NARRATIVE STRATEGIES IN ROBERT CORMIER'S YOUNG ADULT NOVELS

DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

The young adult fiction of Robert Cormier (1925 – 2000) has been influential in writing for young adult readers. In particular, Cormier's manipulation of narration transcends the accepted conventions in the field of young adult literature and enables him to move toward multiple voices and perspectives. Yet Cormier's YA novels have never been analyzed systematically in terms of their narrative merits. Applying contemporary narrative theory, this study explores the reciprocal relationship between Cormier's narrative techniques and his treatment of controversial themes in his young adult fiction. It is based on the assumption that theme and narration are not separate components, but complementary elements. That requires appropriate amalgamation. The dissertation begins by investigating the critical context of Cormier's works in relation to the field of young adult literature. Then the study turns to a close examination of the narrative techniques employed in Cormier's young adult novels *The Chocolate War* (1974), *I Am the Cheese* (1977), *After the First Death* (1979), *The Bumblebee Flies Anyway* (1983), *Beyond the Chocolate War* (1985), *Fade* (1988), *Other Bells for Us to Ring* (1990), *We All Fall Down* (1991), *Tunes for Bears to Dance To* (1992), *In the Middle of the Night* (1995), *Tenderness* (1997), *Heroes* (1998), and *The Rag and Bone Shop* (2001). Among the salient textual features identified in Cormier's YA novels are Bakhtinian dialogue

achieved through multiple focalization, a polyphonic effect produced by free indirect discourse, and suspense generated by means of gaps and delay. Cormier utilizes diverse narrative techniques to elaborate the significance of his works and thus achieves a unique correspondence between form and content. This study also demonstrates Cormier's contributions to young adult literature: the introduction of modern and postmodern techniques of narration and the pioneering use of sophisticated narrative strategies. This dissertation concludes with a discussion of the use of Cormier's YA fiction in high-school literature classes, along with suggestions for future research.

Dedicated to my parents

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

        The general prejudice that children's and young adult (YA) literature lacks

literary merit results from a misleading presumption that literature for children and young

adults is "simple" in terms of literary craft. Attacks on YA literature center on the

problem of quality. Young adult literature is besmirched as "a bastard child of real

literature" (Crutcher, 1996, p. ix) or "the stepchild of the high school curriculum" for

struggling readers (Moore, 1995, p. 2). YA literature has been "looked at as the B-team

of literature" (Lynch, 1994, p. 37). No wonder Babbitt (1978) could boldly assert the

futility of YA literature in stating: "Teenagers do not need a fiction of their own: they are

quite ready to move into the world of adult fiction" (p. 143). Crowe (2001) provides a

succinct summary of one of the common negative perceptions regarding contemporary

YA books: "They aren't the Classics" (p. 146). In brief, young adult literature has been

criticized for its literary simplicity.

        Indeed, many books published for children and young adults today fall short of

the literary qualities that distinguish the classics. Specifically with respect to narrative

technique, children's and young adult literatures commonly display some features of

narrative discourse which might be criticized as uncomplicated and unsophisticated.

McCallum (1996) summarizes the characteristics of such simplistic narration in

children's literature:

> Briefly, the narrative modes employed in children's novels tend to be restricted to
> either first person narration by a main character or third person narration with one
> character focaliser (Stephens, 1991). Texts tend to be monological rather than
> dialogical, with single-stranded and story-driven narratives, closed rather than
> open endings, and a narrative discourse lacking stylistic variation (Moss, 1990;
> Hunt, 1988). These are strategies which function to situate readers in restricted
> and relatively passive subject positions and to implicitly reinforce a single
> dominant interpretive stance. (p. 397)

Nikolajeva (2003) makes similar observations, listing the following simplistic features:

> a distinct narrative voice, a fixed point of view, preferably an authoritarian,
> didactic, extradiegetic narrator who can supply the young reader with comments,
> explanations, and exhortations, without leaving anything unuttered or ambiguous;
> a narrator possessing larger knowledge and experience than both the characters
> and the readers. (p. 18)

Young adult novels have commonly used a first-person point of view in which the

adolescent character takes an "I" position in the story, and thus all the events in the text

are presented from a single point of view. In other words, the perceptions, feelings, and

thoughts of this protagonist-narrator dominate the text. Even though other young adult

novels use the third-person point of view, they seem to conform to a requirement that YA

novels be narrated from the adolescent's point of view. Nilsen and Donelson (1993)

observe that YA novelists often "write through the eyes of a young person" (p. 20) and

that "point-of-view is expressed largely through the person who tells the story" (p. 77).

Similarly, Small (1992) characterizes YA novels as narratives based on "the perspective

of the main character" to present an "adolescent interpretation of events and people,"

whether the point of view is first or third person (p. 283). Moreover, it is supposed that

YA novels must employ a single, unified narratorial position, which is stipulated: the

young adult "story has to be told from a consistent point of view" (Nilsen & Donelson, 1993, p. 77).

The criteria for narrative strategies and the conventions that usually govern in young adult literature do not apply to Robert Cormier's young adult novels. Cormier utilizes much more sophisticated narrative strategies than those that conventional narrative forms and techniques allow. I have employed contemporary narrative theory, particularly as proposed by Bakhtin (1981), Genette (1980), and Rimmon-Kenan (2002), to validate my argument.

Cormier's narrative craft is discussed in detail in Chapter 4. However, before this detailed examination of Cormier's narrative craft, the following sections of this chapter will define young adult literature, defend the legitimacy of literature for young adults, and discuss Cormier's contributions to young adult literature.

Definition of Young Adult Literature

In this study, I use the term "young adult literature" as an umbrella term that includes various literary works written for young adults instead of such terms as "teenage books," "teen fiction," "juvenile fiction," or "adolescent literature." Nielsen and Donelson (2001) have pointed out that these labels are weighed down with the negative connotations of "pimples, puberty, and immaturity" (p. 4). They suggest that the descriptive term "young adult literature" is more appropriate than the somewhat derogatory evaluative tags.

Indeed, the notion of young adult literature as a distinctive genre is perplexing. So far, literary critics and educational practitioners have arrived at no unanimous agreement on a definition of this concept. Cart (1996) has even refused to define young adult

literature for fear that such a definition might undervalue it as a form of formulaic writing.[1] However, this open stance still leaves the question of the definition of young adult literature unresolved. Some researchers have attempted to describe this genre. From the perspective of reading interest, Reid (1999) regards young adult literature as "books that adolescents would probably like and be able to relate to" (p. 3). Similarly, Wilder and Teasley (2000) suggest that young adult literature includes books written intentionally for young adults as the audience, any books that young adults like to read, and publications that publishers market to young adult readers. However, these descriptive definitions highlight the social context of young adult literature without resulting in a better understanding of the literary qualities of young adult literature.

Certain literary properties of young adult literature are reflected in the following definitions. Brown and Stephens (1995) define young adult literature as a text that "focuses upon youthful characters and explores their sense of identity, their adventures, their dreams, and their trials" (p. 6). In a similar vein, Wilder and Teasley (2000) contend that YA literature "deals with issues that young people face . . . or issues that young people are afraid they may have to face" (p. 55).

Other researchers have identified young adult literature from the perspective of writing craft. Regarding style, Herz and Gallo (1996) mention the quick-paced style in young adult texts, where "the first page or two demand readers' attention, enticing them

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[1] The recipe for YA writing is, "Take one teenage protagonist (sixteen or younger – usually younger); give her/him a story to tell in her/his first-person voice. Keep the number of other characters to a bare minimum and develop their identities sketchily. Limit the story's time span to a year or less. Fold in an undistinguished setting in a sentence or two and don't refer to it thereafter. Add a lot of pop culture references and brand names. Stir briskly – no time for reflection or introspection – using lots of dialogue and a simple, unadorned, straightforward, colloquial style. Keep it short – no more than 200 pages; . . . Hang the plot on a problem that can – after lots of hints of impending doom – be resolved satisfactorily by the protagonist without adult interference" (Cart, 1996, pp. 236-237).

to read on" (p. xvi). With respect to characterization, Reid (1999) observes that "the teenage main character is usually perceptive, sensitive, intelligent, mature, and independent" and "the actions and decisions of the main characters are major factors in the outcome of the conflict" (p. 4). Bushman and Haas (2002) identify some "common characteristics" of young adult literature: "Conflicts are often consistent with the young adult's experience, themes are often of interest to young people, protagonists and most characters are young adults, and the language parallels that of young people" (p. 2). These statements provide insight into the distinguishing features of young adult literature, even though they are partial, not comprehensive.

Nilsen and Donelson (2001) offer a more inclusive list of characteristics of young adult literature:

1. "Young adult authors write from the viewpoint of young people": YA books are written through the eyes of adolescents.

2. "Please, Mother, I want the credit": In YA stories, the protagonists get rid of their parents or an elder to accomplish their own goals.

3. "Young adult literature is fast-paced": YA plots develop speedily through a restricted number of events and characters.

4. "Young adult literature includes a variety of genres and subjects": YA books are abundant in a remarkable diversity of subjects, themes, and genres.

5. "The body of work includes stories about characters from many different ethnic and cultural groups": Young adult literature reflects social, economic, and ethnic multiplicity.

6. "Young adult books are basically optimistic, with characters making worthy accomplishments": YA works inspire adolescent readers by showing them how to successfully mature from childhood to adulthood, even in the face of cruel realities.

7. "Successful young adult novels deal with emotions that are important to young adults": YA fiction addresses issues of physical growth and mental maturity in adolescents' developmental tasks. (pp. 25-33)

This set of characteristics helps us to formulate a definition that leads to a complete conception of young adult literature.

The Legitimacy of Literature for Young Adults

Young adult literature has its own historical legacy. In the United States, the antecedents of contemporary young adult literature can be traced back 130 years and include the American Sunday School Union's moral lessons, Louisa May Alcott's novels, dime and domestic novels, Edward Stratemeyer's syndicated series, and the junior novel (Nilsen & Donelson, 2001). Winnowed from the generality of formulaic and simplistic texts, young adult literature has stood the test of time, gradually came of age, and actually exists today in its own right. This literary tradition is evident in scholarly criticism.

However, hostility toward young adult literature is still prevalent. As Hollindale (1995) points out, "For some commentators, adolescent fiction is an unnecessary commercial intervention, impeding progress to adult reading and pandering to teenage immaturity and emotional narcissism" (p. 86). Confronting negative criticisms about young adult literature, Gallo (2001) robustly protests:

It bothers me a great deal when high school English teachers or university professors condemn young adult books because they believe they are shallow and poorly written. . . . Those critics seem to think that young adult books mean shallow romances, Sweet Valley High, transparent mysteries, or supernatural thrillers like those by R. L. Stine. . . . But there is so much more. No thoughtful reader can ever accuse *After the First Death* by Robert Cormier, *Dancing on the Edge* by Han Nolan, *Speak* by Laurie Halse Anderson, or *Whitechurch* by Chris Lynch of being simplistic. Spend a couple of hours reading *I Hadn't Meant to Tell You This* by Jacqueline Woodson and then try to tell me it's shallow. Read *Ironman* by Chris Crutcher and you'll eat your words. Read Gary Paulsen's *Soldier's Heart* and you'll wonder why anyone would want to struggle through Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*. (p. 37)

Young adult novels are not necessarily less complex and less significant than canonical literature. In terms of literary merit, Tchudi and Mitchell (1989) comment that "top-notch writers such as Sue Ellen Bridgers, Robert Cormier, Susan Cooper, Madeleine L'Engle, and Cynthia Voigt write with skill and grace, use vivid imagery, intertwine complex plot lines, and give depth to their characters while telling engrossing stories" (p. 138). Likewise, Aronson (1995) observes the technical qualities of young adult literature, commenting that young adult fiction may "employ a surrealistic style, a poetic voice, hard-edged realism, or a highly personal blend of interior reflection and exploration of the outside world" (p. 36). Moore (1997) argues that "the finest young adult literature deserves a place among the familiar classics in the secondary school literary canon" (p. 2). In addition, Soter (1999) demonstrates from the multiple perspectives of contemporary literary theories that excellent young adult novels "can bear critical scrutiny" and that such scrutiny reveals the complexity and sophistication of young adult literature (p. 2).

In terms of its content, young adult literature is broad and diverse in scope, as Aronson (1995) observes:

Up for grabs for the modern YA novel are matters of ethnicity and race, issues of faith and religion, markers of gender and sexuality, problems of home and society,

choices of politics and belief, concerns about money and the future. In short, the YA genre now engages the most profound, deepest, and richest issues that we face as a nation. (p. 36)

Moreover, Purves, Rogers, and Soter (1995) claim that the themes and subject matter of young adult literature match issues in adolescents' personal, social, intellectual, and cognitive development, saying that "we can, through young adult literature, connect them with issues that are contemporary, such as gender bias or orientation" (p. 32).

In addition to the artistic value of its literary qualities, young adult literature has educational value as it engages young adults in reading. Kaywell (1993) states that "the reading levels of most young adult books are within a range of ease that most students can master" (p. ix). Therefore, young adult novels are especially beneficial to struggling and resistant readers. Salvner (2000) suggests that young adult novels are more suitable for all adolescent readers than the classics are, "both because the books are often relatively brief and because their closeness in experience and insight to teenagers today suggests that they might be read with less resistance and more efficiency" (p. 94). Furthermore, as Soter (1999) points out, young adult novels "contain content that is more directly relevant to teenagers and their experience" (p. 2).

To sum up, this genre has indeed progressed from the unsophisticated toward the complex and significant, and its overall quality is attested to by literary critics and scholars. Christenbury (2000) believes that an excellent young adult novel has the same attributes as those found in an adult novel, despite the fact that young adult fiction is "stripped down in complexity regarding plot, number of characters, breadth of setting, and sheer length of prose" (p. 17). Likewise, Zitlow (2000) claims that quality young adult literature can "reinforce all the aspects of literary analysis, personal response, and

introspection that are a part of even the most advanced reading and writing curriculum" (p. 21). In a particularly strong view, Crowe (2001) even places YA novels on the same scale with the classics, saying that "we have a handful of classics, followed by a good bunch of brilliant novels, followed by an impressive collection of readable and entertaining books" (p. 146). This makes young adult literature worthy of study because of its potentially outstanding literary quality.

Robert Cormier's Young Adult Novels

Robert Cormier (1925 – 2000) is a widely read and critically acclaimed author of young adult literature. Schwartz (1979) has conferred upon Cormier the title "Teen-agers' Laureate." Myers (2000) claims that Cormier is "the founding father of YA dark realism." Cart (2000) believes that Robert Cormier is "the single most important writer in the whole history of young-adult literature," arguing that

> it is because of Robert Cormier that we can dignify the genre with that very word literature. . . . He had made it possible to write true literature for young adults and not only for young adults but for older readers who are also challenged and stimulated by the thematic richness, the artful plotting, and the complexity of characterization that are the hallmark of his books. (p. 807)

In 1991, Robert Cormier became the third person to receive the Margaret A. Edwards Award for his lifelong contribution to literature for young adults.[2] Citing *The Chocolate War* (1974), *I Am the Cheese* (1977) and *After the First Death* (1979), the award committee noted that "Cormier's brilliantly crafted and troubling novels have achieved the status of classics in young adult literature" (Thomson, 2003, p. 66).

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[2] The Margaret A. Edwards Award "gives recognition to those authors whose book or books have provided young adults with a window through which they can view the world, and which will help them to grow and understand themselves and their role in society" (Sutton, 1991, p. 28).

Thus, Cormier may be considered a leading author of YA literature. His literary achievements can be evaluated from three perspectives: how he changed the landscape of YA literature through a reconceptualization of problem novels; how this new genre broke down the taboos previously prescribed for and observed in literature for young adults to open an unlimited range of possibility in writing for young adults; and how Cormier's works continue to challenge young adult readers emotionally and intellectually.

Reconceptualizing problem novels.

According to Nilsen and Donelson (2001), problem novels in young adult literature emerged from the radical changes in social and educational values that occurred in the late 1960s. The newly realistic young adult novels have been interchangeably called "new realism," "problem novels," or "realistic problem novels" by critics (Donelson & Nilsen, 2001; Keeley, 2001). Donelson and Nilsen (1988) recognize "the publication of S. E. Hinton's *Outsiders*, Robert Lipsyte's *Contender,* Ann Head's *Mr. and Mrs. Bo Jo Jones*, and Jean Thompson's *Houses of Tomorrow* in 1967 as the birth of the realistic YA problem novels" (p. 275). Moreover, Donelson and Nilsen (2001) also identify the serious coming-of-age novels as "*new realism* (as opposed to the romanticized stories from the 1930s through the 1950s)" or "*problem novels*" (p. 113). In their opinion, a good realistic young adult novel treats a problem that young adults face in the contemporary world candidly. Based on Donelson and Nilsen's definition, the following discussion will use "problem novels" and "new realism" as umbrella terms for the realistic problem novels emerging in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Problem novels deal honestly with social realities that teenagers may experience from childhood to adulthood in their real world. In addition to the selection of subject

matter, Nilsen and Donelson (2001) identify four key features that distinguish problem novels from other earlier books for teenagers: the portrayal of protagonists from lower-class families, the presentation of harsh settings, the use of colloquial language, and a change in the mode of approaching literature. In Nilsen and Donelson's (2001) view, the newly realistic problem novels of the late 1960s and early 1970s transformed the earlier comic and romantic modes to ironic and even tragic ones.

However, critics have perceived some shortcomings in the problem novels of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Sutton (1982) argues that most problem novels written during this period were actually a form of "low mimetic comedy," unworthy of critical analysis. Abramson (1976) observes that although taboos in the selection of subject matter were lifted, some limitations still existed. Teen fiction has tended to adhere to conventional morality and thus avoids descriptions of sexual encounters and ambivalent attitudes toward sex. Though attempting to render reality honestly, most authors still "look solely on the bright side of life and human nature" and insist on "the sunny-side up ending," providing readers with "a measure of hope or reassurance" (Abramson, 1976, p. 39). Abramson argues that "the restrictions on teen fiction result in books that succeed only in mirroring a slick surface realism that too often acts as a cover-up. . . . Books that set out to tackle painful experiences turn into weak testimonies to life's essential goodness" (p. 38). In a word, most realistic problem novels of this period fostered "a cockeyed optimism" and concluded on "false notes of uplift" (Abramson, p. 39). Most likely, the problems Abramson noticed were due to the changing nature of young adult literature itself. Abramson made those comments at a time when young adult literature was being redefined, and such problems may have been worked out since. However, it is

worthwhile to examine these problems Abramson pointed out as his critical comments roughly coincided with the appearance of Cormier's first YA novel and with the beginning of this change.

> Cart (1996) echoes Abramson's (1976) assertion when he claims:
>
> The kind of realistic novel that was being written in the 1960s and early 1970s was firmly rooted in the traditions of nineteenth-century American realism and its essential optimistic view that goodness would prevail and that man had the power of free will to make it so. (p. 68)

Sutton (1982) further argues that such problem novels do not merit critical analysis because the upbeat endings "preclude critical response" and because they offer mostly entertainment and solution but seldom enlightenment. In his opinion, a good realistic novel asks provocative questions instead of providing definite answers; the essential quality of problem novels is "sensibility, evoking in the reader strong emotion for its own sake" (p. 34). Sutton complains, "We don't often offer truly challenging realism to young adults" (p. 35). To sum up, the common complaints about earlier realistic problem novels include their celebration of conventional morality, the insistence on a happy resolution, and the lack of intellectual challenge and emotional engagement.

Situated in the historical context of the development of young adult literature, Cormier has transcended the limitations of earlier realistic problem novels since his first YA novel, *The Chocolate War,* appeared in 1974. With it, he brought a new dimension to young adult literature (Cart, 1996; Iskander, 1994; Myers, 2000). The lack of a happy ending in Cormier's novel opened up enormous thematic possibilities for writers to follow. Moreover, Cormier extended the possibilities of young adult literature as a genre not only in the subjects covered, but also in the use of narrative technique. Cormier has

been credited with an innovative use of narrative technique. Head (1996) and Tarr (2002)

point out the postmodernist features of Cormier's writing: the use of metafictional

discourse, the destabilization of the reader, and the questioning of the boundaries between

fiction and reality.

In short, Cormier's problem novels form a class of their own marked by

idiosyncratic qualities, which have come to be called *cormieresque*, in Campbell's (2001)

words. According to Campbell, the recognizable characteristics of these novels are "short

cinematic scenes, taut dialogue, a deceptively straightforward story undergirded by

intricate structure and layers of tricky allusion and metaphor, an intense focus on the

emotions of the situation, and a dark awareness of evil as an implacable obstacle in

human affairs" (p. 246). Cormier's novels have thus become a landmark in the

development of young adult literature, opening up new avenues for the creation of

challenging literature for adolescent readers. In doing so, Cormier's works actually

elevate the nature of young adult literature.

Elevating the nature of young adult literature.

The evaluation of young adult literature was influenced by theories about

adolescents' reading and mental development in the 1950s and 1960s. These theories

valued didacticism in young adult literature and saw the novels as a teaching tool akin to

moralistic reading of novels prevalent in literary criticism of the eighteenth century. This

requirement for didactic reading meant that any novels that required more than surface

reading were precluded as too complex for young adult readers. All of the properties

valued in adult literature (complex or dynamic characters, problematized morality,

questioning of authority, etc.) do not fit into didactic novels. This didactic view of literary

appreciation required that young adult literature remain somewhat simplistic with a clear

cut representation of right and wrong.

Carlsen (1967) categorizes young adult literature according to three stages of

adolescent reading development: early adolescence, middle adolescence, and late

adolescence. In each stage, certain types of stories are especially appealing. For example,

in middle adolescence, nonfiction accounts of adventure, biography and autobiography,

historical novels, mystical romances, and stories of adolescent life are preferred.

Another much quoted theory of adolescent development is Havighurst's seven

"developmental tasks" that teenagers must complete in order to move towards adulthood.

The seven tasks are:

> 1. achieve new and more mature relations with age-mates of both sexes; 2.
> achieve masculine or feminine social roles; 3. accept their physiques and use their
> bodies effectively; 4. achieve emotional independence of parents and other adults;
> 5. prepare for marriage and family life; 6. prepare for economic careers; 7. acquire
> a set of values and an ethical system as a guide to behavior – develop an ideology
> that leads to socially responsible behavior. (cited in Cart, 1996, p. 28)

Based on such theories of adolescents' reading and developmental tasks, literary critics

and educational practitioners have tended to scrutinize young adult novels from the

specific perspective of thematic and developmental appropriateness. Such critical

practices usually treat young adult literature from a utilitarian view, which, in Cart's

(1996) words, "smacks of the didactic and dogmatic and also threatens to turn literature

from art into tool" (pp. 29-30).

This narrow view of young adult literature as didactic and utilitarian has been

found to be inadequate in describing current literature for young adults. Close attention to

aspects of young adult literature beyond its utilitarian qualities will help critics gain a

truer appreciation of the sophistication of novels within this genre. There is more to these complicated YA novels than simply what they can tell us explicitly. In addition to actually enjoyment of the novel (and thus cultivation of the joy of reading), intricate and well-crafted YA novels can be useful on deeper levels that are not, at first, apparent under the old model of criticism. These high-quality YA novels may prove to be of more profound utility in helping adolescent readers develop their critical thinking and analytical skills.

Cormier's YA fiction helped readers and critics see another side of young adult literature. In breaking away from the earlier didactic novel format, Cormier's novels eliminated the preoccupation of YA literature with didacticism and justified YA literature as an art form. Cormier achieved this through his violation of traditional conventions, his selection of controversial themes, and his uncompromising treatment of characters. Cormier's novels complicate the nature of literature for teenage readers through contravention. First, they violate the convention of the happy ending in young adult literature. The happy ending had been one of the important characteristics of YA novels (Mertz & England, 1983; Sutton, 1982). Instead of conforming to the conventions of writing for adolescents, Cormier's novels break from "the unwritten rule that fiction for the young, however sternly realistic the narrative material, must offer some portion of hope, must end at least with some affirmative message" (MacLeod, 1994, p. 189). Cormier's *The Chocolate War* is among the first novels to depart from this rule about how to end a novel for young people. Most of his subsequent YA novels relentlessly present the reality that good guys do not always win.

In addition to the absence of happy endings in the plot, Cormier's novels are also quite unconventional in choice of theme. The major foci of Cormier's novels are not on an individual's psychological development in the process of coming-of-age, which is more often than not addressed in YA novels. Instead, Cormier has been concerned with themes of universal significance rather than those regarding personal mental growth (Ellis, 1985; Headley, 1994; MacLeod, 1994). This was contrary to the mainstream of problem novels during Cormier's time.

According to Cart (1996), the real birth of young adult literature in the late 1960s came with the personal-problem novels, which embrace four major issues: "the transition [from adolescence to early adult life], alienation, sex, and violence" (pp. 38-39). Later in the 1970s, the subject matter of young adult novels tended to reflect problems such as alcoholism, runaways, and homophobia (Sutton, 1998). However, Ellis (1985) notes that Cormier's characters are not concerned with "alcoholism, drug use (except when imposed by institutions), premarital sex, childbirth, physical handicaps, social and racial problems, divorce, mental illness (except when imposed by institutions), and homosexuality" (p. 11). Ellis also points out that "Cormier's focus has not been on menstruation, rape, or prostitution" (p. 11). Cormier is not preoccupied with those issues associated with juvenile delinquency; he actually "has a larger view and sees the much greater problems that young people face" (Ellis, p. 11). Similarly, Macleod (1994) points out that "neither the issues Cormier poses nor the answers he implies belong to the same moral world as the themes of adjustment, acceptance, and understanding that undergird most adolescent fiction" (p. 196). This drift away from such conventional problems in the genre of problem novels marks a change in the landscape of young adult literature.

Thus, Cormier's YA novels can be distinguished from the problem novels of his time because they address universal issues and moral questions. Through compelling stories of violence in schools, religious hypocrisy, institutional corruption, and international terrorism, Cormier explores the struggle between good and evil, the ambiguities of right and wrong, and the free will involved in moral choices and the accompanying responsibility for consequences.

Another of Cormier's contraventions lies in the untraditional treatment of characters in his stories. He does not characterize the protagonists in his novels according to the conventions used in the YA genre. Iskander (1987) points out that "two of the principal norms governing the structure of literature for children and adolescents are the identification of the protagonist with morality and the triumph of good over evil – in other words, a victorious protagonist" (p. 11). However, Cormier often presents a dynamic character who is not stereotypical in his or her beliefs.[3] Such a character, in the case of Cormier's fiction, usually shatters our beliefs and expectations that good will triumph over evil. For example, in *The Chocolate War*, Cormier rejects the American myth of the victorious nonconformist, where "the good nonconformist must, in fiction, win at least a qualified victory" (Iskander, p. 12). Jerry, the hero of *The Chocolate War*, is finally beaten up, abandons his original determination to challenge the school's authority, and advises Goober not to disturb the universe. In the same vein, the protagonists of *I Am the Cheese* and of *After the First Death* realize that such ideals as participatory democracy and triumphant patriotism are not all that they had once believed.

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[3] Lukens and Cline (1995) define a dynamic character as "one that changes in the course of the story" (p. 18).

In addition, Cormier does not portray the protagonists in his novels as role models as the protagonists in many other YA novels are. Cormier states, "I'm not in the business of providing good role models or models of any kind, old or young. If I neglect adults or parents, it's because I want the focus to be on my protagonists or connecting characters" (cited in Myers, 2000, p. 453). It stands to reason that Cormier is not concerned with moral lessons first and foremost, because his major focus is "writing realistically and truthfully to affect the reader" (Silvey, 1985, p. 294). Thus, Cormier's protagonists are not flawless models, but reflections of common human beings, in whom YA readers can recognize true humanity and learn about the nature of humankind.

Cormier's contravention against normative writing for YA readers, as discussed earlier, indeed increases the stakes of young adult literature. However, because of the risky innovations in his writing, some parents and educational practitioners are opposed to Cormier's disturbing novels when they first encounter them, without giving them careful scrutiny. For example, Bagnall (1980), though recognizing *The Chocolate War* as a compelling novel, says of it, "Hopelessness pervades the entire story. The presentation of people and events show only the evil, the ugly and the sordid. It is not appropriate for young people because it presents a distorted view of reality and because it lacks hope" (p. 214). Macleod (1994) also makes the negative comments that Cormier's novels go "beyond the standard limits of 'contemporary realism' to describe a world of painful harshness, where choices are few and consequences desperate" and that "conventional hopefulness is irrelevant" in his novels (p. 189). Because of the lack of happy endings and pessimism about the survival of the protagonists, Cormier's YA works were at one

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time banned from classrooms in Arizona, New York, Massachusetts, and South Carolina (Iskander, 1987).

The objections against Cormier's novels are understandable, in part due to the fact that the parents and teachers, whose teenage years took place in more stable times than those of contemporary teenagers, are inclined to hold conservative assumptions about the appropriate themes, ideal characters, and moral values of literature for young adult readers (Headley, 1994). The censors assume, from a perspective of didacticism, that literature can make people better so long as it provides positive role models and shows an idealistic life, however unrealistic they may be. However, keeping YA readers within a safe and carefree utopian world is a naïve stance. Today's adolescents face a complex world with unresolved and continual cruelties. Defending his harsh look at the social reality, Cormier says: "Kids know the language they hear and what's going on in the locker rooms and the school buses. They know my books are mild in comparison" (Silvey, 1985, p. 295). Cormier regards his novels as an "antidote to the TV view of life, . . . phony realism. As long as what I write is true and believable, why should I have to create a happy ending?" (cited in Schwartz, 1979, p. 88). Thus, in Cormier's view, the obsession with happy resolutions only leads to artificial realism. He admonishes, "Life just isn't like that" (Schwartz, p. 88). The harsh realities in Cormier's fiction may act as an introduction to a less-than-perfect world for naïve YA readers, providing for them an entry into a world that may be more hostile than they expect. This harsh reality may also reflect the experiences of a YA reader who has had more exposure to wickedness, providing more believable and identifiable characters.

In spite of the harshness of the accounts of life in Cormier's works, what is reflected in these YA books is not sheer pessimism or nihilistic skepticism, but the courage to face honest realism. In defense of *The Chocolate War*, Carter and Harris (1980) contend that Cormier "does not leave his readers without hope, but he does deliver a warning: they may not plead innocence, ignorance, or prior commitments when the threat of tyranny confronts them" (p.285). Ellis (1985) makes a similar comment, observing that "the struggle is not hopeless" (p. 53). Likewise, Lenz (1982) suggests that Cormier depicts a dark and tragic world in order to imply the opposite: a bright and happy world. The harsh representation of reality in Cormier's novels is tempered by his ability to offer tips for succeeding in a malevolent society, such as to get involved in the world and stay informed, rather than remaining innocent.

In his YA novels, Cormier truthfully presents the world from the viewpoint of adolescents: no happy endings or adult intervention in moral choice. Therefore, YA readers can easily identify with Cormier's characters through their lived experiences. Cormier takes broad steps in advancing this educational aspect of YA literature by moving from mere didacticism, and thus helping to elevate the status of the YA literature genre in general.[4]

Challenging young adult readers.

Cormier's challenge to the literary conventions typically seen in young adult literature can be regarded as his strategy to convert the readers from passive recipients to active respondents. It is commonly acknowledged that the issues involving moral

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[4] Not all novels in the YA genre are explicitly didactic in nature. Cormier is, in this respect, following in the footsteps of antecedent YA authors such as Louisa May Alcott and J. D. Salinger.

dilemmas and other somber subject matters invite Cormier's readers to reevaluate their stock response to evil and to reexamine some enduring American myths of equality, freedom, justice, and patriotism (Campbell, 2005). Furthermore, Cormier's uncompromising endings and his portrayal of harsh realities provoke YA readers to review the world from different angles (Headley, 1994; Iskander, 1987; Peters, 1992; Simmons, 2001; Veglahn, 1988). In essence, Cormier's novels offer his YA readers "an invitation to think, to use their brain power, to ponder words on a page and, almost miraculously in this visual world, to actually reread these words" (Cart, 2000, p. 807).

Although Cormier regards himself as a storyteller rather than a teacher, the educational value of his YA books cannot be overemphasized. His novels can engage YA readers in critical thinking, as Cormier "expects readers to think, to extrapolate beyond the end and connect what they have read with what they will do with their lives in the world" (Myers, 2000, p. 461). More importantly, such intellectual involvement is not a product of teaching, but is achieved spontaneously through reading enjoyable literature. To the questions of how we can find moral lessons in something awful and how fiction can make the future generation into intelligent people, Cormier responds, "It's through sheer storytelling, holding the attention of the reader – young and old – that the great themes can be addressed. . . . The storytelling form of the novel makes it accessible and, I think, emotionally effective" (cited in Myers, pp. 450-451). Cormier's ability to teach without resorting to overt didacticism helps to elevate his fiction above conventional YA books and also contributes toward establishing the value of novels that might otherwise be considered too harsh for YA readers.

Cormier's novels can emotionally and intellectually invigorate adolescent readers. His works excite the reader's imagination and compel him/her to live through the stories. In turn, such vicarious experiences lead to readers' emotional responses. But Cormier's novels never merely end with sentimentalism. Taking the reader's affective engagement further, Cormier always invites them to reflect on themselves and critique their world after they have closed the novel. Indeed, Cormier's YA novels can engage readers, to borrow Rosenblatt's (1978) words, in "aesthetic reading."[5]

Statement of Purpose

The research for this study was motivated by the lack of systematic study of Cormier's narrative techniques. As a YA literature author, Cormier has much to offer that has not yet been explored. The purpose of this study is to investigate Cormier's management of narrative strategies, with special emphasis on the effects of the selected techniques on the explanation of themes. The primary task of the present study is to locate and identify the narrative techniques in Cormier's YA novels. Along with the issue of technique, this study raises a second question of how the selected narrative strategies correspond to thematic illustration. A third concern of this study is the ways in which Cormier's narrative strategies revolutionize the conventions used in telling YA stories. Through a comparative reading of Cormier's novels, this study demonstrates that Cormier's manipulation of his narrative goes beyond the traditional omniscient point of view to the achievement of multiple voices and perspectives embedded within sophisticated thematic development.

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[5] Rosenblatt (1978) defines two reading stances: efferent reading and aesthetic reading. According to her definition, the purpose of aesthetic reading is to immerse oneself in the story world for a lived-through experience. Aesthetic reading "will fuse the cognitive and affective elements of consciousness—sensations, images, feelings, ideas—into a personally lived-through poem or story" (Rosenblatt, 1980, p. 388).

Research Questions

The objective of this dissertation is to explore Cormier's young adult novels through the critical lens of contemporary narrative theory. Specifically, this study examines the reciprocal relationship between Cormier's narrative techniques and his treatment of controversial themes in all of his YA novels. The assumption of the present study is that thematic presentation and the selection of narrative strategies are not separate, but rather complementary. An author's choice of narrative technique is neither simply irrelevant nor whimsical if one presumes to analyze literature within its literary, social, and ideological contexts. Based on this assumption, the present study investigates the following three research questions:

1. What particular narrative techniques does Cormier employ in his YA novels?

2. Why has Cormier selected a given technique in dealing with each specific theme?

3. How do Cormier's innovative narrative techniques enhance, elevate, or revolutionize the writing of YA problem novels?

Significance of the Study

A review of related literature indicates that currently the study of YA literature is making progress toward the establishment of a body of scholarly knowledge in the field. This dissertation, in its application of contemporary narrative theory to analysis of Cormier's YA novels, will further advance this agenda. Through an interpretive analysis of the literary properties of Cormier's YA novels, this study contributes to the existing body of critical literature that justifies the existence of YA literature in its own right.

In addition, review of literary criticism about Cormier's YA works reveals a lack of research to explore Cormier's narrative strategies. The present study attempts to demonstrate Cormier's literary merit in terms of his narrative innovations in the genre of YA literature. In this dissertation I have attempted to show that Cormier's craft stands the test of scrutiny in terms of contemporary narrative theory. While this study explores only the particular case of Cormier's YA novels, it is my hope that it can also serve as an example of, if not a paradigmatic method for, critical inquiry into other YA novels.

Chapter Organization

The dissertation begins with a discussion of the definitions of young adult literature, explores its legitimacy, and investigates the contributions Cormier made to the field of young adult novels. Then the study turns to a close examination of narrative strategies in Cormier's young adult novels: *The Chocolate War* (1974), *I Am the Cheese* (1977), *After the First Death* (1979), *The Bumblebee Flies Anyway* (1983), *Beyond the Chocolate War* (1985), *Fade* (1988), *Other Bells for Us to Ring* (1990), *We All Fall Down* (1991), *Tunes for Bears to Dance To* (1992), *In the Middle of the Night* (1995), *Tenderness* (1997), *Heroes* (1998), and *The Rag and Bone Shop* (2001). The remainder of the study is organized into four chapters and a bibliography in the following manner. Chapter Two surveys contemporary narrative theory and presents a review of related literature dealing with Cormier's young adult novels. Chapter Three delineates the methodology of the study and describes the assumptions on which the study is based and the analytical approach undertaken. An analysis of textual features and a discussion of the findings are presented in Chapter Four. Chapter Five includes a summary, conclusions, and recommendations for further study. The dissertation concludes with a bibliography.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

As discussed in Chapter 1, this study explores the reciprocal relationship between

Cormier's narrative techniques and his treatment of controversial themes in his young

adult novels. The following sections are devoted first to a discussion of the state of the art

in the field of young adult literature; second, to a review of relevant literary criticism of

Cormier's young adult fiction; and third, to a survey of the elements of contemporary

narrative theory as critical concepts necessary to the discussion of Cormier's young adult

novels. The discussion of the state of young adult literature in general reveals the need for

further inquiry. The review of the relevant literature focusing specifically on Cormier's

young adult novels introduces the reader to the types and depth of the studies already

undertaken and reflects the need for further research. Finally, the survey of contemporary

narrative theory offers an entry into the theoretical framework that informs this study and

introduces the critical terms used in the chapters that follow.

Inquiry in the Field of Young Adult Literature

According to Nilsen and Donelson (2001), young adult literature research is

indeed blossoming, as "a look into a recent edition of *Dissertation Abstracts*

International shows an increasing number of dissertations being written on young adult

literature" (p. 322). Nilsen and Donelson also point out that the study of young adult

literature has attracted critical focus on "discussions of adolescent fiction as a genre,

historical background of the field, relationships between authors and their work, patterns

that appear in young adult novels, and themes and underlying issues" (p. 321). But,

Nilsen and Donelson detect a deficit in such research: "The majority of topics, however,

deal more with social or pedagogical issues than with literary ones" (p. 322).

Mertz (1992) points out that young adult literature criticism has "emphasized [the]

thematic and developmental appropriateness [of YA literature] for adolescents rather than

[the] literary qualities [of such texts]" (p. 23). She suggests that for young adult literature

to be accepted as a literary form, critics need to pay more attention to its literary and

artistic merits. Cart (1996) makes a similar observation that criticism on YA literature

often "focus[es] less on the literature (except for its utilitarian potential as a bridge or a

ladder) than on the developmental and psychological needs of the books' presumed

audience, the teenagers themselves" (pp. 242-243). Obviously, aside from a few

exceptions, the past research in YA literature is not adequate in terms of its scope.

In their large-scale survey of research in young adult literature conducted from

1968 to 1993, Poe, Samuels, and Carter (1993) identify several inquiry categories:

recommended book lists, articles by YA authors, author studies, critical analyses, adult

books for young adults, topic analyses, social issues, reading interests, reader-response

theory, and other related research. Among these categories, critical analysis, which

concentrates on the literature itself, is "certainly necessary and significant if young adult

literature is to be considered a scholarly field" (p. 68). Poe et al. point out that most of the

critical analyses on young adult literature to date focus on themes and characters of

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specific novels while overlooking other fictional elements. Lack of comprehensive critical work on YA literature devalues young adult literature, placing it in a category subordinate to mainstream literature.

