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HOMODIEGETIC NARRATION:
RELIABILITY, SELFCONSCIOUSNESS, IDEOLOGY, AND ETHICS

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

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1997

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ABSTRACT

By bringing together rhetorical and structural theories of narrative, this study's goal is to advance our current understanding of homodiegetic narration. Drawing from the seminal works of Wayne C. Booth and Gérard Genette and from their successors, I argue that the two main categories we use to discuss homodiegetic narrators—reliability and selfconsciousness—need to be more fully theorized. Following the structuralist impulse to provide narrative typologies and the rhetorical proclivity for close reading, I examine the assumptions and limitations of reliability and selfconsciousness, the relationship of these two categories to other theoretical and interpretive concerns, and the ideological and ethical import of the categories themselves.

To develop my theory of homodiegesis, in each chapter I pair a literary text with a central theoretical concern. My first chapter joins in the ongoing controversy about the reliability of Nick Carraway, the narrator of Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby; ambiguities in Nick's narration, I argue, point more to inconsistencies within the implied author than to unreliable narration. Chapter 2 brings feminist
and narrative theories together in a discussion of Brontë's *Villette*; here, I demonstrate how the ideological goals of an interpretive community lead to misperceptions of rhetorical relationships among authors, narrators, and audiences and, in so doing, fail to adequately account for both *Villette's* formal features and historical situatedness. In Chapter 3, I address the radical undertheorization of the category of selfconsciousness by analyzing the narrational dynamics in Twain's *Huck Finn*; refining our definition of selfconsciousness, in turn, highlights the distinctive qualities of naive narration. I conclude my dissertation by turning to the ways in which Winterson's *Written on the Body* "queers" the conventions of homodiegesis, thus foregrounding the ideological and ethical dimensions of reading.

The formal, ideological, and ethical dimensions of homodiegesis this study addresses raise many questions about narrative categories: their adequacy, their use by other critical methodologies, and their own principles and assumptions. By answering these questions through interpretations of these four important narratives, we not only gain new insight into each of the texts, but also reaffirm the resilience of rhetorical and structural categories as productive tools for many critical projects.
Dedicated to the loving memory of my grandparents,

Charles and Adelaide Reese
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am grateful to Debra Moddelmog and Mark Conroy for discussing with me various aspects of this dissertation; their careful attention to detail and their insightful suggestions kept me focused and challenged.

I thank Bernard Duyfhuizen for his long term commitment to my success as a reader, thinker, and writer.

I also thank my loved ones: Mark, Rickie, Katie, and Tabitha Kidwell, who always brightened my long hours; Judith Preston, whose confidence and care sustained me through the highs and lows; Kirk Kidwell, who provided steadfast emotional and material support; and my sons, Stanley and Maxwell Kruger, who gave up so much, too much, during the production of this document.

Finally, I am deeply indebted to Jim Phelan, my adviser, mentor, and friend, for the encouragement, enthusiasm, and intellectual support which made this dissertation possible—my heartfelt gratitude to you, Jim, remains beyond narrative.
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INTRODUCTION
ENCOUNTERING THE "I"

In his groundbreaking 1961 *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, rhetorician Wayne C. Booth, making one of his most striking claims, told us that "[p]erhaps the most overworked distinction is that of person. To say that a story is told in the first or the third person will tell us nothing of importance unless we become more precise and describe how the particular qualities of the narrators relate to specific effects" (150). The Booth of the 1983 "Afterword" to the second edition of *The Rhetoric of Fiction* goes on, somewhat endearingly, to correct himself: "Plain wrong. It was radically underworked ... It had been talked about a lot, more than most aspects of technique, but the talk had been, like mine following the comment, superficial" (412). True enough, the matter of person was radically underworked, as Gérard Genette made clear in *Narrative Discourse* (1981), where he notes the tendency to discuss the "narrator and his audience, real or implied," under the term "person" but prefers "to adopt a term whose psychological connotations are a little less pronounced ... voice" (31). Genette's concept of voice, which
includes distinctions among various diegetic levels, adds precision to our critical terminology, but the tongue-in-cheek quality of Booth's retraction, most evident in his substituting in the second edition the word "little" for "nothing" in the initial statement, reminds us of our need to relate structural and rhetorical issues—if we want to know something of importance about the narrator we are encountering.

Where the structuralist Genette classifies the different structures of narrative literature to produce a taxonomy of narrative discourse which will work for any and all narratives, rhetorician Booth emphasizes the ideological and ethical dimensions of the individual reading experience. The differences between structural and rhetorical narratology might best be summed up as follows: structural narratologists analyze narrative in terms of its deep structure, giving priority to what is common between narratives; rhetoricians not only look at the deep structure and formal features, but also attend to the effects of individual texts on readers. While structuralism, less interested in close reading per se than the communicative function of structural properties, produces a grammar of narrative types, rhetorical approaches emphasize close reading as the ground for interpretation and the basis for generalizations about narrative technique and structure.
Structural and rhetorical criticisms do not, however, exist in a vacuum. As my title "Homodiegetic Narration: Reliability, Selfconsciousness, Ideology, Ethics" suggests, rhetorical and structural matters intersect; homodiegetic reliability and selfconsciousness differ from heterodiegetic forms of reliability and selfconsciousness. The goal of this dissertation is to develop a more specialized account of homodiegetic narration, especially homodiegetic reliability and selfconsciousness, in terms of their formal features, their effects, and their heuristic value. Thus I begin each chapter with questions about narrative categories in terms of their general viability— their ability to account for different manifestations of reliability and selfconsciousness in a variety of texts that span two centuries, the nineteenth and twentieth, and two countries, the United States and Great Britain; their interpretive value for various types of audiences (flesh-and-blood, authorial, narrative); their relationships with other structural and rhetorical categories such as paralipsis and paralepsis, the implied author, and narrative authority. In each chapter I investigate a specific narrative—F. Scott Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby, Charlotte Brontë's Villette, Mark Twain's Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, and Jeanette Winterson's Written on the Body respectively—and each chapter begins with a description of a formal problem: reliability,
selfconsciousness, the homodiegetic narrator-character. I assess the assumptions, benefits, and limitations of these and other narrative categories individually, collectively, and in relation to other interpretive problems. I then offer, when appropriate, revisions and extensions which will enhance our interpretive methods. As my formal considerations raise other questions, I turn to larger concerns about the ideological and ethical dimensions of reading. Here, I consider the links between our narratological tools and things like gender, autonomy, historical context, agency, and identification, and then turn the spotlight back on those tools themselves, as the literature I work with illuminates the ideological and ethical import of our narrative categories and our conventions for reading homodiegesis.

To demonstrate my interests, let me turn to the opening paragraph of Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*:

1801.—I have just returned from a visit to my landlord—the solitary neighbour that I shall be troubled with. This is certainly, a beautiful country! In all England, I do not believe that I could have fixed on a situation so completely removed from the stir of society. A perfect misanthropist’s Heaven—and Mr Heathcliff and I are such a suitable pair to divide the desolation between us. A capital fellow! He little
imagined how my heart warmed towards him when I beheld his black eyes withdraw so suspiciously under their brows, as I rode up, and when his fingers sheltered themselves, with a jealous resolution, still further in his waistcoat, as I announced my name.

The first pronoun of the narrative discourse, "I," explicitly designates a first-person narrator; but as Genette tells us, all enunciating subjects can exist "only in the 'first person'" (ND 244). Doing away with the old "first-person/second-person/third-person distinction,"¹ insisting on discriminating between authors and narrators, Genette gives us, in Narrative Discourse and Narrative Discourse Revisited, a sophisticated system of classifying narratives and narrators.

While Genette's distinctions are too numerous to list here, his crucial classificatory method was to move from the concept of "person" to that of narrative, or diegetic, level.² In this move, we see the influence of the early linguistic structuralism of Ferdinand de Saussure and the structuralist anthropology of Claude Levi-Strauss. Saussure, who privileged the systematic, synchronic aspects of langue over the changing, diachronic occurrences of parole, determined that the formal features of a particular speech act can be isolated from that speech act and analyzed in terms of a general model. Former distinctions
between "person" didn't allow for the type of linguistic analysis Saussure insisted upon, for they could not account for the langue. Genette's model addresses the deficiencies of "person"; he takes up the systematic concerns of langue when he discerns "two types of narrative: one with the narrator absent from the story he tells . . . the other with the narrator present as a character in the story he tells . . . I call the first type, for obvious reasons, heterodiegetic, and the second type homodiegetic" (245). Brontë's narrator clearly belongs to the second group. The "I"--whoever s/he might be--speaks as narrator from the time of the discourse ("I have just returned"), but also has a role as a character in the story ("when I beheld his black eyes"). With the narrator present in the story, Wuthering Heights belongs in Genette's category of homodiegesis.

Genette further differentiates between two types of homodiegetic narrators. The first, whom Genette simply refers to as homodiegetic, resembles Booth's "mere observer": he has a peripheral role as character, telling the story of another. The second type Genette calls autodiegetic; the autodiegetic narrator parallels Booth's "narrator-agent" and tells a story in which her character has the primary role. Genette's distinction between the homo- and autodiegetic narrator has less to do with the type of systematic features of langue with which Saussure
was so concerned than with what Levi-Strauss would call "bundling": the way that the "gross constituent units" combine to produce meaning.⁵ If we look at the beginning of Wuthering Heights, we see that the paragraph offers two bundles, one which suggests autodiegesis and the other which indicates homodiegesis. From "I have just returned from a visit" to "removed from the stir of society," the narrative discourse seems autodiegetic: the narrator and the narrator's actions are the primary focus. The sentence in the middle of the paragraph—"A perfect misanthropist's Heaven—and Mr Heathcliff and I are such a suitable pair to divide the desolation between us"—marks a transition between the first bundle and the second. The second leans toward homodiegesis as it describes another character, Heathcliff.

On the basis of this first paragraph, we have no way of knowing whether or not the narrator will be a narrator-agent or a witness-observer; and, quite frankly, at this point we don't care that much. But if, as Peter J. Rabinowitz tells us in Before Reading, a text signals its own important features, and if we are to use the "stressed features in a text" as "scaffolding" upon which to build an interpretation (53), then the tension between the first three sentences of Wuthering Heights, stressing autodiegesis, and the last sentences, stressing homodiegesis, asks us to "scaffold" neither the
autodiegetic nor the homodiegetic impulses. Rather, the interplay between the two emphasizes both the narrator as character and the way in which the character of the narrator—the narrator's perspective and beliefs—might affect our understanding of the other character, Mr Heathcliff.

While recognizing the ways in which Brontë's artistic choices create an interplay between auto- and homodiegesis, I am also responding to the voice of the narrator. "This is certainly a beautiful country!" the narrator says, and while I have no particular trouble with this assessment of England in general, by the time the third sentence concludes, I'm beginning to wonder about the narrator's reliability. A tension arises between the narrator's norms and my own as the "beautiful country!" becomes a "perfect misanthropist's Heaven" and "desolation." How can we give much credence to this putative misanthrope who values a place so isolated, so "removed from the stir of society," yet who seeks out the company of the landlord, Heathcliff?

The description of Heathcliff increases my uneasiness with the narrator. Structurally and rhetorically paralleling the earlier lines, the later part of the passage—"[a] capital fellow!"—reflects "a beautiful country!" Just as the beauty of the country suspiciously arose from its desolate demeanor, so too Heathcliff's "capital-ness" arises from his suspicious black eyes and
jealous resolution. The narrator seems fully oblivious to the potential ironic use of "capital" to mean not only, or even necessarily, the attractive qualities (from the narrator's perspective) that Heathcliff may exude, but also to intimate money, land, or other "capital" associated with the "landlord."

The disparities established within the initial paragraph of Wuthering Heights suggest some type of ironic play in the passage. We in the United States seem to have a "thing" for irony, and we have been blessed with an abundant history of irony, from the New Criticism of I. A. Richards and Cleanth Brooks to Booth's rhetorics of fiction and irony. Brooks and Richards, like most New Critics, base their analyses on poetry, although acknowledging that what is true of the poem is, of course, true of other literary works. The emphasis on poetry, especially lyric poetry, leads them to see the author, or the author's persona, if you prefer, as the source of irony—in lyric poetry, there can be no other source. But in narrative literature, a variety of possible relationships can lead to irony, and Booth once again laid the groundwork for recognizing the different forms.

Narrative irony, Booth tells us, usually stems from the relationships between agents, occurring between the narrator and the characters, the narrator and the reader, the implied author and the reader, the implied author (who
carries the reader with him in this instance) and other
characters, and the implied author and the narrator.7
When the irony originates in the implied author/narrator
relationship, Booth calls it "unreliability": "I have
called a narrator reliable when he speaks for or acts in
accordance with the norms of the work (which is to say, the
implied author's norms), unreliable when he does not" (158-
59). Booth takes care to distinguish unreliability from a
narrator's intentional deceptiveness, or even outright
lying. A narrator is unreliable when she believes herself
to have qualities which the author denies her.

Complementing Booth's study of ironic distances is
Russian formalist M. M. Bakhtin's study of novelistic
discourse. Bakhtin's works, although written before
Booth's and following a similar line of inquiry, remained
unpublished in English until two decades after The Rhetoric
of Fiction appeared.8 Bakhtin's concept of dialogism is
helpful in understanding how narrative irony works. For
Bakhtin, meaning is produced dialogically, through a
combination of two language systems. "This interaction,"
Bakhtin writes in "Discourse in the Novel," "this dialogic
tension between two languages and two belief systems,
permits authorial intentions to be realized in such a way
that we can acutely sense their presence at every point in
the work" (314). The "dialogic tension" resembles Booth's
concepts of distance and unreliability, and Bakhtin's

10
analysis of double-voiced discourse plays an important role in our evaluations of irony, for it allows us to associate various discourses, or rhetorical postures, with various enunciating subjects—implied authors, narrator, and characters (all which Bakhtin calls "ideologues")—and thus visualize the source of the narrative irony.

The dialogic tension that arises in the first paragraph of *Wuthering Heights* seems—although I suppose we cannot be positive at this point—to stem from a distance between implied author and narrator, rather than a distance between the narrator and the narrator's character. We do not sense that the irony comes from the older narrator's language dialogizing his or her younger character's language largely because of the close temporal relationship between narrator and character. The time of the discourse—the storytelling—is almost simultaneous with the time of the story itself: the narrator has "just returned from a visit to [his] landlord"; the visit comprises the story-events which s/he relates apparently moments later. The temporal alignment between story and discourse creates what Dorrit Cohn calls "consonant narration," narration in which the narrator "displays no increment in intellectual powers over his past self; he is as reflective and enlightened during his mental antics as he is when he records them" (*Transparent Minds* 157). Mieke Bal and Seymour Chatman, who like to keep impenetrable boundaries between story and
discourse, would insist that the focalization of the narrator-as-character during the time of the story and point-of-view of the narrator at discourse-time differ, but even these stricter theorists would agree that here the difference between character and narrator is minimal. Brontë's narrative discourse does not have the reflective quality that can occur when the narrator has matured in her or his understanding of herself and the events—as in, say, Jane Eyre. It certainly seems that the irony at work in the first paragraph of Wuthering Heights stems from a distance between implied author and narrator and thus fits Booth's category of the unreliable narrator.

Unreliable narration occurs along three axes—unreliability of norms and beliefs, of facts, and of cultural knowledge—and the first two (norms and facts) have received a great deal of critical attention. Since Booth first coined the term, significant contributions to the study of reliability have been made by Susan Sniader Lanser and James Phelan. Lanser and Phelan each emphasize the rhetorical frameworks for assessing reliability (which often invokes Bakhtinian dialogism), look at variations of reliability during the progression of a narrative, and assess potential intersections and divergences between a narrator's reliability and her character's honesty, integrity, and so on. Lanser's and Phelan's approaches to reliability are not, however, identical, and I shall flesh
out the differences in my chapters on *Gatsby* and *Villette*. Although Lanser and Phelan are the only two narrative theorists who have worked substantially with Booth's category, critics from all communities have relied upon, and continue to invoke, un/reliability as part of their larger interpretive and ideological projects. While reliability's popularity suggests its continued importance in the interpretation of narrative, one of the consequences that has followed its acceptance in critical discourse is the tendency to appropriate the term without retaining its rhetorical framework, its designation of the rhetorical relation between implied author and narrator. My chapters on *Gatsby* and *Villette* demonstrate in depth both the flexibility and the misapplied appropriation of the term, but let me return to *Wuthering Heights* to preview some of these concerns.

As my interpretation of Brontë's first paragraph demonstrates, I am clearly working under the assumption that many readers will share my sense of tension when reading the first paragraph of *Wuthering Heights*, but that does not mean that all readers will, or even that "we" are supposed to feel this way as members of the authorial audience. One might be tempted to read all distances between one's own norms and those of a homodiegetic narrator as indicating unreliability, but giving into such temptation requires a solipsistic leap that is not always
warranted. To prevent premature judgments of unreliability, we can perform an "historical check." Note that the date with which the narrative begins establishes the time of the discourse--1801. Perhaps, to the 1801 reader--the narrator's audience--there is an historical context that would make the dynamics of the first paragraph seem to be wholly without tension. Or perhaps the 1847 (the time of the novel's production) reader would respond differently than the 1997 reader like myself. I must admit that neither of these interpretive possibilities holds much sway; the dynamics of this first paragraph just do not seem to support either possibility. In other words, the explanations are possible but not plausible in this particular reading. Yet the larger point, that we need to recognize that historical forces can alter the potential layers of reading and interpretation that can occur, is well taken. We must remember the historical aspect of reliability, and ask ourselves how the historical situatedness of the author, the narrator, and the reader influence our evaluations of a narrator's status.

Furthermore, even "the 1997 reader" (like the 1801 or 1847 reader) cannot be seen as a stable entity. Different readers enter texts with different perspectives, backgrounds, expectations, and ideological concerns. A 1997 "perfect misanthropist" may enter the narrator's world with more uneasiness than I do, or more than her 1847
counterpart would. A naive reader might not even notice
the irony at play. Perhaps the implied author herself
shares the norms of the narrator. How do we distinguish
the position the text asks us to assume—the
characteristics of the authorial audience—from the
position of the flesh-and-blood reader and the narratee, or
ideal narrative audience? Is it possible to do so? While
I want to recognize the differences between readers, I also
want to acknowledge that the individual reading experience,
like the individual reader, does not exist in a void. Our
horizon of expectations, our literary experiences—
especially we who are bearers of degrees in English—and
the norms and values of our culture all reinforce the
viability of the actual response I had to the first
paragraph of Wuthering Heights.

Another factor might influence our decision about the
reliability of Brontë's narrator: selfconsciousness. Also
popularized by Booth in The Rhetoric of Fiction, the term
selfconsciousness remains relatively untheorized.
Selfconscious narrators, Booth writes in The Rhetoric of
Fiction, are "aware of themselves as writers" and unself-
conscious narrators "rarely if ever discuss their writing
chores" or "seem unaware that they are writing, thinking,
speaking, or 'reflecting' a literary work" (RoF 155). The
selfconscious narrator might be heterodiegetic, like the
"I" narrator of Tom Jones, or homodiegetic, like Marlow in
Heart of Darkness or autodiegetic, like Tristram Shandy. The selfconscious narrator is not, however, the same as a selfconscious, self-reflexive, or self-referential text. Although a selfconscious homodiegetic narrator and a self-reflexive text can, and frequently do, go together, it is not necessary that they do so. For example, Geoffrey Braithwaite's narration in Flaubert's Parrot is selfconscious and the text is self-reflexive; but in Gatsby Nick is selfconscious without the text being self-reflexive.

Although a great deal of scholarly work has been done on the self-reflexive text—Linda Hutcheon's Narcissitic Narrative, Brain McHale's Postmodernist Fiction, and Ross Chambers's Story and Situation, to name a few of the better known—the category of the selfconscious narrator remains, to this day, radically underworked, especially in those narratives in which the narrator is not overtly selfconscious. Booth's own dissertation, "Tristram Shandy and its Precursors: The Self-Conscious Narrator," deals primarily with the more overtly selfconscious narrators up to and including Tristram Shandy, as does one of his most recent writings, "The Struggle to Tell the Story of the Struggle to get the Story Told." Lanser and Phelan have once again taken the forefront in extending Booth's analysis, with Lanser emphasizing the writer's awareness of the communicative context and Phelan foregrounding the
agent who controls the literary techniques and their aesthetic effects.

If we come to see Brontë's narrator as selfconscious, aware of the writing or telling of the story, and aware of the effects that the technical choices have on the authorial reader, then we might be tempted to revise our initial assessment of the narrator's unreliability. The selfconscious narrator would be more likely to dialogize his or her character's language intentionally, which returns us to the possibility of the distance existing between narrator and character rather than narrator and implied author. I do not mean to suggest, though, that if a homodiegetic narrator is selfconscious, s/he is always reliable—think of Lolita's Humbert Humbert or The Good Soldier's Dowell. I only intend to raise the issue of how our interpretations of reliability can be complicated by our understandings of selfconsciousness; the complexities between the two poles are addressed in my chapters on Villette and Huck Finn. We cannot, of course, determine whether or not Brontë's narrator is selfconscious in this first paragraph, but that is not unusual—many homodiegetic narrators do not make their selfconsciousness known until later on in the narrative. But if nothing in the text signals homodiegetic selfconsciousness, then we resort to the default of nonselfconscious narration.
Questions about the narrator's gender, race, sexuality, and class might also influence our interpretive efforts, despite the claims made by the early structuralist Vladimir Propp. Propp, working with the elements of fairy tales, maintained that despite diachronic changes in elements like age, gender, and location, the characters in fairy tales perform the same functions, play the same part in the plot. For Propp, the elements of story, detachable from the particular plot, create a taxonomy of narrative elements that should work for any and all folktales. Propp's claim may be true in that regardless of gender, race, class, and sexuality, the narrator functions to tell the story, but in terms of what stories can be told by whom, and the ways in which gender, race, class, and sexuality might influence interpretation, Propp's claim just doesn't hold up.

We have no indication in the first paragraph about the narrator's race, class, gender, or sexuality. The absence of markers leads to interesting discussions about "defaults," or what assumptions the reader makes when no evidence is given. Is an unmarked narrator white? male? rich? heterosexual? Lanser's work with gender and sexuality raises issues that others' considerations of race and class would share.

Lanser asks important questions about the relationship between the gender/sex of the author/implied author and
narrator. Lanser admits to some perplexity "as to whether and when the marking of an author's sex (on the title page or cover) lends sexual [and I'd add gendered] identity to the unmarked heterodiegetic or homodiegetic narrator, or whether and when the normativity of masculine voice, particularly in heterodiegesis, would override that link" ("Sexing the Narrative" 89). Brontë's first paragraph, although homodiegetic, provides a background against which to measure Lanser's dilemma: do we make the sexed/gendered leap from author to narrator, reading the "I" as female? If so, would the reliability of the female narrator be more questionable than a male counterpart? After all, the traditional association with women and the nurturing domestic sphere would make a female's claim to misanthropy more suspect than a male's admission of the same. When read as the discourse of a female narrator, the first paragraph would also create mimetic questions about the plausibility of a female removing herself to the countryside, apparently alone; similar concerns do not arise when we read the narrator as male. The codes of the first paragraph implicitly designate a male narrator. Wuthering Heights's narrator, Lockwood, is of course male, so there is no discrepancy between the codes and their object, but, as we will see with Jeanette Winterson's Written on the Body, such is not always the case.
Wuthering Heights goes on, of course, to challenge many inscribed gender conventions and, in so doing, Emily Brontë's worldview, her norms and beliefs which involve a sense of the oppressive forces of patriarchy, the need for female liberation, and the value of love, resonate ideologically and ethically. N. M. Jacobs, Bette London, Michael S. Macovski, and Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar each work extensively, and convincingly, with Brontë's ethics. Macovski argues, in fact, that Wuthering Heights is "about the act of interpretation itself"; that the "rhetorical interchange" between characters highlights reception and judgment (364-65).11

We can see how reliability and selfconsciousness provide "jumping off points" for other considerations, formal, ideological, and ethical. My dissertation follows the rhetorical tradition which emphasizes close reading, the structuralist insistence upon the relations between the parts and the whole, and the general desire for precision in our terminology; in so doing, it raises questions about our critical terminology and the relationship between our categories of analysis and larger ideological and ethical concerns. Through my readings of F. Scott Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby, Charlotte Brontë's Villette, Mark Twain's Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, and Jeanette Winterson's Written on the Body, I argue for a more expansive narrative poetics, one that takes into account the relational
concerns of a transnational feminist politics. Relational narratology, as I see it, looks at formal matters in new ways, both individually and in relation to each other. Such scrutiny invites rethinking and refining those categories which we have begun to use with complacency, yet, at the same time, I argue that we must remain flexible enough to include a variety of textual dynamics and a diverse reading population. Moreover, a relational poetics of narrative considers the ideological and ethical deployment of narrative and narrative categories.

More than a decade ago, Teresa de Lauretis urged feminists to a "theoretical return to narrative," a "rereading of the sacred texts against the passionate urging of a different question, a different practice, and a different desire" (Alice Doesn't 107). While de Lauretis's appeal, contemporaneous with similar entreaties by the first feminist narratologists such as Susan Sniader Lanser and Robyn Warhol, and with feminists working with other approaches, such as Judith Fetterley, Julia Kristeva, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Luce Irigaray, Barbara Christian, and Catharine A. MacKinnon, asked us to do important theoretical work, it also established a binary opposition which has come to characterize feminism, especially white Eurocentric feminism, up to the 1990s. That is, de Lauretis asks us to be different in our questioning, our practices, and our desires. While the new practice that de
Lauretis and other feminists called for and did open up new, exciting interpretations, a less-positive consequence of this general trend was to force things into oppositions, binary oppositions which not only failed to account for the specifics of the literary dynamics of any given text, but also altered the rhetorical and structural categories on which many interpretations relied. The tendency to place things in binary oppositions is reflected in feminist theories of language, subject-development, and psychoanalysis (Cixous, Irigaray, Kristeva), reading (Fetterley, Kennard, Schweickart), of race (Christian, Collins), and of literature (Armstrong, Miller, Showalter). Under a feminist lens which equates—and forgive me for having to reduce these many fruitful and complexly different paradigms here—female agency with resistance to traditional patriarchal structures, early feminist interpretive practices sought reading experiences which gave the female character/narrator/reader agency: voice, authority, autonomy. The benefits from this early work are unquestionable in terms of female liberation, but in terms of narrative theory, they often relied on a somewhat reductive employment of rhetorical and structural categories. I share with the earlier feminists a sincere desire to address voice, authority, and gender in a formal narrative poetics; I acknowledge both the usefulness and the necessity of employing binary oppositions within our
critical methodology; and I have an overarching interest in developing a model of reading which grants ideological and ethical agency to the female reader. However, influenced as I am by the recent work in transnational feminism, I want to open up our binary system of classification to relational practices—be they our formal categories such as reliability, selfconsciousness, voice, and so on, or our tendencies to classify texts by the gender or sexual preference of the author, or our text- and author-based models of reading.

The benefits of a relational methodology in narrative theory are fourfold. First, relational models encourage us to historicize. Although we retain the ability to use narrative categories to specify formal features, when we see these features in relation to other features and to the cultural contexts of production and reception, we are less able to make (often incorrect) assumptions about the meaning of a particular structural element, or even a gross constituent unit. Second, by closely scrutinizing our systems of classification, both individually and together, we begin to see the historical, ideological, and ethical import of our interpretive strategies. To deem a narrator reliable, an implied author ethical, or a character fallible, is to recognize both the political and ethical nature of literary texts and of the act of reading. Third, when we establish the relationship between the historical,
ideological, and ethical dimensions of the narrative categories qua narrative categories and the ideological and ethical dimensions of our own interpretive efforts, we are more likely to see how our own use, even our misuse and abuse, of formal categories helps us to achieve certain personal, political, and ethical goals. And finally, a relational methodology might help us work our way toward establishing a model of reading homodiegesis which goes beyond the conventional text-based/author-based models in our recent past.

Each of the questions that Wuthering Height's first paragraph leads us to, all the assumptions we may find ourselves making or rejecting, from homo/autodiegesis to un/reliability to non/selfconsciousness to fe/male--each and every one of these is an instance of the relational interaction between text and reader, reflecting and refracting the text's and the reader's own political and ethical positions. What are the politics behind my assumption of the narrator's gender, or reliability? What are the ethical consequences of those assumptions, upon the text, within me, within our culture and upon other cultures? What is the relationship between the categories we use and the issues that interest us? These are some of the many questions that I will attempt to answer in the remainder of this dissertation.
I begin with F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, joining in the continuing controversy over the reliability of Nick Carraway. Booth's claim that "Nick provides thoroughly reliable guidance" (RoF 176) has been both challenged and reaffirmed by critics representing a variety of interpretive communities—especially feminists, cultural critics, and narrative theorists. Rather than simply arguing for a reading of Nick as reliable, I change the terms of the argument from whether or not Nick is reliable to, first, an investigation of why and how the text signals conflicting responses. Tensions arise between some of the more explicit anti-capitalist and anti-racist discourses and the implicit racism and sexism within the text. Secondly, I look at the relationships between those formal features and the rhetoric of reliability; while a tension does exist, it does not exist within the implied author/narrator relationship. My analysis leads me into a reconsideration of the ways in which we understand the implied author. Arguing that the tension in the narrative discourse ultimately lies not only within Nick but also within the implied Fitzgerald, I underscore the relationship between the textual construct of the author and the actual historical author. Fitzgerald, both a product and producer of historical change, reflects the dialogism of a network of discourses and plays a role in changing the formation of social institutions. By
emphasizing the dialogic nature of the implied author, I move away from the rather monologic implied author of Boothian rhetoric; consequently, the role of the flesh-and-blood reader takes on increased significance. Finally, I suggest that accounting for dialogic contradictions cannot fully explain the insidious sexism that infects the narrative logic of *The Great Gatsby*.

Chapter 2 discusses how, in Charlotte Brontë's *Villette*, our understanding of both the narrator's position in the plot of heterosexual union and her achievement of narrative authority is tied to our assessments of the reliability of her narration. Although feminist critics have addressed the issue of reliability in *Villette*, and although rhetoricians have refined this category over time, the complexities of Lucy Snowe's narrative discourse ask us to expand our ways of thinking about un/reliability. Feminist critics of the 1980s use a rather strict opposition between reliability and unreliability, accentuating Lucy's realization of narrative authority while minimalizing her engagement to M. Paul. A close examination of the narrating-I's growing selfconsciousness and her decisions to withhold some information complicates not only our sense of Lucy's achievement but also the way we think about narrative reliability in general. While Lucy does indeed attain narrative authority, equally significant is her love for, and relationship with, M.
Paul. Requiring us to consider un/reliability not along mutually exclusive axes but as historically and textually relational, Brontë's novel can thus be seen as part of a larger transnational feminist politics.

Having established the theoretical and ideological concerns of my dissertation, I look next at selfconsciousness in Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. The paradigmatic underdevelopment of selfconsciousness leads to critical dissension that appears, initially, to be unresolvable. An overview of the critical corpus on *Huck Finn* immediately foregrounds the problem: from cultural feminists to linguistic poststructuralists, from New Historicism to psychoanalysis, both within and between theoretical paradigms, some read Huck as a selfconscious author while others insist upon his naive narration. What strikes me as so intriguing is how the assumptions made about Huck's selfconsciousness are inextricably linked to conclusions about Twain's narrative task, aesthetically, ideologically, and ethically. By refining the very broad category of selfconsciousness into separate considerations of authorial disposition, narratorial introspection, and aesthetic control, I not only adjudicate some of the divergence between critics and propose a theoretical refinement which will have long-lasting benefits to theories of narrative, but also I demonstrate how reliable, unreliable, and naive narration
function together and independently. Twain’s characterization of Huck Finn can be seen as the primary technique by which the author addresses and redresses sociopolitical and ethical concerns.

In my final chapter on Jeanette Winterson’s Written on the Body, I turn from the specific analyses of reliability and selfconsciousness to a larger model for reading homodiegetic narration. Here, I begin by fleshing out the conventions of the dramatized character-narrator in homodiegesis. I examine the qualities, or traits, that comprise the homodiegetic character-narrator as compared to the heterodiegetic character and narrator; the relationships between the homodiegetic narrator and his or her character in terms of those traits; the ways in which traits combine to create un/reliable or non/selfconscious narration; and the movement from narratorial selfconsciousness to textual self-reflexivity. Through its troubling of conventional gendered and sexed paradigms, Winterson’s text plays with the conventions of homodiegesis in such a way that heterocentrist forms of narrative and ways of reading are challenged.

