Narrative James:
The Different Inflections of Henry James in Narrative Theory

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Abstract

This thesis takes a case study approach to investigating some key critics in the historical development of narrative studies; it argues that in their engagement with Henry James's critical writings, especially the New York Edition prefaces, they have directly or indirectly misrepresented the complexity of the texts themselves, in order to advance their own theoretical agendas. These critics are Percy Lubbock and his formalist approach in Chapter One; Wayne C. Booth and his rhetorical approach in Chapter Two; J. Hillis Miller and his deconstructive approach in Chapter Three; and the interdisciplinary approaches of Martha Nussbaum's moral philosophy and Rita Charon's narrative medicine in Chapter Four. The main goal of this thesis is to open up significant questions or nuances about narrative that have been overlooked, through close engagement with the critical writings in question. At the same time, it also attempts to map out how these nuances shed light on the historical development of narrative studies. The focus of the thesis is, in other words, upon the history of narrative theory as informed by the different inflections of Henry James. In the process, the thesis seeks not to reach conclusive views about existing theoretical issues, nor come up with new theories, but rather to demonstrate the theoretical vitality of the questions raised by the dialogue between the works of the selected critics and the critical writings of James upon which they draw. The thesis offers a historical, single-author approach that contributes to both narrative theory and Jamesian scholarship; it demonstrates the merits of revisiting James's critical writings in rethinking narrative concepts beyond the narrative techniques with which James is usually, albeit reductively, associated.

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Author's Declaration

I declare that I am the sole author of this doctoral thesis, and that it is an original contribution, apart from those instances in which I quote or draw upon the works of others, of which acknowledgement is accordingly given. No portion of the work contained within this thesis has been previously submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification at this, or any other, institution.

Introduction

Henry James and Narrative Theory

Henry James has often been perceived as one of the most influential writers of the Anglo-American nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, and his fictional works, not least his novels, continue to be prime targets for critical analysis. While his currency as a writer of fiction, especially within the domain of literary studies, goes almost without saying, we cannot forget either that throughout his prolific career James also produced a large body of critical writings, some of which, most notably the 1884 essay 'The Art of Fiction' and the critical prefaces to the New York Edition of his works, have remained important in various theoretical discussions. This 'theoretical potential' in James's works was brought to the foreground with the publication of John Carlos Rowe's 1984 *The Theoretical Dimensions of Henry James*, in which he uses James as a 'point of reference' to explore how recent theories of literary criticism (then) had used James and his works in making their own bid for authority – how they constructed their respective versions of the literary 'mastery' James has come to typify (Rowe, *Theoretical Dimensions* xi, 16). The important message from Rowe's work is that each attempt entails, inevitably, a particular perception of James and a particular interpretation of his works, none of which is either 'complete' or 'correct' in itself; while each theoretical position (among others, feminism and Marxism) 'enables us to understand James's art in new ways,' it at the same time 'fails to master a certain aspect of the Jamesian text.' Having said that, Rowe also makes a judicious observation: that such 'failure' does not invalidate these theoretical positions, but reveals limitations within each one (Rowe, *Theoretical Dimensions* 24). Rowe acknowledges the 'irreducible ambiguity' of James's texts and possible 'divergent

interpretations' they consequently invite; at the same time, he insists that we have to take into account the different circumstances that prompted each different inflection of James and his works in the first place. The great force of Rowe's project derives from this research framework, which does not merely see each theoretical position as emerging out of either 'an abstract idealism' or 'the text's essential polysemousness' (Rowe, *Theoretical Dimensions* 16-17), but also gives close attention to how James is invoked, and how his writings are used, in each specific context, reminding us of the theoretical potential inherent in James's works and of *how* those works come to acquire different theoretical dimensions.[1]

My interest is of a similar nature to Rowe's; it is however not grounded in theories of literary criticism, but more specifically in narrative theory. It is not difficult to notice that within narrative theory, as in literary studies writ large, James's fictional works have been, and continue to be, analysed as examples of, or testing grounds for, narrative concepts, with the focus usually directed at the narrative techniques employed;[2] his critical writings and their theoretical merits within the field are often overshadowed by the fiction. This is, of course, not to suggest that James's critical writings have been ignored, or that they hold less purchase on narrative theory. Quite the contrary, James and his critical

[1] Sheila Teahan offers a similar assessment in her survey article 'Mastering Critical Theory' that Rowe's ground-breaking study marked the formalising of 'the long-standing theoretical bent of James's criticism,' though I find it beneficial to qualify her claim that the work 'identified James's own formidable powers as theoretician in his criticism and fiction alike' (Teahan 23). While James's works certainly show theoretical potential on the one hand, using the term 'theoretician' on the other hand could suggest that there is some sort of 'theory' that the texts themselves propound (while James never really considers himself a theorist, or his works theoretical, per se); this in turn could displace Rowe's emphasis on the way each theoretical school seeks to present its own 'mastery' of James.

[2] Some of the well-known examples in the past include Robert Scholes and Robert Kellogg's *The Nature of Narrative* (1966), Dorrit Cohn's *Transparent Minds* (1978), and Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan's *Narrative Fiction* (1983).

writings are considered to have a foundational importance in the development of the Anglo-American tradition of narrative theory (for example, in Chatman, *Story and Discourse* 15; Herman, 'Histories of Narrative Theory I' 25; Prince, 'Classical and/or Postclassical Narratology' 115; Teahan 11), his discussion giving rise to narrative concepts such as 'point of view' or 'centre of consciousness.' These concepts, however, are generally viewed in technical terms (that is, as narrative techniques), subsequent investigations of which in narrative theory would acknowledge James's foundational influence, but then forgo extensive discussion of his ideas. This particular treatment of James's ideas on fiction – and more broadly speaking, as I shall argue, on narrative – is a theoretical legacy that can be attributed first and foremost to Percy Lubbock, who produced a markedly prescriptive formalist framework invoking James's 'craft' in his 1921 *The Craft of Fiction* (Herman, 'Histories of Narrative Theory I' 27), codifying the merits of James's works largely in a technical sense; and then to further 'categorical formulations' that followed suit with the rise of the New Criticism in the Anglo-American scene during the 1940s and 1950s (Rawlings 37).[3] The tendency, starting from Lubbock, to treat the ideas found in James's writings as doctrine may help to explain why the writings themselves have not drawn as much attention; when the ideas have already been passed down as techniques, we overlook the texts that are the sources of these ideas (not, strictly, considered as techniques). Even more importantly, we also overlook the specific

[3] James's strong association with narrative techniques is also evident from the discussion of him under the heading of 'Narrative Techniques' in *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*, where Wayne C. Booth and James Phelan write: 'although there are discussions of technique as far back as Aristotle's *Poetics*, the intensive study of it is a twentieth-century phenomenon that begins with Henry James. […] Critics who followed James gradually converted these preferences [for centre of consciousness and scenic presentation] into abstract rules for novelistic practice' (Phelan and Booth, 370-371).

interpretation of the texts – the specific appropriation of James in a specific context, as Rowe has made clear in his argument – that gives rise to these ideas in the first place.

It will already be evident from my discussion – particularly from the distinction I have attempted to make between narrative concepts (or ideas about narrative) and narrative techniques (understood mainly as technical tools for composition) in James's critical writings – that my interest in the relationship between them and narrative theory is of a more fundamental kind. Theory of narrative and theory of fiction (or, in the case of James, theory of the novel) are used interchangeably in some contexts; this perceived interchangeability leads narrative theory to be understood sometimes only in its (structuralist) narratological form or, more reductive yet, as theory of storytelling, a creative theory that primarily deals with the best ways of employing narrative techniques in fictional (or novel) composition. Dorothy Hale observes in her 1998 *Social Formalism* the increasing tendency to subsume novel theory under narratology, the main focus of which she takes to be 'formal and generic descriptions of the novel.' Hale's attempt at dissociating novel theory (and, concurrently James, a founding figure in novel theory) from narratology as the 'business of nomenclature' and, more generally, as 'the formalism we have taken it to be' (Hale, *Social Formalism* 2-4) reveals some key assumptions that contribute to my own project. While novels are most of the time narratives (the reason why they are not only subject to, but also have pride of place in, narrative investigations), narrative is not necessarily a novel (or a 'verbal' 'artefact,' for that matter), which allows us to see that James's ideas – and his contribution to narrative theory – does not have to be framed strictly within the domain of the novel, even if it is the form he is most known for. Hale's consideration of formalism beyond concerns about novelistic elements also

helps to show that just as there is more to the novel than its technical composition, so too there is more to narrative theory than techniques used in narrative, than the formalist trajectory, in its traditional sense, to narrative.[4]

James Phelan, in his chapter contribution to the fortieth anniversary edition of Robert Scholes and Robert Kellogg's *The Nature of Narrative* (2006), reflects upon the developments that have happened in narrative theory since the work's original publication in 1966, and states that while Scholes and Kellogg 'persuasively located the then dominant object of narrative study, the novel, within a much broader history and understanding of literary narrative, contemporary narrative theory now locates literary narrative within a much broader conception of narrative itself' (Phelan, 'Narrative Theory, 1996-2006' 285). Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, too, looks back upon her old project *Narrative Fiction*, describing narratology, the object of her study at that time, as 'mainly a formalist-structuralist discipline' that relies on assumptions inherited from structuralism, but she also acknowledges that there was even then another direction in the discipline: 'one that sought the *differentia specifica* not of narrative fiction but of narrative in general, whether fictional or non-fictional, verbal or non-verbal' (Rimmon-Kenan 140-141). Likewise, conversations of a broader scope emerge from the ideas about narrative

[4] Hale, with one of the chapters in her book dedicated to James and 'point of view,' is one prominent exception to my previous assertion that discussions about narrative concepts attributed to James usually acknowledge him but do not go back to investigate the critical sources from which the concepts arise, though it must also be added that her focus is on novel theory and not on narrative per se. A similar case of tangential contribution is Peter Rawlings' article 'Narrative of Theory and Theory of Narrative: Point of View and Centres of Consciousness,' in which he traces how theorists have imposed on James a systematic theory of representing 'point of view,' while ignoring the acts of experiencing that constitute experience. His argument, however, is situated within epistemological and scientific contexts, and it is also important to note that he, like Hale, views the appropriation of James's idea as 'narratological,' that is coming from the more formal and structuralist side of narrative theory (though neither of them makes this distinction explicit in their respective arguments).

in James's critical writings, especially as narrative theory continues to grow and widen. Phelan, in another context, also offers a valuable reminder that speaks directly to my project: even though there have been developments and new approaches to narrative theory after its postclassical turn (circa 1999, when David Herman proposed the term itself),[5] there are still foundational concepts, such as the story and discourse distinction, that remain important staples for narrative theorists, 'a source of nourishment that help shapes [sic] our maturation in the field' (Phelan, *Somebody Telling Somebody Else* 3). These foundational concepts are also what I would like to seize upon, but with the awareness that the theoretical domain of narrative theory, too, is not entirely cumulative, but also contestational, in a similar way to the critical theories in Rowe's investigation. There are indeed different approaches to each particular key concept about narrative, and when it comes to the way James is used by narrative theorists, there are in turn different interpretations of his critical writings – different ways of viewing his contribution to narrative theory. By definition, competing claims to a particular concept can neither be correct or incorrect by themselves; what we can do is to investigate the theoretical preoccupations that lie behind each claim so as to evaluate the respective positions and tease out further questions. This study is, therefore, revisionist in spirit, and I take as its governing force the constructive 'attitude of sceptical reconsideration' that can be found in such works as Richard Walsh's *The Rhetoric of Fictionality* (Walsh, *Rhetoric of Fictionality* 1).

[5] In his edited volume *Narratologies: New Perspectives on Narrative Analysis*. Herman previously discussed the concept in his 1997 article 'Scripts, Sequences, and Stories: Elements of a Postclassical Narratology.'

The specific methodology of this thesis, then, is to attend closely to how different critics throughout the development of narrative theory have engaged with James's critical writings in order to advance their particular view about narrative, or their particular theoretical position, and investigate the gap between the specific version of James's ideas that they construct (through their interpretation of his works) and what can actually be found in the close reading of the critical texts in question themselves, especially in their original contexts; and in doing so to generate critical questions, or even problems, that when addressed can enrich the field of narrative theory.[6] My case study approach is not a pragmatic limitation so much as a chosen strategy. My intention is not to offer new narrative concepts from my own reading of James – which, in the process, would be adding another problem to the equation[7] – but rather to retain a revisionist stance towards the richness that James's critical writings have to offer to narrative theory; accordingly, the scope of my study provides me with both a better focus (on existing ideas that have been drawn out of him) and a leash. I follow, in other words, the same spirit that is found in James's prefaces to the New York Edition, in which his thinking about a specific composition repeatedly proves a productive occasion to reflect upon different aspects of

[6] It is here that my approach departs from Rowe's; his project is broader in scope and in ambition, using important contemporary theoretical approaches to interpret James's writings, both fictional and critical, in order to show how the writings themselves reveal the respective limitations of those theoretical positions. I focus mainly on close engagement with how critics in narrative theory have used James's critical writings, and, accordingly, inflected him differently.

[7] On this matter, I share Rimmon-Kenan's sense that, what 'theory' is (understood formerly largely in structuralist terms) has begun to shift after the postclassical turn in narrative theory: she sees theory not so much as 'analytical categories' anymore, but as 'a self-conscious reflection, a conceptual framework, a set of hypotheses having explanatory power' (Rimmon-Kenan 151). Proposing new narrative concepts could also be falling into a structuralist typological trap, as warned by Walsh: it is possible that the capacity to draw distinctions will instead become 'a runaway engine,' that typological distinctions will 'proliferate less in pursuit of some theoretical goal than *as* the theoretical goal, or to serve less as means of explanation than as the occasion for explanation' (Walsh, 'Narrative Dynamics and Narrative Theory' 82).

narrative. At the same time, my approach also provides me with the opportunity to draw connections between each theoretical preoccupation, each particular moment in the history of narrative theory, that allows me to reflect on the trajectory of the development of the field itself. Of course, I am not claiming that I intend to trace the complete history of the field, but by looking at the shifting inflections of James and his critical writings, I can at least map the similar shifting inflections of some key concepts in narrative theory.

I find this method remarkably useful for another reason: it cultivates the awareness that what are presented as James's ideas about narrative are often only part of the whole picture. This leads to consultation – and in most cases, rereading – of James's original texts in themselves, within their respective contexts. The manner in which James's writings are usually invoked in narrative theory is similar to the way his narrative techniques are passed down – as theoretical adages, or even illustrative quotes, that are not accompanied by further discussion about the particular writings in question. Meir Sternberg, for example, briefly cites the preface to Volume 17, in which James discusses the 'appeal to wonder and terror and curiosity,' as part of his argument about the informational tensions (such as suspense) generated in reading (Sternberg 261-262); Phelan, similarly, quotes the famous remark in the preface of Volume 1 (*Roderick Hudson*), 'Really, universally, relations stop nowhere […],' to express the difficulty of concluding, connecting it to his own reflection that 'for the rhetorical interpreter, really, universally, relations between the somebodies who tell and the somebodies who listen, relations mediated by the multiple resources of any individual narrative, are, if not infinite, then certainly too numerous to address in one analysis' (Phelan, *Somebody Telling Somebody Else* 257). In cases such as these when the invocations are brief and illustrative,

the writings seem to be providing the critics not so much with their own theoretical merits (due to the brevity of usage) as their Jamesian authority (for illustrating the point they are making). The illustrative purpose of these invocations does not require that one look into the writings themselves, or that the interpretation needs to go beyond the local level. However, I will demonstrate in the course of this thesis that it gets much more complicated in cases where James is used in a more sustained manner, or is invoked as a contributive force of the critics' argument. It does not take long to realise that these critics, too, seek to borrow the authority of James to advance their propositions. We cannot forget that what each critic offers to us is not James's ideas as found in his original texts, but the critic's interpretation of such ideas, always coloured by agendas, and at times not contextually accurate. Only by giving detailed attention to James's texts and each critic's interpretation of them can we recover the nuances of the former's own ideas and by the same token evaluate the latter's theoretical position.

The Prefaces to the New York Edition: A Case Study

James's critical prefaces to the New York Edition make up a large proportion of this study for the reason that they are the critical writings that his critics usually go to, but also, and more importantly, because they are the principal locus in which different versions of James – including James the theorist – have been constructed. In the following section I discuss as a case study the manner in which R.P. Blackmur constructed a version of James that continues to influence the perception of later critics, even up to the present day. I look particularly at his invocation of one of James's letters, the omission he makes, and the lasting impression formed by the shaping of his collection. In doing so, I put into

practice the approach I wish to take in this thesis; at the same time, the discussion serves to elaborate on the point made earlier, that critics tend to use James's critical writings illustratively without going back to the actual texts in question.

In the introduction to *The Art of the Novel* (1934), R.P. Blackmur attributes his effort – of collecting all the critical prefaces James wrote for the New York Edition into a single volume – to James's feeling that these prefaces 'made an essay in general criticism which had an interest and a being aside from any connection with his own work, and that finally, they added up to a fairly exhaustive reference book on the technical aspects of the art of fiction' (Blackmur viii). In doing so, Blackmur specifically invokes the 1908 letter in which James describes the prefaces to William Dean Howells as

> a sort of plea for Criticism, for Discrimination, for Appreciation on other than infantile lines – as against the so almost universal Anglo-Saxon absence of these things; which tends so, in our general trade, it seems to me, to break the heart. […] They ought, collected together, none the less, to form a sort of comprehensive manual or *vademecum* for aspirants in our arduous profession. (*Letters* 426)

The collection has since attained an established status both in- and outside Jamesian scholarship, often being the first-pick for critics who wish to consult James's prefaces. However, as Herschel Parker observes, the existence of this 'wonderfully convenient' collection has at the same time 'subtly and insidiously robbed the prefaces of their volume-specific qualities' (Parker 304).[8] He criticises in particular Blackmur's attempt to

[8] Parker elaborates that this was partly due to the fact that few Jamesians and even fewer general readers encountered the prefaces in the separate volumes of the New York Edition (Parker 285). Michael Anesko concurs, in his extensive research into the literary culture surrounding the Edition, that the prefaces remained inaccessible to many people because they were embedded 'in a series of books that very few were willing or able to purchase' (Anesko 128). Blackmur's introduction aside, the continuing merit of the book is as a 'wonderfully convenient' collection of the prefaces that critics cite for scholarly ease of reference.

unify the prefaces into 'a coherent treatise on what he called literary criticism and we would call theory,' and its subsequent role in (mis)leading critics into believing that the prefaces form 'a coherently structured work,' carefully planned out 'from first to last' (Parker 285).[9] Even though Parker's own argument focuses on 'liberating' James's prefaces by showing that they too can be 'enjoyed' and not merely 'analysed' (the point I will be coming back to later in this introduction), the important point that he helps to highlight remains: that critics have, in effect, first come to the prefaces 'mainly as guided' by Blackmur and his collection, and that their perception and interpretation of the prefaces have, in turn, been influenced by Blackmur's specific invocation of James.

It is essential, therefore, that we first recognise that Blackmur's effort is motivated not so much by James's own feeling as by Blackmur's *interpretation* of James's feeling, not without his own agenda. This has already been made evident in Michael Anesko's *Monopolizing the Master*, in which he explores 'the strategies by which different critical cohorts have attempted to shape […] the contours of James's posthumous reputation […] wanting to transfer or borrow his cultural capital to shore up their own artistic agendas' (Anesko xii). In the process that Anesko describes as 'ventriloquism,' what Blackmur does is 'appropriating the role of the Master himself and fulfilling the deferred prophecy conveyed in that 1908 letter to Howells' (Anesko 133). If Blackmur's agenda is to invoke

[9] Eric Leuschner offers a more balanced view, arguing that while it is difficult to deny Blackmur's legacy (or what Parker calls 'tyranny') is still powerful, with the inextricable linkage of the prefaces and the phrase 'art of the novel,' it is as important to understand that these prefaces do indeed exist as part of a larger project, even if not an artfully planned one (Leuschner 25).William E. Cain notes that *The Art of the Novel* is 'so Jamesian that we often forget that it is not a book by Henry James' and that 'scholars have sometimes analysed it as though it were crafted and designed by James himself' (Cain 232). A recent instance is when Genevieve Liveley cites part of the preface to *The Awkward Age* ('"Kinds" are the very life of literature'), but says that James 'declar[es] it in *The Art of the Novel'* (Lively 162). Even though it does not affect the argument she makes in any way, it is symptomatic of the larger, and evidently still on-going, influence of Blackmur's collection.

James's prefaces as 'the most eloquent and original piece of literary criticism in existence' (Blackmur viii), he indeed focuses only on the aspects that would be conducive to such portrayal. As later critics have found, however, such a portrayal of James is far from complete, even as it continues to be passed down. Anesko's account helps to paint a clearer picture of Blackmur's project by situating it in relation to both his own admiration of James and his financial necessity, but more relevant to my explication here is David McWhirter's observation that Blackmur intentionally neglects to mention part of the letter that would portray 'the Master' differently: as the James who also struggles, in his own words, with a 'staleness of sensibility' in writing the prefaces, and whose hope lies in 'their perhaps helping the Edition to sell two or three copies more!' (McWhirter 3-4). D.W. Jefferson similarly notes that Blackmur emphasizes 'the dedicated artist and the logical theorist in James' while missing 'human elements' in the prefaces by making no reference to such elements as James's humour in his introduction (Jefferson 5-7). James the theorist, while only one dimension of him, has come to be the characteristic way in which he is received.

It is telling that Blackmur claims the difficulty of reading James's prefaces is not because of 'what James has to say – which is indeed lucid – but because of the convoluted compression of his style and because of the positive unfamiliarity of his terms as he uses them' (Blackmur xi). It seems that Blackmur, in trying to portray James as 'the Master' and his prefaces as 'a unity of being' (Blackmur ix), is willing in the process to disregard much of its richness. This is the result, too, of Blackmur's 'sifting through the Master's frequently digressive and always sinuous expository paragraphs, selecting out important subjects, and thereby providing a kind of schematic index to key topics' (Anesko 129),

the method which was followed later by James E. Miller's edited volume *Theory of Fiction* (1972). In Miller's own words, this volume was an attempt at 'a collection of selections and excerpts that presented in comprehensive and definitive fashion James's theory of fiction,' with 'a systematic arrangement designed to give order and coherence to James's fictional theory' (Miller xv). As Rob Davidson argues, Blackmur and Miller share the aim to 'clarify' and to 'systematise' James's critical works but in doing so they also 'rigidly codified James's criticism, imposing elaborate formalist schemas to assess the sprawling body of work' (Davidson 2). Blackmur's version of James gained such influence that readers of James's prefaces were not only led to believe that the texts themselves constitute a particular set of theory, but also to apprehend it within the frame of the 'schematic index,' often leading them to forgo reading the prefaces in their own right, and, with that, to miss out on the pleasure that they provide.

The pleasure I mean in this context differs slightly from the one proposed by Parker or Jefferson in that it arises mainly from the theoretical merits that can be found in James's thought process, usually conveyed through his elaborate use of metaphors. The point is that the context of each preface, and the movement of James's thinking in it, is essential;[10] the problem with an anthology of Blackmur's kind that attempts to 'unify' James's prefaces (especially with its canonical status in Jamesian scholarship) is that it reinforces a certain (pre-)conception of them. Such preconception can then encourage a

[10] My symbolic gesture in this thesis is not to cite Blackmur's *The Art of the Novel* as is customary, but to cite instead each preface as a text (one that prefaces another text) in its own right. The idea behind this citational practice is similar to Sarah Copland's intention to 'turn away from the prefaces as a totality […] not to read them as though they were a single, multi-part text,' which she also notes has been the dominant approach to the prefaces (Copland 46). Her reason, however, is different from mine; her aim is pedagogical, and the individual treatment of each preface allows her to focus on its interaction with the text it accompanies. She is still citing *The Art of the Novel*, but that does not affect her point about turning to individual treatment as it would affect mine.

reading that glosses over nuances found in the texts within their own contexts, in favour of more general theoretical propositions that are afforded by – and in turn feed back into – a received idea of James. This tendency is also apparent when the prefaces are called upon in support of different theoretical frameworks within narrative theory, as if James's words were already theories. I am not disavowing reading the prefaces, or his other critical writings, for their theoretical merits, but there is a clear benefit in distinguishing that from reading them to find theory.

Indeed, we can still learn considerably from his discussions and his metaphors, which stimulate productive thinking about different aspects of narrative. His unsystematic and occasional investigations of issues pertinent to fiction and, by extension, of narrative, can provide the field with theoretical stimulants, offering a fresh perspective upon these issues, without needing to be passed down as theoretical aphorisms in order to accommodate their own highly metaphorical nature.[11] As Jefferson argues, James writes to 'describ[e] an individual solution to a particular problem' (Jefferson 8); it is imperative, then, that the discussion and the metaphors driving it be situated back within James's thought process in a given preface, in order that we can understand more fully the issues at stake. My project overall, then, would also be part of the revisionist tradition within Jamesian scholarship, along with the landmark collection *Henry James's New York Edition: The Construction of Authorship* (1995), that seeks to 'restore James's art to what he once called "the conditions of life"' (McWhirter 1). My version of the demystification of James as 'the Master' in this thesis aims to reveal the different theoretical inflections of James, and in the process to suggest that while reading James's critical works in their

[11] Willian Veeder argues for the fluidity and particularity of Jamesian images, which resist being taken as a static symbol of something and need to be read in context. (Veeder 179)

own contexts does reveal some theoretical thoughts about narrative, those thoughts do not on their own constitute a complete view of narrative; in the case that they appear so, they have already been buttressed by extrinsic theoretical preoccupations.

Structure of the Chapters

In Chapter One I explore the relationship between James and Percy Lubbock, who approaches James's writings with a formalist agenda. Lubbock is known as a 'disciple' of James who, however, over-systemises James's thoughts to an extent not intended or warranted by James himself. Believing that fiction is an autonomous art form that should be studied systematically, Lubbock evokes a vision of James as the master of compositional techniques represented by the reflections upon methods found mainly in his prefaces to the New York Edition, while overlooking the importance of authorial discernment in the process of creative writing that James always insists upon. Lubbock's belief that fiction contains certain elements, methods, and rules for the critic to identify and study is also at odds with James's own idea of fiction as an organic whole. Foregrounding the difference between Lubbock's approach to fiction as a critic and James's approach as an artist, the chapter investigates three main areas – the novelistic concepts of form, of story, and of point of view – with the overarching argument that representation in fictional narrative cannot be understood merely as a product (that is an *object* of representation) but has to be understood also as an *act* manifesting the rhetoric of the author.

Chapter Two looks at Wayne C. Booth, a foundational figure in the development of rhetorical narratology, who disagrees with the overly systematic manner in which

Lubbock approaches James. Booth's rhetorical approach favours the communicative relation between author and reader, particularly the effect such communication produces in each distinct fictional work. Booth's *The Rhetoric of Fiction* therefore evokes James in a different spirit than Lubbock's work, viewing compositional methods as means to successful communication. The chapter discusses the nature of communication in fiction and the different issues that accompany it, mainly the contract between the author and the reader, the question of morality in fiction, and the concept of the implied author. I argue that while Booth's work is still limited by its treatment of moral commonalities as absolute, there is discernible, in his shift of focus to the rhetoric of fiction, and its legacy in such concepts as the implied author, the basis for further explorations into the contextual functioning of narrative. Booth reminds us that understanding (fictional) narrative requires addressing the full complexity of the author, the reader, and the context of communication.

Looking back at James's writings allows us to see the complexity of such ideas as 'form' (in the case of Lubbock) and 'morality' (in the case of Booth), and encourages us to think about the underlying 'logos' behind traditions of theoretical thinking. Chapter Three looks at the influence of James from another perspective, through J. Hillis Miller's deconstructive criticism and its tangential critique of the formal/structural logos that had been dominant in narrative studies up to that point, in what has come to be considered the classical phase of narrative theory. On the one hand, I bring Miller's discussion into productive dialogue with structural narratology, the dominant voice in the history of narrative theory, showing that the structuralism/post-structuralism relationship is more dialogic than antagonistic in that the latter develops the germs already existing in the

former. On the other hand, I show that Miller, as closely as he engages with James's texts, still glosses over some aspects of James's writings, in ways that partly explain why his contribution has not acquired canonical status in narrative theory, and his deconstructive criticisms have not been fully integrated into the conceptual framework of the field. I do this by investigating the concept of 'structure' and arguing for the importance of regarding it, too, as 'structuration,' taking into account the reciprocity between the rigid form of 'structure' and a continually evolving 'process.' The chapter also develops a theoretical insight hinted at, though not pursued, by Miller, concerning James's discussion of the difference between fiction and photograph, which helps to illuminate our understanding of fictionality and narrative media.

Chapter Four situates James within the more recent postclassical and interdisciplinary context of narrative theory. Postclassical narratology has seen the branching out of heterogeneous theoretical areas from the same discipline, rather than the more linear development of the classical period. The figures I discuss in this chapter – Martha Nussbaum (narrative and moral philosophy) and Rita Charon (narrative medicine) – both represent the diaspora of approaches beyond structuralist narratology (and beyond literary study). The problem with interdisciplinary approaches to narrative is that the traffic between their inquiries and the issues of narrative theory proper tends to be one-way – that these approaches usually seize upon the available narratological tools (that is, the legacy from the classical phase) without critically engaging with them in a manner that would encourage further discussion in the interest of narrative theory. I argue, however, that it is equally important to look at these issues from divergent perspectives and ask how new exchanges with other disciplines can help to reshape the thinking of

narrative theorists, and particularly invite reconsideration of the affordances and limitations of narrative form in the light of interdisciplinarity. My argument in this chapter is developed with particular reference to the increasing cognitive interest in narrative, as the approach to narrative that most transcends the boundary between narrative theory and other disciplines.

The case study methodology of my thesis means that each chapter can be read individually, but together they help to adumbrate the shifting inflections of some key issues in narrative theory and, in turn, the shifting inflections of James in the work of different critics who have played their parts in the development of the discipline. I seek to emphasize in my conclusion that James's critical writings provide us with rich resources encouraging us to rethink several narrative concepts in a new light; the complexities in his thinking – and the multivalency of James himself, not only as a theorist, but also as an artist, is a key reason for the extent of his theoretical appropriation throughout the history of the field.

Chapter One
Henry James and Percy Lubbock's Formalist Approach to the Novel

Henry James's large output of critical writings, notably his influential 1884 essay 'The Art of Fiction' and, later in his career, the New York Edition prefaces, has been credited as having a foundational importance in the development of the Anglo-American tradition of narrative theory. 'The Art of Fiction,' with its seminal claim that '[a] novel is a living thing, all one and continuous' (AF 36), characterises fiction as an organic whole, anticipating and subsequently giving force to the New Critical tenet that literary texts are self-contained verbal artefacts (Herman, 'Histories of Narrative Theory I' 26-27); the New York prefaces provided resources, in the form of James's discussion of his own compositional practice, for further critical debate on narrative technique, in particular on narrative point of view (Culler, 'Fabula and Sjuzhet' 27). Among various formalist invocations of James that gave specific attention to the unity of novelistic form and the technical elements that constitute it, the one most frequently recognised, and at the same time criticised, was Percy Lubbock's overly systematic attempt to anatomise a set of selected novels in *The Craft of Fiction* (1921).

Lubbock certainly shares with Blackmur the vision of the formalist James, but compared to the latter's collection, which showcases James's actual ideas (though of course not without Blackmur's own partial theoretical lead, as discussed previously in the introduction), Lubbock's invocation is more tenuous, relying mainly on his personal conviction that James is the epitome of compositional mastery; that James's attention to technical detail is a quality necessary to novel criticism as a serious discipline. This is

especially evident in the preface to the 1954 Jonathan Cape Edition of *The Craft of Fiction,* where Lubbock writes:

> Where, he seems to say, on the loose fabric of a mere preference or distaste will be found the marks of the long wear and tear of discrimination that are the true critic's honourable and recognizable warrant? It needs a solider consistency to stand the pressure and take the imprint of the accumulating weight of his scrutiny; and certainly there was no light fondness or hasty petulance in Henry James's praise or blame of a book.[12] (ix)

This 'solider consistency' Lubbock finds in the techniques that novelists such as James – and particularly James – employ in the making of their works. The reason Lubbock puts his own twist on the title of James's famous essay, playing on the two cognate terms 'art' and 'craft,' can be explained also by looking at the same preface:

> Art is a winged word, neither to hold nor to bind, ever ready to fly away with a discussion that would fasten it to its own ground and to the work that bears its name. The homely note of the craft allows no such distractions; it holds you fast to the matter in hand, to the thing that has been made and the manner of its making; nor lets you forget that the whole of the matter is contained within the finished form of the thing, and that the form was fashioned by the craft. (v)

For Lubbock, who seeks to establish a sense of the rigour of a discipline in novel criticism, the idea of 'craft' based upon the 'materiality' of 'the matter in hand' is imperative. As he will assert later in the work, 'nobody can work in material of which the properties are unfamiliar,' and just as other crafts require one to know 'the capacities of wood and clay and stone,' so fiction demands that the author's compositional techniques are similarly grounded in a way that is perceptible to, and learnable by, both authors and critics alike

[12] Lubbock's reverential attitude towards James is clear in this preface. He claims that 'the novel in its wayward exuberance had hardly been held to any serious account of its practice till it was called to confront the most magisterial of its makers. Henry James took the whole of its conduct in hand with a large assurance that cleared the air of certain old and obstinate misunderstandings, if only by loftily ignoring them. So massive an attention bent on a thing so familiar […]' (viii-ix).

(20). The object of critical scrutiny is to be found 'within the finished form of the thing,' unified and 'fashioned by the craft' that is the author's technical method. Lubbock's invocation of James's spirit – his formalist spirit, specifically – becomes most apparent when he chooses to prioritise 'craft' over James's 'art' of fiction;[13] it is also this departure, however, that alerts us to the importance of distinguishing between James's own ideas and Lubbock's perception of them.

Lubbock's prescriptive tendency evidently differs from James's belief that it can only be a mistake 'to say so definitely beforehand what sort of an affair the good novel will be' (AF 32). In fact, Lubbock's formalist approach marginalises James's own key concern, expressed in 'The Art of Fiction' and later in the prefaces, with authorial discernment in the creative process of fictional composition, and centres his investigation instead upon the text itself as an autonomous artefact, anticipating Wimsatt and Beardsley's New Critical rejection, in the seminal essay 'The Intentional Fallacy,' of the idea of the literary work as 'the echo of a great soul' (Wimsatt and Beardsley 1235). We cannot possibly say that it was Lubbock who spearheaded this 'soulless' treatment, which brackets much of James's original consideration on authorial control in favour of elements that can be found in the finished form of fiction, but we can notice that Lubbock's project itself was symptomatic of, and participated in, an already shifting literary-critical

[13] The difference, in fact, can be traced back to Walter Besant's 1884 lecture 'The Art of Fiction,' which prompted a response with the same name from James. Although the three authors shared a belief in fiction as an art form, the implication of Lubbock's term 'craft' has more in common with the meaning of 'art' for Besant than for James. Besant claims that fiction, in order to be considered an art form, has to be 'governed and directed by general laws; and that these laws may be laid down and taught' (Besant 3). His broad sense of 'art' includes concerns for morality that are not foregrounded by Lubbock, but Lubbock nonetheless follows him in insisting that there should be general methods involved in the making of good fiction.

atmosphere that gave more weight to systematic study of fiction and its technical elements.

The role *The Craft of Fiction* played in reinforcing a strong association between James and narrative techniques, particularly those surrounding narrative point of view, is widely acknowledged. Sheila Teahan argues that Lubbock codifies the compositional principles he believes to be advocated by the prefaces, and valorises the 'centre of consciousness' strategy James often employs as a superior technique (Teahan 20), while David Herman similarly notes that such codification involves generalisation to an extent not necessarily warranted by James's own approach, which results in a markedly 'prescriptive framework.' Teahan's observation is echoed by Herman, who observes that Lubbock's 'invidious distinction' between 'telling' and 'showing' in technical terms pushes forward the idea that 'specific methods or procedures are at the heart of the craft of fiction' (Herman 'Histories of Narrative Theory I' 27). Both critics' arguments illustrate how the formalist James, conceived through Lubbock's vision of him, comes to be associated closely, but also quite reductively, with the specific compositional 'craft' that he uses in the portrayal of his centre of consciousness.

Having said that, it is equally important to appreciate the likelihood that Lubbock's study was predicated upon a degree of self-imposed compromise. The preface to *The Craft of Fiction* suggests that Lubbock is aware of the complexity inherent in James's ideas about the 'art of fiction' – that there is much more to it than technical method in composition. In calling 'art' 'a winged word' always ready 'to fly away with a discussion that would fasten it to its own ground,' he expresses his concern that 'the airy discussion may all too easily range, were it not for the pluck of the string that tethers it to the thing

in hand, the novel itself within its covers' (v- vi). Lubbock also makes quite explicit the necessity to differentiate between the form and the story of the novel, the latter of which he argues might provide the reader with an illusion of life (an idea James also discusses in 'The Art of Fiction'), so pleasant that it gets in the way of 'our finding, perceiving, recreating, the form of the book' (6). Regretting that such reading experience unfortunately does not allow one 'to grasp the shadowy and fantasmal form of a book' (1), and that one must be instead a critical reader who is not 'haunted by a sense that a novel is a piece of life' (22), Lubbock reveals that his overt formalist stance and his departure from the complexity of James's ideas were motivated by his attempt to advance an academic discipline that is practicable and tangible enough to be credible on its own terms. With the benefit of historical hindsight, then, we can see that while Lubbock's work has at its core a scientific impulse and striving for objectivity that anticipates the later development of structuralist narratology, it also takes into account the importance of the experience of the reader – even if it ultimately rejects it – to an extent that some structuralist narratologists do not.

As Heather Fielding argues, Lubbock's work has now largely fallen out of critical circulation, probably because of disinclination for 'his long-standing, self-cultivated' reputation as the 'disciple' of James, and even more so because contemporary critics want to free James from Lubbock's 'systematising influence' (Fielding 168). There is a possibility, however, that in dismissing Lubbock's reductive invocation of James critics have also already limited their own horizon of consideration, focusing mainly on the technical codification of James they seek to criticise (and avoid), while neglecting other aspects of fiction – and, specifically in the interest of this thesis, of narrative – that his

discussion can accommodate. Mark Schorer concludes in his foreword to the 1957 Edition of *The Craft of Fiction* that 'without Lubbock's respect for the artist in the novelist, the loose form of the novel would have floundered on for how many more years without the prestige that, as a form of art, it had always deserved' (Schorer ii). John Carlos Rowe agrees with Schorer's assessment that Lubbock's work helped to legitimate the novel as a properly artistic genre and was part of the reason 'why modern criticism of the novel focused so centrally on aesthetic techniques'; Rowe adds, however, that while this is a consideration for literary history, 'it *can* no longer be taken seriously as *the* task of critical reading' (Rowe, 'Art of Teaching' 216, emphasis original). Freeing James from Lubbock's 'systematising influence' can also be achieved by moving away from the predominantly formalist perspective and its attention to the 'craft' of fiction that has framed much theoretical discussion about James and Lubbock.[14] For this reason I would like to approach Lubbock's work more sympathetically (bearing in mind, of course, the inherent limitation of his scheme), and grant force to its engagement with ideas and fundamental issues that may not pertain to narrative techniques, but more generally to narrative theory, and which precisely arise from the theoretical dialogue between his self-imposed formalistic approach to the 'craft of fiction' and James's own ideas about the 'art of fiction.'

