

# Studies in 20th & 21st Century Literature

---

Volume 35 | Issue 2

Article 7

---

6-1-2011

## Pierre Bayard's Wormholes

Warren Motte  
*University of Colorado*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://newprairiepress.org/sttcl>



Part of the [Film and Media Studies Commons](#), [French and Francophone Literature Commons](#), and the [Modern Literature Commons](#)



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 4.0 License](#).

---

### Recommended Citation

Motte, Warren (2011) "Pierre Bayard's Wormholes," *Studies in 20th & 21st Century Literature*: Vol. 35: Iss. 2, Article 7. <https://doi.org/10.4148/2334-4415.1751>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by New Prairie Press. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Studies in 20th & 21st Century Literature* by an authorized administrator of New Prairie Press. For more information, please contact [cads@k-state.edu](mailto:cads@k-state.edu).

---

## Pierre Bayard's Wormholes

### Abstract

The recent work of Pierre Bayard is trenchant, original, and deeply engaging. From *Qui a tué Roger Ackroyd?* (1998) *Who Killed Roger Ackroyd?* (2001) onward, Bayard's books have piqued the interest of readers well beyond the limited circle of those who habitually consume French criticism and literary theory, and have served thus to expand the horizon of possibility of critical writing in significant ways. Bayard writes in a conditional, hypothetical mode, rather than a declarative one, keenly aware of how very mobile literary objects are. Bayard is not afraid to take risks, and he searches for new forms through a process of bold experimentation. He seeks moreover to enlist his reader in that quest, proposing a contract to him or her, one whose principal clauses are articulative and ludic. Fictional worlds are incomplete, he argues, and we readers must intervene in them in order to palliate that incompleteness, through our interpretations. We accede to fictional worlds through wormholes, passages joining places that are thought to be unconnected. With this interventionist model, Bayard encourages us to reconsider the way that we read fiction, and also the way that we read critical writing.

### Keywords

French literature, literary theory, critical writing, conditional mode, hypothetical mode, Pierre Bayard, *Qui a tué Roger Ackroyd*, wormhole, interventionist model, fiction

## Pierre Bayard's Wormholes

Warren Motte  
*University of Colorado*

Pierre Bayard, a professor of literature at the University of Paris-VIII and a practicing psychoanalyst, occupies a rare position as a critic and a theorist, because he speaks to specialists and general readers alike. His recent work is trenchant, original, and deeply engaging. From *Qui a tué Roger Ackroyd?* (1998) *Who Killed Roger Ackroyd* (2001) onward, Bayard's books have piqued the interest of readers well beyond the limited circle of those who habitually consume French criticism and literary theory and have served thus to expand the horizon of possibility of critical writing in significant ways. One might attempt to explain that phenomenon in a variety of manners, focusing upon issues of style, of subject, of interpretive strategy, or of legibility and accessibility. Chief among the many things that may keep one coming back to Bayard, the stance that he takes with regard to his own work is particularly refreshing. He writes in a conditional, hypothetical mode rather than a declarative one, keenly aware of how very mobile literary objects are, at their best. Bayard is not afraid to take risks, and he searches for new forms through a process of bold experimentation. He seeks moreover to enlist his reader in that quest, proposing a contract to him or her, one whose principal clauses are articulative and ludic. In short, in terms of mood and general approach, Bayard's books display clear affinities with a certain strain of contemporary fiction. For practical purposes, one might call the latter the critical novel, that is, a novel that puts its own principles of construction on display; a novel that is aware of its own literary heritage; a novel that thematizes its own structure; a novel that invites its readers to take a critical position with regard to the material that it presents.

The similarities that prevail between Bayard's essays and the contemporary critical novel are more than merely coincidental, I believe, for his work verges toward the novel in certain key ways. That such a phenomenon is largely intentional on Bayard's part is confirmed in a recent remark of his: "Ce que j'ai en effet essayé de faire au fil de mes livres, et ce dont je continue de rêver, est de parvenir à déplacer l'une des lignes de séparation fondatrices de toute écriture, à savoir celle qui sépare la théorie de la fiction" ("Comment j'ai fait régresser la critique" 34) 'What I have tried to do in my books, and what I continue to dream about, is to shift one of the fundamental boundaries of writing, that is, the line separating theory and fiction.'<sup>1</sup> Bayard's essays are more obviously narrative than most critical writing, and indeed he puts very considerable talents as a storyteller on offer in each of his books. Furthermore, just like the novel, Bayard's writing is animated by the technique of character. The protagonist in each case is a version of Bayard himself in a hermeneut's costume, and each text also elaborates a character loosely defined as the reader (a role the actual reader may choose to play as scripted, or not). Literary texts from Agatha Christie to Shakespeare to Arthur Conan Doyle themselves become characters under Bayard's pen, and take their place in a process of mutual interrogation whose fundamental nature may seem, even to a casual reader, patently fictional.

Working through Bayard's recent work, I would like to examine the phenomenon I have just described in order to understand more clearly what may account for it and, more broadly speaking, what may be involved in the wagers it stakes. A good place to begin is with a consideration of Bayard's conception of fictional worlds, and of the way that we may come to satisfactory terms with the latter. In his view, imaginary worlds are incomplete, a feature that becomes glaringly obvious when they are compared to the referential world, as they inevitably must be. Developing that point in *Qui a tué Roger Ackroyd?*, Bayard insists that this incompleteness is necessary and structural, rather than anecdotal:

Mais, surtout, *le monde que produit le texte est un monde incomplet*, même si certaines œuvres proposent des mondes plus complets que d'autres. Il serait plus juste de parler de *fragments de mondes*, constitués de parties de personnages et de dialogues,

où des pans entiers de la réalité font défaut. Et, point essentiel, ces défaillances du monde de l'œuvre ne tiennent pas à un défaut d'information que le travail de recherche, comme en histoire, peut espérer combler un jour, mais à un *défaut de structure, à savoir que ce monde ne souffre pas d'une complétude perdue, faute d'avoir jamais été complet*. De ce fait, le texte n'est pas lisible si le lecteur ne lui donne pas sa forme ultime, par exemple en imaginant, consciemment or inconsciemment, une multitude de détails qui ne lui sont pas directement fournis. (127, original emphasis, here and elsewhere)

But most importantly *the world that the text produces is an incomplete world*, even if certain works propose worlds that are more complete than others. It would be more accurate to speak of *fragments of worlds*, constituted by pieces of characters and dialogues, where whole sections of reality are missing. It is essential to note that these gaps in the fictional world do not result from a lack of information that historical research might eventually hope to repair, but from a *structural flaw, that is, the fictional world does not suffer from a lost completeness, since it has never been complete*. Consequently, the text is illegible unless the reader gives it final form, for instance by imagining, consciously or unconsciously, innumerable details that are not directly provided.