The broad scope of this study makes my work preliminary in many ways. First, it leaves untouched many significant homodiegetic narratives, leaves underdeveloped many other significant categories. Relationships between narratorial selfconsciousness and textual self-reflexivity
in narratives like Julian Barnes's *Flaubert's Parrot*, between narrative and authorial audiences fictionalized autobiography such as Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior*, and between ethics and anonymity in a novel like *Primary Colors*, all deserve consideration. My focus on the formal dimensions of narrative has also limited my ability to fully explore the material and historical forces within a particular place and time. Other limits arise from this study's use of texts from a variety of traditions and, conversely, its failure to investigate texts from other traditions, especially ethnic literature. Not only do I lose the impact of a national "literary tradition" like the Victorian novel, American modernism, and so on, but also I fail to do full justice to the traditions of, specifically, feminist and queer literature.¹²

However, my decision to span the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and American and British cultures enables me to make larger claims about narrative categories in general. Following a long line of rhetoricians, I emphasize close reading—I keep my eyes on the effects individual texts have on real readers; following an equally long line of structuralists, I aspire to revise and expand categories in ways which will account for any narrative. I add to both methodologies a relational practice which, while manifesting itself in feminist terms in many ways, is not limited to a feminist politics. (My evaluation of
selfconsciousness in *Huck Finn*, for example, employs a relational methodology but is not explicitly feminist.) The relational methodology that I use asks us to recognize the historical, ideological, and ethical consequences of our interpretive categories while simultaneously challenging the conventional boundaries of those categories themselves. In this way, my dissertation might best be considered an extended, but less than comprehensive, encounter with the "I," an opening-of-doors for other encounters by other critics.
1. Norman Friedman's "Point of View" provides one of the most comprehensive discussions of first-, second-, and third-person.

2. Genette writes that readers of *Narrative Discourse* "may have noticed that until now we have used the terms 'first-person—or third-person narrative' only when paired with quotation marks of protest. Indeed, these common locutions seem to me inadequate, in that they stress variation in the element of the narrative situation that is in fact invariant—to wit, the presence (explicit or implicit) of the 'person' of the narrator" (244). Genette's dismissal of the concept of person is that it tends to designate the narrator as the source for a choice of person, a grammatical issue, rather than designating the novelist as the source for the choice of a narrative posture. The "real question," Genette tells us, "is whether or not the narrator can use the first person to designate one of his characters" (244).


4. For more on Booth's witness-observer and narrator-agent, see *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, 153-54.

5. See Lévi-Strauss, "The Structural Study of Myth."

6. Interest in irony reached it peak with the New Criticism of I. A. Richards and Cleanth Brooks. In his *Principles of Literary Criticism*, Richards's interest in the differences between scientific and emotive language lead him into formal analyses of reading, but unlike the stricter structuralists, he stresses the emotional quality of the reading experience. Richards acknowledges that different readers, when reacting to any formal unit, from the single line to the whole poem, may ideate different mental images, but such variances assume less importance than the fact that the character of the image is "a mental event peculiarly connected with sensation" (119). Irony occurs when the narrative discourse brings in "the opposite, the complementary impulses" or moments when the structure of words themselves produces an effect opposite to their most literal meaning (250). We can recognize the irony at work in Brontë's passage, especially the "beautiful country" and "capital fellow," as these words, followed by contradiction, cause a response very different than their most literal meaning.

As Cleanth Brooks notes in "Irony as a Principle of Structure," we must see irony in relation to the pressures of context; "[i]nvulnerability to irony is the stability of a context in which the internal pressures balance and mutually support each other" (802). Brooks, like Richards
and the stricter structuralist Tzvetan Todorov, is interested in the relation of the parts to the whole, the relationship between form and content. Where Todorov demonstrates how formal choices of focalization, vision, point-of-view, absence and presence, and embedded elements come together as a whole to produce the theme of the work (see his wonderful reading of James's "The Figure in the Carpet"), Brooks—adhering to many similar concerns like faithfulness to the internal form of the work and the relationship of the smaller units to larger—emphasizes the effects the words produce in the reader and the way the various parts transmute initial responses. If we can imagine Todorov reading the first paragraph of *Wuthering Heights*, he would want to place things like autodiegesis/homodiegesis and the point-of-view of the narrator/the focalization of the narrator's character into binary opposition and then track them throughout the progression of the narrative, linking the initial oppositions to others as he works to extract a theme.

7. See *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, 155-59, for Booth's complete discussion of irony between various agents.

8. Booth immediately recognized Bakhtin's contributions to the study of narrative, and the parallels between the two are demonstrated in Booth's "Freedom of Interpretation: Bakhtin and the Challenge of Feminist Criticism" and his introduction to Bakhtin's *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*.

9. Drawing from Peter J. Rabinowitz, Phelan defines the authorial audience as "the hypothetical, ideal audience for whom the author constructs the text and who understands it perfectly. The authorial audience of fiction, unlike the narrative audience . . . operates with the tacit knowledge that the characters and events are synthetic constructs rather than real people and historical happenings. The term is synonymous with *implied reader*" (*Narrative as Rhetoric* 215). See my first chapter for a more in-depth analysis of the authorial audience.

10. The subject of the gendered "I" is something that Lanser takes up in her earlier *Fictions of Authority*, especially the section on personal voice.

11. See also Bernard Duyfhuizen's discussion of *Wuthering Heights* in *Narratives of Transmission*.

12. My study is also limited in that it includes only narratives from a specifically Western tradition. It would be very interesting and fruitful to extend this project to include, say, Natsume Soseki's *I am a Cat*, a three-volume novel told by a homodiegetic nameless narrator who is a cat.
Do selfconsciousness, reliability, and other narrative categories take on different formal properties in non-Western literature? Or are these categories of narrative theory equally useful in dealing with non-Eurocentric literature?
CHAPTER 1

IMPLYING AUTHORS IN THE GREAT GATSBY

The younger Nick as a 'lucid reflector' in the James manner would be an unreliable witness to the events. As it is, the older Nick provides thoroughly reliable guidance. (Wayne C. Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction)

You might think that after Wayne C. Booth, the Dr. T. J. Eckleburg of rhetorical narratology, flashed the green light of reliability on F. Scott Fitzgerald's Nick Carraway, there would be little left to say on the subject. After all, Booth's categories of reliability and unreliability have significantly impacted our ways of thinking and talking about homodiegetic narrators—perhaps more profoundly than any other classification system in the last thirty-five years. Yet oddly—or perhaps predictably—critics have gone to great lengths both to challenge and to defend Booth's judgment of Nick. Just in the past decade or so we have had, on the one hand, critics such as Kent Cartwright, Scott Donaldson, and Ernest Lockridge judging Nick "limited," "a snob," and "not to be trusted in his judgments and interpretations," respectively. On the
other hand, David O'Rourke considers "the reliability of Nick's narration . . . quite surprising" (58) while Joyce Rowe deems Nick reliable, finding *The Great Gatsby* "the most historically self-conscious consideration of American idealism and the social cost of its attempt to subdue the facts of history to the faith of myth" (100). The most recent account, James Phelan's "Reexamining Reliability" in *Narrative as Rhetoric*, proposes that Nick's functions as character and narrator sometimes operate independently of each other, which in turn leads Phelan to see Fitzgerald's narrator as sometimes reliable, other times unreliable. The Carraway Controversy has been—and still is—quite remarkable, but what seems to be missing from the critical corpus is an effort to integrate questions of reliability with larger concerns about the ideological dimensions of reading. My own reexamination of *Gatsby* considers how the formal features of the text complicate the categories we have for discussing relationships between narrators and implied authors, storytellers, and audiences. Thus my endeavor here is not simply to offer a new interpretation of Fitzgerald's text, but to engage *Gatsby* as a means of uncovering the assumptions, benefits, and limitations of our rhetorical models in terms of larger concerns about ideology, ethics, and reading.
Before I turn to my discussion of Gatsby, let me provide an overview of the terms and concepts that inform my analysis. First, we have the implied author. "Disparately gifted," the implied author has responsibility for more than just the "extractable meanings" of the literary text, but, never neutral toward values, s/he provides "the moral and emotional content" of the action and the characters (RoF 70-73). For Booth, the implied author possesses superior moral attributes; s/he, through the medium of the literary text, offers a "gift" that leads the reader to some higher insight, to "ethical goodness" (The Company We Keep 169-95). The implied author differs from other "authors" such as the flesh-and-blood, postulated, dramatized, career, and fictitious author (Critical Understanding 268-71) and no two implied authors are exactly alike; thus the implied Fitzgerald of The Great Gatsby differs from that of Tender is the Night. Booth also distinguishes between the implied author and the dramatized narrator whose mind mediates the experience being narrated. Indeed, Booth suggests that perhaps "the most important differences in narrative effect depend on whether the narrator is dramatized in his own right and on whether his beliefs and characteristics are shared by the author" (RoF 151-52).
The amount of distance between the implied author's values and beliefs and those held by the dramatized narrator plays a crucial role in our determinations of narrative irony which, in turn, affect the way we apprehend a given text (The Rhetoric of Irony 11-19). When a great distance separates the two--such as that between Lardner and Whitey in "Haircut"--we sense that the narrator and his discourse become the object of our interest as much as, perhaps even more than, the events that constitute the story. To measure the degree of accord between the implied author's and the narrator's belief systems, we invoke Booth's categories of un/reliability, calling "a narrator reliable when he speaks for or acts in accordance with the norms of the work (which is to say, the implied author's norms), unreliable when he does not" (RoF 158–59). Within this rhetorical framework, then, as soon as we ask questions about reliability, we accept the "existence" of the implied author which, in turn, predetermines at least one of our assumptions about the ideology of mimetic performatives: we presume that the nature and the function of narrative has an ethical dimension.

By extension, the rhetorical-structural framework that Booth lays out asks us to accept the notion of an authorial audience. Booth began (in 1961) to speak vaguely of an implied reader; the implied reader, as Shlomith Rimmon (now -Kenan) notes, "is not any element of the text but a mental
construct based on the text as a whole. In fact, the implied reader parallels the implied author" (58). In his 1983 "Afterword" to the second edition of The Rhetoric of Fiction, Booth adopts Peter J. Rabinowitz's distinctions between authorial and narrative audiences. Rabinowitz defines the narrative audience as an "imitation audience" addressed by the narrator, an audience which believes in the factuality of the characters and events represented. As members of this audience, we would consider Gatsby, Daisy, Tom, and Nick "real" people who "really" went through these events. The authorial audience (synonymous with the implied reader) accepts the implied author's invitation to read in a particular socially constituted way ("Truth in Fiction" 126-27). To join the authorial audience, the flesh-and-blood reader might be requested to suspend her own identities; the degrees to which you or I might put our identities into suspension varies, of course, and is never fully, finally, measurable.

To determine the characteristics the authorial reader possesses, Rabinowitz suggests that we ask what sort of corrupted reader the text implies, what the authorial audience's engagements and prejudices might be (Before Reading 22-26). Picking up on Rabinowitz's categories in his Reading People, Reading Plots, Phelan links the authorial or "ideal" audience to his concept of progression--"how authors generate, sustain, develop, and
resolve readers' interests in narrative”; he further postulates that such movement is "given shape and direction" through the introduction, complication, and resolution of instabilities (unstable relations in the story) and tensions (unstable relations in the discourse) (15). From Booth, Rabinowitz, and Phelan, we acquire a rhetorical model of reading in which the relationship between tensions and instabilities reveals the norms of the text: the implied author, privileging certain ethical stances in relation to specific events in the narrative discourse, addresses a corrupted reader whose responses, logical and affective, reflect the implied author's aesthetic-ethical choices. The point of reading in this audience is that it gives us access to the author's intentions as evident in the formal features, or the structures, of the text: we can determine both the "extractable meaning" of the text and the text's "moral and emotional content." Should we choose to affirm or to resist those ethics depends to a great extent on our individual flesh-and-blood personalities in relation to the identity we assume as members of the authorial audience.

The authorial audience, with its literary-conventional understanding of what Phelan calls progression or what Rabinowitz considers under the rubric of various "rules," has the ability to distinguish between various narrative matters. Phelan's progression not only allows us to
distinguish between story matters and discourse matters, but also asks us to recognize the way that a character's mimetic, thematic, and synthetic components work within the logical and emotive movement of the narrative.

Rabinowitz's "rules"—of notice, of signification, of configuration, and of coherence—serve a similar function. What both Phelan's and Rabinowitz's models do is demonstrate how some narrative matters are crucial to the outcome of the narrative, intersecting and overlapping in significant ways, while others have little bearing on the overall progression. How important is Owl Eyes to the outcome of *Gatsby*? The joke about the butler's nose? How about Nick's relationship to Jordan Baker? Here and elsewhere, our flesh-and-blood experiences of reading in a variety of authorial audiences allow us to quickly separate the peripheral action from the primary.

I don't mean that Owl Eyes, the butler's nose, and Nick's relationship with Jordan do not intersect with the primary narrative logic in explicit and important ways. They clearly do. I only want to emphasize that *Gatsby*'s formal features, combined with our histories of experiences as flesh-and-blood readers, ask us to recognize that the unstable relations, or instabilities, between Nick and Gatsby, and Gatsby and Daisy and Tom, as well as the fluctuating tensions between Nick and the authorial audience, provide the primary generation, complication, and
resolution of both the plot events and the reader's engagement with those events. The peripheral actions can, however, take on an increased importance when their intersections with the primary actions significantly alter the viability of the progression.

To fulfill our need for comprehension, to create some type of logical, ordered relationship between author/text/reader, and to discuss and even to disagree about narratives, we must rely on the language of critical terminology. The rhetorical categories I have invoked all function to identify and make sense of the formal features of a given text. Whether we're talking about narratorial reliability, the implied author, or the authorial audience, we're discussing constructs that structure and explain the logic of the narrative, not just its cognitive development but also the affective responses associated with it. And while the theme and ethical perspective of a literary text may for the most part be "discovered" within the text's integrity, we can no longer fail to recognize the influences of historical and individual forces, centripetal and centrifugal, on the human agent who writes the literary text and on the human agent who reads it.

II

The critique of the United States class system seems the most obvious place to begin talking about ethical norms in Gatsby. Nick reliably exposes the amoral base of the
capitalism which underlies and produces the American Dream, a Nationalist Dream sustained by a discursive network that promises equal access to health, wealth, and the pursuit of happiness, a romantic myth that covers up the realistic "foul dust" that preys on people like Gatsby. In the first few pages, Nick establishes the motivation for his narration, preparing us for a backwards glimpse into the riotous excursions of the human heart. Several oppositions appear in his "preamble"—abnormal/normal; younger:unreliable/older:reliable; romantic readiness/realistic sorrows—all which establish the occasion for the telling. Nick relates his father's words of wisdom ("all the people in this world haven't had the advantages that you've had"), moves quickly into his role as tolerant "witness" to the conduct of others, states his belief that "a sense of the fundamental decencies is parcelled out unequally at birth," and then admits that even his tolerance has limitations: "Conduct may be founded on the hard rock or the wet marshes, but after a certain point I don't care what it's founded on." The transgression of the boundaries of acceptable conduct has prompted Nick to tell this story. Nick's "preamble" thus creates, in the reader, an expectation for a narrative of strong ethical valence, a story that promises to expose that "certain point" of human behavior which exceeds the boundaries of acceptable conduct.
Nick's preamble not only designates the main narrative logic as one which will reveal immoral conduct, but also functions to establish the ethically superior qualities of our narrator. "[I]nclined to reserve all judgments," Nick plays the role of confidant with great success; his tolerance of a wide continuum of moral behavior--from the "hard rock" to the "wet marshes"--establishes his role as moral guide. By establishing Nick as an embodiment of the proper moral vision, Fitzgerald subtly validates both what Nick experiences and how Nick judges the behaviors of others, others who do not live within the realm of tolerable conduct. In other words, the "corrupted" reader of Fitzgerald's audience is asked to accept what Nick sees (the facts) and how he sees them (the values associated with the facts). As flesh-and-blood readers we could decide that Nick's snobbishness or pretentiousness provides sufficient grounds for discontinuing reading or resisting Nick's entire narration, or we might easily accept Fitzgerald's invitation to place our trust in his narrator. If we decide to join the authorial audience, the degree to which each of us might have to suspend our flesh-and-blood identities will vary significantly, but what I'm interested in at this point are the responses and expectations of the authorial audience. Both the logic of the story and the emotional responses we are asked to have toward the homodiegetic narrator highlight ethical concerns.
Fitzgerald has established Nick as the moral conscience, asking us to respond to him as if he could guide us to some insight about the limitations of ethical behaviors. We cannot, of course, know at this point how the narrative dynamics will play out; the formal features of the text might indicate at some later point that we should revise our initial assessment of our narrator.

Having thus established the motivation for the telling, Nick launches into his story. The object of Nick's critique, American capitalism and its production of an upper class bound by no ethical law, is present from the beginning. The signs have been well-documented: Nick's description of his "weatherbeaten cardboard bungalow at eighty a month . . . squeezed between two huge places that rented for twelve or fifteen thousand a season" (3-5); the introduction of first Tom and then Daisy, representatives of that capitalist class which the text targets: a cruel-bodied man, Tom's "freedom with money was a matter for reproach" (6); Daisy's "white girlhood" (20) and life "[h]igh in a white palace [as] the king's daughter, the golden girl" (120); her "indiscreet voice" that is "full of money" (120); Daisy and Jordan as "silver idols" (115); the Englishmen who court the "hungry and prosperous Americans . . . convinced that . . . easy money . . . was theirs for a few words in the right key" (42); Gatsby's corruption, "disapproved of . . . from beginning to end" (154); and the
final, harsh judgment of Tom and Daisy, "careless people . . . who smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money or their vast carelessness" (180). Complicit with the unreserved critique of capitalism, gold and silver imagery adorns Nick's descriptions. Nick certainly delivers what he promises: a story of transgressive behaviors. The enticing world Tom, Daisy, Jordan, and Gatsby inhabit in the beginning becomes the brutal killings and deflected responsibilities of the ending. The authorial audience's apprehension and condemnation of unethical individual behaviors lead to a critique of the larger social structures that create, condone, and reinforce these behaviors. Throughout all the tumultuous, tawdry, torrid action, the narrator's quiet, unassuming style keeps us intent on the primary narrative logic, concurring with both Nick's vision and his voice.

The formal structure of this critique of the corruption and immorality festering under the glittering surface of capitalism could easily be considered a Showpiece for Booth's Reliable Narrator Model. (And thus it might explain Booth's determination of Nick as "thoroughly reliable.") Nick presents facts with authority, and he speaks and acts in accordance with the implied author's norms. Note the two key assumptions that inform my assessment here: reliable narration is the default; without the presence of any formal indicators to
the contrary, we assume a continuity of authorial and narratorial voice, norms, and facts. The correspondence between implied author and narrator need not extend to the narrator's character, who can assume highly variable positions. At times, Nick's character behaves in a fashion that diverges from the norms he valorizes as narrator, i.e., his desire for the "golden armed Jordan," his enchantment with Gatsby's parties, and his preoccupation with Daisy's voice. This contradiction in no way detracts from Nick's narratorial reliability; rather, it affirms the homodiegetic narrator's unique position "within and without," both "enchanted and repelled" (36) by the lure of the American Dream and recognizing, later (and as a consequence of the story-events), the Nightmare lurking under its golden surface.

Nick's susceptibility to the seductive nature of the American Dream suggests that this myth attains an almost omnipotent position in our nationalist discourses, that no subject of the United States can fully escape its force. Who among us has not been subjected, in our earliest learnings, to the idea of the Nation (indivisible, with liberty and justice for all) where liberty and justice mean the possibility of success within capitalism? "Our" idea of "our nation" brings to my mind Cornelius Castoriadis's explanation of how the nation fills the "function of identification" through a "threefold imaginary reference to
a common history": the individual identifies with the common history of the nation, but this is imaginary in that (1) the history is sheer past; (2) it is not common; and (3) "what is known of it and what serves as the basis for this collectivizing identification in people's consciousnesses is largely mythical" (148). Functioning as "a wall in the field of the possible, separating the licit from the illicit" (Castoriadis 138), the American Dream legitimizes people like Daisy and Tom Buchanan, while criminalizing those like Gatsby who gain access to wealth through "illegal means." What Fitzgerald has Nick do— and do well—is demystify the Dream, showing the illicit in the legitimized, the legitimate in the criminal. The authorial audience, asked to accept Nick's and Fitzgerald's condemnation of the capitalist ideology underlying the American Dream is one that we who are reading this essay probably have little difficulty joining.10

If we could stop here, we could happily assess Nick as reliable and Fitzgerald as the model implied author. The generation, complication, and resolution of the major instabilities move the authorial reader toward sharing Fitzgerald's and Nick's condemnation of the moral bankruptcy associated with capitalism. A stable, ethically superior entity who leads the reader toward living a better life and who provides "the most successful reading . . . in which the created selves, author and reader, can find
complete agreement" (RoF 137-38), the Boothian implied author has a monologic quality as he constructs an imaginary world with coherent structures.

But of course we can't stop here.

III

"The reader's apprehension of a particular novel in its formal integrity, which may involve disunity as well as unity, cannot then help but include the novel's own point of entry, and its overall configuration of mutually constitutive social processes" (203). Julian Markels notes that while a reader brings a conceptual framework to the text (e.g., my rhetorical analysis of reliability above), the text has its own entry point that intersects with other social processes to form an autonomous and historicized whole. This whole, Markels argues, should take a primary role in our analyses; failure to address the whole (in both its unity and disunity) leads to hegemonic theories which favor genealogies that "stain the particular novel's sensuous variety into a bland puree of predictable reification" (205). Markels argues for a "ground of apprehension" within each novel that considers class, race, and gender not as "sites of origin" but as processes, interacting matrices that historicize both the literary text and the theoretical approach (205). Citing Resnick and Wolff, Markels asks how the "'nonclass aspects of the social totality function so as to overdetermine its class
aspect, and what dynamic is constituted by the mutual determination of both class and nonclass aspects?" (202-203). He answers this question in literary terms, retaining the New Critical insistence on the integrity of the whole text while opening up that text to the historically constituted processes of class, race, and gender. I share with Markels both an interest in those critical attempts that try to perceive the literary text on its own terms and a desire to reclaim "a human subject capable of agency and purpose," but where he seeks to offer Marxism as "an alternative to contemporary reification" that "rethink[s] humanism as it rethinks itself" (214), I'm more interested in looking at how the various processes of class, race, and gender dynamically intertwine, at the ways in which what seems peripheral intersects with the primary narrative logic, and then at how the meaning ascribed to this formal structure is historically constituted.

Markels proposes a model that looks at how the social processes of class, race, and gender function as interacting matrices within a primary narrative logic. I would like to supplement his model, which emphasizes thematics, with a greater consideration of how our expectations are formed and subsequently either realized or disappointed. I will continue to foreground the issue of reliability—not only because it categorically involves the affective responses of flesh-and-blood readers, but also
because questions of reliability often become more complex when they become caught up in racialized and gendered representations, complicating our emotional responses to characters, narrators, and implied authors. As we turn now to questions about race in Gatsby, we will need to grapple with an implied author who does not fit so neatly into Booth's model. Recognizing the limitations of Booth's legacy will, in turn, elucidate the relationship between the real, historically situated flesh-and-blood reader and the (also historical) textually inscribed structures of the authorial audience.

The initial conversation between Nick, Tom, Daisy, and Jordan links capitalism to racism. After sidestepping the issue of Daisy's bruised knuckle (more on that later), Nick confesses that the banter between the women makes him feel "uncivilized." Tom takes up Nick's remark "in an unexpected way," "violently" asserting that "[c]ivilization's going to pieces." Going on to refer to Goddard's The Rise of the Colored Empires, Tom exhibits the racist attitude that "if we don't look out the white race will be--will be utterly submerged." His belief in the superiority of Nordics, the "dominant race" which must "watch out or these other races will have control of things," elicits neither Nick-the-character's verbal support nor his dissent. However, Nick does conclude there is "something pathetic" in Tom, and, when departing, he feels "confused and a little disgusted,"
calling Tom's (and Goddard's) ideas "stale" (13-21).
Nick's explicit representation of his reactions here links Tom's "cruel body" with his cruel thoughts; we (the corrupted readers) are asked, or directed by Nick, to come to the same conclusion about Tom.

Having established Tom's diminished, condemnable belief system, Nick returns to it later. Tom confronts Gatsby and Daisy, saying, "'Nowadays people begin by sneering at family life and family institutions, and next they'll throw everything overboard and have intermarriage between black and white.'" Nick then comments, "Flushed with his impassioned gibberish, [Tom] saw himself standing alone on the last barrier of civilization . . . Angry as I was, as we all were, I was tempted to laugh whenever he opened his mouth. The transition from libertine to prig was so complete" (130-31). Tom's concerns about maintaining white privilege and prohibiting racial intermarriage reflect the traditional ideology of a patriarchal, capitalist society which depends for its privileges on an underclass of "others"—women, nonwhites. By placing the stale priggishness of a racist belief system in the mouth of the token capitalist Tom, Nick's critique gains credence. The consistency between the two scenes, as well as the correspondence between the explicitly antiracist ideology and the strong capitalist critique, accentuates an important intersection
between capitalism and racism, one which our American Dream tends to obscure. At this point, the implied author's norms, coherent and consistent, correspond. Nick's negative reactions to racist rhetoric increase his moral suasion as he both unmaskos and debunks racist injustice. The narrator's affinity with the implied author reinforces our already favorable appraisal of Fitzgerald as offering a gift that leads the reader to "ethical goodness."

However, our faith in Nick—and ultimately Fitzgerald—weakens when anti-Semitic and what Toni Morrison calls "Africanist" rhetoric infect Gatsby. Mrs. McKee's description of the "little kike" (34) does not elicit from our narrator the same type of negative response that Tom's priggishness did. Additionally, Nick describes Wolfsheim as a "small, flat-nosed Jew" with "tiny eyes" (70) and his assistant as a "lovely Jewess" with "black hostile eyes" (171). Compounding things, Nick's Africanism—the way that "nonwhite, Africanlike (or Africanist) presence or persona [are] constructed . . . [as] both a way of talking about and a way of policing matters of class, sexual license, and repressions, formations and exercises of power, and mediations on ethics and accountability" (Morrison 6-7)—is less obvious but just as insidious:

The city seen from the Queensboro Bridge is always the city seen for the first time, in its
first wild promise of all the mystery and the beauty in the world.

A dead man passed us in a hearse heaped with blooms, followed by two carriages with drawn blinds, and by more cheerful carriages for friends. The friends looked out at us with the tragic eyes and short upper lips of southeastern Europe, and I was glad that the sight of Gatsby's splendid car was included in their somber holiday. As we crossed Blackwell's Island a limousine passed us, driven by a white chauffeur, in which sat three modish negroes, two bucks and a girl. I laughed aloud as the yolks of their eyeballs rolled toward us in haughty rivalry.

'Anything can happen now that we've slid over this bridge,' I thought; 'anything at all . . .' Even Gatsby could happen, without any particular wonder. (69)

Here we have a symbolic situation in which the narrator makes allusions to several systems of thought. In a typical move, Nick's voice initially assumes the values of romantic discourse, but the juxtaposition of the second paragraph's realist description quickly dialogizes romantic ideology. The "wild promise" of the primal city is replaced by a "dead man . . . in a hearse" covered with flowers; the attractive surface hides the decomposing
corpse much as the American Dream covers up the rotten class system which produces the nation. So far, Nick's descriptions are in keeping with the larger critique of society. But the next image is of the "modish negroes," "two bucks and a girl," in a limo with a white chauffeur. In a country where this can happen, where "two bucks and a [black] girl" can accumulate material wealth and where whites are the servants, anything at all can happen—even Gatsby. Like Gatsby, then, who obtains his wealth illegitimately, black success represents the outer limits of the possible in our national formation. Nick's amusement here, his selfconscious word-choices, juxtaposition of scenes, imagery, and metonymic substitutions, do a good job of veiling the racism, but it is there, subtly undermining the more explicit norms.

Reliability again becomes an important issue. Does Fitzgerald share the belief system Nick's aesthetics imply, or does the implied author somehow contain Nick's artistic choices, using the techniques associated with selfconscious discourse as a method of undermining Nick's reliability? If we could ascertain that Fitzgerald here intends Nick to become an object of critique, then the mixed dynamics associated with racism would present no problem—we'd simply deem Nick unreliable, case closed. Two things compel me toward judging Nick unreliable: the lack of correlation itself and my own unwillingness to accept the
implications of the narrator's values. However, neither the contradictory rhetoric nor the offensiveness of the racist undertones provides sufficient grounds for finding Nick unreliable. While such moments in the text do make us question Nick's reliability, the most we can ultimately do, I think, is question, for nothing convincingly indicates a divergence between implied author and narrator: Nick's voice seems in accord with Fitzgerald's; nothing suggests that the facts are misrepresented. My temptation to judge Nick unreliable here stems from a distance between my norms as flesh-and-blood reader and the racism associated with both Nick and Fitzgerald in these scenes.

The dynamics associated with the formal features of the Queensboro bridge scene foregrounds one of the most crucial aspects of reliability: reliability is a continuity of norms, values, and beliefs between the implied author, narrator, and authorial audience. The flesh-and-blood reader, as a member of the authorial audience, is asked to respond a particular way in keeping with this rhetorical relationship, but may or may not actually do so. My point is that a reader's failure to accept the ethical position of the authorial audience does not need to indicate narratorial unreliability. Distinguishing the rhetorical relation between implied author, narrator, and authorial audience from that between authorial audience and flesh-and-blood reader is important,
important because it keeps readers—who are exceedingly
different from each other—from simply judging the narrator
who doesn't share their norms as unreliable. The rhetoric
of the text implies an authorial audience who shares with
Nick and with Fitzgerald the position of espousing
explicitly antiracist rhetoric while implicitly sustaining
racism through anti-Semitic and Africanist perspectives.
Within the boundaries of the Boothian model, where a
monologic implied author constructs an imaginary world with
coherent structures, the contradiction here indicates
textual recalcitrance. We have two traditional methods for
dealing with such seemingly unresolvable disparities:
first, we might reject Fitzgerald's text because it places
us, as members of the authorial audience, in an ethical
position we, as flesh-and-blood humans, don't want to
occupy; second, we might overlook the racist implications
in favor of the more overt antiracist strains.

Each of these strategies has, to me, unacceptable
consequences. If we blame the implied author for "an
accidental conflict between a narrator and what is implied
by the rest of the tale," ultimately deciding that the
implied author has "botched" the job (CU 270), then we all
but throw the baby out with the bathwater, peremptorily
dismissing the beneficial consequences associated with
Gatsby's critique in lieu of the negative import that the
racism requires us to adopt (at least during the reading of

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the text). But I think Booth would agree with me here that while Fitzgerald has botched the job locally, we do not have a global contradiction. More importantly, this type of unequivocal rejection leads to untenable consequences when we think of it on a larger scale. As a general model for ethical reading, it encourages all readers to resist all texts that incorporate any belief system which they—the readers—find unfamiliar, uncomfortable, morally suspect, or contradictory. We might want this to happen in some reading experiences (Booth's example of Jaws makes sense to me), but do we want our students to resist, say, Jeanette Winterson's Written on the Body or Toni Morrison's Beloved because the texts ask them to adopt ethical positions that they might find uncomfortable?

The second solution, to dismiss the anti-Semitism and Africanism because it has little direct bearing on the larger progression, leads to great risk and great loss: risk of perpetuating racist structures; loss of our flesh-and-blood responses. Furthermore, issues of race, while peripheral, do connect to the primary narrative line which critiques capitalist ideology. Glossing the contradictory norms of Gatsby unacceptably erases the tension that the reading experience creates, privileging the dominant voice of a stable trajectory.

Perhaps, then, we are left with what Phelan calls "the stubborn"—unyielding textual recalcitrance (as opposed to
"the difficult," which "yields to our explanatory efforts"). When confronted with textual recalcitrance, Phelan argues, we follow the implied author's lead to find, within the formal features of the text, some "positive role, some functionality" for the confusion (Narrative as Rhetoric 178-79). You can feel the influence of the Boothian implied author on Phelan's categories as he works with Toni Morrison's Beloved: it is Morrison's lead that provides solutions which have a positive function, adding to the ethical import of the reading experience. Thus we need only to find the right combination, the combination Fitzgerald intends us to find (if we're good enough readers) and move what seems stubborn into the difficult, or, alternatively, accept the indeterminacies as the stubborn, as part of the stable author's larger project.

The situation in Gatsby differs significantly from the one Phelan describes when reading Beloved in that when reading Gatsby, we cannot assign a positive purpose for the confusion, a purpose in keeping with the "implied author's" intention. Gatsby's recalcitrance exemplifies neither the difficult nor the stubborn as Phelan delineates them: the former requires intratextual coherence for resolution, the latter an unyielding contradiction. It seems unlikely that Fitzgerald had some "positive intentionality" behind the contradictory norms. The dynamics of Nick's narration lead to a situation that our traditional models cannot really
account for, suggesting that we have run up against the
limits of the monologic implied author.

Harry Shaw reminds us to "remain aware that our terms,
as a necessary condition for their having any usefulness at
all, must leave some areas out of focus," that "certain
tools are useful for some purposes, but not for others"
(289-90). I want to suggest a rhetoric of the implied
author that goes beyond seeing him or her as a textual
structure, as the force from whom originates the thematic
and ethical touchstones offered to the flesh-and-blood
reader through the mediating structure we call the
authorial audience; I want to consider the idea of a
dialogic implied author, multiple and fluid in his or her
own identities, reflecting and acting within, and even
upon, an historical and literary era.13

The recalcitrance in Gatsby not only resembles similar
moments in other Fitzgerald narratives,14 but also occurs
repeatedly in literary works by other modernists such as
Faulkner and Conrad. The overtly antiracist rhetoric in,
say, Absalom, Absalom! and Heart of Darkness coexists with
covertly racist representations. While those interested in
historicism could flesh out the specific dynamics within
the cultural context further than I will attempt here, even
these brief examples ask us to recognize an historical
tension that characterizes the time. These literary
documents, the products of the fictionalizing acts of real,
white, male authors, are clearly marked by an attempt to move out of—and to move readers out of—racist ways of thinking, discourse patterns that had, up to this point, defined America. Yet in attempting to challenge old norms, these authors remained dialogically caught up in them, historically constrained in ways that many writers and readers today are not. (We today are constrained in other ways, and future generations will be sure to point them out.) By considering the possible dialogicity of an implied author, we are able to view a moment in our history in which human agents, through their actions and their language, do not passively "discover" antiracist discourse and thought, but are engaged in an active struggle with that discourse as they attempt, through new literary forms and norms, to replace it. Castoriadis tells us that it is "absurd" to believe that, whenever a "rule" is set down, the consequences will be coherent with other rules and/or with the ends that are consciously or objectively sought. Such coherencies, he says, rely on some sort of Hegelian "absolute Spirit" presiding over the birth of the modification of every institution (122). In the absence of such "absolute Spirit," I would suggest that Gatsby shows us how the active constitutions of new belief systems retain patterns from the old. The dialogic implied author becomes more than just a textual function. Closely linked with the flesh-and-blood author, s/he has political agency
and ethical responsibility as s/he participates in the slow processes of structural change.