However, even though more than a decade has passed since Poe et al. (1993) pointed out the need for research concerned with the literary qualities of YA fiction, only a few dissertations in the field of young adult literature to date address the related issue of narration. Schwenke Wyile's (1996) dissertation explores the aspects of immediate-engaging-first-person narration in three young adult novels representative of three genres respectively: Bernice Thurman Hunter's (1981) *That Scatterbrain Booky* as Bildungsroman, Jean Fritz's (1982) *Homesick: My Own Story* as autobiography, and Jane Gardam's (1971) *A Long Way From Verona* as Kunstlerroman. Drawing largely on Roland Barthes's concept of readerly and writerly texts, Schwenke Wyile's study focuses on how the immediate-engaging-first-person narration across genres creates various types of reading involvement for YA readers: active, passive, readerly, and writerly engagement. A limitation, however, is that Schwenke Wyile's study only examines the situation of first-person narration. As mentioned earlier, some YA novels actually utilize more complex and sophisticated narrative techniques along with first-person narration. The focus on first-person narration alone leaves whole modes of narration unexamined. In order to meet the need identified by Poe et al., deeper evaluation on a broader basis is required.

In the past decade, one other dissertation has dealt with narrative issues. Crew's (1996) study used narrative analysis to examine the theme of mother-daughter relationships in American young adult novels published between 1965 and 1991. Taking

feminism as a theoretical framework, Crew explores how the traditional narrative

practices of telling a story in the young adult novel inscribe gender bias and patriarchal

ideology into the mother-daughter relationship. Although Crew claims that she has used

narrative analysis as a research method, her study as a whole still concentrates on an

ideological reading of the mother-daughter relationship in the sense of content analysis,

rather than a study of the poetics of fiction.

Both Crew's (1996) and Schwenke Wyile's (1996) studies indeed enrich the

scholarly research in the field of young adult literature. However, the scope of their

research is limited, as they are constrained by their particular research parameters. Other

areas of narrative study in YA novels, such as third-person omniscient narrative,

novelistic discourse, and the connection between form and content, deserve further

exploration. The present study attempts to reduce the research gap through analysis of the

narrative techniques in Cormier's YA novels.

The following section is devoted to a brief survey of relevant literature on

Cormier's YA novels to date, so as to indicate what has been researched and what

remains to be investigated in terms of Cormier's narrative techniques.

Literary Criticism of Cormier's Young Adult Novels

To date, while not completely overlooked, Cormier's YA novels have not

received the attention they deserve from critics. So far only two monographs that discuss

Cormier's works have been published. One is Campbell's (1989) *Presenting Robert*

Cormier, which provides an introduction to Cormier's life as well as his early YA novels

and short stories. The other is Keeley's (2001) *Understanding I Am the Cheese*, which is

devoted to a general introduction to Cormier's YA title *I Am the Cheese*, in terms of the

novel's plot, characters, and impact. Both monographs are useful in that they offer a quick reference for information about Cormier's life and his novels, but they do not analyze his literary craftsmanship in detail.

Journal articles and book chapters supply more comprehensive interpretations of Cormier's YA fiction and in-depth analyses of his literary merit and shortcomings. Rees (1980) uncompromisingly questions how faithfully Cormier's YA novels, such as *The Chocolate War*, *I Am the Cheese*, and *After the First Death*, reflect social reality, arguing that "the situations in his books are always extreme," and that the "immense variety and richness of human experiences" is not reflected in his works (p. 161). On the contrary, Sutton (1982) defends *The Chocolate War* and *After the First Death* as novels that offer "true realism to young adults" (p. 35). Iskander (1987) emphasizes that Cormier's YA fiction indeed reflects reality but strategically breaks the realistic conventions of YA books to "convert the reader from a passive to an active role" (p. 12).

Susina (1991) discusses how Cormier uses a boxing match in *The Chocolate War* as a central metaphor to explicate the theme of the corrupting power of evil. Lenz (1982) elucidates the use of irony to explain the theme of good and evil in *After the First Death*. Veglahn (1988) analyzes how the evil adult characters control and destroy the adolescent protagonists in *The Chocolate War*, *I Am the Cheese*, *Beyond the Chocolate War*, and *The Bumblebee Flies Anyway*. Campbell (1995) examines how Cormier complicates the issue of good and evil by presenting a moral dilemma in *In the Middle of the Night*. Trites (2000) applies Michel Foucault's concepts of power and repression to interpret the theme of the individual versus society in *The Chocolate War*.

Nodelman (1992) takes a psychoanalytic approach to reading *The Chocolate War*, contending that the novel's characters all fall into a condition of paranoia and this collective phenomenon of paranoia leads to a thematic paradox. Coats (2000) also uses a psychological approach to categorize the protagonist of *The Chocolate War* as an abject hero, suggesting how this novel reflects the phenomenon of abject depression in adolescent culture. Monseau (1994) explores the characters of Cormier's YA fiction as reflections of adolescents' psychological development: Jerry in *The Chocolate War* as a model of emotional autonomy; Adam in *I Am the Cheese* as a failure of identity autonomy; Ben as a victim of identity confusion, Kate as an example of moral maturity, and Miro as a case of identity foreclosure in *After the First Death*.

Conducting a feminist reading of *The Chocolate War*, Yoshida (1998) declares that the novel reflects the changing conceptions of masculinity in the 1970s. Likewise, again from a feminist perspective, Tarr (2002) points out the inherent blindness of sexual discrimination in *The Chocolate War*.

Some critics have analyzed the narrative structure of Cormier's novels. Among them, Nodelman (1983) uses Wolfgang Iser's reader response theory to analyze the narrative structure of *I Am the Cheese* and shows how Cormier manipulates narration "to do a number on the readers." Mertz (1992) also investigates the style and structure of *I Am the Cheese*, discussing how "form and content merges" in this novel (p. 30). Bixler (1985) uses *I Am the Cheese* as a classroom text to let pre-service teachers apply reader-response criticism to this novel.

Myszor (1988) addresses the narrative structure of *After the First Death*, arguing that Cormier uses complex intersecting storylines as substitutes for the conventional

linear story events to present the protagonist's "oppositions, oscillations, and transformation" (p. 88). Head (1996) discusses the metafictionality of *Fade*, suggesting the postmodernist features of Cormier's fiction, such as "collaps[ing] the boundary between fiction and reality" (p. 29) and "alert[ing] his readers to the unreliability of a notion of reality" (30). Likewise, Nikolajeva (1996) treats *Fade* as metafiction, discussing the relationship between the implied writer and his fictional world. While the research has begun to cover more ground, there are still gaps that need to be filled.

Just as there are not enough books and journal articles devoted to Cormier's novels, theses and dissertations about Cormier's books are scarce. Only Witten (1987) and Sheese (1995) have devoted their entire studies to Cormier's works. Witten conducted a thematic analysis of Cormier's YA novels, identifying a central theme in them: the confrontation of the teenage protagonist as a disobedient individual against the dominant social order. Witten regards this confrontation as a rite of passage from adolescence into adulthood. From the stance of archetypal criticism, and basing his thesis on the works of Joseph Campbell and Carl Jung, Witten regards the adolescent's passage in modern society as a variation on the archetypal hero's journey through suffering ordeals, acquiring knowledge, and achieving growth. In Witten's view, what Cormier's novice protagonists have to confront is not supernatural monsters but the human evils which have been incorporated in institutions: religious corruption, educational mistreatment, governmental scandal, military fanaticism, international terrorism, and ethical degradation in science. Because Witten's critical analysis is limited to Cormier's publications before 1987, the question that remains unanswered is whether Witten's conclusion is applicable to Cormier's later works.

Sheese's (1995) dissertation is an empirical study of how 33 male juvenile offenders between the ages of 13 to 18 responded to Cormier's two short stories "The Moustache" (1965) and "President Cleveland, Where Are You?" (1966). Sheese discloses that the rationale behind the selection of Cormier's short fiction in this study was simply that Cormier was well known as a popular writer of young adult literature. From the use of Cormier's short stories in this study, we are not given any particular insight into the literary qualities of his works, but just learn about the perspectives of many readers.

In summary, Cormier's novels have been examined to some degree in terms of their style, theme, characters, and structure. However, comprehensive critical examination regarding Cormier's narrative craft is still lacking. To fill this research gap, the current study investigates all of Cormier's YA novels from the perspective of narrative artistry.

Contemporary Narratology: The Poetics of Fiction

The traditional study of narrative which uses the concepts of first-person or third-person point of view is insufficient for an investigation of the complexity of narration (Genette, 1980; Rimmon-Kenan, 2002).[6] This is because such an analysis usually obscures the vital difference between a narrator who is telling a story and a character who is "seeing" from a position within the story, as discussed more fully below. Especially in the present study of Cormier's narrative structure, which transcends the conventional characterization of YA novels as first-person or third-person narratives, it has been necessary to draw on contemporary narrative theory that allows a more in-depth investigation of narrative strategies.

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[6] Lubbok (1921/1966) was the first critic to categorize point of view according to the grammatical person of the narrator.

The remainder of this section is comprised of a summary of the contemporary narrative theory that informed the initial approach of the study and a review of critical terms that will be used as analytic tools in the chapters to come. The information is offered as a means of establishing a working vocabulary of terms that are used throughout the study as well as to pinpoint the critical concepts that are used to examine Cormier's works.

Contemporary narrative theory begun with Russian Formalism. Russian Formalists initiated a systematic examination of narrative fiction. They distinguished between the concepts of fibula (a story) and of sjužet (way of telling the story), attempting to establish a rigorous narrative study as a scientific discipline.[7] Tomashevski (1925/1965) mentions two basic levels of analysis: fibula and sjužet. The first is examination of the events represented in the story; the second is analysis of the frame of the narrative representation. However, Bal (1985) proposes three levels of analysis: fibula, story, and text. His definitions of these terms are: "A text is a finite and structured set of linguistic signs and a narrative text is a text in which an agent relates a story," "A story is the signified of a narrative text," and "A story signifies in its turn a fibula" (cited in Onega & Landa, 1996, p. 6). Rimmon-Kenan (2002) synthesizes Tomashevski's (1925) ideas of fibula and sjužet and Bal's (1985) concepts of fibula, story, and text, identifying three essential aspects of narrative fiction: story, text and narration. In this framework, story means the narrative events extracted from the text; text refers to the verbal

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[7] The earliest systematic study of narrative can be traced back to Plato's *Republic*, where Socrates employs diegesis and mimesis to distinguish two different methods of presenting speech, namely, narration and imitation (Hawthorn, 1994). In *Poetics*, Aristotle extends the definition of mimesis to include both the speech and action represented in literature. Onega and Landa (1996) mark the development of narrative inquiry after 1950 as contemporary narratology, and outline the fields of narrative study as comparative narratology, theory of authorship, theory of enunciation, theories of action or fibula, theories of reception, theories of self-referentiality and intertextuality, and applied narratology.

representation as a piece of work awaiting reading; and narration is the manner of telling or writing a story in the text.

The present study adopts Rimmon-Kenan's (2002) notions of story, text, and narration as three levels of analyses to be used to investigate Cormier's narrative craft. Rimmon-Kenan's ideas are not all original, though she solidified the varied work of others in the field. Rimmon-Kenan is viewed as an authority in the field of modern narratology, and her studies provide a sound, unified basis for analysis.

The following is a brief survey of these narrative elements as critical concepts that have been helpful in the effort to recognize and examine the narrative techniques employed in Cormier's YA novels.

Story.

Story refers to the chronological events extracted from the text. In the story, the narrative form and the characters are two salient features worthy of close investigation, as Rimmon-Kenan (2002) points out. Narrative form can be further examined in terms of deep narrative structure and surface narrative structure. Levi-Strauss (1968) leads in the study of deep narrative structure by analyzing mythology. Based on his analysis of the Oedipus myth, he declares that the deep structure underlying the Western myth is the interplay between binary oppositions (e.g., good versus evil). Greimas (1966) goes further by interpreting Levi-Strauss's concept of binary opposites in terms of disparate categories: contraries (e.g., good versus evil) and contradictories (e.g., moral versus amoral).

Regarding the surface narrative structure, Rimmon-Kenan (2002) identifies the basic constitutive unit of a story as an event. Events can be further categorized as

"kernels" and "catalysts." Kernels move the action of an event forward. Catalysts "expand, amplify, maintain or delay" the kernel (Rimmon-Kenan, p. 16). A succession of events forms a narrative sequence.

According to Bremond (1973), a sequence is inclusive of three logical phases: potentiality, process, and outcome. Such a primary sequence is likely to combine other sequences to compound the complexity of the story. Bremond further proposes three methods of combining story sequences to compose a complex texture: enchainment, embedding, and joining. Enchainment means that one story sequence leads to another sequence. Embedding refers to a situation where one sequence is inserted into another. Joining indicates that one sequence of events is coupled with another to form an aggregated sequence.

In addition to narrative structure, the characters compromise another important aspect in examining a story. The characters can be reconstructed from the text to come into being with specific traits. Rimmon-Kenan (2002) proposes "the main principles of cohesion" in the process of separating story figures from the text: repetition, similarity, contrast, and implication. When one character repeats the same behavior, this can be labeled as a feature. Contrast comes from one character's contradictory behaviors. Implication, as Garvey (1978) suggests, has three possible forms: (a) "a set of physical attributes implies a psychological AP (Attributive Proposition)," (b) "a set of psychological attributions implies a further psychological AP," and (c) "a set of psychological and physical attributes implies a psychological AP" (pp. 74-75).

According to these principles of character reconstruction, the characters seem to come into being in the text and then can be further examined. Forster (1963)

distinguishes "flat" and "round" characters. Flat characters can be referred to as caricatures. As Forster defines flat characters, "in their purest form, they are constructed around a single idea or quality" and "can be expressed in one sentence" (1963, p. 75). Flat characters can be further classified as foil and stereotype. On the other hand, round characters have more detailed personality traits. Whether round characters are static or dynamic depends on the degree of their development in the course of story.

Text.

Rimmon-Kenan (2002) identifies three observable features of text: time, characterization, and focalization. These features are of great concern in the poetics of narrative fiction. Story-time is different from text-time. The former is primarily based on linear chronology; the latter is based on "anachronies" (Genette, 1972). Anachronies tell the story in non-linear chronology. Anachronies are of two primary types: "analepsis" and "prolepsis." An analepsis can be referred to as a flashback or retrospection; on the other hand, a prolepsis is known as foreshadowing or anticipation (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002). In other words, an analepsis tells a past story event with respect to the present moment in the text. In contrast to an analepsis, a prolepsis narrates a story event which will happen later than at the moment of narration. Analepses can be further distinguished as "homodiegetic analepsis" and "heterodiegetic analepsis" (Genette, 1972). Homodiegetic analepses "provide past information . . . about the character, event, or story-line mentioned at that point in the text" whereas heterodiegetic analepses offer information "about another character, event, or story-line" (cited in Rimmon-Kenan, 2002, p. 47).

In light of the starting point of the text, analepses can be further classified as external, internal, and mixed. (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002). When analepses "evoke a past which precedes the starting point of the first narrative," they are known as "external analepses in Genette's terms" (Rimmon-Kenan, p. 48). Conversely, internal analepses "conjure up a past which occurred after the starting point of the first narrative but is either repeated analeptically or narrated for the first time at a point in the text later than the place where it is due" (Rimmon-Kenan, p. 48). A mixed analepsis "begins before the starting point of the first narrative but at later stage either joins it or goes beyond it" (Rimmon-Kenan, p. 48).

Prolepses can also be analyzed in the same way as analepses. Prolepses "can refer either to the same character, event, or story-line figuring at that point in the text (homodiegetic) or to another character, event, or story-line (heterodiegetic)" (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002, p. 49). Likewise, prolepses "can cover either a period beyond the end of the first narrative (external), or a period anterior to it but posterior to the point at which it is narrated (internal), or combine both (mixed)" (Rimmon-Kenan, p. 49).

Along with narrative order, duration (the time length of narration) is another important aspect of the text. In order to investigate narrative speed, Genette (1972) suggests that narrative pace can be measured by the ratio of how much textual space is allocated to narrate a story event which lasts for a certain period of time. Thus, the speed of narration can vary between two extremes: acceleration and deceleration. Acceleration is created when a short textual length is used to tell a long story event, while deceleration is produced when a long portion of the text is used to narrate a brief story event. The narrative tempo ranges from the maximum of the ellipsis, through summary

(condensation or compression), scene (dialogue), to the minimum of a descriptive pause (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002).

Another temporal element of narration in the text is frequency, which refers to "the relation between the number of times an event appears in the story and the number of times it is narrated (mentioned) in the text" (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002, p. 57). On the basis of "repetition-relation between story events and their narration in the text," Rimmon-Kenan identifies three types of frequency: (a) singulative, "telling once what 'happened' once," (b) repetitive, "telling *n* times what 'happened' once," and iterative, "telling once what 'happened' *n* times" (pp. 57-58). When a story event is repeated by different characters in the text, this repeated event usually assumes different meanings in the new contexts. So narrative frequency is of great concern in narrative poetics since it may affect how the reader interprets the story.

The second observable feature of narrative text identified by Rimmon-Kenan is characterization. According to Ewen (1971), characterization can be accomplished through two methods: direct definition and indirect presentation. Direct definition is description of a character's traits "by an adjective (e.g., 'he was good-hearted'), an abstract noun (e.g. 'his goodness knew no bounds'), or possibly some other kind of noun ('she was a real bitch') or part of speech ('he loves only himself')" (cited in Rimmon-Kenan, 2002, p. 60).

On the other hand, indirect presentation depicts character traits through the means of action, speech, external appearance, and environment. Rimmon-Kenan (2002) identifies three types of action: "act of commission (i.e. something performed by the

character), act of omission (something which the character should, but does not do), and contemplated act (an unrealized plan or intention of the character)" (p. 62).

Another widely used means of presenting character traits indirectly is to highlight the character's manner of speech, which may reveal his occupation, ethnic background, or social status (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002). External appearance is also utilized in indirect characterization. As Rimmon-Kenan points out, "the metonymic relation between external appearance and character-traits" has been widely used since the creation of fiction (Rimmon-Kenan, p. 65). Moreover, a personality trait of a character can be implied by such aspects of his environment as "physical surrounding (room, house, street, town) as well as his human environment (family, social class)" (Rimmon-Kenan, p. 66).

In addition to indirect presentation, another method of characterization is to support character-traits by means of analogy. Whereas indirect presentation is based on implicit connections in the story, analogy is "a purely textual link, independent of story causality" (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002, p. 67). Rimmon-Kenan lists three types of analogies used to reinforce character-traits: analogous names, analogous landscape, and analogy between characters. As to analogous names, Hamon (1977) argues that names can suggest character-traits in four ways: visual, acoustic, articulatory, and morphological. Ewen (1980) also contends that there is semantic association between names and character-traits and that the semantic connection may originate from allegories or literary allusions.

Character-traits can also be implied by an analogous landscape: for example, "X lives in a very poor neighborhood, therefore, he is cheerless, or – the other way round – Y is depressed, therefore, his house is neglected" (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002, p. 69). Analogy

between characters is also a common approach to characterization. Rimmon-Kenan

explains that in analogy between characters, if "two characters are presented in similar

circumstances, the similarity or contrast between their behavior emphasizes traits

characteristic of both" (p. 70).

Along with time and characterization, focalization is another essential feature in

the text, as defined by Rimmon-Kenan (2002). Genette (1972/1980) points out that the

traditional classification of point of view according to grammatical agency fails to give a

clear answer to the question "Who is the character whose point of view orients the

narrative perspective?" or to the very different question "Who is the narrator?" – or more

simply, the question "Who sees?" and the question "Who speaks?" (p. 196). To remedy

this confusion, Genette distinguishes speaking voice ("who speaks?") and narrative

perspective ("who sees?"). This angle of vision is known as focalization. A story is

filtered and represented in the text through focalization.

According to Bal (1977), focalization includes the focalizer (the subject) and the

focalized (the object). Cohan and Shires (1988) further argue that "focalization consists

of a triadic relation formed by the narrating agent (who narrates), the focalizer (who sees),

and the focalized (what is being seen and thus narrated – in the case of mental life:

emotion, cognition, or perception)" (p. 95).

In terms of the focalizer's spatial stance relative to the story, focalization can be

classified as of three types: "unfocalized" or "degree zero of focalization" (dramatic point

of view), internal focalization (limited omniscient point of view), and external

focalization (omniscient point of view) (Genette, 1972; Bal, 1977). External focalization

is mediated through a narrating agent and its vehicle (focalizer) is called the "narrator-

focalizer" (Bal, p. 37); internal focalization is within the story events, and thus the angle of vision is mediated through the "character-focalizer."

Rimmon-Kenan (2002) argues that "just as the focalizer can be external or internal to the represented events, so the focalized can be seen either from without or from within" (p. 77). If the focalized is observed from without, only his/her outside appearance is described. If the focalized is perceived from inside, then what the text presents is the character's feelings and thoughts.

According to its degree of persistence, focalization can also be distinguished as fixed, variable, and multiple (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002). That is, focalization may change or remain unchanging throughout the course of the narration. Or focalization can even vary in the text. As Bal (1985) points out, narrative focalization is likely to shift from one character to another, that is, different characters "view the same facts" (pp. 104-105). In this way, the text creates certain effects on readers by positioning them differently during the course of reading. Cohan and Shires (1988) designate this focal reallocation by the term *textual movement*: "narration cannot be centered in a fixed and single point of view or personified by a narrator whose viewpoint is totally responsible for what is said, seen, and shown" (p. 103). In other words, textual movement results from the switch of focalization from narrator to character, or among the characters themselves in the text.

According to Rimmon-Kenan (2002), three facets of focalization are worthy of examination: perceptual, psychological, and ideological. The perceptual facet refers to the spatial and temporal dimensions of the narrative point of view, by which focalization can be classified as "a panoramic view" ("simultaneous" focalization) or a restricted view (Rimmon-Kenan, p. 78). The panoramic view can present several scenes at the same time

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from the vantage of external focalization. On the other hand, the limited view, positioned in internal focalization, is restricted to one location at one time.

The psychological facet of focalization is concerned with a focalizer's cognitive ability and emotive attitude (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002). Cognitive ability means the extent of the focalizer's knowledge about the characters and story events in the text; the focalizer's knowledge may vary from omniscient to limited. Emotive attitude indicates whether the focalizer remains subjective, neutral, or objective in the text.

The ideological facet of focalization is about a focalizer's value scheme in the fictional world (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002). This value system may affect the focalizer's presentation of the story events. If the text is narrated through fixed focalization, then only one ideology dominates the whole text. However, if multiple focalizations are present in the text, then, according to Bakhtin (1984), the narrative world will be ideologically polyphonic rather than unitary.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, Bakhtin (1981) does not regard language as a neutral system of signs, but as a network of values, attitudes, and beliefs prevalent in a society. In other words, language reflects a value scheme in viewing the world, namely, ideology. In light of this, through verbal mediation, a narrative can be viewed as Bakhtin's (1981) "metropolis of heteroglossia," which displays conflicting voices or at-odds ideologies. Bakhtin emphasizes the importance of the ideology which resides in the narrative voice and vision. Consequently, analysis of how the narrator's and characters' individual world views serve their purpose in narration is essential.

Chatman (1990) also inspects the ideology inscribed within the employment of narrative strategies, claiming that a narrator does not stand outside a "locus of ideology"

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(p. 143). For instance, the strategy of utilizing an anonymous narrator has its ideological considerations. The situation, whether the narrator is visible or effaced in the text, is likely to affect textual interpretation. Chatman points out that an anonymous narrator covertly incorporates values, attitudes, and beliefs into the story being narrated. Chatman terms this phenomenon *slant*. A narrator's slant can be concealed through description and commentary.[8]

Narration.

Narration means the act of telling a story in the text (Todorov, 1981). Rimmon-Kenan (2002) identifies some aspects of narration worthy of close examination: temporal relationship between story and narration, narrative levels, narrator's perceptibility and reliability, and novelistic discourse. The following section will briefly discuss each of these aspects.

Genette (1972) identifies four types of narration based on the temporal relations between story and narration: "ulterior narration," "anterior narration," "reporting or diary entries," and "intercalated narration." Whereas ulterior narration is to tell a story event only after it happens, anterior narration is to predict a story event which happens in the future. The narrative form of reporting (diary entries) is to present a currently on-going story event. Intercalated narration refers to the situation where "telling and showing are not simultaneous but follow each other in alternation" (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002, p. 91).

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[8] Stephens (1992) also contends that the practice of narration inscribes certain ideological assumptions into the text through "situating readers in a subject position effectively identical with the narrator, so that the readers share the narrator's view of the world" (pp. 56-57).

Regarding the hierarchical structure of narrative, Genette (1972) recognizes three

levels of narration: extradiegetic, hypodiegetic, and intradiegetic.[9] The highest narrative

level is extradiegetic, where a narrator is superior to the primary story. Next to the

extradiegetic level is the hypodiegetic one, wherein a fictional character serves as a

narrator to tell a story embedded within the primary story. In other words, the

extradiegetic text is the basic story frame; the embedded narrative within this basic story

line is hypodiegetic. Within the hypodiegetic text, a tertiary narrative, called metadiegetic,

can be inserted.

Corresponding to Genette's (1972) notion of narrative level, the narrator can be

categorized as extradiegetic, intradiegetic, or hypodiegetic (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002). The

extradiegetic narrator stands high above a primary narrative which he/she narrates; the

intradiegetic narrator tells a story embedded within the primary narrative; and the

hypodiegetic narrator relates a story which is subordinate to the embedded story.

According to the criterion of a narrator's participation in the story, Genette (1972)

classifies the narrator as autodiegetic, homodiegetic, or heterodiegetic. Autodiegetic

refers to the narrator who appears as a protagonist in the story; homodiegetic signifies the

narrator who serves as a minor character in the text. On the other hand, a narrator is

designated as heterodiegetic when he is an outside observer in the story.

The degree of a narrator's perceptibility in the text ranges from covertness to

overtness (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002). Chatman (1978) identifies certain narrator-indicators

in the text: (a) "description of setting," (b) "identification of characters," (c) "temporal

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[9] In the 1970s the study of point of view was substantially expanded, the structure of narration was systematically explored, and the varieties of narrative discourse were carefully identified. Viewed as pioneering work among narrative critics, Geneete's (1972/1980) study of narrative evolves as a rigorous science of narrative.

summary," (d) "definition of characters," (e) "reports of what characters did not think or say," and (f) "commentary" (cited in Rimmon-Kenan, pp. 98-99). The ordering of these six indicators marks an increase, not only in perceptibility, but also in the narrator's involvement in the story.

Description of setting and identification of characters indicate the minimal degree of a narrator's presence in the text, in which the narrator serves to give the reader the bare knowledge required to begin – or continue – the narrative action. A temporal summary, however, shows more perceivable narrator involvement. As Chatman says (1978), "Summary presupposes a desire to account for time-passage, to satisfy questions in a narratee's mind about what has happened in the interval. An account cannot but draw attention to the one who felt obliged to make such an account" (p. 223). Similarly, definition of character depends upon identification of characters, implying "an abstraction, generalization or summing up on the part of the narrator as well as a desire to present such labeling as authoritative characterization" (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002, p. 99).

Reports of what the characters did not think or say begins to truly mark the narrator's autonomy as distinct from simply relating a story. The narrator, by reporting to the reader what the characters are either unaware of or are trying to hide, begins to be perceived as a source of information separate from the subject matter of characters of the fiction (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002). Finally, the narrator may comment upon the story or narration itself, possibly offering an interpretation of the story. Such interpretation is reflexive in that it often reveals as much information about and insight into the interpreter as it does into that which is being interpreted (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002).

In addition to his perceptibility, a narrator's reliability is another aspect of great concern in narrative analysis. Rimmon-Kenan (2002) defines a reliable narrator as "one whose rendering of the story and commentary on it the reader is supposed to take as an authoritative account of the fictional truth" (p. 101). On the other hand, an unreliable narrator is "one whose rendering of the story and/or commentary on it the reader has reasons to suspect" (Rimmon-Kenan, p. 101).

An unreliable narrator may or may not be conscious of the extent of his/her ability to relate a story. A narrator may be unreliable due to "limited knowledge," "personal involvement" within the story, a "problematic value-scheme," or even willful omission of information (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002, p. 101). Often, the reliability of the narrator is left for the reader to determine through the course of the story.

Stanzel (1984) uses the term "narrative situation" to describe the complex configurations of the narrating parameter (i.e., a narrator's cognition, perceptibility and reliability). Stanzel identifies three basic narrative situations: first-person, authorial, and figural narrative. In a first-person narrative, a narrator is present as a character in the story he tells, and therefore he may be an overt autodiegetic or overt homodiegetic narrator.

In contrast to the first-person narrative situation, an authorial narrative refers to a story told by a narrator who is entirely absent from the plot development and acts as a peripheral observer. An authorial narrator reports the story overtly from an outsider's stance. This superior position often allows him access to a character's consciousness and knowledge about the on-going events. Therefore, in the authorial narrative, an overt, reliable, and heterodiegetic narrator resides. Unlike the authorial narrative, a figural

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narrative is limited in point of view. No bird's eye view of the whole story is provided

here. The story is seen and presented as if through the character's eyes. Thus, the

narrating agent exists behind the scenes; he is a covert, heterodiegetic narrator.

While the preceding discussion has sought to clarify such aspects of narration as

the relationship between story and narration, narrative levels, and the narrator's

perceptibility and reliability, the following segment is devoted to a brief discussion of

speech representation in the narrative.

Through an analysis of the ways modern novelists present the consciousness of a

character, Cohn (1978) identifies three types of narrative discourse: psycho-narrative,

quoted monologue, and narrated monologue. In psycho-narration, the character's

consciousness is mediated through a narrator's reporting or commentary, and thus the

narrative voice reveals whether the narrator's attitude is ironic, sympathetic, or even

neutrally distanced. Quoted monologue comprises interior monologue and soliloquy,

presenting the character's inner thoughts, feelings, and perceptions through his/her own

language. In this way, quoted monologue is more authentic than psycho-narration.

Narrated monologue, as Cohn defines it, "maintains, like psycho-narration, the third-

person reference and the past tense of narration, but like the quoted monologue it

reproduces verbatim the character's own mental language" (p. 14).[10] Cohn observes the

prevalence of narrated monologue in the modern novel, which dispenses with the

omniscient narrator.

In his study of the history and functions of narrated monologue, Pascal (1977)

argues that narrated monologue "permits us to see the fictional characters moving not

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[10] Narrated monologue is also known as *style indirect libre* in French, *erlebte Rede* in German, skaz in
Russia and free indirect discourse in English.

merely against the background of the narrator's consciousness, but within their own worlds of perception and understanding" (p. 137).[11] In other words, narrated monologue can accommodate the perspectives of a diversity of characters on life and the realities of the fictional world.

Unlike Cohn's (1978) and Pascal's (1977) exploration of narrative discourse, Chatman (1978) categorizes novelistic discourse on the basis of the degree of the author's presence in the text. His categories include the non-narrated genres of written documents (letters and diaries), pure speech records (dialogue, dramatic monologue, and soliloquy), and overt narrator's commentary. Thus, Chatman calls attention to whether the presence of the narrator in the text is overt or covert.

In his discussion of Dostoevsky's fictional poetics, Bakhtin (1984) recognizes three major types of fictional discourse. The first type is direct discourse, in which the author's speech is the only authoritative voice telling the story. Thus, the authorial voice dominates all other possible voices in the novel, and the novel becomes monological in nature.

The second type is objective discourse, the speech of characters represented in the form of diaries, letters, dialogue, soliloquy, and interior monologue. There are two alternatives in the development of this type of discourse. It may be objective discourse, which projects a unified ideology through an individual character's speech. The character's discourse is represented so as to serve the author's predetermined intention. Or it may be the objective discourse, which exposes a diversity of ideology within the

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[11] Pascal (1977) actually substitutes free indirect style for narrated monologue for the reason of personal preference.

narrative; the character's discourse can suggest multiple ideologies under the author's control.

The third type of narrative discourse is double-voiced discourse. Bakhtin categorizes several sub-types of double-voiced discourse, i.e., *skaz*, parody, stylization, and character zone. In s*kaz*, a posited narrator tells a story with his/her particular verbal manner (voice) and angle of vision (perspective). The narrator's reliability depends on authorial attitudes, e.g., ironic, empathetic, or parodistic. If the author's attitude turns out to be empathetic, *skaz* develops as authorial discourse without the property of double voice. In parody, the author carefully adopts someone else's manner of discourse and then purposively incorporates conflicting views into this imitated discourse to serve his intention. Consequently, the narrative discourse becomes a forum of multiple voices in conflict. In parody, the narrative voices are discordantly opposed and distanced from each other.

Stylization refers to authorial imitation of a certain person's style, a specific social stance, or a particular artist's idiosyncrasy. Stylization "forces another person's referential (artistically referential) intention to serve its own purpose, that is, its new intention" (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 190). A character zone is defined as "the field of action for a character's voice, encroaching in one way or another upon the author's voice," and thus it creates heteroglossia in the narrative (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 316). A character zone is constructed through "a character's quasi-direct discourse," where a character's self-talk is transmitted through a narrator. For this reason, the voice properties maintain the diegetic tone, but the content of thoughts, feelings, and perceptions belong entirely to the character. Bakhtin (1981) contends:

This is one of the most widespread forms for transmitting inner speech in the novel. It permits another's speech to merge, in an organic and structured way, with a context belonging to the author, while preserving the expressive structure of the character's inner speech. (p. 319)

Among Bakhtin's sub-types of double-voiced discourse, the character zone is generally regarded as the most significant in narrative poetics. Bakhtin's concept of the character zone is quite similar to Cohn's narrated monologue.

Rimmon-Kenan (2002) employs showing (mimetic) and telling (diegetic) as criteria to categorize various types of speech representation in the text. These categories are arranged according to the degree of involvement with the narrator from diegetic to mimetic as follows: "diegetic summary," "summary, less 'purely' diegetic," "indirect content paraphrase," "indirect discourse, mimetic to some degree," "free indirect discourse (FID)," "direct discourse (DD)," and "free direct discourse (FDD)" (pp. 110-111). The following is a summary of Rimmon-Kenan's definitions for each type of discourse:

1. Diegetic summary refers to "the bare report that a speech act has occurred."
2. Summary, less 'purely' diegetic, is a type of discourse "which to some degree represents, not merely mentions, a speech event in that it names the topics of conversation."
3. An indirect content paraphrase restates "the content of a speech event, ignoring the style or form of the supposed 'original' utterance."
4. Indirect discourse, mimetic to some degree, is used to generate "the illusion of 'preserving' or 'reproducing' aspects of the style of an utterance, above and beyond the mere report of its content."
5. Free indirect discourse is "grammatically and mimetically intermediate between indirect and direct discourse."
6. Direct discourse is "a quotation of a monologue or a dialogue."
7. Free direct discourse is the direct discourse "shorn of its conventional orthographic cues." (pp. 110-111)

Among these forms of narrative discourse, free indirect discourse is the most

significant in narrative fiction. Free indirect discourse can achieve the following artistic

functions, as Rimmon-Kenan (2002) observes:

1. FID enhances the bivocality or polyvocality of the text by bringing into play a plurality of speakers and attitudes (McHale, 1978). The plurality of speakers and attitudes, the co-existence of what Perry calls "alternative patternings", contributes to the semantic density of the text.
2. FID is a convenient vehicle for representing stream of consciousness, mainly for the variety called "indirect interior monologue" (Banfield, 1973; McHale, 1978). (p. 115)

In conclusion, contemporary narrative theories provide insight into the nature of

narrative fiction. Narrative fiction is not only a genre with a device, but also a craft

loaded with values and beliefs. The narrative form itself has a great impact on the textual

interpretation. Moreover, contemporary narrative theories provide a useful critical

apparatus with which to explore the various narrative elements – story, text, and narration.

This chapter first provided a discussion of research in the field of young adult

literature and a survey of relevant literary criticism about Cormier's young adult novels.

This literature review revealed the need for further critical analysis of Cormier's narrative

technique. The chapter then introduced the contemporary narrative theories that have

informed this study. Some of the narrative theories will be applied as critical tools in the

next chapter to inspect Cormier's narrative craftsmanship.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This study explores the reciprocal relationship between Cormier's narrative

techniques and his treatment of controversial themes in his young adult novels. It argues

that Cormier's manipulation of the narrative transcends the point of view as traditionally

employed in young adult literature by moving toward the use of multiple voices and

perspectives embedded within the thematic development. The study addresses Cormier's

blending of multiple narrative strategies in dealing with controversial themes to

demonstrate his unique literary achievement in young adult literature.

The present study has drawn largely on contemporary narratology as a theoretical

framework. Literary theory provides a systematic approach to recognizing and

identifying the essential qualities of literary works (Appleman, 2000; Soter, 1999). In

other words, theory is helpful in making the invisible textual properties visible and

tangible. Analysis of young adult novels through a critical perspective makes possible a

better understanding of texts written for adolescent readers.

Rationale and Assumptions

The fundamental rationale behind this study is that narration is not independent

from other fictional elements. Narrative structure, as the framework within which a story

is told and shown, has a crucial impact on the presentation of plot, setting, and characters, and thus has a consequential influence on the interpretation of a narrative's themes (Lanser, 1981; Phelan, 1996). Scholes and Kellogg (1966) contend that narrative point of view determines "the reader's impression of everything else" (p. 275). This is because a story is essentially mediated. The way a viewer or a speaker presents the story determines how the reader perceives and appreciates actions and characters. To borrow the words of Scholes and Kellogg, "between the teller and the audience lies the essence of narrative art" (p. 240).

As Phelan and Robinowitz (1994) point out, it is not worthwhile to conduct untheorized interpretation that "goes about proving its thesis without reflecting either on the principles informing its practice or on the relation of the essay's findings to more general issues in narrative theory" (p. 7). In light of this, the present study employs contemporary narrative theory to investigate Cormier's narrative craft. While taking a certain critical approach, this study attempts to let the text speak for itself, rather than compel the text to match a predetermined set of norms or categories. As Phelan and Robinowitz (1994) caution about the application of theory, literary criticism justifies itself through more than simply testing theory and confirmation. Literary criticism should not attempt to reach a specific end, but should strive for improved clarity, a greater understanding of text. Phelan and Robinowitz further suggest recognition of the resistance of text to theory, i.e., let the text resist being simplified and appropriated into a predetermined grid of narrative theory. In critical practice, it is through application of various theories to the same text that its different readings are highlighted to expose

interpretive conflict. In this way, it may be possible to gain a better understanding of the text as well as to revise the theories employed.

In light of the mutual dynamics of theory and practice, this study cautiously avoids the application of any single narrative theory to examine Cormier's YA novels in a mechanical way. Rather, the study represents an attempt to achieve multiple interpretations of Cormier's narrative strategies from diverse perspectives. The ultimate concern of this dissertation was to let Cormier's works speak for themselves with respect to their literary merit, rather than try to pinpoint Cormier's narrative craftsmanship by means of predetermined rules or principles.

Text Analysis Procedure

The inquiry method used in this dissertation was interpretive analysis. In the context of the contemporary narrative theory introduced earlier, I objectively located, identified, and categorized the textual features of all of Cormier's YA novels. A four-step process for exploring the text was conducted.

Step 1 was the initial reading of all of Cormier's YA novels. Several salient textual features emerged in the course of the seminal reading. Each feature was given an initial coding.

Step 2 was to classify the textual features. The researcher read through the listing of all the textual features and developed a master coding list of narrative elements (See Table 3.1), which was primarily based on Rimmon-Kenan's (2002) analytic scheme. In order to gain insight into how Cormier manipulates narration, the textual features were then analyzed according to the following three categories:

Categories			Descriptions
Story	Structure	Deep structure	Binary opposition
		Surface structure	Enchainment, embedding, and joining
Text	Time	Order	Prolepsis and analepsis
		Pace	Deceleration and acceleration (scene, summary, ellipsis, and pause)
		Frequency	Singulative, repetitive, iterative
	Characterization	Direct definition	Direct definition by the narrator or through characters
		Indirect presentation	Action, speech, appearance, and environment
		Analogy	Analogous names and analogy between characters
	Focalization	Type	External and internal
		Persistence	Fixed, variable, and multiple
		Facets	Perceptual (partial, panoramic) and cognitive (omniscient, restricted)
Narration	Temporal relation to story		Anterior narration, ulterior narration, and reporting
	Narrator	Participation in story	Heterodiegetic, homodiegetic, and autodiegetic
		Perceptibility	Overt and covert
		Reliability	Reliable and unreliable
	Discourse		Diegetic summary, free indirect discourse (FID), and free direct discourse (FID)

Table 3.1 Master coding list

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1. Story. Two basic aspects of a story were analyzed: deep and surface narrative structure. The story's deep structure was identified according to the principle of binary opposition. The story's surface structure was inspected to determine the manner in which the story sequences were arranged. The way the story sequences were interwoven was coded as enchainment, embedding, and/or joining.