[14] Rowe also notes in his foreword to *Henry James's New York Edition: The Construction of Authorship* that formalists often use James's prefaces as carelessly as 'the harried; tourist thumbs the pages of a guidebook' (Rowe, 'Foreword' xxv).

Form

The core concern underpinning Lubbock's *Craft of Fiction*, and motivating its analytical framework, is set out at the start of the work, where he writes:

> To grasp the shadowy and fantasmal form of a book, to hold it fast, to turn it over and survey it at leisure – that is the effort of a critic of books, and it is perpetually defeated. Nothing, no power, will keep a book steady and motionless before us, so that we may have time to examine its shape and design. As quickly as we read, it melts and shifts in the memory; even at the moment when the last page is turned, a great part of the book, its finer detail, is already vague and doubtful. A little later, after a few days or months, how much is really left of it? A cluster of impressions, some clear points emerging from a mist of uncertainty, this is all we can hope to possess, generally speaking, in the name of a book. The experience of reading it has left something behind, and these relics we call by the book's name; but how can they be considered to give us the material for judging and appraising the book? (1)

Lubbock consciously identifies himself here as a 'critic of books' – as opposed to a mere reader, as he will consistently make clear throughout the work – whose objective is to seek an approach through which the novel can be appropriately appraised. Since the novel's 'shadow and fantasmal form' that we gain as we read cannot be kept 'steady and motionless before us' and remains only 'a cluster of impressions' after we finish reading, Lubbock turns instead to another kind of form, one constructed out of what he believes to be concrete 'material' that can be studied in an objective manner. Lubbock's agenda is to make novel criticism a discipline worthy of serious consideration; for that purpose, he needs an established set of learnable materials that can be shared among critics of the novel, which he finds in the technical methods employed by a selected group of authors. These methods, Lubbock believes, make up the concreteness of form, giving the novel,

which he decidedly calls the 'book,'[15] an observable 'shape and design' that allows critics 'to hold it fast, to turn it over and survey it at leisure' – to appraise it critically.

Lubbock compromises in order to escape from the 'perpetual defeat' he has always faced, and in doing so anticipates the New Critical approach to the literary text, which brackets any contingency deemed to be external to the object of study itself. This systematic search for appraisable material in a work of fiction – taking the text itself as the core, autonomous object of the approach – downplays the role of authors and readers as conscious agents in the communication that occurs through the work; it adopts a rather limited view of communication that does not take into full account authors' communicative intentions, nor the effects of readers' inferences about them, but focuses instead on the methods through which they are communicated, since only these are contained within the text and apparent to the eye for appraisal. Lubbock further emphasizes the importance of the novel's concrete form and the technical methods that constitute it when he argues that an author 'cannot transfer his[16] book like a bubble into the brain of the critic; he cannot make sure the critic will possess his work'; the only solution, he thinks, is that the ideal critical reader reassembles from the methods presented to him 'a book which may or may not please his taste when it is finished' (17). A successful communication between author and reader in Lubbock's model requires the

[15] Lubbock's insistence – or even fixation – on the materiality of form is astounding, as the word 'book' is repeated 435 times throughout the whole work, 50 times in the very first chapter alone. This is similar to Lubbock's highly material conception of the novelist's craft (compared to work in 'wood and clay and stone,' discussed in the introduction of this chapter), presenting form as something perceivable to the eye.

[16] Authors are of course not all male, and using masculine pronouns to stand for the universal might no longer be as ideologically acceptable as it was, to an extent at least, when James and Lubbock (and in the next chapter Booth) were writing. Since this is the habitual usage for James, Lubbock, and Booth, I have followed it solely for the sake of consistency and clarity.

latter to work on the material provided by the former with an 'objectifying mind' (8), performing the act of reading in a very specific manner (instead of reading naturally) so as to identify the 'many different substances' that go into the making of a novel, and so that 'a complete, coherent, appraisable book remains in the mind' (20). This model of transaction[17] based upon learning and replicating the 'craft' of fiction is beneficial to Lubbock's personal pursuit of a systematic discipline, because the success of the transaction and, by extension, of the work of fiction, can be appraised through a shared pool of knowledge.[18]

I used the term 'compromise' earlier because there is a perceptible tension between Lubbock's awareness of author-reader communication and his attempt to bracket it off from his model of study. This tension is apparent when Lubbock urges his critical reader to 'follow the methods of the novelists whose effects are incontestable' (21). Lubbock, in his attempt to dissociate the novel from its author and reader – to turn it into a self-sufficient artefact – has to rely on the premise that the effects the novel produces are intrinsic in the methods themselves. His specific stipulation that these effects are 'incontestable' – the implication of which is the existence of one-to-one relation between

[17] I opt to use the word transaction here since it has become clear in more recent work that Lubbock's model of what happens between the author and the reader through the medium of the 'book' is only a small part (and a rather unnatural one, at that) of what we would normally consider to be communication. Dorothy Hale, for example, considers the Lubbockian reader to be 'strangely hollow' (Hale, 'Form and Function' 27). The issues about communication in narrative theory will be discussed further in the second chapter.

[18] Even before Lubbock there had already been interest in the technical insights that James's prefaces provide for fictional composition. Joseph Warren Beach's *The Method of Henry James* (1918) is a highly systematic study in the formalist spirit, the focus of which is on 'the niceties of art' – in other words, the titular 'method' of novel writing (Beach 1). Beach's self-proclaimed choice to centre his study almost exclusively on the novels, on the basis that 'there is little essential difference in technique between James's short stories and his long stories' (Beach 3) suggests that his study is built upon a similar conviction to Lubbock's: that James's fictional works share a set of methods that can be categorically elucidated.

a particular method and its corresponding effect – allows him to move closer to the idea that there are at least finite (permutations of) techniques that can be identified, shared, and learned. By talking about the novel's 'life-like effects' on the reader and 'the imaginative gifts which they imply in the novelist' (5) in the first place, Lubbock admits, and at the same time reminds us, that there is more to the novel, or a work of fiction, than its craft, and that his attempt to reach a unified, appraisable form is indeed predicated upon a compromise. The strain in Lubbock's approach becomes even more apparent if we consider that technical methods are themselves part of the author's rhetoric, and by definition would not be able to stand on their own without an authorial design to cause particular effects in the reader. This view emerges in Wayne C. Booth's insistence upon the rhetoric of fiction – the premise that all techniques are inherently rhetorical. Booth will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter; his argument underlines the problem in Lubbock's bracketing of the author and reader, and reconnects the consideration of fiction with the former's rhetoric and the effect it produces in the latter. It is worth noting here, however, that Booth's own investigation is underpinned by a similar assumption to Lubbock's, that a critical reader will be able to notice 'exactly the manner' in which each method is employed (21).

In a rather ironic turn, James, the authoritative figure in Lubbock's scheme declared to be 'the first writer of fiction […] to use all the possibilities of the method with intention and thoroughness' (172), brings the tension in the scheme to the foreground. Despite James's constant reflection in his critical writings, particularly in his prefaces, about the compositional methods he employs in his works, it is clear his concern is not with objective methods, but emphatically with method in the context of, and with specific

reference to, his own creative process of writing. This meaningful distinction between 'art' and 'craft' can be found in 'The Art of Fiction,' for example, when James chooses to talk about 'artistic preoccupations' (AF 31) or 'artistic considerations' (AF 40) rather than to discuss specific techniques. Lubbock's invocation of 'all the possibilities' of such artistic creativity is thus limiting; by giving too much value to method, Lubbock's approach has the unintended effect of undermining the importance of the very author whose creativity is the source of the extrapolated method – especially given that Lubbock's discussion draws on a range of key authors, each with a uniqueness of their own.

The focus of Lubbock's formalist approach to the novel is in some respect similar to that of narrative theory in its classical phase (or what is commonly known as classical narratology), which, as Gerald Prince observes in his 2008 reflection, can be characterised as 'formalist' in its belief that 'differences in form account for distinctly narrative differences between narrative texts.' Form, understood this way, 'results from different combinations of a finite set of invariant elements,' and the commitment is therefore, like Lubbock's, to 'the elaboration of a formal system describing these combinations of elements' (Prince, 'Classical and/or Postclassical Narratology' 116). Prince adds, however, that the postclassical turn in narrative theory encourages us to consider that 'a work's form does not provide everything necessary for the work's interpretation and evaluation,' while making it clear that postclassical narrative theory is by no means 'anti-formalist' (Prince, 'Classical and/or Postclassical Narratology' 117). In light of Prince's observation, which acknowledges the productive dialogue between narrative form and the various factors that can inflect it (Prince, 'Classical and/or Postclassical Narratology'

122), I would argue that it could be beneficial, also, to question what narrative form entails in the first place. We can already see from Lubbock's project that the form of fiction, or of narrative, should not be viewed in terms of compositional methods alone, especially when such an approach, as in Lubbock's case, effectively displaces the question of form onto that of method, rendering the concept of form itself redundant for consideration.

This emphasis on form as methods is in conflict with James's organic idea of form. In 'The Art of Fiction,' James expresses his belief that the form of the novel should not be treated as a combination of discrete elements.

> A novel is a living thing, all one and continuous, like every other organism, and in proportion as it lives will it be found, I think, that in each of the parts there is something of each of the other parts. The critic who over the close texture of a finished work will pretend to trace a geography of items will mark some frontiers as artificial, I fear, as any that have been known to history. (AF 36)

The specific 'artificial frontier' James is referring to, in his own illustrative example, is the distinction between the novel of character and the novel of incident. The distinction is artificial, for James, because it belongs to the critic's systematising discourse rather than the novel's. His objection to the critic's taxonomical demarcation of 'the close texture of a finished work,'[19] in particular, bears strongly upon Lubbock's project, which is grounded upon a rather different interpretation of the unity of form. James's objection could be considered a preemptive caution against the possible limitations of formalist

[19] This criticism is more generally a response to Besant's lecture; James states outright the rationale behind his writing:

> He [Besant] seems to me to mistake in attempting to say so definitely beforehand what sort of an affair the good novel will be. To indicate the danger of such an error as that has been the purpose of these few pages; to suggest that certain traditions on the subject, applied *a priori*, have already had much to answer for, and that the good health of an art which undertakes so immediately to reproduce life must demand that it be perfectly free. (AF 32)

approaches like Lubbock's. While Lubbock discusses technical methods at great length, these methods are constituents of – and ultimately subordinated to – the novel's 'shape and design' (1), which he lays out at the beginning as the object of his examination. The form of the novel he discovers, in other words, tends to reduce to the unity or consistency of technical methods (of lack thereof) in a particular work; James's *The Awkward Age*, for example, is a novel treated as 'pure drama,' its formal coherence the result of following 'a single method throughout, from top to bottom' (190). Such a sense of form relies on an assumption that the form of the novel can be delineated, or even delimited, by determinable technical methods. This is also evident in Lubbock's own ambiguous use of the term 'form' itself; in some cases it refers to techniques of presentation in a particular part of a fiction (for example, 'scenic form' 199), but in others it implies a quality of wholeness and unity, most noticeably right at the beginning when he speaks of the 'form of a book' (1). Lubbock's formalist approach shares with the New Critical lineage to which it contributes, and with subsequent formalist classical narratology, the attempt to identify a sense of unity in the form of a work of fiction (or, in the latter case, the formal system of a particular narrative).

Jacek Gutorow offers an important reassessment to a received view that James's idea of organic form is aligned with the unity of form, arguing that 'the symbolism of germ, organism, and natural growth' used extensively especially in James's prefaces actually 'hints at the paradoxical character of the idea of organic form' and 'prepares the way for questioning the concept of the novel as autonomous, self-contained, and complete' (Gutorow 285). Further, Gutorow quotes James's preface to *The Awkward Age* when James says, at the very beginning, that he has encountered 'no better example […]

of the quite incalculable tendency of a mere grain of subject-matter to expand and develop and cover the ground when conditions happen to favour it' (AA 1), noting that for James the novel as an organic form actually 'depends to a great extent on incalculable influences and parameters' – which also reverberates with Prince's remark earlier on how postclassical narrative theory has begun to pay more attention to the ways various factors external to narrative form, traditionally understood, can inflect such form. For Gutorow, James's later practice of revision allows us to consider this idea of organic form in a new light: the novel is an individual organism which 'has to adapt, or be adapted, to a new environment and that the accompanying effort is a test of the novelist's skills' (Gutorow 286-287). Even in the preface to *The Awkward Age*, the novel Lubbock takes to be representative of the dramatic form because the dramatic method is used throughout, we can see that that the focus of James's organicism is not necessarily tied to an idea of the unity of form; the focus, instead, is upon the novel 'as a living thing' that grows from, and continues to develop under, the author's creative perspective.

In order to open up the concept of form for reconsideration we therefore have to address the importance of the author's creative process, which is downplayed by Lubbock and generally by New Critics and formalists. The key to this reconsideration lies in Lubbock's discussion of 'point of view' in the novel, which is a topic in its own right and will be explored later in the chapter; it is nonetheless worth pointing out here that his interpretation of the term is different from James's in a significant way. While Lubbock focuses on the technical aspect of point of view, setting an example for further investigation in narrative theory about different techniques pertaining to the issue, James mainly uses the phrase 'point of view,' as Jose Antonio Álvarez Amorós observes, with

no technical import, but in its ordinary meaning to refer to an 'opinion, attitude, or intellectual outlook' (Álvarez Amorós 48). Indeed, in 'The Art of Fiction,' the term is used to refer specifically to the point of view of the author – 'the producer, from whose point of view it is […] that we are attempting to consider the art of fiction' (AF 37). Even 'the search for form,' James sees as a kind of artistic preoccupation (AF 31).[20] The implication is that the point of view of the author is inextricable from the creative process of composing a work of fiction, and in turn from the form of said work, an implication at odds with Lubbock's premise that form is produced through the application of a set of compositional rules. To reiterate the idea that there should be no *a priori* restriction upon composition, James claims that:

> A novel is in its broadest definition a personal impression of life; that, to begin with, constitutes its value, which is greater or less according to the intensity of the impression. But there will be no intensity at all, and therefore no value, unless there is freedom to feel and say. The tracing of a line to be followed, of a tone to be taken, of a form to be filled out, is a limitation of that freedom and a suppression of the very thing that we are most curious about. (AF 33)

It is important to note here, however, that attending to the author's 'personal impression of life' does not mean taking his method of articulation as definitive, for James himself follows by stating that the author

> has painted his picture in a manner best known to himself. His manner is his secret, not necessarily a deliberate one. He cannot disclose it, as a general thing, if he would; he would be at a loss to teach it to others. (AF 33)

[20] Susan M. Griffin argues that 'The Art of Fiction' itself is a personal piece in tone, in which James repeatedly turns to his own experience (Griffin 199). I think it is fair to say that this assessment applies to other of James's critical writings as well, most strikingly his prefaces, in which some may argue that his personal accounts of experience are paramount, or even the reason to read them (for pleasure, no less) in the first place.

We can infer that it is not by any means necessary, nor is it encouraged, that the reader approach the novel in disregard of the strictures of 'The Intentional Fallacy.' There is a sense that the author himself does not claim authority on his 'manner,' and it is his secret simply because it comes naturally as something 'best known to himself,' not because it is deliberately withheld. This is the reason why the manner cannot be conveyed as a 'general thing' – as a method that could be appraised and subsequently shared – nor can it be abstracted to be studied or analysed. The essential aspect of the creative process that can never be ruled out, then, is not the author's intention, which Lubbock seeks to do away with, but the author's creative consciousness; that is, his thinking, his reflection, which itself governs the ongoing composition of fiction.

This brings us back to the experience of the reader Lubbock mentions at the beginning of his work; the reader who is not framed within his critical project, but who experiences 'a cluster of impressions, some clear points emerging from a mist of uncertainty' (1). By foregrounding the importance of the creative consciousness of the author, we are encouraged to reconsider likewise the importance of the reader's 'impressions,' the reader's consciousness in the process of reading. Even so, the communication between author and reader, restored to its richness beyond accountability to methods, seems to pose the problem of communicable form. We should nonetheless acknowledge that the problem of a unified, communicable form might be apparent to us only because we already consider it within Lubbock's restrictive framework, which is what urges us to see form in a limited sense in the first place. Lubbock himself makes a compromise by moving away from his original impression of the experience of reading, resorting to the model of a shared method as the vehicle that allows a unified form, a

'book,' to be reconstructed by the reader; but his original impression was actually closer to James's non-prescriptive stance, which rejects methods in favour of personal impression and experience. Lubbock thus departs from James's suggestion that a given novel has no one definite perceptible form because any such form emerges from, and therefore varies according to, the personal engagement of the one approaching the novel. Any attempt to fix its form will, in Lubbock's own words, 'be perpetually defeated,' but only because its form is inherently 'shadowy and fantasmal' and should be understood as such. Lubbock's 'defeat' can then be attributed to his insistence upon the systematicity of a discipline which, as James warns, belongs to the critic's own discourse, and not to the novel itself.

James's emphasis upon the importance of personal impression is retained throughout his career. Reflecting on the act of re-reading and revising, James asks in the preface to *The Golden Bowl*: 'What has the affair been at the worst […] but an earnest invitation to the reader to dream again in my company and in the interest of his own larger absorption of my sense?' (GB lviii). James's view of the experience of reading here is revealing for its ideas about the communication between author and reader. The emphasis is put upon the reader's imaginative re-creation, once again in 'the interest of his own larger absorption' of the author's sense. It is not expressed in terms of 'construction' or 'materials,' but of 'dream' and 'sense'; not in terms of 'possession' – taking hold of the novel's unified form, or of the 'book' as an objective whole – but of 'absorption,' taking it in as an organic part. Instead of treating the novel as a self-contained literary artefact to be studied, James envisions a more interactive, conscious, and in some sense more vital

communication between the author and any reader with 'interest' and 'sense.'[21] If the form of the novel is to be understood in terms of organicism as James urges, it cannot be itself fixed or rigidly determined, but needs to bloom within the consciousness and the personal impressions of both the author and the reader.

James's extensive discussion of experience in 'The Art of Fiction' gives us more insight into the significance and the role of consciousness:

> What kind of experience is intended, and where does it begin and end? Experience is never limited and it is never complete; it is an immense sensibility, a kind of huge spider-web, of the finest silken threads, suspended in the chamber of consciousness and catching every air-borne particle in its tissue. It is the very atmosphere of the mind; and when the mind is imaginative – much more when it happens to be that of a man of genius – it takes to itself the faintest hints of life, it converts the very pulses of the air into revelations. (AF 34-35)

The metaphor of experience as 'a kind of huge spider-web […] suspended in the chamber of consciousness' is illuminating because it points to the dual nature of experience. Its first aspect is the process of accumulating impressions; experience catches 'every air-borne particle in its tissue.' Experience is not merely cumulative, however, but also transformative: as 'the very atmosphere of mind,' it 'takes to itself the faintest hints of life' and 'converts the very pulses of the air into revelations.' Specifically, it points to the power of human cognition to process mere phenomena into 'impressions,' which will then be stored in the mind. James's statement that 'experience is never limited and it is never complete' is illustrated by the way the web of experience is itself the means by which

[21] J. Stephen Murphy argues, with specific reference to James's practice of revision, that 'a novel or a tale is most complete when it compels revision, is most alive when a reader is reimagining it. […] Treating art or literature as an object to be collected, whether as a physical artifact or as a cherished memory, represents the extinction of that vitality.' (Murphy 171)

further particles are caught, its spatial extension affording the ability to catch multiple, distributed particles simultaneously.

James's concern in this passage is with the sensibility of the author, but if we bring this analogy to the experience of reading and re-constructing a novel, we can see more clearly why the form of the novel must be understood as 'shadowy and fantasmal' and never 'steady and motionless' – a mutable form that consists of 'a cluster of impressions' in our mind. As Lubbock grants,

> The book is never present in the critic's mind, never there in all its completeness; but enough of it, in a commonly good memory, remains to be discussed and criticized – the book as we remember it, the book that survives, is sufficient for practical purposes. (3)

The form of a cluster of impressions does not have to be complete. But the book that 'survives' from the multiple impressions gained through the act of reading is never independent of the particular 'practical purposes' for which it is required; nor is its completeness, as a cluster of impressions, an intelligible notion.[22] This relocation of form from the text to the mind of the reader moves a strictly formalist view of form towards a broader discussion of what the concept of form really entails. As James Phelan reflects, while classical narratology traditionally conceives of its desired formal system as a grammar that can be derived from narrative itself, the developing cognitive approach to narrative, with its more multi-disciplinary endeavour, conceives of its formal system as

[22] Extensive cognitive research has been done on the idea of narrative cognition as an elemental tool of thinking. See, for example, David Herman's edited collection *Narrative Theory and the Cognitive Sciences* (2003). Lubbock also touches briefly on the idea (though it would be anachronistic to expect him to address it directly), observing that there could be some similarities between sense-making in reading a novel and sense-making in real life; that a durable image of a novel can be made by 'unconsciously making a selection […] choosing a little of the story here and there,' a creation of the kind that 'we practise every day […] piecing together our fragmentary evidence about the people around us and moulding their images in thought' (7).

the components of a mental model (Phelan, 'Narrative Theory, 1996-2006' 286). With the hindsight that history provides, the dialogue between James and Lubbock allows us to see that what was once seen by Lubbock as a non-systematic idea of form, but emphasized nonetheless by James, would actually find a place in the recent development of narrative theory.

James's metaphor of the web invites further reflection in this light about the nature of human experience and cognition. The caught particles stay on the web and are connected through the web; what allows several particles to be unified into a single whole is the web itself. The web has an evolving form of its own, beyond any given cluster of impressions, and this suggests that the horizon of form is that of experience itself. The transformative process, from phenomena to impressions, relies upon these qualities within the personal 'chamber of consciousness' of each individual; experience is an ever-changing, ever-developing sense that has been, is, and will be influenced by the very impressions it makes possible, those particles that remain caught in its tissue. Experience both affords the basis for the unity of several impressions, and derives the value from having done so, true to James's description of the relationship between experience and impressions: 'if experience consists of impressions, it may be said that impressions are experience' (AF 35). The novel, then, does not in itself offer form, but occasion and vehicle. Indeed, 'The Art of Fiction' attributes an aesthetic quality to the web itself, being of 'the finest silken threads,' so it is there that readers who can accept the invitation to keep company, especially with the mind of 'a man of genius,' find their reward.

It is also worth considering the tension that arises from James's metaphor of the web should we locate form within the novel; that is to say, treating it as the narrative form

of novelistic discourse. What I would like to draw attention to here is the linear logic of narrative form, the potential limitation of which is revealed in part through Lubbock's insistence upon the materiality of the book form, a form which we approach in a linear manner.[23] Even when Lubbock addresses the reading experience outside his formalist framework, he still describes it in the form of 'a slender thread,' or 'a passage of experience' that occurs as we turn the pages (14). By acknowledging that the novel, or a particular narrative, merely provides an occasion and vehicle for the form achieved within a human mind, we open up the possibility of considering such form as comprehending, or processing, narrative, while not necessarily being entirely narrative – that is, linear – in nature. Indeed, it is important to note that the huge spider-web is after all suspended in – and thus part of – 'the chamber of consciousness'; this reminds us that narrative experience or narrative cognition is only a part of a more complex picture that is human consciousness.

The influence of Lubbock's study on the understanding of James as the 'master' of artistic technique is not in doubt, but at the same time Lubbock's formalist agenda cannot account fully for James's own vision of the novelist as a creative artist in his own right. Attention to James's perspective as an artist, rather than a critic, and attention to the consciousness of author and reader involved in the communication that occurs through the novel, help to dismantle Lubbock's formalist approach and reveal the issues,

[23] The limitation of narrative linearity is explored in the edited volume *Narrating Complexity*. Richard Walsh discusses with Susan Stepney in the introduction how 'narratives reduce complexity [which is non-linear by nature] to linear sequence,' or how 'narratives can explore non-linear temporality, but to be intelligible as narrative they still depend upon its essential linearity' (Walsh and Stepney 4). Similarly, Walsh argues that narrative sense-making is 'partial, provisional and interdependent with other modes of sense-making' (such as spatial cognition) (Walsh, 'Beyond Fictional Worlds' 474).

particularly with the implications of form itself, that lurk within it. The organicism of James's idea of form points to the limitations of treating the novel as a literary artefact, as a unified 'book,' instead of attending to the significance of the form of fiction within the mind of the author and the reader. This relocation of the form to the mind accommodates further investigation into what form actually entails; within narrative theory, it means opening up inquiry into the nature of narrative form, its possibilities, and at the same time its limitations, beyond its traditional formalist framework.

Story

What is also distinctive in Lubbock's formalist approach and its focus on the materiality of the 'book' is the clear boundary it draws between the 'form' and the 'story' of the novel. Lubbock claims that even though the task of describing the form of the book might be difficult, 'we are convinced that it is there, clothing the book' (14). For Lubbock, the form comprising the technical methods employed by the author is a 'cloth,' a perceptible surface that can be distinguished from the story it covers. This is especially evident when Lubbock discusses the manner in which Tolstoy 'crafts' his novel:

> His hand is plunged into the scene, he lifts out of it great fragments, right and left, ragged masses of life torn from their setting; he selects. And upon these trophies he sets to work with the full force of his imagination; he detects their significance, he disengages and throws aside whatever is accidental and meaningless; he re-makes them in conditions that are never known in life, conditions in which a thing is free to grow according to its own law, expressing itself unhindered; he liberates and completes. And then, upon all this new life – so like the old and yet so different, more like the old, as one may say, than the old ever had the chance of being – upon all this life that is now so much more intensely living than before, Tolstoy directs the skill of his art; he distributes it in a single, embracing design; he orders and disposes. (18-19)

The author first selects 'ragged masses of life torn from their setting' before giving them 'new life,' turning them into the story that will finally be furnished, right at the end, with compositional methods – when the author 'directs the skill of his art.' This clear distinction between the story of the novel and the 'cloth' that covers it can be compared directly, in narrative terms, to the fabula-syuzhet distinction derived from Russian Formalism – the distinction between what happens in a narrative and how it is told.[24] In *Theory of Prose,* Victor Shklovsky argues that a new form of art 'makes its appearance not in order to express a new content, but rather, to replace an old form that has already outlived its artistic usefulness' (Shklovsky 20). This prioritisation of form over content as the privileged object of consideration will surely remind us of Lubbock's approach here, the more so when he follows up his explanation of Tolstoy's execution with a decree that the critic accept 'this ordered, enhanced display as it stands, better or worse, and uses it all for the creation of the book' (19).

Lubbock also pursues his thought in the same direction as Shklovsky, who says that 'the forms of art are explained by the artistic laws that govern them and not by comparisons with actual life' (Shklovsky 170). Lubbock does indeed focus on explicating a set of technical methods – the artistic laws that govern the form – rather than, and as distinct from, the story it represents; but it is important to remember that his approach is already predicated upon a compromise. It is equally beneficial, as I have shown, to consider the issue in light of his unusual attention (at least within a formalist framework) to the experience of reading – particularly the importance he attributes to the 'life' of the

[24] Despite this shared tenet, it is unlikely that there was a direct connection between Lubbock and the Russian formalists, considering that no translation of their works would have been available for Lubbock.

story. Dorothy Hale insightfully suggests that while Lubbock is closer to Shklovsky than to James in 'positing an adversarial relation' between 'form' and 'story,' he sees lifelike characters as integral to the novel's aim to represent life, even while he concedes that 'the mimetic power of fiction does distract us […] from the authentic grounds of its artistry' (Hale, 'Form and Function' 26-27). Indeed, Lubbock laments that we usually discuss 'the kind of life' the author renders, while leaving the 'book' 'imprisoned in the volume,' our glimpse of it 'too fleeting […] to leave us with a lasting knowledge of its form' (5). In other words, it is not simply the case that Lubbock realises there are values in the story of the novel, in the life that it represents; he actually gives it such value that he fears it may get in the way of his attempt to establish a systematic discipline – which is the consideration that compels him to make a firm distinction in the first place between the 'life' that exists in the story and the 'method' that the author subsequently applies to it.

Lubbock elaborates on the story's potential impediment on the study of the craft when he says:

> A novel, as we say, opens a new world to the imagination; and it is pleasant to discover that sometimes, in a few novels, it is a world which 'creates an illusion' – so pleasant that we are content to be lost in it. When that happens there is no chance of our finding, perceiving, recreating, the form of the book. So far from losing ourselves in the world of the novel, we must hold it away from us, see it all in detachment, and use the whole of it to make the image we seek, the book itself. (6)

The term 'illusion' Lubbock uses here is reminiscent of James's 'illusion of life' in 'The Art of Fiction' (AF 36); his insistence that we must see the novel 'all in detachment' so as not to 'lose ourselves in the world of the novel' then seems to be reinforcing the perception that his project is quite removed from the ideas of James himself, even as he draws his inspiration from James's works. Timothy P. Martin, for example, argues that

there is a clear distinction between Lubbock's formalism and James's mimesis, and that for the latter 'the effect of reading is to be lost in the world of the book, to be involved in an intense experience' (Martin 22). While James himself agrees that there is indeed importance in the 'exactness,' in the 'truth of detail' of the novel (AF 35), a sweeping label of 'mimesis' cannot do justice to the complexity of James's ideas, nor advance a critical discussion in which he is already usually associated with literary realism.[25] Lubbock observes that the reader is 'usually haunted by a sense that a novel is a piece of life, and that to take it to pieces would be to destroy it,' claiming that this sentiment 'has its share in restraining the hand of criticism' (22). James addresses the issue too in his essay, acknowledging that for many novel readers the '"artistic" idea would spoil some of their fun.' It is important to note, however, that while James is trying to give legitimacy to the novel as an art form here, he also warns against speaking of it 'as if it were a work of mechanics' – a warning that bears upon Lubbock's idea – and calls attention instead 'to the fact that it is at once as free and as serious a branch of literature as any other' (AF 32). Lubbock's belief that 'life' will hinder his pursuit of a systematic discipline requires that he treats the novel not as 'a piece of life' but 'a piece of art' (22), drawing a clear line between the reading experience and critical practice;[26] no similar prescriptive distinction exists in James's case.

[25] The established reception of James, Lubbock, and their critical dialogue may have a role to play in obscuring some theoretical merits in both authors' works. It might be the case, for example, that because Lubbock already has the reputation of being a disciple who uses James tendentiously, some critics draw too clear a line between them. Also, 'mimesis' is a historically and theoretically loaded concept, which makes it all the more problematic as a label.

[26] Walsh, in his discussion of fictionality and reader involvement, highlights this tendency: 'critical practice often defines itself in opposition to the reading experience.' He also relates this to a similar common assumption he seeks to challenge, that 'an awareness of fictionality necessarily produces critical detachment' (Walsh, *Rhetoric of Fictionality* 148).

James proclaims that the novel 'must take itself seriously for the public to take it so' (AF 29), repudiating an age-old expectation that

> a production which is after all only a 'make believe' (for what else is a 'story'?) shall be in some degree apologetic – shall renounce the pretension of attempting really to represent life. (AF 30)

Laurens M. Dorsey asks a thought-provoking question – what is James up to in attempting to equate illusion with representation of life? – and arrives at the explanation that 'in the art of the novel life is represented not in the sense of being objectively reported or mirrored […] but rather in the sense of being artistically recomposed of elements of life within a particular medium according to the root sense of the word "represent"' (Dorsey 15). This association between illusion of life and representation of life encourages us to shift our attention from 'life' as represented 'story' in the novel, separable in Lubbock's case from the method of the author, to the *act* of representing 'life' in the novel, especially considering that originally James talks about 'the illusion of life' in the context of the author's production: that all other merits of the novel 'owe their effect to the success with which the author has produced the illusion of life' (AF 36). The thrust of James's contestation here, then, is not so much on the mimesis of the represented object (but he agrees to its importance, as noted earlier) as on the seriousness that the authorial representational act needs to possess.

It is noticeable that James frames his discussion in relation to authorial rhetoric; both 'make believe' and 'apologetic' imply a target, in this case a reader, who would be made to believe, or receive apologies. Indeed, James wants to insist on the fact that

> as the picture is reality, so the novel is history. That is the only general description (which does it justice) that we may give the novel. But history also is allowed to compete with life, as I say; it is not, any more than painting, expected to apologize. The subject-matter of fiction is

> stored up likewise in documents and records, and if it will not give itself away […] it must speak with assurance, with the tone of the historian. (AF 30)

It is likely that James is not talking about 'history' in terms of something that happened in the past (in other words, historical facts), but as a discourse – that is, historiography – to which the novel is comparable. The novel, James argues, 'must speak with assurance, with the tone of the historian.' It is not history's accountability to historical facts, or in the novel's case the story's accountability to 'life,' that is underlined here, but the way both discourses should present themselves, being allowed to 'compete with life' in its seriousness. By 'competing' with life, James surely does not intend that fiction is a mirror image, or an exact representation of life (and thus 'the illusion of life'), as he clarifies that the task of both novelist and historian is 'to represent and illustrate' the past.[27] Hayden White explores the similarity between novelistic (and, more generally, narrative) discourse and historical discourse, arguing that historiography already incorporates narrativisation[28] 'out of a desire to have real events display the coherence, integrity,

[27] It is useful to add here a pertinent change that occurred in the quote I have used earlier from James:

> It is still expected, though perhaps people are ashamed to say it, that a production which is after all only a 'make believe' (for what else is a 'story'?) shall be in some degree apologetic – shall renounce the pretension of attempting really to represent life. (AF 30)

Mark Spilka finds that in the 1884 version of 'The Art of Fiction' (published in *Longman's Magazine*), James originally used 'compete with' instead of 'represent' here, which would be echoed in this following section of the essay, which remained unchanged, where he talks about how history is allowed to compete with life. Spilka speculates that one reason for the revision of 'The Art of Fiction,' for *Partial Portraits* in 1888, was Robert Louis Stevenson's reaction in 'A Humble Remonstrance.' Stevenson found the term 'compete' 'daring,' and James may have changed it 'so as to avoid the implication of gargantuan totality and vivacity which Stevenson found there' (Spilka 115-116).

[28] White uses narrativisation in the sense of 'giving narrative form to a discourse for the purpose of facilitating a better understanding of the represented phenomena' – that is, transforming historical material into the shape of a story or plot. This is different from Monika Fludernik's use of the term to describe 'a reading strategy that naturalises texts by recourse to narrative schemata'

fullness, and closure of an image of life that is and can only be imaginary' (White 24). More directly relevant to the current discussion is his observation that the modern historiographical community, at the time of his writing, had yet to acknowledge that it was actually 'the narrativity of historical discourse that was celebrated as one of the signs of its maturation as a fully "objective" discipline,' claiming that '[w]here, in any account of reality, narrativity is present, we can be sure that morality or a moralizing impulse is present too' (White 24). We make an analogous inference for other narrative discourses, such as the novel, without having to share or dismiss White's focus on morality, by noting that in any account cultivating narrativity, we can be sure that authorial rhetoric – the 'tone' that James speaks of – is present too.

Lubbock and James have similar ideas on the novel as an artistic representation of life, but their vision of the role played by 'art' (or, in Lubbock's case, 'craft') in such representation is quite different. For Lubbock, the compositional method employed by the author gives the novel its artistic form by 'clothing' it, and in the process offering the critical reader something to consider – indeed, to study – other than the represented 'life' itself. He makes a rather striking comparison between the novel and painting, building upon James's own claim that the former should be treated as an equally serious art form:

> A novel is a picture, a portrait, and we do not forget that there is more in a portrait than the 'likeness.' Form, design, composition, are to be sought in a novel, as in any other work of art; a novel is the better for possessing them. (9)

(Alber, 'Narrativisation' 386-387). Concepts in narrative theory (or in any other discipline, really) can be nebulous, and the same terms are sometimes used to denote different ideas; 'narrativity,' for White, underlines the coherence that arises from the emplotment of a (historiographical) narrative, but his use is not definitive – for further discussion of the term, see for example H. Porter Abbott's entry, 'Narrativity,' in the second volume of *Handbook of Narratology* (2014, 587-607).

His following argument, however, is that while 'an ill-composed painting' will most likely appear to us as 'a plain offence to the eye,' 'we know of novels which everybody admits to be badly constructed, but which are so full of life that it does not appear to matter' (10). The difference in medium of representation aside,[29] it is apparent that Lubbock treats representational method and represented content as two distinct elements of the novel which can be considered in isolation from each other, an idea entirely at odds with James's own that the novel is 'all one and continuous.'

In 'The Art of Fiction,' James makes the point that 'art' is popularly thought 'to have some vaguely injurious effect upon those who make it an important consideration,' and to 'be opposed in some manner to morality, to amusement, to instruction.' This perceived danger is especially significant with the novel because when art is embodied in the work of the painter,

> you know what it is; it stands there before you, in the honesty of pink and green and a gilt frame; you can see the worst of it at a glance, and you can be on your guard. But when it is introduced into literature it becomes more insidious – there is danger of its hurting you before you know it. (AF 31)

James of course rejects any suggestion that artistic considerations as such subvert the experience of reading a novel (or indeed morality, amusement, or instruction). There is

[29] James's intriguing comparison 'as the picture is reality, so the novel is history' also calls attention to this difference, if we look past his immediate attempt in the essay to establish the novel as a serious art form (by comparing it to history, which, in turn, 'is not, any more than painting, expected to apologize'). His awareness of the difference is suggestive particularly because he chooses to compare the novel to history (which is both verbal *and* narrative) rather than directly to the picture (or painting). James was interested in the relationship between picture (especially illustrations in the novel) and text, and wrote essays and a book (*Picture and Text*, 1893) on the matter, but it is unlikely he invokes painting – as a (not necessarily narrative) visual medium – with any further import in 'The Art of Fiction.' There is nonetheless a valuable germ here for more discussion; Kevin Ohi, for example, has pointed out some complexities in James's formulation: '[t]he form of the analogy sets up a series of equivalences: the painting to reality, the novel to history, the painting's relation to reality to the novel's relation to history, and so on' (Ohi 142).

an implication in James's satirical presentation, though, that art in the novel is indeed not as easily distinguishable from represented content as in painting, which 'stands there before you, in the honesty of pink and green and a gilt frame,' and of which you can see the worst 'at a glance.' Art in the novel 'interferes' because it challenges the conventional expectation that artistic method and represented 'life' can be separated from each other, and that only the latter, when dissociated from art, is a fit instrument of morality, amusement, or instruction (James, for example, talks about expectations for virtuous and aspiring characters, or happy endings (AF 32)). Art in the novel is 'more insidious,' in other words, because it is not merely the 'cloth' that covers the 'life' in the manner that Lubbock assumes, but concerns a complicated relationship between the act of representation and the represented content, the effects of which are not detachable and are therefore more than formally consequential – and can 'hurt' you before you know it.