One of the more important consequences of entertaining the notion of a dialogic implied author is that it pushes us to evaluate the relationship between the flesh-and-blood reader and authorial audience. In "Midrash and Mashal," David Richter claims that if the ideological dimension "of a given passage is unacceptable as a social text to the historical reader, the passage will have to be reinscribed until it becomes readable" (259). Note first that Richter designates the "historical" reader, not the authorial audience. My attempts to reinscribe the Queensboro bridge passage point both to the fact that resolving recalcitrance requires us first to look at it in terms of the historical situatedness of the reader and, secondly, to perhaps accept it neither as part of the intentionality of the text nor as something to be explained away. My theoretical approach, my concerns about textual integrity, and my worries about reaffirming racism and risking my own political agency as a reader, highlight the intersection between this flesh-and-blood reader and the authorial audience.15

In other words, I believe that my response is very much conditioned by my historical situatedness: the "informed reader" of academia (which I suspect is each of you reading this dissertation) has been well conditioned to look for the various isms which have become so integral to
our critical discourse. This is a good thing: these processes—race, class, gender, sexuality—have a mutually constitutive history and need close analysis. But both the necessity and the ability to take such matters into account, and the way that a text holds up under such scrutiny, is itself historically determined.

Interpretations written in the first several decades after *Gatsby* was published suggest that readers did not respond to—did not even notice—the Africanism the way I do here. (The same goes for the novels of Faulkner and Conrad.) Acknowledging the influences of culture on reader response allows us to see how, although the "corrupted reader" of the text formally occupies the exact same position in 1996 as in 1926, the meaning given that position by the flesh-and-blood reader is historically and culturally determined.

In other words, while the authorial audience can be seen as a construct that embodies the same stable formal characteristics over time, the emphasis given to different elements of the structure is highly unstable, influenced by the unique position of the flesh-and-blood reader.¹⁶

The space where the authorial audience and flesh-and-blood reader intersect is ambiguous, difficult to explore, impossible to stabilize (even, perhaps, in an individual reading). But it is at this place that the real and the unreal—of both text and reader—are formed. This interstice might thus be understood in terms of what Judith
Butler, Jean Laplance, and J. B. Pontalis call a phantasmatic: that which, by comprising the outside of the unreal, constitutes the inside of the real. While I will take up the idea of the phantasmatic more fully in Chapter 4, here, I want to introduce it as a way of thinking about specific relationships between authors, texts, and readers.

Laplanche and Pontalis define the phantasmatic as that which makes up an individual's psychical reality, "phantasy structures [that] seek to express themselves, to find a way out into consciousness and action" (317). The phantasmatic is not a "thing," but a structuring action, an activity that orders the objects and events we take to be real. Moreover, the phantasmatic structures both our emotional expectations and responses to that reality and the process of identification by which a person's identity is constituted as real. The phantasmatic, an action, takes all the sensory data, internal and external, conscious or unconscious, and structures it, creates order from disorder and thus distinguishes what we take to be "real" from the "unreal."

Butler focuses on how phantasmatic identifications of gender and sexuality constitute the gendered, sexualized "reality" of the individual. Gender is not something assumed by an already formed subject, but the staging and dispersion of the subject into an identificatory position, one "policed" by heterosexist norms. Rather than
identification being figured as an accomplishment, Butler's sense of identification as a phantasmatic sees identifications as "never fully and finally made" but "incessantly reconstituted" as the repeated stagings of alignment and loyalty (Bodies That Matter 105). While Laplanche and Pontalis deal primarily with individual psychology and the formation of desire through the phantasmatic, and while Butler sees political efficacy in the incoherence of identity, I wish to consider the rhetorical relationship between authorial audience and flesh-and-blood reader in terms of a phantasmatic to help explain how a text is shaped and ordered for and by an individual reader.¹⁸

The place where the flesh-and-blood reader--multiple, fluid, ever-changing--meets the authorial audience is where the text, the flesh-and-blood reader's experience of the text, and the flesh-and-blood reader's own identity are simultaneously revealed and constituted through the repeated staging of (dis)identifications. The space where flesh-and-blood reader meets authorial reader functions phantasmatically in that it orders the "reality" of the text, our emotional responses to that reality, and the structure of our identities. In reading experiences where the authorial audience's beliefs follow those of a dialogic implied author, the role of the flesh-and-blood reader becomes increasingly significant. We find ourselves, in
attempting to become members of the authorial audience, caught in uncomfortable contradictory positions. But these difficult reading experiences require us to negotiate carefully both the text and our own processes of identification. Through the staging of identifications and disidentifications, reading stabilizes the text, our responses to it, and our own identities, but only temporarily—rereading, aging, life experiences, and so on will all function to destabilize each prior reality. Our actions as reading readers, writing writers, and teaching teachers in response to the implied author's dialogicity function both to reflect and to alter our identities, strengthening our agency.

To recapitulate: The traditional Boothian implied author is useful for most considerations of reliability and for a fairly coherent reading experience. Booth's categories allow us to make valuable decisions about the relationship between implied author and homodiegetic narrator; the degree of closeness or the amount of distance, in turn, enables us to determine the values and beliefs that the text valorizes. Yet the monologic nature of Booth's implied author may prevent us from fully understanding and appreciating the dynamics of the narrative discourse, as we are required either to relate textual recalcitrance to authorial intention (and thus resolve it); or to too-
quickly dismiss the global because of local inconsistency; or to gloss the local to accentuate the global. The concept of the dialogic implied author is one way to enhance our interpretive efforts in significant ways. But removing the rather strict boundaries that monologism imposes on a text's ethical trajectory does not require that the latter category should replace the former. Rather, it seems that interpretation might be enhanced when we attempt to account for both the monologic and dialogic forces in any text.

With the increased sense of the interconnectedness of ethical responsibility the dialogic implied author embodies, we can visualize the relationship of flesh-and-blood author to her fictionalized self as one that grants the constraints of history and positionality yet simultaneously asks us to acknowledge that the flesh-and-blood reader, similarly constrained, plays an important role in giving emphasis to the specific dynamics of that relationship. One of the consequences of recognizing interconnections and constraints, however, is that we can all too easily move to a view of the author as nothing more than a diminished product of social forces, a being without agency and thus without any ethical responsibility at all. "Fitzgerald is a product of his times; it's not his fault; he's not responsible but language/discursive networks/social institutions are." I wish to avoid at all
costs statements like these, and have attempted to
circumvent this trap by making Fitzgerald's aesthetic
choices the source of the ethical tension that the reader
realizes through the act of reading. Further, I do not
desire to explain away the inconsistencies; rather, I want
to incorporate them into our critical methodology. To do
so, I think it important that we look at those formal
features that jar us not in isolation, not simply in
relation to our own values, but in relation to other formal
features (both similar and dissimilar), the larger
narrative progression, and the historical times of
production and reception. I want to acknowledge a more
important role for the reader in negotiating, ordering, and
assuming ethical responsibility for a literary work than
our more traditional models encourage, but I do not want to
remove the author from, in Booth's language, the realm of
ethical culpability. By entering and living in another
world, we accept (at least for a while) the values of that
world. The trying on of different ethical identities has
the potential to shape us, for better and for worse.

To demonstrate my concerns about the dialogic implied
author slipping too easily into a kind of relativism which
will render the category useless, I will turn now toward
looking at how gender intersects with class in The Great
Gatsby, and at how the relationship between these processes
affects our apprehension of the whole. Many feminist
critics have looked at the way that gender plays out in this class critique; my task here differs from theirs in that I want to consider the relationship between these two processes in terms of other narratological concerns, specifically narratorial reliability, authorial responsibility, and reader accountability.

Let's begin by looking at the style in which Nick-the-narrator describes what Nick-the-character sees upon entering the Buchanan home. Reminding me eerily of Miles Coverdale's descriptions of Zenobia and Priscilla in Hawthorne's *The Blithedale Romance*, Nick recounts that Daisy and Jordan were both in white and their dresses were rippling and fluttering as if they had just been blown back in after a short flight around the house. I must have stood for a few moments listening to the whip and snap of the curtains and the groan of a picture on the wall. (8)

The romantic-gothic view of women here sets the patriarchal tone for the entire narrative. Women are "golden girls" who nurture a male "romantic imagination" (Fetterley); or, as Tyson puts it, "commodities," objects of exchange; or--in Kerr's words--"emotionally weak," "lavishly sentimental and tasteless." Thus Daisy's "white girlhood" has given her a life "[h]igh in a white palace [as] the king's daughter, the golden girl," a "silver idol" whose voice is
"full of money." Nick not only adopts this romanticized ideal of women, he also seems to accept the hostility toward women this romanticization conceals, making no comment about Daisy's bruised knuckle, although Daisy herself faults the "great, big, hulking" brutish Tom. How conveniently Nick adopts the voice of the objective reporter, "inclined to reserve all judgments," when dealing with Tom's abuse here and later, when Nick informs us with equanimity of Tom's hitting Myrtle. While Tom's freedom with money is "a matter for reproach," while Tom's cruelly racist thinking is disgusting and pathetic, Tom's freedom with his fists elicits no condemnation.

While the homodiegetic reporting tells us enough about Nick to charge him with chauvinism at best, the more autodiegetic moments in the narrative reveal him to be quite sexist. Perhaps the most autodiegetic moment occurs in the third chapter, during the break in the narrative frame. Nick switches to the present-tense:

Reading over what I have written so far, I see I have given the impression that the events of three nights several weeks apart were all that absorbed me. On the contrary, they were merely casual events in a crowded summer, and, until much later, they absorbed me infinitely less than my personal affairs. (56)
We then get a summary of those "personal affairs." First, there's the woman back home with whom he must break things off if he's to date Jordan—he's been "writing letters once a week and signing them: 'Love, Nick.'" Second, there's the "girl who lived in Jersey City" with whom he has a brief affair and then lets it "blow quietly away." Third, Nick describes how he spends his time lurking around the streets of New York, fantasizing about "romantic women from the crowd," trailing them to their homes. Finally, our narrator, after telling us about Jordan's tendency toward cheating and lying, calmly states that "[d]ishonesty in a woman is a thing you never blame deeply--I was casually sorry, and then I forgot" (57-59). Dishonesty is--not dishonesty was. The past-tense verb would indicate that the belief was one that Nick held at the time of the story, allowing for the possibility of Nick's revising his opinion during the progression. The present-tense closes down that potential, characterizing Nick as narrator as well as character. The way this segment closes further pits female dishonesty against male virtue: "Everyone suspects himself of at least one of the cardinal virtues, and this is mine: I am one of the few honest people I have ever known" (60).

It should come as no surprise that many have used this autodiegetic segment as a cornerstone in building a case against Nick's reliability. The dynamics certainly lend themselves well to the possibility of narratorial
unreliability. First, the sequence of questionable events, all revolving around Nick's relationship with women, makes me wonder if Fitzgerald deliberately reveals more about Nick than Nick can recognize about himself. Secondly, there's the affective response created by Nick's honesty claim. These types of honesty claims occur almost exclusively in selfconscious homodiegesis, foregrounding an important and unique characteristic of this type of narration. When a selfconscious homodiegetic narrator asserts his own honesty, an implied reader responds by questioning the narrator's honesty. Whether or not the narrator actually turns out to be truthful remains to be seen, but when we begin to wonder about the narrator's truthfulness, we often begin to wonder about his reliability. And, once we suspect the possibility of unreliability, it is easy to find it right down the line, as Booth and others have already noted. 22

But, as Lanser reminds us, honesty, reliability, and self-awareness can function independently of each other. Indeed, Nick seems quite unaware of the meanings that might be attributed to his behaviors in the story and of his sexist rhetoric—but he is honest enough in his presentation of the narrative facts, including those facts which lead us to question his worldview. 23 And although we might not like the import of what he tells us about his behavior or the values associated with his word-choices,
the rhetorical relation between Nick and Fitzgerald is not conclusively one of discord. Try as I might—and I do so like to have things work out neatly—there just isn't enough evidence to find Nick unreliable. The sexism here, like the anti-Semitism and Africanism I mentioned earlier, originates with the implied author. Once again, the dynamics of the narrative discourse offer authorial audience positions that many of us will find uncomfortable. Can we say here, as we said before, that Fitzgerald's sexism is a result of his historical time and thus indicative of the dialogic nature of the implied author?

Well, yes and no. There is of course an historical dimension to the sexism (once again I refer you to Faulkner and Conrad). But the sexist rhetoric differs from the racist in two significant ways. First, the sexism remains consistent throughout *Gatsby*, in virtually all passages that deal with women, while the tacit Africanism is dialogized with an explicitly antiracist strain. Here we do not have a case of dialogic forces surrounding the birth of the modification of some institution. From his most homodiegetic to his most autodiegetic moment, from Daisy to Jordan to Myrtle, from story-time to time of the discourse, in both vision and voice, Nick consistently, and in accord with Fitzgerald, reaffirms patriarchal ideology. Could we then say that Fitzgerald is unreliable? How would we define an unreliable implied author? "An implied author is
unreliable when she or he does not speak or act in accordance with the norms of the work." That doesn't make sense, for the norms of the work are the implied author's norms, whether ethically sound or not.

The second major difference between the dynamics associated with sexism and those relating to racism is that, while the inconsistency between antiracist and Africanist rhetoric did not significantly affect the ethical coherence of the larger progression, Fitzgerald's and Nick's sexism disrupts the narrative logic. Let's not forget what the book is about: it's about the potential of each individual to achieve the American Dream and the way class privilege limits that possibility. It's about the boundaries of conduct, the limits of tolerance. The Great Gatsby tells the story of all those Gatsbys who have "heightened sensitivity to the promises of life . . . an extraordinary gift for hope," but who are preyed on by the foul dust of capitalism (1). The Great Gatsby tells the story of all those Toms and Daisys who have the power and the privilege but are morally bankrupt: "careless people . . . they smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money or their vast carelessness" (180). The evidence Nick presents provides sufficient grounds for our indicting the Buchanans of the world. But Nick's and Fitzgerald's sexism severely circumscribes the overarching logic of the narrative.
It's not just my own resistance to sexism that operates here—although that would, I think, be grounds for entertaining serious reservations about *Gatsby*, much like Booth does with Rabelais. No, more than that is going on: the sexism actually infects the narrative progression to such an extent that we are left with an incoherent implied author. Fitzgerald has, from the very beginning, created specific expectations for Nick's narration. Fitzgerald has established Nick as the moral conscience, the one who can be trusted in both his vision and his voice; Nick's tale will expose and condemn transgressive behavior. The sequence of events—from Daisy and Gatsby's reunion and affair to Daisy's killing of Myrtle, from her failure to come forward to the consequential deaths of Gatsby and Wilson—lead us to conclude, both logically and emotionally, that Daisy's refusal to assume responsibility for Myrtle's death prompts Nick's narration. Her collusion with Tom, as they sit at the kitchen table, links them as the objects of Nick's scorn, but Daisy's act, and subsequent failure to act, gives her the brunt of the blame. Yet at the same time, Nick (and Fitzgerald) refuse to acknowledge women as agents capable of assuming responsibility for their own actions. Dishonesty in women is not to be blamed deeply, right?

In addition to the fact that we are explicitly asked to accept the sexist premise that women are incapable of
agency, the text implicitly represents Daisy as Tom's "possession." As Fetterley puts it, women are "symbolic of the power of moneyed men" (83); or, in Tyson's wonderful words, women are "commodities in a male-dominated market" with no control over the meaning of their "sign-exchange value" (50). On the one hand, then, the text asks us to respond to Daisy as no more than a commodity, as an object which, like any nonhuman object, cannot be held responsible for its actions; on the other hand, the text asks us to hold her—and primarily her—accountable. Desiring to expose the injustices of an economic system which enables those at the top echelon to use their material possessions as a way of circumventing ethical accountability, Nick Carraway and F. Scott Fitzgerald perpetuate capitalism's insistence on the commodification, exchange, and victimization of women. We have no local contradiction here, but a global incoherency which seriously detracts from the effectiveness of the narrative. Seen in this vein, *The Great Gatsby* exemplifies what I would like to call a dispossessed narrative, a text which does not possess a coherent implied author.

VI

In many narratives, discovering the degree of reliability between the implied author and narrator leads us to a monologic implied author, one whose beliefs remain consistent and coherent. When we do have local
inconsistencies, if we see them as a result of dialogic tension, then they need not create obstacles to accepting the text on its own terms; they might function to make the reader actively negotiate his or her own ethical position. But for narratives which do not possess a coherent implied author—"dispossessed" texts—the primary narrative line falls apart because of one or more incoherencies. In these reading experiences, the reader assumes an even more active role in the rhetorical transaction.

Reader accountability in dispossessed texts differs from what Barthes calls a "writerly" text, or from the roles of readers in metafiction, as outlined by Hutcheon, McHale, and others. Barthes's writerly text asserts the very existence of plurality, requiring us to minimalise the discovery of an Author who explains the text's meaning and to embrace a multiplicitly of narrative structures and logics; the dispossessed text, I want to argue, is dispossessed because of the contradictions within the very present implied author's narrative structure or logic. In Hutcheon's model, the reader—a "function in the text . . . a diegetic identity" (139)—is unsettled by the text disrupting the comfortable habits of reading; in a model of the dispossessed text, the text does not deliberately set out to destabilize the reader's role. McHale's postmoderism is characterized by the problem of the relation between fictional artifices and imitations of
reality, the resistance and subversion of reader's efforts to make sense of the text in traditional ways; a dispossessed text, conversely, does not necessarily foreground these reading conventions.

If the dispossessed text is not—or not only—a writerly text, it is certainly not "readerly," either in the classic sense Barthes means or in the specular fashion of Chamber's model, which assumes readability by "virtue of [the text's] coherence . . . of the fact that it has parts that can be perceived as similar to one another" (28). While the readerly text privileges the author's role in creating a world of consistent values, the dispossessed text requires that the reader shape her own truths as well as her own stories.

Reading *Gatsby* illuminates the dangers of reading. Both the insidious ways that the text perpetuates inequality while critiquing it and the protean characteristics of the implied Fitzgerald and Nick Carraway suggest that we need to be careful, even diligent, in our judgments about both the narrator and the implied author, and that we resist the temptation to adjudicate all textual recalcitrance into a unified whole. Narrative categories—the implied author, authorial audience, reliability—are never free from historical and political concerns. The movement in the 1960s toward reconciling ambiguity and difference into coherence and unity reflected a larger
political concern to make literature available to people from different backgrounds, different classes. The 1990's reader can still benefit, I think, from attempting to grasp the literary text on its own terms, but we today tend to value contradictions and incoherencies in a way that our rhetorical and structural predecessors did not. What I find so compelling about the shift from interest in the unity of the text to preoccupation with the flesh-and-blood reader's identity processes—logical, emotive, and ethical—is that both wish to accomplish the same thing: both reflect a desire to empower the disempowered.
1. For more on the Aristotelian basis for Booth's thought, see Barbara Foley, Walter Jost, and Monica Johnstone.

2. The dramatized narrator may be either a "mere observer" or a "narrator-agent . . . who produce[s] some measurable effect on the course of events" (RoF 153-54). In Gérard Genette's terms, of those who have an effect on the events, there are two types, the autodiegetic—the heroine of her own story, such as Jane Eyre—or the homodiegetic, who tells the story of another (Narrative Discourse 244-45). Interestingly, those critics who tend to find Nick most unreliable emphasize his autodiegetic functions, while those who find him reliable consider him a homodiegetic narrator. Part of my undertaking here will be to flesh out more fully the relationships between auto- and homodiegesis and Nick's reliability.

3. James Phelan refines Booth's terms in "Reexamining Reliability," noting that unreliability takes one of two forms: 1) a tension between the implied author and the narrator in terms of narrative facts; or 2) a tension between the implied author and narrator in terms of ethical norms or values (chapter 5, Narrative as Rhetoric). Susan Lanser, considering issues of reliability as "status" concerns, moves in the right direction when she suggests that status issues need to be considered along a continuum; "a narrator," she writes, "can also be 'developing,' that is, can change status through the course of a text" (The Narrative Act 172).

4. Whether we prefer Chatman's "aesthetic principle" that "invents the narrator," or Rimmon-Kenan's "inferred" author, or Bal's or Lanser's preference for the historical author, or even a subjectivist perspective like Bleich's, which would define reliability as "an expression of, and declaration of, self in a local context reflecting a set of local choices, motives, and interests in knowledge" ("Epistemological Assumptions" 158),--whatever our preference, once we discover a space between authorial and narratorial norms we enter the realm of unreliability and hence the realm of ethics.

5. Authorial audience, implied audience, and implied reader are terms I use interchangeably.

6. Owl Eyes, the jokes about the butler's nose, and Nick's relationship with Jordan Baker illustrate what Phelan calls the Principle of Indirect Affective Relevance: they contribute to the narrative progression without directly
affecting the outcome of the main action. For more on the Principle of Indirect Affective Relevance, see Phelan, Reading People, Reading Plots. For analyses of the relevance of Owl Eyes, see Warren Bennet, Riley Hampton, and David Savage. Those interested in the butler’s nose might enjoy Ernest Lockridge’s essay. Judith Petterly’s chapter on Gatsby in The Resisting Reader, and essays by Lois Tyson and Elizabeth Kerr, all discuss the Nick/Jordan relationship.

7. Because Nick is a selfconscious narrator, we credit him for the imagery, the metaphors, the style, and the choice of story-events.

8. This may seem like stating the obvious, as Booth, Phelan, Rabinowitz, and Lanser all note that determinations of unreliability require the presence of some structural-rhetorical device that makes us question the homodiegetic narrator. I repeat it only because other formal inconsistencies may lead us to misapply the category, as I will take up later.

9. See Phelan, Narrative as Rhetoric, Chapter 5.

10. We (superior readers that we are!) may not have difficulty joining Fitzgerald’s authorial audience, but do you remember the first time, or even the second time, that you read Gatsby? Or (if you can’t remember that) can you remember the responses of some of your students who, once they have comprehended the "extractable meanings" and the "moral and emotional content" of the literary text, either experience a significant alteration in their own worldview or vehemently resist Fitzgerald? Not all flesh-and-blood readers easily embrace the ethical worldview that the implied author offers. While resistance can occur for many reasons, in Gatsby’s case I think it follows from the overdetermined force of that which Fitzgerald critiques, the American Dream. To join the authorial audience, the American Dream must be accepted as no more than mere myth, a story told by a nation to a nation in order to produce and sustain inequality and injustice for all, rather than the equality and justice it purports. Not all readers can, or will, accept Gatsby’s moral condemnation of our economic base.


12. In The Company We Keep, Booth discusses seven ethical dimensions; the fifth—tight coherence/explosive disunity—is especially applicable. It is not that the text needs to be fully consistent, offering no gaps at all: what Booth
privileges is the scale of internal harmony, the consistency within the text. As long as the gaps and contradictions (for the most part) are in harmony with the text's intention, we have—so Booth claims—a superior offer of friendship.

13. Booth of course embraces dialogism in his discussion of Rabelais (CWK Chapter 12); Bialostosky provides a nice analysis of the relationship between Booth and Bakhtin.

14. See Jeffrey Meyer's biography of Fitzgerald. These contradictions are repeated in many of his other texts, most notably perhaps in the character Dick Divers.

15. Booth addresses similar concerns in his chapter on Rabelais in The Company We Keep. His discussion differs from mine primarily in that turning to the historical dimension ("historical relativism") proves relatively unuseful for Booth, whereas I have found it—in this instance at least—quite illuminating. But see part V below.

16. My discussion of how a "historical moment" situates the flesh-and-blood reader in relation to the authorial audience glosses the substantial differences that might exist between flesh-and-blood readers within any one historical moment. I don't have to push very hard to ask you to conceive of a flesh-and-blood reader of Gatsby who would not respond to the racism in the way I have outlined. I would hope that my model invites alternative relationships between flesh-and-blood and authorial readers.

17. Butler, Laplanche, and Pontalis understand the "real"—those events and things we attribute to an ontological "reality"—to be a variable construction determined largely through its relation to its "constitutive outside": the unreal, the unthinkable, fantasy. This definition differs from that of other theorists such as Jacques Lacan and Slavoj Zizek, for whom the "real" is that which is unknowable, unthinkable, outside the symbolic world in which we live (Butler's and Laplanche and Pontalis's "real" is similar to Lacan's symbolic). See Butler, "The Force of Fantasy" and Bodies That Matter, especially chapter 3; Laplanche and Pontalis's The Language of Psychoanalysis; Lacan's "The topic of the imaginary"; and Zizek, Looking Awry, 1-47.

18. Butler, and Laplance and Pontalis differ from subjectivist critics like Norman Holland, David Bleich, and Michael Steig in that Holland, Bleich, and Steig see an integrated, stable reader forcing her personality onto the...
structures of the text without accounting for the way the text might shape the reader's identity. See Holland's "Unity Identity Text Self," Bleich's Subjective Criticism, and Steig's Stories of Reading.

19. Wolfgang Iser, in The Act of Reading, talks of the relationship between text and reader in similar terms. I differ from Iser primarily in my recognition of greater divergences among readers and thus the variety of "accepted reading procedures."

20. Martha Nussbaum's Love's Knowledge offers compelling evidence of the force literature has on our ethical development.

21. See especially Judith Fetterley's The Resisting Reader (Chapter 3), Lois Tyson's Psychological Politics of the American Dream (Chapter 2), and Elizabeth Kerr's "Feeling 'Half Feminine.'" My own understandings of the role of gender overlaps with each of these critics in many ways and, while I do have some minor disagreements with each, my interpretations have been tremendously enriched by these three fine accounts.

22. See especially Ernest Lockridge's wonderful interpretation of Nick's unreliability.

23. Phelan convincingly argues that even the paralepsis that occurs when Nick recounts the events that took place in Wilson's garage--narrative facts which Nick cannot know first hand--need not be seen as indicating unreliability, but rather as increasing the authoritativeness of the narration. See Narrative as Rhetoric, Chapter 5.
CHAPTER 2

RELATIONAL RECONSIDERATIONS: RELIABILITY, HETEROSEXUALITY, AND NARRATIVE AUTHORITY IN VILLETTE

I often find it difficult to talk or write about the ways in which a good novel impacts me, to explain my joy, my sorrow, my compassion and my passion. Sometimes, when I'm teaching, I try to articulate these emotions, and I see myself through the students' odd gazes: eyes flashing, arms flailing—a madwoman pacing the boundaries of the third floor classroom. What is it in the company I keep that produces such responses? (And what is it in the company my students keep that produces those looks of tolerant bemusement?)

Charlotte Brontë's Villette has touched my life in inexplicable ways. I read it first as a graduating senior in college, under the tutelage of Bernard Duyfhuizen. In fact, Villette assumes a rather symbolic position: the last novel Duffy assigned that semester, Brontë's final novel was the last literary narrative of my undergraduate program. Duffy asked me a question about Villette during the final oral examination—a question about the ending—and, as I concluded my answer, I began to cry. Lucy Snowe
had touched me, had become more than a character. She had borne me into the past, taken me to a foreign place, and the sadness I felt then at the loss of Lucy's company was augmented by my knowledge of Brontë's own premature death shortly after completing Villette. Looking back now, I can see how the sense of loss the novel generates was compounded by the atmosphere of uncertainty and change marking my personal life at the time, but my rereadings of Villette over the years have not altered my initial impressions. Villette engulfs me, and I cannot hear the narrative's voice without loving Lucy, without loving Brontë, and without . . . without passion.

In the late 1980s, when Duffy assigned Brontë's novel, I was feeling out my roles as feminist and as narratologist. Although women like Susan Lanser and Robyn Warhol were doing some groundbreaking work in feminist narratology at the time, I was blissfully unaware of the difficult relations between the two fields. Indeed, I then believed—as I still do, only now in a different way—in using structural and rhetorical categories as the building blocks for feminist analyses.¹ My efforts as an undergraduate reflect, to some extent, the social milieu of the time. When I read now the corpus of feminist criticism written about Villette during the 1980s, I am amazed at the concentration of narratological interest meeting feminist goals.
My discussion of *Gatsby* in Chapter 1 represents one way in which feminism and narrative theories can be mutually illuminating. As I turn now to a discussion of *Villette*, I am again interested in the relationship between history and interpretation, but here the larger preoccupation is with the way a historical moment intersects with what Stanley Fish calls an interpretive community, a community

made up of those who share interpretive strategies not for reading (in the conventional sense) but for writing texts, for constituting their properties and assigning their intentions. In other words, these strategies exist prior to the act of reading and therefore determine the shape of what is read rather than, as is usually assumed, the other way around. (171)

Many of the analyses of *Villette* written during the 1980s demonstrate the meeting of two interpretive communities, two theoretical paradigms—feminist and narrative—in a specific historical moment, and thus offer an insightful view of how meaning is produced via, or how a text's ideology and ethics are seen through, the historically-filtered lens of, interpretive communities. In the case of *Villette*, the intersections of the two communities fail to adequately account for the textual dynamics, suggesting weaknesses in either the feminist model, the rhetorical
model, or both. My own reading of Brontë's novel, which retains the feminist goals of empowering women as authors, characters, and readers, adopts the strategies of a transnational feminist politics. While I do not pretend to present here a final, irrefutable interpretation, I do suggest that the lens I have chosen leads to more tenable results, and significantly impacts the ways in which we might think about the categories of narrative theory.

With *Gatsby*, I wanted to open up the categories of narrative theory, modifying and extending them in ways that continue the work of Wayne C. Booth, Susan Snaider Lanser, and James Phelan, relying on the resilience of our rhetorical-structural methodologies. Here, I will first look at the way some feminist critics in the 1980s used these categories, often in ways imetical to the basic principles and assumptions of Booth and others. By embracing an "either/or" logic to validate a particular reading, some feminist interpretations of *Villette*, although at odds with the narrative dynamics, stabilize *either* unreliability of ethics or unreliability of facts and/or characterize Lucy Snowe as either reliable or unreliable at any given moment in the narrative progression (even as she develops through the course of the progression).²
I

The 1980s were a time when many feminist agendas, especially those of Americans, sought to conduct readings which empowered women (as authors, literary characters, and readers). Villette lent itself perfectly to such a critical enterprise because of the myriad ways in which the text foregrounds female authority and autonomy. Within the 1980's body of criticism, two related patterns emerge: (1) the separation of narrative events, be they story or discourse events, into two types—either those that reaffirm or those that subvert traditional power structures; and (2) the ritualistic invocation of the categories of un/reliability as a method to privilege the discourse over the story. The first trend relates to ideological concerns about narrative authority. Nancy Sorkin Rabinowitz, Brenda Silver, Karen Lawrence, and Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar all share a methodology which locates two distinct narrative tracks— that of story-events (progression toward heterosexual union) and that of discourse events (progression toward narrative authority)—and then places them in a binary opposition, privileging that track which might subvert patriarchal power (authority) over that which could reaffirm traditional power structures (union). These critics, despite differences in focus, share the conclusion that the death of M. Paul Emanuel at the end of Villette signifies a
rejection of both the cultural construction of heterosexual marriage and the aesthetic convention of the happy ending. In this vein, Brontë's narrative ultimately privileges female autonomy and narrative authority.

Secondly, critics have focused on Lucy's unreliable behavior as narrator: Gilbert and Gubar note "the consternation of many critics who have bemoaned [Lucy's] trickery" and suggest that her "reticence as a narrator makes her especially unreliable" (418); Mary Jacobus tells us that "Lucy lies to us"; Silver calls it "evasiveness"; Rabinowitz says that Lucy "withholds information"; Lawrence dubs her a "cypher." The discussions are largely limited to considerations of unreliability about narrative facts, although Rabinowitz offers a compelling reading of the relationship between Lucy's secrecy in the story and her reticence in the discourse (a matter to which I will return later). The second trend relates to the first in that the critics cite Lucy's unreliability as evidence to support their final judgments about the author's purpose, specifically that Brontë asks us to recognize that heterosexual marriage impedes female authority. Our decisions about reliability thus influence our conclusions about discursive authority and heterosexual desire, as well as our judgments about Brontë's worldview.