2. Text. Three dimensions of a text were examined: time, characterization, and focalization. Text time was investigated according to three aspects: order (analepsis and prolepsis), pace (acceleration and deceleration), and frequency (singulative, repetitive, and iterative). Characterization was investigated in terms of direct definition, indirect presentation (action, speech, appearance, and environment), and analogy (analogous names and analogy between characters). Focalization was scrutinized as to its position relative to the story (internal/external), persistence (fixed, variable, and multiple), and facets (perceptual and cognitive).

3. Narration. The act of narration was examined in its temporal relation with the story: ulterior narration, anterior narration, and reporting. The agent of narration was inspected in terms of its perceptibility (overt and covert) and its participation in the story (heterodiegetic, homodiegetic, and autodiegetic). The discourse of narration was coded as diegetic report, free indirect discourse (FID), direct discourse (DD), and free direct discourse (FDD).

Each of these categories has its related parameters, as indicated in the parentheses above. A certain combination of these parameters can be understood as the configuration of a particular narrative pattern. Frequently occurring narrative patterns were recognized across Cormier's YA fiction.

Step 3 was to explore how the selection of narrative techniques is related in turn to thematic presentation. Analysis of textual features and interpretation of textual themes were conducted to facilitate recognition of the reciprocal relationships between narrative techniques and thematic significances. Doing so has led to a better understanding of the complexity of Cormier's narrative art. The last step was to complete textual analysis and report the findings.

Trustworthiness

To meet the research criteria of trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and representativeness (Miles & Huberman, 1994), confirming and disconfirming evidence was sought in the process of textual analyses. Disconfirming evidence was used to refine the initial findings and led to the abandonment of some of them. Specifically, to assure the validity of the narrative themes, trends, and patterns identified in Cormier's YA fiction, I adopted the procedures for indexing data from the initial findings advocated by Hubbard and Power (1993) and the method of testing linkages among findings across data described by Erickson (1986).

After initially examining and identifying the textual features of Cormier's individual YA novels, I continued to analyze them across his novels. I wanted to be sure that the textual features emergent from one of Cormier's novels had also occurred in his other novels. The cross novel examination was important in deciding whether the textual features had support from his other works, rather than being employed in only one novel. This was done by indexing passages of Cormier's novels according to the initial features to look for connections with these textual features across his novels. Indexing the passages for each feature made it possible to determine the support for the feature from a

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variety of Cormier's texts. To be retained as a feature, each item had to have confirming evidence from various texts. This inductive analytic practice of testing connections was helpful in uncovering the features which had the most supporting evidence. In this way, only those textual features which occurred across the greatest range of Cormier's novels were preserved as representative characteristics of Cormier's narrative art.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS: CORMIER'S CRAFTSMANSHIP

The study reported here analyzed in detail the narrative techniques Cormier employed in his YA novels. The chapter is organized in terms of three aspects of narrative fiction: story, text, and narration. Under these main headings within the chapter, each aspect of Cormier's narratives is further broken down into its constituent elements. Story is examined in terms of structure; text in terms of narrative time, methods of characterization, and narrative focalization; and narration in terms of the temporal relationship between story and narration, typology of the narrator, and speech representation. In each section, I will define my specific terminology and any rhetorical underpinning before outlining particular occurrences within Cormier's novels.

In each aspect the emergent trends, themes, and patterns in Cormier's YA fiction are reported first and then their literary value and poetic functions are discussed. My primary aim in this chapter is to chronicle Cormier's narrative techniques, not to offer a comprehensive interpretation of the individual novels. In the course of providing extensive examples from Cormier's novels, I do engage in critical analysis in order to fully explain my findings. These analyses are, in themselves, limited to specific

occurrences that seem to typify the selected narrative elements particularly well. This study is meant to begin development of groundwork that, to date, has been lacking in the field of young adult literature.

<div align="center">Story: Structure</div>

From a structural perspective, two levels of narrative fiction can be examined: deep narrative structure and surface narrative structure. Table 4.1 outlines the parameters for each of the coding categories of deep and surface narrative structure. Cormier's novels are analyzed in terms of emergent themes in the deep narrative structure – specifically, the ways in which Cormier reinforces or problematizes binary opposition within the novels. In addition, the surface structure in Cormier's novels is examined in terms of the manner of sequence combining which he used to weave and interlace his story events.

Investigation of the deep and surface narrative structure underlying Cormier's novels promotes a better understanding of their "structured character," that is, the recurrent themes and constructive patterns occurring across his novels (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002, p. 6). These intertextual themes and patterns may reflect, to some extent, Cormier's artistic vision and his desire to inspire critical thought in his writing for young adult readers.

Emergent Themes in Deep Narrative Structure

According to Levi-Strauss' (1968) analysis of the Oedipus myth, the underlying structure that is pervasive in the narration of Western mythology is that of binary opposition. In reference to the model of binary opposition, this study has identified recurrent thematic polarities within Cormier's YA fiction. Cormier presents many binary

	Structure	
	Deep narrative structure	Surface narrative structure
The Chocolate War 1974	Good vs. evil The individual vs. society	Joining Enchainment
I Am the Cheese 1977	Good vs. evil The individual vs. society Trust vs. distrust	Joining Enchainment
After the First Death 1979	Good vs. evil Overrating vs. underrating blood relationship	Enchainment
The Bumble-bee Flies Anyway 1983	Life vs. death	Enchainment
Beyond the Chocolate War 1985	Good vs. evil The individual vs. society	Enchainment
Fade 1988	Good vs. evil Fiction vs. reality	Joining Enchainment
Other Bells for Us to Ring 1990	Belief vs. superstition	Enchainment

Table 4.1 Deep and surface narrative structure

Table 4.1 (Continued)

	Structure	
	Deep narrative structure	Surface narrative structure
We All Fall Down 1991	Good vs. evil	Enchainment
Tunes for Bears to Dance To 1992	Good vs. evil	Enchainment
In the Middle of the Night 1995	Forgiveness vs. accusation	Enchainment
Tenderness 1997	Abstinence vs. addiction	Enchainment
Heroes 1998	Heroism vs. cowardice	Enchainment
The Rag and Bone Shop 2001	The individual vs. society	Enchainment

opposites within his YA novels, sometimes reinforcing the polarities and sometimes problematizing them. Even when he disrupts these binaries, Cormier reinforces them by highlighting their importance to YA readers. For example, in the binary opposition between good and evil, Cormier presents a blurred line and ambiguous characters. This does not mean that it is impossible to tell the difference but underscores the importance of an individual's making the distinction on his/her own. A number of pairs of binary opposites underlying Cormier's YA fiction were identified: good and evil, the individual and society, life and death, belief and superstition, accusation and forgiveness, addiction and abstinence, and heroism and cowardice. Some of them emerge recurrently across Cormier's novels, as shown in the chart.

Good and evil.

In *The Chocolate War*, the first opposition is found in the triumph of good over evil (e.g., Jerry thwarts The Vigils) and its reversal (e.g., Jerry is finally beaten down; The Vigils win an overwhelming victory). Trinity High School is full of evil, part of which is embodied in The Vigils, a secret student organization. As Goober suggests, "There is something rotten in that school. More than rotten" (p. 159).

Like its predecessor, *Beyond the Chocolate War* is primarily structured on the basis of the binary opposition between good and evil. Jerry returns to Monument and begins another round of the fight against The Vigils. Jerry's future is uncertain and his struggle with evil is still going on. Emile swears to beat Jerry up whenever and wherever they come across each other. Jerry seems to gain some measure of wisdom and inner strength when he tells Goober, "You can get beat up and still not lose. You can look like a loser but don't have to be one" (p. 223). Inevitably, Jerry's way of life will be as tough

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and lonely as before. In addition to Jerry's defiance in facing the sinister forces, Caroni seeks revenge on Brother Leon because Leon unfairly flunked him. Caroni's suicide following his futile attack on Brother Leon shows how evil can destroy an innocent young man. On the other hand, members of the Vigils, such as Obie and Carter, get sick of Archie's malevolence and start to stand up against him. The novel as a whole is built upon the good versus evil opposition.

This "good/evil" theme can be juxtaposed against a similar opposition in *I Am the Cheese*. David Farmer, Adam's father, reveals the corruption in government and is brave enough to "testify against the organized crime" before a Senate committee in Washington (p. 129). After the testimony, his life and the lives of his family are threatened, and he unwillingly accepts the witness protection program which Grey and his department (the U.S. Department of Re-Identification) provide. After that time, the Farmers (originally called the Delmontes) are under Grey's control. Grey takes advantage of this program to gain David's trust and then visits him once or twice a month to determine whether he is withholding secret information. Finally, Grey makes a plan to murder the Farmers: he first intimidates David with a false warning about an attack on his family and demands that the Farmers leave town for a while by pretending to go on a vacation. Then Grey arranges for a car crash to murder the Farmers on their trip. David gets hurt running away, but Grey's men vow to catch him. David's wife dies on the spot. Adam is left alive since "he may be useful" (p. 202).

Even though he survives the car crash, Adam loses his memory. Much worse, he is confined in a hospital, where he loses his freedom and is forced to confront the evil power, as his father did. Brint controls Adam through medication and bombards him with

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aggressive questioning. In his fake therapy talks, he plays mind games with Adam to see if he has some important information about his father's stand against organized crime.

Compared to The Vigils and Brother Leon, Grey and Brint stand for much more sinister forces, moving between good and evil. Grey pretends to help David through the witness protection program and wins him over. But he actually places the Farmers under his control. As Adam's mother says, "He rules our lives" (p. 156). Likewise, Brint claims to be helping Adam recover his lost memory, but is controlling him to extract information from him. At the end of his annual report on interrogating Adam, Brint even recommends that Adam be terminated since he is of no further use. Moreover, Brint also makes a recommendation that Grey should be reinstated in the government agency, in spite of the fact that he helped murder the Farmers. So Brint and Grey actually work for the same organization. With their disguises, they seem to be good, but in fact they are part of the organized crime. They exist in an ambiguous zone between good and evil, where they can easily intrigue against the innocent.

The theme of good versus evil is also present in the Paul and Ozzie sections of *Fade*, where Paul, the thirteen-year-old protagonist, learns how to distinguish good from evil through his experience with the magic power of the fade. Paul has inherited the ability to be invisible from his Uncle Adelard. Thus, Paul has been empowered to do whatever he wants to do. Paul plans to play a trick on Mr. Dondier, an apparently upstanding grocer, who "collected at the ten o'clock mass on Sunday mornings" (p. 84). Paul stealthily sneaks into Mr. Dondier's grocery store where, to his surprise, he witnesses Mr. Dondier's tryst with Theresa, a young girl the same age as his daughter:

> Mr. Dondier sat down on the piano bench, his face red and sweating and his eyes strange and staring, as he raised her legs onto his shoulders and plunged his face between her legs. He moaned and his shoulders jerked violently as he burrowed between her thighs. (pp. 84-85)

This fading experience brought Paul no triumphant satisfaction, but left him "shaken and disillusioned" (p. 110). He was disgusted at Mr. Dondier's abnormal behavior.

Paul's second fade also frustrates him. When Emerson Winslow, Paul's classmate at Silas B. High, invites Paul to his house and introduces him to his twin sister, Page. Paul is deeply attracted to Page. Page's beauty haunts Paul so much that he can not resist using his capability to fade to enter her room. Again to his shock, in Page's room, Paul witnesses what he is not supposed to see:

> I heard the click of a switch and the room suddenly plunged into darkness. But the darkness did not obliterate the sounds of their lovemaking, their gasps of pleasure, as they tumbled to the bed. . . . I turned toward the bed. Emerson and Page were indistinct forms beneath the covers. (pp. 129-130)

This horrible scene is so appalling to Paul that he has to "clamp [his] hands against [his] ears" (p. 130).

Through the fade, Paul witnesses the dark side of human beings. Both good and evil seem to be part of human nature. Page and Emerson are well-bred twins from a family with high socio-economic status, but commit the sin of incest. Mr. Dondier is a respectful businessman in appearance, but is sexually obsessed with a young girl.

In a broader sense, Paul still needs to deal with the issue of good and evil associated with the fade itself. After intruding into the privacy of other people through his use of the fade, Paul expresses his conscientious uneasiness: "I was filled with guilt and shame, as if I had committed a terrible sin" (p. 86). After his horrible initial experiences of seeing things he had never wanted to see when he was in the fade, Paul follows the

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instruction of his Uncle Adelard to "use the fade when it's absolutely necessary" and

"never use it for [his] own pleasure" (p. 110). After these experiences, Paul only uses the

fade when there seems to be a good reason. For example, he goes into the fade to beat

Omer LaBatt, who has been bullying Joey, a boy on his newspaper route. In addition,

Paul summons the fade to kill Rudolphe Toubert, a villain in Frenchtown. It was said that

Rudolphe arranged for the scabs be brought from Maine to Frenchtown to begin a fight

with the strikers from the comb shop. Paul's father, a worker at the comb shop, was hurt

in the fight, and Paul takes revenge on Rudolphe for his vicious deeds.

Another mission Paul was asked to assume was to "watch for the next fader" (p.

112). Paul's Uncle Adelard had articulated his worry:

> I sometimes wonder what might have happened if the fade had been given to the
> wrong person. Evil man, unscrupulous. . . . what might happen with the next
> generation after you, if there will be an evil fader who will use it for terrible
> purposes. (p. 111).

This "wrong person" is represented by Ozzie, Paul's lost nephew, who inherits the

capability of the fade, but abuses this power. In his final fade, Paul tries to tame Ozzie,

but the event ends up with Ozzie's death. In short, the Paul and Ozzie chapters of *Fade*

are framed on the binary opposition between good and evil. Through magical realism,

Cormier explores what a young adult protagonist might do and how he could tell good

from evil if he were empowered to do anything he wished

The theme of good and evil is also explored in *After the First Death*. Specifically,

the novel's underlying narrative structure centers on the primary opposition between a

defense of terrorism (Artkin and Miro rationalize their terrorist acts) and condemnation of

terrorism (Kate attempts to thwart the bus kidnapping). Based on this kernel event of

terrorism, the story develops to display Miro's monstrous acts (e.g., he kills Kate for no good reason at the end of the story) and to demonstrate Kate's bravery and innocence (e.g., she tries to defy Miro by using her secret key to start the hijacked bus).

The binary opposition between good and evil forms the underlying structure in *We All Fall Down*. The brutal violence of the opening scene is inflicted by "regular kids, not sleazies . . . or the rough guys and dropouts . . . They were nicely dressed" (p. 3). Except for Buddy Walker, all the trashers (Harry Flowers, Marty Sanders, and Randy Pierce), after their vandalism, attempted rape, and murder, talk and laugh as if nothing has happened. They never feel guilty about their behavior nor have a twinge of conscience for their victims. Readers cannot help wondering what kind of kids are capable of such evil and violence or what creates such monsters. From their appearance, we can infer that they are all from well-to-do families. Harry, the gang leader, is the son of a prominent architect. He describes himself as good son, good student, and good guy: "I am good to my mother and don't hassle my father. I make the honor roll. My folks appreciate all that" (p. 105). So, readers are inclined to ask "*What's wrong with this picture?*" (p. 105)

The morally complex adolescent world is at issue. It is true that Harry's parents spoil him. As he says, "When I got into trouble, my father helped out. My father loves me. He wrote the check and asked no questions" (p. 105). Beyond this, it was Harry who "took advantage of his [Buddy's] crappy life" and got Buddy mixed up in their "exploits" (p. 196). Harry can be regarded as a good student and good son, but he is also evil itself, directionless and senseless, picking a random victim and simply finding pleasure in the trashing.

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In fact, the adolescent world in which Harry and Buddy live projects Cormier's recurrent theme: the ambiguity of good and evil. This overriding theme is most obviously revealed in Buddy's reflections upon his involvement in the vandalism:

> Harry was Frankenstein, the doctor who created the monster. Who is the monster then? Buddy wondered. Remembering his part in the vandalism and his inability to stop what they had done to the girl, he thought: Maybe it's me. *But I am not a monster*. Or is that what all the monsters said? (p. 15)

Buddy commits what Cormier calls the sins of omission – doing nothing to stop evil from happening when one should, specifically in the sexual assault. Moreover, Buddy cannot deny the fact that he "enjoyed himself, found great satisfaction smashing and trashing that house" (p. 63).

It seems impossible to place Buddy and Harry in the dichotomous categories of good and evil. The characters of Buddy and Harry epitomize the ambiguity of good and evil:

> Buddy had always thought in terms of good and evil, that you were either good or bad. And he automatically placed himself in the category of good guys. Which made Harry a bad guy, automatically. Now he wasn't certain, not certain about anything about himself. A good guy didn't do rotten things. And he, Buddy Walker, good guy, had helped wreck a family's house. He also drank in secret, went to school drunk sometimes. Missed the honor roll. Harry made the honor roll. (pp. 105-106)

To sum up, the novel as a whole is primarily framed upon the opposition between good and evil and explores the uncertainty and indeterminacy of this dichotomy.

The structure that underlies *Tunes for Bears to Dance To* is primarily the confrontation of the opposing forces of good and evil. This opposition is indicated by Henry's benevolence and Mr. Hairston's malevolence. Mr. Hairston represents a sinister force; he demands that Henry do whatever he is told to do, whether he likes it or not.

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Hairston not only tempts but also intimidates Henry to get him to devastate the wooden

village which Mr. Levine has taken pains to carve. The reason why Hairston orders

Henry to do so is not for personal benefit or revenge. Hairston's motivation simply

originates from his wickedness. Hairston wants to destroy Henry's innocence. As Henry

finally recognizes, "*It was me he* [Hairston] *was after all the time. Not just the old man*

and his village. He didn't want me to be good anymore" (p. 94). The novel as a whole

explores the issue of "how good overcomes evil" (p. 64).

The individual and society.

One of the adolescent's developmental tasks is to make preparations for entry into

society. Awareness of issues involving institutional power, civil obligations, social

conformity, individual freedom, etc. is essential to young adults. Given the importance of

such awareness to YA readers, Cormier deals with the subject of the individual versus

society in his YA books.

In *The Chocolate War*, one binary opposition is between affirmation of an

individual's free will (i.e., Jerry's choice of disobedience to The Vigils), and its negation.

The negation is implied by Jerry's offering Goober the final advice of avoiding

confrontation with The Vigils, while the affirmation of free will is suggested by the secret

support of the Trinity students for Jerry's contention with The Vigils. On the surface,

Jerry's refusal to take part in the chocolate sale is due to Archie's and Brother Leon's

manipulation, intimidation, and victimization of innocent students. Actually, Jerry's acts

of defying Brother Leon and fighting The Vigils take a new meaning when Jerry explains

to Goober: "It's not The Vigils, Goob. They're not in it anymore. It's me" (p. 128). The

poster in Jerry's locker best reflects Jerry's moral choice: "*Do I dare disturb the*

universe?" (p. 129). Indeed, at his own volition, Jerry decides not to conform, but to disturb the microcosm of Trinity High by fighting against Brother Leon and The Vigils.

The issue of free choice is also reflected in Jerry's response to his classmate Harold Darcy's question about why Jerry refuses to sell the chocolates when all of the other Trinity students have been selling them. Brother Leon requires that Jerry answer the question, and Jerry flippantly replies: "It's a free country" (p. 205). Although Brother Leon is not satisfied with that answer, Jerry has again confirmed that since the chocolate sale is voluntary in nature, he does not have to sell them.

In *I Am the Cheese*, one pair of opposites is the powerlessness of the individual versus the dominance of the system. Rees (1980) argues that Cormier's message in this novel is bleak: "the stand of one or two individuals against the whole apparatus of government is hopeless" (p. 158). March-Penny (1978) contends that it does not matter which system an individual is up against because "ultimately, the total system is completely ruthless and will reach into all levels of individual and group psychological motivation in order to maintain its supremacy" (pp. 80-81). Similarly, As MacLeod (1994) notes, Cormier's message is that: "The two systems [government and crime organization] are equally impersonal, and equally dangerous to the human beings caught between them. What matters to the organization – either organization – is its own survival, not Adam's" (p. 192). Cormier presents a world where "nobody knows how powerful these organizations – maybe there's more than one – are today. Nobody knows how far they might have penetrated the government" (p. 145). It's a terrible world because you do not even know "who to trust" and "who the bad guys are" (p. 14).

The Rag and Bone Shop is also about the relation of individuals to their society. Because of his situation, Jason is helpless in coping with the powerful institutional forces, as Jerry of *The Chocolate War* and Adam of *I Am the Cheese* are. The body of seven-year-old Alicia Bartlett is found in the woods, and Jason, a twelve-year-old boy, happened to drop in on Alicia and do jigsaw puzzles with her on the afternoon before her death. Jason is regarded as a prime suspect. Under the pressure of Senator Harold Gibbons and District Attorney Alvin Dark to solve this terrible crime, Detective Lieutenant George Baxton asks Interrogator Trent for help in obtaining Jason's confession. As a matter of fact, there is no physical evidence against him. Jason is invited to go to police headquarters without an adult's or a lawyer's company under the pretext that he may be able to help the police to find important leads. But in fact, a severe interrogation awaits him. Then, during the course of the interrogation, Trent cunningly coaxes and intimidates Jason, trapping him into confessing to the murder. As the narrator describes it, "The boy had stepped almost willingly into the trap" (p. 135). Trent threatens Jason to compel him to make the confession: "Outside this door, there are officers waiting to charge you with the murder of Alicia Bartlett" (p. 139). Moreover, Trent tells Jason that because of the people's hatred, his life is endangered: "If you leave this room right now, this minute, without any admission, there's no telling what's waiting for you outside. Angry people can turn very ugly. It doesn't take much to start a riot" (p. 138). Trent frightens Jason with strict punishment: "Your age won't save you. There's a law now that allows a juvenile like yourself to be tried as an adult" (p. 139).

In addition to fear and intimidation, Trent utilizes sweet-talk to allure Jason into confessing his crime, telling him: "You have to admit your sins before you can be

forgiven" (p. 137). Trent wheedles Jason into believing that when he admits to the crime,

he will be considered to be cooperating and so he can "receive consideration and

understanding" and be given a reduced charge (p. 138). In the end, Jason is overpowered

by Trent's intimidation and makes a false confession. As a teenager, Jason is too fragile

to resist the powerful institutional forces, namely, the police authority of which Trent is

representative.

Trust and distrust.

One binary opposition underlying *I Am the Cheese* is the emotional struggle over

trust and distrust. Adam's parents express their conflicting feelings about their

overdependence on Grey and his department (the U.S. witness protection program). As

Adam's mother says, "I often wonder, Is it right to be at the complete mercy of this

man?" (p. 155). Similarly, this struggle over trust and distrust is also reflected in Adam's

conversations with Brint, who is pretending to be a doctor:

> But he did know. He didn't want to confide the knowledge to the doctor, however.
> The doctor was a complete stranger and although he seemed sympathetic and
> friendly, he wasn't entirely comfortable with him. It should have been easy to tell
> him everything, all his doubts, to get it all off his chest, but he wasn't sure how to
> proceed. He wondered if he should tell him about the clues. (p. 10)

Adam resists full cooperation with Brint even though he knows that Brint is his only hope

because he needs his assistance in restoring his lost memory. In fact, Brint plays on

Adam's mistrust as a way to gain his trust. Brint distorts trust in order to confuse Adam.

In *After the First Death*, what hurts Ben most is not the injury inflicted on him by

the terrorists, but his father's betrayal. Ben's agony is due to the emotional opposition

between trust and distrust. His father, General Marchand, has taken advantage of Ben's

innocence and used him as a pawn to win the terrorists' confidence. The terrorists believe

the attack plan which Ben is forced to reveal through physical torture. After revealing the presumed attack plan, Ben feels deeply ashamed of himself for betraying his father. However, it turns out that the attack time Ben released to the terrorists is wrong and was meant to confuse the terrorists so that the government forces could attack them while they were not alert.

As a matter of fact, Ben does not betray his country but helps a great deal. The problem is that nobody, not even his father, tells him about the tactic. His father's later explanation of why he did not let Ben know about the tactic is that if Ben had known the strategy, the information Ben gave the terrorists would not have seemed true to them. However, Ben feels betrayed by his father. His feeling of being cheated hurts him so much that he begins to distrust his father. Whatever explanation his father gives for his acts is not believable to Ben anymore. In a word, Ben's misery results from the reversal of trust to distrust.

Overrating and underrating blood relationship.

The binary opposition underlying *After the First Death* is General Marchand's overrating of his military career and at the same time underrating of his blood relationship with his son, Ben. General Marchand lives by patriotism to the extent of being fanatic. He places patriotism above everything else, even to the event of being willing to volunteer his son to serve as a pawn. He uses patriotism to rationalize risking Ben's life. However, his patriotism is no better than an excuse to fight against the terrorists. The truth is that what General Marchand is most concerned with during the bargain with the terrorists is preservation of his military base, which the terrorists intend to abolish. This point is clearly revealed in Ben's aftermath reflection upon the bus

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hijacking: "And Inner Delta was the reason I ended up on the bridge and why a bullet created a tunnel in my chest and why 1 dream of screaming children at night" (p. 12). In other words, General Marchand risks his son's life for the safety of his military facility.

Actually, General Marchand underrates his blood relationship with his son Ben when he assigns Ben as a messenger to negotiate with the terrorists. The underrating of the son-father relationship is obvious; as Ben tells the reader, "Anyway, I sat in the office and my father began to address me. Not talk to me but address me. As if I were not his son but a stranger who had suddenly become important to him" (p. 13-14). Indeed, General Marchand dehumanizes himself as well as Ben.

Life and death.

The Bumblebee Flies Anyway is constructed on the binary opposition of life and death. All of the major characters in the story (Barney, Alberto, and Billy) face impending death. While other sickly patients live fretfully, Barney is brave enough to confront death, making use of the brief remaining days of his life to help Billy and Alberto fulfill their desires. Barney arranges for Billy to use Alberto's telephone. Barney also builds a life-sized model car which he calls Bumblebee so that Alberto can realize his last wish of a wild ride in a symbolic way by pushing the car to make it glide over the roof and fly to the ground. Being a "fixer," Barney helps people make their doomed lives meaningful and this includes his own life. He finally says to Alberto (Mazzo):

> Hey, Mazzo, the Bumble is going to fly and we don't have to be in it. The Bumblebee will fly for us and we'll be a part of the flight because we made it possible, you and me, me by building it and you by giving me a reason to build it. (p. 233)

The novel provides a provocative interpretation of life and death.

Accusation and forgiveness.

The novel *In the Middle of the Night* is primarily constructed upon the binary opposites of accusation and forgiveness. Lulu has always blamed John Paul for the Goble Theater fire which blinded her. She keeps making harassing telephone calls to John Paul at night, even twenty-five years after the event. Obsessively, she plans to take revenge on John Paul's son Denny. As she says to his younger brother Dave, "*The sin of the father will be visited upon the son*" (p. 17). On the other hand, Dave, another victim of the fire, has taken a forgiving attitude toward John Paul. He keeps saying to Lulu: "Please don't call. Leave him alone" (p. 16).

John Paul has willingly accepted Lulu's harassing calls for years. He does not take the phone off the hook at night. Picking up the phone, he patiently listens to Lulu's harsh accusations and says nothing. Moreover, John Paul also suffers threatening bombs and hate mail, but he never complains about them. He does not plan to move, or to change his telephone number. In contrast to his father, Denny can not tolerate the night calls. He thinks it unfair to be treated this way since his father has been proven innocent, not guilty for the fire. John Paul is completely sympathetic with Lulu in her accusations. He accepts her calls because he blames and accuses himself. Denny has an outsider's perspective; he can see that his father should not be blamed.

Addiction and abstinence.

The structure underlying *Tenderness* is a pair of opposites, affirmation of one's wistful desire (addiction) and its negation (abstinence). Take Lori for example. She indulges her cravings. As she describes herself: "Me, I get fixated on something and I can't help myself" (p. 1). She experiences a "fixation" first on the singer, Throb, and then

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on Eric. Lori hitchhikes all the way to Wickburg simply to kiss Throb. Later, Lori waits outside of Eric's house, rain or shine, just to satisfy her longing for a brief talk with him. Afterwards, she even risks her life following Eric on his road trip. On the other hand, Lori knows to refrain from her passion. She consciously avoids her mother's boyfriend, Gary, even though she desires a man's touch and enjoys his gaze. She does this because she doesn't "want to do anything to hurt [her] mother" (p. 4). As a teenage girl, Lori splits herself: Part of her is self-disciplined and part of her is self-indulgent.

This contradiction within the personality also exists in Eric. Eric is unable to restrain his hatred for his stepfather, Harvey, and his mother, "who had taken this stranger into their home" (p. 65). Eventually, Eric murders both of them. In addition, Eric becomes addicted to the sensation of tenderness he experiences in intimate body contact with a girl. But the tender feeling is so "swift and fleeting" that he feels disappointment, loneliness, and even fury to the extent that he kills the girl he loves. Eric's self-indulgence leads him to commit a series of murders of Laura Anderson, Betty Ann Tera, and Alicia Hunt. However, more often than not, Eric is capable of restraining himself. At home, he behaves as a dutiful son. During his three years at the youth facility, he makes an effort to behave himself as well, "knowing the danger of too much desire, knowing that he had to postpone those longings" (p. 68). Indeed, Eric splits himself between being a well-mannered teenager and a serial killer.

Belief and superstition.

Two pairs of binary opposites underlie much of the structure in *Other Bells for Us to Ring*. The first opposition is between overrating religious ritual and underrating it. For example, Darcy does not want to enter a Catholic church with Kathleen Mary because

she considers herself Protestant, a Unitarian. When Darcy and Kathleen Mary walk through the churchyard, Kathleen Mary dips her hand "in a large basin of water on the pedestal" and drops water on Darcy, telling her, "Now you're a Catholic, Darcy Webster. Forever and ever, world without end" (p. 69). After the informal baptism, Darcy seems preoccupied with Catholicism. She begins to hesitate over whether to eat meat on Friday for fear of choking to death and worry about committing a sin such as not wearing a hat when entering church. She gets anxious about attending Mass on Sunday. On the other hand, Darcy's mother is quite liberal about religious ritual. According to her, the Catholic rules and regulations are not essential to one's belief in God. In her view, "One thing was clear: God didn't care whether you were a Catholic or not" (p. 94). Similarly, Sister Angela holds a liberal attitude toward religious ritual. When Darcy complains to Sister Angela that she does not know how to pray, Sister Angela says: "The words are not important. Prayer is reaching out, like a hand stretched to God and the hand can reach across eternity. It has nothing to do with words" (p. 131).

The second opposition is between negation of religious miracle and its affirmation. Mimi, a young woman, who has mental problems and who visits Sister Angela to benefit from her healing power, dies when she jumps from the top deck of a three-story house. A miracle does not occur for her. However, the young crippled girl, Monique, miraculously is able to remove her leg braces after she asks Sister Angela for help. In addition, Darcy's father is reported to be missing in a military action. Darcy and her mother almost give up hope. Then Darcy asks Sister Angela to pray for her father. The prayer seems to be answered immediately because official notification that Darcy's father is safe comes on the same day that Sister Angela offers her prayers for Darcy's father. Another miracle

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that happens to Darcy herself is that on Christmas Eve she hears the church bells ringing

although Mr. LeBlanc is unable to hear them in the church. The only explanation is that

"some other bells" do ring for Darcy (p. 151).

Heroism and cowardice.

The central concern of *Heroes* is heroism and cowardice. Francis takes no action

to stop Larry's sexual assault on Nicole. He feels guilty for his failure. As he says, "I did

nothing. Just stood there and let it happen" (p. 114). Nicole accuses him of doing nothing

to save her as well: "Why didn't you do something? Tell him to stop. Run for help.

Anything" (p. 101). Ashamed of his weakness, Francis decides to end his life by jumping

from the church steeple. But he is unable to do so; as he describes himself it: "I was too

much of a coward to kill myself" (p. 113). So he joins the army in order to "get killed" (p.

113). In the battlefield, he falls on a grenade to save his comrades. He does not die;

instead, his face is blown off. Francis is transformed from a coward into a war hero with

a Silver Star.

Larry also earns the Silver Star because of "acts of heroism" in the U. S. Marine

Corps. He is the "hero of newsreels and radio broadcasts" (p. 86). However, on his

triumphant homecoming, he commits the crime of raping a teenage girl, Nicole.

Ironically, Larry, a war hero, turns out to be a disgusting sexual predator. He admits to

the sin, telling Francis without shame about his abnormal lust for young girls: "The sweet

young things, Francis. Even their heat is sweet . . . I love the sweet young things" (pp.

114-115). In Larry, the heroic behavior and the perverted sexual desire coexist. These

conflicting urges create tension within Larry that is unresolved in the novel.

The most frequently used pair of binary opposites underlying Cormier's YA

novels is the conflict between good and evil, which appears in *The Chocolate War*,

Beyond the Chocolate War, *I Am the Cheese*, *Fade*, *After the First Death*, *We All Fall

Down*, and *Tunes for Bears to Dance To*. This intertextual question of good and evil

indeed lies at the heart of Cormier's YA fiction. Cormier truthfully presents a realistic

world in which good and evil are ambiguous and often at odds.

Next in importance to the contrast between good and evil is the conflict between

the individual and society, which is of central concern in *The Chocolate War*, *Beyond the

Chocolate War*, *I Am the Cheese*, and *The Rag and Bone Shop*. This dichotomy addresses

the issue of the relationship of the individual to the social group. Jerry of *The Chocolate

War* refuses to sell chocolate in the school's annual fund-raising activity. In other words,

he chooses not to conform to the school requirements and ends up being brutally beaten

in a boxing match. Jerry confronts the powerful force of Brother Leon's school

administration as well as the peer pressure of The Vigils. Similarly, Adam of *I Am the

Cheese* faces the overwhelming institutional power of the government's agency of

investigation. He is detained in a mental hospital where he undergoes a bombarding

interrogation to see if he still holds important information about corruption in the

government. He is so helpless that his life may one day be terminated, as recommended

by the agent in his annual report at the end of the interrogation.

Jason of *The Rag and Bone Shop* suffers a similar repression by authority. Jason

is wrongly charged with murdering Alicia. The interrogator, Trent, coaxes and

intimidates Jason to coerce him to confess to the crime. He is so frail that he is unable to

resist the intimidating power of the police. As illustrated above, the adolescent

protagonists, Jerry, Adam, and Jason, suffer from the institutional force of the school, the government, and the police, respectively. They have to "learn to exist within institutional structures" (Trites, 2000, p. 7).

In conclusion, the recurring pairs of binary opposites underlying Cormier's YA fiction can be organized in terms of the internal and external worlds of the characters. The outside world is about good and evil. More specifically, the individual versus society opposition is concerned with one's existence within social institutions such as school and other authorities. On the other hand, the inside world is concerned with ethical judgment (accusation and forgiveness), emotional control (addiction and abstinence), moral value (heroism and cowardice), spiritual faith (belief and superstition), and existential meaning (life and death). Viewed in this way, the themes reflected in Cormier's YA fiction are quite comprehensive, including social issues which young adult readers will confront during their growth and the problems concerning the adolescent self.

The Method of Combining Sequences in Surface Narrative Structure

To identify Cormier's craft in weaving story events into a complex narrative, I have drawn on the methods of combining story sequences proposed by Bremond (1973), namely, enchainment, embedding, and joining. In enchainment, one story sequence leads to another sequence. Embedding refers to a situation where one sequence is inserted into another. Joining is the parallel arrangement of two story sequences which are matched against each other.

Enchainment.

The plotting of *I Am the Cheese* is based on the principle of enchainment. David's testifying against organized crime results in his whole family being placed under the

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control of Grey. Then Grey plans a car accident to murder the Farmers. Adam survives the crash but loses his memory. Then a new story sequence begins with Brint's severe questioning of Adam, which is disguised as a therapist's effort to help Adam regain his memory.

The story sequences of *After the First Death* are mainly woven according to the principle of enchainment. At the starting point of the story, Ben is in the school dormitory waiting for his father's visit; then this unwelcome visit is enchained to Ben's suicide. Likewise, in the flashback narrative where Ben is waiting for the call of his girlfriend, Nettie, but the call he receives turns out to be an emergency call from his father, a summons asking Ben to serve as a pawn. This call changes Ben's life.

In *After the First Death*, the story sequence concerning Kate and Miro is also woven by way of enchainment. This story sequence begins with Miro's clearly defined task of his first kill after many years' training. He is supposed to assassinate a male school bus driver. However, when he takes action to hijack the bus, its driver turns out to be Kate, a teenager like himself. At that moment, he hesitates and fails to kill her. This outcome (objective missed) amounts to the potential stage of another new story sequence: the interaction between Miro and Kate. This new story sequence creates possibilities to keep the story developing: What will happen between the two teenagers of the opposite sex, Miro and Kate? Will Miro betray Artkin to accept Kate? These and similar questions command the reader's attention.

The story sequences of *The Bumblebee Flies Anyway* are woven through the method of enchainment. Barney promises to do chores for Alberto in exchange for his permission to let Billy use his telephone. Then Alberto demands that Barney be present

for his meeting with his twin sister, Cassie. After the first encounter with Cassie, Barney is attracted by her beauty and secretly falls in love with her. Simultaneously, Cassie asks Barney to make regular visits to Alberto to inquire about the progress of his sickness and then to report his condition to her. After repeatedly visiting Alberto, Barney has a better understanding of Alberto. Finally he decides to assemble a life-sized model car to help Alberto realize his desire for a wild ride in a symbolic manner. The story events are tightly connected in "back-to-back succession" as a well-wrought plot (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002, p. 23).

Other Bells for Us to Ring is composed of individual episodes. Although these episodes, which are separated by asterisks, appear loose in terms of textual organization, they can actually be connected if viewed in terms of enchainment. For instance, Kathleen Mary leads Darcy to the church so that she can spy on Sister Angela offering prayers for people in need. Among those sickly people, Monique, a crippled three-and-half-year-old girl, and Mimi, a young woman with mental problems, impress Darcy. This episode of church spying acts as a catalyst to open later episodes. Darcy witnesses Mimi killing herself by jumping from a great height. This causes Darcy to completely lose her faith in God. She begins to hold the view that Catholicism is fake and Sister Angela is a fraud. Later on, Darcy witnesses Monique's recovery from her physical disabilities. Overwhelmed by this evidence of the healing power of Sister Angela, Darcy decides to ask for Sister Angela's prayers for her father, who has been reported missing in a military action. The prayer is answered immediately. Official notification of her father's survival is issued on the very day that Sister Angela prays for Darcy's father. Thus, all these episodes can be seen to be woven in succession to highlight the reversal of Darcy's belief.

We All Fall Down consists of one main storyline of the house trashing and one subsidiary storyline of The Avenger. In this novel, story sequences are woven in the fashion of enchainment. After participating in the trashing of Jane's house, Buddy has regrets about vandalism and tracks Jane down. Buddy's action after the house trashing is equivalent to an act of purgation on his part; it starts a new sequence. Immediately after their encounter in the mall, Jane and Buddy fall in love with each other. The process of their dating is smooth and sweet, but eventually the outcome of their romance is bitter.