This brings us back to James's thought on the compositional (or, more generally speaking, representational) process, more particularly his insistence that 'a novel is in its broadest definition a personal impression of life' (AF 33). Describing an instance in which a novelist comes upon a scene of some young French protestants and composes a tale out of it accordingly, James writes:

> The glimpse made a picture; it lasted only a moment, but that moment was experience. She had got her impression, and she evolved her type. She knew what youth was, and what Protestantism; she also had the advantage of having seen what it was to be French; so that she converted these ideas into a concrete image and produced a reality. (AF 35)

The 'reality' that we see in a novel is already a product of the author's experience, filtered and 'converted' through the working of the author's creative consciousness. James's suggestion that an author should 'write from experience, and experience alone' (AF 35)

resists Lubbock's notion that the compositional act requires a prior determination of a self-standing story and a subsequent application of technical methods, as representation is artifice from the first, inherently the production of a version of reality. As Richard Walsh observes, it is problematic to consider the concept of story as 'the untransformed substructure' Lubbock imagines, for it would need to be 'innocent of all perspective,' a requirement that is 'flatly impossible' (Walsh *Rhetoric of Fictionality* 61). The 'story' in a novel is already represented (though not necessarily in a written medium) as it is filtered through the mind of the author, and continues to be so as the author writes; it can by no means be something merely 'liberated and completed,' awaiting the author to 'direct the skill of his art' (18).

The difference between James's and Lubbock's perceptions of story and form corresponds directly to their different perceptions of the communication that occurs in a novel. In Lubbock's case, since the author has already 'completed' the story before he applies his technical mastery, 'the landscape that opens before the critic is whole and single,' as 'it has shed its irrelevancy and is compact with its own meaning' (19). The self-standing story-matter can be distinguished from the method of the author, the two interacting with each other no more than would be required of a good 'cloth' covering its content. The assumption that technical methods do not affect the story in a meaningful way facilitates Lubbock's systematic study of the former, but it forgoes the idea that the act of representation itself is a production of meaning, and it is this production of meaning, rhetorical on the author's part, that allows him to communicate with the reader. I have previously used the term 'transaction' to describe the specific communication in Lubbock's model, and it is apt to reiterate it here; the model takes the story as a matter

whose significance is already pre-determined by the author, and this matter is then to be 'transmitted,' in the best envelope possible, to the reader; or, preferably to the critic, who will separate one from the other, set aside the story, and proceed to consider the envelope in all its mastery.[30]

James's idea helps to remind us that there seems to be no clear boundary between what is told and how it is told, as the two merge into each other in the representational process, under the creative consciousness of the author. In one of the most illuminating passages from 'The Art of Fiction,' James writes:

> I cannot see what is meant by talking as if there were a part of a novel which is the story and part of it which for mystical reasons is not – unless indeed the distinction be made in a sense in which it is difficult to suppose that anyone should attempt to convey anything. 'The story,' if it represents anything, represents the subject, the idea, the data of the novel; and there is surely no 'school' – Mr. Besant speaks of a school[31] – which urges that a novel should be all treatment and no subject. There must assuredly be something to treat; every school is intimately conscious of that. This sense of the story being the idea, the starting-point, of the novel is the only one that I see in which it can be spoken of as something different from its organic whole; and since, in proportion as the work is successful, the idea permeates and penetrates it, informs and animates it, so that every word and every punctuation-point contribute directly to the expression, in that proportion do we lose our sense of the story being a blade which may be drawn more or less out

[30] In the course of his analysis Lubbock suggests, rather prescriptively, that certain types of story demand a particular kind of form that suits them best. This is most obvious in the penultimate chapter (XVII) in which he summarises the methods he has discussed throughout the book. Speaking against the direct form of telling, he concludes that '[t]he easy way is no way at all; the only way is that by which the most is made of the story to be told, and the most was never made of any story except by a choice and disciplined method' (264).

[31] Besant argues that there is a school 'which pretends that there is no need for a story'; by 'story' here he means 'new' content to be told (and not new methods of telling). Besant, in dismissing such a school, claims one can certainly invent new stories, for example by choosing 'new incidents, new conditions, new actors' to reprise the old actions, or by 'skillfully using the plain and simple materials which lie around us everywhere ready to our hands' (Besant 33-36). James says he does not understand Besant's idea of story, and it will be clear from my discussion that it is because he does not view 'story' in the same way as Besant in the first place – for James there is always treatment *and* subject. (Besant's idea is closer to Lubbock's; he distinguishes clearly between the 'story' and the 'construction and machinery' of the novel.)

> of its sheath. The story and the novel, the idea and the form, are the needle and thread, and I never heard of a guild of tailors who recommended the use of the thread without the needle or the needle without the thread. (AF 40)

For James, it does not make sense to distinguish which part of the novel is the story and which is the method, unless one intentionally wants to make it difficult for anyone to 'convey' anything at all. The story 'represents the subject, the idea, the data of the novel,' but at the same time that act of representing ('every word and every punctuation-point') contributes directly to that story itself – to the point that 'we lose our sense of the story being a blade which may be drawn more of less out of its sheath.' The story incorporates both the represented matter and the representational act; its meaning and significance, which is 'conveyed' to the reader, is a rhetorical effect of this relation, of the author's attempt to communicate. James's gloss upon 'story' as 'the subject, the idea, the data' of the novel is a concession, required in order to engage with Besant's distinction at all. James does not deny that there are prior materials, which he often calls the 'germ,' to his composition (and he always stresses that the author's experience, in the repertoire sense, is of the essence), but he also makes clear that this is the only sense of the 'story' – as 'the idea, the starting point' of the novel – that can be seen as 'something different from its organic whole.'[32] The starting point is by definition not complete, nor is it self-sufficient,[33] and it is only in the process of representation on the author's part that the 'story' of the

[32] This suggestive distinction between the prior 'germ' and the story that develops in the course of writing can also be found in the preface to *The Spoils of Poynton*: '[t]he germ, wherever gathered, has ever been for me the germ of a "story," and most of the stories straining to shape under my hand have sprung from a single small seed' (SP xxxix). The single small seed gives rise to, but is distinct from, the 'story,' 'straining to shape' under his hand.

[33] Except, of course, when the starting point itself is already a story (or, more precisely, a narrative). This complicates the matter only in that it means the novel involves a transformation, a *re*-presentation, and to that extent a new story.

novel emerges, organically, for the reader, as the effect of the reciprocity of the representational act and the matter represented.

Even though James does not address narrative theory directly, and his use of the terms 'form' and 'story' may not bear a direct correlation to the respective narrative concepts, his discussion of them, especially in juxtaposition to Lubbock's own, encourages us to rethink the relationship between the two concepts, and in particular the notion that story is the content of narrative, existing prior to or apart from the manner in which it is communicated to the reader. Even though the communication model of narrative based upon this distinction (for example, Chatman, *Story and Discourse* 31) does not separate the story from the form as radically as Lubbock does, it gives priority to grounds of narrative meaning that exist independently of communication, when more attention could have been given to the act of representation as the production of meaning itself.[34] James also helps to affirm the instrumentality of the author's rhetoric in the act of representation; especially in juxtaposition with Lubbock's attempt to separate 'life' from method, James reminds us that the seriousness which the novel takes itself – the seriousness, in other words, of the author's representational act – subsumes any accountability to facts, or to 'life,' in its production of the 'illusion of life.'

[34] As early as 1980, Jonathan Culler critiqued the priority of fabula over syuzhet, that '[a]ction becomes something that exists independently of narrative presentation [and] prior to any narrative presentation,' on the ground that narrative has a double logic, grounded in the primacy of events on the one hand, and of meanings on the other (Culler, 'Fabula and Sjuzhet' 28-32). Walsh offers a similar critique, though he considers fabula to be a by-product of the reader's interpretative process (which is constructed, rather than reconstructed, from the syuzhet) (Walsh, *Rhetoric of Fictionality* 67).

Point of View

In the final part of this chapter I would like to direct my attention to a cornerstone concept in Lubbock's work that I have in reserve earlier: namely, point of view. Lubbock develops the term 'point of view' to accommodate his formalist project in a rather different sense to that James normally uses. 'Point of view' attains its full technical import, for Lubbock, in his proclamation that:

> The whole intricate question of method, in the craft of fiction, I take to be governed by the question of the point of view – the question of the relation in which the narrator stands to the story. (251)

This 'relation in which the narrator stands to the story' is the premise Lubbock uses for his distinction between 'telling' and 'showing' and his preference for the latter; a distinction and preference subsequently contested, most forcefully by Booth in *The Rhetoric of Fiction*. Lubbock's preference is driven by his formalist agenda; his attempt is to bracket the communication from the author, 'an arbitrary, unmeasurable, unappraisable factor' he believes can only deflect the reader away from the 'book' (140), in favour of assumed imperatives of representation that are perceptible within the text.

Lubbock distinguishes between 'picture' and 'drama,' which he considers to be 'an antithesis' (110). The pictorial mode of representation is aligned with (though does not necessarily have to be a method of) telling, since it expresses 'the reflection of somebody's mind' (115), meaning that it involves the perspective of a filtering consciousness. The dramatic mode of representation is aligned with showing, because in this mode it is as if the author 'places their parts in the mouths of the players, leaves them to make their own impression, leaves us, the audience, to make what we can of it.' This is Lubbock's mode of preference, not least because 'the recording, registering mind of the

author is eliminated' (111). Yet, this distinction involves some conceptual strain, as can be seen if we consider Lubbock's discussion of Lambert Strether from *The Ambassadors*. We might expect that *The Ambassadors* would fall into the category of the pictorial mode, as the events in the story are reflected through Strether's mind, but Lubbock argues on the contrary that it belongs instead in the dramatic mode, because the reader directly takes on Strether's perspective:

> Strether personally has nothing to do with the impression that is made by the mazy career of his imagination, he has no hand in the effect it produces. It speaks for itself, it spreads over the scene and colours the world just as it did for Strether. It is immediately in the foreground, and the 'seeing eye' to which it is presented is not his, but the reader's own. (146)

Lubbock needs to say that Strether 'personally has nothing to do with the impression' in order to regard him as a medium for the reader's 'seeing eye' and so align James's novel and this method of presentation with his preferred 'dramatic form.' Nonetheless, his account is complicated by the implication of 'seeing' in James's own emphasis upon Strether's seeing in the preface to *The Ambassadors*, where he explains the rationale behind the moment when Strether comes to a realisation and tells his young friend to 'live all you can':

> The answer to which is that he now at all events *sees*; so that the business of my tale and the march of my action, not to say the precious moral of everything, is just my demonstration of this process of vision. (A xxx)

By 'seeing,' James does not simply mean the literal vision of Strether; but rather points to the gradual development of Strether's impressions until he comes to this very realisation. He does not by any means intend Strether's statement to declare outright 'the precious moral of everything,' but rather he aims to articulate it by demonstrating the

'process,' the development, of Strether's perspective. It is important to note that James explicitly says here 'my demonstration,' implying that the development we see in Strether is not something that shows itself – it is to be understood as a development being presented specifically by James. Strether's point of view is not just a vehicle of representation, but also an object of representation.

Similarly, Lubbock refers to the moments when the reader can actually see the working of Strether's mind – which he calls the mind being dramatised – but he treats them as distinct instances, rather than something inherent in the depiction of Strether's experience. He claims that when the mind is dramatised,

> [i]t is given as nobody's view – not his own, as it would be if he told the story himself, and not the author's, as it would be if Henry James told the story. The author does not tell the story of Strether's mind; he makes it tell itself, he dramatizes it. (147)

When juxtaposed with James's intention not to say outright, but to demonstrate, it becomes apparent that Lubbock's distinction between telling and showing cannot be based on whether or not the intended communication is overtly expressed to the reader. The development of Strether's impression is a story neither told nor shown by himself, but shown within James's 'demonstration,' which, at these moments, is not telling either. If Lubbock's exposition of the difference between telling and showing suggests anything, it is that the terms do not capture the distinction of representational perspectives with which he is concerned, and that the two ideas can and must overlap. Having said that, it also points to the representational importance of point of view in the narration of fiction, particularly that of the author, as emphasized by James, and raises the broader and even more fundamental question of what really constitutes 'narration.'

Lubbock sees 'the reflection of somebody's mind' as a defining characteristic of the pictorial mode of representation, while his preferred dramatic mode eliminates 'the recording, registering mind of the author.' There is a meaningful shift here, however, from the general idea of 'reflection' in the former (which should include Strether's case, as pointed out above) to the more specific indication of the 'registering mind of the author' in the latter. What comes to the fore, once we have established that the line Lubbock draws between the two modes is often blurred, is that even though he is concerned with a formalist framework (and a broadly systematic attempt to categorise different methods), the distinction also assumes certain qualities of the reader's experience. It might be more beneficial, then, to look at Lubbock's distinction less categorically in terms of 'telling' and 'showing' – because both are after all representation by the author – and more in terms of his underlying attempt to downgrade modes of representation that highlight direct authorial communication.

If we look past the technical import of 'point of view,' which is the usual focus of critical attention, we find that Lubbock does actually recognise the representation found in a novel as, in the end, the product of authorial 'point of view,' in a sense that would be closer to James's own usage. In discussing the dramatic method, he writes:

> The scene he evokes is contemporaneous, and there it is, we can see it as well as he can. Certainly he is 'telling' us things, but they are things so immediate, so perceptible, that the machinery of his telling, by which they reach us, is unnoticed; the story appears to tell itself. Critically, of course, we know how far that is from being the case, we know with what judicious thought the showman is selecting the points of the scene upon which he touches. But the effect is that he is not there at all, because he is doing nothing that ostensibly requires any judgement, nothing that reminds us of his presence. (113)

Lubbock admits that the dramatic method associated with 'showing' is actually another form of 'telling,' by means of the author's 'machinery' and through his 'judicious thought,' but one which leaves nothing to remind the reader of his presence. It is noteworthy that Lubbock discusses the method in relation to the effect it has on the reader, particularly when he claims that the effect would allow the reader 'to see it as well as he [the author] can.' In the dramatic method, then, the author makes it appear as if there were no filtering consciousness – no mediation – between the reader and the transpiring events. Lubbock's argument that 'Strether personally has nothing to do with the impression that is made by the mazy career of his imagination' can be reconsidered in these terms, less as a dramatic scene that 'tells' itself than as an authorial effort to minimise any mediation that could remind the reader of the author's demonstration. Within Lubbock's own conceptual framework that distinguishes between normal reading experience and critical appraisal of a novel, the reader will supposedly be oblivious to precisely this element of craft – a desired effect that Lubbock believes a good novel should produce – which otherwise is of premium value to a critic such as himself. The question of 'point of view' for Lubbock is not precisely 'the question of the relation in which the narrator stands to the story,' but rather the question of how the author mediates his representation and, in turn, the effect such mediation has on the reader.

This helps to address the muddle around the term 'narrator' in Lubbock's usage, which is often recognised as idiosyncratic in narrative theory. Álvarez Amorós, for example, notes how Lubbock combines the ideas of perspective and fictional speaker, leading to imprecise critical descriptions (Álvarez Amorós 47). Strether, who is the 'narrator' in Lubbock's formulation, does not himself 'narrate,' at least verbally, nor is he

communicating, least of all directly to the reader. It is important to note, however, that the oddness of this formulation to the modern critical eye may reflect the predominance, since the appearance of *Narrative Discourse*, of a Genettian model that distinguishes clearly between narrative perspective (or *mood*, 'who sees') and the *voice* of narration ('who speaks') (Genette 186).[35] Clearly, the key question for Genette, 'who is the narrator?' would sit uncomfortably with Lubbock's idea, because for Lubbock the communication of narrative (to the reader) is not in the first place framed strictly in terms of narration – that is, verbal communication involving someone who *speaks* to another[36] – but in terms of mediation (for example, through a figure such as Strether) of the author's representation. Lubbock approaches the issue with a formalist orientation, but with reference to (a conception of) the reader's experience, putting his approach in quite a different position from Genette's structuralist typology, which forgoes such experience.[37]

Lubbock argues that the distinction between the pictorial and dramatic modes is also 'a question […] of the reader's relation to the writer; in one case the reader faces towards the story-teller and listens to him, in the other he turns towards the story and

[35] Genette actually cites Lubbock's work as demonstrative of the 'regrettable confusion' between these two ideas.

[36] The Genettian model also assumes that the narrator and the narratee are on the same communicative plane, an assumption which Walsh addresses in chapter four of *The Rhetoric of Fictionality*. Lubbock's idea focuses on mediation through the authorial representation, while the effect on the reader apparently cuts across frames of narration, especially as Lubbock himself does not seem to care much about drawing clear lines between different ontological levels (he often characterises the effect of the dramatic method as readers being able to witness the events with their own eyes, which is of course ontologically impossible, even if we grant its semiotic naivety).

[37] Franz Karl Stanzel's *A Theory of Narrative* (1986) is comparable to Lubbock in regarding mediacy of presentation as the generic characteristic of narrative (Stanzel 4). His narrative typology includes the figural narrative situation (which, like Lubbock's account of Strether, would not be considered a mode of narration in Genette's scheme) and can be considered an equally legitimate, if much less popular, alternative to the prevalent Genettian model. It is also interesting to note that, according to Monika Fludernik, Stanzel actually integrated insights from Lubbock into his work (Fludernik, 'Histories of Narrative Theory II' 40).

watches it' (111). Lubbock often equates 'the story-teller' with 'the author,' though his own account makes it clear that it may equally be a represented narrator. We could choose to grant Lubbock's loose use of the term 'narrator,' rather than to dismiss it, and we could further allow 'the story-teller' to cover both the narrating voice (whether authorial or character narration) and the focalising character as mediator. In the pictorial mode, the reader faces towards the story-teller and listens to him; in the case of Strether, that would equate with turning to Strether and listening in a loosened sense that corresponds to Lubbock's loosened sense of 'tell,' one that distributes the communicative function between experiencing and narrating characters as it does between narrating characters and author. In Strether's case, then, there are two recursive layers of filtering consciousness: Strether's own, which forms an impression of events seen through his eye, and that of the author, which forms an impression of Strether's own impression.

Lubbock's loosened sense of the narrator or the story-teller puts Strether into a double role as both an experiencing character and a 'narrating' character; it also reveals an assumption that underlies the modern understanding of narration – that narration is overt communication from the narrating agent (be it authorial or character) through the narrating voice. We already see that narration, in Lubbock's sense, cannot be determined simply by the narrating voice, since a character like Strether can still perform narration without having to speak directly (he 'narrates' by means of mediation). Lubbock's confusion of terminology actually encourages us to see that the orthodox concept of the story-teller or the narrator might not have taken in the full scope of the act of narration, or even more precisely, the act of representation in fictional narrative. It is evident in the case of the narrator-focaliser, that there are two distinct layers of filtering consciousness,

but in other circumstances – for example in the case of an omniscient narrator – there has not seemed to be the need, nor does any become apparent, to distinguish between the filtering consciousness of the one who is 'telling' and the filtering consciousness of the one who is 'experiencing,' since the two consciousnesses are bound to be of the same figure who is performing a single role of narration.

If we accept the definition Lubbock uses to discuss point of view – 'the relation in which the narrator stands to the story' (251) – it would not be problematic to distinguish between the pictorial mode and the dramatic mode if we make our judgement on the assumption that the narratorial point of view is constituted as a single consciousness. This is not always the case, as Lubbock's slippage of term ironically reveals; the importance of the different layers of filtering consciousness that contribute to a perspective of narration should by no means be overlooked. In the case of Strether, recognising two layers of filtering consciousness allows us to recognise the presence of James himself, who needs to be acknowledged as part of the act of narration, because he is the one who demonstrates the drama of Strether's mind.[38] Strether as an experiencing character is one aspect of the narration, mediating the external unfolding of events, while Strether is also another aspect of the narration with respect to how his consciousness stands in relation to the first story. In this sense, Strether is a narrator, in Lubbock's sense, but only one aspect of his narration originates from his point of view, as he does not stand in the direct relation to himself entailed by the second aspect. It would be wrong, however, to say that only one aspect of Strether's narration originates from his consciousness, since in the second case

[38] In the case of omniscient narration, too, Lubbock's equivocation of terms – especially when he talks about the 'omniscient author' (115, 255) – reminds us that behind the consciousness of the narrator (in the modern sense) there is also the consciousness of the author who represents any such narration in the first place.

the story of his story is also located in his consciousness, only it is not filtered through that very consciousness itself. The term point of view as Lubbock uses it, therefore, seems to accommodate better the distinction between the two layers of consciousness, or two dimensions of point of view (as the frame or focus of attention), since it accommodates two different points of view rather than two distinct aspects of narration mistaken for one.

If we return to Lubbock's statement that the question between the pictorial mode and the dramatic mode is a question of 'the reader's relation to the writer,' we can distinguish between the narration from Strether, and of Strether, because in the former case the reader receives the information from Strether himself (still, in Lubbock's loosened sense) while in the latter case the reader receives the information from the actual author. The two 'narrations' are of different mode but nonetheless happen simultaneously, and in order to distinguish between them a sense of two different 'narrating agents' of different orders may be helpful. This is where the term 'narration' might not be adequate to the implications of the double-layered communication that occurs through the authorial act of representation in the novel, because it would seem that the reader, in Lubbock's terms, must be facing towards the story-teller and listening to him, while at the same time turning towards the story and watching it. Lubbock's use of the term point of view allows us to look at the incident as having been filtered through two separate consciousnesses, whereas the term 'narration' in the modern sense would not be able to capture the whole implication of it.

Lubbock's discussion of point of view therefore has a merit of its own because it points to the importance of the filtering consciousness, particularly that of the author, which cannot be conflated with the filtering consciousness of any narrating agent. It also

reminds us, with the unusual attention it gives to the reader's experience, relative to the structuralist approach represented by Genette, that narrative communication in the novel is the mediation that occurs through an authorial act of representation. In 'The Art of Fiction' James argues that it is in the production of illusion that the author competes with life:

> it is here that he competes with his brother the painter in his attempt to render the look of things, the look that conveys their meaning, to catch the colour, the relief, the expression, the surface, the substance of the human spectacle. (AF 36)

It is true that within Lubbock's formalist scheme his 'craft' is a simplification of the 'rendering' that James envisions, particularly when the term 'rendering'[39] itself incorporates both the act and the product into the process of authorial representation itself, and therefore accommodates better the sense that 'the look of things […] conveys their meaning' to the reader. The ambiguity inherent in the word 'look' James uses is also revealing in this light, as it can suggest both the representational matter that is perceptible to the eye (the *look* of things), and at the same time the filtering consciousness (that is, someone's look *of* things) that mediates the representation (or already is part of such representation, in the case of a represented 'narrator' in Lubbock's loosened sense), the precondition for representation having meaning in the first place. Having said that, Lubbock's study of method still has merit in its acknowledgement of the communication that occurs between the author and the reader, and when resituated back in conversation with James's works, it calls attention to the significance of the author's rhetoric in the act

[39] Coincidentally, Stanzel uses the German term *gestalten* when talking about the way the author treats his story, which Charlotte Goedsche translates to 'render' in English. Paul Hernadi notes in the book's preface that gestalten 'connotes the act of in-forming inchoate matter by giving salient shape (gestalt) to it' and thus 'making literary virtue out of linguistic necessity' (Hernadi xii)

of composition, an integral aspect of James's idea and a matter narrative theory cannot ignore.

Chapter Two

Henry James and Wayne C. Booth's Rhetorical Approach to the Novel

My discussion of Percy Lubbock's formalist approach to the novel in the previous chapter has shown that his treatment of the novel as a self-contained literary artefact obscures some concerns that James expresses in his critical writings; concerns that add to, and at the same time encourage us to reconsider, our understanding of certain narrative concepts. One such concern is communication in fiction, and it is clear that the communication model as envisioned by Lubbock, in which the author 'transmits' the 'story' in a 'form' made of shared 'materials,' is a reductive one that cannot encapsulate the complexity of communication, the more so as it relies on the assumption of 'the critical reader.' James, on the contrary, insists upon the importance of the creative consciousness of the author, which likewise brings to the fore the importance of the reader's consciousness in the process of reading. My aim in this chapter is therefore to explore in fuller detail the relationship between the author, the reader, and the communication that occurs between them through the medium of fiction, within the occasions that James's critical writings provide.

The rhetorical approach to fictional narrative (or, more broadly speaking beyond the current discussion, to narrative) provides a fruitful ground for my exploration, mainly because the recursive relationships between the author and the reader lie at the heart of its concern. A more practical reason for my choice, especially in the interest of this thesis, is to acknowledge the contributive force the rhetorical approach has provided to the development of narrative theory, and its continuing relevance within the field; as James Phelan observes, 'just about any contemporary discussion of narrative theory would place

rhetorical theory in the mainstream of the field' (Phelan, 'Chicago' 133). Wayne C. Booth is a seminal figure in my investigation, not only because *The Rhetoric of Fiction* is integral to the development of the rhetorical approach,[40] but also because Booth directly criticises Lubbock in *Rhetoric*, thus offering an appropriate follow-up to the previous chapter. The rhetorical approach has its roots in the neo-Aristotelian approach of the Chicago school, which emerged in part as an alternative to the then widely practiced New Criticism (Phelan, 'Chicago' 133), the agenda of which Lubbock's systematic approach anticipated. The close, even direct, connection between the two approaches will offer a productive basis for an exploration into the concept of communication in fiction, not only theoretically, but also chronologically.

Despite not being as outspoken a Jamesian as Lubbock, and therefore not as much recognised (notoriously, in Lubbock's case) in this respect, Booth without a doubt has high regard for James,[41] and draws extensively on his ideas in *The Rhetoric of Fiction*.[42] It does not come as a total surprise that Booth's main criticism of Lubbock relates to the

[40] The work also marked a significant moment of advancement in the history of narrative theory, especially in the Anglo-American tradition; many American narrative theorists were introduced to, or studied, narrative theory through Booth's *Rhetoric* long before they became familiar with Genette's *Narrative Discourse*, another landmark work which can be said to represent the French structuralist tradition. It is not my intention here to draw a clear line between the two traditions (beyond identification purposes), and each has in the course of their history influenced the other. Seymour Chatman observes in his review of *Narrative Discourse* that 'Genette profits from the Anglo-American tradition and in some ways corrects it' (Chatman, 'Review' 221), and Booth himself gives a lot of credit to Genette in his afterword to the second edition of *Rhetoric.*

[41] Some of Booth's highest and most personal praise for James can be found in his article 'The Ethics of Forms: Taking Flight with *The Wings of the Dove*' (1994), in which he lauds the James who wrote *The Wings of the Dove* as having 'the special precise attention to getting it all right – to creating it all better than anyone else could, even given the same materials' (Booth, 'Ethics' 115).

[42] It is important to note that Booth does not rely on James as *the* authority to the same extent that Lubbock does, but uses his works more for illustrative purposes. His discussion of James's works in the unreliable narrator chapter, for example, uses them to support his broader point that impersonal narration usually comes with a moral price.

latter's reductive treatment of James's writings. In particular, he disagrees with how Lubbock turns the 'dozens of literary problems' James may have addressed, consciously or unconsciously, into 'the one thing needful: a novel should be made dramatic' (Booth, *Rhetoric* 24). Booth makes his theoretical intervention by invoking James in a different spirit, citing the prefaces as 'those shrewd and indispensable explorations into the writer's craft [which] offer no easy reduction of technique,' before concluding through James's own metaphor of 'the house of fiction' in the preface to *The Portrait of a Lady* that there are in fact 'five million ways to tell a story, each of them justified if it provides a "center" for the work' (Booth, *Rhetoric* 23-24; PL 7). As one of the Chicago critics, Booth's methodology – his discussion of different methods of narration in different works – is informed by neo-Aristotelian poetics, 'characterised as reasoning back from the effects of a work to their causes in the work itself' (Phelan, 'Chicago' 137). Booth emphasizes that each particular effect is part of the author's rhetoric, here understood as the choices the author makes in a particular fictional work, and he opposes Lubbock's prescriptive sentiment by claiming that 'the novelist should find the practice of his peers more helpful than the abstract rules of the textbooks.' It is instead by considering the rhetoric authors such as James employ in their works that Booth finds 'a storehouse of precise examples' for his study (Booth, *Rhetoric* 165).

This is further highlighted by Booth's criticism that Lubbock's 'convenient' distinction between showing and telling is underpinned by the distinction between what Lubbock considers to be 'artistic' and 'inartistic' respectively (Booth, *Rhetoric* 8). Not only does this underline that Lubbock's *a priori* prescription does not adequately account for other elements and the uniqueness of each particular work, it also raises the more

pressing question of what it means for a fictional work to be artistic – a question that exposes the very different conceptions of art that Lubbock and Booth attribute to James. Lubbock's appraisal of artistry is strictly tied to the aesthetic of the finished product, as the evident result of its compositional method. His claim that 'the best form is that which makes the most of its subject' (Lubbock 40) is, in this sense, rather ironic. Although the method, which is part of authorial rhetoric, is for Lubbock an important means constituting the end (in the composition of a fictional work), it is only the final form that matters in his model of communication. The means is collapsed into the end in itself, whose aesthetics is, however, not evaluated in relation to all the elements and the processes that contribute to its realisation. Authorial rhetoric is downplayed in favour of the fictional work as a self-standing literary object in this regard.

Lubbock draws on James's organic idea as part of his argument for textual unity, but his formalist stance results in a bracketing of important elements such as the consciousness of both the author and the reader, making his perception of fiction far different from James's own. The concept of fiction as an organism with different, inseparable parts working in relation to one another coincides more closely with the idea of process – of growth – of the author's gradual unfolding and development of his subject, which in turn is manifest in the unfolding of the narrative itself, through his rhetoric, before the consciousness of the reader.[43] In a similar light, the preface to *The Rhetoric of*

[43] Narrative dynamics, which views narrative as 'a progressively unfolding, interconnected system of elements' (Richardson, 'Narrative Dynamics' 353), has been an important issue in discussion about narrative. This became prominent in rhetological narratology when James Phelan developed the concept of 'narrative progression' in *Reading People, Reading Plots* (1989) and emphasized that, in addition to the textual dynamics itself, we also need to take into account the dynamics of the communication between the author and the reader through the medium of the text (Phelan, *Reading* 115).

Fiction foregrounds the author and the reader as having integral roles in our understanding of communication in fiction; that is, our understanding of the *rhetoric* of fiction(al narrative).

> My subject is the technique of non-didactic fiction,[44] viewed as the art of communicating with readers – the rhetorical resources available to the writer of epic, novel, or short stories as he tries, consciously or unconsciously, to impose his fictional world upon the reader. (Booth, *Rhetoric* xiii)

Specifically, in considering 'the technique' used by the author as 'the art of communicating with readers,' Booth reminds us that authorial rhetoric has a broader significance than the 'method' as conceived by Lubbock, and thus helps to liberate it from Lubbock's formalist prescription; technical methods are treated less as building blocks for a literary artefact than as means through which complex communication can occur between author and reader.

Having said that, it is important to keep open the possibility that James's thinking allows for an exploration into the relationship between the author, the reader, and the text beyond the framework that Booth himself emphasizes in his work. As I have already pointed out, the title of Booth's work, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, draws attention on the one hand to fiction's rhetoric (that is, fiction as an art of communication between the author and the reader); on the other hand, it can also be taken to convey the narrower sense of

[44] Booth uses the term 'didactic fiction' to refer to 'fiction used for propaganda or instruction,' and justifies its exclusion by claiming that this type of fiction makes use of 'overt, distinguishable rhetoric' (Booth, *Rhetoric* xiii). While his reason for narrowing down the scope of investigation is reasonable on practical grounds, the definition he offers, and the resulting implication that there is a distinction between 'didactic' and 'non-didactic' fiction, raises further questions. In particular, if the book's critical position is that fictional narrative has an influence on the reader's morality, thus making it in some sense already instructional or didactic by nature, can we really draw a clear line between didactic and non-didactic fiction? Or, what criteria (and how warranted) should we use to determine whether a piece of fiction is more or less didactic than others?

rhetoric as a classification of particular works according to the techniques employed by the author.[45] There can be little doubt, especially with the benefit of historical hindsight, that Booth prioritises the former sense in light of his rhetorical project at large; however, his discussion in the book itself tends to invoke the latter sense, in which rhetoric is largely confined within the frame of technical methods or, in his own words, 'the rhetorical resources available to the writers' (Booth, *Rhetoric* xiii). Booth's invocation of James's metaphor of 'the house of fiction' to underline that there are indeed 'five million ways to tell a story' (Booth, *Rhetoric* 24) may help him to criticise Lubbock's reductive perception of James and resulting prescriptive objectivity, but it is equally noticeable that here Booth, like Lubbock, is drawing primarily upon James the technical master. In other words, Booth does not venture far from the realm of narrative techniques and their effects, even as James's writings provide occasions for a broader investigation into the nature of communication in fiction. We cannot forget that in criticising Lubbock, Booth is simultaneously making his own cases, negotiating between James's authority and his own theoretical preoccupation, which themselves merit further examination.

Booth's argument that Lubbock misappropriates James has often been seen as his major contribution to the dialogue between James and narrative theory, but this perception itself reveals the dominant association between James and narrative techniques within the field. Sheila Teahan, for example, writes that Booth has proposed 'a more discriminating taxonomy' that helps to advance 'the formalist strand' of Anglo-American narrative theory (Teahan 22); an irony, if we consider that the emphasis upon his contribution to

[45] Richard Walsh makes a similar distinction when discussing the title of his book (*The Rhetoric of Fictionality*), stating that it 'might be a book about the rhetorical function of fictionality, or it might be a treatise on, or taxonomy of, the body of rules, principles, or devices that constitute fictionality.' He intends the former sense (Walsh 5).

this 'formalist strand,' as distinct from rhetorical aspects of fiction, effectively aligns him with Lubbock, from whose formalism he sought to distant himself. The fact that Teahan credits *The Rhetoric of Fiction* as one of the major critical studies that represent a 'summa of the formalist James invented by the New Critics' (Teahan 22) could at first glance appear symptomatic of the aforementioned tendency to overlook discussion beyond narrative techniques when it comes to James, and neglectful of the possibility that Booth's analysis and his rhetorical thinking in fact extend beyond concerns about 'rhetorical resources' found in fictional narrative. But Teahan's evaluation is reasonable, for Booth *does* invoke (the technical) James in order to rebut Lubbock's prescriptive objectivity, and much of the attention in the book is indeed given to different narratorial methods and the effects they have upon the reader (for which James's fictional works provide some of the examples). Although Booth argues that the voice of the author 'is never really silenced,' and that 'it is, in fact, one of the things we read fiction for' (Booth, *Rhetoric* 59-60), this is still considered mainly in technical terms. What is foregrounded in his discussion is not the nature of the author-reader relationship, but rather the different ways in which the author can convey the story to the reader (for example, through a single narrator, an observer, or multiple points of view) – that is, a taxonomy, as Teahan observes, of narratorial methods.[46] The implications of a rhetorical, communicative perspective beyond formalism are gestured to by Booth, but are not fully realised in the book itself, where the approach remains in some respects constrained by New Critical norms of the time, and their focus on textual elements.

[46] Chapter Six of *Rhetoric* is explicitly called 'Types of Narration.' Booth then offers a thorough explication of two ways to narrate – (explicit) authorial narration and (less direct) impersonal narration.

Persistent traces of formalism – such as the focus upon techniques – can be found throughout *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, but like Lubbock, Booth is well aware that he is making a compromise that necessarily limits the scope of his study, and that is a symptom of the New Critical climate within which he was writing.[47] This awareness is particularly notable at the beginning of the book when he makes it clear that his analyses in the book will be focused on textual elements, and that the book will 'ignore the psychology of the author and the whole question of how it relates to the creative process' (Booth, *Rhetoric* xiv). My discussion of Booth's concept of the implied author later in this chapter in fact builds on the premise that the concept was originally conceived, in part, as a concession to the New Critical orthodoxy of the autonomous text, and that a reconsideration of its merit beyond its original critical framework is not only possible, but encouraged by the dialogue between Booth's work and James's critical writings.

It is also useful to elaborate here that by highlighting Booth's focus on technical methods as 'the traces of formalism' I do not intend to reinforce the perception that formalism, as such, deals principally with textual elements (and I have argued in the previous chapter that the idea of 'form' itself might also be reconsidered). Nonetheless, we can understand the idea of formalism (or perhaps to make the distinction more clearly in this instance, *F*ormalism) as historically situated, specifically here in relation to the dominance of the New Criticism and its focus on the text as a closed system. This allows us to acknowledge that attention to textual elements (and more broadly speaking 'form')

[47] It is important to acknowledge that the book was also written as a reaction against certain objective rules about fiction (especially evident in the first few chapters), to which an appropriate counter-argument is to show that technical methods are dependent on the specific context of each particular work. The goal might itself be a limit upon Booth's horizon of consideration, but we can grant the book its effectiveness in this respect.

in (fictional) narrative is not intrinsically problematic – and some narrative theorists, such as Gerald Prince, would argue that narrative theory should at its core remain 'formalist' (Prince, 'Classical and/or Postclassical Narratology' 122). Reciprocally, we can take the occasion to address and attempt to see beyond the limitations that inhere in this idea of the text (or narrative) as a closed system.

Booth's aim to explore the *rhetoric* of fiction – that is, the nature of the communication between the author and the reader through the text as a medium – may be partly obscured, rather regrettably, in *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, not least in comparison to his subsequent works (and those other rhetorical narrative theorists) where the scope of his rhetorical project is far more extensive and ambitious. Still, Booth makes several comments over the course of *Rhetoric* that remind us there is indeed more to explore in relation to narrative communication than 'rhetorical resources,' as for example in his acknowledgement that 'the persistent enemy for James was intellectual and artistic sloth, not any particular way of telling and showing a story' (Booth, *Rhetoric* 23); in other words, that for James *rhetoric* deals more fundamentally with the liberty of authorial imagination, the intellectual and artistic discernment, and the way it is conveyed through the text, and in turn reciprocated by the consciousness of the reader. I intend to pursue in Booth's *Rhetoric* these possibilities, obscured as they are behind his attempt to negotiate with his contemporary critical context, which can otherwise be pursued further, especially with the retrospective knowledge of the development of narrative theory that renders us more resistant to the book's historical contingency.

The Author-Reader Contract

Although James does not theorise directly about the communication between the author and the reader, or the nature of their relationship, he frequently spends time ruminating about the issue in his critical writings. There is a possibility that James had a more significant influence on Booth's thinking and, in turn, on the overall trajectory of *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, than is often acknowledged, especially if we consider Booth's references to James's discussion of the author 'making his readers' in 'The Novels of George Eliot' at different points of the book. The underlying assumption we can infer from Booth's running invocation of this idea throughout the book is that the author does not merely convey the story to the reader, but *interacts* with the reader within a 'tacit contract' as they communicate in fiction. Before looking at the actual quotation itself, I would first like to discuss the way in which Booth talks about this 'tacit contract.' Drawing on Jean-Louis Curtis, Booth argues that:

> our entire experience in reading fiction is based […] on a tacit contract with the novelist, a contract granting him the right to know what he is writing about. It is this contract which makes fiction possible. To deny it would not only destroy all fiction, but all literature, since all art presupposes the artist's choice. (Booth, *Rhetoric* 52)

His argument is made specifically against the mode of realism espoused by Sartre, who believes that the author should avoid omniscient commentary altogether, and that he 'must not show any signs of his control, because to do so reveals that he is playing God' (Booth, *Rhetoric* 51). For Booth, that is not how fiction works; his insistence is that 'though the author can to some extent choose to disguise, he can never choose to disappear' (Booth, *Rhetoric* 20). We can see from the elaboration he gives in this instance that his concern actually extends beyond local methods of narration employed in a particular work to the

more general stance that is expected of the reader who approaches it. As an example, if the author chooses to 'sign' an agreement with the reader not to 'go behind' characters on every occasion, that is the convention that the reader needs to adopt (Booth, *Rhetoric* 53). A further implication that comes with the term 'contract' is that it is both conscious and mutual; authorial rhetoric exists behind any work of fiction (this is brought to the foreground in my discussion in the previous chapter), and especially in Booth's model it is crucial that the reader be aware of it. This concept of the 'tacit contract,' therefore, relies on the implicit assumption that readers of fiction never approach a work without acknowledging beforehand the requirement that in reading they are not only interacting with the text itself, but also with the author who attempts to interact with them through particular rhetorical choices; as a condition of which, in particular, they need to grant the author's authority, 'the right to know what he is writing about.'