Two crucial—and related—issues are involved here. First, the problem of representation: any mimetic gesture is inevitably impoverished with regard to what it represents; no constructed artifact can compete with the plenitude and abundance of the real world. The second issue is bound up in what Gerald Prince calls “narrativity,”<sup>2</sup> and more precisely the relative degree of narrativity that a given text displays. Prince suggests that the latter textual feature “depends partly on the extent to which that narrative fulfills a receiver’s desire by representing oriented temporal wholes [...] involving a conflict, consisting of discrete, specific, and positive situations and events, and meaningful in terms of a human(ized) project and world” (*A Dictionary* 64). Thus, it might be claimed that Balzac or Tolstoy offers a higher degree of narrativity than does, say, Jean-Philippe Toussaint or Nicholson Baker.<sup>3</sup>

Yet the wild card here is undoubtedly the notion of “a receiver’s desire.” It is well nigh impossible to theorize in a cogent manner; nevertheless we are all aware that literary texts play upon readerly desire—upon us in fact, not to put too fine a point on it. Bayard, for his part, never loses sight of that truth, and indeed it is one of the cornerstones of the theoretical edifice he has constructed over the last several years. Thus, his insistence that the reader is called upon to address the incompleteness of narrative by imagining certain things that the text has not furnished. Common narratological wisdom holds that one cannot ask what Achilles’s name was when he hid among the women, because Homer doesn’t provide that datum. Bayard would be tempted to ask nonetheless, I think, for at least two reasons. In the first instance, because that readerly desire is, to his way of thinking, an integral part of the way texts work, and it must consequently be accounted for in some way. Secondly, he would be tempted to pose the question because the incompleteness of fictional worlds might be marginally less radical and definitive than it seems on the surface.

I shall return to that latter point in a moment. For the time being, let us underscore Bayard’s notion that a reader must act in some fashion when he or she is faced with the incompleteness of a fictional world. He returns to that activist model of reading again and again in his work, arguing that textual incompleteness must be repaired, as if prosthetically, and characterizing that process as the first duty of criticism:

Une œuvre littéraire n’est jamais complète, ou, si l’on préfère, ne constitue pas un monde complet, au sens où l’est, quelles que soient ses imperfections, celui dans lequel nous vivons. Si elle emprunte des éléments à des mondes déjà existants, dont le nôtre, elle ne donne pas à voir et à vivre un univers entier, mais délivre une série d’informations parcellaires qui ne seraient pas suffisantes sans notre intervention. Il serait plus juste alors de parler, à propos de cet espace littéraire insuffisant, de *fragments de monde*.

Dès lors, *l’activité de la lecture et de la critique est contrainte de compléter ce monde.* (*Enquête sur Hamlet* 48)

A literary work is never complete, or rather it never consti-

tutes a complete world, in the sense that our world, despite its imperfections, is complete. If the work borrows elements from already existing worlds, our own for instance, it does not construct a whole universe for us to see and live in; instead, it offers a series of fragmentary data which would not be adequate without our intervention. In characterizing that insufficient literary space, it would be more precise to speak of *pieces of worlds*.

In that perspective, *the activities of reading and criticism are obliged to complete such a world*.

It's a tall order, let us agree. Yet by the same token it is one that provides the reader with broad room for maneuver, enfranchising him or her significantly in the production of literary meaning. Philippe Lejeune once remarked about George Perec's work, "Il y a dans tous ses textes une place pour moi, pour que je fasse quelque chose. Un appel à moi comme à un partenaire, un complice, je dois prendre le relais" (*La Mémoire et l'oblique* (41) 'Memory and the Oblique' 41) 'In each of his texts, there is a place for me, for me to do something. An invitation to a partner, an accomplice, I must take my turn;' clearly enough, Bayard feels much the same way about literature in general. This interventionist model is one that Bayard deploys, in different ways, in each of his books. In *Qui a tué Roger Ackroyd?*, for instance, Bayard intervenes from his position in the real world—that is to say, as a reader of Christie's detective novel—to redress a miscarriage of justice in the fictional world. "S'il devait s'avérer que le docteur Sheppard n'est pas l'assassin," he argues, "c'est une erreur judiciaire qu'auraient causée Hercule Poirot et, à sa suite, tous ceux qui ont accepté sa solution sans protester" (14-15) 'If Dr. Sheppard turned out not to be the killer, Hercule Poirot would have caused a miscarriage of justice, and, after him, everyone who accepted his solution without protest.' In order to make sense of Bayard's approach, it is important to realize that in his view the scandal of injustice is not limited to the fictional world where it first occurs; it ramifies in the real world too, by contagion as it were, through the mediation of "everyone who accepted his solution without protest." Thus it is not only the fictional world that must be set right, but the real world as well—and indeed perhaps especially.

This is a pattern that Bayard will follow in each of the books

subsequent to *Qui a tué Roger Ackroyd?*, that interventionist gesture being either more obvious (*Comment améliorer les œuvres ratées?* ‘How to Improve Failed Works,’ *Enquête sur Hamlet* ‘Inquest on Hamlet,’ *L’Affaire du chien des Baskerville* ‘The Affair of the Hound of the Baskervilles’) or more subtle (*Peut-on appliquer la littérature à la psychanalyse?* ‘Can We Apply Literature to Psychoanalysis?’; *Demain est écrit* ‘Tomorrow is Written,’ *Comment parler des livres que l’on n’a pas lus?* *How to Talk About Books You Haven’t Read*, *Le Plagiat par anticipation* ‘Plagiarism by Anticipation’) in any given instance. The aspect of his work that Bayard has called “critique policière” ‘detective criticism,’ and which includes to date *Qui a tué Roger Ackroyd?*, *Enquête sur Hamlet*, and *L’Affaire du chien des Baskerville*, puts the interventionist gesture on stage in an almost theatrical way; and indeed there is a strong dimension of performance in each of those texts. They serve to exemplify Bayard’s notion that readers have an important role to play in literature, one that is more ample than they may have suspected. More broadly speaking, they put into play the principles of an activist literary criticism, a position that Bayard occupies indefatigably, and which he defends with a great deal of vigor. In his detective criticism, that defense is mounted not only through showing, but also through telling:

Telle est en effet la différence majeure qui sépare la critique policière, non seulement des autres travaux fondés sur des enquêtes, mais de l’ensemble de la critique littéraire, à savoir son *interventionnisme*. Alors que les autres démarches se contentent le plus souvent de commenter les textes de façon passive, quels que soient les scandales qui s’y déroulent, la critique policière intervient de manière active, en refusant de s’en rendre complice. Elle ne se contente pas de relever les faiblesses des textes et de jeter le doute sur les assassins présumés, mais a le courage d’en tirer toutes les conséquences en recherchant les criminels. (*L’Affaire du chien des Baskerville* 62-63)

Indeed, that is the principal difference which distinguishes detective criticism, not only from other work based on inquiry, but from all of literary criticism: its *interventionism*. Whereas other approaches are content to comment upon texts passively, no matter what kind of scandals those texts may include, detective criti-



cism intervenes actively, refusing to accept those scandals. It does not merely register the weaknesses of the texts and cast doubt on presumed killers, it dares to pursue its consequences to the end, as it seeks the real killers.