I find these readings problematic because they rely on a strict separation of story and discourse; they place
story-events and discourse-events into an antithetical relationship, privileging those events which most closely align with the critics' own historically specific ideological beliefs (the repressive nature of heterosexuality); and they invoke unreliability in a rather monolithic fashion. First of all, I don't think that Villette sustains the type of strict boundaries between story and discourse that these interpretations suggest. Secondly, feminist criticism of the 1980s was rigorous in its criticism of compulsory heterosexuality. Desiring to empower women, critics produced an abundance of analyses in which the female protagonist ends up contesting patriarchal structures (including but not limited to marriage) in order to achieve some sort of authority or autonomy: think of essays written on novels by the Brontë sisters, Kate Chopin, Zora Neale Hurston, Gayl Jones, and Toni Morrison, to name a few. While often correct and always insightful, this end result sometimes came at the price of adequately accounting for the textual dynamics. Finally, Villette's narrative discourse suggests that issues of reliability are far more complex than these critics claim--so complex, in fact, that we need to supplement Booth's, Lanser's, and Phelan's models.

Now, I do not suggest that feminist criticism can or should lose its focus on forms of female oppression and liberation, but I do hesitate before both the ideological
assumption that makes heterosexual love the antithesis of narrative authority and the role that the theoretical construction of unreliability plays in upholding that assumption. I want to argue here that while *Villette* does advocate a feminist politics, it does not conform so well to the version of politics found by the 1980s feminist critics. Connecting questions of narrative theory to the 1980s feminist reception of Brontë's text allows us to see the relationship between ideological concerns and narratological tools. Moreover, such an investigation moves us away from a reified "either/or" logic, expanding our ways of thinking about the categories of un/reliability, asking us to consider the possibility of a more complex and often contestatory interplay between ethical and factual norms in both story and discourse.

The either/or logic entertained by *Villette* 's critics reveals itself most clearly in terms of the binary oppositions that sustain these 1980's analyses: narrative authority/heterosexuality, discourse/story, reliability/unreliability, ethics/facts. As Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan point out, the texts of modernity tend to dichotomize concepts and terms, overlooking "complex, multiply constituted identities that cannot be accounted for by binary oppositions" (10). In demanding that we rethink the theories of modernity that have informed our critical discourses and that we attempt to apply relational
strategies in our feminist interventions, Grewal and Kaplan eerily echo Boothian concerns about terminology and classification: any system of categorization will tell us nothing of importance unless we become more precise and describe who uses these terms, where they are used, and for whom and why they are useful.® If we can move away from the constructed oppositions of modernity without ignoring the specificity of concerns about power relations, we might link Brontë's feminism to a larger feminist critique that attempts to understand the forces that construct and deconstruct difference. Brontë's sophisticated modulation of the narrative discourse does suggest that Lucy achieves narrative authority, but does not ask us to conclude that Lucy is liberated by the loss of her beloved, or that such an easy opposition can be made between authority and heterosexual union. Indeed, the dynamics between Villette's story and discourse, the interchange between the fictional and cultural texts, and the various forms and functions of narratorial/character traits all suggest that Brontë values heterosexual love as much as discursive authority. This alters our awareness and appreciation of the disruptive feminism both Lucy Snowe and Villette embody.

II

To create a space for a model of female autonomy, Brontë first exposes those Victorian "fictions of
authority" that confer patriarchal norms upon female subjects. Lucy's trips to art galleries, where she is "happy; happy, not always in admiring, but in examining, questioning, and forming conclusions," both designate and contest the aesthetic and cultural belief systems that function to repress female creativity and to silence women's voices. Claiming that "an original and good picture was just as scarce as an original and good book," Lucy values those "exceptions" that embody "fragments of truth here and there which satisfied the conscience, and gleams of light" that give a "clear insight into character . . . startlingly remind[ing] you that genius gave it birth." Lucy's trip to "a certain gallery" where she views two popular representations of women, the Cleopatra and the four "Anges" (Angels), allows Brontë to pinpoint more specifically her own aesthetic values. Lucy unequivocally censures the first painting, interjecting sarcastic remarks into her descriptions: Cleopatra's girth meets an unfavorable comparison to a "well fed" animal feeding on "very much butcher's meat"; mocking incredulity characterizes Lucy's response to this "commodity of bulk" on a couch: "why [she lay half-reclined], it would be difficult to say; broad daylight blazed round her; she appeared in hearty health . . . [s]he had no business to lounge away the noon on a sofa." Dialogizing the words of the dominant discourse, Lucy's language and belief system
renders this "notable production" nothing more than "an enormous piece of claptrap." Colonel de Hamal, for whom we have earlier cultivated a distaste, appears on the scene. Considered by his genteel peers a "man of sense," de Hamal's appreciation of the Cleopatra, juxtaposed to Lucy's ironic description of his "highly-polished little pate" and his "tittering" and "whispering," works to undermine the aesthetic norms of supposedly "refined gentlemen of superior taste and tact" (274-81). While Lucy is clearly ironic in her use of the language of this "refined class," nothing in the text indicates that Brontë ironizes Lucy's voice. In fact, the inclusion of de Hamal in this scene reflects Brontë's intention to align her reader with Lucy, rather than with "men of sense."

If the Cleopatra depicts one patriarchal image of woman, the series of portraits that M. Paul insists Lucy should view, "La view d'une femme," exemplify the opposite pole. Opposites of the "indolent" Cleopatra, Lucy denounces these "laids tableaux" with equal vehemence. The four Angels are as "grim and gray as burglars, and cold and vapid as ghosts . . . insincere, ill-humoured, bloodless, brainless nonentities!" Her emphatic critique of the "hideous" Angels undermines the discursive relationship between "masterpiece" and referent, once again calling dominant artistic norms into question (277-78). If we see the Cleopatra and the four Angels as representatives of
what Mary Poovey calls the contradiction "between a sexless, moralized angel and an aggressive, carnal magdalen" (11), then we can see how Lucy's denigration and disdain of both situates her in a gap between these two dominant versions of woman. Lucy's sarcastic and aggressive voice, sincere and urgent in its condemnation of these two female stereotypes, along with the absence of any double-voicing by Brontë, functions to contest the aesthetic standards of Victorian society.

Lucy (and Brontë), after successfully critiquing the dominant norms, offers an alternative: Vashti. Compared with "the Cleopatra, or any other slug," Vashti is a "marvellous sight: a mighty revelation" and "a spectacle low, horrible, immoral." An embodiment of opposing forces, a woman and a representation of woman, Vashti, Lucy tells us, "would see, would hear, would breathe, would live, up to, within, well nigh beyond the moment when death says to all sense and all being—'Thus far and no farther.'" The artist embodies the pain, the hurt, and the agony of her own experience and, like Heaven's gleam of light, "pierces the confines" of Lucy's heart, drawing it "out of its wonted orbit." This is indeed an "exception" that embodies a "fragment of truth" (336-42). The "strong magnetism of [Vashti's] genuis" signifies that Lucy, with Brontë behind her, affirms an aesthetics that contain two prominent truths: 1) art is a dynamic process that enables the
individual to represent her own experience; and 2) the speaker and the receiver of the representation are fully recognized as human subjects. Villette's self-designated aesthetic paradigm establishes a relational model between life and representation, and between speaker and receiver. The factual events of female experience should not diverge from the represented; representation should transmit this experience in a way that provides "clear insight into [the subject's] character" while simultaneously "satisf[y]ing the conscience" of the receiver. By constructing and endorsing this model, Brontë contests dominant literary and cultural norms. Assessing how closely Lucy's narration comes to meeting the criteria of Vashti's model provides one way to measure Lucy's success as narrator. In other words, if the process of Lucy's narrative discourse aligns her with the norms suggested by Vashti's model, then Lucy can be seen to achieve narrative authority; conversely, if Lucy's narration doesn't meet these standards, then we must decide whether Brontë ultimately and intentionally undermines Lucy, or whether values privileged in Vashti's model become inadequate, or if Brontë failed to meet the aesthetic goals that she herself established.

Brontë's sophisticated handling of the narrative discourse slowly but powerfully aligns Lucy's artistic act with the norms of Vashti's art. Lucy's beliefs about representation never deviate from Brontë's; only Lucy's
ability to bring about the same type of aesthetic experience as Vashti fosters remains in question. Furthermore Lucy's achievement of aesthetic exemplitude neither generates nor constitutes the only, or even the primary, narrative logic. Rather, Brontë eventually intertwines Lucy's progression toward narrative authority with her progression toward achieving heterosexual union.

In the first three chapters of Villette, Lucy's status as witness-observer and her nonselfconsciousness create a tension between implied author and narrator in terms of the story's moral center, the "Home" plot, a plot of heterosexual union, separation, and reunion. Situated outside her godmother Bretton's family circle, Lucy bears witness not to her own story but to that of Polly Home. Polly's prayers to her absent "dear papa" are, to Lucy, indicative of "that monomaniac tendency" with which "the most unfortunate . . . man or woman can be cursed" (69). She feels "oppressed" when Polly expresses joy at the return of Mr. Home, and when the agitated Polly cries upon his departure, "I," Lucy Snowe tells us, "was calm" (79). When the primary love for the father is substituted with the childish romantic love young Polly comes to feel for Graham Bretton, Lucy deems this amusing and eccentric, a precursor to the "shocks and repulses, the humiliations and desolations" that constitute life (93). Relying on the pathos of the scenes between Polly and her father (and
later Polly and Graham) to elicit a moral center based on love and union between male and female, Brontë's voice here undermines Lucy's. This is a conventional method for ironizing a narrator's ethical stance, but note that the nonselfconscious and homodiegetic narration also indicate a distance from the aesthetics Vashti's model valorizes: Lucy, as witness to Polly's story, does not represent her personal experience, and the double-voicing tends to dehumanize Lucy, making her more of an object than a subject.

But in Chapter 4, the narrative tides shift. First Polly and then Lucy leave Bretton. Closing the door on Bretton and foreclosing the Polly Home plot, Lucy moves home, a transition which includes replacing homodiegetic with increasingly autodiegetic narration. Beginning to focus on herself, Lucy uses the present-tense to beseech her "reader" to picture her "as a bark slumbering through halcyon weather" (94). Then she challenges that image: yes, we can go ahead and picture her as a slumbering bark, but in reality she "must somehow have fallen over-board, or that there must have been wreck at last . . . the ship was lost, the crew perished" (94). The mutinous changes in imagery and tense correspond to a shift in responsibility for the techniques associated with the narrative discourse. The mature Lucy's selfconscious voice, speaking from the time of the discourse, is now endorsed by Brontë as she--
Lucy—asserts the lyricism of her own style: her own images, metaphors, and tone.

While I will more fully evaluate the category of selfconsciousness in my discussion of Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* in Chapter 3, our understanding of Lucy as a selfconscious narrator does impact our understanding of *Villette*, so let me take a moment more to fully explicate what I mean by the term. In the introduction to this dissertation, I presented Booth's definition, which bears repeating here. Booth classifies narrators who are "aware of themselves as writers" as selfconscious; the nonselfconscious narrator "rarely if ever" discusses her writing chores *(RoF* 155). Phelan explicates Booth's categories, noting in "Distance, Voice, and Temporal Perspective" that nonselfconscious narration is the default: unless given reason to do otherwise, "we assume that the narrator is not the source of such things as foreshadowing, patterns of imagery, parallelism of incidents, the lyricism of a particular style" (69). While Lanser places issues of reliability under "status" concerns, issues of selfconsciousness fall under the category of "contact," or the relationship between speaker and audience: "the contact between author and audience is established through discourse register, tone, and other equivalents of visual/auditory contact" *(The Narrative Act* 91). As with issues of status (which are "dynamically
linked" to those of contact), Lanser sees degrees of selfconsciousness as variable along the narrative continuum (see her comments on Tristram Shandy, The Narrative Act 177).

Selfconsciousness relies on our acceptance of a "narrative convention": although we all really know that the flesh-and-blood author is the source of all techniques, including the synthetic task of creating a narrator who announces "authorship," we suspend that knowledge when so required. In this way, we accept the putative author, the narrator who takes responsibility for imagery, parallelism, lyricism, and so on. But to simply state that a narrator is selfconscious tells us little. What may be significant, however, is asking who is given selfconsciousness and why, when or where in the text selfconsciousness is foregrounded, and how it might relate both to story-events (or the narrator's character) and to larger ideological concerns.

We have already seen the way that Brontë modulates homo-autodiegesis and un/reliability in relation to non/selfconsciousness in the first four chapters of her novel; I return now to examining the way she develops this pattern. The changes in Lucy's position in both the story and the discourse parallel a shift in her relation to the ethics of the Home plot. Lucy, "forced . . . by circumstances" to become self-reliant, assumes care of the
elderly Miss Marchmont. For eight years Lucy tends the older woman, growing fond of the "vein of reason" that runs through Miss Marchmont's passion, adopting "the steadiness of her virtues . . . the power of her passions . . . the truth of her feelings to trust." Having aligned Lucy with her employer, Brontë then uses Miss Marchmont to reintroduce the moral center, the Home plot. On a stormy February night ("I remember it well," Lucy selfconsciously muses), with the wind first "wailing at the windows" with "an accent keen" and then falling "to a dead calm," Miss Marchmont awakens and tells Lucy a story. A discursive substitution of the earlier story-events between Polly, her father, and Graham, Miss Marchmont's narrative speaks of her love for her betrothed (Frank), their separation, his death, and her years of grief (97-99). The double-voicing, which at Bretton distanced Lucy from the implied author and reader in terms of the Home plot, now vanishes as Lucy sensitively accepts, at least in the abstract, the value of heterosexual love and union, the pain of separation, and the desire for reunion. Miss Marchmont thus functions to "redirect" Lucy's worldview; once this has been accomplished, she dies, leaving Lucy free to embark on a voyage. The convention of the voyage indicates that Villette's narrator, like Jane Eyre's, will undergo a fresh search for self-identity. Neither the romantic fantasy of young Polly Home nor the abstract ideal of Miss Marchmont's
discourse, Lucy's Home plot relies, in part, on the successful negotiation of her identity and her sexual desires. To France Lucy travels, to the town of Villette, where, employed as an English teacher, she meets one Dr. John. Her growing passion for Dr. John becomes increasingly apparent, but what Lucy doesn't tell the reader is that Dr. John is actually the Graham of Bretton-place. Lucy-the-narrator's withholding information from the reader in the discourse coincides with Lucy-the-character's hiding her identity from Dr. John.

Lucy's reticence as narrator constitutes a paralipsis, and, whether dubbed reticence, trickery, withholding, or dishonesty, has been read as an instance of unreliability because it creates a tension between narrator and reader in terms of the narrative facts. These paralipses are even more interesting in light of the fact that Brontë has ostensibly ceded aesthetic control by making Lucy selfconscious. Why would Brontë first let Lucy assume the role of "author" and then have her make aesthetic choices that disconcert virtually all readers? Nancy Rabinowitz suggests that the power Lucy gains over her readers through strategic silence increases her discursive authority in the same way that her secrecy about her identity gives her control of the situation with Dr. John. This foregrounds Lucy's role as narrator: "When games are played with what is told us," Rabinowitz writes, "we are much more conscious
of the medium of the tale, and consequently of the 
authority of the teller" (248). In other words, even as 
paralipsis signifies an unreliability of facts at both 
story and discourse levels, it indicates a reliability of 
norms.

I agree with Rabinowitz that Lucy's withholding 
signifies her attempt to gain control at both story and 
discourse levels, but feel that these paralipses have still 
other implications. On the one hand, these withholdings 
indicate a movement toward one of Vashti's criteria: the 
representation of personal experience, the integration of 
life (Lucy's secrecy with Dr. John) and art (her reticence 
with her reader). But on the other hand, her game-playing 
seems to move her away from Vashti's other aesthetic 
criterion, that the personal utterance does not dehumanize 
subject or audience. Gregory O'Dea and Brenda Silver 
succinctly summarize what many critics note: at times Lucy 
"disorient[s] her audience," is "distanced from and 
disdainful of" the reader (O'Dea 41), and assumes a 
"potentially antagonistic posture" with her reader (Silver 
93). Just as Lucy (as audience) felt antagonism toward and 
distance from both the Cleopatra and the Angels, 
representations which fail to address the "truth" of female 
experience, so too does Lucy's sidestepping the "truth" of 
her own experience provoke her audience to similar 
responses. The dynamics of Villette suggest that the
relationship between paralipsis and unreliability of fact is highly variable: by merging lived experience and representation, it empowers Lucy, but by disorienting the reader it seems to disempower her. To understand more fully the way Brontë modulates the narrative discourse, we need to address the benefits and the repercussions of Lucy's secreting her identity in terms of the other narrative track, that of heterosexual love and union.

The "paralipsis" at the level of Lucy's "lived experience," her secreting of her identity from Dr. John, functions in relation to the paralipsis at the discourse level and within a larger context. D. A. Miller, in The Novel and the Police, relates secrecy to "the [Victorian] subject's formal insistence that [s]he is radically inaccessible to the culture that would otherwise entirely determine [her]" (195). Following Miller's logic, Lucy (the character), by withholding her identity from Dr. John, remains "undetermined" by the a priori assumptions that would stabilize her identity, especially those gendered-class beliefs that could only block the possibility of a romantic liaison between the two. If secrecy is "the spiritual exercise by which the subject is allowed to conceive of [her]self as a resistance . . . a friction in the smooth function of social order, a margin to which its far-reaching discourse does not reach" (Miller 207), then by hiding her identity Lucy does attain some power over Dr.
John. Brontë thus affirms the potentially empowering aspects of secrecy, of keeping silent—a function especially important, as Elaine Hedges and Shelly Fisher Fishkin point out, in combatting "the taboos under which women have historically labored in representing the body and sexuality" (5). In other words, as a "real-life paralipsis," silence can be strategically deployed as a technique to gain control, especially over the desiring female body.¹³

Lucy's character's increased consciousness of her self as a physical, desiring subject thus corresponds with her narrator-trait of selfconsciousness; control of the facts of her identity parallels control of the facts of the narrative. But we run into the same problem with Lucy's strategy at the story-level as we do at the discourse-level: just as the power the character gains by withholding her identity from Dr. John does not bring her any closer to achieving heterosexual union, so too the power the narrator achieves by tricking her readers fails to establish the narrative authority valorized by Vashti's model. Again we see a parallel with the Cleopatra and the Angels: the "men of sense" who applaud these images are no closer to understanding "woman" than Dr. John is to understanding who Lucy is. Thus Brontë carefully links the progression of the two narrative tracks. As Karen Lawrence astutely points out, Lucy's designation of herself as
"cypher" signifies the tension between two modes of being: a nonentity and a disguised manner of writing. While the image of the nun (none/nonentity) and what Christina Crosby calls the "ghostly world of the text" link the two, for Lucy to attain authority, to be more than null, she must develop other skills.

Gayatri Spivak's comments on the relationship between an "itinerary of the silencing" and a view of history "not as a series of brute facts but as narratives generated in one way or another" can help us see Villette as a project which reveals how various narratives compete with each other, "which one rises, which one falls, who is silent, and the itinerary of the silencing rather than the retrieval" (31). The first three chapters give rise to one narrative about women which, through Brontë's double-voicing and Lucy's irony, positions both female narrator (Lucy) and female protagonist (Polly) as object. This narrative falls as Lucy begins, in Chapter 4, to assert a different project, one that eventually deploys a strategic itinerary of silence to create a resistance in keeping with that discursive framework which Miller relates to Victorian subjectivity. Characters (Miller writes, discussing Dickens) "protect their subjectivity by refusing to assume it even grammatically, by refusing to say 'I'" (202); and we see that Lucy often speaks of herself in third-person (see especially page 401). This resistance allows her to
become the non(nun)person. Brontë then reveals the relational structure of the second narrative—the Victorian agenda of secrecy—showing that for a specific class of women (i.e., working women like Lucy Snowe) there may be repercussions to silence—that, in fact, the Lucy Snowes of the world must ultimately resist being the nun, the nonentity, and risk exposing their subjectivities by saying "I," by speaking their desires. Villette thus does not offer one stable "representation of woman," but a series of narratives that compete with each other in an ongoing struggle to constitute an artistic voice and to create an identity as a desiring subject.

The strength of the second narrative, which produces a resisting subject through silence, proves inadequate as Lucy's story—and her narrative—threatens to come to a sudden end. The potential dangers of silence and secrecy are exposed as Lucy comes to the point where, alone, unknown, and unloved, cold, powerless, and weak, she collapses. While we have suspended our knowledge of the implied author's control of the imagery, parallelism, style, and foreshadowing as early as Chapter 4 (when Lucy asserted her awareness of herself as narrator), at this moment, Brontë's command of the narrative discourse is foregrounded. We are asked to see Lucy's selfconsciousness as a trait that first moves her toward Vashti's model as she assumes control of her own story, but then functions to
distance her from both reader and author as she struggles, within the confines of Victorian ideology, to use secrecy and silence as tactics of empowerment. "Status" and "contact" issues conflate as Brontë, at the cusp of her era, recognizes the insidious repressiveness in this mode of self-definition, contesting its effectiveness, and replacing it with a new narrative that allows for both artistic and sexual expression.

In the second volume of *Villette*, Brontë continues to play with the effects of paralipsis, this time to move her narrator steadily away from her "secretive" behaviors. During her recuperation, Lucy attends Vashti's presentation. A fire erupts toward the end of the performance; a woman is injured; Lucy does not say who; and we--having picked up on Lucy's tendency to trick us--suspect another paralipsis. We might even guess that the hurt woman is Polly Home. But this time Lucy is not withholding. Part of the joy of the situation occurs because, through her newly-found factual reliability, Lucy bests us again. Our suspicion, coupled with its failure to be warranted, signals an important shift in Lucy's strategy of narration. No longer will she omit "truths" about her experience.

But of course Lucy (and Brontë), by choosing some facts, must ignore others. Choice--inclusion and omission--is inherent to narrative. What Barthes calls the
"hermenenetic code" works because reading involves a series of enigmas that "can be distinguished, suggested, formulated, held in suspense, and finally disclosed" (19). All paralipses do not have the same effects; each "omission" does not have to indicate unreliability. Yet the feminist analyses of the 1980s, having discerned the relationship between unreliability and withholding in the earlier half of the novel, want to equate all foregrounded instances of reticence as continuing that pattern. Without accounting for the shift that takes place during the fire, two subsequent moments of "withholding" are frequently mentioned: that which occurs while Lucy is making M. Paul his birthday gift, and that which occurs at the end of the novel, when Lucy does not specifically tell us of M. Paul's death. Read as repetitions of the type of withholding that occurred with Dr. John, these paralipses have been interpreted as indicators of Brontë's continued privileging of narrative authority. Since I have already questioned the assumptions that separate and privilege narrative authority and discourse over heterosexual union and story, it should come as no surprise that I interpret the textual dynamics here differently. While producing diverse affective responses at various moments, the pattern of paralipsis continues to connect the story's progression (toward heterosexual union) with the discourse's progression (toward narrative authority).
True enough, Lucy doesn't tell us exactly what she's doing before M. Paul's fête, but this functions very differently from the disarming sidesteppings I have already discussed. Lucy's word-choices when describing her craftsmanship—"to suit the particular taste whose gratification was in view, an effective appearance was quite indispensable" (422)—are juxtaposed to an explicit reference to the impending birthday fête. Many readers will draw the correct conclusions, but even if we do not, the effect differs from the earlier disorienting responses: like M. Paul, we share in the pleasure of the surprise of her handmade gift. To determine if any one particular paralipsis signals an unreliability, then, we must see it in the context of the different textual norms and recognize that the pattern of paralipsis itself might serve two or more thematic purposes within the narrative logic. It is our attempts to work out the various possibilities that brings us much of our reading pleasure.

Rather than retaining the narrator-trait of trickery to distance Lucy from the reader, Brontë develops this trait along a different line: Lucy's sense of humor. Hinted at in earlier scenes like the one in the art gallery, Lucy's wit increases as her tendency to withhold information decreases. She begins to present her facts openly, personably, and we begin to laugh with Lucy. Brontë has variously positioned Lucy in relation to
heterosexual desire throughout the narrative: the initial dismissal of the heterosexual model based on the primary father-daughter relationship and sanctified through the substitution of Polly's love for Graham; the acceptance of the abstract ideal when caring for Miss Marchmont; the secrecy surrounding her love for Dr. John. Lucy's growing love for M. Paul, however, is presented according to a different logic. Initially presenting M. Paul as "mawkish," "injudicious," "sullen," and possibly "violent and implacable" (202), Lucy's later characterizations remain similar in terminology but differ in tone as she humorously notes such things as his "laudable, acceptable custom" of bursting in unannounced during study time (414). Lived experience again merges with representation: upon completing a "very inefficient" French translation, Lucy (as character) cannot help but smile at M. Paul's reaction, and her tone (as narrator) during the transmission of this event replicates that smile, making her reader smile too (416-17). Perhaps most significantly, Lucy begins to joke about herself with her reader: "The reader not having hitherto had any cause to ascribe to Miss Snowe's character the most distant pretension to perfection . . . " (427). A pattern of development emerges in which Lucy's selfconscious narration becomes more and more reliable as she uses humor to establish the identity that she has so long kept secret. In so doing, Lucy begins to "pierce the
confines" of her reader's heart. By the time Lucy reveals that which "defied suppression" and tells M. Paul that her "heart will break" without him (580), the pattern of paralipsis has been left far behind. Here, she withholds nothing. She takes a great risk. Lucy Snowe speaks.

If, as Poovey notes, "the representation of women was . . . a site of cultural contestation during the middle of the nineteenth century" (9), then Villette takes part in this struggle by representing a working woman who comes to terms with, and speaks out on behalf of, her desire. Her action plays a significant role; she and M. Paul become engaged. Jane Gaines asks us, "Why the need to claim heterosexuality when it is not only a given but also a mandate?" Her twentieth-century answer holds true for nineteenth-century Lucy Snowe: "It would seem that the only alternative to publicly claiming an erotic identity is to remain sexually unidentified. (And to be outside identity politics categories is to be unidentified.)" (394). By bringing her narrator to the point where she withholds nothing, Brontë accomplishes two things. First, she acknowledges women as desiring, speaking subjects. Second, Brontë herself, with Lucy as her reliable spokesperson, contests the Victorian codes which arrest female development both professionally and personally. The two narrative tracks again operate in parallel: Lucy establishes her identity as she begins to act and speak in
accordance with her desire for M. Paul and, correspondingly, she gains narrative authority. Together, the story and the discourse align with both the aesthetic and moral norms of the text, Vashti's artistic paradigm and the Home plot of love and union.

III

I began this chapter by noting that many feminists read the ending of Villette, "Finis," as a final moment of truth in which Lucy achieves authority. Nancy Rabinowitz sees the conclusion as "a conscious resistance of the conventional 'happy ending'" (252) and writes that "Brontë seems to realize that the paradox is that for women in heterosexual relations, in some ways you are better off alone" (253); Silver, stating that Lucy has rewritten "the traditional novel to illustrate the limited plots available to women in literature, as in life" and in so doing has "grown into another reality," determines that Brontë's narrator survives "the destruction of the romantic fantasy" and finds intellectual and financial fulfillment (110-11); Lawrence notes that "the very power of [M. Paul's] presence as opposed to Lucy's threatens to overwhelm her" and that his absence enables the plot of ambition--Lucy as headmistress and writer--to thrive: in the end, Lucy, in the space provided by M. Paul's absence, "returns us to herself as writer" (98-99); Gilbert and Gubar also attend to the relationship between M. Paul's presence and absence,
asserting that "it is only in his [M. Paul's] absence that she [Lucy] can exert herself fully to exercise her own powers" and that "the end of love must not be equated with the end of life" (438). Each of these accounts reads Lucy's "withholding" of the facts about M. Paul's death as a paralipsis that privileges the discourse over the story. But this type of literary "comeabout" just doesn't correspond with either the narrative logic or the specific dynamics of the narrative discourse; it works against the established intersections connecting the two tracks and overlooks the affective valence of Lucy's explicit statements.

Quite simply, nothing in the text indicates that Brontë wants us to see her narrator as "better off alone." For one thing, Lucy does not narrate the events of her supposedly thriving, liberated life as headmistress and writer; we are told only that the first three years of anticipating M. Paul's return were "the three happiest years of [her] life." Nowhere does the narrative discourse suggest that Lucy's joy comes from M. Paul's absence; quite to the contrary, the "secret of my success," Lucy narrates, "did not lie so much in myself . . . as in a new state of circumstances, a wonderfully changed life, a relieved heart." Her happiness seems very much linked to her love for M. Paul. M. Paul's letters provide "real food that nourished, living water that refreshed" (593-95). Just
before the formal break (indicated by the asterisk), Lucy summarizes her beloved's strengths and weaknesses: his tenderness, his pious enthusiasm. The sincerity of Lucy's voice is difficult to deny. What, then, has led the critics of the 1980s to interpret the final chapter, and especially the final nine paragraphs, as privileging narrative authority over heterosexual union?

If you accept my reconsiderations of the variable, fluid relations between different forms and functions of unreliability, between unreliability and selfconsciousness, and between the two narrative tracks, you might anticipate my answer. The tendency to use binary oppositions—un/reliability, story/discourse, heterosexual union/female authority—to reach the desired goal of female liberation plays a large part in judgments about the ending. But I do not think that is the only factor at work. Brontë's sophisticated handling of the conclusion brings many different dynamics together, making it difficult to more fully understand just what is happening. I therefore want to begin by acknowledging the fact that M. Paul's physical absence plays a role in Lucy's success as narrator, but that it does so only in relation to his narrative presence. M. Paul's absent-presence permeates Villette, blurring story/discourse boundaries up to and including the final moment of Lucy's narration. To put it another way, Brontë's narrator's longing for the completion of the Home
plot (reunion) both marks the narrative occasion and infiltrates earlier story-events. Techniques associated with selfconsciousness—diction, style, mood, metaphors, foreshadowing, and the juxtaposition of scenes and imagery—become crucial to unravelling the various narrative threads that appear in "Finis."

As I noted earlier, the shift to selfconscious discourse occurs in Chapter 4, paralleling a movement from homo- to autodiegesis and an increased acceptance of the values associated with heterosexual love and union. Lucy's interjection of present-tense discourse also marks this transition: "To this hour," Lucy writes, "when I have the nightmare, it repeats the rush and saltness of briny waves in my throat, and their icy pressure on my lungs" (94). Her images (storms, shipwrecks, wind) will, along with the present-tense narration, repeatedly reappear (often in conjunction), signalling key moments in the narrative discourse.

These images will foreshadow all the deaths in Villette, both "literal" and figurative. "Three times in the course of my life," Lucy says, "events had taught me that these strange accents in the storm—this restless, hopeless cry—denote a coming state of the atmosphere unpropitious to life" (98). The first "literal" death occurs on that stormy February night of Chapter 4, when the keening wind dies down and Miss Marchmont concludes her
narrative, telling Lucy that "from this day I am about to enter a better frame of mind, to prepare myself for reunion with Frank"; she then dies (101). The second death occurs sometime between the stormy November night when Lucy awaits M. Paul and seven days later. The storm that begins that November night, that "roared frenzied for seven days" and did not cease until "the Atlantic was strewn with wrecks," causes the second "literal" death, the death of M. Paul Emanuel. Functioning both to make M. Paul present and as testimonial to the pain, the anguish, and the suffering associated with her loss, Lucy's writing embodies her grief, voices her sorrow.

The voice that haunts Villette frequently combines the knowledge of the narrating-Lucy with the vision of the experiencing-Lucy, blurring the boundaries between story and discourse. As Lucy narrates her own Home plot--her developing love for M. Paul, her actions in bringing the engagement about, and their separation--the knowledge of his death filters every relived event. Lucy initially represents M. Paul as sullen and mawkish, but also claims that "he was the soul of honour" (212). It is impossible that at the time of the story--the time of her vision--she could know that M. Paul was the "soul of honour" and, in fact, she has gone to great pains to represent him as anything but an honorable soul. This hybridization of vision and voice, of focalization and point-of-view, is
even more apparent when, during M. Paul's birthday fête, Lucy expresses a lack of pleasure in gathered flowers: "I look on them as things rootless and perishable," she narrates, "their likeness to life makes me sad" (424). The sad association of flowers and life makes sense only when considering the "certain bunch of white violets" that M. Paul offers her when they first meet (187), the "sweet violets" that "lent fragrance" to her schoolroom (585), the plants she cultivates "out of love for him" (595), and her painful acknowledgement of his continued absence at the time of the discourse. The narrating-I constantly infiltrates the mood of the experiencing-I. Destabilizing vision/voice and story/discourse boundaries, the narrative discourse merges lived and represented experience, paying tribute to the continual sadness that loss generates. Lucy's narration articulates her grief, the pain and the pleasure of love and of life. In keeping with Vashti's model, Brontë asks us to recognize the measurement of love as loss.

Lucy herself undergoes two figurative deaths and rebirths, complete with shipwreck and storm images. The first "death" occurs when, after leaving Bretton-place and then England, Lucy is "reborn" as selfconscious narrator of her own story (see the beginning of Chapter 4, which I have already recounted). The second death occurs between Volumes One and Two. Volume One ends with Lucy, "lost" and
with "no resolution to ask guidance of any passenger," falling unconscious during a rainstorm (236); Volume Two opens with her soul--one of the two "divorced mates, Spirit and Substance"--being rebound to her "poor frame" (237). She hears

a gale, subsiding at last . . . drawn and withdrawn far, far off, like a tide retiring from a shore of the upper world--a world so high above the rush of its largest waves, the dash of its fiercest breakers could sound down in this submarine home, only like murmurs and a lullaby.

(255)

If the Lucy of Chapter 4 is reborn as an autodiegetic, selfconscious narrator, the metaphorical rebirth in Volume Two occurs after another "nightmarish" time of life when silence and secrecy disguise both her desire and her writing, threatening to nullify her very existence. The two figurative deaths, like the two literal deaths, function to move Lucy closer to Brontë's aesthetic and moral values.