While the nature of the tacit contract itself needs more extensive investigation later, I would like to draw attention to the notion that it is this tacit contract that 'makes fiction possible.' The term 'possible' here is very strong, because it indicates a minimal condition for occurrence. We already know that the rhetorical approach seeks to explain how the author uses rhetorical resources to create certain effects in the reader, so the existence of this tacit contract would make sense in that context, because it builds upon 'the artist's choice.' Booth's book demonstrates (and its extensive index indirectly testifies) that these effects are varied and very much dependent on individual works (as well as upon genres and types of works). If such effects can never be prescribed, it is reasonable to speak in terms of fiction 'being made possible,' as Booth does here, by a tacit contract without prior constraint upon the author's use of rhetorical resources. A

similar sentiment is suggested when Booth argues that 'the very concept of writing a story seems to have implicit within it the notion of finding techniques of expression that will make the work accessible in the highest possible degree' (Booth, *Rhetoric* 105). If the tacit contract relies upon the reader granting the author authority over his own rhetoric, we can infer that the minimal condition which makes fiction possible – in other words, its 'accessibility' – hinges upon the degree to which the reader can grant such authority to the author.

Booth's choice to use the term 'accessible' here resonates with the explanation he provides in the afterword to the second edition of his book: when he states that as complex as the reading experience normally is, all readers do find one common ground: 'we either become engaged in a tale or we do not; we either stop reading and listening or we continue […] a given story either gets itself told to "us" or it fails to' (Booth, *Rhetoric* 442). This is reminiscent of James's only criterion in 'The Art of Fiction' when it comes to evaluating fiction:

> The only obligation to which in advance we may hold a novel without incurring the accusation of being arbitrary, is that it be interesting. That general responsibility rests upon it, but it is the only one I can think of. The ways in which it is at liberty to accomplish this result (of interesting us) strike me as innumerable and such as can only suffer from being marked out, or fenced in, by prescription. (AF 33)

And Booth does indeed invoke this criterion, noting that James would repudiate any effort to say 'definitely beforehand what sort of an affair the good novel will be' as long as the novel fulfils the only absolute requirement that 'it be interesting' (AF 32-33, *Rhetoric* 24). He also talks briefly about the specific example given by James, in which he praises *Treasure Island* because it appears to him 'to have succeeded wonderfully in what it attempts' even though 'it has very little relation to the kind of realism of subject and

manner sought in his own tales' (AF 42; Booth, *Rhetoric* 24). His overall argument points to his neo-Aristotelian stance against *a priori* theorists such as Lubbock who try to evaluate a fictional work from a set of rules, for it highlights the inherent impossibility of delineating universally what constitutes the minimal condition that makes a work 'interesting' (or, in Lubbock's case, 'artistic') and, in turn, makes the reader continue to read. *Treasure Island* cannot and should not be evaluated within the same conventions as the novels James or other authors write.

By appealing to this notion that James's 'catholicity is not confined to technique' (Booth, *Rhetoric* 24) – or, more precisely, to any inherent values of technique – Booth advocates the book's main proposition that 'the purposes of the individual work should dictate the standards by which it is judged' (Booth, *Rhetoric* 377). This sensible argument needs to be situated – and evaluated – in the critical context with which Booth was engaged; that is, as a reaction against objective doctrines in composition of fictional narrative. Returning to James's original discussion opens up new considerations, the more so when we realise that Booth's engagement with his example of *Treasure Island* is relatively brief, serving only to illustrate the argument he is advancing. James's thinking offers a new perspective that contributes towards our understanding of the notion of 'making fiction possible.' The actual discussion in 'The Art of Fiction' is as follows:

> I have just been reading, at the same time, the delightful story of *Treasure Island*, by Mr. Robert Louis Stevenson and, in a manner less consecutive, the last tale from M. Edmond de Goncourt, which is entitled *Chérie*. One of these works treats of murders, mysteries, islands of dreadful renown, hairbreadth escapes, miraculous coincidences and buried doubloons. The other treats of a little French girl who lived in a fine house in Paris, and died of wounded sensibility because no one would marry her. I call *Treasure Island* delightful, because it appears to me to have succeeded wonderfully in what it attempts; and I venture to bestow no epithet upon *Chérie*, which strikes me as having failed in

> what it attempts – that is in tracing the development of the moral consciousness of a child. But one of these productions strikes me as exactly as much of a novel as the other, and as having a 'story' quite as much. The moral consciousness of a child is as much a part of life as the islands of the Spanish Main, and the one sort of geography seems to me to have those 'surprises' of which Mr. Besant speaks quite as much as the other. For myself (since it comes back in the last resort, as I say, to the preference of the individual), the picture of the child's experience has the advantage that I can at successive steps (an immense luxury, near to the 'sensual pleasure' of which Mr. Besant's critic in the *Pall Mall* speaks) say Yes or No, as it may be, to what the artist puts before me. I have been a child, but I have never been on a quest for a buried treasure, and it is a simple accident that with M. de Goncourt I should have for the most part to say No. With George Eliot, when she painted that country, I always said Yes. (AF 41-42)

James's comparison between *Treasure Island* and *Chérie*, another tale with a vastly different nature, is omitted by Booth in his book, and it is this comparison that encourages us to reconsider the idea about the tacit contract suggested in Booth's work. James is more expansive and at the same time more specific, his comparison presented in terms of two distinct kinds of evaluation. While he believes each work is 'exactly as much of a novel' as the other, he only calls *Treasure Island* 'delightful' because he thinks it has succeeded in what it attempts, in contrast to *Chérie* which has failed. The first comparison is made upon the basis of the minimal condition, because for James both works are made 'possible,' and are therefore equally 'novels,' by the story they contain (albeit different ones).[48] The second comparison, however, is a value judgement based upon whether or not he thinks each novel has succeeded at what it attempts.

The distinction between the two comparisons is important because it allows us to see that the minimal condition that makes a work of fiction possible is simply the initial

[48] Not to mention that James's perception of 'story' is quite different from Besant's. See Chapter One for this discussion.

basis of the work, a premise upon which further evaluation can be made. This perception that the authority the reader grants the author over his story, and by extension his rhetoric, is only the baseline of accessibility for each work (and as James suggests, the personal preference of each reader aside, one of the novels has 'a story quite as much' as the other'); it makes room for consideration of the unfolding of the reader's consciousness as the reader approaches the text, and the dynamics that consequently arises in response to authorial rhetoric. It reveals the force of authorial rhetoric, and in turn the authorial consciousness that governs the composition of a particular fictional narrative, to the extent that such rhetoric corresponds to the reading experience of the reader. While James makes it clear that his preference is for the mode of realist fiction represented by *Chérie,* and that he is able to 'say Yes or No […] to what the artist has put before me' because 'I have been a child, but I have never been on a quest for a buried treasure,' he also dissociates this preference from his response to each work. The emphasis is that the kind of judgement elicited is different – one from the minimal condition of the reader granting the author his rhetorical authority, the other from the meeting of, and the subsequent correspondence between, the consciousness of the author and that of the reader as it is accommodated in a particular work. The fact remains, nonetheless, that both works are equally novels.

The difference can be conceptualised more succinctly if we turn to the fact that James phrases his evaluation in terms of whether the work has 'succeeded' wonderfully in what it attempts or not. That is, it is a matter of the difference between what makes a work of fiction possible and what makes it successful. Obviously, different criteria would be needed in each case, especially because the latter concerns evaluation in terms of

degree as opposed to the either/or criterion of the former.[49] The role of the reader's individuality becomes evident only in evaluation of the second-order – that is, of the success, but not of the possibility of the work. The tacit contract that makes fiction possible extends only to the point at which the reader grants the author 'the right to know what he is writing about,' but it is clear that it is only after such authority is granted that more complex communication between the author and the reader actually begins, as the reader starts evaluating the text conveyed by authorial rhetoric.

Booth is attentive to this relationship between the author and the reader in the initial stage of their communication, particularly when he talks about the almost unnatural trust readers tend to give to the author as they approach a work of fiction: even though 'the unknown author has given us a kind of information never obtained about real people, even our most intimate friends,' it is information 'that we must accept without question if we are to grasp the story that is to follow' (Booth, *Rhetoric* 3). However, the way Booth chooses to describe this relationship as 'artificial authority' (Booth, *Rhetoric* 4) recalls how he talks about the author 'impos[ing] his fictional world upon the reader' (Booth, *Rhetoric* xiii) in the preface. The difference I have discussed between the possibility and the success of fiction reveals a complexity that is not brought to the foreground by Booth. There are two different kinds of consent in play, but only the first – the condition for the reader engaging with a fiction at all – is highlighted. The second consent, the evaluative

[49] The distinction James makes here may bear upon related discussions about 'narrativehood' and 'narrativity' – and the difference (if any) between the two terms. Herman, for example, adopts 'narrativehood' as a 'binary predicate' by which 'something either is or is not' deemed a story, but 'narrativity' as a 'scalar predicate' by which something is deemed 'more or less prototypically storylike' (Herman, *Story Logic* 90-91).

condition for the success of fictional narrative that would evolve matters like the reader's emotive response (James's 'Yes or No'), remains comparatively obscure.

It is worth noting that even in Booth's explanation – 'we either become engaged in a tale or we do not; we either stop reading and listening or we continue […] a given story either gets itself told to "us" or it fails to' (Booth, *Rhetoric* 442) – the distinction between the reader being 'engaged in a tale' and the success of the story getting itself 'told to us' continues to be blurred. The latter is a matter of success and failure, minimally speaking, whereas for a story to be engaging involves a broader sense of evaluative communication that implicates the role of the specific reader. The ambiguity of Booth's claim conflates the minimal authority the reader needs to grant to the author for a communication to happen with the further communication between them during the course of reading, and actually obscures the latter. This meeting of the author and the reader within the text, which Booth would later describe as 'glorious' in his afterword to the second edition (Booth 403), dwarfs the mere authority that makes the communication possible, yet is here subsumed within it. The elevation of authorial rhetoric in Booth's model as the governing force of fiction exerted upon the reader will be relevant later in my discussion of the implied author.

I now return, in the light of this analysis, to the discussion I set aside at the beginning of this section: the discussion about 'making readers' that bears strongly upon Booth's thinking in *The Rhetoric of Fiction*. The context of James's original comment is as follows:

> The assurance of this possibility [Adam Bede's marriage after Hetty Sorrel's death] is what I should have desired the author to place the sympathetic reader at a stand-point to deduce for himself. In every novel the work is divided between the writer and the reader; but the writer

> makes the reader very much as he makes his characters. When he makes him ill, that is, makes him indifferent,[50] he does no work; the writer does all. When he makes him well, that is, makes him interested, then the reader does quite half the labour. In making such a deduction as I have just indicated, the reader would be doing but his share of the task; the grand point is to get him to make it. (*Views and Reviews* 18)

As Booth argues, James 'is making his readers by forcing them onto a level of alertness that will allow for his most subtle effects' (Booth, *Rhetoric* 302). We can notice from the diction he uses that emphasis is again put upon the author as the assertive agent; while it is true that authorial rhetoric involves the author's active role in choosing the rhetorical resources most suitable to create such 'subtle effects,' still the idea of 'making readers' in Booth's gloss drifts significantly towards 'forcing' – even though Booth frames it as a 'collaboration' (Booth, *Rhetoric* 302). In James the language indicates something more interactive and performative, and the word 'making' clearly means something more akin to 'creating'; the reader may have granted the author's authority over his rhetoric, but the reader, too, is to be cultivated in order to play no less important a role in the communication. When Booth invokes James to the effect that there are 'five million ways to tell a story, each of them justified if it provides a "center" for the work' (Booth, *Rhetoric* 23-24; PL 7), we can see that the sense of rhetoric in fiction for Booth is closely tied to the idea of providing a 'center' for the work. This idea unfortunately encourages a view of authorial rhetoric in the limited sense of authorial resources – which, despite their variety and particularity in each specific work, ultimately serves the end of conveying a certain 'center' to the reader.

[50] The text that appeared in the original *Views and Reviews*, published by the Ball Publish Company in 1908, actually reads 'When he makes him ill, that is, makes him *different* […]' (my emphasis). The text quoted by Booth is as here. I have not found any critical discussion in Jamesian scholarship of this particular variant, and I assume that it was a silently corrected mistake.

Booth's tendency for absolutism, especially in his discussion of the morality of fiction (which will be explored in fuller detail in the next section), seems to reinforce this point; for example, at one point he claims that 'the really harmful misreading' involves 'the most tragic false identifications of the reader with the vicious centre of consciousness' (Booth, *Rhetoric* 389).[51] As well as his adjective choice ('harmful,' 'false,' 'vicious'), his reliance upon the category of 'misreading' here ought to be questioned. His distinction between reading and misreadings tends to assert that there is a correct reading that the author seeks to convey to the reader; but we have already seen that this involves the conflation between two different kinds of consent (the minimal and the evaluative) expected of the reader, and postulates a model of successful fictional narrative within which the reader assumes authorial rhetoric to be absolute. The moral overtone of *Rhetoric* also makes it seem that such success has to depend on the fiction's capability for moral edification; in this sense, to put it in Booth's own terms, the fiction can 'fail' to be 'told' to the reader if it does not manage to get its 'center' – or, more specifically in this context, its core (moral) message(s) – across to its reader. The connotation that originally comes with James's idea of 'making readers' changes as it is passed to Booth; the transmission of the core (moral) message(s) has not only become a requirement for the success of a work of fiction, but its raison d'être.

Harry E. Shaw notices that there is 'the potential coerciveness attached to the notion that the author makes the reader' in Booth's work, to the extent that it might as well involve 'deific powers' (Shaw 207); Daniel Punday observes that the rhetorical

[51] The relationship between character identification, empathy, and the rhetoric of fiction can be much more complicated, as the (empirical) research of Suzanne Keen (*Empathy and the Novel*) shows. Keen's work is also an example of how broadly rhetorical investigations in narrative theory can and have been undertaken beyond the textual realm (and in a more interdisciplinary manner).

approach, to which Booth and his works are integral, usually conceives reading as 'a more or less unified march toward the conclusion that the author wishes the reader to draw' (Punday 899). *The Rhetoric of Fiction* indirectly endorses a model of communication which is goal-oriented, and as much as Booth's rhetorical approach succeeds in foregrounding the importance of authorial rhetoric to the communication of fiction, the role of the reader is overshadowed to the extent that this rhetoric is characterised mainly in terms of the rhetorical resources that the author employs to reach his goal. However, we need to acknowledge that Booth, like Lubbock, was in part held back by the very mission he set himself. In writing against the dogmatism of method, he provides us with new perspectives on communication in fiction through his taxonomical discussion of the author's rhetorical resources; but at the same time, he does not fully pursue other possible questions about communication in fiction. Booth to some great extent does away with formal prescriptiveness, but the same cannot be said of the goal-oriented assumptions that continue to govern his conception of communication in fiction; these assumptions are, if anything, emphasized by his own investigation.

In contrast to Booth's emphasis upon goal-oriented assumptions, James insists on 'interest' as the minimal condition that makes fiction possible; the idea is not only non-prescriptive, but also expansive, because it suggests that the author should instead 'place the sympathetic reader at a stand-point *to deduce* for himself' (*Views and Reviews* 18, my emphasis). James touches upon this idea in the preface to *The Portrait of a Lady*:

> [—the author has] the benefit, whatever it may be, involved in his having cast a spell upon the simpler, the very simplest, forms of attention. This is all he is entitled to; he is entitled to nothing, he is bound to admit, that can come to him, from the reader, as a result on the latter's part of any act of reflexion or discrimination. He may *enjoy* this finer tribute – that is another affair, but on condition only of taking it as

> a gratuity 'thrown in,' a mere miraculous windfall, the fruit of a tree he may not pretend to have shaken. Against reflexion, against discrimination, in his interest, all earth and air conspire; wherefore is it that, as I say, he must in many a case have schooled himself, from the first, to work but for a 'living wage.' The living wage is the reader's grant of the least possible quantity of attention required for consciousness of a 'spell.' The occasional charming 'tip' is an act of his intelligence over and beyond this, a golden apple, for the writer's lap, straight from the wind-stirred tree. (PL 13-14)

If the reader engages with the work beyond 'the least possible quantity of attention required for consciousness of a spell' through any act of reflection or discrimination (as opposed to being simply 'interested'), the author may enjoy such an 'occasional charming tip' as a 'finer tribute' from each reader's intelligence.[52] The value of the rhetoric of the author (as opposed to the established mere possibility) is gauged by the occasion for response it manages to open up[53] for the reader. While the finer tribute is itself a gratuity, it is nonetheless elicited to the extent that the reader's discrimination is engaged; in this sense, James neither downplays the importance of authorial rhetoric in the communication that occurs through fiction, nor does he present it in terms of imposition upon the reader through rhetorical resources, or any governing rhetorical force constituted by them.

I would like to draw attention back to James's discussion in 'The Novels of George Eliot,' and in particular his comment, 'the writer makes the reader very much as he makes his characters.' Booth understands this to mean that the author creates different emotions in the reader as he would in the presentation of his characters: 'he makes the reader laugh

[52] A similar idea can be found in the preface to *The Wings of the Dove* (which Booth also invokes in the aforementioned 'The Ethics of Forms'). James refers to 'a positively close and felicitous application of method' on his end as simply 'a certain diversion,' which underlines the fact that it is by no means required of the reader, but 'might be of some profit, to follow' (WD xliv-xlv).

[53] I deliberately use the phrase 'open up' because the metaphor of the window, and in particular the artist as the window, comes up at several points in James's critical writings – and this metaphor will be central to my investigation of the implied author in the last section of the chapter.

or makes him weep, or hate, or glow with a sense of triumph' (Booth, *Rhetoric* 49), and directly moves on to discuss the author making his reader 'interested.' However, there is a deeper connection. This has to do with James's idea about the 'growth' of his character; specifically, his comparison between the kind and degree of the artist's 'prime sensibility' and

> the soil out of which his subject springs. The quality and capacity of that soil, its ability to 'grow' with due freshness and straightness any vision of life, represents, strongly or weakly, the projected morality. That element is but another name for the more or less close connexion of the subject with some mark made on the intelligence, with some sincere experience. By which, at the same time, of course, one is far from contending that this enveloping air of the artist's humanity – which gives the last touch to the worth of the work – is not a widely and wondrously varying element; being on one occasion a rich and magnificent medium and on another a comparatively poor and ungenerous one. (PL 7)

This part in the preface to *The Portrait of a Lady* speaks to many concerns at the heart of both James's and Booth's thinking, some of which I will take up later in this chapter. The point I would like to make here is that 'the writer makes the reader very much as he makes his characters' attains a new significance in the context of this quote. For James, fiction seems to be of value to the extent that it facilitates the growth, the expansiveness, of the reader's imagination. Just as the artist's 'prime sensibility,' the 'quality and capacity of that soil, its ability to grow with due freshness and straightness any vision of life,' 'makes' the subject (and in turn the characters) of a particular work, so too it 'makes' – nurtures – the reader who approaches the work. Rather than forcing anything onto the reader, James's hope – and hope it remains, not expectation – is to cultivate a group of peers who would respond to his imaginative call as an artist. It is a relationship that is not based

strictly on a contract, but one more akin to growing trees that, one day, may bear fruits, and reward his artistic effort with 'a miraculous windfall.'

The Question of Morality

Before moving on to discuss the concept of the implied author in the last section, I would like to address here first the importance of morality in Booth's and James's thinking, not only because it is an important part of Booth's critical framework, but also because it is helpful to distinguish between the different meaning morality takes on, and in turn the different implications it bears, in each case. I will argue that this difference has directed Booth's subsequent argumentation onto a course distinct from James's, and that by considering them closely together we can recover some insights that may be lost when either one is considered alone.

In the last chapter of *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, Booth reiterates the maxim of his book: that 'the individual work should dictate the standards by which it is judged,' and that the reader should 'let its author discover its inherent powers and gauge his techniques to the realisation of those powers' (Booth, *Rhetoric* 377-378). This principle makes sense, especially from the perspective of composition, in opposition to the doctrine of objectivity that Booth is challenging; the 'powers' he refers to are the effects the author intends to elicit from the reader, and the 'techniques' are the specific narratorial methods the author accordingly chooses. Throughout the book there are indications that Booth does not think about this whole question merely within a compositional, or technical, framework – that these 'effects,' for him, are never merely 'ends' in themselves and that the 'powers' the author's rhetoric enables actually carry with them moral implications – but it is not until

Booth asks the following question that the issue is finally brought to the foreground and confronted openly:

> But is there no choosing among effects? Must we always grant the author what James calls his 'subject' and deal only with his success in realising that subject? […] In so far as the critic wants to be of practical help to the artist or reader, I am convinced that he must follow James's advice and avoid such questions. […] Yet in so far as we are men who react to each literary work with our whole being, we will inevitably follow James's practice and bring to bear, however surreptitiously, judgements of ends as well as means. (Booth, *Rhetoric* 378)

Booth is suggesting here that the evaluation of authorial choices cannot be made on compositional grounds alone. If the critic's intention is only 'to be of practical help to the artist or reader' – in other words, to offer an explanation of *what* the different kinds of narratorial methods are and *how* they work – then it would probably suffice to take whatever is chosen by the author and analyse that on its own terms. This, Booth certainly has done, and extensively illustrated, throughout his earlier investigations in the book – demonstrating, for example, how the psychic vividness of a prolonged and deep inside view is effective in eliciting from the reader intense sympathy for characters (Booth, *Rhetoric* 378). Booth's main contention, however, is that in reality as readers we 'react to each literary work with our whole being,' and will likely bring to bear 'judgements of ends as well as means.' This contention might find a logical place within the domain of technicality, as judgements of authorial choices and how well they work are, after all, an essential basis upon which each fictional work might matter to the reader, yet it is evident that Booth situates this contention rather within the moral domain,[54] particularly as he

[54] The conclusion also comes right after the section of the book on impersonal narration (specifically after the chapter that discusses unreliability in James's works), which Booth argues 'has raised moral difficulties too often for us to dismiss moral questions as irrelevant to technique' (Booth, *Rhetoric* 378).

makes a clear categorical division between 'means' and 'ends'; the latter, for Booth, are equated with morally-charged effects.

This becomes conspicuous when Booth makes a sudden transition from a hypothesis on the reader's judgement to a conviction that the author, too, by extension, would be keenly aware of the role morality plays in his composition, and that moral concerns cannot be separated from rhetorical choices.

> But I am convinced that most novelists today – at least those writing in English – feel an inseparable connection between art and morality; their artistic vision consists, in part, of a judgement on what they see, and they would ask us to share that judgement as part of the vision. In any case, it is only to such novelists – whatever their number – that one can have anything to say about the morality of technique. (Booth, *Rhetoric* 385)

There is in this passage an empirical sense that most novelists do in fact write with moral goals in mind – that they make a 'judgement' they would like to share with the reader; but there is also the prescriptive implication when Booth says it is only to such novelists 'that one can have anything to say about the morality of technique,' that these 'moral' novelists are the only ones worthy of critical attention. Booth does not directly criticise works whose 'central intent' he considers to be 'morally questionable,' but his attitude towards them is far from flattering:

> If an author really does not care whether his works leave his readers in *some* sense better for having read them, if he feels no connection at all between his artistic motives and some improvement in the quality of the lives led by his readers, attempts to prove such a connection will be futile. (Booth, *Rhetoric* 385)

This might be a claim that Booth makes with an eye to practical criticism, for he turns his attention right afterwards to the works in which he can speak with more confidence about the author's moral judgement, and so analyse any potential misreading that may occur

(Booth, *Rhetoric* 385). The critical direction he is taking, nonetheless, reveals an important underlying assumption about morality. The line he draws between 'morally questionable' works and those with 'moral judgement' points to a belief that there exists an absolute, *a priori* standard for morality, the standard that defines what the 'norms' and what the 'deviations' are.

Booth's dismissive conclusion, that it would be 'futile' to prove a connection between the author's 'artistic motives' and 'some improvement in the quality of the lives led by his readers' if the author 'really does not care,' itself points to another crucial assumption: that in the case of the author who cares (as authors, for Booth, should) there has to exist a moral connection, with the further implication that morality of the work will already be intentionally determined, encoded even, by its author. By this logic of intentionality, the communication between the author and the reader is conceptualised as a process of encoding and decoding hidden (moral) messages, and underlines the coerciveness in Booth's idea of 'making readers.' This conceptualisation seems reductive, especially when compared to James's idea of 'making readers' in the sense of cultivation, since it leaves little room for the reader to 'grow' upon the 'soil' – to use James's metaphors – if the conceptualisation already implicitly dismisses as irrelevant, or in some cases, even dangerous, any moral 'deviations' in interpretation from the intention of the author.

In isolation, Booth's interpretations of individual works within a moral paradigm are legitimate in their own terms, and consistent with principles of critical pluralism, which acknowledge the multiplicity of interpretations while pursuing the one most appropriate to the critic's own context. However, when this series of analyses is situated

within the larger context of a theoretical project, a sense of overarching coherence – even purpose – tends to emerge. It is understandable, therefore, that analyses made in a book titled *The Rhetoric of Fiction* will, to some extent, lead its reader to infer an association between the singular nature of each analysis and the *rhetoric* of fiction at large. Especially with no canonical predecessor in rhetorical theory of fiction, at least in the Anglo-American scene,[55] it is perhaps not surprising that the book was taken to have a more systematic theorising intent than the pluralistic nature of the project itself warranted.[56] Ironically, if this tendency (and the critical backlash that followed) is any indication, *The Rhetoric Fiction* occupies an important place in the history of narrative theory, deservedly, for the very reason that it ventures into these uncharted waters.

We can see that this uncharted critical region of the rhetoric of fiction gave Booth occasion to affirm that authorial rhetoric needs to be perceived not only in a compositional, but also in an ethical, light. It is already strongly implied in *Rhetoric* that morality, for 'ethical values,' is expected in fiction – that fictional works should leave the readers 'in some sense better for having read them' (Booth, *Rhetoric* 385); this sentiment only becomes more pronounced in Booth's later writings, particularly in *The Company We Keep* (with the very explicit subtitle *An Ethics of Fiction*) in which the presiding metaphor is that of 'books as friends.' Booth also acknowledges that, looking back, one

[55] It is important to acknowledge, nonetheless, that R.S. Crane was an important precursor in the Chicago School to this movement. Crane's 'The Concept of Plot and the Plot of *Tom Jones*' is a notable example; he combines interpretation with poetics, seeking to identify 'both the key elements of Fielding's plotting that produce the audience's sense of comic pleasure and the principles underlying Fielding's construction' (Phelan, 'Rhetorical Approaches to Narrative' 501-502).

[56] Booth commented later, in the 1982 afterword of *Rhetoric*, that a distinction between the rhetoric *in* fiction and fiction *as* rhetoric is indeed not always maintained consistently, and that the reader should simply remember to ask 'whether a given line of defense or illustration pertains to technical matters or to the whole art of storytelling viewed *as* rhetorical' (Booth, *Rhetoric* 415-416).

of his major concerns about the critical scene in the 1950s was 'how critics ignored the value of rhetorical ethical effects' (Booth, 'Resurrection' 76). His motives may be honourable, but it is hard to deny that his attempt to advance questions of morality through his rhetorical framework is at times inordinate; that he, perhaps, relies too much on underlying moral commonalities. Liesbeth Korthals Altes discusses the rhetorical approach under 'Ethical Turn' in *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory* as one of those approaches that 'share their confidence in *common sense* […] and in texts as the expression of an ethos that can be reconstructed' (Korthals Altes 142, emphasis original). Indeed, this belief in underlying moral commonalities is hinted at even from the start, in the preface of *Rhetoric,* when Booth claims that even though his analyses are intended as 'illustrative, not definite,' each critical conclusion he makes still 'could have been illustrated with many other works' (Booth, *Rhetoric* xv).

James's discussion of morality in 'The Art of Fiction' is relevant to the issue at hand, mainly because it allows us to see morality from a different perspective. His refutation of Besant's idea that English fiction should have 'conscious moral purpose' on the basis of the 'vagueness' of the phrase itself is already revealing of a disbelief that fiction can or should be a vehicle of moral purposes. However, it is his doubt that a novel can be 'either moral or immoral' (AF 42) that most succinctly addresses the problem in Booth's assumptions about morality:

> We are discussing the Art of Fiction; questions of art are questions (in the widest sense) of execution; questions of morality are quite another affair, and will you not let us see how it is that you find it so easy to mix them up? (AF 42-43)

Booth's assumption that moral values are decided by the rhetorical choices made by the author is problematic because it mixes up technical questions with ethical ones; it implies

that both, while distinct, have to go hand in hand when talking about fictional composition. The consent that the reader will be willing to give the author on artistic grounds (granting the author's subject, as Booth and James agree) becomes entangled with moral consent, and the author's rhetorical force, which is certainly technically-oriented, because the author is naturally conscious of *how* to go about writing fiction, becomes associated with – inseparable from – moral ends. Suzanne Keen offers a balanced assessment of this matter, arguing that while she is inclined to agree with Booth that 'no one ethical effect inheres in a single narrative device, the commentary on narrative form often asserts (or assumes) that a specific technique inevitably results in particular effects' (an assumption she believes should be 'subject to careful empirical testing') (Keen, 'A Theory of Narrative Empathy' 225). James's comment implies that moral values, at least in the sense understood by Besant or Booth, should not be confused with the author's artistic decisions, and at the same time it challenges the legitimacy of Booth's (rhetorical) question, as to whether there really is no choosing among effects, for the very reason that it starts strictly from a technical premise, but makes moral values intrinsic to the effects of concern.

Perhaps, one could argue James is sidestepping the question of morality in 'The Art of Fiction'; however, I would argue instead that James is artfully maneuvering to frame the question instead in relation to his perspective as an artist, to gain for himself an opportunity to re-emphasize the importance of authorial discernment, which is closely related to the sense in which he does believe morality to be relevant to fictional composition:

> There is one point at which the moral sense and the artistic sense lie very near together; that is, in the light of the very obvious truth that the

> deepest quality of a work of art will always be the quality of the mind of the producer. In proportion as that mind is rich and noble will the novel, the picture, the statue, partake of the substance of beauty and truth. To be constituted of such elements is, to my vision, to have purpose enough. No good novel will ever proceed from a superficial mind; that seems to me an axiom which, for the artist in fiction, will cover all needful moral ground. (AF 43)

For James, morality does not refer to any specific moral value, but rather to what could be more accurately termed the 'moral sensibility' of the artist, or 'the quality of the mind of the producer.' To ask whether a novel is 'good' or not, as such, is not to ask whether it is 'moral' or 'immoral.' This, however, does not mean the question excludes entirely any concern about morality. It means the question is less about ethical merit in terms of moral virtue or depravity than about the artistry of the work, which, even so, can be considered fully only when the artist's moral sensibility is taken into account.

The importance of this sensibility, and the different implication it bears in relation to Booth's idea of morality, reverberates subtly through the majority of James's works,[57] but one instance worth close attention is the passage from the preface to *The Portrait of a Lady* discussed earlier, in which James compares the artist's 'prime sensibility' to the nourishing 'soil.' This is not only because the term 'sensibility' itself is used there, but also because the passage helps to elucidate further James's and Booth's differing perceptions.

> The quality and capacity of that soil, its ability to 'grow' with due freshness and straightness any vision of life, represents, strongly or weakly, the projected morality. (PL 7)

[57] In the preface to *The Golden Bowl*, for example, James calls his decision to use the Prince and the Princess as his centres of consciousness 'the moral of the endless interest, endless worth for "delight," of the compositional contribution' (GB xliii).

What the artist's moral sensibility nurtures – what the soil 'grows' – is, first and foremost, 'any vision of life,' a phrase that accords with James's belief that a novel is 'a personal impression' whose value is 'greater or less according to the intensity of the impression' (AF 33). If this impression – this 'vision of life' – is what constitutes a work of fiction, then the 'projected morality' is towards the realisation of the work itself, not towards the reader. It can be said, however counter-intuitively, that in the hope of communicating with his readers, James does not address himself to the readers themselves (which, however, is different from not thinking about his readers), but to his fictional work in the process of composition. To put it another way, while Booth sees morality in fiction as largely the encoding and decoding of moral values, James's emphasis is not upon communicating any such values, but on 'growing,' with his own moral sensibility, a work that will carry with it a sense of having been projected upon, and enriched, by that 'rich and noble' sensibility. The author's moral sensibility gives the work its artistic life, while the work in turn manifests its creator's richness of mind to the reader who approaches it.

James further elaborates that the 'projected morality' is 'but another name for the more or less close connexion of the subject with some mark made on the intelligence, with some sincere experience' (PL 7). The novelist's art, for James, is imagined as the traces of the artist's sensibility integrated seamlessly throughout the work, like the 'enveloping air of the artist's humanity' (PL 7), rather than as discrete choices made to put forward particular (moral) communicative ends. This becomes more noticeable if we follow the different meanings that the term 'vision' acquires in Booth's and James's writings. When Booth claims that the authors' 'artistic *vision* consists, in part, of a judgement on what they see' and that 'they would ask us to share the judgement as part

of the *vision*' (Booth, *Rhetoric* 385, my emphasis), the term 'vision' connotes what the authors 'envisage' their artistic project to be. That is, the authors would consider 'the judgement on what they see' – that is, the subject – to be itself part of their composition, and of what the reader is invited to share as part of that 'vision.' It is a prospective 'vision,' the ultimate goal of the artistic project, which is to impart the author's own judgement to the reader. James uses 'vision' with a similar meaning, as envisaging, when he says 'to be constituted of such elements is, to my *vision*, to have purpose enough,' but the 'vision' he uses in the preface to *The Portrait of a Lady* – specifically, 'any *vision* of life' that the artist's moral sensibility can give rise to – has a notably different meaning. It takes on a more literal meaning as 'an instance of seeing,' or 'something to be seen,' which alludes to the subject of the fiction itself. Morality, for Booth, is part of the 'vision' – the intention, or at least the expectation – of the author, and can be distinguished by the influence it has on the author's technical choices. The rhetoric of the artist, in this sense, hinges upon the inevitable convergence of two different considerations, namely artistic and moral, both understood to be intentional. James's rhetoric, on the other hand, only takes into account the artist's compositional choices; the question of moral intentionality does not feature, because such compositional choices are already drawn from the 'soil' that is the artist's moral sensibility.

What James's perception of morality allows for the author, therefore, is a freedom in composition, unconstrained by considerations of the moral message to be conveyed to the reader, and hence by technical choices dictated by the need to fulfil such moral goals. The author's moral sensibility is organically engaged in a process that, while immensely intent upon compositional technicality, is not dictated by prescriptive moral aims; a

process inseparable from the artistic value of the fictional work itself, because it urges us to look past any extrinsic moral absolute into the rich domain of art, or as James himself proclaims: 'our criticism is applied only to what he [the author] makes of it [his subject]' (AF 38).

James never really hides his general scepticism towards the prescriptive tendency that comes with the act of criticism (as evident, for example, in his rebuttal of Besant in 'The Art of Fiction'), but it is brought into relief by this discrepancy of perspective between James as artist and Booth as critic. An immediate conclusion might be that Booth's perception of morality does not accommodate as much freedom for the author as James requires, but that would make their difference merely a matter of degree. The more important conclusion I would like to draw is that the different positions of James and Booth set them on different paths, paths which need not be reconciled. The emergence and subsequent development of such movements in the study of fiction and narrative as formalism, the New Criticism, and particularly structuralism indeed represent significant advances in critical studies, and that, in itself, is beneficial. We might have to recognise nonetheless that it advances in a direction quite different from, and in some ways incompatible with, James's own.

In 'The *Poetics* for a Practical Critic,' Booth addresses the tendency of critics to establish a common ground for critical discussion – which, in turn, sustains a certain system underpinning critical studies. To the question why critics often treat the studied works 'as if each of them aspired to only one end,' Booth replies:

> There is more common ground among *experienced* readers than is generally acknowledged. […] Critics dispute only what they dispute about, and their disputes are mutually intelligible only to the degree that

> they share some sense of the disputed objects. (Booth, *Poetics* 402, emphasis original)

There is a strong sense in this justification that Booth not only believes, but considers it inevitable, that readers come to share similar perceptions of what they read as they become 'experienced.' This inevitability is translated into achieved fact when Booth proceeds to talk about critics, themselves implicitly among those 'experienced readers.' It is a characteristic of critical studies, Booth suggests, that a common ground, or a certain degree of commonality, is a necessary precondition for the 'mutually intelligible' contestation of analyses. While Booth the critic distinguishes between readers and 'experienced' readers, and by implication between non-critical and critical approaches to fiction, in a manner reminiscent of Lubbock's concept of 'the critical reader,' James does not make such a distinction. This divergence in trajectory, between critical demarcation on one side and compositional expansiveness on the other, persisted from Lubbock, through Booth, into what can be seen as the 'classical' period of narrative theory (as coined by Herman in his introduction to *Narratologies*). It suggests that the difference is, in fact, not an issue unique to formalism, to which (on the surface) Lubbock contributed while Booth objected. Instead, it is an issue pertaining to the difference between an artist seeking to liberate fiction from prescriptiveness, and critics who, at least in part, are motivated by the need to establish a ground of commonality – and in Booth's case, this ground is a moral one. It eventually comes down to the difference between, on the one hand, the art of (writing) fiction for James, and on the other, the discipline, rather than the art, of (analysing) fiction for critics.

Still, if the several critical turns after the classical period of narrative theory tell us anything, it is that such commonalities, while always to a certain degree assumed, do

not always exist, and are not always needed after all. This retrospective upon the dialogue of ideas between Booth and James participates in an ongoing shift of focus, inviting narrative theorists to look beyond views of authorial rhetoric and, even more importantly, the rhetoric of fiction(al narrative), primarily as goal-oriented communication based upon moral commonalities; this is a theoretical expansion that has accommodated and will continue to accommodate a broader range of narrative investigation. It is evident, for example, in Monika Fludernik's critique of the narrative communication model that relies on 'a plot-oriented analysis of narrative' in which 'the text appears to transport a meaning (i.e. the story) to the reader,' which she argues might not be the most conducive way to study texts that foreground experientiality and contain little 'story' in the traditional sense (Fludernik, *Natural Narratology* 251). The same could be said for fictional narratives that are composed using experimental devices that 'have the potential to subvert conventional language and thinking [and] undermine ordinary assumptions about the communication contract between author and reader by frustrating any interpretation that seeks to refer the narrative directly to authorial intent' (Walsh, *Rhetoric of Fictionality* 134). Moving away from thinking about authorial rhetoric in terms of communication of (moral) messages opens up the possibility of considering it more fully in terms of authorial creativity.