Intervention is omnipresent and inescapable in Bayard's detective criticism, where it serves as both motive and outcome. Elsewhere in his work, he puts that same principle forward in other ways. In *Comment améliorer les œuvres ratées?*, for example, Bayard invites his reader to imagine that the infelicities one may encounter in canonical literary works can be palliated or indeed remedied, that one can in effect rewrite those texts in strategic fashions. In *Peut-on appliquer la littérature à la psychanalyse?*, he proposes his interventionist model in terms that have still vaster implications for literature and the ways we view it, when he argues that, “nous trouvons le plus souvent, en littérature, face à quelque chose de théoriquement inachevé et dont la richesse tient à cet inachèvement” (144) ‘most of the time in literature we are faced with something that is theoretically incomplete, and whose richness springs from that very incompleteness.’ Once again, just as in the case of fictional worlds, Bayard invokes the idea of incompleteness, but this time he situates it on a more abstract plane. Our readerly desire to address that incompleteness on the theoretical level, as well as any material steps we may take in that direction, figure inevitably and centrally, for Bayard, in the dynamics of literature. Intervention and readerly activism are for him imperatives, and the cumulative force that they eventually assume in his writing is, more than anything else, moral in character—at least insofar as the first layer of Bayard's multiple irony is concerned. It is an astonishing stance for a literary critic undoubtedly; but it is also a most bracing one.

The vehicle of the interventionist model as Bayard sketches it is of course interpretation; and indeed each of Bayard's books, whatever other stories it may tell, is fundamentally a fable of interpretation. He conceives of interpretation in a highly idiosyncratic manner, as one might well expect. In *Qui a tué Roger Ackroyd?*, he speaks of “le délire d'interprétation” (15) ‘the delirium of interpretation,’ offering the latter as one of the objects of investigation in that book. If interpretation for Bayard has a pathological aspect to it, flirting with hallucination, intoxication, and delusion, it is also—and by the

same token, as it were—significantly unfettered, unbounded, and free to play over the field that it surveys. Most importantly perhaps, in terms of Bayard's own view of things, interpretation is an intensely personal phenomenon.

Bayard holds dear to that idea throughout his work, and he advances it on a variety of fronts, in a variety of voices, sometimes stridently polemical, sometimes more sober in tone. He is candid about the subjective quality of his own approach certainly, but his interpretive gesture is not the only one at issue. To Bayard's way of thinking, any interpretation is indelibly stamped by the consciousness that imagined it, and it must consequently be read as such. This leads him to propose a couple of reflections on reading that may be taken as axiomatic in his theory of literature. On the one hand, "La lecture neutre n'existe pas" 'Neutral reading does not exist'; on the other hand, "la lecture n'est plus le fait d'un nous, mais d'un je" (*Peut-on appliquer la littérature à la psychanalyse?* 32, 172) 'reading is no longer a matter of a we, but of an I.' In that fashion, Bayard sets the terms of reading and interpretation in a manner that will allow him to make a still more vertiginous leap of theoretical faith. If those activities are necessarily and fundamentally subjective ones, and if reading and interpretation are intimately bound up in what we call textuality, then it follows that textuality itself is necessarily colored by the subjectivity that apprehends it: "il n'existe pas de texte littéraire," argues Bayard, "indépendant de la subjectivité de celui qui le lit" (*Qui a tué Roger Ackroyd?* 128) 'there is no literary text that is independent of the subjectivity of the reader.'

Stretching a point predicated upon an expanded notion of what a text may be, many people will accept Bayard's thesis on common sense grounds, as indeed they accept the idea that no reading is neutral, that is to say, innocent of the subjectivity which produces it. But Bayard is not content to stop there in his brief for subjectivity. Having suggested that no literary text can exist altogether apart from the consciousness that grapples with it, he further contends that literary texts contain something of us, even prior to that encounter: "Or toute œuvre littéraire nous représente inconsciemment, ou, si l'on veut, parle essentiellement de nous" (*Comment améliorer les œuvres ratées?* 117) 'Now, every literary work represents us unconsciously, or, if you prefer, speaks essentially about us.' Indeed, as Bayard sees

it, the critic's principal task is to ferret out and make explicit the manner in which the text represents the reading subject, through a process that is fundamentally introspective:

Car le principe fondateur de la notion de paradigme intérieur est de penser le geste critique comme une *traversée de l'œuvre*, mise au service d'une réflexion du critique sur soi. Comme parlé par l'œuvre—réaménagée en fonction de ses fantasmes et de sa langue personnelle—, devenu l'un de ses personnages, le critique peut travailler, au-delà de l'objet textuel oublié, avec le référent majeur de sa recherche: lui-même. (*Enquête sur Hamlet* 144-45)

For the founding principle of the idea of the interior paradigm is to think of the critical gesture as a *stroll through the work*, put into the service of a critic's reflection on himself or herself. As spoken about by the work—reconfigured in function of his or her fantasies and personal language—, having become one of its characters, the critic may come to terms, above and beyond the forgotten textual object, with the major referent of his research: himself or herself.

In all of this, Bayard is playing on at least two fronts. Clearly enough, there is a substantial element of wryness, irony, and indeed self-mockery in the most extreme positions Bayard takes in his discussion of interpretive subjectivity. But at the same time, he is arguing quite seriously for a more unconstrained vision of the critical act, one that is not altogether innocent of the delirium of interpretation. He is unapologetic about the idiosyncratic character of his own readings, most obviously so in *Comment parler des livres que l'on n'a pas lus?*:

Sans doute pourra-t-on me reprocher, comme à l'esthète aux lunettes à montures dorées, de parler des livres que je n'ai pas lus ou d'avoir raconté des événements qui, à proprement parler, n'y figurent pas. Je n'ai cependant pas eu le sentiment de mentir à leur propos, mais plutôt d'énoncer à chaque fois une forme de vérité subjective en décrivant avec la plus grande précision possible ce que j'en avais perçu, dans la fidélité à moi-même et l'attention au moment et aux circonstances où je ressentais la nécessité de faire appel à eux. (143-44)

Undoubtedly I might be accused, like an aesthete with gold-rimmed glasses, of speaking about books I haven't read, or of recounting incidents which, strictly speaking, do not occur in them. However, I don't believe that I have lied about them; rather, on every occasion I have articulated a subjective truth, describing with the greatest possible accuracy what I saw in them, faithful to myself, and remaining attentive to the moment and the circumstances in which I felt obliged to invoke them.