But it is "three times in the course of" her life that events have taught Lucy that "these strange accents in the storm" denote death, not two. This third death, I propose, merges the literal and the figurative, bringing Lucy's story and discourse to the conclusion for which the narrative logic has been preparing us. One more pattern
emerges in these repeated narrative breaks: Lucy's contemplation of religious rebirth. Perhaps Miss Marchmont's hopes to join her Frank in Heaven spawn this interest, but regardless of its origin, Lucy becomes increasingly concerned with the possibilities of life hereafter. Each passage that voices these religious concerns is marked by the present-tense, muddying the waters of story and discourse once again. Lucy, recovering from her descent into the "abyss" at the end of the first volume, instructs her audience to turn to God for a method of coping with the "pains He has appointed," to wait patiently--like the "weeping and despairing" and the "maimed and mourning millions" who await the herald who will heal the bleeding heart (252). Her words here make sense both in terms of the story events--her unrequited love for Dr. John--and in relation to the discourse, as her knowledge of M. Paul's death interferes with her telling of the earlier passion for Dr. John.

An even larger, more intense break occurs in the "Reaction" chapter (Chapter 21). The verb-tense again changes from past to present, and Reason--"vindictive as a devil," associated with cold and denial--is opposed to Imagination--a "good angel," a "divine Hope" which is likened to eternal summer and rebirth (308). Subsequent present-tense narration (Chapter 38) continues to emphasize Lucy's concern about an afterlife: "Proof of a life to
come must be given," Lucy narrates; the next three sentences all begin with "In fire and blood," returning us to the image of Vashti on the stage, just as the capitalized closure of this break—"WE SHALL NOT DIE"—harkens to an art form that lives beyond the moment when death halts life. When contemplating Polly's and Graham's marriage, Lucy notes that some real lives do—for some certain days or years—actually anticipate the happiness of Heaven; and, I believe, if such perfect happiness is once felt by good people . . . its sweet effect is never wholly lost. Whatever trials follow, whatever pains of sickness or shades of death, the glory precedent still shines through, cheering the keen anguish, and tinging the deep cloud. (532)

Lucy, recounting later the "[h]appy hour" in the garden with her beloved, beseeches time to "stay one moment" and "incline to mine that brow of Heaven!"; she implores the "White Angel" to let light linger on darker, succeeding times (588). Lucy's persistent return to the theme of rebirth, as well as the images of storms and shipwrecks and the interplay between Reason and Imagination, continue until her final narrating moments.

And these truly are her last narrating moments. We know as early as Chapter 4 that Lucy, with white hair "under a white cap, like snow beneath snow," narrates in
her old age, and we will learn, when we turn the last page, that "Madame Walravens fulfilled her ninetieth year before she died." But: "Peace, peace, Banshee—'keening' at every window!" What time are we in now? Yes, certainly this indicates that moment when, three years after her engagement, the "destroying angel of tempest" achieved his perfect work in M. Paul's death, much as the earlier storm's conclusion corresponded with the end of Miss Marchmont's story and her life. But it seems very much in keeping with the pattern of the progression—as well as with our knowledge that Lucy narrates decades after M. Paul's death—to acknowledge that another storm rages, roaring frenzy at the time of the discourse, setting the scene for the final death. This storm, then, and its foreshadowing of death, provides the occasion for the narrative. It is not just that Miss Marchmont's narrative functions as a mise en abyme, what Ross Chambers calls a "narrational embedding . . . the mirroring within a story of the storytelling relationship itself" (33). Look at how Lucy's words bring together all the strands: Vindictive, cold Reason recognizes death, but sunny Imagination produces a "happy succeeding life." The "happy succeeding life" to which Lucy refers is probably not the life which would chronologically follow M. Paul's demise (it seems clear that sorrow permeated those years). Nor is the "happy succeeding life" the represented world created by
Lucy's "impromptu faculty," the imaginative world that took the place of—succeeded—the painful reality of life with M. Paul.

The "happy succeeding life" logically signifies one more possibility: the life to follow the one from which she narrates, the life about which Lucy's present-tense interjections are markedly concerned. With this meaning, we can better understand why Lucy must "pause: pause at once," why she must rush through the others' fates as if time is running out. It is. The third storm, occurring in Lucy's final moments, "keens" in time with the second as Lucy looks toward a subsequent life, a rebirth, a "rapture" and a "wondrous reprieve from dread." Lucy has had her moment of happiness in the garden, and anticipates the joy of reunion not here, not in this world, but in Heaven. By telling her story of love, union, separation, and anticipated reunion, Lucy, like Vashti, has shared the pain and the anguish which are destroying her. Lucy's "Farewell," indeed final, signifies both the end of her "life" and of the conclusion of "her" narrative proper.

IV

Now, to shift the tides of my own narrative, I would like to return to the ideological and narratological concerns that have informed this essay. As my analysis of Villette demonstrates, these issues are inextricably linked: our definitions of narratological tools influence the way we
understand key features of a text, and our political concerns influence the deployment of particular methods of analysis. Feminism of the 1980s has advanced our understandings of language, patriarchal oppression, and female strategies of resistance. As we move closer to the twenty-first century, increasing demands are being made for a less exclusive, more historically-specific practice, a methodology that will allow us to better understand the production and reception of diverse feminisms. Our ways of thinking about our rhetorical and structural categories cannot remain separate from our feminist goals. To think of the variety of forms and functions un/reliability might take, to relate them not only to each other but to other narrative categories such as selfconsciousness, pushes us—and I paraphrase de Lauretis—to reconsider (again!) those sacred texts of narrative, asking different questions, employing different strategies, allowing for different desires, and disrupting dominant patterns of thinking.

For if nothing else, Villette is disruptive in its contestation of Victorian constructions of women, desire, and representation. Lucy's "Farewell," like Brontë's conclusion, does not equate ending with death. Quite to the contrary, Brontë's form leads us back into the aesthetic experience; only when we learn of M. Paul's demise and Lucy's impending death can we return to the
text, seeing more and more subtleties in the beginning and the middle. *Villette* is process, not product; it is a living exchange which recognizes the subjecthood of both reader and author as Lucy Snowe lives on within us, "up to, within, well nigh beyond the moment when death says to all sense and all being—'Thus far and no farther!'"
1. Duffy introduced me to people like Tvetzan Todorov, Paul Ricoeur, and M. M. Bakhtin. I remember having a blast writing a paper on *Manon Lescaut* in which I used computer graphics to demonstrate the series of frames that prohibited Manon's voice from ever telling her own story, thus representing patriarchal society. Later, when I read Genette, I was so happy to find that there were terms that could be used to explain the various narrative levels, saving me paragraphs of explanation!

2. Of course some texts might be easily explained within this binary logic, but many are far more complex. Booth is aware, even in 1961, of the potentially problematic consequences: "the equally pervasive irony-hunt will go on. Once on this road we cannot turn back; we cannot pretend that things are as simple as they once seemed. We may commit absurdities, questioning . . . even the most obviously omniscient and reliable narrators. We are not to be stopped by even the most explicit rhetoric" (RoF 369). Booth here foregrounds the primary concerns of rhetorical theory: first, the commitment to produce criticism that attends to the specific dynamics of the individual text; and second, the value placed on the vital, recursive interaction between text and theory.

I borrow the term "progression" from Phelan, who, in *Reading People, Reading Plots*, uses it to indicate that narrative is "a dynamic event, one that must move, in both its telling and its reception, through time" (15). Phelan foregrounds concerns with how an author generates, sustains, develops, and resolves readers' interests in narrative and offers a model which accounts for "tensions," or unstable relations in the discourse (between implied author/narrator and reader), and "instabilities," unstable relations in the story (within a character's personality, or between two or more characters).

3. To name just a few of the numerous and diverse forms of feminist literary criticism: Nancy Armstrong's *Desire and Domestic Fiction*, Barbara Christian's *Black Feminist Criticism*, Teresa de Lauretis's *Alice Doesn't* and *Technologies of Gender*, Nancy K. Miller's *The Heroine's Text and Subject to Change*, and Elaine Showalter's *A Literature of Their Own*, as well as various paradigms of reading offered by Judith Fetterley, Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, Jean Kennard, and Patrocinio Schweikart.

4. While this distinct pattern does emerge from the 1980s critical corpus, I do not mean to suggest that all accounts of *Villette* written during this decade--give or take a couple years on either end--rely on or discuss only the following concerns about narrative authority, heterosexual union, and reliability.
5. By narrative authority, I mean that which Lanser, in *Fictions of Authority*, defines as "the intellectual credibility, ideological validity, and aesthetic value given or conferred upon a work, author, narrator, character, or textual practice" (6). Lanser acknowledges both the ability of unauthorized writers to appropriate authoritative textual strategies and the complicity which often accompanies critiques of Western models of authority. I want to emphasize that I do not use the term "authority" or "autonomy" to designate a stable or universal product, but more to indicate a process that destabilizes dominant voices, producing many contestatory "authoritative" discourses rather than one final master narrative.

6. The impact of Lucy's unreliable narration was noted well before the feminist criticisms of the 1980s: in 1927, E.M. Forster determined that the desire to "suppress" information comes "at the expense of Lucy's character" (93). Interestingly, in 1853, two of Brontë's contemporaries wrote her requesting "'exact and authentic information respecting the fate of M. Paul Emanuel!'" (qtd in *Villette*, notes, 622), suggesting that at the time of its first reception, *Villette*'s plot of heterosexual love held the most interest to readers.

7. In addition to those texts I mention in endnote four, many of which implicitly find heterosexuality a structure of oppression, see also Hélène Cixous, Luce Irigaray, Catherine MacKinnon, Adrienne Rich (especially "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence"), and Monique Wittig.

8. Of course Grewal and Kaplan's examples--dominant/dominated, colonizer/colonized, global/local, and center/periphery--differ from Booth's concerns about first/third person, dramatized/undramatized, etc; but my larger point is that these two models, presented by strikingly dissimilar people working under immensely different conditions at historically distinct times (that is, the time of *The Rhetoric of Fiction* and that of *Scattered Hegemonies*), share the same overall concern for precision, for looking at who deploys what techniques and what the effects of those structures are on different peoples.

9. By double-voicing, I mean the presence of at least two voices in one utterance. This term, credited to Bakhtin, is usually used in relation to issues of unreliability: we often determine a narrator unreliable when the implied author's voice undermines the narrator's. In this essay, I will use double-voicing, distance, irony, and undermining all somewhat interchangeably.
10. Freud notes the transference females make from the primary love for the father to appropriate objects. The substitution of Graham for father as love-object is noted again toward the end of the novel, when Lucy narrates: "Is there, indeed, such happiness on earth? I asked, as I watched the father, the daughter, the future husband, now united—all blessed and blessing" (532).

11. Paralipsis is Genette's term for moments when a narrative "does not skip over a moment of time, as in an ellipsis, but it sidesteps a given element" (52).

12. Elizabeth Langland notes how "formulaic" and "ritualistic" behaviors "enabled women constantly to police and maintain their social borders" (33). Langland focuses extensively on middle-class women, but her discussions of "middle-class borders" implicitly relate to those who are situated on the other side of the boundary. For Lucy to marry Dr. John, the boundary between working-class and middle-class would have to be crossed. Later, when Lucy does become engaged to M. Paul, Madame Beck's negative response to the engagement illustrates the "policing" that Langland discusses.

13. For other accounts of the uses of silence and secrecy, see Magda Gere Lewis, Deidre Lashgar, and Janis Stout.

14. For a fuller analysis of the variety of joking and punning that Lucy engages in, see Robert Heilman's excellent essay.

15. An interesting and related point here is that his faults are very much associated with the imperialist overtones of his trip to the Caribbean: his piety "made him abandon justice to himself to do the work of craft, and serve the ends of selfishness" (595). While his "tenderness," "affection," and "devotion" clearly situate him outside the traditional qualities associated with Victorian masculinity, his complicity in colonialism indirectly causes his death.

16. Seymour Chatman, in Story and Discourse and Coming to Terms, strictly demarcates vision from voice, or story from discourse. The form of story, or "content," consists of story-events, existents, and their connections; the form of discourse, or "expression," consists of elements shared by narratives in any medium—mood, voice, duration, etc. (SD 22-37). For Chatman, discourse space (telling) is not to be confused with story space; he denies that the narrator can inhabit both at the instant of narration (CT 123). My reading of Villette suggests that these boundaries are much more permeable than Chatman allows. See also Harry Shaw's
challenge to Chatman ("Loose Narrators") Chatman's reply and Shaw's rejoinder, as well as Eva Pohler's attempt to adjudicate the two (Chatman and Shaw), and Shaw's response to Pohler.

17. The use of flowers as a symbol of acceptance begins when, as Lucy tells us, "bouquets began to be laid on my desk in the morning" (147) by her students. Lucy's associating flowers not with the joy of teaching, but with the loss of her beloved, leads away from, rather than toward, the conclusion that she found fulfillment as headmistress of her own school.

18. As feminist narratologists continue to grapple with new ways of thinking about rhetorical and structural categories, we remain indebted to the significant contributions made by critics in the 1980s. Susan Lanser, Robyn Warhol, and Nancy K. Miller, among others, not only opened the doors to investigations between formalism and feminism, but remain committed to advancing this area of study.
"IF I'D A KNOWED WHAT A TROUBLE IT WAS": AUTHORIAL DISPOSITION, NARRATORIAL INTROSPECTION, AND AESTHETIC CONTROL IN HUCK FINN

In Chapter the Last of Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, Mark Twain has Huck reflect on his role in the narrative discourse. Here is the final paragraph of the novel:

Tom's most well, now, and got his bullet around his neck on a watch-guard for a watch, and is always seeing what time it is, and so there ain't nothing more to write about, and I am rotten glad of it, because if I'd a knowed what a trouble it was to make a book I wouldn't a tackled it and aint't a-going to no more. But I reckon I got to light out for the Territory ahead of the rest, because Aunt Sally she's going to adopt me and sivilize me and I can't stand it. I been there before.

In the original edition, this passage is followed by a picture of Huck at the bottom of the page, lifting his hat in a final farewell, with the caption, "THE END. YOURS TRULY, HUCK FINN."
The ending provides closure in its conventional return to the beginning, where Huck introduces himself as the character in another book created by Mr. Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*.\(^1\) At the end of that book, the diegetic character Huck Finn submits to the civilizing attempts of the Widow Douglas on the condition that he can be a member of Tom's gang; in the beginning of this book, crossing ontological as well as narratological boundaries, Huck asserts his role as extradiegetic homodiegetic narrator. Moreover, Huck goes beyond his role as narrator when, in passages like the one that ends *Huck Finn*, he accentuates his difficulty with the telling of the story, the "trouble it was to make a book." Like Nick Carraway and Lucy Snowe, Huck Finn explicitly designates himself as the "author" of the narrative, a gesture that typically indicates narratorial selfconsciousness.

But at the same time, Twain's narrator—unlike Fitzgerald's or Brontë's narrators—seems naive. Naive narration occurs when the knowledge between the narrator and his narratee, or ideal narrative audience, significantly differs from that of the implied author and his or her authorial audience.\(^2\) Thus while Huck sees himself at the end of his *Adventures* as about to light out for the Territory, thereby avoiding Aunt Sally's attempts to "sivilize" him, his (and his narratee's) understanding of what he says differs from Twain's and the
authorial reader's: where Huck and his audience deplore civilization's table manners, prayer, and lessons, Twain and his authorial audience condemn civilization's violence and racism. Like Joe Butler in Hemingway's "My Old Man," Huck fails to understand either the full import of the events which he narrates or the effects his own words have on the reader. Huck's naiveté indicates nonselfconscious narration, Huck's failure to control the text's aesthetics --the imagery, metaphors, parallelism of incidents, foreshadowing--in order to achieve a specific and desired response in the reader. The effects of Huck's naiveté thus seem to oppose those of his more explicitly selfconscious gestures.

Critical discourse reflects *Huck Finn*’s contradictory impulses, with some critics reading Huck as fully selfconscious narrator and others finding him completely nonselfconscious. The tension in *Huck Finn* and in *Huck Finn*’s critical corpus creates a space for a further investigation of selfconsciousness. While I will eventually return to the consideration of intersections between selfconsciousness and reliability begun in my discussion of *Villette* in Chapter 2, I begin here by looking at the dynamics of non/selfconscious narration. I first consider at some length how *Huck Finn* critics have deployed selfconsciousness in their attempts to address larger theoretical and interpretive concerns about
identity, language, form/genre, and the by-now-all-too-familiar-"problem-of-the-ending." I go on to demonstrate how the confusion over Huck's contact with the reader stems from the competing forces of three very different criteria for judging selfconsciousness: authorial disposition, or the narrator's self-designation of himself as author or his explicitly-stated concerns about the task of writing; narratorial introspection, or sustained reflections on the literary endeavor or constructedness of narrating/authoring agent; and aesthetic control, the manipulation of the literary techniques, by either the author or narrator, which produces a specific response in the reader. Breaking down the global "selfconsciousness" into sub-categories allows us to better account for the specific qualities of Twain's narrator; once we separate the three strands, we can more adequately account for the larger narrative logic, which relies on Huck's naivete. I conclude this chapter with a three-part analysis of naive narration: (1) I discuss the way naive narration, a third axis of unreliable narration, works to produce the comic effects of the novel; (2) I consider the significance of the comic form in terms of the socio-historical context of the time of production; and (3) I look at how naive narration converges with both reliability and unreliability of norms.

While no critic of whom I am aware has dealt exclusively with the issue of Huck's selfconsciousness,
assumptions about the nature of Huck's contact abound. The decisions critics make about Huck's selfconsciousness, so implicit that the term "selfconscious" rarely or ever is used, play a role as supporting evidence for other theoretical and/or interpretive concerns. Because of the myriad ways in which decisions about a narrator's selfconsciousness relate to other literary and interpretive concerns, I want to spend some time providing an overview of the critical corpus. The criticism of George Monteiro, Keith Opdahl, and Joseph Sawicki, representative of those who are interested in the form of the novel—what has become "problem-of-the-ending" criticism—reveals how central assessments of Huck's selfconsciousness are to structural considerations.

Monteiro, interested in the "block-I" structure of the novel, outlines the way that the story events move from a boyish "lies as play" to a more violent "playing of lies," and then back again at the end to the boy's world. In the initial "lies as play," Huck, in Monteiro's view, assumes the role of selfconscious author: "Samuel Langhorne Clemens, who was, as always, the authority responsible for Mark Twain, the writer who, in turn, cooked up Huck Finn, also an author who, in his own turn, is credited with the creation of the persona responsible for narrating the autobiographical work he called, in cahoots with all the other authorities" (227). Monteiro
distinguishes the retrospective narrator-author Huck from the character Huck, showing how that distinction enhances the moral content of the narrative discourse. As *Huck Finn* moves from the boyish lies as play to describing the harsh playing of lies, "Huck Finn the author is not reticent when it comes to telling the truth about his hero's [Huck-the-character's] suspect behavior" (228). Huck-the-narrator thus selfconsciously and intentionally reveals Huck-the-character's flaws as part and parcel of the "playing of lies" world—"harsh, grim, and violent"—that he (Huck-the-narrator) exposes. For Monteiro, the novel's social critique works because the author (Huck) does not shield the character (Huck) as the character moves into and out of various scrapes and identities. The "block-I" structure, however, forces a return to the boy-like "lies as play," undermining the ethical impact derived from Huck's previous authority. Monteiro's interpretation of the relationship between the "blocks" and the "I"—lies-as-play and playing-of-lies—is grounded in his assumption of Huck's selfconsciousness. For the ending to compromise the rest of the narrative discourse in the fashion Monteiro claims, Huck must be granted the selfconscious authority that is taken from him at the end.

Opdahl shares many of Monteiro's assumptions and conclusions in his investigation of *Huck Finn's* structure: both see Huck as selfconscious and thus self-revelatory;
both consider Huck morally superior; and each voices concern about the efficacy of the ending, although Opdahl more strongly censures Twain. While Monteiro follows the relationship between different types of lies as a means of analyzing the structure, Opdahl traces Huck's style. A "superb stylist" whose "precise language" makes "style the subject of the novel" (277-78), Huck--according to Opdahl--immediately takes authority for the narrative discourse, selfconsciously withholding or revealing story events as a means of creating specific responses from the reader. But when Huck "ceases to give his personal impression of events" (a shift that occurs at the Phelps's farm), Twain, in Opdahl's view, violates the narrative logic (279-81). Opdahl sees the writing here becoming more sophisticated and less self-revelatory, a change that substitutes Huck's wisdom, solemn perception, and comic identity with "a single farcical tone" (284). Opdahl concludes that the form of the ending detracts from the novel's ethical force; his judgment, like Monteiro's, relies on reading Huck as selfconscious for much of the narrative progression.

Where Monteiro and Opdahl see Huck relinquishing authority (and thus selfconsciousness) to Twain, Sawicki suggests that the progression begins with a minimally selfconscious narrator and moves toward a fully self-reflexive text. Sawicki finds that Huck, "ostensibly simple and naive," has "wrested authority for the narrative
from Twain" as early as the opening paragraph, where Huck "begins to act like a novelist," revealing "a good deal of sophistication in his understanding of the nature and effects of writing" (695). As the narrative progresses, Sawicki claims, Huck acts more like a novelist and less like a truth-teller of history. Sawicki sees the Huck of the ending as so sophisticated in his manipulation of narrative technique that he has ultimately become "a figure, a metaphor of the writer struggling with the complex process of mediating between representation and fictionality" (700). The tension between history and fiction culminates in the "Evasion" where Huck is fully transformed "from a character acting out his own experience to a narrator forced to assess the best strategies to 'retell' his own experience" (700). Sawicki needs to begin with the tacit assumption of Huck's selfconsciousness, or he will be unable to determine Huck's role in the meta-commentary. For Sawicki, as for Opdahl and Monteiro, judging Huck selfconscious provides the base for the entire argument about the problem of the ending.

Perhaps the most implicit assumption of Huck's selfconscious contact comes from Gerry Brenner, who cleverly rewrites Huck's story from Jim's point of view. In Brenner's version of Huck Finn, Huck is manipulative, mean, and racist--both as character and as retrospective narrator who, "to make hissef look better . . . planted dat
passage [the passage where Huck agonizes about the moral dilemma at the Phelps farm] like it wuz a flower bed of moral worryin'" in order to "gets folks to think well o' him" (466). Huck's intentionality behind "plant[ing] dat passage" designates him as selfconscious. Brenner's critique, like Monteiro's, Opdahl's, and Sawicki's, shows how the nature of homodiegetic narration, where the voice and diction originate with the "I" narrator, can—with just one little step—easily be deemed selfconscious narration. James Phelan addresses this tendency in his reply to Brenner, "On the Nature and Status of Covert Texts."

Phelan points out that, for Brenner's subversive account to work, Huck must be considered selfconscious: Despite the surface appearances of naiveté, he is actually always in control of his narrative, always aware of how what he says might be affecting his audience. (It must be always; since the text does not call attention to Huck as a self-conscious narrator, Brenner cannot be anything but arbitrary if he were to say that Huck is in control in some places but not in others.) (475)

Going on to list the numerous places where the text's recalcitrance weakens Brenner's interpretation, Phelan reminds us that in homodiegesis the dominant voice is always that of the first-person narrator, and thus "it is
always possible to see him as in control of the narrative, always possible to read motives into what he tells and how he tells it" (476). Phelan finds the assumed link between dominant voice and aesthetic control generally unwarranted and, in the case of *Huck Finn*, incorrect. Following the path of more traditional critics like Lionel Trilling, T. S. Eliot, Leo Marx, James Cox, and Wayne C. Booth, Phelan sees Huck's narration as naive, and therefore nonselfconscious. In fact, in some places Huck "essentially disappears," becoming "the all but transparent window" for Twain's own views; like Frederic Henry in Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*, Huck exemplifies the "unselfconscious reporter."

Janet A. Gabler-Hover and Joyce Rowe similarly consider Huck nonselfconscious. For Gabler-Hover, Twain's "faithful use of first-person narrative" results in "a character who is clearly not Mark Twain in terms of his moral vision but who is . . . a character whose moral vision, though profound, is seriously and consistently flawed"; the "tragic blindness in Huck's character is his consistent lack of conscious awareness and admission of universal as opposed to socially imposed moral imperatives" (69). Rowe goes one step further in suggesting not only that Huck's lack of selfconsciousness renders him morally irresponsible, but also that Twain's aesthetic choices, especially his deployment of a naive narrator, "allowed him
[Twain] to deny conscious responsibility" (51). Where Monteiro's, Opdahl's, Sawicki's, and Brenner's accounts assume a coherent selfconsciousness, Phelan's, Gabler-Hover's, and Rowe's analyses assume an equally coherent nonselfconsciousness. Stephen Blakemore and Henry Wonham take a more middle ground, seeing the nature of Huck's contact as variable.

Blakemore and Wonham appraise Huck as selfconscious, but ultimately conclude that Twain's own control of the language circumscribes Huck's command of the same. Blakemore claims that "[t]he cluster of concrete images, colloquial expressions, and vivid verbs . . . combine to make Huck's style an exuberant linguistic event" (21), yet credits Twain, not Huck, for the opening paragraph's "self-conscious questioning of the medium he [Twain] writes in"; he further notes that "Huck is not always linguistically self-conscious, [although] Twain surely is" (22). Huck's selfconsciousness, in Blakemore's view, serves as Twain's reflective mirror just as his (Twain's) own "self-conscious position of creator of all the book's languages, in which he writes about the deceptions of words and books, in a book about Huck Finn writing a book about the questionable meaning of words and books" leads to a hall of mirrors, self-reflexively questioning language and truth.

Similarly interested in *Huck Finn's* use of language, Wonham links the form of Twain's text to the form of
Twain's platform technique. Twain's "yarnspinning style" of public speaking allowed him to adopt a persona who speaks gravely but knows better, whose "affected seriousness served as an invitation to excessively naive listeners . . . to adopt a correspondingly grave interpretation of his words, while the implied humorist shared a tacit joke with those members of the audience who saw through the deadpan and appreciated the crafted absurdity of his narration" (8). Wonham's initial move toward seeing Huck Finn as a "rhetorical posture made real" seems, at first glance, to move him in the direction of the more traditional critics. Just as Booth said years ago, that "the story that Mark Twain tells us is consequently quite different from the story that Huck thinks he is telling" (*Rhetoric of Irony* 141), Wonham concedes that Huck "enjoys no access to the perspective of the implied humorist . . . [he is . . . genuinely rather than affectedly ignorant of his mistakes" (9)—in other words, a naive narrator. But Wonham differs from the traditionalist view when he goes on to assert that "Mark Twain as an authorial commentator remains equally cut off from Huck's narrative consciousness"; the rhetorical posture in the novel forces a distance between Twain and Huck that was not evident in the stage performances, where Twain was never far removed from the mask of the persona. Thus Wonham sees Huck's story as significant in its own right as the
frustrated tale of Buck's own desire for inclusion in the "elite interpretive circle" that his story defines (9-11).

I have spent some time with each of these critical stances not only to provide an overview of the diverse assumptions concerning the nature of Buck's contact, nor simply to illustrate the significant ways in which our decisions about selfconsciousness inform our larger projects, but to emphasize the variety of ways in which critics interpret the text's formal features when determining, implicitly or explicitly, a narrator's selfconsciousness. For Monteiro, Opdahl, and Sawicki, Buck's explicit references to himself as author of the book suggest selfconsciousness; Gabler-Hover and Rowe overlook the distinct indications, as does Phelan, who claims that "the text does not call attention to Buck as a selfconscious narrator"; these three critics foreground situations in which we can clearly see Twain's aesthetic control creating effects that Buck is not aware of. Both Blakemore and Wonham suggest--albeit disparately--that Huck Finn is more a story about the storyteller and the struggle of storytelling, whether the storyteller is Buck, Twain, or both.

How is it that critics have reached such different conclusions about Buck's contact? Clearly, they are responding to different textual cues. With the exception of Phelan, no critic explicitly refers to what it is in the
text that influences her interpretation of Huck's narrator traits—and even Phelan's insistence on Huck's nonselfconsciousness asks us to overlook those moments in the text where Huck explicitly refers to his role as author. Perhaps the best way to negotiate this interpretive impasse is to scrutinize the category of selfconsciousness itself.

II

In my discussion of _Villette_ in the previous chapter, I introduced the major players in the propagation and perpetuation of selfconsciousness: Wayne C. Booth, James Phelan, and Susan Sniader Lanser. Booth, of course, makes the initial distinction between selfconscious narrators who are "aware of themselves as writers" and narrators who "rarely if ever discuss their writing chores" (RoF 155); Phelan tells us that "we assume that the homodiegetic narrator is not the source of such things as foreshadowing, patterns of imagery, parallelism of incidents, the lyricism of a particular style—unless we have some signal that calls our attention to the narrator's self-consciousness"—in other words, that nonselfconscious narration is the default (Narrative as Rhetoric 81); and Lanser sees a continuum of selfconsciousness as an "awareness of a narratee or a communicative context" (The Narrative Act 177). I have also noted that the selfconscious narrator is itself a narrative convention:
although we readers know that the flesh-and-blood Brontë was the source of all the literary techniques, including the creation of one Lucy Snowe who asserts her own role as "author," we suspend that knowledge and assign responsibility for the imagery, parallelism of incidents, lyricism of style, foreshadowing, and so on to Lucy. We can thus see the phantasmatic nature of selfconsciousness.

Discussing Gatsby in Chapter 1, I attempted to distinguish the relationship between implied author/narrator from that of authorial audience/flesh-and-blood reader. I suggested that the unstable space where the authorial audience and the flesh-and-blood reader intersect helps form the real and unreal of both text and reader, and thus might be considered a phantasmatic. Something similar can be said, I think, of the relationship between implied author and narrator in terms of selfconsciousness. It may be stating the obvious to note that the implied author/narrator relationship has no stable boundaries; restrictions arise only when the flesh-and-blood author begins to write and imposes certain limitations through characterization, restrictions related to his or her larger purpose. Significantly, these qualifications work both ways: as the narrative logic develops, implied author and narrator become both liberated and confined by the unfolding events. The issue of selfconsciousness relates to our understanding of the
implied author/narrator relationship in that both what and how a text means can take on strikingly different forms depending on who is held responsible for the layout of the narrative discourse. In other words, the space between implied author and narrator may be just as unstable as that between flesh-and-blood reader and authorial audience. Our attempts to stabilize that space, to determine which characteristics belong to implied author and which to narrator, help form the real and the unreal of each textual agent and thus function as a phantasmatic. Thus our mediations in that space need to reflect, with some degree of precision, the formal features that delimit that space.

Of course, not all differences can be resolved vis-a-vis an appeal to precision; however, I do think a careful reconsideration of non/selfconsciousness might enhance our abilities to think and write about specific narrator/implied author relationships. Let's begin with Booth. What does Booth mean by the term "rarely" when he asserts that the nonselfconscious narrator "rarely if ever" discusses her writing chore? Is rarely once? twice? five times? three times in a short story and ten times in a novel of more than one-hundred-twenty-three pages? How does Lanser's claim that homodiegetic selfconsciousness can be determined by looking at the narrator's relation "as narrator to the narratee" differ from Booth's notion of selfconsciousness? Is it enough to say that because Huck
Finn reveals an awareness of the communicative activity in which he is involved to his narratee, he is selfconscious? If so, then would this be "content-motivated" or "occasional"? Finally, how does the Boothian selfconscious narrator, "aware of [him]self as writer," and Lanser's narrator, aware of the communicative context, relate to Phelan's notion of the selfconscious narrator as one whom we hold responsible for the patterns of imagery, the parallelism of incidents, the lyricism of the style, and the other aesthetic techniques?

Much of the difficulty in assessing homodiegetic selfconsciousness stems, I think, from our failure to recognize the different qualities that comprise this category. Taking the theories of selfconsciousness provided by Booth, Lanser, and Phelan, three different criteria emerge: (1) the homodiegetic narrator makes an explicit reference to his role as the party responsible for the communicative act; (2) selfconscious narrators may differ in degree; (3) she is the one we credit with the various aesthetic techniques. Each of these axes of selfconsciousness operates in the critical accounts I summarized earlier. Monteiro, Opdahl, Sawicki, and Brenner each emphasizes Huck's awareness of his status as author; Wonham and Blakemore note variations in degrees of selfconsciousness during the progression of the narrative discourse; Phelan, Gabler-Hover, and Rowe accentuate the
source who controls the aesthetics—the source who controls the literary techniques which produce specific responses in the reader, rather than, say, the narratee or narrative audience. But are the three axes of selfconsciousness so much at odds? If so, then it would seem to me we have run into a theoretical impasse, one which might require us to use different, more intricate terminology. In other words, the trouble with discussions of Huck's contact stems from a definition of selfconsciousness which forces together three potentially arbitrary formal features: self-designation of authorship, degree of self-designation, and control of the aesthetics. The first I call authorial disposition, the second narratorial introspection, and the third aesthetic control. By taking these three different strands one by one, we can come to see how the various dynamics in *Huck Finn* have led to opposing readings of Huck's selfconsciousness.