Similarly, the series of murders The Avenger commits are woven in the manner of enchainment. His successful act of shooting his classmate, Vaughn Masterson, opens the action which leads to a new murder: the killing of his grandfather. The Avenger shoots Vaughn Masterson with a gun which he had stolen from his grandfather, Louis Kendrick, a retired police sergeant. Although The Avenger easily passes through the police interrogation because of his lack of motive, he cannot evade his grandfather's suspicion. How he can get rid of his grandfather becomes The Avenger's new objective. Eventually, he pushes his grandfather so that he will fall to the ground when his grandfather leans over the banister of a balcony. His grandfather dies before the ambulance comes. In this way, the story events follow each other in succession.

The story events of *Tunes for Bears to Dance To* are woven in the fashion of enchainment. The story begins with Henry's tracking Mr. Levine to the craft center, and Henry subsequently learns of Levine's past experience of surviving a Nazi concentration camp and his later devotion to carving a wooden village in memory of his family and friends. Afterwards, when working for Mr. Hairston as a sweeper in his grocery store, Henry informs Mr. Hairston that Levine's wooden village will be on display at City Hall.

Hairston tricks Henry into destroying the wooden village and offers him rewards for doing so. Sneaking into the craft center, Henry is quite reluctant to damage Levine's work, despite the mallet that he is holding in his hand. At the moment of his hesitation, a rat suddenly appears and scares Henry so badly that he drops the mallet on the wooden village. Even though Levine's wooden village has been smashed, Henry refuses to accept Hairston's rewards. Eventually, Henry is able to resist Hairston's sinister temptations. As a whole, the novel's story events are connected in succession.

The story events of *In the Middle of the Night* are woven in the manner of enchainment. Lulu, watching the Halloween magic show at the Globe Theater, ends up being seriously hurt because John Paul accidentally causes a fire on the balcony and that balcony crashes down on her. Although she miraculously survives the Globe fire, Lulu becomes blind in the accident. This horrible outcome opens a new sequence in which she seeks revenge on John Paul through harassing telephone calls for years. However, John Paul simply receives the middle-of-the-night calls silently. That disappoints and even infuriates Lulu. This unsuccessful outcome to her plan for vengeance initiates another new story sequence in which Lulu plans to seek revenge on John Paul's son, Denny. Lulu successfully abducts Denny through telephone enchantment, but fails to hurt him. Lulu's attempted murder in the end results in her death. In a word, the novel's story sequences are tightly connected in the manner of enchainment.

The story events are connected in the manner of enchainment in *Tenderness*. Lori happens to see Eric entering the woods with Alicia Hunt and then has a brief conversation with him. Three years later, Lori notices a TV report that Eric has been released from a youth facility. Recalling the pleasant conversation she had with Eric in

the past awakens in her a new fixation on him. She patiently waits outside Eric's house. To shelter herself from rain at night, she sneaks into Eric's minivan and eventually falls asleep. At dawn, without noticing the presence of Lori in his van, Eric starts the vehicle to take a road trip. They begin a journey together which changes their lives.

The story events of *Heroes* are woven in the manner of enchainment. Larry LeSalle shows up to organize the Wreck Center, inviting Nicole to the dance class and teaching Francis how to play table tennis. When World War II breaks out, Larry volunteers to serve in the army. While the Wreck Center is closed because of Larry's enlistment, Francis enjoys going on a date with Nicole. One year later, Larry comes home as a war hero, having earned a silver star for his bravery in the service. After a dance party at the Wreck Center, Larry rapes Nicole. Although he is aware of what is happening, Francis dares not take any action to interfere with Larry's sexual assault on Nicole. In the aftermath, Francis blames himself so severely that he even decides to end his own life by leaping from the church steeple. Yet, thinking that killing himself would be cowardly behavior and would disgrace his parents' name, he changes his mind. Instead of committing suicide, he enlists in order to die on the battlefield. In a fight, Francis fell on a grenade and miraculously survived, although his face was seriously damaged. When he returns home as a war hero, he is determined to kill Larry for revenge. At the end of the story, Larry admits to his sin and shoots himself in front of Francis.

As illustrated above, Cormier repeatedly uses the method of enchainment to connect the story sequences in his YA fiction. Next in frequency of use to the method of enchainment is the technique of joining.

Joining.

In *The Chocolate War*, story sequences are woven together in the manner of joining, that is, each phase of one sequence corresponds to its counterpart in another sequence (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002). Goober's episode matches against Jerry's sequence. Goober is chosen for the Vigils' assignment of loosening the screws in all the furniture in Room Nineteen to the point where the pieces of furniture will collapse when they are touched slightly. With the assistance of other Vigil members, he accomplishes this. The destruction of Room Nineteen frightens Brother Eugene so much that he takes sick leave and never recovers from the shock. Goober feels deep remorse for what he has done, regretting that he carried out the Vigils' order.

Similarly, Jerry is chosen for the Vigils' assignment to reject participation in the school's annual chocolate sale for ten days. Jerry's refusal certainly angers Brother Leon and subjects Jerry to Brother Leon's malice. After the ten-day Vigil stunt, Jerry continues to refuse to sell the chocolate, even under pressure from The Vigils to do so. Even though Jerry successfully resists the chocolate sale, he ends up being brutally beaten in a boxing match by the end of the novel. Jerry's and Goober's sequences are combined into a complex narrative. In this way, the novel weaves two discrete narratives as one whole to highlight the overwhelming prevalence of the evil power, from which nobody can escape.

In *I Am the Cheese*, the story sequences are also woven by the method of joining. Adam's survival sequence is combined into David's sequence in this manner. These two sequences are balanced against each other. Adam's attempt to restore his memory involves (a) accepting Brint's help, (b) the act of talking to Brint, and (c) the failure of this action (at the end of the talks, Brint recommends that Adam be "terminated").

Likewise, David's effort to avert the potential danger to his family includes (a) accepting Grey's protection, (b) following Grey's instructions to take a trip to avoid a possible threat, and (c) the failure of this action (Grey plans a car crash to murder the Farmers during the course of the trip).

Another example of joining is the parallel development of Adam's imaginary bike journey and his dialogue with Brint. In his bike journey, Adam is pushed into the ditch by Whipper and his gang and feels sore as a result of the fall. Similarly, Adam tells Brint that he has been in the hospital ever since the car crash and he is sore from the injections he has been given. In addition, the purpose of Adam's bike journey is to see his father and achieve a family reunion. Likewise, the aim of Adam's conversations with Brint is supposed to be to help Adam recover his lost memory so that Adam will know what happened to his parents. However, Adam fails both in talking to Brint and in riding a bike to see his father. Brint simply takes advantage of the talks with Adam to find out whether he is withholding any secret information and has no intention of helping him at all. As for the bike journey, Adam only imagines it. The real situation is that Adam is imprisoned in a hospital. Through the subtle similarities mentioned above, the two distinct narratives – Adam's first-person narration of his bike journey and the dialogue between Adam and Brint – are joined together, giving the story a sense of cohesion.

In *Fade*, story sequences are combined in the manner of joining. For example, each stage of the Paul's sequence matches its counterpart in the Ozzie section. Paul is initially in a powerless state (e.g., chased by the bully, Omer LaBatt), and then he is empowered with the capability of the fade and exercises this power (e.g., beats Omer LaBatt, kills the villain, Rudolphe Toubert). Similarly, at the start, Ozzie is vulnerable

under his Pa's ill-treatment and Bull Zimmer's threats, and then he is given the power of the fade and employs this power to seek revenge. The Paul and Ozzie sequences are related structurally to constitute a seamless whole.

To sum up, in Cormier's YA fiction, enchainment is the most commonly used method of combining story events, the method of joining is used infrequently, and the technique of embedding has not been identified. The method of joining complicates the story's plot by presenting the contrasts and similarities between matching story-lines. Occasionally, Cormier utilizes more than one method in linking story events in his work. For example, both joining and enchainment are applied to connecting story sequences in *The Chocolate War* and *I Am the Cheese*. The varied methods of combining sequences contribute to complexity, breaking from the conventional simple arrangement of story events.

Text

As mentioned earlier, in this study three textual aspects of fictional narrative were examined: time, characterization, and focalization. The issue of text time in Cormier's novels was explored in terms of order, pace, and frequency. As to characterization, the methods Cormier used to portray his characters were investigated. Focalization was analyzed to reveal the angle of vision utilized in Cormier's texts. The perceptual and cognitive facets of focalization were also examined.

Time

Text time is different from story time because a story is usually narrated in linear temporality. However, when the story is represented in the text, its story events may be arranged in a nonlinear fashion. This textual rearrangement of the story creates certain

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artistic effects. For example, flashback produces a sense of reminiscence. Foretelling arouses the reader's interest and keeps him/her turning the pages of the book to find out what happened in the past to cause this particular outcome. Therefore, text time attracts critical attention in the study of fictional narrative.

The present study investigated three discernible temporal elements in Cormier's novels: order, pace, and frequency. Specifically, this study deals with the following questions: How does Cormier employ analepsis (retrospection) and prolepsis (foretelling) to represent a story in the text, how does his text produce an effect of acceleration or deceleration in narrative tempo, and what patterns of narrative frequency reside in his texts?

Order

In the text, story events are conventionally arranged in a chronological manner to simulate the natural trajectory that events in the real world follow. However, this linear arrangement of story events is not Cormier's only option, as Table 4.2 shows. Cormier sometimes organizes story events in nonlinear ways such as analepsis (retrospection) and prolepsis (foretelling). The following section is devoted to a discussion of how Cormier manipulates the way story events are displayed in the text to achieve the effects of mystery, suspense, and surprise.

External analepsis to provide a story's background information.

In *I Am the Cheese*, there are two primary strands of narrative: Adam's first-person narration of his bike trip to Rutterburg and transcripts of the conversations between Adam and Brint, along with a third-person narrative. Adam's narrative of his bike ride addresses events happening during the course of the journey chronologically. In

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	Order	
	Prolepsis	Analepsis
The Chocolate War 1974	X	
I Am the Cheese 1977		X
After the First Death 1979		X
The Bumble-bee Flies Anyway 1983		X
Beyond the Chocolate War 1985		X
Fade 1988	X	
Other Bells for Us to Ring 1990	X	X
We All Fall Down 1991	X	X
Tunes for Bears to Dance to 1992		X
In the Middle of the Night 1995	X	X
Tenderness 1997		X
Heroes 1998	X	
The Rag and Bone Shop 2001	X	

Table 4.2 Textual time: Order

contrast, the third-person narrative embedded within the recordings of Adam's and Brint's dialogue is anachronistic. The focus of Adam's conversations with Brint is the recall of Adam's past. The recalling of Adam's childhood memories and his family's suffering is primarily mediated through a third-person narrative which provides background information about his parents' distress and about Adam himself. Therefore, this is an instance of homodiegetic analepsis. All the past information offered here precedes the starting point of narration, and thus this is also an instance of external analepsis.

The odd-numbered chapters of *After the First Death*, except for Part 11, are developed through homodiegetic analepsis. From their own viewpoints, Ben and his father, respectively, recount the school bus hijacking in retrospect. This retrospection is an example of external analepsis because the terrorist event happens before the beginning point of the primary narrative. By providing past information about the story events and characters, such an analepsis fills the gaps in the primary narrative.

In the even-numbered chapters of *After the First Death*, the text time shifts between the present and the past. This is because the narrative includes hypodiegetic analepsis, which offers important background information about the characters. In the following passage, the text time leaps from the present to the past when Miro associates the kidnapped children with his childhood, which he spent with his elder brother:

> The children were meaningless to Miro. They all looked the same to him: small human beings, without identity, strangers who did not arouse his interest or curiosity. He could make no connection with them. He had never played with children when he was growing up. His only companion had been his brother, Aniel. Aniel had been two years older than he. Neither of them had been children, really. They had scrounged for a living in the refugee camps, although it had been Aniel who had done most of the scrounging, an expert, drifting out into the

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steaming mornings among the thousands who came and went in the camps and returning later with scraps food or sometimes clothing – an old jacket, shirts or socks – he had either begged or stolen. (pp. 58-59)

Through such retrospection, the narrative provides past information about Miro. This information about Miro's past helps to explain his current attitudes and also builds credibility into his character.

Kate is also gradually introduced to the reader through flashback, wherein the text time changes from the present to the past. The time shift takes place when Kate connects her present plight of being hijacked in the school bus with a similar situation in her past, as demonstrated in the following passage:

> She wanted to flee the sight of the boy [Miro], flee this bus, this bridge . . . I will not cry, she told herself. I will not cry.
> Actually, she couldn't remember the last time she cried. Perhaps as a child when she was little Katie Forrester and her mother dressed her up in lace and frills like a child movie star. That had been her first disguise, the first of many. She often wondered where her disguises left off and the real Kate Forrester began. So many disguises. . . . That was Disguise Number One: Kate Forrester, healthy young American girl, cheerleader, prom queen, captain of the girls' swimming team, budding actress in the Drama Club. . . . The Kate Forrester who couldn't stand the sight of blood . . . who was afraid of riding in roller coasters and who oozed with urine between her legs in moments of high excitement. (pp. 64-65)

Through such flashbacks, Kate's multiple dimensions are presented. The analepsis here is external, that is, it tells a past event happening before the starting point of the first narrative. This narrative technique is employed to represent Kate's fractured consciousness. The repetition of the word "disguise" within this flashback suggests further questionings about her true identity.

In *The Bumblebee Flies Anyway*, Cassie's secret, the "Thing" (p. 152), is revealed in retrospect. An external, homodiegetic analepsis is utilized in this novel. At the beginning of the story, the reader knows only that Cassie is very eager to gain current

information about her twin brother Alberto's illness. She uses her beauty to attract

Barney and easily persuades him to spy on Alberto. Her apparent reason for requesting

that Barney do so is her affection and concern, but actually she is seeking such

information because of the "Thing." In a flashback, the "Thing" is exposed, that is, the

reality that she can feel the same physical pain that Alberto feels even though they are far

from each other is revealed. Now as Alberto comes near his death, Cassie is also

suffering physically.

Part One of *We All Fall Down* is narrated in the fashion of retrospection. This

section opens with the scene of a house trashing. Buddy is actually drunk and under

Harry's command to trash the house. At the same time, The Avenger, outside of the

house, is witnessing their act of vandalism. Then the narrative goes backward to explain

why and how Buddy has come to participate in the trashing. Buddy is depressed by his

parents' divorce and then becomes addicted to alcohol. While fooling around in the mall,

Buddy meets Harry, an infamous gangster at Wickburg Regional. Harry entices Harry to

take part in "a bit of diversion, a bit of fun," offering him more to drink (p. 50). After he

gets drunk, Buddy passively participates in the house trashing.

Another strand of narrative in Part One of *We All Fall Down* is used to tell of The

Avenger's past. For the sake of justice, at the age of eleven, The Avenger killed the

school bully with a gun which he had stolen from his grandfather. Afterwards, in order to

escape the suspicion of his grandfather, The Avenger pushed him from a balcony and he

fell to his death. This past history of The Avenger prepares the reader for his later action

of seeking revenge on trashers after he spots them committing this act of vandalism. The

first part of the novel provides information about the characters' pasts, which precedes

the beginning point of the primary narrative. Therefore, Part One is composed of homodeigetic and external analepses.

In *Tunes for Bears to Dance To*, Mr. Levine's survival of a Nazi concentration camp and the death of Eddie, Henry's elder brother, in a car accident are narrated in retrospect. Both events provide background information about characters in the present narration, and thus they are homodeigetic. In addition, both events happen anterior to the point of time when they are narrated, and therefore they are external analepses.

In the novel *In the Middle of the Night*, Dave's first-person narrative also consists of analepsis when he recalls Lulu's suffering as a result of the fire in the Globe Theater. This flashback provides background information about Lulu and Dave and accounts for Lulu's desire to get revenge by calling Denny. Another analepsis is used to narrate Denny's growth and maturation under the influence of the gloom cast by the Globe Theater fire. Since childhood, he has had to abide by his father's rule: "*Do not pick up the phone*" (p. 34). When Denny tells a friend, Tommy Cantin, about this rule, in Tommy's eyes, Denny is like "a creature from an alien planet" (p. 34). At the age of eleven, Dave answers the phone by chance and is shocked by the caller's accusation that his father is a murderer. Later, he finds out that his father was involved in the Globe tragedy, in which twenty-two children died. Since then, Denny's mind has been shadowed by this tragic event, which affects his relations with his peers. Denny breaks up with his sort-of girlfriend, Chloe, because she mentions the event in history class. Because of the "spotlight of notoriety upon him," (p. 100) Denny is forced to transfer to another school. Denny spends his childhood moving here and there, isolating himself in each new environment.

In *Tenderness*, Eric's figural narration proceeds with homodiegetic and external analepses in which he recalls why and how he committed serial murders in the past. These serial killings are also narrated in retrospect by Police Lieutenant Proctor. External analepsis is also used in *The Rag and Bone Shop*. Such is the case in the account of Jason's beating the school bully, Brad. This event takes place before the starting point of the primary narrative. Trent distorts the significance of this event, so he can use it as evidence to support that Jason has a tendency toward violence. Thus, this is a false analepsis intended to mislead the reader to reinforce the plausibility of the plot; it is an advanced technique.

In summary, the external analepsis in Cormier's YA novels is mediated either through a character's memory or through an anonymous narrator's account. Cormier utilizes external analepsis to provide background information about the characters and events related to them. The external analepsis constitutes a secondary narrative, serving as a supplement to the primary narrative. External analepses can fill the gaps in the primary narrative, offering leads to readers to aid them in comprehension of the story as a whole.

Internal prolepsis to create suspense.

The opening line of *The Chocolate War* foretells the brutal end of the protagonist, Jerry Renault: "THEY MURDERED HIM" (p. 1). This is a prolepsis, predicting what will become of Jerry by the novel's end. In the text, Jerry's torture, that is, he is brutally eaten up in a boxing match, occurs some time posterior to the point when it is told and anterior to the end of the story. The narration of such an event is also known as internal prolepsis (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002). The internal prolepsis is carefully placed at the

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beginning of the novel, and so it causes readers to thrill to the tale from the very moment they open the cover.

Internal prolepses are also employed in *Fade*. For example, Adelard thinks that he is responsible for his young brother Vincent's death, saying, "Vincent died because of me" (p. 94). This statement creates a suspense that lingers in the text. Paul has tried to resolve this suspense and would like to ask his Uncle Adelard, "Did you make a vow because of what happened to Vincent?" (p. 112) But finally, he is afraid to ask that question. It is not until near the story's end that Adelard tells Paul why he blames himself for Vincent's death. Adelard did not tell his parents about Vincent's sickness, but "used the fade to help him." He tells Paul:

> I used the fade to slip into Lakier's. Found medicine there. I had heard that a medicine called paregoric had dope in it. To ease pain. Found the paregoric and brought it to him [Vincent]. . . . The thing is, Paul, I did not think he was sick enough to die. . . . In fact, he might have lived if I had not interfered. (p. 219).

This internal prolepsis leaves a sense of mystery hanging over half of the story, and thus creates the effect of maximum suspense for the reader.

Another similar instance of suspense created through internal prolepsis is Paul's foretelling that he will be responsible for the death of his younger brother, Bernard. Paul repeats his apology for causing Bernard's death on pages 211, 217, and 222. However, even at the end of the story, Paul does not tell the reader why he blames himself for Barnard's sudden death. Paul only offers the hint that Barnard's death may be due to "an act of revenge" (p. 219). An unending suspense results from this information gap in the text.

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Other Bells for Us to Ring is narrated in the past tense, beginning with the internal

prolepses that tell how Darcy was baptized as a Catholic by her friend, Kathleen Mary,

and that Darcy's father was sent overseas as a soldier. Darcy was quite uncertain about

her new religion, and she was also worried about her father's safety. Following this

foretelling, the text proceeds to explain through retrospection the interactions between

Darcy and Kathleen Mary, how Darcy adjusts herself to her new belief, and what

becomes of Darcy's father.

Prolepsis is also employed in Part Two of *We All Fall Down*. Mickey Looney

visualizes how to kidnap Jane before he actually performs this act: "Visions of what he

would do to her. He pictured her sitting in a chair, all tied up – her arms and legs – but

her chest free" (p. 165). And the narrative also foretells how Mickey Looney will handle

Jane: "After making her afraid, he would do to her what he had done to Vaughn

Masterson and his grandfather" (p. 165). Mickey's plan, which is actually carried out

posterior to the point in time when it is narrated, is also an instance of internal prolepsis.

In the Middle of the Night begins with Dave's first-person account of his sister

Lulu's thirst for revenge:

> Me and my sister. My sister and me. Sustaining each other through the years,
> although we often argued about what she insists on doing. The telephone calls, for
> instance. I have allowed them, without approving of them. But now she wants to
> call the boy, instead of the father. (p. 1)

The event in which Lulu, Dave's sister, makes a telephone call to Denny, John Paul's son,

occurs some time posterior to the point when Dave narrates it and anterior to the end of

the novel, and thus it is an internal prolepsis. As in the case of *The Chocolate War*, this

prolepsis, carefully arranged at the inception of the novel, generates suspense-filled

tension when the reader turns back the cover. Therefore, Cormier renders the novel a tense thriller.

Heroes begins with Francis's returning home with a mission to carry out: to kill Larry LaSalle. Francis says, "I have just prayed for the man I am going to kill" (p. 8). Thus, the novel employs internal prolepsis. This anticipation raises suspense questions such as why Francis is thirsting for revenge, how he will reach his goal, and what will become of him in the end. These questions build to a fearful climax.

The Rag and Bone Shop begins with a diegetic report that Alicia's body has been found in dense woods. This account is an internal proplepsis which raises the question: Who murdered Alicia? This question becomes the main concern of the story. This internal proplepsis creates a suspense-filled opening to the text.

To conclude, internal prolepses are employed in Cormier's YA fiction to create suspense. Cormier utilizes internal prolepses to create suspense by offering partial glimpses into the potential future of the story line. Prolepses challenge the reader to wonder "How is it going to happen?" instead of "What will happen next?" (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002, p. 48). Such a question can provoke a reader's curiosity and keep him/her turning the pages till the end. Indeed, Cormier is a master of the thriller.

Amorce as foreshadowing.

Amorce, in Genette's terms, is similar to, but not the same as the proplepsis discussed above. *Amorce* is "a preparation of or a hinting at a future occurrence" (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002, p. 48). *Amorce* is a device in general usage in Cormier's YA novels.

Amorce is employed in *The Chocolate War*. Since his mother died, Jerry's father

has acted "like a sleepwalker going through the motions, like a puppet being maneuvered

by invisible strings" (p. 59). To Jerry's father, life is simply fine no matter what happens.

His father's insensitivity makes him unbearable. Thus, Jerry is determined to do

something great to show his genuine passion. *Amorce* is employed here to foreshadow

Jerry's defiance of the authorities in refusing to take part in the chocolate sale. Another

example of *amorce* in *The Chocolate War* is seen in the narrator's comment "Cities fell.

Earth opened. Planets tilted. Stars plummeted. And the awful silence," which follows the

climactic moment when Jerry officially announces that he refuses to sell chocolate in

Brother Leon's class (p. 118). This remark foretells Jerry's terrible end.

The example of *amorce* in *Beyond the Chocolate War* is the disclosure that

Caroni kept an envelope that "contained a steel single-edged razor blade, gleaming

lethally in the slant of afternoon sunlight" (p. 73). Ever since Brother Leon humiliated

him by failing him, Caroni has been deeply dejected. The presence of the razor blade is a

clue which points to Caroni's later suicide.

In *I Am the Cheese,* there is a hint of the Farmers' deaths before the time this

occurs. Grey makes up a news story to erase the existence of the Farmers, who will be

concealed under the witness protection program. The news headline reads: "BLOUNT

REPORTER, WIFE, CHILD KILLED IN CRASH ON HIGHWAY" (p. 135). This news

becomes true later when Grey plans a car crash to murder the Farmers.

In *After the First Death,* Ben's first-person narrative utilizes *amorce* to hint at a

future event. For instance, he says: "I am joking because I won't have stayed around to

become a human barometer or an instrument capable of forecasting weather" (p. 4). This

is the first time that Ben gives expression to his intention to give up on life. Later, it is

more obvious in the statement:

> When the time comes to perform the act [of suicide], I will do it without any
> prelude or prologue, and may simply walk up River Road one afternoon, arrive at
> Brimmler's Bridge, calmly climb the parapet or whatever it's called, and let
> myself plummet to the riverbed below. (p. 5)

Such foreshadowing is planted in the text as a preparation for the subsequent event –

Ben's suicide. The hinting at suicide is intensified as the narration continues:

> Maybe I should make another and final trip to Brimmler's Bridge before he
> [Ben's father] arrives. And take that sweet plummet into nothingness as the wind
> whistles through the tunnel in my chest and the hole in my heart. (p. 15).

At the end of the novel, when Ben actually kills himself, the reader has been provided

with sufficient clues to make the suicide plausible: It is an act that Ben has been

preparing for.

In *Tunes for Bears to Dance To*, Doris warns Henry to be "careful of [her] father"

because "there are a lot of ways he can hurt" (p. 49). This suggests the coming sinister

force with which Henry will be confronted. Mr. Hairston gives Henry an order to commit

the appalling act of destroying Mr. Levine's art work. The warning is apt in that this

particular method for hurting someone is indirect; the physical violence is not aimed at

Henry. The clue given in this warning is two-fold: the attempt to hurt will occur and may

come in an unexpected way.

In *Tenderness*, Police Lieutenant Proctor's prediction "Chances are you'll kill

again" is a preparation for the bait that will be offered to Eric to tempt him to try to

commit another murder (p. 37). Proctor arranges for a beautiful girl, Maria, to seduce

Eric and sets him up to commit this crime again. Proctor's words foreshadow his own

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scheme that, in turn, prompts Eric's criminal actions. Proctor's prediction proves accurate as Eric takes the bait.

Amorce also occurs in Heroes. Francis's intention to take revenge is hinted by the weapon. As he says: "I thought of the gun hidden away in my duffel bag, and knew that my mission was about to begin" (p. 7). The presence of the gun is indicative of the future murder and suicide Francis plans to commit. Francis's plan is to shoot Larry for taking revenge on Nicole and then kill himself.

In short, in Cormier's YA books, amorce is a technique frequently used to foreshadow a character's coming actions. Amorce is an effective way of giving the reader hints about what will follow. Moreover, amorce serves well to diminish the sense of abruptness, created by some unexpected outcome later in the novel. Consequently, it renders the plot development plausible and acceptable.

Pace

Narrative pace is determined by how much textual space is devoted to narration of the corresponding story. An accelerated pace of narration is produced if the text devotes a short segment to cover a long story. On the contrary, the narrative speed appears to be decelerating when a large amount textual space is used to tell a short story event, or when the text deviates from and even stops narrating. The effect of acceleration can be achieved through textual ellipsis and diegetic summary; the effect of deceleration can be accomplished by narrative pause. Table 4.3 on the next page shows that Cormier's text tends to be quick in narration through use of ellipsis and summary.

	Pace				Frequency	
	Ellipsis	Summary	Scene	Pause	Singulative	Repetitive
The Chocolate War		X	X		X	X
I Am the Cheese		X	X		X	X
After the First Death	X	X	X		X	X
The Bumble-bee Flies Anyway	X	X	X		X	
Beyond the Chocolate War		X	X		X	
Fade	X	X	X	X	X	X
Other Bells for Us to Ring		X	X		X	
We All Fall Down	X	X	X		X	
Tunes for Bears to Dance To			X		X	
In the Middle of the Night		X	X		X	X
Tenderness		X	X		X	X
Heroes		X	X		X	X
The Rag and Bone Shop	X	X	X	X	X	X

Table 4.3 Textual time: Pace and frequency

Acceleration through ellipsis and summary.

As a whole, Cormier's YA novels are quick-paced in narration as the following

analysis indicates. The accelerated pace of narration imparts a sense of urgency and

indicates nervousness, haste, or energy. It gives the readers a feeling of excitement and

highlights action over thought. The techniques Cormier frequently employs to achieve the

effect of acceleration are ellipsis and summary.

In *The Chocolate War*, each scene is like a cinematic snapshot, covering only

several pages, without lengthy description. Its dominant forms of narrative discourse are

summary and dialogue. Cormier's use of dialogue thus has two functions. One is "to

establish character and situation in a brief, broad stroke," and the other is "to move the

action quickly" (Campbell, 1989, pp. 42-43). In this way, the novel as a whole achieves

an accelerated narration.

In *Beyond the Chocolate War*, the narrative pace is accelerated through textual

compression. Take Jerry for example. The one-year period of his stay in Canada for

rehabilitation after being beaten up at the end of a boxing match is summed up simply in

a few statements:

> Jerry spoke a bit of French, enough to get by, but he too enjoyed the absence of
> conversation, learned to accept the sounds of television. He immersed himself in
> the daily routine of chores, going to the village and the church, reading late at
> night, blocking from his mind all thoughts of Monument and Trinity, as if by
> some magic he was able to turn his mind into a blank screen at will. (p. 108).

In similar fashion, Brother Eugene's suffering after the Room Nineteen destruction and

his death are condensed into a diegetic report: "He had immediately gone on sick leave.

Had never returned to Trinity after that shambles of a day. He had died last week in New

Hampshire" (p. 103). This brief narration moves the narrative along at a fast pace, but at

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the same time creates suspense forever unanswered in the novel: Does Brother Eugene's

death result from the incident of the Room Nineteen destruction or a lengthy illness?

Does Goober need to take responsibility for Brother Eugene's demise?

In *I Am the Cheese*, the tape scripts, which consist exclusively of dialogue, have

identical story duration and text duration. Relative to the tape scripts established as the

norm, the third-person account of Adam recalling his past life devotes short segments to

address a long period of story events. Adam's past life from birth to the present (at least

fourteen years) is covered in this third-person narrative. As a whole, the novel modulates

between scene (tape scripts) and diegetic summary (third-person narrative), and the

narrative pace is gradually accelerated through textual compression. Acceleration of the

narration shows Adam's increasing anxiety over the blanks that he longs to fill.

The narrative pace of *After the First Death* is accelerated through textual ellipsis.

The following is one example of omission, where no textual space is used to indicate

some story duration:

<div align="center">* * *</div>

> Those asterisks denote the passage of time. From 8:15 A.M when I began typing
> this to the present moment: 10:46 A.M. Don't ask what I was doing those two and
> a half (more or less) hours. (p. 10)

In addition to ellipsis, the text accelerates the narrative pace by condensing story events

into brief statements. For example, there is no detailed description of how, when, and

where Ben passes away, and the report on his death is compressed into a short statement:

"*Once in the ground, in the military cemetery at Fort Delta. And again inside of you*

[Ben's father]. *Buried me* [Ben] *deep inside of you*" (p. 227). It is expected that the

protagonist's death should be described in detail, and this brief summary of Ben's death

indeed creates the effect of shock to the reader. By accelerating past Ben's death, an event that has been discussed throughout the book, Cormier shifts the focus from Ben's individual misfortune to a broader idea of life's significances.

The narrative pace of *The Bumblebee Flies Anyway* is accelerated primarily through ellipsis and summary. Ronson is simplified as a tough fighter. Nothing is known about Billy the Kidney, except that he was once a car thief for the sake of a joy ride. Even the protagonist, Barney, is known through the Handyman's (Dr. Edward Lakendorp) patient history review, which reports that Barney grew up in foster homes after his parents died in a car accident when he was seven years and eight months old. Similarly, Cassie briefly describes her twin brother, Alberto, as the athletic type and says that he is angry with their mother for divorcing their father. The stories behind the characters are either deleted or condensed. The text focuses only on the current events with which the characters are engaged. Thus, the span of text time simply covers the present actions.

In *Fade*, Paul's story stretches a long time, from 1938 (Paul's initial experience of the fade at the age of thirteen) to 1967 (when Paul finds his lost nephew, Ozzie, before Paul's death at the age of forty-two). In spite of the lengthy period of the story, the narrative pace is accelerated primarily through narrative pause, ellipsis, and summary. Asterisks are often used in the text to indicate a pause in the current narrative and to signify another new narrative. In addition, narrative ellipsis is also used to speed up the story progression. The transition from Paul's adolescence to his adulthood (from 1938 to 1963) is completely left out of the text. The reader only learns what happens to Paul after that period through his narration "I am writing now of Frenchtown in the late spring of

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1963 when I lived in a three-room tenement on Mechanic Street" (p. 191). This lapse of

story time indeed produces an effect of acceleration in the narration.

In the same novel, another way of accelerating the narrative is diegetic summary.

For example, Paul summarizes his life since his first fade: "Twenty-five years later, I lay

in my bed in the third-floor tenement across from St. Jude's Church . . . The fade had

invited itself, however, depleting me, coming again and again, and I was helpless to

prevent its assault" (p. 223). No lengthy textual space is devoted to describing how the

fade has tortured Paul during the intervening years, but this diegetic summary efficiently

conveys Paul's suffering at the mercy of the fade to invite the reader's sympathy for him.

In *Other Bells for Us to Ring,* the text time is shorter than the story time. The

novel achieves the effect of quick-paced narration through condensation of story events.

For example, Kathleen Mary's family suddenly moves out of Monument, and nobody

knows where they have gone. Only at the end of the story does Kathleen Mary's elder

brother, John Francis, appear to visit Darcy and report what became of Kathleen Mary.

Kathleen Mary died after being struck by a car when she ran out of her house to escape a

beating by their father, who thus ended up in jail. Similarly, the battle in which Darcy's

father was reported to be missing is also briefly summarized through a letter from

Darcy's father. No details about the war are included. Through such summaries, the novel

achieves an accelerated effect.

In *We All Fall Down*, Cormier achieves the effect of acceleration by means of

ellipsis. The Avenger, who witnesses the house trashing at the beginning of the story, is

actually forty-year-old Mickey Looney (Michael Stallings). Then the narrative leaps back

to a previous act of vengeance by the Avenger at the age of eleven. No account of The

Avenger's life from eleven to forty is given in the novel. Such ellipsis creates an accelerating pace during the course of narration.

The text time of *In the Middle of the Night* is shorter than its story time. The novel's story time extends over twenty-five years, across two generations from father to son. The story begins with John Paul Colbert, who, at the age of sixteen, worked as an usher at the Globe Theater and accidentally started a deadly fire there. The story proceeds to account how the Colberts have suffered harassing telephone calls for years, along with hate mail and frightening bombs. When John Paul's son, Denny, becomes a 16-year-old teenager, he attempts to defend his father by standing up against the infuriating calls at night. The focus of the text is on the period from early September to Halloween, when Denny is trying to fight against the middle-of-the-night calls. What happened in the past 25 years is condensed into the reports of the harassment the Colbers have suffered, along with a summary of the miserable life Lulu, the antagonist of the novel, led after being blinded in the Globe tragedy. Through condensation, the narrative proceeds at a quick pace.

In *Tenderness*, the effect of acceleration is achieved by means of condensation. Eric's life in the prison is sketched slightly without detailed description:

> Eric Poole did not dream. His sleeping hours were a blank. He closed his eyes at night and plunged instantly into the nothingness of sleep, and woke up just as suddenly, eyes flying open to greet another day, a day without either hope or hopelessness. (p. 64).

The time he spent in the prison is summarized in one sentence: "His three years at the facility had been a procession of such days" (p. 64). The condensation of narration helps

the reader to realize the repetitiveness of Eric's days. Each day is the same, so only one description is necessary.

The story time of *Heroes* extends almost five years (from the time Francis is 13 years of age until he is 18), but the text time focuses only on the two months (from March to April) when Francis returns home and awaits his chance to kill Larry. Most of the past story events are condensed through summary. In this way, the novel achieves an accelerated pace during the course of narration.

In *The Rag and Bone Shop*, the narrative pace is accelerated through condensation. The fact that Alicia was killed by her elder brother, Brad, is summed up in a brief statement by Sarah Downes, a police detective assistant, to the interrogator, Trent:

> They have the killer in custody. I was coming to tell you that. The girl's brother. His alibi with his friends broke down. One of them implicated him, then the other. He confessed. (p. 148).

No detailed description of how and why Brad killed his sister, Alicia, is provided. The narrative supplies this unexpected outcome abruptly to shock Trent while he is addicted to his triumph over securing the confession of the supposed murderer, Jason.

In addition to the textual condensation in *The Rag and Bone Shop*, ellipsis is also used to produce the effect of acceleration. In Trent's interrogation of Califer, the text only gives a slight description of how Trent secured Califer's confession: "Trent had not only waited for the proper moment to spring the question but had attacked Califer from the inside, not the outside, touching the one vital spot where Califer was vulnerable" (p. 47). The tedious process of delicate interrogation is omitted and the text offers the final result: "Ten minutes later, Califer confessed" (p. 47). Likewise, in Jason's case, no detailed description of how Trent secured his confession is offered. The account of Trent's 3-hour

interrogation moves swiftly to a conclusion: "Five minutes later, the boy uttered the words Trent needed to hear" (p. 142). Through such ellipsis of the actual interrogative process, an accelerated pace of narration is accomplished.

Similar indicators of ellipsis in story duration can be found in statements like "It's been three days and now her [Sarah's] machine doesn't pick up. It's apparently been turned off" (p. 148) and "The nightmares stopped after a week or so and he [Jason] wasn't sure whether they really had been nightmares or just bad dreams" (p. 150). The actual duration of the story when Trent is anxiously desiring to contact Sarah after his failure in Jason's case and when Jason is suffering from nightmares after being wrongly charged with the murder is omitted to accelerate the narrative.

Deceleration before reaching resolution.

Generally speaking, Cormier's YA novels are narrated at a quick pace. However, his fiction does not always accelerate hastily all the way from the outset of the novel to the end. Sometimes Cormier will decelerate the act of narration at a specific point in time when the plot development falls from the climax and prepares to reach the resolution. Examples can be found in *After the First Death*, *Fade*, and *The Rag and Bone Shop*.

In *After the First Death*, the first-person accounts of Ben and his father, General Marchand, maintain an accelerated pace until the climax of the story, in which Ben eventually drowns himself and General Marchand misses his last chance to meet his son. In the last scene of the novel, the act of narration decelerates with the presentation of a dialogue between Ben and General Marchand. In this dialogue, Ben appears as a phantom to seek appeasement with his father. This scene is not condensed, but presented completely through dialogue. Therefore, a normal pace is maintained, that is, the story

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duration is equal to the text duration. As a whole, the text modulates between the two extremes of acceleration and deceleration.

In the Paul section of *Fade*, the narrative tempo remains quick until the climax is reached. Cormier deliberately decelerates the pace of narration to naught in describing the climactic moment when Paul seeks revenge on Rudolphe Toubert for his treachery:

> Turning away from him, I searched the counter and among lengths of rope and old newspapers found the weapon I needed, the long knife used to cut the rope that held the bundles of newspaper together. I picked it up. (p. 151)

Immediately after this theatrical moment, the narrative abruptly pauses and switches to another scene. The chilling emotion mounts steadily and then unexpectedly drops. It is not until two pages later that Paul tells the reader in retrospect: "I thought of Rudolphe Toubert and the knife and the peculiar sound that passed his lips as the knife penetrated his flesh and found its mark" (p. 153). After this revelation, the thrilling suspense is released. Such a device of suspending the climax is a narrative delay; it enlarges the effect of shock on the reader. This technique can also be found in other Cormier's YA novels.

An effect of deceleration is also created in *The Rag and Bone Shop* through descriptive pause. After the account of Jason's confession to the crime of murdering Alicia at the end of Part III, the text unpredictably departs from the interrogation scene, leaps to a new scene where Trent is rolling a magazine to swat a bug in his office, and then returns to the interrogation scene where Sarah tells Trent that the real killer is Alicia's elder brother, Brad. Before reaching this climax, the text delays the plot reversal through insertion of the unrelated scene and thus produces an effect of deceleration.

As these examples illustrate, Cormier tends to unexpectedly delay or decelerate the narration after building up to a fearful climax. In this way, the suspense-filled emotions created by the text mount steadily and then dangle unresolved to intensify the affective effect to a maximum degree. Cormier's manipulation of the narrative tempo is indeed wire-tight. In sum, quick-paced narration is a feature of Cormier's writing, and this narrative technique is compatible with young people's desire for straightforward action (Iskander, 1989). In this respect, Cormier's YA novels fulfill one essential characteristic of adolescent fiction identified by Mertz and England (1983): "directness of exposition" (p. 120).

