‘[C]onstantly supposing’: A text-possible approach to Hypothesis and the Metaperspective in [Man] Booker Prize-winning novels 2000–2020

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Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of the University of Liverpool for the degree of Doctor in Philosophy by Naomi Catriona Adam

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‘[C]onstantly supposing’: A text-possible approach to Hypothesis and the Metaperspective in [Man] Booker Prize-winning novels 2000—2020

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Abstract

The human race has an innate tendency towards hypothesis: we are ‘constantly supposing’ (Laing *et al*. 1966: 4). More narrowly, we are prone to project the perspectives that others have upon us; what Laing and his colleagues within social psychology term the *metaperspective*, or, ‘*My view* of the other’s (your, his, her, their) *view* of me’ (*ibid*; italics in original). Given that literature has since Aristotle (e.g. 1981) been recognised as a microcosm of life, metaperspectives are also to be found frequently within fiction. Within this thesis, I apply the erstwhile social-psychological concept of the metaperspective to the study of literature for the first time. The thesis is couched largely within the discipline of stylistics (alternately literary linguistics), with some influence from narratology. The methodological framework selected is my so-called ‘Best of Both Worlds Theories’ approach: an amalgam of Text World Theory (Gavins 2007; Werth 1999) and possible worlds theory (e.g. Ryan 1991b) which fuses the former’s cognitive insights with the ontological sensibility of the latter.

In order to integrate the metaperspective into the study of literature, I first explore how it tessellates with existing stylistics and narratological theory, including the concept of hypothetical focalisation (Herman 1994, 2002). This theory is then applied in practice through the steam stylistic analysis of four ‘case-study’ novels taken from the cohort of contemporary (2000—2020) [Man] Booker Prize-winning novels. Chapter 4 explores Margaret Atwood’s (2019) *The Testaments*; Chapter 5 Anna Burns’ (2018b) *Milkman*; Chapter 6 Marlon James’ (2014) *A Brief History of Seven Killings*; and Chapter 7 George Saunders’ (2017) *Lincoln in the Bardo*. These particular novels have been selected to analyse as exemplary instances of literary fiction, a form which privileges the subject of human cognition and in which metaperspectives therefore predominate. Doing so unveils four distinct permutations, or sub-types, of the metaperspective which I refer to respectively as: the *discourse-architectural metaperspective*; the *communal metaperspective*; the *racialised metaperspective*; the *literalised metaperspective*. Within each case-study chapter, these various sub-types are tied to typical linguistic indices, alongside related phenomena with which they tend to co-occur. In this regard, I also coin the terms *[inverted] communal hypothetical focalisation* and *intradiegetic recentering*. Ultimately, I aim not only to contribute a significant new set of terms to the stylistician’s current ‘tool-kit’ (Short 1996: xii), but also to provide an original literary *and* linguistic perspective upon prize-winning works of international, contemporary fiction.

Keywords: *contemporary fiction*; *hypothetical focalisation*; *literary fiction*; *[Man] Booker Prize*; *metaperspective*; *possible worlds theory*; *stylistics*; *Text World Theory*.

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Much like the graduate work of *The Line of Beauty* protagonist Nick Guest, this thesis began life simply as a ‘‘look at *style*’’ (Hollinghurst 2004: 54). Many thanks are owed to all those who helped as it transformed from this rather nebulous naissance into what it is now.

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Introduction

1.0. Preliminaries

As human beings, we spend between 30 and 50% of our time mentally disengaged from our immediate reality (Killingsworth and Gilbert 2010; Kane *et al*. 2017). Instead, we dream of unrealised pasts, we imagine parallel presents, we plan for possible futures. We are also 'constantly supposing' (Laing *et al*. 1966: 4) the thoughts and feelings of those around us, a tendency enabled by Theory of Mind (Premack and Woodruff 1978) capacities. It is when we suppose that these hypothesised thoughts and feelings relate to ourselves that we construct a metaperspective: '*my view* of the *other's* (your, his, her, their) *view* of me' (Laing *et al*. 1966: 4).

The metaperspective, 'a constant concern of us all' (5), forms the proverbial beating heart of the present thesis. Although originally conceived in a social-psychological and therefore non-fictional context, here it is applied for the first time in a fictional one, to award-winning works of literature. Specifically, I adopt a stylistic approach in the analysis of these works. This interdisciplinarity is enabled by two factors: for one, literature has long been feted as a mode mimetic of life (Aristotle 1981; Gavins and Steen 2003: 2), meaning that metaperspectives occur just as frequently in fiction as they do in everyday reality; for two, these fictional metaperspectives are much more accessible and amenable to analysis than their non-fictional counterparts, for in a literary context one may see precisely how they are both framed and phrased.

The skeleton supporting this theoretical focus will be the 'Best of Both Worlds Theories' approach, a novel amalgam of the ontologically-based possible worlds theory (e.g. Ryan 1985, 1991b; Ryan and Bell 2019) and the cognitively-grounded Text World Theory (Werth 1994, 1999) which I originally introduced in Adam (2021) and intend to develop further here. My analyses of literary metaperspectives will be fleshed out using case-study novels from among contemporary winners of the [Man] Booker Prize, from 2000 to 2020. As works of literary fiction, these novels tend to elaborate upon characterological cognition (Farner 2014; Todd 1996), therefore providing ample instances of literary metaperspectives for stylistic analysis. Finally – to extend my latent corporeal conceit to near-breaking point – my analyses will be supplemented by the consideration of other organs of the hypothetical within literature,

including the notion of the hypothetical reader, hypothetical focalisation and disnarration. This, then, is the body of the present thesis.

The aims of this thesis, meanwhile, are threefold, namely:

1) To demonstrate further, following Adam (2021), the feasibility of the combined cognitive—ontological text-possible, or 'Best of Both Worlds Theories' approach;
2) To propose the heretofore social-psychological concept of the *metaperspective* as not only applicable, but often integral, to literature;
3) To contribute a stylistic (literary-linguistic) perspective to the critical study of international, contemporary, prize-winning literary fiction.

These tripartite targets will be explored in further depth in Section 1.4, below.

In this initial chapter – the first of eight – I introduce several parameters crucial to the thesis as a whole. The discipline of stylistics is contextualised, and I situate the approach adopted throughout the present thesis within this diverse research field. I then provide a précis of the history of the [Man] Booker Prize, alongside addressing its associated controversies, in order to explain the selection of the four 'case-study' novels analysed in detail across Chapters 4 to 7 of this thesis. Finally, I present a brief outline of the seven chapters which follow this introduction, each of which are united by a focus upon the role of hypothesis within literature and the related concept of the metaperspective.

1.1. Introduction

Hypothesis is integral to the daily lives of each and every one of us. It is for this reason that the social psychologists R.D. Laing, H. Phillipson and A.R. Lee state that the human race is 'constantly supposing' (Laing *et al*. 1966: 4). Corballis (2011) concurs, and having cited an example from the works of Shakespeare, observes:

> As in fiction, so in life; we all live in a web of complex recursive relationships and planning a dinner party may need careful attention as to who thinks what of whom.
>
> (Corballis 2011: 9)

Yet this relationship is also reciprocal: as in life, so in fiction. Proving Aristotle's (1981) oft-invoked principle of mimesis, hypothesis is to be found frequently in literature, as attempts are made to mirror our hypothesis-heavy reality. Gavins and Steen (2003) note that 'literature is grounded in some of the most fundamental and general structures and processes of human cognition and experience.' (2). Nowhere is this more evident than in depictions of Corballis' figurative 'web of complex recursive relationships', for characters in novels, just as much as

people on the street, are ‘constantly supposing’ the thoughts and feelings of those around them. Indeed, this capacity is central to so-called ‘Theory of Mind’ (e.g. Apperly 2012; Corballis 2011; Premack and Woodruff 1978; Zunshine 2006, 2015, 2021; cf. Chapter 3), which refers to the innately human tendency to model within one’s own mind the mind of another. A specific subset of this phenomenon – the modelling of how one is viewed by the other – is what Laing *et al*. (1966) refer to as the *metaperspective*. Yet, despite being coined a mere sixty or so years ago, the phenomenon which the term denotes is no recent development. Corballis (2011) interweaves evolutionary and neurolinguistic evidence to suggest that a capacity for recursive thought may be traceable to up to 6 million years ago. It is certainly inferable from Robert Burns’ infamous apostrophe, ‘O wad some Power the giftie gie us / To see oursels as ithers see us’ (ll. 42-3) within his 1786 ode ‘To A Louse’ (Burns 2022).

More than two centuries on from this literary metaperspectival prototype, further investigation is warranted. This thesis interrogates hypothesis and the metaperspective as they appear in contemporary (post-2000) winners of the [Man] Booker Prize, adopting a predominantly stylistic perspective in doing so. Ultimately, I aim to add the metaperspective to the proverbial ‘tool-kit’ (Short 1996: xii) which is, to extend the metaphor, currently carried by those employed in the stylistics trade. In the following sub-section, I limn the contours of this ‘fusion’ (Stockwell 2003: 195) discipline, and align its various foci with the present thesis.

1.2. Stylistics

The discipline of stylistics is also known alternately as ‘literary linguistics’ (e.g. Stockwell 2003) and/or ‘linguistic criticism’ (see esp. Fowler 1986). As these monikers indicate, stylistics is at root an interface discipline. Spanning the borders of the two subjects of linguistics and literary criticism (Short 1996: 1), it involves the systematic study of the language of literature so as to uncover insights into its wider thematic and/or contextual meaning. Crucially, throughout analytical ‘attention is largely and closely text-centred’ (Wales 2011: 400), prioritising the ‘nitty gritty’ details of language (Sotirova 2022: 512).

In one of stylistics’ proto-texts, Spitzer (1948) allies the discipline with the concept of the philological circle. This he describes as ‘the procedure from details to the inner core and back again.’ (34 n.10). As schematised in Fig. 1.1, the philological circle is comprised of four nodes: linguistic description; linguistic evidence; aesthetic function; literary interpretation. Ultimately, the iterative application of this process should reward the researcher with an ever-

more nuanced understanding of the text under consideration; as Spitzer (1948: 24) opines, the *microscopic* in language is able to illuminate the *microcosmic* in literature.

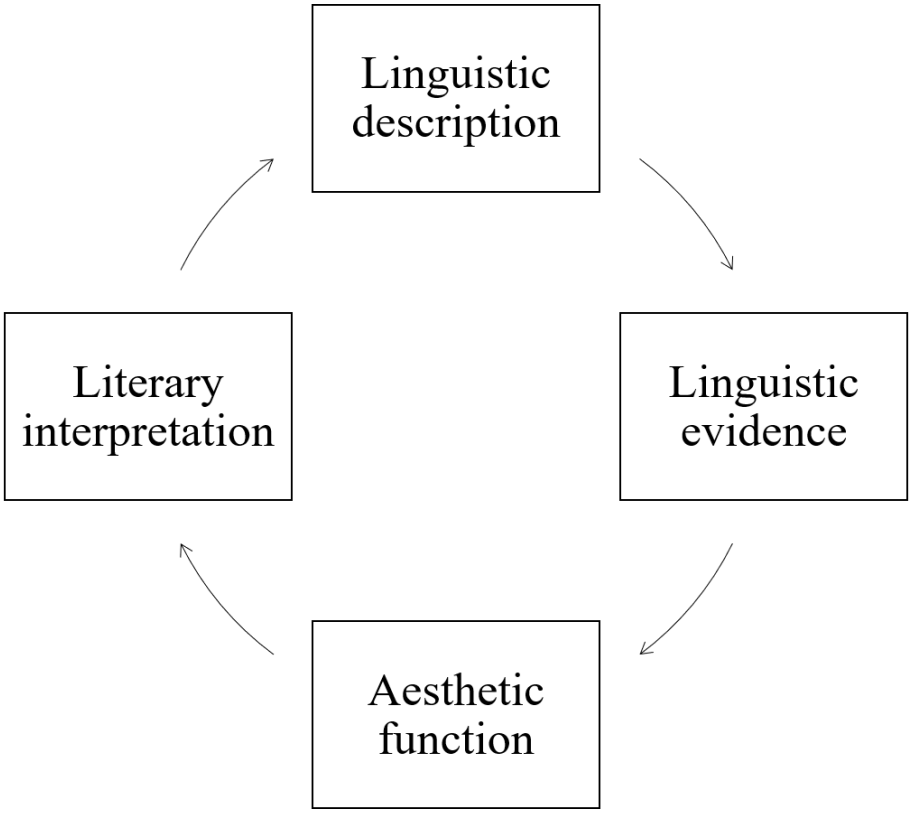

Fig. 1.1. Spitzer's (1948) philological circle, after Goatly (2021: 129)

Within stylistics, the term 'literature' can be understood rather broadly. Instead of indexing (as is common in literary criticism) 'written work valued for superior or lasting merit' (Oxford English Dictionary, henceforth OED 2022, s.3b) – Literature with a capital 'L' – stylisticians take literature to denote 'printed matter of any kind' (s.5). Hence stylistic analyses can, and have been, carried out upon a multiplicity of text types; *Language and Literature*, the foremost stylistics journal, has recently featured articles interrogating newspaper editorials (Browse 2016), scripts of television serials (Gibbons and Whiteley 2021) and song lyrics (Nahajec 2019) among many other genres. Nonetheless, as will be outlined in Section 1.5, below, the case studies for this thesis belong to the rather more traditional text-type of narrative literary fiction. However, this is not to suggest that either the methodology (see Chapter 2) nor the terminology (Chapter 3) employed within this thesis is exclusive to the study of fiction, be it literary,

narrative, or otherwise. Indeed, Section 8.2 of the concluding chapter to the thesis suggests that transferring the approach adopted here to the study of various other text-types may prove fruitful. Certainly, metaperspectives are not exclusive to literature, nor are the suppositious text-possible worlds (Adam 2021; see further Section 2.2) with which they frequently co-occur.

The microscopic textual focus of stylistics is ideally suited to the study of metaperspectives in literature, and enables the identification of 'typical linguistic indices' for each metaperspectival sub-type. Indeed, each of the four 'case study' chapters will begin with a brief preliminary sub-section, outlining the indices commonly associated with the respective metaperspectival variants. This begins to fulfil the 'linguistic evidence' node of Spitzer's (1948) philological circle.

Stylistics may be further stratified into various sub-disciplines, including (but not limited to) *cognitive stylistics*, *corpus stylistics* and *steam stylistics*. Given that during the course of this thesis I harness each one of these separate sub-disciplines, below I provide a brief overview of the primary characteristics and concerns of each. Here I address the three sub-disciplines alphabetically, as opposed to in an order of the importance which each holds for this thesis.

1.2.1. Cognitive Stylistics

The cognitive branch of the stylistics discipline focuses upon the mental processing of texts, and how these processes elicit an aesthetic and affective response in the reader. As an extension of the oft-attested 'cognitive turn' (e.g. Simpson 2012; Stockwell 2002, 2010, 2011, 2020a, 2020b) within the humanities broadly and within literary study specifically, cognitive-stylistic approaches have informed much research in stylistics over the past couple of decades. Indeed, Stockwell (2010) regards cognitive stylistics as 'the latest innovation to be adopted widely by stylisticians' (420). Under this general rubric may be grouped several disparate theories, including (though not limited to): blending theory (e.g. Dancygier 2005); conceptual metaphor theory (Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Lakoff and Turner 1989); contextual frame theory (Emmott 1997; cf. Adam 2021); mental spaces theory (Fauconnier 1994); schema theory (Semino 1997, 2003). The cognitive-stylistic theory which most informs this thesis, however, is Text World Theory, originally devised by Werth (1994, 1999). This theory will be surveyed in some detail in Section 2.1, below. Here, suffice it to note, *pace* Stockwell (2010), that Text World Theory is one of the few cognitive-stylistic models to focus upon a text at the micro-linguistic level, a characteristic which endears it to the steam stylistic enterprise of the present thesis.

As a cognitive stylistics-based footnote, there is ongoing debate as to the precise contours of the term *cognitive stylistics* versus *cognitive poetics*. While some assert there to be subtle differences between the two with regard to scope (e.g. Gavins 2007; Wales 2011), others maintain that the two terms may be used interchangeably (e.g. Mansworth 2022a: 45-6; Nørgaard *et al*. 2010). Throughout this thesis, I align myself with the latter school of thought.

1.2.2. Corpus Stylistics

Another burgeoning stylistics-based research field is that of corpus stylistics. As its name suggests, this branch is influenced by corpus linguistic methodology, and involves the computational analysis of large bodies of text (*corpora*) in the service of an investigation into their style. Carter (2012) avers that: 'Corpus methods have emerged as a major methodological feature of the present and future landscape for the discipline of stylistics.' (108).

Saliently, recent years have seen the publication of two separate works titled *Corpus Stylistics* (Semino and Short 2004; Walker and McIntyre 2019). Other stylistic applications of corpus methodologies have been diverse. While some researchers have explored the style of a single author (e.g. Dickens in Mahlberg 2013; Lawrence in McClure 2021), others have used a corpus stylistic approach to investigate characterisation (Archer and Gillings 2020), while for yet others corpus stylistics has aided the study of texts in translation (Mastropierro 2017; Wijitsopon 2022).

Meanwhile, it is important to note that while corpus stylistic approaches import much of the metalanguage of corpus linguistics (e.g. *colligation*, *collocation*, *keyword*, *semantic preference*, *semantic prosody*), they may be more or less beholden to corpus linguistic methodology. At one end of the dependency spectrum, a corpus-*based* approach will use a target corpus, and the insights it generates, as the object of study; this is the approach taken by Semino and Short in their (2004) investigation of hypothetical discourse presentation in contemporary narratives. In short, this approach necessitates the use of *specialised* corpus data. Conversely, a corpus-*driven* approach will mine corpora for patterns based upon pre-existing hypotheses. The insights gleaned are then extrapolated out to either support or refute these pre-formed stylistic theories. Hodson and Broadhead's (2013) investigation of the upsurge in fictional dialect representation during the nineteenth century via the Dialect in British Fiction 1800-1836 project is an example of this second sort. This approach, then, regards corpus data as *supportive*. Finally, at the 'least dependent' end of the spectrum is the corpus-*informed* approach. This involves 'us[ing] existing large corpora [e.g. the 100-million-word British

National Corpus, hereafter BNC] to generate insights into single short texts.' (Walker and McIntyre 2019: 119). Corpus methodology thus becomes *supplementary* to the stylistic enterprise.

The corpus-stylistic methods employed in Chapters 5 and 7 of this thesis are of this latter type, bolstering what may otherwise be deemed impressionistic or subjective statements with quantifiable, objective linguistic evidence.

1.2.3. Steam Stylistics

Conversely, the majority of my linguistic analysis over the course of this thesis will be of the so-called 'steam stylistic' variety. This knowingly self-effacing phrase can be attributed to the stylistician Ronald Carter, who explains:

> Practical stylistic analysis or 'steam stylistics' (before electricity and broadband) explores equations of linguistic forms with literary meanings and is the cornerstone of close reading. [...] The linguistic forms that are identified as significant are largely based on intuition and observation and may vary from one analyst to another, but no stylistic account of the text can omit treatment of these features.
>
> (Carter 2012: 107)

In this way, the epithet 'steam' is meant not to disparage, but merely to continue an analogy, placing the approach as a counterpoint to more recent, computerised methods including corpus stylistics, as examined above. Meanwhile, the two central elements to the steam stylistic approach – that is, 'linguistic forms' and 'literary meanings' – quite clearly echo two of the four proverbial stylistic compass points identified by Spitzer (1948): 'Linguistic evidence' and 'Literary interpretation', respectively (cf. Fig. 1.1). Indeed, Carter (2012: 107, 113) acknowledges 'steam stylistics' to be the prototypical stylistic sub-discipline.

Steam stylistics also differs from other, more mechanised, methods due to its qualitative rather than quantitative focus. This is helpful in the context of this particular thesis, given that the typical linguistic indices associated with the various metaperspectival sub-types tend to be indicative rather than constitutive. Ultimately, it is necessary for a researcher rather than a computer to judge whether particular linguistic features result in a metaperspective.

1.2.4. Stylistics and Narratology

While this thesis is largely couched within the discipline of stylistics, it also borrows from narratology. The subject can be glossed as:

> the systematic study of literature as literature. It deals with the question 'What is literature?' and with all possible questions developed from it, including: What is art in language? What are the forms and kinds of literature? What is the nature of one literary genre or trend? What is the system of a particular poet's 'art' or 'language'? How is a story made? What are the specific aspects of works of literature? How are they constituted? *How do literary texts embody non-literary phenomena*?
>
> (Hrushovski qtd. in Rimmon-Kenan 2002: 2; my italics)

Clearly, there is significant overlap between the fields of stylistics and narratology. Crucially, both take the 'language' of a text as the primary object of study. However, there are subtle differences between the two disciplines, deriving from the former's roots in [Russian] Formalism (Hough 1969) and the latter's in [French] Structuralism (Wales 2011: 286). These differences mainly manifest in the scope and scale of the two subjects. The textual features narratology focuses upon – for instance 'forms and kinds of literature'; 'literary genre[s] and trend[s]' – tend to be at a global level. Theoretical interest lies in analysing 'levels and structures' (Wales 2011: 286). The study of 'focalisation' (Genette 1980, 1988) is one example. Stylistics, in contrast, often functions at a more local level. A stylistic study, for instance, may examine how alterations in focalisation are achieved via the interplay of various speech, thought and writing presentation techniques (cf. Leech and Short 2007).

The primary narratological theories informing this thesis are those of possible worlds (e.g. Ryan 1985, 1991b; Ryan and Bell 2019) and (hypothetical) focalisation (Herman 1994, 2002; cf. Genette 1980, 1988). These will be treated, respectively, in Chapters 2 and 3. Moreover, the narratological occupation with how literary texts incorporate non-literary phenomena (see the italicised interrogative quoted above) is especially suited to my study of how the heretofore social-psychological metaperspective manifests within literature (see further Chapter 3).

Additionally, as is implied etymologically, narratology focuses upon narrative texts only (albeit encompassing a variety of media; see e.g. Ryan 2015) as opposed to stylistics' less circumscribed approach, outlined above. Nevertheless, this caveat does not impact upon this particular thesis, given that it investigates the narrative text-type with case studies drawn from a pool of contemporary (i.e. post-2000) winners of the [Man] Booker Prize. In the following sub-section, I continue to contextualise this prestigious literary prize, often regarded as the foremost award for literature in the English-speaking world (Morris 2020; Strongman 2002; Todd 1996).

1.3. The [Man] Booker Prize

The Booker Prize, a literary award and brainchild of Jonathan Cape publishers Tom Maschler and Graham C. Greene, was initially established with the aim of rivalling France's prestigious Prix Goncourt. In 1968 the duo sought financial backing for the Prize from the agribusiness conglomerate Booker McConnell, and in 1969 the inaugural award was presented to Briton P.H. Newby for his novel *Something to Answer For* (1968).

Across the intervening six decades, the rules and regulations of the [Man] Booker Prize have undergone many alterations, several of them controversial. In recent years, the extension of eligibility to authors of any nationality publishing English-language novels in Britain has generated the most debate. Indeed, the rule change, though instituted in 2013, continues to inspire discussion as to the perceived American long- and shortlist dominance – 'Americanization' (The Bookseller 2018: n.p) – at the expense of entrants from other (often Commonwealth) countries (see further Morris 2020; Moseley 2014). Currently, the Prize's official webpage outlines that: 'Each year, the prize is awarded to what is, *in the opinion of the judges*, the best novel of the year written in English and published in the UK and Ireland' (The Booker Prize Foundation 2022a; my italics).

Yet the [Man] Booker Prize is not unaccustomed to controversy; indeed, it has frequently courted it over the course of its 50-plus-year existence. Much of this has been engendered by the subjectivity inherent to the italicised embedded clause quoted above. There have been walkouts and resignations; rules bent and broken; accusations of fixing, nepotism and snobbery (Moss 2001); and an overriding Goldilocks mentality (too literary? not literary enough? just right?) in relation to the shortlist (Studeman 2020). Politics, too, have impinged upon the literary/publishing industry, particularly in relation to the Prize's colonial roots. [1] Much media attention attended victorious author John Berger's decision to donate half his winnings to the Black Panther movement in 1972 (Stoddard 2014). The 2015 Man Booker winner Marlon James notes the continuing 'complicate[d]' dynamic (James and Cathcart 2016: n.p) in receiving the Prize as a person of colour.

[1] As a registered charity, The Booker Prize Foundation is no longer financially affiliated to the Booker Group Plc. However, the Foundation does acknowledge that its parent company, founded in 1835, once held interests in enslaved peoples in Guyana, formerly British Guiana (The Booker Prize Foundation 2022c). By the inception of the Booker Prize in 1968, slavery had been abolished internationally, and the company was run by Jock Campbell, a Socialist peer who aimed to dissociate the Booker Prize from its colonialist roots (*ibid*).

An upside to this media hoopla is what is referred to in the publishing industry as 'the Booker bounce' (Todd 1996): a significant upsurge in sales following the announcement of the longlist, the shortlist, and the eventual winner. For example, in 2015, the Booker Prize winner (and Chapter 6 case-study novel) *A Brief History of Seven Killings* saw its sales balloon by 256% post-victory (The Bookseller 2018). It is likely that this commercial reality underpinned the decision to publicly reveal the Booker longlist from 2001. Overall, a commercial element is key to the continuation of the Booker Prize.

Nonetheless, the [Man] Booker Prize is commonly regarded as one of the most – if not *the* most – prestigious of British literary prizes (Drąg 2014). In a specially commissioned paean to the Prize to mark its fiftieth anniversary, 1991 winner Ben Okri positions it as 'there in the landscape' (Okri 2019: l. 5), a colossus of the literary, and literary award, scene. Its winners frequently prove able to fuse popular appeal with critical acclaim, and are just as likely to be discussed on train journeys as in literary journals.

Meanwhile, as Drąg (2014) identifies, the Prize is likely to contribute to future canon formation, both within teaching and the literary-critical tradition. Here, he pre-empts Okri's (2019) suggestion that the back-catalogue of award-winners will likely prove 'some enigma / For future generations to chew' (ll. 55-6). Somewhat less lyrically, Head (2008) observes: 'The importance of the Booker Prize to the novel in Britain – indeed, to the health of the novel in English more widely – has become an established fact of literary history.' (62). In examining the tranche of [Man] Booker Prize-winning novels from 2000 to 2020, the present thesis aims to illuminate works which may well become enshrined in 'literary history' from a stylistic perspective.

Across the aforementioned time span, the funding body associated with the Prize has changed twice: first to the Man Group in 2002, and later to the Crankstart Foundation from 2019. This has resulted in corresponding name changes for the Prize: throughout my thesis, I refer to the [Man] Booker as an inclusive term, delineating all prizes awarded within my allotted (2000—2020) time span. For individual cases, the official title of the Prize awarded during the year in question is used. Fig. 1.2 schematises these name changes, alongside documenting key events in the history of the Prize between 2000 and 2020, the time span on which this thesis focuses.

Fig. 1.2. A brief history of the [Man] Booker Prize 2000-2020: key events and changing sponsors

Despite the aforementioned alterations, many of the award's criteria have remained remarkably consistent. This is evident in comparing the draft rules (Anonymous 1968) with recent iterations (The Booker Prize Foundation 2018; The Booker Prize Foundation 2022b). The juxtaposition highlights that even some of the original wording has been retained. While the bulk of recent guidelines consist of often convoluted stipulations directed at publishers, several key criteria are pertinent in illustrating the scope of this thesis. These considerations, which dictate the nature of my 'case-study' novels, number the following.

1) The Prize must be awarded to a single work of fiction, as opposed to an individual author for their entire fictional oeuvre, as occurs with the Nobel Prize for Literature. Short story collections and novellas are ineligible.
2) The novel nominated must be both published in Britain and written in English; works in translation are not eligible. Nonetheless, following an amendment to the rules, from 2014 authors of any nationality are now eligible to receive the award; prior to this, entrants were restricted to members of the Commonwealth.
3) The entries for the Prize under deliberation must have been published in Britain for the first time over the course of that calendar year. For example, it was required that submissions for the 2022 Booker Prize had a publication date between 1 October 2021 and 30 September 2022.
4) The author of the work of fiction must be living at the time of nomination: the [Man] Booker is not a posthumous prize.
5) The Prize must be awarded to one work of fiction only (although this rule has been disregarded by the judging panel, most recently in 2019).

The judging panel itself is comprised of five members, with one acting as head judge. Although changing yearly, the composition of this panel follows a specific algorithm: it is always comprised of (at least) one academic/critic, writer, and 'other'. This latter, 'wildcard' category is generally filled by a well-known public figure with an observed interest in contemporary literature, for instance a politician, actor or television presenter (Higgins 2021). In the year 2009, for example, the allotted 'wildcard' was former *Bake Off* presenter Sue Perkins.

The current judging process involves three rounds of reading for the judging panel: around 150 submitted entries must first be read in order to devise a shortlist of 13 (the so-called 'Booker dozen'); the longlisted works must be read again and whittled down to a shortlist of 5

or 6; the half-dozen shortlistees must be read for the final time in order to agree upon a winner. Due to the odd number of judges, unanimity is not required for this final decision.

Each winning novel has therefore necessarily been read (at least) three times by each of the five members of the judging panel. It has been conjectured that this process acts to the detriment of certain genres – comedy and crime among them – which are not ideally suited to rereading (Higgins 2021). Indeed, it was not until 2018 that a crime novel appeared on the longlist for the first time. [2] Conversely, Prize director Gaby Wood has refuted the suggestion that 'the Prize is seeking to reward a certain kind of book.' (Wood 2018: n.p). Adam (2022a), however, does uncover some salient patterns among past Booker Prize winners. Data from winning works post-2000 suggest historical fiction and/or novels with a postcolonial bent to be particularly popular with the Prize's judging panel. The case-study novels for Chapters 5, 6 and 7, in particular, tally with this judgement.

In his book-length study of the Booker Prize for Fiction, meanwhile, Todd (1996) categorises the majority of its winners as works of *literary fiction*. These he suggests to be successful as they are suited to repeated rereadings and sustained scrutiny. The following sub-section continues to condense precisely what is meant by the mutable, even contentious, term 'literary fiction'.

1.3.1. The [Man] Booker Prize and Literary Fiction

There is not currently, nor ever has there been, a specific clause in the [Man] Booker Prize rules delimiting the winner to a work of literary fiction. Yet recent iterations (e.g. The Booker Prize Foundation 2018) include the following clause.

> Any novel in print or electronic format, written originally in English and published in the UK or Ireland by an imprint formally established in the UK or Ireland [...] is eligible. *The imprint must publish a list of at least two literary fiction novels by different authors each year*.
>
> (The Booker Prize Foundation 2018: n.p; my italics)

This criterion, alongside the judging process itself as discussed above, have likely both contributed to the preponderance of literary fiction winners of the Prize.

Indeed, to a greater or lesser degree, each of the case-study novels under consideration in this thesis may be termed works of literary fiction. Yet precisely what *literary fiction* is frequently proves contentious. Farner (2014) illustrates just how nebulous the notion may be

[2] The novel referred to here is Belinda Bauer's (2018) *Snap*.

in eliding 'literary fiction' and 'fictional literature' in his monograph *Literary Fiction: The Ways We Read Narrative Literature*. This is not a definition I subscribe to here; instead, I take literary fiction to be a sub-type, or *hyponym*, of fictional literature.

The semantic ambiguity of the term *literary fiction* means that it is often explained via the 'negative definition' (Solnick 2019: 228): it is simply said *not* to be genre fiction. The two supposedly binary terms are unhelpful for a couple of reasons. Firstly, in treating the two discretely, it fails to acknowledge that they may, in some instances, be melded. Atwood's (2019) *The Testaments*, a hybrid literary fiction/dystopian thriller, and the first case-study novel for this thesis, is a prime example. Indeed, Atwood is a commonly-cited example of an author transcending the literary/genre fiction divide (e.g. O'Gorman and Eaglestone 2019; Solnick 2019). This amalgam impacts upon the accessibility relations (Ryan 1991a, 1991b) of her various novels, a topic to be unpicked in Section 4.2.1. Secondly, it leaves a critical lacuna as to the precise features of literary fiction. Nonetheless, some have been tentatively suggested (O'Gorman and Eaglestone 2019; Todd 1996). These include a lack of formulaicness; the use of experimental stylistic techniques; the privileging of character over plot, and, relatedly, the focus upon the interior states of characters. In short, literary-fiction novels are often considered *novels of ideas* rather than *novels of action*.

Each of the aforementioned characteristics make literary fiction an ideal site of study for the analysis I undertake in this thesis. The first two (qualities of non-formulaicness and experimentation) combine to result in 'complexity [...] allied to a greater attention to the form and to the sentence-by-sentence language itself' (Leith 2018: n.p). This is echoed in Okri's aforementioned 2019 poem, which depicts Booker-winning novels as representative of 'The elevation of language' (l. 10). Similarly, as head of the 2021 judging panel Maya Jasanoff noted, novels lauded by Booker committees often display 'a kind of deliberate quality and attention to the writing' (The Booker Prizes 2021: n.p).

As a discipline, stylistics is likewise predicated upon an attention to linguistic detail. Its overriding interest in what Leith terms 'the language itself' (see Section 1.2) make its resources apposite here. Meanwhile, the attention to characters' interiority common to literary fiction suits my focus upon the metaperspective within a literary context. As Chapter 3 will elaborate, the metaperspective is a concept premised upon the internal workings of the human mind; indeed, it is a concept co-opted from the work of three [social] psychologists. So-called 'novels of ideas' are consequently perfectly tailored to this phenomenon of interpersonal perception.

From a narratological-stylistic standpoint, this consideration also motivates my selection of case-study novels: all four are homodiegetic, primarily internally focalised fictions. This is a selection justified in Sections 1.5 and 3.3.1. Note, however, that this constitutes a 'selection' rather than a 'restriction'; the concepts I discuss are not exclusive to novels of this form, merely common to and illustrated well by them. This same caveat applies to the genre of literary fiction as a whole. It is used for illustrative purposes only; both the text-possible method and the concept of the metaperspective may be applied to works of any genre.

1.3.2. The [Man] Booker Prize and Contemporary Fiction

Less contentious is the status of [Man] Booker Prize-winning novels as works of contemporary fiction. As per the submission guidelines outlined above, entries must have been published in English for the first time in the year prior to the awarding of the Prize to be eligible. Each of the novels under consideration here have hence been published since the turn of the millennium. These publication dates thus accord with the early-1980s-and-onwards timescale commonly associated with contemporary literature (Drąg 2014). [3] This contemporaneity makes these works ideal sites of study for this thesis. The 'Best of Both Worlds Theories' approach proposed in the subsequent chapter, for instance, tallies with the ontological 'dominant' the postmodernist scholar McHale (1987) observes in recent fiction. The concept, derived from Russian Formalism, refers to 'the common denominator' (9) or 'principle of systematicity underlying [...] otherwise heterogenous catalogues' (10) of literary works. Thus McHale posits that postmodernist texts orbit around the following questions.

> What is a world?; What kinds of worlds are there, how are they constituted and how do they differ?; What happens when different kinds of world [*sic*] are placed in confrontation, or *when boundaries between worlds are violated*? [...] And so on.
>
> (McHale 1987: 10; my italics)

Much as with the catalogue of prototypical narratological queries (Section 1.2.4), these questions dovetail with the focus of this thesis. The TEXT IS WORLD conceptual metaphor dominates, just as in both Text World Theory and possible worlds theory (Chapter 2); the blurring of 'boundaries between worlds', so essential to the metaperspectival enterprise, is scrutinised. Further pertinent features of postmodernist texts include an ability to 'produce[...] new insights' into existing theoretical constructs (McHale 1987: 5); an overarching concern

[3] Indeed, Drąg (2014) references Salman Rushdie's Booker-winning *Midnight's Children* (1981) as a seminal text in this dating process. The novel will be considered in more detail in Chapter 8 of this thesis.

with ‘the theme of the multiplicity of the self’ (15); a predilection for recursive, *mise-en-abyme* structuring (112-30; cf. Corballis 2011); an enhanced awareness of the figure of ‘the reader’ (Wales 2011: 332). Each of these characteristics will be interrogated over the course of this thesis.

However, I do not intend to imply that contemporary fiction is necessarily postmodernist. It is entirely possible for recently-published fiction to respond to conventions introduced in a previous era. Alternatively, it has been proposed (e.g. Burn 2019; cf. Wales 2011: 332) that fictions published over the past decade or so are in fact *post*-postmodernist. This term – alternately *automodernism*, *ergomodernism* and/or *hypermodernism* – refers to a chronological grouping suggested for the most recently-published literary texts. Published, respectively, in 2019, 2018, 2014 and 2017, the case studies for this thesis (see Section 1.5) could be counted within this category. Much as with postmodernist texts in relation to modernist ones, post-postmodernist texts are conceived to be a reaction to their literary predecessors. As Neeper (2016) outlines, this takes the form of a renewed emphasis upon sincerity and empathy within narratives, at the expense of the sarcasm and pastiche which are seen to typify postmodernist texts. Nonetheless, even if they are to be defined as ‘post-postmodernist’, post-2000 novels may still trace a literary lineage to postmodernist forbears of previous decades. Similarly, postmodernist fiction does not supplant the epistemological dominant McHale (1987) associates with modernist fiction. Instead, it is merely backgrounded, and he cautions: ‘push ontological questions far enough and they tip over into epistemological questions’ (11).

As O’Gorman and Eaglestone (2019) recognise, contemporary fiction often proves responsive to the current mood or moment. In short, it is reflective of the *zeitgeist*. As a result, these fictions are popular objects of study for reading groups, whose discussions are frequently collated on online forums. Due to the media furore and attendant publicity generated by the [Man] Booker Prize (see Section 1.3, above), novels awarded the Prize are even more likely to feature in these contexts, as well as to be reviewed on websites including *Amazon* and *Goodreads*. Chapters 4 and 6 makes use of the resulting glut of reader-response data, supplementing my own analyses informed by a steam stylistic sensibility. The resulting findings are thus less subjective than intersubjective (see further Section 8.2). Moreover, this methodological triangulation proves a mutually beneficial process, for while reading group responses bolster potentially subjective judgements, fine-grained linguistic analysis can also illuminate the impressionistic statements made by lay readers. The focus of this thesis upon contemporary literature and its readership also aligns with the ‘contemporary bias’ (Gavins and

Steen 2003: 12) in cognitive stylistic theory. In practice, this prevents over-generalised hypothesising about the mental functioning of readers from previous eras.

However, the surplus of popular interest in contemporary fiction frequently correlates with a lack of scholarly criticism investigating this fiction. This is a prosaic reality: there simply has not been the time to amass many studies of recently-published works. A rudimentary keyword search, conducted in May 2022 via the integrated literary database Gale Literature, captures this dearth. A search for literary criticism relating to Willa Cather's *My Antonia* (1918) returned 617 results. A similar search involving Anna Burns' (2018b) *Milkman*, which serves as the second case study for this thesis, returned a mere 9. Even allowing for the somewhat lax inclusion of multiple independent variables (e.g. authorial nationality, genre of fiction) within this impromptu survey, the results are telling. An interval of one hundred years in publication dates shrinks the number of academic studies conducted into the fiction by a factor of almost 70.

If scholarly articles on recent [Man] Booker Prize-winning fictions tend to be scarce, full-length monographs are non-existent. Todd's (1996) study, promoted as 'the first full study of the Booker-led explosion of literary fiction' (n.p), evidently does not extend the chronological scope of its analysis beyond the mid-1990s, and is yet to be updated by additional research. Likewise, Strongman's (2002) interrogation of the Booker Prize in conjunction with colonial history surveys the years 1969-1999. Yet, if perhaps a little counterintuitively, this dearth proves a boon to the present thesis. It facilitates the third of my aforementioned three aims for this thesis, as sketched in Section 1.0 and considered in further detail in the following section.

1.4. Thesis Aims

As adumbrated above, the aims of this thesis are threefold:

1) To demonstrate further, following Adam (2021), the feasibility of the combined cognitive—ontological text-possible, or 'Best of Both Worlds Theories', approach;
2) To propose the heretofore social-psychological concept of the *metaperspective* as not only applicable, but often integral, to literature;
3) To contribute a stylistic (literary-linguistic) perspective to the critical study of international, contemporary, prize-winning literary fiction.

Chapter 2 services the first aim. It outlines the trajectories of two critical 'worlds theories', the ontologically-grounded possible worlds theory (e.g. Ryan 1991b) and its cognitive counterpart, Text World Theory (e.g. Gavins 2007; Werth 1999), from their respective prehistories to the

present day. Following this, the confluence of the two theories, which have until now been treated discretely by scholars, is examined, and an amalgamated 'Best of Both Worlds Theories' approach is advocated. This is the approach adopted in the four case-study chapters (Chapters 4 to 7).

Chapter 3 contributes to the second aim in outlining the origins of the notion of the *metaperspective*, alongside aligning the term with current stylistic frameworks, Herman's (1994, 2002) concept of hypothetical focalisation chief among them. It concludes by suggesting the existence of various metaperspectival sub-types. Although by no means exclusive, four in particular are proposed: 1) the discourse-architectural metaperspective; 2) the communal metaperspective; 3) the racialised metaperspective; 4) the literalised metaperspective. These four terms stand in a semantic relation of hyponymy to the overarching hypernym *metaperspective*, as Fig. 1.3 illustrates. Within this figure, the parenthesised ellipses are intended to account for both the recursivity of the construct of the metaperspective, and for the potential existence of further metaperspectival sub-types. These topics will be unpicked in Chapters 3 and 8, respectively.

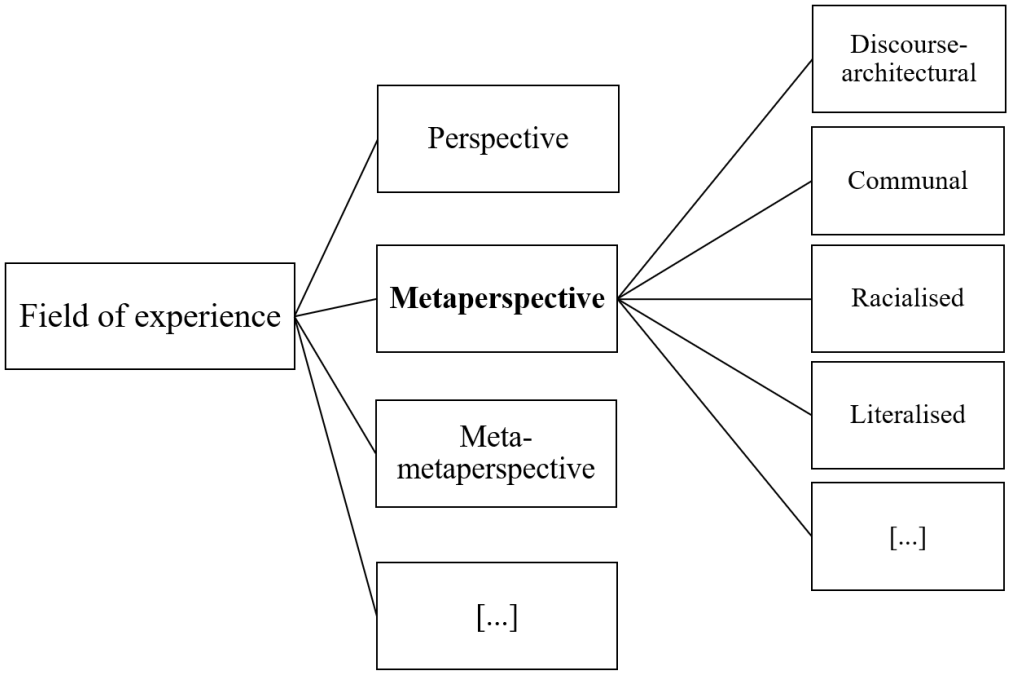

Fig. 1.3. The semantic network of the term *metaperspective*

The four proposed sub-types are then investigated, one apiece, in the following four case-study chapters. The 'case studies' in question are all contemporary (i.e. post-2000) novels which have been awarded the prestigious [Man] Booker Prize, allowing me to realise aim 3), as stated above.

Taken together, Chapters 3 to 7 also address a range of questions related to the metaperspective, namely: Are metaperspectives in literature generally uniform, or do they come in several different varieties? If so, what are these varieties? How may they be defined? What are their linguistic *differentiae specifica*?

Across the eight chapters which comprise the present thesis, reference is made, to a greater or lesser extent, to each one of the 22 novels which have won the [Man] Booker Prize between 2000 and 2020. This inclusivity is motivated: if it allows for the eclecticism of the contemporary [Man] Booker Prize-winning cohort to be represented in its entirety, it also as far as possible avoids researcher bias towards a particular text-internal or -external (e.g. authorial, generic) criterion within this oeuvre (though see Section 1.5). Nonetheless, some texts feature far more substantially than others. For instance, in Chapter 3 a single paragraph of Howard Jacobson's (2010) *The Finkler Question* is excerpted as a provisional illustration of the metaperspective. Equally short snippets from a half-dozen other [Man] Booker-winning novels figure in Chapter 8, 'Conclusions and Future Prospects', as an indication of promising, as-yet-unexplored avenues for future research. Conversely, as acknowledged above, a quartet of case-study novels inform the bulk of the stylistic investigation of Chapters 4 to 7. The next section turns to briefly explain the selection of these particular novels, justifying what could otherwise appear an uneven or overly subjective approach.

1.5. Thesis Case Studies

The four case-study novels explored across this thesis are as follows:

1. Chapter 4: Margaret Atwood's *The Testaments*, published in 2019 and joint winner of the Booker Prize 2019;
2. Chapter 5: Anna Burns' *Milkman*, published in 2018 and winner of the Man Booker Prize 2018;
3. Chapter 6: Marlon James' *A Brief History of Seven Killings*, published in 2014 and winner of the Man Booker Prize 2015;

4. Chapter 7: George Saunders' *Lincoln in the Bardo*, published in 2017 and winner of the Man Booker Prize 2017.

The quartet demonstrates diversity across a variety of dimensions. Just as the 2018 Man Booker Prize judging panel openly aspired to a shortlist evenly balanced across the categories of authorial gender, ethnicity and nationality (Hutton 2019), so too do I follow their example here. Hence two of the four case-study novels come from female authors, and two from males; one of the authors is Black, and three are White; the authors hail from, respectively, Canada, Northern Ireland, Jamaica, and the United States. Meanwhile, the authors also differ as to degree of seniority and renown. Whilst Atwood has published 18 works of fiction to date, *Lincoln in the Bardo* is Saunders' debut full-length novel. Neither Burns nor James were well-known prior to their respective Man Booker wins, while Saunders was already a celebrated short story writer, and Atwood had previously been shortlisted five times for the Booker, and won once. This heterogeneity is not a mere striving for equal representation, though of course this is an important consideration, as has recently been highlighted by the Decolonising the Curriculum initiative (see further Charles 2019). Given the colonial roots of the [Man] Booker Prize, this indeed proves a particularly pertinent issue within the context of the present thesis. The balance also validates the conclusions drawn, preventing the implication that stylistic trends are tied to a particular authorial characteristic.

Generically, the case-study novels themselves are just as assorted. Each may be considered under the broad umbrella of 'literary fiction' (see Section 1.3.1), yet within this classification are dystopian, experimental, historical, marvelous and realist sub-types. This variety is reflected in the divergent accessibility relations (Ryan 1991a, 1991b) of each novel, a subject explored across the four case-study chapters. In the case of Saunders' *Lincoln in the Bardo*, in particular, the generic classification of the novel proves crucial to the specific metaperspectival sub-type under consideration.

Chronologically, however, the case-study cohort is less diverse, clustered as the publication dates for the novels are in the latter half of this century's second decade (as Fig. 1.2 spotlights). This situation is due to coincidence rather than design. It does however, prove ideal in the context of my third research aim, as the recency of my case-study novels means few published analyses of the works currently exist. Their recent nature also serves to uphold the observed tradition of stylistic analysis at the vanguard of literary study (Gavins 2007; Simpson 2014). Similarly homogenous is what Genette (1980) would term the 'Mood' and 'Voice' employed

by the four case-study novels. Namely, all four are *homodiegetic narratives* primarily employing *internal focalisation*. This preference is purposeful and will be addressed further in Chapter 3. In this chapter will also be found an overview of the uncontextualised, italicised technical terminology employed above, alongside related terms. In the final sub-section of this Introduction, I outline further the contents of the seven upcoming chapters of this thesis. This prefigures a more detailed outline in Chapter 3, following an explanation of the concept of the *metaperspective*, a central unifying thread with which the case-study chapters are stitched together.

1.6. Thesis Contents

The next chapter of this thesis crystallises the methodology to be employed across subsequent chapters, and comprises three distinct parts. The first two sub-sections focus respectively upon the cognitive stylistic Text World Theory (Gavins 2007; Werth 1999) and the narratological possible worlds theory (e.g. Ryan 1991b). The pre-histories, histories, and current applications of the two theories are considered, and comparisons are drawn between them. In both sub-sections I append a brief textual excerpt from a contemporary (i.e. post-2000) [Man] Booker Prize-winning novel. This allows me to illustrate how both theories may be fruitfully, if discretely, applied to aid the stylistic analysis of contemporary fiction. However, applying both theories in tandem is my ultimate ambition. In order to achieve this, the chapter introduces the innovative, integrative method I propose to employ over the course of this thesis: the 'Best of Both Worlds Theories' approach. This thus addresses this thesis' first aim, as stated above.

The third chapter, which concentrates upon the assorted terminology relevant to the present thesis, is similarly theoretical in focus. Its main contribution is an outline of the hypernym *metaperspective,* which begins to fulfil aim 2), above, and paves the way for the exploration of four distinct metaperspectival sub-types, or hyponyms, in the following four case-study chapters. Indeed, the application of the metaperspective to literature constitutes the central original contribution of this thesis. Alongside explaining the concept, which originates in the field of [social] psychology, the chapter also integrates it into existing stylistic frameworks, particularly concentrating upon those concerned with point of view. These include Herman's (1994, 2002) notion of 'hypothetical focalization', and Simpson's (1993) modal classification system. This buttresses my proposal that the concept of the metaperspective be integrated into the so-called stylistic toolkit (Short 1996).

The next four chapters put the theory into practice. Each one is centred around a contemporary [Man] Booker Prize-winning work of fiction, which is employed as case study in the consideration of four proposed metaperspectival sub-types: the *discourse-architectural metaperspective*; the *communal metaperspective*; the *racialised metaperspective*; the *literalised metaperspective*. These sub-types each possess distinct 'typical linguistic indices'; these are first identified then exemplified through the fine-grained, steam stylistic analysis of select textual excerpts from the case-study novel in question. Related phenomena, informed by the disciplines of stylistics and narratology (*[inverted] communal hypothetical focalisation*; *intradiegetic recentering*) as well as postcolonial studies and sociology (*controlling images*; *double consciousness*) are also discussed. While some of these concepts have an established critical history, others are my own coinages, inspired by and responding to previous academic studies. The methodological framework throughout remains Chapter 2's 'Best of Both Worlds Theories' approach, fulfilling aims 1) and 3) outlined above.

The final chapter, entitled 'Conclusions and Future Prospects', is both retrospective and prospective. It begins by summarising the original contributions made over the course of the preceding chapters, hence cementing the terminological coinages proposed. Following this, the limitations of the present study are acknowledged; this is countered in part by the following sub-sections, which present comparable areas for further academic study. In order to demonstrate the expansive and dynamic nature of the concept of the metaperspective, I also point to additional metaperspectival sub-types, unexplored in this particular study, which could nonetheless inform future research. We humans are, after all, 'constantly supposing' (Laing *et al*. 1966: 4).

‘[T]he potential for synchrony’: A ‘Best of Both Worlds Theories’ Approach

> Most of the time you feel the potential for synchrony, but only once in a while do things actually synch up. Things can synch good, or synch bad.
>
> (*Vernon God Little*, Pierre 2003: 201)

2.0. Preliminaries

This chapter outlines the ‘Best of Both Worlds Theories’ approach which will inform the four case-study chapters of this thesis. The proposed amalgamated methodology seeks to combine the ontological insights of possible worlds theory, the literary application of which has been spearheaded most notably by the narratologist Ryan (e.g. 1985, 1986, 1991a, 1991b, 1995, 2015; Ryan and Bell 2019), with Text World Theory, a cognitive-poetic framework first devised by the linguist Werth (1994, 1999). It is to an overview of this latter theory that this chapter first turns, before continuing on to a comparable explication of possible worlds theory in Section 2.2. The third and final part (Section 2.3) suggests how the two erstwhile discrete theories may work profitably in tandem, thus capitalising upon the best of both worlds-based theories. Given that they are already grounded in a shared conceptual metaphor – TEXT IS WORLD – I hope to demonstrate their capacity to ‘synch good’.

2.1. Text World Theory

Text World Theory is an experiential, cognitive-poetic theory, centrally concerned with the mental processing of discourse in context. It explores how rich mental representations may be prompted by even the most scant of spoken stretches or written passages of language. First comprehensively elaborated in Werth (1999; cf. 1994), the theory has since been revised and extended by Browse (2016), Gavins (2001, 2005, 2007), Gibbons and Whiteley (2021), Giovanelli (2013), Lahey (2006), McLoughlin (2020), Norledge (2020), Nuttall (2017) and Whiteley (2011, 2015), among several others. The focus of these subsequent scholars has largely been on extending the scope of Text World Theory to cover new modes and mediums, meaning that each have retained the crux of Werth’s original theory. Likewise, the following four sub-sections are informed in the most part by Werth’s seminal monograph entitled *Text*

worlds: Representing conceptual space in discourse, published posthumously in 1999 under the editorship of Mick Short. These sub-sections elaborate respectively upon the pre-history of Text World Theory, its core principles and its problems, before putting the theory into practice via the analysis of a short textual excerpt. The chosen text is the 2009 historical novel *Wolf Hall*, written by the two-time Man Booker Prize-winning author Hilary Mantel.

Harnessing a Text World Theory approach undergirded by a steam stylistic sensibility, this analysis pre-empts the more in-depth textual investigations of Chapters 4 to 7, which are conducted using my proposed 'Best of Both Worlds Theories' approach. The following major section in this chapter, Section 2.2, details the pre-history, principles and problems of possible worlds theory in like manner. It then also appends a brief textual analysis of a former Man Booker Prize winner, DBC Pierre's 2003 black comedy *Vernon God Little*, albeit an analysis, in this instance, informed by a possible-worlds perspective. It is only by first treating the two approaches discretely that their potential when applied in tandem may be fully realised. The ultimate aim is to highlight, in the parlance of *Vernon God Little*'s eponymous teen protagonist, 'the potential for synchrony' between Text World Theory and possible worlds theory.

2.1.1. A Brief History of Text World Theory

Text World Theory is the inheritor of earlier works in text linguistics (e.g. van Dijk 1972). These studies are premised largely upon decontextualised, sentence-based analysis, rather than a holistic context-bound approach. However, Werth (1999) aimed to take a more inclusive approach, and circumscribed as his subject matter 'no less than 'all the furniture of the earth and heavens'' (17). As a 'discourse linguist[ic]' (3) approach, then, Text World Theory is able to account for the mental processing of each and every conceivable discourse type, spoken or written, be it crisp packet packaging or canonical classic. (For a succinct overview of the success of Werth's ambitious, interdisciplinary project, see Browse 2016: 20; Gibbons and Whiteley 2021: 105-6). Text World Theory's experiential outlook means that it strives to avoid the decontextualized textual analysis of its predecessors. Indeed, the first of three layers which inform a fully realised text world is the discourse world, which pertains to the wider world experienced beyond the text. Below, I turn to an explication of this first layer, as well as of the two to which it acts as matrix.

2.1.2. Text World Theory: Principles

Central to Text World Theory is the existence of three layers enabling the cognitive processing of discourse. These comprise a) the discourse world, b) the text world, and c) the sub-world. [4] Each are diagrammed upon Fig. 2.1, below.

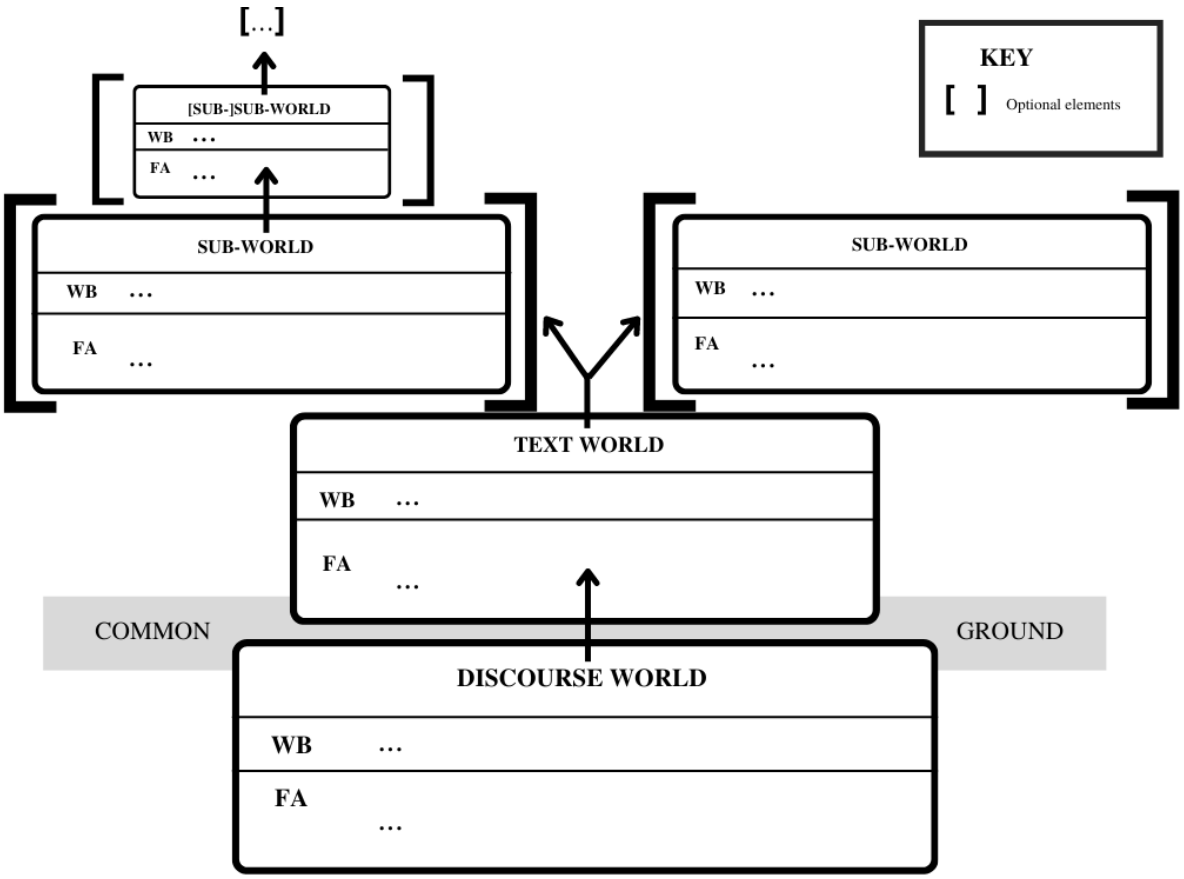

Fig. 2.1. Text World Theory

The first level – the discourse world – is 'the communicative (or immediate) situation' (Werth 1999: 362), the conceptual backdrop against which the discourse is comprehended. The discourse world attendant upon the reading of a novel will typically include two participants: the author and the reader (though see further Chapter 4). The discourse world is informed symbiotically by two inputs, the first direct ('perception' [17]), the second cognitive ('knowledge of the elements perceived' [*ibid*]). This latter, epistemic input may be either

[4] During the following explication of Text World Theory, I follow the original typography of Werth (1999), employing hyphenation for the nominal 'sub-world' alone, and leaving 'discourse world' and 'text world' dehyphenated. This asymmetry is implicitly rejected by Gavins (2007), among others, who hyphenates all of the aforementioned terms.

personal, mutual (i.e. shared among discourse participants), or universal. All discourse worlds have distinct deictic parameters, as they are by their nature located in some definite time and space. The figure above represents the discourse world via the bottommost oblong. As with the computer stack metaphor adopted by Ryan (2004: 440), this marks the discourse world as the primary and originating level upon which all others are based.

The second level – the text world – is formed from the mental constructs of the participants of the first discourse world level. Indeed, it can be glossed as: '[A] *deictic space, **defined initially by the discourse itself**, and specifically by the deictic and referential elements in it*.' (Werth 1999: 180; italics in original, emboldening mine). As evidenced by the first co-ordinating conjunction within this quotation, Text World Theory's second level is again the product of two mutually enforcing sources of knowledge. On Fig. 2.1, this world is situated directly above that of the discourse world, indicating its subordinate status; a discourse world must necessarily exist for a text world to be created.

The third and final level of the Text World Theory framework is that of the sub-world. As with Text World Theory's initial division between the discourse world, the text world and the sub-world, Werth's (1999) division of sub-world types is also triadic (216). Thus he suggests that sub-worlds comprise i) deictic alterations; ii) modalised worlds; iii) epistemic worlds. These may be created, respectively, through the alteration of spatial and/or temporal parameters, by the indication of modality, or by the expression of knowledge. Sub-worlds may also be generated through the use of negation and of metaphor. Stockwell (2020a: 164-5) refers to these two sub-world types as 'fleeting worlds', given the short temporal span of attentional movement with which they are associated. Unlike other sub-world types, negation worlds arise from the removal rather than the addition of one or more world-building parameters. Metaphor worlds, meanwhile, convey their meaning through the construction of a source- and target-world which feed into a blended-world (cf. Browse 2016; McLoughlin 2020), paralleling the construction of conceptual metaphors (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). It should be noted that, of the three levels of Text World Theory, the sub-world is the only non-mandatory level; in Fig. 2.1 this is indicated by the square parentheses enclosing the two uppermost oblongs. Also unique to the sub-world is the capacity for both recursive embedding and for simultaneity, as indexed by the parallel sub-world callouts of Fig. 2.1. Furthermore, it is only the latter two world levels – the text world and the sub-world – which may be either participant- or character-accessible. These qualities relate to the source of the world and its consequent verifiability; accessibility relations of worlds may be decided by establishing a) who is directly responsible

for their construction, and b) to whom questions about their contents may be addressed. In contrast, all discourse worlds are necessarily participant-accessible.

Whilst acknowledging a hierarchy to the three world levels, Werth (1999) also proposes that the layers exhibit a 'fractal' (336ff.) structure. Through this he suggests all three to be formed in a duplicative way, exhibiting 'the property of 'self-similarity'' (337), with certain components shared by all. These components Werth (1999) divides into two overarching, complementary sets: the world-building (WB) elements, and the function-advancing (FA) propositions. The former are largely noun phrases which concretise the world in question by defining its parameters (temporal or locative) and by furnishing it with entities in the form of characters and objects. To explicate via a car analogy, this is the specification of the vehicle (e.g. engine capacity, make and model), distinguishing features (colour of bodywork) and add-on extras (like bumper stickers). The latter are largely verb phrases which enable an otherwise static scene to progress into a dynamic state-of-affairs. In short, they are the vehicle's four wheels. While here I present the two categories discretely, recent updates to Werth's model show the dividing line to be not quite so definite. Generic differences, in particular, have been demonstrated to impact upon the categorisation of world-building and function-advancing elements (Lahey 2006; cf. Werth 1999: 249).

A final important component of Werth's (1999) Text World Theory is the concept of Common Ground. This is defined as '*the totality of information which the speaker(s) and hearer(s) have agreed to accept as relevant for their discourse*' (Werth 1999: 119; italics in original). It is thus an epistemic backdrop comprised of necessary contextual knowledge alongside information absorbed from the preceding discourse. Crucially, it is a text-driven construct: given the potentially infinite nature of human knowledge, Werth (1999) proposes that only information primed by the text world will be retrieved from the Common Ground.

Recently, this notion has commonly discounted, found by many to be unwieldy and/or problematic: 'contemporary text-world theorists have largely ceased referring to it at all', as Browse (2019: n.p) acknowledges. Browse (2016), as a scholar who does retain the concept, nevertheless questions where precisely it is to be located. Does the Common Ground reside in the text world, he enquires, or, alternatively, in the discourse world from which the text world is derived? Werth's (1999) explicit bullet-pointing of 'two sources' (119) for the Common Ground leads me to conclude in favour of a combination of the two. For this reason, Fig. 2.1 represents the common ground as a pale grey rectangle straddling both the discourse world and

text world levels. Its placement behind both iconically suggests its supportive function. In Section 2.1.4, below, the concept of the Common Ground proves its utility in the analysis of the historical novel *Wolf Hall*, and I therefore do not wish to discount it as have previous Text World Theory-based studies.

2.1.3. Text World Theory: Problems

Of Text World Theory's three levels, it is the sub-world which has been subject to the most revision in the decades since its conception, and Werth's (1999) typology is now considered somewhat obsolete with regard to this last level. The most significant amendments have come courtesy of Gavins (2001, 2005, 2007). She argues convincingly that the subordinate status entailed by the 'sub' prefix is frequently untenable in relation to sub-worlds. For instance, in texts featuring a homodiegetic narrator, it is perfectly possible for an epistemic sub-world to be far more visible than any objective matrix text world which may have generated it. (See further Chapter 6, esp. Section 6.3.4). This would then result in the sub-world being both quantitatively more significant and qualitatively more salient. This anomaly can also occur in relation to deictic sub-worlds. A prolonged flashback sequence may be perceptually privileged over an initial framing text world, particularly if the former comprises the majority of the narrative, and the latter its opening lines only. Again, in this instance, a so-called sub-world would supplant its initiating text world. The case-study text for Chapter 5 of this thesis, *Milkman* by Anna Burns (2018b) proves a prime example. As indicated both by the past tense aspect of the narration and infrequent proleptic remarks – 'I saw a programme on TV years after I had split from maybe-boyfriend' (37), for example – the unspecified time of narration is temporally anterior to the time of the events narrated, which retain primary focus. Only occasionally does this text world impinge upon the tale of middle sister and Milkman, but it is ontologically superordinate nonetheless. Gavins' (2001, 2005, 2007) solution is to introduce the twin concepts of the *world-switch* (encompassing alterations in temporal and/or spatial parameters within a text world) and *modal-worlds*. This latter may be further stratified according to content: boulomaic modal-worlds thus express desire; deontic modal-worlds detail commitments; epistemic modal-worlds relay beliefs.

Despite the altered labels, there remains considerable overlap between Gavins' (2001, 2005, 2007) constructs and Werth's original (1999) categories. No new categories have been introduced; the terminology has merely been tweaked so as to realise the often underappreciated potentiality of the sub-world. For instance, a world-switch equates to a deictic

sub-world in all but name, whilst the epistemic sub-world quite clearly parallels the epistemic modal-world in form and function, if not quite in phraseology. Meanwhile, there remain substantial gaps in both typologies, and it is for this reason, as shall be argued in Section 2.3, that the 'Best of Both Worlds Theories' approach proves so promising.

Gavins (2007) further amends Werth's initial (1999) terminology by referring to 'enactors' as opposed to 'characters' and 'sub-characters' (Werth 1999: 189-90). The former term, borrowed from contextual frame theory (e.g. Emmott 1997), refers to specific iterations of an individual at different world levels. As Gavins (2007) glosses: 'Enactors are simply different versions of the same [non-fictional] person or [fictional] character which exist at different conceptual levels of a discourse' (41). This concept is thus particularly helpful for instances in which actual individuals are imported into fictional contexts, as with Henry Tudor in Excerpt 2.1, below.

A further potential problem with Text World Theory is its tendency towards essentialism. The opening chapter of Gavins (2007) asserts that:

> While the distinct pictures we create of language in our minds may vary in their precise constitution, *all* linguistically competent human beings process *all* language in this way. We construct mental representations, or **text-worlds**, which enable us to conceptualise and understand every piece of language we encounter. How these text-worlds are formed, their conceptual configuration, and how we as human beings make use of them are the focus of **Text World Theory**.