I have argued that Bayard's books resemble novels in certain of their key aspects; yet Bayard himself sees them—and in fact any other critical gesture at all, insofar as it recognizes its own biases—as verging toward another literary genre, precisely by virtue of their subjectivity: “Ainsi la critique, ayant tranché ses liens avec une œuvre dont la contrainte l'handicapait, finit-elle par s'apparenter au genre littéraire qui met le plus clairement le sujet en valeur, c'est-à-dire à l'autobiographie” (*Comment parler des livres que l'on n'a pas lus?* 152) ‘Thus criticism, breaking away from the work that constrained and handicapped it, finally comes to resemble the literary genre that puts the subject on stage most clearly, that is, autobiography.’ And thus we arrive where we suspected we might be headed all along, to a vision of text-as-pretext wherein the interpreting consciousness becomes the “objet profond” ‘fundamental object’ of criticism; where introspection is what legitimates interpretation, and indeed elevates it “au niveau de l'art” ‘to the level of art’; and where any reading at all becomes an exercise in narcissism: “l'essentiel est de parler de soi et non des livres” (*Comment parler des livres que l'on n'a pas lus?* 152, 153, 154) ‘the main thing is to speak of oneself, and not about books.’

Let us recapitulate, then. According to Bayard, fictional worlds are incomplete, and we readers must intervene in them in order to palliate that incompleteness. We do so through our interpretations. Those latter are necessarily subjective, constructed out of our readerly desire, and geared to making the text render up its truth about *us*. The question of the site of our intervention remains, however, and it is a most intriguing one. Even if we accept the interventionist model that Bayard proposes, and if we accept, too, the ego-driven nature of any intervention, we may still be at a loss to see how to get

from the real world to a fictional one—and hopefully back again. In *Qui a tué Roger Ackroyd?* Bayard alludes tantalizingly to “l’immense monde intermédiaire entre le monde de l’œuvre et le nôtre” (129) ‘the immense intermediate world between the world of the work and our own,’ suggesting that readers habitually shy away from imagining such a world because conventional, rationalist reading contracts dissuade them from doing so. A couple of years later, in *Comment améliorer les œuvres ratées?*, he postulates the existence of intertextual alleyways connecting different fictional worlds:

Il apparaît ainsi, à travers ces quelques exemples, que des passages secrets existent entre les textes apparemment les plus éloignés, permettant de circuler de l’un à l’autre. Au détour d’une phrase, dans les recoins d’une habitation romanesque, dans le geste inexplicé d’un personnage, se dissimulent des ouvertures qu’il est possible d’emprunter pour se faufiler dans une autre œuvre ou pour en faire venir, vers celle où l’on se trouve, des éléments susceptibles de l’enrichir.

Aucune œuvre, à ce titre, n’est seule. Aussi étendue soit-elle, elle n’est jamais que la partie limitée d’un ensemble plus vaste, une simple pièce perdue dans l’immense demeure des textes universels. Elle se trouve donc par là en correspondances multiples avec de nombreuses autres pièces cachées dont il appartient au critique attentif et rigoureux de révéler l’existence et les voies d’accès. (160-61)

It thus becomes clear, through these several examples, that secret passages exist between the most apparently distant texts, allowing one to cross from one to the other. In a sentence, in the corners of a novelistic structure, in the unexplained gesture of a character, lie openings that one may take to sneak into another work, or to import therefrom into the one where one resides elements that might enrich it.

No work, in such a light, is alone. As vast as it may be, it is merely a limited part of a still vaster whole, a simple piece lost in the immense world of universal texts. By virtue of that, the work is in multiple correspondence with many other hidden pieces, whose existence and whose means of access the attentive and rig-

orous critic must reveal.

We might call these passages wormholes, for the sake of convenience. I borrow that term from the lexicon of science fiction, where it designates a kind of tunnel connecting different regions in the vast expanse of space/time—regions hitherto thought to be utterly separate—and enabling passage from one to another.

At a first glance, it would seem that the phenomenon which Bayard describes is limited to the mutual relations of fictional worlds. More closely considered, however, it becomes clear that what he is talking about is precisely the kind of intermediary site that his interventionist model calls for. That is, when he invokes passages between texts allowing one to cross from one to the other, that vision is predicated upon another kind of migration, one more dramatic still, from the real world to the fictional one. That site of passage can likewise be thought of as a wormhole, connecting topologically as it does places notionally unconnected. It is in just such a perspective, furthermore, that the incompleteness of fictional worlds can be imagined as less definitive than it seems, for to the degree that those worlds communicate with each other and with the referential world, actively and constantly through the agency of readers, the degree of their incompleteness diminishes.

Bayard's vision is a powerful one, and powerfully invigorating of literary experience. Firmly based in a synchronic, Eliotic view of literature, it serves to amplify the notion of textuality in important ways, and to expand the boundaries of what we think of as a literary work. The incessant backing-and-forthing that it hypothesizes underscores the dynamic character of literature. Bayard's model coaxes production and reception into mutual articulation, such that each enriches the other. The franchise that it offers the reader is a truly exceptional one, it should be noted. Any reader willing to take Bayard at his word cannot fail to be moved as he or she surveys the newly configured horizon of readerly possibility that he describes. Imagine that one might actually inhabit a fictional world—however temporarily—and act in it, too. Imagine that one might pull Anna Karenina back from the train's path, or suggest to Pierre Menard that he read Cervantes. Imagine that one might bring about a meeting between Lancelot du Lac and Humbert Humbert. Imagine that one might prompt Oblomov to abandon his couch, Ahab his obses-

sion with the white whale, or the Consul his drunken ways. Imagine that....

There is one obstacle in the path of anyone who would take Bayard at his word, however, and that is the fact that, as he limns his wormholes, Bayard is patently—and indeed happily—wallowing in the delirium of interpretation. Consequently, those literalists among his readers will undoubtedly bridle just a bit when asked to accept his view of things. For the latter is principally intuitive rather than rational; and indeed intuition plays a key role for Bayard in any encounter with literature, be that encounter on the ground of production or on that of reception. In *Peut-on appliquer la littérature à la psychanalyse?*, for example, he speaks of writerly intuition, comparing it to endopsychic knowledge:

Il faut entendre par là une forme particulière d'intuition que Freud prête également aux paranoïaques, aux primitifs et aux personnes superstitieuses, et qui donne à ceux qui en disposent un accès direct à des phénomènes dont les scientifiques n'ont connaissance que par des voies longues et détournées. (24)

I mean a particular kind of intuition that Freud also ascribes to paranoiacs, primitive people, and superstitious people, and which affords to the people who possess it a direct access to phenomena which scientists may come to know only by long and roundabout research.

Here once again, we are in the presence of a wormhole, one that affords a direct access from one site to another one far removed. And once again, we are in full delirium, swept into an interpretive flood in full spate. In short, whether we recognize it or not, we ourselves have emigrated from one world to another, for the world that Bayard has created here—and which we now inhabit, largely unsuspecting—is clearly a fictional one. And those wormholes are the most characteristic figures of that fiction, as well as the surest guarantors of the very passage that they themselves enable.