Frequency: Prevalent Repetitive Mode

Frequency refers to the number of times a story event is narrated in the text. The rate of recurrence of one story event in the text can be specified as singulative, repetitive and iterative. Singulative means "telling once what 'happened' once," repetitive is "telling n times what 'happened' once," and iterative indicates "telling once what 'happened' n times" (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002, p. 57). Repetitive narration is fairly prevalent in Cormier's YA novels, as Table 4.3 shows.

In *The Chocolate War*, Cormier practices the "less common phenomenon of narrating *n* times what happened *n* times" (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002, p. 57). Take Brother Leon's roll calling for example. In Chapters 14, 17, and 19, Brother Leon begins his class by calling roll to check on the individual students' chocolate sales. Correspondingly, Jerry responds negatively to the roll call over and over again. This repetitive narration of the same event sounds mechanical, but has the effect of causing the tension of confrontation between Jerry and Brother Leon to accumulate. This repetitive narration

also serves to reconfirm Jerry's stance against selling the chocolate.

In *I Am the Cheese*, one of the main events – Adam's bike journey to see his father – is narrated repetitively. The last chapter of the novel repeats this event with which the first chapter begins. But the same event, when narrated again in this new location, takes on a completely different sense. Adam's bike journey, when narrated at the beginning of the story, seems promising. But when this trip is narrated again, the reader knows that the effort is futile since this bike journey is simply in Adam's mind while he is actually riding a bike in a circle around the hospital grounds. As to his father, Adam will never see him again because he is already dead. Adam's bike trip is a never-to-be-realized dream.

The major event in *After the First Death*, the school bus hijacking, is addressed repetitively by Artkin (the terrorist leader), Miro (Artkin's assistant), Kate (Miro's victim), General Marchand (Artkin's opponent), and Ben (Marchand's son). Each participant has his or her own perception and understanding of this event. To Arktin, the seizure of the bus is to advance his great cause of freedom fighting. To Miro, this hijacking is his first assignment and he will prove his manhood by killing the bus driver. To Kate, this event is a pure accident: Her involvement is forced and she displays herself as instinctively brave and fearful. To General Marchand, the act of terrorism is an opportunity for him to display his military merit. To Ben, this event is a chance for him to build an intimate relation with his father by taking the part of a messenger in the counter terrorist operation. Thus, the same event has different significances when seen in the context of different narrators. The repetitive narration of this central event is not redundant but complementary.

The repetitive narration of the bus hijacking from the various perspectives of characters indeed delays the reader's comprehension since he/she needs to piece the narrative strands together from page to page to reach a full understanding of the whole event. This craft of repetitive narration may produce suspense and create an effect of shock when the reader finally gets the true picture of the entire event: how terribly the General has victimized his son, Ben, taking advantage of his innocence to fulfill his own fanatic sense of military duty.

Repetitive narration is exactly what happens in *Fade*. In the Paul chapter, the first-person narrator, Paul, twice repeats his use of the fade to kill the villain, Rudolphe Toubert. The first time Paul tells this event as an experiencing *I*, reporting how he killed Rudolphe in 1938. Paul's second account of this event is made from the stance of narrating *I* in 1967:

> Let me now put into words what I have not been able to do during the long, aching passage of the years. I killed Rudolphe Toubert. Held the knife that entered his body. And stabbed him again and again. The scene is as vivid in my mind at this moment as it was a lifetime ago. (p. 211)

This repetition is objective in tone and sounds like admitting to a crime. It certainly reinforces the credibility of Paul's story.

However, in the Susan chapter, Jules recounts all the occurrences in Paul's story from a different perspective. By doing so, Jules questions the likelihood of Paul's murder of Rudolphe and undermines the fictional reality of Paul's story. In this novel, Cormier initially takes pains to establish the fictional reality of Paul's story. Then, through the use of repetitive narration, Cormier subtly foregrounds the boundary between fiction and reality and intentionally collapses this arbitrary borderline in "unmasking the constructed

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nature of reality" in novels (McHale, 1991, p. 164).

In the novel *In The Middle of Night*, the fire tragedy at the Globe Theater is told

three times individually from Lulu's, John Paul's, and Denny's perspectives. In addition,

this event is also summarized in Les's feature coverage on the twenty-fifth anniversary of

the fire. Thus, this primary event of the novel is narrated repetitively. The repetitive

narration of the fire highlights the importance of the fire as an event, and also as a

lingering memory. It serves the purpose of restating the impact the fire has had on so

many lives.

Repetitive narration also occurs in *Heroes*. Francis repeats the narration of his

mission to kill Larry on several occasions: "I thought of the gun hidden away in my

duffel bag, and knew that my mission was about to begin" (p. 7), "I . . . returned late with

the gun in my pocket, ready to do my job," (p. 105) and "I touch the gun in my pocket to

remind me of my mission" (p. 112). Francis's repetitive narration reflects his inner

restlessness over such revenge; he needs to address himself in such a way over and over

again to ensure his determination.

In *The Rag and Bone Shop*, a significant example of repetitive narration can be

found. When the police detective George Braxton first questions Jason, Jason briefly

describes the afternoon he spent doing jigsaw puzzles with Alicia at her house, without

mentioning what was going on between Alicia and her brother, Brad. The second time

Trent interrogates him, Jason reveals more detail about the argument between Brad and

Alicia. As Jason says: "They seemed to be fighting. I mean, not really fighting but mad at

each other" (p. 114). Jason's repetitive account of what happened to Alicia before her

death intensifies the suspense surrounding Alicia's death. The reader cannot help but

wonder whether Jason still holds secret information about Alicia. In this way, the repetitive narration of the same story event causes no boredom at all, but reinforces the thrilling suspense of the plot.

The repetitive narration such as that described above occurs in more than half of Cormier's YA fiction. His other YA novels, such as *Beyond the Chocolate War*, *The Bumblebee Flies Anyway, Other Bells for Us to Ring*, *We All Fall Down*, and *Tunes for Bears to Dance To*, are all told in the regular method of singulative narration. In Cormier's YA novels, repetitive narration is more prevalent than singulative narration. It seems that Cormier prefers to utilize repetitive narration, possibly because he writes about life-changing events – moments of great significance.

Cormier rarely uses iterative narration. *In the Middle of the Night* has a passage of iterative narration. The recurrent harassing telephone calls to Denny's father over the years is narrated in one segment: "The telephone rang almost every afternoon now but Denny ignored it, using all his old defenses: flushing the toilet in the bathroom, turning up the volume on the radio, or, finally, leaving the apartment" (p. 121). This iterative narration can be viewed as an economy of narration which efficiently conveys Denny's anger and helplessness when he is subjected to the lasting harassments of the telephone calls.

To conclude, the temporal features in Cormier's YA fiction include external analepsis used to provide background information for the story, internal prolepsis employed to create suspense, and *amorce* implanted in the course of narration to foreshadow events to come later. As to story tempo, Cormier produces an effect of acceleration by means of narrative ellipsis and summary. In his texts, a decelerating

effect is also created before the plot reaches the climax; this narrational delay generates suspense much as internal prolepsis does. Regarding frequency, repetitive narration is quite prevalent in Cormier's novels.

<div align="center">Characterization</div>

Rimmon-Kenan (2002) identifies three basic methods of characterization in a text: direct definition, indirect presentation, and reinforcement by analogy. Based on this principle, the following section discusses the way Cormier characterizes the story figures in his YA novels. The methods of characterization used in each of Cormier's YA novels are displayed in Table 4.4. This chart indicates that Cormier tends to describe minor characters through direct definition. He also characterizes his story figures by means of methods of indirect presentation such as action, speech, and external appearance.

Minor Characters Defined Through Direct Definition

Direct definition refers to the straightforward naming of a character's traits in the text. In his YA books, Cormier tends to describe minor characters through direct definition. Brother Leon of *The Chocolate War* is defined as "a special breed" (p. 24) and "a superb actor" (p. 41). Leon has a double personality. On the surface, he is the Assistant Headmaster of the Trinity school, appearing normal as "one of those pale, ingratiating kind of men who tiptoed through life on small, quick feet" (p. 24). However, under his deceptive appearance, he "was another person," sinisterly "probing for weakness in the students and then exploiting those weaknesses" (pp. 24-25). Leon is "always trying to shock" students (p. 40). Descriptions of his character which suggest that he is prone to evil are that he is "unpredictable, moody" and "never satisfied" (p. 150). Leon plays a minor role in this novel; his traits are listed at different points. Emile Janza, another

	Direct definition		Indirect presentation		
	By narrator	Through characters	Action	Speech	External appearance
The Chocolate War 1974	X	X	X		
I Am the Cheese 1977	X	X	X		X
After the First Death 1979		X	X	X	X
The Bumble-bee Flies Anyway 1983	X	X	X	X	X
Beyond the Chocolate War 1985	X	X	X		
Fade 1988	X		X	X	
Other Bells for Us to Ring 1990		X			
We All Fall Down 1991	X	X	X		X
Tunes for Bears to Dance To 1992	X	X	X		

Table 4.4 Characterization: Direct definition and indirect presentation

Table 4.4 (Continued)

	Direct definition		Indirect presentation		
	By narrator	Through characters	Action	Speech	External appearance
In the Middle of the Night 1995		X	X	X	X
Tenderness 1997		X	X		X
Heroes 1998	X		X		
The Rag and Bone Shop 2001	X	X	X		

minor character in the novel, is portrayed as a school bully, defined as "a brute," "an animal" who does not "play by the rules" (p. 49). In contrast to Emile, Goober is "a peaceful figure" who dislikes "strain, contention" (p. 100).

Generally, these direct definitions of character traits are given by an authoritative third-person narrator so that the reader gets a static and reductive impression of the characters. In order to remedy this, attributes of character are sometimes described by other characters involved in the story. For example, through Archie's eyes, Jerry is described as "tough and stubborn" (p. 14).

David, Adam's father in *I Am the Cheese*, is characterized primarily through direct definition, as in Adam's recalling how his father describes himself: "I'm not the

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hero type – I get scared too easily" (p. 130). In other words, David identifies himself as Everyman, not particularly brave at all. As to his act of testifying against organized crime, he simply characterizes it as doing a citizen's duty, saying that "he was an old-fashioned citizen who believed in doing the right thing for his country, to provide as much information as possible" (p. 124).

In *After the First Death*, Ben's father, General Marchand, is primarily characterized through direct definition. Ben makes such comments on his father as "My father, the patriot," (p. 13) "My father, the phantom," (p. 56) and "My father, the actor" (p. 83). The positive image of Ben's father as a patriot is completely shattered after the bus hijacking. In his mind, his father is dehumanized as a ghost and plays only the role of the military fanatic. This direct definition produces an unforgettable impression of General Marchand as patriotic and hypocritical.

Minor characters are defined directly by a third-person narrator in *The Bumblebee Flies Anyway*. Ranson is described as "tough, tougher than any of them, a fighter who'd won the Golden Gloves in Lowell two years ago" (p. 5). In addition, characters also define each other. For example, at the beginning of the story, Alberto appears as Mazzo, the bastard through Barney's perspective since Alberto is known to be mean and unfriendly to other patients in the hospital. Alberto describes Barney as "a fixer" as well as "a tough guy" (p. 101). Through such mutual definitions, the characters are made to seem alive as virtual human beings capable of perceiving each other in the text. They give the impression of having been released from the manipulation of an authoritative narrator.

A third-person narrator defines Brother Leon in *Beyond the Chocolate War*:

> Since assuming the authority of Headmaster, Brother Leon called all students by their last names, kept a strict formality with them. He had never been the buddy-buddy type anyway; now he treated the students as if they were underlings, mere subjects in the kingdom of his royal highness, Leon the First. (p. 40)

This authoritative voice defines the character traits of Leon aptly by "generalization and conceptualization" (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002, p. 60). The narrator's direct definition is not the only method of characterization in this novel. A character's traits are also revealed through the eyes of other characters in the story. For instance, after listening to Leon's lament on Brother Eugene's death, Archie makes his own comment on Leon, "What a fake he was," to express his disgust for Leon's hypocrisy (p. 45). Another example is Archie's description of Carter: "Football hero. Macho man. Lots of trophies. Tall, dark, and handsome" (p. 144) and "Honor and pride, the twin facets of Carter's personality" (p. 145). Moreover, Morton, Archie's girlfriend, is also characterized through his vision: "What Archie liked about Morton was that she was both smart and dumb. But, before that, beautiful. Long and slender and blond. Compliant. Bending like the willow, as the song went" (p. 143). Although she is intelligent, independent, and self-possessed, Morton has the weakness of indulging in Archie's intimate touch.

Archie's comments on these characters also reflect his own qualities of acute observation of people's personalities and shrewdness in taking advantage of them. For example, Archie plays with Carter's pride by destroying his trophies in the school display, and thus Carter involuntarily comes out to confront him. Besides, by using Morton's weakness, Archie can easily fool and subdue her. Archie's personality traits are also reflected in his definition of other characters.

In *We All Fall Down*, minor characters are characterized through direct definition given either by an authoritative narrator or by the other characters in the story. For example, the narrator defines Buddy's mother as "fastidious, elegant, cool, precise" (p. 49). This image makes her understood as the miserable victim of an unfaithful husband. After her husband had an affair with his secretary, her marriage ended in divorce. Through a similar method, Jane's father is defined as "Mister Good Guy," a person who "smiled a lot, played golf Saturday afternoons, went to church with his family on Sundays, served on the United Way committee every year" (p. 7). Such characterization provokes the reader to perceive the pathetic situation of this good man, whose house is trashed for no good reason. Beyond the narrator's direct definition, a character may be delineated by other characters in the story. Jane defines her younger sister Karen as a snob:

> Secretly, Jane regarded Karen as a snob, immersed in her social life at school, ignoring her parents as well as Artie and Jane herself, acknowledging Jane's existence only when she invaded her room to borrow, without asking, her clothes, her cologne, her jewelry. (pp. 33-34)

Mr. Hairston defines himself as "a dictator" in *Tunes for Bears to Dance To*. He describes the way he deals with his customers. He tells Henry: "I was like a dictator, the way they treated me. I was a dictator. Because I had control over them" (p. 15). The third-person narrator depicts Henry as timid and fearful: "He was afraid of a lot of things – the closet door that never stayed closed in his bedroom, spooky movies about vampires – but most of all, the rats" (p. 13).

In the novel *In the Middle of the Night*, Denny's mother defines his father, John

Paul, as "such a good man" (119) and "a nice guy" (p. 120). Similarly, Denny is defined

directly through the eyes of his parents:

> The obvious: dutiful son, good student – not brilliant, not a genius (definitely not
> a genius), but a regular kid. Did not give them cause for alarm. Polite. Oh,
> sarcastic sometimes when things piled up and no one spoke or said anything.
> Uncoordinated, awkward at sports, quiet. (p. 19)

Lieutenant Proctor, in the novel *Tenderness*, describes Eric as "a psychopath" and

"a monster" (p. 37). In his eyes, Eric is "incapable of feeling" and "incapable of

connecting with other people," and he thus turns out to be an animal "without emotion,

without feeling" (p. 41). Such direct descriptions of Eric's traits come early in the novel

before readers figure out what is really behind his action; this manner of direct definition

impresses the reader like theatrical trailer.

Alicia is described as "a little old lady" by the third-person narrator in *The Rag*

and Bone Shop:

> When most kids spent hours on the Internet, she did jigsaw puzzles. She wore
> dresses most of the time and was seldom seen in pants or shorts even on hot days.
> She scolded Brad as if she were his big sister, not his kid sister. (p. 37).

Such a description is a textual indicator of direct definition to identify Alicia's traits.

Trent is defined by his wife, Lottie: "You are an interrogator. That's what you do. And

you are what you do" (p. 68). Lottie's depiction is quite accurate since Trent has lost his

humanity in his career. He uses unfair means to force Jason to make a false admission,

without any ethical considerations.

To sum up, in Cormier's YA novels, minor characters are usually defined by a

third-person narrator with authoritative voice. Sometimes the characters are also

described by other characters in the story. Thus, besides direct definition, Cormier also chooses indirect presentation to describe characters.

Indirect Presentation

A character trait can be indirectly presented through action, speech, environment, and external appearance (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002). In his YA novels, Cormier tends to characterize the protagonist by action, associate a character's traits with his/her external appearance, and indicate the character's identity through speech.

Protagonists characterized through action.

In narrative fiction, character actions can be categorized as "act of commission (i.e. something performed by the character), act of omission (something which the character should, but does not do), and contemplated act (an unrealized plan or intention of the character)" (Rimmon;Kenan, 2002, p. 62). According to the categories, the following section is devoted to a discussion of how the protagonists of Cormier's YA novels are characterized by way of action.

In *The Chocolate War*, the protagonist, Jerry, is characterized by his actions. For example, Jerry curiously peeks through a pornographic magazine at a book store and spends all of his allowance to buy one. But after he goes home with this magazine, he begins to feel guilty over his act, wondering if any girl could love him because of his obscenity, and worries that his mother might find the magazine. Finally, he gets rid of it. This action emphasizes the fact that Jerry is different from other teenage boys. He is innocent and sensitive by nature. Another action which reveals Jerry's character traits is his refusal to sell the chocolate. This act of commission suggests Jerry's character qualities of bravery, determination, and righteousness. Regardless of peer pressure, The

Vigils' threatening acts, and Brother Leon's intimidation, Jerry stands "alone against the school, the Vigils, everybody" (p. 228).

As in *The Chocolate War*, Adam's personality traits are implied through action in *I Am the Cheese*. For instance, Adam's bike journey to see his father is a contemplated act since it is an imaginary, unrealized trip in his mind. The implication of this act is that Adam yearns for freedom even though he is actually confined in the hospital under Brint's medical control. This characteristic plays an important part in his resistance to Brint's aggressive questioning. In addition, this contemplated act symbolizes Adam's ceaseless quest for self-identify. He inquires: "Who am I? I am Adam Farmer. But who am I? I am Adam Farmer. But Adam Farmer was only a name, words, . . . Who is Adam Farmer? He didn't know" (p. 83). Adam's actions evoke the dynamic aspects of his courage, perseverance, and determination.

In *After the First Death*, the strong will and fortitude of Ben, the protagonist, is suggested through his brave acts. For example, he successfully performs the task of serving as a pawn to deliver messages to the terrorists. This act of commission indicates that Ben is courageous enough to risk his life in "the Messenger Gambit" (p. 137). This act also shows that Ben is conscientious, possessing a strong awareness of right and wrong. He displays a deep feeling of guilt after giving the false information on the government's planned attack on the terrorists (when he gives this information to the terrorists, he does not know that it is a fake message), as the following passage illustrates:

> Miro looked at the boy [Ben]. For the first time, the boy turned his eyes to Miro. Miro had never seen such a look in anyone's eyes. Was there a word for such a look? It was beyond terror or horror or pain. A look of such anguish, such regret. . . . A look that left the boy hollow, empty. A look that said: What have I done? The look of the betrayer. (p. 207)

In addition, Ben's act of commission also suggests that Ben is obedient to and has trust in his father so that he is willing to accept the job without any protest. He is characterized as a teenager who is conscientious, obedient to his father, and brave enough to meet a challenge.

Likewise, Kate's character traits are implied by her brave action. Kate's attempt to restart the hijacked bus to escape the terrorists' control is a contemplated act. Kate's volunteering to be executed in Raymond's place is also a contemplated act. Both acts imply the potential courage of Kate lying beneath the image of female fragility.

Miro's character traits are also presented through action. His habitual action of falling into deep thought does not seem to fit his identity as a cruel and merciless terrorist. It indicates that he is quite sensitive, not dumb to his surroundings, as seen in the following passage:

> This is why Miro did not like waiting. It gave him too much time to think, to ponder, to wonder about things he should leave to Artkin. He wondered now about the girl, squinting his eyes to see her at the front of the bus. . . . Miro pondered what she was thinking. Did she suspect that she would die before this incident was over? Had she seen through Artkin's lies, even though he lied so skillfully? A sudden thought struck Miro. Does Artkin lie to me as well? Have I also been taken in by his skill? (pp. 60-61)

Obviously, Miro is capable of observing and thinking from different angles of vision. He puts himself in Kate's position and even doubts his relationship with his mentor, Artkin. This phenomenon implies that the true adolescent Miro is not a man of brutal action, but one of thought.

Barney of *The Bumblebee Flies Anyway* is characterized through acts of commission: arranging the use of the telephone for Billy, building a life-sized model car

for Alberto, and working for Cassie to probe Alberto's illness. These actions indicate Barney's kindness and desire to help people out.

In *Fade*, the character traits of the young adult protagonist, Paul, are suggested through action. Paul's propensity toward fetish in puberty is implied by his habitual act of peeking at female apparel. For example, one time Paul went into his Aunt Rosonna's bedroom and "shamelessly opened one of her bureau drawers, saw a pair of her silk panties lying on top of other underwear . . . [and] held the pink panties to [his] cheek" (pp. 25-26). Another instance is when he uses the fade to watch Page "[take] off the brassiere and [slip] her panties down" (pp. 128-129). Paul expresses his strong desire to "reach for the silken undergarments and crush them to [his] face" (p. 129). These habitual acts suggest symbolically the gloomy side of Paul's character traits in puberty, but also faithfully represent the teenage boy's characteristic inclination to sexual fantasy. In other words, Paul is not idealized as pure and innocent, but is brought to life in the text as he would be in the real world. Additionally, Paul is also characterized through the positive act. For example, Paul uses the fade to save Joey from the bully Omer Labatt's attack. Again, Paul summons the fade to kill the villain, Rudolphe Toubert, for his vicious deeds. Paul's bravery and righteousness can be glimpsed in these actions.

Similarly, character traits are also implied through action in *Beyond the Chocolate War*. For example, Jerry's fight with Janza in the alley suggests symbolically Jerry's propensity to defy evil power rather than submit to it. Similarly, Carter's tipping off Brother Leon to the Vigils' assignment to humiliate the bishop when he is visiting Trinity High implies the latent traits of "a sense of honor" and "a social conscience," even though Carter was previously an accomplice of Archie (p. 144).

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Buddy, in *We All Fall Down*, is characterized as spiritless and pathetic through his habitual action of drinking. On the other hand, The Avenger's primary personality feature is suggested in his one-time act of vengeance. His killing of the school bully, Vaughn Masterson, and his grandfather are acts of commission, indicating a tendency toward impulsiveness and extremism. The incident when The Avenger succeeds in trapping Jane, but fails to kill her and ends up committing suicide on the spot is contemplated action. The Avenger's innate naivety and innermost frailty are implied in this contemplated action.

Both Mr. Levine's and Mr. Hairston's character traits are implied through their habitual actions in *Tunes for Bears to Dance To*. Mr. Levine constantly tips his hat as a "reflex action" (p. 39), which indicates his deep trauma after he survives a Nazi concentration camp. Mr. Hairston is picky and vicious in nature, always speaking ill of his customers and "commenting sourly as usual on the people passing by" (p. 32).

The protagonist Henry's dominant personality traits are revealed in his action. His morality is reflected in his reluctance to follow Hairston's order to destroy Levine's wooden village. His smashing of Levine's wooden village is not really an act of commission because he did it accidentally. He actually commits an unintended act. His successful refusal to accept Hairston's reward for the destruction of the wooden village is indeed an act of commission, indicating his integrity.

Denny of *In the Middle of the Night* is characterized through his action. Denny's bravery is indicated in his eagerness to take any action to stop the harassing middle-of-the-night telephone calls to defend his father's innocence. This is a contemplated act for he fails to stop the calls. However, he is successful in defending his father's integrity

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through his refusal of reporter Les Alberto's tempting invitation. The reporter tells Denny

that he can "shift things around" in a newspaper feature, turning the image of Denny's

father from "a suspicious figure" to that of "a good guy," "a family man," even "a

martyr" (pp. 150-151). Denny eventually rejects the report so as not to violate his father's

intention to share the Globe victims' pain by silently subsuming their unreasonable blame.

In *Tenderness*, Eric's personality trait of brutality is implied by habitual acts of

commission. He performs a series of murders of girls, along with the murder of his

mother and stepfather. Such habitual acts reveal the static aspect of Eric' cruelty. On the

other hand, in *Heroes*, a crucial one-time act of omission characterizes Francis. The

memory of his failure to stop Larry from raping Nicole and to save the struggling Nicole

remains an obsession to him. This act of omission becomes a central concern that

preoccupies Francis to the end of the novel. In addition, a contemplated act also

characterizes Francis. That is, he is unable to carry out his plan to shoot Larry when he

confronts him. Larry eventually shoots himself. Francis's hesitation over killing Larry

indicates his kind nature. Larry says to him, "You couldn't have killed me anyway, in

cold blood" (p. 117).

Jason's personality is implied in his one-time action of fighting with the school

bully, Bobo, for his mean tricks in *The Rag and Bone Shop*. This is an act of commission

because Jason indeed astonishes Bobo when he hits and renders him defenseless, "like a

little boy" whose "chin wobbling" (p. 25). While the other students merely accept Bobo's

sly stuff, Jason is courageous enough to stand up to him, displaying his strong indignation

at the wrongs. Jason's actions imply his character traits: He is brave, candid, and

righteous.

To conclude, like other YA novels, Cormier largely draws on indirect presentation, rather than on direct definition to characterize the protagonists. The character traits of the protagonists are indirectly presented through action. Thus, readers may feel they know the protagonists because they can discover these characters' traits rather than being told about them.

Especially, most of the protagonists in Cormier's YA novels perform acts of commission which subtly imply their qualities. The only exception is *Other Bells for Us to Ring*, in which the protagonist, Darcy, is not engaged in any action, but passively waits for the story events to happen to her. Instead, Darcy is characterized through direct definition. She describes herself as shy: "I was too shy, did not know what to say when meeting strangers, did not know what to do with my hands, did not know how to stand properly, my body awkward" (p. 6). Another aspect of her character that Darcy herself recognizes is "the cynical side" of her personality (p. 60).

Mismatching of a character's personality and external appearance.

In his YA novels, Cormier carefully describes a character's external appearance to suggest his/her personality features. In *I Am the Cheese*, Adam's father, David, is portrayed through external appearance: "He wore horn-rimmed glasses and had a mustache – not a shaggy mustache like the ones people wore who also had long hair but a neat trimmed mustache with glints of gray" (p. 31). This description suggests that Adam's father is a decent man, nothing fancy. So it is no surprise that he stands up to testify about corruption in the government.

In *The Bumblebee Flies Anyway*, Alberto is handsome, indicating his pride, but

Barney looks plain, suggesting his sense of inferiority and lack of confidence in himself.

Barney describes Alberto:

> Christ, but Mazzo was handsome, and the thing that was killing him had not
> diminished his beauty. In fact, the disease seemed to heighten it, accenting the
> line of his jaw, emphasizing the delicate structure of his cheekbones and forehead,
> enhancing the startling blue of his eyes, even more striking with the fever dancing
> in them. His flesh was splotchy, blotches like healed burns scattered on his face
> and forehead. His blond hair was thin, limp with perspiration, scalp pale and scaly.
> But through it all shone his unaccountable beauty. (p. 23)

On the other hand, Barney looks plain in comparison with Alberto:

> He was not tall, about five six, and slightly bowlegged. Hair cut short to keep it
> out of his eyes. Adolescent acne spotting his cheeks like small wounds healing.
> Good eyes, though. He didn't need glasses. Snappy brown eyes. (p. 34)

Barney's mediocre appearance gives him a sense of inferiority when he compares himself

with Alberto. It also reflects his sense of diffidence about himself.

John Paul's tidy and clean external appearance is meant to suggest his character

trait of self-control in the novel *In the Middle of the Night*:

> His father was a small slender man, compact, neat. Shoes always shined, shirt
> never wrinkled. He could fool around with a car engine or work outside and never
> soil his clothes. Never a dab of dirt or grease on his face. Denny attracted dirt and
> grime, and his shirts and trousers began to wrinkle the moment he put them on,
> before he'd even taken a step. (p. 20)

The examples we have seen above surely fit the assumption of "the metonymic

relation between external appearance and character traits" (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002, p. 65).

In a conventionally realistic text, there is supposed to be a positive correlation between a

character's external appearance and his/her personality traits. However, Cormier

sometimes subverts this assumption by developing a character's personality in contrast to

his/her external appearance. The following are instances of this technique.

In *After the First Death*, the static aspect of Ben's character is revealed through his external appearance: "I am not the macho-muscled type, not at five eleven and one hundred eighteen pounds" (p. 3). Ben is a teenager without physical strength, but by serving as a messenger to deal with the terrorists, he displays the aspects of a strong will and fortitude. Ben's brave performance in the course of the narrative is in contrast to the lack of physical power in his external appearance.

The novel's heroine, Kate, is good-looking and has an attractive figure. She always attracts the attention of her peers. However, her feminine slenderness and tenderness contrasts with her bravery emergent in her handling of the terrorists during the bus hijacking. Kate's external appearance indeed is a mismatch with her courageous action of defying the terrorists. Her performance really surprises the reader.

A similar mismatch between external appearance and character traits is seen in *We All Fall Down*. The teenagers (Buddy, Harry, Marty, and Randy) all look normal: "They were nicely dressed. No leather jackets or black boots. They looked like high school baseball players or baggers at the supermarket or clerks at McDonald's" (p. 3). Especially, Harry Flowers wears "white painter's pants, white socks, white Nikes" and he is "spotlessly clean" (p. 14). Surprisingly, these normal-looking teenagers perform the abnormal act of house trashing.

In *Tenderness*, Eric's facial features and his personality traits are connected: "He had an innocent face. His face was also beautiful. Innocence and beauty, always confirmed when he looked into a mirror" (p. 30). Also, the external description of Eric suggests the character trait of self-control in his lifestyle: "He always dressed neatly. Clean clothes. Nikes all laced up, jacket without a spot. But not too neat. Did not want to

draw attention to himself, did not want to invite inspection" (p. 31). However, these suggestions of positive features of character are actually mismatched with Eric's abnormal behavior of committing a series of murders. Behind his decent appearance, Eric is a psychopathic killer.

As discussed above, Cormier creates characters whose performance is in contrast to their external appearance. This arrangement violates the conventional relation of character traits to external appearance. However, such a mismatch between the characters' traits and their appearance can be viewed as purposeful. The aim is to enhance the story tension and produce a compelling effect of shock for the reader. Maybe Cormier is presenting a message to the young adult reader about judging people by appearance.

Speech indicating character's identity.

Another way to indirectly present character traits is to simulate a character's speech in the context of the story. For instance, Miro of *After the First Death* speaks English with a strong accent: "He pronounced 'allergic' as three separate words" (p. 42). His speech indicates that his racial and cultural background is different from Kate's American one.

In *The Bumblebee Flies Anyway*, the Handyman's English sounds "so formal and proper that it was obvious that English was not his native tongue" (p. 40). In Barney's doubletalk, the Handyman refers to Dr. Edward Lakendorp. His "formal and proper" speech suitably corresponds to his identity as an outside observer who remains detached from and indifferent to the subjects in his experimental medicine.

In *Fade*, Cormier also uses speech to indicate the character's identity as Canadian French settled in Frenchtown. One clear example is Rubberman Robillard's particular accent when he talks to Paul: "'Your father will be okay,' he said, pronouncing the word the way so many Canucks did: *Hokay*" (p. 68). Speech here is used to establish the character's identity as if they were talking in a real setting, and therefore the fictional reality is reinforced.

Similarly, the characters' Canadian French accent is highlighted to show their identity in *Other Bells for Us to Ring*. For example, Monique's mother talks with "the light Canuck accent curling her words as if each sentence were a question and not a statement" (p. 122). Mr. LeBlanc speaks French words, "rolling his r's dramatically" (p. 149).

In the novel *In the Middle of the Night*, Denny's father, John Paul, is characterized through his speech to emphasize his identity as an immigrant from the French-speaking Quebec Province of Canada: "He spoke without a heavy accent but his English was stilted and formal, learned from books and not from conversation" (p. 53). Mr. Burns, his English teacher, advises him to learn contractions in order to "sound like a real U.S. teenager" (p. 54). Speech becomes an indicator of John Paul's character traits. Such is the case when the narrator immediately comments on his speech "Forgetting his contractions," after John Paul tells Nina, "You did not look nervous" (p. 93). Cormier utilizes this form of speech to indicate the character's identity and ethnic origin. This technique is commonly used in his YA novels.

To conclude, indirect presentation is a frequently-used method of characterizing figures in Cormier's YA novels. Specifically, the protagonists are characterized through

action. Speech is used to indicate a character's identity. Cormier also correlates the characters' traits with their external appearance, but, at the same time, undermines the metonymic relation of personality features and external appearance. The mismatch between character traits and external appearance is quite unconventional.

Generally speaking, action, speech, and external appearance are frequently used by Cormier to characterize figures in the text. Environment is rarely used. Only one case is found in *After the First Death*, where the terrorist, Miro, is only a product of the environment in which he has lived. His origin as an orphan living in a refugee camp suggests a lack of family care and his desire for love. These character traits portray Miro as an antagonist actually worthy of sympathy, not totally unforgivable.

Support by Analogy

In addition to direct definition and indirect presentation, Cormier also reinforces characterization through analogy. Two methods of analogy can be identified in Cormier's YA fiction: analogous names and analogy between characters, as indicated in Table 4.5. Character names are used to suggest character traits. Analogy between characters refers to the situation where if "two characters are presented in similar circumstances, the similarity or contrast between their behavior emphasizes traits characteristic of both" (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002, p. 70).

Analogous names.

Character's names can signify character traits by semantic connection, as Ewen (1980) suggests. For example, in *The Chocolate War*, the name Archie can be regarded as an analogous name that produces a semantic connection with arch, signifying the head of a group of people. Peck (1989) points out that Archie derives "from arch, meaning

	Analogy	
	Analogous name	Analogy between characters
The Chocolate War 1974	X	
I Am the Cheese 1977	X	
After the First Death 1979		X
The Bumble-bee Flies Anyway 1983		
Beyond the Chocolate War 1985	X	
Fade 1988		
Other Bells for Us to Ring 1990		
We All Fall Down 1991		
Tunes for Bears to Dance To 1992		
In the Middle of the Night 1995	X	X
Tenderness 1997		X
Heroes 1998		
The Rag and Bone Shop 2001		

Table 4.5 Characterization: Support by analogy

cunning" (p. 37). As the following description illustrates, Archie is portrayed as a king: "Archie turned and smiled . . . like a goddam king passing out favors" (p. 7). Archie is so powerful that the Vigils attempt to please him. Obie says, "Keep him happy, when Archie's happy, we're all happy" (p. 11). In addition, both Harley and Cornacchio act as stooges to the school bully, Bunting, and their names indicate their character traits. As Campbell (1989) asserts, the first name, Harley, is easily associated with "the hulking menace of a huge motorcycle" and the second name, Cornacchio, means "a crow, a rook, a bird of ill-omen" in Italian (p. 74). Both names fully explain the character connotation.

In *I Am the Cheese*, Mr. Grey, is easily associated with the color gray. Adam says, "He also seemed like a gray man to me" (p. 109). Gray is an ambiguous color between black and white, as suggested in Adam's comment that "gray is a nothing color" (p. 109). So it is hard to locate and identify Mr. Grey because he is "like nothing" (p. 106) and "like a phantom" (p. 127). Indeed, Mr. Grey is a puzzling figure with multiple identities: Grey, Thompson, and Personnel #2222. He pretends to help Adam's father, David, through the witness protection program, and thus he gains David's trust and visits him regularly, with the excuse of ensuring the safety of his family. However, the real intention of his visits is to find out whether David is still withholding any secret information from him. Finally, Grey helps to murder the Farmers. Grey is a blend of good and evil, just as the color gray is a mixture of white and black. As Mertz (1992) argues, the name "Grey" embodies the ambiguities of good and evil" and he represents the "grey" areas of life (p. 32). It seems impossible to define him. The name Grey exemplifies "a semantic parallelism between name and trait" (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002, p. 68).

The main quality of the character can also be suggested by the articulation of a name (Hamon, 1977). Take Adam's real name, Paul, for example. It can be pronounced like "pall," a cloth draped over a coffin, and thus produces a homophonic connection with doom and gloom. Adam himself acknowledges that he has fear of confined spaces and fear of open spaces as well. To him, an elevator is "like an upright coffin" (p. 2). Just as his real name implies, Adam is fearful in character and doomed in fate. Additionally, as Mertz (1992) points out, the name Adam also represents innocence, based on the biblical allusion. This name ironically reflects Adam's miserable situation in the novel: He is an innocent victim of the sinister institution of government.

As Campbell (1995) points out, the name of the antagonist, Lulu, of *In the Middle of the Night* brings to mind "the nineteenth-century avant-garde: artists' models, modistes, the demimonde, the feverish excesses of Alban Berg's opera Lulu" (p. 366). This name reinforces the perception of Lulu as "an avenging fury skulking in the night" to seek revenge, and "a voluptuous voice on the telephone" to seduce the young protagonist, Denny (Campbell, p. 366). Through this literary allusion, Lulu's character as a merciless avenger is effectively highlighted.

Analogy between characters.

Contrasts and similarities between story figures can also reinforce characterization. In the case of *After the First Death*, the three teenagers Ben, Kate, and Miro are presented in similar situations, and thus "reciprocal characterization" is achieved (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002, p. 70). Miro's mercilessness underscores Ben's and Kate's kindness by means of contrast. However, the analogy also implies some similarity

between the protagonists (Ben and Kate) and the antagonist (Miro): They are the victims of their surroundings and have not had free choice.

Both Ben and Kate are accidentally involved in the terrorist seizure of the bus. Originally, both of them appear to enjoy their easy and carefree adolescent life. However, both of them are forced to be brave in the face of the hijacking. General Marchand volunteers his innocent son, Ben, to serve as a pawn in the negotiation with the terrorists and thus risks Ben's life. Although Ben recovers from the gun wound, his mental injury is never healed. He finally drowns himself. Likewise, Kate occasionally works as a school bus driver to substitute for her uncle and happens to get caught in the bus hijacking. Although Kate attempts to save herself and the children, she is finally shot and dies. Ben and Kate are presented in similar circumstances, and they are analogous in their response to terror.

While Ben and Kate live in sound families, Miro seems to have been doomed from birth. As a child, Miro was an orphan living in a refugee camp. Later, Artkin recruits him as a member of his terrorist group, and since then he has been trained to be a killer and brainwashed to follow the terrorists' agenda. Miro is a monster who victimizes Kate. But, in a larger sense, Miro is also a victim of his environment.

There is another reciprocal characterization in the contrasted roles of General Marchand and the terrorist leader, Artkin. The former stands for justice while the latter represents terrorism. But the truth is that both of them are similarly fanatical and thus dehumanize themselves. While General Marchand justifies the merciless act of risking his own son's life through his patriotism, Artkin rationalizes the terrorist actions as

justified by the great cause of freedom. In fact, both of them disguise their ambition to realize personal aggressiveness, putting aside right and wrong.

In this novel, the two story lines serve to emphasize the parallels and opposition between the characters. The relationship between Ben and his patriot father, General Marchand, is similar to that between Miro and his terrorist "father," Artkin, in that both fathers place their political ideal ahead of everything else, even the lives of their sons. Ben reflects upon the nature of his father's profession, saying, "His is the kind of profession that not only disguises the man but consumes him as well" (p. 6). The general has become an instrument of the absolute ideal, incapable of a loving relationship with his son. He has to repress his human feeling and depersonalize himself for the sake of his patriotic duties. As he reflects later upon offering Ben as a pawn to deal with the terrorists, he confesses, "I had to forget that you [Ben] were my son" (p. 190). There are moments when he feels that he "should have called it off, removed you [Ben] as messenger, canceled the arrangements, picked up the telephone and told Washington I had changed my mind" (p. 192). But he makes the choice not to follow his intuitive feeling, and so can say to Ben, "At the moment you left my office, you had ceased to exist in the minds of those at Inner Delta as my son" (p. 193).