(Gavins 2007: 2; italics and emboldening in original)

This is problematic. While the above constitutes a laudable attempt to find some cognitive common ground *vis-à-vis* human language processing, the italicised quantifiers imply a homogeneity that is unwarranted. Instead, empirical evidence has suggested there to be 'amazing variation in what words stimulate [different] people to see' (Otis 2015b: 506). This is something only hinted at by Gavins' above evocation of text worlds which 'vary in their precise constitution'. As neuroscientific research has illuminated (e.g. Galton 1880; Höffler *et al*. 2017; Otis 2015a, 2015b), there are three distinct strategies for language processing: the verbal, the visual spatial, and the visual pictorial. Not all construct 'distinct pictures' in order to process a text: this is the preserve of the latter group, the visual pictorial processors. They alone will produce what Cushing (2021) calls 'rich, mental representations of language' (184). [5] While this processing style is one which will generate holistic and specific mental

[5] Clearly Gavins is not the only text world theorist to elide distinct cognitive processing styles; she is used here for illustrative purposes only. Furthermore, in an earlier article she is less prescriptivist in stance, employing

representations, those of the visual (spatial) will be schematic, and those of the verbal abstract. Indeed, case study no. 98 in Galton's pioneering (1880) research into cognitive processing types averred: 'I remember well where a word occurs in a page [yet] [t]he ideas are not felt to be mental pictures, but rather symbols of facts' (306). In this way, for this extremely verbally-oriented reader, mental representations are not only severely visually attenuated but almost non-existent.

Ultimately, researchers employing Text World Theory – be it fully or, as here, partially – must be mindful of this heterogeneity in processing. Any reference to the 'distinct pictures' formed during text world construction must be accompanied by the proviso that three cognitive processing types exist.

2.1.4. Text World Theory in Practice

As a textual demonstration of the three aforementioned levels of Text World Theory, below is reproduced a passage from Hilary Mantel's historical novel *Wolf Hall* (2009), winner of the Man Booker Prize the year of its publication. I accompany the analysis of the two paragraph-long passage with a diagram of the text world and sub-worlds it establishes (Fig. 2.2).

The novel *Wolf Hall* is the first of a trilogy depicting the political machinations of the tempestuous Tudor court. The presiding monarch is Henry VIII, the English king famed for having six wives. The excerpt below, heterodiegetically narrated and internally focalised, takes Henry as both filter and interest-focus (Chatman 1986) as he inveigles to replace his existing wife, Queen Katherine of Aragon, with his inamorata Anne Boleyn. [6]

Excerpt 2.1

> It is June, 1527; well barbered and curled, tall and still trim from certain angles, and wearing white silk, the king makes his way to his wife's apartments. He moves in a perfumed cloud made of the essence of roses: as if he owns all the roses, owns all the summer nights.
> His voice is low, gentle, persuasive, and full of regret. If he were free, he says, if there were no impediment, it is she, above all women, that he would choose for his wife. The lack of sons wouldn't matter; God's will be done. He would like nothing better than to marry her all over again; lawfully, this time. But there it is: it can't be managed. She was his brother's wife. Their union has offended divine law.

(Mantel 2009: 88-9)

volitional modality to argue that text worlds 'can' be complex, and 'often' (though crucially not *always*) as richly detailed as our real-world surroundings (Gavins 2005: 10).

[6] In referring to the novel's characters, I follow the nomological orthography of the 'Cast of Characters' preface; see Mantel 2009: xv-xix.

The discourse world of the above passage necessarily varies from reader to reader. (There are even more possibilities than Henry had wives!). I myself first read it on a rainy February day in 2020, as faint rumours of a mysterious virus began to circulate. Nonetheless, the discourse world must necessarily be located sometime after 30 April 2009, the date of publication of the first hardback edition of the book. This then distinguishes the extradiegetic discourse world from the intradiegetic text world, the temporal parameters of which are explicitly set as 'June, 1527'. The physical location of the text world is more implicit, though it can be inferred to be one of Henry's royal residences due to the locative expression 'to his wife's apartments'. The nominal within this phrase also serves as world-building (WB) element for the scene, alongside several others including the somewhat less tangible 'a perfumed cloud made of the essence of roses'. In addition to these inanimate world builders are the animate enactors 'the king' and 'his wife', vocatives which denote, respectively, Henry Tudor and Katherine of Aragon. The actions of the former, both static (e.g. 'wearing white silk') and dynamic ('makes his way', 'moves') form the function-advancing (FA) propositions for this initial paragraph. Neatly iconic, Henry's literal forward motion within the text world enables the metaphorical forward motion of the novel's plotline.

While the first paragraph of Excerpt 2.1 is primarily devoted to the construction of a text world, the second develops several different varieties of what Werth (1999) would term sub-worlds. Indeed, at least one of each of the three sub-world types surveyed above is in evidence, in both participant- and enactor-accessible forms. The penultimate sentence, for instance, cues a participant-accessible deictic sub-world, diverging momentarily from the stipulated time-signature of the text-world (i.e. 'June, 1527') to focus on past events. It is a prototypical instance of flashback, or analepsis (Genette 1980), in which 'an incident prior to the main storyline of the text world' (Werth 1999: 213-4) – namely the 1501 marriage of Katherine of Aragon to Henry's elder brother, Arthur Tudor – is referenced. Alternately, Gavins (2001, 2005, 2007) would class this as a (temporal) world-switch.

An attitudinal sub-world is to be found in the clause 'He would like nothing better than to marry her again'. Constituting as it does a 'predicate[...] of the *want* class' (Werth 1999: 227), this clause forms a so-called 'Desire world' for Werth (1999) and a modal-world of the boulomaic variety for Gavins (2001, 2005, 2007). Unlike the deictic sub-world, this attitudinal sub-world is of the enactor-accessible variety as it details enactor Henry Tudor's cognition. Indeed, the assertion perfectly captures the potentially unreliable nature of enactor-accessible sub-worlds. Text world knowledge gleaned from prior chapters of the novel, potentially

bolstered by extratextual historical knowledge contained within the Common Ground, will enable the reader to identify Henry's statement as disingenuous. Indeed, as Arias (2014) observes, disguise and dissembling are tropes repeated throughout the novel. Henry's actual desire is to marry Anne Boleyn, as any reader with even a passing familiarity with either his reign or the Reformation should realise.

Lastly, a duo of chained epistemic sub-worlds can be identified (for Gavins [2001, 2005, 2007] these would be classed as modal-worlds of the epistemic variety). These form hypothetical scenarios in which, counterfactually, Henry is 'free' to marry as he pleases, unfettered by lawful 'impediment' to a marriage with Katherine. As with the attitudinal sub-world, this sub-world is enactor-accessible, and equally unreliable. An astute reader may divine that, if there were no impediment, the king would probably choose to divorce Katherine, rather than to wed her anew. It should, however, be noted that this interpretation is once again based upon a Common Ground cache of knowledge that some readers (for instance those taught Tudor history at school) are more likely to possess than others.

Further sub-worlds are generated through the use of negation and of metaphor in Excerpt 2.1. The clause 'The lack of sons wouldn't matter', for example, establishes a temporary negative sub-world through its alteration of the parameters of the originating text world. The system of primogeniture and its centrality to the English monarchy is momentarily discounted in favour of an idealised alternative cued by the clitic in the contraction. The metaphor sub-world comes courtesy of the asyndetic clauses 'as if he owns all the roses, owns all the summer nights'. Together they establish a blended world, formed from a text world plus a sub-world (or alternatively a source-world plus a target-world [Browse 2016]), in which Henry has dominion over all living beings as opposed to his human subjects alone.

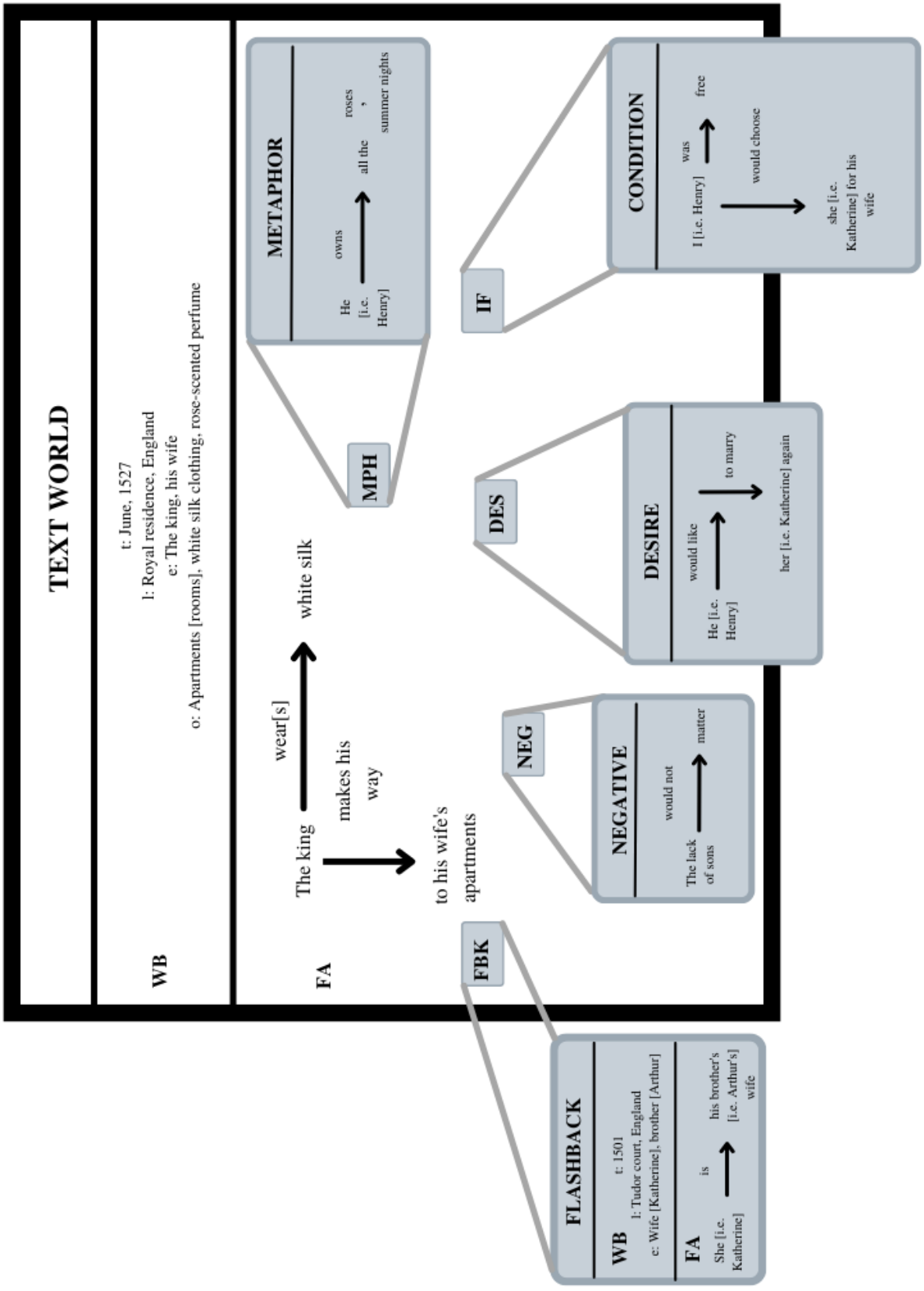

Fig. 2.2. A Text World Theory diagram of pages 88 to 89 of Mantel's (2009) *Wolf Hall*

Fig. 2.2 collates the observations of the preceding paragraphs into a Text World Theory diagram based upon Excerpt 2.1. [7] As Browse (2016) rightly observes, these diagrams can often prove 'unwieldy' (23). Fig. 2.2 is thus tailored to suit my purposes here, as advocated by Gavins (2007), rather than being exhaustive. The aim, rather than comprehensiveness, is to indicate the proliferating, overlapping world types which may be generated by even a few short paragraphs of prose.

Central to the diagram is the main text world of the novel *Wolf Hall*, i.e. the tumultuous Tudor court of the early sixteenth century. Following Werth (1999), as it is this world which is in prominent cognitive focus during the reading process, it is bounded by an emboldened line. Prominent world-building elements are indexed by the shorthand of 't', 'l', 'e', and 'o', referring respectively to *time*, *location*, *enactors* and *objects*. Function-advancing propositions, meanwhile, are indexed via arrows. The horizontal correspond to modifiers, designed to flesh out the world of the story, whilst the vertical represents paths spurring the story's plotline. Owing to the fractal structuring of Text World Theory's three levels, the same notation is employed with each of the various sub-worlds.

Due to its complete deictic remoteness (temporal and spatial), the 'FLASHBACK' sub-world is positioned entirely apart from the main text world. It is the only sub-world to establish new WB parameters; as its contents occurred in the temporal past (1501), the sub-world is positioned to the left-hand side of the diagram (see further Werth 1999: 299). Other sub-world boxes indicate some level of remoteness, whilst maintaining key WB parameters. These include the 'DESIRE' and 'HYPOTHESIS' sub-world. An alternative interpretation of the passage would embed the desire world within the conditional 'IF' world, but for the purpose of clarity I choose to diagram them separately above. Meanwhile, as the 'NEGATION' and 'METAPHOR' sub-worlds tweak existing text world parameters, they are entirely enclosed by the text world callout. However, as I illustrate in the following section, I believe possible worlds theory to offer a more sophisticated approach to differentiating the relations of accessibility between world levels.

2.2. Possible Worlds Theory

The second framework to inform this thesis is that of possible worlds theory. Below, I summarise the trajectory of its interdisciplinary application, before crystallising its key criteria

[7] My figure follows the notation employed by Werth (1999: xv-xvii).

when applied in a literary context. Throughout, I allude to several salient similarities and differences between possible worlds theory and the Text World Theory surveyed in the previous section. This is in preparation for Section 2.3, which aims to integrate the two theories and so propose an amalgamated 'Best of Both Worlds Theories' approach.

2.2.1. A Brief History of Possible Worlds Theory

Possible worlds theory in literature is an offshoot of possible-worlds notions explored in philosophy of logic. Study of the latter originated with the eighteenth-century German polymath Gottfried Wilhelm Leibnitz (e.g. 2001 [1710]). Leibnitz reasoned that the world in which we live is but one (albeit ontologically privileged) option, selected from among many other alternative ways the world might have been. Adopting a theological stance, Leibnitz proposed the agent of this selection to be God, and further that God had chosen 'the best (*optimum*) from among all possible worlds' (128; italics in original) in creating this world. He continues:

> I call 'World' the whole succession and agglomeration of all existent things, lest it be said that several worlds could have existed in different times and different places. For they must needs be reckoned all together as one world or, if you will, as one Universe. And even though one should fill all times and places, it still remains true that *one might have filled them in innumerable ways, and that there is an infinitude of possible worlds* among which God must needs have chosen the best, since he does nothing without acting in accordance with supreme reason.

(Leibnitz 2001: 128; my italics)

The above quotation summarises succinctly the central notion of possible worlds theory. It establishes a dichotomy between the pertaining, or 'existent', world in which we live, and 'an infinitude of possible worlds' which are non-pertaining. The former, ranging across both chronological and geographical boundaries ('different times and different places'), I will hereafter refer to as *the Actual World*. It exists in contradistinction to the many ways in which the world might have been, which constitute merely *possible worlds*. The nominal plurality here is key: these alternatives are, after all, declared to be 'innumerable'.

During the twentieth century, the concept of possible worlds gained prominence among scholars of modal logic. (For an overview, see the essays collected in Loux 1979). It was used largely to account for the truth-functional status of various propositions in discourse. From here, the interdisciplinary trajectory of possible world theory's application led to literature. Literary-minded reworkings can be found in Doležel (1979), Eco (1989) and Pavel (1976), among others. However, here I primarily adopt the reformulations of the narratologist Marie-

Laure Ryan, as begun in a series of papers (e.g. 1980, 1985, 1986, 1991a), and later consolidated in the seminal (1991b) monograph *Possible worlds, artificial intelligence and narrative theory*. Ryan's reformulations are privileged here for three reasons. Firstly, they are widely viewed as the most measured application of the formerly philosophical theory to the literary sphere (Ronen 1994; Semino 1993, 1997). Secondly, they have proved the most influential (see, e.g. Bell 2010; Gregoriou 2009; McIntyre 2006; Raghunath 2017; Stockwell 2002). Finally, they are also the most amenable to current trends in both literary and linguistic analysis, as the 2019 publication of *Possible Worlds Theory and Contemporary Narratology*, co-edited by Ryan alongside Bell, affirms.

While it is Ryan's application of possible worlds theory to the literary domain that the summary below owes the greatest debt, this does not imply that Ryan's reformulations are infallible. It also proves necessary to supplement her framework with the work of several other possible-worlds scholars. In Section 2.2.3, I negotiate and justify my own position in regard to the modal structure of narrative 'Universe[s]' which Ryan (1991b) proposes. Prior to this, Section 2.2.2 outlines the principles of possible worlds theory within the literary domain, as well as surveying some problems associated with this interdisciplinary transference. This section works in tandem with Fig. 2.3 (cf. Fig. 1c in Ryan 1980: 411). Diagrammatising possible worlds theory in a literary context, the figure acts as a counterpart to Fig. 2.1.

2.2.2. [Literary] Possible Worlds Theory: Principles

Literary possible worlds theory (hereafter solely *possible worlds theory*) is an ontological theory focused upon the various planes of being engendered by a literary work. As noted above, this makes the theory ideal for application to postmodern texts, which are governed by an ontological 'dominant' (McHale 1987). In this category may be found the contemporary winners of the [Man] Booker Prize for Fiction which provide the case-studies for this thesis. Possible worlds theory, which is outlined in detail for the remainder of this section, is diagrammatised in Fig. 2.3, below.

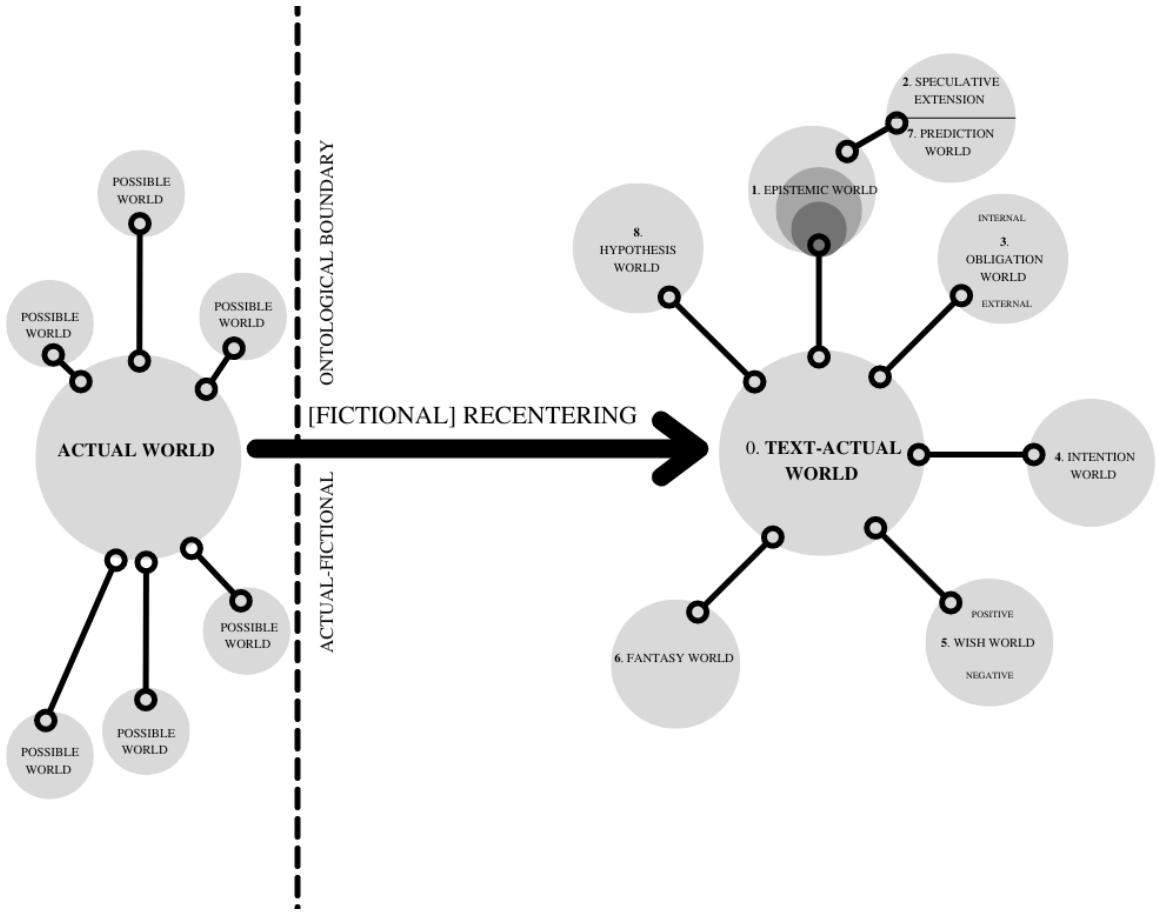

Fig. 2.3. [Literary] Possible Worlds Theory

2.2.2.1. The Actual World, the Text-actual World and [Fictional] Recentering

Possible worlds theory rests upon two corresponding dichotomies. Firstly, it acknowledges a division between the world in which the reader lives and the 'world' depicted in a work of fiction. Fig. 2.3 represents this via, respectively, its large left-hand and right-hand central circles. From the former, the Actual World, radiate various possible worlds, which correspond to the possible worlds of logic instituted by Leibnitz and outlined above. Its counterpart within the text, meanwhile, can be termed the Text-actual World (see further Section 2.2.4, below). [8] The process of cognitive relocation across the actual—fictional ontological divide is labelled by Ryan (1991b) as '[fictional] recentering' (13-30). This constitutes 'an imaginative relocation of author and reader into an alternative possible world' (Ryan 2022: n.p), i.e. the

[8] Throughout this thesis, I employ capitalisation for specific instances of worlds (no matter the ontological level), and use lower-case lettering for groupings of world-types more generally. This aligns the orthography adopted here with everyday language norms; considering, for instance, the semantic field of planets (as the conceptual metaphor which undergirds possible worlds theory), one may discuss 'Pluto' (singular), but 'planets' (plural).

world of the fiction. In Fig. 2.3, this process is indicated by the emboldened arrow bisecting the vertical dashed line. Ultimately, it is a process enabled by the imaginative capacities of readers in the Actual World. The dashed line in the diagram, meanwhile, symbolises the permeable boundary between the Actual World and the Text-actual World, for, as acknowledged by Raghunath (2017: 161), these two worlds exist in a relationship of reciprocity. Knowledge derived from one is henceforth always available to inform the other, and *vice versa*. Complementarily, I term an in-text, and hence recursive, variant of fictional recentering *intradiegetic recentering*; this coinage is elaborated further in Chapter 6.

The second dichotomy of possible worlds theory occurs within the text itself, resulting in the creation of two ontologically distinct domains. The first is a superordinate or absolute domain, detailing the facts of the fiction; this I shall refer to as the Text-actual World. This moniker is preferable to that of 'textual actual world' initiated by Ryan (1985), not only as it avoids morphological repetitiveness and increases brevity, but as it accentuates the correspondence between this world and the aforementioned Actual World. Subordinated to this world is the relative domain resulting from the interior states of narrators and/or characters within the fiction; semantic logic suggests a collective term for this ontological complement to the text-actual is 'text-possible'. Henceforth, this is the terminology I will adopt throughout this thesis. Less unitary than the text-actual, this second domain splinters into eight further text-possible world-types. Six of these text-possible world-types stem from Ryan's original (1985, 1991b) formulations; the remaining two were proposed by Semino *et al*. in 1999. Mirroring the design of the left-hand spider diagram, these assorted text-possible world-types radiate from the central Text-actual World to the right of Fig. 2.3, encoding their subordinate status.

2.2.2.2. Accessibility Relations

A further component of possible worlds theory key in the context of this thesis is the notion of accessibility relations (Ryan 1991a, 1991b), which involves the investigation of the connections between the Actual World and the Text-actual World. Ryan intended them to serve as a means of distinguishing between genres, and originally suggested nine overarching categories. Listed '[i]n decreasing order of stringency' (Ryan 1991b: 32), her original nonet is paraphrased below. [9] (For consistency, I add the epithet 'Technological compatibility' to the unnamed subcategory F'). I will have recourse to return to the notion of accessibility relations

[8] However, the appended principles J and K have since disrupted the meaningful ordering of the original nine accessibility relations (Schuknecht 2019: 244-5, n.15).

in each of the case-study chapters, in particular Chapters 4 and 7. In Chapter 4, at the behest of Ryan (1991b: 44-6) herself, the repertory below is expanded.

A. Identity of properties

Objects shared by the Text-actual World and the Actual World have the same properties. (Note that, for Ryan, 'objects' designates the animate alongside the inanimate, the sentient and the non-sentient, and thus subsumes everything from people to plants to places).

B. Identity of inventory

The Text-actual World and the Actual World share the same objects.

C. Compatibility of inventory

The Text-actual World includes all of the members of the Actual World, as well as its own native members. (Categories B and C are hence mutually exclusive).

D. Chronological compatibility

The Text-actual World is not situated at a point in time posterior to that of the Actual World.

E. Physical compatibility

The Text-actual World and the Actual World share natural laws; for example, both assume the impossibility of telepathy and telekinesis (though see further Chapter 7).

F. Taxonomic compatibility

The Text-actual World and the Actual World contain corresponding species with the same properties.

F'. Technological compatibility

The Text-actual World and the Actual World contain corresponding manufactured objects with the same functions.

G. Logical compatibility

The Text-actual World respects Actual World laws of logic, including those of noncontradiction and bivalence, or the excluded middle. Non-adherence to either of these precepts results in an impossible world (Ashline 1995; cf. Mansworth 2022b; Ryan 2013).

H. Analytical compatibility

The Text-actual World and the Actual World share analytical truths; for example, both acknowledge that four quarters make a whole.

I. Linguistic compatibility

The Text-actual World and the Actual World have mutually intelligible languages.

(Summarised from Ryan 1991a: 558-9, 1991b: 32-3; Semino 1997: 81-3, 93-104)

Subsequent amendments to Ryan's original (1991a, 1991b) typology have resulted in the introduction of the following two categories.

J. Non-a/melioration

The Text-actual World is neither appreciably better nor worse than the Actual World (Schuknecht 2019). [10] Especially pertinent to utopian and dystopian fiction, this principle will be explored further in Chapter 4.

K. Referential compatibility

The Text-actual World references Actual World history, politics, individuals and/or events (Raghunath 2022).

2.2.2.3. The Principle of Minimal Departure.

Closely linked to a text's accessibility relations is the Principle of Minimal Departure. Ryan (1980) terms it an 'interpretative principle' (403), as it concerns the reader's processing of the Text-actual World. She elaborates:

> The principle states that we reconstrue the world of a fiction [...] as being the closest possible to the reality we know. This means that we will project [...] everything we know about the real world, and that we will make only those adjustments which we cannot avoid. [...] It is by virtue of the Principle of Minimal Departure that [we] are able to form reasonably comprehensive representations of the foreign worlds created through discourse, even though the verbal description of these worlds is always incomplete.

(Ryan 1980: 406)

Ryan's Principle of Minimal Departure is in essence an ontological Occam's Razor: it posits that we make as few adjustments as possible in fictionally recentering across the actual—fictional ontological divide. Fictional worlds may be verbally 'incomplete', but they are completed by the reader's cognitive processing. For any given object in the Actual World, we presume its existence in the Text-actual World, unless the propositions of a narrative entail otherwise. Semino (1993, 1997) also perceptively suggests that not only form but genre will likely impinge upon fictional world-building. This is something Ryan (1980) only hints at in

[9] One must note as a caveat the relative nature of this societal judgement. As Schuknecht (2019) pithily proposes: '[O]ne person's utopia is often another's dystopia.' (237). The comparatives 'better' and 'worse' also prove impossible to quantify.

claiming that ‘a reader without advance knowledge of the genre’ (415) will interpret a narrative differently to a reader able to identify said narrative’s genre. It facilitates the construction of what Ryan (above) terms ‘the world of the fiction’, i.e. the Text-actual World. Problematically however, Ryan is equally definitive in referring to ‘the real world’ from which the fictional world is generated – i.e. the Actual World – as is indexed by the definite article. Ryan hence treats this world as a stable, unitary concept, despite this being far from a metaphysical given. Indeed, this is one of several subject areas lost in the translation of possible worlds theory from philosophy to literature. Ultimately no ‘perfect fit’ (Semino 1993: 148) is achieved, though it is questionable to what extent this should be expected, given that fiction is a cultural phenomenon and possible worlds theory derives from philosophy of logic. The various problems identified with possible worlds theory’s interdisciplinary transference are considered in the following sub-section.

2.2.3. [Literary] Possible Worlds Theory: Problems

As adumbrated above, there are problems with the transference of possible worlds to the literary arena. These pertain to the interrelations of all four ontologically distinct world-types: the Actual World; possible worlds; the Text-actual World; text-possible worlds. Four of the distinct logical permutations which result are covered below. These combinations are consequently both what Schuknecht (2019) has termed transuniversal (i.e. between the world of everyday life and the world of the fiction) and intrauniversal (i.e. within the fiction itself). Each must be considered to avoid naive assimilation. After all, as Ronen (1994) acknowledges, literary possible worlds may be a ‘handy metaphor’ (6), but they are a metaphor nonetheless, and often a ‘diffuse’ (7) one. Another objection raised to literary possible worlds theory concerns its supposed lack of a cognitive dimension (e.g. Semino 1993, 1997; Stockwell 2002; cf. Raghunath 2017), but engagement with this particular issue will be postponed for now, to be addressed in detail in Section 2.3, below.

The first combination places the Actual World alongside the Text-actual World; literary possible worlds theory is premised upon distinguishing the world portrayed in a work of literature from the world in which this work of literature is a physical, textual object. This is the ontological division depicted by a dashed line in Fig. 2.3, and it is one central to the Principle of Minimal Departure (Section 2.2.2.3). However, it must be underscored that there exists no monolithic conception of the ‘Actual World’ among possible-world philosophers.

Broadly, conceptions can be divided into three camps. [11] Modal realists like Lewis (1973) propose that not only the Actual World, but all possible worlds too, have physical existence. Those subscribing to this stance regard the Actual World as a relative notion; for the modal realists, each individual considers their own Actual World to be ontologically privileged, in much the same way as in deictic shift theory (Duchan *et al*; see further Chapter 6) an individual will presume themselves as deictic centre. Analogous to this is the tendency for cartographers to design maps differently according to where they are based, hence ensuring that their own country is placed in the approximate centre. The second view subscribed to by some philosophers is termed moderate realism, and does not assign possible worlds tangible existence. Instead, they are conceived as mental constructs designed by Actual World inhabitants. Here, unlike with modal realists, the Actual World is given ontological priority, serving as the parent from which all possible worlds are born. This view is expounded by Kripke (1972), among others. Finally, anti-realists like Goodman (1978) maintain that neither the Actual World nor any possible worlds have concrete existence. This final stance is thus the binary opposite to the first, that of the modal realists. The majority of literary possible-worlds scholars identify with the moderate realist camp, be it explicitly (e.g. Doležel 1979; Raghunath 2017; Ronen 1994) or more implicitly (e.g. Ryan 1985, 1991b). Indeed, as Doležel (2019) notes, the first transference of possible worlds to the literary sphere was based upon the moderate realist formulations of Kripke (1972). Since possible worlds in literature are centred around the mental constructs of narrators and/or characters, this seems a sensible approach to take. A logical consequence becomes the equation of possible and text-possible worlds, as their parallel placement on Fig. 2.3 implies.

However, possible worlds and text-possible worlds do prove ontologically distinct in several regards. If the former is 'abstract' (Ronen 1994: 22), the latter is concrete by virtue of its explicit textual existence. Meanwhile, whilst possible worlds may extend indefinitely, text-possible worlds are finite and bounded. They are neither more nor less than what is given in the text. It is for this reason that Eco (1989) refers to them as 'small worlds' (cf. Doležel 2019). Stockwell (2002) ultimately opts to refer to possible worlds in literature as 'discourse worlds' in order to underscore the lack of direct equivalence to possible worlds in philosophy, and so avoid potential conflation. My own terminological amendment is to refer to 'text-possible worlds', resorting to hyphenated premodification to flag the distance possible worlds in

[10] Here, for reasons of space, heterogenous views within the 'moderate realist' camp are elided. For more on this, see Ronen 1994: 22-3.

literature have travelled from the philosophical origins. A further reason for this lexical adaptation will be considered in Section 2.3.

Further ontological differences arise when possible worlds are compared to the matrix Text-actual World of a novel. Although it is a common fallacy that a work of fiction is a special variant of a possible world (Ronen 1994), there are in fact crucial differences. Counterintuitively, fictional worlds are in many respects *more* complete than their Actual World counterparts. They 'consist[...] of a finite number of possible particulars' (Doležel 2019: 56). In the fictional context, all is subordinated to the will of the author, who as world-creator is also arbiter and final authority (Ryan 1985: 720-1; however, this becomes debatable in the franchise context, as van Dam and Polak [2021] outline). The same cannot be said of possible worlds. While they do have the potential to be infinite, they may also be underdeveloped, intangible, and/or impossible (Ashline 1995). Text-actual worlds also differ from possible worlds proper as to them the concept of truth – so central to modal logic – does not and cannot apply. In this regard, Doležel (1979) proposes referring to 'authentication' in fictional texts, therefore bypassing a discussion of truth-values in a medium lacking an external referent.

The final logical ontological combination covered here proves the least complex, with the Text-actual and text-possible worlds of a text existing in a straightforward superordinate/subordinate relationship. The following four sub-sections continue on to detail these world-types in depth. This overview begins with the only objective world-type: the Text-actual World, which generates all other (subjective) text-possible worlds.

2.2.4. The Objective Text-actual World

0. The Text-actual World

The domain which deals with all that is verifiable within the fiction. On Fig. 2.3, this world occupies the central position on the right-hand spider diagram, equivalent as it is within the textual domain to the Actual World. It is a development of Doležel's (1979) 'primary narrative world', and as the only objective world within a narrative fiction, it is superordinate to the eight subordinate text-possible world-types enumerated below.

2.2.5. Subjective Text-possible World-types: The 'Big Six'

Alongside an overarching, objective matrix world – the Text-actual World – a narrative will also likely exhibit an assortment of subjective, text-possible worlds. (However, this is not

guaranteed within a narrative; moreover, a dearth of text-possible worlds may be thematically significant [Mansworth 2022a, 2022b]). Ryan (1991b) suggests six main types – a narratological 'Big Six' – further supplemented by subsequent scholars to result in eight types overall. These, then, are the world-types which radiate from the central text-actual circle in Fig. 2.3. At the outset, it is important to acknowledge that each of these text-possible world-types may be cued by either narrator or character. This is an oversight of several scholars, who discuss only character-cued text-possible worlds (e.g. McIntyre 2006; Ryan 1985, 1991b; Semino 1997, 2009; Stockwell 2002). Another key consideration involves the size and scope of text-possible worlds. As implied above, text-possible worlds as 'small worlds' (Doležel 2019; Eco 1989) may range from minimally to maximally elaborate, spanning anything from single clauses to the majority of the text under scrutiny.

1. The Epistemic World

This is the world-type related to knowledge, belief, and/or ignorance. Frequently, this world-type is cued by explicit references to desiderative lexical verbs (*know*, *think*, *believe*), as well as through epistemic modality. Consequently, these world-types recall Gavins' (2001, 2005, 2007) 'epistemic modal-worlds', as worlds which 'occur whenever some sort of epistemic commitment is expressed in discourse' (Gavins 2007: 137). More will be said about this equivalence in Section 2.3.

While an Epistemic World, as with the other seven text-possible world-types detailed below, may be cued by either a narrator or a character within the fiction, it may also be framed in either the first- or third-person. Attendant to these options are differing degrees of reliability (Booth 1961); the former will always be perceived as less reliable than the latter. A special feature of this world-type is its 'potentially infinite recursive embedding' (Ryan 1991b: 116). Thus, the Epistemic World of a narrator may contain the Epistemic World of a character, which in turn may contain the Epistemic World of a second character, and so on, *ad infinitum*. On Fig. 2.3, this capacity is represented by three interlocking circles in differing shades of grey. In principle, however, this embedding may be taken far beyond the tertiary level. Some schools of thought believe that the human brain is capable of comprehending up to seven levels of epistemic embedding (Zunshine 2021); a more conservative five have been empirically attested (Corballis 2011). This *mise en abyme* structuring, so typical of postmodernist novels in general (McHale 1987) is particularly prevalent in the contemporary [Man] Booker Prize-winning novels which form the case-studies for this thesis. Crucially, it is also this cognitive capacity

for recursive epistemic embedding which enables the construction of the metaperspective, a concept interrogated in Chapter 3, below.

The Epistemic World has a more chequered terminology history than other world-types. It has been referred to as a 'Knowledge World' by several possible-worlds scholars (e.g. Raghunath 2017; Semino 1997, 2003) as well as Ryan herself. Alternatively, McIntyre (2006) suggests this world-type be termed a 'Belief World', proposing that this would prevent a logical contradiction from arising whereby the mistaken thoughts of non-omniscient characters are deemed 'true' within their individual Knowledge World. What his reasoning ultimately foregrounds is the inaccurate nature of the designator 'Knowledge' in this context. Nonetheless, in Ryan's original typology (1985, 1991b), it is acknowledged that a Knowledge World may be either incomplete or partial. While the first denotes an awareness that one does not possess all the facts, the second occurs if one remains oblivious to a lack of certain information. Furthermore, Ryan (1991b: 114-115) suggests that Knowledge Worlds may be either 'possible' or 'impossible'. While the former is 'an incomplete representation' (115), the latter involves fallacious propositions. (The notion of the impossible Knowledge World will be returned to in Chapter 5 during a discussion of my proposed coinage, *communal hypothetical focalisation*). Raghunath (2017, 2019) develops her notion of 'Reader Knowledge Worlds' correspondingly, suggesting them to be either complete, incomplete, or partial, as well as correct or incorrect. This coinage refers to a readerly variant of the character-derived Epistemic World; grounded in the knowledge frames possessed by a reader in the Actual World, it encompasses 'an individual's subjective construction of the objectively existing actual world.' (Raghunath 2017: 64). Her addition also bolsters possible worlds theory in adding an extratextual element, and recourse will be made to it during the consideration of Atwood's hypothetical reader for *The Testaments* (2019) in Chapter 4. Bell's (2010) 'World View' addition, in contrast, I believe to be largely superfluous. Covering the ideological stance of a given narrator or character, it is easily subsumed into the larger Epistemic World. Semino (1997) appears to concur, parenthetically glossing a 'world view' as equivalent to, 'in Ryan's term, [an] epistemic or knowledge world' (227). Also note that, throughout this thesis, I follow Stockwell (2002) and Gregoriou (2009) in referring to this world-type as an Epistemic World.

Semino (1997) appears to concur, parenthetically glossing a 'world view' as equivalent to 'in Ryan's term, [an] epistemic or knowledge world' (227). Throughout this thesis, I follow Stockwell (2002) and Gregoriou (2009) in referring to this world-type as an Epistemic World.

This aligns the world-type with the modal category it is tied to, and has the additional benefit of greater neutrality in relation to the truth status of the propositions the world-type expresses.

2. Speculative Extension to the Epistemic World

A future-oriented variant of text-possible world-type 1 (the Epistemic World). Ryan prefers a synonym to denote this world-type; she describes a 'Prospective Extension' world-type relating to 'apprehension of the tree of possible developments out of the present situation' (1991b: 116). I prefer the modifier 'Speculative' as do Gregoriou (2009) and Stockwell (2002), as I believe it to foreground the suppositious nature of this world-type more satisfactorily than 'Prospective', which seems more concerned with temporality. Furthermore, I also choose to conceive of the Speculative Extension as a sub-text-possible world-type, rather than a text-possible world-type of its own. After all, it is just as much dependent upon the Epistemic World for its existence as the other text-possible worlds are dependent upon the Text-actual World for theirs. Furthering Ryan's metaphor, it can be likened to a protruding branch stemming from the trunk of a character and/or narrator's current knowledge, as Fig 2.3 reflects. There is much overlap between this world-type and world-types 7 and 8, as will be explored below.

3. The Obligation World

This world-type is concerned with social and/or moral rules and values. Ryan's first typology (1985) designated two different monikers for what she later reconciled into one category, having identified both internally- and externally-imposed variants (cf. '*Worlds of Moral Values*' in Ryan 1985: 728-9; italics in original). The annotations 'INTERNAL' and 'EXTERNAL' on Fig. 2.3 reflect this duality. The key modality for this world-type is deontic. The modal verb *must* thus proves a key indicator. As with the Epistemic World above, there is equivalence between this text-possible world-type and a modal-world introduced by Gavins (2001, 2005, 2007): the deontic modal-world.

4. The Intention World

This world-type is generated by the floating of goals and/or 'plans to change the [Text-actual World] in some way.' (McIntyre 2006: 131). Like world-types 2 and 7, it has a future time-signature. The telltale modal verb for this world-type is the auxiliary *will*.

5. The Wish World

The world-type tied to notions of desire, as well as axiological concerns. Outlined are thus 'desired alternative states' (McIntyre 2006: 130) or their inverse. Unlike other world-types, the

Wish World ranges across a continuum from most to least preferred, and is consequently either positively or negatively valent. (On Fig. 2.3, this is indexed by the antonymous legends 'POSITIVE' and 'NEGATIVE'). Given that the indicative modality of this world-type is boulomaic, once again similarities may be traced to a modal-world proffered by Gavins (2001, 2005, 2007): the boulomaic modal-world. Somewhat counterintuitively, as Ryan (1991b: 118) recognises, within a Wish World the fewer the number of propositions the greater the Wish World has of being realised.

6. The Fantasy World

This text-possible world-type is triggered by instances of fiction-making within the fiction. These may arise in the form of dreams, nightmares, or hallucinations, or alternatively as what Genette (1980) refers to as 'metadiegetic' elements (cf. 'hypodiegetic' in Rimmon-Kenan 2002: 90), by which he denotes instances of fiction (books, films, stageplays and so forth) within the fiction.

Ryan (1991b) posits that this world-type instead be referred to as a 'Universe' (119), with which I disagree, as does Stockwell (2002). There are several reasons for my objection to this moniker. Firstly, Ryan (1991b) suggests special terminology is warranted due to the ability of this world-type to generate further world-types (119). However, this is not a unique ability: as observed above, an Epistemic World also has this capacity. Further, not only may Epistemic Worlds embed matryoshka-like, they may also spawn another world-type, i.e. that of the Speculative Extension. For this reason, to consider the Fantasy World a 'Universe' would mar the unity of the typology presented here. The Fantasy World, as a subordinate and subjective world-type stemming from an objective text-actual matrix world, is ontologically identical to each of the other text-possible worlds. Additionally, as noted above, text-possible world-types vary greatly in size; while some comprise entire paragraphs, others are limited to mere clauses. It would clearly be counterintuitive to discuss a 'Universe' couched within a single clause. Finally, any reference to a 'Universe' unhelpfully recalls the exposition of Leibnitz (2001: 128), initiator of philosophical possible worlds theory. As quoted above, Leibnitz uses 'Universe' to refer to the Actual World in its entirety, comprising past, present and future states; it would be both inconsistent and illogical to use this same lexeme to refer to a fictional and subordinate text-possible world-type. For these reasons, throughout this thesis I reject the 'Universe' label proposed by Ryan (1991b), discussing instead the Fantasy World. Notably,

Stockwell's (2002) seminal overview of literary possible worlds (to the author, 'discourse worlds') does likewise. [12]

2.2.6. Possible Worlds Theory in Practice

Before reviewing the proposed additions to Ryan's original 'Big Six', I wish to supplement the theory with some practice. Below is a single paragraph excerpted from another Man Booker Prize winner: *Vernon God Little* by DBC Pierre, which was both published and awarded the Prize in 2003. Narrated in Southern American *skaz* by focalising protagonist Vernon Gregory ('God') Little, the satiric novel charts the aftermath of a school shooting in Martirio, a fictitious Texan township. While the perpetrator of the incident (which resulted in multiple fatalities) is acknowledged to be the troubled teenager Jesus Navarro, his best friend, the eponymous Little, fears being accused of complicity. Below, his thought processes are documented in typically irreverent style:

Excerpt 2.2

> Fuck her [his overbearing mother]. I kick a pile of laundry, and slam my bedroom door. What I'm seriously considering, in light of everybody's behaviour, is just to evacuate through the laundry door; hop a bus to Nana's, and not even tell anybody. Just call up later or something. I mean, the whole world knows Jesus caused the fucken tragedy. But because he's dead, and they can't fucken kill him for it, they have to find a skate-goat. That's people for you. Me, I'd love to explain the sequence of events last Tuesday. But I'm in a bind, see. I have family honor to think of. And I have my ma to protect, now that I'm Man of the House and all. Anyway, whoever points a finger at me, just for being a guy's friend, has some deep remorse coming. Tears of fucken regret, when the truth comes marching in. And it always comes, you know it. Watch any fucken movie.

(Pierre 2003: 36)

This excerpt illustrates perfectly the interrelated and ever-changing nature of text-actual and text-possible world-types within a literary narrative. They are akin to an ontological kaleidoscope; constantly in flux, they reflect and refract. The full complement of 'Big Six' text-possible world-types are in evidence here, alongside the Text-actual World from which they stem.

It is this Text-actual World which begins the extract, as protagonist Vernon documents his actions – 'I kick a pile of laundry, and slam my bedroom door' – in a series of temporally linear

[12] It is interesting to note that the updated, second edition of Stockwell's (2002) *Cognitive Poetics* textbook, published in 2020, omits reference to 'discourse worlds' entirely. This may be a result of the relative heterogeneity of the term *discourse* (cf. Sections 3.1.6 and 3.1.7), alongside the potential for conflation with the distinct concept of the discourse world within Text World Theory. Whatever the reasoning, this omission bolsters my own avoidance of the phrase within the present thesis. Instead, I prefer my own distinction between the Text-actual World and text-possible worlds.

declarative statements, detailing what is happening in the 'world' of the novel. Both the 'kick[ing]' and the 'slam[ming]', as dynamic, material action processes, occur in narrative reality. Meanwhile, nominals like 'a pile of laundry' and the 'bedroom door' have verifiable existence as intradiegetic objects. Contrastingly, the passage's third sentence is firmly text-possible. In outlining a chronological plan of his future actions ('What I'm seriously considering [...] is just to evacuate through the laundry door; hop a bus to Nana's, and not even tell anybody.') across multiple clauses, Vernon cues an Intention World. Text-possible world-type 4 is thus the first of the 'Big Six' to be introduced in the passage. The second is an Epistemic World: 'I mean, the whole world knows Jesus caused the fucken tragedy'. The prototypical *verbum sentiendi* ('knows') is an obvious index of this category. Also of note is the collective nature of this text-possible world: the subject of the desiderative verb is 'everyone'. I will return to the concept of communal perspectives, and indeed communal *meta*perspectives, in Chapter 5, below. Finally, observe that this Epistemic World is subtly embedded, as Ryan (1991b: 116) noted was common for this particular world-type. The state of affairs in which 'the whole world knows' is a predicate subordinated to the verb phrase 'I mean', a colloquial stand-in for the verb phrase *I think*. This thus places the collective Epistemic World within the individual Epistemic World of Vernon, resulting in second-order embedding. Meanwhile, the Speculative Extension to the Epistemic World is represented by Vernon's foreboding 'whoever points a finger at me [...] has some deep remorse coming'. The future perfect tense alludes to the time-signature of this world-type; its contents, grounded in the personal conjecture of Vernon, mark it as purely speculative. A similarly suppositious world-type, the Wish World (world-type 4) is typified by the sentence: 'Me, I'd love to explain the sequence of events last Tuesday'. The lexical verb (albeit somewhat sardonically) portrays this as an ideal state-of-affairs for Vernon; the preposed pronoun only emphasises this scenario to be personal wish-fulfilment. Subsequently, and less egocentrically, Vernon considers his duties to his family, thus triggering an Obligation World. Saliently, both the externally-imposed variant dictating 'social rules' (Ryan 1991b: 116) and the internally-imposed restrictions of 'moral values' (*ibid*) are represented. In Excerpt 2.2, the former appears in the clause 'I have family honor to think of'; the latter is clear in 'I have my ma to protect, now that I'm Man of the House and all', especially via the comic capitalisation. The linkage of these two declaratives by means of a non-standard sentence-initial co-ordinating conjunction testifies to their symbiosis as two facets of Vernon's overarching Obligation World.

The only text-possible world-type remaining to be analysed now is that of the Fantasy World (type 6), yet it proves to be the only world-type not fully accounted for in Excerpt 2.2. However, it is latent in the excerpt's final, imperative sentence: 'Watch any fucken movie'. Were this to be elaborated to describe a (fictional) cinematic sequence analogous to Vernon's present reality, a Fantasy World proper would be cued. This is not so outlandish, given that throughout the novel *Vernon God Little*, focaliser Vernon frequently prioritises the reel over the real. In one episode, for example, Vernon ponders 'the TV-movie of [his] life' (59; cf. 76-77, 117). As it is, the fiction-making potential of the noun 'movie' merely hints at this world-type. Indeed, cinematic references prove common conduits to this particular text-possible world-type, as will be explored in further detail in Chapter 6 (cf. Adam 2021: 185).

2.2.7. Additional Text-possible World-types

A selection of amendments to Ryan's original (1985, 1991b) modal typology of narrative universes have already been gestured to above: consider, for instance, Bell's (2010) 'World View' and Raghunath's (2017, 2019) 'Reader Knowledge Worlds'. However, the most significant additions to Ryan's framework come courtesy of Semino *et al*. (1999): the Prediction World and the Hypothesis World.

Above, I classified Vernon's conjecture that 'whoever points a finger at me [...] has some deep remorse coming' as a Speculative Extension to the Epistemic World. However, it may equally be argued that it belongs to a Prediction World. This world-type is glossed below.

7. The Prediction World

This is a world-type concerning assured guesswork as to what will happen in the future. Intuitively, this world-type overlaps with world-type 2: the Speculative Extension to the Epistemic World. I differentiate between the two with regards to the level of certainty projected. The states of affairs proposed in a Prediction World are most often premised upon outwardly observable prior patterns of behaviour (Semino *et al*. [1999] speak of 'available information' [325]). This links to the social 'practices' discussed by Agha (2007), a commitment to which involves acknowledging 'the ubiquity and recurrence of certain behaviours' (395 n.1) among a society's individuals. Grounded as this world-type thus is in communal patterns of behaviour, it proves central to discussions of communal hypothetical focalisation and communal metaperspectives in Chapter 5. In contrast, Semino *et al*. (1999) distinguish between the Speculative Extension and Prediction world-types by taking the

opposite approach. For them, the latter proves less 'authoritative' (325) than the former, although this is subject to the reliability of the individual cuing the Prediction World. This is difficult to reconcile with the dictionary definition of the two terms. If *to speculate* is 'to act conjecturally' (OED 2022, s.1d), to *predict* is 'To state or estimate, esp. on the basis of knowledge or reasoning.' (OED 2022, s.1a). Clearly the latter is less subjective. Meanwhile, the examples that Semino *et al*. (1999) append differ from each other epistemologically. One outlines an almost guaranteed, indeed immanent, political situation; the other involves supposition as to the mental state of a prominent public figure (the Queen). While it may be argued that the latter's notoriety makes her reactions more amenable to prediction, the level of certainty attached to the second example is undeniably weaker. Indeed, the authors point out that their regal example is less 'a considered prediction' (326) than a salacious rhetorical technique aimed at upping newspaper sales. Ultimately, it must be recognised that text-possible world-types 2 and 7 are strikingly similar, and for this reason they are assigned a shared bubble in Fig. 2.3. In summary, a Prediction World should be considered a Speculative Extension with more epistemological certainty attached to it.

Vernon's assertion in Excerpt 2.3 above can be classified as belonging to a Prediction World by virtue of the high level of certainty it displays. This owes largely to the temporal adverbial 'always', alongside the direct address ('you know it'), which implies conventional received wisdom and dovetails with the grounding of the Prediction World in prior available (often behavioural) evidence. Resultantly, Vernon conveys an impression of inevitability. A more clearcut example of a Prediction World in *Vernon God Little* is found in the following excerpted passage. Here Vernon mulls over the likelihood of his Hispanic defence lawyer Abdini jeopardising his chances of being granted bail.

Excerpt 2.3

> A jury would convict on his fucken shoes alone [...]. [Y]ou take a bunch of flabby white folk, of that kind that organise bake-sales etcetera, and put them in a jury, then throw in some fast-talker from God-knows-where, chances are they won't buy a thing he says. [...] It's a learning I made.

(Pierre 2003: 49)

Linguistically, Vernon's certainty is relayed via a number of means. The first sentence is governed by the strong epistemic modal 'would'; the second casts subjective opinion as a universal statement. The unconventional figure of speech employed in the final sentence ('It's a learning I made.') impresses the inevitability of the state of affairs Vernon depicts coming to fruition, whilst also instantiating the THOUGHTS/IDEAS ARE OBJECTS conceptual metaphor

(Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 127; Semino 1997: 204). The high likelihood of the events described transpiring ('chances are') owes much to the alleged racist tendencies of the Martirio townspeople: 'flabby white folk' felt to harbour prejudicial opinions about the non-White. [13] Indeed, racialised double-standards are attested throughout the novel. For example, Vernon claims: 'everybody dissed me because my buddy was Mexican' (66) (cf. 17, 92, 118, 121). The fact that this world-type is based upon prior behavioural evidence only cements its categorisation as a Prediction World.

The eighth and final text-possible world-type to be reviewed here is the Hypothesis World, another amendment courtesy of Semino *et al*. (1999).

8. The Hypothesis World

This world-type involves 'characters or narrators simply hypothesizing about alternative ways in which things might have happened' (Semino *et al*. 1999: 327). While the authors helpfully emphasise that this world-type may be cued by either characters or narrators (as several possible-worlds scholars do not), I would wish to extend slightly the scope of their definition. They allow only for hypotheses concerning retrospective 'alternativ[es]', whereas hypotheses can surely relate to present or future domains as well. In outlining the allied concept of 'hypothetical focalization' (see Chapter 3), Herman (1994, 2002) acknowledges as much.

The authors also fail to supply any specific linguistic features which would help to distinguish this world-type from similar ones, for instance the Speculative Extension or Prediction world-types. (Indeed, numbering typical linguistic indicators of each proposed metaperspectival sub-type, in order to distinguish between them, is key to my research enterprise in later chapters of this thesis). I suggest the prototypical hypothesis-building sequence of *If... then...* to be a key indicator of this world-type. This linguistic index recalls Ryan's (1985) subsequently amended construct of the '*Hypothetical Extensions of K-Worlds*', connoting 'propositions embedded under an operator of possibility or a conditional operator *if... then*.' (724; italics in original). Indeed, the textual example which is provided for this world-type (Semino *et al*. 1999: 328) uses precisely this protasis apodosis structuring. What Semino *et al*. (1999) do underscore is the affinity between the Hypothesis World and Prince's (1992) notion of the *disnarrated*. This will be considered further in Chapter 6.

[13] In citing directly from sources, I retain the decapitalised forms of the racial epithets *black* and *white*. Elsewhere within the body of my analysis I choose to capitalise them. I reiterate this caveat in Chapter 6, where it proves most salient.

The Hypothesis World can be illustrated with the following line, again taken from Pierre's (2003) *Vernon God Little*. It not only employs a future time-frame, but makes use of the aforementioned linguistic feature integral to this world-type.

Excerpt 2.4

> If this is how much of an asshole everybody's going to be, about this devastating fucken issue, then I'd better get the hell out of town.

(Pierre 2003: 46)

This quotation is instantly identifiable as a Hypothesis World due to its classic antecedent-consequent structure. Within his internal monologue, suffused with the same sulky teenage dissatisfaction as the previous two passages, Vernon reasons that 'If' his maltreatment should continue, 'then' he will abscond from town. The quotation further emphasises that a text-possible world need not necessarily be extensive; here, it is a single sentence which suffices to cue a Hypothesis World.

2.3. Text World Theory and Possible Worlds Theory

Having so far surveyed the salient aspects of Text World Theory and possible worlds theory separately, the final section of this chapter reconciles the two worlds-based approaches. It first surveys their similarities and their differences, and then outlines the proposed amalgamated 'Best of Both Worlds Theories' approach to be adopted throughout the remainder of this thesis. This section is supported by Table 2.1, which summarises the key criteria of each approach in order to aid the comparative process. Ultimately, I hope to illustrate that despite their erstwhile discrete theoretical application, 'things actually synch up' (Pierre 2003: 201).

	Text World Theory	**Possible worlds theory** [14]
Underlying conceptual metaphor	TEXT IS WORLD	TEXT IS WORLD
Theoretical origins	Text linguistics	Philosophy of logic
Parent disciplines	Cognitive linguistics	Narratology
Foundational text	*Text worlds: Representing conceptual space in discourse* (Werth 1999)	*Possible worlds, artificial intelligence and narrative theory* (Ryan 1991b)
Select theoretical amendments	- Browse 2016 - Gavins 2001, 2005, 2007 - Gibbons and Whiteley 2021 - Giovanelli 2013 - Lahey 2006 - McLoughlin 2020 - Norledge 2020 - Nuttall 2017 - Whiteley 2011, 2015	- Bell 2010 - Mansworth 2022a, 2022b - Raghunath 2017, 2019, 2022 - Schuknecht 2019 - Semino *et al*. 1999 - Stockwell 2002
Focus	Cognitive, experiential	Ontological
Structure	- Fractal - Triadic - Hierarchical	- Centrifugal - Binary - Hierarchical
Key components	- Discourse world - Text world - Sub-world - World-building (WB)/function-advancing (FA) elements - Participants/enactors - Common Ground	- Actual World - Text-actual World - Text-possible worlds - [Fictional] Recentering - Accessibility relations - The Principle of Minimal Departure

Table 2.1. Text World Theory and possible worlds theory: a criterial comparison

[14] A note concerning typography is necessary here, due to the asymmetry that Table 2.1 so explicitly flags. As noun phrases, *Text World Theory* is commonly capitalised, whereas *possible worlds theory* is most often not (though see Mansworth 2022a, 2022b; Narayan 2009; Norledge 2022). Following the majority of existing scholarship, I follow this typographical pattern throughout the present thesis. This is not, however, intended to reflect any difference in the importance attached to the respective theories; indeed, the reasoning behind the decision 'To capitalise or not to capitalise' remains unclear.

2.3.1. Text World Theory and Possible Worlds Theory: Similarities and Differences

Most saliently, both Text World Theory and possible worlds theory are undergirded by the TEXT IS WORLD conceptual metaphor. Illustrating just how entrenched this conceptualisation is within discussions of literature, Okri's (2019) Booker Prize-prompted paean professes that the Prize 'restore[s] the promise / That a mind alone is sufficient / For a world to be valid' (ll. 12-4), and thus equates each work of fiction with a self-contained 'world' created in the 'mind' of its reader. This shared metaphor is not coincidental: Werth (1999: 32) and Gavins (2007: 11-12) readily acknowledge Text World Theory's possible worlds roots. In this regard, a combination of the two is not without precedent. Indeed, as Gavins and Lahey (2016: 1) indicate, all worlds-based approaches may trace their origins to the logic of possible worlds. They impress:

> What is important to remember is that the differing approaches [...] do not stand in contradiction or conflict with one another. Rather, the variety of frameworks, theories and terms [...] can be seen to have developed over many decades of productive interdisciplinary collaboration, borrowing and cross-pollination, all of which has greatly enriched and improved the overall functionality of worlds-based approaches to discourse and is likely to continue long into the future.
>
> (Gavins and Lahey 2016: 4-5)

I agree wholeheartedly, and with the 'Best of Both Worlds Theories' approach hope to confirm their cautiously hedged prescience.

Ultimately, for both worlds theories, the text – the target domain of the conceptual metaphor – is at the centre of the theoretical analysis. Text World Theory is most adept at explicating this via the concept of 'text-drivenness' (Werth 1999); indeed, as Stockwell (2010) observes, Text World Theory is one of the few literary worlds-based theories to incorporate a linguistic component sensitive to nuances on the micro-level of language. Its 'prominent textual aspect' (425) accords well with the steam stylistic sensibility of this thesis. Given its grounding in narratology, possible worlds analysis in contrast often operates at a higher level. Unlike Text World Theory, possible worlds theory is 'hard to relate to [...] the linguistic properties of texts' (Semino 1997: 253; cf. Semino 2009: 54, 59). It is more global than it is local, concerning itself instead with structural not linguistic choices. Yet, as Semino (2009) notes, this is less an omission than a motivated decision, for possible worlds theory 'does not *aim* to account for stylistic differences and nuances in linguistic expression.' (66; italics in original). I believe that this does not obviate a possible worlds-based approach from doing so, especially when fused

with the cognitive and linguistic insights of Text World Theory (cf. Mansworth 2022a). In this way, through adopting both a 'bottom-up' and a 'top-down' perspective, the 'Best of Both Worlds Theories' approach allows a holistic impression of any given text.

As the fifth row of the above table illustrates, despite their divergent histories both theories may trace their current form to the same decade: the 1990s. This is not coincidental, for the decade marked the start of the 'cognitive turn' in the humanities (Bell *et al*. 2019; Stockwell 2002). Text World Theory is undeniably cognitive in orientation, concerned to redress the decontextualized bias of its predecessors. Meanwhile, despite its predominantly ontological focus, possible worlds theory is similarly amenable to cognitive add-ons, as the work of Raghunath (2017, 2019) has so adroitly demonstrated. Additionally, it has been overlooked that certain facets of the original possible worlds theory are in fact cognitive in orientation: consider the Principle of Minimal Departure as a prime example. Following this theory, extratextual knowledge is deployed in the comprehension of the world of a text, much as with the Common Ground of Text World Theory. Ryan (1980) casts the Principle as a process by which readers '*reconstrue* the world of a fiction' (406; my italics); the verb here shares etymological origins with *construct*, thus explicating the Principle's cognitive, world-building dimension. Is this really so different from the process of 'Building a text world' (Werth 1999: 180-209)? The concept of [fictional] recentering evinces a similarly cognitive basis, despite protestations that possible worlds theory lacks a cognitive dimension (e.g. Semino 1993, 1997; Stockwell 2002).

Structurally, the two theories also prove similar: both propose a tiered, hierarchical typology, ultimately grounded in the world in which the discourse is produced. While for Text World Theory this typology is three-tiered, possible worlds theory holds there to be only two, yet many individual world levels can be equated, as sketched throughout Sections 2.1 and 2.2. Broadly, the text world of Text World Theory may be equated to the Text-actual World of possible worlds theory, whilst the sub-world level of the former corresponds to the text-possible worlds of the latter. Consider, for instance, the epistemic sub-world at the third level of Text World Theory's tiered hierarchy, a counterpart to the Epistemic World (text-possible world-type 1) in possible worlds theory. The remaining world levels, the discourse world in Text World Theory and the Actual World of possible worlds theory, are the only two to differ ontologically. The latter, in keeping with moderate modal realist logic (e.g. Kripke 1972) has objective and verifiable existence outside the mind; the latter, like all levels of Text World

Theory, is taken to be a construct of the mind. Nonetheless, both acknowledge a reciprocal relationship between the extradiegetic and the intradiegetic.

2.3.2. The 'Best of Both Worlds Theories' Approach

Why, then, apply Text World Theory *and* possible worlds theory, as opposed to one or the other, discretely? This latter approach has certainly been that favoured by scholars until now. Excluding my own research (e.g. Adam 2021, 2022b), Lugea (2013) constitutes the sole stylistics-based exception to the rule that I have been able to locate. Moreover, even Lugea's (2013) study does not fully amalgamate both world theories. Her multimodal analysis of a Hollywood blockbuster is predominantly Text World Theory-based; possible worlds theory plays something of a supporting role, used to 'supplement the text-world analysis' (134) of the film. Stockwell's (2002) comments, in contrast, suggest a more symbiotic approach.

> [T]he possible-worlds approach can be adapted so that we can speak of discourse worlds that can be understood as dynamic readerly interactions with possible worlds: possible worlds with a narratological and cognitive dimension.
(Stockwell 2002: 93)

Both theories have their own strengths and weaknesses; it is hoped that in applying the two in tandem the former are multiplied and the latter divided. Text World Theory, for instance, is far stronger from a cognitive perspective. As a theory with a 'prominent textual aspect' (Stockwell 2010: 425), I also borrow its notions of world-building and function-advancing elements to interrogate the make-up of different text-possible world-types on the linguistic level.

Possible worlds theory, meanwhile, offers a much more in-depth consideration of accessibility relations between worlds, into which the concept of the 'enactor' (Emmott 1997; Gavins 2007) may be integrated. This neatly sidesteps the intricacies of counterpart theory (Raghunath 2017). Indeed, Stockwell's (2020a: 155-75) overview of Text World Theory would benefit from some of the ontologically-motivated mechanisms of possible worlds theory when discussing 'counterpart connections between world-building [WB] elements.' (163). Where possible worlds theory is strongest, however, is in its typology of world-types; these are far more nuanced than either Werth's (1999) triad or those proposed in Gavins' (2001, 2005, 2007) amendments. Even this more recent work by Gavins acknowledges only three distinct modalities: that of the boulomaic, the deontic and the epistemic. Undeniably, other modalities exist – consider, for instance, alethic modality, governing the notions of (im)possibility and/or necessity, and axiological modality, covering morality. Meanwhile, a vast range of cognitive

options are subsumed under the 'epistemic modal-world' tag introduced in Gavins (2007): the term covers 'any articulation of personal belief or knowledge, the representation of the thoughts and beliefs of others, hypothetical constructions and conditionality' (137). Giovanelli (2013) identifies a similar issue of theoretical overcrowding within Werth's (1999) notion of the 'desire sub-world' (185, 227-32), instead proposing a tripartite classification system to distinguish between desire and dream states.

The more highly developed nature of possible worlds theory in this regard is even mirrored in the naming practices of the two theories. While it is Text *World* Theory (singular), it is possible *worlds* theory (plural). In particular, within possible worlds theory there exist 5 distinct world-types which hold the potential to generate hypothetical perspectives and/or scenarios. It is therefore these world-types which will constitute the bulk of the textual excerpts of Chapters 4 to 7. These Adam (2021) refers to collectively as 'suppositious text-possible world-types'; they comprise the Speculative Extension to the Epistemic World (text-possible world-type 2), the Wish World (5), and the Fantasy World (6) of Ryan's original (1985, 1991b) framework, alongside both of Semino *et al.*'s (1999) appended worlds, i.e. the Prediction World (7) and the Hypothesis World (8). Neither Gavins' (2001, 2005, 2007) nor Werth's (1999) typologies would stratify so finely between intradiegetic world-types. Indeed, Gavins (2007) admits that the possible worlds 'approach has obvious appeal for those whose central interests lie in the investigation of mental constructs and the unrealised situations to which they frequently relate' (12). Given that this exactly limns the focus of this thesis (see further Chapter 3 on the 'metaperspective') it is unsurprising that insights of possible worlds theory are incorporated here.

As Adam (2021) reasons, the collective noun phrase 'suppositious text-possible worlds' has two major benefits. Firstly, it groups together discrete world-types which nonetheless share a common focus upon the 'what if' or 'if only...' elements of a narrative. Secondly, and relatedly, '[t]his collective terminology also mitigates against the confusing overuse of the adjectives 'hypothetical' and 'speculative', which signify their own specific text-possible worlds.' (175). Meanwhile, as with Adam (2021), it is these five suppositious text-possible world-types which will form the core of many textual excerpts throughout Chapters 4 to 7, as well as informing their analysis.

In summary, the 'Best of Both Worlds' approach applied across this thesis is as follows. Firstly, the metalanguage adopted in discussions of the worlds a narrative engenders, at various

ontological levels, will borrow extensively from possible worlds theory. I will refer to the Actual World in which the reader is located, considering this to be an objective concept filtered through the subjective consciousness of each individual, rather than the more subjective (and therefore nebulous) discourse world of Text World Theory. Correspondingly, I will refer to the primary domain within the narrative as the *Text*-actual World. This lexical equivalence I believe to best point up the inherent relationship of reciprocity between these two ontologically discrete levels (see further Raghunath 2017: 161). Meanwhile, the Text-actual World is conceived as surrounded by various (more or less) ontologically remote satellites, dubbed text-possible worlds. More specifically, these world-types will be labelled according to the finely delineated classification system begun by Ryan (e.g. 1985, 1991b), and later extended by other possible worlds-based theorists (e.g. Semino *et al*. 1999). Especially given my own focus upon the multifaceted notion of hypothesis within narrative, the precision this approach enables is superior to that provided by the often terminologically underspecified sub-worlds (or, alternatively, modal-worlds and world-switches) of Text World Theory.