Turning for the moment to an approach that is marginally more rationalist, one way to think about wormholes is through the notion of metalepsis. That trope is demonstrably and explicitly on Bayard's mind in *Demain est écrit*, when he discusses Poe's tale, "The Oval

Portrait.” Pondering the relation between the death of a female character in that text and the fate of Poe’s wife Virginia, Bayard remarks: “**Meurtre particulier, que l’on pourrait dire par métonymie, pour reprendre cette figure du récit, longuement analysée par Gérard Genette, qui permet de glisser d’un niveau narratif à un autre**” (87) ‘A strange murder, one might say by metonymy, to borrow a narrative figure described at length by Gérard Genette, and which allows one to slip from one narrative level into another.’<sup>4</sup> What Bayard is adumbrating here is another sort of wormhole, one which allows the writer, or more properly an inhabitant of the writer’s real world, to enter the fictional world of the tale.<sup>5</sup> Yet that sort of emigration is not the exclusive prerogative of people on the production side of things. Bayard makes it clear that people on the reception side of the literary dynamic are apt to emigrate in that fashion, as well. Certainly such is true of the critic, according to Bayard. Speaking of the way the critic slowly approaches the “*objet de son angoisse*” (*Demain est écrit* 140) ‘object of his or her anxiety’ in a reading, Bayard describes an uncanny moment:

Le lieu précis n’en est pas pour autant situable dans le texte, et c’est seulement à ce qu’il ressent que le critique peut se fier: l’impression que les mots qu’il est en train de lire lui sont devenus étranges ou, au contraire, trop familiers, le sentiment que ce n’est plus de l’autre qu’il parle mais de lui-même, la présence d’une atmosphère irréelle, comme s’il ne se tenait plus du même côté du miroir et avait franchi la barrière de la page. (*Demain est écrit* 140)

Its exact locus in the text cannot be situated, and the critic can only rely upon what he or she feels: the sense that the words he or she is reading have become strange or, on the contrary, too familiar; the impression that it is no longer the other who is at issue, but himself or herself; the presence of an unreal atmosphere, as if he or she were no longer on the usual side of the mirror, as if he or she had broken through the barrier of the page.

That crossing over to the other side of the mirror or through the page is clearly metaleptic in character, and it constitutes a key clause in the kind of reading contract that Bayard proposes.



It is useful to take a look at how Gérard Genette conceives that trope—as indeed Bayard invites us to do—in order to understand what specific purposes it may serve for Bayard himself. Genette first invokes it in a passage of *Figures III* (1972) entitled “*Métalepse*”:

Le passage d'un niveau narratif à l'autre ne peut en principe être assuré que par la narration, acte qui consiste précisément à introduire dans une situation, par le moyen d'un discours, la connaissance d'une autre situation. Toute autre forme de transit est, sinon toujours impossible, du moins toujours transgressive. (243-44)

The passage from one narrative level to another can be effected only by the narration, in principle, an act that consists precisely of introducing into a given situation, through discourse, the knowledge of another situation. Any other kind of transit is, if not impossible, always transgressive.

The notion of transgression is very important indeed, and it will come to color, in one way or another, many other subsequent constructions of the trope. That feature becomes very clear indeed when Genette describes the way that metalepsis puts conventional—and indeed hallowed—boundaries into question:

Tous ces jeux manifestent par l'intensité de leurs effets l'importance de la limite qu'ils s'ingénient à franchir au mépris de la vraisemblance, *et qui est précisément la narration (ou la représentation) elle-même*; frontière mouvante mais sacrée entre deux mondes: celui où l'on raconte, celui que l'on raconte. (245)

All these games display by the intensity of their effects the importance of the boundary that they labor to cross, against all credibility, *and which is precisely narration (or representation) itself*, a mobile but sacred frontier between two worlds: the one where one tells and the one that is told.

Let us note in passing that Genette sees metalepsis as a kind of game, and thus, granted his particular worldview, as something a bit apart from real-world concerns. Finally, insofar as this initial formulation is concerned, Genette alludes to the way that metalepsis disturbs us

by intimating that our readerly metaphysics are not quite as stable as we might have imagined: “Le plus troublant de la métalepse est bien dans cette hypothèse inacceptable et insistante, que l’extradiégétique est peut-être toujours déjà diégétique, et que le narrateur et ses narrataires, c’est-à-dire vous et moi, appartenons peut-être à quelque récit” (245) “The most troubling thing about metalepsis resides in this unacceptable yet insistent hypothesis which suggests that the extradiegetic is perhaps always already diegetic, and that the narrator and his or her narratees—that is to say, you and me—belong perhaps to some story.’ The idea of transgression, along with the figures that attend it (unacceptability, marginality, illegitimacy, uncanoniness, and so forth), is absolutely central in Genette’s formulation of the trope of metalepsis; and try as he might, when he returns to that figure, he cannot shake it.

For he does return to metalepsis, thirty years after *Figures III*, and this time in a sustained manner, keynoting a colloquium organized around it,<sup>6</sup> and subsequently devoting an entire book to it.<sup>7</sup> It is thus legitimate to suppose that there is something about metalepsis which continues to fascinate Genette, something rather more compelling than what may be displayed in certain other figures to which he has turned his agile mind. In *Métalepse: De la figure à la fiction* (2004), Genette tries for all he is worth to restrain the trope, which threatens to ramify in disturbing ways:

je crois raisonnable de réserver désormais le terme de métalepse à une manipulation [...] de cette relation causale particulière qui unit, dans un sens ou dans un autre, l’auteur à son œuvre, ou plus largement le producteur d’une représentation à cette représentation elle-même. (13-14)

I think it is reasonable to restrict the term *metalepsis* from now on to a manipulation [...] of the particular causal relation that links the author to the work, or more broadly the producer of a representation to that representation itself.

Restricting metalepsis in this fashion leaves the reader safely out of the picture, of course. Yet Genette continues to fret about the way that metalepsis, through its intrusive quality, can call the reader so dramatically into question: “Cette capacité d’intrusion dans la diégèse, dont l’auteur use à sa guise, peut aussi bien s’étendre à cet au-

tre habitant de l'univers extradiégétique qu'est le lecteur" (94) "This ability to intrude into diegesis, which the author uses as he or she wishes, can also be extended to the other inhabitant of the extradiegetic universe, the reader." The most disquieting feature of all—and undoubtedly one of the reasons that the trope grips him so—is that, when Genette takes a step back from it, he sees metalepsis all around him, a fully integrated element of the landscape, rather than a marginal one:

En vérité, la fiction est, de part en part, nourrie et peuplée d'éléments venus de la réalité, matériels ou spirituels: l'avarice d'Harpagon ou l'ambition de Rastignac ne sont identifiées comme tels qu'à partir d'une idée de l'avarice ou de l'ambition que l'auteur et son public se sont construite au contact de la vie réelle—et d'autres œuvres dramatiques ou romanesques. Cette transfusion perpétuelle, et réciproque, de la diégèse réelle à la diégèse fictionnelle, et d'une fiction à une autre, est l'âme même de la fiction en général, et de toute fiction en particulier. Toute fiction est tissée de métalepses. Et toute réalité, quand elle se reconnaît dans une fiction, et quand elle reconnaît une fiction en son propre univers: "Cet homme-là est un véritable Don Juan." (131)

Actually, fiction is nourished and peopled throughout by elements taken from material or spiritual reality: Harpagon's avarice or Rastignac's ambition can only be identified as such through the idea of avarice or ambition that the author and his or her readership have constructed in contact with the real world—and with other dramatic or novelistic works. This perpetual and reciprocal transfusion of real diegesis to fictional diegesis, and from one fiction to another, is the very soul of fiction in general, and of each fiction in particular. Every fiction is created out of metalepses. And every reality, when it recognizes itself in a fiction, and when it recognizes a fiction in its own universe: "That man over there is a real Don Juan."