One of the most well-known criticisms of Booth's *Rhetoric*, which he addresses directly in his afterword to the second edition of the book, is Fredric Jameson's accusation that the book's recommendations on narratorial techniques, particularly its preference for authorial voice in fiction, 'turn out to be nothing but regression and sterile nostalgia for the past,' and that Booth himself is someone with a 'basically ahistorical approach' (Jameson 357-358). Booth objects that his project is by nature 'transhistorical' (Booth,

Rhetoric 413), and in fact his analyses of author's rhetorical choices are often grounded within specific contexts of writing, from different historical periods (which Booth himself does indeed take into account). I agree, moreover, with Booth's argument that 'studying the rhetoric of fiction is one thing and studying the political history of novels and their interpretation is another' (the latter of which being the perspective of Jameson's criticism). The distinction he makes, nonetheless, helps to underline the point I have emphasized in my argument: even within narrative theory's own scope of interest, Booth's emphasis upon the morality and ethics of fiction betrays a more fundamental issue. It is not, of course, my intention to say that questions of morality and ethics have no place in narrative theory; rather, it is that Booth's moralism neglects the historically contextual considerations to which theories of communication in fictional narrative ought to be accountable. By addressing such considerations we can come to a fuller sense of what the rhetoric of fiction(al narrative) entails.

Regardless of the extent to which Booth's critical direction in *Rhetoric* was influenced by his own conviction about the ethics of fiction, we can appreciate that it is symptomatic of the critical climate in which he was writing, even more so in the absence of a well-established scholarly field of narrative theory. It is understandable, even sympathetic, this endeavour to find those theoretical tools, be they shared sets of rules, terms, or methods, around which systematic analyses could be conducted, and further knowledge could eventually be gained, even if the endeavour indirectly endorses a rather goal-oriented model of communication in fiction. James's writings shed light on the limitations found in Booth's critical framework, as in Lubbock's, but the discrepancy between his view as an artist and that of the critics also reminds us that those limitations

were in part necessary sacrifices; an unfortunate implication perhaps, is that for the purposes of critical studies, the full freedom of fiction that James envisions will always be to some extent compromised.

The Implied Author

Theoretical tools are double-edged swords; while they can indeed help to facilitate critical studies, they also tend to be reductive out of necessity. Such reductiveness may also bring further theoretical complications, especially as the tools begin to take root and gain critical afterlives of their own. When it comes to Booth's *Rhetoric*, one such tool that has aroused heated critical debate for the past several decades is the concept of the implied author. An entire issue of *Style* was devoted to this concept in 2011, introduced by editor Brian Richardson, who comments that while 'most new concepts in narrative theory either wind up gradually incorporated or quietly ignored, the debate over the implied author has become rather entrenched' (Richardson, 'Introduction' 1). I would like to pick up James's idea of the artist's moral sensibility and bring it into dialogue with the concept of the implied author. The juxtaposition, I suggest, brings out the theoretical potential of the concept in ways obscured by its original conception as a negotiation with the New Critical orthodoxy of the autonomous text, a context from which Booth later attempted to extricate it.

James's metaphor of the 'window' is a well-known one, and much critical attention has already been given to discussing the 'million' windows of 'the house of fiction' in the preface to *The Portrait of a Lady* (PL 7), all of which represent the multitude of perspectives that different authors may adopt towards the same subject. However, the

manner in which Booth invokes the metaphor, that there are in fact 'five million ways to tell a story,' places an emphasis not necessarily warranted by James on technical methods, and consequently on textual elements. Rather, this metaphor bears a marked association with the artist's moral sensibility, in large part because it resonates so noticeably with the idea of 'vision,' and in this light it is worth revisiting other instances in which this same metaphor is used. In an 1890 letter to William Dean Howells, for example, James writes:

> The novelist is a particular *window*, absolutely – and of worth in so far as he is one; and it's because you open so well and are hung so close over the street that I could hang out of it all day long. […] The usual imbecility of the novel is that the showing and the giving simply don't come off – the reader never touches the subject and the subject never touches the reader; the window is no window at all […]. (*Letters* 276, emphasis original)

James praises Howells for being the window that 'open[s] so well' and is 'hung so close over the street'; he has composed his fiction in a manner that succeeds in capturing the interest of his reader, James, who 'could hang out of it all day long.' The metaphor is very apt here particularly because it shows how the author manages to present to the reader a 'vision' of life that is not strictly *his* 'vision,' for it is obvious from the metaphor the author is but the window, and the reader is the one who perceives. The image of an enthusiastic reader spending all day long hanging out of the window suggests that the reader is not only allowed, but also encouraged, to have his own 'vision' of the 'vision' that is presented to him – an idea that recalls James's attempt to 'make readers.' The metaphor is also suggestive of the notion that while authorial discernment stays present as the 'frame' of the window,[58] it never obstructs the view, and the reader is left to

[58] James uses the same diction when asked by the Deerfield Summer School to give his opinion about fictional composition. He reasserts the importance of the writer's 'direct impression of life' and encourages the students to turn theirs 'into a picture, a picture *framed* by your own personal wisdom' ('To the Deerfield Summer School' 29, my emphasis).

experience, and in turn evaluate, the unfolding of the subject before his very own eyes – a reminder of the organic nature of fiction, as well as the continual and processual nature of its reception in James's thinking.

For James, the capability of the artist's moral sensibility to give rise to 'any vision of life' is of utmost importance, and the grave mistake on the author's part is, accordingly, when he fails to make the reader and the subject 'touch' each other. We can infer that this is when the author hinders, or worse yet blocks, rather than facilitates the vision; when 'the window is no window at all.' Such obstruction is hinted at in one of James's reviews, in which he criticises the 'excessive sentimentality' of Miss Mulock (Dinah Maria Craik), who he thinks presents a shrouded vision of life:

> There is something almost awful in the thought of a writer undertaking to give a detailed picture of the actions of a perfectly virtuous being […]. Miss Mulok […] gives us the impression of having always looked at men and women through a curtain of rose-coloured gauze. This impediment to a clear and natural vision is nothing more, we, conceive, than her excessive sentimentality. (*Essays on Literature: American Writers; English Writers* 845)

James does not explicitly employ the metaphor of 'window' here, but a similar train of thought evidently runs behind this criticism. The contrast between the unobstructed vision allowed by the window that 'opens so well' and the other clouded behind 'a curtain of rose-coloured gauze' is distinct. In light of the previous discussion about morality, the implication is that a sentimentality too heavily influenced – in this case, by moral virtue – would only be an 'impediment to a clear and natural vision.' A similar concern is present in 'The Art of Fiction,' when James warns his fellow writers not to think 'too much about optimism and pessimism' (AF 44). It could be argued, then, that the richness of the artist's sensibility entails a certain resistance, on the artist's part, to the sway of personal

judgement that could cloud the vision for the reader. The sensibility is, after all, the 'soil' James believes to be necessary for the growth of, with an emphasis, *any* vision of life.

This becomes clearer when we consider another review by James, in which he praises Rudyard Kipling for 'having an identity as marked as a window frame':

> He is one of the illustrations […] that help to clear up the vexed question in the novel or the tale, of kinds, camps, schools, distinctions, the right way and the wrong way; so very positively does he contribute to the showing that there are just as many kinds, as many ways, as many forms and degrees of the 'right,' as there are personal points in view. (*Views and Reviews* 228)

James expresses here ideas that can also be found elsewhere in his writing, namely his suspicion toward making categories out of the novel, and his belief that there can be several ways to compose a work of fiction, all of which may be equally 'right.' The specificity of the context in which James is putting forward these otherwise general ideas, however, gives us the opportunity to consider them from a different perspective. They are part of his praise for Kipling, which logically means that they relate to his specific, individual case ('so very positively does *he* contribute'). Therefore, when James talks about how there are 'as many forms and degrees of the right as there are personal points in view,' he is not making a general statement that different authors can and will have different perceptions – as he does in the 'house of fiction' metaphor – but rather commending Kipling for his multiplicity of 'personal points in view.' This gains even more force as James continues:

> It is the blessing of the art he practises that it is made up of experience conditioned, infinitely, in this personal way – the sum of the feeling of life as reproduced by innumerable natures; natures that feel through all their differences, testify through their diversities. (*Views and Reviews* 228)

The richness of sensibility that James affirms can be understood in terms of the 'innumerable natures' encompassed by the author; the art is made up of 'experience conditioned' – vision as framed by the author's 'personal' perception – but 'infinitely' so. What we get from James's use of the metaphor of the 'window' in this case is thus not merely a reiteration of the argument about the pluralism of perception and method appropriate to different authors, an argument also at the core of Booth's *Rhetoric*, but an acknowledgement of – and a commendation for – the pluralism of an individual author's sensibility itself.

The connection between this idea of pluralism on the artist's part and Booth's concept of the implied author arises because Booth, too, uses a discussion of the author's neutrality as the starting point from which he proposes the concept in question. He first introduces neutrality in the sense of 'an attempt at disinterested reporting of all things good and evil,' only to reject it as part of his argument against objective orthodoxies, because it is something 'no author can ever attain' (Booth, *Rhetoric* 67-68). Booth argues that the question should instead be about 'whether the particular ends of the artist [in writing a particular work] enable him to do something with his commitment' (Booth, *Rhetoric* 69-70). This idea, which correlates to a larger one that 'though the author can to some extent choose his disguises, he can never choose to disappear' (Booth, *Rhetoric* 20),[59] leads to an argument against the belief that the author should see himself as a 'man in general' and attempt to forget his 'individual being' (Booth, *Rhetoric* 70). Booth then

[59] Phelan makes a similar connection, but in more specific relation to the concept of the implied author, when he argues that 'implied authors cannot choose whether to be neutral or partisan; they can choose only the way in which they will express their partisanship' (Phelan, *Living* 39).

offers a counterproposal that will become canonised in narrative studies as the implied author, whose description is as follows:

> As he writes, he creates not simply an ideal, impersonal 'man in general' but an implied version of 'himself' that is different from the implied authors we meet in other men's works. To some novelists it has seemed, indeed, that they were discovering or creating themselves as they wrote. (Booth, *Rhetoric* 70)

Booth's proposal is motivated by his claim that considering the author as a 'man in general' would 'understate the importance of the author's individuality' (Booth, *Rhetoric* 70). Within its original context, the concept can thus be considered in part a statement Booth is making about the nature of the author; that the author, despite not expressing directly or openly his judgement in the novel, is by no means impartial and, more importantly, does not lack individuality. This aspect of the concept does not seem at odds with James's idea of moral sensibility at all, since it is from his own individuality – his own impression – that James encourages the author to write.

However, Booth does not foreground this contextual (one might even argue, biographical) aspect of the concept and so it remains largely overshadowed by its more functional side within the rhetorical framework of textual analysis. One of the more evident claims Booth makes is that the implied author – or 'the picture the reader gets of this presence' of the author – is 'one of the author's most important effects' (Booth, *Rhetoric* 71). While his articulation of the implied author in terms of 'picture' and 'effects' already accentuates its representational nature,[60] his explanation that the reaction of the reader toward the implied author's commitments will help to determine the response to

[60] Walsh observes that Booth's commitment in *Rhetoric* is biased towards representation, that he 'placed rhetoric at the service of representation.' Notably, Booth sees the rhetoric of fiction as the art of 'imposing fictional worlds' upon the reader (Walsh, *Rhetoric of Fictionality* 6).

the work (Booth, *Rhetoric* 71) makes it even more likely that this theoretical figure would be perceived as merely a conglomeration of elements (such as norms or moral standards), representative of choices made in fiction in pursuit of certain rhetorical goals. As Dan Shen observes, critics tends to give attention only to the idea that the real author 'creates' the implied author, while in fact Booth himself 'puts "creating" on a par with "discovering"' (Shen, 'Implied Author' 142). For this reason, it is perhaps not surprising that the figure has been considered more of a textual hypostasis that underpins the rhetorical function of the work, leading some critics to call into question on this ground the necessity of framing such a concept in terms that implicitly represent an anthropomorphic 'agent.'[61]

Booth, nonetheless, repeatedly talks about the implied author as a 'second self' or an 'official scribe' of the author, making it problematic simply to disregard the idea of having such a theoretical agent as part of discussion about the communication model. Notably, Booth attributes the coining of this new term to his belief that other then-existing terms, such as 'theme' or 'meaning,' can be misleading in their scope. Unlike these terms, he believes, the implied author should not just be understood in the sense of 'extractable meanings' of the work (Booth, *Rhetoric* 73), which again suggests that his rhetorical concerns extend beyond the confines of his current project. However, it is his subsequent point that, in my view, marks one of his great contributions to narrative theory:

> […] we can be satisfied only with a term that is as broad as the work itself but still capable of calling attention to that work as the product of a choosing, evaluating person, rather than as a self-existing thing. (Booth, *Rhetoric* 74)

[61] For example, Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, who argues that 'the implied author must be seen as a construct inferred and assembled by the reader from all the components of the text' (Rimmon-Kenan 90); or Ansgar Nünning, who considers it to be the text's 'structural whole' (Nünning 111).

The statement is significant because it echoes James's emphasis on the role of the author as a creator, and even more so because it underscores the necessity of having this active agent who chooses and evaluates, without whom there can be no text 'as a self-existing thing.' It helps to bring us back to one of Booth's original concerns which has otherwise been overlooked – that the author's individuality might be understated. The concept of the implied author, therefore, at least has the inherent potential to call our attention to the notion that the agent who is responsible for the work we are reading is after all an 'individual being' and not simply any general, abstract figure.

An internal tension arises as a result of the equivocation in Booth's own formulation of the concept. On the one hand, Booth keeps signalling to us the ontological possibility of this theoretical agent as someone 'behind' the creation of the text, but on the other hand, there is also an equally strong implication that this someone is merely a metaphorical culmination of how the author not only dissociates himself from, but makes use of his 'intellectual or political causes' for rhetorical ends. As Richard Walsh observes, it is possible to extract two pertinent motives for distinguishing between the real author and the implied author: the first is a matter of 'authorial personality,' and the second is a matter of 'authorial intention' (Walsh, *Rhetoric of Fictionality* 82-83). While the latter aspect of the concept is what allows critics to circumvent charges of 'intentional fallacy' in critical discussion about the author, providing for a communicative focus beyond the scope of the idea of fiction as a 'self-existing thing,' the theoretical potential of the former has not been so readily apparent, which is perhaps why the 'individuality' of the implied author has never really gained attention. Booth goes on to make another equivocal claim that teases us with this very potential, before undermining it yet again:

> The 'implied author' chooses, consciously or unconsciously, what we read; we infer him as an ideal, literary, created version of the real man; he is the sum of his own choices. (Booth, *Rhetoric* 74-75)

We can see that Booth's elaboration suggests the implied author could – or even does – bring more to fictional composition than the dictate of his choices, since his choices are not always necessarily made 'consciously.' In other words, it could be said that the implied author draws on his 'individuality' in a manner reminiscent of the way the artist's moral sensibility provides a soil from which the subject can grow. The fact that he can also be inferred to be an 'ideal' person, however, limits the horizon of this individuality, for there is a sense of expected coherence, that he will be representing certain agendas, and those agendas alone.

Ironically, this equivocation also highlights the issue of the extent to which this theoretical figure of the implied author can actually bring himself to bear upon the communication that occurs via the fiction he supposedly creates; in particular, Booth's proclamation that the implied author is 'the sum of his own choices' emerges as a striking contrast to another of his claims discussed earlier, when he argues for the individuality of each unique reader, who reacts to each literary work with his or her 'own whole being' (Booth, *Rhetoric* 378). A communication model that reduces at one of its end the implied author into an ideal construct would not correspond to the idea Booth has about the reader.[62] If anything, this asymmetry points to the possibility that his rhetorical concerns accommodate some potentials which, although implicitly signalled or even promised in *Rhetoric* – may have not yet been realised or adequately acknowledged.

[62] One could argue that naturally the other end of such a model is the implied reader. The concept, being a theoretical counterpart to the implied author, raises the same question about Booth's equivocation regarding the reader's (contextual) individuality on the one hand and the (implied) coherence inherent to the concept on the other.

The benefit of re-considering Booth's concept through the lens of James, who was writing and thinking during a time when the study of fictional narrative was still not framed theoretically is that it encourages us to be historically aware of the influence currently dominant debates can have on the formulation of new theoretical concepts; new perspectives can be gained, or some obscured insight can be recovered, in this manner. Booth's own revisiting and clarification of the concept of the implied author in his 2015 article 'Resurrection of the Implied Author' is a case in point. He emphasizes the less considered performative aspect of the concept, the idea that the implied author is less the creation of a distinct figure than a 'role-playing' on the author's part. It may be simply Booth's attempt to demystify the muddledness of the concept when he explains that the real author, like all of us do, implies 'a version' of his character that he knows 'is quite different from many other selves' that are exhibited in the flesh-and-blood world (Booth, 'Resurrect' 77); even so, the real author's self-awareness – his sense of intentionality – is still foregrounded.[63] It points to a problem that has always persisted in Booth's project: even though his clarification helps to excite investigations of the concept from another direction, the goal-oriented sentiment limits its scope of consideration for authorial rhetoric in the communication of fiction, as it conflates the textually situated view of authorial rhetoric with intentional choices being made by the author for certain ends. In close comparison with James's idea about the richness of the artist's moral sensibility, it becomes apparent that what is at stake here has been eclipsed by theoretical debates that focus on the concept as a tool for textual analysis within a transmissive model of

[63] Interestingly, this differs from the idea previously found in *Rhetoric* that the implied author may write either 'consciously or unconsciously' (Booth, *Rhetoric* 74-75). The difference might be only accidental, or it might suggest that Booth developed an even stronger sense of the author's role (and its moral implication) over time.

communication – debates indirectly caused by ambiguities in Booth's own works themselves. That is the potential instead for a broader application of the implied author to the understanding of communication in (fictional) narrative, facilitated by a more contextual consideration of the real author.

Granted, the implied author is a useful tool in combatting the tendency to incorporate the author's biographical information uncritically into the study of fiction, which was one of Booth's original motives in creating the concept. However it is also evident that this intentional creation of versions is not without problems, especially in the light of James's discussions, which do not distinguish between the author and the writing versions of himself. James always spoke for the richness of the moral sensibility because it is an integral constituent of the artist's worth, the mark of the artist's complex individuality. Booth, by proposing that the author, in writing a particular work, intentionally brings only 'a version' of himself – a version tailored to certain goals – simplifies and undermines this complexity. The separation between the self and the 'second self' is understandable and perhaps useful within the theoretical context of rhetorical textual analysis, but stopping there would only return us to the underlying problem of Booth's project. Booth's reliance on a restrictive model of intentionality, tied to his interest in how the author edifies the reader through such model, is again found in his claim that the implied author is 'always' distinct from the real author, who 'creates a superior version of himself' as he creates his work (Booth, *Rhetoric* 151).[64] For James,

[64] There are some other instances in which Booth's sense of absolute moral standards surfaces in relation to the concept of the implied author. For example, Booth claims that a major challenge for the reader is 'to distinguish between beneficial and harmful masking [on the author's part]' (Booth, 'Resurrection' 77) – in a parallel manner to his comments on harmful misreading.

the soil out of which fictional works arise is the self of the artist – the entirety of his experience.

Because the problem can be attributed to Booth's perception of morality, it is worth looking more closely at the beginning of the discussion when he first brings up the idea of authorial neutrality, before proposing the concept of the implied author. He cites Flaubert's 'attitude of the scientist,' which instructs that art 'has to be achieved 'by a pitiless method, the precision of the physical sciences,' and argues that 'no author can ever attain' such neutrality (Booth, *Rhetoric* 67-68). While Flaubert's idea lends itself very nicely to the argument Booth is making against the possibility of neutrality, however, Flaubert is not the first author Booth draws upon; that is Keats, and in particular his idea of the 'camelion Poet':

> The poetical character […] has no character […] It lives in gusto, be it foul or fair, high or low, rich or poor, mean or elevated. It has as much delight in conceiving an Iago as an Imogen. What shocks the virtuous philosopher, delights the camelion Poet. It does not harm from its relish of the dark side of things any more than from its taste for the bright one; because they both end in speculation. (Booth, *Rhetoric* 68)

While Booth claims that 'Keats was saying in 1818 the kind of thing that novelists began to say only with Flaubert,' we can see from the quotation itself that their ideas are quite different, and it is as if Booth were making the connection about neutrality between them by relying on the first part alone ('the poetical character […] has no character'). The language used to describe the poet here is the language of emotion ('delight,' 'relish'), and it is quite evident that he is not 'disinterested' in the same way as the novelist in Flaubert's thinking would be. He is impartial, in the sense that he is willing to deal with any kind of subject, 'be it foul or fair, high or low, rich or poor, mean or elevated,' but not disinterested in the sense that he will be presenting the subject with impartiality, or as

propounded by Flaubert, with the 'attitude of the scientist […] by a pitiless method.' Keats's 'camelion Poet' is similar in nature to the author James would celebrate, because he revels in the multifacetedness of the experience the world has to offer, and aims at a receptiveness or adaptiveness that would correspond to such experience. By 'the poetical character […] has no character,' therefore, Keats is pointing to the ever-growing individuality of the writer – that it has in other words no essential nature or fixed identity. Booth's concept of the implied author, whether viewed in its original conception as a way to negotiate with the New Criticism and rescue the author from the biographical person, or in its subsequent formalist application in (rhetorical) textual analysis, would only encourage a reductive view that boxes in the complexity of identity the author always brings, intentionally or unintentionally, to fictional composition.

David Darby argues that it was the theorisation of authorship, manifested in anglophone narrative theory through the concept of the implied author, that allowed contextual considerations of the author to interact with formalist analysis (Darby 838). Beyond the theoretical purview of Booth's original project, informed as it was by the critical climate of his writing in which (literary) textual analysis was dominant, we can find in James's idea a more contextual understanding of the author, which in turn allows for a reconsideration of the implied author in this contextual light. What I attempted to show in Chapter One is only reinforced by my discussion here of the concept of the implied author: an understanding and investigation of fictional narrative (and, some would argue, narrative) needs to take into account the author who gives rise to a particular narrative in the first place. The concept of the implied author, when taken in a contextual sense relating to the real author, encourages us to consider the possibility that an analysis

of (fictional) narrative neither necessarily relies upon goal-oriented assumptions about the communication between the author and the reader, nor upon textual elements as the only parameters of such communication.[65] It allows us to place more emphasis on the contextual aspects of the author (and reciprocally the reader), and the communication itself.

Theoretically speaking, it also helps to address the issue of whether the concept is necessary; as Shen argues, the debates surrounding the implied author may persist because it has not been properly considered in relation to the real author, when an implicit understanding of the relevant contextual factors of the real author is necessary for an adequate grasp of the rhetoric of any particular work (Shen, 'Implied Author' 150). Walsh's assessment of the implied author is a useful case; he rejects the concept on the ground of its ambiguities, and argues that 'there is no room anywhere for a third agent that would be neither a *character* nor the real author' (Walsh, *Rhetoric of Fictionality* 84). His assessment is built upon Genette's refusal to multiply agents unnecessarily, though Genette himself retains the concept of the narrator as a necessary intermediate agent. It is fair to say that a reconsideration of the concept in this contextual light actually aligns with Walsh's argument in that the implied author is considered as *real author*; the benefit of having it as a distinct concept (or at least, the benefit of my discussion of it), then, is more theoretically reflective than practical or functional, which is in part the point of Walsh's argument.

Gerald Prince, in his discussion of the complementarity between narrative theory and postcolonialism, suggests that narrative theorisation (and resulting narrative concepts)

[65] Barbara Herrnstein Smith's 'Narrative Versions, Narrative Theories' is a well-known example of a more pragmatically-oriented rhetorical analysis of narrative.

'can help to shed light on the nature and functioning of the ideology those narratives represent and construct' (Prince, 'Postcolonial Narratology' 372), while also acknowledging that even though such theorisation can benefit from the examination of specific (sets of) texts, 'it is not tied exclusively to them' (Prince, 'Postcolonial Narratology' 379). The important point of his suggestion, then, is that it allows us to distinguish between narratological criticism and narratological theorisation; Prince's interest in contextualism is primarily motivated by the possible merits that inhere in (re)theorisation, and in the narrative concepts that emerge from such (re)theorisation itself. In the current context of discussion, we can reconsider the concept of the implied author beyond its applicability as a tool employed in a particular text to understand the moral or ethical message the author would like to convey (in the manner that is prioritised by Booth), and look instead at how contextual possibilities might inform, not merely particular interpretations, but the theoretical concept itself – recognising that moral or ethical questions are inherently implicated in contextual consideration of the author (and in turn the reader).

In the afterword to the second edition of *Rhetoric*, Booth acknowledges Mikhail Bakhtin and his success in crossing 'boundaries that my book seems to erect' by 'look[ing] closely at how authors and readers are made, made in their cultures, made in part by the narratives they have consumed' (Booth, *Rhetoric* 415). This leads him to see that

> for some purposes I must make problematic the sharp distinctions I once made between flesh-and-blood authors and implied authors and between the various readers we become as we read and the actual

> breathing selves we are within our shifting cultures.[66] (Booth, *Rhetoric* 415)

The horizon of *The Rhetoric of Fiction* was confined in some respect to its aim as a critique of critical orthodoxies of its time. The concept of the implied author might have done its job in negotiating the importance of authorial rhetoric with New Criticism, but it is precisely this aspect of its formulation that causes the concept to be dominantly received as a theoretical tool for rhetorical textual analysis within the goal-oriented model of communication that Booth's project itself endorses. Retrospectively, however, a contextual reconsideration of the concept, facilitated by its connections with James's critical writings, allows us to see that it has the potential to mediate a complementary relationship between the formalist strands of narrative theory (focusing on textual elements, in the case of Booth), and the more contextual strands in which the contextually-situated functioning of (fictional) narrative is itself a theoretical insight. Ultimately, Booth's interest in ethics can be considered fulfilled, albeit not necessarily in a way that he foresaw. An analysis of any individual fictional narrative and its respective *rhetorical resources* will likely reveal authorial moral judgement, which could lead to moral edification on the reader's part; but what might be equally important is that the *rhetoric* of fiction itself always calls attention to the full complexity of the author, the reader, and the context of communication, morally or otherwise.

[66] This is already elaborated and clarified to some extent in his 2015 article 'Resurrection of the Implied Author' that I draw on in my discussion.

Chapter Three
Henry James and J. Hillis Miller's Deconstructive Criticism

In the previous chapter, I have argued that Booth's *The Rhetoric of Fiction* was a crucial point in the development of narrative theory because it speaks against prescriptive, *a priori* rules that dictate what a good fictional work should be by foregrounding the importance and the multitude of 'rhetorical resources' available to the author in his or her attempt to communicate with the reader (Booth, *Rhetoric* xiii). On the one hand, Booth's project challenges a formalist assumption held by critics such as Lubbock that elements of literary texts can be recognised, shared, and studied as objects unto themselves; the assumption on which such 'convenient' distinctions as that between 'showing' and 'telling' are predicated (Booth, *Rhetoric* 8). On the other hand, by taking into account the complex relationship between the author, the reader, and the text, it paves the way for a critical alternative to – and at the same time questions the authority of – the then widely practised New Criticism that eschewed the communicative aspect of literature in favour of the belief in texts as autonomous sacred artefacts. Notably, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* underlines the idea that each fictional work is a particular instance of communication between the author and the reader, which is quite different from the New Critical emphasis on the text's particularity in terms of its distinctive unity. This awareness of the author-reader relationship and communication as a variable from one text to another (and, more implicitly, from one instance to another) helps to expand the horizon of narrative theory, and is perhaps most evident in the emergence and subsequent development of contextualist narratology (particularly feminist and postcolonial narratologies), whose critique, directed mainly against the dominant formalist-structuralist propensity for a

universal model or taxonomy of classical narratology, extends Booth's own critique of formalist prescriptive tendency.

I have also demonstrated, however, that the implications of a rhetorical perspective beyond formalism heralded by Booth were not fully realised, at least in *The Rhetoric of Fiction*. Booth was well aware of the limitations of his study and accordingly acknowledged in the preface that he had to rule out 'many of the most interesting questions about fiction' in order to 'deal adequately with the narrower questions' about rhetorical techniques (Booth, *Rhetoric* xiii-xiv). Nonetheless, my discussion suggests that the limitations derive not only from practical grounds (most evidently, his attempt to challenge objective doctrines of fictional composition) but also from ideological grounds, for Booth discusses rhetorical techniques on the premise, to some extent his personal conviction, that fiction is inherently moral and that there exist moral commonalities in fiction. The problem that such an assumption brings is that the 'correct readings' of each particular work are reduced to a critical consensus about the rhetoric of the author. Despite his concern extending beyond mere textual elements, Booth's assumption about moral commonalities in *Rhetoric* is in this sense similar to Lubbock's assumption about technical commonalities.

What these critical approaches share, highlighted especially by the distinction I have emphasized between a critic (such as Lubbock and Booth) and an artist (of which James is exemplary, in the context of this thesis), is their reliance on the universalist assumption of an absolute epistemological bottom, albeit of differing kinds, to the text as a semiotic object of interpretation. This intellectual trajectory, with its epistemological goal of 'mastery,' manifests itself in varying approaches, from Lubbock whose method,

though impressionistic, still invokes an ideal of system, to structural narratologists who attempt to understand narrative systematically. The scientific, at times overly rigid, approach of the latter has often been criticised, especially by contextualist critics who believe in the importance of the context beyond formal or linguistic elements of the text. In this regard, even though Booth's *Rhetoric* brought more contextual awareness to the consideration of narrative, we cannot think of the latter as simply a direct development of the former.[67] It is still in the interest of contextualist narratology, after all, to critique universalist assumptions about narrative, about the 'absolute bottom' upon which some kinds of narratological model, taxonomy, or structure are built.

David Herman's distinction between classical (that is, structuralist) narratology and postclassical narratology (which includes contextualist narratology) has become standard in the discussion of the development of the field, but this gloss distinction also comes with the potential risk of being taken at face value, as signalling an abrupt transition from structuralist assumptions of the universalist 'structure' of narrative, understood primarily as a semiotic object, to contextualist attention to narrative as always functioning within a particular 'context.' Gerald Prince, in 'On Narratology: Criteria, Corpus, Context,' expresses his initial scepticism about the development from (structuralist) narratology to contextualist narratology, contrasting contextualist narratology's particular focus upon narratological criticism – that is, on interpretation of particular texts with special attention to 'the exploration of contextual features' – with the general focus of

[67] It is reasonable however to argue in broader terms, as Richard Walsh does for example, that contextualist narratology 'draws strength from another long-standing tradition with contextualist premises, which is rhetorical narrative theory' (Walsh, 'Narrative Theory at the Limit' 266). Susan Lanser's idea for the inclusion of 'sex' and 'gender' as narratological categories of the narrator ('Toward a Feminist Narratology'), or Robyn Warhol's concept of 'engaging narrators' ('Toward a Theory of the Engaging Narrator') were both influenced by the rhetorical approach to narrative.

(structuralist) narratology upon understanding 'the ways in which all and only narratives are configured and make sense' (Prince, 'On Narratology' 82). As pointed out at the end of the previous chapter, however, Prince warmed to the merits of contextualist narratology in his later affirmation of the idea of a postcolonial narratology. He comes to see narratological criticism and narratological theorisation as mutually and recursively beneficial, in that contextual interpretation can and does give rise to concepts with broader theoretical implications beyond their specific contexts (Prince, 'Postcolonial Narratology' 379). This position is shared by Dan Shen,[68] who also makes an important observation that insofar as narrative concepts, or the classification of 'generic structures' of narrative, are concerned, there will always be some kind of abstraction – that non-universal, contextual elements 'cannot enter the realm of narratological *theory* unless they *are transformed into decontextualised formal distinctions*' (Shen, 'Contextual and Formal' 153, emphasis original). It is therefore more appropriate to consider the development of contextualist narratology in terms of a negotiation with, rather than an attempt to dismiss, the previous universalist assumptions of structuralist narratology; this involves a critical investigation into the concept of structure, the implications of which are left relatively unexamined within structuralist narratology itself.

[68] Shen elaborates (indirectly) on Prince's idea, arguing that 'different narrative devices, such as flashback and flash-forward [she is drawing on Michael Kearns' observation of Genette's typology], have both varied contextualised significance (when used in specific narratives) and shared *generic functions*, the latter being able to "affect readers differently" in a *decontextualised* way' (Shen, 'Contextual and Formal' 164, emphasis original).

J. Hillis Miller's Deconstructive Criticism and Narrative Structure

It is useful to bring in deconstructive literary criticism here because it offers an important critique of the intellectual ideology, particularly that of universalist structure, behind much of the development of narrative theory, but also because it remains mostly tangential when it comes to the development of the field, especially compared to contextualist narratology which advances parallel criticisms of such universalist assumptions. J. Hillis Miller is a key figure in my discussion because his participation in deconstructive literary criticism (and deconstruction writ large) was combined with careful and extensive attention to James's writings. Discussing Miller after Booth is also apposite because Miller, too, speaks for the importance of 'rhetoric' in the literary text, even though his idea of rhetoric is vastly different from Booth's. In fact, it could even be argued that it is the very ideology behind Booth's idea of rhetoric that Miller seeks to refute.[69]

In *The Ethics of Reading*, Miller expresses his intention to shift the ground from a reading that 'depends on mastery of the ability to interpret written stories' to a reading of 'the man or woman face to face with the words on the page' (Miller, *Ethics* 4). The former kind, Miller argues, is 'subordinated to the epistemological, to some act of cognition,' a leading by the hand usually determined by social, institutional, or political considerations that would prevent the text from exerting its full power (Miller, *Ethics* 4). This is important, because the critique applies not only strictly (by virtue of the shared term 'rhetoric') to 'rhetorical reading' in Booth's sense – as a navigation through the author's

[69] It is important to note that Miller does not make a specific reference to the rhetorical approach in narrative theory, nor can it be deduced from his analyses alone if the approach is at all taken into consideration. The case thus differs from the direct relation between Lubbock and Booth in the previous chapter, but I believe the connection I am making here is a productive one still.

rhetoric in search of a moral message – but also to other concepts that rely similarly on a mutual frame of epistemological knowledge. Miller aims instead at bringing out 'an influx of performative power from the linguistic transaction involved in the act of reading' (Miller, *Ethics* 4) – the inherent 'rhetoricity' that comes with the figurative aspects of language.[70] His interest in what he calls the 'ethics of reading' does not deal with the power of fiction to educate in a moral or an institutional sense, but with the ethical urge, the much more fundamental 'I must' moment instigated as a response to the complexity of the language of the text itself (Miller, *Ethics* 4). A good reading for Miller is a performative one, grounded in the close encounter between the reader and the text, not a constative one that revolves around decoding or knowing.[71]

What needs to be reiterated here is that Miller favours close reading without theoretical or epistemological presupposition; a close reading which, in the words of Éamonn Dunne, is an 'intense labour' of working through the text, 'guided by words there on the page, not some prefabricated theoretical framework' laid over the text in order to pinpoint its meaning (Dunne, *Reading Theory Now* xxiii). Such scepticism towards a 'prefabricated theoretical framework' makes this approach to the text a deconstructive counter-voice to the epistemological orthodoxy in narrative theory that seems to have

[70] This 'rhetorical reading' is likely influenced by de Man's 'reading,' which seeks to 'draw out the innermost logic of the text, showing how rhetorical tensions develop to a point where that logic is implicitly confounded by its own implications.' For de Man this discrepancy between reason and rhetoric is 'endemic to all literary texts' (Norris 99).

[71] The distinction between 'constative' and 'performative' derives from speech act theory, which plays an important role in Miller's *Literature as Conduct: Speech Acts in Henry James*. The book is perhaps Miller's most extensive engagement with James, as he shows how different speech acts in James's fiction should be understood by their performative function, not by their constative function. It does not quite find its place in this thesis, however, because the majority of Miller's analyses focuses on moments from James's fictional works rather than on his critical writings, and are therefore interpretative rather than theoretical (though not without Miller's general deconstructive thrust) in nature.

reached its height in structuralist narratology; yet while epistemological orthodoxy was a main voice in the history of the field's development, deconstructive approaches gained relatively little purchase despite being influential in other critical spheres.

Miller did not engage with narrative theory to the extent that he would be generally considered a narrative theorist – and by that virtue claim a natural place in the history of narrative theory – nor did he identify himself as such. Nonetheless, there are instances when his deconstructive criticism touches directly on issues pertaining to narrative. Notably, he voices his concerns about Genette and other like-minded narratologists, whose works in 'the region of descriptive intelligence' seek to 'name' features of narrative in the attempt to bring them out 'into the full light of the logical sun' (Miller, *Reading Narrative* 48-49);[72] concerns which can be traced back to his deconstruction of the image of the line in 'Ariadne's Thread.' This very image, which has been an important part of the logocentric Western tradition, and on which Miller argues the notions of 'legislation' and 'boundary' – or, in this particular context of discussion, of 'structure' – are built, is already a 'figure' (Miller, 'Ariadne' 61). The logic behind his argument is that the inherent rhetoricity in language prevents any absolute pinpointing of meaning (this he demonstrates in the article through etymological retracing, revealing that language is full of bifurcation and indeterminacy). Accordingly, 'the motif, image, concept, or formal model' too, in part already derivatives of language, end up not being 'clues,' but themselves 'labyrinths' (Miller, 'Ariadne' 60).

[72] This is another instance that suggests it might be worth making a terminological distinction, or at least a clarification of differences, between narratology and narrative theory (and by the same token narratologists and narrative theorists), on practical grounds, considering that Miller's criticisms are likely directed at the 'narratology' in its classical, structuralist phase with which he had been familiar, not 'narrative theory' in its more inclusive form as we know it today.

Miller is not alone in questioning structuralist narratology. As Jonathan Culler points out, structuralist narratology has often been criticised for the perceived critical 'arrogance' of its 'systematising ambitions' in pursuing 'a comprehensive science of matters involving meaning and culture' (Culler, *Structuralist* viii). This perception is also invoked by Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan who observes that the endeavour usually carries connotations of 'objectivity, neutrality, even scientificity,' especially due to the prevalent need 'to use a precise metalanguage, with a one-to-one relationship between term and phenomenon' (Rimmon-Kenan 141). Culler, however, emphasizes that the driving force behind structuralist narratology, the 'desire to be rigorous and systematic' by establishing a 'structure,' is often misinterpreted as 'attempts at causal explanation' (a desire to delimit the meaning of the text by discovering its 'secret'), when in fact such structures are established to help understand the text's production of meaning (Culler, *Structuralist Poetics* 297-298). More important still is Culler's acknowledgement that these structures can both 'comply' with and 'resist' the production of meaning, suggesting that it is less an attempt to solve the text than to 'participate in the play of the text' (Culler, *Structuralist Poetics* 302). Implicit in these observations is the idea that structure cannot be understood entirely in its abstract form, but only in relation to the '*production* of meaning,' to its application (or applicability) to particular (con)texts, an idea that reaffirms the recursive relationship between poetics and interpretation.

Even though *Structuralist Poetics* is usually regarded as an influential account of structuralist narratology, and Culler himself regarded (at that time) as one of its important spokespeople for structuralist narratology, it is worth nothing that here he is already on a post-structuralist trajectory. That trajectory is even more evident in Culler's foreword to

Genette's seminal *Narrative Discourse*, another high watermark of structuralist narratology, in which he remarks:

> Not only is this a severe test of categories, which doubtless leads to the discovery of new distinctions, but the theory is constantly confronted with anomalies and must show how they are anomalous. […] It is as though his [Genette's] categories were specifically designed to identify as anomalous the most salient of Proust's techniques, so that in a sense these marginal phenomena, these exceptions, in fact determine the norm; these cases which the system seems to set aside are in fact crucial to it. (Culler, 'Foreword' to *Narrative Discourse* 9-13)

Culler ends his foreword with a direct reference, claiming that 'Genette's work communicates with the most interesting speculative strain of what is now called "post-structuralism"' (Culler, 'Foreword' to *Narrative Discourse* 13), so highlighting the idea that structuralism and post-structuralism (or, more specifically here, Miller's deconstructive approach to narrative) are not antithetical of each other, and that the boundary between the two is never clear up close. The seeds of post-structuralism already lie in structuralism itself, and it is less a matter of repudiating structuralism than of the more thorough pursuit of its own latent implications.