Secondly, the possible worlds theory-derived concept known as the Principle of Minimal Departure, and the related typology of accessibility relations are also adhered to here, as is the notion of counterparts. Once again, the former two are invaluable in differentiating between the various ontological levels generated by any one narrative text. However, in discussing the latter concept, pertaining to various versions of individuals which may appear across distinct world levels, the lexicon of Text World Theory is appealed to; I refer to 'enactors' within any given narrative, utilising the term given its established roots in the study of readerly cognition and narrative processing (Emmott 1997; Gavins 2007). This leads to the third crucial feature of my 'Best of Both Worlds Theories' approach: likewise (and unsurprisingly given its cognitive core), Text World Theory also supplements possible worlds theory within this thesis through the application of further terminology centred around the readerly processing of text. Thus, the steam stylistic analysis of textual excerpts throughout acknowledges the role function-advancing (FA) propositions and world-building (WB) elements play in enabling the construction of text-actual and text-possible worlds within a reader's mind. Accounts of the cognitive processing of metaphor and negation also inform my analyses, especially in relation to the phenomenon of disnarration (cf. Chapter 6). This grounding in experientiality complements well my consideration of the so-called 'real reader' of two of my case-study novels, in Chapters 4 and 6, respectively. Ultimately, the terminology of Text World Theory is largely applied on the micro-level, and that of possible worlds theory on the macro-level,

meaning that there is no superfluous 'doubling up' of the two distinct but – to my mind, at least – mutually compatible, worlds-based theories. Overall, throughout the theoretical balance is weighted slightly more in favour of possible worlds theory; if Text World Theory were to be coloured yellow, and possible worlds theory blue, then this thesis would be turquoise. The aim, to echo Stockwell (2002), is to imbue 'possible worlds with a narratological *and cognitive* dimension' (93; my italics).

The following chapter develops in detail the concept of the metaperspective (Laing *et al*. 1966), which has already been alluded to throughout the present chapter. The discussion of the concept is inflected by the 'Best of Both Worlds Theories' approach outlined above; for instance, the metaperspective is acknowledged to be an Actual World phenomenon that is equally applicable in Text-actual World contexts, one which, furthermore, serves to generate text-possible worlds. Centred around four [Man] Booker-winning novels, Chapters 4 to 7 then employ my proposed amalgamated methodology in investigating assorted varieties of the metaperspective within literature.

‘‘‘To see it from all sides’’’: Point of View and the Metaperspective

> ‘‘You are wonderfully free with one verb, I notice,’’ the widow returned. ‘‘What does it mean for you, Mr. Moody, to know something?’’ [...]
> Moody smiled. ‘‘Why,’’ he said, ‘‘I suppose that to know a thing is to see it from all sides.’’
> ‘‘To see it from all sides,’’ the widow repeated.
>
> (*The Luminaries*, Catton 2013: 502)

3.0. Preliminaries

This chapter seeks to situate the key terminology to be employed across this thesis; to, as *The Luminaries*’ Moody would have it, ‘‘‘see it from all sides’’’. At its heart is an elaboration of the concept of the *metaperspective* (Laing *et al*. 1966), the literary application of which I introduce in the present thesis. In Section 3.1, I begin by contextualising the semantically related, albeit somewhat more familiar, terms *point of view*, *perspective* and *focalisation*, as applied within narratological and stylistic study. Prominent models in the field are summarised as I situate the theoretical position to be taken in the upcoming chapters. Likewise defined here are the terms *discourse*, *hypothetical discourse* and *mind style*. Section 3.2 follows; it comprises an exploration of the social-psychological origins of the metaperspective, and an explication of how the concept tessellates with the existing narratological and stylistic theories surveyed in Section 3.1. Also central to this section is my proposal that there exist several metaperspectival sub-types. These varieties – which I term respectively the *discourse-architectural metaperspective*, the *communal metaperspective*, the *racialised metaperspective* and the *literalised metaperspective* – will be examined one apiece in Chapters 4 to 7, the four case-study chapters. In preparation for these case-study chapters, the present chapter concludes with an overview of their contents. Also bridging the gap between the theory-focused Chapters 2 and 3 and the practice-based Chapters 4 to 7 is the steam stylistic analysis of Sections 3.1.3, 3.2.3 and 3.2.6, which incorporate select passages from [Man] Booker Prize-winning novels in order to demonstrate salient theoretical points. To now to turn to said theory, the next section adopts a view on narrative point of view.

3.1. Point of View

According to Short (1996), ‘the study of the novel in the twentieth-century has to a very large extent been the study of point of view’ (256). While this temporal boundary has by now been

surpassed, a focus upon point-of-view relations still remains central to many a narratological and/or stylistic study, including that of the present thesis. In this section, I first define precisely what is meant by 'point of view' within narratology and stylistics, then investigate a range of influential frameworks in the field.

Wales' (2011) *A Dictionary of Stylistics* defines narrative point of view as 'the angle of vision or perception by which the events of a novel are narrated and the information presented' (326-7), acknowledging that it also entails 'a particular way of conceptualising: a world-view or ideology' (*ibid*). Narrative point of view subsumes relations between figures on various discoursal levels (e.g. authors, readers, narrators, narratees and enactors; see further Section 3.1.5, below), and can be indicated on the macro- and micro-linguistic level.

While the terms *point of view* and *perspective* are commonly used interchangeably by critics and laypeople alike (Rimmon-Kenan 2002: 72; Wales 2022: 315), often simply for the purposes of elegant variation, they will not be treated as synonymous within this thesis. As detailed in Section 3.2 and illustrated in Fig. 3.3, *perspective* in the present thesis is understood to form a co-hyponym of the term *metaperspective*, and to denote a direct, non-recursive viewpoint variant. In contrast, *point of view* counts as hypernym, subsuming perspectives, metaperspectives, meta-metaperspectives, and so forth.

Correlating with the extensive theoretical study of point of view, a vast range of typologies have been proposed, many mutually reinforcing, others – somewhat unhelpfully – mutually exclusive. Space and time constraints preclude me from covering all point of view-oriented theories here; instead I review a selection of the most seminal. I address these point-of-view theories in chronological order, given that many are influenced by preceding work in the area.

3.1.1. Point of View in Theory

An early stylistic work on point of view is that of Uspensky (1973), who identifies four distinct point-of-view planes: the spatio-temporal, the psychological, the ideological and the phraseological. The author also coins the terms *verba sentiendi* and *words of estrangement*. Both relate to the psychological point-of-view plane, with the former denoting verbs reflecting thoughts and/or feelings, and the latter lexical indications of uncertainty encapsulated by negative modality, chiming with Simpson's later (1993) point-of-view typology premised upon modal shading. Yet although the work of several subsequent scholars (e.g. Fowler 1986; Simpson 1993) is grounded upon Uspensky's four planes, his fourth point-of-view plane – the

phraseological – has been widely discounted (e.g. Fowler 1986; McIntyre 2006). However, while justifiably critiquing several aspects of Uspensky's (1973) model, Simpson (2014) offers no check to this fourth plane. Adam (2021: 184) argues that this implies a tacit acceptance of the concept's utility. Likewise, I retain the notion of the phraseological plane here, feeling it to correlate well with Short's (1996) detailing of 'linguistic indicators of viewpoint' (263) to be explored in Section 3.1.4.

Considering point of view more holistically, Genette (1980) proposes two overarching narrative types: the heterodiegetic and the homodiegetic. As adumbrated etymologically, heterodiegetic narratives are told by a figure external to the narrative in question, one on a *different* diegetic level, whilst homodiegetic narratives are told through a text-internal enactor on the *same* diegetic level as the events relayed. Exemplifying the former type is Hilary Mantel's (2012) *Bring Up the Bodies*, the sequel to 2009's *Wolf Hall*, discussed in the previous chapter, which garnered the author her second Man Booker Prize. While the novel centres around Henry VIII's aide Thomas Cromwell, the narrator figure is external to the Tudor court both he and the king inhabit. This becomes evident from the first sentence, an *in media res* rendering of their falconry expedition: 'His children were falling from the sky.' (Mantel 2012: 3). Conversely, the homodiegetic narrative situation is represented by Anne Enright's 2007 Man Booker Prize-winning *The Gathering* (2007). The novel details the reminiscences of the Irishwoman Veronica Hegarty following her brother's suicide, and begins thus:

> I would like to write down what happened in my grandmother's house the summer I was eight or nine, but I am not sure if it really did happen.
>
> (Enright 2007: 1)

The distinction between the heterodiegetic and homodiegetic narrative scenario is roughly analogous to the third-person versus first-person distinction of traditional grammar, as indeed the sentence-initial pronouns of the two above excerpts impress. Meanwhile, following the precepts of the 'Best of Both Worlds Theories' approach, heterodiegetic narrators may be positioned to the left-hand side of the actual—fictional ontological divide, and homodiegetic to the right; the former belong to the Actual World or one of its possible satellites, and the latter to the Text-actual World or one of its text-possible satellites.

Furthermore, Genette (1980) perceptively identifies earlier narratological studies to have privileged the issue of 'who tells' a narrative over 'who sees' it. To enable discussion of the

latter issue, Genette (1980) coins the term *focalisation*.[15] This refers to the act of 'seeing' rather than 'telling' within a narrative; it addresses what he believes to be 'regrettable confusion [...] between the question *who is the character whose point of view orients the narrative perspective?* and the very different question *who is the narrator* [...]?' (Genette 1980: 186; italics in original), and answers the former. Lexical derivatives of the coinage include *focaliser* (the agent through which the focalisation occurs) and *focalising* (the act of focalisation).

Overall, three types of focalisation are proposed (though cf. Bal 1985): zero focalisation, external focalisation and internal focalisation. These three types can be conveniently illustrated using mathematical symbols, and relate to the epistemological interplay between the narrator and the focaliser. Zero focalisation involves narratorial omniscience, hence a narrator knows *more than* a focaliser knows ('>'). External focalisation corresponds to the narrator knowing *less than* a focaliser does ('<'). Finally, internal focalisation results in a narrator and focaliser who share *the same* ('=') amount of knowledge (Genette 1980: 188-89). Given that this latter type of focalisation is premised upon the necessarily limited Epistemic World of an individual, Simpson (2014) also refers to attenuated focalisation. This technique involves 'relaying the impression that we are momentarily restricted to the visual range of a particular [enactor]' (29). However, following the logic of Chatman (1986), to be discussed in further detail below, I see no reason for restricting this discussion of restriction to the 'visual' plane only. Instead, I shall use the term to refer to the deployment of any form of focalisation limited with regard to one or more of the five senses, cognition, and/or emotion. Finally, attenuated focalisation should be considered less of an additional category than a sub-category of the inherently subjective internal focalisation.

Since its conception, several amendments have been made to the notion of focalisation (not least by the author himself: see Genette 1988) and its three attendant categories. In particular, Bal (1985) argues for a more streamlined typology comprising only internal and external variants of focalisation. I do concede the observations upon Genette (1980) made by Bal (1985) in her monograph. Firstly, the pre-modifying antonyms 'internal' and 'external' fail to denote converse categories; instead, it is 'external focalisation' and 'zero focalisation' which are opposed (as the above mathematical shorthand should highlight). Secondly, the epithet 'zero' is something of a misnomer, suggesting there to be no focalisation involved in a narrative,

[15] As a brief note on orthographic conventions, throughout this thesis I adopt the Anglicised spelling of the term *focalisation*, unless direct quotation warrants otherwise. The same caveat applies to grammatical derivatives (e.g. *focalising*, *focaliser* etc.).

although it is a truism that all narratives needs must be focalised through one means or another (Genette 1980). Nonetheless, I retain Genette's tripartite typology here, supplementing it with Herman's (1994, 2002) notion of hypothetical focalisation in Section 3.1.3, below. For all its terminological shortcomings, the framework still manages to capture an important distinction between the three conceivable ways a narrative may be focalised. The semantic surface may be inadequate, yet its substance is illuminating.

Fowler (1986) suggests there to be four overarching narrative 'Types', which he tags alphabetically. Condensed into a single epithet, these types comprise: Type A (subjective); Type B (omniscient); Type C (objective); Type D (estranged). Meanwhile, each type has concomitant effects: A commonly engenders sympathy, B is apt to provide ironic commentary, C achieves a more neutral narrative vantage point, and D is able to alienate a reader from a seemingly 'grotesque' character. Where Fowler's framework fails is in its telescoping of distinct diegetic varieties – for instance the heterodiegetic and the homodiegetic – into a single type. For instance, the subjective narration of Type A may be traced to either a partial, extradiegetic narratorial figure, or to a text-internal enactor premising narration upon his or her Epistemic World. As discussed below, these deficiencies are rectified by Simpson (1993). However, they are not the only objections which may be raised to early point-of-view frameworks.

In a seminal article, Chatman (1986) takes exception to contemporaneous point-of-view studies on two counts. Firstly, he critiques the overreliance upon the visual metaphor, opining that terms including 'point of view' and 'perspective' – even, to a lesser extent, 'focalisation' – prioritise the sense of sight whilst intending to denote all five senses alongside cognition and emotion. This is a cogent argument, and one I remain mindful of during my transference of the term metaperspective to the literary arena (see further Section 3.2.1). Secondly, he argues that current terms in the field 'confuse[...] fundamental narrative distinctions' (195) inherent to specific diegetic roles. Instead, Chatman proposes four discrete terms tailored to distinguishing between various narratological functions: *filter*, *center* [*sic*], *slant* and *interest-focus*. A *filter* Chatman (1986: 196-7) takes to mean an enactor, within either the Text-actual World or some text-possible one, whose thoughts and feelings inform the diegesis: 'their ''perspective'' is immanent' (197) as narrative events are relayed '''from''' or '''through''' (196) them. Said filter may be of greater or lesser importance within the narrative. Meanwhile, it is for enactors of 'paramount importance' (196) that Chatman reserves the term *center*. Closely allied with this construct is that of the *interest-focus*, as an enactor who is 'a matter of concern' (197)

within a narrative. Yet the two concepts do not entirely overlap: the *center* is far more constant than the capricious *interest-focus*, which is apt to change from paragraph to paragraph. Chatman's (1986) *filter* also overlaps with the concept of the *origo* (Bühler 1982; Simpson 2014): a deictic zero-point from which the narrative's co-ordinates of space, time and perception may be understood. Finally, the *slant* pertains to an 'attitudinal function' (*ibid*) within a narrative, which may be conveyed either more or less explicitly. In this way, it recalls both the ideological point-of-view plane of Uspensky (1973), and Fowler's (1986) 'world view' category.

As cemented by the above overview, point of view-related lexis proliferates, with several competing terms corresponding to complementary constructs. Stockwell (2009: 124) provides a diagrammatic means of distinguishing between this profusion of terms. Here, influenced by this model, I regard the ideological point-of-view plane as more enculturated and socially situated than either slant or world view. Crucially, the former is a stance which may be situated with a group and adopted by an individual, while both slant and world view may be situated with an individual but shared by a group. Consequently, slant and world view are apt to be more idiosyncratic and distinctive. They are not quite so distinctive, however, as the related concept of mind style, to be detailed in Section 3.1.2 and discussed further in Chapter 6.

Simpson (1993) develops the work of Fowler (1986) to offer 'a more fine-grained set of distinctions' (Gavins 2013: 63) between narrative types. Instead of a quadripartite framework, he suggests a nine-way typology premised in large part upon the narrative's primary modal shading. As Simpson (1993) explains, '*modality* refers broadly to a speaker's attitude towards, or opinion about, the truth of a proposition expressed by a sentence' (47; italics in original). In this way, the three modal shading options accord with the 'slant' facet of a narrative discussed in Chatman (1986); indeed, Chatman refers to slant as an 'attitudinal function' (197), lexically echoing Simpson (1993: 47).

The framework begins, *pace* Genette (1980), by distinguishing between homodiegetic and heterodiegetic narratives, termed respectively 'Category A' and 'Category B' (Simpson 1993: 55). The second category is further bifurcated into either 'Narratorial' or 'Reflector' mode, based upon whether events are relayed through the consciousness of an enactor within the diegesis (cf. Chatman's [1986] 'filter') or through an extradiegetic narrator. The final division separates all Category A and B narratives into three, premised upon their predominant modal shading, be it positive, negative or neutral. Linguistically, modality is indexed by various

means, most usually via modal auxiliaries and/or adverbs, *verba sentiendi*, generic sentences and evaluative lexis. Moreover, different modal types privilege different classes of modality: positively shaded narratives are rich in deontic and boulomaic modality; negatively shaded narratives employ epistemic and perception modality; neutral narratives are characterised by a lack of modality.

The nine-way modal grammar of point of view Simpson (1993) proposes is illustrated by Fig. 3.1. In the diagram, the emboldened font corresponds to the abbreviations that will be used throughout this thesis in referring to Simpson's model. Indeed, the framework is referred to frequently and favoured over that of Fowler (1986). Its finer stratifications result in a more inclusive model able to account for a greater number of narrative texts.

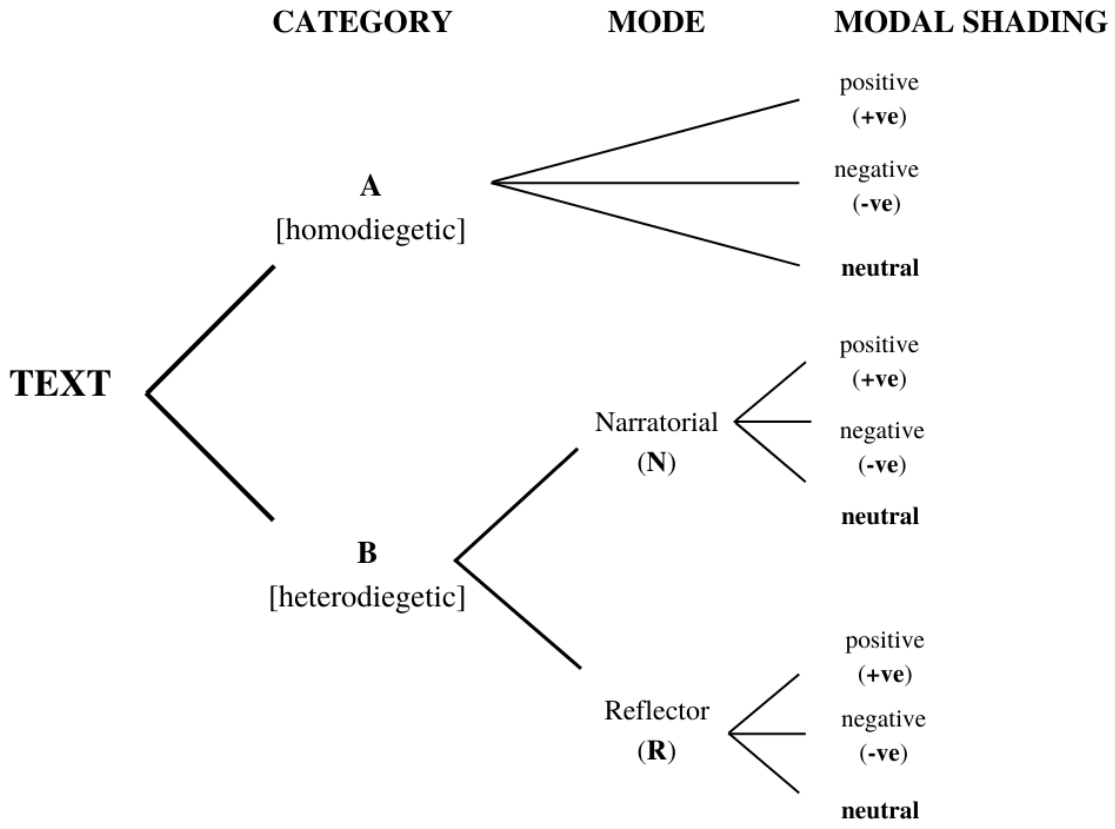

Fig. 3.1. A modal grammar of point of view, after Simpson (1993: 53)

3.1.2. Mind Style

Another concept closely allied to the study of point of view – particularly to Uspensky's (1973) ideological and psychological planes, upon which it was modelled (Fowler 1986) – is that of

mind style. Coined in Fowler (1977), the term encompasses 'cumulative, consistent structural options, agreeing in cutting the presented world to one pattern or another' (76), resulting in the '*distinctive linguistic representation* of an individual mental self' (103; my italics). It is the text-focused crux of this concept which makes it so suited to steam stylistic study. While the term 'mind style' may, in theory, pertain to the cognitive patterning of any 'individual', in practice it is most frequently employed in the context of unusual or abnormal patterns (see, for example, Bockting 1994; Gregoriou 2007, 2009; Norledge 2022). Likewise, Gregoriou (2009) alludes to deviant fictional mind styles which are either 'cognitively primitive, psychologically impaired or emotionally troubled' (73). Clearly, any one of these three options has the potential to impact upon a text's 'slant' (Chatman 1986) or modal shading (Simpson 1993), and will resonate upon both the psychological and ideological point-of-view planes (Uspensky 1973).

The succinct overview here prefigures a more complete treatment of the concept in Chapter 6. In this chapter, the mind style of 'emotionally troubled' (Gregoriou 2009: 73) focaliser Kim Clarke is seen to accord with her frequent recourse to the racialised metaperspective (see further Section 3.2.7, below).

Above, it was noted that Genette (1980) identifies three varieties of narrative focalisation: internal, external, and zero. Yet, while mutually exclusive, these types are not exhaustive. Particularly central to the present thesis is the concept of hypothetical focalisation, which will be explored at length in the following sub-section.

3.1.3. Hypothetical Focalisation

Hypothetical focalisation is Herman's (1994, 2002) proposed addition to Genette's (1980, 1988) tripartite typology, as discussed above. Hypothetical focalisation concerns:

> the use of hypotheses, framed by a narrator or character, about *what might be or have been seen or perceived* – if only there were someone who could have adopted the requisite perspective on the situations and events at issue.
>
> (Herman 1994: 231; my italics)

Clearly, the concept boasts a broad purview. Firstly, it is applicable across different narrative moods (Genette 1980). Texts predominantly internally focalised through 'characters' are just as likely to include passages of hypothetical focalisation as are those which are externally focalised and employ omniscient 'narrators'; equally, those engaging in hypothetical focalisation may be either homodiegetic or heterodiegetic. Secondly, the temporal remit of hypothetical focalisation is wide-ranging and non-exclusive, covering both past ('might [...]

have been') and future ('might be') eventualities. Finally, the scenarios evoked may vary greatly in content: they can be either static ('situations') or dynamic ('events'), cued through world-building (WB) details, successive function-advancing (FA) elements, or a combination of the two. Ultimately, hypothetically-focalised scenes may range from phrases to pages to entire works of narrative prose. In only one respect is Herman's above-quoted mission statement misleadingly exclusive. Its reference to the ocular (i.e. 'seen or perceived') replicates the more general narratological bias towards the visual when discussing point of view, perspective, and/or focalisation (see Chatman 1986). As with focalisation more broadly, hypothetical focalisation should be considered to pertain to all five senses, not just the one.

As Herman (2002) outlines, the narratives generated via hypothetical focalisation can be classified into one of two types, being either:

> **Type 1**
>
> Narratives whose interpretation provokes speculation about some non-existent focaliser

or

> **Type 2**
>
> Narratives that prompt speculation about focalising activity that someone who actually exists in the Text-actual World may or may not have performed.

(Adapted from Herman 2002: 309)

The case-study novels of Chapters 4 to 7 evidence both of these types.

Not insignificantly, several of the case-study texts under consideration also contain a large proportion of internal monologue. Herman reasons that hypothetical focalisation is especially frequent within internal monologues, for texts of this form, more so than any other, replicate the inner workings of the human mind. He reasons:

> Given *the vast importance of hypothesis and contrary-to-fact speculation in people's mental lives*, H[ypothetical] F[ocalisation] can be predicted to play an especially important and prominent role in texts with a high concentration of interior monologue.

(Herman 2002: 320; my italics)

As shall be seen, the case studies of this thesis provide irrefutable textual evidence to support this 'predict[ion]'. Likewise evidenced is Herman's argument (somewhat buried in a footnote; 411 n.13) that texts rich in hypothetical focalisation frequently thematise self-consciousness. Focalisers middle sister of *Milkman* (Chapter 5) and Kim Clarke from *A Brief History of Seven*

Killings (Chapter 6) are prime examples. In contrast, I do not subscribe to Doležel's (1980) argument that: 'Introducing hypotheses, conjectures, guesses [...] is a privilege of the Ich-form [homodiegetic] narrator not available to the anonymous Er-form [roughly heterodiegetic] narrator' (19 n.16). [16] While I concede that hypothetical focalisation may be embarked upon more readily by homodiegetic narrators, there is no reason why its use is their prerogative. Although heterodiegetic narrators are often omniscient, this is not always so – consider Simpson's Category B(N -ve) – and hypothetical focalisation may function as an effective rhetorical device, even for the omniscient. The reason that the case-study narratives within this thesis are predominantly homodiegetic follows not from Doležel's argument, but rather from the idiosyncrasies of the metaperspective. This will be explored in further detail in Section 3.2.5, below.

In addition to his two hypothetically-focalised narrative 'types', Herman (1994, 2002) identifies four sub-categories of hypothetical focalisation. Influenced by the speech and thought presentation continuum devised by Leech and Short (2007), he labels the two overarching categories of hypothetical focalisation as 'direct' and 'indirect', further bifurcating them into strong and weak variants to result in a four-way typology. This is captured in Table 3.1, which summarises the key criteria for the four sub-categories, whilst aligning each with the 'Best of Both Worlds' framework this thesis employs.

[16] While Doležel's (1980) dichotomy is similar to Genette's contemporaneous (1980) homodiegetic/heterodiegetic distinction, there is no exact equivalence between the two sets of terms. Clearly, heterodiegetic narrators are not all necessarily 'anonymous'. My comparison here is based upon the literal translation of the German pronouns.

a) Strong direct ['Counterfactual witness'] - Explicit focaliser - Text-possible focaliser	b) Weak direct - Explicit focaliser - Text-actual focaliser
c) Strong indirect - Implicit focaliser - Angle of focalisation potentially text-possible - Contents of focalisation potentially text-possible	d) Weak indirect - Implicit focaliser - Angle of focalisation potentially text-possible - Contents of focalisation text-actual

Table 3.1. The four sub-categories of hypothetical focalisation, after Herman (1994, 2002)

Paraphrasing from Herman's (1994, 2002) explanation, the distinguishing criteria of the above schematic may be elaborated as follows.

a) Strong direct

- Hypothetical focalisation undertaken by an agent who is explicitly (lexically and/or grammatically) identified;
- Focalising agent text-possible rather than text-actual, i.e. a hypothetical figure or so-called 'counterfactual witness' (Herman 1994: 237);
- Often co-occurs with hypothetically-focalised narrative type 1.

b) Weak direct

- Hypothetical focalisation undertaken by an identified agent;
- Focalising agent ratified as a text-actual enactor; only the act of focalisation cannot be confirmed as part of the Text-actual World;
- Often co-occurs with hypothetically-focalised narrative type 2.

c) Strong indirect

- Focalising agent left implicit, requiring inferencing from the Actual World reader;

- Doubt surrounding both the angle of perception and its 'contents', i.e. what is perceived: neither the subject nor the object of focalisation is ratified as text-actual, both remaining potentially text-possible.

d) Weak indirect

- Focalising agent left implicit; their activity must instead be inferred by the Actual World reader;
- Solely the angle of focalisation in doubt; what is perceived certified as text-actual.

Adam (2020b) also identifies a further, somewhat disguised, variant of hypothetical focalisation overlooked by Herman, which is termed *assured hypothetical focalisation*. In this paper, I argue that the variant presents less 'what might be or have been seen or perceived' (Herman 1994: 231) than what *must be* seen or perceived by those with the ability to do so. The strong epistemic modality intrinsic to this variety means that the reader must be attuned to minute, momentary lapses in the degree of certainty conveyed, which act as hints of underlying hypotheticality. I suggest that while the purpose of this particular narrative technique is to prevent 'stymying [a] novel's plot, or limiting it to a series of hypothetical statements' (Adam 2020b: 59), its result is the 'blurring of the boundaries between reality and fantasy' (*ibid*), between the text-actual and the solely text-possible.

Space constraints here prevent me from providing an illustrative example of either this innovative variant, or each of the other four sub-categories. Instead, I gesture to the possibilities of hypothetical focalisation with the passage below, which evidences the first sub-category, and refer frequently to the concept throughout the case-study chapters. The passage in question is excerpted from Alan Hollinghurst's historical novel *The Line of Beauty*, first published in 2004 and recipient of the Man Booker Prize that same year. Set against the backdrop of a hedonistic, Thatcherite Britain, the novel chronicles the early adulthood of reflector of the fiction Nick Guest. For much of the novel, Guest (as his characteronym foretells) is a lodger in the elite Kensington Park Gardens home of the aristocratic Feddenses. Here, the exclusive communal gardens which adjoin the mansion are described:

Excerpt 3.1

> There were one or two places, in the surrounding streets, where someone who wasn't a keyholder could see through to a glade among the planes and tall copper beech – across which perhaps a couple would saunter or an old lady wait for her even slower dog.

(Hollinghurst 2004: 15)

The passage above typifies hypothetical focalisation sub-category a), the strong direct variant. It relies upon a counterfactual witness – note the indefinite non-specific reference to '*someone* who wasn't a keyholder', which echoes Herman's (1994) explicatory 'someone' (231) – to focalise the scene. This scene is specific, established via finely delineated WB elements, inanimate (e.g. 'tall copper beech') and animate ('even slower dog'), alongside FA propositions. Cast in the conditional mood ('could have seen'), Excerpt 3.1 ultimately conveys 'what might be or have been seen or perceived' given the 'requisite perspective' (Herman 1994: 231) of inquisitive neighbours.

It was suggested above that the strong direct variant of hypothetical focalisation tallies with hypothetically-focalised narrative type 1, formed of 'narratives whose interpretation provokes [...] speculation about some non-existent focalizer' (Herman 2002: 309). So it proves with the excerpt from *The Line of Beauty*. As the unabridged passage makes clear, Nick Guest himself could very well have been 'someone who wasn't a keyholder' (Hollinghurst 2004: 15) passing by the exterior of the gardens' gated compound: a person on 'the outside' rather than 'the inside' (*ibid*) both literally and metaphorically. Throughout the novel, Guest is enamoured by the upper-class lifestyles of his companions, whilst remaining conscious of 'his own social displacement' (48); harnessing hypothetical focalisation in Excerpt 3.1 gives subtle vent to these feelings. Meanwhile, this characterisation also resonates with Herman's (2002: 411 n.13) alignment of hypothetical focalisation and insecure enactors, as discussed above. Ultimately, this symbiosis of the literary and the linguistic succinctly demonstrates the efficacy of the philological circle (Spitzer 1948).

A final point to note in relation to the above passage concerns its ontological structure. It marries an initial text-actual description with the subsequent establishment of two text-possible worlds. These are triggered by the sentential adverbial 'perhaps', and may be classed as Prediction Worlds due to their grounding in contextually commonplace activities and behavioural patterns. Hence in one Prediction World 'a couple [...] saunter[s]', whilst in a parallel one a slow 'old lady' walks an equally slow dog. Cued in rapid succession, and competing (note the comparative conjunction 'or'), these text-possible worlds emphasise the ultimately conjectural nature of the entire scene.

As Herman himself (1994, 2002) acknowledges, there is considerable affinity between hypothetical focalisation and possible worlds theory as applied to literature. This is apparent even in Herman's lexical choices: note the 'speculation' (2002: 309) he refers to echoes text-

possible world-type 2, the Speculative Extension to the Epistemic World. Yet this is by no means the only world-type which may be aligned with hypothetical focalisation. Above, the Prediction World (world-type 7) was seen to tally with its deployment. Other complementary candidates include the Wish World (type 5), the Fantasy World (6), and, incontrovertibly, the Hypothesis World (8). Indeed, in coining the latter world-type, Semino *et al*. (1999) describe it as one detailing 'alternative ways in which things might have happened' (327), echoing Herman's (1994) definition of hypothetical focalisation as the 'what might be or have been' (231) perspective of literature. Finally, it is no coincidence that together these five text-possible world-types form the 'suppositious text-possible world' cohort outlined in Chapter 2. Hypothetical focalisation is, after all, grounded in supposition.

By now, it has been established what is meant by semantically related terms including *perspective* and *focalisation*. How precisely, though, are these variables indexed linguistically? This is the subject of the following two sub-sections, which explore, respectively, point-of-view relations on the micro- and macro-linguistic levels.

3.1.4. Linguistic Indicators of Viewpoint

According to Short (1996), there exist several features on the micro-linguistic level which index narrative point of view. These so-called 'linguistic indicators of viewpoint' are 'small-scale linguistic choices on the part of the author' (263) which are used to establish – often subtly – 'who sees' and 'who tells' (*pace* Genette 1980) within a narrative text. Explicitly identifying these indicators enables the 'transparent and replicable method[...] of investigation' (Gavins 2013: 7) inherent to the stylistic endeavour (cf. Simpson 2014: 4). Short (1996: 263-87) enumerates the following eight linguistic viewpoint indicators.

i) Schema-oriented language (subsuming overlexicalisation and underlexicalisation);

ii) Evaluative lexis;

iii) Given versus new information (via definite or indefinite reference and/or anaphoric pronouns);

iv) Indicators of thought or perception (via modality, *verba sentiendi*, and/or verbs of factivity);

v) Spatio-temporal deixis (via distal or proximal adverbs, demonstratives or verbs);

vi) Social deixis (via vocatives and naming strategies);

vii) Psychological sequencing (via event coding);

viii) Ideological lexis.

(Adapted from Short 1996: 263-87)

Discussing, adjacently, 'verbal indicators of focalisation', Rimmon-Kenan (2002: 84-6) notes similar features, whilst also recognising that particular semantic fields may convey narrative viewpoint (85). Linked to this, the use of figurative language (e.g. metaphor) should also be considered, for novel uses in particular may be tied to the attitudes and/or experiences of a specific narrative figure. This tallies with Harrison's (2020) observation of the potentially characterising function of metaphor: 'Metaphor choices can present information about the psyche of a central character' (33).

Several of Short's criteria relate quite clearly to an Uspenskian point-of-view plane (see Section 3.1.1). The fifth evidently maps to the spatio-temporal plane, the fourth and seventh the psychological, and both the first and eighth the ideological. Finally, criterion vi) recalls the phraseological point-of-view plane. This further supports my above contention that this plane is not superfluous, and does merit a separate analytical category. Meanwhile, in Section 3.2.8 below I will elaborate upon how Short's (1996) 'linguistic indicators of viewpoint' both inspired and relate to the 'typical linguistic indices' of the metaperspective, in all its various forms.

3.1.5. Discourse Architecture

What Short (1996) refers to as 'discourse architecture' relates to point of view on the macro-linguistic level. Its consideration may be used to complement that of the eight 'linguistic indicators of viewpoint' listed above. The phrase uses the conceptual metaphor NOVEL IS A BUILDING so as to investigate the 'construct[ion]' (256) of the various discoursal levels of a narrative. These levels enable the communication of the meaning of the discourse: its message. According to Short (1996: 255-87), there exist four ontologically distinct levels. They comprise: 1) the real author—real reader level; 2) the implied author—implied reader level; 3) the narrator—narratee level; and 4) the enactor—enactor level (though for Short [1996] this is the character—character level). The four levels are diagrammatised in Fig. 3.2, which depicts 'the basic discourse structure for the novel' (Short 1996: 257). Those figures to the right-hand side of the discourse-architectural diagram will be explored in further detail in Chapter 4, which investigates the discourse-architectural metaperspective in Margaret Atwood's 2019 novel, *The Testaments*. This will also occasion clarification of the four figures to the left-hand side. Meanwhile, to each of my four case-study chapters will be appended a discourse-architectural

diagram, akin to that below, representing the section of text under analysis. This will enable analyses which fully account for each individual narrative's complex ontological relations.

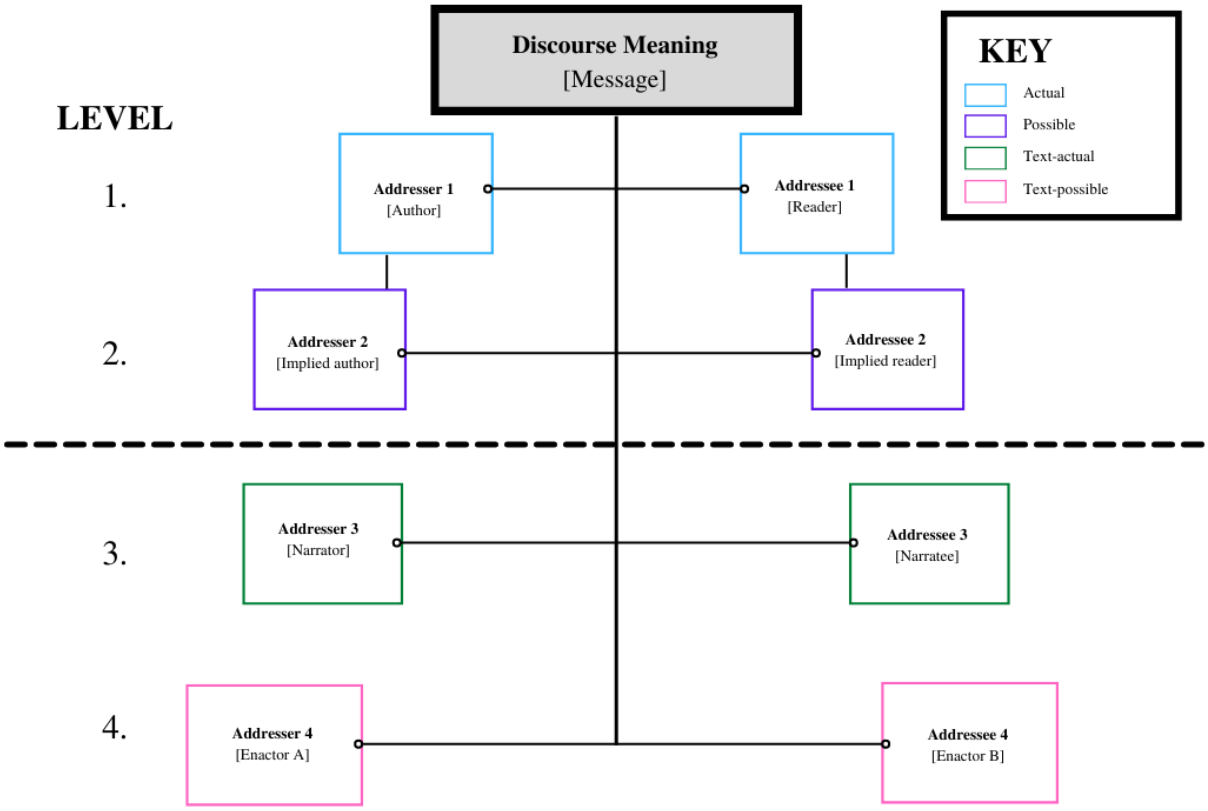

Fig. 3.2. The basic discourse architecture of a novel, after Short (1996: 257)

Expanding upon Short's (1996) conception, in the above figure I assign different ontological domains different colours. This functions as an immediate visual indication of the varied and interlocking ontological levels relating to the reading of any one fictional narrative. (Note that, for the purposes of illustrative completeness, in the diagram the enactor—enactor level is depicted as text-possible, hence showcasing all possible ontologies [and colours!]. Clearly, this is not a necessary condition of this fourth level, which may be either text-actual or text-possible). Undergirding this, the dashed horizontal line on the above diagram indexes the divide between reality and fiction. This corresponds to the dashed vertical line of Fig. 2.3, across which, as was discussed, readers must travel in order to 'fictionally recenter' (*pace* Ryan

1991b) into a text. Meanwhile, solid vertical lines connect levels 1 and 2 to represent the theoretical grounding of the second-tier figures in that of the first (see further Chapter 4).

Theoretically, as Short (1996: 250) identifies, both novels and the discourse-architectural diagrams which represent them are capable of infinite regress: while a narrator may report the conversation of two enactors, so too may one of these two enactors report the conversation of another two enactors, and so on *ad infinitum*. Due to space constraints (and as these proliferating levels often prove more confusing than clarifying), on the above figure I restrict myself to four levels only. This is enough to account for 'the novel 'in general'' (Short 1996: 257), though more will be added as and when necessary to Figs. 4.1, 5.1, 6.1, 7.1, 8.1 and 8.2.

However, in sketching the discoursal 'levels of communication', Goetsch (2004: 189) diverges from Short's (1996) discourse-architectural prototype. Instead, Goetsch proposes a five-tiered model, interpolating a 'buffer stage' between the real author—real reader level and the implied author—implied reader level (levels 1. and 2. on Fig. 3.2). This additional level, so Goetsch opines, consists of 'the author as a creator of a work of prose fiction and the reader as a prospective consumer of the narrative' (Goetsch 2004: 189). I would however prefer to retain Short's (1996) quadripartite model, believing Goetsch's extra level superfluous. Surely it may be easily subsumed into the first ('real') level; Goetsch suggests that his second-level readers 'are influenced by external factors [including] knowledge of other works by one and the same author, the sales campaign for the book' (Goetsch 2004: 189) *etcetera*. These variables are undeniable (and empirically testable; see the Author Recognition Test [ART] outlined by Mak 2021), yet they exist in the Actual World for real authors and readers, and thus do not merit a separate, segmented subcategory.

Two further terms of significance within discussions of a novel's discourse architecture are the dichotomous *fabula* and *sjužet*. Both traceable to work undertaken by the Russian Formalists during the early 1900s, the terms enable a distinction to be drawn between the abstract sequence of events which form a novel's plotline and the order in which they are presented to the reader. Equivalent binary pairings have been proposed by other theoretical schools (for instance the *histoire* and *discours*/*récit* distinction of French Structuralism), but given the grounding of the stylistic discipline in Russian Formalism (see Section 1.2) their terminology is preferred within the present thesis.

Having defined the noun phrase *discourse architecture* in the preceding paragraphs, in the following subsection I concentrate specifically upon the premodifier *discourse*, which proves slightly more terminologically problematic.

3.1.6. Discourse

As Wales (2011) acknowledges, 'discourse is one of the most widely used and overworked terms in many branches of linguistics, stylistics, cultural and critical theory.' (121). It is therefore beneficial to briefly gloss here the sense in which it will be employed throughout this thesis. Namely, *pace* stylisticians including Leech and Short (2007) and Semino and Short (2004), I treat discourse as referring to any mode of communication, be it spoken, thought or written, or indeed some combination of the three. This thus accords with sense 6 as recorded in the *OED*, limning 'Interactions, dealings, communication.' (n.p). In this way, 'discourse' functions as a convenient shorthand, a more economical means of conveying the concept of communication via any one (or several of) the three channels.

However, this usage of the term runs counter to that of linguists including Fairclough (e.g. 2010) and Lampropoulou *et al*. (forthcoming, 2023). For the former 'discourse' is understood to mean 'a complex set of relations including relations of communication between people who talk [and] write' (Fairclough 2010: 3); discourse is conceived as a sort of socially-constructed theory (8), communication *about* rather than communication *through*. Consequently, this tallies with the seventh entry in the *OED*: 'The body of statements, analysis, opinions etc., relating to a particular domain of intellectual or social activity, esp. as characterised by recurring themes, concepts or values.' (n.p). Ultimately, while this understanding services the critical discourse analysis (Fairclough 2010) and/or sociolinguistic (Lampropoulou *et al*. forthcoming, 2023) approach, it does not suit the stylistic one here.

Finally, while using 'discourse presentation' as a 'briefer[...] term to refer to what [is] otherwise [...] speech, writing and thought presentation' (Semino and Short 2004: 2), I follow Semino and Short in specifying where necessary that analysis pertains to a specific discourse type, i.e. speech, thought or writing presentation alone. The same caveat applies to any discussions of 'hypothetical discourse presentation'. In the next sub-section, I expand upon precisely what 'hypothetical discourse' denotes.

3.1.7. Hypothetical Discourse

Fleshing out Leech and Short's (2007 [1981]) earlier 'speech and thought presentation' model, Semino and Short (2004) are the first to acknowledge hypothetical discourse as a distinct phenomenon, and to allocate it a separate classificatory category. This decision is informed by the corpus-based observation of its relative frequency within a variety of genres and text-types. In justifying the tagging of their custom-made corpus, the two stylisticians note that:

> what we tagged as 'h' for 'hypothetical' is wider than more standard understandings of the term 'hypothetical'. It captures *all presentations of discourse which are indicated as not actually occurring in the world evoked by the text*, including [...] 'interpretative paraphrase' as well as more 'standard' kinds of hypothetical discourse – for example the presentation of what someone would have liked to say, but did not actually say.
>
> (Semino and Short 2004: 165; my italics)

This more inclusive interpretation of the adjective 'hypothetical' thus enables 'hypothetical discourse' to denote any and all instances of discourse explicitly presented as non-actual (57). Indeed, Semino and Short (2004) frequently employ the terms 'actual' and 'non-actual', which helpfully resonates with the text-actual/text-possible binary deployed in this thesis, and detailed in Chapter 2. Yet my own understanding of the term 'hypothetical discourse' does not completely correlate with that of Semino and Short; I advocate stretching its denotative boundaries yet further. I take 'hypothetical discourse' to refer to any form of speech, thought or writing which does not belong to the Text-actual World, but rather to some text-possible world, whether or not this is 'explicitly' marked. Following cognitive-stylistic precepts, I acknowledge the agency of the reader in any interpretation of a text (Giovanelli 2022: 409-10; Stockwell 2020a: 156); even if hypotheticality is not indexed explicitly (for instance, a protasis apodosis structure is lacking), a competent reader may nonetheless be able to identify the scenario described as text-possible. Consequently, I amend Semino and Short's original definition thus:

> Hypothetical discourse captures all presentations of discourse which are indicated as, or inferred to be, not actually occurring in the world evoked by the text.

Admittedly, these altered boundaries render the construct both more subjective, and more nebulous; there is no accounting for the idiosyncratic responses of readers. Nonetheless, I feel it necessary to acknowledge that hypothetical discourse, in both fictional and non-fictional contexts, is not necessarily consistently flagged as hypothetical *per se*, often requiring

pragmatic inferencing on the part of the reader. Indeed, it is often just this ontological indeterminacy which makes the analysis of hypothesis so fascinating.

Meanwhile, the caveats noted in Section 3.1.6 regarding the polysemous lexeme *discourse* likewise apply here. That is, I prioritise sense 6 rather than sense 7 as listed in the *OED* (2022). A discussion of 'hypothetical discourse' will thus relate to the presentation of text-possible speech, thought or writing within my case-study texts, rather than 'statements, analysis, opinions etc., relating to a particular domain of intellectual or social activity' and characterised by the 'theme[...]' of hypothesis. As shall be seen in Section 3.2.8 below, the presence of hypothetical discourse is a key index of the metaperspective in literature. The following section establishes precisely what is meant by this heretofore social-psychological term.

3.2. The Metaperspective

The social psychologists R.D. Laing, H. Phillipson and A.R. Lee posit that

> Human beings are constantly thinking about others and about what others are thinking about them, and what others think they are thinking about the others, and so on.

(Laing *et al*. 1966: 23)

It is this stance which spurred their coinage and subsequent application of the concept of the *metaperspective*. The term was first defined in their 1966 publication, *Interpersonal Perception: A theory and a method of research*, which acted as a primer for a then-pioneering method of marriage counselling that the trio named the Interpersonal Perception Method (henceforth IPM). The coinage *metaperspective,* explained as central to the IPM, is defined as follows:

> My field of experience is, however, filled not only by my direct view of myself (ego) and of the other (alter), but of what we shall call *meta*perspectives: ***my view* of the *other's* (your, his, her, their) *view* of me**. I may not actually be able to see myself as others see me, but I am constantly supposing them to be seeing me in particular ways, and I am constantly acting in the light of the actual or supposed attitudes, opinions, needs, and so on the other has in respect of me. [...] Human beings are constantly thinking about others and what others are thinking about them, and what others think they are thinking about the others, and so on.

(Laing *et al*. 1966: 4; italics in original, emboldening mine)

More colloquially, the metaperspective may be conceived of as ''What I think you think of me''. In short – in just two words – the metaperspective entails *perspectival supposition*. Emphasising the concept as crucial not only to their newly-developed research paradigm, but more generally to day-to-day existence, Laing and his colleagues conclude that:

> The other I am for the other is a constant concern of us all. My view of the others' view of me, my perspective on the others' perspective on me, is what we are calling a metaperspective [...].
>
> (Laing *et al*. 1966: 5)

Jahoda supports this assertion in her preface to Laing *et al*.'s monograph, arguing that a desire to know the thoughts of 'the other [is] probably the most universal experience' (Jahoda 1966: v). Similarly, as quoted above, Herman identifies 'hypothesis and contrary-to-fact speculation' as 'vast[ly] importan[t]' to people's mental lives. It is this experiential centrality, alongside the relative neglect of the concept of the metaperspective, which make it so well worth sustained study. Moreover, given that the human race is given to the frequent creation of metaperspectives – is, as Laing *et al*. would have it, 'constantly supposing' – it is unsurprising that metaperspectives are to be found in fiction, considered as it is a medium reflective of everyday life (Aristotle 1981). The original application of Laing *et al*.'s metaperspective may have been to the Actual World, but, as this thesis will demonstrate, it is equally applicable in a Text-actual World context.

There is clearly much to unpack within the above-quoted excerpts. Through doing so in the following subsection, I aim not only to concretise the concept of the metaperspective, but to illustrate how well it meshes with established stylistic frameworks, particularly those relating to narrative point of view (see Section 3.1, above). This will then facilitate the interdisciplinary application of the metaperspective, as it is translated from a social-psychological to a literary context for the first time. Indeed, as stated in the Introduction (Section 1.4), this is the second of the three research aims of this thesis.

In the next sub-section, I sketch some points relating to the size and scope of the metaperspective. Following this comes a discussion of the related mechanism of Theory of Mind, subsuming consideration of how it may be distinguished from the metaperspective. I continue with further elaboration of the original usage of the metaperspective, introducing the *marital metaperspective* as an effective hyponym. Finally, I explore how the term metaperspective has been applied in the fifty-plus years since its conception, and how it may be employed within a literary and stylistic context in the future.

3.2.1. The Metaperspective: Size and Scope

Crucially, in evoking the concept of the metaperspective, one must remain cognisant of its metaphorical bent. In this regard, the term functions much like the narratological-stylistic notions of point of view and perspective. Indeed, my argument here recalls that of Chatman

(1986) who, as noted above, cautions against an overly literal interpretation of the term 'perspective' within narratological studies (cf. Rimmon-Kenan 2002). Likewise, the root morpheme *-perspective* within the term 'metaperspective' is not meant literally, for the concept covers not only the visual field, but an individual's 'entire field of experience' (Laing *et al*. 1966: 4). It should be apparent that ''What I think you think of me'' may be informed by any one of the five senses, alone or in combination, as well as cognition and/or emotion. Indeed, as shall be evidenced throughout the case-study chapters, the emotive dimension informs the evaluative lexis which constitutes a key linguistic index of the metaperspective in literature. Consequently, while I retain Laing *et al*.'s original (1966) definition of the metaperspective as '*My* ***view*** of the *other's* [...] ***view*** of me' (4; italics in original, my emboldening) throughout this thesis, I in no way wish to limit the metaperspective to the sense of sight alone. The lack of a suitable English-language alternative results in this terminological impasse.

Secondly, a metaperspective need not necessarily involve just two people, i.e. a single subject (or 'ego') against a single object (or 'alter'). Although this was Laing *et al*.'s prototype (see further Section 3.2.3), their glossing of the term as cited above sets a precedent for the wider application of the concept. Namely, the parenthesised pronominals – '(your, his, her, their)' – indicate that the metaperspective may be generated by the interplay of perspectives between two parties rather than two people. Crucially, as the third-person plural pronoun indicates, it is feasible that the second of these parties – the object, or 'alter' – consists of two or more individuals. Indeed, Laing *et al*. designed the IPM to explore dyadic relations, and affirm: 'A dyad contains two epicentres of experience, two points of view, two perspectives.' (1966: 53). Nowhere is it ruled that these 'two perspectives' must belong to a person apiece. This proviso comes to the fore in Chapter 5, which explores communal metaperspectives – or, *My view* of the *community's view* of me – within a less quantitatively reductive paradigm.

A further key feature of the metaperspective is what Laing *et al*. (1966) deem the 'Spiral of Reciprocal Perspectives' (23-34). In this way, just as a perspective may be used to establish a metaperspective, so may a metaperspective establish a meta-metaperspective. In essence, as its morphology suggests, the meta-metaperspective involves one further level of embedding: it denotes the subject's view of the object's view of the subject's view. Couched less formally, this relays ''What I think you think I think of you''. A sentence like 'I suppose that you think that I love you' (cf. Laing *et al*. 1966: 152) illustrates this doubly-embedded metaperspective in action. Meanwhile, the iteration of suppositious perspectives is capable of infinite regress: individuals may conjure not only second-order metaperspectives, but 'spiral off into third,

fourth, even fifth levels of what we have [...] called metaperspectives', as Laing *et al*. (1966: 23) reason. Admittedly, the processing of these proliferating perspectives proves a veritable mental whirligig (psychologists Premack and Woodruff [1978] have suggested that 'only about four steps make our species [i.e. humans] uncomfortable' [515-6]). Yet their seeming complexity belies the fact that they are far from unusual, either in everyday life (Laing *et al*. 1966; Walsh 2015) or in literature (Corballis 2011; Zunshine 2015, 2021). Nevertheless, it is the second-order metaperspective which will form the central focus of this thesis. At this single level of embedding, the concept is found frequently in literature, and aligns well with several established narratological and stylistic theories, as well as with the text-possible worlds framework which undergirds the following four chapters. Nonetheless, in the interest of comprehensiveness, a brief instance of the metaperspective's recursive offspring, the meta-metaperspective, will be commented upon in Chapter 6.

Finally (and especially pertinently in the context of this thesis), it must be acknowledged that the metaperspective is grounded in supposition. While my two-word summary of the concept condensed it to perspectival supposition, Laing *et al*. (1966) similarly recognise that the metaperspective results from the human penchant for 'constantly *supposing*' (4; my italics). Moreover, the metaperspective is premised upon 'the actual or *supposed* attitudes, opinions, needs, and so on' (*ibid*; my italics) of an other or others. The metaperspective is thus as grounded in conjecture as the suppositious text-possible world-types of the previous chapter. Laing *et al*.'s 'actual' versus 'supposed' binary also tallies neatly with my own Text-actual World/text-possible worlds schematic, as sketched in Sections 2.2 and 2.3. Meanwhile, the facets of the metaperspective listed by Laing *et al*. ('the supposed attitudes, opinions, needs, and so on') map directly to several of the text-possible world-types already surveyed. Supposed 'opinions', for instance, may generate an Epistemic World, and supposed 'needs', depending upon the wider context, either an Intention or an Obligation World. Each of these three text-possible world-types, along with the remaining five, are in ample evidence throughout the literary case studies of Chapters 4 to 7.

3.2.2. The Metaperspective and Theory of Mind

Those familiar with Theory of Mind may wonder precisely how this concept differs from that of the metaperspective (neatly, in reaching this conclusion I have engaged my own Theory of Mind). While the literature addressing this cognitive capacity is far too extensive to delve into in any depth within this thesis, the present sub-section offers an overview of the field. The aim

is to crystallise how the metaperspective is both similar to, yet crucially distinct from, Theory of Mind.

An acknowledgement of the human capacity for 'Theory of Mind' (hereafter ToM) is relatively recent, traceable to 1978 following a seminal article published by the psychologists Premack and Woodruff. The concept pertains to 'the ability to explain and predict the actions, both of oneself, and of other intelligent agents' (Carruthers and Smith 1996: 1) through recourse to hypothesis about their mental functioning. Much as with Jahoda's description of the metaperspective, ToM ability is characterised by Premack and Woodruff (1978) as 'universal' (525); as they explain: 'assigning mental states to another individual is not a sophisticated or advanced act, but a primitive one.' (*ibid*). Within cognitive psychology, the ability is often investigated in relation to those on the autism spectrum, children, and/or primates, though it has also been applied fruitfully in the context of literature as spearheaded by Zunshine (2003). Associated literature identifies three overarching viewpoints in relation to how this ability is achieved. One is the so-called 'theory-theory', which posits that implicit folk knowledge of cognitive structure and functioning allows for the imputation of other people's mental states. However, theory-theory theorists have yet to agree upon whether this capacity is the result of quotidian experience or whether it is innate, a result of a dedicated 'module' in the human brain. Another position is termed 'simulation theory', as it proposes that 'an ability to project ourselves imaginatively into another person's perspective' (3) enables ToM. The third and final stance involves some combination of the preceding two. During this thesis, I align myself with this latter viewpoint. In this way, I view ToM as a result of both societal enculturation and perspective-taking projection (cf. Whiteley 2011: 39). Moreover, it is precisely this latter ability which is crucial in the process of '[fictional] recentering' (Ryan 1991b); the realisation of ToM for the character of a novel is therefore a doubly-embedded, recursive process.

How, then, is ToM distinct from the concept of the metaperspective? The difference is one more of quality than of kind. Just as Premack and Woodruff (1978) deem empathy a subset of the ToM mechanism ('it might be called a Theory of Mind concerning the other's motivation' [518]), so too may the metaperspective feasibly be considered a subset of human ToM capacities. It is one concerned not with what we think other people think *in general*, but, more specifically, what we think other people think *of us*. In short, the metaperspective is Theory of Mind with an egocentric bias.

Having surveyed the purview of the metaperspective, and so viewed the concept from a broad vantage point, I now zero in on the more specific nuances of its application. Firstly establishing the original use to which it was put, I then document its subsequent theoretical trajectory, and suggest how this could be extended into the literary and stylistic domain.

3.2.3. The Original Metaperspective: 'The Marital Metaperspective'?

A cornerstone of the IPM (Laing *et al*. 1966), the metaperspective was originally harnessed in the context of marriage counselling. As Laing *et al*.'s monograph documents, the IPM was administered to a total of 22 couples (73-91), comprised of 12 'disturbed' and 10 'non-disturbed' (control groups) dyads, in order to test its efficacy. Following this, the IPM was employed to analyse the relationship of a case-study couple – 'the Joneses' – in detail (92-130).

In undertaking the marital therapy, each individual was required to complete a 60-question IPM questionnaire, formed of 6 separate categories. These covered *Basic trust, understanding and regard* (Category A); *Warm concern and support* (B); *Disparagement and disappointment* (C); *Contentions: fight or flight* (D); *Contradictions and confusions* (E); *Extreme denial of autonomy* (F). Six example questions, one piece from each of the categories and following the above ordering, are appended below. As their wording indicates, all are directed towards the male of the dyad. [17] For each, section A relates to the [direct] perspective of the respondent, section B to their metaperspective, and section C to their meta-metaperspective. Given the focus of this thesis, the majority of the below citations reproduce the second section only. The exception, predominantly for illustrative purposes, is the first question, reproduced in its entirety. Moreover, this question may be taken as the archetype in the context of marriage counselling; Laing *et al*. (1966) acknowledge that '[t]he issues in category A represent those that are essential components of a close dyadic relationship' (101).

15. A. How true do you think the following are?

    1. She loves me.
    2. I love her.
    3. She loves herself.
    4. I love myself.

B. How would SHE answer the following?

    1. ''I love him.''
    2. ''He loves me.''
    3. ''I love myself.''
    4. ''He loves himself.''

[17] Due to the sociocultural context in which Laing *et al*.'s (1966) monograph was first published, the authors presume a heteronormative relationship for their prototypical marital dyad.

C. How would SHE think you have answered the following?

1. She loves me.
2. I love her.
3. She loves herself.
4. I love myself.

(Laing *et al*. 1966: 152)

How would SHE answer the following?

22. B. 1. ‘‘I couldn’t care less about him.’’

7. B. 1. ‘‘I am disappointed in him.’’

10. B. 1. ‘‘I would like to get away from him.’’

44. B. 1. ‘‘I have a warped view of him.’’

31. B. 1. ‘‘I treat him like a machine.’’

(Adapted from Laing *et al*. 1966: 155, 148, 149, 166, 160)

In answering these questions, the code is as follows. The symbol ‘‡’ indicates the statement is ‘very true’, with ‘+’ representing ‘slightly true’; conversely, ‘=’ indexes that a statement is ‘very untrue’, and ‘-’ ‘slightly untrue’ (144). Uncertain responses (marked as ‘?’) are discouraged (*ibid*).

Upon completion of the questionnaire, the source of marital discord is identifiable via a comparison of three perspectival levels associated with each partner. This pinpoints precisely which issue (or issues) should be addressed in subsequent marriage counselling. For instance, the direct perspective of the wife may contradict the metaperspective of the husband with regard to question 22 (the ‘care’ question). The wife may care for the husband and believe she displays this care; the husband, meanwhile, may interpret his wife’s behaviour as controlling or patronising as opposed to caring. The consequent disjunction, now illuminated, is primed as a subject to cover during therapy.

Clearly the initial application of the metaperspective is not exclusive; it forms a specialised sub-type, and is not the only use to which the concept may be put. The original usage may be more finely delineated terminologically as the *marital metaperspective*. This, following Laing *et al*.’s original (1966: 4) template, may be couched as:

My view of my *spouse’s* [husband’s/wife’s] *view* of me.

Although marital metaperspectives were originally investigated in a non-fictional context, they are also frequent in fiction. (Indeed, given fiction frequently focuses upon interpersonal, particularly familial relations [Magennis 2019], this is unsurprising). Below is a literary

iteration of Laing *et al*.'s marital metaperspective. Excerpted from John Banville's (2005) Man Booker-winning *The Sea*, it describes an argument between a married couple as to the appropriateness of taking photographs of hospital patients. The italics circumscribe the metaperspective proper.

Excerpt 3.2

> 'Well?' she said now, keeping her eyes on the pictures and not bothering to look at me.
> 'What do you think?'
> *She did not care what I thought. By now she had gone beyond me and my opinions*.

(Banville 2005: 183; my italics)

This clearly recalls question 22B from the IPM, namely:

> How would SHE answer the following?
>
> 1. ''I couldn't care less about him.''

(Laing *et al*. 1966: 155)

In Banville's novel, the husband (and heterodiegetic narrator) Max Mordern serves as Laing *et al*.'s 'ego', his wife Anna as 'alter'. At the core of Excerpt 3.2 is his perspective upon her perspective of him: *My view* of my *wife's view* of me. (Were the fictional character Max to be given a copy of the IPM, he would undoubtedly answer '‡' to the question cited above!). Fittingly, given the prominence Max accords to 'my opinions', the dismissive attitude he allocates to his wife is likewise only his opinion, pure speculation. Nevertheless, linguistically it is couched with certitude, as evidenced by the unmodalised, categorical statement. However, certainty is in no way a constitutive feature of the metaperspective in literature, as Excerpt 3.3 below will illustrate. Instead, to invoke Simpson's (1993) varieties of modal shading, metaperspectives may be placed anywhere along a cline of modality ranging from utter definitiveness to all-encompassing doubt. Neither should this excerpt imply that the marital metaperspective is the only metaperspectival type to be found in literature. Just as the social-psychological metaperspective may be found in many different forms, so too does the metaperspective within literature occur in several varieties. The following four chapters of this thesis investigate four distinct metaperspectival iterations, as Section 3.2.7 details. However, prior to this, for contextual purposes, the following two sub-sections situate the concept of the metaperspective within critical theory.

3.2.4. Metaperspectives in Theory

Since the inception of the concept of the metaperspective over 50 years ago, its theoretical uptake has been relatively limited. This proves all-the-more surprising when it is considered that, as Walsh (2015) notes, the ability to construct a metaperspective – if not this precise lexeme – has been attested for millennia within philosophical literature. Hua Yan Buddhist theology is just one example cited (167; cf. the discussion of Buddhism and theories of consciousness in Chapter 7). Meanwhile, within a specifically literary context, the seminal 1786 ode 'To a Louse' by Robert Burns can be seen to prefigure the metaperspective almost two-hundred years prior to the publication of Laing *et al*.'s monograph and the explicit labelling of the term. The apostrophic lines, 'O wad some Power the giftie gie us / To see ourselves as ithers see us' (2022 [1786]: ll. 43-4) presciently echo the psychologists' aforementioned assertion that: 'I may not actually be able to see myself as others see me, but I am constantly supposing them to be seeing me in particular ways' (1966: 4). Clearly the concept was noted before it was named; given its 'universal[ity]' (Jahoda 1966: v), this should prove unsurprising.

More unexpected is the relative dearth of scholarly interest in the centuries since Burns' poem. Under the umbrella discipline of sociology (a sister discipline to Laing *et al*.'s social psychology), the researchers Garcia (1998), Monsour *et al*. (1993) and Walsh (2015) each identify the metaperspective as under-researched at best, ignored at worst. Certainly, within the disciplines of narratology and stylistics no studies have as of yet deployed the term, despite its alignment with several prominent point-of-view theories, which Section 3.2.5 will highlight. On Microsoft Word, *metaperspective* and its lexical derivatives are invariably accompanied by the crimson squiggle of obscurity, indicating that they do not appear in the software's in-built dictionary system. Even more saliently, neither *metaperspective* nor its grammatical derivatives appear in the *OED* (2022).

However, it is simple to construct a dictionary definition of the term from etymological precepts. While the root *-perspective*, in this context, denotes 'a particular attitude towards or way of regarding something: an individual point of view' (OED 2022, s.9), the bound morpheme *meta-* derives from the Greek *μετά*, meaning '[b]eyond, above, at a higher level' (s.2). Thus a *metaperspective* is a higher-order version of an individual point of view, one which goes beyond a particular individual's viewpoint in order to suppose that of a third party. This accords with Walsh's (2015) observation that the ability to construct a metaperspective is

a ‘higher order’ (157) perspectival skill (though cf. Premack and Woodruff 1978: 525). In Walsh’s (2015) the metaperspective is classified as ‘postconventional’ (161), indexing it as a cognitive capacity which has undergone complex developmental specialisation.

Not all subsequent engagements with the work of Laing and his colleagues tally with their original research. In particular, the concept of the metaperspective has recently been adopted into disciplines as diverse as anthropology, neuroscience, philosophy and sport psychology, and each have refracted and/or diluted the original meaning of the term in idiosyncratic ways. For instance, Daanen and Young (2013) diverge from the original model in suggesting there to be two oppositional forms of the metaperspective. The first form they suggest is self-analytical. It comprises the subject’s perspective on their own perspective. One could, for example, chastise oneself for behaving in too self-critical a manner (and therefore continue a vicious cycle!). However, this version of the metaperspective evidently does not tally with the original definition of the concept outlined above; it is in no way interpersonal, but rather *intra*personal. Laing *et al*.’s metaperspective necessitated two parties, generating ‘my view’ alongside ‘the other’s view’, rather than simply one’s view upon their own view. Despite being a perfectly plausible perspectival phenomenon, this second variant does not constitute a metaperspective. Daanen and Young’s (2013) second form, meanwhile, covers the ‘perspective on the perspective that others have of me’ (132), and so better aligns with Laing *et al*.’s formulations. Its syntactic embedding conveys particularly well the interpersonal embedding of viewpoints necessary to the construction of a *bona fide* metaperspective.

Fuchs (2012) is another to posit several metaperspectival forms as opposed to the original one. Instead, the psychiatrist and philosopher proposes three: a) the first-person metaperspective; b) the second-person (or ‘self-other’) metaperspective; and c) the third-person metaperspective. To briefly summarise, a) equates to a feeling of self-consciousness, occurring as a subject ‘become[s] aware of [their] subjective perspective [via] self-reflection’ (659); in this way, the variant chimes with Daanen and Young’s (2013) first metaperspectival type, described (and subsequently discounted) above. Meanwhile, b) the so-called ‘self-other’ metaperspective (655), constitutes an awareness of the multiperspectival nature of interpersonal interaction, which allows the subject a more neutral, equidistant, omniscient and ultimately integrative vantage point of events. However, given that Fuchs (2012) is apt to refer to this metaperspectival type metaphorically (as, for example, ‘a ‘‘bird’s-eye view’’’ [670] or ‘a ‘‘view from nowhere’’’ [673]) it is arguable just how realistic this neutralised viewpoint is. This stance certainly clashes with the subjectivity associated with the metaperspective by other

scholars (e.g. Garcia 1998, Monsour *et al*. 1993; see further Section 3.2.5), and the partiality identified by Laing *et al*. (1966). The third type proposed by Fuchs (2012) forms a dichotomous counterpart to the first. Termed 'other-consciousness', it covers the techniques of 'perspective-taking, imaginary transposition or inferential attribution' (659). Despite coming closest to Laing *et al*.'s original (1966) definition, even this type does not mirror it exactly. The onus of Fuchs' type c) is upon comparing 'my view' with 'the other's view'; for Laing *et al*. (1966) the metaperspective involves conjecture about the view of 'the other' upon the self. Ultimately, it is revealing that Fuchs (2012) cites the work of Laing *et al*. (1966) only once, and marginally.