It is a great irony that Artkin says to the general, "Either you are a great patriot or a great fool," and the general replies, "Perhaps both" (p. 192). The general rationalizes his choice and sacrifices his son for he believes: "This is the greatest patriotism: to accept disgrace for the sake of your country. The traitor as patriot" (p. 189). Ben becomes a sacrificial victim because of his innocence. The general chooses his son because Ben has "an air of innocence . . . that cannot be denied even to a man like Artkin" (p. 193). Ben

trusts his father, but his father takes advantage of his innocence to get the task

accomplished. The general is incapable of self-reflection and tries to justify himself,

saying: "There are all kinds of patriotism; ours was pure and sweet and unquestioning.

We were the good guys. . . . Is it possible we are the bad guys? They should never ask

that question, Ben, or even contemplate it" (p. 134). It seems that his doubt is only

superficial. His decisions take precedence over any questions.

Artkin is the general's opposition but he holds up a mirror to the general's fanatic

patriotism in its extremes. They are both political fanatics. The general admits:

> He knew exactly what I was. What I am. Just as I knew exactly what he was and
> to what lengths he would go. We knew each other across the chasm; we had
> recognized each other across the ravine, although we had never met. (p. 193)

Here characterization is achieved by representing difference as similarity. Like the

general, Artkin serves a political ideal and puts it ahead of everything else. He justifies

the terrorist actions, saying, "They were not interested in needless cruelty. They had a job

to do and the job concerned death. . . . [They] are not animals, after all, . . . but merely a

means to an end. Everything is done for a purpose" (p. 29). To regain their homeland,

Artkin and Miro are willing to sacrifice their own lives, seeing themselves as great heroes.

Artkin tells Miro, "Saving ourselves is not important. Except if we can live to fight again.

Otherwise, to die in these circumstances is the best way to serve" (p. 114). All the lessons

Artkin has taught Miro are for a purpose: either "to die with Artkin on the bridge" or "to

carry on the work" (p. 232). Artkin rationalizes the terrorist actions. Artkin taught Miro

that "there were many laws in the world, good laws and bad laws, right laws and wrong

laws. According to the wrong laws, their mission, their work, was condemned. But these

laws had been made by their enemies" (p. 41).

Artkin and Miro deny family ties, and they are incapable of loving relationships. His life experience has taught Miro, "Do not seek to own anything, do not try to make anything belong to you, do not look for pleasure in anything. It will be taken from you sooner or later just as you must take from other people" (p. 59). His life as a terrorist "would not let himself be filled with anything"; he had to "keep himself empty" (p. 233). This is why they feel no sympathy for their victims.

In contrast to Ben as a victim of innocence, Miro embodies the innocence of a monster. Miro's innocence is monstrous. The paradox of this innocence is perceived from the perspective of Kate, who, after their confrontation, has the following knowledge:

> But now she recognized him for what he was: a monster. And the greatest horror of all was that he did not know he was a monster. He had looked at her with innocent eyes as he told her of killing people. She's always thought of innocence as something good, something to cherish. People mourned the death of innocence. . . . But innocence, she saw now, could also be evil. Monstrous. (p. 130)

Later Kate ponders these questions: "But who has made him a monster? This world, his world. Who was guilty, then: the monster or the world that created it?" (p. 171). In a word, the analogy between the characters in the novel can be summarized as follows: Artkin is to General Marchand what Miro is to Ben and Kate.

The son and father of *In the Middle of the Night* are portrayed as similar to each other. Both prefer to be unknown. In the case of John Paul, he "was glad to lose himself among hundreds of other students while he adjusted to his new life" (p. 53). His son, Denny, also likes to remain anonymous:

> Denny didn't want any individual attention, however. Just the opposite: he wanted to blend in and not call attention to himself. . . . He was a shadow without substance, gliding through his hours in the corridors and classrooms like a ghost,

unseen and unheralded. In the classrooms, he tried to sit as far back as possible"
(p. 29)

Likewise, reciprocal characterization occurs in *Tenderness*, where Eric's
bloodlessness underscores Lori's innocence by way of contrast. But there is similarity
between these two teenagers, that is, emotional obsession. Lori is fixated upon idols and
Eric is addicted to the feeling of tenderness he experiences in touching the female body.

To sum up, reinforcement of the characterization by analogy is quite common in
Cormier's novels. Cormier employs analogous names to indicate character traits. In
addition, analogy between characters is also used in his novels. The utility of
characterization through analogy is that it highlights similarities and differences between
characters.

Focalization

In this study, textual focalization was first examined in terms of its position
relative to the story. If the point of view is located within the story, the focalization is
internal; if the angle of vision is high above the story, the focalization is external. Then
focalization was further analyzed as fixed, variable, or multiple, in terms of the degree of
persistence in the text.

Table 4.6 on the next page shows the configuration of variable parameters of
focalization in Cormier's YA novels. Follow-up analyses indicated that Cormier tends to
use internal focalization in third-person narratives and external focalization in first-person
accounts. In addition, alternation between variable or multiple focalizations is quite
prevalent in Cormier's texts.

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	Type of focalization				
	Position relative to the story		Degree of persistence		
	External	Internal	Fixed	Variable	Multiple
The Chocolate War 1974		X			X
I Am the Cheese 1977		X			X
After the First Death 1979 (Odd chapters)	X	X		X	
(Even chapters)		X			X
The Bumble-bee Flies Anyway 1983	X	X			X
Beyond the Chocolate War 1985		X			X
Fade 1988	X	X			X
Other Bells for Us to Ring 1990		X	X		
We All Fall Down 1991		X			X
Tunes for Bears to Dance To 1992		X	X		

(Continued)

Table 4.6 Textual Focalization

Table 4.6 (Continued)

	Type of focalization				
	Position relative to the story		Degree of persistence		
	External	Internal	Fixed	Variable	Multiple
In the Middle of the Night 1995		X			X
Tenderness 1997		X		X	
Heroes 1998		X	X		
The Rag and Bone Shop 2001		X		X	

Types of Focalization

  Textual focalization can be differentiated as external and internal, in terms of its position relative to the story. The locus of external focalization is outside the story. Correspondingly, external focalization usually occurs in a third-person narrative, in which the narrator does not participate in the story. On the other hand, internal focalization refers to the vision of a character within the story. Thus, internal focalization often happens in a first-person narrative, where narration and focalization are indistinguishable. However, internal focalization is used extensively in Cormier's YA novels, especially those which are narrated from a third-person point of view.

Internal focalization in third-person narrative.

The story events of *The Chocolate War* are told primarily by a third-person narrator who does not participate in the story. The third-person narrator merely serves to verbalize what the characters think and perceive. Therefore, the story events are represented as seen through the characters' points of view inside the narrative. In other words, internal focalization is used to present the story. As the following passage demonstrates, Jerry himself is both focalizer and focalized:

> SWEET, SWEET IN THE DARK, SAFE. Dark and safe and quiet. He dared not move. He was afraid that his body would come loose, all his bones spilling out like a building collapsing, like a picket fence clattering apart. A small sound reached his ears and he realized it was himself, crooning softly, as if he were singing himself a lullaby. (p. 214)

From Jerry's point of view, darkness is perceived as a safe and sweet means of finding momentary shelter after he is ambushed by the Vigils on the athletic field at school.

Adam of *I Am the Cheese* also serves as an internal focalizer in a third-person account following a dialogue between Adam and Brint. In the following passage, the language conveys Adam's perceptions through his own eyes:

> He had stepped outside himself, departed, gone from this place and was outside looking in, watching himself and the doctor, if he was a doctor. He could be a doctor, he had a kindly face although sometimes his eyes were strange. The eyes stared at him occasionally as if the doctor – if that's what he was – were looking down the barrel of a gun, taking aim at him. He felt like a target. That's why he was glad that he could stand aside like this, step out of himself and look back and see the two of them there in the room. (pp. 23-24)

It is through internal focalization that the narration comes close to conveying Adam's perceptions and his uneasiness in the conversations with Brint, who is pretending to be a doctor.

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The even-numbered chapters of *After the First Death* are composed of third-person narratives wherein internal focalization is employed. Here is a typical example:

> The bus climbed steadily, lumbering, like some huge beast being driven against its will. She hoped the bus would collapse, like a beast, and die there on the road. She wondered what would happen if the bus stopped and didn't go on. She looked down at the ignition. What would happen if she removed the key, tossed it out the window into the thick growth by the side of the road? Would this spoil their plan, whatever it was? Or would she be placing the kids and herself in worse jeopardy? (p. 35)

At first glance, the focalization may appear to be external focalization. But expressions like "the bus climbed steadily, lumbering," "she hoped the bus would collapse," and "she looked down at the ignition" indicate an inside position within the hijacked school bus from which things are perceived and observed. Although no personalized focalizer is designated, it is apparent it must be Kate, who is in charge of driving, because only she would be able to defy the terrorists by "remov[ing] the key" to rescue the children.

In *The Bumblebee Flies Anyway*, Barney and Cassie are two major character-focalizers. Through Barney's angle of vision, the Complex is presented as a place of neither hope nor miracle, where all the inmates are doomed. Their only salvation is to build a life-sized model car and then to push it down from the roof to symbolize their flight with the car. Cassie serves as an internal reflector who recalls Alberto's past and reveals the "Thing": She and Alberto are twins virtually connected by an invisible bond, and they feel each other's pain.

Using the examples given above, it is easy to see how Cormier incorporates this technique of internal focalization in his third-person narratives. There are instances of this technique in some of his other novels, which I will outline without examples. The method of analysis used above can be applied to the following novels.

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We All Fall Down is told from the point of view of three character-focalizers: Jane Jerome, Buddy Walker, and The Avenger. *Tunes for Bears to Dance To* is a third-person narrative in which Henry serves as an internal reflector. In *In the Middle of the Night*, the story events are presented primarily through Denny and his father, John Paul. Both of them serve as focal characters. In *Tenderness*, Lori, Eric, and Police Lieutenant Proctor serve as character-focalizers individually. In *Heroes*, Francis is the character-narrator, and thus he serves as an internal focalizer. Jason is an internal reflector in *The Rag and Bone Shop*.

To conclude, in Cormier's YA fiction, a third-person narrator sometimes makes external descriptions without entering the character's inner world. One example can be seen in the questions posed in *The Rag and Bone Shop*: "What did he [Trent] see in those deep gray eyes [of Sarah]? Pity, perhaps? Or revulsion? And which was worse?" (p. 72). The narrator is unable to accurately describe Trent's real response to Sarah. Thus, the characters seem free and autonomous to live in their own world. The story is presented as seen through the focal characters themselves, without the narrator's interference. The narrator merely serves to verbalize the characters' thoughts and feelings.

The use of focal characters (filter characters) in the text is certainly chosen out of rhetorical concerns. The story is shown through focal characters, instead of being told by an omniscient narrator outside the story. In this way, the text seems unmediated, and a sense of immediacy in a virtual world is created. An illusion of realism is therefore produced in the text.

External focalization in first-person narrative.

In theory, a first-person narrative is supposed to have internal focalization since its narrator is also the focalizer. However, Cormier undermines this presumption, producing external focalization in the first-person narrative. Such an example is found in *After the First Death*. In Ben's case, narration and focalization are separated in his first-person narrative; external focalization is used here because "the perception through which the story is rendered is that of the narrating self rather than that of the experiencing self" (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002, p. 75). A passage like the following betrays the severance existing between Ben as narrating self and Ben as experiencing self:

> I keep thinking that I have a tunnel in my chest. The path the bullet took, burrowing through the flesh and sinew and whatever muscle the bullet encountered. Anyway, the bullet went through my chest and out again. The wound has healed and there is no pain. The two ends of the tunnel are closed although there's a puckering of the skin at both ends of the tunnel. (p. 3)

The introductory tag "I keep thinking" not only highlights the act of narration, but also draws attention to the distinction between the narrating *I* and the experiencing *I*. At the moment of narration, the narrating *I* describes his wounds so objectively and indifferently that he seems to be another person, distinct from the experiencing *I*, who suffered the shot. Instead of sympathy, the speaking voice projects a kind of mockery at the injury. It is unlikely that one could describe his own wounds so calmly, even callously. Obviously, in this passage, the narrating *I* is not identical with the experiencing *I*. That is, it is an external focalization of Ben as a quasi-third-person narrator, rather than an internal focalization of Ben as an acting self in the gun fight. Viewed in this way, in Ben's first-person narrative, it is apparent that there is "temporal and psychological distance between narrator and character" (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002, p. 75). Ben changes and develops after

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the bus hijacking. Therefore, two identities emerge from his account: Ben, the naïve (as experiencing character in the story) and Ben, the sophisticated (as narrating agent in the narration). The sophisticated Ben might be viewed as a depressed, fatalistic, perhaps nihilistic young man trying to come to terms with his father and his survival after a terrifying incident.

Another indicator of this sophisticated Ben as an external focalizer is his language. That is, his language is "colored by his perceptions at the time of narration (external focalization)" (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002, p. 85). A statement like "I have deduced, reflecting on the Bus, that this would be the best way to shuffle off this mortal coil. Poetic Justice" (p. 5) betrays the sophistication of the narrator through use of the philosophical expressions "shuffle off this moral coil" and "poetic justice." The heightened language also reflects a distancing of the narrator from his own self. One more example is "Time going slowly, bent out of shape like a Dali watch" (p. 80). Images like a "Dali watch" would not be expected within an innocent teenager's typical range of expression. The words here indicate that Ben is an external focalizer whose neutrality and sophistication signal temporal and emotive distance from the story event he once participated in.

Another example of separation of focalization from narration in a first-person narrative occurs in *Fade*. The Paul sequence of this novel is narrated from Paul Moreaux's first-person point of view, in which Paul recalls the time when he was a thirteen-year-old teenager. This retrospective narrative is supposed to be recording things as they were perceived and understood by the young Paul, but the narrative sometimes goes beyond the young Paul's cognitive ability. For example, immediately after the incident in which his aunt Rosanna "took [his] hand and placed it on the white blouse, on

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her breast, and [his] fingers cupped her breast, caressing instantly and instinctively," Paul

felt shame, and in the narrative he includes the following reflection:

> And I knew then that I was no better than Rudolphe Toubert and all the others in her life who had wanted only her body, her flesh, not caring about her, who she was, her needs, her desires, her ambitions. (p. 53)

A woman's "needs," "desires," and "ambitions" are clearly not within a thirteen-year-old

child's cognitive ability. This young Paul could not be expected to be so considerate and

understanding, especially since he was still addicted to "hot dreams at night" (p. 53).

Accordingly, the narrator is the adult Paul, but the focalizer is the young Paul. In other

words, in this first-person narrative, the narrating *I* and the experiencing *I* are separate.

In *Other Bells for Us to Ring*, narration also separates from focalization. In

Darcy's first-person narrative, there is the disparity between the acting *I* and the narrating

I, as the following passage demonstrates:

> "She looks very healthy."
> I could not believe I had said those words. Who says that about a child? You say a lot of things, how beautiful they are or how smart or how polite or a thousand other things but not "She looks very healthy." Not unless you are fishing for information. Which is exactly what I was doing. (pp. 121-122)

Darcy's self-comment on her inappropriate inquiry about the young girl Monique's

physical condition sounds quite sophisticated, and its tone does not match that of the

eleven-year-old Darcy at the point of time when the event happened. During the course of

narration, Darcy splits herself between the narrating *I* (the adult Darcy) and the

experiencing *I* (the young Darcy). The story is told by the adult Darcy in retrospect.

The foregoing discussion implies that Cormier's first-person narrative is not as

simplistic as narration is generally presumed to be in a highly conventional genre. In his

first-person account, focalization is sometimes detached from narration, complicating the text with manifold perspectives.

Persistence of Focalization

In terms of the degree of persistence, focalization can be categorized as fixed, variable, and multiple. If the entire text is mediated through a single focalizer, the textual focalization is called fixed. Variable focalization refers to the situation where two focalizers are available to change the focalization. If focalization moves about among several focalizers, it is referred to as multiple focalization.

Fixed focalization.

Fixed focalization is used quite sparingly in Cormier's YA novels. Only three of his thirteen YA novels have fixed focalization in the text. *Other Bells for Us to Ring* is told solely from Darcy's point of view, and thus the text's focalization remains fixed. In *Tunes for Bears to Dance To*, focalization remains fixed because the novel is presented entirely through Henry's perspective. In *Heroes*, the textual focalization remains fixed since the story events are conveyed primarily through Francis's first-person narration.

Switch in focalization.

Variable and multiple focalizations are prevalent in Cormier's YA novels. Thus, switches in focalization are quite common in the texts. In *The Chocolate War*, focalization in the text does not remain fixed, but shifts among several character-focalizers. Cormier uses multiple angles of vision to develop the reader's understanding of the characters, their motivation, and their mutual relationships. Multiple focalizations are employed in the text. Chapter 14 offers a typical example of multiple focalizations, which in this case reveal how various students respond to the chocolate sale in their own

ways. John Sulkey, who is poor at both sports and studies, enjoys selling the chocolate because the chocolate sale gives him a chance to stand on the school auditorium stage to be recognized for his service to the school through his outstanding sales. This pleases his parents and lets him feel proud of himself. Tubs Casper also takes the chocolate sale seriously. He takes advantage of the chocolate sale, using the money he takes in to buy Rita, his girlfriend, a bracelet for a birthday present. Tubs desperately needs money to purchase a gift for Rita because she occasionally allows Tubs to enjoy intimate contact with her. Paul Consalvo uses the chocolate sale as an excuse to get out of his home since his family lacks warmth. Paul actually hates selling the candy from the bottom of his heart.

The students carry out the tasks involved in sale of chocolate to serve their individual purposes. Through the use of multiple focalizations, Cormier is able to show the varied responses of the students to the chocolate sale. He is further able to convey the idea that although many students participate in it and have high sales, each boy has his own personal reason for doing so. This multiple focalization produces an effect of montage and enriches the novel.

Since *I Am the Cheese* is a combination of three strands of narrative – tape scripts, Adam's first-person narration, and a third-person account, the text has multiple focalizations. As the narration leaps back and forth among these three strands of narrative, the focaliztion switches among character-focalizers Adam, Brint, David, and Grey.

In the odd-numbered chapters of *After the First Death*, the focalization alternates between two predominant character-focalizers – Ben and his father, General Marchand. This variable focalization presents the characters' contradictory views of the same event.

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For example, General Marchand presumes that his son Ben will be willing to act as a

ploy in the apparent bargain with the terrorists. He comments on Ben's expression when

Ben is sent to the terrorists: "I caught a glimpse of trust, determination. A look that said: I

won't let you down, Dad" (p. 194). However, this is only General Marchand's unilateral

observation. As Ben recalls the event, he was so frightened that he "felt a drop of

perspiration roll down from [his] armpit like a small cold marble" (p. 14) when his father

informed him of the bus hijacking. If just the news of the hijacking could scare Ben this

much, how could he be so determined to take a chance with his life to be a pawn?

Moreover, in Ben's first-person narration, he never expresses his willingness to take on

the task of being a messenger. He is involuntarily engaged in the event.

In the even-numbered chapters of *After the First Death*, the heterodiegetic

narrator tells the story through different character-focalizers, as shown in the following

example, wherein the narration shifts swiftly from Kate's mind to Miro's articulation. In

this way, the narrator adeptly presents separate responses to the same action, as the

following passage illustrates:

> Why don't they shoot him? Kate thought. There are cops out there and soldiers,
> with guns and rifles. Shoot him!
> "They will not shoot him," Miro said, his voice loud in Kate's ear even though he
> was whispering. He had crowded close to her to view the scene through the
> limited space. (pp. 75-76)

The following is another example of the shift in focalization. The narrative point of view

moves between Miro and Kate. The narrator first describes Miro's sexual fantasies about

Kate:

> He watched the girl. As he had never watched anyone before. . . . . He would love
> to trace that delicate profile with his finger, down her forehead, over the nose that
> had a slight rising in it, and across the lips to the delicate chin. (p. 146)

Immediately following this passage, the focalization switches to show how Kate responds to Miro's lustful stare:

> She knew he was watching her, that look in his eyes again, and she was both exhilarated and appalled. A while ago, he had looked at her with hard, cold eyes and talked of death and destruction, and she'd had no doubt he could kill her or any of the children without hesitation, without conscience. And then she'd felt his eyes upon her, following her, drinking her in as if she could quench some terrible thirst of his. (p. 148)

One more example will suffice to illustrate the shift in focalization. In the following passage, the narrator presents Kate's and Miro's individual responses to the coming night. The narration leaps from Kate's mind to Miro's.

> Night penetrated the bus without Kate being aware of it, the mysterious border between dusk and night dissolved by the darkness. Actually, night only deepened the dimness of the bus, and yet it brought with it a kind of weariness that settled on its occupants like a comforting blanket. The air of the bus was stained with smells: urine (maybe my own, Kate thought dismally) and sweat and vomit. . . . Miro brooded in the darkness, watching and waiting. On his guard. Watching for any movement at all. Watching for whatever the girl might do next. (pp. 166-168)

The even-numbered chapters of *After the First Death* have no fixed point of view. Multiple focalizations dominate the narration, permitting the character-focalizers (Artkin, Miro, and Kate) to speak for themselves. Their cognitive, emotive, and ideological perceptions are presented through individual focalization. Through this alternative narrative point of view, the problematic demarcation between good and evil, which is one of the major themes of this novel, can be subtly brought into relief. The demarcation between good and evil is questionable. As Artkin says, "There were many laws in the world, good laws and bad laws, right laws and wrong laws. According to the wrong laws, their mission, their work, was condemned. But these laws had been made by their enemies" (p. 41), That is, Artkin and Miro, on behalf of the third world's terrorism,

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exemplify the principle that the ends justify the means. Kate, representative of the American hegemony, regards this principle as monstrous power.

This confrontation between good and evil is dramatized through the technique of multiple focalizations, which lets the protagonist and the antagonist stand on their own feet. In this way, the tension in the story is strengthened. Moreover, the perceptibility of the narrator is reduced to a minimum so that a sense of immediacy is achieved. This narrative technique allows the story events to show themselves to the reader. To some extent, this narrative technique serves as showing. In other words, through the text the readers witness the blindness of both sides and their lack of mutual understanding.

The focalization of *Beyond the Chocolate War* does not remain fixed. There is variable focalization within a single character, Goober. One part of his inner self thinks that he should be blamed for Brother Eugene's death: "The Goober was responsible, as if he had held a gun to the teacher's temple and pulled the trigger" (p. 103). However, the other part of him protests: "You had nothing to do with Eugene's death. It's a coincidence, that's all. Okay, a terrible coincidence, but a coincidence all the same" (p. 103). The same event is viewed through contradictory perspectives resident in one character.

Variable focalization shifts not only within one single character, but between characters as well. Such is the case in the following example, where the focus of narration moves between Jerry and Goober:

> Jerry glanced at his friend, saw the utter misery on his face, as if he were being tortured, and realized suddenly how his decision to return to Trinity was affecting him. He felt stricken with guilt, inflicting guilt on his friend, Goober. And knew instantly what he must do.

> "Look, Goober, okay, I'm not going back. Forget what I said. I guess that was just crazy talk."
> Goober looked at him guardedly. "You sure?"
> Jerry nodded. "I'm sure."
> The Goober relaxed visibly, slowed his pace. (pp. 224-225)

From Jerry's perspective, Goober appears to be satisfied with Jerry's compromise. However, when the narrative focus switches to Goober's mind, his apprehension is revealed:

> And knowing, too, that Jerry *was* going back to Trinity. Pretending for Goober's sake that he wasn't, but going. And the Goober not wanting to go. He'd enough of Trinity High. Of being put to the test. Of betrayal. He'd break off from Jerry, a bit at a time this summer, little by little. Because, damn it, he did not want to go back to Trinity. Wouldn't. Couldn't. He didn't want to betray him again. (p. 226)

Goober continues to struggle over whether he should leave Trinity High or stay there with Jerry. The variable focalization which shifts between Jerry and Goober effectively presents their contradictory responses in the face of evil: "to outlast" the sinister forces, or "to run" away from them (p. 224).

Another example of variable focalization moves between Ray and Obie, as the following passage demonstrates:

> Ray lifted his shoulders and let them fall. He knew that Obie planned to give Archie Costello the scare of his life. He also suspected that Obie planned to go further, to carry out some kind of weird plot against Archie. (P. 244)

Immediately following these comments from Ray's perspective, the narration switches to Obie's point of view:

> He [Ray] looks at me as if I'm crazy, but I'm not crazy, am I? Crazy people aren't eighteen-year-old seniors in high school. And anyway, I'm not going to do anything. I'm just going to scare the hell out of Archie Costello. Humiliate him in front of the entire student body. Get him on his knees. (p. 245)

This perspective change indicates that Ray is on guard, not totally under the sway of Obie's manipulation. It hints at the failure of Obie's scheme for retaliation against Archie. Because of Ray's vigilance in setting up a safety catch, it is unlikely that Obie will hurt Archie when his head is resting upon the guillotine.

Along with such variable focalization, multiple focalizations among characters can also be found in this novel. For instance, Caroni's death is presented from various perspectives. The police regard Caroni's death as a pure accident: "The verdict of the investigation was: No one at Trinity is implicated in David Caroni's death" (p. 271). In addition, Brother Leon, in his memorial speech to the whole student body, unblushingly attributes Caroni's death to his own troubled mind and even blames the other students for their neglect of Caroni when he was in need. On the contrary, according to Caroni's statement, it is Leon's cruelty that leads to his death. The clash of multiple perspectives in the treatment of Caroni's death underscores the fact that the truth is likely to be clouded, as in this case where the hypocrisy of Leon and the ignorance of the police bury Caroni.

Change in multiple focalizations is prevalent in *Fade*. The novel begins with Paul's first-person account of his experiences with the fade. Then Paul's story is treated and read as a manuscript by three fictional readers in the text. They are: Jules, a police detective and Paul's cousin; Meredith, Paul's literary agent; and Susan, Jules's granddaughter, who is a college student working as an intern in Meredith's office. Based on their expertise and previous interactions with Paul, these characters try to judge whether Paul's self-account of the fade is true or not. Treating Paul's story as if he were involved in a police investigation, Jules lists rigorous evidence which throws the

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credibility of Paul's story into question and concludes, "I have sifted fact from fantasy, fiction from reality. *Thus, what Paul has written in the manuscript is fiction. Without any doubt or conjecture. To believe otherwise is to believe in the impossible*" (p. 181).

However, Meredith questions Jules's conclusion concerning the reality of Paul's story. Meredith points out an important fact to Susan:

> In fact, he [Jules] does not deny the existence of any of the people in the manuscript. He only denies the way Paul portrayed them. And who can say whether your grandfather is right and Paul is wrong? The point is that the characters in the manuscript were clearly recognizable to him. And this is not true of Paul's other work . . . In none of his other novels or stories were the characters recognized as real people. But in this manuscript, everybody is. The first names are real names. (p. 183)

Meredith contends that Paul's story is not fictional, but "realistic, autobiographical" (p. 184). Susan does not fully concur with Meredith in this matter. Susan presents her own explanation about how to distinguish reality and fiction in Paul's story: "I have a theory. Maybe Paul had to create a real world so that the reader would be forced to believe the fantasy. But that doesn't mean the fantasy was real" (p. 184). In brief, the focal point of narration shifts from character to character: Paul narrates his story, Jules questions Paul's story, Meredith questions Jules's questioning, and in turn Susan casts doubt on Meredith's questioning. Of course, the reader is also invited to join the heated debate. This switching among multiple focalizations produces an effect of *mise en abyme*, an infinite questioning of fiction and reality in the textual world.

In *We All Fall Down*, during the course of narration the angle of vision switches among the major characters, and thus multiple focalizations are set up. The following is an example where focalization first projects how love changes Buddy's previous gloominess over his parents' divorce: "He became aware of the beauties of the world

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around him. Colors more brilliant, sunsets breathtaking, neon signs dazzling. Laughed easily at jokes, laughed at stuff that was not really that funny" (p. 129). Then the focalization switches to Jane's feelings in response to Buddy's affection:

> Jane passed lovely weightless days, floating almost, as if her feet barely touched the earth, capable of drifting off into the sky like a balloon and never be seen again, which would be awful because life on earth was so incredibly sweet. (pp. 129-130)

The change in focalization indicates how much they love each other.

The following passage offers another instance of focalization shifting speedily from Jane to Buddy:

> Dashing into the house, she was exhilarated by the evening's events. But later, slipping on her pajamas, she wondered if she should have asked him [Buddy] about Harry Flowers.
> While Buddy, at home, desperately drank himself into a stupor and then oblivion for the first time since he had met her. (pp. 138-139)

After telling Buddy that her house had been trashed and her sister Karen hospitalized in a coma, Jane felt great relief. On the contrary, Buddy felt terrible because he had an ominous certainty that Jane would learn of his participation in the house trashing some day, and then their love would end up as nothing. This quick change in focalization produces emotional contrast and creates sensational intensity in the text.

Change in focalization also occurs between Jane and The Avenger when The Avenger attempts to hurt Jane, whom he has abducted:

> From somewhere in the folds of his flesh around his waist, he drew a knife. A kitchen knife but a big one. The kind turkeys are sliced with. A blade that gleamed even in the dimness of this godforsaken shed.
> Stall, she commanded herself. She was dealing with a madman and had to stall him off. . . . She had to survive, get away, escape. (pp. 175-176)

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The change in focalization effectively conveys the extreme tension of that moment of confrontation between Jane and The Avenger.

Along with a third-person narrator, the story events of *The Bumblebee Flies Anyway* are mediated through Barney and Cassie. Therefore, the novel has multiple focalizations, switching among Barney, Cassie, and the third-person narrator. *In the Middle of the Night* is presented from the various perspectives of different character-focalizers, and so its focalization does not persist, but varies among the focal characters (John Paul, Denny, Dave, and Lulu) to create multiplicity in focalization. *Tenderness* also has variable focalization. In the text, the focalization switches from Eric to Lori and, in addition, between Eric and Police Lieutenant Proctor.

Likewise, *The Rag and Bone Shop* has variable focalization. In the text, focalization switches between the protagonist, Jason, and the antagonist, Trent. One example occurs in the incident where Trent and Jason read each other's minds. Jason observes that "Mr. Trent's eyes narrow, as if he had somehow seen the idea forming" in his mind (p. 91). On the other hand, Trent also perceives "a moment of revelations, a flash of – what? – in the boy's eyes" (p. 92). In this way, simultaneous focalization is achieved. While Jason is wondering what is in Trent's mind, the reader is provided a glimpse of Trent's thoughts at the time.

In conclusion, through variable and multiple focalizations, Cormier presents characters' different points of view on certain subjects. Consequently, his novels become dialogical in the Bakhtinian sense by breaking the monological predominance of an authoritative narrator. In the text, everything is shown through the characters' diverse perspectives. There is no omniscient authoritative narrator who tells the reader what has

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really happened or provides moral comment on the characters. Thus, Cormier's fiction engages the reader in the text to interpret the fictional world on their own.

Narration

Narration is the act of telling a story in the text. Aspects of narration worthy of close examination are the temporal and subordinate relations between story and narration, the narrator's perceptibility and credibility in the course of narration, and narrative discourse (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002). In light of this analytic scheme, this section is devoted to analyzing how Cormier manipulates narration in his YA novels to meet the needs of the plot and to create aesthetic effects.

Story and Narration

Narration can be examined in terms of its temporal relationship with a story. The temporal factor determines how a story is presented in the text and how the reader perceives it. If narration is simultaneous with the events covered in the story, then it is a kind of showing and produces a sense of immediacy in the scenes. If narration is anterior or posterior to the story events, it takes the form of telling. In addition, narration can be analyzed from a structural perspective, that is, specifically, to investigate the ways the various narratives are arranged in one single text (i.e., the Chinese-boxes plotting design).

Temporal Relations

According to the temporal relations between story and narration, narration can be classified into four types: ulterior narration, anterior narration, reporting, and intercalated narration (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002). Ulterior narration means telling of an event which happened before it is addressed. Anterior narration refers to telling of an event which will happen beyond the point in time when it is narrated. When telling and acting are

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synchronous, it is a kind of reporting. If ulterior narration and anterior narration coexist, it is called intercalated narration.

Anterior narration addressing a character's unrealized desire.

Cormier uses anterior narration to tell of a desire that is hard for a character to realize. For example, in *I Am the Cheese*, Adam's first-person account of his bike journey to visit his father can be regarded as an instance of anterior narration. This is an event which Adam wishes would take place in the future. In point of fact, this bike journey does not really occur. It only comes to Adam's mind while he is actually riding his bike around the hospital grounds. Like a dream, this imaginary journey reflects Adam's wistful desire to escape from confinement in the hospital to look for his father. Adam is so haunted by this unrealized dream that the same description of his bike journey appears again by the end of the novel.

A similar fantasy taking the form of anterior narration emerges in *Beyond the Chocolate War* when Caroni thinks about how to take revenge on Brother Leon. Caroni fantasizes that he will send Leon an explosive parcel which blows his head off. Caroni also imagines that he might act as a sniper to shoot Leon on the auditorium stage when he is giving a lecture to students. Caroni's imagination predicts "What he must do. To Brother Leon" (p. 139).

These cases of anterior narration in *I Am the Cheese* and *Beyond the Chocolate War* express the characters' unrealized longings (i.e., Adam's reunion with his father and Caroni's opposition to Brother Leon). The characters' predicaments (i.e., Adam's hopelessness and Caroni's helplessness) are also reflected through this form of anterior narration. In other words, the narrational form itself is loaded with thematic significance.

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Likewise, reporting, as another type of narration, can also transmit thematic meaning, as the following interpretation illustrates.

Reporting to enhance the text's emotive tension.

In *I Am the Cheese*, by addressing himself in the first-person point of view, Adam seems to be narrating his action while performing it: "I am riding the bicycle . . . I'm pedaling furiously . . . It's cold as I pedal along . . . But I keep pedaling, I keep pedaling" (p. 1). Here Adam's narration is simultaneous with his action. In this way, a strong sense of urgency is conveyed in the text. That is, there is a feeling that Adam needs to hurry all the way because someone is chasing after him. Chasing and evading are important motifs in the novel. Therefore, the tension in the story is enhanced through reporting.

Reporting is also used in *After the First Death*. The first sentence of this novel is narrated by Ben in the form of reporting: "I keep thinking that I have a tunnel in my chest" (p. 3). Ben's telling of the story synchronizes with his act of pondering over his injury. Such narration not only serves to describe his wound, but also conveys his feelings about the wound. Thus, a note of sadness is heard while Ben is telling his story.

Dave of *In the Middle of the Night* also addresses himself in the manner of reporting: "I am writing all this down. . . . I find that it's necessary to keep a record. Why? For my own good, my own testimony, in case anything happens" (p. 1). Obviously, Dave is not so willing to narrate the story. He is a reluctant narrator. But narration is a necessary choice for him so that he can defend himself since something horrible will happen later. The act of narration itself is painful, even unbearable for Dave. Therefore, a pathetic, gloomy tone underpins his narration.

In *Tenderness*, Lori addresses herself:

> I am on my way . . . I am standing by the side of the road hitching to Wickburg . . .
> I am always careful when I hitch . . . I brace myself against the traffic . . . I don't
> always stick out my thumb . . . I skip sports cars, of course, and pickup trucks. If I
> see something like dice dangling above the windshield, I also skip that one.
> (pp. 12-14)

It indeed prompts an empathetic response that Lori is situated alone in the midst of the rushing traffic to hitch a ride. Through such reporting readers seem to be invited into the scene where they can share Lori's risky experience. Thus, this type of narration engages readers in the text.

As we have seen, reporting is employed as a narrational method in Cormier's YA novels. This type of narration is unique in terms of the simultaneity of telling and acting. The distance between narration and the narrated story is minimized. Temporal delay is mitigated. In this way, the effects of urgency and immediacy are created to enhance emotive tension.

Coordinate Relations: Narrative Strands

Narratives within narratives are common in Cormier's YA fiction. *I Am the Cheese* is composed of triple strands of narrative. *After the First Death* consists of double strands of narrative. Likewise, *Fade* is constituted of two major strands of narrative. *Tenderness* and *In the Middle of the Night* are also comprised of double strands of narrative. The various narratives of Cormier's YA novels usually constitute a parallel structure. In other words, the story-lines are arranged according to coordinate relations. This style of parallel arrangement differs from the hierarchical structure, where some story-lines are subordinate to others (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002).

Cormier's parallel management of narrative strands makes the text much harder to read than texts with a conventional hierarchical arrangement. In parallel structure, diverse story-lines unfold simultaneously so that it takes time for the reader to connect the different narrative strands to capture the whole picture. In contrast, in the hierarchical structure, narrative strands are subordinated to each other and arranged in a system of levels. Thus, the reader can easily follow the textual leads from one level to another sub-level in an orderly way.

One example is sufficient to illustrate the subtlety of a text's parallel structure in terms of reading. *I Am the Cheese* comprises three narrative strands: Adam's first-person account of his bike journey, the tape scripts of Adam's talk under Brint's therapy, and a third-person narrative of Adam's family background. These three story-lines spread out in turn and proceed independently and simultaneously. At first glance, the reader merely knows the narratives are all about Adam. During the course of reading, the reader feels puzzled about why Adam takes a bike trip to visit his father, what happens to Adam, and why Adam accepts Brint's therapy to recover his memory. It is only at the end of the novel that the reader can figure out what Adam has really suffered and experienced by integrating these narrative strands into a whole one. Readers themselves need to construct meanings without textual leads. Cormier is able to defer meaning in this novel through the use of parallel narration. Were the story presented in a more traditional, hierarchical fashion, it would be more difficult to withhold the fact that Adam's bike journey happens in his mind. The reading pleasures of surprise, suspense, and speculation lie in this textual device of arranging various narrative strands in a parallel fashion.

Take *Fade* as another example. This novel is composed of two strands of narrative. One narrative is the Paul section about three generations of faders: Paul himself, Paul's Uncle Adelard, and Paul's nephew Ozzie. The other narrative is the Susan section, where Paul's story is read as "a posthumous unpublished manuscript" (p. 162) by three fictional readers, Susan, Jules, and Meredith. They try to determine whether Paul's story of the fade is fact or fiction. In this way, these two strands of narrative are not arranged in a hierarchical fashion, but instead managed in a coordinated manner within the frame of *Fade* as a whole. The Paul sequence can be viewed as fiction of fantasy; the Susan sequence serves as metafiction, a metanarrative about Paul's narrative. In *Fade*, this arrangement of the unexpected shifts between the Paul section and the Susan section indeed alerts readers to the act of narration and encourages them to reevaluate the nature of fiction as a type of artifice.

Typology of the Narrator

A narrator can be studied in terms of his participation in the story and his perceptibility and reliability in the course of narration (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002). According to these criteria, the charts that follow on the next page were set up to facilitate examination of the narrator in each of the novels analyzed. In follow-up analyses, the researcher identified three prototypes of narrators in Cormier's YA fiction: the overt reliable heterodiegetic narrator in authorial narration, the overt unreliable autodiegetic narrator in first-person narration, and the covert heterodiegetic narrator in figural narration.