"So there ain't nothing more to write about," Huck says at the end of the novel, "and I am rotten glad of it, because if I'd a knowed what a trouble it was to make a book I wouldn't a tackled it and aint't agoing to no more" (366). Buck clearly designates himself as author of the *Adventures*, here and in other passages. Escaping from Pap, Huck falls asleep and, upon awakening, forgets his location. He tries to describe the disorientation he feels by giving us a description of the river and moon, and then
saying, "Everything was dead quiet, and it looked late, and *smelt* late. You know what I mean--I don't know the words to put it in" (58). Huck's awareness of his limitations, his inability to "know the words" in this scene, as in the later passage when Huck tells us that he "can't imitate [the king], so I ain't agoing to try to" (209), suggests a narrator who is aware of himself as writer. Moreover, Huck's use of the present tense in each of these passages indicates that the struggle to find the right words occurs at the time of the discourse, reinforcing his authorial disposition.

Huck further foregrounds his authorial disposition when he narrates, again using present-tense discourse, the shoot-out between the Shepherdsons and Grangerfords. Huck says, "I don't want to talk much about the next day. I reckon I'll cut it pretty short" (152); "I ain't agoing to tell all that happened--it would make me sick again if I was to do that. I wished I hadn't ever come ashore that night, to see such things" (154). Our sense of Huck's authorial disposition is further augmented when the narrator emphasizes the time elapsed between the story events and the moment of narration. Again, the Shepherdson/Grangerford incident works in this way: "I ain't ever going to get shut of them," Huck says, "lots of times I dream about them" (154). Later, he mentions that he "hain't ever seen [Mary Jane] since that time that I see
her go out of that door; no, I hain't ever seen her since, but I reckon I've thought of her a many and a many million times" (245). These passages, indicating retrospective narration, do not explicitly refer to Huck's writing task, but they enhance our sense of Huck-the-narrator as distinct from Huck-the-character. Because the general trajectory of the narrative discourse involves what Dorrit Cohn calls "consonant narration"—with the narrating-Huck and the character-Huck collapsed without a sense of greater knowledge stemming from the narrator—the distinction at these moments heightens our sense of Huck's authorial disposition. Clearly, he considers himself the author of these adventures. But what exactly is the relationship between authorial disposition and the other two axes of selfconsciousness, narratorial introspection and aesthetic control?

It seems to me that a narrator with an authorial disposition may be just as limited in his understanding and/or control of the narrative discourse as one without an authorial disposition. Narrators like Ernest Hemingway's Frederic Henry, William Faulkner's Quentin Compson (of "That Evening Sun" and The Sound and the Fury, but not Absalom, Absalom!) do not have authorial dispositions, and we tend to read them as nonselconscious. But, I want to argue, the reverse need not hold true: Huck Finn, like Whitey in Ring Lardner's "Haircut," demonstrates an
awareness of the narrating task, but such cognizance need not indicate control of the literary techniques. That is, the narrator's awareness of his status as "author" may exist at a purely diegetic level, within the communicative context of narrator/narratee.

Lanser's idea of a continuum of contact allows us to discriminate between the narrator who simply gestures toward her role as author and she who is aware of the ways in which her choices affect the progression of the narrative discourse. When a narrator moves from simply referring to herself as the author of a particular narrative to sustained reflections on her role as storyteller, we have a case of narratorial introspection. The introspective narrator almost always--perhaps always?--involves a narrator with authorial disposition, but this narrator does more than gesture toward her authorship. She actually reflects on her status as author, questioning her abilities and limitations, manipulating the reader's responses, and altering the trajectory of the narrative.

Introspective narrators range from those who, like Nick Carraway, break the frame of the narration to fill in missing facts to create expectations within the reader and to direct the reader toward a specific understanding of the narrative; to the Lucy Snowes whose frequent, passionate, and sustained appeals to her reader correspond with both her development as narrator/character and the *bildungsroman*
quality of *Villette*; to the Tristram Shandys whose intrusiveness ultimately constitutes a significant, if not the significant, part of the narrative discourse.⁹

While we end up with a clear picture of Huck as a narrator with an authorial disposition, none of the moments where Huck reflects on his writing task suggests narratorial introspection. Huck's gestures toward his role as author are no more than that: brief demonstrations which do little to engage us in the struggle of telling that, say, a Tristram Shandy or Geoffrey Braithwaite invoke. To the contrary, what the reflections on the writing task reinforce is our sense of the significance of those events about which Huck narrates or keeps quiet. Sustained reflections on the literary endeavor, moments where Huck contemplates his accuracy or honesty, do not appear. Narratorial intrusions never subsume the events of the story. The lack of any formal features suggesting introspection perhaps led Blakemore to determine that Huck is ultimately "Twain's reflective mirror," rather than a selfconscious narrator; without narratorial introspection, Wonham could easily assert that Twain and Huck, two distinct "authors," remain cut off from each other's stories.¹⁰

Reviewing the critical interpretations of *Huck Finn* that I cited earlier, I believe that the various critics would readily agree to both the presence of Huck's
authorial disposition and the absence of introspective narration. Even Phelan, who in chastizing Brenner for deeming Huck as "always in control of his narrative" might be equally reprimanded for his (Phelan's) own failure to account for those moments where the text foregrounds Huck's awareness of himself as writer ("since the text does not call attention to Huck as self-conscious narrator"), would, I am quite sure, quickly concede to Huck's authorial disposition. Complications arise, then, from the problematic nature of aesthetic control.

Before moving on to discussing aesthetic control, I do want to make it clear that these three axes can relate to one another in myriad ways. Consider the first three chapters of Villette, where Lucy's non-introspective narration parallels the lack of authorial disposition and—as Brontë's containment of Lucy's discourse indicates—gives aesthetic control to the implied author. In Chapter 4, however, when Lucy (ironically) beseeches her "reader" to "picture me . . . as a bark slumbering through halcyon weather," we see that authorial disposition gives way to narratorial introspection—"I must not, from the faithful narrator, degenerate into the partial eulogist." I think that many narratives will show these categories working in conjunction: the introspective narrator most likely will have an authorial disposition, although here again, the reverse may not be true. Frequently, the narrator with an
authorial disposition does control the aesthetics, as does the introspective narrator, yet once again we must be cautious, for a narrator might control the aesthetics without being introspective. Designating herself in Chapter 4 as the "author" who speaks directly to the "reader," Lucy first manipulates the reader into ideating a false image of her life and then interjects the primary imagery (shipwrecks, storms) that will function as metaphors and as foreshadowing for all the major narrative events. Does this mean that the obverse is also true, that a narrator with an authorial disposition must also control the aesthetics? Not necessarily. If we turn back to Huck Finn, we can see that an authorial disposition might not necessarily indicate aesthetic control.

The explicit rhetoric by which Huck designates himself as author often corresponds with Huck's sense of his limitations, and, in fact, these moments frequently undermine, rather than increase, his authority. For instance, in the first chapter, Huck goes upstairs at the widow's. "I felt so lonesome I most wished I was dead," he narrates. "The stars was shining, and the leaves rustled in the woods ever so mournful" (20). After escaping from Pap, Huck falls asleep. When he awakens, he sits up, looks around, "a little scared. Then I remembered. The river looked miles and miles across. The moon was so bright I could a counted the drift logs that went a slipping along,
black and still, hundreds of yards out from shore." Huck doesn't "know the words to" explain his world the night he left Pap: "Everything was dead quiet, and it looked late, and smelt late. You know what I mean—I don't know the words to put it in" (58). Huck believes his inability to find the right words relates to the lateness, the stillness of that evening; we sense that his inability to articulate relates more to his inability to understand his own feelings of abandonment and loneliness. The river scene parallels the earlier passage at the widow's while, at the same time, the passage at the widow's foreshadows the scene on the river. But Huck recognizes neither the descriptive nor emotive parallels between the two events. Even when Huck describes night falling on the island, when "it was dark" and he "got sort of lonesome, and so I went and set on the bank and listened to the currents washing along, and counted the stars and drift-logs and rafts that come down, and then went to bed; there ain't no better way to put in time when you are lonesome" (64), we sense that Huck tells us more about himself than he recognizes, for in one sense the scene asks us to recognize that the character Huck felt more alone than the narrator Huck can articulate.

Likewise, his reticence about the Shepherdson/Grangerford shoot-out, withholding what he believes protects him from getting sick again, functions to distance the reader from Huck's point-of-view. Huck doesn't
understand the larger critique of society that this episode relates, but we do. Yet in another way, this passage brings us closer to Huck by increasing our faith in his gut instincts as to what is "right" or "wrong"—even while he doesn't fully "get it." Even when Huck makes comments like "lots of times I dream about [the Shepherdson/Grangerford events]" (154) or "I hain't ever seen [Mary Jane] since, but I reckon I've thought of her a many and a many million times" (245), all this really tells us is that the narration isn't "to-the-moment" like, say, Pamela or Waiting for the Barbarians. Authorial disposition thus does not seem to designate Huck as the putative source of the literary techniques. Rather, Huck's authorial disposition functions to create a persona for the narrator as distinct from the actual author. If a narrator's authorial disposition does not necessarily indicate that the narrator has aesthetic control, what does?

In homodiegesis, the imagery, metaphors, foreshadowing, and so forth are presented within the voice that belongs to the narrator. The homodiegetic narrator is always, at some level, the origin from which the aesthetic choices emanate. However, the narrator-narratee level is not the one from which we determine aesthetic control; rather, we must ask who is the source that manipulates the aesthetics in such a way that they produce specific responses in the reader. In other words, who is the source
of the effects of the aesthetic choices? Aesthetic control can be assessed by looking at whom we hold responsible for choosing the literary techniques that produce specific effects on the flesh-and-blood reader as she reads in the authorial audience. I think it fair enough to go along with Phelan's default and note that, unless the text signals otherwise, the implied author is responsible for the aesthetic choices and the effects of those choices on the reader.

To determine whether or not Huck has aesthetic control, then, we need to attend specific passages where techniques such as foreshadowing, imagery, parallelism of scenes, metaphors, and so on, create certain effects. Listen to Huck's description of the sunrise over the Mississippi:

The sun was up so high when I waked, that I judged it was after eight o'clock. I laid there in the grass and the cool shade, thinking about things and feeling rested and ruther comfortable and satisfied. I could see the sun out of one or two holes, but mostly it was big trees all about, and gloomy in there amongst them. There was freckled places on the ground where the light sifted down through the leaves, and the freckled places swapped about a little, showing there was
a little breeze up there. A couple of squirrels
set on a limb and jabbered at me very friendly.

(61)
The voice and word choices are clearly Huck's: the
adjectives/nouns so high, ruther comfortable, big trees,
freckled places, little breeze, very friendly all belong to
our narrator. But what of the alliteration of S and W in
the first sentence—"The Sun was up so high when I waked";
and the assonance of A: waked, eight, laid, shade;
followed by the poetry of: light, leaves, little, holes,
all, gloomy, freckled, places, leaves, breeze, ground,
down, about. Is Huck responsible for the lyrical quality
of this passage and others like it?

The dynamics of this passage foreground the
difficulties associated with determining aesthetic control.
It can certainly be a tricky business, ascertaining who to
hold responsible for the literary techniques; the challenge
stems, in part, from competing impulses. In homodiegesis,
as Phelan has already said, the voice and point-of-view
belong to the narrator and thus are marked by the his own
vocabulary and diction, tempting us into always seeing the
narrator as the one in control of the aesthetics. But on
the other hand, as I have mentioned, the knowledge that the
implied author is the final source of all the literary
techniques might equally persuade us to prematurely
maintain that she should be credited with control of the
aesthetics. How, then, do we begin to determine who to hold responsible for a passage such as the description of the sunrise?

One thing that strongly dissuades me from granting Huck control over the aesthetics of this passage is the incongruity between the overall effect the passage produces and the specific individual word choices. Look at how very unsophisticated the words are: lots of "to be" verbs, general modifiers and nouns. Huck's vocabulary is clearly limited, unsophisticated, in and of itself, yet it results in poetry. The gap between the ordinary words and the extraordinary poetic quality they produce suggests to me that Twain manipulates Huck's limited vocabulary, that Twain, not Huck, is the source of the aesthetic techniques and thus responsible for the effects they create in the reader. However, this passage, when considered alone, does not provide definitive evidence of Huck's lack of aesthetic control. After all, we could have an older, more sophisticated narrator containing the younger character's voice. However, the narrative discourse does almost nothing to suggest that the retrospective narration establishes a significant gap between an older, wiser, literary narrator and his younger, naive, unsophisticated character. In fact, Twain's use of both paralipsis and paralepsis intimate just the opposite, that Huck-as-
narrator and Huck-as-character are practically indistinguishable.

A paralipsis occurs in Chapter IV when Huck tells us that the townspeople, upon finding a drowned person, believed it to be Pap, an interpretation that Huck (correctly) rejects. The misreading of the drowned man nicely foreshadows the actual drowning of Pap represented in Chapter IX. In Chapter IX, however, Huck—who as retrospective narrator would already know that the drowned man in the story was Pap—does not present this information. Like Lucy Snowe withholding her knowledge of Dr. John from the reader in Brontë's Villette, Huck omits something which he, as narrator, knows. But is Huck deliberately deceiving his reader as Lucy did hers? Now a very astute reader—and I'm not sure if the authorial reader is signified as being this astute—might correctly surmise in the first reading that the dead man is Pap. But for those less-astute readers (like me) who fail to make the association during our first reading, Jim—not Huck—tells us of Pap's demise at the same time he (Jim) tells Huck. The use of paralipsis in Huck Finn differs from that in Villette most significantly because the narrating-Lucy withholds information to manipulate her reader's responses, to increase her control of the aesthetics. Huck does not. The "paralipsis" here does not suggest intentionality, or control of the literary techniques, on the narrator's part,
and thus cannot properly be called a paralipsis. The dynamic here, as with many non-reflective homodiegetic narratives, underscores the minimal distance between the narrating-Huck and the character Huck; moreover, it foregrounds Twain's control of the foreshadowing and juxtaposition of scenes. While Lucy Snowe's character-trait and narrator-trait of reticence are mimetic dimensions that consistently function to further the theme of female authority, the paralipsis in *Huck Finn* works to reinforce our understanding of the narrative as predominantly merging Huck's point-of-view as narrator with his focalization as character.

In addition to paralipsis, Twain uses paralepsis to designate himself, not Huck, as the one with aesthetic control. Describing Pap's behaviors when staying with the new judge, Huck says, "And after supper [the judge] talked to him about temperance and such things till the old man cried, and said he'd been a fool . . . [t]he judge said he could hug him for them words; so he cried" (42). Huck wasn't there; he couldn't know what the judge said or that Pap cried; we never receive the source of Huck's information. The paralepsis here brings to mind Phelan's discussion of "authoritative narration" in *The Great Gatsby*. Phelan notes that Nick's narration of the events that occur in Wilson's garage were not witnessed by Nick, and that Nick never says how he receives that information.
"If Fitzgerald does not present this information scenically," Phelan writes, "it will interfere with the reader's inferential activity in piecing the story together . . . [i]f Fitzgerald calls attention to how Nick learned what he tells us, Fitzgerald will also call attention to the limits of Nick's knowledge . . . if Fitzgerald tried to supply the source of Nick's knowledge, he would very likely weaken the authority of the scene" (NaR 109). The situation in *Huck Finn* resembles the one in *Gatsby* in that in both instances the scenic presentation of information does not interfere with the reading activity. But the two differ as well. In *Gatsby's* case, because Nick Carraway immediately establishes himself as the one who controls the aesthetics, Nick's authority is reaffirmed. The paralepsis in *Huck Finn* is more likely to call attention to the limits of Huck's knowledge and point us toward Twain's control of the literary techniques.

Much as the text foregrounds Twain's greater knowledge in this paralepsis, the imagery functions to reveal more about Huck than Huck himself understands, reaffirming our sense of Twain, not Huck, controlling the aesthetics. The diction and perspective of an eleven-year-old give Twain a freedom that an older, more mature narrator doesn't have. Can you imagine Nick Carraway describing the Buchanan estate like this: "mostly it was big trees all about, and gloomy in there amongst them"? Of course not. What Twain
gains by using the syntax, diction, and perspective of an adolescent boy is a lively voice, capable of painting wonderful pictures in a charming fashion, but who remains unaware of the fuller import of his own words. We get a better sense of Huck-the-narrator's character through this combination, and the narrator's character closely resembles the slightly younger Huck-the-character. At no point do we see the narrator as possessing a better understanding than his character, although we do see the character coming to understand the consequences of some of his actions, most notably in the jokes he plays on Jim.

A wonderful example of the shared perspective between the narrating-Huck and the experiencing-Huck comes with Huck's description of the circus:

"It was a real bully circus. It was the splendidest sight that ever was, when they all come riding in, two by two, a gentleman and a lady, side by side, the men just in their drawers and under-shirts, and no shoes nor stirrups, and resting their hands on their thighs, easy and comfortable—there must a' been twenty of them—and every lady with a lovely complexion, and perfectly beautiful, and looking just like a gang of real sure-enough queens, and dressed in clothes that cost millions of dollars, and just
littered with diamonds. It was a powerful sight;
I never see anything so lovely. (192)
The exaggeration—"millions of dollars"—and the
incongruous "gang" of "queens" who are "littered with
diamonds" are wonderfully Huck's, whose perception of the
"bully circus" differs greatly from our own. Here we,
along with Twain, implicitly understand that these are
carnies, and probably not the most sophisticated group of
carnies, wearing a lot of make-up and cheap, glittery
costumes. The word-choices, replete with metaphoric
qualities, once again belong to Huck, but our understanding
of this scene differs significantly from Huck's
understanding—his understanding both as character and as
narrator. We reject the narrator's interpretation of the
scene and, because Twain contains Huck's narrative
discourse here, we conclude that Huck cannot be responsible
for the effects the literary techniques create. While Huck
has an authorial disposition, and while the word-choices
and diction are his, we recognize his very limited access
to the aesthetics of the narrative discourse.

Separating the global "selfconsciousness" into three
axes thus proves to be a useful method for investigating
Huck Finn and, I suspect, for other homodiegetic
narratives. In homodiegesis where the three axes—
authorial disposition, narratorial introspection, and
aesthetic control—are not contiguous, we may be better off
to do away with the term "selfconscious" altogether and look specifically at each of the narrator-traits. If my analysis above has merit, then we should all be pretty much able to agree that Huck's authorial disposition complements his otherwise naive narration.

III

Huck Finn's reader resembles Judith Loftus, the woman who "reads" Sarah--Sarah Mary--Williams. Sarah Williams, you remember, is the name Huck chooses when, dressed as a girl, he visits the town on the Illinois shore and hears his own story from Judith Loftus in the shanty. Huck has no idea that Judith quickly catches on to his bluff; he, speaking sincerely and earnestly, thinks he's telling her a pretty convincing tale. Huck's words and actions, however, give him away, much to Judith's amusement. Huck's naiveté, his inability to read himself accurately, or understand the woman's reactions, creates a comic effect here and elsewhere, and functions as a *mise en abyme*. We are amused with Huck in a way that parallels the woman's amusement with "Sarah Mary Williams." The humor that results from Huck's limited cognitive abilities makes naive narration a unique type of unreliable narration, yet the implications of naive narration remain relatively untheorized. To address this theoretical oversight, I will first consider the function of the naive as a form of the comic and then
turn toward developing a model for this third type of unreliable narration.

In his *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*, Sigmund Freud discusses how the naive functions as a unique form of the comic. Because Huck's naive narration contributes to the satiric qualities of Twain's text, I think it worthwhile to discuss the Freudian concept of the naive, which involves working through Freud's analysis of jokes and the comic. Central to Freud's analysis of jokes is the parallel structure of the joke and dream-work. Both submit thought material to "strange revision": displacement, indirect representation, and condensation characterize both the dreaming process and joking. These three processes may work independently or together.

Jokes which rely on double meaning operate through displacement. Just as the dream makes it "possible for the cathetic energy to pass over uninhibited from the important ideas to the unimportant ones" (203), some jokes divert "the train of thought from one meaning to the other" (61). For example: "'A horse-dealer was recommending a saddle-horse to a customer. "If you take this horse and get on it at four in the morning you'll be at Pressburg by half-past six."--"What should I be doing in Pressburg at half-past six in the morning?'" (62). Here, what is important (the ability of the horse) is diminished while the unimportant life-style of the purchaser is emphasized.

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The next element common to the dream-work and the joke is indirect representation, or "representation by something similar or . . . 'correlated' or 'connected'" (86). Often this connection is a resemblance in sound. Freud quotes Lichtenberg's writing: "'A girl scarcely twelve Moden [modes] old.'" The joke works by indirect representation because "twelve Moden" sounds like "'twelve Monden [moons]', i.e. months"; the girl's age is represented vis-a-vis the changing fashions, rather than the changing moon.

The joke, like the "task of dream-formation," often functions "to overcome the inhibition from the censorship" (204). While the examples of displacement and indirect representation above bear little evidence of the expression of inhibition, the following joke, an example of condensation, shows this quality quite strongly. In both dreams and jokes, common elements condense, or fold into each other or into a common third element (77). Freud offers this example which helps demonstrate condensation: "'Serenissimus was making a tour through his provinces and noticed a man in the crowd who bore a striking resemblance to his own exalted person. He beckoned to him and asked: 'Was your mother at one time in service in the Palace? '--"No, your Highness," was the reply, "but my father was"" (79-80). As Freud explains, "here new and unexpected unities are set up, relations of ideas to one another, definitions made mutually or by reference to a common third
element" (77). The eerie resemblance is described by a mutual relation discovered to exist between them, indicated by Serenissimus's comment on the other man's mother. Furthermore, the joke here functions to overcome a social inhibition. From Serenissimus's point-of-view, as (traditionally) from most of society's point-of-view, it is acceptable that the father sleep with another woman, but the thought of the mother sleeping with another man is strongly censored.

Of course, *Huck Finn* is not a joke, but Twain's text is, however, humorous and much of the humor stems from what Freud calls the comic.¹² The comic, Freud tells us, arises when one set of behavior, physical or mental, seems to us "extravagant and inexpedient." We laugh at the comic behavior because we make "a comparison . . . between the movement [we] observe in the other person and the one that [we] should have carried out [ourselves] in his place." Freud's point is that we possess, in our memory, ideas about expenditures on similar movements. The comic occurs when, through ideation, we create an image of what our expenditure might be and then compare it to the exaggerated behavior that occurs in another (235-37).

Now, three things distinguish the joke from the comic: (1) jokes are made and the comic is found (224); (2) the inhibition that characterizes the joke is often absent in the comic (230); and (3) the pleasure of jokes is located
in the unconscious while the pleasure of the comic is located in the expenditure of psychic energy in the preconscious (258). While the joke and the comic are not exactly the same, they need not be seen as mutually exclusive: the joke, Freud writes, "is the contribution made to the comic from the realm of the unconscious" (258). Nowhere does the relationship between the joke and the comic become more clear than in Freud's discussion of the naive.

"The naïve," Freud writes, "agrees with jokes as regards wording and content: it brings about a misuse of words" (229). But the psychical process in the naïve does not conform to that in jokes. In the joke, there is displacement, indirect representation, and condensation; in the naïve, the naïve person thinks he has used his means of expression and trains of thought normally and simply, and he has no arrière pensée in mind; nor does he derive any yield of pleasure from producing something naïve . . . In that respect the naïve is a marginal case of the joke. (229)

Freud gives this wonderful example of the naïve:

A brother and sister—a twelve-year-old girl and a ten-year-old boy—were performing a drama composed by themselves before an audience of uncles and aunts. The scene represented a hut by
the sea-shore. In the first act the two author-actors, a poor fisherman and his honest wife, are complaining about the hard times and their small earnings. The husband decides to cross the wide seas in his boat to seek his fortune elsewhere, and, after tender farewells between the two of them, the curtain falls. The second act takes place a few years later. The fisherman has returned a wealthy man with a big bag of money; and he tells his wife, who awaits his arrival outside the hut, what good fortune he has met with in foreign lands. His wife interrupts him proudly: 'I too have not been idle.' And thereupon she opens the door of the hut and reveals to his eyes twelve large dolls lying asleep on the floor. (227)

The children clearly have no idea of the import of their words and suggested actions, and humor occurs because we, like the relatives watching the drama, have knowledge which the children don't possess, or, in Freud's terminology, we ideate a very different set of circumstances than the author-actors did. In a real life situation, the speakers --in this case the children--are responsible for their words and diction, but because they do not have the intellectual, cognitive ability of most adults, their discourse produces a response contrary to, or inexplicable
in terms of, their intentions. The people watching the children's play laugh, as do the listeners of the joke.

The difference between real life and a constructed narrative like *Huck Finn* lies in the fact that although both Huck and the girl-child in Freud's example do not have the ability to comprehend the significance of their narrations, the humor of the girl's situation arises without intentionality, while the humor of Huck's words are controlled, intentionally produced by Twain. (In much the same way as Wonham describes Twain's platform technique.) The humor occurs because Huck lacks what I'll call the "cultural literacy" Twain and his readers possess. The distance between Huck and Twain thus presents a third axis of unreliability, one far less common than the other two axes, unreliabilities of norms and of facts. We do not sense that Twain ironizes Buck's values, or that Huck omits or misrepresents crucial information. Huck simply does not have the background knowledge to recognize the significance of the various events. Twain's use of this third type of unreliability in the circus passage, and in other scenes like it, works to create humorous effects, not to question the moral or perceptual viability of the homodiegetic narrator.

Twain's construction of his character-narrator makes sense when we consider the sociohistorical context of the time of production. Huck's naïveté produces humor and the
humor functions to express what is feared, repressed, or unacceptable in society—in Freud's words, what is censored. Addressing societal fears is part of the function of satire, both verse satire and Menippean satire. While verse satire deals with the themes of flaws and foibles, Menippean satire, on the thematic level, attacks ideologies. In the satiric novel, two things are essential: "one is wit or humor founded on fantasy or a sense of the grotesque or absurd, the other is an object of attack" (Frye 224). We see the flaws and foibles of Huck, the King and the Duke, the Shepherdsons and Grangerfords, and countless others. But the object of attack, "civilized" American violence in general and racism in particular, comes about through Huck's limited vision. The use of young, naive Huck enabled Twain to attack ideological contradictions in a way that sidestepped the "censorship" of the post-Civil War American psyche. The naive Huck's inability to read humorous situations aligns us with Twain's perspective in less threatening situations like the circus and, as Twain turns to issues of greater importance like violent industrialization, reconstruction, lynch mobs, and racist ideology that defined our nation, we are likely to retain our affinity with his worldview.

But Huck's naiveté, his cultural illiteracy, does not function only to provide humor, a shield from the more traumatic issues of Twain's American society (a past
society which too closely resembles today's culture). At
times, Huck's naive narration is also unreliable in terms
of norms and values. Take the episode that immediately
precedes the circus events: the Sherburn segment. The
Sherburn episode begins with Huck's description of the town
which sets up the meaningless violence that follows: dog
against pig, dog against dog, setting a dog on fire or
tormenting it to death in another way. Huck gives us
nothing but the facts here; he doesn't censure the
meaningless violence. The scene ends with Sherburn, in a
strong critique of the lynch mob which characterized race
relations in the south during reconstruction, telling the
cowardly mob to disperse. Huck says that he "could a
staid, if I'd a wanted to, but I didn't want to"; instead,
he goes to the circus. Buck's alignment with the "cowardly
mob" is something we recognize, but Huck does not. The
juxtaposition of one of the most violent and disconcerting
segments with the hilarity of Huck's "take" on the circus
has important consequences for Twain's development of his
narrator and our understanding of the narrator. The
authorial audience sees Twain as using this scene to
critique civilization's meaningless violence (much as the
Shepherdson/Grangerford feud functions), yet Buck just
doesn't "get it." But Buck's not "getting it" here differs
significantly from his not "getting it" at the circus.
Here Huck becomes the object of critique; his narration is unreliable.¹⁴

Yet at other times unreliability of the third type, cultural literacy, converges with ethical reliability. Although Huck's understanding of social mores is naive, his ethical choices are often in keeping with Twain's. Huck-as-character comes to see that the jokes he played on Jim—especially the snake-joke and the faked "disappearance"—are "mean." Huck stops: "I didn't do him no more mean tricks, and I wouldn't done that one if I'd a knowed it would make him feel that way" (121). Huck's developing understanding, however, remains limited, as we see the scene when Huck runs away from the King and the Duke in Pikesville, only to find that Jim has disappeared, been discovered and taken to the Phelps's farm. Huck goes through great mental trauma as he comes to terms with his role in the situation:

I went to the raft, and set down in the wigwam to think. But I couldn't come to nothing. I thought till I wore my head sore, but I couldn't see no way out of the trouble . . . Once I said to myself it would be a thousand times better for Jim to be a slave at home where his family was, so long as he'd got to be a slave . . . And then think of me! It would get all around, that Huck Finn helped a nigger to get his freedom; and if I
was to ever see anybody from that town again, I'd be ready to get down and lick his boots for shame. That's just the way: a person does a low-down thing and then he don't want to take no consequences of it . . . Well, I tried the best I could to kinder soften it up somehow for myself, but saying I was brung up wicked, and so I warn't so much to blame . . . [Huck writes a letter to Mrs. Watson, informing her of Jim's whereabouts] . . . I felt good and washed clean of sin for the first time I had ever felt so in my life . . . And I got to thinking over our trip down the river; and I see Jim before me, all the time . . . I couldn't seem to strike no places to harden me against him, but only the other kind . . . I took [the letter] up, and held it in my hand. I was trembling, because I'd got to decide, forever, betwixt two things, and I knewed it. I studied a minute, sort of holding my breath, and then says to myself:

'All right, then, I'll go to hell'--and tore it up. (269-72)

The poignance of this passage stems from the gap between how we understand Huck's ethical behavior and how the culturally illiterate Huck sees it. Huck's ethical act, tearing up the letter, resonates all the more strongly
because he truly believes that it is immoral but does it anyway. The dynamics are not quite as simple as Booth suggests when he says that Huck "claims to be naturally wicked while the author silently praises his virtues behind his back" (RoF 159). Rather, the two axes of reliability—ethics and cultural literacy—converge. Twain asks us to see how Huck, as character, comes to the correct decision; Huck does the right thing, and we applaud him. Thus, along the ethical axis of reliability, we see Huck as reliable. However, we do not accept Buck's interpretation of the consequences of his actions. That is, while Huck firmly believes that he'll "go to hell," we, with Twain, just as firmly believe the contrary. The disparity here creates neither a comic effect, as in the circus passage, nor an ironic effect, as in the lynch-mob scene. Rather, the unusual dynamic here, with the unreliable narrator saying that he's worse than we think he is, makes us recognize the immense difficulty involved in choosing an ethical position that goes against the conventional, restricted notions condoned by social institutions. As Mark Twain wrote in his notebook almost twenty years after he began these Adventures, Huck Finn is "a book of mine where a sound individual heart and a deformed social conscience come into collision and conscience suffers defeat!" (qtd in Kaplan 198).
While critics disagree over the success or failure of the variety of comic forms in *Huck Finn* (Lionel Trilling's claim that "[t]he Satiric brilliance of the episode lies, of course, in Buck's solving his problem not by doing 'right' but by doing 'wrong'" [332] is a far cry from Rowe denouncing the "sordid, even sinister cast" of the satire [63]), my point is that the traits Twain gives Huck Finn are crucial to the form he has chosen for expression. Huck's authorial disposition and his lack of aesthetic control set up the dynamics of naive narration, a form which opens up a space in which social satire can attack the most sensitive of subjects. Like the dream which takes the repressed inhibitions and expresses them for the psyche to deal with, so too *Huck Finn* continues to ask the reader to deal with the repressed national identity of slavery, lynchings, and other atrocities that lie hidden behind a boy's world of misadventures.

The formal dimensions of a homodiegetic narrator—his reliability, selfconsciousness, naiveté, age, gender, class, and so on—intersect with the content, enhancing both the thematic and emotive dimensions of reading. E. M. Forster, in *Aspects of the Novel*, notes the deliberate techniques an author chooses to best achieve the desired results:

He [the author] is competent, poised above his work, throwing a beam of light here, popping on a
cap of invisibility there, and (qua plot-maker) continually negotiating with himself qua character-monger as to the best effect to be produced. (96)

The relationships between character and plot in homodiegesis have informed each of my first three chapters. In my next chapter, on Jeanette Winterson's Written on the Body, I look at the conventions of the dramatized character-narrator in homodiegesis, conventions which, as my reading of Winterson's narrative suggests, have important consequences for our understandings of how reliability and selfconsciousness emerge.
1. James Phelan uses the term "closure" to refer to "the way in which a narrative signals its end" (Reading People, Reading Plots 17-18).

2. Rabinowitz's narrative audience is "the imaginary audience for which the narrator is writing"; the ideal narrative audience is the audience "for which the narrator wishes he were writing" ("Truth in Fiction" 127, 134). Prince's narratee is the enunciatee, or the receiver of the narrator's enunciation ("Introduction to the Study of the Narratee").

3. In this chapter, I use the term "reader" to designate the flesh-and-blood reader who is reading as a member of the authorial audience. References to any other type of reader will be specified.

4. Monteiro invoke's Edwin Cady's earlier work on the "block-I" structure, in which Cady notes that there is a long central narration, picaresque in form, framed on each end by boybook narratives. See Cady's The Light of Common Day.

5. See Phelan's comments on Huck Finn in Narrative as Rhetoric, p. 81. See also James Kastely, and Thomas Quirk.

6. The selfconscious narrator differs from selfconscious (or self-reflexive) literature in that the former designates a narrator who is characterized by some authority in the construction of the narrative while the latter indicates writing that reflects on its status as fiction, its constructedness. For more on self-reflexive literature, see Roland Barthes, Ross Chambers, Linda Hutcheon, and Brian McHale.