Walsh (2015) has suggested that the construction of a metaperspective is a 'process where one disidentifies or disembeds from a previous perspective [to] then look back at the previous perspective, and thereby examine, assess, and relativize it.' (161-2). Again, this is an *intra*personal process: it involves only the self and no third party. It echoes the first metaperspectival type of Daanen and Young (2013), as well as Fuchs' (2012) 'first-order' metaperspective. This misinterpretation of the metaperspective outlined by Laing *et al*. (1966) is clearly commonplace. Cumulatively, the three studies surveyed above suggest that, less than fifty years after its conception, the theoretical nuances of Laing *et al*.'s (1966) 'metaperspective' have been somewhat elided.

Despite this, not all contemporary researchers evince conceptual confusion. Garcia (1998) may offer a slightly terse summary of the metaperspective, but at least acknowledges it to centre around 'how one perceives judgements by others' (309), evoking the interplay of 'views' Laing *et al*. reference. Similarly, Monsour *et al*. (1993) helpfully gloss the term as follows: 'an M[eta] P[erspective] is an estimation of another's D[irect] P[erspective]' (532). This definition is valuable for two reasons. Firstly, it clarifies the relation of the metaperspective to ordinary direct ('first-order') perspective; secondly, it acknowledges the inherently suppositious nature of the metaperspective, its crucial ingredient of 'estimation'. In my own translation of the originally social-psychological concept into the literary arena, I am conscious not to skew its original intent. Concretising its original denotation, I reproduce it here:

> *metaperspective* (n) – *My view* of the *other's view* of me

As the italicisation indicates, there needs must be two perspectival poles to every metaperspective. These derive from the self constructing the metaperspective and an other, or others.

While I do not advocate for multiple metaperspectival varieties, I do suggest there to be several metaperspectival sub-types. These sub-types are not equal, but subordinate, to the original term: they are hyponyms to 'metaperspective' as a hypernym. 'Metaperspective', meanwhile, stand in a relation of co-hyponymy with the terms 'perspective', 'meta-metaperspective', and any further levels of perspectival embedding (e.g. the 'meta-meta-metaperspective'). Fig. 3.2, below, crystallises the semantic relations between the various point of view-oriented terms. The term 'metaperspective', forming as it does a major focus of this thesis, is emboldened here.

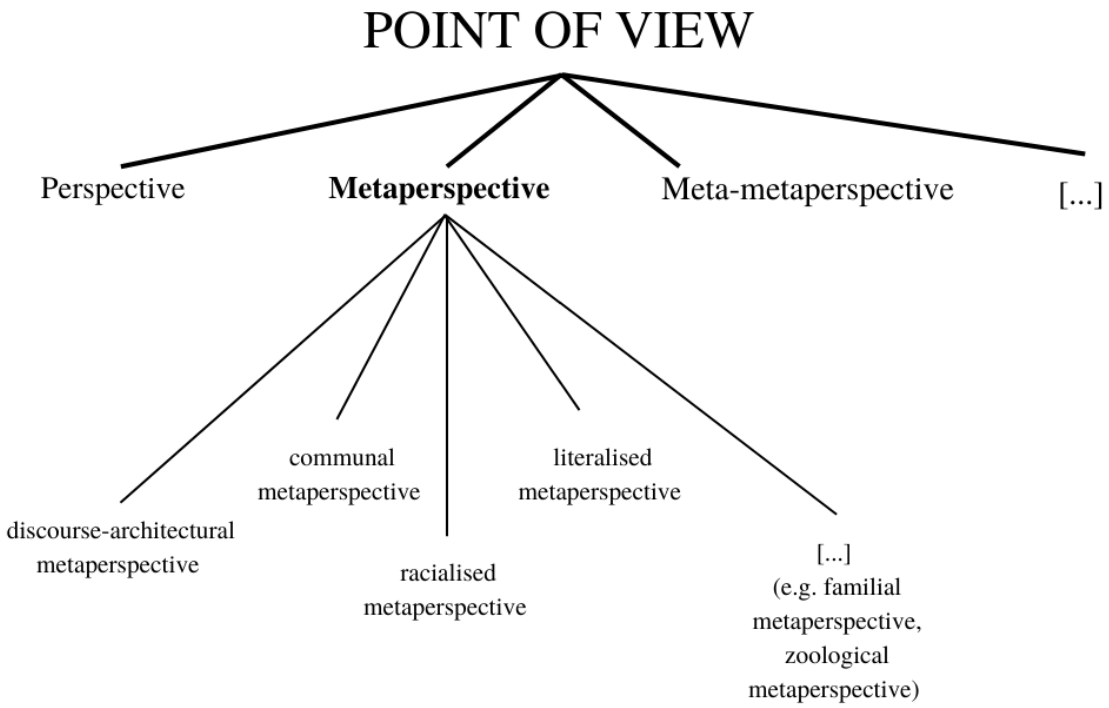

Fig. 3.3. Semantic relations of *point of view*: hypernymy, hyponymy and co-hyponymy

Section 3.2.7 details my proposed sub-types in greater depth. (These can be seen on the third tier of the above figure). Prior to this, I complement the above consideration of the metaperspective in theory generally with a discussion of the metaperspective in narratological and stylistic theory specifically. This is supported by a steam stylistic analysis of the

metaperspective within Howard Jacobson's (2010) Man Booker-winning *The Finkler Question* in Section 3.2.6.

3.2.5. Metaperspectives in Narratological-Stylistic Theory

While the metaperspective, as an originally social-psychological concept, has not yet been applied in a literary context, it does evince many areas of overlap with existing narratological and stylistic theory. This proves encouraging for the interdisciplinary approach adopted here; while there is no practical precedent, there is at least a theoretical one. Where precisely, though, may the metaperspective be situated within existing stylistic research? In this subsection, I identify the key areas of convergence, prior to applying the accumulated theory in practice via the steam stylistic analysis of a short textual excerpt from Jacobson's (2010) *The Finkler Question*.

The point-of-view theory with which the metaperspectival tallies best is that of hypothetical focalisation. It may be recalled that, according to Herman (1994), hypothetical focalisation (in any of its various forms) 'entails the use of hypotheses, framed by the narrator or a character, about what might be or have been seen or perceived' (231). In comparison, the bounds of the metaperspective are similar, if more tightly prescribed. With the metaperspective, 'the use of hypotheses' is still central: recall Laing *et al*.'s (1966) repeated reference to supposition, as discussed in Section 3.2.1. Similarly, a 'narrator or character' must still be available to 'fram[e]' said hypothesis. This corresponds to the 'ego' of Laing *et al*. (1966: 4), understood to be the self around whom the metaperspective revolves. However, in the context of the metaperspective, Herman's (1994: 231) 'what' morphs into a 'who'; the focus is upon not 'the situations and events at issue' but rather the individual instituting the hypothetical focalisation and the third party whose perspective is being supposed. To co-opt Herman's evocative phrasing, this alteration may be summarised as follows:

> The metaperspective entails the use of hypotheses, framed by the narrator and/or a character, about how this narrator and/or a character might be or have been seen or perceived.

In short, the metaperspective is the result of *interpersonal hypothetical focalisation*. It is for this reason that all metaperspectives involve one of the two 'direct' variants of hypothetical focalisation (see Table 3.1): due to the interpersonal focus, the focalising agent is always explicitly stated. Counter to the stance of Daanen and Young (2013), Fuchs (2012) and Walsh (2015), without a third-party agent the metaperspective collapses.

Social psychologists Monsour *et al*. (1993) argue that metaperspectives are apt to reveal just as much about the self as about the other whose perspective is supposed, given that the metaperspective is likely to be inflected by the 'ghostly echoes' (546) of the beliefs, attitudes and opinions of the person constructing it. Garcia (1998) concurs: 'It is possible that [...] the target [i.e. the self constructing the metaperspective] has incorporated self-perceptions and metaperspectives together so [...] fails to differentiate between these perceptions.' (317). This observation realises the truism that everyone is restricted by a necessarily subjective personal perspective; in text-possible parlance, each individual is beholden to his or her own Epistemic World. On the stylistic level, this means that first-person narratives, be they homodiegetic or autodiegetic, are best suited to the study of metaperspectives. Nonetheless, third-person narratives employing an intradiegetic 'Reflector of the fiction', or those written in what Simpson (1993) terms 'Reflector mode', are also given to depicting metaperspectives due to their thorough grounding in the consciousness of a character or characters.

Conversely, metaperspectives will never be conveyed via any of the three Category B(N) narrative variants identified in Simpson (1993). Being in the narratorial mode, these narratives will not concern themselves with a character's internal consciousness, a crucial element in the depiction of a metaperspective. This applies across the spectrum of narrative modalities – positive, negative and neutral – given that no narrative in this mode ever presents a character's thoughts and/or feelings. If a B(N) positive narrative is 'narrated from a position outside the consciousness of any of the characters' (63), its opposite, B(N) negative, displays a 'lack of detail concerning the thoughts of characters' (65), and a B(N) neutral narrative is 'marked by the absence of direct description and analysis of the thoughts and feelings of characters' (67). Clearly, all three are unconducive to the elaboration of a metaperspective. Fowler's (1986) 'Type C' narratives similarly preclude the metaperspective. As the classically 'impersonal' point-of-view type (see Section 3.1.1), these narratives are wholly unsuited to presenting an *inter*personal metaperspective. Likewise, narratives employing Genette's (1980) 'external focalisation', in which 'a narrator says less than a character knows' (234) are unsuited to the investigation of metaperspectives. In contrast, any of Fowler's (1986) remaining three narrative 'types' could conceivably convey a metaperspective, albeit in different ways. Type A narratives prove the prototype, 'strongly coloured' as they are by 'personal [linguistic] markers of a character's world-view' (170), hence revealing of a character's interiority. Type B narratives, heterodiegetic and therefore omniscient, allow for the presentation of multiple characters' metaperspectives, or even the comparison of one character's metaperspective

against another character's corresponding perspective, as Laing *et al*.'s (1966) IPM aimed for in the Actual World. Finally, given that Type D narratives characteristically 'emphasise an act of interpretation, an attempt to reconstruct the psychology' (142) of another, they can be seen to echo on the stylistic level the supposition inherent to the metaperspective.

3.2.6. Metaperspectives in [Literary] Practice

Before outlining the contents of the subsequent chapters of this thesis *vis-à-vis* the metaperspective, I append here a brief illustration of the literary metaperspective in practice. The excerpt is taken from Howard Jacobson's (2010) novel *The Finkler Question*, a satire examining Jewish identity in contemporary Britain and winner of the Man Booker Prize the year of its publication. While this novel does not figure as a case study in any of the four succeeding chapters, the passage does prove a concise illustration of precisely how the metaperspective may occur within a work of literature. For the purposes of contextualisation, I quote the paragraph in its entirety, italicising the portion that constitutes a metaperspective proper.

Excerpt 3.3

> It was exactly 11:30 p.m. when the attack occurred. Treslove knew that because something had made him look at his watch the moment before. Maybe the foreknowledge that he would never look at it again. But with the brightness of the street lamps and the number of commercial properties lit up – a hairdresser's was still open and a dim sum restaurant and a newsagent's having a refit – it could have been afternoon. The streets were not deserted. At least a dozen people might have come to Treslove's rescue, but none did. Perhaps the effrontery of the assault – just a hundred yards from Regent Street, almost within cursing distance of the BBC – perplexed whoever saw it. *Perhaps they thought the participants were playing or had become embroiled in a domestic row on the way home from a restaurant or the theatre. They could – there was the strange part – have been taken for a couple*. That was what Treslove found most galling.

(Jacobson 2010: 12-13; my italics)

The above passage relates an incident which serves as something of a narrative fulcrum around which much of the subsequent text-actual action turns. It details a potentially anti-Semitic mugging, the victim of which is enactor Julian Treslove, a Gentile who idolises his Jewish friends. It is Treslove, above as for the majority of the novel, who acts as reflector of fiction. Note, for instance, the epistemic verb ('knew') beginning the passage, and the evaluative commentary ending it. However, towards the end of Excerpt 3.3, Treslove relinquishes focalisation to a supposed viewing public, an entity which acts as hypothetical focaliser (Herman 1994, 2002). More specifically, the anonymous, indefinite 'whoever saw it' belong to the strong direct 'counterfactual witness' type (1994: 237-9), as they are an explicitly

referenced yet nonetheless suppositious focalising entity. These hypothetical bystanders, subsequently the grammatical subject ('they'), are the 'other' of Laing *et al.*'s (1966) metaperspective. As surmised above, hypothetical focalisation and the metaperspective are seen to co-occur textually.

Recourse to the metaperspective proper occurs in the latter, italicised portion of the passage, forming what focaliser Treslove euphemistically dubs 'the strange part'. Detailed are several suppositious scenarios through which (unnamed) onlookers may account for the relationship between the mugger and Treslove himself as 'muggee'. In this way, Treslove surmises the perspective of a third-party in relation to himself. Hence established is his view of the other's view of him: the prototypical metaperspective. This is no concrete reconstruction of the other's view, however. Frequent linguistic co-ordination (e.g. 'playing *or* [...] embroiled in a domestic row on the way home from a restaurant *or* the theatre'; my italics) gestures to proliferating perspectival possibilities and hence uncertainty. This is compounded by the weak epistemic modality ('Perhaps'; 'They could') which confirms Treslove to be a Category B(R -ve) reflector, following Simpson's (1993) modal framework.

Marking it as unusual in comparison to the case studies of this thesis (Section 3.2.7), Excerpt 3.3 is narrated from an extradiegetic third-person standpoint. The case-study novels of Chapters 4 to 7 are predominantly intradiegetic and largely autodiegetic; as discussed above (Section 3.2.5), this proves an ideal environment for the development of metaperspectives. Nonetheless, Excerpt 3.2 illustrates that the metaperspective need not be limited to this narratological profile. Given that the omniscient narrator has access to the inner workings of reflector Treslove's mind as a consequence of the Category B(R) narrative mode, documenting Treslove's metaperspective – what he thinks others think of him – is still practicable.

Another notable feature of Treslove's metaperspective is the incorporation of text-actual WB elements into text-possible supposition. Co-referential chaining enables the indefinite allusion to 'a restaurant' to be linked to the earlier 'dim sum restaurant'; the definite reference of 'the theatre', in contrast, suggests a specific, text-actual location. This ontological interweaving demonstrates that, despite their suppositious nature, metaperspectives are ultimately grounded in reality. As Laing *et al.* (1966) aver, their remit is 'the actual' alongside the 'supposed' (4). Similarly, there is no complete divorce between the Text-actual World and text-possible worlds.

Indeed, alongside an affinity to hypothetical focalisation, metaperspectives frequently overlap with the construction of text-possible world-types, an observation that Excerpt 3.3 confirms. Moreover, the text-possible worlds in this passage act to both shape and support the metaperspectival scenario. For instance, the speculative main clause 'At least a dozen people might have come to Treslove's rescue' institutes a Hypothesis World, one subsequently disnarrated by the bathetic subordinate clause 'but none did' (on disnarration, see further Chapter 6). Meanwhile, the metaperspective proper can be classed as evidencing a Speculative Extension World. Sentences 8 and 9 – the italicised metaperspective – are comprised of guesswork grounded upon prior experiential knowledge: what Treslove thinks others will think of him is beholden to his Epistemic World. In Excerpt 3.2, his knowledge manifests as societal competence which draws him to conclude that a heterosexual 'dyad' (Laing *et al*. 1966) in close proximity late at night are likely to be taken for 'a couple'. However, it must be noted that while Speculative Extensions commonly contribute to metaperspectives, they are not the sole world-type through which metaperspectives may be cued. This will be attested throughout the steam stylistic analysis of case-study Chapters 4 to 7.

In a press review of Jacobson's novel, national newspaper *The Scotsman* singled out 'the opening chapters' (The Newsroom 2010: n.p) of *The Finkler Question* for especial praise. These were proclaimed examples of 'some of the wittiest, most poignant, and sharply intelligent comic prose in the English language' (*ibid*). While it is just as speculative as the italicised segment of Excerpt 3.3 to apportion this effusiveness solely to the prominent inclusion of a metaperspective within these chapters, it could very well be a contributing factor to their classification as intelligently observed. What is undeniable, however, is that Jacobson's depiction of the metaperspective, 'a constant concern of us all' (Laing *et al*. 1966: 5) is perspicuous. Yet this appearance of the metaperspective in a literary context should come as no surprise. Literature has long been feted for its mimetic capacities, its ability to act as a mirror for the scenarios of everyday life (Aristotle 1981). Being so 'universal' (Jahoda 1966: v; Premack and Woodruff 1978: 525) in life should all but guarantee the commonplace construction of metaperspectives within literature.

The case-study novels which inform the next four chapters of this thesis support this intuitive hypothesis. Continuing on from the investigation of the so-called 'marital metaperspective' above (Section 3.2.2), each of these chapters considers a specific metaperspectival sub-type. To wit, I discuss, respectively, the *discourse-architectural metaperspective*, the *communal*

metaperspective, the *racialised metaperspective*, and the *literalised metaperspective*. The next sub-section elaborates further upon this metaperspectival quartet.

3.2.7. Proposed Metaperspectival Sub-types

Employing a text-possible world framework, this thesis investigates various iterations of the metaperspective. This proceeds from the assumption that the previously-identified 'marital metaperspective' is not the only conceivable metaperspectival sub-type. Indeed, I propose a further four metaperspectival sub-types: the *discourse-architectural metaperspective*; the *communal metaperspective*; the *racialised metaperspective*; the *literalised metaperspective*. In doing so, I subscribe to Laing's (1961) assertion that '[u]nless one can describe, one cannot explain' (63); I believe this 'label then learn' approach facilitates an enhanced understanding of the concept of the metaperspective as a whole. I devote a chapter apiece to exploring how each of these metaperspectival sub-types may be instantiated in literature. Moreover, conscious of the metaperspective as a comparatively underexplored construct, I suggest a further two 'additional metaperspectival sub-types' in Section 8.4 of the concluding chapter. However, there undoubtedly exist even more beyond this appended duo (as has been confirmed by several stimulating conference discussions). In the remainder of this sub-section, having now interrogated the core concept of the metaperspective in depth, I provide a recap of the four upcoming case-study chapters, further to Section 1.6.

In Chapter 4, I concretise the interdisciplinary application of the metaperspective in concentrating on a sub-type premised upon discourse relations. This text-centric sub-type I term the *discourse-architectural metaperspective*. This chapter is intentionally placed first, given that its explicitly textual focus illustrates well how the erstwhile psychological concept of the metaperspective may be incorporated into the literary domain. Margaret Atwood's much-anticipated (2019) *The Testaments* is taken as the primary case study. All discourses presuppose a narrator and a narratee (Rimmon-Kenan 2002), and the narratorial act of projecting an audience or readership and their perspective is similarly in-built within discourse. However, this hypothetical discourse partner may be more or less explicit. In *The Testaments*, narrator-focaliser Aunt Lydia's 'unknown reader' (4) falls towards the extreme 'explicit' end of this spectrum, enabling her frequent construction of *My view* of my *discourse partner's view* of me. The autobiographical account of Aunt Lydia's 'Ardua Hall Holograph' proves simultaneously to achieve the educative 'edification' (*ibid*) of her projected reader, and to allow her to engage in the process of constructing – edifying – this selfsame reader. Overall, this

chapter draws the concept of the metaperspective from its Actual World roots into a Text-actual World domain in which it proves no less applicable.

Following this, Chapter 5 examines *communal metaperspectives*, attending to the 'plural [...] inflectio[n]' (Laing *et al*. 1966: 4) the metaperspective may display. This inflection, having been evoked in Laing *et al*.'s original (1966) definition via the parenthesised plural pronoun 'they' (4) has definite precedent, if no accompanying analysis. This is rectified via the steam stylistic analysis of Anna Burns' (2018b) novel *Milkman*, promoted by its publishers as 'a tale of gossip and hearsay' (Faber 2020: n.p). The focus is on how this 'gossip and hearsay' is relayed via the anonymous narrator, who establishes *My view* of the *community's view* of me.

The penultimate case-study chapter, Chapter 6, explores the racialised metaperspective, placing the concept – *My view* of the *other's* racially-inflected *view* of me – in dialogue with existing postcolonial and sociological theories of race and consciousness. Du Bois' (1903) seminal notion of 'double consciousness' proves key in this regard, as does Collins' (2009) 'controlling images' construct. The illustrative [Man] Booker winner for this chapter is Marlon James' (2014) *A Brief History of Seven Killings*, a compendious, heteroglossic, [post-]post(-)colonial novel. Given the novel's expansive scope (cf. Harrison 2015), the analytical focus is upon a single chapter – Section 3, Chapter 1 (James 2014: 277-313) – one narrated and focalised by the enactor Kim Clarke. The recurrent construction of a racialised metaperspective by this enactor proves so integral as to constitute a facet of her idiosyncratic mind style. This I suggest to be tied to her social positionality, for as an ethnically Black Jamaican and a woman, Kim is subject to the intersecting oppressions which result in 'double colonisation' (Ashcroft *et al*. 2013).

Chapter 7 concludes the literary case studies of this thesis, and subverts somewhat the pattern established in the previous three case-study chapters. It instead interrogates the literalisation of the ordinarily metaphorical notion of adopting another's perspective, taking George Saunders' (2017) *Lincoln in the Bardo* as its literary example. This wresting of the concept from its figurative roots (see Section 3.2.1), resulting in *My view* through the *other's view* of me, is tied to current research on perspective-taking and empathy.

3.2.8. Metaperspectives in Language

Before embarking upon the granular stylistic analysis of the aforementioned case-study chapters, I wish to first identify the 'typical linguistic indices' associated with each

metaperspectival sub-type. This practice is modelled upon that of three seminal studies: Bortolussi and Dixon (2002), Gavins (2013), and Short (1996). As noted above, Short (1996) establishes eight 'linguistic indicators of viewpoint' to ensure stylistic rigour in the analysis of narrative point-of-view relations. Likewise, Gavins (2013) grounds her survey of absurd prose and poetry in 'a clear delineation of some of the linguistic and narrative features [...] identified as absurd in various reading contexts.' (138). Like the 'features' Gavins identifies within absurdist works, I find that those associated with the metaperspective in literature are 'neither confined to nor wholly defining of' (147) the phenomenon. Nonetheless, they remain typical ways in which the metaperspective may be indexed within fiction: hence their designation as *typical linguistic indices*. Away from the discipline of stylistics, the psychonarratologists Bortolussi and Dixon (2002) are similarly meticulous. They begin their chapter headed 'Preliminaries' (35-59) by opposing 'readerly constructions' to 'textual features' (37-43). This latter is defined as 'objective and identifiable characteristics of the text' (37), which are ideally objective, precise, stable, relevant and tractable (38), and neither, one may infer, impressionistic nor ambiguous. Likewise, Sections 4.1, 5.1, 6.1 and 7.1 precede the stylistic analysis of each case-study chapter by establishing with specificity the objective, precise, stable, relevant and tractable linguistic ordinates of the metaperspectival sub-type under consideration. Ultimately, explicitly identifying the typical linguistic indices of each sub-type circumvents a shortcoming identified by Stockwell (2011) within many cognitively-oriented literary studies. Namely, these studies are said to make 'grand statements about consciousness that engage with the theory while neglecting the linguistic grounding or empirical base in texts.' (289). Conversely, the present thesis aims to keep its (metaphorical) feet firmly upon the (equally metaphorical) 'linguistic ground[...]'.

Some of the typical linguistic indices identified are shared among sub-types, with others specific to a particular type. The sole 'unnegotiable' is the use of evaluative lexis, premised as the metaperspective is upon judgement (it is, after all, ''What I think you think of me''). Notably, this feature accords with the second of Short's (1996) 'linguistic indicators of viewpoint' (263) as listed in Section 3.1.4. This impresses the link between the metaperspective and stylistic point-of-view studies. Also common to more than one sub-type is *hypothetical discourse* (see Section 3.1.7), grounded as the metaperspective is in supposition. Intuitively, it may be expected that this is a constitutive feature of the metaperspective, but the anomalous literalised metaperspective – explored in Chapter 7 – proves otherwise. Two of the proposed

sub-types (the communal metaperspective; the racialised metaperspective) also possess related theoretical phenomena, which I expand upon in the respective chapters.

Ultimately the micro-level linguistic analysis of the four case-study chapters not only facilitates the understanding of the metaperspective in a literary context, it also proves a conduit through which to understand prevailing literary-critical commentary about the immensely critically and commercially successful [Man] Booker Prize-winning novels. In this way, linguistic description and evidence may be used to inform literary interpretation and aesthetic function. Spitzer's (1948) philological circle hence rolls into action.

3.3. Concluding Remarks

This chapter has outlined the key technical terms which will be employed across the upcoming case-study chapters. The primary focus has been upon narrative point of view; the first half of the chapter began with a chronological overview of seminal point-of-view theories, subsuming the semantically-related terms *perspective* and *[hypothetical] focalisation*. Following this, to ensure the rigorous systematicity associated with stylistics (Simpson 2014), various 'linguistic indicators of viewpoint' (Short 1996: 263) on both the macro- and the micro-level were listed. The second half of the chapter, meanwhile, turned to an explication of the metaperspective, a heretofore social-psychological construct. As well as introducing and contextualising this relatively neglected term, Section 3.2 allowed me to begin to address the second aim of this thesis, namely:

> 2) To propose the heretofore social psychological concept of the *metaperspective* as not only applicable, but often integral, to literature.

I explored how well the concept tessellates with existing narratological and stylistic theories relating to point of view, and adumbrated the various linguistic indicators of the metaperspective within literature. Seeing it thus '''from all sides''' (Catton 2013: 502) enables knowledge of the concept to be expanded. As detailed in Section 3.2.7, the following four case-study chapters further facilitate this endeavour.

‘[F]or your edification, my unknown reader’: The Hypothetical Reader and the Discourse-architectural Metaperspective in Margaret Atwood’s (2019) *The Testaments*

> I am well aware of how you must be judging me, my reader; if, that is, my reputation has preceded me and you have deciphered who I am, or was.
>
> (Atwood 2019: 32)

4.0. Preliminaries

The present case-study chapter, the first of four, explores the construction of a hypothetical reader figure and the concomitant discourse-architectural metaperspective in Margaret Atwood’s novel *The Testaments*. Published amid much media fanfare in September 2019, the dystopian sequel was the joint winner of the newly-rechristened Booker Prize the following month. (This accolade it shared with Evaristo’s *Girl, Woman, Other* [2019]; see further Section 8.3.3).

Following the template produced by Laing *et al*. (1966: 4), the discourse-architectural metaperspective can be defined as:

> *My view* of my *discourse partner’s view* of me. [18]

In short, it is the metaperspective relating to the production and reception of discourse (see further Section 3.1.6).

Here, as in the subsequent case-study chapters, I use italics to emphasise the two nodes necessary for the development of a metaperspective, i.e. Laing *et al*.’s (1966: 4) ‘ego’ and ‘alter’. The ‘discourse partner’ referenced above subsumes a range of figures, but this chapter will focus on a single iteration, namely that of the ‘unknown reader’ (Atwood 2019: 5) of Aunt

[18] In thus echoing the original definition of Laing *et al*. (1966: 4), I also somewhat unhelpfully reproduce the visual bias within point-of-view studies, as acknowledged in Chapter 3 (see especially Chatman 1986; cf. Genette 1988). Here, I reiterate that any reference to a ‘view’ is solely metaphorical, and encompasses all five senses, alongside cognition and emotion, as opposed to the sense of sight alone. This situation results from a lack of English-language alternatives which are not visually inflected (cf. *perception*).

Lydia, one of three narrator-focalisers within Atwood's novel. Likewise, the figure of the 'reader' in relation to a text may take many forms: Lydia's reader is both intradiegetic and hypothetical, yet many other iterations exist. Section 4.3 condenses the extensive debate surrounding the concept of the literary reader, and situates Aunt Lydia's 'unknown reader'

within this saturated field. In distinguishing between the various iterations of 'the reader' which have been proposed by critical theorists over the last six decades, I develop a diagrammatic representation I term the Readerly Cline for Fictional Narratives. The schematic proves especially useful in situating each distinct figure ontologically. This discussion also supplements Section 3.2.5 of the previous chapter, which focused briefly upon 'the basic discourse structure for the novel' (Short 1996: 257). Section 4.3 is complemented by Section 4.4, which sets out the manifold uses to which the second-person pronoun *you* may be put within a fictional narrative. The accumulated theory is then put into practice in Sections 4.5, 4.6 and 4.7, via the steam stylistic analysis of select textual excerpts from *The Testaments*. Section 4.8 caps this chapter in summarising my findings, and in linking them to the forthcoming case-study chapter.

Meanwhile, the following two sections begin this fourth chapter proper by detailing which specific linguistic features typify the discourse-architectural metaperspective, and subsequently by outlining how these features relate to the interconnected Actual and Text-actual World associated with the novel *The Testaments*. Section 4.2 also subsumes an interrogation of the novel's genre and accessibility relations, providing an insight into the gulf between its actual, text-actual and text-possible readers.

4.1. The Discourse-architectural Metaperspective: Typical Linguistic Indices

Here, as with the other three metaperspectival sub-types surveyed across succeeding case-study chapters, I have identified 'typical linguistic indices' associated with the variety of the metaperspective via an iterative process involving both induction and deduction. My initial guide was the proto-definition proffered by Laing *et al*. (1966) – '*My view* of the *other's* [...] *view* of me' (4) – which, as referenced in Section 3.2.8, necessitates an element of both evaluation and hypothesis (though see Chapter 7) when couched in language. Having established these two more generalised linguistic indices, I then sought to identify what differentiated one form of the metaperspective from another: its particularised indices. While often intuitive (e.g. a racialised metaperspective must make reference to the topic of race),

comparison of appropriate textual excerpts revealed yet more defining linguistic indices (e.g. [dia]lect representation, again in the instance of the racialised metaperspective; see further Chapter 6). In the Conclusion to this thesis I acknowledge the dynamic nature of the concept of the metaperspective; additional sub-types are yet to be discovered, and the process of doing so will likely involve the steps as described above. Similarly, further linguistic features yoked to one type or another may conceivably be discovered in the future.

There are five typical linguistic indices which can be associated with the discourse-architectural metaperspective. The first two are shared among other metaperspectival sub-types, being:

1. Hypothetical discourse (speech/thought/writing) presentation;
2. Evaluative lexis.

The latter three, meanwhile, are unique to the discourse-architectural metaperspective:

3. Direct address;
4. Compositional deixis;
5. Textual deixis.

Index 3 commonly involves the use of apostrophe and the second-person singular pronoun; narrative *you* will form the focus of Section 4.4, below. The index demonstrates an explicit awareness of a discourse partner 'other' (Laing *et al*. 1966: 4) – be they reader, listener, ratified overhearer (Bell 1984) etc. – which is central to the construction of this particular metaperspectival sub-type. Meanwhile, indices 4 and 5 cluster under the broad heading of deixis – derived from the Greek, meaning *to point* – yet are subtly different. In adapting six variants of deixis to a specifically literary context, Stockwell (2000b: 27-41) explains that compositional deixis refers to 'the compositional choices [...] narrating personas seem to make' (41), which becomes especially salient when '[t]he syntactic arrangement within the [...] text[...] tends to conform to [a] generic text-type (*ibid*). Elsewhere, Stockwell (2009) also refers parenthetically to the 'interpersonal' (128) aspect of compositional deixis, evoking the title of Laing *et al*.'s seminal monograph, and adumbrating the centrality of compositional deixis to the (discourse-architectural) metaperspectival endeavour. Textual deixis, according to Stockwell (2002), relates to 'expressions that foreground the textuality of the text, including [...] references to the text itself or the act of production.' (46). Stylistically, this is served by '*co-reference to other stretches of text by discourse anaphora*' (54; italics in original) and '*the use of predicates from the lexical set of writing, printing or creation*' (54-5; italics in original),

among other techniques. Overall, if compositional deixis may be said to 'point' to the conventions associated with a specific text-type, textual deixis 'points' to the text as artefact. However, ultimately the two share a focus upon 'metalinguistic and reflexive patterns' (Stockwell 2000b: 42). They also therefore share a consciousness of the text as product, and its context of production, further features central to the construction of a discourse-architectural metaperspective.

Each of the five indices listed above will be amply evidenced in the textual excerpts of Sections 4.5, 4.6 and 4.7 below. As observed in Section 3.2.8, these five indices are not exclusive to the discourse-architectural metaperspective, and may be found individually in many other linguistic contexts. Instead, it is their co-occurrence which serves to establish a discourse-architectural metaperspective; this same caveat applies to the metaperspectival sub-types examined respectively in Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

4.2. The Actual and Text-actual Worlds of *The Testaments*

In *The Testaments* (2019), the Actual World reader is returned to the Text-actual World of Gilead, a misogynistic theocracy first established in the 1986 Booker-shortlisted novel, *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985). Both novels belong to the genre of dystopian fiction, which results in their contravention of several 'accessibility relations' (Ryan 1991a, 1991b), as Section 4.2.1 will elaborate. In Atwood's (2019) sequel, the text-actual temporal parameters have moved approximately 15 years further into the notional dystopian future, during which time the theocratic regime has become firmly entrenched. However, the Republic of Gilead is by now also facing problems: the leadership is riven by in-fighting, and the regime is increasingly attracting censure from abroad. The novel *The Testaments* thus concerns itself in large part with charting the beginning-of-the-end of the regime, subsuming a series of events which 'initiat[e] the final collapse of Gilead' (Atwood 2019: 411).

Many commentators (e.g. Allardice 2019; Gheorghiu and Praisler 2020; Harrison 2020; Kuznetski 2021; van Dam and Polak 2021), as well as the author herself (Atwood 2017, 2019) have identified parallels between the Text-actual World of the novels and the current political situation in the Actual World. Summarising this sentiment succinctly is van Dam and Polak's (2021) assertion that: 'In the past few years, the world has been moving in the direction of which the Gilead regime is the ultimate consequence' (172). Most frequently cited as proof of this parallelism is the election and presidency of Donald Trump (e.g. Gheorghiu and Praisler 2020: 87; Kuznetski 2021: 219; van Dam and Polak 2021: 172-3), though the more recent 2022

decision by the Supreme Court to overturn Roe v. Wade is also suggestive of similarity. Outside of America, the 2021 Taliban takeover of Afghanistan has resulted in repressive, misogynistic restrictions which additionally echo those depicted in *The Handmaid's Tale* and its successor *The Testaments*. Capitalising upon these text-actual/actual parallels, it is now commonplace for women's rights marchers to adopt the sartorial iconography of Atwood's novels, donning crimson robes and white face-obscuring veils in imitation of Handmaids (Kuznetski 2021: 300; van Dam and Polak 2021: 173-4), a symbol of resistance of which Atwood herself is rumoured to approve (*ibid*). Yet this ontological seepage problematises the precise boundaries between the Text-actual and Actual Worlds. Despite several severed narrative accessibility relations (see Section 4.2.1), then, the two worlds maintain a closeness, bolstered by Atwood's 'central axiom[...]' (Allardice 2019: n.p) that all text-actual events have Actual World precedent. As Atwood (2019) affirms: '[N]othing goes in that there isn't backup for.' (433). This facilitates the doubly deictic (Herman 1994, 2002) nature of many uses of narrative *you*, a subject to be explored further in Sections 4.4 to 4.7.

Aside from sharing a setting, several enactors appear in both the novels *The Handmaid's Tale* and *The Testaments*. This includes all three of the latter's reflectors of the fiction, whose interleaved tales from the novel. One, whose eyewitness account is headed 'Transcript of Witness Testimony 369A', is Hannah, the daughter of the eponymous Handmaid protagonist 'Offred' from the first novel. In *The Testaments*, she is renamed as Agnes Jemima (later Aunt Victoria). Meanwhile, the novel's second eyewitness is referred to variously as 'Witness 369B', 'Daisy', 'Baby Nicole' and 'Jade': she is Offred's second daughter, conceived during the diegesis of *The Handmaid's Tale*. The third and final reflector of the fiction is Aunt Lydia, one-time antagonist of *The Handmaid's Tale* ('Aunt Lydia, the indoctrinator and cruel enforcer' [Labudova 2020: 99]). In its sequel, Lydia has become 'a legend [...] a framed head [...] a bugaboo used by the Marthas [a female subclass devoted to domestic duties] to frighten small children [...] a model of moral perfection' (Atwood 2019: 32). Yet this last is not without irony. Through penning her apologia, 'The Ardua Hall Holograph', which forms her portion of *The Testaments*, Lydia attests to both her own corruption and that of Gilead society. Lydia resides at Ardua Hall, a repurposed University library, as leader of the 'Aunts', an all-female cohort tasked with devising laws and maintaining order among Gilead's women. She is, however, disenchanted with the Gileadean regime, and in writing her memoirs aims to destabilise and ultimately destroy it: to 'tunnel[...] under the foundations of Gilead with [a] stash of cordite' (317). As my focus is upon the unique discourse relations of the 'Holograph'

sections of *The Testaments*, it is Aunt Lydia who acts as internal focaliser for the majority of the textual excerpts cited below.

Much as with its predecessor, *The Testaments* ends with an afterword which alters the discourse architecture of the preceding text (see further Fig. 4.1, below). In a final chapter entitled 'The Thirteenth Symposium' (407-15), the text-actual parameters are shifted yet further into the novel's notional future, as the chapter details an academic conference of Gileadean Studies held in Passamaquoddy, Maine, between 29 and 30 June, 2197. The three preceding interwoven accounts are recontextualised as 'a manuscript [...] of handwritten pages' (409) alongside two 'witness testimonies' (411) transcribed after their respective narrators' flight from Gilead. Collectively, the three documents are stated to form the focus of a graduate project by the student Mia Smith. Meanwhile, as the final chapter's homodiegetic narrator Professor Piexoto notes (408), this discoursal situation parallels the discovery of an autodiegetic audiotape in a footlocker at the close of *The Handmaid's Tale*.

In all three of the discourse scenarios alluded to above (i.e. audiotape, memoir, witness testimony), the focus remains largely upon the homodiegetic narrator, relegating any narratee to a comparatively backgrounded position. Indeed, in the accounts of Agnes and Nicole in *The Testaments*, and 'Offred' (June) in *The Handmaid's Tale*, the narratee figure is a textual lacuna, a ''felt absence'' (Stockwell 2009: 158). Not so for the chapters of *The Testaments* narrated and focalised by Aunt Lydia. Her narratee is very much a presence, referred to throughout her narrative via the possessive noun phrase 'my reader' (e.g. Atwood 2019: 61, 172, 317, 404).

Yet instead of being a text-actual entity, it becomes increasingly apparent that this figure is a purely hypothetical, text-possible one. It is a mere 'wish, a possibility, a phantom' (173). Premodifiers proliferate: the reader is both 'future' (318) and 'unknown' (4). Establishing this figure – explicit, intradiegetic, ultimately suppositious – facilitates Lydia's concomitant construction of a discourse-architectural metaperspective, a concept which will form the crux of this present chapter. Neatly, it is through Lydia's 'edification' (4) (i.e. construction) of this hypothetical reader figure that Lydia is able to achieve the 'edification' (i.e. enlightenment) of the selfsame reader. The 'Ardua Hall Holograph' operates 'for your edification, my unknown reader' (4) in both senses.

Lydia is also unique within the novel as the only focaliser without a spatio-temporally co-present narratee. The reasoning for this is predominantly pragmatic: Lydia is unwilling to direct her account to any verifiably text-actual figure for fear of (potentially fatal) repercussions.

Consequently, she is aware of the possibility that she may ultimately find no readership whatsoever: 'Perhaps I'll only be talking to the wall' (5), she muses, with the weak epistemic adverbial indicative of her parlous text-actual situation. [19] (This particular discourse architecture is redolent of *The Handmaid's Tale* television series [2017-present], in which the voiceover of protagonist Offred/June '*might* be oriented towards a particular person or audience' [Harrison 2020: 33; my italics]). Discourse-architecturally, this also results in what I shall be referring to as a *split Text-actual World*. Analogous to the 'split discourse-world' of Text World Theory (Gavins 2007: 26), this discourse-architectural scenario applies when a narrator and narratee within a text are divided by co-ordinates of space and/or time, resulting in an intradiegetic discoursal divide. In essence, this occurs when 'two [or more] enactors do not share the same spatio-temporal location.' (Nuttall 2017: 161).

The phenomenon is one which has until now been explored solely within a Text World Theory paradigm, and is hence referred to alongside the concept of the 'split text-world', a similar construct existing on the intradiegetic rather than extradiegetic level. In the literary sphere, it has been explored in epistolary fiction of both the short-form (Norledge 2020) and long-form (Nuttall 2017) variety. More multi-modally, a 'split text-world' has also been identified in the 'sad comedy' (Gibbons and Whiteley 2021: 106) television series *Fleabag*. In this context, the scenario in which 'enactors are not co-present' (118) is adroitly tied by the authors to the traditional dramatic technique of breaking the fourth wall. (Indeed, it is not coincidental that *Fleabag* originated as a play at the 2013 Edinburgh Festival Fringe). The discourse architecture of *The Testaments* is in many ways similar to that of *Fleabag*. It too tactically employs the second-person pronoun to implicate a discourse-partner in the communicative situation. It too realises the complexity of the pronominal *you*, which in the context of the programme may stand alternately for an Actual World viewer or the text-actual enactor Fleabag herself. Finally, it too enacts a 'progressi[on]' (Gibbons and Whiteley 2021: 118), with viewers initially believing themselves addressed by Fleabag's dialogue, and later rejecting the discourse as inapplicable to their Actual World context. Gibbons and Whiteley (2021) conclude: '[A]lthough viewers feel the force of direct address, the lack of textual information allows both for the apostrophic experience of being directly addressed and for the impression that the direct addressee is a fictional protagonist within Fleabag's psyche' (122). This perceptive analysis chimes with Aunt Lydia's situation in *The Testaments*, and will be

[19] This in(tertextual)-joke alludes to 'the Wall' upon which alleged traitors within Gilead are hung in *The Handmaid's Tale* novel and television series.

returned to below. The nebulousness of the second-person pronoun, also notable as the third of the five 'typical linguistic indices' associated with the discourse-architectural metaperspective, is examined in Section 4.4.

Ultimately, however, there will always be an ontological disconnect between the text-possible 'unknown reader' (Atwood 2019: 4) envisioned by Aunt Lydia and the text-actual 'student' reader Mia Smith (412), and the reader of the Actual World. Before turning to a typology of these proliferating reader figures, I briefly examine the reasons for this ontological disconnect: the severance of five so-called 'accessibility relations' (Ryan 1991a, 1991b).

4.2.1. Genre and Accessibility Relations in *The Testaments*

As hinted in the preceding section, *The Testaments*, a work of dystopian fiction, severs several of Ryan's (1991a, 1991b) accessibility relations, namely B, D, F' and J. Moreover, as I shall elaborate further below, Gileadean society epitomises socio-economic incompatibility, infringing a category briefly referenced by Ryan (1991b: 45) but not fully developed. To this nascent category I assign the moniker 'L'. For the remainder of this sub-section, I survey these five compromised categories in detail. The accessibility relations pertaining to *The Testaments* are summarised in Table 4.1, below.

	A	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**	**F**	**F'**	**G**	**H**	**I**	**J**	**K**	**L**
	+	-	+	-	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	+	-

Table 4.1. Accessibility relations in Atwood's (2019) *The Testaments*, after Raghunath (2017: 163) and Schuknecht (2019: 235)

Being a work of fiction, *The Testaments* necessarily severs Category B in introducing individuals who do not exist in the Actual World. Admittedly, the Text-actual and Actual Worlds do share some individuals (for instance the *bona fide* historical figure Phyllis Schlafly, after whom the 'Schlafly Cafe' [Atwood 2019: 313] is named), yet others, including Aunt Lydia, are solely 'native members' (Ryan 1991b: 32). Additionally, due to the novel's temporal location in a notional future, chronological compatibility, and hence Category D, does not hold. Instead, 'temporal relocation' becomes necessary for a reader in the Actual World 'to contemplate the entire history' (Ryan 1991a: 559) of the Text-actual World. Correspondingly,

‘the earlier days of Gilead’ (Atwood 2019: 61) recollected by Aunt Lydia within the novel are situated in the text-actual national past, but a notional future for members of the Actual World. Neither does the narrow variant of Category F (taxonomic compatibility) pertain, for there is no technological compatibility between the Text-actual and Actual World. The Text-actual and Actual World do not contain ‘the same type of manufactured objects’ (Ryan 1991b: 33), as typified by the so-called ‘microdot’ technology employed by the novel’s enactors (e.g. Atwood 2019: 140, 145). As this is a consequence of the futuristic setting of the novel, it demonstrates accessibility relations D and F’ to be aligned.

As Raghunath (2021, 2022) has observed in relation to counterfactual historical fiction, several key narrative genres are omitted from Ryan’s (1991a, 1991b) framework. Despite diagrammatising the accessibility relations of 13 distinct genres (Ryan 1991b: 34), no mention is made of dystopian fiction. Nonetheless, *pace* Raghunath (2021, 2022), dystopian fiction may be assigned an intermediary position between two listed genres, namely that of ‘anticipation’ (Ryan 1991b: 34, column 5) and ‘science fiction’ (*ibid*, column 6). Indeed, the trio evince several areas of overlap. For instance, Ryan (1991b) explains that ‘[t]he point of anticipation novels is to show what may become of the actual world [*sic*] given its present state and past history’ (32). This aligns with Atwood’s (2019) metanarrative ‘mission statement’ for *The Testaments*: ‘Nothing goes in that there isn’t backup for’ (433). Indeed, several literary critics have noted parallels between Gileadean society and the contemporary Western world. Correspondingly, Ryan (1991b) situates the ‘point’ of science fiction in a ‘focus on the changes brought about by technological advances’ (32). While this is by no means the primary focus of *The Testaments*, certain ‘technological advances’ are integral to the plot, including that of the aforementioned microdot. Meanwhile, Stockwell (2000b, following Suvin 1979) regards the most salient marker of science fiction to be its ‘*novum*: the central concept, whether a technical innovation, a social variation, or some other element of alternativity’ (90; italics in original) which distinguishes the Text-actual World from the Actual World. The skewed socio-economic structures depicted in *The Testaments* (see further the discussion of Category L, below) could well be considered equal to the ‘social variation’ Stockwell mentions. Nonetheless, in interview Atwood has insisted that *The Testaments*’ predecessor, *The Handmaid’s Tale*, be regarded not as science fiction but as speculative fiction, specifically of the ‘classic dystopia[n]’ variety (as qtd. in Harrison 2020: 23), a stance which may logically be extended to her sequel.

In an attempt to place utopian and dystopian fiction within Ryan’s (1991a, 1991b) typology, Schuknecht (2019) introduced Principle J (non-a/melioration), as outlined in Chapter 2. To

recap, this relation is held if the Text-actual World 'does not systematically ameliorate or deteriorate the state or conditions of our '[A]ctual [W]orld' (234), with all the necessary caveats these predicates entail. However, given the severe strictures upon basic human rights within the novel, *The Testaments* can almost indisputably be regarded as depicting deterioration (cf. Atwood 2019: 67). Accessibility relation J is thus the fourth to be broken by the novel, alongside relations B, D and F'.

The fifth and final discrepancy between the Actual World and the Text-actual World of *The Testaments* pertains to societal structure. While Ryan (1991b) does not delve into this particular category in depth, nor assign it a letter, she does sketch it skeletally as one of five potential 'candidates for addition' (44) to her original model. It is couched as '*Socio-economic compatibility*' (45; italics in original), and is upheld when the Actual World and the Text-actual World 'share economic laws and social structures.' (*ibid*). Following the alphabetically-additive example of Schuknecht (2019) and Raghunath (2021, 2022), this category is assigned the moniker 'L'. [20]

Clearly, neither of its two facets pertain to *The Testaments*. The 'social structures' depicted in the novel are alien to Actual World readers; Gilead stratifies its society into rigidly designated groupings (women positioned as Aunts, Pearl Girls, Supplicants, Wives, Econowives, Marthas or Handmaids, and men as Commanders, Angels, Guardians, Eyes and

'ameliorate or deteriorate' the Actual World, but may merely alter its rules neither for good nor bad.

In Sections 4.5 to 4.7, the five accessibility relations severed by *The Testaments* and discussed above will be used to account for distinctions between readers on various ontological levels. These ontologically-distinct readerly figures are explored further in Section 4.3. Prior to that, however, I sketch the discourse architecture for the sections of *The Testaments* under consideration in this chapter. While relating directly to the concept of the discourse-architectural metaperspective, this sub-section also sets the precedent for the three case-study chapters to follow. Each will include a dedicated discourse-architectural diagram for the (section of the) novel under analysis, which I find to supplement analytical specificity in discussing different ontological levels.

4.2.2. Discourse Architecture: *The Testaments*

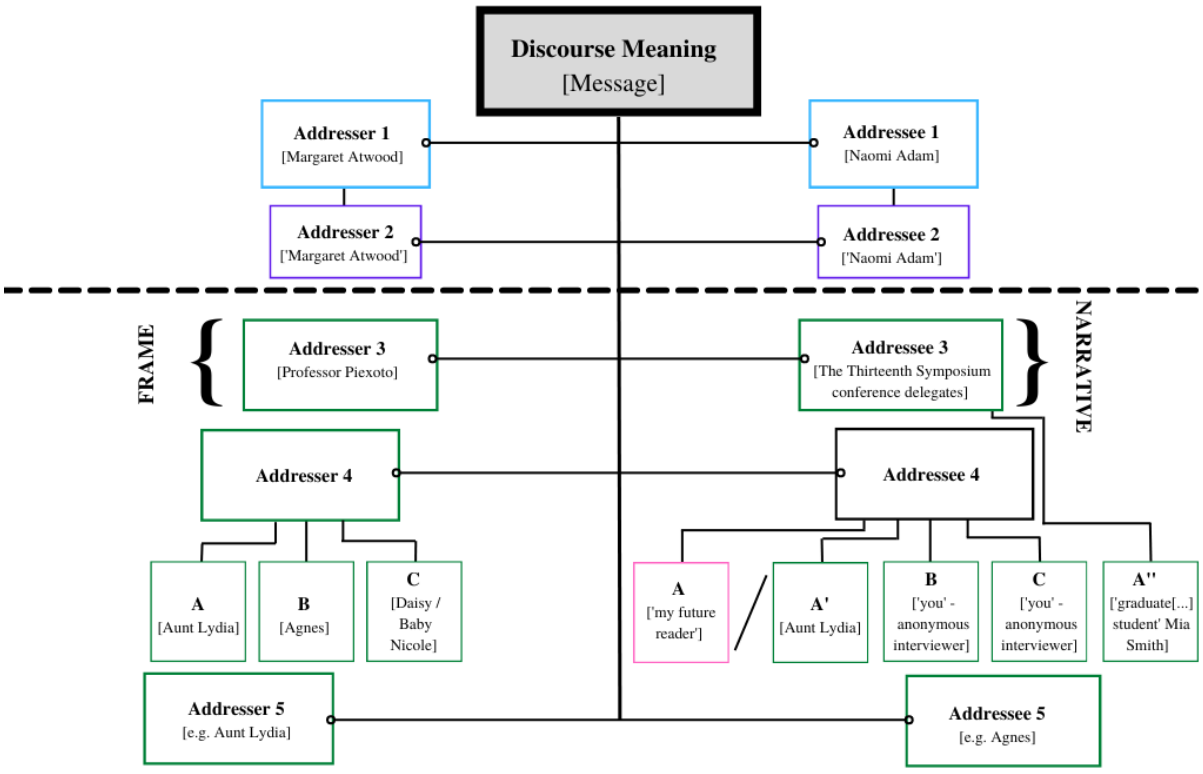

Fig. 4.1. A discourse-architectural diagram of Atwood's (2019) *The Testaments* (for key, see Fig. 3.2)

The above diagram, as with those of subsequent chapters, is modelled upon those of Short (1996: 257, 261), as replicated in Fig. 3.2. *Pace* Short, various distinct ontological levels are displayed, via which the meaning of the discourse – its 'message' – is conveyed. These levels comprise both those related to the Actual World and its possible satellites (in the upper half of the figure, above the dashed line representing the actual—fictional ontological boundary) and those linked to the Text-actual World or a text-possible satellite (in the lower half of the figure). While in many regards Fig. 4.1 recalls 'the basic discourse structure of a novel' (Short 1996: 257) represented by Fig. 3.2, it also displays certain quirks peculiar to *The Testaments*. [21]

Firstly, the discourse-architectural diagram is comprised of five tiers as opposed to the standard four. This is a result of the interpolated 'frame narrative' resulting from the novel's final chapter, entitled 'The Thirteenth Symposium', as outlined in Section 4.2. The braces enclosing this tier index its relative cognitive backgrounding: it is not until the close of the novel (Atwood 2019: 407-15) that this heretofore disguised ontological level is finally revealed. Secondly, to the level below that of the frame narrative – the narrator—narratee level – have been appended several box-shaped slots. These correspond to *The Testaments*' three distinct narrator-focalisers, and their associated narratees. Among the narrators, Addresser 4A (Aunt Lydia) is unique in having three associated narratees. The first of these figures is the only text-possible entity the diagram depicts, hence the differently coloured callout. (The ontological differences between the various narratees will be revisited in Section 4.4, below). This textual entity corresponds to the idealised 'unknown reader' (4) envisioned by Aunt Lydia, upon whom her discourse-architectural metaperspective is premised. Its text-actual correlate is Addressee 4A'', Mia Smith, the 'graduate student[...] in search of a thesis topic' (412); the correspondences between the two will be discussed further in Section 4.7, below. Given that this second of Aunt Lydia's three addressees is only mentioned during the frame narrative, a connecting line in the figure joins her to the third tier; in the terminology of Emmott (1997), this is the 'frame' into which she is bound. Finally, Aunt Lydia's third potential addressee is herself, for she recognises that neither her own survival nor that of her manuscript is guaranteed, and that ultimately she may 'only be talking to the wall' (Atwood 2019: 5). Similar

[21] Note that my own name as appellative in the 'Reader' and 'Implied Reader' slots, here as in the three succeeding discourse-architectural diagrams, is for indicative purposes only; I act as stand-in for any number of possible readers.

instances of discourse interpretable as self-address will feature in the discourse-architectural diagrams associated with both Chapters 6 and 7.

As a final caveat, it should be clarified that the enactors associated with the lowest (enactor—enactor) level are appended for illustrative purposes only. The vocatives are solely suggestions and are by no means exclusive.

In the following sub-section, I consider the theoretical debate surrounding those figures displayed to the right of Fig. 4.1. Specifically, the focus is upon the somewhat nebulous *reader*, a figure with an often chequered critical history which may be associated with worlds actual, possible, text-actual and text-possible. In attempting to condense over fifty years of critical theory on the subject, I devise a so-called 'readerly cline' to differentiate between these readerly figures which exist on various ontological levels.

4.3. The Reader: From the Real to the Ideal

In beginning a chapter of his seminal *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* with the interrogative 'The question is, what kind of reader?', Iser (1978: 34) foregrounds the often proliferating conceptualisations of this figure within literary study. Nonetheless, historically the right-hand side of the prototypical discourse-architectural diagram has tended to receive far less critical attention than its counterpart to the left (Goetsch 2004; Moore 2000; Prince 1971, 1985; cf. Fig. 3.2), with the construct of the narrator consequently privileged over that of the reader.

However, recently this imbalance has begun to be addressed. Corresponding to the basic stylistic tenet that the reading experience requires three components – the text, the writer *and* the reader – over the past twenty or so years there has been a dramatic upsurge of interest in exploring the third, readerly component, previous treated as something of a poor relation (Allington and Swann 2009; Gibbons and Whiteley 2018; Whiteley and Canning 2017). Yet this research tends to be informed by the 'Reader Response' school of criticism established in the 1970s and '80s (e.g. Iser 1978), and hence to focus upon a specific iteration of the reader: the so-called 'real reader' (Booth 1961), located, in my 'Best of Both Worlds Theories' lexicon, in the Actual World. While important, and indeed the first of several readerly types to be surveyed below, this figure does not hold a monopoly over the reader figures associated with any given text.

This sub-section aims to disentangle the profusion of readerly types associated with the novel form in general, and *The Testaments* in particular. It works in tandem with Fig. 4.2, 'The Readerly Cline for Fictional Narratives', which diagrammatises the range of readerly figures a narrative text can generate, and situates each along a continuum with regard to its distinct ontological profile. The cline thus includes labels for the four overarching, ontologically-distinct types of worlds identified in Chapter 2: the Actual World, possible worlds, the Text-actual World and text-possible worlds. The legends 'POSSIBLE WORLD' and 'TEXT-ACTUAL WORLD' are placed adjacent rather than overlapping, following the conclusions drawn in Section 2.2.3. Here, it may be recalled, it was observed that a text-actual world is a special concretised version of an abstract possible world satellite to the Actual World. This positioning also preserves the actual—fictional ontological divide, designated in Fig. 4.2 (as in Figs. 2.3, 3.2 and 4.1, above) by a dashed line. The readerly types are surveyed below in the order in which they appear on the cline, from left to right. As a caveat, the assorted readerly types below are considered solely in relation to narrative fiction; the terms 'narrative', 'fiction', and 'text' are therefore used both in combination and interchangeably. The claims made should not be applied to other text-types without modification.

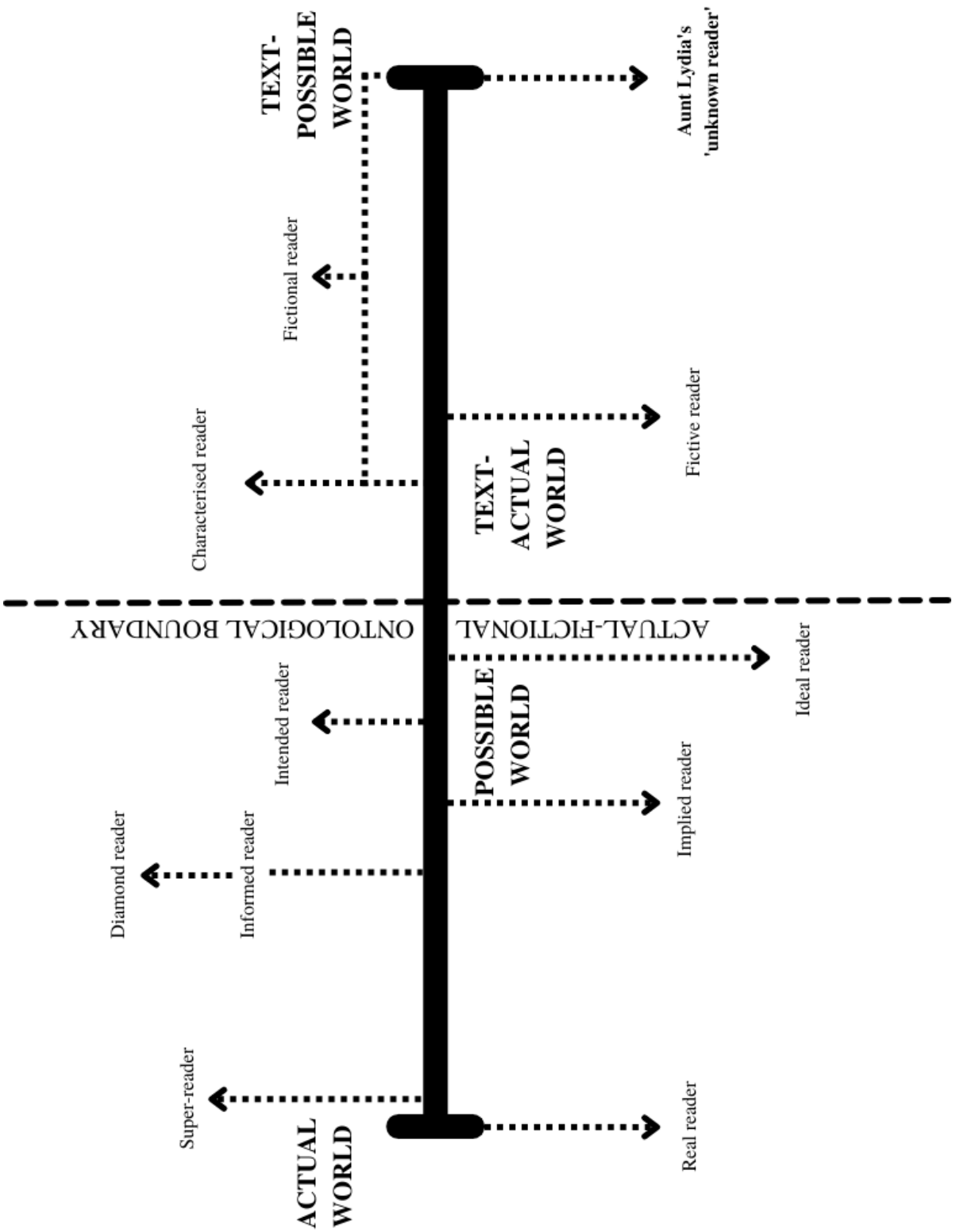

Fig. 4.2. The Readerly Cline for Fictional Narratives

4.3.1. The Real Reader

To the furthest left of the cline is the 'real reader' identified by Booth (1961) as a counterpart to the real author. As a tangible individual, whose eyes will scan the page of text in front of them, this figure can quite unequivocally be associated with the Actual World (indeed, *real* and *actual* function as cognitive synonyms). As Iser (1978: 27) observes, they are 'known to us by documented reactions': real readers may be investigated empirically via either naturalistic or experimental means (Gibbons and Whiteley 2018: 301-18) to obtain qualitative and/or quantitative data for analysis. Swann and Allington (2009) identify a recent vogue within stylistics for studies of this sort; among the vast array are those by Peplow (2014) and Stradling (2019), which investigate the behaviour of real readers within an in-person, book group setting. Meanwhile, responses from real readers of *The Testaments* have been collected in *The Guardian*'s compilation article entitled ''I genuinely felt she was talking to me': readers review Margaret Atwood's The Testaments' (Guardian readers 2019). I will return to the salience of some of the reader responses included within the article during my steam stylistic analysis of passages from the novel, below. Given the demographic diversity of its respondents (who range in age from 28 to 65, and are citizens of countries as dissimilar as Ireland and Indonesia), the *Guardian* article also helpfully flags the heterogeneity the construct of the real reader subsumes, despite the definite article associated with the construct. Indeed, at root it is an imprecise concept, for there is never a single real reader but a host of unique real readers (a similar issue with the conceptual reader of Text World Theory was discussed in Section 2.1.3). The balance between heterogeneity and homogeneity is likewise at issue with the next readerly type, the 'super-reader'.

4.3.2. The Super-reader

The 'super-reader', a term coined by Riffaterre (1978), denotes something of a readerly mean average. It is generated by 'a group of informants' (48) who concur in their interpretation of certain points in a text. It is in essence a more numerically endowed version of the solitary real reader (Section 4.3.1), and is therefore placed adjacent to this figure on Fig. 4.2. As the notion represents an average and not a single individual, consequently smoothing over possible idiosyncrasies, it is not however able to be fully aligned with the Actual World. The results of Peplow's (2014) book club research, mentioned above, evidence this second readerly type in action. In the case of his subjects, there is almost perfect accord with regard to the text discussed: near 'unanimous response' (165) as broad consensus is reached and opinions

converge. Nonetheless, Peplow does conclude that agreement of this kind among book club members is 'highly unusual' (169). Readers are apt to disagree (Procter and Benwell 2015). Consider the responses of the *Guardian* readers recorded in the aforementioned 2019 article; for Fran Gillam, the novel 'didn't disappoint' (n.p), yet for Sharon Blackie the same text was '[p]rofoundly disappointing' (n.p). Ultimately, however useful the 'super-reader' may be as a construct, it will always inevitably elide what may prove to be telling differences between readers (generated through, for example, cultural, geographical or chronological diversity), and so misrepresent the nuanced subjectivity of the readerly experience. It is for this reason that the super-reader slides slightly further towards the 'POSSIBLE WORLD' territory of Fig. 4.2.

4.3.3. The Informed Reader

Even further towards the 'POSSIBLE WORLD' centre of the cline is Fish's (1970) 'informed reader', which may be thought of as occupying an ontological halfway house. This figure is one able to fully process a given text, one competent in its language, as well as possessed of the requisite contextual, intertextual and intratextual knowledge with which to understand it. Fish summarises: 'The reader of whose responses I speak, then, is this informed reader, *neither an abstraction, nor an actual living reader, but a hybrid*.' (Fish 1970: 145; my italics).

The hybridity identified results from the unlikelihood of perfect textual comprehension (see Section 4.3.6, below), though it is of course possible that a reader will attempt to remedy any ignorance within the Actual World, and so plug any gaps in their incomplete Epistemic World. Nonetheless, as Fish observes, the 'informed reader' cannot be allocated a place within the '[A]ctual' World, yet neither is it a text-possible 'abstraction': it is consequently placed midway between these two legends on the cline of Fig. 4.2. A further parallel construct is that of the diamond reader. Although yoked by DeMaria (1978) to the 'Ideal Reader' (Section 4.3.6), I feel Coleridge's (2020 [1849]) description to better equate to that of the informed reader, hence its placement above the term on Fig. 4.2. Here, the diamond reader is cast as one 'rare and valuable, who profit[s] by what they read, and enable others to profit by it also' (221). This thus adds an innovative interpersonal element absent in other readerly types.

4.3.4. The Implied Reader

The implied reader is the discourse-architectural correlate of Booth's (1961) implied author. For Iser, coiner of the collocation 'implied reader', this readerly type:

> embodies all those predispositions necessary for a literary work to exercise its effect – predispositions laid down, not by an empirical outside, but by the text itself. [The implied reader] is *a construct and in no way to be identified with any real reader*.
>
> (Iser 1978: 34; my italics)

The implied reader is therefore similar to Fish's (1970) informed reader (Section 4.3.3), though possessing a solely textual (as opposed to also contextual and intertextual) focus. Once again, this is a readerly figure situated extradiegetically, however counterintuitive this may seem given its textual immanence. The implied reader's recourse to 'the text itself' merely renders the figure text-driven (Werth 1999), formed as a composite of clues encoded in the discourse. Clearly, *pace* Iser, the figure should be distanced from the 'real', i.e. Actual World end of the cline. Moreover, given its element of 'anticipation' (Iser 1978: 34), a figure suggested but not necessarily fructified, it dovetails with the 'POSSIBLE WORLD' side of the cline.

4.3.5. The Intended Reader

Wolff's (1971) concept of the 'intended reader' is glossed by Iser (1978) as 'the idea of the reader which the author had in mind' (33-4). Concerned as this concept is with the author's Epistemic World ('in mind'), this readerly figure is clearly more text-possible than actual. On Fig. 4.2, it hence occupies a position beside the legend 'POSSIBLE WORLD'. The intended reader may be evidenced text-internally by linguistic features including apostrophe and the presence of the second-person singular pronoun. This ties the intended reader both to the elaboration of narrative *you* in Section 4.4, below, and to the third of the five 'typical linguistic indices' associated with the discourse-architectural metaperspective (Section 4.1).

In interview, Atwood (2017) evokes this readerly type, referring to 'the 'real' reader, the Real Reader for whom every writer writes' (n.p). Despite the misleading pre-modifier, the figure alluded to here is not the Actual World individual discussed in Section 4.3.1. Indeed, the initial scare quotations suggest as much, implying that authorial access to this figure is mere fantasy, with their dialogue prevented by the split discourse-world (Gavins 2007) inherent to fictional narratives. Instead, in capitalising her reiteration of the collocation, a second readerly type is evoked, one issuing from the process of the 'writer writ[ing]'; stemming from the writer, this figure is clearly akin to Wolff's 'intended reader'.