Miller's decision to call his project a work of 'anarratology' is therefore quite telling, because it does not indicate a direct opposition to or rejection of the attempt to understand narrative per se – it is not 'anti-narratology' in the same manner, one could argue, that post-structuralism is not 'anti-structuralism.' In a 1994 interview, for example, Miller does not object entirely to the idea of theoretical pursuit, but his words come with an important caveat:

> Theory is never fully sponsored or generated or supported or confirmed by the reading; far from it: the reading always does something to the theoretical formulation and at the same time generates new theoretical formulations which have to be modified then in their turn. So a theory

> is never something that's fixed once and for all, and the thing that alters it is more reading. (Miller qtd. in Dunne, *Possibilities of Reading* 17-18)

His choice to use the term 'anarratology' underlines his resistance to the typological mastery, the 'logos' of 'narratology,' especially the notion of precision – of 'one-to-one relationship' – between structure and meaning that is perceived to be at the heart of structuralist narratology. Such resistance, however, relies on a rather rigid conception of structure which should be reconsidered, in the light of Culler's emphasis on the *production* of meaning. When Miller claims that classifying features of narrative will only lead, in confrontation with the text, to a recognition of how complex narrative really is (Miller, *Reading Narrative* 49), his view is actually quite similar to Culler's, and indeed to that of contextualist narratology. In contrast to Culler, for whom this is a productive challenge,[73] Miller frames his evaluation within a negative rhetoric that discourages rather encourages further theoretical pursuit, a sentiment already expressed in 'Ariadne's Thread' when he admits that 'the blind alleys in the analysis of narrative may not by any means be avoided' and that the only solution is 'by stopping short, by taking something for granted in the terminology one is using rather than interrogating it' (Miller, 'Ariadne's Thread' 74). The reason Miller's deconstructive criticism has not really been integrated into fruitful dialogues with structuralist narratology can perhaps be attributed to this negative rhetoric, which itself derives from his scepticism towards the idea of structure.

[73] And this, I would argue, is true for most narrative theorists (though the extents of their theoretical pursuit and investment vary of course). Similar to Culler, Prince, for example, argues that enterprises in narratological criticism 'test the validity and rigor of narratological categories, distinctions, and reasonings' and that 'they identify (more or less significant) elements that narratologists (may) have overlooked, underestimated, or misunderstood,' which potentially leads to 'basic reformulations of models of narrative' (Prince, 'On Narratology' 78).

In comparison to contextualist narratology, which acknowledges the productive relationship between narratological criticism and narratological theory, even as it challenges the universalist assumptions behind the idea of structure, Miller prioritises interpretive criticism, and the complexity and pleasure it brings, as an end in itself.

Nonetheless, there are merits to be gained from looking at Miller's resistance to structure. The fundamental correlation between the idea of 'structure' and the spatial image of the line in Miller's works allows him to extend the reach of his suspicion of 'logos,' from the issue of the instability of categorical terms (due to the rhetoricity of language) to the privileged spatial metaphors of structuralist narratology, in which narrative and structure is 'picturable as a graph or plot, a line going from A to B or from A to Z' (Miller, *Reading Narrative* 49-50). James comes into play here for Miller by providing two major spatial images – the images of the 'embroidered canvas' in the preface to *Roderick Hudson* and the 'shining expanse of snow' in the preface to *The Golden Bowl* – from which Miller draws the conclusion that both represent the breakdown of any effort to determine any single definite structure of the text. As I will proceed to show in this chapter, Miller's argument, nonetheless, still relies largely on the interpretation of these images in spatial terms, at times even putting a strain upon James's own emphasis upon the processual, contextually-oriented nature of such images. This causes him to underplay nuances in James's prefaces that could otherwise encourage us to reconsider more positively what structure entails, and accordingly gain further insight into how a changing perspective upon structure informs the development of approaches in narrative theory that seek to negotiate with the universalist assumptions of structuralist narratology.

By focusing his analyses of the two prefaces on refuting the spatial assumptions of structuralist narratology, Miller forgoes addressing the structuralist endeavour in its full complexity. The issue connects most productively perhaps to the shifting idea of 'structure' in the work of Roland Barthes, another prominent theorist who straddles the divide between structuralism and post-structuralism. In *S/Z* Barthes marks a decisive shift by declaring that he is concerned 'not to manifest a structure but to produce a structuration' (Barthes, *S/Z* 20), suggesting that 'structure' need not be viewed only spatially, in terms of static *product*, as *the* structure to be manifested, but can also be viewed as *a* 'structuration,' in terms of *production* and of process. James is often invoked, particularly within the formalist tradition, as an artist who upholds the importance of *the* 'structure' of his novel, but James is also a writer who has at several points touched on the pragmatic, contextual aspect of the need for *a* 'structure.'[74] In the preface to *Roderick Hudson*, James responds to the difficulty of 'the art of representation' in writing fiction by claiming that 'experience has to organise, for convenience and cheer, some system of observation' (RH 35). Understanding the 'system' in this context spatially, as some kind of structural object, makes less sense than understanding it as a processual framework that assists James in his composition, his *production* of fictional narrative, an idea that reverberates closely with Barthes' distinction between 'structure' and 'structuration' in his approach to reading 'Sarrasine.' While it is evident that structural delineation is an integral part of structuralist narratology, by focusing on a rigid concept of structure in his reading of James's prefaces, Miller misses an opportunity for a productive dialogue with another conception of structural system.

[74] The influence of his older brother William James, as a leading figure in the American tradition of philosophical pragmatism, may be detected in this regard.

Miller's focus on the theoretical front of structuralist narratology acts as a useful foil for James's pragmatic perspective as a writer. Miller argues that 'narratological distinctions, unlike scientific discoveries, are not facts about the external world […] and are disciplinary artefacts concocted for heuristic purpose' (Miller, 'Focalization' 125); yet his argument is preoccupied with the abstract narratological theorisation itself, rather than the respects in which that theorisation is 'for heuristic purpose.' Miller not only glosses over the potential 'play' with the text to which Culler draws attention, behind the generalising façade of structural reduction, but also downplays the reciprocity between the theoretical and the praxeological, the latter of which actually lies at the heart of his belief in the ethics of reading, and would align his theoretical position more closely with that of contextualist narratology. James's pragmatic perspective is therefore an important intermediary between two positions that are not antagonistic to each other; his emphasis on the creative process of composition reminds us that (fictional) narrative is far from being merely a matter of clearly discernable representation, or of mapping out one-to-one connections within a narrative as an *object* of investigation, but also a gradually developing system – that is, a (narrative) *process* – that unfolds and attains its significance in relation to specific contexts. Susan Lanser, advocating for contextual narratology, stresses that the 'theoretical' aspect of structuralism and the 'praxeological' aspect of engaging with the text itself should work together and be 'mutually profitable' (Lanser, 'Sexing the Narrative' 92). Even though James does not frame his thought in the same context, not being a theorist, a similar voice can still be heard in his prefaces, and in looking back at them as mediators in the conversation between Miller's deconstructive criticism and structuralist narratology, we come to understand better the rationale behind

the development of contextual narratology in the history of narrative theory. At the same time, the prefaces make us realise that Miller's critique, even if indirectly, contributes to such an understanding by provoking further examination of what structure in narrative really entails, and that is my focus in this chapter.

The 'Embroidered Canvas' in the Preface to *Roderick Hudson*

As Miller's discussion of *Roderick Hudson*'s embroidered canvas is built on his prior deconstruction of the image of the line in 'Ariadne's Thread,' it is important to give that some due attention first.[75] For much of the article Miller emphasizes the inherent rhetoricity of language; his etymological retracing renders words 'unstable, equivocal, wavering, abysmal,' demonstrating that the terminology invented to describe elements in narrative is already involved in 'a labyrinth of branching interverbal relationship,' which prevents any pinpointing of meanings (Miller, 'Ariadne's Thread' 72). The implication is that any attempt at logical mastery of narrative, with particular reference to structuralist narratology's penchant for categorical naming, is always inherently self-undermining, because language is by no means a transparent medium that would allow a one-to-one mapping between term and meaning.[76] While this argument addresses a general problem that comes with the Western logocentric tradition and its intellectual desire to determine

[75] The discussion of the embroidered canvas is from a chapter of Miller's *Reading Narrative*, which could be seen as a book-length extension/elaboration of the ideas about narrative line found in 'Ariadne's Thread.'

[76] The view is not unique to Miller and has been discussed in differing ways by other theorists of deconstruction. An immediate connection can be made between this idea of the inherently self-undermining nature of intellectual mastery and Paul de Man's 'The Resistance to Theory,' in which he argues that a productive theory of literature needs to foreground the rhetorical aspect of language, but to do so is a 'negative process' that undoes 'grammatical cognition,' thereby subverting the goal of having a theory (de Man, ' Resistance to Theory' 17).

some foundational 'truth,' it does not specifically critique the logic of narrative – there is a tendency in Miller's criticism to prioritise the deconstruction of language as a semiotic system rather than confronting the specific issue at hand head-on. Miller seems to take for granted the self-undermining nature of intellectual mastery and its potential detriment to the text, which oftentimes leads him to arrive at a certain kind of 'undecidability' as the conclusion of his analysis, itself perhaps a reason why his criticism has not really been integrated into theoretical discussion on narrative.[77]

In 'Ariadne's Thread,' however, Miller makes an observation that I find particularly relevant to the structural logic of narrative, which makes it a useful foothold for further engagement with his arguments elsewhere.

> The model of the line is a powerful part of the traditional language of Occidental metaphysics. […] Narrative event follows narrative event in a purely metonymic line, but the series tends to organise itself or to be organised into a causal chain. The chase has a beast in view. The end of the story is the retrospective revelation of the law of the whole. […] The image of the line tends always to imply the norm of a single continuous unified structure determined by one external organising principle. This principle holds the whole line together, gives it its law, controls its progressive extension, curving or straight, with some arche, telos, or ground. (Miller, 'Ariadne's Thread' 69)

Miller's subsequent argument is based on the premise that this '*model*' of the line – quite a telling choice of term itself on his part – is often perceived spatially as 'a single

[77] For example, in an article on *The Awkward Age*, Miller starts from the narratological concept of focalisation but arrives at the conclusion that the work is 'undecidable in meaning' (Miller, 'Focalization' 134). In the previously mentioned *Literature as Conduct: Speech Acts in Henry James*, the chapter on *The Portrait of a Lady* ends with the statement that the novel 'does not tell the reader enough to confirm a reading' (Miller, *Speech Acts* 79), and the one on *The Golden Bowl* encourages the reader to read 'on his or her own, on the basis of a reading that has no fully prescribed basis' (Miller, *Speech Acts* 290). It could be argued that what makes Miller's works resistant to further theoretical discussion is that he tends to use the occasion of theorisation to prioritise his contingent interpretation of the text. Given his resolve to challenge the one-direction flow of epistemological, constative power by creating 'an influx of performative power from the linguistic transactions' (Miller, *Ethics* 4), this move is probably intentional.

continuous unified structure determined by one external organising principle.' The way Miller describes the tracing of a narrative as 'the chase' with 'a beast in view' hints at the existence of an absolute 'answer' traceable through narrative structure, a structure that is not only determinable as a 'whole,' but whose inflexibility is underlined by having a governing 'principle' that 'holds the whole line together' and 'controls its progressive extension, curving or straight.'[78] What is noteworthy is that Miller himself seems to suppress the temporal aspect of narrative structure, in order to highlight instead the spatial imagination that he seeks to challenge. He makes his focus the ultimate 'beast in view' that the chase is after, and perhaps even more remarkably, envisions 'the retrospective revelation' spatially, as if what matters is only reaching the 'end' (a spatial point) so as to see 'the law of the whole' (a spatial structure), without giving enough attention to the processual, temporal experience of tracing through narrative structure required for such retrospection. In *Reading Narrative*, Miller makes his case against Genette, and by extension structuralist narratology, in a similar manner; he starts by acknowledging that the Greek term 'diegesis' that Genette has reintroduced has a sense of 'track down' (the di- of diegesis is from dia- and means 'through'), only to come to the conclusion that this reaffirms what Aristotle says about the need to interpret any representation from the perspective of its end (Miller, *Reading Narrative* 48).[79] It is important, then, to consider

[78] It becomes apparent in *Reading Narrative* that Miller's earlier attempt to contest the logos behind the idea of narrative line in 'Ariadne's Thread' may derive from his interest in Aristotle's *Poetics*, which he addresses directly in the former, pointing to Aristotle's belief that 'a good tragedy must itself be rational in the sense that everything in a good tragedy makes sense because everything is referred back to a single action and meaning' (Miller, *Reading Narrative* 5).

[79] It is also worth noting that the sense of 'narration' which Miller takes 'diegesis' to be is not one shared by Genette. As Walsh observes, Genette derives the term from French *diégèse*, which invokes a distinction originating in film theory between the diegetic universe (domain of the signified) and the screen universe (domain of the signifier), not from Plato's distinction between mimesis and diegesis (Walsh, *Rhetoric of Fictionality* 90). This at the same time causes the connection Miller makes with Aristotle to lose some of its power.

the possibility that Miller, in his attempt to challenge the idea of structure, might be compelled – intentionally or not – to overemphasize its inherent spatiality to the extent that he himself overlooks its temporality, an ironic outcome considering that the temporal is just what Miller's deconstructive criticism might be expected to draw attention to.[80]

This spatial emphasis on the idea of 'structure' works in favour of Miller's argument, because it figures 'structure' in terms of a discernable object, a 'whole' that can be determined in order to arrive at the meaning – in other words, a one-to-one mapping the precision of which is taken to be absolute and thus open to challenge in the same manner that the stability of language can be, because of its inherent rhetoricity. It is on such analogous grounds that Miller encourages instead close-reading that aims to bring out the tension already existing within the text itself, a *sui generis* reading that Miller relates to James's 'religion of doing' (*GB* lx). The language of religion is worth calling attention to, because it immediately recalls and simultaneously counterposes the New Critical belief that the literary work, especially the poem, is a sacrosanct object. Christopher Norris, in his survey of deconstruction theory and practice, offers a lucid account of this 'quasi-religious orthodoxy' of New Criticism, observing that for New Critics it is 'a matter of deep doctrinal commitment' that criticism should 'restrict its own operations to the separate realm of rational prose statement' in order to preserve 'the authentic mystery of poetic truth' (Norris 14-15). In particular, his comment that this is 'not merely an issue in aesthetics but a testing-point of faith in relation to human reason' (Norris 14) seems to capture how Miller's scepticism towards such 'poetic truth' encourages him to turn instead to reading as performance, and also why the rearguard of

[80] For example, as apparent in Derrida's concept of *différance* or in de Man's article 'The Rhetoric of Temporality'.

New Criticism such as William K. Wimsatt, feared that 'interpretation would always be tempted to run wild in games of its own inventing' in such a case (Norris 95).[81] It is important to note, however, that even though the New Critical 'quasi-religious' idea of ultimate poetic truth and the objective, scientific stance of structuralism tend towards similar beliefs in an absolute epistemological bottom to the semiotic object of interpretation – which deconstructive criticism rejects – they are still different manifestations of the same premise and should not be conflated into one, especially when the scientificity of structuralism, without the sense of religious conviction, is much more prominent in classical narratology.

Miller seems to be treating all theoretical pursuits in the same way, as relying upon an unyielding zeal to attain the ultimate answer to theoretical questions, and this leads him to downplay other equally important aspects of each pursuit.[82] Norris observes that structuralist narratology never really takes on the same kind of quasi-religious orthodoxy invoked by New-Critical method (Norris 15),[83] and should therefore not be taken as one coherent 'movement,' much less a movement to be treated as the same as another. The aura of scientificity that structuralist narratology exudes, if anything, captures the rigour that comes with the attempt to establish a structure or a system that helps to understand not only narrative as a product, but also the production of meaning in narrative; and as Culler and Barthes have suggested, the boundary of this system is never rigid, and it

[81] Wimsatt's concern would apply more directly to figures such as Geoffrey Hartman, whose attempt to break the boundary between literary work and its criticism through 'virtuoso exercises' is much more pronounced (Norris 24).
[82] Or, as I have previously observed, gradually move away from the theoretical matters at hand, turning the occasion of theorisation into an occasion of deconstructive close-reading instead.
[83] Structuralism is, after all, a spectrum like others, and there are likely hardline structuralists who believe in the merits of having a more rigid structure to understand narrative, in the manner that Miller (and for that matter James) would criticise.

already contains within itself continual reflection and revision of its own terms. The systemic complexity of meaning is, in fact, something to be pursued with rigour by both the structuralist and the deconstructionist (albeit differently); Miller, however, seizes too firmly upon a tacit assumption that the method of structuralism is invariably built on a firm, ultimate ground.

With this in mind, I now turn to Miller's discussion of the image of the embroidered canvas in the preface to *Roderick Hudson*. His main argument is that the image James employs bears on the point he makes about 'the impossibility of making a finite repertoire or neat historical story of the narrative line's branchings' (Miller, *Reading Narrative* 89), harking back to his claim in 'Ariadne's Thread' that narrative line has the compulsion to repeat itself and therefore cannot be understood in terms of 'a single continuous unified structure' (Miller 'Ariadne's Thread' 62). It is worth nothing, however, that Miller seems to move fluidly from talking about 'narrative line' as narrative itself, which can be understood in terms of process, to talking about 'narrative line,' as a structure that is used to make sense of the narrative, without making a clear distinction between the two. This distinction will be important in the following discussion of James's imagery, because it allows us to see that Miller's deconstructive criticism, despite closely engaging with the imagery itself, still depends to an extent on a gloss, especially with regard to the idea around structure.

For ease of reference and analysis, I will quote here the famous passage from the preface Miller uses as the basis for his discussion.[84]

[84] The opening line in particular is frequently quoted, usually out of its context, to support a broad idea that 'relations [of a specific kind] stop nowhere.' To draw as examples from the works of critics related to the field of narrative studies, Phelan (as mentioned in the introduction of this thesis) uses the line in support of his argument that 'relations between the somebodies who tell

> Really, universally, relations stop nowhere, and the exquisite problem of the artist is eternally but to draw, by a geometry of his own, the circle within which they shall happily *appear* to do so. He is in the perpetual predicament that the continuity of things is the whole matter, for him, of comedy and tragedy; that this continuity is never, by the space of an instant or an inch, broken, and that, to do anything at all, he has at once intensely to consult and intensely to ignore it. All of which will perhaps pass but for a supersubtle way of pointing the plain moral that a young embroiderer of the canvas of life soon began to work in terror, fairly, of the vast expanse of that surface, of the boundless number of its distinct perforations for the needle, and of the tendency inherent in his many-coloured flowers and figures to cover and consume as many as possible of the little holes. The development of the flower, of the figure, involved thus an immense counting of holes and a careful selection among them. That would have been, it seemed to him, a brave enough process, were it not the very nature of the holes so to invite, to solicit, to persuade, to practise positively a thousand lures and deceits. (RH 37)

Miller interprets the imagery as representing the novelist's work, his composition being 'a figure' created by the embroiderer's interlacing a line from hole to hole. The work of making a 'figure' out of the 'undifferentiated or unfigured' canvas of life that otherwise contains 'the possibility of an infinite number of slightly different variations' is, for Miller, illustrative of the idea that one cannot capture 'the latent possibilities of relation' in spatial terms (Miller, *Reading Narrative* 93). Building on his prior argument that narrative line has the compulsion to repeat itself, Miller asserts that the spatial nature of the embroidered canvas highlights the 'paradoxical unfolding of the infinity implicit in the finite' – the different iterations of figure on the canvas can only be falsely imaged as separate, while in fact they must be thought of as superimposed or simultaneous (Miller, *Reading Narrative* 93-94). This deconstructive reading of the figure on the canvas,

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and somebodies who listen […] are, if not infinite, then certainly too much to address in one analysis' (Phelan, *Somebody Telling Somebody Else* 257), while Rita Charon (who will be discussed in the next chapter) quotes it to celebrate 'the inexhaustibility of our combinations and the universality of our relations' (Charon, *Narrative Medicine* xiii).

however, ironically relies on the perception of the figure – or each iteration of the possible ones – as a singular, traceable structure of narrative line, which would lend itself to Miller's argument that an internal tension exists in the figure because it is at once 'single' and 'multiple.' Miller is comparing here the seemingly infinite possibilities of narrative and a single, finished iteration of narrative structure, and even though the spatial structure is made from the temporal unfolding of narrative line, Miller chooses to focus his attention upon the end product, rather than the process that makes it, especially so when his argument is framed quite strictly in terms of the text as a semiotic *object* (thus product) of interpretation.

James's own words, however, shed light on how Miller's discussion loses emphasis upon the temporality of narrative line and its structure. Miller's argument builds on his perception that there is a shared logic between the notion that a structure of narrative line cannot be determined due to its inherent compulsion to repeat itself and James's idea of the difficulty the embroiderer has to face from the tendency inherent in his figures 'to cover and consume as many as possible of the little holes' on the canvas. Nonetheless, Miller takes this difficulty as an absolute rule that the embroiderer must obey,[85] most evidently when he claims that 'every possible relation *must* be retraced within the circle, every figure drawn on its surface' (Miller, *Reading Narrative* 92, my emphasis), while James himself presents it as an inherent part, 'the perpetual predicament,' of his compositional system. It is worth noting, also, that this predicament exists for James not

[85] Another rather strained connection Miller makes in relation to James in this discussion is when he associates the infinite possibilities of the figure on the canvas to 'the paradoxical law governing James's fiction whereby the more apparently narrow, restricted, and exclusive the focus, as for example, on the relations of just four persons […] in *The Golden Bowl*, the more the novel is likely to extend itself to greater and greater length and even then to be unfinished in the sense of being disproportionate' (Miller, *Reading Narrative* 94).

only at the moment of working on the 'surface' of the canvas; it has been with James before, when he talks about 'the continuity of things' that he has 'at once intensely to consult and intensely to ignore.' At the start of the preface, James mentions how 'experience has to organise, for convenience and cheer, some system of observation' (RH 35), and even though the 'system' in that instance does not exactly apply to the issue of narrative line (it concerns James's reflection on his old works and his compositional practice, the latter of which 'bristles with questions' to the point that James finds organisation is needed), it points to the possibility of considering 'structure' as a 'system' – to use James's own word – created by choice, rather by necessity, to make sense of narrative by means of 'structuring.' We can argue, then, that in drawing on James, Miller displaced James's emphasis upon the multiplicity of narrative line in the continuous process of making sense, itself important for his composition (the focus here is on 'line,' inherent in narrative logic), discussing it instead in terms of static structures, the finitude of which he can refute (the focus here is instead on 'narrative,' understood as achieved representation).

This distinction between the 'surface' of the canvas the embroiderer works on and the embroiderer's own system of working can be pressed further when we consider James's claims that:

> The prime effect of so sustained a system, so prepared a surface, is to lead on and on; while the fascination of following resides, by the same token, in the presumability somewhere of a convenient, of a visibly-appointed stopping place. Art would be easy indeed if […] such conveniences, such simplifications, had been provided. We have, as the case stands, to invent and establish them, to arrive at them by a difficult, dire process of selection and comparison, of surrender and sacrifice. (RH 37)

In the end, the embroiderer is the one that has to 'invent and establish' some convenient stopping place, making it an act of volition, rather than predetermination. This is supported further by the way James describes the process as involving 'selection and comparison' which, when juxtaposed with the canvas's 'boundless number' of perforations for the needle,' suggests that the relation between the 'system' and the 'surface' is dynamic rather than absolute; it is not merely a matter of infinitely repeating narrative line, understood in terms of repeating represented structures, but a processual negotiation between the 'system' and the 'surface.' James also notes that 'to exhibit these relations, once they have all been recognised, is to "treat" his idea, which involves neglecting none of those that directly minister to interest' (*RH* 36-37). We have to acknowledge the difference between 'recognising' all the relations first before 'treating' them, the former of which – the expansive making of relations that recalls the image of the web of consciousness in 'The Art of Fiction' – does not fall under the same tension of having to be contained in an already mapped out structure, as contested by Miller's deconstructive reading. James himself says that the development of the figure involves 'an immense counting of holes and a careful selection among them,' which not only reiterates the importance of the choice of the embroiderer, but also suggests that it is a related, yet different process from the actual running the line through the holes on the canvas.

In this light, the invention of a visibly-appointed stopping place by the embroiderer is part of his 'system' of working, a point at which he finally arrives after the attempt of making a 'structure.' It is an act of 'surrender and sacrifice,' and even if it is of necessity as Miller claims, it is the necessity of practicality that arises from the confrontation

between the embroiderer's system and the working on the canvas. James's words are suggestive, when he describes the challenge as coming from 'the tendency inherent in his many-coloured flowers and figures to cover and consume as many as possible of the little holes.' While the system – the relations the embroiderer attempts to map out – has an inherent 'tendency' to 'cover and consume,' he can only do so in a single structure, at least at one time, on the canvas. The way James presents 'so prepared a surface' as a figure for 'so sustained a system' perhaps conveys this sense that the sacrifice to be made is one that exchanges the expanse of the possibilities that comes with his system for a structural form.

This is especially important in the context of current discussion within narrative theory that sees narrative as a mode of cognition, the limitations of which are brought to the fore when considered in relation to complex systems (particularly in the works of H. Porter Abbott and Richard Walsh[86]). Abbott argues that narrative 'fails in the representation of a certain kind of complex causality,' yet it is still humans' natural mode of understanding, 'our first response to the representation[87] of events in time' that 'has allowed us to understand causality at a level that is crucial for our survival, allowing us to learn from the past, plan for the future, and generate those stories that give us identity and cultural belonging' (Abbott, 'Narrative and Emergent Behavior' 228-230). James's imagery of the embroidered canvas probes at this idea of the complex 'system' and its negotiated 'surface' represented as a line, and his attention to the system as processual

[86] See, for example, Abbott's 'Unnarratable Knowledge: The Difficulty of Understanding Evolution by Natural Selection' (2003); Walsh's 'Emergent Narrative in Interactive Media' (2011), the edited volume *Narrating Complexity* (2018), and the forthcoming 'Eventuality in Fiction: Contingency, Complexity and Narrative.'

[87] Representation here can be understood also as an act (rather than an action), a point I emphasize in my discussion of Lubbock in Chapter One.

does not downplay the temporality of narrative as Miller does. In this sense, we are encouraged to consider narrative structure in terms of cognitive sense-making which depends on a basic narrative logic, the *process* of understanding structurally *in* line, rather than in terms of a rigid structure *of* line, which is already undermined by the fact that for James his negotiation between 'system' and 'surface' precedes the finished product itself.

The emphasis on the heuristic nature of James's system also needs to be reiterated, for it makes all the stronger the affinity between his idea and the conception of narrative understanding as inherently contextually situated and for a particular purpose. James's reflection on the way 'relations stop nowhere,' that 'the exquisite problem of the artist is eternally but to draw, by a geometry of his own, the circle within which they shall happily appear to do so' may be framed artistically; the process of composition involves negotiating with the 'relations' that 'stop nowhere' in order to arrive at some achieved form (the geometry image figures an orientation towards the artistic achievement), to reach a 'stopping place' at which the proliferation of relations can 'happily appear to [stop].' But this artistic achievement, the attempt to establish a structure that satisfies itself with having 'covered' the many proliferations, is inextricably linked to the exercise of the author's narrative understanding of his subject in a particular context for a particular purpose. Abbott further argues that narrative understanding is also 'a kind of mental lust,' which plays an instrumental role in our cultural perception of what a 'good story' means (Abbott, 'Narrative and Emergent Behavior' 230-232). Both in terms of production and reception, then, the point of fictional composition should not be to establish a structure that can claim (the appearance of) exhaustiveness of relations (for that would be unattainable, partly due to the limitations of the linear logic of narrative); rather, it should

exhibit a contextually situated narrative understanding the artistic merit of which is a representational by-product, found in the achieved form, of such narrative understanding itself.

Miller's criticism of structuralist narratology may hold in that it does address the structuralist penchant for finding an overall structure; nonetheless, it also forgoes the complexity in the idea of system. The idea that a structure is built from a top-down, external or teleological perspective, as he suggests via his discussion of the influence of Aristotle on the Western tradition of reaching the 'end,' is only one way of understanding a system. As James encourages us to think through his processual imagery, the end of the structure in this sense is by no means absolute, but rather a convenient stopping place, heuristically, that leaves room still for further development, refinement, and revision.

The 'Shining Expanse of Snow' in the Preface to *The Golden Bowl*

Miller's scepticism towards the idea of a rigid structure, together with his assumption of the spatial preference behind it, is also recognisable in his discussion of the image of a 'shining expanse of snow,'[88] which James evokes as part of his description of the process of revision.

> To re-read in their order my final things, all of comparatively recent date, has been to become aware of my putting the process through, for the latter end of my series (as well as, throughout, for most of its later constituents) quite in the same terms as the apparent and actual, the contemporary terms; to become aware in other words that the march of my present attention coincides sufficiently with the march of my original expression […] Into his very footprints the responsive, the

[88] There are two instances of Miller's discussion, one in *The Ethics of Reading* (1987) and the other in *On Literature* (2002). His arguments in these two instances however remain largely the same.

> imaginative steps of the docile reader that I consentingly become for him all comfortably sink; his vision, superimposed on my own as an image in cut paper is applied to a sharp shadow on a wall, matches, at every point, without excess or deficiency. This truth throws into relief for me the very different dance that the taking in hand of my earlier productions was to lead me; the quite other kind of consciousness proceeding from that return. Nothing in my whole renewal of attention to these things, to almost any instance of my work previous to some dozen years ago, was more evident than that no such active, appreciative process could take place on the mere palpable lines of expression – thanks to the so frequent lapse of harmony between my present mode of motion and that to which the existing footprints were due. It was, all sensibly, as if the clear matter being still there, even as a shining expanse of snow spread over a plain, my exploring tread, for application to it, had quite unlearned the old pace and found itself naturally falling into another, which might sometimes indeed more or less agree with the original tracks, but might most often, or very nearly, break the surface in other places. What was thus predominantly interesting to note, at all events, was the high spontaneity of these deviations and differences, which became thus things not of choice, but of immediate and perfect necessity: necessity to the end of dealing with the quantities in question at all. (GB xlix)

This 'shining expanse of snow' is James's metaphor for 'the clear matter' that provides the occasion for both creation and revision, the nature of which, however, he never clarifies. Julie Rivkin, for example, argues that James seems to be drawing on a Platonic model, the 'matter' representing 'an ideal form of the literary work that preexists, exceeds, and transcends any textual embodiments' (Rivkin 144). Miller perceives the image in a similar way, with the 'matter' being a 'basic substance' of the tale, 'something independent of the words that record it.' What is notable in his case, however, is that he seizes particularly on the 'clear' part of 'the clear matter,' stressing the 'untrodden' and 'virgin' nature of the snow field and its difference from the tracks of the footsteps, 'the actual words of a given novel or story' (Miller, *On Literature* 56). The question he

ultimately poses is that: if the snow field itself is 'undifferentiated […] a kind of nothing incommensurate with any differentiation, such as words necessarily provide,' 'how could tracks in a featureless expanse of snow adequately represent that snow?' (Miller, *On Literature* 58). It is a question reminiscent of the similar conundrum he draws from his discussion of the embroidered canvas in the preface to *Roderick Hudson*, to the effect that any single iteration of narrative structure cannot possibly represent the infinite possibilities of narrative.

James's idea of 'the clear matter' offers Miller an opportunity to press forward his belief in the performative power of the linguistic transaction involved in the *sui generis* act of reading, because it complements his argument that a world created through the reading of a literary text does not actually 'depend for its existence on the words of the book, even though those words are the only window on that world' (Miller, *On Literature* 14). Miller prioritises here the proliferation of meaning inherent in language, against a conceptualisation of determinate structure – such as that made out of words written on the page – which represents the arrest of such proliferation. The 'clear matter' behind the manifestation of the text, for Miller, signifies the latent force, the 'law of language' to which the text is subject, that encourages the reader – James included, as evident from his repeating, at times changing, footsteps – to act upon the text, 'to betray or deviate from it in the act of reading' (Miller, *Ethics* 122). In fact, Miller seems to be aware that such a deconstructive reading will likely invite criticism, or even dismissal, for its nihilistic tendency to remove 'all grounds of certainty or authority in literary interpretation' (Miller, *Ethics* 8), and thus justifies his cause by saying that it is not an endorsement of 'misreading in the sense of a wanton deviation from the text' but rather a challenge to the temptation,

for the critic or reader, to make the text 'the ground of a universal legislation' even though the text itself 'neither offers nor claims any authority for that move' (Miller, *Ethics* 122). Miller's point seems to be that one should not attempt to derive some form of 'law' out of the text, since the text itself is merely a product of the force that is the enfranchising law of language – a track of footsteps on the otherwise undifferentiated shining expanse of snow – and 'never a final and definitive expression'; a point that can certainly be related back to his belief that each instance of reading is a *sui generis* occasion that is 'good only for one time and place' (Miller, *Ethics* 122).

Miller speaks for the possibilities that a literary text holds as one of his overarching argument in *On Literature*; yet again his perception of a 'text' when discussing James's imagery is strangely limiting, as it relies on the assumption that the text is an already mapped out structure – that is, a perceivable, traceable track of footsteps on the snow field. This results in an underplaying of James's own expression, which is more complicated; Miller's attitude towards revision might be similar to James's, his belief in the 'I must' moment of reading coinciding with James's 'religion of doing,' but it does not quite bring out the same implication for the processual nature of revision. While Miller is not the only one who makes a connection between the footsteps on the snow field and 'the actual words of a given novel or story',[89] the contrast he draws to his idea of the

[89] Philip Horne, for example, makes a similar observation in *Henry James and Revision* that James's metaphors in the preface to *The Golden Bowl* seem to coincide 'with the format of James's procedure of revision, variously to render and meditate on the physical relation on the page of earlier words to those of the New York Edition' (Horne 152). This observation, however, focuses instead on, and by that virtue provides very interesting insight into, the material aspect of the revision culture of the Edition. Incidentally, Barthes also employs the footprint metaphor in his *S/Z* to describe the residual evidence of the escaped fugitive text – the extent to which it is not fully defined and captured by the conceptual analysis. 'The blanks and looseness of the analysis will be like footprints marking the escape of the text, for if the text is subject to some form, this form is not unitary, architectonic, finite' (Barthes, *S/Z* 20). The perspective is quite different from

'matter' certainly helps to reinforce a sense that these words on the page make the text up as an individual semiotic object. This sense is present even before Miller discusses the snow field. When James describes his experience of revising later works, he compares the way his footsteps 'comfortably sink' into his old ones to the way his old 'vision' fits with the new 'as an image in cut paper […] matches, at every point, without excess or deficiency' a shadow on a wall. This, Miller argues, suggests that for James 'the old text is the artifice to be measured for validity by its correspondence to his present living vision (Miller, *Ethics* 112). Miller figures the already written original work as an 'artifice,' while James's current revision is linked to his 'present vision' which, nonetheless, will produce another iteration of 'text,' of words on the page. The act of revision, perceived this way, emphasizes the spatial *differences* between entities – between the original, finished work, and the current, to-be-finished work, both of which are ultimately patterned variations that differ from the undifferentiated 'matter' – rather than the processual and continual *differentiation* that is underlined in James's expression.

True enough, there is a sense of spatiality in James's metaphor that leads Miller to emphasize the spatial nature of the footsteps and the snow field. That, however, does not necessarily give us the whole picture, nor does it necessarily mean James uses the image with the same emphasis as Miller; for example, Miller calls the snow field a 'spatial expanse' (Miller, *Ethics* 110), while James himself does not emphasize its spatiality. Only by looking at what Miller does not mention can we arrive at a more rounded understanding of the potential nuances in James's thought process. Just before James evokes the image of footprints, he describes revising his later works as 'putting the process through […]

James's (being critical/theoretical rather than compositional/authorial), but it is still complementary to his metaphor.

quite in the same terms as the apparent and actual, the contemporary terms.' What is worth noting – and illustrative of the value that exists in the complexity of James's writing – is the way 'terms' can be interpreted in more than one way. In the light of Miller's argument, 'terms' can be taken as the author's choice of words, or the words on the page itself; but 'terms' could also denote the conditions or circumstances of revision, in the sense of a framework for the act, which would highlight his '*putting the process* through.'

A similar difference in emphasis can be noticed when Miller chooses to describe the track on the snow as 'the "march" of a story,' with each footprint 'corresponding to a word, a phrase, or an episode, as the writer traces out a trajectory across the untrodden "matter"' (Miller, *Ethics* 113). Looking at James's actual words – 'the march of my present attention coincides sufficiently with the march of my original expression' – reveals again the possibility of an alternative interpretation: that the march refers to the act of walking, rather than the track made on the snow field. The track of footprints, therefore, can be viewed both in terms of traces and of movement, and if the inherent possibility of this dual interpretation of James's image tells us anything, it is that to view the track externally – as the trace of the narrative – is to take up only one aspect of the complex process of revision, for it does not include the no less important internal perspective of the marcher as he moves on the snow field – that is, it fails to address revision itself as an organic *act*, seeing the revision only in terms of an iteration or product of such act, separate from the revising mind.

The possibility of dual interpretation presents itself again when James expresses how the act of revision, the act of seeing it again,

> caused whatever I looked at on any page to flower before me as into the only terms that honourably expressed it; and the 'revised' element in the present Edition is accordingly these terms. (GB lii)

We can see that ‘terms’ here are implied to be both the ‘terms that honourably expressed it’ and the revised ‘terms’ that appear in the Edition – the former suggestive of a process of working, the latter its resultant product. This duality echoes the interactive, contributive, and processual negotiation to establish a sense of ‘structure’ found in the preface to *Roderick Hudson*. Just as structure need not be viewed only spatially in terms of the product to be manifested but also in terms of structuration, so too revision cannot be fully understood merely as different manifestations of the ‘matter,’ without taking into account the process of differentiation. This is underlined when James notices, while revising his older works, ‘the so frequent lapse of harmony between my present mode of motion and that to which the existing footprints were due.’ It is the difference in ‘mode[s] of motion’ that James emphasizes, the difference which is figured less in terms of the outcome than of a different way of moving, as the ‘exploring tread’ of the author ‘had quite unlearned the old pace and found itself naturally falling into another.’