	Narrative mode	Extent of participation in the story		
		Hetero-diegetic	Homo-diegetic	Auto-diegetic
The Chocolate War 1974	third-person: anonymous	X		
I Am the Cheese 1977	first-person: Adam			X
	dramatic: Adam & Brint	N/A		
	third-person: anonymous	X		
After the First Death 1979	first-person: Ben			X
	first-person: General Marchand			X
	third-person: anonymous	X		
The Bumble-bee Flies Anyway 1983	figural: Barney	N/A		
	third-person: anonymous	X		
Beyond the Chocolate War 1985	third-person: anonymous	X		
Fade 1988	first-person: Paul, Jules, and Susan			X
	third-person: anonymous	X		
Other Bells for Us to Ring 1990	first-person: Darcy			X

(Continued)

Table 4.7 Degree of narrator's participation in the story

Table 4.7 (Continued)

	Narrative mode	Extent of participation in the story		
		Hetero-diegetic	Homo-diegetic	Auto-diegetic
We All Fall Down 1991	third-person: anonymous	X		
Tunes for Bears to Dance To 1992	third-person: anonymous	X		
In the Middle of the Night 1995	first-person: Dave			X
	third-person: anonymous	X		
Tenderness 1997	first-person: Lori			X
	figural: Eric	N/A		
	third-person: anonymous	X		
Heroes 1998	first-person: Francis			X
The Rag and Bone Shop 2001	third-person: anonymous	X		

	Narrative mode	Degree of perceptibility	
		Covert	Overt
The Chocolate War 1974	third-person: anonymous		X
I Am the Cheese 1977	first-person: Adam		X
	dramatic: Adam & Brint	N/A	N/A
	third-person: anonymous		X
After the First Death 1979	first-person: Ben		X
	first-person: General Marchand		X
	third-person: anonymous		X
The Bumble-bee Flies Anyway 1983	figural: Barney	X	
	third-person: anonymous		X
Beyond the Chocolate War 1985	third-person: anonymous		X
Fade 1988	first-person: Paul, Jules, and Susan		X
	third-person: anonymous	X	
Other Bells for Us to Ring 1990	first-person: Darcy		X
We All Fall Down 1991	third-person: anonymous		X

(Continued)

Table 4.8 Extent of narrator's perceptibility in the text

Table 4.8 (Continued)

	Narrative mode	Degree of perceptibility	
		Covert	Overt
Tunes for Bears to Dance To 1992	third-person: anonymous		X
In the Middle of the Night 1995	first-person: Dave		X
	third-person: anonymous		X
Tenderness 1997	first-person: Lori		X
	figural: Eric	X	
	third-person: anonymous		X
Heroes 1998	first-person: Francis		X
The Rag and Bone Shop 2001	third-person: anonymous		X

	Narrative Mode	Reliable	Unreliable (Sources of unreliability)
The Chocolate War 1974	third-person: anonymous	X	
I Am the Cheese 1977	first-person: Adam		1
	Dramatic: Adam & Brint	N/A	
	third-person: anonymous	X	
After the First Death 1979	first-person: Ben		2
	first-person: General Marchand		3
	third-person: anonymous	X	
The Bumble-bee Flies Anyway 1983	figural: Barney	X	
	third-person: anonymous	X	
Beyond the Chocolate War 1985	third-person: anonymous	X	
Fade 1988	first-person: Paul		2
	First-person: Susan		1
	third-person: anonymous	X	
Other Bells for Us to Ring 1990	First-person: Darcy		2

Table 4.9 Narrative reliability

Table 4.9 Narrative reliability (Continued)

	Narrative Mode	Reliable	Unreliable (Sources of unreliability)
We All Fall Down 1991	third-person: anonymous	X	
Tunes for Bears to Dance To 1992	third-person: anonymous	X	
In the Middle of the Night 1995	first-person: Dave		2
	third-person: anonymous	X	
Tenderness 1997	first-person: Lori		2
	Figural: Eric	X	
	third-person: anonymous	X	
Heroes 1998	first-person: Francis		2
The Rag and Bone Shop 2001	third-person	X	

Key:

1 = The narrator's limited knowledge

2 = Personal involvement

3 = Problematic value-scheme

The Overt Reliable Heterodiegetic Narrator in Authorial Narration

Cormier tends to use a heterodiegetic overt narrator with authoritative voice in

third-person narration. *The Chocolate War* is primarily narrated by a third-person narrator

who does not participate in the story. This anonymous narrator is perceived overtly

through appeal to the reader, as the following passage shows:

> "Renault?"
> "No."
> Pause. You'd think Brother Leon would have gotten used to the situation by now, that he'd skip quickly over Renault's name. But each day, the teacher's voice sang out with hope and each day the negative response was given.
> "Santucci?"
> "Three." . . .
> Strictly by accident, Goober happened to look up as Brother Leon marked down Santucci's report. He saw Leon's hand trembling. He had a terrible feeling of doom about to descend on all of them. (p. 91)

Here the narrator sets aside the act of narration and talks to readers, inquiring of them

whether Brother Leon's insistence on roll calling is beyond their expectation. Moreover,

the narrator's description of Goober's ominous feeling, "doom about to descend on all of

them," indicates that the narrator is able to enter the character's mind. So the narrator is

omniscient. Based on his omniscience, the narrator is presumed to be authoritative in

telling the story.

In *After the First Death*, a third-person narrator who is above the story dominates

the narrative. This narrator is not involved in the story and therefore is heterodiegetic.

This heterodiegetic narrator maintains perceptibility during the course of narration. His

overtness is indicated through his manner of identifying a character to the reader:

> The other man was Antibbe, heavy, middle-aged, at least forty. His grimace could be like thunder rumbling, his frown an earthquake. He lumbered through life like a freight car on the loose, shouldering his way through exits and entrances. He seldom spoke and when he did, his words came out in hoarse grunts. (p. 25)

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Such statements are signs of a narrator's overtness, as Chatman (1978) recognized.

Moreover, the narrator's identification of the character means that he possesses "prior

knowledge of the character" (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002, p. 98). It also presumes that the

reader depends on the narrator's knowledge to comprehend the story. Thus, the narrator

is supposed to be reliable.

The Bumblebee Flies Anyway is told by a heterodiegetic narrator from the third-

person point of view. The narrator appears to be overt in his comments on Barney's

behavior:

> Yet, as he stood there in the agony of this thing that was killing him, he had the
> taste of Cassie Mazzofono on his lips and the knowledge that he had pulled it off,
> sent her out of here without telling her what was happening to him, his condition,
> the screens, and the pathetic thing his life had become. Because of that, his life,
> whatever was left of it, wasn't pathetic after all. But kind of noble, somehow.
> (p. 214)

Such commentary indicates that the narrator is able to enter character's mind and can

verbalize his feelings and thoughts. Therefore, the narrator assumes authority as a reliable

narrator based on his knowledge.

In *Beyond the Chocolate War*, the third-person narrator is perceived as overt

through his definition of the characters in the story. The narrator defines Brother Leon as

follows: "He had never been the buddy-buddy type anyway; now he treated the students

as if they were underlings, mere subjects in the kingdom of his royal highness, Leon the

First" (p. 40). Another example can be seen in the narrator's direct definition of Morton,

Archie's girlfriend: "She was pretty and popular and intelligent. . . . Independent and self-

possessed" (p. 146). Since identification of a character's traits implies a narrator's "prior

knowledge about or acquaintance with him," the narrator assumes authority with unlimited knowledge (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002, p. 99).

The narrator of *We All Fall Down* is perceived as overt through his reporting of what the characters did not say. An example of such reporting occurs where the narrator tells of the Avenger's sorrow and bitterness when witnessing the house trashing: "By the time the trashers had left the house, the tears on the cheeks of The Avenger were cold and hard, like tiny pieces of glass" (p. 4). Another instance is the narrator's verbalization of Jane's feelings of emptiness after the vandalism: "Felt dead inside. Empty. Like a vessel waiting to be filled" (p. 37). In this way, the perceptibility of the narrator in the text is quite obvious; he is supposed to be an omniscient and reliable narrator who knows what is in a character's mind.

Tunes for Bears to Dance To is told by a heterodiegetic narrator. Early in the novel, the narrator identifies the characters and introduces them to the reader. Let's look at one example: "The boy, whose name was Henry, watched him from the third-floor piazza that overlooked the street" (p. 1). Based on such information, the narrator is perceived to be overt and supposed to be omniscient.

Tenderness also has an overt and authoritative narrator. The narrator makes himself overt by identifying the characters:

> Jake Proctor had been a cop for twenty-six years out in Oregon and the next twenty here in New England. He'd worked all the beats, been praised and promoted regularly and was finally named a detective lieutenant, an office where his instincts and dogged working habits brought him success but never satisfaction. His one devastating failure back in Oregon had tarnished all the triumphs of his career. (p. 56)

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The narrator's presence in the text is perceptible because he conveys his prior knowledge of the characters to the reader.

Since *The Rag and Bone Shop* is told by a third-person narrator who does not participate in the story, the narrator is heterodiegetic. The narrator is perceived as overt in statements of temporal summary like:

> Let's get this straight: he didn't really cry but his chin would begin to wobble all over the place and tears would fill his eyes and he'd have to hold himself rigid to make it all stop. But he couldn't always make it stop. (p. 23)

The narrator's summary of Jason's response to Alicia's death is delivered to readers when he hails them: "Let's get this straight." In this way, the narrator exposes himself to the reader. The tone of his direct comment also echoes the authority of the narrator's voice.

Cormier frequently uses third-person narration to present his story. In the authorial narratives, the narrators tend to be overt, reliable, and heterodiegetic. In other words, Cormier's third-person narrator remains uninvolved in the story as an outside observer with authority. On the other hand, Cormier's first-person narrator is inclined to be unreliable, as the following analysis demonstrates.

The Overt Unreliable Autodiegetic Narrator in First-Person Narration

In Cormier's YA novels, the first-person narrators are always identical with the hero or heroine, and so they are autodiegetic. These autodiegetic narrators tend to be overt as established by their comments on their own narration. Furthermore, the reliability of the overt autodiegetic narrator is somewhat questionable because of their participation in the story.

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In *After the First Death*, Ben tells about his personal engagement in the bus

hijacking in the first person. He is a typical autodiegetic narrator, playing the double roles

of acting *I* and narrating *I*. Ben's status as a narrator is overt because of the commentary

on his narration. A typical example is:

> Please do not consider these the notes of a self-pitying freak who needs the
> services of a psychiatrist. I am not filled with pity for myelf. And I'm not writing
> this to cop a plea of some kind. I do not consider this a suicide note either. Or
> even a prelude to one. (p. 5)

Such statements attract the reader's attention to the presence of the narrator, who is

reflecting upon the nature of his own telling. Ben even expresses his self-doubt about

what he narrates, saying, "My father's first visit since the Bus and the Bridge, but I

already said that, didn't I?" (p. 6). Thematically, such misgivings project the unstable

state of Ben's psychology as a narrator. That is, he is under great stress after the bus

hijacking. Technically, this self-commentary on the narration undermines the reliability

of the narrator and thus diminishes the credibility of the text.

Ben's commentary on the act of narration seems to jeopardize its reliability, as in

the following passage:

> I lied before when I said that I never learned the touch system but must hunt and
> peck. I wrote that down so that I could justify looking out at the window so often
> to see if my father was approaching. I am really a terrific typist. Between 60 and
> 70 words a minute, one of the bonuses of that exclusive concentrated school at
> Delta. (pp. 81-82)

The narrator's dishonesty alerts the reader to the potential unreliability of his narration,

though not necessarily of all of his reporting of facts. However, instead of being

considered unreliable, Ben might be regarded as laying bare the stressful process of

narration. For example, while narrating his story, he is anxious about his father's visit for

fear of facing his cold-blooded father.

Like Ben, Paul, the protagonist-narrator in *Fade*, also makes commentary on the

narration. For example, Paul's Uncle Adelard, a wanderer, is so attractive to him that

Paul is eager to hear anything about him:

> "He's back," my father announced as he entered the kitchen in a cloud of
> celluloid and banged his lunch pail on the table. I leapt from the chair where I had
> been reading the latest issue of *Wings* magazine, eager for details. "When did she
> arrive?" my mother asked, . . . *She?* . . . I realized that my ears had fooled me into
> hearing what I wanted to hear – that my uncle Adelard had returned – instead of
> what my father had actually said. (9)

Paul's commentary at the end of this passage exposes his status as a narrator present in

the text. His reflection on his own narration throws into relief the potential unreliability

of his narrative.

Another example of Paul's self-commentary on his story is: "With my Uncle

Adelard gone, the events at Silas B. [Paul's high school] consumed me completely and

the fade became a part of the past summer and its witchery, along with street games and

garden raids and the battle of Moccasin Pond" (114). Here Paul reflects on how his recent

fading experiences seem to be a fiction. Again, Paul's reflection undermines the

credibility of the text.

In *Other Bells for Us to Ring*, Darcy is an autodiegetic narrator who is perceived

as overt either through her direct address to the reader or through comments she makes

on her narration. As a first-person narrator, Darcy speaks to the reader: "This was in

Clapham, North Carolina, and the next thing you knew we were riding in a train to Fort

Delta" (p. 3). Through the causal expression "you knew" the narrator seems to establish

rapport with readers, inviting them to share her story. Another example of the narrator's

addressing readers occurs when Darcy asks them a question after her diegetic report: "I

looked away, blinking to make the room settle down, wondering if my mother had seen

the word too. Then I felt her stiffen. Wait, can you feel someone stiffen?" (p. 112).

Due to the narrator's personal involvement in the story, the narrative reliability is

problematic. But the potential unreliability is remedied by the narrator's self reflection.

The narrator, Darcy, reflects upon her narration, making comments like "Wait a minute –

I am lying ferociously now" and "I am lying again. And also engaging in self-pity" in the

following passage:

> My mother loved order and neatness and everything in its place and daisies in
> glass vases on windowsills, and made the best of it whenever we moved. But I
> hated moving, packing all my possessions once more and leaving my friends
> behind. Wait a minute – I am lying ferociously now, I never had *that* many
> possessions . . . I had no real friends at all, only acquaintances, girls who might
> have become my friends if we'd lived in one place long enough. Hold the phone. I
> am lying again. And also engaging in self-pity. The truth is that most of the time I
> did not make friends because I didn't try. (pp. 5-6)

Actually, the narrator's exposure of her own deception does not diminish but reinforces

the narrative reliability. The reader can be sympathetic to the narrator's situation. As she

calls attention to the unreliability of her own narration, Darcy is less dangerous as an

unreliable narrator because her "lying" is not malicious, but expresses her wishes. In the

lie about "packing all my possessions once more and leaving my friends behind," Darcy's

dream of having close friends to leave behind is exposed. The reader can become

sympathetic to the narrator's situation: In revealing the truth, Darcy is also revealing her

fear of rejection. Darcy's concerns are typical of the concerns of a child who has moved

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around a lot, and her lying is an expression of her desire to cover them up or to change her reality.

In Dave's first-person narrative of *In the Middle of the Night*, Dave serves as an autodiegetic (I-as-witness) narrator. His status as a narrator is manifested overtly, as he comments on the purpose of his narration:

> I am writing all this down. I have never kept a diary or a journal or anything like that. My thoughts and memories were enough, but now that she has begun to assert herself, I find that it's necessary to keep a record. Why? For my own good, my own testimony, in case anything happens. (p. 1)

Moreover, during the course of narration, Dave occasionally mentions his act of writing: "This new Lulu makes me lie awake at night, and makes me hide what I'm writing so that she can't see it" (p. 132) and "I am writing all this down and Lulu is watching me" (p. 153). To Dave, the act of writing as a narrational means seems frightening, even though Lulu is blind and unable to read what he writes. He seems to have the feeling that he is betraying Lulu by writing down what he knows of Lulu's revenge plan; he says, "I feel the old tenderness between us as she removes the roof . . . and strokes my poor pathetic flesh while I keep on writing" (p. 153). The "old" tenderness reminds him of the close bond he once shared with his sister, which necessarily affects Dave even while he is engaged in recording Lulu's vicious act.

Dave's constant reference to his writing emphasizes his overt role as narrator. Nevertheless, due to his personal involvement in the story, the credibility of Dave's narration is indeed questionable. But Dave's emotional struggle over writing the story down, under the invisible pressure of Lulu's presence, seems to remedy the unreliable nature of his status as an autodiegetic narrator.

The novel *Heroes* is narrated entirely by Francis in the first person, and thus he is an autodiegetic narrator. Francis begins the story by identifying and introducing himself to readers: "My name is Francis Joseph Cassavant and I have just returned to Frenchtown in Monument and the war is over and I have no face" (p.1). He thus makes himself overt as a narrator. The credibility of Francis's narration is questionable because of his participation in the story. In order to redress the likely unreliability, the mirror trick is used to mitigate the narrator's presence, as in the following passage:

> Before going to bed, I stand in front of the mirror in the bathroom. My hair is a mess as usual, thin in some spots, thick in others. For some reason, my hair began to fall out in clumps my first few days in the hospital in France and it has grown back the same way. (pp. 8-9)

Through use of the mirror trick, the narrative is made to seem authentic without any narrative mediation. As a result, narrative reliability is secured.

As illustrated above, in the first-person accounts of Cormier's YA novels, the autodiegetic narrator tends to be overt and unreliable. In some cases, the intrinsic unreliability of autodiegetic narration does not diminish the textual credibility, but reflects the predicament of the hero/heroine-narrator and invites the reader's sympathy for him/her. Consequently, in Cormier's YA fiction, narrative unreliability is better viewed as a device to develop themes than as a technical flaw.

Along with the overt reliable heterodiegetic narrator in authorial narration and the overt unreliable autodiegetic narrator in first-person narration, a third type of narrator in Cormier's fiction is the invisible narrator in figural narration.

The Invisible Narrator in Figural Narration

A figural narrative presents the story as seen and spoken directly through the characters without the mediation of a narrator so that the narrator seems to be invisible. In figural narration, Cormier uses the mirror trick to render the narrator covert. A typical example is seen as Barney, the protagonist in *The Bumblebee Flies Anyway*, looks into the mirror: "Barney squinted at his reflection in the mirror. He wished he were good-looking like Mazzo. He thought of all the worlds he would have conquered, all the girls he would have impressed" (p. 33). Here the narration seems to flow out of Barney as a reflector character without any mediation.

In *Tenderness*, Eric's figural narration seems *narratorless* where the mirror trick is used to render the narration unmediated. Consider the passage: "Then he smiled, the sad, wistful smile he had practiced before the mirror, the little-boy smile that he knew would appear later on television screens and the front pages of newspapers" (pp. 108-109). The narration seems to be done through the reflector character Eric.

To sum up, three prototypes of narrators can be identified in Cormier's fiction. They are the overt, reliable, and heterodiegetic narrator in authorial narration, the overt, unreliable, and autodiegetic narrator in first-person narration, and the invisible narrator in figural narration. In some cases, an unreliable narrator was adopted out of the plot's need to reflect the predicament of the hero/heroine-narrator. Thus, the unreliable narrator does not diminish the textual credibility, but invites the reader's compassion for him/her. Viewed in this way, unreliability is better regarded as a narrative device to develop themes than as a technical defect.

Discourse

A fictional narrative consists of the narrator's and the characters' discourses (Dolezel, 1973). The narrator's discourse takes the form of diegetic statements about story events. In Cormier's YA novels, one salient variety of diegetic statements is "non-narrated written documents" (Chatman, 1978). Such documents as diaries, letters, and newspaper coverage can produce virtual reality in the text, as we will see later. As to the representation of characters' speech, several types have been identified: diegetic summary, less purely diegetic summary, indirect content paraphrase, indirect discourse, free indirect discourse, direct discourse, and free direct discourse (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002). Table 4.10 indicates that among these characters' discourses, two types occur frequently in Cormier's YA fiction, and each of these serves a specific function. That is, free indirect discourse is employed to generate polyvoality in the text, and free direct discourse is utilized to manifest a character's mentality.

Non-Narrated Written Documents Producing Virtual Reality

In Cormier's YA fiction, diegetic statements appear in the form of non-fictional documents like letters and newspaper coverage. The following is an example of such a document from *I Am the Cheese*:

> Adam looked down at a five-column headline that preceded a long news story. He didn't want to read the story. The headline told him all he needed to know:
> BLOUNT REPORTER, WIFE, CHILD
> KILLED IN CRASH ON HIGHWAY
>
> (pp. 134-135)

The fabricated news regarding the death of Adam's family is presented as if it really happened to enhance its authenticity.

	Non-narrated written documents as diegetic discourse	Free indirect discourse (FID)	Free direct discourse (FDD)
The Chocolate War 1974		X	X
I Am the Cheese 1977	X		X
After the First Death 1979		X	X
The Bumble-bee Flies Anyway 1983		X	X
Beyond the Chocolate War 1985		X	X
Fade 1988	X		X
Other Bells for Us to Ring 1990			X
We All Fall Down 1991		X	X
Tunes for Bears to Dance To 1992		X	X
In the Middle of the Night 1995	X	X	X

(Continued)

Table 4.10 Narrative discourse

Table 4.10 Narrative discourse (Continued)

	Non-narrated written documents as diegetic discourse	Free indirect discourse (FID)	Free direct discourse (FDD)
Tenderness 1997	X	X	X
Heroes 1998	X		X
The Rag and Bone Shop 2001		X	X

In *Fade*, non-narrated written documents are also used as a variety of diegetic

report. One example is the letter which Paul leaves for his literary agent, Meredith:

> By the time you read this, dear Meredith, I will be dead, probably for many years.
> (See what faith I have in you – gambling that you will outlive me by that long a
> time?) Make of this [manuscript] what you will. My thanks for everything.
>
> <div align="right">Paul (p. 162)</div>

This brief note functions in at least two ways. It works as a diegetic transition to connect

the novel's initial chapter of Paul's fading story with the Susan chapter. This note also

establishes itself as fictional reality in the text to reinforce the validity of Paul's story as a

realistic and autobiographical novel.

Along with the letter, newspaper clippings are also used in this novel. The

following example is about the death of Rudolphe Toubert:

<div align="center">

LEADS DWINDLING
IN MURDER CASE;
SEARCH FRUITLESS

</div>

The search for Herve Boisseneau and the knife allegedly used in the three-week-old murder of Rudolphe Toubert has reached a virtual dead end, police announced today . . . (p. 216)

This newspaper report reinforces the illusion that Paul used the fade to kill Rudolphe Toubert so that it is unlikely that the weapon will be located. Another newspaper clipping is posted at the novel's end to suggest the arrival of a new, evil fader, "a madman unleashed on the world" (p. 310):

<div align="center">

MYSTERY BLAST KILLS 75:
SECOND TRAGEDY IN WEEK

</div>

SHERWOOD, N.Y. (AP) – A mysterious explosion in a chemical plant here Tuesday killed *75* workers and injured 23 others in the second major tragedy to hit this city of 11,000 in a week. On Friday night, 20 students and 3 teachers died when fire swept the Sherwood High School gymnasium during the Senior Prom.

The causes of the explosion and fire have not been determined. Police Chief Herman Barnaby said that "foul play is suspected in both cases."

"We are baffled," admitted Henry Tewksbury, plant manager of ABC Chemicals, Inc. "Because of the volatile nature of the chemicals, we maintain the strictest security in the world. Our experts tell us it was impossible for anyone to penetrate our security without being observed. That person would have had to be invisible." (pp. 308-309)

Again, this newspaper clipping is helpful in constituting the fictional reality in the text and strengthens the possibility that Paul's account of the fade is fact, not fantasy.

The following example from *In the Middle of the Night* is an anonymous letter concerning the fire tragedy at the Globe Theater to the newspaper editor:

To the Editor:

The city of Wickburg should be ashamed of itself for not pursuing further the investigation of the disaster at the Globe Theater on October 31. The probe seemed to die along with the death of the theater owner. But there was another person involved in this needless tragedy, the only person other than the theater owner who was in the theater in the months prior to the collapse of the balcony. . . . "Case closed," the commissioner said after the death of Mr. Zarbor. This case will never be closed until justice is served.

<div align="right">

D. C. Wickburg (p. 89)

</div>

This letter protests the verdict in the case of John Paul and reflects the public's

resentment over the verdict. This form of diegetic statement functions well as a realistic

representation of the fictional world.

Along with the letter to the editor in *In the Middle of the Night*, the narrative

statement also takes the form of newspaper coverage to narrate the past event. The

following is an example:

<div style="text-align:center">

DEATHS OF 22 CHILDREN
HAUNT AFTER 25 YEARS;
BARSTOW MAN HARASSED

By Les Albert
Telegram Staff

</div>

On a quiet street in Barstow, Mass. – 25 miles north of Wickburg – a man lives whose days and evenings are shadowed by a tragedy that occurred *25* years ago. The man's name is John Paul Colbert. The tragedy was the collapse of the balcony in the venerable Globe Theater in downtown Wickburg on Halloween afternoon, which took the lives of 22 children. (p. 163)

Such a passage reads like virtual quotation, simulating reliability and objectivity, and thus

produces a sense of reality in the fictional world.

One special feature of *Tenderness* is that diegetic report takes the form of a

newspaper story. In the following example, the *Wickburg Telegram* reports on Lori, who

has continuously waited outside of Eric's house for a couple of days:

"Miss Anonymous" in the above photo has kept a daily vigil on Webster Avenue, where released murderer Eric Poole, 18, lives with his aunt, Phoebe Barns. The girl will not give her name or address, and only smiles enigmatically in answer to most questions. (pp. 120-121)

Through this form of newspaper report, the story event is made to seem realistic and

objective.

In *Heroes*, diegetic report appears in the form of newspaper headlines such as "LT.

LASALLE EARNS SILVER STAR" and "LASALLE CAPTURES ENEMY, SAVES

FELLOW MARINES" (p. 52). Such forged quotations not only bring life to a fictional

figure, but permit the narrative discourse to sound realistic and authoritative. This type of

narrative discourse represents a virtual world in the text.

Free Indirect Discourse Generating Polyvocality

Syntactically, free indirect discourse (FID) maintains some of the formal features

of indirect discourse. Semantically, FID reproduces the characters' feelings, thoughts,

and perceptions through their own viewpoints. FID allows the characters to speak for

themselves, and thus it sounds like utterances genuinely coming from the characters. The

diverse speech manners of the characters enrich the textual voice; the text becomes

polyphonic without a narrator's domination.

In *The Chocolate War*, Jerry's laughing at his cowardice is represented in free

indirect discourse, as the following passage illustrates:

> He had stolen away from the school, not wanting anyone to witness his painful
> passage down the street to the bus stop. He kept his collar up, like a criminal, like
> those men in newscasts being herded into court. Funny, somebody does violence
> to you but you're the one who has to hide, as if you're the criminal. (pp. 214-215)

Woven inside this diegetic summary, the free indirect discourse "Funny, somebody does

violence to you but you're the one who has to hide, as if you're the criminal" represents

another voice which emerges from Jerry's inner mind, along with the narrator's. In this

way, the free indirect discourse creates bivocality in the text. The following is another

example of free indirect discourse:

> The locker had an air of absence, of being unoccupied. He thought, maybe I
> should look in a mirror, see if I'm still here. But he was still here, all right. His

cheek still stung with pain. Staring at the inside of the locker, like looking into an upright coffin, he felt as though someone was trying to obliterate him, remove all traces of his existence, his presence in the school. Or was he becoming paranoid? (p. 224)

The last line obviously comes from Jerry's self-questioning about his presence at school when he is purposely ignored by his teachers and classmates because of his refusal to sell the chocolate. Jerry's self-questioning colors the usual narrative voice with a pathetic tone, creating polyphonic resonance in the text.

Although the even-numbered chapters of *After the First Death* are primarily narrated by a heterodiegetic narrator to create a summarizing report of a character's words or thoughts, this narrator does not dominate the entire voice of the text. This is because the narration is mediated through free indirect discourse which projects the idiosyncratic voice of the individual character, as the following passage shows:

I'm no good at this kind of stuff, she thought. I'm not heroic, not brave. She glanced backward at the children. Maybe she was risking their lives unnecessarily. For Christ's sake, Kate, come on, she urged herself. Do it if you're going to do it. Don't do so much thinking. Do it. (pp. 156-157)

In this case, Kate projects her inner struggle over whether to start the bus or not. The remarks "Don't do so much thinking. Do it." echo back Kate's own voice so clear as to convey her agonizing emotions while making decisions. This voice indeed strengthens the story tension and at the same time earns the reader's sympathy.

In *The Bumblebee Flies Anyway*, free indirect discourse is used to represent a character's individual voice, along with the narrator's. In the following passage, Barney's speech takes the form of free indirect discourse:

Better lie down, Barney, take it easy, conserve your strength. The invader's here, all right, but nobody knows how fast it will move. Got to play a waiting game

now. Tempo, rhythm. Said the words aloud: "Tempo, rhythm." Felt better saying them, for some reason. Like a prayer. "Tempo, rhythm." (p. 206)

The passage conveys the pain Barney feels when confronting the torture of the disease.

His repeated phrase indicates his inner strength in the face of death.

In the passage below, free indirect discourse following the diegetic report

represents the unspoken utterances in Cassie's mind:

Before returning to the Hacienda that Sunday night, she wondered whether she should tell Alberto, risking his ridicule and disbelief. If she couldn't tell him, then she should at least warn him to be careful. Take care of yourself, buddy. Think twice before sliding into third base or climbing another mountain. Whither thou goest, I will go. But she didn't tell him anything. (p. 163)

It is through free indirect discourse that the hesitant and pitiable voice that conveys

Cassie's worry about her twin brother, Alberto, can be so adequately expressed.

Free indirect discourse is also employed in *Beyond the Chocolate War*, as the

following passage demonstrates:

Staring into the future, next year, beyond. Him, Bunting, in command of the entire school. Stooges at his beck and call. An army at his disposal. No rules except those he made up. The boss. More than that. Like a dictator, for crissake. Beautiful. (p. 278)

This free indirect discourse gives the reader immediate access to Bunting's inner thought,

to his relishing the pleasures of commanding Trinity High.

In *We All Fall Down*, free indirect discourse is used to give the reader immediate

access to the character's innermost thought. The following is an example, with the

diegetic report going first:

Later, Buddy realized he had been stupid to have carried the bottle while on a date with Jane. Before leaving home, he had, on impulse, slipped the bottle into his jacket pocket. (p. 147)

Then this diegetic report switches to free indirect discourse:

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> Just in case. In case of what? He didn't know, But he was jumpy. Had to be prepared. Prepared for what? For anything. In case. In case of what? In case Karen suddenly recovered and Jane wanted to take him to the hospital to meet her. In case Harry double-crossed him, made a phone call to Jane, for instance. In case, for crissakes. (p. 147)

This free indirect discourse simulates a voice coming from a corner of Buddy's mind, projecting his feeling of helplessness when his relationship with Jane falls into crisis.

In *Tunes for Bears to Dance To*, free indirect discourse is inserted within diegetic report to create a double-voiced effect, as in the following passage:

> Flakes of wood fell away. Henry became aware for the first time of the smells surrounding the bench, the clean smell of wood shavings and the sharp odors of shellac and dyes, a confusion of smells that made his nostrils itch. A shape began to form in the wood. Did he have talent, after all? Then a slip of the knife, a brief slicing downward, and Henry saw blood spurt from his finger before he felt the pain. (p. 36)

The question "Did he have talent, after all?" is actually Henry's own voice questioning his talent. Thus, this question in the format of free indirect discourse ruptures the narrator's dominance by introducing Henry's voice to the narrative.

In the Middle of the Night is also partially comprised of free indirect discourse. In the following example, free direct discourse immediately follows the dialogue between Donna and Denny:

> "I'm thinking of starting a petition," he said. "Maybe you'll sign it."
> "What kind of petition?"
> "A petition to get the power companies to put the wires underground. So that they wouldn't hack the trees anymore." Was he overdoing this tree thing? (p. 107)

The last line of free indirect discourse presents Denny's self-questioning about the appropriateness of initiating such a topic in his conversation with Donna. This discursive form creates another voice emerging from Denny's mind, implying his sense of uneasiness in socializing with Donna.

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Cormier also uses free indirect discourse in *Tenderness*. Such is the case when

Eric speaks in his mind in response to Lori's inquiry concerning what had become of the

girl with whom he walked into the woods, only to come back alone later:

> She had doomed herself by remembering the girl and it didn't matter now whether
> she was baiting him, playing a role designed by Lieutenant Proctor. She knew
> about Alicia Hunt, could link him with her. She had witnessed them together the
> day Alicia Hunt disappeared. In fact, he realized sadly that Lori Cranston was
> completely innocent. (pp. 168-169)

The word "doomed" implies Eric's ruthlessness in planning to kill Lori, who might serve

as a witness against him. Yet, the remark "he realized sadly" suggests Eric's reluctance to

pursue such a scheme. This free indirect discourse coming from Eric's inner being

reflects his contradictory character traits: He can be both brutal and merciful.

In *The Rag and Bone Shop*, free indirect discourse is aligned with diegetic report.

The following passage provides such an example:

> Jason's own lips were trembling now as he opened his eyes and stared at the
> smoking alarm on the ceiling. Should he have gone into all those details with the
> detective? Or were Alicia and Brad just having another one of their squabbles?
> Brother-and-sister stuff. Would he have looked stupid if he had told the detective
> about it and it had turned out to be nothing at all? He had looked stupid too many
> times in his life. Anyway, did it all really matter? With Alicia dead, that
> overwhelming knowledge giving him shivers, what did an argument amount to,
> anyway? (p. 39)

Immediately following the first line of diegetic description, the free indirect discourse

transmits Jason's self questioning after he talks to the detective about Alicia's death. In

this way, Jason's own voice rises to the surface. Through this free indirect discourse, his

voice contributes to the polyphonic effect in the text.

The available examples indicate that free indirect discourse is frequently used in a

third-person narrative context in Cormier's YA fiction. Free direct discourse is also

blended with other types of novelistic discourse in the text. Consequently, free indirect

discourse works well to generate an effect of polyphony and enriches the textual voice.

Free Direct Discourse Manifesting Mentality

Free direct discourse takes the form of discourse "shorn of its conventional

orthographic cues" (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002, p. 111). In Cormier's YA fiction, free direct

discourse usually appears as interior monologue, which is utilized to represent a

character's mental processes of thinking and perceiving. The character's flow of

consciousness is manifested in this type of discourse.

In *The Chocolate War*, free direct discourse is occasionally embedded within the

diegetic summary of the story event, as the passage below illustrates:

> Reaching inside, he grabbed a marble, concealed it in the palm of his hand. He
> withdrew his hand, held the arm straight out, calmly now, without shiver or
> tremor. He opened his hand. The marble was white. The corner of Archie's mouth
> twitched as the tension of his body relaxed. He had beaten them again. He had
> won again. I am Archie. I cannot lose. (p. 38)

Along with the narrator's voice, the last two lines convey Archie's inner thoughts of

pride and triumph. The following passage offers another example of Jerry's interior

monologue implanted in the diegetic summary:

> He listened for night sounds. His father snored in the next room. A car gunned
> along the street outside. He'd love to be gunning along the street, going
> someplace, anywhere. *I'm not going to sell the chocolates.* Boy. (p. 121)

Jerry's interior monologue "I'm not going to sell the chocolates" provides an inside view

into his mind. This line gives a strong impression of Jerry's determination to defy The

Vigils and, at the same time, adds a passionate tone to the narrator's monotonous voice.

Another instance of Jerry's interior monologue occurs when he questions himself

about why he keeps practicing football:

> Know what? he asked himself, a game he played sometimes.
> *What*?
> I'm going to make the team.
> *Dreamer. Dreamer.*
> Not a dream: it's the truth. (pp. 4-5)

This interior monologue presents the uninterrupted flow of contradictory emotions in Jerry's heart. Jerry splits himself between being idealistic and being realistic. Jerry is not of a muscular type to be qualified as football player, but he has a strong will to make the team.

The following passage is another example of Jerry's self-questioning verbalized through interior monologue:

> WHY DID YOU DO IT?
> I don't know.
> *Have you gone crazy?*
> Maybe I have.
> *It was a crazy thing to do.*
> I know, I know.
> *The way that "No" popped out of your mouth - why?*
> I don't know. (p. 119)

Here, Jerry asks himself why he objects to the chocolate sale. No definite answer is given, but the raw feeling of Jerry's inner struggle over the sale is exposed through this interior monologue.

In *I Am the Cheese*, Adam's first-person narrative consists of interior monologue, as displayed in the following passage:

> A car passes, a station wagon with wooden panels, and the driver looks back as if he might stop. But he doesn't. I wish he had stopped. I could have thrown the bike into the back of the car and have driven along warm and dry inside. But I'm also glad that he didn't stop. "You are a nut," I tell myself, my voice sounding strange in my ears. (p. 58)

Another speaking voice comes from Adam's mind, highlighting his inner hesitation and apprehension. This voice from Adam's other self takes a further step to challenge him in the following interior dialogue:

> "I'm going back," I yell.
> "No, you're not," I answer.
> My voice is lost in the wind and the rain.
> "All right, all right – I am going to Rutterburg, Vermont," I sing out, lifting my voice above the sound of the rain. (p. 58)

Through this interior monologue, Adam's inner uneasiness is fully transmitted.

In *After the First Death*, interior monologue is present in Ben's narrative and makes his narration distinctive as compared to General Marchand's. Here is one typical example:

> Just think how I would have saved the day – and myself – that way.
> And my father most of all.
> But how many times is a person allowed to die?
> Anyway, my parents are scheduled to arrive here late this morning. Eleven o'clock to be exact. (p. 5)

The flow of diegetic report, which narrates Ben's verbalized thoughts on how he might have ended his life when he was sent to the terrorists as a pawn, is unexpectedly interrupted by one sentence of interior monologue: "But how many times is a person allowed to die?" This question implies Ben's unconscious response to death at the point of narration.

The following is another example of interior monologue representing a view into Ben's inner mind:

> No more room on this particular postcard.
> Call it amnesia.
> Emotional amnesia, maybe.
> Or whatever the hell you wish.

Who the hell are you anyway, out there looking over my shoulder as I write this? I feel you there, watching, waiting to get in. Or is anybody there? (p. 14)

Without any logical sequence, this interior monologue represents Ben's chaotic emotions. In this passage, the imaginary "you" may be Ben's father who is planning to visit him at the moment of Ben's narration, although Ben is reluctant to meet him. Ben's anger and anxiety are conveyed through this interior monologue.

In *The Bumblebee Flies Anyway,* free direct discourse is used to capture a character's innermost mentality. Barney's self-questioning of his own identity is conveyed through interior monologue: "But what is Barney? Barney who? . . . Barney who? Not that question. What question? Who am I? Worse: What am I?" (p. 86) The unstoppable flow of Barney's interior monologue gives a raw impression of his anxiety and helplessness.

In *Beyond the Chocolate War*, interior monologue is also utilized as in the following passage:

Ah, but that isn't all, Obie, is it? You know what you're planning to do. And that's where the crazy part comes in, the insane part. Insane, Obie baby. You are out of your mind. You can't do what you're planning to do. Not in a high school in Monument, Massachusetts, in the last quarter of the twentieth century. (p. 245)

One distinct voice coming from Obie's inner self questions his act of retaliating against Archie, in the format of interior monologue. This interior monologue not only conveys the vivid conscious flow of his mind, but also exposes Obie's nervousness and apprehension about carrying out his revenge on Archie.

In *Fade*, free direct discourse is constantly employed to represent how the protagonist, Paul, agonizes over the use of the fade. In the following passage, Paul argues with himself about whether he should use the fade to peek at his beloved, Page:

> No, I won't do it.
> *Why not?*
> Because.
> *Because why?*
> Because I don't want to fade. I don't want the pause and the flash of pain and the cold.
> *Don't you want to see her again? Enter her house, stand next to her, go to her bedroom, watch her sleeping, maybe see her undressing?*
> No, I don't want to do that. I don't want to do any of those things.
> *Yes, you do. Of course you do.*
> The voice was sly and insistent, . . .
> *C'mon Paul. Let's go. It's getting dark. You can be there, at her house, in a few minutes.*
> No . . .
> *She's leaving tomorrow. You may never see her again. Or she might not remember you next time she sees you. Might look at you blankly and say: Who's that?* (p. 124)

This interior monologue effectively captures Paul's other voice emerging from behind his surface character of integrity. This novelistic discourse renders the text double-voiced.

Interior monologue also occurs in *Other Bells for Us to Ring*. An innocent voice comes from Darcy's inner mind, questioning the validity of the baptism Kathleen Mary has practiced on her: "A bit of holy water can't make you a Catholic, can it? Can it?" (p. 71). The following is another example of Darcy's interior monologue, expressing her worry about the obligations of being a Catholic:

> All the things Catholics are supposed to do. Going to mass on Sunday. Confession and communion. If I were a Catholic, I would have to do those things, wouldn't I? But you're not a Catholic, are you? Of course not. And I have no intention of becoming one. Well, then, what's bothering you so much? (pp. 78-79)

Darcy's troubled mind full of doubt and uncertainty is vividly exposed through the interior monologue.