7. Harry Shaw, replying to Eva Mokry Pohler, reminds us that "we need to remain aware that our terms, as a necessary condition for their having any usefulness at all, must leave some areas out of focus" ("Drawing the Line" 289). I mention Shaw's reminder because, as I extricate the various parts of selfconsciousness, other aspects might well fall out of focus. However, I think the benefits of precision here outweigh the limitations.

8. Lanser offers a continuum of selfconsciousness, with continual selfconsciousness on one end and unconsciousness of the narrative act on the other end. Occasional selfconsciousness would be the narrator who occasionally refers to the act of narration; content-motivated means
that the narrator refers to the act of narration only within a specific context. See The Narrative Act, Chapter 4, esp. page 177.

9. Booth calls narratives that emphasize the telling/teller over the plot "struggle-plots." See his "The Struggle to Tell the Story of the Struggle to Get the Story Told."

10. It might be important to distinguish between narratorial introspection, which is discursive, and the way in which the narrator's character may, at times, be introspective. While the former involves a narrator overtly commenting on himself as author, reflecting on his choices and behaviors as storyteller, the latter is simply a character looking within himself and judging his choices and behaviors as character. Huck's character is introspective in many instances, most notably in his coming to understand the impact of his pranks on Jim and of course his run-ins with his conscience as he comes to the conclusion that he will "go to hell" for helping a runaway slave.

11. I try to offer examples from Freud that you might actually find humourous. Perhaps it is cultural differences, perhaps intellectual—whatever the root, I didn't actually find too many of his jokes terribly amusing.

12. See Rowe's discussion on the variety of "jokes" in Huck Finn.

13. See Northrop Frye's Anatomy of Criticism, (esp. Essay Three); see also Raëa Aniq-Filali.

14. A more complicated passage is when Huck, pretending to be Tom, makes up the story of his trip for Aunt Sally. Huck claims the boat's cylinder-head blew and Aunt Sally asks him if anyone was hurt. "'No'm,'" Huck replies, "'Killed a nigger.'" Aunt Sally responds with, "'Well, it's lucky; because sometimes people do get hurt'" (280). While on the surface the perspectives of both Huck and Aunt Sally appear equally racist, the blurring of ontologies makes it more complex. Huck is, after all, making up the entire accident, and in that context it seems possible that his dismissal of the "dead nigger" has little ideological consequences, since there was no African and no boat at all. At the same time, however, Huck's imaginative powers are represented as racist in their structure, as is Aunt Sally's way of thinking.
My discussion of the dramatized character-narrator in homodiegesis has, up to this point, largely focused on the narrator-traits of reliability and selfconsciousness. As traits, reliability and selfconsciousness differ from other defining characteristics; a character-narrator does not "possess" reliability and selfconsciousness in the same way that she "possesses" a gender, race, age, intelligence, or sense of humor. Rather, a character-narrator's race, gender, intelligence, wit, and so on are attributes that can correspond in a variety of ways to produce un/reliable or non/selfconscious narration. Nick Carraway's age, class, and intelligence not only make him a reliable witness-observer, but also lend credibility to his role as the "author" who is responsible for the aesthetics of Gatsby; gender, class, desire, and repression combine in Villette, where Lucy Snowe progresses from unreliable nonselconscious narration to achieving full narrative authority; Huck Finn's age, class, and intelligence help us understand his narration as naive. Categories like
reliability and selfconsciousness, although we call them "traits," are really theoretical apparati that explain the ways in which character traits are given, combined, and altered in narrative texts to produce specific effects. Given the causal relationship between reliability, selfconsciousness, and character attributes, it seems quite striking that very little theoretical work has been done on the character components of the homodiegetic character-narrator, a critical oversight that I will address here. To uncover the conventions of the dramatized character-narrator, the first part of this chapter looks at two theories of character, one by structuralist Seymour Chatman and the other by rhetorician James Phelan.¹ I extend Chatman's and Phelan's assumptions to the dramatized character-narrator in homodiegesis by returning to Gatsby, Villette, and Huck Finn; a brief interlude with Jane Austen's Mansfield Park serves as a heterodiegetic comparison. The second part of this chapter is devoted to fleshing out the relationships between the conventions of character, reliability, and selfconsciousness through a close reading of Jeanette Winterson's Written on the Body, a text that "queers" many narrative conventions.

In Story and Discourse, Seymour Chatman briefly discusses the conventions of narrative in general:

Audiences come to recognize and interpret conventions by 'naturalizing' them . . . To
naturalize a narrative convention means not only to understand it, but to 'forget' its conventional character, to absorb it into the reading-out process, to incorporate it into one's interpretive net, giving to it no more thought than to the manifestational medium. (49)

Thinking quickly over the other chapters in this dissertation, we can see the naturalization of character within an interpretive net. Take, for example, Nick Carraway, a male. If Nick had been a female named Nicole, would I be so ready to make the same claims about the insidious sexism in *Gatsby*? Would it mean the same thing? What about Lucy Snowe's repressed desire, how would our interpretations differ if the character were male? Could Huck Finn have told the story as Hilda Finn, an African-American twenty-year-old female? What is the relationship between character and plot? What are the conventions of character, and how do they become incorporated into our interpretive nets?

Early structuralists Vladimir Propp and Tvetzan Todorov, following in an Aristotelian tradition, saw character as secondary to plot, whereas *Aspects of the Novel* theorist E. M. Forster privileged character over plot. Chatman doesn't find the debate over the primacy of character or plot very useful, preferring to see "plot and character [as] equally important" (110). I willingly—and
gratefully—accept Chatman's decision to make plot and character of equivalent significance. Theoretical equivalence for the structuralist, of course, does not mean that the two parts of narrative can be lumped together. Events, or story/plot, exist in time; existents, Chatman's term for characters, exist in space.

Chatman strives for what he calls an "open theory of character," one which treats "characters as autonomous beings, not as mere plot functions" (119). Struggling to define just what he means by character, Chatman turns to the definition in the Dictionary of Philosophy, which bears repeating here: "'The totality of mental traits characterizing an individual personality or self. See Self'" (Chatman 120); and self is the "'totality of uniqueness and persistence through changes . . . by virtue of which any person calls himself I and leading to the distinction among selves, as implied in such words as myself, yourself, himself, etc.'" (Chatman 120-21).

Extremely important to Chatman's analysis of character is the concept of "trait," which he defines as "a narrative adjective out of the vernacular labeling a personal quality of a character" (125). Borrowing from Gordon W. Allport, Chatman includes four properties of traits that "seem significant for narrative theory": (1) a trait is more generalized than a habit; (2) the existence of a trait may be established empirically or statistically; (3) traits are
only relatively independent of each other; and (4) inconsistent, or opposite acts, are not proof that a trait does not exist; rather, they may be "opposed integrations" (121-22). Traits expand the time spans staked out by the events and often extend beyond the story-world.

Chatman's discussion of character strives to delineate those qualities of character that are present in all narratives; Phelan's rhetorical analysis in *Reading People, Reading Plots* also offers a model of character that should work with all narratives, but examines, in some depth, the different configurations that character components take in individual narratives. Like Chatman, Phelan does not seem to privilege story over character or vice versa; rather, his discussion of an array of texts from Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* to Calvino's *If on a winter's night a traveler* to Mailer's *The Armies of the Night* demonstrates the relationships between progression and character. Phelan elucidates the ways in which literary characters have mimetic, thematic, and synthetic components. Mimetic dimensions are "a character's attributes considered as traits"; mimetic functions "result from the way these traits are used together in creating the illusion of a plausible person" (11); thematic dimensions are "attributes, taken individually or collectively, and viewed as vehicles to express ideas or as representative of a larger class than the individual character" (12); and the
synthetic dimension of character involves the way created characters (not real people) function in the construction of a text. While every character trait is a mimetic dimension, it may function mimetically, thematically, or synthetically, either independently or in conjunction with other attributes. Phelan's work augments Chatman's in that it views traits as having the potential of multiple functions and, in this way, his model is less strict about the plot/time:character/space boundary.

Taking Chatman's and Phelan's approaches to character together, what underlying assumptions inform structural and rhetorical theories of character? First, each critic sees, as the primary principle of character, traits. The traits must also be human traits, although characters need not, in these two models, necessarily be human (thus in Kafka's The Metamorphosis Gregor Samps, although an ostensible "bug," is also a character; and Adams's primary character in Watership Down is a rabbit named Hazel). Now, what types of human traits are there? Let's look at two passages, one from Story and Discourse and one from Reading People, Reading Plots, to see if we can uncover a taxonomy of traits.

Elizabeth Bennet, though basically a kind and generous person, has her moments of prejudice.

(SD 126)
Elizabeth's character is composed of these main attributes: she's the twenty-year-old daughter of a gentleman and of a woman . . . who possesses 
(1) a greater degree of independence from the norms governing the marriage market . . . (2) 'more quickness of observation' than all her sisters and 'less pliancy of temper' than Jane (p. 9); (3) 'a lively, playful disposition' . . . (4) a strong pride in her own abilities; and (5) a capacity to be honest with herself about her own faults. (RP,RP 54)

Chatman's appraisal of Elizabeth foregrounds the traits of kindness, generosity, and prejudice; Phelan adds to these personality traits a consideration of age (twenty-year-old), gender (daughter=female), class (daughter of a gentleman), and sexuality (marriage market norms=heterosexual). I do not think Chatman's model is inimical to Phelan's expansion; but where traits like gender, age, class, and sexuality are implicit assumptions in Chatman's model, Phelan spells them out.

Both Chatman's and Phelan's models hinge on the notion of character traits of two types, one relating to larger, sociostructural categories like gender, class, race, and sexuality, and another relating to psychological descriptions like intelligence, independence, pride, and wit. The distinction between the two types of attributes

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might best be understood in terms of what Jürgen Habermas calls "collective identity" and "ego identity." Habermas, working with Durkheim and Mead, defines collective identity as a "universalizing" identity (97), one that "develops in the form of normative consensus"; it is when "all members of the society" agree on the "structure of group identity" (53); collective identity indicates things like race, class, gender, and sexuality. I shall refer to collective identity markers as suprapersonal. Ego identity refers more to the "identity of individuals in relation to the identity of the group to which they belong" (99)—seriousness or humor, impulsive or predictable, intelligent or stupid, etc, fall under this category. The attributes which fall under ego identity I shall call personal. Elizabeth Bennet's character thus consists of suprapersonal traits—female, upper-class, white—and personal attributes—indeed, pride, intelligence, and wit.

The combination of the suprapersonal with the personal in the character of Elizabeth Bennet leads us to the second assumption of character: continuity of traits. Chatman's inclusion of Allport's third criterion, "traits are only relatively independent of each other," and Phelan's linking of mimetic dimensions to various functions both point to what is meant by continuity of traits. Traits make sense in relation to each other (thus developing a full mimetic portrait of a plausible person and/or working in

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conjunction with a theme) and have an internal consistency. Because Elizabeth is a young, white, heterosexual woman, there are certain marriage market norms that would not be possible with an old, or black, or lesbian character; because she is wealthy she can be somewhat independent of these norms; because she is wealthy, she is more likely to be a little too proud. The relationships between the personal and the suprapersonal do not always, however, work in stereotypical ways. In Villette, for example, Brontë gives de Hamal, a male character, feminine attributes which work thematically in the author's critique of the artistic values of the upper-class. Similarly, a female character may be imperious and bold, such as young Catherine in Wuthering Heights. However, certain suprapersonal traits cannot correspond with others: a biologically male character cannot simultaneously be biologically female; a financially secure character cannot also be in debt. Race matters are a little more complicated, since many people have a mixture of heritages, yet the naming power of our collective identities tends to group anyone with African heritage as black. There may, of course, be movement from male to female (Orlando), from rich to poor (Persuasion), and even from black to white (The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man); such movement seems to always function thematically. Despite some limited play, the general
tendency for suprapersonal attributes is to remain stable throughout the course of the narrative progression.

The personal differs from the suprapersonal in that where the suprapersonal remains fairly stable, personal attributes correspond in a different way. An intelligent character will not also be stupid; an even-tempered individual is not prone to frequent outbursts of anger; a sensible person will not, unless succumbing to desire, fear, or other strong emotions, act haphazardly. Yet we know that the intelligent character may be blind in some areas of perception or knowledge; the occasional outbursts of the even-tempered individual illuminate key aspects of the character; and many sensible heroines, when under duress, act extravagantly—Richardson's Clarissa or Dreiser's Carrie. This is what Chatman means when he talks about "opposed integration." Continuity of the personal also occurs when a trait alters over the course of the narrative. Lucy at the beginning of Villette pokes fun at others, rejects the value of heterosexual love, and cannot speak of her own feelings and desires; as Lucy develops, her reticence decreases, she becomes more likely to make fun of herself, and embraces love. Hemingway's Frederic Henry, Dickens's Pip, Austen's Emma, and Prevost's Des Grieux all belong to the group of characters whose development of one or more personal attributes provides the main narrative progression. Still another group like
Flaubert's Emma Bovary and Soseki's nameless cat fail to develop and meet their demise; others, like Dostoevsky's Underground Man, simply remain static.

We can thus envision character as— to borrow the words of Levi-Strauss— a "bundle" of human traits, consisting of both the suprapersonal and the personal. Character has some sort of coherence, both in terms of the individual trait and its relation to the bundle. The ways in which any individual narrative designates individual traits and relates them to each other and to the text's plot and discourse are, of course, highly variable. Yet for character to be character it seems that elements of both the suprapersonal and the personal must be present.

Because the homodiegetic narrator is also a character in his own story, we would expect the same conventions of character to apply to the narrator. The dramatized character-narrator has both personal and suprapersonal traits while the heterodiegetic narrator generally does not. Consider the "I" of Austen's Mansfield Park. Hidden for most of the progression, an "I" enunciates itself as the novel comes to a close:

Let other pens dwell on guilt and misery. I quit such odious subjects as soon as I can, impatient to restore every body, not greatly in fault
themselves, to tolerable comfort, and to have
done with all the rest. (446)

Austen's explicit "I" has no character-counterpart in the
story; it exists only outside the diegesis, and must be
heterodiegetic. Encountering the "I" here seems to serve
no immediate purpose within the plot, but does foreground
the enunciating subject as the source of the sense of
humor, the playfulness, that we hear throughout Mansfield
Park— a voice that seems female, middle-class, white, and
heterosexual. I also find it plausible that the "I"
functions politically. Susan Sniader Lanser, in Fictions
of Authority, notes that "women writing from the late
seventeenth to the late eighteenth century seem to have
avoided the public form of personal voice" (141), and
Austen's 1814 publication of Mansfield Park might be seen
as an early, tentative gesture toward a personal voice.

Consider, however, how quickly I associate the
heterodiegetic "I" with the author. My move here is not
atypical. Wayne C. Booth, in The Rhetoric of Fiction,
discusses the rhetorical basis for associating the narrator
with the implied author in reading situations where the
undramatized, implied narrator remains unspecified, as it
does in Mansfield Park. Lanser, in "Sexing the Narrative,"
is more "perplexed" than Booth is about these rhetorical
relations; she remains unsure of whether the
author=narrator impulse is outweighed by the normativity of
the masculine voice. Lanser's perplexity points to one of the significant features of the heterodiegetic narrator: although we can concede some continuity between heterodiegetic narrator, implied author, and author, we cannot go so far as to say, with any certainty, that the narrator of a text like *Mansfield Park* is female, or upper-class, or white, or heterosexual. We can, on the other hand, state with some certainty that *Mansfield Park*'s narrator is feminine, feminist, classist, Eurocentric, and heterosocial. One of the norms of heterodiegesis, then, is that the heterodiegetic extradiegetic narrator's character remains unmarked by the suprapersonal but displays the personal.

Homodiegetic narrators, however, as Dorrit Cohn reminds us, "are themselves presented as human beings with human limitations" ("Signposts" 790), and because of the continuity between the narrator as character and the narrator as narrator, the dramatized narrator is marked by the suprapersonal traits that we assign to characters. As character and as narrator, Nick Carraway is an intelligent, sexist, white middle-class male; Lucy Snowe is a humorous, intelligent, passionate, white lower-class female; Buck Finn is a naive, somewhat-compassionate, white lower-class adolescent male. Furthermore, both the suprapersonal and personal work thematically in each of these texts. Nick initially succumbs to but finally resists capitalism's
false lure; Lucy's success in love and art resonates all the more because of her class and gender; and Huck's naivete gets to the heart of American racism.

A brief review of the beginnings of *Gatsby*, *Villette*, and *Huck Finn* also reveals the strategies we have for discerning a character-narrator's attributes—both the suprapersonal and the personal. In Lucy's narration, she makes explicit reference to both her gender and implicit reference to her age and class: "My godmother lived in a handsome house in the clean and ancient town of Bretton . . . When I was a girl I went to Bretton about twice a year, and well I liked the visit" (61). The narrator designates her character as a "girl," and we would indeed be surprised if, in Chapter 2, she told us her name was Lawrence Snowe instead of Lucy Snowe. We further surmise that since "when" she "was a girl" she went to Bretton, the narrator now is no longer a girl but an adult female, which her voice and diction reaffirm. While *Villette* is very explicit about the suprapersonal traits, we glean the personal from inference—Brontë's double-voicing Lucy in the first three chapters makes Lucy the object of Brontë's sense of humor; later, Lucy's wit develops as she repeatedly makes the reader laugh. In *Gatsby*, very much the opposite occurs.

*Gatsby*, unlike *Villette*, designates the suprapersonal largely via shared cultural codes; the personal is rendered
much more explicitly. Nick Carraway certainly does not mark his maleness as quickly as Lucy does her femaleness, yet the opening sentences of his narration codify him in many ways as male. "In my younger and more vulnerable years my father gave me some advice . . ." hints at transmission of knowledge from father to son; "in college I was privy to the secret griefs of wild, unknown men" suggests some type of male-bonding. However, the codes at work in our initial assessment of Nick's gender should be recognized as codes, not the type of determinate assessment we can give when Nick speaks of his desire to be "the 'well-rounded man.'" Nick's personal traits come to us in a much less mediated way; he tells us that he's "inclined to reserve all judgments," that he's the one responsible for the story we're about to hear, and that he went to school in New Haven (Yale). Reserved, educated, and articulate, Nick makes a good choice for witness-narrator: other characters confide in him; readers believe him. Unlike their heterodiegetic counterparts, homodiegetic narrators, who present themselves as human beings with human limitations, are plausible persons because of the way in which the suprapersonal and the personal function formally, ideologically, and ethically. To be a plausible person, our history of homodiegetic narrative tells us, the character-narrator, like a character, combines
suprapersonal and personal traits in ways that encourage us to accept him as a potential human being.

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"Why is the measure of love loss?"

A plaintive voice speaks to us from the first page of *Written on the Body*. The voice is immediately tempered by two descriptive, metaphoric passages:

It hasn't rained for three months. The trees are prospecting underground, sending reserves of roots into the dry ground, roots like razors to open any artery water-fat.

The grapes have withered on the vine. What should be plump and firm, resisting the touch to give itself in the mouth, is spongy and blistered. Not this year the pleasure of rolling blue grapes between finger and thumb juicing my palm with musk. Even the wasps avoid the thin brown dribble. Even the wasps this year. It was not always so.

Then, the narrator is designated as an "I":

I am thinking of a certain September: Wood pigeon Red Admiral Yellow Harvest Orange Night. You said, 'I love you.' Why is it that the most unoriginal thing we can say to one another is
still the thing we long to hear? 'I love you' is always a quotation. You did not say it first and neither did I, yet when you say it and when I say it we speak like savages who have found three words and worship them. I did worship them but now I am alone on a rock hewn out of my own body.

The "I" next quotes from Shakespeare's *The Tempest*:

**CALIBAN** You taught me language and my profit on't is/I know how to curse. The red plague rid you/For learning me your language.

The disembodied voice speaking to us from the first page of *Written on the Body* asks us to respond to it on two levels, the emotional and the intellectual. We immediately recognize the joy of love and the pain of loss; we also—especially we who hold advanced degrees in language and literature—appreciate the voice's literary savvy. The experiential and the cerebral appeals also establish the homodiegetic narrator's most significant personal traits: passion (both in love and loss) and intelligence. Each personal trait is developed in ways that affect our judgment of the narrator's reliability: the development of the narrator's passion, from impulsive and selfish to mature and giving, indicates a progression of reliability of norms and beliefs; the narrator's intelligence and learning establish reliability along the axis of cultural
literacy. Each axis of reliability also intersects with various levels of selfconsciousness: the erudite narrator easily assumes the role of author, ostensibly being the one whom we hold responsible for the aesthetics; the selfconsciousness of the narrator extends to textual self-reflexivity as the narrator foregrounds the constructedness of text, self, and others; and the self-reflexive nature of Written on the Body, in turn, demands that the reader become selfconscious, aware of her role as reader and writer of the text, as well as cognizant of how desire is constructed.

Although the passage I just quoted does not allow us to determine who to hold responsible for the various literary techniques (the juxtaposition of diegesis with description, the assonance and alliteration), narrator or implied author, the intertextual reference to Shakespeare can come only from the narrator. But the allusion preconditions us to accept the ability of the narrator to create a literary text; thus, when we run into the narrator's authorial disposition, we are not at all surprised: "Have I got it wrong, this hesitant chronology? Perhaps I should call it Emma Bovary's eyes or Jane Eyre's dress. I don't know. I'm in another rented room now trying to find the place to go back to where things went wrong. Where I went wrong" (17). Making parallels between the inconsistencies in Flaubert's and Brontë's texts aligns
the narrator with authorial figures. We soon come to learn that the narrator, employed as a translator, is very well read, making intertextual references to *The Tempest*, *Great Expectations*, *Madame Bovary*, *Jane Eyre*, *Christopher Robin*, *Rumpelstiltskin*, *Sherlock Holmes*, *Jonah*, *Sampson*, and others.

Winterson's narrator (unlike Nick Carraway, who affirms his honesty, a rhetorical gesture that leads us to question his reliability), worries about the accuracy of the narrative discourse: "I can tell by now that you are wondering whether I can be trusted as a narrator" (24). Although somewhat lacking faith—wishing to have the "confidence of a computer programmer" (57)—the narrator acknowledges that "I am the scriptwriter and can put words in their mouths" (59). As scriptwriter, as the one who controls the aesthetic techniques, the narrator performs beautifully. I find one of the finest poetic passages arising partway through the novel, when the narrator, perusing a page from a volume at the British Museum, muses:

I was sitting in the library writing this to Louise, looking at a facsimile of an illuminated manuscript, the first letter a huge L. The L woven into shapes of birds and angels that slid between the pen lines. The letter was a maze. On the outside, at the top of the L, stood a pilgrim in hat and habit. At the heart of the
letter, which had been formed to make a rectangle out of the double of itself, was the Lamb of God. How would the pilgrim try through the maze, the maze so simple to angels and birds? I tried to fathom a path for a long time but I was caught at dead ends by beaming serpents. I gave up and shut the book, forgetting that the first word had been Love.

The alliteration of L (library, Louise, looking, letter, lines), and the assonance of I (I, library, writing; sitting, facsimile, illuminated) and U (Louise, look, illuminate, manuscript) work to poetically link I and U to the Love that is the "first word." The passage also foregrounds the doubling and the maze-like quality of the letter, which mirrors the doubling and maze-like quality of the "letter" in its archaic sense of being a text. The passage thus functions much as Miss Marchmont's narrative does in Villette, as what Ross Chambers calls "narrational embedding": "it implies the representation, internally to the fictional framework, of a situation involving the major components of a communicational act" (33). I cannot but believe that the emphasis on I and U, representing speakers and hearers, writers and readers, narrators and narratees, lovers and beloveds, joined together by Love, is deliberate, and utterly delightful.
The marvelous control of the aesthetics aligns narrator with implied author; in Written on the Body, there is never a moment where the implied author contains the aesthetics, manipulating them to create effects of which the narrator remains unaware. We certainly don't have the type of naïve narration that marks Huck Finn, nor do we have moments like the one in Villette where Lucy's literary techniques, although she wrested control of the aesthetics as early as chapter 4, were contained by Brontë until after Lucy's collapse at the end of Volume 1. Here, narratorial choices coincide with authorial; the intelligent, articulate translator and the equally intelligent, articulate fiction-writer are, in terms of the literary aesthetics, one and the same, a mirror of each other. Narratorial selfconsciousness develops into corporeal and textual self-reflexivity as agents and letters become metaphors—translations, in the obsolete sense of the word—of each other.\(^6\)

Not only do narrator and implied author reflect each other's aesthetics; the narrator and Louise become mirrors as well. Louise tells the narrator that she (Louise) will leave her husband Elgin, "because my love for you makes any other life a lie" (98). In the very next sentence, we jump ahead in time, to a time when Louise is gone, and the narrator holds onto Louise's words, taking
them out like a jewel thief when no-one's watching. They haven't faded. Nothing about you has faded. You are still the colour of my blood. You are my blood. When I look in the mirror it's not my own face I see. Your body is twice. Once you once me. Can I be sure which is which? (99)

But if Louise and the narrator are one, then the status of each is questionable: "It's as if Louise never existed," the narrator tells Gail Right, "like a character in a book. Did I invent her?" (189). Louise's synthetic status, foregrounded here, reflects back upon the narrator's own synthetic function.

The only description of the narrator, given by Louise, furthers the sense of mirroring: "'You are a pool of clear water where the light plays'" (85). If the narrator is "a pool of clear water" to Louise, then what Louise sees is a projection of herself which, in turn, is a projection of the narrator. The maze of mirrors extends to the reader, the other "you" that Written on the Body inscribes, implicating her as well in the projections and reflections of being. We, too, must recognize our own projections in the face of the narrator. But, as we know from reading our Lacan, the "I" we see is never identical with the "I" doing the seeing. There is always a distance between the corporeal body, or the one doing the seeing, and the textual body, or the one that is seen, or read. The
reflective quality of the narrator asks us to recognize the ways in which we, as readers, project ourselves into the narrative text. What we "see" in a text reproduces, to some extent, our own desires and fears. We, in our refulgent flesh-and-blood, exist outside the text; at the same time, we--in our resplendent imagination--see ourselves within the text, in stories of others, in textual positions that are never quite identical with our corporeal being.

The projection of self into narrative hinted at here is played out for us later, when the narrator, having left Louise, reads the medical books on leukemia:


Your clavicle is both keyboard and key . . . I wanted . . . to fasten my index finger and thumb at the bolts of your collar bone . . . I wanted to fit you . . . Thus she was, here and here. The physical memory blunders through the doors the mind has tried to seal. A skeleton key to Bluebeard's chamber. (129-30)
Even with the most objective of narratives, the scientific
description of the body, reading is an imaginative act in
which the reader-narrator projects self and desire into the
script. Yet at the same time, we need to see the act of
reading not simply as appropriation of text by reader, but
as a recursive imaginative enterprise. For the narrator's
projections are, in the terms of Wolfgang Iser, "guided" by
the script of the text.\(^8\) Both the reality of the text and
the reality of the "real life" of the narrator are altered
by the act of reading.

*Written on the Body* thus blurs the boundaries between
corporeal and textual identities, becoming so reflexive
that the readers, writers, and characters mirror each
other, share in each others' stories and bodies. Part of
the intellectual challenge of reading Winterson's text
consists of the reader coming to recognize the mirror-like
quality of the reading experience, as well as the
intertextuality of stories, "real" and "fictive." In other
words, *Written on the Body* asks us to be self-conscious
readers, to recognize our own roles in the production of
the narrative. Winterson herself "ascribes political
efficacy to narrativity; the invention of stories is a
political act and [Winterson is] 'hoping all the time that
it will challenge people, both into looking more closely at
these things they thought were cut and dried and also,
perhaps, into inventing their own stories'" (Doan 141).
Through the staging of mirrors, the reader not only comes to question the norms of narrativity that relate to character, but also his or her own stories in relation to Written on the Body.

While the personal trait of intelligence indicates cultural and intellectual reliability and functions to establish both the narrator's selfconsciousness and the text's self-reflexivity, the second personal trait that the beginning of the novel establishes, passion, works along another axis of reliability, norms and beliefs. From the plaintive "Why is the measure of love loss" to the almost angry passionate grief of "now I am alone on a rock hewn out of my own body," the novel immediately appeals to its readers on the common grounds of love and loss. The appeal plays out as we move backwards and forwards in the narrator's life, from a passion that is not fully reliable in terms of norms and beliefs to one that is fully reliable. The progression constitutes the major movement of the narrative discourse and, as we share the narrator's experiences of love and loss, we are forced to become more selfconscious about the ways in which desire is constructed.

Two distinct temporal layers, both in the narrative past, represent the development of the narrator's passion. The events of the more distant past are the first temporal layer, while the more recent past comprises the second
temporal layer; the narrative discourse moves back and forth between these layers for the first part of the novel. The first temporal layer consists of memories, largely recollections of the sequence of failed love affairs, some adulterous, others not, that characterize the narrator’s history. We have the angst-ridden stolen weekends with Bathsheba, the daring anarcha-feminist requirements with Inge, relationships with Amy, Catherine, Juditha, and Estelle. The first temporal layer, however, is not narrated chronologically; rather, it appears as a series of interspersions within the second temporal layer, which is itself rendered achronologically. Beginning in September, with the exchange of "I love you"s between the narrator and Louise, the narration moves backwards through August and then to the more distant past, the sequence of relationships which begins with Bathsheba, who perhaps precedes Inge, and then forwards to the relationship with Louise, and back again to Inge, who precedes Jacqueline. Although Winterson takes great care not to cast moral aspersion on the series of affairs, we do recognize the degrees of impulsiveness, desperation, and irresponsibility that characterize the succession of lovers. Significantly, the narrator shares our understanding of the inviability of the pattern of relationships: "I’ve been through a lot of marriages. Not down the aisle but always up the stairs. I began to realise I was hearing the same story every time"
after Bathsheba, the narrator tells us, "I had to keep my heart to myself in case I infected somebody" (25). The emotional withdrawal reaches its peak in the relationship with Jacqueline. Losing the desperate impulsiveness, the narrator "settles" for Jacqueline, knowing the exact consequences. "I considered her," the narrator tells us, speaking of the decision to begin a relationship with Jacqueline. "I didn't love her and I didn't want to love her. I didn't desire her and I could not imagine desiring her . . . I had come to know what everyone told me I would know; that passion is for holidays, not homecoming" (26-27). Although the decision to settle for, and settle down with, Jacqueline distances the narrator from the implied author's norms, both the events that precede the relationship with Jacqueline, and the significant change in the narrator's approach to relationships, as evidenced by the careful—although poorly justified—considerations, elicit our compassion and understanding. The perfunctory relationship with Jacqueline is represented perfunctorily. We come to know Jacqueline through her job at the Zoo and her dependability, but no more. She functions as the quintessential "rebound" relationship and, as such, those of us who have been rebounders or reboundees can easily empathize with her position.
"And then I met Louise" (28).

From this point on, the privileged temporal layer is that of the developing relationship with Louise. Meeting Louise invites passion, irrepressible desire, back into our narrator's life. Yet we notice a difference here from the matter-of-fact way in which the relationships of the first temporal layer are rendered. The narrator reflects on the consequences of ending the relationship with Jacqueline and beginning one with Louise. "What to do? Should I stay in with Jacqueline and hate it and start the slow motor of hating her? . . . I can't have it all my own way, relationships are about compromise" (31). The narrator begins to understand the nuts and bolts of a relationship in new ways: "I used to think that Christ was wrong, impossible hard, when he said that to imagine committing adultery was just as bad as doing it. But now, standing here in this familiar unviolated space, I have already altered my world and Jacqueline's world for ever" (38).

The more logical reflections are complicated by moments in which the narrator's desire for Louise cannot be denied: "When [Louise] lifted the spoon to her lips how I longed to be that innocent piece of stainless steel . . . Let me be diced carrot, vermicelli, just so that you will take me in your mouth" (36); "[s]he touched me and I yelped. 'Did I scratch you?' she said, all concern and remorse. 'No, you electrocuted me'" (37). The fervor of
the narrator’s desire, the repression that originates with
the narrator’s sincere wish to not mistreat Jacqueline, and
the earnest yearning to make the correct choice come to
fruition in the narrator’s dream about Amy, a former lover:

During the night I had a lurid dream about an ex­
girlfriend of mine who had been heavily into
papier-maché. It had started as a hobby; and who
shall object to a few buckets of flour and water
and a roll of chicken wire? I’m a liberal and I
believe in free expression. I went to her house
one day and poking out of the letter-box just at
crotch level was the head of a yellow and green
serpent. Not a real one but livid enough with a
red tongue and silver foil teeth. I hesitated to
ring the bell. Hesitated because to reach the
bell meant pushing my private parts right into
the head of the snake. (41)

The dream speaks of both the narrator’s desire for Louise
and the narrator’s fear of being hurt, and of hurting, yet
again. As we know from reading our Freud, the snake, its
shape, its tongue and teeth, all symbolize repressed
desires and fears.

With desire for Louise thriving, the narrator further
deliberates upon the ethical bind. "I don’t feel wise,"
the narrator muses. "Why is it that human beings are
allowed to grow up without the necessary apparatus to make

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sound ethical decisions? . . . For the first time in my life, I want to do the right thing more than I want to get my own way" (43-44). The desire to do the right thing here evokes the final night with Bathsheba, which the narrator remembers "with shame and rage" (45). The dissonant narration here clearly demarcates the narrator from the narrator's character, foregrounding the emotional and ethical distance between the two. We understand it is not only for Jacqueline or Louise that the narrator wants to "do the right thing"; the narrator's own emotional and moral well-being are also at stake.