4.3.6. The Ideal Reader

Originating from the structuralist theory of Culler (1975), the 'ideal reader' is 'a theoretical construct' (124; cf. Iser 1978: 34) capable of processing the meaning-making potential of a fictional narrative to its fullest. In short, an ideal reader will know all that is necessary for the comprehension of a text, and hence attain perfect understanding. The Epistemic World of writer and reader will correspond entirely. Iser (1978) contends that: 'The ideal reader [...] is *a purely fictional being* [...] [with] *no basis in reality*' (29; my italics). For this reason, the ideal reader is placed at great remove from the 'ACTUAL WORLD' end of Fig. 4.2, which denotes 'reality'. Instead, it is situated firmly within 'POSSIBLE WORLD' territory. However, I believe Iser to use the designator 'fictional' ill-advisedly in the aforementioned quotation. It is certainly contrary to my own understanding, for he presumably does not mean to imply that the ideal figure is an intradiegetic figure to be found within the pages of a work of fiction. The term is likely applied somewhat more loosely, as an antonym to *real* (cf. the lemma 'reality'). If this is so, 'possible' is more accurate within a 'Best of Both Worlds Theories' context; indeed, given the inherent idealised status of this readerly type, it may be aligned with a Wish World satellite to the Actual World.

However, there do also exist intradiegetic reader figures, i.e. those that belong within a work of fiction. Identifying the field as a 'relatively neglected' (Goetsch 2004: 188) one, Goetsch continues to identify two complementary categories in his seminal article entitled 'Readers in Narrative'. These two intradiegetic readerly iterations form the subject of the next two sub-sections.

4.3.7. The Fictional Reader

Crossing the actual—fictional ontological boundary, a definitively intradiegetic readerly type may be observed: that of the 'fictional reader' (*sensu* Goetsch 2004). These, in essence, are a book's bookworms, encountered whenever a narrative enactor begins to read. Goetsch argues that these figures exist 'on the level of the action' (189), which would suggest their text-actual status and a corresponding placement alongside the legend 'TEXT-ACTUAL WORLD' on Fig. 4.2. This interpretation of the figure would also align it with the 'characterized [*sic*] reader' of Wilson (qtd. in Wells 2003: 5), a figure with 'perceptible features, sometimes not very admirable, which are inscribed within a text in either direct or indirect terms' (*ibid*). This figure, too, should be placed alongside the 'TEXT-ACTUAL WORLD' legend.

However, the figure of the fictional reader may just as feasibly be text-possible: consider, for example, an enactor cast as a reluctant reader who only reads for pleasure in the Wish World of a book-loving friend. Alternatively, this reluctant reader may dread a scenario couched within a Hypothesis World in which they are required to begin reading upon beginning a new job. To fully acknowledge the ontological potential of this readerly type, then, it must be split, and assigned two separate positions on Fig. 4.2. The first associates the fictional reader squarely with the Text-actual World, the second with any number of text-possible worlds. It is this second, text-possible variant of the fictional reader which best accords with Atwood's 'unknown reader' (4).

4.3.8. The Fictive Reader

The fictive reader, as putative obverse of the fictional reader, is one encoded 'in those narratives which direct attention to the process of narration' (Goetsch 2004: 190), again chiefly by means of the second-person singular pronoun. The figure exists 'on the level of the narrator' (188) as its discourse-architectural correlate. It is a contemporary incarnation of the prototypical 'listener figures in classical and medieval epics' (*ibid*), and may prove either 'generalized [*sic*]' or 'elaborat[e] [...] acquir[ing] characteristics' (191) during the narration. Given this formal variety, it is less easy to situate the fictive reader upon Fig. 4.2 than other readerly types. I have opted for a positioning slightly to the right of the first type of 'fictive reader' given the lower textual salience of the fictive reader. A 'generalized' variant, most especially, would skew the fictive reader towards the 'TEXT-POSSIBLE' side of the cline. It is this readerly type to which the anonymous interviewers prompting Witnesses 369A (Agnes) and 369B (Daisy/Baby Nicole) most closely correspond. Yet this correspondence is far from a perfect one, for in *The Testaments* the communication is presumed to occur via a spoken rather than a written channel. Meanwhile, Goetsch (2004) also suggests several functions which a fictive reader may fulfil within any given narrative. Of these, options 2 and 5 – comprising 'a partner, a fellow-traveller, or even a friend' (192) and conversely 'the prejudiced reader whose expectations and norms are challenged' (*ibid*) – best capture the intradiegetic readerly types associated with Atwood's novel. However, the correspondence here is not to narrative streams B and C (see Fig. 4.1), which may be attributed, respectively, to enactors Agnes and Daisy/Baby Nicole, but to those of Aunt Lydia (stream A). The chapters she focalises seem to necessitate both of the readerly figures Goetsch delineates at one time or other; in the sections below I will explore how the two seemingly diametrically opposed functions of the fictive reader, as quoted above, are encoded within the construct of the 'unknown reader' (4).

In summary, it is clear that the nomenclature associated with the right-hand side of the discourse-architectural diagram is complex, even 'otiose' (Prince 1985: 302). As Prince also acknowledges, 'distinctions are not always easy to draw' (*ibid*) between the different readerly types. It is hoped that 'The Readerly Cline' of Fig. 4.2 has gone some way to remedying this. Furthermore, it is undeniable that the figure of the reader, be it extradiegetic or intradiegetic, text-actual or text-possible, or some combination, remains 'an essential component of any general account of narrative' (299). In the following account of the narrative *The Testaments*, I therefore endeavour to tease out the multiple forms and functions of its readerly figures. This not only occasions reflects upon the role of the (hypothetical) reader within the discourse, but upon the construction of the discourse-architectural metaperspective. After all, the second key component of the discourse-architectural metaperspective – Laing *et al*.'s (1966) 'alter' (4) – is a discourse partner, realised as a reader throughout Atwood's novel.

4.4. Narrative *You*

Having now considered in detail the different incarnations of the 'reader' any one text may generate, it is also instructive to identify the various potential referents of narrative *you*. In the present context, this helps to account for the divergent discourse-architectural metaperspectives generated by the three 'strands' of *The Testaments*. On a more holistic level, explication of the use of the second-person singular pronoun in narrative is necessary in order to fully appreciate its function as the third of five 'typical linguistic indices' for the discourse-architectural metaperspective.

Herman (1994, 2002: 331-71) explores narrative *you* in detail, and distinguishes 5 distinct types (341), four of which he terms 'functional' (*ibid*), the other hybrid. Herman also acknowledges these types to be 'actual' (*sensu* Herman 2002), 'virtual', or a combination of the two. Since what is under discussion in this regard is the ontological status of the pronoun, and to avoid the potential confusion of overlapping terminology, I replace Herman's modifiers with 'extradiegetic' and 'intradiegetic', respectively. While all extradiegetic figures will equate to those positioned to the left of the actual—fictional ontological boundary on Fig. 4.2, the intradiegetic are positioned on the right. This is more satisfactory than using what would seem to be the intuitive alternatives – i.e. 'actual' versus 'text-actual' – following my 'Best of Both Worlds Theories' approach. However, as will become clear, 'virtual' reference need not solely involve text-actual figures; it is just as feasible that text-possible enactors are addressed. In summarising each type, I also append a brief example from *The Testaments*, not only for

heuristic purposes, but to bridge the gap between the theory-heavy first half of this chapter and the more applied sections which follow. This strategy also has the advantage of emphasising the varied uses to which narrative you has been put within the novel, a point returned to in Sections 4.5 to 4.7. [22]

1. Generalised you – extradiegetic

Denoting what Herman (2002) pithily refers to as 'the *you* of fortune cookies and newspaper horoscopes' (355), and akin to the formal indefinite pronoun 'one', this incarnation of the second-person pronoun has non-specific, potentially universal reference. Generalised *you* is typified by the following example, taken from Strand C of *The Testaments* (i.e. that narrated and focalised by Daisy/Baby Nicole):

> *You* can be angry at dead people, but *you* can never have a conversation about what they did; or *you* can only have one side of it.

(Atwood 2019: 40; my italics)

Here, as is common with generalised *you*, this is a declarative and universal statement, or generic sentence. It presents a logical truism stemming from the fact that 'dead people' cannot converse with those living (unless Ryan's [1991a, 1991b] Principle E [physical compatibility] is transgressed, of course, though following Section 4.2.1 above, it is not). [23]

2. Fictional reference – intradiegetic

With fictional reference, the second-person pronoun is deictically displaced, and employed instead as a pseudo first-person pronoun as an enactor self-addresses. This recalls the ''speaking to oneself' convention' identified by Leech and Short (2007: 227), and is typified by the following instance in *The Testaments*.

> When Aunt Vidala asked if there were any questions, there weren't any, because where would *you* begin?

(Atwood 2019: 82; my italics)

The 'you' in this passage acts as substitute 'I', an indication of a reaction of cognitive displacement from fearful focaliser Agnes, newly confronted with shocking information. (A similar instance of 'Fictional reference' narrative *you* as a coping mechanism is to be found with Kim Clarke in *A Brief History of Seven Killings* [James 2014], and will be treated in

[22] Fittingly, Herman's 2002 chapter is prefaced by a passage from *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985).
[23] Though note, as Chapter 7 also argues, that this stance is both culturally and chronologically relative.

Chapter 6). Should it transpire that Aunt Lydia is 'talking to the wall' (Atwood 2019: 173) as she predicts, hence validating box 4A' on Fig. 4.1, her use of the pronominal *you* will similarly acquire fictional reference.

3. Fictionalised ('horizontal') address – intradiegetic

Nicknamed 'horizontal' address, this variant occurs when one intradiegetic enactor engages in discourse with another. Following the logic of Section 3.1.6, the mode of communication is not limited to speech; indeed, *The Testaments* evidences writing to be just as applicable. The following, however, is relayed by verbal means:

> ''Have *you* sent any pretend converts in there before?''
>
> (Atwood 2019: 203; my italics)

This interrogative is directed by Daisy/Baby Nicole to her handler Garth, an anti-Gilead resistance fighter. Both enactors are clearly text-actual; linguistically, the distal deixis ('there') encodes some shared point of reference in the Text-actual World (in this instance, the country of Gilead).

4. Apostrophic ('vertical') address – extradiegetic

Alternatively termed 'vertical' address, this variant is a development of the rhetorical technique of apostrophe, and entails address to a real reader (see Section 4.3) outside of the narrative. In discussing this category, Herman (2002: 361) cites Kacandes' concept of 'literary performatives', for apostrophic address often involves the reader in the Actual World enacting what is being read. This is attested by the following line from *The Testaments*, an observation focalised by Aunt Lydia:

> But as *you* will have noticed, my own corpse is not among them.
>
> (Atwood 2019: 66; my italics)

This type of narrative you frequently involves metatextual language, and the above quotation is no exception. Here the *verbum sentiendi* ('noticed') is metatextual, implying an addressee familiar with the trajectory of Lydia's life, which is congruent with the Actual World reader by this point in the analeptic novel.

However, the excerpt is in other ways an imperfect illustration of so-called 'vertical' narrative *you*. Although it may well address the so-called 'unknown reader' existing outside the fiction, in the Actual World, said 'unknown reader' could equally plausibly be located

within the fiction, as a text-actual or text-possible enactor. The reason that the passage likely precludes the second interpretation is because it does not expand upon its construction of the 'you' in any great detail, allowing Actual World readers to project themselves into subject position much more easily than in passages involving substantial, granular detail (see further Excerpt 4.5, below). There is less scope for the readerly identification of irrelevancies, details which do not apply to them in the Actual World, to cause a feeling of estrangement. In short, Ryan's (1980, 1991b) 'Principle of Minimal Departure' is not compromised on the personal level. Additionally, this passage, unlike others (e.g. Atwood 2019: 61, 172, 404), does not feature the possessive pronoun within the collocation 'my reader'. No claim is made upon the Actual World readership by a text-actual enactor, a technique which could be interpreted as binding the evoked reader figure to the Text-actual World by placing both narrator (i.e. 'Aunt Lydia') and narratee ('you [...] my reader') on the same ontological plane.

Meanwhile, it is the remit of the fifth and final form of narrative *you* to purposefully conflate ontological planes. This Herman (1994, 2002) terms 'double deixis'.

5. Double deixis – extradiegetic and intradiegetic

With this hybrid form, the single (and singular) pronoun has dual reference. It involves the combination of two of the above categories (i.e. 1 to 4), one of which must be extradiegetic, the other intradiegetic, to result in the melding of the actual and text-actual and a second-person pronoun interpretable as applicable to either ontological plane. Ultimately, double deixis occasions 'ontological interference' (Herman 2002: 345), as one ontological sphere encroaches upon another, compromising the ontological divide between the Actual and Text-actual World represented by the dashed line in Figs. 2.3 and 4.1.

Apropos of the frequency of figurative language in his own illustrative excerpts, Herman observes that 'similes create a favourable environment for double deixis' (417, n. 25). This certainly applies in the example below. Here the target domain of WRITTEN DOCUMENTS maps to the source of a TREASURE BOX, echoing the description of literary as 'a gift' (Atwood 2019: 246) few in Gilead – and particularly few females – possess. Lydia laments:

> Our time together is drawing short, my reader. Possibly *you* will view these pages of mine as a fragile treasure box, to be opened with the utmost care. Possibly *you* will tear them apart, or burn them: that often happens to words.

(Atwood 2019: 403; my italics)

The above paragraph precedes the passage excerpted as 4.5, below. It succeeds in melding extradiegetic elements with intradiegetic ones. With regard to the former, the physicality of what is described corresponds to the Actual World. Literally, the real reader 'open[s]' the 'pages' of the novel *The Testaments*; more metaphorically, time spent reading the book is 'drawing short', for this quotation is taken from the penultimate chapter. (Moreover, as Scarry [1999] notes, to reference the materiality of the reading experience is to increase its vividness). The appellation is also accurate; the literary performative necessitates a 'reader'. Other aspects prove less plausible: to 'burn' or 'tear [...] apart' the novel *The Testaments* would be an unprecedented reaction from real readers in the Actual World. It is instead within the text-actual theocracy the novel depicts that the composition of a manuscript would be considered an 'act of sinfulness' (61) and engender these extreme responses. The possessive genitive, as adumbrated above, is also fallacious within the Actual World; while Aunt Lydia may have penned 'these pages' in the Text-actual World (as per the fourth level of Fig. 4.1), Margaret Atwood is the 'real author' (Booth 1961) of the novel in the Actual World. The final clause – 'that often happens to words' – is ontologically more slippery. Book burnings are a standard practice in Gilead (Atwood 1985: 234), yet are also a (comparatively rarer) occurrence in the Actual World, as acknowledged by Atwood (2017) and illustrated by the reaction to the publication of Booker winner Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* in 1988. (Here, it is instructive to recall Atwood's [2019] self-injunction: 'Nothing goes in that there isn't backup for.' [433]). The ultimate result of doubly deictic *you* is the dual reference of the direct address. Actual World readers may find themselves to be oddly nonvirtual participants in discourses from which they are nevertheless spatiotemporally removed' (Herman 2002: 348), though one should remain cognisant of the heterogeneity in readerly response; *pace* Raghunath (2017), a partial or incomplete Reader Knowledge World will result in a different interpretative parsing of the passage. Yet for those with the requisite Actual World knowledge, *The Testaments* clearly becomes one of the 'discourses' Herman evokes, braiding the extradiegetic and the intradiegetic, as the recurrent instances of double deixis in the excerpts below will underscore. This blended ontology is boosted by the social and political parallels between the Actual and Text-actual Worlds surrounding *The Testaments*, as explored in Section 4.2.

4.5. Who is 'You'?: Narrative *You* in *The Testaments*

Following the above critical overview, the sections below apply the collected theory to select textual segments from Atwood's (2019) *The Testaments*. While the principle focus is Aunt

Lydia's construction of a hypothetical reader figure – 'my unknown reader' – for comparative purposes it is instructive to briefly review the discourse architectures of the two 'Witness Testimony' strands of the novel. This distinguishes their text-actual narrative *you* from Aunt Lydia's text-possible *you*, a figure central to her construction of a discourse-architectural metaperspective.

4.5.1. Text-actual *You*

As outlined above, a text-actual *you* is encoded in the witness testimonies of respondents 369A and 369B. With regard to discourse architecture, these two transcripts prove strikingly similar. Both feature a text-actual narrator, whose autodiegetic eyewitness account is spurred by the prompting of some unelaborated, anonymous but nonetheless co-present text-actual narratee. Consequently, unlike throughout Lydia's 'Holograph', in *The Testaments*' two 'Transcript' sections, the Text-actual World is not 'split' (cf. Gibbons and Whiteley 2021; Section 4.2, above). This discourse-architectural similarity is reflected in the language of the respective accounts. Here, to illustrate, are the opening passages of their testimonies.

Excerpt 4.1

> You have asked me to tell you what it was like for me when I was growing up within Gilead. You say it will be helpful, and I do wish to be helpful. I imagine you expect nothing but horrors, but the reality is that many children were loved and cherished, in Gilead as elsewhere, and many adults were kind though fallible, in Gilead as elsewhere.

(Atwood 2019: 9)

Excerpt 4.2

> They say I will always have the scar, but I'm almost better; so, yes, I think I'm strong enough to do this now. You've said that you'd like me to tell you how I got involved in this whole story, so I'll try, though it's hard to know where to begin.

(Atwood 2019: 39)

The above two passages are focalised through enactors with radically divergent personalities. While the first constitutes the free direct speech of compliant Gileadean citizen Agnes, the second is that of her rambunctious half-sister, known alternately as Daisy, Baby Nicole and Jade, who was raised in exile in democratic Canada. Nonetheless, the passages prove alike on both the macro-level (i.e. discourse-architecturally) and the micro-level (linguistically). Firstly, both prominently feature the second-person pronoun and concomitant direct address. In each instance, this comprises what Herman (1994, 2002) terms 'fictionalized (= horizontal) address' (Herman 2002: 345): the discourse is directed towards another enactor in the Text-actual

World. Although in both excerpts from *The Testaments* this discourse partner remains unnamed, he or she is clearly co-present, as well as crucial from a plot-functional perspective. It is the speech act of this interlocutor (or, potentially, interlocutors) – 'You have asked me to tell you' in the first; 'You've said that you'd like me to tell you' in the second – which act as function-advancers to precipitate the two eyewitness accounts.

Nonetheless, the speech acts of the anonymous narratee are all couched in the indirect mode (e.g. 'You say it will be helpful'). This means of discourse presentation renders the utterances almost maximally unfree, mediated as they are through a second, narratorial figure within the fiction (Leech and Short 2007). The original content of the utterance within the Text-actual World is obscured, recoverable only through the inferencing procedures of the Actual World reader. Alongside backgrounding the utterance, this narrative strategy functions to foreground the narrator, who becomes simultaneously 'center', 'filter' and 'interest-focus', to adopt the terminology of Chatman (1986). Indeed, this perspectival dynamic remains so not only for the introductory paragraphs cited above, but for the entirety of the respective witnesses' testimonies. Consequently, the narratee to which the testimony is addressed via fictional reference narrative *you* (Herman 1994, 2002) becomes a textual lacuna (Stockwell 2009). Solely a pronominal, never personalised, this figure also accords with Prince's (1985) 'zero degree (or maximally covert) narratee' (300), devoid as it is of distinguishing features. Moreover, placing the focus of Actual World readers upon the focalising 'Witness' (i.e. Agnes or Daisy/Baby Nicole) reinforces ontological parallelism, for the attention of this covert narratee is likewise focused upon one or other of these witnesses. This thus supports the contention, made by both Goetsch (2004) and Prince (1971), that an intradiegetic addressee can function didactically within a narrative, guiding the behaviour of an extradiegetic one. The dashed nature of the medial line on Fig. 4.2 is validated: the interplay between the actual and fictional ontological planes is clearly porous.

Differences between Excerpts 4.1 and 4.2 are most notable with regard to their respective ontological profiles. Most saliently, the first excerpt, unlike the second, makes frequent forays into the text-possible. For one, the non-factive *verbum sentiendi* 'imagine' in its second line cues a Prediction World. The scenario is grounded in contextualised guesswork, for focaliser Agnes is familiar with the pejorative view foreigners tend to have upon Gilead (cf. Atwood 2019: 132, 146). Within this text-possible world blossoms another: a presumptive 'world of horrors' (best categorised as a Fantasy World due to the nightmarish connotations of the

phrase) is attributed to the 'imagin[ation]' of her anonymous narratee. Finally, these nested text-possible worlds are punctured by the 'reality' of the Text-actual World.

The presence of the aforementioned suppositious text-possible worlds (see Adam 2021: 176) within the narration of Agnes is a result of the enactor presuming the perspective of another – in this instance her interviewer – upon herself. Linguistically, this is evidenced by the embedded *verba sentiendi* ('I *imagine* you *expect*'; my italics). This presumption of another's perspective results in a prototypical metaperspective, centred around Agnes' view of her interviewer's view of her and her upbringing within Gilead. Although quantitatively minimal (a mere clause), the typical indices of a metaperspective are included: there is evaluative lexis ('horrors') alongside a subtle variant of hypothetical discourse which, following Semino and Short (2004) may be termed hypothetical narrative report of a thought act. Meanwhile, marking the metaperspective as of the discourse-architectural sub-type specifically, the second-person pronoun 'you' features in subject position, emphasising that the perspectival supposition occurs within the context of the production and reception of discourse.

It is not insignificant that Agnes constructs a metaperspective at the very beginning of her witness testimony. On the local level, the Actual World reader is subtly prepared for the far more extensive recourse to supposition and the metaperspective within the narration of Aunt Lydia (see Sections 4.5.2, 4.6 and 4.7). More globally, Agnes' reliance upon supposition from the outset of her witness testimony outlines the centrality of metaperspectival phenomena in everyday life. As Laing *et al*. (1966) aver, human beings are 'constantly supposing' (4).

Overall, this sub-section has demonstrated that the anonymous interviewer(s) prompting the two 'Witness Testimon[ies]' act as narrative ciphers, and exist on the same ontological plane as the enactors Agnes and Daisy/Baby Nicole. For both these eyewitnesses, the discourse partner is a text-actual figure, addressed via 'Fictionalised reference' (Herman 1994, 2002). However, the discourse-architectural similarity between these two narrative 'strands' does not extend to the third, narrated and focalised by Aunt Lydia. Instead, her addressee may be interpreted as text-possible, actual, or both. Nonetheless, Aunt Lydia's discourse does sometimes prove comparable on the linguistic level, as the following sub-section will illustrate.

4.5.2. Text-possible *You* ... Actual *You* ... Both?

As with Agnes and Daisy/Baby Nicole's eyewitness accounts, Aunt Lydia's discourse partner is accorded textual primacy. The following evocation appears on the second and third pages of the novel proper:

Excerpt 4.3

> Over the years I've buried a lot of bones; now I'm inclined to dig them up again – if only for your edification, my unknown reader. If you are reading, this manuscript at least will have survived. Though perhaps I'm fantasizing: perhaps I will never have a reader. Perhaps I'll only be talking to the wall, in more ways than one.

(Atwood 2019: 4-5)

This narratee figure, claimed by Aunt Lydia as 'my unknown reader', may be accorded text-possible status, as opposed to its text-actual counterpart(s) in Excerpts 4.1 and 4.2. Given the possessive pronoun, the figure may be interpreted as belonging to a Speculative Extension to Lydia's Epistemic World, yet this is undercut by her subsequent musings which position the figure as even more epistemologically and ontologically remote. The linguistic markers of this distancing include the repeated weak epistemic sentential adverb 'perhaps', alongside – crucially – the lexical verb 'fantasizing', which suggests that a Fantasy World plays host to the reader figure. Equally, it is possible that Actual World readers may feel addressed by this instance of the second-person pronoun, occasioning the 'Apostrophic (= vertical) address' outlined by Herman (2002). Certainly, this is the response of *Guardian* reader Ruth Whitney (2019), who states: 'I genuinely felt she [i.e. Aunt Lydia] was talking to me.' (n.p). Two overarching factors can account for this feeling of implication. Firstly, the moniker 'reader' acts as a literary performative, automatically aligning with all those who are scanning the prose of The Testaments in the Actual World, as well as any potential intradiegetic figure. Secondly, at this early stage in the novel, the 'emptiness' (Gibbons and Whiteley 2021: 122) of the addressee side of the split Text-actual World is yet to be established. This hence 'permits interpretative openness and therefore allows for and explains readers' felt sense of being addressed by a fictional character' (*ibid*). The lessening of this sense of ontological equivalence will become apparent in the following two sections.

Prior to this, however, it is instructive to close this section with an extended quotation from the critical linguist Fairclough. Despite originally pertaining to the nuances of media discourse, it proves remarkably apt in relation to the discourse-architectural scenarios of strands A, B and C of *The Testaments*. Fairclough (2001) proposes the following:

> In face-to-face discourse, producers design their contributions for the particular people they are interacting with – they adapt the language they use, and keep adapting throughout the encounter in light of various sorts of 'feedback' they get from co-participants. But media discourse is designed for mass audiences, and there is no way that producers can ever know who is in the audience, let alone adapt to its diverse sections. And since all discourse producers must produce with *some* interpreters in mind, what media producers do is address an *ideal subject*, be it viewer, or listener, or reader. Media discourse has built into it a subject position for an ideal subject, and actual viewers or listeners or readers have to negotiate a relationship with the ideal subject.

(Fairclough 2001: 41; italics in original)

While the description of 'media discourse' evokes the 'Ardua Hall Holograph' chapters of *The Testaments* (e.g. Excerpt 4.3), the discussion of 'face-to-face discourse' aligns with the witness testimonies of Agnes and Daisy/Baby Nicole (Excerpts 4.1 and 4.2). The latter do indeed 'design their contributions' for the benefit of their interlocutor – 'I do wish to be helpful' in Excerpt 4.1 attests to this – a figure who is anonymous but nonetheless both text-actual and co-present. This dynamic is reflected on the linguistic level, with the enactors 'adapt[ing] the language they use' throughout their respective narratives in acknowledgement of their interlocutor. Agnes, for instance, laments the lack of detail her eyewitness account contains: 'It felt like hours. Sorry I can't be more precise.' (Atwood 2019: 395). Finally, it is due to the eyewitnesses' metalinguistic management that the ''feedback'' of the backgrounded interviewer figure may be reconstrued by the inferencing procedures of readers in the Actual World, as discussed above, a process which impresses the text-actual existence of the interviewer despite their anonymity.

Conversely, the chapters narrated by Lydia map to Fairclough's description of 'media discourse' in several regards. Lydia, as 'producer' in the Text-actual World, cannot know who is in her audience (much like Atwood-as-producer in the Actual World); Lydia conceives of 'my unknown reader' as '*ideal subject*' for this reason. Moreover, and potentially counterintuitively, 'my unknown reader' is frequently specified to an exceedingly high degree of detail, which creates an in-built, specific 'subject position' like that discussed by Fairclough. It is to this text-possible 'ideal' that the Actual World reader must then 'negotiate a relationship', in Fairclough's terms. As detailed below, this ontological adjustment is achieved with varying levels of ease across the excerpts which construct a hypothetical reader figure.

4.6. Where is 'You'?: The Ontology of the Hypothetical Reader in *The Testaments*

The third of *The Testaments*' chapters narrated by Aunt Lydia begins with the following paragraphs, in which she interrogates the 'unknown reader' figure she has constructed in detail for the first time. The passage is also notable for its establishment of a metaperspective, evidencing the two as concomitant phenomena.

Excerpt 4.4

> Who are you, my reader? And when are you? Perhaps tomorrow, perhaps fifty years from now, perhaps never.
> Possibly you are one of our Aunts from Ardua Hall, stumbling across this account by chance. After a moment of horror at my sinfulness, will you burn these pages to preserve my pious image intact? Or will you succumb to the universal thirst for power and scuttle off to the Eyes to snitch on me? Or will you be a snoop from outside our borders, rooting through the archives of Ardua Hall once this regime has fallen? [...]
> By now you may be wondering how I've avoided being purged by those higher up [...]. You might assume that, being a woman, I would be especially vulnerable to this kind of winnowing, but you would be wrong.

(Atwood 2019: 61)

Within the extract, the hypothetical reader figure constructed is ontologically nebulous. With regard to the 'Best of Both Worlds' framework, it constitutes a Speculative Extension to the Epistemic World, a consequence of its grounding in Lydia's text-actual present (cf. the proper nouns 'Aunts' and 'Ardua Hall'), albeit one marked by uncertainty. Lydia's uncertainty is evidenced linguistically: there are words of estrangement (Uspensky 1973) and negative modal shading (Simpson 1993), as in the modal auxiliaries and adverbs, alongside a profusion of rhetorical interrogatives. These latter allow for a proliferation of potential reader figures. The 'tree of possible developments out of the present situation' (Ryan 1991b: 116) has many branches. These prove stable with regard to neither WB nor FA elements. For instance, the chronological profile is subject to constant alteration, as evidenced by the frantic asyndeton of the excerpt's first paragraph. The hypothetical reader is located alternately in the near ('tomorrow') then distant ('fifty years from now') future, before being discounted entirely via disnarration ('never'). Correspondingly, multiple iterations of the hypothetical readerly figure are evoked, recalling Prince's (1971) observation that: 'Sometimes, the narrator may have one receiver in mind, then another one, then still another one' (121). Indeed, Prince's parataxis parallels that deployed by Aunt Lydia within the excerpt above.

On the text-possible level, the result is an accumulation of multiple, concurrent worlds, each featuring divergent enactors. In one, ‘a snoop from outside our borders’ figures as reader; in another, the projected reader is internal to Gilead, ‘one of our Aunts from Ardua Hall’. This second scenario then bifurcates further, generating two mutually exclusive possibilities, as demonstrated by the sentence-initial contrastive conjunction. Whereas one of these hypothetical Aunts is benevolent, ‘preserv[ing] [Aunt Lydia’s] *pious image* intact’ (my italics), the other is malicious, a ‘snitch’. Note, too, that the very ability of Aunt Lydia to refer to her ‘image’ is reliant upon her view of the view of others upon her: the prototypical metaperspective.

However, the reader in the Actual World is estranged from each of these proliferating text-possible figures. Linguistically this is pointed up by the repeated inclusive pronoun ‘our’, indexing Aunt Lydia’s putative reader to exist on the right of the actual—fictional ontological boundary, as indeed she herself does. Alongside this, the vocatives ‘Aunts’ and ‘Eyes’ impress the divergent ontological plane upon which the text exists, one severing accessibility relation L (socio-economic compatibility), as discussed in Section 4.2.1. This then suggests a variant of ‘Fictionalised (horizontal) address’ of Herman’s (2002) framework to be at play here, with the ‘you’ a text-possible, but nonetheless solidly intradiegetic, figure. However, this is to some extent tempered by the compositional deixis inherent in the direct address to ‘my reader’ in the first line of Excerpt 4.4. This once again constitutes a literary performative (albeit a nominal variety), implicating the Actual World reader from the first due to the necessity of reading the interrogative to process the prose of the novel. For this reason, it is possible that the ‘you’ of the subsequent sentence is interpreted as having ‘Fictional (vertical) reference’, following Herman’s aforementioned framework. Indeed, the primacy effect generated by the pronoun’s prominent compositional position (i.e. at the beginning of the novel’s fifth chapter, ‘Van’), may override the later irrelevancies of profile as Lydia outlines her hypothetical reader in more detail. Given the confluence of intradiegetic and extradiegetic referential forms, then, ultimately the passage neatly demonstrates Herman’s fifth and final, ontologically hybrid, category: double deixis.

In Excerpt 4.4, as predicted in Chapter 3, the presentation of text-possible worlds co-occurs with the construction of a metaperspective. This is most apparent in the passage’s final paragraph; here Aunt Lydia surmises the mental processes of her hypothetical reader (note the *verbum sentiendi* in the phrase ‘By now you may be wondering’), and assigns said reader an evaluative stance (‘You might assume [...] I would be especially vulnerable’). Further

implications of readerly evaluation can be found in the fronted adverbial clause ‘After a moment of horror at my sinfulness’ (cf. Excerpt 4.1), which, following Semino and Short (2004), demonstrates hypothetical narration of an internal state, the most heavily mediated of thought presentation forms. As an addition to Leech and Short’s (2007 [1981]) speech and thought presentation scale, this discoursal variety covers ‘cases where the narrator reports a character’s cognitive and emotional experiences without presenting any specific thoughts’ (Semino and Short 2004: 46), and thus allows Lydia to maintain total narratorial control. However, the weak epistemic modality of Lydia’s text-possible world scenarios also leaches into the accompanying metaperspective; the modal auxiliaries in use are dubitative (‘may’) and deductive (‘might’), each evidence of a lack of surety. In contrast, a later appeal to the hypothetical reader by Aunt Lydia is accompanied by a far more assured instantiation of the discourse-architectural metaperspective.

Excerpt 4.5

> This morning I got up an hour early to steal a few moments before breakfast with you, my reader. You’ve become somewhat of an obsession – my sole confidant, my only friend – for to whom can I tell the truth besides you? Who else can I trust?
> Not that I can trust you either. Who is more likely to betray me in the end? I will lie neglected in some spidery corner or under a bed while you go off to picnics and dances – yes, dancing will return, it’s hard to suppress it forever – or to trysts with a warm body, so much more attractive than the wad of crumbling paper I will have become. But I forgive you in advance. I, too, was once like you: fatally hooked on life.

(Atwood 2019: 172)

Unlike the previous passage, the primary modal shading of Excerpt 4.5 is positive (Simpson 1993): it is peppered with the assumptive modal auxiliary ‘will’. In text-possible terms, this renders it a Prediction World. One of the predictions Lydia makes within the passage concerns her hypothetical reader’s view of her (or, more precisely, her manuscript); metonymically, she is evaluated as a ‘crumbling wad of paper’, far from ‘attractive’. This couples textual deixis with evaluative lexis, whilst elsewhere in the excerpt compositional deixis occurs alongside direct address (e.g. the tag clause ‘my reader’). Ultimately, the result is a prototypical discourse-architectural metaperspective.

In Excerpt 4.5, the profile of the directly-addressed ‘you’ is similar to that of Excerpt 4.4. Once again, it is doubly deictic, applicable equally to a text-internal figure as to a text-external one. With the former, the pastimes listed (‘picnics and dances’) belong to a text-possible future sketched with surety by Lydia; with the latter, they are everyday privileges for most. As an

intradiegetic, 'Fictionalised reader', the figure is akin to the 'partner, a fellow-traveller, or even a friend' profile outlined by Goetsch (2004: 192).

The preceding section has explored two notable evocations of a hypothetical reader figure by the enactor Aunt Lydia, and situated this figure ontologically. It has been highlighted that the use of second-person direct address in *The Testaments* is complex, oscillating between intradiegetic and extradiegetic variants to result in what Herman (2002) terms 'doubly deictic' *you*. It is likely this ontological mutability which has resulted in the impression that the text-actual Aunt Lydia is 'genuinely [...] talking to' (Guardian readers 2019: n.p) an Actual World readership. Additionally, the excerpts above have once more proven a correlation between text-possible world-types, particularly those of the suppositious variety, and the construction of metaperspectives. The following, penultimate section continues to impress this affinity, analysing *The Testaments*' most sustained invocation of a hypothetical reader, and the concomitant discourse-architectural metaperspective presented.

4.7. What is 'You' Thinking?: The Discourse-architectural Metaperspective in *The Testaments*

In the final chapter to be narrated by Aunt Lydia, entitled 'Sendoff' (Atwood 2019: 403-04), suppositious text-possible worlds coincide once more with the construction of a metaperspective. Taken from this chapter, the excerpt below (which follows directly on from that used to illustrate the concept of 'double deixis' in Section 4.4, above) also features the most fully-fledged description within the novel of Aunt Lydia's 'unknown reader' (4) figure.

Excerpt 4.6

> Perhaps you'll be a student of history, in which case I hope you'll make something useful of me: a warts-and-all portrait, a definitive account of my life and times, suitably footnoted; though if you don't accuse me of bad faith I will be astonished. Or, in fact, not astonished: I will be dead, and the dead are hard to astonish.
> I picture you as a young woman, bright, ambitious. You'll be looking to make a niche for yourself in whatever dim, echoing caverns of academia may still exist by your time. I situate you at your desk, your hair tucked behind your ears, your nail polish chipped – for nail polish will have returned, it always does. You're frowning slightly, a habit that will increase as you age. I hover behind you, peering over your shoulder: your muse, your unseen inspiration, urging you on.
> You'll labour over this manuscript of mine, reading and rereading, picking nits as you go, developing the fascinated but also bored hatred biographers so often come to feel for their subjects. How can I have behaved so badly, so cruelly, so stupidly? you will ask. You yourself would never have done these things! But you yourself will never have had to.
> [...]
> Goodbye, my reader. Try not to think too badly of me, or no more badly than I think of myself.

(Atwood 2019: 403, 404)

As an elaborate and extended scenario ‘composed by the characte[r]’ (Semino 1997: 73) Aunt Lydia, the passage typifies a Fantasy World. This fulfils her earlier conjecture (see Excerpt 4.3) that ‘perhaps I’m fantasizing’ (Atwood 2019: 5). It is the polysemous verb ‘picture’ which is in large part responsible for this particular text-possible categorisation, as it underscores the scene to be a ‘fiction-within-the-fiction’ (Ryan 1991b: 119) of Lydia’s own devising. The fantastical metalepsis in which Aunt Lydia ‘hover[s] behind’ this reader, urging her on despite being ‘dead’, only concretises this text-possible classification. It should also be acknowledged that momentary forays into other suppositious text-possible world-types are made. These include the Hypothesis World, as implicit in the subtle protasis and apodosis structure of the subordinate clause ‘if you don’t accuse me of bad faith I will be astonished’, alongside a Prediction World cued by the assured declarative ‘nail polish will have returned, it always does’.

It was suggested in Section 4.2 above that *The Testaments* evinces a split Text-actual World, a concept developed from the recent Text World Theory innovation of the ‘split discourse-world’ (Gavins 2007: 26-7). In outlining her concept, Gavins explains the necessary consequences of a split discourse-world: ‘I do not know what my co-participant looks like, what gender or age they are’ (27) nor any other of their personal qualities. This caveat likewise applies to split Text-actual World scenarios, for example that of *The Testaments* in which Aunt Lydia and her reader – tellingly both ‘future’ (318) and ‘unknown’ (4) – are separated by space as well as time. For this reason Aunt Lydia’s granular depiction of her projected reader figure in Excerpt 4.6 is all the more foregrounded: not only does she speculate as to ‘gender’ and ‘age’ (i.e. ‘young woman’), she also attends to aesthetic minutiae. Note, for instance, the detailed predication and postmodification in the chained phrases: ‘your hair tucked behind your ears, your nail polish chipped’.

Aside from the visual, the ‘compose[r]’ of ‘fiction-within-the-fiction’ (Ryan 1991b: 119) Aunt Lydia also considers the cognitive, in the process constructing a metaperspective. Based as it is around the viewpoint of a putative reader of her manuscript, the metaperspective in question is a discourse-architectural one, and indeed all five of the indices mentioned in Section 4.1 are in evidence. Crucially, evaluative commentary is frequent: the rhetorical triad and its accompanying, parallelistic intensifiers (‘so badly, so cruelly, so stupidly’) is a prime example. Alongside this, it is couched within hypothetical discourse – in this instance, hypothetical free indirect speech – another linguistic component mandatory for the construction of a metaperspective. This degree of judgement recalls the ‘prejudiced’ fictionalised reader evoked

by Goetsch (2004: 192). Yet, as Goetsch continues, typically the 'expectations and norms' (*ibid*) of this readerly figure are challenged, as they are above: 'You yourself would never have done these things! But you yourself will never have had to'.

Meanwhile, both compositional and textual deixes abound. For the former, which requires that 'the narrator refer directly and explicitly to their own narration' (Stockwell 2000b: 41), there is reference to 'this manuscript of mine', a phrase tying the Holograph to Lydia by virtue of its proximal deictic determiner and postposed possessive pronoun, as well as the etymology of the head noun. An apposite lexeme, 'manuscript' derives from the Latin *manu scriptus*, meaning 'written by hand', and so cleverly encodes the physical process undertaken by Lydia. The 'textuality of the text' (Stockwell 2002: 46) is also asserted through a semantic field of the textual: consider 'account of my life and times', 'footnoted' and 'biographers'. Compositional deixis furthers this through reference to the reading process; there are the continuous verbs 'reading and rereading' alongside the ever-present appellation 'my reader' on the following page (404). Finally, second-person direct address is incorporated throughout. Indeed, the pronoun 'you', when combined with its clitic and possessive forms, occurs 27 times in the 225-word passage, or about once every 8 words. The recipient of Lydia's discourse is consequently foregrounded as central.

Nonetheless, despite its ubiquity, it is likely that the readerly figure depicted is so granular as to alienate the majority of the Actual World readership. Should this be the case, the 'student' reader is best aligned with Herman's (1994, 2002) 'Fictionalised (horizontal) address' *you*. Yet this must not entirely discount the possibility that, to a greater or lesser degree, the Actual World reader may feel implicated in Lydia's description of her suppositious 'student of history' reader. (Personally, despite being a student of English myself, I was able to identify several similar features, and consequently resolved to stop my habit of 'frowning slightly' whilst reading!).

However, as the Actual World reader reaches 'The Thirteenth Symposium' frame narrative of the following chapter (Atwood 2019: 408-15), they are presented with a text-actual reader possessing eerie similarity to the text-possible reader of Excerpt 4.6. In this subsequent chapter, focalising history professor Piexoto references 'Mia Smith, one of our graduate students in search of a thesis topic' (412). Adopting the terminology of Goetsch (2004), an erstwhile 'fictive reader' (Section 4.3.8) is transmuted into a 'fictional' one (see Section 4.3.7), as a

verifiably text-actual enactor engages with Lydia's 'Holograph' manuscript. Lydia's text-possible predictions are (at least partially) realised.

4.8. Concluding Remarks

In interview, Actual World author Margaret Atwood has observed that '[e]very recorded story *implies* a future reader' (Atwood 2017: n.p; my italics; cf. Atwood 2020). For text-actual author Aunt Lydia of *The Testaments*, this 'future reader' (Atwood 2019: 317) is less *implicit* than *explicit*. Her 'Ardua Hall Holograph' is (allegedly) penned 'for [the] edification' (4) – i.e. the educative enlightenment – of her reader, while at the same time resulting in the 'edification', or construction, of this selfsame figure. It is a figure integral to the narrative, present from the second page of Lydia's 'Holograph' (4) to its last (404), interwoven throughout her account and oftentimes delineated in detail. This is despite the limitations resulting from her split Text-actual World (cf. Gavins 2007: 26-7; Gibbons and Whiteley 2021).

This chapter has situated this hypothetical reader figure both theoretically, through surveying the various understandings of the term 'reader' within critical theory, and ontologically, largely with recourse to Herman's (1994, 2002) typology of narrative *you*. The various iterations of 'the reader' extant in critical theory since the 1970s were arrayed diagrammatically upon a schematic I termed the Readerly Cline for Fictional Narratives. This simplified the navigation between the interrelated, yet ontologically distinct, reader figures associated with any one work of fiction.

Moreover, it has been demonstrated that alongside supposing the features of her 'unknown reader' (4), Aunt Lydia is prone to projecting the viewpoint of this discourse partner upon herself, resulting in a metaperspectival sub-type I term the *discourse-architectural metaperspective*. This is a sub-type premised upon the production and reception of discourse, and its five typical linguistic indices – hypothetical discourse presentation, evaluative lexis, direct address, compositional deixis and textual deixis – have been amply evidenced in textual excerpts from *The Testaments*. However, this should in no way suggest that the discourse-architectural metaperspective is only to be found within this particular work of fiction (see further Section 8.3.1). Atwood's novel simply figures as prime case-study material, due in no small part to the author's penchant for thematising the process of textual construction, traced by Nischik (2000) across her entire oeuvre. Nor is the discourse-architectural metaperspective limited to novels in general. While Kellogg (1994) chimes with Atwood (2017) to acknowledge that all writers, either more or less consciously, encode a reader-as-recipient within their work,

Fairclough (2001), as cited above, asserts that 'all discourse producers must produce with *some* interpreters in mind' (41; italics in original). This suggests discourse-architectural metaperspectives are likely widespread, even engrained. To speak with *The Testaments*' Aunt Lydia, 'One person alone is not a full person: we exist in relation to others' (Atwood 2019: 148), a sentiment with which Laing, Phillipson and Lee, as authors of *Interpersonal Perception* (1966), would undoubtedly agree.

The following chapter investigates how 'One person' may interact with multiple 'others', resulting in what I term the *communal metaperspective*, alongside the concomitant phenomena of *communal hypothetical focalisation* and its inverse, *inverted communal hypothetical focalisation*. The selected case-study exemplifying these techniques is Anna Burns' (2018) Man Booker-winning *Milkman*.

‘[A]ll that repertoire of gossip, secrecy and communal policing’: Communal Hypothetical Focalisation and the Communal Metaperspective in Anna Burns’ (2018) *Milkman*

> ‘What if one person happened to be sane, longest friend, against a whole background, a race mind, that wasn’t sane, that person would probably be viewed by the mass consciousness as mad – *but would that person be mad?*’
>
> (Burns 2018b: 201; italics in original)

5.0. Preliminaries

At the core of this second case-study chapter is my proposed concept of the *communal metaperspective*, exemplified via the stylistic analysis of Anna Burns’ 2018 Man Booker Prize-winning novel *Milkman* (2018). This metaperspectival sub-type may be defined as

> *My view* of the *community’s view* of me.

It is important to note here that the community in question need not necessarily be grouped by domicile, though this is the standard case, and one reflected in the novel *Milkman*. Other constructed communities exist both in the Actual World and its text-actual correlates, for example the community of a school or a workplace. Section 8.3.2 supports this caveat with a textual excerpt in which the community is comprised of a unit of soldiers.

The communal metaperspective clearly has a quantitatively larger remit than other variants, including that of the original metaperspective as applied to the marital ‘dyad’ (Laing *et al*. 1966: 53). Nonetheless, Laing and his colleagues do parenthetically reference a metaperspective founded upon ‘their’ point of view (4), setting a theoretical precedent for the study of perspectival supposition tied to a social collective. Related to the communal metaperspective, below I also suggest two complementary constructs based upon Herman’s (1994, 2002) notion of ‘hypothetical focalization’ (on this, see Section 3.1.3): *communal hypothetical focalisation* and its inverse, *inverted communal hypothetical focalisation*. Taken together, these three aforementioned phenomena both elucidate prevalent themes within Burns’ novel – including those of ‘gossip, secrecy and communal policing’ – and bolster intuitive,

often impressionistic literary-critical accounts with concrete linguistic examples. Thus far, paralleling the relative lack of scholarly attention paid to *Milkman*, as discussed in Section 1.3.2, there have been scant studies adopting a narratological and/or stylistic perspective upon the novel (for an exception, see Rytter 2020). Instead, existing analyses tend towards the commercial, historical, and/or literary-critical. These include those of Darling (2021), DenHoed (2020), Hutton (2019), Malone (2022), Sheratt-Bado (2018) and White (2021). The present chapter therefore furthers the last of the three stated aims of this thesis (Section 1.4), acting as one of the first forays into the language of Burns' multi-award-winning novel. [24]

Section 5.1 begins this project, in examining the three perspectival phenomena noted above and enumerating their associated linguistic indices. Section 5.2 unveils how both marketing strategies and prevailing critical opinion have cast *Milkman* as 'a tale of gossip and hearsay' (Faber and Faber 2020: n.p), and is supported by Section 5.3 which investigates critical understanding of these sociological terms. The third section also considers narratological and stylistic theories relating to the presentation of textual collectives and communities. This is interrogated further in Sections 5.4 to 5.7, which undertake fine-grained, micro-linguistic analysis to uncover precisely how these thematic preoccupations are established on the textual level. In this regard, the communal metaperspective and [inverted] communal hypothetical focalisation outlined in preceding sections prove key. Section 5.8 summarises my findings, as well as anticipating the metaperspectival focus of the subsequent chapter: the *racialised metaperspective*.

The approach taken here thus realises Spitzer's (1948) philological circle, as considered in Section 1.2, enacting a reciprocal interplay between linguistic description and evidence on the one hand, and aesthetic function and literary interpretation on the other. It is with the first of these four coordinates that I begin, as the next section follows the precedent set by the previous case-study chapter to elaborate upon the 'typical linguistic indices' associated with the metaperspectival sub-type under scrutiny in this chapter.

5.1. The Communal Metaperspective: Typical Linguistic Indices

As the numerous textual examples throughout this chapter will illustrate, four key linguistic indices typically attach to the communal metaperspective. The first two are shared by other

[24] Aside from the Man Booker Prize 2018, *Milkman* has also received the National Book Critics Circle Award for Fiction in 2018, the Orwell Foundation Political Book Prize in 2019, and the International Dublin Literary Award in 2020.

metaperspectival types, including the discourse-architectural metaperspective examined in the previous chapter:

1. Hypothetical discourse (speech/thought/writing) presentation;
2. Evaluative lexis.

The remaining two indices are particular to this specific sub-type, differentiating it from others. They are:

3. Third-person exclusive pronominal reference;
4. Communal discourse (speech/thought/writing) presentation.

As before, these four criteria are neither necessary nor sufficient to produce a communal metaperspective. However, at least one of the particularised indices (i.e. 3 or 4) must be present to establish it as a communal variant. Linguistically, index 3 is instantiated via the lexeme *they* and its grammatical derivatives, including *their* and *theirs*, which act as a 'distancing device' (Gibbons and Whiteley 2021: 121) in distinguishing the 'ego' and 'alter' (*sensu* Laing *et al*. 1966) bounding the metaperspective. Section 5.3 reviews the findings of a recent surge in critical study of third-person pronouns in greater depth, relating these findings to the novel *Milkman* in particular. Index 4 likewise utilises third-person pronominal reference within inquit formulas, thus presenting discourse which may be attributed to an entire community. While related to collective discourse, communal discourse is a distinct concept, tied etymologically as well as theoretically to the sociological notion of community. Again, further consideration will be given to these topics of critical interest in Section 5.3, below.

5.1.1. Related Phenomena: Communal Hypothetical Focalisation and Inverted Communal Hypothetical Focalisation

As adumbrated above, the communal metaperspective sub-type commonly co-occurs with phenomena I term *communal hypothetical focalisation* and *inverted communal hypothetical focalisation*. I provide a brief definition of the two terms here, before fleshing out each, and their associated characteristics, in the sections to follow.

Centrally, both terms are founded upon the notion of hypothetical focalisation, as coined by Herman (1994, 2002). As elaborated in Section 3.1.3, this perspectival phenomenon relates 'what might be or have been seen or perceived – if only there were someone who could have adopted the requisite perspective on the situations and events at issue' (Herman 1994: 231). *Communal* hypothetical focalisation retains these core characteristics, while imbuing the

concept with a collective flavour. It denotes instead a sub-type of hypothetical focalisation concerned with what might be or have been seen or perceived by some community grouping. The singular 'someone of Herman's (1994) definition is hence replaced by a quantitatively more substantial subject. Communal hypothetical focalisation is typically triggered by community gossip, through which collective supposition about past, present and/or future events occurs; it is thus to be found frequently throughout *Milkman*.

The logical inverse of communal hypothetical focalisation I suggest be termed *inverted* communal hypothetical focalisation. This is a perspectival technique involving supposition on the part of an individual as to 'what might be or have been seen' by a community. Rather than initiating the perspectival supposition, the community instead becomes the subject of conjecture. Correspondingly, it is the erstwhile subject of communal scrutiny who becomes focalising agent. Clear affinities exist between this concept and that of the communal metaperspective, as Section 5.7.3 will underscore.

Communal hypothetical focalisation and inverted communal hypothetical focalisation often occur in tandem; indeed, they may be conceptualised figuratively as two sides of the same coin. If 'tails' equates to the rumours and gossipy *tales* constructed by a community, which involves communal hypothetical focalisation, 'heads' relates to the supposition within the *head* of an individual about said community, enabled by inverted communal hypothetical focalisation. In *Milkman*, this symbiosis is captured in focaliser middle sister's antimetabolic reference to 'this communal drain upon me by the community [...] and [...] the drain by me upon the community' (Burns 2018b: 179-80). The following section continues to contextualise these two opposing narrative factions through summarising the Text-actual World of *Milkman*. Complementarily, I also consider the Actual World situation upon which the historical novel is based. Both are set alongside the Actual World critical response to the novel upon its publication in 2018.

5.2. The Actual and Text-actual Worlds of *Milkman*

Milkman (2018) tells the tale of an 18-year-old woman, known solely as 'middle sister', who is subjected to a two-month campaign of sexual harassment by a 41-year-old local paramilitary: the eponymous Milkman. [25] Despite rejecting his advances from the outset, neighbourhood gossip as to the progress of her supposed affair with Milkman, a married man, abounds. The events of the novel are narrated retrospectively by the autodiegetic focaliser middle sister, who

[25] Within this thesis, the capitalisation of characteronyms mirrors that of the novel; see further Section 5.2.1.

acts as filter, center [*sic*], slant and interest-focus (Chatman 1986) for the majority of the novel. She is also what Genette (1980) would term an autodiegetic narrator, for 'the 'I' who tells the story is also the story's protagonist (or an older version of the protagonist)' (61). The parenthetical statement clearly applies in the instance of *Milkman*, and it is for this reason that the novel has been classified as a Bildungsroman (Hutton 2019; Rytter 2020) charting the emotional and social development of middle sister. Malone (2022), in contrast, critiques this stance to position *Milkman* as 'a picaresque novel of voice' (1148-9). This she attributes to its focus upon the adventures of an outsider-protagonist who must rely upon her wits for survival, one who ends poised on the brink of – yet crucially not fully experiencing – a psychic epiphany ('a little softening' [Burns 2018b: 348]).

The retrospective narration of *Milkman* also marks it as a historical novel. While world-building elements within the text remain vague, Hutton (2019) has conducted a forensic linguistic analysis of the novel to convincingly conclude that what I refer to as the Text-actual World backdrop is Ardoyne, a staunchly Catholic neighbourhood set in a predominantly Protestant enclave of Belfast, Northern Ireland, and that the year is 1979 (cf. Sheratt-Bado 2018; Toal 2018). Contextually, this places the text-actual action amidst the infamous twentieth-century Anglo-Irish conflict known colloquially as 'the Troubles' (CAIN 2020). Moreover, 1979 was a particularly pivotal year during this protracted war of attrition between armed forces from Great Britain and paramilitary groups desirous of a united Ireland. Actual World events which occurred in this year include the assassination of royal family member Lord Mountbatten by the Irish Republican Army (henceforth IRA), the highest single-day death toll of British military personnel stationed in Northern Ireland, and – within *Milkman*'s presumed setting Ardoyne, specifically – the death of two 24-year-old IRA members due to the premature explosion of their own car bomb (CAIN 2020; Spotlight on the Troubles 2019a, 2019b, 2019c). Finally, White (2021) deems *Milkman* a novel of hysterical realism, given that while it is closely tied to Actual World events and with a largely plausible diegesis, it also incorporates absurd situations and caricature-like enactors. Middle sister herself – somewhat metatextually – acknowledges that her story 'br[eaks] bounds of credibility [...] but lots of things in life break bounds of credibility. Breaking credibility, I was coming to understand, was what life was about.' (Burns 2018b: 305).

The Text-actual World of *Milkman* is described by its focaliser as 'our intricately coiled, overly secretive, hyper-gossipy, puritanical yet indecent, totalitarian district' (Burns 2018b:

172). Each one of these stacked pre-modifiers proves significant in regard to the novel's Text-actual World.

'[I]ntricately coiled', for instance, connotes the strict differentiation of social roles within middle sister's area, particularly in relation to gender. According to the focaliser, there exists explicitly delineated 'official 'male and female' territory' (9), which governs 'what females could say and what they could never say' (*ibid*). As this quotation highlights, it is women who bear the brunt of social regulations. Indeed, this metaphor shadows the literal, for it is accepted that matrimony and childbirth are 'a communal duty' (50) of women in the district. It is interesting that middle sister should choose to adopt third-person reference in the aforementioned quotation, despite referring to a group to which she herself, by virtue of her gender, belongs. With *they* once again acting as a 'distancing device' (Gibbons and Whiteley 2021: 121) within the clause, it proves a linguistic symptom of the general social misogyny within the novel, in which the 'feminine' (93) is aligned with the 'subversive, witch-like, the left hand, bad luck' (*ibid*). This outlook likewise justifies the epithet 'totalitarian' above, a description echoed by Traynor who, in interview with *Milkman*'s author, gestures to the 'everyday totalitarianism' (Hogan *et al*. 2020: n.p) apparent in the novel. She then traces this to the local as opposed to state level, specifically associating it with repressive attitudes towards women and the concomitant pressure to conform. Similarly, Allen and Kelly (2003) acknowledge that reactionary elements tend to characterise Belfast literature in general, resulting in Text-actual Worlds founded upon maintaining traditional values.

Middle sister's fourth epithet – 'puritanical' – is interpretatively ambiguous. While it may convey a moral stance, *Milkman*'s counterpart of Ardoyne is also religiously 'puritanical' (somewhat ironically, given the Catholic community's disavowal of Protestantism, 'the opposite religion' [Burns 2018b: 22], a religion associated with the Puritans). For instance, a large contingent of enactors is communally referred to as 'the pious women of the neighbourhood' (251-2) due to their fervent religious observances.

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The pre-modifying phrase ‘intricately coiled’ additionally evokes the dense, multiplex networks of middle sister’s district. Firstly, everybody appears to be acquainted with everybody else. Upon first accosting her, Milkman attempts to engage with middle sister by ‘nam[ing] the credentials’ (3) of her wider family. He asserts:

> ‘You’re one of the who’s-it girls, aren’t you? So-and-so was your father, wasn’t he? Your brothers, thingy, thingy, thingy, and thingy, used to play in the hurley team, didn’t they? Hop in. I’ll give you a lift.’
>
> (Burns 2018b: 3)

It is telling that here middle sister is defined by her male relatives only, despite living in an all-female household with her ma and three wee sisters at the time of Milkman’s offer. Indeed, Darling (2021) identifies this ‘*patriarchal naming power*’ (307; italics in original) as pervasive throughout the novel. Secondly, the neighbourhood is perpetually positioning itself in opposition to those around it. Reference is continually made to ‘the tribal identifiers of ‘us’ and ‘them’ [...] ‘our community’ and ‘their community’ [...] ‘over the road’, ‘over the water’ and ‘over the border’ [...] ‘our side’ and ‘their side’’ (22, 24, 314). This recalls the findings of the contemporaneous sociolinguistic fieldwork undertaken by Milroy (1980) in Troubles-era Belfast. During her research, Milroy (who incidentally did interview a ‘milk roundsman’ [77]) discovered: ‘Residents generally have a clear perception of the boundaries of ‘their’ area which are usually units of four or five streets’ (79), a mindset she tied to urban poverty and religious segregation. Even the scare quotations are replicated in this Actual World context, underscoring the constructed nature of community, to be explored further in Section 5.3.4. Other overlaps between the Actual World and the Text-actual World of *Milkman* exist in the latter’s reference to ‘the communal vocabulary’ (53), echoing Milroy’s (1980) findings of idiosyncratic linguistic and paralinguistic codes within the insular communities she studied, as well as Milroy’s observation that ‘the sexes tend to polarise in the[...] communities [observed], with a sharp distinction being recognised between men’s and women’s activities’ (79), a reflection of *Milkman*’s milieu as outlined above.

Of the remaining designations, ‘indecent’ refers to the communal propensity for sexual scandalmongering (‘sexual dirt being the most best for general gossip’ [Burns 2018b: 172]), which reaches its apogee in the elaborate neighbourhood gossip surrounding middle sister and Milkman. However, the tendency is not solely reserved for stories featuring these enactors; the neighbourhood tendency to fictionalise communal events, captured in the adjective ‘hyper-gossipy’, will be evidenced throughout the excerpts below in relation to several different

enactors. Again aligning the actual with the fictional, Paulin (2003) identifies a similar 'ethic of communication' (236) in what I term Actual World Belfast, proclaiming this to be 'part of the fabric of the cit[y]' (*ibid*) in an apt analogy for a location founded upon the wealth of the textile industry (Allen and Kelly 2003). Paulin's (2003) observations also chime with those of *Milkman*'s author. In interview, Burns has explained that 'in my book, gossip and rumour characterise the narrator's community' (Hogan *et al*. 2020: n.p).

The frequent equivalences between the Actual and Text-actual World, as outlined above, demonstrate that *Milkman* upholds the majority of Ryan's (1991a, 1991b) accessibility relations. As a work of fiction, *Milkman* necessarily severs relation B (identity of inventory) through introducing 'native members' (Ryan 1991b: 32) as textual enactors (e.g. middle sister, Milkman and ma). Otherwise, relations A through to L (see Chapter 4) are maintained. It is for this reason that I do not devote a separate sub-section to this topic as in the previous chapter.

Following *Milkman*'s publication in May 2018, the critical consensus doing the proverbial rounds cast the novel as nuanced, original and thought-provoking, and timely amid the #MeToo zeitgeist, if formally challenging (see e.g. Crum 2018; Devers 2019; Leith 2018; McKinty 2018; Miller 2018; Revely-Calder 2018). Prefiguring Malone's (2022) generic qualification of *Milkman* as 'a picaresque novel of voice' (1148-9), as discussed above, Baker (2018) situates the novel's success in large part with what Stockwell (2009) would term the linguistic *texture*. Specifically, she applauds 'the novel at its best [...] in its mimicry of hearsay and its swirling cadence-like volubility' (Baker 2018: n.p). This accords with marketing strategies for the work. Both its merchandising material (e.g. Faber and Faber 2020: n.p) and blurb (Burns 2018b: n.p) summarise the story as 'a tale of gossip and hearsay'. In a press release confirming *Milkman* as the fiftieth overall (as well as first-ever Northern Irish) winner of the [Man] Booker Prize, head of the judging panel Kwame Anthony Appiah appeared to concur with this characterisation. He justified the judges' atypically unanimous decision through acknowledging that:

> The novel delineates brilliantly the power of gossip and social pressure in a tight-knit community, and shows how rumour and political loyalties can be put in the service of a relentless campaign of individual sexual harassment.
>
> (Appiah, qtd. in The Booker Prizes 2020: n.p)

This stance is one echoed in Hutton's (2019), the first literary-critical assessment of the novel to be published.

> The language the narrator uses is key to the achievement of *Milkman*: the lexical choices Burns makes enable her to communicate the character and mentality of 'middle sister', and to deconstruct the mentalities and structures of Northern Irish society as it was before the Good Friday agreement.
>
> (Hutton 2019: 358)

While Hutton comes closer than either Appiah or Baker in aligning the novel's thematic content with its linguistic form, her above-quoted reference to 'key [...] lexical choices' is somewhat abortive, never tied to specific stylistic features. In contrast, the present chapter anchors the aforementioned, strikingly concordant observations of journalists, Man Booker Prize judges, literary critics and marketing teams within a stylistic framework. It is argued that among the 'key [...] lexical choices' which foreground themes including 'gossip and hearsay', 'social pressure [...] rumour and political loyalties', are techniques I term the *communal metaperspective* and *[inverted] communal hypothetical focalisation*.

5.2.1. O-no-mastics: A Note on Namelessness in *Milkman*

Above, it was observed that *Milkman*'s broadly realist remit results in the severance of only one accessibility relation (Principle B). Where the Text-actual World does prove slightly divergent from Actual World norms is in its naming practices. As should be apparent from event the succinct synopsis above, the majority of the novel's enactors are not assigned a conventional proper name within the text. Instead, each is referred to periphrastically, citing familial or communal relations; the focalising protagonist is alternately 'middle sister', 'middle daughter' and 'maybe-girlfriend'. Several reasons may be posited for this singular linguistic strategy.

Firstly, the technique emphasises communal interconnectedness within the novel: the proverbial 'tight-knit community' to which Appiah (qtd. in The Booker Prizes 2020: n.p) alludes. Each enactor is constituted by his or her relation to another. This clearly recalls Milkman's initial interaction with middle sister, as quoted above, which begins: ''You're one of the who's-it girls, aren't you?'' (Burns 2018b: 3). According to Malone (2022), the novel's use of 'nicknaming' (1172, n. 11) is reflective of a general tendency within Irish culture, whereby people are named and hence defined by some particular, distinguishing feature. This accords with the view of social anthropologist Cohen (1989). Within an Actual World context, he posits that nicknames imply communal ownership of an individual's identity, hence constituting the individual 'socially by the stock of public knowledge' (131). This can result in reductiveness, a telescoping of identity into a single specific temperament, role or function. In

Milkman's Text-actual World, this is typified by the instance of the novel's *bona fide* milkman. His assigned moniker is 'the man-who-didn't-love-anybody' due to the communal pronouncement that: 'unloving, anti-social, bad-tempered – the district had said he was' (Burns 2018b: 253). However, it later transpires that this appellation is not only reductive, but false. Running counter to his 'characteristic [...] stern concern for people' (142), including middle sister, the nickname actually serves as a contraction of the noun phrase 'the man who'd set a grim policy never to love anybody, especially Peggy' (253), following an abortive love affair. Similar community misnomers include 'chef', who never does become a chef, and the notorious neighbourhood poisoner 'tablets girl [...] the girl who was really a woman' (214). Cumulatively, the inadequacy of each of these nicknames satirises the communal penchant for assigning them.

The novel's overarching namelessness also likely links to the 'overly secretive' (172) nature of middle sister's community. Due to this 'repertoire of [...] secrecy' (59), McKinty (2018) suggests that within the novel, 'identity, names and seeing the other are contentious acts' (n.p), an observation which acts as reminder that tension exists not just intra-communally within the Text-actual World, but also *inter*-communally, between adjacent Catholic and Protestant neighbourhoods. Additionally, this may also explain the decapitalisation of the anonymised characteronyms throughout the novel. A lack of capitals is suggestive of the generic rather than the specific, a useful strategy in a scenario where going incognito can be life-saving.

Here it should be acknowledged that not every nickname is designed by the community-at-large: some are clearly traceable to middle sister alone. For instance, not all in the Text-actual World will agree with the evaluative designation of her twin brother's ex-lover as 'true wife' (275; Rytter 2020: 16), nor will the community *en masse* refer to middle sister's paramour as 'maybe-boyfriend'. Instead, these vocatives foreground the autodiegetic narrative stance, and the Epistemic World of middle sister which is overlaid upon the Text-actual World. When the idiosyncratic epithets attributable to middle sister are incorporated into the direct speech of others, her constant presence as narrative mediator is foregrounded, and an 'absurd' and 'comic' (White 2021: 131) effect is also achieved.

In contrast, and as Rytter (2020: 29-30) acknowledges, when in conversation with 'longest friend from primary school' (Burns 2018b: 195), middle sister is forced to confront the epithets the community apply to her. Consequently, she begins to see herself as others see her: the crux of the metaperspective. As her friend informs her, to the community she is:

> [T]he girl who walks. Sometimes the one who reads and other times you're the pale, adamantine, unyielding girl who walks around with the entrenched, boxed-in thinking.

(Burns 2018b: 204)

This passage literalises the communal metaperspective: it is less what the community supposedly think of middle sister than what they *do* think of her. Rather than being couched within a suppositious text-possible world, the pronouncements above belong to the Text-actual World. In Chapter 7, further consideration is given to literalising the concept of the metaperspective.

Milkman's author Burns offers the following (amusingly tentative) conclusions regarding her decision to largely eschew proper names throughout her book.

> I think that there's also [...] in the book [...] *a sort of collective mindset*, which is seen as more important than the individual identity or autonomy. [...] I think the non-naming links in with that. [...] That you can't stand out and of course the narrator [i.e. middle sister] does stand out.

(Burns 2018a: n.p; my italics)

Indeed, the narrator is not only nominally in the middle, but also at the centre of communal supposition founded upon what Burns terms 'a sort of collective mindset'. This phraseology recalls middle sister's reference to ''a whole background, a race mind [...] the mass consciousness'' (Burns 2018b: 201) within *Milkman* itself. Moreover, I believe this mindset to be critical to the development of the terms I propose within this chapter; that is, to the *communal metaperspective* and *[inverted] communal hypothetical focalisation*. While a 'collective mindset' forms the 'other' (*sensu* Laing *et al*. 1966: 4) for the former, it acts as either focalising agent or subject of interest (cf. Chatman's [1986] 'interest-focus') for the latter two interrelated phenomena. After the coming sub-section, which follows the precedent set in the previous case-study chapter in sketching the discourse architecture of Burns' novel, I return to an in-depth exploration of the collective and the communal with regard to narrative, pronouns and discourse.