In *We All Fall Down*, Cormier also uses free direct discourse to present a character's stream of consciousness. Consider the following example, where free direct discourse is inserted between the lines of direct discourse:

> "Remember this, Buddy. What happened the other night, you enjoyed it. You got your kicks. You're probably having conscience trouble now, but you had fun that night." . . .
> "Right, Buddy?" That cool persistent voice.
> "Right, Harry" Buddy said, capitulating. *But I didn't pee against the wall. And I didn't attack the girl.*
> "Good, Buddy. Which means you're one of us."
> *But I didn't help the girl, either, did I? Did not come to her rescue like a hero. Some hero, Buddy.* (p. 63)

In the italicized lines, another voice repressed beneath Buddy's consciousness speaks out in response to Harry's accusation that he enjoyed the vandalism. In his mind, Buddy strongly protests against Harry's charge, but he seems unable to refute Harry since he actually did nothing to save Karen when she was assaulted. In other words, Buddy committed a sin of omission. Buddy's affliction over such an offense is revealed through his interior monologue.

In *Tunes for Bears to Dance To* as well, free direct discourse mixes with diegetic report. The following is an example:

> *Don't think. Do it.*
> He picked up the mallet. Raised it above his head. . . . Fastening his grip on the mallet as he held it aloft, he looked down at the village.
> *Such a simple thing. You don't have to do anything. Let the mallet do it. Let it drop, like an atomic bomb falling from a plane.*
> Blood drained from his arms above his head into his shoulders, flooding his heart, causing it to thump dangerously in his chest.
> *Do it.*
> But could not.
> Could not move either. (pp. 88-89)

The italicized utterances representing another side of Henry come out of his inner mind and urge him to tear down the wooden village. This blending of Henry's interior monologue and the narrator's diegetic report efficiently captures the moment when Henry falls into an agonizing state of struggle with his conscience over whether to destroy the wooden village or not.

Henry's verbal response to other characters often comes in the form of interior monologue. The following passage is such an example:

> "It's hot out," Henry said, raising his voice a bit, speaking as if his father was deaf. . . . Slowing gathering the cards into a neat pile, his father looked up at him. "I'm sorry, Henry," he said. Sorry for what? The heat? This tenement? His long silences? (p. 43).

Henry's interior monologue "Sorry for what? The heat? This tenement? His long silences?" questions his father's intention, reflecting his dissatisfaction with his father, but he is unable to voice his feelings. The following is one more example of Henry's interior monologue:

> "Such a small thing I'm asking you to do. Look at all the rewards for doing it." *If it's such a small thing, why is it so important to you?* Henry asked, but silently. Afraid of the answer, afraid of what the grocer might say. (p. 81)

Henry does not dare ask about Hairston's motivation for ordering him to destroy Mr. Levine's art piece of a wooden village. Henry's perplexity and uncertainty about Hairston's demand surfaces in his mind, but he is unable to give them expression. Thus, his silent questioning appears as interior monologue.

Free direct discourse flows through the text of *In the Middle of the Night*. In the following passage, interior monologue follows the tagged direct discourse:

> "Hush, hush," Ellie said. "You did nothing. . . ."
> *But I did something wrong.*

The matches.
The fire. (p. 73)

Lying in bed after the fire injury and unable to verbally respond to nurse Ellie's comforting, John Paul turns to the form of interior monologue to express his self-blame for the fire. This silent monologue intensifies the undercurrents beneath Ellie's spoken discourse.

In the following conversation between Denny and Donna, direct discourse and free direct discourse are woven together:

"Why have you moved so much? Because of your father's job?"
He nodded. "My father gets restless." Big lie. "He likes to travel." Bigger lie.
"But he wants to settle down here in Barstow." This one was the truth. "He has a new job that he likes, with opportunities for the future." Half-lie, half-truth.
(pp. 108-109)

The comments following Denny's responses to Donna's inquiry are obviously not made by a third-person narrator, but by Denny himself. If the narrator made such comments, it would sound redundant because the previous narrative has already established that Denny's family moves frequently due to the harassment of the fire victims. Actually, the comments are from Denny who is talking to himself about his own dishonesty. Besides projecting the double, contradictory voices in Denny's mind, this interior monologue underscores Denny's inner struggle over how to deal with his family crisis: to cover or to confront it.

In *Tenderness*, Lori tries to comfort herself when her mother forgets to celebrate her twelfth birthday: "*Snap out of it. A birthday cake is not a big thing anymore. You are no longer a child but almost a teenager*" (p. 88). Lori's interior monologue is fitting to display her maturity, her evolution from childhood into adolescence. Another instance of

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Lori's interior monologue suggests the further development of her mind. No single perspective dominates in her thinking any more. Another voice comes from Lori's inner self, telling her what to do when she is not sure whether she should stay with Eric or not after Eric fails to suffocate her with a pillow: "*What you should do is get out of here, wait for him to fall asleep, then slip away, as far as you can go*" (p. 191). In this interior monologue, another Lori seems to step aside as an objective observer to offer suggestions.

Examples of interior monologue can also be found in *Heroes*. The other part of Francis questions the way he chooses to end his life because he regrets taking no action to stop Larry from raping Nicole: "*Did you hear what Lefty's son did last night, jumped to his death from the steeple of St. Jude's?* " (p. 104). This self-questioning is expressed in the form of an interior monologue which reflects Francis's emotional turmoil. Another instance of interior monologue is the incident where Francis doubts Nicole's response to his question:

> "How about you, Nicole? How are you doing?" . . .
> "Fine," she says. . . .
> *You don't sound fine.* (p. 126)

Francis dares not express his mind and thus voices his doubt in interior monologue. Francis's unfinished speech in direct discourse with Nicole turns into interior monologue:

> "I wanted to see you again. To tell you that I'm sorry, too, for what happened. To see if . . ."
> "If I was all right? To see if I had survived?" That bitter twist back in her voice again.
> *To see if maybe you could still be my girl. Which could maybe change my mind about the gun in my duffel bag.* (p. 128)

The italicized lines imply that Francis is afraid to express his love for Nicole and so he only speaks to himself.

Free direct discourse is also used in *The Rag and Bone Shop*. Consider how Jason talks to himself in interior monologue:

> *But I didn't do anything.*
> *Yes, I did. . . .*
> Could *never* do it, could never do something like that. Never.
> Never?
> But if you said you did it, maybe you *could* do it, maybe you could do something terrible like that. Maybe deep inside in that secret place of yours you really knew that you could do it. (p. 152)

After being framed into confession, Jason falls into a state of bewilderment over what he literally said and what he actually did. This interior monologue represents his cognitive and emotional turmoil. This interior monologue captures his inner confusion between reality and delusion.

In *The Rag and Bone Shop*, interior monologue is also woven into the regular diegetic report to make the character's secret inner world known. The following offers such an example:

> Astonishingly, the boy seemed to be suggesting that the girl's brother was somehow implicated in the girl's murder. That they quarreled on the day she was killed, which could provide a motive. Trent recalled that the brother had an alibi, although he knew that alibis could be manufactured. Was it worth looking into? *Should* it be looked into? If it was, the present situation could be disrupted. And it mustn't be. *Jason Dorrant is my subject, not the girl's brother*. (p. 116)

In this passage, Trent's interior monologue, which follows immediately after the diegetic statement, initiates such vital questions as "Was it worth looking into? Should it be looked into?" Trent's monologue indicates his doubt over whether Jason is the real killer. But he eventually sacrifices his conscience, determined to force Jason into making a false confession. The mixture of Trent's subjective voice with the third-person narrator's objective tone enhances the dramatic tension of the text.

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In summary, in Cormier's young adult novels, free direct discourse appears as a character's interior monologue. Through interior monologue, Cormier represents the mental processes of the character's thoughts and perceptions. The character's mentality is laid bare, so a strong impression of raw experience is given in the text (Dujardin, 1991). Furthermore, Cormier also uses non-narrated written documents as one variety of diegetic discourse to produce virtual reality in the text. Additionally, Cormier draws on free indirect discourse to enhance the textual polyphony. These various types of novelistic discourse serve important aesthetic functions and contribute to the complexity of speech representation in Cormier's texts.

CHPATER 5

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter offers a summary of the study and significant conclusions drawn

from the analysis and interpretation of Cormier's young adult (YA) novels presented in

Chapter 4. It also provides recommendations for further research.

Young adult literature has been criticized for its short history and literary

simplicity. Indeed, many books published for young adult readers today fall short when

examined in terms of the literary qualities of the works in the literary canon. Especially,

with respect to its narrative technique, young adult fiction might be criticized as

uncomplicated and unsophisticated. However, Robert Cormier's young adult novels, I

would argue, stand out because they go beyond this simplicity. Cormier employs much

more sophisticated narrative strategies than those common to the conventional YA books.

The primary task of the present study has been to identify, locate, and analyze the

various narrative techniques in Cormier's YA novels. This study also raised a second

question concerning the aesthetic value of the narrative technique that Cormier employed.

A third focus of this study has been the ways in which Cormier's narrative strategies

revolutionized the conventions for telling YA stories. Through a comparative analysis of

Cormier's novels, this study has demonstrated that Cormier's manipulation of his narrative goes beyond the traditional omniscient point of view to the use of multiple voices and perspectives embedded within sophisticated thematic development.

The researcher located, identified, and analyzed the narrative features of all of Cormier's YA novels in light of contemporary narrative theory. The study was conducted in the following manner. The first step was the initial reading of all of Cormier's YA novels. Several salient textual features emerged from the seminal reading. The next step was to classify and examine the textual features, especially with regard to narrative techniques. To that end, the researcher developed a master coding list of narrative elements, primarily based on Rimmon-Kenan's (2002) analytic scheme and including three major aspects of narrative fiction, story, text, and narration, each with its related subcategories. After the characteristics of Cormier's narration had been identified, the final step was to discuss how the selection of narrative techniques was in turn related to thematic explication. Themes and narrative techniques were understood as the interplay of fictional elements.

Textual Features

This section serves to answer the study's first research question: What particular narrative techniques does Cormier employ in his YA fiction? From among the various narrative techniques of Cormier examined in the previous chapter, three are highlighted here in terms of their aesthetic value: (a) multiple focalizations, (b) free indirect discourse, and (c) textual gaps and narratorial delay. These narrative devices stand out in Cormier's YA fiction and produce significant artistic effects. The multiple focalizations in

Cormier's novels achieve a Bakhtinian dialogue; free indirect discourse generates a polyphonic effect in his text; and the gaps and delay create chilling suspense.

Bakhtinian dialogue achieved through multiple focalization.

Multiple focalizations are widely employed in Cormier's YA novels in that the conventional omniscient narrator is effaced and the story is presented through diverse characters' perspectives. Since the narrator recedes behind the scenes, the characters are given the chance to speak as individuals and to confront, criticize, and comment on each other. In this way, a Bakhtinian dialogue is achieved in the text. Cormier's YA fiction displays the dialogical nature of a good novel as defined by Bakhtin (1981). As the character's diverse points of view are foregrounded, the reader is encouraged to reconsider the fictional world in the light of numerous possible interpretations of its reality.

Polyphonic effects produced by free indirect discourse.

Cormier frequently uses free indirect discourse, which conveys the characters' thoughts, perceptions, and impressions as if spoken by themselves without a narrative medium. In the novels, free indirect discourse is woven between diegetic report and summary. Consequently, the characters' voices merge with the narrator's to produce a polyphonic effect during the course of narration. A proliferation of polyvocality in the text is achieved.

Suspense generated by means of gaps and delay.

Cormier is a skilled writer of suspense. His YA fiction is well crafted to create suspense through narrative gaps and delay. Cormier uses internal prolepsis, which leaves out some details of occurrences between the current and future events, to produce a

temporary information gap in the text, and thus the reader's interest, attention, and curiosity are maintained until the suspended gap is filled. Additionally, Cormier uses narrative delay to create textual suspension. He consistently slows down the pace of narration either by digression or by scene change.

Correspondence between Form and Meaning

This section serves to answer the study's second research question: Why has Cormier selected a given technique in his YA fiction to deal with a specific theme? A possible answer to this question is that Cormier tends to match his selection of narrative devices with his thematic explication. Narrative manipulation and thematic illustration are well combined in his YA works. In other words, how Cormier tells his story is essential to the meaning of the story. For example, in *The Chocolate War*, Cormier employs multiple focalizations to present different YA characters' various reactions to the evil power. The protagonist, Jerry Renault, dares to stand up for what he thinks is right, and his schoolmate, Howie Anderson, claims to support Jerry in his refusal to participate in the school chocolate sale. But most of the other people in the novel choose to keep silent over The Vigils. Even Jerry's good friend, Goober, avoids confrontation with the Vigils at all costs, even though he hates their evil and cruelty. By means of the technique of multiple viewpoints on evil, the novel suggests that evil prevails because of people's cruelty and cowardice and that it lives on people's silence and indifference.

Cormier also uses multiple focalizations in *Beyond the Chocolate War*, a sequel to *The Chocolate War*, to demonstrate why and how evil exists in the world. Evil exists because of people's indifference. For example, when Obie attempts to identify himself as "one of the good guys" (p. 48), Archie reminds him of his own evil. Obie is not simply

the secretary of The Vigils, but carries out the task of "finding the victims" (p. 263). Archie further points out to Obie, "Nobody forced you to do anything, buddy. Nobody made you join the Vigils. . . . You could have said *no* anytime, anytime at all. But you didn't. . . . you have free choice, buddy . . . and you did the choosing" (pp. 263-264). Therefore, evil prevails because people choose to tolerate it. Archie is simply "an easy scapegoat . . . for you [Obie] and everybody else at Trinity" (p. 264). The character of Goober also shows a tolerance for evil. Goober once carried out a Vigils' assignment which led to the destruction of Room Nineteen because he lacked the moral courage to defy their orders. Although Goober feels regret for what he did, he still lacks the courage to stand up against the evil. He thus chooses to run away from the evil of The Vigils by transferring to Monument High.

In contrast to Obie and Goober, Jerry and later Carter try to defy the evil of The Vigils. After his fight with Janza in the alley, Jerry changes his mind about entering Monument High and decides to return to Trinity High and outlast the evil. Likewise, running the risk of stigmatizing himself as a traitor, Carter chooses to tip off Brother Leon about the Vigils plan to humiliate the bishop when he visits Trinity High.

Cormier's compelling technique of multiple focalizations creates a simultaneous display of different characters' reactions to the sinister forces. Only Jerry decides to fight back against the evil. Goober chooses to come to a compromise with it, and most of their schoolmates remain silent or even indifferent to it. In this way, Cormier illustrates that evil prevails primarily because people do nothing to stop it. It is this sin of omission that fuels evil. This recognition is not told directly but is shown through multiple focalizations. In other words, rather than summarize a moral lesson regarding evil, Cormier attempts to

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show how evil breeds. The technique of multiple focalizations helps Cormier explicate the theme of good and evil with efficiency.

Multiple focalizations also enable Cormier to position readers above the story, since they are granted a panoramic and omniscient view over the characters. The readers might think of themselves as superior to the characters as they read the novel; however, by the time they finish the novel, they might find themselves to be merely part of the story's silent majority that tolerates the existence of evil. When the readers close the novel with this knowledge, the novel's instructional function is successfully accomplished.

Multiple focalizations are also used in *We All Fall Down*. The novel's focalization regularly switches among the focal characters Jane, Buddy, Harry, and The Avenger. In this way, the topic of juvenile delinquency is explored from various perspectives. No simple dichotomies of right/wrong and good/evil are defined in this novel. Harry and his stooges, Marty and Randy, regard the act of trashing Jane's house as fun and have no sense of guilt. Even in the aftermath, Harry can plead *nolo contendere* to declare himself innocent, "admit[ting] to the facts of the case [of house trashing] without admitting guilt" (p. 108). He is merely placed on probation by the judge and lives his life free from any moral burden.

On the other hand, Buddy lives a miserable life after the house trashing. Although he did not participate in the assault on Jane's younger sister, Karen, during the house trashing, Buddy did nothing to stop the violence Harry, Marty, and Randy inflicted on Karen. Buddy seems to be innocent and evil-free, but in his own mind, he is guilty of "the sins of omission," that is, "the sins of doing nothing" (p. 81). Although he receives no

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legal punishment, he blames himself conscientiously. Even worse, his love for Jane is denied after Jane finds out that he took part in trashing her house. The gray zone between right and wrong and good and evil is efficiently presented through the device of multiple focalizations. This narrative technique empowers Cormier's novel through its compelling capability to illustrate the theme by showing a vivid case rather than preaching a moral lesson.

In the Middle of the Night is also narrated from multiple focalizations to explicate the ambiguous polarities of guilt/innocence and accusation/forgiveness. The story is intensified by the diverse characters' responses to these oppositions. Although he is legally declared innocent in the incident of a tragic fire at the Globe Theater, John Paul has silently tolerated the accusations of people who blame him for years, including Lulu's harassing in-the-middle-of-the-night telephone calls. John Paul blamed himself morally for his sin of omission, that is, his failure to take action in advance to prevent the tragedy, and thus serves as a scapegoat and a target for people's hatred and emotional pain. But at the beginning of the story, Denny, John Paul's son, is unable to understand his father's concern and considers fighting back. The issues of morality and conscience place father and son in confrontation. On the other hand, Lulu, victimized and blinded in the Globe fire tragedy, is obsessed with the need for vengeance. Dave, Lulu's younger brother, who also suffered from the fire, takes a liberal attitude toward this tragedy and even thwarts Lulu in her act of hurting Denny. The reactions of John Paul, Denny, Lulu, and Dave in the story provide multiple focalizations that illustrate thematic ambiguity, paradox, and dilemma.

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In addition to the use of multiple focalizations, Cormier uses variable focalization to explicate a theme. Take *After the First Death* for example. In this novel, he utilizes variable focalization to illustrate the paradox of innocence, deliberately juxtaposing the opposing viewpoints of Kate and Miro. Kate views Miro as a monster of terrorism. Miro criticizes Kate's American culture, defending his action of hijacking the bus as patriotic and heroic. Consequently, a dialogical debate on international terrorism and racial oppression appears in the text. Through the narratorial device of variable focalization, readers become onlookers "who, like the characters in the novel, must construct a meaning rather than absorb one that has been ready-made by the author" (Myszor, 1988, p. 86). The alternation between opposing points of view not only lets the readers feel the emotions of the different characters, but also invites them to make a balanced judgment on their actions.

As we have seen, some of Cormier's novels are narrated in either multiple or variable focalizations. Since this device allows efficient explication of the theme, form matches well with content in Cormier's novels. In the following section, I will demonstrate that the correspondence between Cormier's narrative manipulation and his thematic explication is strengthened by repetitive narration and manifold narrative strands.

One of the distinctive features of *I Am the Cheese* is the repetitive narration in the last chapter, where the first paragraph of the first page of Adam's journey to Rutterburg is reprinted. The novel ends where it began. This cyclic structure indicates that Adam will keep pedaling the bike year after year in the search for his identity. This bike trip will last until the moment when Adam is terminated. It also symbolically suggests that Adam's everlasting struggle against the implacable force of evil gives him human dignity and

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makes his fate more tragic. As Mertz (1992) contends, this novel achieves the integration of form and content into a whole.

Along with the repetitive narration, *I Am the Cheese* is structured in a mosaic fashion with triple narratives – namely, Adam's first-person narration, a third-person account, and the dramatic dialogue between Adam and Brint. The reader becomes engaged in these triple threads of narrative to make sense of the whole story, as much Adam goes on a quest for his self-identity. In other words, the complex narrative structure allows the reader to undergo the same experience that Adam does. As Nodelman (1983) points out, Cormier does a Number on his readers in the same way that Amy and Adam carry out the Numbers in the novel. The readers are deceived and misled into believing the wrong things and ignoring the right ones, only to discover at the end that they were fooled.

In *I Am the Cheese*, the complex structure of the triple narratives allows Cormier to deceive readers so that they will accept the truth of three falsehoods: Brint is a doctor, Adam is Adam, and Adam is on a bike ride to see his father (Nodelman, 1983). Cormier makes readers believe that Adam is mentally disturbed and under therapy because Brint sounds like a doctor or psychiatrist who is guiding Adam to rediscovery of his past and restoration of his identity. Readers believe what Brint says when he assures Adam: "I'm here to help you. . . . The medicine will help and I will help" (p. 55). However, readers begin to doubt Brint's role as they discover more blatant evidence of Brint's interest in specific information rather than in Adam himself as a person. Readers share Adam's doubt when he tells Brint that he sounds like an investigator: "It's as if you're searching for certain information – these specifics you're always talking about – and this

information seems to be more important than anything else about me" (p. 170). Then the truth of Adam's past is revealed to readers when Adam discovers that his real name is Paul Delmonte and his father's name is David Delmonte and that they have been living lies: "We – my mother and father and me – are living through a Number that's the biggest one of all" (p. 172). Meanwhile, Adam becomes convinced that Brint is "not a doctor at all" (p. 148).

However, even after learning about Adam's past and Brint's role, readers have no doubt about the bike ride. It is not until the end that the foremost deception in the novel is revealed: Adam's bike journey is sheer imagination. It never occurs to readers that the bike ride and the interview session are going on in approximately the same time frame. In this way, Cormier plays his trick on his readers twice. With this narrative device, he extends readers' disorientation through most of the novel and demands their deep involvement in the story.

Cormier tricks the reader into believing lies and then reveals the truths they hide because he wants the reader to undergo the same experience as Adam. Just as Adam has tried to figure out the deception in his life, past and present, so the reader has to figure out Cormier's narrative tricks. The final discovery is really a shock to the reader, but it is not as awful as Adam's. The reader can remain somewhat detached from the fictive world, but Adam is totally subject to the manipulation of either organized crime or the government. It is not clear to which system Mr. Grey and Brint belong; perhaps they work for both, or perhaps the government is no different from organized crime (Campbell, 1989; Mertz, 1992). Such ambiguity makes Adam's story even more tragic. Just like his parents, he has no escape. Evil always surrounds him, and his confinement will last until

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he is terminated or obliterated. Adam feels too powerless to counter the omnipresent evil of the system. To conclude, Cormier subtly manipulates the narration of the novel in triple strands of storylines. Therefore, the reader has to make meanings out of these fragmented narratives in a way that is similar to the way Adam has to construct his identity in the obscure situation (Nodelman, 1983; Keely, 2001).

Cormier's selection of narrative devices is indeed matched to his thematic explication. In his YA novels like *The Chocolate War*, *Beyond the Chocolate War*, *We All Fall Down*, and *In the Middle of the Night*, Cormier uses variable and multiple focalizations to develop the theme of good and evil. In *I Am the Cheese*, he utilizes repetitive narration and manifold narrative fragments to illustrate the theme of the quest for self identity. These selected narrative techniques aptly engage readers in virtual participation in the story so that they may experience recognition just as the characters do at the story's end. Consequently, Cormier accomplishes a subtle correspondence between form and meaning in his YA fiction.

Cormier's Contributions to Young Adult Writing

The third research question addressed in this study was whether Cormier enhances, elevates, or revolutionizes the writing of YA problem novels. The answer is a definite yes. Cormier was one of the first writers to employ modern and postmodern narrative techniques in this field. He also preceded other outstanding YA writers in the use of sophisticated narrative strategies.

Use of modern and postmodern narrative techniques.

If Cormier is situated in the historical context of the 1960s and 1970s, a period when YA novels were characterized by the traditional realistic genre with omniscient

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narration, a single authoritative narrative voice, and linear causal arrangement of events (Nikolajeva, 2003), the innovative craft of Cormier's narration indeed broadened the range of possibility in literary creation for YA readers. Simmons (2001) asserts that Cormier changed the landscape of YA writing, pointing out:

> In the decades before Robert Cormier began to produce his young adult novels, the style of the great majority of texts in that genre was narrow and predicable. Interior monologues, unexpected flashbacks, and other such stylistic ventures were minimal. But with the publication of *The Chocolate War*, *I Am the Cheese*, and *After the First Death*, Bob Cormier changed all that. (p. 8)

Through exhaustive analysis, this study's findings confirm Simmons's comments on Cormier's innovative craftsmanship. Departing from the realistic conventions, Cormier elevates YA writing with modern and postmodern narrative techniques. One of the modernist devices Cormier employs in his YA books is banishing the omniscient narrator from the text. In addition, he uses figural narration in his YA novels. As to postmodernist technique, textual reflexiveness can also be identified in Cormier's YA novels, as we will see later.

One of the narrative devices that Cormier uses, the "banishing of the omniscient narrator," is a prominent feature in the modern novel (Cobley, 2001, p. 149). For example, in *Tenderness* and *The Bumblebee Flies Anyway*, Cormier dispenses with the use of the omniscient narrator. Consequently, the narrative point of view switches between the narrator and the characters. In other words, the narrator no longer assumes an authoritative voice above and beyond the story. The characters are presented as free individuals who interact, perceive, and even criticize one another, and they are given the opportunity to express their own views.

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Another modernist device Cormier uses is figural narration to reproduce the multiple facets of the character's experience and consciousness (Jahn, 2003). Underlying this narrative technique is the assumption that it is unlikely that reality can be adequately depicted by a single, authoritative, omniscient narrative voice. Reality can be more fully conveyed by a triangulation of characters' inner voices. To that end, narration serves to reproduce the characters' consciousness in the text.

The following passage of *The Bumblebee Flies Anyway* is told in figural narration to present a "slice of life" in the hopeless situation where Alberto and Barney have come close to death. Through figural narration, the characters' epiphany is conveyed. That is, Barney and Alberto perceive "the moment of being":

> Barney nodded. We got here. And he realized that getting there had been the important thing. Not the flight, although the Bumblebee could still fly. For them. Hey, Mazzo, the Bumblebee is going to fly and we don't have to be in it. The Bumblebee will fly for readers and we'll be a part of the flight because we made it possible, you and me, me by building it and you by giving me a reason to build it. We're all mixed up in it – you and me and Billy the Kidney and Allie Roon and, yes, Cassie, too. (pp. 233-234)

This device of figural narration effectively captures the characters' inner world of the struggle to come terms with death and their efforts to make the brief remaining hours of their lives significant. It transmits their sensations of anxiety and blankness and their final recognition. The figural narration helps to express the sense of immediacy, the intensity of feeling, and the sense of being alive caught in the this moment of ultimate awareness.

Cormier also employs figural narration in *Tenderness* to present the protagonist Eric's psychopathic state of mind after he kills a girl, as the following passage illustrates:

> Finally, he laid her gently to rest in the bushes, carefully brushing back a strand of hair from her face. That black hair. Her left arm fell loose, pale and fragile. For some reason, he trailed his mouth along her flesh, so warm and moist against his

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lips. Bliss filled him. He had never known such tenderness before, his body trembling with it. He knew that he must find it again. (p. 45)

Obviously, this passage is not an omniscient account of the murder because the narrator merely says "for some reason" instead of providing a definite explanation for Eric's spine-chilling behavior of licking the corpse of his victim. The narrator presents Eric's obscure, abnormal mentality from a partial, restricted perspective rather than from the realistic, objective, omniscient viewpoint. This figural narrative serves to capture Eric's disturbing, pathetic, and distorted sensation of satisfaction achieved through murder.

As illustrated above, both *Tenderness* and *The Bumblebee Flies Anyway* exemplify some characteristics of modernist narration. Thus, Cormier indeed departs from conventional realistic YA writing. However, he takes an even further step in the direction of postmodernism. For example, we see traces of postmodernism in *I Am the Cheese*, which is structured in the form of a box-within-a-box. Moreover, the novel's triple strands are not arranged in the conventional linear method, but combined in the fragmented manner of postmodernism. The narratives of the vignettes of Adam's past memories, current worries, and anxiety about the future are all banded together in the mosaic fashion which is a hallmark of postmodern feature.

Cormier also uses the postmodern features of discontinuity and self-reflexivity in his YA novels. For example, in *After the First Death*, the novel's odd and even chapters constitute two separate storylines so that the novel as a whole appears to be fragmented and unified in a mosaic fashion. In addition, the narrator, Ben, in his first-person account constantly comments on his own process of keeping a diary and even questions the credibility of his narrative. Ben's self-consciousness draws the reader's attention to the

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narrative mechanism and lays bare the properties of the novel as an artifice (Myszor, 1988).

Similarly, the narrator's reflexiveness can also be seen in *In the Middle of the Night*, where the first-person narrator, Dave, refers to his act of writing the story down. Throughout his narrative, Dave tries to tell the readers that he is reluctant to write the story down, but he has no choice. The novel begins with his revelation: "I am writing all this down. I have never kept a diary or a journal like that. . . . I find that it's necessary to keep a record. Why? For my own good, my own testimony, in case anything happens" (p. 1). Dave's self-awareness and his direct address to the reader bring the act of narration into relief, creating a "'rupturing' effect in fiction, an effect which consists of the narrating agency revealing itself and which is frequently called 'postmodernist'" (Cobley, 2001, p. 172). This self-reflexive technique is yet another trace of postmodernism in Cormier's writing.

The postmodern meta-narrative technique is also present in *Fade*. The Susan sequence begins with a typical first-person voice, "Let me introduce myself," a highly conventional narrative device in the young adult novel. But immediately after this introduction, the narrator, Susan, breaks this convention by making some commentary upon her act of narration:

> Shit.
> This isn't the way I want to begin. What I want to do is keep things plain and simple and direct. Professor Waronski in Creative Writing 209 says that the best way is to plunge in, make a beginning, any beginning at all, as long as you start. Most of all, he said, be yourself. (157)

Susan's irritable comments not only reflect her sense of inadequacy as a narrator, but expose the act of narration itself. This exposure certainly alerts readers to the manner of

storytelling in fiction. Again Cormier has utilized the postmodern exercise of metafictive discourse.

In this same novel, reality and fantasy are integrated in the plot. The novel opens with the primary story, in which the young protagonist, Paul Moreaux, uses his inherited capability of being invisible to learn to distinguish good from evil. Immediately following this initial sequence, the Susan chapter is offered to question and even undermine the fictional reality of Paul's story. This plotting casts into doubt the idea of reality in fiction, laying bare a novel's artifice. As Head (1996) explains, in the novel Cormier actually "educates his readers, not by presenting a schematic view of their world, but by revealing its constructed nature" (32). *Fade* bears the postmodern characteristic of subverting the dichotomy between reality and fiction and exposing the constructive nature of realism. This novel is meant to "question the reality of 'reality'" (Nikolajeva, 1996, p. 202).

To sum up, *Fade*, *I Am the Cheese*, *After the First Death*, and *In the Middle of the Night* exhibit postmodern qualities such as discontinuous and self-reflexive narratives. In these novels, Cormier discards the simplistic, straightforward narration of realistic YA novels, replacing it with complex fragmented storylines combined in nonlinear temporality. Cormier even lays bare the narrative mechanism, drawing the reader's attention to the constructive nature of fiction. As these examples suggest, Cormier's narrative craft is complex and complicated. Indeed, he can be credited with introducing these modern and postmodern literary devices into young adult literature. Through his sophisticated narrative techniques, Cormier renders his YA fiction captivating and challenging.

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Pioneering the use of sophisticated narrative techniques.

A comparison of the work of Robert Cormier with that of other outstanding YA writers in the United States indicates that Cormier pioneered in the use of some narrative strategies, as shown in Table 5.1. This chart is based on the comparison of Cormier's narrative craft with that of widely recognized excellent YA novelists Paul Fleischman, Lois Lowry, Robin McKinley, Water Dean Myers, Katherine Paterson, Gary Paulsen, Richard Peck, Virginia Euwer Wolff, Avi Wortis, and Karen Hesse (Nilsen and Donelson, 2001; Larobe and Hutcherson, 2002). For example, Cormier employed the literary device of multilayered and discontinuous narratives in *I Am the Cheese* (1977) decades earlier than Avi did in his *Nothing but the Truth* (1991) and Walter Dean Myers did in his *Monster* (1999).

In addition, Cormier precedes other YA writers in the use of multiple focalizations to create a Bakhtinian dialogue and a polyphony of voices in the text. This technique has been used in Cormier's works since the publication of his first YA novel, *The Chocolate War*, in 1974. Paul Fleischman's (1993) *Bull Run* and Karen Hesse's (2001) *Witness*, which draw largely on a multiplicity of character focalizers, came quite a bit later than Cormier's works. Moreover, Cormier experimented with genre mixing in his YA fiction earlier than the other outstanding YA novelists mentioned above. His *Fade* (1988), which blends fantasy with a realistic contemporary story, was published anterior to Avi's (1989) *The Man Who Was Poe*, which mixes drama, history, and mystery.

As Table 5.1 illustrates, Cormier pioneered in the use of several narrative strategies and initiated the increased sophistication of young adult fiction. As a forerunner in this field, he indeed paid a high price for his narrative innovation. Negative

Narrative Strategies	Author and Work	Descriptions
Narrative fragmentation and discontinuing	Robert Cormier's (1977) *I Am the Cheese*	Adam's first-person account of his bike ride, the tapes of dialogues between Adam and Brint, and a third-person narration of Adam's past
	Avi's (1991) *Nothing but the Truth*	A series of journal entries, memos, letters, and dialogues
	Walter Dean Myers's (1999) *Monster*	A film script Steve is developing, his account of the courtroom events, and his journal entries
Multiple focalizations to create a Bakhtinian dialogue and a polyphony of voices	Robert Cormier's (1974) *The Chocolate War*	thirteen different characters' individual voices present in the text
	Paul Fleischman's (1993) *Bull Run*	Fifteen focalized characters narrating their individual experiences in the Civil War
	Karen Hesse's (2001) *Witness*	Eleven characters expressing their different points of view about the Ku Klux Klan
Genre mixing	Cormier's (1988) *Fade*	Merging Fantasy and contemporary realistic story
	Avi's (1989) *The Man Who Was Poe*	Blending drama, history, and mystery
Narrative verse	Robert Cormier's (1999) *Frenchtown Summer*	A short collection of twelve-year-old Eugene's 1938 summer life episodes narrated in lyric poetry
	Virginia Euwer Wolff's *Make Lemonade* (1993)	Story about fourteen-year-old LaVaughn's growth told in free verse
	Karen Hesse's (1997) *Out of the Dust*	Free-verse poems telling of the thirteen-year-old Billy Jo's life during the Depression

Table 5.1 Comparison of Cormier and other outstanding YA authors in the use of narrative strategies

critical reaction to his works was unavoidable because of his novels' obscurity and ambiguity in their narrative manner and structure. However, as this genre gradually came of age and moved toward complexity, other YA novelists were able to use those innovative strategies without negative criticism. Viewed in this way, it is hard to deny that Cormier's YA fiction has been influential in young adult literature.

Implications

The findings of this study have implications both for critical inquiry concerning YA fiction and the use of Cormier's YA novels in the study of literature.

The resistance of Cormier's text to theory.

While this study investigated only the particular case of Cormier's YA novels, it is my hope that it can also serve as an example of, if not a paradigmatic method for, the critical inquiry to explore other YA fiction. This study's analytic scheme, primarily based on Rimmon-Kenan's (2002) proposal, has been quite helpful as a critical apparatus that enables the researcher to capture Cormier's narrative techniques. Rimmon-Kenan, who is considered authoritative within the field of narrative study, presents a comprehensive framework while others are incomplete.

However, Cormier's text resists at least two of the predetermined categories in this analytic scheme. For example, in terms of characterization, Cormier sometimes violates the principle of "the metonymic relation between external appearance and character-traits" (Rimmon-Kenan, p 65). In Cormier's YA fiction, a mismatch between the characters' external appearance and their character-traits prevails. For example, Eric of *Tenderness*, a well-mannered and innocent looking teenager, is a psychopathic serial

killer. Harry of *We All Fall Down* is always dressed up and performs well in high school, but commits the violence of house trashing just for fun.

Another predetermined item of this study's analytic scheme which cannot be used to categorize Cormier's text is the subordination relations among narrative levels. The various narratives of Cormier's YA novels usually constitute a parallel structure as, for example, in *Fade*, *I Am the Cheese*, and *After the First Death*, among others. In these novels, the story-lines are arranged according to coordinate relations. In other words, no causal, logical, or linear relations exist among the various narrative strands, and therefore, readers need to make an effort to integrate the separate narrative stands into a whole. This parallel arrangement of narratives contrasts with Rimmon-Kenan's (2002) notion of a hierarchical structure where story-lines are subordinate to each other and readers are led from one level of narrative to another.

In short, this study's analytic scheme was useful in the exploration of how Cormier manages and manipulates narrative elements in his fiction. But to some extent, Cormier's novels resisted the predetermined norms of narration used in this research and in turn modified the analytic framework of this study. The resistance of Cormier's works to theory has indeed helped me to appreciate Cormier's narrative techniques and to achieve a better understanding of general issues in narrative. Perhaps more importantly, using theory to examine text in this manner allowed me to establish my analysis within the constructive framework of the theory-versus-practice dialogic nature of literary criticism (Phelan and Robinson, 1994).

Like any complex novelist, Cormier cannot be encompassed by a single theory. The method of textual analysis used in the present study could not capture the whole

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picture of Cormier's narrative craftsmanship. This was because the analytic focus of this study was on the intrinsic properties of Cormier's YA novels. In this study, Cormier's texts were examined in isolation without reference to the political and ideological issues inherent in his narrative. Although close textual analysis is helpful in providing insight into Cormier's narrative devices, it misses the opportunity to explore the social, cultural, and historical context of his works. The use of varied literary theories to cover more aspects of Cormier's narrative craft is more beneficial than trying to force Cormier's works to fit a particular theory.

Pedagogical values of Cormier's young adult fiction.

Given the various literary tricks and devices Cormier employs in his YA novels, they are particularly appropriate for teaching students about the narrative elements of fiction such as *in medias res*, multiple focalizations, free indirect discourse, interior monologue, metanarrative discourse, and so on. Teaching these concepts might be helpful in enhancing students' abilities to understand and appreciate how fiction is produced through narrative manipulation as a piece of verbal art. Mertz (1992) advocates the use of Cormier's YA fiction, like other high quality YA novels, "to enhance students' understanding of literary techniques and concepts" (p. 23).

Additionally, because of the open-ended structure of Cormier's YA novels, Cormier's works are also valuable in stimulating classroom discussion and for essay assignments. Readers are required to reorganize the fragmented and discontinuous narratives, as in *Fade*, *I Am the Cheese*, *After the First Death*, and *In the Middle of the Night*, into a logical story in linear fashion. In each of these novels, students also need to discern the reliable or unreliable narrating voices, to discover the hidden messages, and to

figure out the possible final resolution to the plot. Thus, students are deeply engaged in the text, living through the story.

This interactive engagement between text and readers makes Cormier's YA fiction quite valuable in the classroom in two ways. First, Cormier's works enhance readers' ability in literary analysis. Through study of these novels, readers can learn to examine and appreciate narrative devices. Second, Cormier's YA books provoke students' critical thinking about some controversial issues. Cormier's novels, in terms of both form and content, meet the instructional needs of high-school literature curriculum.

Limitations and Directions for Further Research

Following the principle of classical narratology, the present study treated narrative elements as inherent properties of the text. Due to this methodological limitation, the researcher did not consider the historical context in which Cormier's YA fiction is situated. In other words, the textual features of Cormier's works were examined ahistorically as "closed systems and static products" (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002). Therefore, this study did not address the ideology behind Cormier's narrative strategy.

To achieve a more comprehensive understanding of Cormier's craftsmanship, his YA works need to be further explored through the critical lens of postclassical narratology. Future research needs to focus on the relationship between Cormier's art and his historical context. By doing so, we can obtain a better understanding of what in the historical situation led to Cormier's choice of certain narrative techniques in his illustration of themes of controversy in the genre of problem novels.

A further possibility for research would be to apply the methodology used in the current study to other young adult novelists. The benefits of such studies would include

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deeper and broader understanding of young adult fiction as a genre as well as of the particular author. The researcher may wish to compare the use of narrative techniques by other YA authors and Cormier to detect the influence of Cormier. Such analysis would also more firmly establish Cormier's role as an innovator in young adult literature.

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