It is in such a perspective that he returns to the trope, by now inevitably as it were, in *Bardadrac* (2006) and then *Codicille* (2009). In the former, he takes the opportunity to adduce a few telling examples of the figure that he had hitherto neglected to mention

(279); in the latter, he speaks of the transgressive quality of metalepsis once again, and more particularly about the way that it questions the distinction between dream and reality (176-80). Along the way, he offers an apology for his fascination with metalepsis, one based in his dawning awareness of the figure's omnipresence:

On trouvera peut-être que je fais un peu trop de cas, trop souvent et trop longuement, et en y impliquant un peu trop de choses, de ce qui n'est, en principe, qu'une simple figure de style ou qu'un badin tour de fiction. Mais il se trouve que notre société repose en grande part, et de plus en plus, sur la fascination qu'exerce sur tous, ou presque, le passage de l'image pixellisée à la réalité vécue, du "vu à l'écran" au "rencontré en vrai", et réciproquement bien sûr. (*Codicille* 179)

It will perhaps be thought that I am making too much of, and bringing to bear too many things, or speaking too often and too long about, a simple figure of style or a funny twist of fiction. Yet our society happens to rely in large measure—and in fact more and more so—on the fascination that the passage from the pixelated image to lived reality exerts on everyone, or almost everyone, from the "seen on TV" to the "seen in real life," and vice versa of course.

There, in a nutshell, is how Genette's conception of metalepsis evolves. From a dangerously transgressive and fundamentally illegitimate figure, he comes to see it as one that enables a dynamic both interactive and reciprocal, a dynamic moreover that is intimately bound up in the fabric of our daily lives, for better or for worse. From the exceptional, metalepsis has itself migrated in Genette's poetics to a site that is far more normative—despite his lingering suspicion that there is something about it which is very disturbing indeed.

The notion that metalepsis is a transgressive figure is an exceptionally persistent one, however. Evidence of its stamina becomes apparent in almost every other effort to describe the trope. Gerald Prince speaks of its intrusive quality, for instance<sup>8</sup>; Sophie Rabau invokes the transgressive way that it abolishes discursive boundaries<sup>9</sup>; Klaus Meyer-Minnemann describes an effect of *bizarrierie* produced

by metalepsis, as it plays among different orders of narrative space and time<sup>10</sup>; Jan Christoph Meister talks about the aporetic function of metalepsis, and the way it abolishes differences among ontological levels and communicative contracts<sup>11</sup>; John Pier speaks about the way metalepsis subverts normative narrative hierarchies<sup>12</sup>; Jean-Marie Schaeffer argues that metalepsis serves as a constant reminder of the divided mental state that fiction fosters—and indeed demands.<sup>13</sup>

Among all of these critics and theoreticians, Bayard is undoubtedly closest to Genette in the way he conceives of metalepsis. Or, more accurately, to the Genette who gradually came to view metalepsis as a phenomenon broadly distributed in the everyday world, and thus rather less anomalous than he had once imagined it to be. Yet Bayard's stance seems to me more radical than Genette's, insofar as his wormholes cannot be reduced to mere tropes. While the figure of metalepsis is undoubtedly involved in the way that Bayard conceives them, and while some of the gestures that they describe are certainly metaleptic in character, his wormholes are more complex than that, both in their conception and in the maneuvers that they enable. In fact, they are nothing less than the pathways of a fully integrationist vision of literature.

Though that vision is implicit in Bayard's work from *Qui a tué Roger Ackroyd?* onward, it is in *L'Affaire du chien des Baskerville* that he puts it explicitly and materially on offer. In the early pages of that book he argues a brief for the autonomy of fictional characters: "Ceux-ci ne sont pas, comme on le croit trop souvent, des êtres de papier, mais des créatures vivantes, qui mènent une existence autonome, allant parfois jusqu'à commettre des meurtres à l'insu de l'auteur" (18-19) 'Contrary to popular belief, they are not mere paper figures, but living beings who lead an autonomous existence, sometimes going so far as to commit murder unbeknownst to the author.' Further along, Bayard invokes once again the idea of the incompletion of fictional worlds, noting that many of the details concerning the lives of characters are not communicated to us, leaving us thus largely in the dark about them:

Cette incertitude a partie liée avec un point essentiel que j'étudierai plus loin, qui est le mode particulier d'existence des personnages littéraires, lesquels, j'en ai la conviction, jouissent d'une autono-

mie beaucoup plus grande que celle qu'on leur prête et sont donc en mesure de prendre des initiatives, à l'insu de l'écrivain comme du lecteur. Cette forte tendance à l'autonomie des personnages accroît encore l'incomplétude du monde littéraire en augmentant sa mobilité intérieure et renforce la difficulté à le clore. (68)

This uncertainty is related to an essential point that I will study a bit later, the particular mode of existence of literary characters, who, I am persuaded, are far more autonomous than we normally imagine, and who can consequently take certain initiatives, unbeknownst to the writer or the reader. This strong inclination toward autonomy on the part of the characters increases still more the incompleteness of the literary world by boosting its interior mobility, and it reinforces the difficulty of limiting it.

In an effort to understand aspects of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* that have escaped previous critics, "souvent trop rationnels" (99) 'often too rational' in his view, Bayard outlines his integrationist position, relying in the first instance on Thomas Pavel's *Fictional Worlds*. Therein, discussing different philosophical attitudes concerning the relations of real world and fictional ones, Pavel writes:

Some theoreticians promote a segregationist view of these relations, characterizing the content of fictional texts as pure imagination without truth value; their opponents adopt a tolerant, integrationist outlook, claiming that no genuine ontological difference can be found between fictional and nonfictional descriptions of the actual world. (11)

Pavel's own position with regard to those opposing stances is a moderate, relativist, and rationalist one. "Texts, media, are not just referential paths leading to worlds," he asserts, "to read a text or to look at a painting means already to inhabit their worlds" (74); yet he uses the verb inhabit in a figural sense, rather than a literal one. In a similar perspective, he views the reader's participation in the events of fictional worlds as a heavily mediated form of psychological projection: "We are moved by the fate of fictional characters, since, as Kendall Walton argues, when caught up in a story, we participate in fictional happenings by projecting a fictional ego who attends the imaginary events as a kind of nonvoting member" (85). In short,

Pavel tends more toward segregationism than toward integrationism.