5.2.2. Discourse Architecture: *Milkman*

Much as in the previous chapter, the discourse-architectural diagram below represents the structure of the novel *Milkman*.

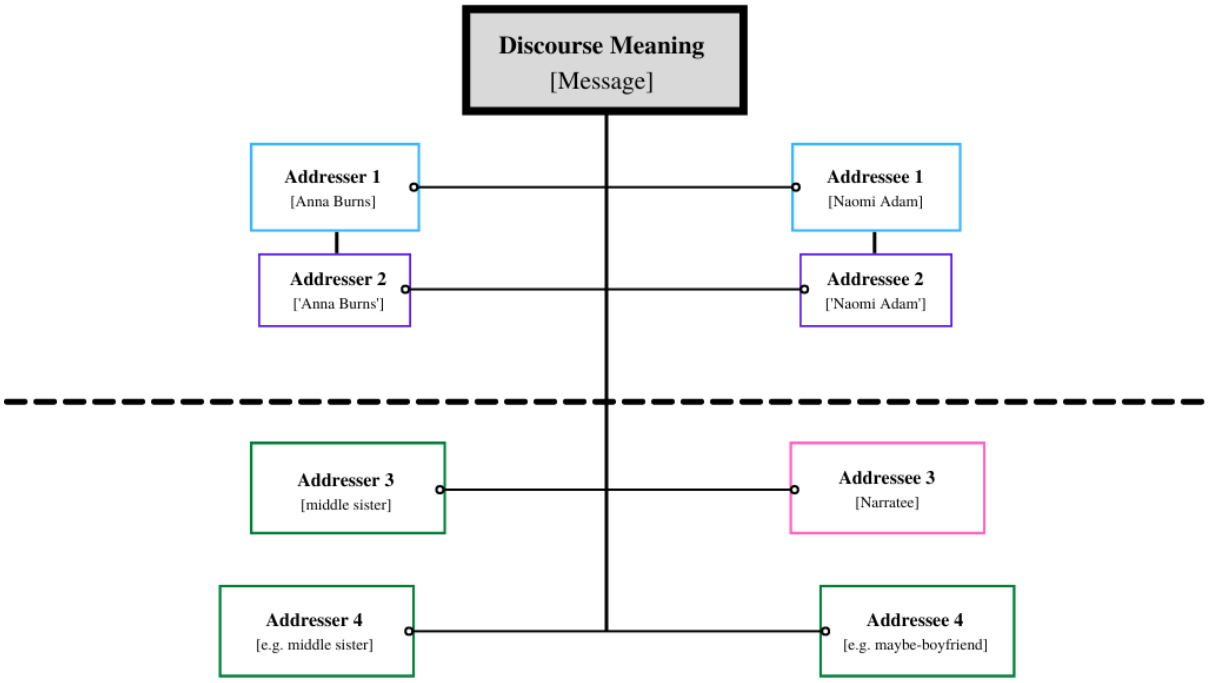


Fig. 5.1. A discourse-architectural diagram of Burns' (2018) *Milkman* [26]

Milkman's discourse-architectural structure is similar to 'the basic discourse structure of the novel' (Short 1996: 257), as diagrammed in Fig. 3.2. Like this Ur-figure, Fig. 5.1 is formed of four tiers, split evenly (i.e. two apiece) across the actual—fictional ontological boundary. The sole text-possible enactor within the diagram is the narratee of the third level, for this enactor is never fleshed out within the Text-actual World, and may accordingly be assigned to the Wish World of middle sister.

The prototypical appearance of the above diagram somewhat obscures a – possibly *the* – distinguishing feature of the novel and its discourse. Namely, it elides the centrality of communal gossip about middle sister, and her response to this gossip. This is a shortcoming inherent to discourse-architectural diagrams, given that they concentrate solely upon the direction of discourse rather than its subject. While masked by Fig. 5.1, it is communal supposition as discoursal subject which will form the focus of the passages excerpted in

[26] For key, see Fig. 3.2.

Sections 5.4 to 5.7, below. Prior to this, the next section explains several concepts which will enhance a linguistic and thematic understanding of these upcoming passages.

5.3. The Collective and the Communal

Largely theory-based, this section contextualises several concepts centred around the collective and the communal. Borrowing from diverse fields including narratology, sociolinguistics, sociology and stylistics, the terms below frame my own proposed coinages: the *communal metaperspective* and *[inverted] communal hypothetical focalisation*. In particular, those addressed in the first three sub-sections relate to indices 3 and 4 of the communal metaperspective.

5.3.1. Collective Narratives

Since the advent of the novel in English, the predominant narrative form employed has oscillated between the first-person singular and the third-person singular (Rimmon-Kenan 2002). This has largely been tied to the relative privileging of either subjectivity or objectivity within different eras. However, recently there has been an upsurge in so-called 'unnatural narratives' (Alber 2015), including those penned from a first-person plural, second-person, or third-person plural perspective. Those employing a plural narrative agent may be termed collective narratives; these narratives occur in two forms, the *we*-narrative and the *they*-narrative.

According to Bekhta (2020), we-narratives are 'defined by the narrator speaking, acting, and thinking as a collective agent and possessing a collective subjectivity, which the narrative performatively creates and maintains throughout its course' (11). However, it is difficult to argue that this definition applies to we-narratives alone, as opposed to collective narratives (i.e. we-narratives *and* they-narratives) more broadly. Indeed, the sole indisputable distinction between we-narratives and they-narratives is the respective first-person or third-person plural pronoun marking the narrative stance, and consequently achieving either inclusive or exclusive reference.

Likewise, Emmott's (2018) chapter exploring 'The Observing *We*' in contemporary fiction unveils several similarities between uses of the first-person and third-person plural pronoun within fiction. Semantically, Emmott notes the morphological mutability of the first-person pronoun, its ability to expand and contract at will to encompass groupings of various sizes, a feature shared by the pronoun *they*. This allows for the temporary division of a larger group

into several smaller ones, who may harbour different opinions. Nonetheless, as Bekhta (2020) notes, within collective narratives these divergent factions are always ultimately reconciled: the narrative 'never reveal[s] an 'I' or even hint[s] at the possibility of a singular individual who speaks for the group' (62). Thematically, Emmott's (2018) chapter also aligns the pronoun *we* with themes including voyeurism, social alienation, and the impersonal compartmentalisation of present-day society. Bekhta (2020) uncovers similar thematic preoccupations, aligning we-narratives with gossip and rumour, the depiction of closed communities, and the ostracisation of a social outsider who eschews communal norms. Each of these themes correlate with the novel *Milkman*, with its prominent use of the third-person plural pronoun.

In his 2000 article 'Telling in the Plural: From Grammar to Ideology', Margolin develops a comprehensive typology of different collective narrative forms and their associated features. While five categories are identified, those of most relevance in the context of the current chapter are categories D and E. The former involves a 'community [with] traditions, common history, values, norms, and moral codes' (607) acting as collective narrative agent; the result is a 'collectively negotiated sense of identity within a bounded whole' (*ibid*). This description recalls middle sister's own description of her 'district' as discussed in Section 5.2, above. Meanwhile, Category E involves an 'institutional structure [...] control and constraint system' (*ibid*) in the role of narrative agent. Again, this recalls *Milkman*'s Text-actual World with its 'rules of what was allowed and not allowed which featured heavily in this place' (Burns 2018b: 59).

However insightful Margolin's typology proves in the analysis of *Milkman*, it should be remembered that the novel does not constitute a collective narrative. As noted in Section 5.2, the narrator, focaliser and protagonist is middle sister: a single enactor. Therefore, the novel is instead a first-person narrative incorporating significant instances of collective discourse, a term to be discussed further in Section 5.3.2, below. Bekhta (2017, 2020) is similarly careful to differentiate between collective narration proper – what she terms 'performative' uses of the plural pronoun – and 'indicative' use of the plural pronoun, whereby it is ultimately re-incorporated into a narrative adopting a singular pronominal narrative stance. It is only the latter which applies to the novel *Milkman*.

Palmer (2011) differs from Bekhta in this regard, arguing that he 'would call *they*-narratives [any] narratives that feature social minds' (117), that is, either as narrator *or* as character. While

I diverge from this view for the reasons stated above, I do find Palmer valuable with regard to his overview of the so-called 'Middlemarch mind' (225-232). This term he employs in relation to the neighbourhood depicted in Eliot's (1872) novel *Middlemarch*, which, as Palmer convincingly argues, function and focalise *en masse*. As a collective – indeed, a communal – cognition, this construct bears much resemblance to the anonymous community of Burns' *Milkman*. In regard to both, the novel's 'pages are saturated with [a] group mind' (225) formed of a medium-sized, 'neighbourhood[...]' (219) intermental unit. This shared cognition leads to a 'powerful, norm-establishing core group' (228) of locals, given to 'scapegoating' (215) perceived outsiders. No individual may ever be extrapolated from the mass mind. Linguistically, within *Middlemarch* this group mind is marked via explicit lexical reference in subject position, evaluative lexis pertaining to outsiders, and the passive voice; each are features similarly evident in the excerpts from *Milkman,* below. However, it should be noted that, in both *Middlemarch* and *Milkman,* the group viewpoint is not always identified straightforwardly; often readerly presupposition is necessary for its identification. (This recalls the caveat accompanying the concept of hypothetical discourse; see Section 3.1.7). In relation to *Middlemarch*, Palmer (2011) observes that sometimes '[t]he narrator expresses a view that, as soon becomes apparent from the context, is the view of the townspeople' (229). Finally, the group viewpoint is often relayed via 'intermental [i.e. communal] free direct thought' attributable to 'the town' (225) at large. The excerpts from *Milkman* certainly feature this form of communal discourse, alongside a variety of others, in conveying the claustrophobic, gossip-fuelled neighbourhood of middle sister. The following two sub-sections continue on the theme of *collective* and *communal discourse*, which also acts as the second particularising index of the communal metaperspective.

5.3.2. Collective Discourse

In discussing 'indicative' uses of the first-person plural pronoun, Bekhta (2020) avers: 'I-narrators cannot but use we-reference when their belonging to any group needs to be addressed' (28-9). Likewise, middle sister is 'absent for extended stretches of the narrative' (28) as her *exclusion* from the group is addressed, yet she is always ultimately reinstated as the text's narrator. On the textual level, this is primarily achieved via the use of collective discourse.

Collective discourse can be defined as the occurrence of speech, thought, and/or writing attributable to some multi-person grouping. Narratologically, it has been in evidence since at least the fourteen-century writings of Malory (c. 1415—1471; cf. Wales 2011). Linguistically,

it is made manifest through plural pronouns (in either the first- or third-person) or collective nouns and noun phrases. These (pro)nominals may then attach to verbs denoting collective actions, beliefs, feelings, mental states, thoughts, or a combination of the above. The pragmatic, semantic and thematic consequences of collective discourse, meanwhile, are various. For instance, Wales (2011) notes that while collective discourse may 'dramatically emphasize unanimity of opinion' (68), it may also provide an ironic commentary upon supposed group concord, or an assessment of prevailing social norms and expectations.

Reviewing contemporary narratology, Prince (2005) suggests that collective discourse is 'a neglected category' (373), phraseology echoed by Alber (2018: 132) in discussing discourse attributed to a third-person plural (i.e. *they said*) more specifically. While Prince's (2005) comments relate only to (free) direct forms of collective discourse, analysis of collective discourse forms across the speech and thought presentation continuum (Leech and Short 2007) are similarly rare. Below, I attempt to address this dearth through consideration of, among other forms, free indirect collective discourse. As the textual excerpts below will demonstrate, collective discourse suffuses middle sister's narrative. Indeed, this is in evidence from the first page to the last: the novel begins with a reference to 'talk [...] by these people of the rumour' (Burns 2018b: 1) and ends by alluding to 'what others might term a little softening' (348) in the outlook of middle sister. This observation of the centrality of collective discourse may also be supported quantitatively. The verb phrase 'they said' appears 76 times throughout the course of the 368-page novel *Milkman*, equivalent to around once every five pages. In contrast, it is used a mere 17 times across the previous case-study novel for this thesis, *The Testaments*, which is comparatively longer at 432 pages. This equates to the use of the phrase around once every 25 pages: five times less frequently than in the novel *Milkman*, hence underscoring the centrality of collective discourse to this latter novel.

5.3.3. Communal Discourse

Should the narrative agent responsible for the collective discourse discussed above – in the form of speech, thought, and/or writing – be a community, the result is a sub-type which may be termed communal discourse. (For further differentiation between the notions of collectives and communities, see Bekhta [2020: 166-75]; cf. Adam [forthcoming]). As argued above, it is the presentation of this discoursal sub-type which forms the first of two particularised indices for the communal metaperspective. Communal discourse is signalled linguistically through the use of the noun *community* (or a synonym) in subject position within the reporting clause

attached to the discourse being presented. (Alternatively, a collective reporting noun [e.g. *people*] alongside lexical reference to community may, with recourse to readerly inferencing, also establish communal discourse). While this noun may later be replaced by an anaphoric (third-person plural) pronoun for the purposes of elegant variation, it is crucial that a nominal antecedent tied to the concept of community is initially established; this distinguishes communal discourse from discourse of the collective variety (Section 5.3.2) more generally. For instance, *Milkman* features inquit formula including 'said the area' (Burns 2018b: 156) and 'the community decided' (256) alongside the glut of *they said*s discussed above, as pronominal equivalents. Moreover, the two above-quoted verb phrases neatly illustrate the diverse forms in which communal discourse may be couched. The former sandwiches stretches of direct speech; concerning supposition as to the behaviour of the neighbourhood feminist group, the sentence in full reads: ''If they get a hutment,' said the area, 'they could be up to anything in it.'' (156). Conversely, the second verb phrase relays communal free indirect thought. Following an elaborate disquisition as to the dangers of marrying for love, it precedes the bathetic assertion: 'The community decided that no, it couldn't.' (256). Further instances of communal discourse throughout the passages excerpted below will evidence yet more forms of speech and thought presentation (Leech and Short 2007; Semino and Short 2004) with a communal inflection.

In a subsection headed 'Communal Voice', Lanser (1992: 221-79) distinguishes three distinct yet interrelated forms of communal discourse: the singular; the sequential; the simultaneous. These correspond, respectively, to a) discourse deriving from a singular narrator acting as spokesperson for some larger group; b) discourse attributable to several successive narrators who share membership of some group; c) prototypical 'group discourse' in which the many narrate as one. While Lanser (like Bekhta [2017, 2020] after her) notably considers only the first-person plural form of communal discourse, her observations may easily be extrapolated to cover third-person communal discourse as well. The sequential and the simultaneous forms of communal discourse in particular are evidenced in the excerpts from *Milkman*, below, and contribute to the construction of the communal metaperspective and [inverted] communal hypothetical focalisation.

5.3.4. Community

Etymologically, terms including *communal narration, communal discourse* and *communal [hypothetical] focalisation* each presuppose the notion of *community*. It is therefore instructive to briefly review this sociological term here.

Within the context of this thesis, following the *OED* (2022, s.2b), community is understood to denote: 'A body of people who live in the same place, usually sharing a common cultural or ethnic identity.' (n.p). As acknowledged above, within *Milkman* this 'place' is the working-class northern Belfast township of Ardoyne, an area populated by the city's Catholic minority. As sociologist Cohen (1989) observes, the most tightly-bound communities are those which consider themselves in some way different from society-at-large, and/or those which reside in close proximity to communities deemed 'other' in some way. Both these criteria apply to *Milkman*. Indeed, middle sister dubs her area 'a rogue community' (Burns 2018b: 182). Aside from being a staunchly Catholic and Republican enclave within Unionist Belfast, it is also a neighbourhood ringed, beyond the 'interface roads' (e.g. Burns 2018b: 165) by Protestant communities. The atmosphere is one of mutual suspicion, so that ''Us' and 'them' were second nature: convenient, familiar, insider' (22). Longest friend, for instance, casts the situation as 'the community under siege, us all having to pull together' (200), invoking solidarity through the first-person plural pronoun.

Finally, it must be highlighted that, just as the text-possible worlds which form the focus of this thesis are 'mental constructs presented by the inhabitants of the T[ext-actual] W[orld]' (Ryan 1991b: n.p), so too is the concept of community 'largely in the mind [...] a *mental construct*' (Cohen 1989: 114; my italics). Crucially, community is collectively constructed by the 'bod[ies]' which comprise it, be they Actual or Text-actual World beings.

5.3.5. Communal Policing

The concept of community additionally relates to the 'communal policing' referenced within the title of the present chapter. In the novel *Milkman*, from which it is excerpted (Burns 2018b: 59), the phrase figures both metaphorically and literally.

The literal variant of the concept has been explicated in an article by Goodhew (1993) addressing another sectarian society to which *Milkman*'s Text-actual World has previously been compared (Malone 2022: 1170): apartheid South Africa. Goodhew explores a people's policing initiative instituted in the Western areas of Johannesburg in the mid-twentieth century

(c. 1930—1962), and only officially state-sanctioned as the 'Civilian Protection Service' between 1951 and 1952. Formed to counter high rates of predominantly youth-instigated violence, rapes, robberies and murders (447-8), the initiative represented a patent critique of the central state regime, and reflected the inherent distrust the largely Black Western Rand communities felt towards a mainly White South African police force. Communal policing in this context also attempted to address intergenerational discord, especially between the youth of the area and neighbourhood officials including church leaders (450). Nonetheless, the movement was one characterised by a culture of machismo and strictly-defined gender roles.

It is clear that several parallels exist between the fraught Actual World situation in apartheid-era South Africa and the Text-actual World of Northern Belfast depicted in *Milkman*. Both constitute nuclear communities hostile to official state structures; both are premised upon the policing of behavioural norms among the younger generation; both enforce rigid gender roles. Yet if the South African communal policing scheme existed in large part to counter 'violent crime' (Goodhew 1993: 447), communal policing initiatives in *Milkman* often initiate violence. As middle sister documents, the euphemistically-termed 'renouncers-of-the-state' employ homespun methods of justice including 'beatings, brandishings, tar and featherings' (Burns 2018b: 119) in order to enforce their dominance.

Meanwhile, communal policing within *Milkman* also functions more metaphorically. In addition to being physical, it is psychological. As middle sister avers, there is a 'psycho-political atmosphere' (24) to her area, one in which 'everybody read[s] minds' (36) in order to foster and regulate specific community norms, and militate against 'deviant' (200) or 'beyond-the-pale' (59-60) behaviour. Not insignificantly, this idiomatic prepositional phrase has distinctly Hiberno-Irish undertones. It evokes the mediaeval practice of delimiting communities by means of fence stakes ('pales', from the Latin *palum*), and is commonly associated with the English Pale in fourteenth-century Ireland. This was a system whereby English settlers to the country marked the boundaries of so-called civilized communities within the nation they sought to colonise. While this etymology has since been discredited as apocryphal, an association with segregated Irish communities remains in the Actual World. Meanwhile, the verified etymology of the phrase recalls Cohen's (1989) aforementioned observation that the most strongly defined communities are those closely bounded by another community considered somehow 'other'.

As Rytter (2020) observes, the concept of sousveillance is instructive to an understanding of *Milkman*. As a co-hyponym of the lexeme *surveillance*, *sousveillance* denotes members of the public recording and/or documenting their own or other people's activities (OED 2022). Unlike surveillance, and as is implied etymologically, the observation necessarily originates from within some social grouping, rather than without. While middle sister is subject to state surveillance during the fabula of *Milkman* ('Their monitoring [...] their infiltrating, their intercepting, listening at posts, drawing up of room lay-outs' [Burns 2018b: 206]), this is paralleled by her sousveillance by 'members of the public', or, more specifically, members of her own community. It is for this reason that she can claim that the community, as well as Milkman, is 'stalking' (182) her.

5.3.6. Gossip

A further term within the title of the present chapter – 'gossip' – benefits from further elaboration here. It proves so integral to middle sister's community that it is even, comically, personified: 'Gossip washed in, washed out, came, went, moved on to the next target' (Burns 2018b: 5). According to Bergmann (1993), prototypical gossip:

> is precise and detailed and remains, however, vague and allusive. Authentic presentations are suddenly transformed into exaggerations. Indecency is mixed with decent restraint. Indignation about transgressions is paired with amusement. Disgust with compassion, disapproval with understanding. [...] Gossip is a moral balancing act.
>
> (Bergmann 1993: 149)

Within Bergmann's quotation, the paradoxical qualities of gossip are captured perfectly via antonymy ('[i]ndecen[t] [...] decent') and syntactic parallelism ('Disgust with compassion, disapproval with understanding') alongside more obviously alluding to the figurative 'balancing act' it entails.

To Bergmann's qualifications may be added those of the sociolinguist Milroy (1981):

> gossip [...] is characterised by short exchanges between two or more speakers with interruptions and, frequently, deviations from the matter at hand.
>
> (Milroy 1981: 86)

Finally, it is significant that the narratologist Pavel (1976), in considering the gradations of diegetic reliability, places gossip bottommost. However, recalling Bergmann's (1993) identification of '[a]uthentic' elements melding with hyperbolic ones in the production of gossip, Pavel (1976) is careful to hedge his classification of 'neighbourhood gossip' (171) as

‘*almost* unreliable’ (*ibid*; my italics). Likewise, to Bekhta (2020) gossip differs from ‘the less trustworthy rumour’ (144), for the source of the former is generally identifiable. Moreover, Bergmann (1993) is once more echoed in this context, as Bekhta (2020) dubs gossip ‘precise’ (144).

Each feature of the above ‘gossip inventory’ will be recorded in the textual excerpts of Sections 5.4 to 5.7, where I will have cause to return to the commentary of Bergmann and Milroy. Indeed, each of the various critical terms and theories outlined above are explored in the following four sections, proving crucial to a complete understanding of the novel *Milkman*. These steam stylistic analyses align aforementioned literary interpretations and aesthetic functions of the novel with its stylistic ‘texture’ (Stockwell 2009) through sustained linguistic description and evidence, fulfilling Spitzer’s (1948) notion of the philological circle. In particular, I concentrate upon my three proposed coinages: the *communal metaperspective*, *communal hypothetical focalisation* and *inverted communal hypothetical focalisation*. I begin by exploring how the use of communal hypothetical focalisation enables the novel to ‘delineate[...] brilliantly the power of gossip and social pressure in a tight-knit community’ (Appiah, qtd. in The Booker Prizes: n.p).

5.4. ‘[G]eneral gossip’: Communal Hypothetical Focalisation in *Milkman*

Throughout the novel, middle sister is clearly attuned to the ‘neighbourhood gossip’ (Pavel 1976: 171) which pervades her community, particularly when it concerns herself and Milkman. As the novel progresses, she becomes increasingly paranoid due to ‘this communal drain upon me by the community’ (Burns 2018b: 180). Flouting as it does Grice’s (1989) maxim of manner due to the redundant lexical repetition, the phraseology here reflects this paranoid attitude. Additionally, this underscoring of the community’s omnipresence serves to engender sympathy as to middle sister’s plight. Middle sister believes herself to be subject to constant communal sousveillance, even waking in the middle of the night to search her house ‘to make sure [...] the community had not got in since last time before bed when I’d searched’ (184). She finds nothing, for the community do not follow her physically. Instead, as they speculate about ‘what might be or have been seen or perceived’ (Herman 1994: 231) had they tailed her to supposed meetings with Milkman, she is followed by gossip and rumour. As middle sister explains: ‘Their creative imaginings would reach my ears slander by gravitational slander’ (Burns 2018b:

172). This suppositious and communally-inflected perspective is what I have above termed *communal hypothetical focalisation*, and it is typified by the following two passages.

Excerpt 5.1

> As for the community, and my affair with the milkman according to this community, I was now well in it, that being the case whether I was or not. It was put about I had regular engagements with him, rendezvous, intimate 'dot dots' at various 'dot' places. In particular we frequented our favourite two romance spots which were the parks & reservoirs and the ten-minute area, though we were also partial, it was said, to spending time, just the two of us – and presumably all the people who were spying on us – where the tall grasses grew over the ancient tombstones in the old part of the usual place. Ever so confidently, ever so arrogantly, I stepped into his flashy cars, it was said, for yes, many people had seen me. 'Picks her up for assignations,' they said, 'for their trysts, their lovers' appointments, and they go to these places.' 'When they're not there,' it was also said, 'they're fostering illicit togethernesses downtown at those risky bars and clubs.' 'Already he's married, you know,' whispered people and, 'Already he's covering her,' whispered back other people. 'Well, he is him,' they said.

(Burns 2018b: 171-2)

Excerpt 5.2

> [A]ccording to the latest in the area, it was the case I'd been in relationship with Milkman for two months by now. That meant it was time to cheat on him, they said, so I was cheating on him, having a dalliance behind his back with some young whippersnapper from across town.

(Burns 2018b: 281-2)

These two passages share a text-possible profile: both are examples of impossible Epistemic Worlds. As sketched in Section 2.2.5, this variant of the Epistemic World 'involves contrary-to-fact propositions' (Ryan 1991b: 115). It is not altogether clear what the precise parameters of this alethic system are, but here I take 'contrary-to-fact' to mean contrary to what the Actual World reader recognises as text-actual fact. For example, through the retrospective narration of middle sister the reader will be aware that her meetings with Milkman are not 'appointments' but are instead unsolicited. This world sub-type negates McIntyre's (2006) Belief World, preventing the logical contradiction whereby false statements are categorised as true within a (necessarily) subjective Epistemic World. Instead it is recognised that statements true within an *impossible* Epistemic World clash with text-actuality.

Nevertheless, pronouncements as to the fictitious affair of middle sister and Milkman are couched with certitude. Syntactically, this is assisted by the postposition of reporting clauses whenever rumour figures, allowing the prior reported clause an initial semblance of truth. The text-possible masquerades as text-actual. Combined with this technique are frequent categorical assertions, including 'for yes, many people had seen me', which pairs the auxiliary verb 'had' with the interjection 'for yes' to impute definitiveness. While the interjection in this

clause suggests it to be one of free indirect discourse, the following utterances of direct speech evince similar certainty. Meanwhile, the (unfounded) certainty in Excerpt 5.2 evident in the phrase ‘according to the latest in the area, it was the case I’d been in relationship with Milkman for two months by now’ is interpretable as either indirect or free indirect discourse. I will return to the stylistic salience of this phraseology below.

Here, it is useful to note the communal inflection inherent to the aforementioned discourse, no matter the precise position it takes on Leech and Short’s (2007) speech and thought presentation continuum. Linguistically, this is made manifest via both lexical and grammatical means. In relation to the former, Excerpt 5.1 alludes to ‘the community [...] the people [...] many people’, and Excerpt 5.2 ‘the area’; for the latter, the third-person plural pronoun is included in both passages. The association of the suppositious state-of-affairs depicted with the viewpoint of middle sister’s community therefore justifies the first epithet of *communal hypothetical focalisation*. The second epithet, meanwhile, is fulfilled by the text-possible profile of the discourse presented. Ultimately, it is clear that both passages depict what the community believes ‘might [...] have been seen or perceived’ (Herman 1994: 231) were they to have taken the requisite perspective and truly ‘sp[ied]’ upon middle sister.

The communal hypothetical focalisation of Excerpts 5.1 and 5.2 evidences many of the characteristics of prototypical gossip, as outlined in Section 5.3.6. The six stretches of direct speech come in the form of ‘short exchanges between two or more speakers’ predicted by Milroy (1981: 86); indeed, they capitalise upon the morphological mutability of the third-person plural pronoun (Emmott 2018; Bekhta 2017, 2020) to present the opinions of various factions (‘many people [...] other people’). Nonetheless, all concur in their negative evaluation of middle sister. Bergmann’s (1993: 149) observations are similarly fulfilled. As middle sister herself acknowledges, in her area it is considered that ‘sexual dirt [is] the most best for general gossip’ (172) – with the infantile non-standard grammar here acting as her implicit critique upon this childish mindset – and this results in gossip which melds ‘[i]ndecency’ with ‘decent restraint’ (Bergmann 1993: 149). Encapsulating the latter, for example, is the euphemistic reference to ‘‘dot’ places’, phraseology also harnessed by the enactor ma to allude to ‘indecent’ (Burns 2018b: 54) behaviour she deign not discuss. This coyness is accompanied by the louche, colloquial assertion: ‘‘Already he’s covering her.’’. This polysemous verb presents several interpretative possibilities. *To cover* may refer to a simple act of protection (OED 2022, v.1, s.1), or, in a specifically military context, ‘to protect with a weapon’ (s.8), an incarnation indubitably appropriate for the novel’s Troubles-era Text-actual World backdrop.

Alternatively, the term also refers to animal copulation (s.6), though its application is restricted solely to male dogs and/or horses. Correspondingly, in the above instance the grammatical subject of the verb is the eponymous Milk*man*; dogs are also associated with the masculine – and by extension, are communally approved of – throughout the novel (e.g. Burns 2018b: 93-100).

As a further paradox, the passage exhibits the qualities of authenticity and exaggeration that Bergmann (1993: 149) identified within prototypical gossip. While middle sister and Milkman have indeed met in the parks & reservoirs [*sic*] and the ten-minute area, it has never been intentional on the part of middle sister, nor has an encounter between the two enactors ever taken place in 'the usual place' (the community graveyard). Excerpt 5.2 combines the 'precise' (the quantifier 'two' in the temporal noun phrase) with the 'vague and allusive' (the generic determiner 'some' in a later noun phrase). Similarly, text-actual fact and text-possible fiction again converge. Middle sister is indeed 'having a dalliance with some young whippersnapper from across town', yet this enactor is 'maybe-boyfriend', and their relationship is exclusive. Meanwhile, it becomes apparent across both excerpts that it is only to Milkman that the vaunted 'compassion' and 'understanding' suggested by Bergmann (1993: 149) extend. The extract highlights the bivalent attitude towards males and females in *Milkman*'s Text-actual World (see Section 5.2); the actions of Milkman are excused through the tautologous semi-reduplication of 'he is him', implying social acceptance and communal complicity. The tautology is also redolent of the idiom *boys will be boys,* for which no female equivalent exists (cf. *girls will be girls*?). If gossip is indeed 'a moral balancing act' the scales of the balance are weighted decidedly in favour of the male.

It was suggested above that the first sentence of Excerpt 5.2 presents analytical ambiguity. Namely, it is debatable whether it constitutes the indirect speech or thought of the community, or their free indirect discourse mediated by middle sister. In either instance, the prepositional phrase 'in relationship with Milkman' is syntactically and pragmatically marked. The elision of the determiner implies a solidity to this putative relationship through removing the indefinite article. That this phraseology is deviant is evident through searching for the lexical bundle 'in relationship with' within the British National Corpus. As Fig. 5.2 demonstrates, within its 100-million word database, only five instances of this particular collocation are to be found.

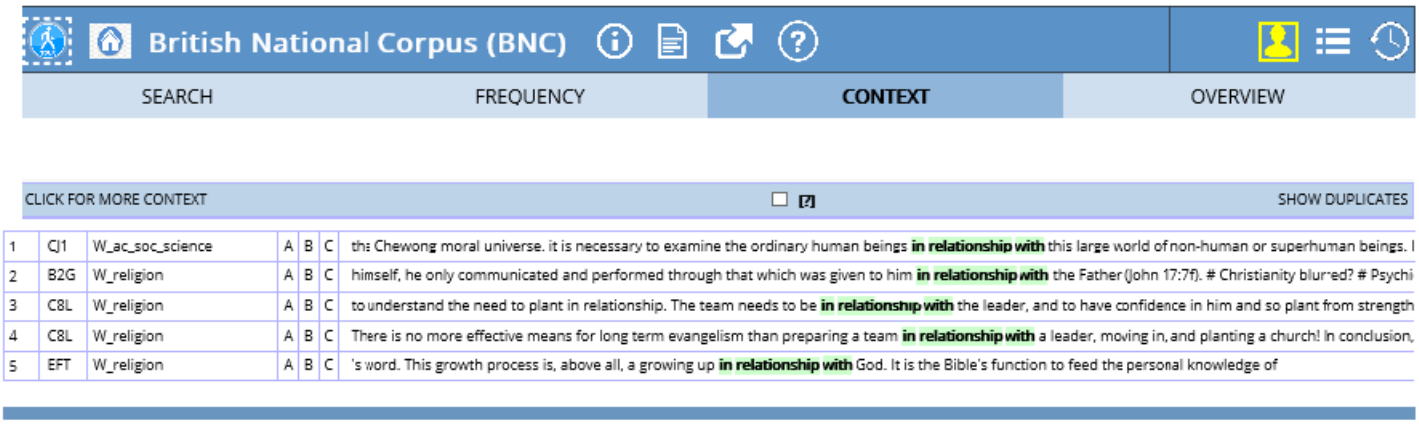


Fig. 5.2. Concordance lines for the phrasal string *in relationship with* from the web front-end of the British National Corpus

Moreover, as is evident from these concordance lines, all bar one of the comparable examples occur in religious texts, with the clausal complement referring – more or less metonymically – to God. Even the anthropological anomaly (line 1) gestures to the otherworldly with reference to 'non-human or superhuman beings'. The effect of the selection of this marked phrasal structure within *Milkman*, predicated upon (likely sub-consciously acknowledged) linguistic norms, is to deify the enactor Milkman, placing him on a par with God, a not insignificant positioning in so religious a community (see Section 5.2). On the thematic level, this highlights once more the special status he is accorded in the community. In contrast, middle sister remains constantly communally disparaged. Even the progressive aspect of the verb phrase 'was cheating on him' in Excerpt 5.2 is intended to defame: it suggests her actions to be premeditated, her supposed infidelity no mere isolated incident, but ongoing.

Gossip surrounding an alleged affair is similarly ongoing. Middle sister takes to associating only with those who 'didn't gossip' (Burns 2018b: 196) as a strategy to avoid this. Few enactors (largely third brother-in-law and longest friend) fall under this bracket. Partway through the novel, longest friend arranges to meet middle sister 'in the lounge of the district's most popular drinking-club' (195). She begins to admonish middle sister for her careless behaviour, and ironically lapses into conveying precisely the gossip she is purported to avoid.

Excerpt 5.3

> 'But what are you doing, longest friend,' she said, 'what are you thinking of, walking around with cats' heads?' This was when it came out I had dead animals on me. Perhaps for ceremonial,

> black-magic purposes? longest friend said the community was hazarding. Perhaps to invoke a ritual with piecemeal familiars in opposition to the pious women with their bells and birds and prognostications and auguries? Or was I pregnant? Had Milkman made me pregnant? 'Yes, that must be it!' they were saying. 'Milkman's made her pregnant and because of hormones—'.
>
> (Burns 2018b: 201-2)

Within Excerpt 5.3, communally-attributable pronouncements are at first filtered through 'longest friend' as mediating presence. (Note that, for the enactors, this moniker is mutual; its first use in Excerpt 5.3 relates to middle sister). The dual narrative levels enact the cumulative layering of gossip in middle sister's district: the proverbial game of 'Chinese Whispers'. This is apparent from the first, through the doubly-embedded *verba diciendi*: 'longest friend *said* the community was *hazarding*.' (my italics). The homonymy here is apposite: the hypothetical 'hazarding' of the community constitutes a hazard to middle sister, threatening her reputation. Also notable is the singular concord of the latter verb phrase; while the collective noun *community* would grammatically accept either *were* or *was* as complement, the second option underscores the unanimity of opinion among the amorphous, mass focaliser.

While the community serves as focaliser for the majority of the passage, the form of communal discourse presentation varies throughout. This allows for vacillation between various levels of certainty: the free indirect speech and thought midway through the passage is associated with doubt (note the fronted adverbial 'Perhaps', the archetypal hypothetical space-builder [Stockwell 2002], and the successive rhetorical interrogatives), which subsides into certainty later in the passage as the communal direct speech captures. Indeed, if the first direct speech utterance employs a modal auxiliary associated with the maximal level of certainty ('must'), the second eschews modalisation altogether. For this reason, the abortive declarative (halted by the protestations of middle sister) is a categorical assertion, which presupposes 'the strongest commitment possible to the factuality of the proposition' (Nørgaard *et al*. 2010: 117).

Yet the declarative is in no way 'factual[...]', i.e. true in the Text-actual World. Once again it constitutes an impossible Epistemic World with regard to the community, and once again it demonstrates prototypical features of gossip. Both 'disapproval' and '[d]isgust' (Bergmann 1993: 149) are inherent in the accusation that middle sister has been 'walking around with cats' heads'. This in itself is an 'exaggeration[...]' (Bergmann 1993: 149); in the Text-actual World middle sister has collected a decapitated cat aiming, in her Intention World, 'to take it to some green' and 'cover it' (Burns 2018b: 101), therefore neither the iterative verbal aspect nor the plural noun phrase is warranted. It is also revealing of societal double standards. Middle sister's associating with animals is decried as witchcraft ('black-magic'); the pious women's

deployment of 'birds' – historically animals believed to act as witches' 'familiars' – is accepted as standard practice.

Cumulatively, the three passages above impress the features associated with communal hypothetical focalisation. Crucially, it presents the suppositious viewpoint of a collective which may be considered, in some way, a community. There is also typically the admixture of the '[a]uthentic' and 'exaggerat[ed]' to be found in prototypical gossip, which translates, from a 'Best of Both Worlds Theories' perspective, into an interweaving of the text-actual and the text-possible. Meanwhile, if the agent of communal hypothetical focalisation is necessarily a community, its focus is often a person deemed somehow 'other' by said community. This is certainly true of the 'outsider' (White 2021: 126, 134) middle sister in *Milkman*. The inverse narratological scenario, in which an individual speculates as to the actions, thoughts and feelings of a community, is described as *inverted communal hypothetical focalisation* in Section 5.6 below.

5.5. '[O]n the grapevine': Further Communal Hypothetical Focalisation in *Milkman*

Not all gossip – and by extension not all communal hypothetical focalisation – within *Milkman* concerns the enactor middle sister. As she herself acknowledges: 'Gossip washed in, washed out, came, went, moved on to the next target.' (Burns 2018b: 5). In the following extract, the chosen 'target' – Chatman's (1986) 'interest-focus' – is a local child, 'wee tot', and the subject of his untimely death. This latest neighbourhood happening is relayed to middle sister by the community's *bona fide* milkman, who has offered her a lift home in his milk float following a further unsolicited meeting with Milkman in the gloaming of the sinister so-called 'ten-minute area'.

Excerpt 5.4

> [T]he latest death in our area [...] had taken place that day. It had occurred once again in the family of Somebody McSomebody when wee tot, their youngest, fell from their upstairs back bedroom window. Real milkman said that at first it seemed he'd jumped, which was what had been assumed on the grapevine, that the toddler had leapt to his death but that the death hadn't been deliberate. It was because he'd thought himself Superman, the neighbourhood said. Or Batman. Or Spider-Man. Or one of those other heroes. He was always going about with that red pillowslip pinned to the back of him, shouting '*Biff!*', '*Bash!*', '*Whamo!*', '*Bamo!*', '*Lights out!*', '*Aarrgh!*'. It hadn't been proved though, said real milkman, that that was how his death in reality had come about. It was being rumoured that way, he said, because that was the thing people invented here because you couldn't just die here. [...] Life here, said real milkman, simply has to be lived and died in extremes. It turned out that the child had been found in the backyard in the late morning by one of his sisters. There hadn't been any pillowslip pinned to the back of him either.

(Burns 2018b: 145-6)

In evidence here is a Hypothesis World, one of the two addendum worlds reviewed in Section 2.2.7. As in the excerpts above, this text-possible world-type is skilfully interwoven with the text-actual to develop the admixture of '[a]uthentic presentations' and 'exaggerations' (Bergmann 1993: 149) characteristic of gossip. For instance, the excerpt begins with an unmodalised, categorical assertion delineating what 'had taken place that day'. The past perfect tense employed enhances the impression of epistemological assurance. This then, is the 'death in reality', i.e. belonging to the Text-actual World, soon to be positioned alongside communal conjecture following the non-factive verb 'assumed'. Later sentences are subject to the marker of evidentiality 'seemed', a further weak epistemic verb deemed by Herman (1994: 232) as a key feature of passages of hypothetical focalisation. It is significant, too, that the circumstances surrounding the death are 'being rumoured': the progressive aspect underscores the ongoing nature of community speculation, further undermining its credibility.

Indeed, this passage is characterised by doubt masquerading as certainty, and may initially be assumed to comprise of 'known propositions' (Ryan 1991b: 114) and so form an Epistemic World. In this regard it recalls the *assured* variant of hypothetical focalisation explored by Adam (2020). Symptomatic of this is the explanation of wee tot's fatal jump: 'It was because he'd thought himself Superman [...]'. As an unmodalised categorical statement, the clause displays the maximum level of certainty (Gregoriou 2009: 72; Nørgaard *et al*. 2010: 117). Yet this surety is subsequently punctured by a string of sentence fragments: 'Or Batman. Or Spider-Man. Or one of those other heroes'. On the stylistic level this epanaphoric trio is foregrounded for several reasons – it conforms to the rule of three of classical rhetoric; it displays syntactic parallelism; the co-ordinating conjunction is placed in a non-standard, sentence-initial position – while thematically the emphasis is upon the lack of verifiable information the community possesses. This is capped by the dismissive, distal deixis within the phrase 'those other heroes', confirming the 'vague and allusive' (Bergmann 1993: 149) nature of the community's knowledge. Finally, the fragmentary syntax serves as further evidence of the spontaneous development of rumour which fuels this communal hypothetical focalisation.

That this speculation is attributable to the community is made explicit in the above passage; the communal inquit 'the neighbourhood said' is attached to indirect speech, and reference is made to 'people [...] here' which functions as a cognitive synonym (Stockwell 2000a) for the term *community*. Consequently, the passage typifies communal hypothetical focalisation: it

addresses ‘what might be or have been seen or perceived’ (Herman 1994: 231) by the community, were they to have been present at the site of wee tot’s death.

However, it should be noted that this passage, like Excerpt 5.3, has been twice mediated for middle sister: firstly by the community-at-large, and secondly by the intradiegetic narration of real milkman. This is highlighted through the *verbum diciendi* of the phrases ‘Real milkman said’ and ‘said real milkman’; it is not insignificant that these inquits, unlike those associated with the community, are placed in a prominent syntactic position. As middle sister perceives, real milkman ‘could be trusted to be honest’ (Burns 2018b: 145): he admits to his subjective knowledge, and does not obscure doubt behind a veneer of certainty. Nonetheless, the double mediation of the passage renders some sentences ontologically unstable and so analytically ambiguous. It is unclear, for instance, to whom the categorical assertion ‘He was always going about with that red pillowslip pinned to the back of him’ may be attributed. Should it be tied cataphorically to ‘real milkman’? Or should it be linked anaphorically to ‘the neighbourhood’? Its epistemological status is similarly equivocal. The iterative adverb impresses surety, the distal social deixis suggests familiarity, and the chromatic adverb adds specificity. Yet this cumulative certainty is compromised some lines later by the excerpt’s final, bathetic sentence: ‘There hadn’t been any pillowslip pinned to the back of him either’. Once more, text-actual evidence clashes with that couched within some text-possible world.

The final two sentences of Excerpt 5.4 are marked in comparison with the preceding passage. They are distanced and unemotive when compared with the earlier speculation; this enacts the admixture of ‘[i]ndecency’ and ‘decent restraint’ that Bergmann (1993: 149) associates with prototypical gossip. Indeed, they are redolent of Simpson’s (1993) Category C ‘reportage’-style narratives, an impression engendered by the frequent use of the definite article, as if overcompensating for previous vagary (cf. ‘vague and allusive’ [Bergmann 1993: 149]) with ‘precise’ (*ibid*) detail. In this regard, the clause ‘The child had been found in the yard in the late morning by one of his sisters’ is indicative. The definite article is incorporated thrice, and stacked prepositional phrases ensure a wealth of detail, in stark contrast to the earlier text-possible supposition. Meanwhile, the overall tone is unmodulated, reflective of a familiarity with tragedy and resultant desensitisation. Indeed, this has been identified as a common psychological repercussion among Actual World survivors of Ireland’s Troubles (DenHoed 2020; Spotlight on the Troubles 2019a, 2019b, 2019c). It also recalls the prosaic description of the death of wee tot’s elder sibling earlier in the novel, said to have occurred ‘in the middle of the week [...] in the middle of the afternoon [...] in the middle of the street’ (Burns 2018b: 62).

As with middle sister's characteronym (see Section 5.2.1), this repeated reference to 'the middle' is symbolic and significant. It highlights that death has become a prosaic norm within the community, encroaching into the centre of text-actual existence.

In summary, the above passage illustrates a number of features typical of communal hypothetical focalisation more generally. There is a suppositious text-possible world-type; there is an amorphous mass focaliser; there is both ontological and epistemological instability, with the viewpoint vacillating between certainty and its antonymic double, doubt. Additionally, the passage encourages real readers to draw comparisons between Actual World events and their Text-actual World counterparts. Meanwhile, it should be noted that the four excerpts above, while all typifying communal hypothetical focalisation, constitute different text-possible world-types. This flags that there is no one-to-one mapping between narratological world-types and this narratological technique.

In the textual excerpts which inform the following section, a similar oscillation between certainty and doubt is apparent. Middle sister comes to a psychological impasse, 'thwarted into a carefully constructed nothingness' by both the predations of 'that man [i.e. Milkman]' and 'the community' (303). The heightened self-consciousness arising from 'this communal drain upon me by the community' (180), meanwhile, contributes to her frequent construction of the communal metaperspective: the subject of the next section.

5.6. 'I thought they'd think': The Communal Metaperspective in *Milkman*

As a strategy to counteract the rampant gossip of her area, middle sister develops a 'non-verbal defence repertoire' (Burns 2018b: 175) centred around what she terms her 'terminal face' (176): a studiedly blank expression. In the excerpt below, she rationalises this visage through supposing how the community will view it, and by extension her: the prototypical communal metaperspective.

Excerpt 5.5

> I thought it would bemuse the gossips, confound them, run counter to their expectations, so that eventually, frustrated, wearied, they'd call a halt to their persecutions, with everybody giving up and going home. I'd hoped the sheer nullity of me would lead them to doubt their inventions and their convictions, even to suspect that a renouncer – especially *that* Man of Men, Warrior of Warriors, our high-celebrity, local community hero – could ever have developed lust for an inert, vapid person like myself. Wasn't even that I thought they'd think me stupid, or stop at thinking me stupid, but that they'd go further and come to the conclusion that I must not understand language in some prevailing, basal, social-code way. [...] I'd strike them as a textbook, some kind of log table – as in correct, but not really right either. This was what I'd

> hoped they'd think [...]. However, both the milkman and the gossip about me and the milkman turned out to be a rapid learning on the job. [...] I can see now, of course, that no matter what I would have done or could have done, those gossips wouldn't have stopped [...].

(Burns 2018b: 176, 177)

This passage evidences all four indices of the communal metaperspective itemised in Section 5.1, above. On the more generic level, there is abundant evaluative lexis concerning middle sister (and also Milkman; see below), couched within stretches of hypothetical discourse. This hypotheticality is indexed by the iteration of desiderative verbs, for instance in the clause 'I thought they'd think', highlighting the suppositious embedding of perspectives. On the particularised level, the aforementioned hypothetical discourse is attributable to a community grouping, as is emphasised by the third-person plural pronouns scattered throughout the passage. *They* and its derivatives (e.g. *their*, *them*) feature eleven times within a relatively short (189-word) passage, including four times within the first sentence alone. This ensures that 'their' view is kept constantly cognitively foregrounded; the community clearly form the 'other' alongside middle sister's metaperspectival 'ego' (*sensu* Laing *et al*. 1966: 4).

At times the communal inflection to the metaperspective is less explicit than others. Indeed, the identification of a communal element to the metaperspective is reliant upon readerly inferencing, 'chaining' (Werth 1999: 290) of the pronominal 'them' to 'the gossips', and, by metonymic extension, the community-at-large. Nonetheless, it is indubitable that middle sister is focaliser of the passage. Her 'distinctive voice' (Appiah, qtd. in The Booker Prizes 2020: n.p.) inflects the extract throughout. For instance, middle sister's characteristic recourse to tripling (Rytter 2020: 49) is represented in the asyndetic verb phrases of the first sentence ('bemuse [...] confound [...] run counter to their expectations'), and the amalgam of high and low lexis identified by White (2021: 131) as indicative of her narration is also apparent. Alongside the Latinate lexis of 'basal', 'inert' and 'vapid' is the colloquial phraseology of 'not really right' and the neologism 'high-celebrity'. For this reason, the communal discourse presented is 'indicative' rather than 'performative' in Bekhta's (2020) sense; as suggested in Section 5.3, *Milkman* is in no way a *they*-narrative despite containing significant stretches of *they*-narration.

The communal discourse which features throughout the extract takes various forms. For instance, in the first line there is the communally-inflected hypothetical report of thought: 'I thought it would bemuse the gossips'. This is followed by both communal hypothetical report of a thought act ('I'd hoped the sheer nullity of me would lead them to doubt their inventions')

alongside what could be interpreted as either communal hypothetical free indirect speech *or* thought ('especially *that* Man of Men, Warrior of Warriors') in the next sentence. Interestingly, middle sister even incorporates negated communal thought ('wasn't even that I thought they'd think me stupid') and consequently disnarrates, in order to precisely establish the parameters of the communal metaperspective she constructs. (The topic of disnarration will be returned to in detail in Chapter 6).

Integral to the communal discourse throughout the extract is a gender-inflected gulf between how middle sister is supposedly perceived, and how Milkman is. The evaluative lexis which attaches to middle sister is negatively valent. Firstly, she is deemed a 'person', a minimally specific noun which, by the implicature generated through the flouting of Grice's (1975) maxim of manner, is suggestive of an affective distancing on the part of the community. Yet there is also the adjectival description of the enactor middle sister as 'inert, vapid'. The second of these pre-modifiers derives from the Latin *vapidus*, and was originally applied solely to beverages (OED 2022). This objectification ties to the later cremamorphism of middle sister as 'a textbook, some kind of log table'. Indeed, her prediction that 'I'd strike them as a textbook' is of particular linguistic interest. Adumbrating the common idiom *a textbook case*, the removal of the secondary noun defamiliarises to position middle sister as mere object. Cuing the conceptual metaphor A PERSON IS A BOOK, qualities of inanimacy, predictability and staidness are mapped onto middle sister. It is also a particularly apt metaphor given that middle sister is decreed a district 'beyond-the-pale' due to her penchant for 'reading-while-walking', a supposed social aberration (see further Section 5.2.1).

In contrast to the vilification of middle sister within Excerpt 5.5, Milkman is vaunted. Marked within a novel which largely eschews onomastic capitalisation, he is declared 'Man of Men, Warrior of Warriors', typographically flagging his import. Moreover, the complete converse to middle sister, he is cast as animate and dynamic. These epithets also echo the tautology of Excerpt 5.1 ('he is him'), positioning Milkman as communally integral and irrevocable.

As hinted above, the discourse here is interpretable as either communal free indirect speech or communal free indirect thought on the topic of Milkman. It remains unclear as to whether the above characterisation of him is openly voiced by the community, or attributable to some community mind akin to the 'Middlemarch mind' identified by Palmer (2011) and discussed above. Certainly, on the thematic level the 'aesthetic judgements' Palmer (2011: 229)

associates with the group mind are present, while on the lexical level it may indeed be presupposed that '[t]he narrator expresses a view that [...] apparent from the context, is the view of the townspeople.' (229). Hutton (2019) would likely concur with the former interpretation; she perceives the sporadic use of italicisation in *Milkman*, as with the italicised distal deictic '*that*' in Excerpt 5.5, to convey the 'energy and authenticity' (357) of Belfast speech. (See also its use in Excerpt 5.4, above). Meanwhile, the communal free indirect discourse through which Milkman is parenthetically described is also of uncertain ontological status. While thus far it has been analysed as text-actual, communal parlance mediated through middle sister, it could potentially be text-possible. In this second instance, it would evidence *inverted communal hypothetical focalisation*, displaying middle sister's supposition as to what the community think about Milkman.

From a text-possible perspective, Excerpt 5.5 counts as a Speculative Extension to the Epistemic World of middle sister. It is an 'apprehension of the tree of possible developments out of the present situation' (Ryan 1991b: 116) – indeed, middle sister is fittingly *apprehensive* – yet is too much associated with uncertainty to be counted as a Prediction World (cf. Sections 2.2.5 and 2.2.7). While ultimately aware that her community is 'intricately coiled, overly secretive, hyper-gossipy, puritanical yet indecent, totalitarian' (Burns 2018b: 172), middle sister has no precedent for the situation in which she finds herself. For middle sister, fielding the communal gossip is 'a rapid learning on the job' – observe that the gerund 'learning' here evokes the progressive tense – and insights come 'belatedly' (Burns 2018b: 176), for instance in proleptic declaratives like 'I can see now'.

Indeed, somewhat unusually for a metaperspective, Excerpt 5.5 is prospectively inflected. The result is a double layering of communal metaperspectives, with one qualifying the other. The retrospective narration of the novel *Milkman* allows middle sister to present both her view of the community's view of her during the months in which she was being stalked by Milkman (*circa* 1979), and her view of the community's view of her from a distance of some years. (White [2021: 113, 129-30] posits the narrating instance to be temporally located at some point during the 2010s, though cf. Hutton [2019] and Toal [2018]). In contrast to the teenage enactor of middle sister optimistically 'hop[ing]' to 'bemuse the gossips', the older middle sister acknowledges the inherent inevitability of her past situation. 'No matter what I would have done or could have done, those gossips wouldn't have stopped', she concludes.

This resigned attitude is replicated in a communal metaperspective constructed by middle sister some pages later. During this narrative episode, she ponders the futility of her situation due to the district's double standards. Indeed, middle sister has a tendency to 'pla[y] out in [her] head what would have happened *if*' (Burns 2018b: 296). A quartet of catastrophising protasis-apodosis sequences follow, culminating in those excerpted below.

Excerpt 5.6

> If I'd said, 'He expressed his condolences on my sister's loss of her murdered man while at the same time linking my almost-maybe-boyfriend to a constantly recurring carbomb,' they'd have said, 'How come you're not married and why do you go out with maybe-boyfriends in the first place?' Apart from the gossip – and even if there'd been no gossip – my belief from the outset was that not really would I have been heard or believed. [...] I sensed that this doubt – of myself, of the situation – would be picked up on and would then lead to comment on my own credibility. Even if I were to be heard, people here were unused to words like 'pursuit' and 'stalking', that is, in terms of *sexual* pursuit and *sexual* stalking.

(Burns 2018b: 181-2, 182-3)

Several of the features noted in Excerpt 5.5 are also evident here. Crucially, the excerpt constructs a metaperspective through recourse to evaluative lexis and hypothetical discourse. Moreover, given that this discourse is communal, and that the third-person plural pronoun features prominently, the metaperspective is identifiably of the communal sub-type. Finally, 'gossip' is similarly omnipresent.

Structurally, middle sister is once again both 'ego' (*sensu* Laing *et al*. 1966: 4) and '*origo*' (Simpson 2014); she is the first-person 'I' to which *verba sentiendi* (e.g. 'sensed') attach. Her 'other' (Laing *et al*. 1966: 4) complement is again the community; as in Excerpt 5.5 this is indexed largely implicitly through the exclusive third-person plural pronoun, with the nominal antecedent 'the community' featuring on the previous page (180) and reinforced by the allusion to 'people here' in Excerpt 5.6 itself. The characteristic value-laden pronouncements of the hypothesised *vox populi* continue to attest to an uneven, gendered value system within the Text-actual World. This recalls the harsh societal evaluation of women Palmer (2011: 225-232) associates with the so-called Middlemarch mind. Face-threatening interrogatives (Brown and Levinson 1987) including ''How come you're not married''? and ''[W]hy do you go out with maybe-boyfriends''? are directed towards middle sister, while Milkman's veiled threats ('a constantly recurring carbomb') are ignored. Excerpt 5.6 additionally serves to reinforce the communal preoccupations and principles as discussed in Section 5.2. For instance, it typifies the text-actual injunction: ''Marriage, after territorial boundaries, is the foundation of the state.'' (Burns 2018b: 42; cf. Alarcón-Hermosilla 2021: 56).

Meanwhile, several lexemes within the communal hypothetical direct speech of Excerpt 5.7 are of stylistic interest. This includes the nominal 'carbomb', which is not typically found in dehyphenated form (OED 2022). The consequent effect is to underscore the normalisation of violence within the Text-actual World *Milkman* depicts. It suggests that the Troubles-era society has grown so accustomed to the device that a designated lexeme, rather than a hyponymic lexical compound, is necessary to denote it. The marked lack of punctuation certainly cannot be aligned with authorial external deviation. On the contrary, Burns deploys typography to the opposite extreme throughout: consider the triple-barrelled 'super-rumour-mongers' (173) middle sister evokes, or the 'almost-maybe-boyfriend' of the above excerpt. As Baker (2018) notes, narrator middle sister is characteristically 'volub[le]' (n.p), in no way given to brevity, making any conciseness notable. Similarly notable is the (hyphenated) plural noun 'maybe-boyfriends'. As suggested in Section 5.2.1, the incorporation of middle sister's idiosyncratic vocatives into the discourse of the community accentuates the status of this discourse as supposition constructed by middle sister herself. As in the example given in White (2021: 131), the 'clunky' nature of this vocative contrasts with the 'seriousness' of the situation and 'clear hurt' (*ibid*) experienced by middle sister. It is further notable that the singular 'almost-maybe-boyfriend' within middle sister's hypothetical speech is inflated to multiple 'maybe-boyfriends' within the hypothetical speech of the community. Increasing both the number of middle sister's putative boyfriends and her relative level of commitment to them ensures that, as is characteristic of gossip, the (text-)actual is 'suddenly transformed into exaggerations' (Bergmann 1993: 149).

While Excerpt 5.7 is suffused with similar epistemological uncertainty (e.g. 'this doubt') to Excerpt 5.6, it is best classified as a different text-possible world-type. Due to its antecedent + consequent syntactic form, the passage counts as a Hypothesis World rather than a Speculative Extension. It may be recalled that this world-type, appended by Semino *et al*. (1999), may be applied when 'characters or narrators [are] simply hypothesizing about alternative ways in which things might have happened.' (327). I argued in Section 2.2.7, however, that this specifically retrospective time-frame is somewhat limiting.

Excerpt 5.6 supports this contention; the suppositious scenarios middle sister constructs are initially presented as past-tense alternatives ('If I'd said'), yet later the narrator transfers to the future tense in assessing how she 'would be' perceived by her community. Ultimately, however, the text-possible world-types associated with both of the excerpts above are centrally suppositious, proving perfect environments for the construction of a metaperspective,

communal or otherwise. Meanwhile, both feature prominently the four 'typical linguistic indices' of the communal metaperspective highlighted in Section 5.1: hypothetical discourse; evaluative lexis; third-person pronouns; communal discourse.

Also frequently correlating with the presentation of the communal metaperspective in *Milkman* is a phenomenon I term *inverted communal hypothetical focalisation*. Closely related to communal hypothetical focalisation, as discussed above, this coinage is the subject of the following section.

5.7. 'Trying to understand their viewpoint': Inverted Communal Hypothetical Focalisation in *Milkman*

Section 5.1.1 introduced *inverted communal hypothetical focalisation* as the logical complement to communal hypothetical focalisation. In essence, as opposed to involving supposition *by* the community, it involves supposition *about* the community instead. This inversion, however, does not necessarily function to shift the power dynamic, as this section will demonstrate.

The phenomenon of inverted communal hypothetical focalisation is evidenced in the following excerpt, which captures middle sister's reaction to the discovery that her three 'wee sisters' are 'reading the paper from 'over there' [i.e. mainland Britain]' (Burns 2018b: 149) in an effort to ''understand their viewpoint'' (149-50), an endeavour unprecedented in her community.

Excerpt 5.7

> *Trying to understand their viewpoint!* What obscurity would wee sisters utter next? As for their remark, it was of the type that instantly could taint any person in our area. Did 'INFORMANTS BEWARE' mean nothing to those three at all? [...] [B]y associating themselves with this paraphernalia they were leaving themselves open to accusations of traitorship. [...] It was clear [...] that they'd no care for any motive a passing neighbour, chancing to look in our window, might decide to put upon this matter. [...] Had anybody from the area caught sight of them procuring those papers? [...] [W]e speculated as to whether ages six, seven and eight might not be considered too young to punish in the usual way those thought to be informers, or whether wee sisters might be rebuked only [...].

(Burns 2018b: 149-50; italics in original)

Crucial to this passage is the Speculative Extension text-possible world-type. That the scenario is so far from 'the usual' is what confers its speculative flavour; it in no way constitutes a Prediction World due to the lack of precedent and inherent uncertainty evidenced. This is captured by the co-ordinating conjunction 'or', that lexeme of proliferating possibilities, which

serves to cue two parallel Speculative Extensions, one malign ('punish[ment]'), the other slightly less so (a 'rebuke'). Indeed, the lexical verb *speculate* is explicitly included as middle sister (and later some of her elder siblings) consider the repercussions should the younger siblings have been seen purchasing or reading the communally censured broadsheets. Nonetheless, middle sister's surmising has some grounding in text-actuality, thus forming a 'possible development[...] out of the present situation' (Ryan 1991b: 116): signs of the ''INFORMANTS BEWARE'' ilk are plastered on windows throughout her neighbourhood (Burns 2018b: 152).

It is this surmising of the response of 'the area' – as well as a faction of paramilitary 'renouncers' within this area – which results in inverted communal hypothetical focalisation. The response of the community is presupposed via an implicit protasis-apodosis sequence: *if* 'anybody from the area had caught sight of them procuring the papers', *then* punishment would ensue, as they would be dubbed traitors.

Interestingly, in Excerpt 5.7 the novel, inverted communal variant of hypothetical focalisation occurs alongside a more prototypical instance of Herman's (1994, 2002) counterfactual witness. The hypothetical 'passing neighbour, chancing to look in our window' realises the strong direct form of hypothetical focalisation, given that it cues a lexically identified focalising agent who is nonetheless text-possible. As outlined in Section 3.1.3, this form of hypothetical focalisation tends to correlate with narratives which 'provoke speculation' (Herman 2002: 309) about some non-existent focaliser. This certainly tallies with the Speculative Extension-based Excerpt 5.7, while also capturing its intrinsic, panicked uncertainty.

5.7.1. The Communal Metaperspective *versus* Inverted Communal Hypothetical Focalisation

It will be noted that marked similarities exist between the proposed concepts of *communal metaperspectives* and *inverted communal hypothetical focalisation*. Certainly both are premised upon conjecture as to the perspective of a community. However, the two differ with regard to the supposed subject of the community's focus. The communal metaperspective is the result of an individual speculating about how a community perceives them. This individual, or the 'ego' (Laing *et al*. 1966: 4) must be the subject. The criteria for inverted communal hypothetical focalisation are less prescriptive. The subject of the speculation need not be the individual responsible for the speculation, as the two passages below should impress. They are

taken, respectively, from Margaret Atwood's (2000) *The Blind Assassin* and Douglas Stuart's (2020) *Shuggie Bain*, two novels which bound the time-span of Booker winners covered by this thesis.

Excerpt 5.8

> [T]*he money was burning a hole in their pockets*. *They liked to show off* [...] *play the big cheese*.

(Atwood 2000: 57)

Excerpt 5.9

> Shuggie heard the good people of the tenement pause and then return awkward greetings. He could almost hear their eyes running up and down the length of her, taking her in, making up their minds. This woman, with her bottle-dyed, jet-black hair, in the shiny black tights and the black high heels, was already drunk by lunchtime.

(Stuart 2020: 377)

In the first excerpt, intradiegetic focaliser Iris presupposes the opinion of the small-town Canadian community in which she lives. The supposed gossip, rendered in italics as opposed to quotation marks, is as evaluative as would be expected with a communal metaperspective. However, here the subject is not Iris herself but her relatives: the antecedent of the pronoun 'their' is the local land-owning Chase family. Similarly, Iris later conjectures the town gossip about her grandmother Adelia: 'People [...] in town must have laughed at her. [...] I know their style.' (Atwood 2000: 76). Again, Iris is in no way the subject of the communal viewpoint here; indeed, she never even met her grandmother, who died before she was born. Nevertheless, the strong epistemic. Nevertheless, the strong epistemic modality here ('must') serves to instantiate what Adam (2020) refers to as *assured* hypothetical focalisation (here, evidently of the communal form).

A similar familial inflection is apparent in Excerpt 5.9. In the paragraphs preceding the excerpt, adolescent enactor Shuggie and his alcoholic mother Agnes have moved into an apartment on Glasgow's South Side. While the *verba sentiendi* place Shuggie as the passage's focaliser and *origo*, the subject of the supposed neighbourhood gossip is Agnes (the anaphoric 'her'). It is she towards whom Shuggie believes the neighbours direct their judgement; given the repeated colour symbolism ('jet-black hair', 'black tights') and socially distal deictic determiner in the noun phrase 'this woman', it is surmised that these judgements are not favourable. Tangentially, the use of the generic noun phrase 'this woman' is stylistically marked here, and suggestive of cognitive dissociation. In the following chapter, I argue this

evidences a narratological phenomenon I term *intradiegetic recentering*, often employed alongside the metaperspective and the racialised metaperspective in particular.

Ultimately, these two brief excerpts from past Booker Prize winners highlight that, whilst interrelated, the phenomena of the communal metaperspective and inverted communal hypothetical focalisation are not identical. The difference lies in the internal dynamics of the two notions: with the former, the focaliser alone is the subject of the supposed communal viewpoint; with the latter, this is not the case.

5.8. Concluding Remarks

Across this chapter, prevailing literary-critical commentary about Anna Burns' 2018 Man Booker-winning *Milkman* has been linked to prominent stylistic techniques within the novel. It was suggested that these techniques on the linguistic level facilitated what head Booker judge Appiah described as the brilliant delineation of 'the power of gossip and social pressure in a tight-knit community' (Appiah, qtd. in The Booker Prizes 2020: n.p) on the thematic level. Consequently, in 'mak[ing] connections between microstructural matters of word and grammar choice and macrostructural matters of global ideology and viewpoint' (Stockwell 2002: 170), I revealed 'the intersection of social identity and textual form' (Lanser 1992: 15; cf. Alber 2015: 214 and Zhang and Shisheng 2022). This thus validates Spitzer's (1948) notion of the philological circle.

Three particular techniques were identified; these I proposed be termed *communal hypothetical focalisation* (the suppositious perspective of a community), *inverted communal hypothetical focalisation* (the suppositious perspective about a community), and the *communal metaperspective* (the individual's view of the community's view of them). The specific linguistic criteria of each were expounded through steam stylistic analysis of excerpts from Burns' novel. If, in penning the novel, Burns (2019) professed, 'I'd like the reader to feel I've conveyed something about closed societies and how they work.' (n.p), I contend that the three above phenomena are the stylistic means by which she may do so.

With each phenomenon, the subject of scrutiny tends to be considered as different in some way; above, there were children with overactive imaginations, and a focalising protagonist dubbed 'beyond-the-pale' for her idiosyncratic behaviour and deviation from gendered social norms. This pattern is replicated within other novels in which the three phenomena occur. The preceding sub-section provided examples of inverted communal hypothetical focalisation in

which the supposed subjects of scrutiny were, respectively, an aristocratic family of land-owners in suburban Canada, and an alcoholic single mother in a working-class Glasgow tenement. Despite straddling the social axis, both may be considered somehow other. Furthermore, as with its use in *Milkman*, the communal metaperspective is often influenced by gender, positioning the female as other. Taking again Atwood's (2000) *The Blind Assassin* as case-study – a novel said 'to emphasize the precarious position of women' (Charles 2000: n.p) – the communal metaperspective is frequently apparent. In an observation redolent of Milkman's middle sister, the narrator of *The Blind Assassin* remarks: 'I knew what the town had to say, much as if I'd been eavesdropping' (Atwood 2000: 57; cf. 54, 76, 547). '[T]he town' is likewise a gossip-fuelled arbiter of morality in Eleanor Catton's *The Luminaries* (2013), recipient of the Man Booker Prize in 2013. Among its constellation of characters, it is a socially transgressive woman – the prostitute Anna Wetherell – who is subjected to the scrutiny of a small New Zealand gold-mining community: 'the court of public opinion in Hokitika was a court of severe adjudication, and a reputation could be ruined overnight.' (399). Cumulatively, it is clear that the concepts proposed in this chapter have more than local significance. Further, in being respectively a first-person autodiegetic and a third-person heterodiegetic narrative, the two [Man] Booker winners referenced above highlight that [inverted] communal hypothetical focalisation and the communal metaperspective are not limited to any particular narrative form.