The perspective of the author as the marcher, from the inside, is therefore indispensable in this process of revision, which makes the ‘terms’ of his revision, by extension, always contextually situated in relation to his revising mind. It is a perspective that Miller however forgoes, as someone who perceives the traces on the snow field only from the outside. Miller’s argument chooses to emphasize the spatial comparison between the footprints and the ‘matter,’ feeding his scepticism about any epistemological absolute ground as the foundation for a literary work; the assumption of which, like Barthes’ Author, serves as a hypostasis that ‘furnishes the text with a final signified’ (Barthes, ‘The

Death of the Author' 1325).[90] Yet if anything, James's exploration of the process of revision resists the perception of a fictional text as a monumental artefact. To see the author's revision only in terms of different versions of the work is to downplay the importance of the continual process of revision, and in turn the continual evolution of authorial creativity, that lies at the heart of James's writing and revising.[91]

This perception of narrative as being necessarily understood within the contextual framework of its production and reception (including, invariably, its producer and receiver, both of which roles James inhabits in his idea of a reviser undertaking to 're-read' his own work) helps to illuminate the development of scholarship in narrative theory, from the structuralist focus upon a universalist conception of product and structure, to the contextualist focus on production and structuration over time. This imperative to contextualise and historicise, to pay particular attention to the changes that occur to the contexts (or, in James's own words, in the 'terms') of narrative production, has also produced, as Walsh observes, a reorientation of the field 'that is in effect a programmatic antithesis to the synchronic method of classic structuralism: that is, diachronic narratology' (Walsh, 'Narrative Theory at the Limit' 266). James's emphasis on the importance of the author as both the architect and the revising force, the continual doer, of the work illuminates the reciprocity between structure and process, between

[90] In another context, Miller recounts, as part of his belief in the many possibilities that literature can offer, how he used to dislike being told, when he was a child, 'that the name on the title page [of a fictional work] was that of the "author" who had made it all up' (Miller, *On literature* 15).
[91] This idea is also in line with the already shifting perspective in Jamesian scholarship concerning the image of James as 'the Master,' explored extensively in the *Henry James's New York Edition: The Construction of Authorship*. David McWhirter argues in its introduction that investigations into James's writings help to show that his idea of authorship 'is less a structure of autonomous, self-same identity than an ever changing network of differences and relations […] less a matter of monological, originating intentions than a process of infinite adaptability and responsibility' (McWhirter 14).

content and context, and between the theoretical and the praxeological that inheres within the positive transition – as opposed to repudiation – from classical structuralist narratology to a more inclusive contextualist narratology, the concern of which, as critics such as Lanser, Warhol, and Prince have shown, is still framed as a productive dialogue with the structuralist roots of narrative theory.

Fiction and Photograph

A further theoretical insight hinted at, though not pursued, by Miller can be identified in 'The "Grafted" Image: James on Illustration,' his short observation on James's discussion, in the Preface to *The Golden Bowl*, of Alvin Langdon Coburn's photographic contribution to the New York Edition (in the form of its frontispieces).[92] Miller's interest is in James's expression of 'the danger posed by the graphic to the verbal,' the risk that 'illustrations will usurp or darken the illuminating power of the text' (Miller, 'Grafted' 139). The relationship between the text of the novel and its accompanying photograph has similarly been discussed within Jamesian scholarship. Julie Grossman, for example, argues that James, in his last novels, 'rejects a realistic representation of details and objects in the world since, as he implicitly acknowledges in the preface, photography could do it better, more realistically, with more mimetic force' (Grossman 311), while Stuart Burrows sees photography as offering 'the flatness of the already seen, the already known,' a flatness that James can turn into 'a compositional resource' (Burrows 262).

[92] The chapter, which is part of *Henry James's New York Edition: The Construction of Authorship*, is only 4 pages in length.

What is noticeable about these arguments, however, is that they all seize upon the distinction between text and photograph in *referential* terms (that is, focusing on their mimetic capability), and treat them equally as mimetic representational objects, while disregarding the important distinction between a photograph, which is inherently a direct record as well as a representation, and a novelistic text, which is expressly fictional in both composition and realisation. Comparably, the tendency of discussion about the medium in narrative theory has been to classify the affordances of each medium within a narrative typology. Despite, or perhaps because of, the transmedial nature of narrative, the relationships between different media are often discussed on the assumption that all media are equally narrative, and that the focus is therefore upon the representational *medium* itself; this sometimes comes at the cost of discussion of the rhetorical *discourse* – that is, the difference between fictional and non-fictional modes of narrative within a medium, or regardless of specific medium affordances.

Miller's insistence upon the competition between the two media in referential terms – that the photographs, while echoing the text, 'must also assert their own power of bringing to light something not in the text but out there in *the real world'* (Miller, 'Grafted' 140, my emphasis) – itself tends to divert attention away from their difference in discourse (or, perhaps more precisely, in their dominant discourse). Nonetheless, some useful insight can still be found in Miller's statement that 'the word [of the novel] evokes' while 'the illustration presents' (Miller, 'Grafted' 138), when we consider it in relation to James's discussion of the curiosity shop frontispiece of *The Golden Bowl.*

> The problem thus was thrilling, for though the small shop was but a shop of the mind, of the author's projected world, in which objects are primarily related to each other, and therefore not 'taken from' a particular establishment anywhere, only an image distilled and

> intensified, as it were, from a drop of the essence of such establishments in general, our need (since the picture was, as I have said, also completely to speak for itself) prescribed a concrete, independent, vivid instance, the instance that should oblige us by the marvel of an accidental rightness. (GB xlviii)

Here, James is referring to his search, with Coburn, for a scene in London suitable for the latter's photograph, but while the referential capability of photographic representation is signalled here, it is not the function that is foregrounded. While James suggests that the picture was 'also' to speak for itself, he thinks of such referentiality, of finding such 'a concrete, independent, vivid instance,' in terms of 'an accidental rightness' against the criterion of his fictional work, rather than as a record of the scene itself as a real world referent. This becomes even more evident considering that James makes it clear the small shop in the novel, to which the photograph must be accountable, is 'but a shop of the mind, of the author's projected world, in which objects are primarily related to each other, and therefore not "taken" from a particular establishment anywhere.'

James is aware of the dominant referential function in photographic representation – that is, its close connection to the real world object – noting that in their search, unlike his novelistic compositions, 'we had, not to "create" but simply to recognise – recognise, that is, with the last fineness' (GB xlviii). However, he also speaks of another criterion of the search: that the scene 'would have to let us truthfully read into it the Prince's and Charlotte's and the Princess's visits' (GB xlviii). James does not emphasize here the non-fictional, referential mode typical of the photographic medium, but its (narrative) significance to his fictional work. The fact that James's objective is nonetheless still to find a scene for photographic representation helps us to cut across the tie between medium and its dominant discourse; that is, James's search suggests the possibility that the

photographic medium, and by extension other media, regardless of its dominant function, can assume the discursive affordances of another medium in particular contexts. In this case, James is not looking for a scene that satisfies any referential criterion, but a scene that provides an occasion for him to read into it narratively, and *fictively*. A photographic representation might naturally cue the perceiver to focus on its non-fictional, referential quality, but it is not necessarily so. James also looks to exercise his fictional (that is, fictive) understanding of the scene in his search, and the affordance it provides in this sense is not referential significance, but associative significance to his fictional work, which is itself not treated in referential terms.

Walsh's argument that the distinguishing quality of fictionality 'is not some mediated kind of falsehood, but independence from directly informative kinds of relevance,' and that fictionality should be understood as a text's mode of 'communication, not a quality of its referent or object of representation' (Walsh, 'Fictionality as Rhetoric' 398-399) helps to shed light on my discussion. Focusing on the quality of fiction as communication brings in an awareness of the contexts and goals of communication; photographs are non-fictional in nature, with a dominant function that is referential and so informative, but that does not disallow considering their significance (or relevance) in non-referential terms – as in James's discussion, where the fictive trajectory of his perception of the scene is directed by, and framed within, his desire to find associations with his fictional work. It is important to note, then, that a photographic image can indeed convey ideas associated with James's novel (which is the main reason he welcomes it into the edition in the first place), but since those ideas are not in themselves inherently *fictive* (or narrative), the photograph can elicit a non-fictional, referential response from the

perceiver (perhaps also a reason for James's approval). In order to attain fictive (or narrative) significance, the photograph has to be understood within a fictional discourse that dissociates it from its dominant referential function.

In the same way James talks about his small shop of the mind, that it is 'the author's projected world, in which objects are primarily related to each other,' we can see that James does not perceive of his fictional works in terms of external referentiality (to the real world), but of internal referentiality, or perhaps better, reciprocity between his fictional composition and the response it elicits from the reader.

> That one should, as an author, reduce one's reader, 'artistically' inclined, to such a state of hallucination by the images one has evoked as doesn't permit him to rest till he has noted or recorded them, set up some semblance of them in his own medium, by his own other art – nothing could better consort than that, I naturally allow, with the desire or the pretension to cast a literary spell. (GB xlvi)

'The images one has evoked' do not gain their force from any explicit reference to the real world, but from the way they do not 'permit him [the reader] to rest till he has noted or recorded them, set up some semblance of them in his own medium.' The focus here is not on the inherent quality of the fictional work, but strikingly on the action of evocation, on the capability of the authorial fictive representation, to elicit further representation in the reader's '*own* medium.'[93] This helps to reinforce the idea that fictional qualities can be reframed to be viewed in terms of contextually-situated communication (which can also be directed to oneself), with a particular goal that does not rely on direct referential significance in the real world.

[93] James might be referring here specifically to illustration, and in his own case to Coburn as such an 'artistically' inclined reader, but a more general and figurative meaning can nonetheless be derived from his comment.

In this light, James's concern that 'his [the author's] garden, however, remains one thing, and the garden he has prompted the cultivation of at other hands becomes quite another' (GB xlvi) is not so much his concern about the competition between different media with the same referential capability as it is about the discursive competition between representational acts across media. The awareness that fiction is a *mode* of understanding or communication, however, allows us to see that as long as the contexts are different (and they are, because his hand and other hands are different, even if the occasion is the same), the fictive significance gained in such contexts will also differ, and indeed the *cultivation* (the focus of which, again, is upon the act rather than upon the end product) of James's garden by his own hand will be 'quite another' from the cultivation of other hands.

My discussion in this chapter has pointed to the growing tendency within narrative theory to view narrative as necessarily achieving its significance in context, and therefore as appropriately conceived in contextual terms, as is evident in the gradual development from classical structuralist narratology to contextualist narratology. At the same time, this development also signals a shift from a conception of narratives as artefactual structures, as representational objects, to a conception of narrative as a structuration, a process, or a mode of understanding. When James talks about the reader setting up a semblance of the novel's imagery 'in his own medium,' it is possible to think of this 'medium' as not necessarily material. I am suggesting, in other words, that this medium may be considered in cognitive terms; as the medium that accommodates the composition and reception – that is, the communication – of (fictional) narrative, all of which ultimately depends upon shared human cognitive capabilities. Indeed, cognitive narratology is another outgrowth

from the contextualist shift in narrative theory, seizing as its main context the human mind itself. In my next chapter, on the interdisciplinarity of modern narrative theory, I will consider how a cognitive approach to narrative theory allows us to transcend (partially, of course) the bounds of disciplines, in particular the primarily literary focus of classical narratology, and in doing so to address both the pervasiveness and the limitations of narrative.

Chapter Four
Henry James and Interdisciplinary Approaches to Narrative

In the previous chapter, I discussed J. Hillis Miller's deconstructive criticism and its attempted resistance to some fundamental beliefs that underlie the structuralist paradigm in the history of narrative theory. Universalist assumptions behind the systematic pursuit of typological mastery over the common structures and elements of narratives have been important driving forces behind the development of the field – most evidently in all the concepts from the classical, structuralist phase of narratology that still retain their theoretical currency even today; but such assumptions, Miller observes, also encourage a rather reductive approach to the text that closes it down interpretatively, rather than opening it up. There are indeed differences of principle between Miller's deconstructive reading, which privileges the interpretation of narrative texts, and the structuralist endeavour to articulate the poetics of narrative – the former focuses on the specific, while the latter focuses on the general. Nonetheless, I have argued through my exploration of the prefaces to *Roderick Hudson* and *The Golden Bowl* that 'structure' (or 'system') can certainly be understood in a less rigid, more accommodating, and even contextual sense, and we have no reason to think of the dynamic between the two sides as a conflict rather than a negotiation between them. Critics such as Roland Barthes and Jonathan Culler have argued for the merit of structure (or 'structuration' for Barthes) in understanding narrative, the boundary of which, however, is never rigid; the continual reflection and revision of structures and structuralist terms, after all, draws its energy from testing the limit of such structures and terms in actual application – by participating in the play of the text.

It is understandable that Miller's deconstructive criticism has not been widely acknowledged within the history of narrative theory; when he engages with theoretical issues pertaining to narrative, he consistently turns such occasions into sites of deconstructive reading instead. That, however, does not prevent his argument against the predominant structuralist tendency from being a significant contribution (albeit in a rather unusual sense); I would argue that, especially in hindsight, Miller's case itself helps to highlight the inherent partiality of narrative theory's inclination towards structure, typology, and abstract idealisation in general. Within the structuralist paradigm, the development of the field translates into such things as typological advancement, and in those terms a figure like Miller, whose theoretical perspective runs counter to the premises of the project, is an anomaly. Miller's contribution is of a more indirect kind; he provides a cautionary voice that points to the potential blindness that comes with prioritising abstract generalisation over particular interpretation. The pursuit of theoretical clarity about narrative structure has remained important to narratological investigation, but it has increasingly been balanced, as it ought to be, by a growing interest in situated aspects of narrative. The contextualist debate discussed in the previous chapter is central to this development, reaffirming the mutually and recursively beneficial negotiation between the general (theorisation about narrative) and the particular (interpretation of narratives, or application of narrative concepts) within narrative theory.

Monika Fludernik's summation of the transition of narrative theory from its classical to postclassical phase provides a useful model that helps to illustrate my point about Miller's contribution. She notes two possible plots for the field's history, the first of which, 'the rise and fall of narratology,' having been refuted by its continued vitality.

The second, more plausible plot, 'the rise and rise of narrative,' charts a development in which 'the adolescence of narratology was followed by a reorientation and diversification of narrative theories, producing a series of subdisciplines that arose in reaction to post-structuralism and the paradigm shift to cultural studies' (Fludernik, 'Histories of Narrative Theory II' 36-37). Just as Miller's choice to describe his work as 'anarratology' (not 'anti-narratology,' noted in the previous chapter) does not express so much a refutation as a move beyond the theoretical premises of narratology, so too structuralist narratology itself has not really 'fallen' but progressively refined itself to accommodate, and make space for, a more rounded set of approaches to narrative.

Gerald Prince, too, argues that in no way is postclassical narratology 'anti-formalist (Prince, 'Classical and/or Postclassical Narratology' 117). However, while Prince acknowledges that formalism is no longer the decontextualised or universalist concept as had previously been (as evident in his later works on postcolonial narratology), a conservatism about narratives as (literary) represented objects of investigation can still be detected in his work, for example in his typological aspiration towards 'ever more accurate descriptions of the formal aspects of specific *texts*' (Prince, 'Classical and/or Postclassical Narratology' 117, my emphasis). Richard Walsh agrees that, given the range and variety of the instances of narrative, it is important to reassert that narrative theory 'is a formalism, or else it is nothing in particular' (Walsh, 'Narrative Theory at the Limit' 269). His idea of formalism nonetheless extends beyond the consideration of narratives as (literary) represented objects. 'No one seriously contends that narratives are either shapeless or abstract,' Walsh observes, affirming the necessarily recursive relationship between the general and the particular. Instead of contrasting narratological typology and

narratological interpretation, he sees narrative as involving 'both something [particular] *of* which we make sense and something [general] *with* which we make sense' (Walsh, 'Narrative Theory at the Limit' 270). What Walsh's observation tells us is that a notion of the form of 'narrative,' as an object of inquiry, remains important to narrative theory, but it has also attained a broader significance in its postclassical phase; the focus here is not upon the formal aspects of (literary) narratives, but on the form, affordances and limitations, of narrative itself, most fundamentally as a mode of cognition. Indeed Herman, in 'Scripts, Sequences, and Stories,' insists that it is by no means his intention 'to dismiss classical narrative poetics,' but rather 'to argue for its continued usefulness within certain limits,' and to develop 'an enriched theory that draws on concepts and methods to which the classical narratologists did not have access' (Herman, 'Scripts, Sequences, and Stories' 1048-1049). Especially in the light of the increasing interdisciplinarity of narrative theory, it has become increasingly obvious that Herman's argument for 'continued usefulness within certain limits' applies not only to narrative concepts in the 'toolkit' sense, but also more generally to (the form of) narrative itself in cognitive contexts.[94]

The horizon of narrative theory has indeed broadened, its influence extending not only through cognitive narratology but even to disciplines such as medicine that do not seem at first to deal directly with narrative materials, at least not in the traditional sense

[94] Walsh shares with Herman the idea that narrative is both an object of interpretation ('making sense of stories') and a (cognitive) means of interpretation ('stories as sense-making') (Herman, 'Introduction' 12-14), but clarifies that he has a different interpretation of the second category: Herman takes it to mean stories 'as tools for thinking' whereas Walsh takes it, more fundamentally, to mean 'stories as sense-making processes.' The emphasis is therefore upon 'the narrative process as a basic, essential human sense-making activity, rather than on the narrative product as a tool of sense-making' (Walsh, *Rhetoric of Fictionality* 105-106).

of (literary) represented objects. Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan argues that this shift 'from a fairly unified discipline to one characterised by a diversity of approaches' has led to a reconsideration of specific 'classical' categories as less 'features' or 'properties' of narrative texts, and more as implied 'reading potentials' that can be employed further for particular purposes (Rimmon-Kenan 147-150). Examples of this redeployment are 'narrative training' in moral philosophy, and narrative medicine; these two are the main focus of this chapter. Miller's cautionary voice makes us more conscious of the potential detriment of a too abstract or too decontextualised focus in narrative theory, but equal caution needs to be exercised at the other pole; newly emerging disciplines should be careful to avoid falling into a converse trap by treating narrative theory merely as 'an analytical toolkit' (or, in Rimmon-Kenan's words, a 'postclassical tribute to the usefulness of narratology') – that is, neglecting the possibility that narrative particulars may speak back to the general theorisation of narrative itself as an object of inquiry. There is a risk, as Fludernik has also noted in her survey, that 'the appropriation of narratological frameworks by nonliterary disciplines often results in the dilution of the narratological basis, in a loss of precision' (Fludernik, 'Histories of Narrative Theory II' 46). My investigation of Martha Nussbaum's moral philosophy and Rita Charon's narrative medicine in this chapter will show that there is certainly a problem with the tendency towards one-way interdisciplinary traffic between narrative theory proper and its contingent disciplines. Work in these disciplines usually seizes upon readily available narratological concepts as tools without engaging with them theoretically, or without reflecting upon broader questions about the form of narrative, thus leaving relatively little room for further discussion that would feed back into the theoretical interest of narrative.

Putting it as Fludernik does, however, would suggest, that narrative theory proper is at the 'centre' (and has a certain priority), with emerging disciplines 'branching away' from it, and I question whether such a conceptualisation accommodates the full extent of the development of narrative theory, or the mutual and reciprocal relationship between narrative theory and other disciplines, especially in recent years. The view of narrative theory's expansion as its 'centrifugal force,' a term used in the title of Jackson G. Barry's article on this trend in narrative theory around the time it started, perhaps needs to be reconsidered. His observation, in 1990, that 'narrative as a concept must seem to the literature professor oddly metamorphosed when it returns from the lips or pens of the social – and sometimes even physical – scientist' (Barry 295) betrays a (persistent) tendency in narrative theory to favour narratives as represented objects, not least literary artefacts. Barry legitimately expects, in the same article, that narrative theorists might 'uneasily sense that some parts of this expansion are ignoring important critical work' and that they will likely ask of the less traditional works the question 'where is the narrative?' (Barry 295-302). I think it is also important, however, to consider this issue from another perspective, in order to gain a fuller picture of narrative theory as a whole; to ask how these newly emerging disciplines help to reshape what we narrative theorists proper understand of narrative. One response to the interdisciplinary spread of narrative studies is to find the associated ideas of narrative unrecognisable, and reject them, but another, and certainly more positive one, is to find them unfamiliar, and take that as a productive stimulus to narrative theory itself. We can take the latter stance, and begin by reframing the question asked by Barry: it is not where the narrative is in 'less traditional works,' but

where narrative is, and what affordances and limitations it has, in relation to other disciplines.

This is where James comes into play, because the post-classical, interdisciplinary figures I intend to investigate in this chapter (Nussbaum and Charon) invoke James to make their respective arguments, and therefore his writings act as intermediary sites from which narrative issues can be discussed (otherwise, they do not engage directly, or in detail, with scholarship in narrative theory). I also argue that James's own thinking as expressed in his critical prefaces, while mainly grounded in the realm of artistic composition, and so concerned with literary narratives, itself goes beyond this context into realms where narrative is considered in relation to human life more broadly – for example, in cognitive terms. His prefaces are usually regarded as offering theoretical insight into the art of writing, yet they speak volumes about his experience not only as an artist but also as a human being. Miller, in his argument against prescriptive reading, invokes the last paragraph of the preface to *The Golden Bowl*, in which James proclaims that to 'put' things is 'very exactly and responsibly and interminably' to 'do' them; for Miller, this suggests that good reading inspires further practical acts (for example, in the form of the written criticism he and other critics produce), so connecting with 'the whole chain of relation and responsibility' (*GB* lx-lxi); but I see in these words of James a more fundamental implication, of narrative as 'doing,' as part of 'living.' It is in this spirit that I begin my exploration in this chapter.

Martha Nussbaum: Narrative and Moral Philosophy

I start with Martha Nussbaum, whose attempt to bring together narrative and moral philosophy into a cooperative relationship is an obvious case study for my investigation of interdisciplinary approaches to narrative, not least because James has been an important driving force in her project. This affinity with James and his writings can be felt throughout her works, but it is reaffirmed most distinctively in 'A Defense of Ethical Criticism' (1998), where she states that the main argument of her project draws directly from Jamesian ideas: that there is an intimate connection between form and content in literary narrative, which allows it to express some types of content completely, in a way that makes us fully responsive to the complexity of our experience 'as social creatures' (Nussbaum, 'A Defense' 347). For Nussbaum, literary narrative, especially the kind exemplified by the works of writers such as James – whom she regards as 'that apostle of a fine-tuned awareness of particulars' (Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge* 196) – is an ally to moral philosophy because it possesses some qualities lacking in the 'non-narrative' style, 'a style remarkably flat,' frequently found in conventional philosophical prose (Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge* 3). In this regard, Nussbaum discourages her fellow moral philosophers – or anyone, for that matter – from treating literary narrative as yet another source from which moral propositional claims – or general ethical rules – can be 'mined,' and encourages instead a close attention to the virtue that stems from the inseparability of content and form in literary narrative (Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge* 192).

Nussbaum leads by example, and her belief is reflected in her methodology. She reads closely a group of novels by selected authors, many of them James's, in an attempt to analyse, with particular attention to issues pertaining to moral philosophy, 'that which

is expressed and claimed by the shape of the sentences themselves, by images and cadences and pauses themselves' (Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge* 192). While most of her close readings are persuasive, it is notable that the interdisciplinary traffic between narrative theory and moral philosophy is one-directional, partly because Nussbaum has not engaged directly with scholarship in narrative theory to the same extent that she has with James, even though her project implies an intersection – or rather a complementarity – between the two disciplines. It is understandable that theoretical questions about narrative might not be her main interest, for Nussbaum is after all a moral philosopher, but it is also unfortunate to see questions left largely unattended that could have been illuminated by her discussions, themselves already potent with theoretical premises for thinking about narrative.[95] This kind of missed opportunity is an inherent risk of interdisciplinary research, which still has its priority, understandably, within the two-way dialogue; but in Nussbaum's case it can be attributed in part to her own methodology, which treats James's critical prefaces – otherwise prime sites for theoretical discussion – as 'remarkably perceptive and helpful guides'; that is, mainly as subsidiary to the fictional works they preface. Even when she is not drawing on them to illustrate her analysis of particular novels, she uses them rather conveniently in a way that does not really attend

[95] In one instance, Nussbaum explicitly cites 'narrativity' as one of the features of literary narrative that one should pay close attention to, as a case against the mere proposition-mining typical in moral philosophy (Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge* 192), but there is no further explication as to what she really means by the term, despite it being theoretically loaded (apart from the general sense of it being 'the quality of narrative' – which would beg the same question). As her argument is not grounded in theoretical discussion about narrative, it is likely that her usages relies on an unexamined sense of the term.

to their general import for literary narrative *and* for narrative in a broader sense, and as such forgoes much of their theoretical richness and complexity.[96]

While the specific way Nussbaum invokes James, as the 'apostle of a fine-tuned awareness of particulars,' gives strength to her argument about moral philosophy, it simultaneously obscures the potential contribution her topic could make to narrative theory. There is a sense of irony, when we consider that Nussbaum's prioritisation of James's fictional works over the critical prefaces leads her to commit the very sin she speaks against, in 'mining' claims from the latter. Furthermore, her concentration on the 'fine-tuned' quality of the novels encourages her to pursue them in the manner that, in practice, is not different from the attentive close reading that literary scholars have always been trained to do. Her arguments, therefore, seem to bear ultimately only upon the specific chosen works she has analysed, and while this is partly legitimated by her attempt to challenge *a priori* rules in moral philosophy, implications of the same magnitude cannot be felt with respect to core assumptions about narrative, because her close attention to particulars in specific works is not matched by a comparable scrutiny of the qualities inherent in their narrative form. Nussbaum's project, then, seems to draw more on the intersection between moral philosophy and *literary* narrative (and thus the close reading familiar to literary studies as a discipline), than on moral philosophy and *narrative* (theory). This is despite the fact that a self-conscious exploration of narrative form is one of the intrinsic features of its literary use. While Nussbaum avows the restricted scope of

[96] Apart from largely forgoing the original context of the prefaces, which will be discussed in more detail later, Nussbaum also tends to cross-reference them, giving the impression that all of them come from a unified work – from R.P. Blackmur's *The Art of the Novel*. As I have discussed in the introduction, this phenomenon is not peculiar to her.

her inquiry,[97] the neglect of narrative issues inevitably recalls to mind the question asked by Barry, 'where is the narrative'?

My point can be illustrated by examining Nussbaum's use of James's preface to *The Golden Bowl* in support of her main argument about the merit of literary narrative for moral philosophy, particularly because it is also an instance where her analysis is noticeably removed from the original context of James's thought. The specific part from the preface is as follows:

> What it would be really interesting, and I dare say admirably difficult, to go into would be the very history of this effect of experience; the history, in other words, of the growth of the immense array of terms, perceptional and expressional, that, after the fashion I have indicated, in sentence, passage and page, simply looked over the heads of the standing terms - or perhaps rather, like alert winged creatures, perched on those diminished summits and aspired to a clearer air. (GB lii-liii)

Nussbaum associates 'the standing terms' with the 'ordinary discourse,' the 'flat' style traditionally used in philosophical writing, contrasting it with the 'alert winged creatures,' or the 'literary' style found in the fictional works of novelists such as James. Drawing on this distinction, she concludes that 'the terms of the novelist can help us to discover ourselves precisely because they are not shopworn terms of ordinary discourse' – because the 'alert winged creatures,' 'perceptional and expressional,' complement where the blunt, habitual, and inert 'standing terms' of ordinary speech or abstract theoretical discourse are blind (Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge* 4;'A Defense' 344). Nussbaum, however, does not pay as much attention to the first part of the passage – 'the very history

[97] She makes it clear in 'A Defense of Ethical Criticism' that she chooses to eschew making any general claim about the merits of literature. If anything, though, the term 'literature' there (which she seems to be using interchangeably with 'narrative') is also in itself telling (Nussbaum, 'A Defense' 346).

of this effect of experience; the history, in other words, of the growth of the immense array of terms' – which would help to situate the claim within the larger context of the specific process of revision, James's concern at this particular point in the preface, and one of the themes of the preface to *The Golden Bowl*.[98] By looking at the passage again within the context of James's thinking, we are encouraged to interpret these 'terms' differently – in relation to revision – and see that 'the standing terms' likely refer to the expressions James used in the original versions of his works, while the 'alert winged creatures' arise out of his later encounter with, and subsequent revision of, those works.[99]

Before I discuss further the implications that come with the temporal aspect of James's thought about revision, I would like to elaborate on how this instance helps to reveal the irony in Nussbaum's methodology. Her distinction between 'the standing terms' and the more 'perceptional and expressional' terms is framed within her invocation of James as the attentive 'apostle' who produces fictional work of finer details, capable of contributing to a 'public victory over obtuseness and emotional deadness' (Nussbaum, 'A Defense' 344). Especially in the light of the general focus her project gives to the *literary* merit of the works discussed, the main question here seems to come down to the different styles of different authors, and she has elsewhere suggested it is the 'style' of each literary work that makes its claim, citing James (and also Proust) as exemplary of the writers who write 'in a way that focuses attention on the small movements of the inner

[98] Nussbaum extrapolates even further from the 'alert winged creatures,' for example, into the realm of the canonical medieval conception of angels (*Love's Knowledge* 5). While this makes sense in the context of her own argument, it is less warranted within the context of the preface itself, and therefore less convincing as a general interpretation of the metaphor.

[99] This is in line with Philip Horne's observation, as also pointed out in the previous chapter, that the metaphor of the 'alert winged creatures' can be traced back to the actual look of the revised pages, in which revised texts written by James were suspended balloonlike in the margins (Horne 152).

world' (Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge* 3, 46). The close connection between content and form she advocates, then, can easily be mistaken as a matter pertaining to the particular way each individual author writes, and her close attention to the 'cadences' of James becomes a double-edged sword, as it diverts our attention from theoretical discussions that could have arisen in relation to the significance of (literary) narrative – as a form, or even more broadly as a concept – and what this could have provided for moral philosophy, preferring instead a consideration of James's virtuosity as the master who provides us with more and better examples.[100]

When looking back through the history of narrative theory, one realises the way Nussbaum considers and treats narrative itself points to an already existing tendency in the discipline to favour literary narrative as a semiotic object of investigation. This proclivity is highlighted especially in the postclassical era of narrative theory when tangential disciplines such as Nussbaum's moral philosophy borrow narrative concepts (or more accurately *narratological* concepts) as 'ready-made' tools to facilitate the pursuit of their own goals, so assuming the pre-existing methodological tradition that made such tools available for use in the first place. But Nussbaum's argument, specifically her interpretation of James in this instance, also helps to reveal a concomitant, but no less important, recent bias towards considering narrative in terms of *what is represented*

[100] Nussbaum's justification discussed previously, that she never had any intention to make a general claim about the merit of literature and that she intentionally limited the scope of her study to 'a narrow group of pre-selected works' from the start (Nussbaum, 'A Defense' 345), may be legitimate, but it still gives the impression that those selected works are written in a 'style' superior to (or at least more conducive to her cause than) others. In fact, Nussbaum herself acknowledges that her reliance on the Jamesian style has drawn considerable criticism from within her own field; she notes that her opponents would respond that it surely seems oddly arrogant to suggest that 'the entire nation is dense and dull and that only James and his characters are finely sensible enough to show us the way' (Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge* 164).

(within a narrative, or of narration itself as a represented act), rather than in terms of *how it represents* (for example, as a mode, process, or logic), although representation is always implicated in considerations of narrative form. Such a shift has certainly taken place, influenced, for example, by increasing interest in the relationship between narrative and cognition. What a return to James's prefaces allows us to do, then, is to follow through his anticipation of cognitive narratology's interest in the mental processes involved in narrative meaning and use it to cast a reflective light on such developments. Nussbaum is far from being the only person who hails James as the great author of the mind, and his fictional works have indeed offered both inspiration and examples for typological research that has enriched our understanding of representation of fictional minds (notably exemplified by the work of Dorrit Cohn). That, however, comes at the price of understanding the insights in his critical prefaces in this regard, when they could tell much about the place of cognition in narrative with respect to its construction, and even outside of the literary context.

I will now pick up the discussion I set aside earlier about the implications that come with the temporal aspect of James's thought about revision. Nussbaum's distinction between 'the standing terms' and the 'perceptional and expressional' terms is static in nature, as it relies on the differentiation between the inherent quality in each set of terms – obtuseness in the former, perceptiveness in the latter. James's expression, however, is highly processual, as the revised terms

> simply looked over the heads of the standing terms - or perhaps rather, like alert winged creatures, perched on those diminished summits and aspired to a clearer air. (GB liii)

The focus here is not so much on the difference *between* the old and the new terms as it is on the development *from* one to the other. The metaphor of 'alert winged creatures' is important in this sense. As living, even sentient, 'creatures,' the value of these revised terms, James seems to be suggesting, depends upon the relation they continue to hold to the previous terms, on which they still 'perched' even as they 'aspired to a clearer air.' The phrase 'diminished summits' tells us that they were indeed summits, but are now perspectivally diminished by the further consideration upon them of the process of revision. Revision as a process for James, therefore, involves looking back to what has already been conceived, not in an attempt to replace, but to renew, to build upon, towards 'a clearer air.' This can also be related to James's earlier claim, when he says the act of revision

> caused whatever I looked at on any page to flower before me as into the only terms that honourably expressed it; and the 'revised' element in the present Edition is accordingly these terms, these rigid conditions of re-perusal; so many close notes, as who should say, on the particular vision of the matter itself that experience had at last made the only possible one. (GB lii)

Nussbaum connects this passage to a common metaphor used by James, comparing the development of his works to plant growth, and his own creative process to the soil that nurtures it.[101] While Nussbaum mentions that the metaphor also implicates the author's sense of life in the production of fictional works – and this will become important in my own discussion later – the core message of her interpretation seems to remain the same, that the attentive selection of appropriate terms and sentences by writers such as James allows a particular story to be put in a specific way, in a way that is not replaceable by

[101] The plant metaphor, specifically the one found in the preface to *The Portrait of a Lady*, is discussed more extensively in Chapter Two.

abstract philosophical writing, for example, but in 'the only terms that honourably expressed it' (Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge* 3).

This interpretation that emphasizes the difference in the 'terms' mainly on representational criteria (depending on how well they express the represented) makes sense in the context of revision, but it also obscures potential issues about narrative behind the question of style. James's own statement, at first glance, seems to support Nussbaum's argument on the betterment of 'terms,' as when he claims:

> The term that superlatively, that finally 'renders,' is a flower that blooms by a beautiful law of its own (the fiftieth part of a second often so sufficing it) in the very heart of the gathered sheaf; it is there already, at any moment, almost before one can either miss or suspect it - so that in short we shall never guess, I think, the working secret of the revisionist for whom its colour and scent stir the air but as immediately to be assimilated. (GB lv)

Reading this in relation to Nussbaum's argument, we might be led to believe at first that revision concerns looking back at the work again so as to find the 'term' that finally 'renders,' the new expression that expresses the story most appropriately, as when the 'alert winged creatures' look beyond 'the standing terms.' This line of thinking, which Nussbaum's argument encourages, has the same limitation in taking the narrative mode of representation for granted, on the assumption that 'the matter itself' has a logic of its own, conducive only to certain representations. It is therefore left in the hand of the author, upon revising his old works, to re-evaluate the existing logic and discern the best way of expressing it anew, to find the 'flower that blooms by a beautiful law of its own […] in the very heart of the gathered sheaf,' in the work that has been previously written.

Nonetheless, as important to James as 'a flower that blooms by a beautiful law of its own' is 'the working secret of the revisionist.' The flower holds its own values in its

'colour and scent,' yet those alone do not suffice when it comes to composition, for they still need to 'stir the air' so as to be 'assimilated' by the revisionist. As I have argued in previous chapters, to James, authorial discernment is instrumental in his art, and here we see it not only reasserted but also elaborated; such discernment is not merely of the logical kind that relies upon finding and re-evaluating retrospectively what is already there in the materials or the story, but of a more creative, more experiential, even more sensual kind, that is grounded in the operating consciousness of the author himself, as he readily and 'immediately' assimilates the flower when its 'colour and scent stir the air.' James's emphasis here is precisely upon the impossibility of separating what is there to discern from the act of discernment, and also upon the sense that there is no final, definitive representation, suggested through the scare quotes James puts around 'renders' – and, similarly, in his previous ironic disavowal: 'so many close notes, *as who should say*, on the particular vision of the matter itself that experience had at last made the only possible one' (GB lii, my emphasis). The difference between the 'terms' found in a narrative then has its roots in the recursive, inseparable relationship between, on the one hand, different (or, in the context of revision, changing) perceptions of what is there in that narrative – that is, the difference in each instantiation of narrative form – and on the other, the experience of the perceiving figure himself, which retains its close connection to the narrative (as an object of perception) through narrative understanding. It is important, in this regard, to look beyond the immediate idea that (literary) narrative is distinctive from other kinds of 'writing' (mainly philosophical prose, in Nussbaum's case) due to the different 'terms' it offers, and acknowledge the possibility that it might be precisely because narrative encourages a specific kind of intersection with our experience, with

ourselves as perceiving figures, that it has its distinctive properties, along with the merits Nussbaum, and other narrative theorists, consider it to have.

This observation fits my theme of missed opportunities, because the germ for further theoretical discussion is already in Nussbaum's argument, even though it is not really brought out because of her extensive exemplification of the merit of close reading. This demonstration is offered in support of her specific claim that what we learn in literary narrative 'could not be replaced by a simple paraphrase' (Nussbaum, 'A Defense' 345), and directs most attention to narrative in its represented form, treating it as an autotelic artefact in the manner which has become orthodox with the rise of New Criticism. In fact, her argument against the paraphrasing of literary works (a part of her objection to 'proposition-mining') does hint at the importance of experience in narrative, but it does not go far, and ends on a note that could still be easily mistaken as a matter of style:

> A paraphrase […] does not ever succeed in displacing the original prose; for it is, not being a high work of literary art, devoid of richness of feeling, a rightness of tone and rhythm, that characterise the original […] a good action is not flat and toneless and lifeless like my paraphrase – whose use of 'standing terms' of moral discourse […] makes it too blunt for the highest value. (Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge* 154-155)

The loss of specificity in paraphrasing is an important point, and certainly does not reduce to a difference in 'terms' or style, as Nussbaum's argument suggests. Her focus results in a self-misdirection, even though her further discussion does move along a similar trajectory to James's thinking. She argues that 'the standing terms' are a recipe for obtuseness because they equate to 'general principles and rules' of moral philosophy, which will never sufficiently allow you to act rightly on specific occasions (Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge* 156); that

> there are elements in [character's] good action that cannot even in principle be captured in antecedent 'standing' formulations, however rich and precise - either because they are surprising and new, or because they are irreducibly particular. The fine Jamesian perceiver employs general terms and conceptions in an open-ended evolving way, prepared to see and respond to any new feature that the scene brings forward. (Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge* 157)

It is evident that Nussbaum's argument still leans toward representation *in* narrative (the representation of fictional minds, in particular), but she does also bring out another implication of 'standing' here that echoes the spirit of the preface to *The Golden Bowl*. Nussbaum's elaboration on the meaning of 'standing' formulations helps us to see more clearly that it is not exactly because the terms in moral philosophy are 'flat and toneless and lifeless' that they do not hold the same value as the terms found in literary narrative; it is because those 'standing terms' are posited as antecedents that do not encourage change or development. The 'standing terms' in James's thinking are antecedent too, but they are also explicitly the 'standing' bases integral for further revision, the very 'diminished summits' on which the alert winged creatures perch. The difference, then, is between the rigid conceptual vocabulary of moral philosophy in Nussbaum's case, and the particular formulations of his own first editions, yet to be final (if they could ever be), in James's. Nussbaum's observation that 'the fine Jamesian perceiver employs general terms and conceptions in an open-ended evolving way' corresponds to this revisionary sentiment in James's preface,[102] but only when we return to the context of the preface itself do we appreciate that it has narrative implications, within and beyond the realm of narrative in its represented, literary form.