Quite the opposite is true of Bayard, for whom fictional worlds and the real interpenetrate incessantly and as it were naturally, in view of the fact that both are very largely constructed—and by that I mean imagined—through language: “Il revient à constater que le langage ne permet pas de faire la séparation entre les êtres réels et les personnages imaginaires et que l’intégration de ceux-ci est dès lors inévitable, que l’on ait l’esprit ouvert ou non” (*L’Affaire du chien des Baskerville* 104) ‘We must conclude that one cannot distinguish real people and imaginary characters through language, and that consequently the integration of those figures is inevitable, whether one be open-minded or not.’<sup>14</sup> Indeed, the position that Bayard stakes out is one that he describes—with a good deal of glee, one might note—as more radical and uncompromising still than that of mainstream integrationism:

On l’aura deviné, l’auteur de ces lignes se situe pour sa part sans la moindre ambiguïté dans le camp des intégrationnistes, et, à l’intérieur de ce camp, dans la partie la plus tolérante et la plus ouverte à cette forme originale d’existence qu’incarnent les personnages littéraires.

Ma tolérance envers les créatures de fiction s’explique par deux raisons majeures. La première est la certitude d’une grande perméabilité entre la fiction et la réalité. Il ne sert dès lors à rien d’essayer de contrôler les frontières entre ces mondes, car de multiples passages s’effectuent, et cela dans les deux sens. Non seulement, on va le voir, il nous arrive d’habiter un temps plus ou moins long tel ou tel monde fictionnel, mais les habitants de celui-ci viennent eux aussi, par moments, vivre dans le nôtre.

La seconde raison—qui ne serait pas partagée, je le crains, par les intégrationnistes, même les plus ouverts—est ma conviction profonde que les personnages littéraires bénéficient d’une certaine autonomie, à la fois à l’intérieur du monde où ils vivent et dans les circulations qu’ils effectuent entre ce monde et le nôtre. Ou, si l’on préfère, que nous ne contrôlons pas complètement, et l’auteur pas plus que les autres lecteurs, leurs faits et gestes. (106-07)

As you may have guessed, the author of these lines places himself without the least hesitation in the integrationist camp, and moreover in that part of the camp which is the most tolerant of and open to the special kind of existence that literary characters incarnate.

I am tolerant toward fictional creatures for two principal reasons. The first is the conviction that there is a vast permeability between fiction and the real. It is thus useless to try to police the frontiers between those worlds, because many passages traverse them, in both directions. Not only, as we shall see, do we inhabit a fictional world for a certain length of time, but the inhabitants of that world come to live, from time to time, in our own.

The second reason—which would not be approved, I fear, by integrationists, even the most open-minded ones—is my deep belief that literary characters enjoy a certain autonomy, both within the world that they inhabit and in their wanderings between that world and our own. Or if you prefer, that we (the author no more than the readers) do not completely control their acts and gestures.

Stepping back from this heady and vertiginous position just for a moment, in an attempt to see it in perspective, it becomes clear that what Bayard is calling for is nothing other than an abolition of the boundaries we habitually postulate between fictional and real life. “En littérature comme dans la vie” (63) ‘In literature as in life,’ he writes at one point in *L’Affaire du chien des Baskerville*, and that phrase could well be taken as a motto for his theoretical enterprise as a whole.

Granted that, is it really so surprising that Bayard’s books should resemble novels? That resemblance is quite obvious and deliberate in Bayard’s detective criticism. Indeed, in those texts, there is something ostentatious about it, as if Bayard were challenging his reader in some fashion with his transgeneric play. “Consacré à lire un roman policier,” says Bayard in the early pages of *Qui a tué Roger Ackroyd?*, “ce livre se retrouve donc, par la force des choses, avoir lui-même la forme d’un roman policier” (15) ‘Devoted to the reading of a detective novel, this book finds itself out of necessity adopting the form of a detective novel.’ And in point of fact the rest of that



text bears him out. It puts on stage a detective (Bayard), hot on the trail of a criminal (the individual who really killed Roger Ackroyd), intent also on proving a wronged man's innocence (Dr. Sheppard), and thus to correct a judicial error and make justice prevail. There is even an explosion of truth at the end, in the best tradition of the detective novel.

“Mais notre livre n'est pas seulement un roman policier sur un roman policier,” warns Bayard. “Il a aussi un second objet, plus théorique, qui concerne le délire, et particulièrement le délire d'interprétation” (15) ‘But our book is not merely a detective novel about a detective novel. It also has a second, more theoretical object that concerns delirium, and more particularly the delirium of interpretation.’ It is precisely in this perspective, I think, that *Qui a tué Roger Ackroyd?* becomes a model for all of Bayard's books thereafter. That is, rather than the way it adopts so patently and neatly the form of a certain kind of novel, the real novelistic quality of Bayard's book is bound up in the way that it plays out a highly fictionalized drama of interpretation. It is difficult not to become engaged in that drama, but that's just the point, of course. Each of Bayard's books scripts a role the reader may play within the broader fiction that it describes. Bayard has every reason to anticipate that we will accept the contract he tenders, for he wagers heavily upon our readerly desire, and more precisely still upon our wish to make a difference in the fictional worlds that we may encounter. Encouraging us to put that wish into action, Bayard provides a space wherein the fiction of intervention subtly but ineluctably comes to the fore, and whatever else may have been at issue—the legacy of the Baskervilles; or how fictional events can seem to anticipate events in the real world; or the way we claim to possess certain books we have read, though we may have forgotten almost everything about them—recedes into the background while we migrate to another world, characters in a fiction whose principal stake is our own readerly experience.

More than anything else, that fluid and in a sense unthinking migration is what interests Bayard, and he has constructed his books quite deliberately in order to enable it. They are best read “à plat ventre sur son lit” (“Notes sur ce que je cherche” 10) ‘flat out on one's bed,’ as Georges Perec said about *La Vie mode d'emploi*, that is, in a leisurely and even dreamy manner. That is how novels are best

read, I would submit, if by best we can agree to mean most pleasurable. I know that such an assertion will seem like heresy to many of my colleagues in the world of literary criticism. Nevertheless, I am persuaded of its fundamental truth—and all the more so after once again reading Bayard, who exhorts us so insistently to reconsider the way that we read fiction, and thereby, too, vitally and inevitably, the way that we read critical writing. For such is the curious role that Bayard scripts for us in the worlds that he imagines: we are constantly reading ourselves reading (and vice versa, as it were) when we inhabit those worlds, miles away from everything else, and at the same time squarely in the middle of things.

Notes

1 My translation, here and throughout, unless otherwise noted.

2 Prince defines that term as “The set of properties characterizing narrative and distinguishing it from nonnarrative; the formal and contextual features making a (narrative) text more or less narrative, as it were” (*A Dictionary* 64).