In Marlon James' (2014) *A Brief History of Seven Killings*, the first-person focaliser Kim Clarke – an ethnically Black Jamaican woman – is another to construct a communal metaperspective within her narrative. However, given that both her race and her gender position her at a social disadvantage (a phenomenon known as double colonisation [Ashcroft *et al*. 2013]), this occurs alongside another metaperspectival sub-type: the *racialised metaperspective*. It is this sub-type, as well as the aforementioned novel and enactor, which form the focus of the following chapter.

‘[I]gnorant bushbaby bullshit’?: Mind Style and the Racialised Metaperspective in Marlon James’ (2014) *A Brief History of Seven Killings*

> I was exactly what these workers thought I was, some uppity naigger fucking the American.
> (James 2014: 31)

6.0. Preliminaries

The metaperspectival sub-type under scrutiny in this penultimate case-study chapter is that of the *racialised metaperspective*. This variety, which pertains to race relations, is explored within Marlon James’ *A Brief History of Seven Killings* (2014; hereafter *A Brief History*), winner of the Man Booker Prize in 2015. Given the postcolonial novel’s expansive scope (see Harrison 2015), I focus specifically upon Section 3, Chapter 1 (James 2014: 277-313) and its homodiegetic narrator, Kim Clarke. It is suggested that her continual creation of a racialised metaperspective, alongside frequent forays into the text-possible more generally, form defining features of her idiosyncratic mind style. As acknowledged in the Introduction to this thesis, in the present chapter my own intuitive response to the cognitive style of a central enactor within *A Brief History* is supplemented – indeed, confirmed – by digital reader-response data. Much as in Chapter 5, this technique both engages with and impresses the efficacy of the philological circle (Spitzer 1948).

This chapter also introduces my coinage of intradiegetic recentering, which I argue to be a necessary extension to Ryan’s (1991b, 1995, 2015, 2022) notion of ‘[fictional] recentering’ (cf. Van Looy 2005). As with the constructs of *communal hypothetical focalisation* and *inverted communal hypothetical focalisation* in the previous chapter, this phenomenon is suggested to be one which commonly co-occurs with the racialised metaperspective, while not being a necessary or sufficient condition of this particular metaperspectival sub-type. (Indeed, intradiegetic recentering is also evidenced within a more generic metaperspective in the following chapter). Likewise, I also align two established, interdisciplinary concepts with that of the racialised metaperspective: *double consciousness* (du Bois 1903) from postcolonial studies, and *controlling images* (Collins 2009) from sociology.

Enabling this interdisciplinary approach, which maps concepts grounded in the Actual World to enactors existing in the Text-actual one, are Sections 6.2 and 6.3. Section 6.2 delves further into the technical nuances of the various terms introduced above, including *controlling images*, *double consciousness* and *postcolonial*, therefore bringing an interdisciplinary perspective to the chapter. Section 6.3 traces several similarities sustained across the actual—fictional ontological divide. In Sections 6.4 to 6.6, the theory is exchanged for practice as choice excerpts from James' novel which incorporate the aforementioned techniques are analysed via steam stylistic precepts. Section 6.7 unpacks reactions to the text-actual enactor Kim Clarke by readers in the Actual World, concentrating in particular upon her perceived plausibility. Section 6.8 concludes by summarising the chapter's overall findings, as well as anticipating the metaperspectival sub-type to be surveyed in the fourth and final case-study chapter, which diverges both conceptually and linguistically from those considered so far. Contrastingly, in beginning this chapter by identifying the typical linguistic indices of the racialised metaperspective, I note the similarities between this third proposed metaperspectival sub-type and the previous two explored in Chapters 4 and 5.

6.1. The Racialised Metaperspective: Typical Linguistic Indices

As suggested above, the racialised metaperspective is a sub-type relating to the concepts of colour, culture, and/or ethnicity. Note that the varied prejudices which this full definition acknowledges hinge upon the official governmental definition of *racism*, namely:

> Racism in general terms consists of conduct or words or practices which disadvantage or advantage people because of their colour, culture, or ethnic origin. In its more subtle form it is as damaging as in its overt form.
>
> (Macpherson 1999: 41)

It is also important to recognise that the chosen appellation for this metaperspectival sub-type is *racialised* rather than *racial*. This flags that the topic at issue is not biological race *per se*, but rather the societal conception of race, a point to be returned to in Sections 6.2.2 and 6.2.4, below. For this reason, and patterned upon Laing *et al.*'s (1966: 4) precept, the racialised metaperspective may be defined as:

> *My view* of the *other's* racially-inflected *view* of me. [27]

[27] Due to the original italicisation of Laing *et al.*'s (1966: 4) template definition, underlining is employed for emphasis here instead.

As several excerpts below will illustrate, this sub-type has an affinity to that examined in the previous chapter: the *communal metaperspective*. It is not uncommon for an individual to presume the racially-inflected perspective of a social collective; indeed, as Section 6.2.2 elaborates, this phenomenon informs the concept of double consciousness (du Bois 1903).

Nonetheless, the racialised metaperspective is distinct due to its focus on the subjects of colour, culture, and/or ethnicity, and correspondingly possesses its own specialised indices. It does, however, share two more generalised linguistic indices with both the discourse-architectural and the communal metaperspective, namely:

1. Hypothetical discourse (speech/thought/writing) presentation;
2. Evaluative lexis.

While the former gestures to the inherently suppositious nature of the metaperspective, the latter impresses that it is predicated upon interpersonal judgement.

Alongside these two prototypical metaperspectival indices are two which are more particularised. Firstly, due to the defining focus of the racialised metaperspective, its most salient linguistic feature is:

3. Semantic field of race.

Due to the human tendency towards categorisation (Pihlaja 2022), this is often achieved via simple nominal premodification. Racially-inflected binaries may be employed (e.g. *black*/*white*), or, alternatively, nationalised epithets (e.g. *American*, *British*, *French*). Conversely, reference to race may be more allusive and implicit, shadowing Macpherson's (1999) 'subtle form' (41). For example, there may be words or phrases with racial connotations (e.g. *bushbaby*, *local wildlife*), or those associating a particular race with stereotyped characteristics of appearance and/or personality. Finally, and at the opposite end of the spectrum of visibility, are racist expletives (e.g. *naigger*, *bush bitch*), corresponding to the 'overt form' of racism referenced in Macpherson (1999: 41).

Index 3 of the racialised metaperspective commonly aligns with the fourth and final typical index of this particular sub-type:

4. [Dia]lect representation.

Again, several diverse linguistic strategies shelter under this single umbrella index. As Hodson (2010) recognises, disparate dialects may be differentiated along a variety of axes – grammatical, lexical, phonological, semantic, syntactic – and by a variety of stylistic means, including (but not limited to) eye dialect and semi-phonetic respelling. Whilst outlining the Creole continuum in Section 6.3.1, the topic of (fictional) dialect representation will be treated in some depth; it will also form a recurring focus of the steam-stylistic analysis of Excerpts 6.1 to 6.9.

Indeed, all four of the 'typical linguistic indices' outlined above will be amply evidenced through the steam stylistic analysis of passages excerpted from *A Brief History*. It will also be. It will also become apparent that the racialised metaperspective frequently co-occurs with what may be considered related phenomena. These comprise:

a) Controlling images;
b) Double consciousness;
c) Intradiegetic recentering.

These three constructs originate in three different disciplines: sociology, postcolonial studies, and narratology, respectively. Their co-existence and frequent overlap with the racialised metaperspective should not suggest superfluity, but instead justify the creation of the racialised metaperspective sub-category through the logic of triangulation. I return to the subject of the two former terms in Section 6.2, also addressing potential objections to the racialised metaperspective on the grounds of theoretical overlap. The third and final related phenomenon – intradiegetic recentering – is in contrast explored in the next sub-section, forming as it does another of my own proposed coinages, alongside the racialised metaperspective.

6.1.1. Related Phenomena: Intradiegetic Recentering

In Section 2.2.2.1, Ryan's (1991b) notion of '[fictional] recentering' was introduced as 'an imaginative relocation of author and reader into an alternative possible world' (Ryan 2022: n.p): the 'world' constructed by a work of fiction. Following on from the consideration of this 'move [...] constitutive of the fictional mode of reading' (Ryan 2015: 73), here I propose the term *intradiegetic recentering* as hyponym. [28] As noted above, this is suggested not as an alteration to Ryan's original formulations, but rather an extension of the terminology to achieve

[28] In acknowledgement of the theoretical origins of this term, the phrase (and all its grammatical derivatives) will retain American orthography.

greater analytical precision. It is comparable to Van Looy's (2005) coinage of 'virtual recentering' as hyponym in the context of video games.

Intradiegetic recentering may be used to refer to instances in which one enactor explicitly adopts the perspective of another, appropriating their discourse and wielding an unwarranted degree of assurance as to their thoughts and/or feelings. While this definition reveals intradiegetic recentering and the metaperspective to be closely connected, it also underscores them as distinct. Much as with inverted communal hypothetical focalisation in Chapter 5, the scope of intradiegetic recentering is less limited than that of the metaperspective. Rather than the enactor who appropriates the discourse of another remaining as the sole interest-focus (Chatman 1986), the topics covered are unrestricted. For example, when Kim Clarke intradiegetically recenters into the cognition of a colony of territorial seagulls in Excerpt 6.5, their supposed focus is both their ideal living arrangements and Kim as usurper of this ideal. Additionally, the narrative phenomenon of intradiegetic recentering is often more prolonged than that of the metaperspective: indeed, it is a process rather than a stance. To evoke the common idiom, it is figuratively akin to walking in someone else's shoes, rather than, say, temporarily borrowing their glasses.

The designation of 'intradiegetic' emphasises that the phenomenon, unlike that of [fictional] recentering, occurs within the Text-actual World rather than across the ontological boundary between the Actual World and the Text-actual World. It is nevertheless still demonstrably recentering, for it constitutes cognitive 'relocation' and 'necessitates the sacrifice of [...] identity' (Ryan 1991b: 26) by the initiating enactor. (For instance, in Excerpt 6.5 the enactor Kim Clarke foregoes feet for feathers). Indeed, unlike [fictional] recentering, intradiegetic recentering is an enactor- not reader-centred phenomenon.

Ryan (2015) asserts that '[fictional] recentering [...] forms the basic condition for an immersive reading experience' (73). Comparatively, intradiegetic recentering is not foundational, nor even necessary, in a work of fiction. However, it does contribute appreciably to depicting realistic characters, given that it reflects the innate human tendency to model the minds of others (see, e.g. Oatley 2011; Stockwell 2022; Zunshine 2006, 2015, 2021) despite our inability to ever truly 'know what they're thinking' (James 2014: 278). In *A Brief History*, for instance, Kim's constant recourse to this form of perspectival supposition appears to correlate with her reception as convincingly lifelike – 'a particularly powerful creation'

(Blincoe 2020: n.p) – by Actual World readers. I return to the remarkably convergent responses of literary critics and lay readers in Section 6.8, below.

It should be noted that Ryan does not fail to recognise the possibility of intradiegetic recentering; rather, she is remiss in allocating the phenomenon a specific, hyponymic term. For instance, in her (1991b) monograph, Ryan refers to the ability of enactors to 'recenter into what is for them a second-order, and for us [i.e. Actual World readers] a third-order, system of reality' (77). This may be interpreted in either one of two ways. It may allude to the cuing of text-possible worlds (see Sections 2.2.5 and 2.2.7) by fictional enactors. Alternatively, it may describe the process of intradiegetic recentering, whereby one enactor assumes the perspective of another enactor within the Text-actual World. Clearly, a coinage to discriminate between the two options is of use.

On the linguistic level, the typical indices of intradiegetic recentering are

i) A shifted deictic centre;

ii) A change in register.

These two enable the enactor to 'pretend[...] to be a member of the foreign world and describe[...] it in the real mode' (Ryan 1995: 264), much as with [fictional] recentering. The sole difference lies in the ontological status of 'the foreign world'; with [fictional] recentering it is the Text-actual World which supplants the Actual World, whilst with intradiegetic recentering one enactor's text-possible, Epistemic World is replaced by the text-possible world(s) of another. The first index also serves to align a possible worlds-based concept with Deictic Shift Theory (DST), as promulgated by Duchan *et al*. (1995). It has been acknowledged that the two frameworks have an undeniable affinity (McIntyre 2006), for the analysis of movement between ontologically diverse deictic planes is central to both.

While both indices of intradiegetic recentering are evidenced in the passages excerpted from *A Brief History*, below, the latter is particularly salient given the Text-actual World backdrop of a diglossic Jamaica, premised upon the overlapping lects of the Creole continuum. The stratified language environment upon the island will be discussed in depth in Section 6.3.1, below. Following this, the stylistic analysis of Sections 6.4 to 6.6 will unveil intradiegetic recentering as central to Kim Clarke's idiosyncratic mind style. Across the excerpted passages, the 'fretful' (Boyagoda 2015: n.p) enactor adopts the perspectives of neighbourhood gossips, a company boss, and even a colony of seagulls. Additionally, this tendency will be tied to the notion of 'double consciousness' (du Bois 1903), reviewed in the subsequent section.

6.2. The Racialised Metaperspective: An Interdisciplinary Perspective

This section explores the interdisciplinary nexus surrounding my proposed concept of the racialised metaperspective. As signalled in Section 6.1, this predominantly involves the established notions of controlling images (e.g. Benz 2020; Collins 2009; Commodore *et al*. 2020; Gentles-Peart 2019; Woodard and Mastin 2005) and double consciousness (du Bois 1903). However, as both hinge upon the term *postcolonial*, I will begin by briefly contextualising this broad research field.

6.2.1. The Postcolonial

The term *postcolonial* encompasses all discourses concerned with exploring the dismantling of the apparatus of empire, the aftereffects of this process, and empire's residual legacy. Originally applied solely in the context of literary studies, today its application is eclectic and interdisciplinary. Studies run the gamut from postcolonial architectural analyses (e.g. Lai 2018) to those couched within postcolonial zoology (Anderson 2016). While in Section 6.0 *A Brief History* was unequivocally deemed a 'postcolonial novel', at times the use of this adjective can prove controversial. Over recent years, both its prefixation and occasional hyphenation (as post-colonial) have sparked debate (Ashcroft *et al*. 2013: 204-9; Wales 2011: 331-2); each are accused of prioritising the colonial era over subsequent history. While throughout this chapter I continue to use the term, I remain mindful of its far-from-neutral status.

6.2.2. Related Phenomena: Double Consciousness

Double consciousness, a term which the Harlem Renaissance figurehead W.E.B. du Bois introduced into wider circulation (though did not invent; see Sundquist 1996: 19, 47) denotes a conceptual phenomenon experienced by Black people in hegemonic White societies. It is thought to result in an internalised sense of inferiority among Black peoples. In his seminal collection of essays, *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), du Bois describes the process as follows.

> [A Black person is] gifted with second-sight in this American world,—a world which yields him [*sic*] no true self-consciousness, but only lets him *see himself through the revelation of the other world*. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, *this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others*, or measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness,—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. [...] [F]rom this must arise a painful self-consciousness, an almost morbid sense of personality and a moral hesitancy which is fatal to self-confidence. [...] [T]his must produce a peculiar wrenching of the soul, a peculiar sense of

> doubt and bewilderment. This double life, with double thoughts, double duties, and double social classes, must give rise to double words and double ideals, and *tempt the mind to pretence* or to revolt, to hypocrisy or to radicalism.
>
> (du Bois 1903: 102, 205; my italics)

Ultimately, Black individuals are felt not to attain a unified sense of selfhood, instead struggling to reconcile various facets of their identity due to externally-imposed prejudice and stereotype. The Black Jamaican enactor Kim Clarke, prime focus of the present chapter, certainly evidences a 'sense of doubt and bewilderment' akin to that mentioned above.

Clearly, the concept of double consciousness chimes with that of the metaperspective. The italicised portions of the above passage prove particularly pertinent. For example, reference to the conjectured perspective of 'the other world' recalls Laing *et al*.'s (1966) definition of the metaperspective as '*My view* of the *other's* [...] *view* of me' (4), whilst the description of double consciousness as 'this sense of always looking at oneself through the eyes of others' echoes a phrase in Laing *et al*. (1966) which casts the metaperspective as a process of 'becom[ing] aware of how one looks in the eyes of the other' (5). Meanwhile, given that the racialised metaperspective relates specifically to a racially-inflected view of how the other views oneself, the sub-type bears an even higher degree of affinity to double consciousness, a phenomenon premised upon race relations.

Nonetheless, the two are not entirely identical (which would render the racialised metaperspective, as a more recent innovation, superfluous). Firstly, du Bois' understanding of double consciousness relates the phenomenon to a specific racial melange: it is applied solely to 'this American world' in which Black people are treated as social subordinates to Whites. The racialised metaperspective, in turn, is a more inclusive concept. It may be applied to any society stratified according to 'colour, culture, or ethnic origin' (Macpherson 1999: 41); Section 8.3.3 of the concluding chapter to this thesis sketches its potential for application outside the bounds of *A Brief History* as case-study here. (The racial dynamics of *A Brief History* will be reviewed in Section 6.3, below). Alongside this difference in scope is one of degree. As highlighted by the pre-modifier, *double* consciousness is the result of a superimposition of two perspectives. One is that of the White person, a viewpoint du Bois (1903) proposes Black people are socially primed to adopt, and in doing so, denigrate their authentic selves. The second perspective is the subjective viewpoint of the Black person themselves: their Epistemic World. It is suggested to be the admix of the two which results in '[t]his double life, with double thoughts'. In contrast, the racialised metaperspective does not

involve perspectival simultaneity. Instead, the metaperspective is formed from the momentary relegation of one's own perspective in favour of that of the other. While the two perspectives may inform one another (see Section 3.2.4), they do not exist in tandem. Given that the two phenomena are distinct albeit interrelated, both will inform my analyses of Sections 6.4 to 6.6 below. Indeed, du Bois' suggestion that double consciousness needs must 'tempt the mind to pretence' may be seen to prefigure my discussion of enactor Kim Clarke's idiosyncratic mind style, one inflected by the racialised metaperspective and intradiegetic recentering.

The application of double consciousness here may be viewed as slightly contradictory, given its grounding in 'this American world' and *A Brief History*'s predominantly Jamaican setting. While the proviso exists that double consciousness was originally formulated in an African-American context, I concur with Gilroy (2002) who argues it to be applicable to 'post-slave populations in general' (126), for the race-related social inequities it is founded upon stretch beyond America's borders. Clearly, the post-1962, newly-independent island of Jamaica accords with this addendum. It is an island marked by derivative colonialism following the dismantling of the British Empire (Harrison 2017), and 'shadist' ideology – whereby societal worth is accorded based on relative lightness of skin (see James and Bailey 2016) – is rife (James 2014: 31, 289). Likewise, Gentles-Peart (2019) effectively applies the concept of double consciousness to Black women 'seeing themselves through the prism of both Jamaican and Western ideologies' (66). Moreover, due to Kim's idolisation of all things American within *A Brief History*, the original focus of double consciousness upon 'the special difficulties arising from black internalisation of an American identity' (Gilroy 2002: 126) should perhaps not even be entirely discounted in discussing the predominantly Jamaican context of James' novel. [29]

6.2.3. Double Colonisation

Another phenomenon prefaced by doubling is that of double colonisation, which refers to the subjection of Black women to the synergistic controlling forces of patriarchy and racism (Ashcroft *et al*. 2013: 89-90). However, in this instance the doubling results not in a splitting of identity but a compounding of intersecting oppressions. Fanon alludes to this in *The Wretched of the Earth* (2004), discussing a gulf between the powerful and the powerless which creates a quadripartite social structure of 'separate compartments' (5). Likewise, *A Brief History* enactor Kim Clarke is aware of her interlinked societal disadvantages. This is apparent

[29] As observed in Chapter 2, while I choose to capitalise the epithets *black* and *white* within my own analysis, I retain the original typography of the quotations I incorporate.

as she classifies herself from the perspective of her partner as ‘a Third World woman whom it is his duty to educate’ (James 2014: 282), cuing a racialised metaperspective grounded in the awareness of her double colonisation. The irony of this quotation comes through the inclusion of the highly formal object pronoun ‘whom’. Kim is clearly far from an ignorant in need of ‘educat[ion]’; indeed, she has undergone fifteen years of schooling at prestigious institutions (James 2014: 32; cf. 632-3). This underscores the stereotypes governing societal perceptions of Black women, a subject given firm form in Collins’ (2009) concept of *controlling images*.

6.2.4. Related Phenomena: Controlling Images

The sociological concept of controlling images derives from the work of Collins (2009), and is central to Black feminist epistemology. In essence, it denotes a catalogue of pervasive, predominantly negative, stereotyped images or ‘tropes’ (Commodore *et al*. 2019: 4) associated with Black women. Having endured over the centuries, they each function to govern public perception and thus to pigeonhole this social group. The confluence of oppressions which results in double colonisation is key to this; controlling images ‘degrade[...] and denigrate[...] according to race, class and gender’ (Woodard and Mastin 2005: 270). As Commodore *et al*. (2019) recognise: ‘Once embedded into public discourse, these *narratives* become, in some ways, accepted truths about Black women, without Black women’s input, validation, or consent’ (1; my italics). Indeed, while modelled on Actual World patterns of behaviour, the inherently storied nature of controlling images makes them ideally suited to application within a Text-actual World context. It should however be flagged that, as with the theory of double consciousness, Collins’ original research into controlling images was conducted in a specifically (African-)American context. Nonetheless, once again this caveat does not limit the scope of the concept’s applicability; Collins herself acknowledges that ‘[i]ntersecting oppressions do not stop at national borders’, but rather ‘a *transnational* matrix of domination’ (250; my italics) exists. Indeed, the theory proves particularly pertinent to the Jamaican-set novel *A Brief History*, as Section 6.4 will elaborate. Controlling images and double consciousness also overlap as both relate to the perceptions of Black people within a social nexus. While the latter is more interiorly-focused, involving ‘a painful self-consciousness’ (du Bois 1903: 205), controlling images relate to the *external* view of Black women by society-at-large – even if these stereotypes do unavoidably filter into the psyches of Black women themselves.

Ultimately, Collins (2009) identified four overriding controlling images, the content and interrelations of which are reviewed below.

1. Mammy – a Black woman employed as domestic help, humble and ever faithful to her (oftentimes White) employer. Emphasising the long legacy of this stereotyped configuration, a similar (though ungendered) figure is evoked in du Bois (1903): 'the frank, honest, simple old servant' instilled with 'submission and humility' (206).

2. Matriarch – something of an inverse of the Mammy figure, a woman exuding an overbearing maternal presence. She is considered to be 'unfeminine' (Collins 2009: 83) as well as 'controlling and emasculating' (Woodard and Mastin 2005: 271).

3. Welfare Mother/Welfare Queen – A woman refusing to work and instead reliant upon the State to support herself (and potentially her family) financially. Note, however, the optionality of children in the modern-day iteration identified by Collins (2009), as signalled by the oblique above. This figure is an elaboration of the Antebellum-era 'Breeder Woman' (Collins 2009; Woodard and Mastin 2005), further compounding the historical antecedents of Collins' controlling images. A white-collar counterpart to this third controlling image is that of the 'Black Lady' (Collins 2009; Commodore *et al*. 2019): a professional woman who behaves in an entitled and conceited manner.

4. Jezebel – a woman who is sexually promiscuous and willing to offer herself for money. In present-day parlance, the Jezebel is also often known as a 'Hoochie', and associated with gang culture (Collins 2009).

In corroborating Collins' (2009) findings, more recent studies (Benz 2020; Gentles-Peart 2019) have since appended an additional controlling image, that of the

5. Sapphire – a woman who is perpetually angry, confrontational and verbally aggressive.

Cumulatively, the above five controlling images reflect the restricted ways in which society is conditioned to perceive Black women. Indeed, these controlling images are so pervasive that they affect how Black women believe others to perceive them. For this reason, they are found frequently within the racialised metaperspective, premised as this concept is upon racially-inflected perspectival supposition. Excerpts 6.1 and 6.3 below are indicative; two of the five tropes listed above are incorporated into the interior monologue of *A Brief History* enactor Kim Clarke as she considers how others view her. Kim also employs a controlling image to her advantage in Excerpt 6.8.

In the following section, I continue on to outline the Text-actual World of *A Brief History*, and the Actual World undergirding it, in order to contextualise several of the concepts summarised in this section. I conclude by reviewing the Epistemic World through which *A Brief History*: Section 3, Chapter 1, is primarily refracted. This subjective text-possible world belongs to the enactor Kim Clarke, and through it the Actual World reader is afforded access to her idiosyncratic mind style.

6.3. The Actual and Text-actual Worlds of *A Brief History*

As Harrison (2015) observes, *A Brief History* is a novel notable for its excess. Indeed, several critics have facetiously acknowledged that no aspect of the work can be termed 'brief' (see, e.g., James and Roth 2015; Morgan 2020). Its cumulative death toll also far exceeds the meiotic 'seven' of the title. However, this high body count does not include that of the reggae supremo Bob Marley. Instead, it is the unsuccessful assassination attempt upon the singer – inspired by an Actual World incident – which forms the centrepiece of the novel. *A Brief History* is also populated by what Boyagoda (2015), in an allusion to Tolstoy and his contemporaries, has dubbed 'a Russian-sized 'Cast of Characters'' (n.p); allowing for aliases, there are 76 to be precise, a dozen of whom figure as homodiegetic narrators across the variably- and often multiply-focalised narrative.

Given this formal excess, here I narrow the analytical scope to focus upon a single chapter of the novel: Section 3, Chapter 1, entitled 'Shadow Dancin'' (James 2014: 275). Following the pattern of the novel's other parts, the sections spans a single day, explicitly marked as 'February 15, 1979' (*ibid*). [30] Its first chapter is narrated by the enactor Kim Clarke, who acts as focalising *origo* throughout. As this is the only occasion on which the enactor Kim narrates (though see the discussion of pseudonyms, below), the chapter may be treated discretely with relative ease. Meanwhile, the predominant discourse presentation type throughout the chapter is free direct thought (though see Section 6.3.3, below), which affords the reader largely unmediated access into Kim's cognition and enables the study of her idiosyncratic mind style.

The Text-actual backdrop for this chapter (though not for those that follow within the same section) is the popular tourist resort of Montego Bay, Jamaica. Kim, an ethnically Black Jamaican woman, is living here in the beachside apartment of her lover Charles, whom she affectionately dubs Chuck. A White American bauxite worker from the state of Arkansas, he

[30] Incidentally, this is also likely the year in which Milkman's predations upon middle sister occur; see Chapter 5.

is expecting his company to cease operating in Jamaica imminently; Kim, aware of this, has begun to siphon money from his wallet to fund a visa application allowing her to return to America with him. As a witness to the assassination attempt upon Marley, she is fearful of reprisals, living under a series of pseudonyms (while her original name is Nina Burgess, she later adopts the aliases Kim Clarke, Claudette Colbert, Dorcas Palmer and Millicent Segree), and believes escaping the country is the only way to guarantee her safety. The chapter is largely concerned with her attempts to do so, as well as detailing her hopes for the future. Kim is referred to by Boyagoda (2015) as 'tough if fretful' (n.p), qualities which make themselves apparent in her unique mind style (see further Section 6.3.4).

Both the temporal and spatial co-ordinates of this section prove significant for several reasons. Firstly, the year 1979 represents a chronological pivot point in Caribbean political history. Frydman (2019) conjures a contemporaneous atmosphere of hope in the region, attributable in no small part to the synchronous emergence of socialist movements in Cuba, Grenada and Jamaica itself. For this reason, Frydman characterises the islands' populace as 'buoyed by the possibility of alternative futures, socialist or otherwise' (36). Several of Kim's text-possible ruminations in the excerpts below reflect this optimistic expectancy. Crucially, all are formulated in a Text-actual World prior to 1980: the year Frydman (2019: 36, 40, 49) cites as juncture between a national mood of hope*ful*ness and one of hope*less*ness. In Jamaica's foremost daily newspaper, *The Gleaner*, the decade is remembered as 'turbulent and volatile' (The Gleaner 2020: n.p), one marred by financial and political crises alongside civil unrest, from the national elections in 1980 onwards. Not merely the end of a decade, 1979 proves a doubly liminal year.

Secondly, the late 1970s also mark a paradigm shift with regard to the international relations of the Caribbean region. It was during this era that the dominance of the former 'Mother Land' – Britain – over its erstwhile empire began to wane. Concomitantly, America emerged as a Cold War superpower and began to exert increasing influence over the area. The conceptual metaphor implicit in the previous sentence – HEIGHT IS POWER – is certainly one common to discussions of America's international role during this era. Frydman (2019) references 'a new imperial order *under* the bipartite auspices of the United States and the Soviet Union' (35; my italics). While contradicting these sentiments slightly, *A Brief History*'s author has recalled in interview that:

> The *hovering power* for [the Jamaican populace] when growing up in the 1970s and '80s was not the UK. It was the States, it was America. *[I]t wasn't an imperialistic power*, it was *just a cultural influence*.

(James and Roth 2014: n.p; my italics)

Once more, an impression of elevation occurs with the pre-modifier in the first italicised noun phrase, suggestive of a paternalistic (possibly patronising) omnipresence. Yet James is eager to depreciate the control America exerted, denying any 'imperial[...]' element (cf. Frydman 2019: 35), and comparing America favourably to Britain. This fraught interplay between America as paternalistic and patronising presence will be enacted throughout the excerpts of Sections 6.4 to 6.6. Here, enactors from the respective countries (America, Jamaica) often figure as metonyms for the countries from which they hail.

6.3.1. Language in (Actual and Text-actual) Jamaica

It was briefly noted in Section 6.1.1 that a *diglossic* language environment exists in Actual World Jamaica. *Diglossia* refers to a situation in which 'certain distinct social functions are regarded as appropriate for different dialects' (Wales 2011: 117), comprising a perceived 'high' variety associated with the formal sphere (e.g. education, law, politics) and a 'low' variety used in informal, colloquial contexts. In the Jamaican instance, these varieties correspond to Standard Jamaican English (modelled upon Standard British English as lexifier) and Jamaican Creole – also known locally as patois or patwa[h] – respectively. The former is termed the *acrolect*, and the latter the *basilect*. Additionally, between these two binaries – and blending, to a greater or lesser degree, characteristics of each – are a range of intermediary linguistic forms known as *mesolects*. The assorted lectal varieties differ along axes of grammar, lexis, phonology, semantics and syntax. However, due to the blended interrelations among the different lects, they are commonly conceptualised as collectively forming a 'Creole continuum' (see, e.g. Bailey 1966; Dalby 2006; Roberts 1988; Sebba 1993, 2009a, 2009b; for a diagrammatic representation, see Adam 2020a: 28). Various lects also attach to various social perceptions. The acrolect is accorded cultural capital (Bourdieu 1993); it 'bears all the elements of prestige' (Bailey 1966: 1) in an overt capacity, and is aligned with education, intelligence, sophistication and wealth. (See further Dorcas Palmer's comment: 'What doors I've opened in my life just from knowing how to speak correctly.' [James 2014: 440]). In contrast, while publicly vilified as the language of the ignorant, rural, and/or illiterate, the basilect harnesses covert prestige (Trudgill 1972) to be tied to the indubitably positive qualities of authenticity, guilelessness, friendliness, honesty, humbleness and national pride.

In *A Brief History*, a similar linguistic situation pertains. If Standard Jamaican English, modelled upon the British standard, is the language of officialdom, more creolised discourse is referred to colloquially as 'chatting bad' (e.g. James 2014: 31, 44, 411). This oft-repeated collocation indicates the pejorative associations of the local dialect. Nonetheless, it should be emphasised that any belief which yokes language use to personality and/or cognitive ability inevitably trades upon stereotypes and is in no way empirically grounded. Similarly, throughout the excerpts quoted below, the enactor Kim Clarke predicates her language use upon prominent social stereotypes, strategically employing various lects from across the Creole continuum to project distinct personas. This character trait is explored in depth in Adam (2020a), a paper which focuses on the calculated use of Jamaican Creole within *A Brief History*, and which will inform the analyses of Sections 6.4 to 6.6 below. However, prior to this it should be impressed that James' depiction of language within *A Brief History* is *fictolinguistic* (Ferguson 1998): that is, it is modelled upon and reflective of Actual World linguistic realities, as well as stereotypes, and incorporates both into a text-actual setting. As above, this justifies the application of Actual World concepts to a Text-actual World context. The novel's relative verisimilitude is considered further in the next sub-section, as well as in Section 6.7, below.

6.3.2. Genre and Accessibility Relations: *A Brief History*

As the preceding sub-sections should have emphasised, *A Brief History* can be categorised as an historical text, much like Chapter 5's *Milkman*; likewise, both are realist novels. Following the precedent set in the previous chapter, I do not append a table of the accessibility relations of *A Brief History*, and instead note that all bar Principle B (identity of inventory) are upheld. Yet while the novel certainly includes 'native' members (Ryan 1991b: 35) – for instance Nina Burgess, *alias* Kim Clarke – it also incorporates historical individuals (e.g. Bob Marley) and events (e.g. the 'Smile Jamaica' peace concert of December 1976). Following Raghunath's (2022) appended 'Category K', there is clear Referential compatibility between James' novel and the Actual World. Indeed, Blincoe (2015) classes the novel as 'almost true' (n.p), while Morgan (2020) proposes: '[M]uch of the horrific immediacy of the novel is crafted through its astute use of a series of bizarre real-life occurrences, and the blurring of boundaries between fantasy and reality' (241). It is the novel's historical precedent – its 'filling in [of] gaps left by distant life histories and media reportage' (*ibid*) – which justifies the co-option of Actual World theories including *controlling images* and *double consciousness* to a Text-actual World context. This confluence of fact and fiction is also likely a contributing factor to the perceived psychological plausibility of the novel's enactors, as discussed in Section 6.8 below. This I

suggest contributes *cognitive compatibility* to the novel. It is interesting to note that James himself concurs with the critical view of his ontologically blended writings. When I questioned the author as to his writing practice, he responded with the observation that he believes himself 'almost sort of a journalist for fictionalised people. And I want to get the story.' (James 2022: n.p). The structure of 'the story' of *A Brief History* is the subject of the next sub-section.

6.3.2.1. The Post-Post-Colonial

Prior to that, the present sub-sub-section offers a brief note on the author's own categorisation of *A Brief History*. Premised upon the concept of the postcolonial (Section 6.2.1), James has in interview dubbed his work (and that of his contemporaries) as 'post-post-colonial' (James and Roth 2014; James and Naughtie 2015). This is a response to the successive waves of subjugation, outlined above, which have led Jamaica to its present moment. However, the author has since disowned his coinage (Cocozza 2015), uncomfortable with the prominence the term, as with *postcolonial* before it, allocates to the colonial as a dominant paradigm, a yardstick by which to measure all subsequent developments. He is yet to suggest a less ideologically-loaded replacement.

6.3.3. Discourse Architecture: *A Brief History*

Mapping the discourse architecture of A Brief *History* in its entirety, incorporating all dozen heterodiegetic narrators, would, as Short (1996) so archly puts it, 'entail using a very wide piece of paper' (261). Eschewing this 'complex[ity]' (*ibid*), and as the present chapter focuses only upon a portion of James' narrative, the figure below corresponds to Section 3, Chapter 1 of his novel.

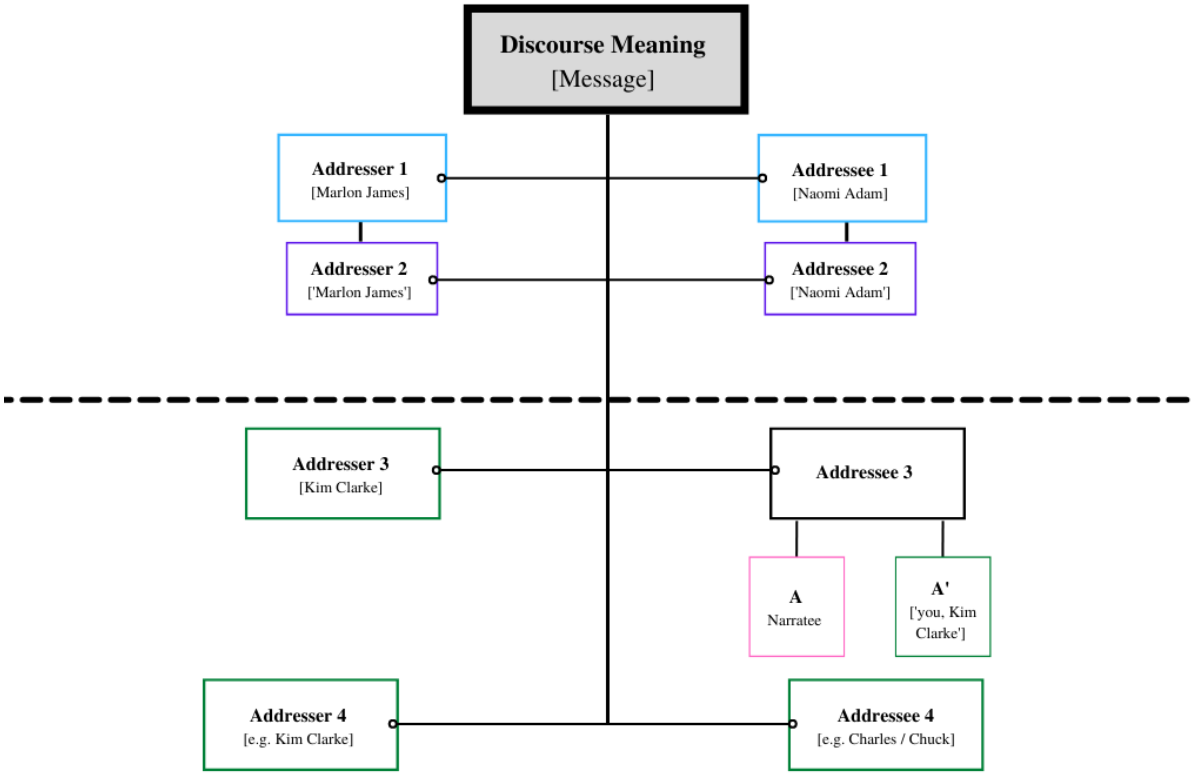


Fig. 6.1. A discourse-architectural diagram of Section 3, Chapter 1 of James' (2014) *A Brief History of Seven Killings* [31]

The figure is not dissimilar to that of Fig. 5.1; again, its four tiers accord with 'the basic discourse structure of the novel' (257), split evenly across the Actual and Text-actual Worlds. It main innovation is on the third (addresser—addressee) tier, which features two potential slots for the recipient of enactor Kim Clarke's discourse, one text-possible, the other text-actual. This is a consequence of the frequent inclusion of the second-person singular pronoun within Kim's chapter; as outlined in Chapter 4, the direct address of *you* has ambiguous linguistic reference. Indeed, the use of *you* may be interpreted as corresponding to each one of Herman's (2002) five distinct categories at various points throughout the chapter. In particular, the options of fictionalised and/or apostrophic address – that is, direct address to an intradiegetic or extradiegetic figure, respectively – are supported by passages in which Kim includes unnecessary exposition whilst mentally documenting past actions (e.g. James 2014: 286, 300). The effect is a seeming justification of her behaviour to a judgemental interlocutor. Indeed, it

[31] For key, see Fig. 3.2.

is Kim's belief that she is judged by those around her which triggers the recurrent racialised metaperspective throughout the excerpts quoted in Sections 6.4 to 6.6.

However, this supposed arbiter of morality does not become text-actual at any point during James' novel, hence the text-possible designation on Fig. 6.1. Alternatively, and recalling the (potential) self-address of Aunt Lydia in *The Testaments* (cf. Chapter 4), Kim may be employing fictional *you*, and in so doing communicating solely with herself. As her partner Chuck later observes, she is an enactor apt to 'talk[...] to [her]self like some crazy chick' (James 2014: 298). She also consciously refers to herself in the third person on multiple occasions (e.g. 278, 280-1, 287, 290, 292-3, 295-7). However, this tendency is also likely to have further psychological significance. Firstly, purposively 'call[ing] [her]self Kim Clarke' (280) serves to reinforce this latest pseudonym for an enactor who adopts several over the course of the novel (Claudette Colbert, Dorcas Palmer, Millicent Segree; cf. 559-60) as she attempts to evade detection. A further interpretation bolstered by research into trauma narratives will be explored in Section 6.5, below.

The fourth and final (enactor—enactor) level of Fig. 6.1 corresponds primarily to the rapid-fire (free) direct speech exchange of Kim and Chuck, which constitutes much of the chapter's latter half (299-310). Given that this discourse presentation type affords a more mediated access into the workings of Kim's mind, none of the excerpted passages below are taken from this portion of the chapter. Instead, all quoted excerpts comprise Kim's free direct thought, a discourse presentation type of the least mediated form (Leech and Short 2007) which thus affords privileged access into her mind and *mind style*. This topic forms the focus of the next sub-section.

6.3.4. The Epistemic World of *A Brief History*: Section 3, Chapter 1

For the majority of Section 3, Chapter 1 of *A Brief History*, the Text-actual World is not directly accessible to the Actual World reader. Instead, it is mediated by Kim Clarke as homodiegetic narrator and internal focaliser. As it is her free direct thought which constitutes the primary discourse presentation type across the chapter, the reader is afforded access to the inner workings of her mind, which displays an idiosyncratic mind style. In this regard, I follow the approach of Rundquist (2020), 'treat[ing] a[n] [enactor's] discourse as a lens into that [enactor's] mind' (152). With Kim Clarke this proves particularly efficacious. The majority of her discourse is couched as free direct thought, or 'inner speech' (*ibid*), a form which Rundquist believes to be 'less likely to be clouded by the rhetorical or manipulative strategies of

interpersonal communication and therefore likely to be more directly reflective of underlying cognitive processes' (*ibid*). However, the epistemic modality in Rundquist's latter statement (note the repeated predicate *likely*) should not be overlooked: in the case of Kim, his comments should be interpreted alongside the caveat that self-deception does not completely eradicate the likelihood of 'rhetorical or manipulative strategies' being employed. Indeed, disnarration, as a distinguishing feature of Kim's mind style (see below) hinges upon her ability to deceive, if only momentarily.

In Section 3.1.2, Fowler's (1977) notion of mind style was clarified as the 'distinctive linguistic representation of an individual mental self' (103) achieved via 'cumulative, consistent structural options' which 'cut[...] the presented world to one pattern or another.' (76). It was noted as a wide-ranging term, equally applicable to Actual World author, Text-actual World narrator and/or Text-actual World enactor, and to cognitive styles extending from the more usual, or 'neutral', to the markedly deviant. As Fowler (1977) explains:

> [A] mind style may analyse a character's mental life more or less radically; may be concerned with relatively superficial or relatively fundamental aspects of the mind, may seek to dramatize the order and structure of conscious thoughts, or just present the topics on which a character reflects, or *display preoccupations, prejudices, perspectives and values* which strongly bias a character's world-view but of which s/he may be unaware.
>
> (Fowler 1977: 103; my italics)

In the present chapter, the application of the concept concerns the 'emotionally troubled' (Gregoriou 2009: 73) mind style of the enactor Kim Clarke. I explore how social 'prejudices, perspectives and values' resulting from the phenomena of double consciousness, double colonisation and controlling images colour her cognition. Concurring with Bockting (1994), here I argue for mind style as a method of characterisation, one which serves to distinguish Kim Clarke from her other eleven narrating compatriots. In particular, through the steam stylistic analysis of the passages below, I note Kim's 'fundamental' reliance upon the text-possible.

Her deviation from the text-actual takes four main forms, each of which are amply evidenced in the excerpts cited below. Firstly, recalling Semino's (2006) exploration of the mind style of the female protagonist in 'Lappin and Lapinova', Kim consistently privileges (text-possible) fantasy over (text-actual) reality. Yet in contrast to the enactor analysed in Semino's article, Kim does not suffer from the 'mental disturbance' (65) of 'maladaptive daydreaming' (67). She is aware of the boundary between the text-possible and the text-actual, however much she wants to escape the latter. Indeed, her second text-possible tendency is her disnarration (Prince

1988, 1992) of the text-possible scenarios she cues. This involves unambiguously marking their text-possible status (Ryan 1995: 264) through explicit textual cues, which serves to further foreground the initial inclusion of the text-possible passages. Again, this second text-possible strategy also figures as 'a characterisation device' (Prince 1988: 4), capturing Kim's deep sense of dissatisfaction and emotional volatility. The third and fourth text-possible tendencies inherent to Kim Clarke's mind style are interlinked: the racialised metaperspective and intradiegetic recentering. Both display a preoccupation with the perspectives of others; although these perspectives are presented, they are never text-actually verified. Given the socially pervasive nature of double consciousness, double colonisation and controlling images (see Section 6.2) in the Actual World upon which *A Brief History*'s Text-actual World is based, this 'painful self-consciousness' (du Bois 1903: 205) is not unprecedented. Meanwhile, ultimately it is the interweaving of these various text-possible tendencies which results in Kim Clarke's distinctive mind style. The following four sections now exemplify this cognitive idiosyncrasy through the steam stylistic analysis of extended textual excerpts from the chapter she narrates and focalises.

6.4. '[P]eople will wonder why this black woman': The Racialised Metaperspective and Kim Clarke

Kim's 'preoccupation[...]' (Fowler 1977: 103) with the text-possible is in evidence from the very beginning of her narration. In the following quotation, excerpted from the first and second pages of Section 3, Chapter 1 (James 2014: 277-8), Kim as *origo* documents her thoughts and feelings whilst walking home from a shopping trip. Grounded upon the construction of a racialised metaperspective, the passage incorporates two of the five controlling images listed above (Section 6.2.4), and is threaded through with instances of intradiegetic recentering. Indeed, the ocular semantic field of Kim's comments – 'people seeing them', 'them watching me' – recalls Laing *et al.*'s (1966) initial explication of the metaperspective: 'I am constantly supposing them [i.e. other people] to be seeing me in particular ways' (4; cf. Stewart n.d).

Excerpt 6.1

> I like people seeing me walking to that home, but I don't like them watching me. They don't see me as me, but as a woman walking to that house near the beach that looks like somebody up and plucked it out of *Hawaii Five-O*. A house that looks like it have no business there and people will wonder why this black woman think she have reason to go deh so with her head held high like she own it. First they will see me as *a woman* who go there once and have to leave in the morning with whatever was my rate. Then they'll see me as *that woman* who go there plenty and must be sweeting that white boy good, or at least being discreet about it. [...] Then they will see me leaving and coming and carrying paper shopping bag and think, maybe

> she have something to do with the house, like the maid. Then they will see that I leave in not good clothes and return [...] and only then start to think maybe she live there for true. She and the white man. No, the white man and she.

(James 2014: 277-8; italics in original)

In text-possible terms, following the 'Best of Both Worlds Theories' methodology sketched in Chapter 2, the above excerpt constitutes a Prediction World. This is the most appropriate categorisation given its grounding in schematic knowledge surrounding societal perceptions of 'black wom[e]n' (cf. Semino *et al*. 1999: 325-6; on the ubiquity of neighbourhood gossip in the Caribbean's social fabric, see Pollard 2011). Collins' (2009) controlling images prove particularly pertinent here. It is these tropes which constrict the 'particular ways' (Laing *et al*. 1966: 4) in which Kim believes others will see her. Specifically, she evokes trope 1: the Mammy, and trope 4: the Jezebel. The former trope features much more explicitly than the latter, triggered through the appellative 'maid' as lexical synonym for the 'domestic servant' of Collins' (2009: 80) prototype (cf. Woodard and Mastin 2005: 272) as well as the description of manual domestic duties ('leaving and coming and carrying paper shopping bag'). The more implicit Jezebel trope may be inferred from the italicised generic noun phrase '*a woman*', especially in combination with reference to 'a rate', alongside the colloquial Jamaican Creole term 'sweeting' (meaning 'Using words or phrases that could be considered seductive' [Jamaican Patwah 2021: n.p]). This figure likewise aligns completely with the literature on the subject. Kim effectively positions herself as 'hypersexual and promiscuous' (Commodore *et al*. 2020: 1), 'available' (Gentles-Peart 2019: 53), a 'whore' (Woodard and Mastin 2005: 272) whose 'main purpose is to provide [...] sexual favours [...] for money' (Collins 2009: 91, 92). Overall, if with this latter controlling image Kim, as a Black woman, is objectified, with the former Mammy trope she is presented almost animalistically, as a 'workhorse[...]' (Commodore *et al*. 2020: 1; cf. Collins 2009). The dehumanisation which informs both these tropes is recurrent throughout the excerpts cited below.

Nonetheless, it must be impressed that the application of these tropes to Kim does not occur in the Text-actual World. Instead, the disparaging commentary of Excerpt 6.1 is purely suppositious; it is, after all, what Kim believes other 'people will wonder'. This is easily overlooked precisely because of the surety with which it is couched. The passage begins with a categorical assertion ('They don't see me as me') in which Kim presents the viewpoint of others unequivocally, and strong epistemic modality (via the modal auxiliary *will* in full and contracted form) dominates throughout. The speculation is even presented methodically – as demonstrated by the fronted temporal adverbials 'First' and 'Then' – further contributing to a

veneer of definitiveness. The certainty mere speculation is accorded may be traced to the rigidly defined roles Black women are assigned within society, as captured by Collins' (2009) roster of controlling images.

Allowing Kim to project in detail the presumed perspectives of her neighbours is the technique of intradiegetic recentering. As noted in Section 6.1.1, intradiegetic recentering is achieved via two main linguistic means: i) a shifted deictic centre, and ii) a change in register. Both are clearly evidenced in Excerpt 6.1. The former includes the use of both distal and proximal deixis (i.e. 'that' in line 1 and 'this' in line 3); one signals the literal distance of prototypical spatial deixis, while the other more figuratively flags a dismissive attitude through referential deixis (Stockwell 2002: 46). This is compounded by references to herself in the third person: consider 'this black woman', '*that woman*', and the aforementioned '*a woman*'. The latter is achieved through frequent style shifts into basilectal Jamaican Creole. These appear on the grammatical, lexical, and phonological levels. Consider, for instance, the verb levelling of 'she have', which is marked in contrast to the standard inflected verb phrase 'looks like' within Kim's earlier more mesolectal discourse; the creolised slang 'sweeting'; semi-phonetic respelling to approximate characteristically Creole th-stopping ('deh'). Cumulatively, these linguistic features enable the illusion of a third-party perspective despite the underlying first-person narrative stance. If Boyagoda (2015) noted the novel's 'Russian-sized 'Cast of Characters'' (n.p), then intradiegetic recentering enables the Russian doll-style stacking of the perspectives of these characters, one inside the other.

Undergirding each of the above phenomena – controlling images, double consciousness, intradiegetic recentering – is the racialised metaperspective. At root, Kim's perspectival supposition presents her view of the other's view of her because of her racial identity. All four linguistic indices associated with this metaperspectival sub-type are in evidence; the previous paragraphs dealt at length with the hypothetical and evaluative nature of the indirect, direct and free direct discourse Kim assigns to her neighbours. Alongside these two generalised indices of the metaperspective are the two more closely associated with the racialised sub-type: a semantic field of race, and [dia]lect representation. The former is signalled particularly explicitly, with the antonymous racial epithets 'black' and 'white' featuring in almost half (4 out of 9) of the passage's sentences. Particularly saliently, these epithets figure as an individual's defining feature; not only does Kim conceive of herself 'through the eyes of others' (du Bois 1903: 102) as 'this black woman', her partner Chuck is also termed 'that white

boy' and 'the white man'. As Excerpt 6.5 below will illustrate, this is a pattern throughout Kim's narration, even infiltrating her presumption of the perspectives of local wildlife.

Ultimately, this illustrates Kim's innate consciousness of her 'dark body' (du Bois 1903: 102), a defining characteristic of double consciousness. The binary racial epithets are particularly significant in the chiasmus of the passage's close, as syntax is altered to reflect power dynamics. Through linguistic reformulation, 'the white man' is made to precede 'she', because 'she' is socially subordinate due to both her racial and gender status. Indeed, as well as reflecting double consciousness, these sentences recognise Kim's double colonisation as both ethnically Black Jamaican and a woman.

Kim's doubly-disadvantaged social status is likewise central to the following excerpt. National identity is marked even more explicitly here than in the first, and a greater admix are intermingled: there are 'French', 'British' and 'Australian' enactors alongside Kim as 'Jamaican' focaliser. This serves to reinforce the acuity of Collins' (2009) observation that 'intersecting oppressions do not stop at national borders.' (250). Indeed, the topic of race is foregrounded from the first via the clarificatory sentence fragment 'White men, that is.', following which Kim documents the typical reactions she as a 'Jamaican girl[...]' receives from 'White men' of assorted heritage.

Excerpt 6.2

> All of them come through Mantana's. White men, that is. If the man is French he thinks that he gets away with saying cunt but saying you cohnnnt, because we bush bitches will never catch his drift. [...] If he's British and over thirty, you spend the whole time watching the stereotypes pile up, from the lettttttt meeeee sssssspeeeeeakkk toooo youuuuu slowwwwlyyyyy, dahhhhhhhling beccauuuuuse youuuuuuu're jusssssst a liiiiiitle blaaaaack, speed of their speech [...]. If he's Australian, he'll just lie back and let you do all the work because even us blokes in Sydney hear about you Jamaican girls.

(James 2014: 287-8)

Again, the excerpt may be classed as a Prediction World; it is based upon past encounters as the iterative verbal aspect of the first sentence indicates. Nonetheless, its content is hypothetical, as is the discourse presented, as the fronted and repeated prototypical hypothetical space-builder 'If' (Stockwell 2002: 96) flags. Undeniably, the discourse is also evaluative. The free indirect appellative 'we bush bitches', for instance, levels three distinct insults in as many words. Kim is firstly deindividualised via the collective pronoun (later echoed in second-person form within the noun phrase 'you Jamaican girls'), then patronised through the connotations of primitiveness attached to the pre-modifier 'bush', and finally dehumanised with the head

noun ‘bitch’. Moreover, these latter two terms also possess sexual undertones, suggesting the additional objectification of Kim. However, once again it must be remembered that this is in no way a direct rendering of the discourse of another. Instead, it is a viewpoint filtered through the view of Kim as focaliser, resulting in her view of the other’s view of her: the prototypical metaperspective.

In the following instance, Kim Clarke once again presumes to ‘look[...] at [her]self through the eyes of [an]other’ (du Bois 1903: 102). In this instance, the ‘other’ slot is filled by the CEO of Alcorp Bauxite, the company for which her partner Chuck works. Although never explicitly stated, the enactor is implied to be, like Chuck, a White American male.

Excerpt 6.3

> *Charles, Charles, we can’t be giving extra tickets to every man who falls in love with the local wildlife, what do you think this is,* South Pacific*?* Oh stop thinking, Kim Clarke, believe you me, you’re going to drive yourself crazy.

(James 2014: 298)

Kim’s shifted deictic centre within this Prediction World is initially made apparent through social deixis, with her partner addressed via the more formalised vocative ‘*Charles*’. Following this, a familiar theme reappears: Kim is once more cremomorphised (‘*local wildlife*’) within hypothetical free direct discourse. Interestingly, the excerpt also features a further embedded text-possible world: while Kim conjectures the perspective of her partner Chuck’s boss, he in turn presupposes the perspective of Chuck in the tag question ‘*what do you think this is,* South Pacific?’. This adds a further layer of complexity to the nested Russian-doll style narration of Excerpts 6.1 and 6.2.

Similarly, it is the presupposed perspective of her partner Chuck which informs the racialised metaperspective Kim develops in the next extract. Within the extract, Kim imagines the consequences should Chuck discover her dishonesty and theft. Unlike Excerpts 6.1 and 6.2 above, it cannot be deemed a Prediction World as there is no precedent for the aggressive, misogynistic behaviour Kim allocates to Chuck. (Indeed, the scene is intensely melodramatic, as the figurative alignment with ‘a movie’ spotlights; this is a common trope in the depiction of text-possible scenarios [Adam 2021: 185]). Instead, it presents her view of his view of her, her looking through the eyes of the American other (cf. du Bois 1903: 102), a circumstance framed by the ocular verb of the initial, declarative sentence.

Excerpt 6.4

> I can see him kicking me out. It will be like in a movie where everybody is talking Italian. He's dragging me out of my house – his house – the house and me on the floor begging and screaming and crawling and bawling Chuck do, no kick me out, do, no kick me out, me beg you. Me will walk on all fours fi you. Me will cook you food and breed you pickney and suck you cocky even when you don't wash it first, Do! Do! And he will look at me and ask what the fuck you mean by do? What kind of ignorant bushbaby bullshit is it when do means the same thing as please? A cock is a cock is a cock to you, he will say because it sounds savage, like he didn't spend any time to think it up, so then he can be angry and still be smart while me on the floor whimpering do, do, do, and wonder if I can just be like in *Dallas* and say it's not what it looks like, honey.

(James 2014: 291)

The first index of the racialised metaperspective, hypothetical discourse presentation, is particularly prominent within the above passage; indeed, it dominates from the second sentence onwards. The final two clauses, moreover, are doubly hypothetical, with Kim presenting an imagined response within an imagined scenario. While alternating between focaliser Kim and enactor Chuck, all speech acts are couched stylistically in the direct or free direct mode, and typographically without quotation marks. Generally, this omission of punctuation serves to lessen the level of narratorial interference (Leech and Short 2007). In the above instance, however, it likely figures as subtle indication of the discourse's lack of antecedent and consequent lack of grounding in text-actuality.

However, it is only the hypothetical speech of Chuck as 'other' which results in the construction of a racialised metaperspective. These utterances are saturated with the evaluative language which forms the second index of the racialised metaperspective. Particularly salient is Chuck's characterisation of Kim's behaviour as 'ignorant bushbaby bullshit'. As with the insults of Excerpt 6.2 ('bush bitch[...]') and 6.3 ('*local wildlife*'), this description is racially weighted. Denotatively, a *bushbaby* refers to a small nocturnal African primate, similar to a lemur; this may be interpreted as essentialising in its own right, given the implication that all Black people are African (cf. James 2014: 157). Additionally, its individual morphemes connote, respectively, savagery and primitiveness ('bush') and infantilisation ('baby'). The insult is only compounded by the adjective 'ignorant', further evidence of the patronising stance Kim believes others adopt in relation to her (cf. 'jusssst a liiiiiitle blaaaaack'). Ultimately, then, the noun phrase realises the third typical linguistic index of the racialised metaperspective: a semantic field of race.

Racial dynamics are developed further by the fourth and final typical linguistic index associated with the racialised metaperspective: [dia]lect representation. In this text-possible world, Kim assigns to herself a markedly basilectal register which she does not ordinarily

employ in the Text-actual World (though see Adam 2020a). This style shift is evidenced on the grammatical level (for example with the non-standard object pronoun 'me' in subject position) and lexical level (e.g. 'pickney'). The use of the creolised pronominal system is especially salient, forming the most significant difference between [Jamaican] Creole and Standard [American] English (Pollard 2011: 466). For this reason, it functions as an effective shorthand for an entire Creole linguistic system, as above and also in Excerpt 6.5 below. Meanwhile, Kim's distinctively Creole language is foregrounded by Chuck's disparaging metalinguistic commentary: 'what the fuck you mean by do? What kind of ignorant bushbaby bullshit is it when do means the same thing as please?'. Not incidentally, Chuck's riposte – and indeed his language throughout the excerpt – is prototypically American, serving to differentiate Chuck from Kim on linguistic (and by extension, national and racial) grounds. For instance, in the aforementioned quotation, the auxiliary verb is omitted, and etymologically American expletives inserted (e.g. 'bullshit', 'fuck'; cf. Kim's prior assertion: 'See? I say fuck like an American.' [James 2014: 280]).

As Kim's language use within this text-possible reverie is so divorced from her standard idiolect – the enactor has, after all, had '[f]ifteen years of schooling on how to talk proper[ly]' (32) – it may be reasoned that her incorporation of basilect in Excerpt 6.4 is strategic. Indeed, this would align the enactor Kim Clarke with her other, varied counterparts throughout *A Brief History* (e.g. Nina Burgess, Dorcas Palmer, Millicent Segree), whose linguistic shifting is analysed in Adam (2020a). Of particular relevance here is the persona the article dubs 'The Dutiful Deferent' (32-4). It appears that in Excerpt 6.4 Kim harnesses a lect furthest from the standard to invoke qualities of humbleness and meekness (Hess 1996: 8; Page 1988: 84). However, as with her adoption of this persona elsewhere in the novel (see e.g. James 2014: 31-2, 105), the facade is imperfectly sustained. Capped with the endearment, itself foregrounded through the typography which suggests emphatic intonational contouring, the closing 'it's not what it looks like, honey.' is undeniably Americanised. Indeed, the phrase appears to have been influenced by the prototypically American soap opera, *Dallas* (1978—1991). This closing remark serves three major functions. Firstly, it is revealing of the dominance of American culture, as outlined in Section 6.3, particularly that of the 'new media' form (on this, see Ashcroft *et al*. 2013; cf. James 2014: 122, 292-3, 441, 681). Secondly, as the speech act is text-possible even within a text-possible world (as indexed by the *verbum sentiendi*, 'wonder'), Kim's 'fretful' (Boyagoda 2015: n.p) personality is once more underscored. Hers is clearly a mind style grounded in unrealised, or text-possible, occurrences. Thirdly, it evidences a style

shift from her earlier, basilectal language use into an Americanised register. This style shift is of the *interpersonal* variety, and may be classed as convergence rather than divergence. This Hodson (2014) outlines as a process 'whereby speakers alter their speech style so it becomes that of the person they are addressing' (177). Likewise, in Excerpt 6.4 Kim gravitates towards the speech style of Chuck, likely as a further attempt to ingratiate herself with him whilst still maintaining a modicum of dignity.

Finally, in impressing the ubiquity of the racialised metaperspective and intradiegetic recentering to Kim's mind style, the following excerpt proves telling. Within the passage, Kim adopts both the deictic centre and (supposed) register of a flock of birds. This anthropomorphism results in a Fantasy World – a 'fiction[...] that [enactors] compose themselves' (Stockwell 2002: 95) – which extends the imputed social judgement of Kim as far as the neighbourhood fauna. This underscores the embeddedness of her racialised self-consciousness. The discourse presented is both obviously hypothetical and highly evaluative: the two telltale linguistic indices of the metaperspective. Moreover, the excerpt clearly supports du Bois' (1903) casting of double consciousness as 'tempt[ing] the mind to pretence' (205).

Excerpt 6.5

> Now I'm the woman who lives close to gulls. I hate gulls. [...] [T]aking over my own damn terrace saying move bitch is fi we terrace now. [...] They couldn't care a r'asscloth about me. I know what they're thinking. They're thinking we was here first, long before you start shack up with man and we was here before him too. Screaming like they know stuff about me – get away from my window or my American Chuck will pull out his American gun and bang [...].

(James 2014: 278-9)

This semi-comic interlude is similar in many ways to Excerpt 6.1, above. Once again, Kim affects an external perspective upon herself and her situation; to echo du Bois (1903: 102), she looks at herself through the eyes of avian others. Linguistically, this distancing is achieved via generic noun use: Kim is 'the woman', Chuck a 'man'. Also in evidence is the second criterion of intradiegetic recentering, a change in register, as a more basilectal style is harnessed. Note, for instance, the verb levelling ('we was'), omission of morphological inflections and articles ('start shack up with man'), ubiquitous Creole particle ('fi'; cf. Jamaican Patwah 2021), and Creole pronominal system ('we terrace now'). Nonetheless, above I was careful to classify this register as only suppositiously assigned to the gulls: it is, after all, the fantastical element of these talking animals which decides the passage's text-possible classification as a Fantasy World.

Nonetheless, while animals cannot talk in the Actual World, an established tradition of featuring talking animals within literature (Turner 1996) and, more recently, film (Lippi-Green 2012; Sønnesyn 2011) means that those in the Actual World are schooled in interpreting Text-actual World talking animals symbolically. Lippi-Green (2012), for one, uncovers a tendency for Disney films to align specific accents and dialects with distinct character roles and/or traits, tracing, for example, a heritage of antagonists with Received Pronunciation (RP) accents (122). As this recalls the linguistic profiling associated with the various lects of the Creole continuum, it is an observation pertinent to Excerpt 6.5 above. In the passage, Kim as focaliser capitalises upon the 'connotations of dauntless assertiveness' (Sebba 1993: 204) that Jamaican Creole possesses to present the flocking gulls as imposing. This is captured in the collective direct speech imperative 'move bitch', through which Kim is once again animalised – here, ironically, by the animals themselves.

Conversely, Turner (1996) observes that in literature through the ages talking animals have served as allegorical representations of society. Applying this to Excerpt 6.5 is convincing, for, as outlined above, the voluble gulls and Kim's gossiping neighbours of Excerpt 6.1 share both a basilectal register and a disparaging outlook upon Kim. Additionally, it should be noted that though these particular animals have likely been selected as vehicles for anthropomorphism as they are prototypical WB elements of a BEACH schema, the collective noun for gulls is the apposite *colony*. As Section 6.3 outlined, while post-1962 Jamaica was no longer a British colony, derivative colonialism resulted in ongoing shadism upon the island to continue a racialised social stratification. Bolstering this implicit racialised dynamic is Kim's reference to the gulls as '*white* feather bitches' (James 2014: 277; my italics) in the paragraph preceding Excerpt 6.5.

Far more explicitly, Kim places nationality as a figural topic of interest via the repeated epithet 'American'. Its inclusion flouts the Gricean (1989) maxims of both quantity and manner, as well as subverting the tenet of elegant variation (Short 1996: 273-4). Most likely, Kim employs the duplication as deterrent, associating an American nationality with a seriousness of intent and a respect that she believes the gulls will not afford her as a Jamaican woman. While above James and Roth (2014) characterised America as a 'hovering power' (n.p) of cultural influence in Actual World Jamaica, America also clearly proves a hovering presence within Kim's Epistemic World. Her idealisation of the country is a crucial element of her mind style, inflecting the frequent text-possible scenarios she cues to envisage her escape to and life there: in short, her American dreams. These are explored in the next section.

6.5. '[W]hen I get to America': The American Dream(s) of Kim Clarke

As noted in Section 6.3.4, the frequent construction of suppositious text-possible worlds (Adam 2021: 175) is a defining feature of Kim Clarke's distinct mind style. Excerpts 6.6 and 6.7 prove prime examples. Although the passages do not appear consecutively within *A Brief History*, below I quote them together due to their logical connection. Both pivot around Kim's desire to leave Jamaica for America, her hope for an 'alternative future[...]' (Frydman 2019: 36); while the first depicts the initial move to the country, the second details her lifestyle while living there. Each are granularly detailed and extensive in scope, yet underlying both are indications of Kim's core uncertainty and volatile emotional state.

Excerpt 6.6

> He's leaving. We're leaving. Has he bought tickets? Will we need tickets? Is a helicopter coming like this is war and just airlift we out? It will just land outside and Chuck will say *babykins, there's no time to grab anything just come now* and he'll look really sad and not know that this is exactly what I want, to take nothing, not even a towel, nothing that will remind me of anything I'm leaving behind, because fuck all of it, really, fuck all of it, I want to get to America blank as a slate can be with no memory of anything behind me. I want to teach myself to write something new on my skin and say howdy to people I don't know. And the helicopter won't land until we're somewhere far like Buffalo, New York or Alaska, somewhere that I'll never have to hear wha'appen ever again. Ever again.

(James 2014: 286)

Excerpt 6.7

> Should I do it here or when I get to America? Jesus Christ, the day when I get bored with thirteen channels, what will I do? The day I get bored with corn flakes, no not corn flakes, Frosted Flakes. The day I get bored with looking up and seeing buildings that clouds hit and run into. The day I get bored with throwing out bread because it's been there four days and I want a new loaf. The day I get bored with Twinkies, Halston, Lip Smackers, L'eggs and anything by Revlon. The day I get bored with sleeping straight from night to morning and waking up to the smell of coffee and the sound of birds and have Chuck say, Did you have a good night's sleep, babykins? And I'll say yes I did, sweetheart – instead of watching the dark all night, and listening to the damn clock tick, because once I fall asleep things come after me. I thought you were going to stop this thinking business, Kim Clarke.