The shift here in the formal properties of desire, indicated by the introduction of ethical responsibility, corresponds with a change in the representation of relationships. We are told that the narrator "never used to think about my previous girlfriends until I took up with Jacqueline" (76); with Louise, the narrator recognizes that "I have been reckless before, never counting the cost, oblivious to the cost"; that the space before the narrator is "uncluttered by association" (81). The impulsive passion that consumed the narrator's younger self changes; the narrator becomes more considerate, more reflective, and less impulsive—even as the narrator becomes more ardent in love.

Flourishing in the relationship with Louise, passion becomes love: "When I say 'I will be true to you' I am
drawing a quiet space beyond the reach of other desires. No-one can legislate love; it cannot be given orders or cajoled into service. Love belongs to itself, deaf to pleading and unmoved by violence. Love is not something you can negotiate. Love is the one thing stronger than desire and the only proper reason to resist temptation" (77-78). Desire persists--but as something different, something in the service of love. Slowly, the norms and beliefs of the narrator align with those of the implied author.

Yet the narrator's passion is not yet fully reliable, and the introduction of Louise's illness reveals the remaining weakness in the narrator's belief system. Despite an increased understanding of self, others, and love, the narrator--upon finding out that Louise has cancer--concludes that Louise's only chance to live longer revolves around her doctor-husband Elgin. So the narrator leaves Louise, believing the decision to be altruistic, reflective of true love. Coming to see the ethical irresponsibility of choosing Louise's life, Louise's story, constitutes the final development of the narrator's personal trait which began as unrefined passion.

Alone in the cabin to which the narrator escapes, thinking about Louise, the narrator, having just vomited, ruminates:
If Louise had had chemotherapy she might be suffering this every morning. And I wasn't with her. "Remember that's the point, that's the point," I said to myself in the mirror. "That's the route she won't have to take so long as she's with Elgin."

"How do you know?" said the piping doubting voice I had come so much to fear. (148)

The "piping doubting voice" becomes "a strong gentle voice," telling the narrator "'You made a mistake'" (153); eventually, the narrator comes to see the decision to leave Louise differently:

There was only the weight of wrong-doing. I had failed Louise and it was too late.

What right had I to decide how she should live? What right had I to decide how she should die? (157)

What right, the narrator is in essence asking, does one person have to choose another's story? The narrator reflects on the earlier pledge, "I will be true to you": "Had I been true to her?" (161). Although the narrator, talking with Gail Right, still attempts to justify the decision to leave Louise, the knowledge that "wrong-doing" has been done is inescapable. The narrator learns that ethical behavior involves recognizing the uniqueness of the other and her story, understanding the necessary
interconnectedness of stories and the responsibility each person has to the other, a responsibility to receive, yet not appropriate, the story of the other.

The narrator comes to understand love as life, and the life-giving responsibility love entails. Life is a coin with a "head on one side, a story on the other. Someone you loved and what happened. That's all there is when you dig in your pockets. The most significant thing is someone else's face" (189). A face and a story—Adam Zachary Newton, working with Emmanuel Levinas's ideas of intersubjective consciousness, invokes the concept of the face as ethical trope: "ethics . . . originates from . . . the other to me, in the sensible experience of the face which he or she presents to me. 'The approach to the face is the most basic mode of responsibility'" (12-13). By this, Newton means that representing someone else's story involves a loss of the person as real; it appropriates or allegorizes that person in a way that "endangers both intimacy and ethical duty" (19). Winterson's narrator's recognition of the face, then, signifies an awareness of the role the narrator has played in constructing Louise's story and the loss involved: "My equilibrium, such that it was, depended on her happiness. I had to have that story" (174). But the narrator comes to see that ethical responsibility involves allowing Louise her own story. The personal attribute that provided the generation and
complication of the story finds resolution in this final recognition of the failure to act responsibly in the face of Louise and Louise's story. Passion and desire become love for self and for other, which, in the end, becomes an ethical way of living.

As the narrator's norms and beliefs become fully reliable, the self-reflexive nature of Written on the Body that I mentioned earlier takes on ideological and ethical resonances. On the one side of the coin, we have the translation of face for face [for face . . . like pi, there is no ending]; on the other side of the coin, we have the invention and transmission of stories. The mirroring of faces--mine, yours, Winterson's, her narrator's, Louise's--and the ethical responsibility to each face, and each face's story, is suggestive of what Levinas, in Outside the Subject, calls "intercorporeity": "the co-presence of two hands, due to their belonging to the same body, has been extended to the other person" (100). When Winterson says that love is transcendent--"'probably one of the few things in life that rises above all those kinds of oppositions--black and white, male and female, homosexual and heterosexual'" (qtd. in Doan 144)--she echoes Levinas's idea of "the spiritual bond" that "lies in the non-in-difference of persons toward one another that is called love" (103).
I dropped into the mass of you and I cannot find the way out. Sometimes I think I'm free, coughed up like Jonah from the whale, but then I turn a corner and recognize myself again. Myself in your skin, myself lodged in your bones . . .

(Winterson 120)

When I begin to see my own face, my flesh "which is called my body . . . flesh which appears also as a body among bodies, but which, in those circumstances, is no longer approached in its concreteness, nor on its own terms" (Levinas 97), I begin to move beyond my own perspective and become an ethical subject. The narrator's spiritual bond with Louise reflects the reader's experience with the text. We "drop into" the mass of Written on the Body; we become lost in the virtual reality of the narrative; we continually see ourselves and create ourselves as we identify and disidentify with a variety of positions.11

Although Winterson's text relies on the mutual recognition of self in other, it "does not absorb the difference of strangeness" (Levinas 103). For Written on the Body is strange, queer, in its steadfast refusal to indicate the narrator's race, class, gender, or sexuality. Despite the absence of suprapersonal attributes, the narrator emerges as a plausible person. If the absence of the suprapersonal does not function to minimize the plausibility of the character-narrator as "real person,"
then how does it function? What does Winterson gain by this refusal?

The narrator's race remains unmarked and, in fact, none of the lovers except Louise, Inge, and Carlo have their race explicitly marked: Louise is "creamy" (11), like an "ivory coast" (117); Inge is, or at least her breasts and nipples are, brown (24); Carlo is a "dark exciting thing" (143). Class, gleaned through the narrator's occupation as translator, is perhaps the most stable suprapersonal trait, yet even that remains somewhat unclear. We learn that Bathsheba bequeaths ten thousand pounds to the narrator—some type of "guilt money"—which allows the narrator to purchase a flat. We also know that the narrator works, translates books at the British Library and even at the cottage. The rather limited information we receive does not, however, allow us to determine the narrator's class. The absence of race and class function, like the unmarked gender and destabilized sexuality, to position the narrator's face and story as one which can be commonly experienced by people of all races, classes, genders, and sexualities.

Written on the Body does not stabilize gender through codes or naming. We know the narrator reads Playboy, but mostly the food articles (and we've heard that explanation before!), discussing phallic images (the magazine "regularly features stories about asparagus and bananas and
leeks and courgettes or being smeared with honey or chocolate chip ice-cream" [36]). But the narrator also reads women's magazines, fascinated "with their arcane world of sex tips and man-traps" (74). The dream about Amy and the papier-maché snake can be read as either a phallic threat, with the rat-trap which cuts the leek in half, or a yonic threat, with the snake's shape intimating penetration. The narrator frequently uses colonizing imagery, telling of settling into "a parody of the sporting colonel, the tweedy cove with a line-up of trophies" and later relates learning Louise's body to Columbus's discovery of the Americas (52); but the narrator's flat is a "happily happy Heidi house" (28). Although it may be fun to try to determine the narrator's gender, we simply cannot.

The nameless, genderless narrator creates a situation in which the two forces that perplex Lanser—the association of the author with the narrator and the normativity of the masculine voice—come into contact. The tension between the two impulses can be seen in our efforts to stabilize the narrator's sexuality. The sexist normativity of the masculine voice hooks up with heterocentrist norms. Readers (real, flesh-and-blood readers) can—and do—read the narrator as either a heterosexual male right up to the moment when Frank, the first of the male lovers, is introduced; readers can—and
do— make a link between the lesbian Winterson and the lesbian narrator. In the first half of the novel, we have, in fact, three potential sexualities: heterosexual, lesbian, or transgendered. (The third could work in two ways: a biological male whose gender is female and desires females; a biological female whose gender is male and desires females). But the second half of the novel introduces past male lovers—Frank, Carlo, Bruno—and we do not know with any certainty when, chronologically, the male lovers fit in. (It seems that the relationships with males occurred before those with females, but I cannot be sure.) Does this make the narrator bisexual? It depends, I think, on how we name sexualities, and whether we see them in a continuum. In other words, we don't know whether the narrator is bisexual at the time of the relationship with Louise; we only that the narrator has had sex with members of each gender in the past. We could have a male narrator who was homosexual and is now practicing heterosexuality, or a female narrator who was heterosexual and now is lesbian, or a narrator who was bisexual and is now lesbian or gay or heterosexual, or a transgendered individual. We could have any of these— but we don't. What Winterson gives us is a queer narrator, one who, if I may transpose the words of Judith Butler, does not perform a 'reverse-discourse' in which the defiant affirmation of queer dialectically reinstalls the
version it seeks to overcome. Rather, this is the politicization of abjection in an effort to rewrite the history of the term, and to force it into a demanding resignification. Such a strategy . . . is crucial to creating the kind of community in which surviving with AIDS becomes more possible, in which queer lives become legible, valuable, worthy of support, in which passion, injury, grief, aspiration become recognized without fixing the terms of that recognition in yet another conceptual order of lifelessness and rigid exclusion. (Bodies That Matter 21)

The refusal to mark the narrator's gender or stabilize the narrator's sexuality returns us to the self-reflexive nature of the text. "Written on the body is a secret code only visible in certain lights; the accumulations of a lifetime gather there" (89). On the one hand, a "secret code" (gender, race, sexuality) is "written on the [human] body"; it is visible only in "certain lights" (via certain perspectives); on the other hand, Written on the Body (like all literature) is a secret code which reveals the accumulations of a lifetime--the assumptions, experiences, and hopes of both author and reader as they enter and construct the world of the text. Thus as the reader becomes selfconsciously about her role in structuring the
text, so too she becomes more self-conscious about the ways in which desire is constructed.

Although the reader is given a rather free rein in the first half of the novel, *Written on the Body* prohibits the reader from fully appropriating the narrative. Whether we begin with assumptions of heterosexuality or lesbianism, when the male lovers appear on the scene, we must face and revise our own assumptions, our own inscriptions of desire. The text asks us, through its self-reflexive nature, to assume ethical responsibility by acknowledging that identity, as Gloria Anzaldúa describes it, is not as "a bunch of little cubbyholes stuffed respectively with intellect, race, sex, class, vocation, gender" but something that "flows between, over, aspects of a person" (252-53). By making an emotional appeal to our common experiences of love and loss, as well as to our intelligence, and by refusing to mark these experiences as racialized, gendered, hetero- or homosexual, Winterson requires us to look at our own projections of "face" and "story"; we, in receiving the narrator's story, are equally challenged to behave with ethical responsibility.

Moreover, *Written on the Body* requires us--we who read the novel, talk about it, and more specifically write about it--to confront the heterocentrist norms of language itself, to "queer" our critical practices. Try writing a critical essay about the dramatized character-narrator in
homodiegesis without using either a proper name or gendered pronouns like "his, her, he, she." I find "genderless" writing extremely exacting and the difficulty I have shows, I think, in the finished product. I have broken many of the "rules" of "good" critical writing. The repetition of "the narrator" seems especially annoying, and the passive construction of many sentences, the preponderance of boring "to be" verbs, reflects just how much our language (English) depends on gender. The structure of our language makes it incredibly difficult, both syntactically and conceptually, to discuss someone like Winterson's narrator. Written on the Body compounds the difficulty by never naming the narrator, even with a gender-neutral name like "Terry." Let me illustrate with this passage:

I gathered my books and rushed from the room, past the suspicious gaze of the guards and out down the steps built through the massive columns of the British Museum. I started to walk home, convincing myself that I would never hear from Louise again. She would go to Switzerland with Elgin and have a baby. A year ago Louise had given up her job at Elgin's request so that they could start a family. She had miscarried once and had not wished to do it again. She told me she was firm about no baby. Did I believe her?

(92)
Now, this passage is what Dorrit Cohn calls self-narrated monologue and resembles, structurally, Cohn's own example from Henry James's *Aspern Papers*. If I can borrow Cohn's words and apply them to Winterson's passage: "The narrator's queries, exclamations, protestations render not [the narrator's] present, long since confirmed [or denied], interpretation of the past events, but the exact rhetoric of [the narrator's] past wonderment, the very words in which [the narrator "convinced" his- or herself during the walk home]" (TM 167). Cohn goes on to discuss this as a "first-person variant of the third technique for rendering consciousness in third-person fiction: the narrated monologue. The relationship of the narrating to the experiencing self in these self-narrated monologues corresponds exactly to the relationship of a narrator to his character in a figural third-person novel" (TM 167). Cohn's reading, insofar as it is concerned both with the ways in which narrators might abandon their temporal vantage point and cognitive privilege and with the ways in which first-person and third-person texts move into closer proximity to each other via self-narrated monologue's ability to create "the illusion of a fiction that 'tells itself,'" (TM 169), is insightful. Indeed, her discussion of Kafka's changes in *The Castle* suggests how close the two can become. *The Castle* is a "perfect illustration for the 'personal' narrative mode defined by Roland Barthes, and
the category of 'focalized' narration defined by Gérard Genette: third-person texts that one can 'rewriter' in first-person form, without the change of person entailing any further alterations" (TM 170); only Kafka's revision of his manuscript demonstrates the reverse, a first-person narrative being rewritten in third-person. But can we rewrite Winterson's text so easily?

"He gathered his books and rushed from the room."

"She gathered her books and rushed from the room."

"Terry gathered Terry's books and rushed from the room."

The first two can't be supported by content—we don't know if we have a he or a she; the third poses a problem syntactically, for in our language the third person pronoun would be indicated by the possessive "his" or "her." We could replace the pronoun with "the"—"Terry gathered the books . . ."—but that only reinforces the bind that gender, or the absence of gender, puts us in. Winterson's refusal to name the character-narrator of Written on the Body not only rejects the idea of gender as a requirement for mimetic identity, but also challenges heterocentrism, right at its linguistic roots.

Alexander Doty uses the word "queer" to describe the nonstraight work, positions, pleasures, and readings of people who either don't share the same 'sexual orientation' as that articulated in the texts they are producing or
responding to . . . or who don't define themselves as lesbian, gay, bisexual" (xvii). Doty discusses how queerness develops through three forms: 1) production of texts; 2) uses of texts by queers, and 3) "adopting reception positions that can be considered 'queer'" in some way, regardless of a person's declared sexual and gender allegiances (xi). Describing "how and where certain heterocentrist critical and theoretical approaches . . . work, and [suggesting] how and where the queerness of texts, producers, and readers might be discussed outside these heterocentrist and homophobic discursive frames" (xiii), Doty wants to talk about queer as something including, but beyond, lesbian, gay, bisexual (xv). Although Written on the Body can be seen within the first two forms that Doty mentions, it is the third form that I have highlighted. Written on the Body both advocates a queer politics in its story and discourse, and enacts one as we recognize the inability of heterocentrist language to describe our reading experiences.

Winterson's text further queers conventions of both narrative and narrative theory in its presentation of narrative facts. All narratives, whether heterodiegetic or homodiegetic, have an occasion, or a motive, for the narration. Heterodiegesis is more likely to leave the situation unmarked or, if it is marked, it almost always is the author's context that is presented.14 The motives for
writing are usually specified in the beginning, in a preface or other introductory remark, and they reflect an authorial purpose. Where heterodiegetic narrative situations arise in the extradiegetic level, the occasion for the narration in homodiegesis can occur in either the extradiegetic (Pamela, Clarissa, Moll Flanders) or the diegetic level (The Great Gatsby, Villette), or both (in The Tenant of Wildfell Hall, we have the authorial voice stating that her "object in writing the following pages was not simply to amuse the Reader, neither was it to gratify my own taste, nor yet to ingratiate myself with the Press and the Public; I wished to tell the truth, for truth always conveys its own moral to those who are able to receive it" [29]; the homodiegetic narrator, Gilbert Markham, has a different motivation for telling: he owes his friend Halford a story). Many homodiegetic texts do not mark their narrative occasion: "The Secret Sharer," "Now I Lay Me," "That Evening Sun," A Farewell to Arms.

Written on the Body, however, troubles the idea of a narrative situation by offering two possible occasions for the narration, yet we cannot stabilize which motivates the narration. From the very first sentence—"Why is the measure of love loss?"—we sense the motive for the telling: a beloved is gone, and the narrator is grief-stricken: "now I am alone on a rock hewn out of my own body" (9). We quickly determine that Winterson's narrator,
much like Lucy in *Villette*, writes to make present the absent beloved.

The genre of amorous fiction, as Linda Kauffman points out in *Discourses of Desire*, has historically linked writing and desire. From the early epistolary fiction of Ovid, from Richardson's *Clarissa* to the fictional autobiography of Jane Eyre to the woven layers of Rosa Coldfield's narration in Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!* Kauffman notes the link between writing and absence: "Each letter is a confrontation, a demand, a plea, a lament: if the beloved were present, there would be no need to write" (17). At stake in the epistolary narrative, Kauffman contends, are issues of authorship, ownership, and identity; these "are traced, retraced, and like a thread in a labyrinth, lost" (19). Moreover, the narratives she discusses are transgressive in that they combine writing and revolt, defiance and desire; "the writing," she claims, "is the revolution" (20), revolutionary because "the aim of the writing heroines" is to "deflower myths' of woman by undermining mimesis, by transgressing the boundaries of both gender and genre" (23). Kauffman goes on to note that narratives that fit in this mold emphasize the diegetic and performative aspects of narrative discourse more than the mimetic; that the heroine writes to sustain the illusion that she is speaking to her beloved; that the telling not only makes present the absent beloved, but also involves
the writer's self-creation, self-invention (24-25). We can see *Written on the Body* doing just this, making Louise present while involving the narrator's self-creation:

Articulacy of fingers, the language of the deaf and dumb, signing on the body body longing. Who taught you to write in blood on my back? Who taught you to use your hands as branding irons? You have scored your name into my shoulders, referenced me with your mark. The pads of your fingers have become printing blocks, you tap a message on to my skin, tap meaning into my body. Your morse code interferes with my heart beat . . . Written on the body is a secret code only visible in certain lights; the accumulations of a lifetime gather there . . . I didn't know Louise would have reading hands. She has translated me into her own book. (89)

Loving is like reading; it is entering a virtual reality where what you desire can be found, yet never had. But what is virtual, and what is reality?

From the kitchen door Louise's face. Paler, thinner, but her hair still mane-wide and the colour of blood. I put out my hand and felt her fingers, she took my fingers and put them to her
mouth. The scar under the lip burned me. Am I stark mad? She's warm. (190)

How do we read the penultimate paragraph of the novel, as reality or fantasy? Has Louise discovered the narrator's hideaway? If so, then we must surmise that the loss the narrator laments is Louise's death. Or is it simply wishful thinking, a projection of desire, that the narrator sees in the door? If so, then the lament is for the still-alive, but very absent, beloved.

The ending of Written on the Body, like the ending of Villette, confuses time and reality. However, where I was able to unravel Villette's narrative discourse to provide a fairly stable interpretation, here I am not. Two different interpretations are possible; neither seems "better" than the other. We know that the narrator, returning from an unfruitful search for Louise in London, returns to his/her cabin, where Gail Right awaits. S/he notices the "fresh flowers on the table. Fresh flowers and a table-cloth. New curtains in the ragged window. My heart sank. Gail must be moving in" (188). The narrator tells Gail about the search that failed to yield Louise, that s/he continues to love Louise—and after that, "[f]rom the kitchen door Louise's face." If we read this event as "really happening," then we must surmise that the narrative discourse begins sometime after Louise's death. But if we read this scene as another of the narrator's fantasies,
then the occasion for the narration is Louise's continued absence, but not necessarily her death. Both readings are supported by the dynamics of the narrative discourse.

Certainly many passages suggest that the narrator and Louise were reunited and that Louise subsequently died. The descriptions of the leukemic body, which seemed initially to be pure fantasies generated by the narrator's reading of medical books, now seem to collapse two distinct times:

- Rest now, let me unlace your boots, massage your feet where the skin is calloused and sore. There is nothing distasteful about you to me; not sweat nor grime, not disease and its dull markings... It has been a long day for you to find me. You are bruised all over. Burst figs are the livid purple of your skin.

  The leukaemic body hurts easily. I could not be rough with you now, making you cry out with pleasure close to pain. We've bruised each other, broken the capillaries shot with blood. Tubes hair-thin intervening between arteries and veins, those ramified blood vessels that write the body's longings. (124)

The narrator snaps out of the reverie, and says, "I've been living on my memories like a cheap has-been. I've been sitting in this chair by the fire, my hand on the cat,"
talking aloud, fool-ramblings" (124) and notes the open
text book on the floor. But when is the time of this
reverie? We know that, at the very beginning of the
narrative, the narrator, mourning, is sitting in the same
armchair that s/he sits in at the cabin as s/he first
defends and eventually repents the decision to leave
Louise. It's entirely likely, if we read Louise and the
narrator as reuniting at the end, that the narrator has
lived beyond Louise's death, and can thus describe the
leukemic body with the details that pepper the pages. The
narrator's loss of Louise through death makes sense in
these next two passages as well:

I've thought a lot about death recently, the
finality of it, the argument ending in mid-air.
One of us hadn't finished, why did the other one
go? And why without warning? Even death after
long illness is without warning. (155)

The day before the Wednesday last, this time a
year ago, you were here and now you're not. Why
not? Death reduces us to the baffled logic of a
small child. If yesterday why not today? And
where are you? (156)
For the bereaved, the hole is a frightful place. A dizzy chasm of loss. This is the last time you'll be by the side of the one you love and you must leave her, must leave him, in a dark pit where the worms shall begin their duty. (177)

*Death* reduces us . . . where are you . . . for the bereaved . . . Why is the measure of love loss?

The alternative to this interpretation is to see Louise's continued absence, though not necessarily her death, as the motivation for the narration. In this reading, we must interpret the penultimate paragraph, in which Louise's face is at the kitchen door as a fantasy. The text supports that interpretation as well. Before going to London, probably sitting in the armchair, the narrator fantasizes:

Fragile creatures of a small blue planet, surrounded by light years of silent space. Do the dead find peace beyond the rattle of the world? What peace is there for us whose best love cannot return them even for a day? I raise my head to the door and think I will see you in the frame. I know it is your voice in the corridor but when I run outside the corridor is empty. (156)

Seeing Louise in the doorway is, of course, exactly what does occur at the end, but we really can't tell where it
occurs ontologically: in the real world or in the world of imagination. And the narrator's proneness to "seeing" those who aren't really there is already incorporated into the narrative discourse. Thinking of a friend killed in a road accident, the narrator tells us:

I started to see her in the streets, always fleetingly, ahead of me, her back to me, disappearing into the crowd. I am told this is common. I see her still, though less often, and still for a second believe it is her. I have from time to time found something of hers among my possessions. Always something trivial. Once I opened an old notebook and a slip of paper fell out, pristine, the ink firm not faded. She had left it at my seat in the British Library five years earlier. It was an invitation to coffee at four o'clock. I'll get my coat and a handful of small change and meet you in the crowded café and you'll be there today won't you, won't you? (155)

Likewise, when the narrator discovers Louise's last address was the narrator's own flat, s/he leaves a letter with the address of the cabin: "If you get this please answer, I'll meet you in the café and you'll be there won't you. Won't you?" (181)

Just as we cannot stabilize the narrator's gender or sexuality, so too we are unable to determine the occasion
for the narration. Narrative "facts" and narrative "fictions" become indistinguishable. Do we have unreliability of narrative facts here? I don't think so—nothing seems to indicate a distance between implied author and narrator in terms of how the facts are rendered. What the two different possible interpretations have in common is the refusal to inscribe the death of Louise, and thus the rejection of the diseased and dead body as spectacle. From Richardson's Clarissa to Sylvia Plath's "Lady Lazarus" the female diseased body, dying, becomes spectacular. The refusal to inscribe the border of the body, dead or alive, parallels the refusal to gender the narrator in that both acts "queer" literary conventions, refusing the body as spectacle, granting narrative the power of life.

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At present to enter a virtual world you would have to put on a crude-looking diving helmet of the kind people used to wear in the 1940s and a special glove rather like a heavy gardening gauntlet. Thus equipped you would be inside a 360° television set with a three-dimensional programme, three-dimensional sound, and solid objects that you could pick up and move around. No longer would you be watching a film from a fixed perspective, this is a film-set you can explore, even alter if you don't like it. As far
as your senses can tell you are in a real world. The fact that you are in a diving helmet wearing a gardening glove won't matter.

In a little while, the equipment will be replaced by a room that you can walk into like any other. Except that it will be an intelligent space. The room will be a wall-to-wall virtual world of your choosing. If you like, you may live in a computer-created world all day and all night. You will be able to try out a Virtual life with a Virtual lover. You can go into your Virtual house and do Virtual housework, add a baby or two, even find out if you'd rather be gay. Or single. Or straight. Why hesitate when you could simulate? (Winterson 96-97)

Reading Written on the Body is like entering a virtual world, a world in which we assume different identities, deconstruct and reconstruct our selves and others. Winterson's virtual reality demands the repeated stagings of identification; it asks us to selfconsciously assume responsibility for our own stories as they interconnect with others' stories. Refusing the heterocentrist conventions that define the dramatized character-narrator, troubling the gendered structure of our critical language, banning the spectacle of the diseased body, Written on the Body emphasizes the ethical responsibility of the "I"—both
in the text and reading the text--to the story. If "the invention of stories is a political act" (Doan 141), then the ethical receiving of stories involves an awareness of the ideologies within the text and the ideologies we bring to the text.

The virtual worlds that Fitzgerald and Nick, Brontë and Lucy, Twain and Huck, and Winterson and her narrator give us represent strikingly different ideological concerns, as do my interventions in each world. Addressing the issues of reliability and selfconsciousness is just one way to encounter the homodiegetic "I," but by exploring the wealth of rhetorical relations that these two categories generate, readers can formulate the ideological position of, and the ethical behaviors required to live in, each of these virtual worlds. Because we cannot predict the various ways in which reliability and selfconsciousness might intersect to generate readerly invitations in any given text, a study like mine could, conceivable, go on indefinitely. However, my goal has not been to provide an exhaustive taxonomy of the various rhetorical invitations narratives offer, but rather to develop a relational methodology, one that examines the principles and assumptions of our theoretical categories: individually, in relation to other categories, in relation to the interpretive goals of various critical communities, and in relation to the literary narratives they hope to help

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explicate. The relational model of homodiegesis that I advance here, emphasizing convergences and divergences, parallels and oppositions, as well as historical contexts, requires us, as readers, to respond to formal matters, history, ideology, and ethics and, in so doing, it asks that we recognize the power of narrative, a power which demands that, as "I" encounter another "I," I act with care, with responsibility, and, finally, with love.
1. All references to Chatman and Phelan allude to Story and Discourse and Reading People, Reading Plots, respectively, unless otherwise specified.

2. I would also want to note the correspondence between class and occupation that occurs in many literary texts. To be a teacher, like Lucy, or a bondman, like Nick, influences our understanding of class, and perhaps with some jobs even gender or race.

3. A character may, of course, live as if he were wealthy, as Arthur does in The Tenant of Wildfell Hall, while really being in debt. A character might also have biological organs of both the male and the female, as in some science fiction; but such characters are not codified as male or as female, but as both. My point is that if we are introduced to a character as a male, we expect that attribute to be consistent and, in fact, if that character were later referred to as female there would have to be an explanation for the change within the narrative logic, as in Orlando, or we would consider it "the erroneous." For more on the erroneous, see Phelan, Narrative as Rhetoric, chapter 9.

4. For the opposing sides to the argument about gender and the heterodiegetic narrator, see Lanser's discussion of Hemingway's "The Killers" in The Narrative Act and Chatman's response to Lanser in Coming to Terms. See also Gerald Prince's "On Narratology: Criteria, Corpus, Context" and Lanser's response to Prince, "Sexing the Narrative."

5. Brian McHale notes how postmodernist fiction often foregrounds its own status through references to letters. Such reflective inclusions suggest that the text is "about the world of letters in the sense of the institutions of literature and the literary life, as well as, of course, being conspicuously determined by letters" (Postmodernist Fiction 158).

6. The obsolete meaning of "translation," Webster's tells us, is "in rhetoric, transference of the meaning of a word or phrase; metaphor"; Winterson's translator can be fruitfully seen as translating, transferring, metaphorically likening, the various agents involved in the reading process, both textual and corporeal.

7. At times, the "you" in the text signifies Louise: "You were careful not to say those words that soon became our private altar" (11); "I would miss you, do miss you and think of you very often" (38). At other times, the "you" is
someone other than Louise: "What would you do under the circumstances?" (22); "I told you that Louise had more than a notion of the Gothic about her" (54).

8. Iser's model of reading, developed in The Implied Reader, The Act of Reading, Prospecting, and The Fictive and the Imaginary, likens reading to fantasy or dreaming, yet notes that reading differs in that the imagination of the reader is guided, or contained, by the formal features of the text.

9. By "first" and "second" I do not mean to give primacy to one temporal layer over the other, only to distinguish between the two different narrative pasts.

10. The only history we receive apart from the sequential lovers is that of the narrator and the narrator's father being at the train station (182).

11. In Bodies That Matter, Judith Butler discusses identification as a desired event, a phantasmatic staging of the event, a structuring presence of alterity in the "I." Identification, the possibility of assuming various positions, works in both the fantasy and the dream to enable the subject to play with a permutation of his or her own roles and attributions. Disidentification, the refusal to identify with a given position, also works phantasmatically, for disidentification suggests that on some level an identification has already occurred, been made and disavowed (113). What holds true for the dream and the fantasy holds true, so Written on the Body suggests, in reading.

12. Indeed, the obsession with food is an old motif for desire. See Emily Dickinson's "I had been hungry."

13. Lanser also raises some concerns about how reliability (of norms and beliefs) works in Written on the Body, which "yields, in some sense, two narrative texts" (89). She states that a sexually conservative reader of Written on the Body, fortified, perhaps, by the evidence of Winterson's previous novels . . . might well decide that the norms of the implied author "Jeanette Winterson" are decadent or diseased and the author's judgments therefore unreliable, in which case a narrator who would technically be considered reliable by our definitions (because the narrator's norms are consistent with those of the implied author) might well be judged
unreliable by readers whose values diverge from those of "Winterson." (88)

While Lanser is correct in assuming that the narrator's norms are, for the most part, consistent with the implied Winterson's, she (Lanser) runs into trouble by addressing the relationship between the reader's and the author's norms in terms of their reliability. Reliability is the rhetorical relation between implied author and narrator. An author, implied or flesh-and-blood, cannot be reliable except in relation with the narrator. When it comes to discussing the viability of the implied author's own norms, we are, as I suggested in my chapter on Gatsby, in the realm of ideology and ethics.

14. Fielding writes to George Lyttleton, Esquire, of his desire "to recommend goodness and innocence" and to display "that beauty of virtue" which men should pursue (37); the narrator speaks of the desire to provide reading "fare" which induces the reader "to read on forever," a good, entertaining story (53). Mary Wollstonecraft, in Mary and The Wrongs of Woman, uses an "Advertisement" and "Author's Preface" respectively to establish the occasion for the narration; "In delineating the Heroine of this Fiction [Mary], the Author attempts to develop a character different from those generally portrayed . . . a woman . . . drawn by the individual from the original source" (Mary); "my main object, the desire of exhibiting the misery and oppression, peculiar to women, that arise out of the partial laws and customs of society" (Wrongs).

15. Winterson's text, by entertaining the "factuality" of a non-narrated story event and by blurring the facts so that we are unsure of what happens, problematizes Chatman's structural analysis of story-events. Events, he claims, differ from existents in that "the former have strictly determined positions in story . . . events are discrete; they may overlap, but each has a clear-cut beginning and end; their domain is circumscribed" (SD 128).

16. Compare the death of Mrs. Sinclair in Clarissa to that of Belton. Her death is far more horrifying, and linked to her "diseased" lifestyle, which comes under especial critique because she is a female. This further contrasts with the youthful, pure death of Clarissa herself. Of the spectacle of the female dying body, Plath bitingly writes:

There is a charge

For the eyeing of my scars, there is a charge
For the hearing of my heart---

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It really goes.

And there is a charge, a very large charge
For a word or a touch
Or a bit of blood

Or a piece of my hair or my clothes.


Fetterley, Judith. "Reading about Reading: 'A Jury of Her Peers,' 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue,' and 'The Yellow Wallpaper.'" In Flynn and Schweickart, 147-64.


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Marx, Leo. "Mr. Eliot, Mr. Trilling and Huckleberry Finn." In Graff and Phelan, 290-305.


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Schweickart, Patrocinio. "Reading Ourselves: Toward a Feminist Theory of Reading." In Flynn and Schweickart, 63-82.