3 See Bayard, *L’Affaire du chien des Baskerville* 67: “Et, surtout, le monde que produit le texte littéraire est un monde incomplet, même si certaines œuvres proposent des mondes plus complets que d’autres” ‘And, especially, *the world that the literary text produces is an incomplete world*, even if certain works propose worlds that are more complete than others.’

4 See also *Demain est écrit* 87: “Un exemple célèbre de métalepse figure dans *La Rose pourpre du Caire* de Woody Allen, où l’acteur d’un film, apercevant dans la salle, pendant la projection, une spectatrice séduisante, sort de l’écran pour la rencontrer” ‘A famous example of metalepsis occurs in Woody Allen’s *The Purple Rose of Cairo*, when the actor in a film, observing a seductive spectator during the projection, steps out of the screen to meet her.’

5 “La même aventure survient à la Virginia de Poe et à celle de son peintre: elles passent de la vie de l’artiste à son œuvre, passage qui les transfigure esthétiquement, mais en même temps les met à mort” (*Demain est écrit* 87) ‘The same thing happens to Poe’s Virginia and to his painter’s Virginia: they migrate from the artist’s life into his work, a crossing that transfigures them aesthetically, but at the same time condemns them to death.’

6 That meeting, entitled “La métalepse, aujourd’hui,” was held at the Institut Goethe de Paris in November 2002. The proceedings appear in John Pier and Jean-Marie Schaeffer, eds., *Métalepses: Entorses au pacte de la représentation*.

7 *Métalepse: De la figure à la fiction* (2004) expands considerably upon Genette's contribution to the 2002 colloquium, "De la figure à la fiction."

8 See his definition of the term "metalepsis" in *A Dictionary of Narratology*: "The intrusion into one diegesis (*diégèse*) of a being from another diegesis; the mingling of two distinct diegetic levels. Should an extradiegetic narrator suddenly enter the world of the situations and events recounted, for instance, a *metalepsis* obtains (50). Elsewhere, he suggests that *metalepsis* involves "contamination" ("Disturbing Frames" 626).

9 "Représenter un monde où se côtoient et dialoguent l'auteur, les personnages et le lecteur, reviendrait, en d'autres termes, à se donner une manière d'utopie qui pousserait à l'extrême la démarche de toute interprétation du texte littéraire" ("Ulysse à côté d'Homère: Interprétation et transgression des frontières énonciatives" 61) 'Constructing a world wherein author, characters, and readers rub elbows and speak to each other would amount in other terms to imagining a kind of utopia which would push the process of interpretation of any literary text to its extreme limit.'

10 See "Un procédé narratif qui 'produit un effet de bizarrerie': La *metalepse* littéraire," especially 135.

11 See "Le *Metalepticon*: Une étude informatique de la *metalepse*," particularly 232.

12 See "Métalepse et hiérarchies narratives" 248: "la *metalepse*, par le biais des permutations et substitutions qu'elle opère, fragilise les distinctions, ouvrant un espace ou un lieu de négociation, implicite ou marqué, entre les niveaux et traduisant par cela le caractère intrinsèquement paradoxal de la représentation narrative" 'metalepsis, through the permutations and substitutions that it puts into play, weakens distinctions, implicitly or explicitly opening up a space or a site of negotiation between levels, and voicing thereby the intrinsically paradoxical character of narrative representation.'

13 Invoking the transgressive aspect of *metalepsis*, he argues: "cette *transgression*, loin d'être une anomalie, n'est qu'une exemplification particulièrement explicite de ce qui constitue la caractéristique définitionnelle centrale de l'immersion fictionnelle, à savoir le fait qu'elle implique un état mental scindé" ("Métalepse et immersion fictionnelle" 325) 'this *transgression*, far from being an anomaly, is merely a particularly explicit illustration of that which constitutes the central definitional trait of fictional immersion, that is, the manner in which it implies a divided mental state.'

14 See also *L'Affaire du chien des Baskerville* 105: "le langage est un facteur permanent de brouillage des mondes" 'language is a permanent factor in the interference of worlds.'

Works Cited

- Bayard, Pierre. *L'Affaire du chien des Baskerville*. Paris: Minuit, 2008. Print.
- . *Comment améliorer les œuvres ratées?* Paris: Minuit, 2000. Print.
- . “Comment j’ai fait régresser la critique.” In Laurent Zimmermann, ed. *Pour une critique décalée : Autour des travaux de Pierre Bayard*. Nantes: Editions Cécile Defaut, 2010. 19-37. Print.
- . *Comment parler des livres que l’on n’a pas lus?* Paris: Minuit, 2007. Print.
- . *Demain est écrit*. Paris: Minuit, 2005. Print.
- . *Enquête sur Hamlet: Le dialogue de sourds*. Paris: Minuit, 2002. Print.
- . *Peut-on appliquer la littérature à la psychanalyse?* Paris: Minuit, 2004. Print.
- . *Le Plagiat par anticipation*. Paris: Minuit, 2009. Print.
- . *Qui a tué Roger Ackroyd?* Paris: Minuit, 1998. Print.
- Genette, Gérard. *Bardadrac*. Paris: Seuil, 2006. Print.
- . *Codicille*. Paris: Seuil, 2009. Print.
- . “De la figure à la fiction.” In Pier and Schaeffer 21-35. Print.
- . *Figures III*. Paris: Seuil, 1972. Print.
- . *Métalepse: De la figure à la fiction*. Paris: Seuil, 2004. Print.
- Lejeune, Philippe. *La Mémoire et l’oblique: Georges Perec autobiographe*. Paris: P.O.L, 1991. Print.
- Meister, Jan Christoph. “Le *Metalepticon*: Une étude informatique de la métalepse.” Trans. Ioana Vultur. In Pier and Schaeffer 225-46. Print.
- Meyer-Minnemann, Klaus. “Un procédé narratif qui ‘produit un effet de bizarrerie’: La métalepse littéraire.” In Pier and Schaeffer 133-50. Print.
- Pavel, Thomas. *Fictional Worlds*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1986. Print.
- Perec, Georges. “Notes sur ce que je cherche.» In *Penser/Classer*. Paris: Hachette, 1985. 9-12. Print.
- Pier, John. “Métalepse et hiérarchies narratives.” In Pier and Schaeffer 247-61. Print.
- Pier, John, and Jean-Marie Schaeffer, eds. *Métalepses: Entorses au pacte de la représentation*. Paris: Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, 2005. Print.
- Prince, Gerald. *A Dictionary of Narratology*. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1987.

Print.

—. “Disturbing Frames.” *Poetics Today* 27.3 (2006): 625-30. Print.

Rabau, Sophie. “Ulysse à côté d’Homère: Interprétation et transgression des frontières énonciatives.” In Pier and Schaeffer 59-72. Print.

Schaeffer, Jean-Marie. “Métalepse et immersion fictionnelle.” In Pier and Schaeffer 323-34. Print.