[102] It might be worth noting again that even here Nussbaum continues to speak in relation to representation within a literary narrative, 'the fine Jamesian perceiver' specifically referring to the usually perceptive characters upon whom James often centres the focalisation of his novels.

James's thinking permeates the boundary between what is represented and the process of representation, encouraging us to rethink the horizon of what narrative entails. In the light of the narrative 'specificity' that Nussbaum raises, for example, we are encouraged not to stop merely at the question whether literary narrative manages to provide more specific – and thus better – examples, but also to consider it within the broader scope of narrative as a process deeply connected with experience. It would be possible, however, when thinking about specificity and experience in literary narrative, even outside the formal or structural scope of representation, to attribute it to the specificity of reception stemming from differences between each particular perceiving figure. Nussbaum's take on James's metaphor of plant growth as incorporating 'the author's sense of life' recognises (an encounter with) narrative as specific – and contextualised – in relation to the experience of said author; but the question seems to be settled yet again in terms of 'the Master's' fine-tuned experience as a writer which, for her project, not only provides examples but is also itself exemplary for each individual, who should strive to be a more perceptive reader and, in turn, a more perceptive citizen of society. For the convenience of the discussion I quote here again the relevant passage from the preface to *The Golden Bowl*:

> The act of revision, the act of seeing it again, caused whatever I looked at on any page to flower before me as into the only terms that honourably expressed it; and the 'revised' element in the present Edition is accordingly these terms, these rigid conditions of re-perusal; so many close notes, as who should say, on the particular vision of the matter itself that experience had at last made the only possible one. (GB lii)

What is evident here is not simply that James, as Nussbaum argues, manages to find 'the only terms that honourably expressed […] the matter itself.' Looking at it that way focuses

upon the static, repertoire-like quality of experience, and on the changes that the experience brings to (represented) narrative, while at the same time taking for granted the changes that happen to experience as it interacts with narrative, perhaps even *in the process* of narrative itself.

To James, both are equally important, and they are accounted for in the dual language he uses to describe revision. The act of revision has made changes to his old works, giving rise to 'the revised element in the present Edition,' but it is also closely connected to the specific experience he has upon re-reading these old works, his 'act of seeing it again.' The specificity of the revised 'terms' therefore comes not only from the interaction between James's experience – the repertoire kind, or the author's sense of life in Nussbaum's formulation – and the works, but also from the refined faculty of understanding that goes along with such a repertoire of experience, and that causes whatever he encounters in his works, in any particular moment of his re-reading, to 'flower' before him in the only terms that properly represent it. The word 'experience' has a duality, then, that entails both James's *accumulated* experience and his *gradually growing* sense-making ability, and there exists in the passage an intriguing dynamics between the specificity of experience that is grounded in each instance of experience (the former sense), and the retrospective looking back (the latter sense). This is also hinted at earlier, when James emphasizes that for him, 'to revise is to *see*, or to *look over* again – which means in the case of a written thing neither more nor less than to re-read it' (GB lii, my emphasis).[103]

[103] There is a hint here in James's framing of his discussion within 'the case of a written thing' that he might have, either consciously or not, already considered the possibility that the implications of his thought go far beyond the realm of his novels – that is, beyond the realm of matters represented on the pages waiting to be read.

The interest also lies in 'these rigid conditions of re-perusal' that James speak of, for he does not merely attribute the revised element to it, thus suggesting that what is found in the revised work is the product of 'rigid conditions of re-perusal,' or his rigorous standard of revision alone; he equates the revised terms themselves to the rigid conditions, drawing our attention also to the experience happening, and accordingly growing, in the process of revision itself – which recursively contributes to the revised terms we see on the page. The duality persists in the last clause of the passage, where 'that experience had at last made the only possible one' is ambiguous. It is possible to understand 'experience' as making possible 'so many close notes […] on the particular vision of the matter itself,' which is to say James's own (growing, sense-making) experience has enabled him – has tuned him – to come up with all the notes that constitute his revision. It is equally possible, however, to read 'experience' here as a specific experience, in the form of fictional composition, his process of making out the only possible 'particular vision of the matter itself' on the particular occasion of re-reading his old works.

James's thought about the process of revision (and 're-reading') opens up new possibilities in thinking about specificity in the context of the relationship between experience and narrative, particularly the way reading narrative involves individuals drawing on both the accumulated, specific past instances of their own experience, and their general, continually growing sense-making faculty afforded and refined by their narrative grasp of such experience. We can return to the metaphor of the 'alert winged creatures' perching on the diminished 'summits' and recognise that while the 'summits' are 'diminished' due to the difference between the original and the current contexts of James's writing – and thus also the difference between his 'then' and 'now' experience

that gives rise to the new terms – these new terms are also at the same time the very product of an experience that continues to change, as it builds on the 'summits' that is the old work.[104] James's metaphor helps to frame the evolving specificity of his narrative, not as the discovery of more expressive terms in the light of finer experience, but as a recursion between experience as *specific* encounter and experience as *general* cognitive grasp for which literary narrative (both in its production and reception) provides occasion. James's thinking connects narrative with cognition and allows us to see that the author's sense of life involved in his composition, or his revision, is itself already suggestive of the complex and recursive cognitive process that happens when one engages with (literary) narrative; the possibilities suggested in James's reflective writing are predictive of the cognitive turn within the field of narrative theory.

Reframing Nussbaum's argument within the context of the prefaces is also beneficial to her aim to advocate for the fruitful relationship between moral philosophy and narrative, as it helps to extend the scope of her original claim beyond its focus upon narrative representations, and only those by a few authors of her choice. Another example that helps further this cause is her discussion of *The Princess Casamassima* and its preface. Her main argument there is that we cannot really answer the main ethical question of 'how one should live' in a 'pure' or 'detached' manner and should instead engage in what she terms 'perceptive equilibrium,' an equilibrium that is taken as a moral standard, but always ready to reconstitute itself in response to the new, examining life at each stage

[104] A similar idea is found in the preface to *The Portrait of a Lady,* when James talks about the 'fine possibilities of recovering, from some good standpoint on the ground gained, the intimate history of the business – of retracing and reconstructing its steps and stages' (PL 4). 'The ground gained' that offers James 'some good standpoint' to 'retrace' the 'intimate history of the business' is inescapably related to, but not entirely dependent on, the old version of the work.

then asking whether the standard is capable of doing full justice to everything that our sense of life wants to include (Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge* 173). At the heart of this argument, we find the same implicit question concerning the nature of narrative – not simply as a written medium, but as a form – of how it differentiates itself from philosophical prose in encouraging a continual and reflective negotiation between established, retrospectively created antecedents, and judgements grounded in, and as such more suitably adapted to, contextualised experience. This question is however veiled behind Nussbaum's close analysis of the masterful ways in which James presents the main character Hyacinth's life as full of unpredictability that renders insufficient pre-established general rules about living.

Nussbaum invokes a part of the preface to *The Princess Casamassima*, quoted as follows, to make a similar argument in the context of her close reading of *The Golden Bowl.*

> It seems probable that if we were never bewildered there would never be a story to tell about us; we should partake of the superior nature of the all-knowing immortals whose annals are dreadfully dull so long as flurried humans are not, for the positive relief of bored Olympians, mixed up with them. (PC 34)

She derives from the passage the idea that 'human deliberation is constantly an adventure of the personality, undertaken against terrific odds and among frightening mysteries,' the premise that she believes gives *The Golden Bowl* much of its 'beauty and richness' (Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge* 142). In fact, her claim that the novel 'calls upon and also develops our ability to confront mystery with the cognitive engagement of thought and feeling' (Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge* 143) signals an already existing potential for more theoretical discussion on narrative, but it never goes further than her close reading of the

convoluted relationships between Maggie and those around her. Nussbaum's focus, in relation to the sense of being 'bewildered' suggested in James's preface, is therefore upon the characters' bewilderment with their situations in *The Golden Bowl* (and in James's other novels, most notably Hyacinth in *The Princess Casamassima*) and how this is exemplary of the situations we too will invariably face in our own lives. The argument is reasonable as far as it goes, but it is also ultimately hinged upon the *comparison* of literary narrative (especially, in this case, narrative representation) to readers' – to our – lives, rather than being an argument that investigates the *interaction* between the two that occurs as we read, though this is something Nussbaum also hints at.

The centrality of bewilderment to how narrative works has previously been explored by Meir Sternberg, who has also cited this same passage from James's preface in his 1987 *Poetics of Biblical Narrative* to argue for the 'vital link between plot and perspective' as 'the complicating and propulsive forces' of narrative. His observation that an actional sequence by itself cannot go far 'without some impetus from bewilderment on the part of the agents' (Sternberg 172) draws our attention to the importance in narrative of human emotive and cognitive faculties, with bewilderment being one of its constitutive qualities. Yet when looking back at the context surrounding the passage, we find that James does not so much stress the bewilderment found *in* the novel as he does its bewilderment *of* the reader. This is made particularly evident in the sentences immediately following the passage in question, which are however left out by both Nussbaum and Sternberg in their respective discussions:

> Therefore it is that the wary reader for the most part warns the novelist against making his characters too interpretative of the muddle of fate, or in other words too divinely, too priggishly clever. 'Give us plenty of bewilderment,' this monitor seems to say, 'so long as there is plenty of slashing out in the

> bewilderment too. But don't we beseech you, give us too much intelligence; for intelligence – well, *endangers*; endangers not perhaps the slasher himself, but the very slashing, the subject matter of any self-respecting story. It opens up too many considerations, possibilities, issues; it may lead the slasher into dreary realms where slashing somehow fails and falls to the ground.' (PC 34-35)

James is here elaborating on what he deems to be 'the danger of filling too full' his vessels of consciousness. On the one hand, he acknowledges the importance for these characters to remain 'natural' enough – by not knowing more than they should – so as to share 'the needful communities with our own precious liability to fall into traps and be bewildered' (PC 34), which is in line with Nussbaum's perception of them as exemplary of the attentiveness required of us when dealing with the complicatedness of life. On the other hand, James also emphasizes that what is really at stake here is not so much the sense-making efforts of the characters as 'the slashing out in the bewilderment' that such efforts bring; a compositional difficulty to him, indeed, as he imagines his readers wanting 'plenty of bewilderment' but at the same time demanding 'plenty of slashing out in the bewilderment too.' To James, what is instrumental in connecting his narrative with his readers and making it a 'self-respecting story' is therefore the unravelling of its complicatedness, the balance of which is of utmost importance; too much intelligence presented to the reader, and this process – and the way the reader processes his narrative – will be 'endangered.'

From the perspective of an artist James might be thinking in terms of compositional balance, but this concern of his also offers an invaluable theoretical insight into the issue that lies at the heart of Nussbaum's inquiry: what distinguishes (literary) narrative from philosophical prose. As Nussbaum argues, the former is a rich source of

complexities and bewilderment, qualities the latter systematically minimises (at least as a methodological aspiration) in order to focus upon presenting clear and direct propositions. What James adds, however, is an ability to see the difference not in terms of an attributive quality, but in terms of a process, and it is precisely because narrative seizes upon the dynamic tension already existing in the reader's expectation – of wanting to be bewildered on the one hand and to be freed from such bewilderment on the other – that it works as narrative. James's observation that too much intelligence 'opens up too many considerations, possibilities, issues' and may cause the slashing to 'fail and fall to the ground' is intriguing, as it implies that narrative loses its force, too, when the understanding supplied by his characters, as the narrative unfolds, is too elaborate. His point here, in artistic terms, may be essentially that it is the tension of uncertainties, ambiguities, and mysteries that gives (literary) narrative its forward momentum; at the same time, this tension (and the author's attempt to strike a balance) also touches upon a fundamental negotiation that happens when readers attempt to make sense of the narrative and, as such, exercise *narrative* understanding: the attempt to reconcile all the 'considerations' and 'possibilities' in narrative form.

The function, and in turn the merit, of literary narrative lies in how it offers occasions for, and in turn refinement of, this cognitive negotiation; it stages the encounter between complex novelistic narrative (whose merits Nussbaum foregrounds) and the basic idea of narrative as a form of cognition. The merit lies in the process of making sense *of* the narrative, and not *in* the content of narrative itself, which recalls Walsh's observation I invoked earlier, that narrative is 'both something *of* which we make sense and something *with* which we make sense' (Walsh, 'Narrative Theory at the Limit' 270).

The qualities that set narrative apart from philosophical prose, then, are both *general* (as it cues the cognitive capability *with* which we make sense) and *particular* (the complexity to which Nussbaum draws attention to in the novels of writers such as James, *of* which we make sense). The philosophical propositions extrapolated from literary narrative, or any paraphrase, minimise *both* of the general and the specific qualities, but at the same time paraphrase shows that (general) narrative understanding, while pervasive and fundamental, is not always exercised to the same extent in every context; and indeed there are recalcitrant cases of complexity that foreground the limitations of this narrative mode of cognitive understanding.[105] While Nussbaum's comparison might not have engaged directly with the theoretical issues, her interdisciplinary dialogue is helpful in setting the scene upon which narrative and moral philosophy can be taken as foils of each other, by which the affordances and limitations of the respective objects of inquiry are brought into a clearer view.

We can find further suggestions that encourage this understanding of narrative within a cognitive framework in James's prefaces, even when James himself is perhaps thinking about it aesthetically. For example, when he states at the end of the preface to *The Princess Casamassima* that

> If you haven't, for fiction, the root of the matter in you, haven't the sense of life and the penetrating imagination, you are a fool in the very presence of the revealed and assured; but […] if you are so armed you are not really helpless, not without your resource, even before mysteries abysmal. (PC 48)

[105] This shift of focus to the affordances and limitations of narrative as a mode of cognition can itself be considered a productive development (albeit not directly) from previous work of theorists on differences between text types (that is, between narrative and non-narrative texts, as can be found, for example, in Seymour Chatman's *Coming to Terms*).

James may be talking of how the authorial imagination contributes to his composition, but if we are to exchange authorial creativity with narrative understanding and consider it within a cognitive framework, especially when James explicitly pairs 'the penetrating imagination' with 'the sense of life,' we see that his line of thought suggest that we are already on our way to equipping ourselves before 'the mysteries abyssal.'[106] Nussbaum's claim that for James 'the aesthetic is ethical and political' is not inaccurate (Nussbaum, 'A Defense' 344); though her emphasis may be misplaced. It is not because James assists moral philosophy by writing literary narratives providing readers with materials that enable them to cut through 'the blur of habit and the self-deceptions habit abets' (Nussbaum, 'A Defense' 344), but because his aesthetic thinking is already involved with, even if not explicitly formulated as, theoretical concerns about narrative as a cognitive mode of understanding.

Rita Charon: Narrative and Medical Practice

At first glance, Rita Charon's advocacy for narrative medicine approaches narrative from a similar direction to Nussbaum; and in fact, she cites the precedent of Nussbaum's work in her seminal *Narrative Medicine: Honoring the Stories of Illness* (2016). There she reaffirms Nussbaum's view that 'only the singularity and penetration of James's densely woven narrative context could represent and enact the moral texture of human life she [Nussbaum] wished to probe'; and endorses the claim that James's

[106] I was drawn to this particular part of the preface because it is another instance in which Nussbaum simply interprets James's words as comparing the fine minds he presents in his novels with good citizens. Another example is Nussbaum's brief discussion of the preface to *The Lesson of the Master* (or Volume 15 of the New York Edition), in which she talks about how James uses his imagination in a civic manner to imagine the 'supersubtle fry' found in his novels because real life does not offer him minds with the same quality (Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge* 167).

stories 'display for readers varieties of ways in which to consider what one "ought" to do or how one might judge the actions of others' (Charon, *Narrative Medicine* 56). As another attentive reader of James, Charon shares the sentiment that his works are prime resources, in her case for cultivating in medical practitioners what she terms 'narrative competence,' or the ability 'to recognise, absorb, interpret, and be moved by the story of illness' (Charon, *Narrative Medicine* vii). Her project also shares with Nussbaum's a significant risk, however, in that it foregrounds the benefit of narrative concepts – especially as ready-made, tried-and-true tools – in the close-reading of stories of illness while leaving unexamined the assumptions about narrative upon which her affirmation of its value actually relies.[107]

Having said that, the practice-oriented framework of narrative medicine is merely a delineator of the practical aspect of Charon's interest – towards the betterment of medical practice – rather than an indicator of the extent of her theoretical investment in narrative and its interdisciplinary potentials, which is far greater.[108] The narrative theoretical issues behind Charon's project are best approached from the place where she addresses narrative theory most directly, before situating the discussion back in relation to the unexamined assumptions within narrative medicine. The occasion most apposite to this investigation is her article 'Playing James,' in which she argues that, in the following

[107] Her invocation in *Narrative Medicine* of James's famous snow field imagery from his preface to *The Golden Bowl*, for example, acts only as a preamble to her insistence upon the importance of fictional time (particularly in the Genettian sense) and her typological explanation that 'fictional time is distinguished into order, duration, frequency, story-time, and discourse-time' (Charon, *Narrative Medicine* 43).

[108] In *Narrative Medicine*, she states that 'narrative is a magnet and a bridge, attracting and uniting diverse fields of human learning,' and that 'the richness and exhilaration of narrative studies today […] arise from our recognition of our common concerns and shared goals […] the deep, nourishing bonds that hold us together' (Charon, *Narrative Medicine* 11).

passage from the preface to Volume 17 of the New York Edition ('The Altar of the Dead' and other short stories), James undercuts conventional 'measures' of literary worth as 'plot and originality,' and draws attention instead to 'our experience in undergoing the text' (Charon, 'Playing James' 206).

> The moving accident, the rare conjunction […] doesn't make the story – in the sense that the story is our excitement, our amusement, our thrill and our suspense; the human emotion and the human attestation, the clustering human conditions we expect presented, only make it. The extraordinary is most extraordinary in that it happens to you and me, and it's of value (of value for others) but so far as visibly brought home to us. (AD xx)

James's main message here, Charon observes, is that 'the power of the story rests not within the story space but within the phenomenal space of the experiencing participants who, with their emotions, *confirm* that something has happened' (Charon, 'Playing James' 206). What merits interrogation here is the spatial premise of Charon's argument, especially when she subsequently talks about 'the possibility of shared worlds' and, even more directly, mentions 'fictional worlds' (Charon, 'Playing James' 208). For Charon, James seems to be suggesting that the creation of such worlds not only requires the novelist to have registered 'the moving accident, the rare conjunction,' but also requires a reader 'who can call forth the living memory and offer past experience as grist for the imagining process' (Charon, 'Playing James' 208-209). While Charon's interpretation of and further extrapolation from the passage do signal a movement beyond certain 'conventional measures' towards emerging cognitive research into the reader's engagement with, or even embodied engagement in, the events of the story, it is grounded in a representational bias that is not James's emphasis in the passage.

This idea, indeed, can be seen to prefigure Fludernik's attempt to move beyond 'formal narratology into the realm of pragmatics, reception theory, and constructivism,' via a radical elimination of 'plot' in her definition of narrativity, reconstituting it instead on the lines of experiential rather than actantial parameters (Fludernik, *Natural Narratology* ix, 9, 247). What Charon's interpretation of James's preface allows us to see, however, is that his idea not only anticipates Fludernik's own, but also offers a corrective to it at the same time.[109] The reader James envisions, Charon suggests, is the one 'who will *incarnate* the consciousness of the fictional character' (Charon, 'Playing James' 208). While this is reminiscent of Fludernik's proposition about the reader's evocation of real-life experiential frameworks in the reading process – that is, the alignment of a human actantial frame or a speaker role with the narrative representation (Fludernik, *Natural Narratology* ix) – Charon further observes that the passage also 'makes even more clear that the individual reader […] has the power and responsibility to complete and participate in the act of creation' (Charon, 'Playing James' 209), and in doing so helps to bring out Fludernik's bias towards represented experientiality. In Fludernik's model, the focus is not on the reader's participation in the *act* of creation per se, but rather on the act of recuperating what has already been created, or *represented*, by the author. Charon's discussion of James's preface helps bring to light the possibility of distinguishing between making sense of a narrative as a represented (literary) semiotic object – in Fludernik's case, 'narrativising' through mediated experientiality (Fludernik, *Natural Narratology* 37) – and making, or understanding, narrative(ly) as part of human cognition itself.

[109] It needs to be made clear that Charon herself does not directly engage with Fludernik. It is important to distinguish between James's comment, which anticipates Fludernik, and Charon's interpretation of it, which does not.

Charon's interpretation of James's words, however, betrays a similar representational bias. She emphasizes the continuity between making sense of (literary) narrative and making narrative sense of experience, and assumes the congruence of the 'story space' and its 'moving accident' with a 'phenomenal space' that requires experiential participation from the reader, even though such participation presupposes the existence of a representational world that each individual reader has not only the power but the 'responsibility to complete.' Instead, James's actual emphasis in the passage falls upon the possibility of considering narrative in terms of a shared cognitive faculty; that is, narrative sense-making as part of human cognition itself. Charon focuses on our engagement with the story, 'our excitement, our amusement, our thrill and our suspense,' but James moves from that engagement, via our expectation as readers for 'the clustering human conditions' to be 'presented' in the story (that is, the experiential *in* narrative representation), to analogous situations in real life in which we are experiencers ourselves (and, in this light, make sense *with* narrative). The intelligibility, and also the value of the events that occur 'to you and me' for 'others,' James suggests, depends upon the others 'visibly' recognising that the events are 'brought home to us.' In other words, he is establishing a cognitive equivalence between narrative sense-making in real life, and the application of the similar cognitive frames in making sense of represented narrative, the process that provides for the concept of 'story' upon which his fictional composition is predicated. By putting the emphasis on the common cognitive perspective that both author and reader share, James's thinking reveals that the communication between them does not necessarily rely on imaginary participation in a shared representational space, and thus

also offers a corrective to Charon's bias, and to Fludernik's, towards spaces and the consequent subordination of the sense-making process to the representational product.

The practice-oriented framework of narrative medicine, with its foundation upon the self-betterment of medical practitioners, encourages us precisely to see narrative not merely in terms of a product of cognitive processes, but also as a cognitive process itself.[110] There is therefore merit in examining further the focus in James's preface upon the author's faculty of mind and, more importantly, how it is involved in the process of making a 'story.' Charon is certainly right in saying that we can see from the following passage James's acknowledgement of the importance of the emotion of the author and the reader:

> Such compositions […] would obviously never have existed but for that love of 'a story as a story' which had from far back beset and beguiled their author. To this passion, the vital flame at the heart of any sincere attempt to lay a scene and launch a drama, he flatters himself he has never been false […] He has consistently felt it (the appeal to wonder and terror and curiosity and pity and to the delight of fine recognitions, as well as to the joy, perhaps sharper still, of the mystified state) the very source of wise counsel and the very law of charming effect. He has revelled in the creation of alarm and suspense and surprise and relief, in all the arts that practise, with a scruple for nothing but any lapse of application, on the credulous soul of the candid or, immeasurably better, on the seasoned spirit of the cunning, reader. He has built, rejoicingly, on that blest faculty of wonder just named, in the latent eagerness of which the novelist so finds, throughout, his best warrant that he can but pin his faith and attach his car to it, rest in fine his monstrous weight and his queer case on it, as on a strange passion planted in the heart of

[110] In one of her articles, Charon argues that 'the skilled clinician does not first collect and deploy evidence and then soften it up with narrative; rather he or she is always already embarked on grounded, rigorous, personal, particular, and perilous interpretations' (Charon, 'Narrative Evidence Based Medicine'). The focus here is more on the process of the practitioners than on the product that is made out of it, the latter of which implies the use of 'narrative framework' in its more classical-typological sense.

> man for his benefit, a mysterious provision made for him in the scheme of nature. (AD xvi)

What she could have discussed further, however, is James's emphasis upon the love of 'a story as a story,' especially when it would help to clarify her previous claim that James's preface suggests the power of the story does not merely rest within the story space. It is noteworthy that when James talks about the love 'of a story as a story' here, he is not referring in particular to any existing, already conceived (and as such already represented) work, but rather to the 'passion, the vital flame at the heart of any sincere attempt to lay a scene and launch a drama.' James also declares immediately before this passage that he cannot talk about these compositions 'but under the plea of my amusement in them – an amusement I of course hoped others might succeed in sharing,' and later notes that the question about composition, to him, is one of both 'wondering' and 'causing to wonder' (AD xviii).[111] Charon, however, interprets the passage as suggesting the importance of the reader who has 'the attention to wonder, eagerly, passionately, what his novelist is up to' (Charon, 'Playing James' 208). This attention to the author's communicative act, Charon goes on to conflate once again with incarnating characters and creating fictional worlds. James's actual premise is more fundamental than that; it is rather the inherent 'blest faculty of wonder,' the love of 'a story as a story' that he and his readers share, that

[111] Meir Sternberg also uses this idea from James (and, in fact, part of this particular passage) to support his argument for three master interests constituting the universals of narrative (suspense, curiosity, surprise). While Sternberg's attention to the human mind and its relation to narrative would indeed put him close to James's discussion, his interest is still quite different from James's own, as the emphasis of his investigation lies in the compositional variables in narrative (specifically concerning the interplay between 'story' and 'discourse'), and the functional operation of the mind within such narrative's overall intersequencing (Sternberg, *Poetics of Biblical Narrative* 262). Sternberg is similar to Charon (and to Fludernik) in this respect, preferring to investigate the application of the 'blest faculty of wonder' to narrative, rather than the working of the faculty itself.

makes his composition possible, both in its production and reception, in the first place. Charon's idea is strongly aligned with a represented experientiality provided by narrative, and focuses on the engagement of the 'experiencing agents' with the particulars in the story space, as is evident from the equivocation between character and reader that the term 'experiencing agents' facilitates. In comparison, James highlights a shared cognitive faculty, in which the production of narrative particulars – in his case, the fine details of his fictional composition from which Charon's narrative training greatly benefits – is framed as an instantiation of that 'blest faculty.'

This is underlined by James's suggestion that the 'blest faculty of wonder,' while fundamental and common to – that is, shared by – both the author and the reader, can be cultivated, and cultivated differently by each individual. While his tales 'practise' on 'the credulous soul of the candid' and 'on the seasoned spirit of the cunning, reader' alike, James makes it clear that his pleasure, the revelling in authorial creativity, is 'immeasurably better' in the latter case. The tales occasion a temporal language of progression in James's reflection upon the love of story as a story, which 'had from far back beset and beguiled their author,' and how it is best exercised when performing for the 'seasoned' reader. This emphasis encourages a reading of 'practise' in this context in terms of exercising his faculty to maintain and improve its proficiency, even as 'practise' here is closely tied to the idea of trickery or scheming. But it is also in this very connotation of 'practise' as deception that we can see precisely that *fictional* narrative is a prime ground for the refinement of the 'blest faculty of wonder'; and that there is a continuation between such 'practise' afforded by the composition and reception of fictional narrative (as a represented semiotic object), and the exercise of the 'blest faculty

of wonder' in non-fictional contexts. The 'blest faculty of wonder' is treated not as a universal quality of narrative as a construct, but rather a universal and evolving faculty, for which fictional narrative provides grounds for 'practise.'

The cultivation of the 'blest faculty of wonder,' especially as a distinct, personal quality that precedes the act of composition, is further emphasized when James compares it to a 'chord' which may 'vibrate' in 'innumerable ways.'

> [The author] has seen this particular sensibility, the need and the love of wondering and the quick response to any pretext for it, as the beginning and the end of his affair – thanks to the innumerable ways in which that chord may vibrate. His prime care has been to master those most congruous with his own faculty, to make it vibrate as finely as possible – or in other words to the production of the interest appealing most (by its kind) to himself. This last is of course the particular clear light by which the genius of representation ever best proceeds – with its beauty of adjustment to any strain of attention whatsoever. Essentially, meanwhile, excited wonder must have a subject, must face in a direction, must be, increasingly, about something, Here comes in then the artist's bias and his range – determined, these things, by his own fond inclination. About what, good man, does he himself most wonder? – for upon that, whatever it may be, he will naturally most abound. Under that star will he gather in what he shall most seek to represent; so that if you follow thus his range of representation you will know how, you will see where, again, good man, he for himself most aptly vibrates. (AD xvii)

The mind is viewed as a musical (and, most likely to James, artistic) instrument, of which 'the need and the love of wondering and the quick response to any pretext for it' are the strings (cf. definition 2b of 'chord' in *OED*), and the prime care of the artist, therefore, is to find – and then 'master' – those 'ways' in which the chord of wonder vibrates most congruously with his faculty of mind; not until then can 'the genius of representation' best proceed with its work. The journey towards mastery for James concerns the production of the interest appealing most 'to himself,' or, as he later says, 'how [and] where […] he

for himself most aptly vibrates.' Although James seems to be saying that the artist already has his own 'bias' and 'range' which influences his choice of subject, his language suggests that such a 'bias' is far from being a rudimentary element of the mind, but something that has been – and is still – in a continual process of forming, with an emphasis upon its *progression towards* something. Even though the cultivation of the faculty of mind is most saliently expressed here by James in terms of fictional narrative, it extends to the refinement of human cognition in general; it provides for its owner a general (because it is a tendency) yet particular (because it is bound to personal and particular usage, within particular contexts), guiding 'light' by which he can best proceed; or, as James himself describes, 'about what […] does he himself most wonder? – for upon that […] he will naturally most abound.'

Charon has already hinted at the prospect of considering the benefit of fictional narrative in this light when she discusses 'narrative knowledge' in 'A Model for Empathy,' the knowledge which allows one to 'understand the meaning and significance of stories through cognitive, symbolic, and affective means' (Charon, 'A Model for Empathy' 1898). This recalls a similar, aforementioned term 'narrative competence,' but whether or not Charon herself intends to treat the two terms differently, an important distinction can still be made. 'Narrative competence' leans more toward stories as the target-objects of the training (the practice of close-reading and typological knowledge of narrative concepts come into focus under the heading 'Developing Narrative Competence' in *Narrative Medicine*), while 'narrative knowledge,' in Charon's argument, leans more towards acquiring 'local and particular understanding about one situation' (Charon, 'A Model for Empathy' 1898). Charon has always been concerned by what she

calls ‘the parallax gaps’ that occur between the practitioner and the patient; the gaps that arise, not from simple misunderstandings or lack of knowledge, but from the way ‘training and clinical responsibility’ have caused the practitioner to perceive sickness ‘fundamentally as something to be fixed and managed’ and so have ‘spoiled his or her capacity to understand what living with sickness must be like’ (‘The Novelization of the Body’ 40). As we can see, what is at issue here in medical practice does not concern the knowledge so much as the methodological perspective inherent in the responsibilities of the practitioner’s role. In this respect the issue is adjacent to the idea discussed in James’s writing about how the cultivation of the faculty of mind becomes a cultivation of aptitude, a bias in which each individual masters the way in which ‘he for himself most aptly vibrates.’ Medical practice may be circumscribed as any methodology must be, but it is not inherently negative for that reason, and ultimately the value of correlating multiple perspectives, which is apparent in my discussion of Charon’s argument in the light of James here, does not depend upon maligning one of them.

James’s preface might therefore be speaking even more closely to Charon’s interest in the betterment of medical practitioners than she has foregrounded; at the same time, it is also against this backdrop of narrative medicine that the interrelation between (fictional) narrative and the human mind might be brought to light more clearly. Charon sees the act of composition as central to the narrative medicine project, arguing that writing out stories of illness has allowed her ‘to take up another view of the real than the one I am trained to see’ (Charon, ‘The Novelization of the Body’ 40). She nonetheless retains her representational bias towards narrative, claiming that in writing out their own experience, both practitioners and patients do not simply tell what they see but ‘actively

generate' more values, yet that in doing so they are discovering 'aspects of the experience that, until the writing, were not evident to them' (Charon, *Narrative Medicine* 136). My attempt to reframe her argument outside her emphasis on the priority of the representational product allows me to consider the values generated from the practice not solely *in* discovered 'aspects of the experience,' but also *as* the discovery of the cultivability of the mind itself. Just as James, in his preface, discusses the artist's 'trained' inclination and hints at its limitation, resonating with the way medical practitioners themselves are likened to artists in the context of Charon's concern with narrative medicine, so his thought more generally foregrounds the significance of fictional narrative as a ground in which the faculty of mind is continually refined.

Yet the pride of place that narrative theory grants to literary narrative (as a semiotic object of inquiry) is itself underlined in narrative medicine. Charon sharply observes that 'literary studies and narrative theory […] seek practical ways to transduce their conceptual knowledge into palpable influence in the world, and a connection with health care can do that' (Charon, *Narrative Medicine* viii). The juxtaposition of literary studies with narrative theory is itself illuminating, and narrative medicine here acts as a foil that brings to light dominant assumptions that might be taken for granted from the inside, but invite critical (and productive) interrogation from the outside. Especially when we move beyond representational bias, which is already in some sense partly symptomatic of the dominance of literary narrative, we can see that narrative competence in medical practice is far from being only a matter of learning and making use of existing narratological concepts; it involves, or even stems from, attention to the cognitive narrative faculty that is shared by both practitioners and patients alike as human beings.

Ultimately, the practical aspects of narrative medicine reveal limitations within narrative theory as a discipline itself, by challenging the perception that the study of narrative has to focus primarily on represented semiotic objects, not least literary ones. Narrative medicine might already be dealing with narrative in a more theoretical, and at the same time fundamental, sense than it perceives itself to be, and in this respect it helps to advance the significance of narrative, as a shared cognitive mode, and its 'palpable influence in the world.'

Conclusion

During the course of this thesis I have demonstrated that James's critical writings have provided valuable resources for theoretical discussion about narrative, and that they have at the same time provided authority, often unwarranted, for critics to advance their particular theoretical positions. In investigating the different inflections of James along the developmental history of narrative theory, I have discussed, and in the process opened up, new perspectives on some important narrative issues. My investigation of Percy Lubbock in Chapter One suggests that core narrative concepts such as 'form,' 'story,' and 'point of view' always invite reconsideration – and the more our understanding of narrative grows with the continuing development of the field, the more likely they will attain new meanings and significance. More generally, and more importantly, I have scrutinised the perception of James as the technical 'master' that emerged from within the predominant formalist critical orthodoxy of that time, and was passed down to subsequent critics; and I have shown how the prefaces and essays encourage a rethinking of (fictional) narrative form, not only with reference to an autonomous object of interpretation, but also with reference to an object of inquiry. Furthermore, the chapter allows us to see that James's contribution to fiction, and to narrative, extends beyond compositional or narrative techniques, and that his thinking, when pressed, yields fruitful insight into more fundamental aspects of narrative.

My discussion of Wayne C. Booth in Chapter Two illustrates how certain perspectives upon narrative can be obscured by the critical context within which the particular narrative concepts were formulated. This is evident in my discussion of Booth's

implied author, a concept that was originally intended as a negotiation with the New Critical paradigm, but that attained new significance in the light of Booth's own changing perspective, beyond the confines of New Critical orthodoxies. The discussion also helps to reaffirm the theoretical merit of a historical approach; it provides for critical yet sympathetic reconsideration of theorists in context, acknowledging that their ideas were invariably the products of the contemporary critical atmosphere. At the same time, it allows me to sketch shifting perspectives upon narrative, and trace the developmental trajectory within the field, while bringing to the fore the shifting inflections of James that serve to reflect such perspectives.

The theoretical domain of narrative theory is, and ought to be, contestational, but as my discussion of structuralist and post-structuralist approaches to narrative in Chapter Three shows, it is important that we see this in a positive light, and approach theoretical debates within the field as an evolving dialogue. The germs of the idea of 'structure' as a 'process' that my discussion of James and J. Hillis Miller brings to light suggest that theoretical disagreements are not always refutations, and as such not debilitating to the progress of the field; theoretical knowledge is not always cumulative, and challenging perspectives, or counter-voices can themselves be integral to the refinement and betterment of such knowledge. The chapter also makes a point that narrative theory, in order to accommodate fully the complexity of narrative as an object of inquiry, needs to strike a balance between abstract theoretical pursuit and contextually-situated practice; this is most evident in the subsequent development of contextualist narratology.

On the same note of open dialogue, I hope that I have illustrated in Chapter Four how interdisciplinary approaches to narrative do not only borrow from narrative theory,

but also introduce productive counter-voices that help to enrich the discipline. The relationship between narrative theory and other disciplines should be viewed as mutually illuminating, especially when these other disciplines, rather than diverting inquiry, can help to direct the question back to narrative theory's primary object of investigation: that is, the form of narrative, its affordances and limitations, itself. Similarly, recent developments in postclassical narratology, or new approaches to narrative, are not merely offshoots from narrative theory's classical, structuralist phase, since they too stimulate reinvestigation of core concepts, or fundamental issues about narrative, in refreshing contexts that feed back into the original interests of narrative theory. The development of the field, in this sense, is not marked by abrupt transitions so much as by evolving continuity, and just as narrative issues always invite reconsideration, so too do James's rich critical writings themselves, and not merely in relation to fictional composition. This final chapter brings my investigation full circle; despite James's reputation as a master of techniques, a formalist *par excellence*, he is ultimately not only an artist but also a human being, whose thinking offers depth into the understanding of our relationship, as *homo narrans*, with narrative, in the most fundamental sense. I hope that in this light, I too have contributed to the restoration of James's art to 'the conditions of life' (GB lx).

It has been beyond the scope of a single thesis to trace all the different inflections of James in narrative theory; it should be evident at this point that his critical writings continue to provide resources, and in turn rewards, for close attention and appreciation. I sincerely hope that these rewards will not only be for me on my personal journey, but also for narrative theory and Jamesian scholarship; and that the theoretical (re)investigation of narrative concepts in this thesis will encourage further engagement with the richness of

James's critical works in the light of narrative theory. On this occasion I would like to draw upon James Phelan's words, which resonate so profoundly with the revisionist spirit of this thesis:

> Genuine inquiry never really ends. Asking and answering, even in a provisional way, a challenging question will inevitably generate new challenging questions that need their own answers. By engaging in that process, we can gradually increase our store of knowledge or, perhaps better, of plausible hypotheses, and thus do our part to diminish the darkness at least a little. (Phelan, 'Narrative List – THANK YOU!')

Ultimately my intention is to play my part in bringing more vitality into the already vigorous and ever-expanding field of narrative theory. I may not have conceived new concepts, or reached conclusive views about existing theoretical issues; but that is part of the point, for 'genuine inquiry never really ends,' and narrative concepts, new or old, will always generate, and benefit from, 'new challenging questions.' Even though we may never reach a conclusive end to our theoretical journey, we can 'gradually increase our store of knowledge.' James himself did not believe that his work as a novelist could ever be complete, and considered the whole act of revision, of writing and re-writing, 'a living affair' (GB lv). This thesis is merely a first step in what is to be my own 'living affair,' and I take pleasure in the feeling that I, in this thesis, have done something 'to diminish the darkness at least a little'; and I hope my contribution will continue to grow from here.

Abbreviations of Henry James's Works

Full details of all works cited are given in the Bibliography. The following abbreviations of Henry James's works (specifically their respective New York Edition prefaces, apart from 'The Art of Fiction') are used in referencing throughout the thesis:

A	*The Ambassadors*
AA	*The Awkward Age*
AD	*The Altar of the Dead and Other Tales*
AF	'The Art of Fiction'
GB	*The Golden Bowl*
PC	*The Princess Casamassima*
PL	*The Portrait of a Lady*
RH	*Roderick Hudson*
SP	*The Spoils of Poynton, A London Life, The Chaperon*
WD	*The Wings of the Dove*

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