(James 2014: 295)

As Section 3, Chapter 1 of *A Brief History* begins *in media res*, Excerpt 6.6 is the first indication that the Actual World reader is given regarding Kim's ultimate objective to flee Jamaica for America. The excerpt attests that the geographic scope of her American dream is wide: either 'New York' on the East Coast or the northernmost state of 'Alaska' will suffice. This indiscriminateness proves ambiguous. In one interpretation, it may suggest an underdeveloped schematic knowledge of America, with the co-ordinating conjunction 'or' yoking two distinct

locations together as they are perceived to be near identical – perhaps even adjacent – by focaliser Kim. Alternatively, the dual options may be indicative of the intensity of her wish to escape Jamaica, no matter where her American destination. Given that this passage pivots around the boulomaic modal verb 'want' (repeated thrice) it does indeed constitute a Wish World, a suppositious text-possible world-type predicated upon 'desired alternative states' (McIntyre 2006: 130). Note that this categorisation comes despite the presence of the verb of volition, 'will', commonly an indicator of the Intention World. As a world-type documenting 'what [enactors] plan to do to *deliberately* change their world' (Stockwell 2002: 95; my italics), it is unsuitable here: Kim lacks agency within Excerpt 6.6. Her reveries are instead parasitic upon 'a helicopter' conveniently '*just* land[ing] outside' (my italics). (Note that this WB element later reappears with definite reference – 'the helicopter' – demonstrating it to have been incremented into Kim's increasingly elaborated Wish World). Indeed, the adverb of manner 'just' proves integral to the atmosphere of spontaneous serendipity in which Excerpt 6.6 is cloaked, also reappearing in Chuck's hypothetical direct speech: '*babykins, there's no time to grab anything just come now*'. This speech act underscores that Chuck is the only enactor with agency in the passage; he exhorts via the imperative '*come now*', while Kim remains silent in the text-possible world. Following Giovanelli (2013), this particular text-possible world would be classed not as one of the 'desire' variety, but rather as a Type A dream world, given the low level of agency the enactor Kim exhibits and the consequent unlikelihood of the scene depicted coming to fruition.

Meanwhile, her underlying uncertainty in the Text-actual World is signalled by the linguistic reformulation of the first two declaratives (redolent of Excerpt 6.1) and trio of apostrophic rhetorical questions. A further two occur in Excerpt 6.7, demonstrating this second instance of Kim's American dreams to be just as grounded in 'fretful' (Boyagoda 2015: n.p) uncertainty as the first. Following the terminology of Mansworth (2022a), both text-possible worlds can be said to exhibit low attainability (12ff.); there is a relatively low likelihood of the events they evoke transpiring in the Text-actual World. It is this sense of unobtainability which both contributes to the passages' specific text-possible classification on the linguistic level, and which impresses a sense of Kim's hopelessness and desperation on the literary level.

Although not central to the construction of Kim's Wish World, a latent metaperspective is detectable in Excerpt 6.6. Chuck's hypothetical instruction to Kim is revealing of how she views him to view her, while the later (doubly-embedded) Epistemic World – 'he'll [...] not know that [leaving] is exactly what I want' – utilises metaperspectival logic to interpret

another's thoughts and feelings. More precisely, the recursivity of this statement results in the presentation of a *meta*-metaperspective: Laing *et al*.'s (1966) term for *my view* of the *other's view* of *my view*. Indeed, the predicate recalls the first of Laing *et al*.'s (1966) 60 IPM questions, centring around the level of understanding between a dyad (145).

The metaperspective within Excerpt 6.6 is too brief to be aligned with the racialised sub-type. Nonetheless, the topic of race does underlie the passage. For instance, Kim refers to her desire to arrive in America '*blank* as a slate can be' (my italics) enabling her to 'write something new on [her] skin'. The former simile may be a common idiom, but the adjective 'blank' is also, significantly, an etymological doublet of *blanc*, French for *white*. This, when combined with the later explicit reference to her 'skin', adumbrates a racialised self-consciousness akin to that evoked by du Bois which would be especially valid in the American context of the text-possible scenario. This 'peculiar wrenching of the soul [...] fatal to self-confidence' (du Bois 1903: 205) is likely fuelled by Kim's earlier conversation with Chuck, during which he reveals that 'he's not sure how his [American] family will react to a woman like me' (James 2014: 283), which the Actual World reader is likely to infer as a veiled reference to race. The dynamic of national and racial stratification is furthered on the lexical level. Kim, for instance, describes her desire to 'say howdy to people I don't know'. The phatic interjection 'howdy' here is cliched, redolent of Stetson hats, spurred cowboy boots, and an oeuvre of 'Wild West' films: in short, it is archetypally American. Given its stereotyped status, *howdy* can thus figure as a shorthand for an entire American linguistic system, in much the same way that creolised pronominals efficiently indexed the basilect in Excerpts 6.4 and 6.5 above. Moreover, it is possible that the inclusion of this linguistic stereotype also signals Kim's etiolated AMERICA schema, as discussed above.

Earlier in the chapter, Kim congratulates herself with the statement 'See? I say fuck like an American.' (James 2014: 280). Not only does Kim's metalinguistic commentary foreground language as indicative of national identity, it also impacts upon the interpretation of Excerpt 6.6's lexically repetitive 'fuck all of it, really, fuck all of it'. Again, as in Excerpt 6.4 and Excerpt 6.5, Kim utilises language performatively. Here, her desired role is that of a naturalised American. Juxtaposed with this Americanised lexis is the later creolised contraction, 'wha'appen'. Within the negated proposition 'I'll never have to hear wha'appen ever again', the contraction serves a double function. As well as indicating her desire to 'leav[e] behind' Jamaica and never hear news of what is happening on the island 'Ever again.', it also, more literally, conveys a desire to escape from a Jamaican social milieu, and to never hear the allegro

speech locution ‘wha’appen’ again. Ultimately, the passage follows those of Section 6.4 in underscoring the centrality of language as a marker of identity within the novel. Clearly, this applies equally in hypothetical, text-possible scenarios.

Defining Excerpt 6.7 in text-possible terms is less straightforward than with Excerpt 6.6. Again, the modal auxiliary ‘will’ alludes to an Intention World, yet the propositional content of the text-possible scene – in particular, the somewhat cliched ‘waking up to the smell of coffee and the sound of birds’ – aligns sufficiently with Actual World schemas of idyllic lifestyles to be suggestive of another Wish World. However, I would argue that a different text-possible world category is more appropriate: that of the Hypothesis World, with the parallelistic, sentence-initial ‘The day I get bored with’ implying the protasis *If I get bored with*. Nonetheless, within the passage no apodosis is ever supplied to flesh out this inferred protasis, which is in itself significant: the suggestion of this somewhat lopsided syntax is that the eventuality of becoming ‘bored’ with American luxuries is inconceivable to focaliser Kim, in either the Text-Actual World or a text-possible one.

Moreover, the setting of this second ‘American Dream’ sequence is even more indeterminate than the first: a generic city with skyscrapers (‘buildings that clouds hit and run into’) is cued, and no anchoring proper nouns save the highly generalised ‘America’ feature. Nonetheless, the scene presented is vivid, richly-detailed and multi-sensory. Indeed, it accounts for senses less commonly considered within text-possible scenarios, placing the olfactory (‘the smell of coffee’) and auditory (‘the sound of birds’) alongside the visual (e.g. ‘looking up and seeing buildings that clouds hit and run into’). This last quotation is particularly notable, for it dovetails with the research of Scarry (1999). Applying neuropsychiatric findings to the reception of narrative texts, Scarry outlines that ‘airy [...] filmy objects’ (91, 93) as well as those that float and/or glide are especially amenable to visualisation and cognitive manipulation by Actual World readers. The post-modified noun phrase ‘buildings that clouds hit and run into’ is therefore doubly striking, with the WB element ‘clouds’ capitalising upon both of these qualities. It is primed for visualisation despite its text-possible status, and easily conceptualised as tangible by readers in the Actual World as well as Kim in the Text-actual World, furthering the granularity of the scene depicted. Ultimately, concreteness is added to conjecture, allowing Kim (and, by extension, the Actual World reader) to escape into an ‘American Dream’ reverie.

Complementing this sense of concreteness to Kim’s dreams of the American ‘concrete jungle’ is her asyndetic listing of aspirational consumer goods: ‘Twinkies, Halston, Lip

Smackers, L'eggs'. Each proper noun signifies a specific product of food, clothing or make-up, all of which are prototypically American (this despite the pseudo-Gallic morphology of the latter). Not only does this demonstrate the level of detail attached to Kim's American dream, it also recognises once more America's presence as 'a cultural influence' (James and Roth 2015: n.p) within the Jamaican psyche. Particularly interesting is Kim's discoursal repair ('no not corn flakes, Frosted Flakes') as she mentally upgrades from the standard to the branded. This foregrounds both the uncertainty inherent to Kim's text-possible American dreams, as well as the 'online' nature of her reveries, mimetic of cognitive patterns in the Actual World (Gavins 2007; Harrison and Nuttall 2021; Werth 1999; see further Section 6.7, below). It also reinforces the pervasive, or 'hovering' (James and Roth 2014: n.p), influence of American consumer culture.

Towards the latter half of Excerpt 6.7, the conjunctive adverb 'instead' functions similarly to the *kireji* of a haiku, or a poetic volta: it demarcates the alteration from the text-possible to the text-actual. Kim's American dreams are hence replaced by her Jamaican reality. In some regards, the two are diametrically opposed; for instance, rather than 'sleeping straight from night to morning', Kim is prone to lying awake 'all night' and 'watching the dark'. In the Text-actual World, her insomnia is a result of the trauma she has suffered as a witness to the attempted assassination of Bob Marley, and later a fugitive: trauma from which her text-possible worlds may act as reprieve. Morgan (2020) notes that three common symptoms are displayed by survivors of trauma: 'hypervigilance and hyperarousal, avoidance, dissociation and void' (248). All three are applicable to the enactor Kim Clarke. It is her 'hypervigilance' which results in sleepless nights, while her frequent construction of text-possible scenarios may be interpreted as 'avoidance' of text-actual reality, an attempt to remain 'buoyed by the possibility of alternative futures' (Frydman 2019: 36). Relatedly, 'dissociation' is realised by her adoption of the alias 'Kim Clarke'. As referenced in Section 6.3.3, Kim is apt to refer to herself in the second- and third-person, instances of both apparent above. It is useful to note here that second-person self-address is a linguistic technique commonly recommended by Actual World psychologists and counsellors (Kross 2022), for it has proven an effective coping mechanism for those faced with emotionally challenging circumstances (Orvell *et al*. 2019). Strategies of 'avoidance' and 'dissociation' from text-actuality also inform Kim's recourse to disnarration, another defining feature of her mind style which is explored in the subsequent section.

6.6. ‘Lie that’: Disnarration and Kim Clarke

The final text-possible facet to Kim’s mind style that will be interrogated in the present chapter is that of disnarration. Consider, for instance, the passage below, in which Kim recounts a recent encounter with a marketstall holder. The disnarrated episode is brief, revealed ‘after a few lines’ (Prince 1992: 34) to be a ‘lie’ (Prince 1988: 3), and therefore it represents the ‘negative’ mode of disnarration (Prince 1988, 1992; Warhol-Down 2010). Nonetheless, prior to the admission of counterfactuality – ‘I didn’t say any of that.’ – the text-possible scene is richly evoked. Kim recalls:

Excerpt 6.8

> Not the answer she was looking for, so she punished me by adding on fifty cents to the price. I think I said, You know what, babylove? Have it. Take it, for in a few weeks the only thing Jamaica money would be good for would be to wipe me batty. I like that. I sounded Jamaican. I didn’t say any of that. I would never call anybody babylove.

(James 2014: 285-6)

It is instructive to note that it is not all the FA propositions within the passage which are disnarrated, but instead only the speech acts of Kim. After all, the admission of counterfactuality clarifies that she ‘didn’t *say* any of that.’ (my italics). As in Excerpt 6.4, this renders Kim’s speech wholly hypothetical. Yet while Kim’s locutions in that earlier instance vacillated between the Jamaican Creole and the American, here the ‘purely imagined’ (Prince 1988: 3) and subsequently disnarrated utterances are ‘Jamaican’ only. Consider, for instance, the morphological levelling of the noun phrase ‘Jamaica money’ alongside the patois expletive ‘batty’. Even the endearment ‘babylove’ (meaning ‘Darling [...] Slang term usually used by women for addressing a person’ [Jamaican Patwah 2021: n.p]) is distinctively creolised, a Jamaican correlate of the American ‘babykins’ in Excerpt 6.6. As her metalinguistic commentary indicates, this highly creolised discourse is for Kim highly inauthentic: ‘I would never call anybody babylove’. Instead, and again paralleling earlier excerpts, the language in use represents a style shift for rhetorical effect. In this instance, it is best classed as a *metaphorical* style shift, allowing Kim to project a distinct persona through language use by trading upon established linguistic stereotypes. Here, the distinct persona most closely approximates that which Adam (2020a) alliteratively refers to as ‘The Formidable Foreigner’ (36). Kim harnesses the folk equation of Creole language with ‘dauntless assertiveness’ (Rampton 1995: 204); additionally, this adumbrates the Matriarch controlling image, conceptualising as it does Black women as ‘strong [...] indomitable and undaunted by oppressive systems’ (Gentles-Peart 2019: 53). The ultimate effect of this discoursal

disnarration is adjacent to the proverbial 'wishful thinking'. Kim manipulates her memories into a text-possible scenario she wished had occurred, rather than admit to her embarrassingly meek text-actual attitude.

Similar self-manipulation occurs in the second instance of disnarration excerpted here, another passage in the 'negative' mode unveiled as a lie. The passage features Kim rapidly disnarrating the propositional content of her own utterances. In conjunction with the disnarration, through striving for an accurate representation of her own perspective upon Chuck, Kim also cues a metaperspective.

Excerpt 6.9

> I mean, he's not bad looking. No, he's cute. No, he's handsome. Look, right now three thousand Jamaican women probably hate me because I'm with him. I have what you want, you pussyholes. Me, Kim Clarke. Come and get it if you bad.
> Lie that. I know for a fact that Jamaican women not out there looking for a white man from foreign.

(James 2014: 280-1)

The metaperspective featured here is both communal *and* racialised: it involves Kim's supposition about the collective viewpoint of 'three thousand Jamaican women' upon her due to the 'white man from foreign' she has ensnared romantically. The excerpt therefore flags an important point to which I will return in Chapter 8: that is, that the assorted metaperspectival sub-types which I have identified do not necessarily function discretely. Indeed, to judge from the excerpts in the present chapter, the racialised and communal varieties are common companions: both Excerpt 6.1 and 6.5 are premised upon the presumed, racially-inflected perspectives of a collective.

Within the passage, FA information regarding her partner Chuck's appearance is introduced and incremented (Werth 1999: 289-312) into the Text-actual World, only to be subsequently undermined as text-possible wish fulfilment. As in Excerpt 6.8, the instance of disnarration is marked typographically by a line break, and lexically by an admission of untruthfulness. Pragmatically, the narration is just as deviant. Outlining the concept of scalar implicature, Horn (2004) observes that 'the utterance of a weaker scalar value [...] tends to imply that the speaker was not in a position to assert the correspondingly stronger value' (12); following this logic, for instance, would suggest that the presence of an evaluative term like *good* would automatically deny the applicability of a semantically stronger alternative (e.g. *great*). In Excerpt 6.9, Kim's triad – 'not bad-looking [...] cute [...] handsome' – inverts this principle, uplevelling the praise she applies to Chuck. This explains both the sentence string's

markedness and its humour; characteristic of a proverbial 'thou-doth-protest-too-much' mentality, it realises Karttunen's (2008) assertion that disnarration may be used for 'comical effect' (424). Meanwhile, if the excerpt problematises the characterisation of Chuck, it does contribute appreciably to the characterisation of Kim Clarke. Once more, her internal cognition is presented as firmly grounded in the text-possible. This repeated recourse to 'hypothesis and [the] contrary-to-fact' (Herman 2002: 320), which forms so integral an element of Kim's mind style, is further considered in the next, penultimate section. Here, I present empirical data which unveils how this text-actual character trait is received in the Actual World.

6.7. The Characterological Paradox: Kim Clarke in the Actual World

Chapter 3 quoted Herman (2002) to foreground 'the vast importance of hypothesis and contrary-to-fact speculation in people's mental lives' (320); this dovetailed with Laing *et al.*'s assertion that people are 'constantly supposing' (4) in the Actual World. Moreover, Dannenberg (2014) observes that employing the text-possible technique of disnarration within a fictional narrative 'allows the depiction of [enactors] as living in an uncertain world of possible events [...] like we inhabit' (307) in the Actual World. Cumulatively, these comments lead to the hypothesis that any enactor within the Text-actual World with a tendency towards the text-possible will be received as particularly lifelike by an Actual World readership. This would thus predict that Kim Clarke, prone as she is to constructing metaperspectives, recentering intradiegetically, and cuing text-possible scenarios, will be appreciated by real readers as especially verisimilar.

This is certainly a hypothesis supported by the online responses of Actual World readers. In October 2020, when *A Brief History* was selected as the set text for the final 'Reading group' of British newspaper *The Guardian* (Jordison 2020a), Kim Clarke was consistently spotlighted by the digital reading community as 'outstanding' (Jordison 2020b: n.p), a feat significant in a novel which, as referenced above, features 76 enactors in total (see further Jordison 2020c, 2020d). Views converge on the online reading platform *Goodreads* (2022), and also prove more precise in pinpointing the reason for Kim Clarke's popularity. Comments regarding Kim Clarke (or the Ur-enactor, Nina Burgess) are frequently superlative. For the user Richard she is 'the star of the show' (Goodreads 2022: n.p); Jill dubs her 'one of [James'] finest character creations' (*ibid*); Britta Boehler condenses the commentary of her fellow *Goodreads* users to aver that '[m]ost readers find Nina one of the most engaging characters of the novel' (*ibid*).

This appears to extend beyond mere intersubjective readerly preference for a likeable character. For instance, karen [*sic*] admires Kim as 'complex, nuanced, *credible*' (*ibid*; my italics); Michael Finochiarro proclaims her to be '*especially* [...] *so realistic* in [her] internal monologue' (*ibid*; my italics); for Kluxorious Kluxces she is 'human first and foremost' (*ibid*). This lay view is shared by the literary journalist Blincoe (2015), who singles the enactor out as 'a particularly powerful creation' (n.p).

Ultimately, something of a characterological paradox is unveiled: the more an enactor engages with the text-possible – the *irreal* – the more real this enactor seems to become to an Actual World readership. While it was suggested in Section 6.3.2 above that *A Brief History*, as a (post-)postcolonial, historical, and realist novel, upholds each of Ryan's (1991a, 1991b) accessibility relations save B (identity of inventory), here I contend that the inclusion of the free direct thought of narrator-focaliser Kim Clarke also fosters cognitive compatibility. Her idiosyncratic mind style, grounded as it is in the text-possible, mirrors Actual World tendencies towards 'constantly supposing' (Laing *et al*. 1966: 4), strengthening similarities between the Actual and Text-actual Worlds and thus resonating with Actual World readers. It appears Kim's mentality cannot be characterised as 'ignorant bushbaby bullshit' (James 2014: 291) after all.

6.8. Concluding Remarks

This chapter has explored the recurrent deviations of *A Brief History* enactor Kim Clarke into the realm of the text-possible, deviations which have proven characteristic of her idiosyncratic mind style in the Text-actual World, and which have been received as 'realistic' (Goodreads 2022: n.p) in the Actual World. In particular, I proposed a further sub-type of the metaperspective – the *racialised metaperspective* – one occupied with the dynamics between distinct racial, cultural, or ethnic groups. The four typical linguistic indices associated with this metaperspectival sub-type were then listed; alongside the previously encountered criteria of 1. Hypothetical discourse (speech/thought/writing) presentation and 2. Evaluative lexis were two particular to the racialised metaperspective, 3. Semantic field of race and 4. [Dia]lect representation. Detailed steam stylistic analysis of excerpts from James' novel attested to the centrality of these linguistic features to the development of this metaperspectival sub-type.

Moreover, much like with the communal metaperspective explored in Chapter 5, I suggested additional phenomena to commonly co-occur with the linguistic presentation of the racialised metaperspective. However, in this instance the 'related phenomena' were imported from

diverse disciplines: from sociology, *controlling images*; from postcolonial studies, *double consciousness*; from narratology, the hypernymic notion of *recentering*. This latter acted as a springboard for the second terminological innovation of this chapter, as I aired and applied my coinage *intradiegetic recentering*. As a recursive variant of '[fictional] recentering' (e.g. Ryan 1991b), the phenomenon was tied to two linguistic features in particular: i) A shifted deictic centre, and ii) A change in register. It was demonstrated that in deploying these features a text-actual enactor could present the presumed perspective of another text-actual enactor. For instance, Kim Clarke affected the perspective of her neighbours, her partner's boss, and a flock of loquacious gulls.

Kim's subsequent statement (while as the pseudonymous Dorcas Palmer) that 'I like to think I don't give a shit what people think of me' (James 2014: 615) has been proven throughout this chapter as patently false. Indeed, Kim's idiosyncratic mind style is premised upon what other people think of her; it is this 'preoccupation' (Fowler 1977: 103) which results in her repeated construction of the racialised metaperspective, and recurrent intradiegetic recentering. Alongside this, the passages quoted above have proven Kim's tendency towards the text-possible: she frequently cues suppositious scenarios as well as disnarrating her own internal discourse. If the former tendency enacts the mental 'pretence' that du Bois (1903: 205) associates with double consciousness, the latter realises the 'peculiar sense of doubt and bewilderment' (*ibid*) the phenomenon produces. Ultimately, both result from the compounded societal disadvantage of double colonisation faced by Kim as both an ethnically Black Jamaican and a woman. These intersecting oppressions result in her perception that she is simultaneously patronised, objectified, dehumanised; viewed as an 'ignorant bushbaby' (James 2014: 291) even by her own partner.

The following chapter completes the quartet of metaperspectival sub-types this thesis considers in detail. Its central innovation is the *literalised metaperspective*, a variant which deviates somewhat from the established pattern of the preceding three sub-types. Crucially, in making literal the ordinarily figurative notion of adopting the viewpoint of another, the literalised metaperspective obviates the need for hypothetical discourse presentation as a typical linguistic index. The concept is positioned as text-actual rather than text-possible for the first time, a feat enabled by the particular generic classification of the chosen case-study novel: George Saunders' (2017) *Lincoln in the Bardo*. Unlike Kim Clarke's mere purporting to 'know what they're thinking' (James 2014: 277), *Lincoln in the Bardo*'s enactors definitively do, able as they are to enter into the minds of others. This process, I argue, feeds fellow feeling;

I tie the literalised metaperspective to empathy in much the same way that literature is often tied to empathy (e.g. Keen 2007), for both allow unprecedented access beyond the bounds of one's own mind. In many ways, this brings the case-study chapters of this thesis full circle: Chapter 4 packaged the discourse-architectural metaperspective as integral to the construction and reception of literature, while Chapter 7 suggests that the literalised metaperspective is reflective of processes innate to the experience of reading literature.

‘[G]limpses of one another’s minds’: Literalised Perspective-taking and the Literalised Metaperspective in George Saunders’ (2017) *Lincoln in the Bardo*

> Unless some fundamental and unimaginable alteration of reality should occur.
>
> (Saunders 2017: 321)

7.0. Preliminaries

The fourth and final metaperspectival sub-type to be proposed in the present thesis is that of the *literalised metaperspective*. It is investigated in this final case-study chapter with recourse to George Saunders’ (2017) *Lincoln in the Bardo*, an experimental novel inspired by historical fact and incorporating supernatural elements, which received the Man Booker Prize in 2017.

At the core of the literalised metaperspective, as its pre-modifier suggests, is the making literal of the ordinarily figurative notion of adopting the perspective of another. Instead of resorting to mere conjecture of the viewpoint of another, the literalised metaperspective applies in instances in which the cognition of a third-party is directly accessible. In this way, rather than forming *My view* of the *other’s view* of me (Laing *et al*. 1966: 4), it involves

> *My view* through the *other’s view* of me. [32]

On the level of the fabula, this literalisation is enabled by distinct plot devices – which may include, for instance, inhabitation and/or telepathy – making this particular metaperspectival sub-type somewhat less common than those surveyed across Chapters 4 to 6. Nonetheless, it also serves as a valuable counterpoint to these more figurative instances, as this chapter will elaborate.

Replicating the layout of the previous three chapters, the discourse-level implications of the literalised metaperspective will be considered in Section 7.1, which will list the ‘typical linguistic indices’ of the sub-type. This will be followed by Section 7.2, comprising an outline of the Actual and Text-actual World undergirding Saunders’ novel, its corresponding discourse architecture, and its associated generic profile and accessibility relations. It will be impressed

[32] Once again, underlining is used here *in lieu* of the already-employed italics.

that these latter prove of particular import in enabling the inclusion of the literalised metaperspective within the novel. Section 7.3 provides a (necessarily brief) précis of the ever-expanding research into empathy. It is suggested that this phenomenon, widely understood via the idiom of taking the perspective of another, is paralleled in less figurative form by the notion of the literalised metaperspective. Complementing this equation, Sections 7.4 to 7.6 present instances of both hypothetical and literal perspective-taking within *Lincoln in the Bardo*, with Section 7.5 in particular showcasing the literalised form of the metaperspective which arises from this latter, fantastical capacity. As previously, all textual excerpts are analysed via steam stylistic methodology, bolstered by a corpus-informed approach in Section 7.5. Finally, Section 7.7 crystallises the main findings of the chapter. Prefiguring the Conclusion to this thesis, the section concentrates in particular upon establishing links between the quartet of metaperspectival sub-types I have suggested.

7.1. The Literalised Metaperspective: Typical Linguistic Indices

As indicated at the close of the last chapter, the literalised metaperspective subverts the pattern which has by now been established regarding the typical linguistic indices of a metaperspectival sub-type. As its moniker would suggest, the literalised metaperspective makes literal the ordinarily hypothetical. For this reason, the erstwhile index of 'Hypothetical discourse (speech/thought/writing) presentation' is replaced by

1. Direct or free direct discourse (speech/thought/writing) presentation.

Positioned as these two varieties are at the end of the speech and thought continuum associated with minimal narratorial mediation (Leech and Short 2007), this allows for an (almost) unfiltered relaying of the viewpoint of another. [33] Meanwhile, as the metaperspective is necessarily concerned with interpersonal judgement, the second index of the literalised metaperspective, as with the other three sub-types, is

2. Evaluative lexis.

The two linguistic *differentia specifica* of the literalised metaperspective are then:

3. Prepositions;
4. A shifted deictic centre.

[33] The parenthesised caveat is necessary here as ultimately the convention of the textual medium renders complete independence unfeasible.

The first of these particularised indices – the presence of prepositions – emphasises the very literal movement into the cognition of another which is the distinguishing feature of the literalised metaperspective. As my definition itself suggests, the prepositions which are commonly used to convey this manoeuvre include (though are not limited to) *into*, *in*, *through* and *within*.

Tied to the predominance of this spatially-oriented word class is the second particularised index of a shifted deictic centre. This may be encoded in shifted deixis of the spatial variety, alongside perceptual, relational, and/or temporal deixis (Stockwell 2002: 45-6). The centrality of deixis to this metaperspectival sub-type is pertinent, given that deixis is often employed in a literary context to 'model[...] the common perception of a reader 'getting inside' a literary text' (Stockwell 2002: 46), a figurative phenomenon which is made literal within *Lincoln in the Bardo*.

It may also be observed that this fourth and final index of the literalised metaperspective is one shared with the phenomenon of intradiegetic recentering, as explored in Chapter 6. However, unlike with intradiegetic recentering – and, by extension, unlike Ryan's original (1991b) [fictional] recentering – the movement between discrete deictic centres occurs not between the Actual and Text-actual World, nor between the Text-actual World and suppositious text-possible ones, but within the Text-actual World alone.

That this one feature is shared by two phenomena highlights that the identification of either hinges upon context, co-text, and – crucially – the interpretative capacities of the individual reader. Indeed, the identification of any of the metaperspectival sub-types considered thus far, alongside any of their related phenomena, would be singularly difficult to assign to a machine. The linguistic features associated with each are, after all 'typical' rather than necessary. This caveat will be considered further in Section 8.2 of the concluding chapter. In the following section of the present chapter, I introduce Saunders' debut novel, *Lincoln in the Bardo*, in full. This subsumes a discussion of the novel's Text-actual World and its Actual World basis; its resulting discourse architecture; its generic classification and the corresponding profile of accessibility relations. It will be seen that these latter two elements enable the construction of the literalised metaperspective within the novel.

7.2. The Actual and Text-actual Worlds of *Lincoln in the Bardo*

As with *A Brief History of Seven Killings* in Chapter 6, the setting of *Lincoln in the Bardo* is extremely spatio-temporally specific. The text-actual action unfolds in the Oak Hill Cemetery, Georgetown, Washington DC, on '[t]he night of February 25, 1862' (Saunders 2017: 179). This is the night which follows the funeral ceremony of Willie Lincoln, the eleven-year-old son of America's sixteenth president, Abraham Lincoln. His death from typhoid fever has been swift, and a surprise to his family, who temporarily inter him in a borrowed crypt to allow his father, the President, to continue to oversee the nation amid the turmoil of the American Civil War (1861—1865).

Aside from Abraham and Willie Lincoln as enactors and sometime-focalisers, the novel employs 164 other internal focalisers, who jointly relay narrative events. Formally, the discourse is presented as successive lines of dialogue – some little more than a sentence or sentence fragment – followed by a postposed attributive tag. As these tags indicate, the dialogue is that of a melange of Actual and Text-actual World figures, including historians, eyewitnesses, and the ghostly inhabitants of the Georgetown graveyard. The tags also prove a helpful indication of precisely whose Epistemic World is being presented, whilst simultaneously indicating that each account is subjective, tied to the viewpoint of the eyewitness/ghost/historian in question. However, their postposed positioning can at time prove problematic, causing readerly confusion (see further Sections 7.5 and 7.6, below). Moreover, due to the ghost's fantastical ability to inhabit both the bodies and the minds of other enactors – living and dead alike – the Epistemic Worlds of the enactors are constantly overlapping and/or embedded, rendering the attributive tags misleading at best, inaccurate at worst.

Of the 108 chapters of the novel, precisely a quarter (i.e. 27) involve (pseudo-)historical primary sources and contemporaneous eyewitness accounts, with the remainder of the novel narrated, piecemeal, by the graveyard ghosts. (On the ontological status of the historical quotations in *Lincoln in the Bardo*, see Moseley 2019). Central among these spectres are the former printer Hans Vollman, the closeted homosexual Roger Bevins III, and the Reverend Everly Thomas; between them, the trio narrate and focalise the majority of the graveyard-set sections. As cemetery veterans, the three also pursue a campaign to encourage the recently-arrived Willie Lincoln to leave the liminal realm in which he lingers – known as, borrowing from Tibetan Buddhism, the *bardo* – for the afterlife proper. As they caution, '[t]hese young ones are not meant to tarry' (Saunders 2017: 31). However, any persuasive efforts on the part

of the ghosts are stymied by President Lincoln's continual reappearance in the graveyard as he makes visits to hold his son's corpse. Thus the 'Rising Action' (Freytag 1900; cf. Saunders 2008: 175-7) ensues when Willie, both enjoying the paternal attention and sensing the hypocrisy of the other ghosts, refuses to leave the bardo.

Alongside encouraging Willie's departure to the afterlife, the bardo's inhabitants continually relay the circumstances surrounding their own demise. Indeed, this 'preoccupation[...]' (Fowler 1977: 103) proves a distinguishing feature of the ghostly mind style (see, e.g, Excerpt 7.1, below), for, as Bevins explains: 'To stay [in the bardo], one must deeply and continuously dwell upon one's primary reason for staying; even to the exclusion of all else.' (Saunders 2017: 255). Self-absorbedness becomes engrained as a strategy for survival.

A further significant feature of the ghostly mind style is a tendency towards euphemism. The ghosts are by and large adamant that they are not dead, and consequently replace all lexis schematically associated with death with semantically ameliorated equivalents. This applies to several WB elements within the Georgetown graveyard: a corpse becomes a 'sick-form' (Saunders 2017: 58); a grave a 'sick-pit' (59, 87); a coffin is a 'sick-box' carried atop a 'sick-cart' (51) rather than a hearse. These hyphenated neologisms all share the morpheme 'sick', referencing the ghosts' fallacious belief that they will one day recover and return to their previous lives in the mortal world. However, the lexical patterning also echoes Saunders' (2013) assertion that selfishness is 'a sickness' inherent to 'all of us' (Saunders, qtd. in Lovell 2013: n.p). In the metaphorical regard at least, the inhabitants of the bardo truly do prove sick for the majority of the novel.

Despite its fantastical elements (see further Section 7.2.2, below), the novel does have some precedent in Actual World, historical fact. It is reported to have been inspired by an 'historical footnote' (Prickett 2017: n.p): a potentially apocryphal tale involving President Lincoln's repeated visits to his son's burial place to hold his body. This rumoured occurrence preoccupied Saunders for decades prior to his drafting of the novel (Mallon 2017); indeed, the incident is central to the fabula, and is explored as Excerpt 7.2, below.

7.2.1. Discourse Architecture: *Lincoln in the Bardo*

The discourse architectural structure of *Lincoln in the Bardo* is diagrammed as Fig. 7.1, below. Much like Fig. 6.1 in the previous chapter, this figure is indicative rather than exhaustive. Again avoiding use of that 'very wide piece of paper' (Short 1996: 261), the bracketed names of

enactors act as examples, and several others also fill the same slot. Additionally, the figure corresponds only to those 81 chapters set in the bardo and focalised through its ghosts, rather than the entirety of the novel. These are the chapters which provide the illustrative excerpts to be analysed in Sections 7.4 to 7.6.

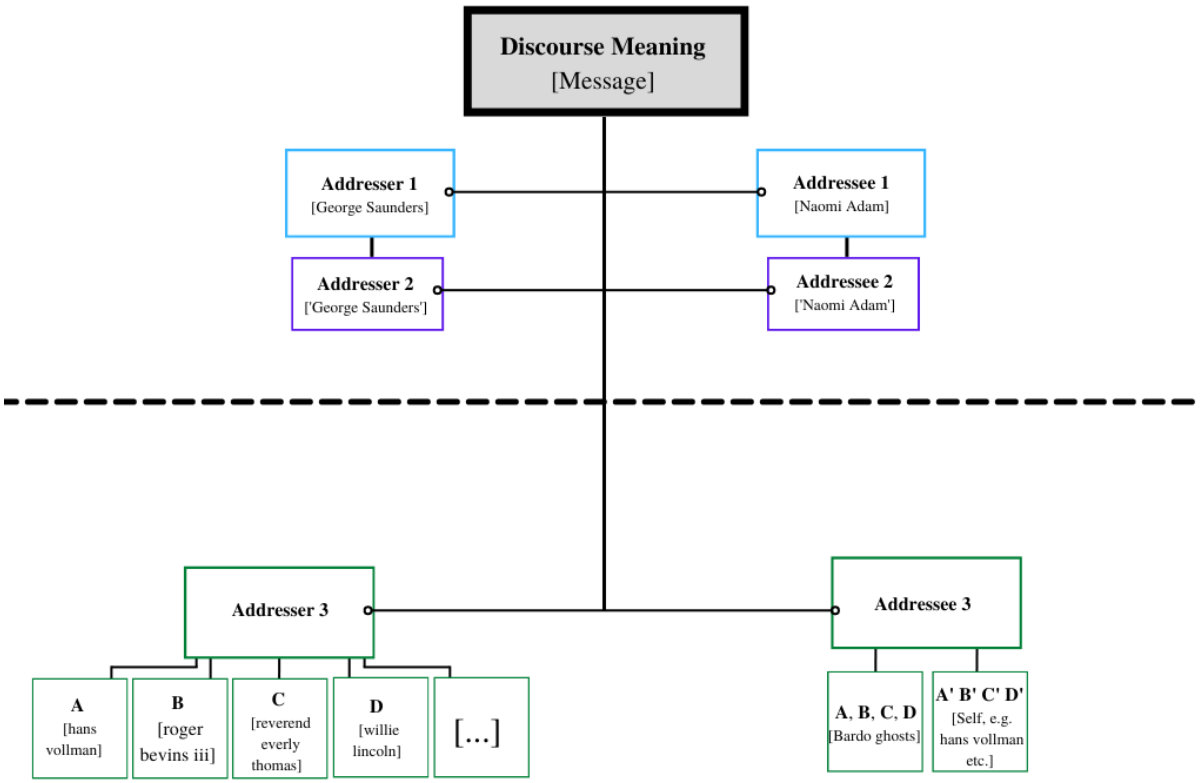


Fig. 7.1. A discourse-architectural diagram of Saunders' (2017) *Lincoln in the Bardo* [34]

The most distinctive feature of *Lincoln in the Bardo*'s discourse architecture is the absence of the expected narrator—narratee third tier. Instead, this is replaced by the enactor—enactor level of discourse which normally figures on the fourth and final tier (cf. Figs. 4.1, 5.1 and 6.1). This is a result of the formal structure of the novel which, as noted above, consists of successive lines of dialogue accompanied by postposed, embedded attributive tags. The necessarily subjective Epistemic World presented through the speech of each enactor is the only means through which an Actual World reader may construct the Text-actual World of the novel, for there is no mediating narratorial presence. In this way, it is very similar to drama, dubbed 'the

[34] For key, see Fig. 3.2.

conversational genre' by Short (1996: 168-194), which 'consists largely of character-to-character [i.e. enactor-to-enactor] interaction' (168). Indeed, reviewers have noted the novel's affinity with a dramatic play-text; Miller (2017) describes *Lincoln in the Bardo* as 'playlike' (n.p), and for Wagner (2017) it is 'more like a play than a novel' (n.p). According to an interview with Meyer (2017), Saunders did initially attempt to write his debut novel as a play, before becoming frustrated with the inauthenticity of the language in his attempts, and switching to long-form fiction. Nonetheless, a 'playlike' residue clearly remains; the resultant dialogism means that the 'interactional modes of analysis' that Culpeper *et al*. (1996: 3) advocate in exploring the language of drama are equally applicable to the so-called 'dialogue novel' (Morse 2018: 26) of *Lincoln in the Bardo*. This will become apparent through the steam stylistic analysis of Sections 7.4 to 7.6.

A further significant feature of Fig. 7.1 is the dual address slots on its lowest (enactor—enactor) tier. As noted by Domestico (2017), not only do the novel's enactors 'speak with and at one another' (15), they also speak 'with and at themselves' (*ibid*). While in part a manifestation of the ghosts' characteristic narcissism (see Section 7.2), this aspect also reflects Bakhtin's seminal (1981) notion of dialogism, which points up the multi-voiced nature of both the novel form and consciousness more generally. The excerpts below will demonstrate this dialogic multiplicity in action through instances of both hypothetical (Section 7.4) and literal (Sections 7.5 and 7.6) perspective-taking.

7.2.2. Genre and Accessibility Relations: *Lincoln in the Bardo*

In exploring the literalisation of the ordinarily hypothetical within *Lincoln in the Bardo,* a consideration of the novel's generic placement is key. This should underscore that, within the novel, perspective-taking, and by extension instances of the metaperspective, function differently than in many other novels, including those of the dystopian and realist variety which have featured as case-study novels thus far. In *Lincoln in the Bardo*, what is typically text-possible instead becomes text-actual.

However, defining *Lincoln in the Bardo* generically is far from straightforward. Indeed, Saunders himself appears to prefer classifying the novel by what it is *not*, rather than what it is. Speaking of the process of writing his first novel, he describes the 'relief not to end up writing a ''normal'' novel, which I really had no desire to do anyway.' (Domestico 2017: 15), while elsewhere he has dubbed *Lincoln in the Bardo* 'Uh, NOT a historical novel' (Saunders, qtd. in Moseley 2019: 9). However, several literary critics appear to disagree with this latter

disavowal. While noting the novel's formal innovation, Strehle (2020) includes the novel as case study in her monograph *Contemporary Historical Fiction, Exceptionalism and Community*. Should this leave any doubt as to her understanding of its generic placement, she categorises the work as 'a radically different kind of historical novel', (165), yet a historical novel nonetheless. Miller (2017) appears to concur in classing it as 'A big historical novel which plays with form' (n.p). Adjacently, Moseley (2019) deems it 'neo-historical' (2); supporting this classification, he cites the novel's melding of identifiable historical events and figures with supernatural elements, alongside an implicit eschewal of verisimilitude.

My own understanding of *Lincoln in the Bardo* is as a formally experimental novel based upon historical fact and incorporating supernatural elements. More specifically, the novel realises what Todorov (1970) refers to as the '*hyperbolic marvelous*' (54; italics in original). As he explains, novels thus classified include 'phenomena [which] are supernatural only by virtue of their dimensions, which are superior to those that are familiar to us' (*ibid*) in the Actual World. This evidently applies to the literalised perspective-taking and concomitant literalised metaperspective in *Lincoln in the Bardo*. Both are skewed, demetaphorised instances of 'familiar' Actual World tendencies to imagine oneself in the position of another and to suppose their thoughts and feelings, respectively. That both text-actual phenomena are also readable as allegory (see Section 7.3). further cements this generic classification (Todorov 1970: 33).

The supernatural elements within *Lincoln in the Bardo* clearly distinguish the novel's Text-actual World from its Actual World counterpart, despite its basis in (purported) historical fact. Given that it is a work of fiction, the novel necessarily severs Ryan's (1991a, 1991b) relation of 'identity of inventory', as with the other three fictional case studies surveyed thus far. More unusually, the novel also differs from reality in upholding neither accessibility relation E nor F (Ryan 1991a, 1991b), as Table 7.1 illustrates.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	F’	G	H	I	J	K	L
	+	-	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

Table 7.1. Accessibility relations in Saunders’ (2017) *Lincoln in the Bardo*

To recap, the two aforementioned accessibility relations relate to the following areas:

> *E*. Physical compatibility (E/natural laws): [Text-actual World] is accessible from [Actual World] if they share natural laws.
> *F*. Taxonomic compatibility (F/taxonomy): [Text-actual World] is accessible from [Actual World] if both worlds contain the same species, and the species are characterized by the same properties [...].

(Ryan 1991a: 559)

Ryan observes that the severance of relation F often follows as a consequence of relation E’s inapplicability, so the patterning above is not infrequent. It is, however, marked when both relations are broken; Ryan’s original (1991a, 1991b) accessibility relations are arranged ‘[i]n decreasing order of stringency’ (Ryan 1991a: 558), therefore failing to uphold those lower on the list (largely D onwards) is conspicuous.

Nonetheless, *Lincoln in the Bardo* quite incontrovertibly breaks relations E and F. The latter is compromised by the presence of ghosts within the Text-actual World; indeed, Ryan (1991b) explicitly references ‘ghosts’ (37) within her role-call of supernatural agents which render relation F invalid. Similarly, she itemises the Text-actual World scenarios which make principle E obsolete as follows: ‘lifting *E*/natural laws makes it possible for animals to talk, people to fly, and princes to be turned into frogs.’ (37). To this list, one may conceivably add ‘consciousnesses to be inhabited’, for the perspectival forays of the ghosts within *Lincoln in the Bardo* subvert ‘natural laws’ which assign one person to one consciousness, and do not allow for a literal ‘mass-mind’ (Saunders 2017: 253) as the novel presents.

Critical reaction to Saunders’ subversion of accessibility relations within *Lincoln in the Bardo* has been mixed. The transgression of principle E (natural laws) has proven especially controversial. Miller (2017), for example, decries the novel’s supernatural elements as ‘too inward-looking’ (n.p), while Kunzru (2017) objects to the ‘conceit’ which results in the ghosts

'understanding and feeling sympathy for each other in a mystical way' (n.p) after episodes of inhabitation. Strehle (2020) is more implicitly disparaging in referring to the 'donnee' (177) which enables the novel's ghostly enactors access to the subjective consciousness of others. Nonetheless, she also perceptively notes that on a metatextual level this mirrors a distinguishing feature of fiction; this is a point to which I will return below.

Finally, I must note a caveat in relation to the accessibility relations outlined above. Depending upon the religious and/or spiritual beliefs of the Actual World reader, both the ability of ghosts to inhabit the minds of others and the existence of said ghosts may be regarded as more or less fictional. In short, belief in the supernatural is culturally, historically, and theologically relative. Many world religions wholeheartedly accept the existence of a spiritual realm alongside the Actual World; as Ryan (1991b) recognises: 'some of us believe in ghosts, so their occurrence in a text does not constitute an absolute sign of fictionality' (43). Impressing this (often religiously-inflected) relativeness is the novel's titular allusion to Buddhist theology (Keown 2013). Within a more Western context, the Catholic concept of purgatory is analogous to the bardo realm. Consequently, it is possible that adherents of either faith would occupy a different perspective in relation to Ryan's (1991a, 1991b) accessibility relations outlined above. For the purposes of the present chapter, a broadly secular standpoint will be adopted. Henceforth, I will consider the existence of ghosts, who reside in a liminal realm and are able to supplant themselves into the consciousness of others, as a transgression of natural and taxonomic principles of compatibility. Not only does this seem to me the most impartial approach, it is also the approach best aligned with the author's professed intentions in writing the novel (see e.g. Meyer 2017; Prickett 2017). Explaining the concept of the bardo, Saunders – raised a Catholic, now a practising Nyingma Buddhist – has stated: 'Early on, I decided not to try to be too literal' (Saunders, qtd. in Domestico 2017: n.p).

The author's paratextual commentary, both upon *Lincoln in the Bardo* and upon the rest of his fictional and non-fictional oeuvre, likewise informs the second part of the following section. Below, I continue on to consider the concept of empathy, firstly as it relates to the Actual World and text-actual worlds generally (Section 7.3.1), and then in relation to the Text-actual World of *Lincoln in the Bardo* specifically (Section 7.3.2). This will facilitate a better understanding of the inclusion of the literalised metaperspective within *Lincoln in the Bardo*, as I argue that the phenomenon both encourages empathy within intradiegetic enactors and mirrors the empathy associated with the extradiegetic reading process.

7.3. Empathy

The present section proverbially oils the wheel of Spitzer's (1948) philological circle, given that this is an approach which has thus far proven illuminating. Specifically, outlining the phenomenological concept of empathy enables the linguistic description of perspective-taking and the literalised metaperspective within *Lincoln in the Bardo* to be tied to broader concerns of literary interpretation and aesthetic function. Empathy is first considered from a macro-perspective, on a global level, as I condense the extensive research into the topic into a necessarily brief overview. Subsequently, this subject is explored from a micro-perspective, looking on the more local level at Saunders' well-documented stance on the subject, and its relevance to his writings.

7.3.1. Empathy: A Macro-Perspective

Empathy, an affective state, can be defined as 'a spontaneous, vicarious sharing of affect' (Keen 2007: 4). Humans are thought to develop this innate capacity as little as 26 weeks after birth (Sotirova 2007). Crucially, as compared to its close cousin *sympathy*, it involves a 'feeling into' rather than a 'feeling with' (Fernandez-Quintanilla 2020, 2021; Keen 2007; Wales 2011: 133). Indeed, as Wales (2011: 133) underscores, this differentiation is reflected in the very etymology of the word *empathy*.

As Keen (2007) notes, empathy has only emerged relatively recently as a technical term. With its German predecessor *Einfuehlung* (literally, 'feeling into') coined in 1895, the first known English translation as empathy is traceable to the novelist Violet Paget, alias Vernon Lee, suggesting that the concept and the novel form have been interwoven from the first. Nonetheless, it was in what the author dubbed her 'primer on the Beautiful' (Lee 1913: 98) that empathy was first introduced as 'the *merging of the perceptive activities of the subject in the qualities of the object of perception*' (57; italics in original) and where it was described as an 'important *mental process*' (*ibid*; my italics). It is hence clear that the primary understanding of the term differs somewhat from its present-day usage. Within current usage, empathy is understood to be far less anthropomorphic; unlike Lee's (1913) discussion of mountains (61-9) as 'object of perception', empathy is now normally considered an interpersonal process between two or more sentient beings as 'subject' and 'object'. Additionally, while no mention is made of empathy as negatively valent within Lee's monograph, today it is a phenomenon generally associated with the sharing of negative affective states (Keen 2007). Within *Lincoln in the Bardo*, empathy is similarly triggered by the negatively-valent emotion of grief.

Nonetheless, its results prove positive: 'One mass-mind, united in positive intention' (Saunders 2017: 254), as opposed to the individualistic, self-centred ethos outlined in Section 7.2.

Lakoff and Johnson's seminal (1980) *Metaphors We Live By* outlines the common conceptual tropes which inform our everyday understanding of Actual World reality. Among these embedded figurative conceptions is EMOTIONAL INTIMACY IS PHYSICAL CLOSENESS, a metaphor which undergirds much theorising on the subject of empathy. For instance, it is recurrent throughout Saunders' understanding of the authorial enterprise of empathy (see Section 7.3.2), as well as within the excerpts of Sections 7.5 and 7.6. It also underpins the common idiomatic understanding of empathy as perspective-taking (Fernandez-Quintanilla 2020), realised via surface metaphors including *stepping into someone's shoes* or *getting inside someone's head* (cf. Mallon 2017, above). This conceptual metaphor is likewise implicit in the following excerpt from Smith's *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) which, while never employing the term *empathy* explicitly, is widely regarded as the proto-definition of the concept. Observe, for instance, the use of the prepositions within the first and second lines of the passage below.

> By the imagination we place ourselves in his [*sic*] situation, we conceive ourselves enduring all the same torments, we enter *as it were* into his body and become in some measure him, and thence form some idea of his sensations, and even feel something which, though weaker in degree, is not altogether unlike him.

(Smith 1759: 2-3; my italics)

Aside from the now outdated use of the generic masculine pronoun, the above passage, despite being penned three centuries ago, proves remarkably congruent with the thinking of modern-day empathy theorists. More immediately, it also tallies with the novel *Lincoln in the Bardo*. However, in *Lincoln in the Bardo*, the italicised construction flagging hypotheticality – 'as it were' – becomes redundant. The overarching metaphorical premise of empathetic perspective-taking is instead literalised, enabling the novel's ghostly enacts to truly 'enter into' the body and mind of, among others, President Lincoln, an experience which provides them with a precise idea of the 'torments' he suffers as a newly-bereaved father. For example, in inhabiting his father, Willie is not restricted to 'feel[ing] something [...] weaker in degree' with regard to affective states; instead, he 'could know *exactly* what he was' (Saunders 2017: 61; my italics). This incident will be returned to in Section 7.5, below.

Considering narrative empathy more narrowly, Keen (2007) observes that an identifiably fictional context encourages, rather than impedes, empathetic engagement by Actual World

readers. This, she suggests, stems from the ability of novel-reading to 'free [...] us from responsibility to protect ourselves through scepticism and suspicion' (106). As it is unlikely that demands are to be made upon them, Actual World readers counterintuitively find it easier to engage with persons who are marked as text-actual rather than their actual counterparts. Keen is also keen to acknowledge just how 'frequently [authors] embed representations of empathy and empathising within their works' (123). She claims an implicit metatextuality to this technique, tying together the practising of empathy and the process of creating fictional worlds. This is an observation indubitably supported by the title of Mallon's (2017) review of *Lincoln in the Bardo*: 'Saunders Gets Inside Lincoln's Head' (n.p).

Keen's observations also tally with those of Iser. Limning the experience of reading fictional prose in his seminal *The Implied Reader* (1974), Iser asserts:

> [I]n reading the reader becomes the subject that does the thinking. Thus there disappears the subject-object division that otherwise is a prerequisite for all knowledge and all observation, and the removal of this division puts reading in an apparently unique position as regards the possible absorption of new experiences. [...] [R]eading removes the subject-object division that constitutes all perception [as] someone else's thoughts [...] take form in our consciousness.
>
> (Iser 1974: 292, 293, 294)

The observations of this passage echo Ryan's (1991b) notion of fictional recentering, described in Section 2.2.2.1 as 'an imaginative relocation' (Ryan 2022: n.p) into a fictional, Text-actual World, a process necessary to the comprehension of fictional prose. However, Iser also recognises the readerly experience post-recentering, as the thoughts of 'someone else[...]' (the 'author' and through this author, fictional enactors) take place within the reader's mind. In a similar way, albeit on a literal level, this is what occurs in *Lincoln in the Bardo*; the bardo ghosts 'within one another [...] receiv[e] glimpses of one another's minds' (Saunders 2017: 254; see further Section 7.6). Finally, it is clear that Iser's description of the reading process also parallels Lee's (1913) original definition of empathy: 'the *merging of the perceptive activities of the subject in the qualities of the object of perception*' (57; italics in original); indeed, Iser even echoes Lee linguistically. These equivalences should serve to explain the frequent parallels drawn between the process of reading fiction and the development of empathy (e.g. Fernandez-Quintanilla 2020, 2021; Keen 2007). Adopting the perspective of another in the Actual World often elicits empathy, as examined above; replicating this process on the text-actual level unsurprisingly effects similar results.

Ultimately, both the process of empathy and the writing and/or reading of narrative texts necessitate getting inside the mind of another – in a metaphorical sense, at least. *Lincoln and*

the Bardo author George Saunders also appears cognisant of this parallel, as the following sub-section will explore.

Prior to this, a final point to note regarding narrative empathy, one only hinted at above, is that it may function on various distinct levels of a novel's discourse architecture (Short 1996), potentially across ontological boundaries. Above, empathy was considered on the author—enactor and reader—enactor levels (the observations apply equally to the 'real' and 'implied' versions of these figures). While the former is discussed in Yeh (2017), the latter constitutes a recent trend in the empirical study of narrative (see, e.g., Bolls 2021; Fernandez-Quintanilla 2020, 2021; Kuijpers 2021; Poehls 2021; Stradling 2019). In the context of the current chapter, given that the focus is on intradiegetic perspective-taking and the concomitant construction of the literalised metaperspective, empathy will be explored largely on the text-actual, enactor—enactor level. Indeed, the intradiegetic exercising of empathy proves thematically significant within the novel, with Strehle (2020) arguing that the eventual 'empathic connection' (164) of the ghosts enables narrative resolution.

7.3.2. Empathy: A Micro-Perspective

To the author Saunders, empathy denotes 'a kind of wide-open awareness [...] a powerful thing' (Yeh 2017: n.p). It is 'the softening of the border between you and somebody else' (Prickett 2017: n.p). Compassion, as one of 'the terms that appear[s] in empathy's family tree' (Keen 2007: 41) is meanwhile conceived of by Saunders as 'plain sight' (Wylie 2001: 56).

The ready availability of explicit definitions of empathy and its synonyms by Saunders is unsurprising. In the Actual World, the concept appears to inform his point of view on the ideological plane (Fowler 1986). He himself recognises that he is persistently 'intrigued by the notion of becoming infinitely empathetic' (Saunders 2021: n.p), a 'preoccupation[...]' (Fowler 1977: 103) which manifests itself in the Text-actual Worlds of his assorted fictional and non-fictional works. It thus appears as central to his authorial mind style, often forming what Saunders himself refers to as the 'Apparent Narrative Rationale' (Saunders 2008: 189) of his work. This he elucidates as 'the writer's answer to his own question: ''What exactly is it that I'm doing here?''', informing what his works are 'centered [*sic*] around' (*ibid*). Consider, for instance, the following passage, the opening to the titular essay from his non-fictional anthology, *The Brain-dead Megaphone* (2008).

> I find myself thinking of a guy standing in a field in the year 1200 [...]. I'm thinking about his mind, wondering what's in it. What's he talking about in that tape-loop in his head? Who's he arguing with? From whom is he defending himself, to whom is he rationalising his actions? I'm wondering, in other words, if his mental experience of life is different in any essential way from mine.

(Saunders 2008: 1)

This passage once again deploys the figurative understanding of empathy as placing yourself in the mind of another. Yet here Saunders' conceptualisation of the process is evidently solely metaphorical: he has no literal access into the mind of 'Mr. or Ms. 1200' (2), despite the interpersonal understanding he gains from imagining that he does. In Lincoln in the Bardo, it is literal access into the 'tape-loop' mental functioning of others – what Bakhtin (1981) refers to as an individual's *microdialogue* – which ultimately enables the bardo's ghosts to overcome their erstwhile 'Selfish, selfish, selfish' (Saunders 2017: 114) attitudes.

In *Lincoln in the Bardo*, it is literal access into the 'tape-loop' mental functioning of others which ultimately enables the bardo's ghosts to overcome their erstwhile 'Selfish, selfish, selfish' (Saunders 2017: 114) attitudes.

The following passage from Basseler (2017) also proves insightful, dovetailing with my earlier observation as to the centrality of an empathetic impulse within the idiosyncratic mind style of Saunders-as-author. He suggests:

> Part and parcel of Saunders' unique voice, I argue, has to do with the extraordinary emphasis he puts on intersubjective experience and understanding, including our cognitive, and, probably as importantly, our emotional inner processes. [...] This, in a nutshell, strikes me as Saunders' version of narrative empathy: to overcome our built-in, self-centred confusions by telling alternative stories that strip off the habitual and thereby make us sensitive to the experiences and perspectives of others.

(Basseler 2017: 153-4)

Boddy (2017) seemingly concurs, referring to Saunders' oeuvre as an exemplary instance of 'moral fiction' (4). While the above conclusions are based solely upon Saunders' short fiction, I believe them to be resonant with *Lincoln in the Bardo*. Likewise, the vast majority of both press and critical reviews of Saunders' debut novel note it to be centrally concerned with the subject of empathy (see, e.g, Brown 2017; Cummins 2017; Eigeartaigh 2018; Higgins 2017; Hopper 2017; Kemp 2017; Kunzru 2017; Wagner 2017; Wilhelmus 2017). This critical consensus is best summarised by Clark (2017), who notes that 'access to greater empathy' is 'Saunders' primary intention in the novel' (n.p). While this quotation remains ambiguous as to precisely which ontological levels this empathy is exercised upon, the steam stylistic analysis

below suggests that intradiegetic empathy and perspective-taking is mirrored by that on the extradiegetic level, in the Actual World. This fulfils Spitzer's (1948) philological circle, aligning the literary interpretation of aesthetic function with linguistic description and evidence. Beginning with the following section, the latter two nodes are addressed through a consideration of the prototypical metaperspective in *Lincoln in the Bardo*, to be contrasted with its literal form later in the present chapter.

7.4. 'I know what you are thinking': The Metaperspective in *Lincoln in the Bardo*

Serving to reinforce the concept, as well as providing a point of comparison with the next section, the present section investigates an instance of the prototypical metaperspective within *Lincoln in the Bardo*. That is, it presents '*My view* of the *other's* (your, his, her, their) *view* of me' (Laing *et al*. 1966: 4), rather than *My view* through the *other's view* of me that is the remit of the literalised metaperspective.

Excerpt 7.1, below, begins the novel. For this reason, Kelly (2017) suggests that paratextual factors (Genette 1997), primarily the novel's title, are likely to influence the Actual World reader to initially ascribe the passage to a text-actual enactor of President Abraham Lincoln. However, as the postposed attributive tag indicates after a couple of pages, the true internal focaliser is 'hans vollman' (Saunders 2017: 5), one of the novel's ghostly enactors. In his mortal life, Vollman was a printer, and shortly before his death married for the second time to a much younger woman. [35] He died as a result of a falling beam in his workshop, just hours shy of marital consummation (as a typically comic touch from Saunders, this scenario manifests itself physically in the afterlife, with Vollman wandering the bardo in a perpetual state of tumescence). The passage below consists of Vollman explaining the circumstances surrounding his death for what is later revealed to be the umpteenth time. For the purposes of clarity, and as in Excerpt 3.3, above, the metaperspective proper is italicised.

Excerpt 7.1

> On our wedding day I was forty-six, she was eighteen. *Now, I know what you are thinking: older man (not thin, somewhat bald, lame in one leg, teeth of wood) exercises the marital prerogative, thereby mortifying the poor young—*
> But that is false.
> That is exactly what I refused to do, you see.

[35] In quoting from the novel, I retain the decapitalisation of the proper names of ghostly enactors. Elsewhere in the body of the text they are capitalised as standard.

(Saunders 2017: 3, 5; my italics)

As 'ego' (Laing *et al.* 1966: 4), Vollman establishes a metaperspective through presenting hypothetical discourse imbued with evaluative lexis. Consequently, he constructs his view of the other's supposedly disparaging view of him. Introduced as the metaperspective is by a locution signalling epistemic commitment – 'I *know* what you're thinking' – it forms part of the Epistemic World of enactor Vollman, as the subsequent nominal tag confirms. Moreover, despite the certainty impressed by the desiderative lexical verb, Vollman's Epistemic World is more strictly an impossible one (Ryan 1991b: 115): it involves fallacious propositions, for Vollman does not definitively know what others are thinking, and instead engages in perspectival supposition. At this point in the novel at least, he has no access to the subjective consciousness of others.

Nonetheless, 'I know what you're thinking' is an unremarkable, even quotidian expression; indeed, a variant ('I know what they're thinking') featured in the case-study novel of the previous chapter, *A Brief History of Seven Killings*. This impresses perfectly the ubiquity of perspective-taking capacities, which enable the exercise of Theory of Mind (Apperly 2012; Premack and Woodruff 1978) in general, and the metaperspective more narrowly. Against this norm, the subversive literalisation of the phenomena later in the novel are all the more marked.

Further similarities exist between the passages analysed from James' novel in the previous chapter and Excerpt 7.1 above. For instance, during his presumption of the perspectives of others, Vollman engages in intradiegetic recentering. The two telltale indices of this process – a shifted deictic system and a change in register – are both clearly in evidence. The noun phrase 'older man' proves a prime example, constituting as it does a reference by the ordinarily first-person enactor Vollman to himself in the third-person (cf. 'this black woman' in. Excerpt 6.1). The phrase is additionally salient in relation to the second index, a change in register. Both the article omission and the telescoping of identity into prescribed details of age and gender are far from Vollman's usual expansive, florid style (though see below), and are additionally redolent of journalese. The italicised portion of the above passage could justifiably be considered the lead sentence of a suppositious newspaper article detailing Vollman's past actions. This impression is only heightened by the subsequent stacking of appositional phrases ('not thin, somewhat bald, lame in one leg, teeth of wood'), a common syntactic pattern within newspaper discourse (Fairclough 2010; cf. Saunders 2008: 3-4, 7-8). Finally, the undeniably euphemistic tone which is adopted is also notable. This involves the face-saving comparative 'older', the qualifying adverbial in the phrase 'somewhat bald', and the circumlocutionary 'not thin' (as

opposed to *fat*); each strategy of 'positive politeness' (Brown and Levinson 1987) strives to mitigate insult and 'avoid giving offence' (Wales 2011: 312). Two interpretations may be imposed upon this adoption of euphemism within Excerpt 7.1. Following the argument that the metaperspective evokes a supposed newspaper article condemning Vollman's actions, the use of this particular strategy would be a necessary means to avoid accusations of libel while still presenting Vollman, as antagonist, in a disparaging way. (For further analysis of the construction of a hypothetical newspaper report, see Adam 2021: 188).

Alternatively, the euphemistic tone may be interpreted as indicative of an overlapping of perspectives within the passage. It could be that Vollman's own, subjective perspective – his Epistemic World – colours and ultimately downgrades the supposed judgement of the unspecified 'you'. This would lead to the implication that the periphrastic nature of adjectival phrases including 'not thin' and 'somewhat bald' hint at Vollman's denial about the uncomfortable realities of his own appearance. It may be that (somewhat ironically, given the content of the insult), Vollman eschews going 'bald on-record' (Brown and Levinson 1987) and hence damaging his own positive face. Indeed, the hedging he employs ('not thin, somewhat bald') is noted by Brown and Levinson as a common means of mitigating face-threat via redressive action (83). Supporting this stance is the aforementioned discussion of the ghostly enactors' aptitude in dissembling in Section 7.3.2, above. Recall, too, that the second-order phenomenon of the metaperspective is often inflected by the first-order, or ordinary, perspective of the person constructing the metaperspective (Garcia 1998).

This second alternative is further bolstered by the implication of Vollman's idiolect within Excerpt 7.1. His highly formal, oftentimes Latinate idiolect is mirrored in the clauses of hypothetical thought report he relays; consider, for instance, the noun 'prerogative', the conjunction 'thereby', and the continuous verb 'mortifying'. Clark (2017) has noted Saunders' novel to be 'committed to the accurate presentation of each voice, its particular context, its variations and sensibilities' (n.p), and this multiperspectival painstakingness enables the layering of perspectives above, allowing Vollman's distinctive 'voice' to underlie the metaperspective he projects. Characterological idiolect proves similarly crucial in Excerpt 7.2, below.

Indeed, Excerpt 7.1 showcases the inherent dialogism of *Lincoln in the Bardo*, as remarked upon in Section 7.2. There, I noted that aside from the 166 voices which comprise the novel 'speak[ing] with and at one another' (Domestico 2017: 15), they also engage in dialogue with

themselves: Bakhtin's (1981) microdialogues. The mini-paragraph of line 4 ('But that is false.') proves pertinent in this regard. Included across just four words are two linguistic markers of the dialogic nature of consciousness, or what Sotirova (2007: 14, 16) labels 'interactive devices'. In the aforementioned paper, as well as during later work on the subject, Sotirova (2007, 2011) has identified three especially prominent indices of this interactivity: a) sentence-initial connectives, most usually *and*, *but*, and *for*; b) pronominal deixis; c) substitution, for example through anaphoric reference. In the above quotation from *Lincoln in the Bardo*, index c) can be aligned with the lexeme 'that', and index a) with 'but'. Ikeo (2014, 2016) concurs with the findings of Sotirova, noting that in her chosen case-study novel '[t]he connective 'but' marks a viewpoint shift *within* the character' (Ikeo 2016: 176; my italics). Clearly, this resonates with Excerpt 7.1. It too evidences a shift within, rather than between, the consciousness of a text-actual enactor, underscoring the dialogic layering to Vollman's discourse. With text-actual criticism absent, merely presumed in a metaperspective, Vollman does indeed, to echo Domestico (2017: 15) speak with and at himself. The 'tape-loop in his head' evoked by Saunders (2008: 1) plays out his 'arguing [...] rationalising his actions' and 'defending himself' (*ibid*) – from himself. This is accounted for by the second of the dual addressee slots on the third level of Fig. 7.1, and ultimately results in 'a conversational mimicking effect' (Sotirova 2011: 164).

The sentence-initial contrastive conjunction 'But' also functions to mark the juncture between the text-possible and the text-actual, much as with the medial 'instead' in Excerpt 6.7 of the previous chapter. Conjecture about the perspective of others is replaced by an account of events as they did occur (though note that even this is filtered through the necessarily subjective Epistemic World of Vollman). In contrast, the following two sections explore textual instances in which perspective-taking and the resultant metaperspective need not be relegated to the text-possible realm. Each feature the novel's ghostly enactors entering into the consciousness of another; consequently, they are able to relay the precise thoughts and feelings of a third-party, as well as to present directly the perspective that 'the other' (Laing *et al*. 1966: 4) has on 'the self' (*ibid*). It is this I refer to as the literalised metaperspective.

7.5. 'And in I went': The Literalised Metaperspective in *Lincoln in the Bardo*

In Chapter XXI, President Lincoln visits the borrowed crypt in which his son's corpse lies. Upon reaching the 'white stone home' (Saunders 2017: 45), President Lincoln proceeds to

remove the corpse from the coffin to cradle it in his arms. (Note that the once-more euphemistic couching of Willie's crypt also cleverly echoes the name of his former place of residence, the White House). What follows is a supernatural extension of the scene that 'just stuck with' (Domestico 2017: 16; cf. Prickett 2017) Saunders to form the novel's original impetus. Aside from being the novel's inceptive scene (and that which is featured as a promotional passage on the author's website), the extract constitutes the first extended foray of a ghost into the consciousness of another (cf. a more marginal incident in which Vollman 'sent the dogs yipping away, by passing through them and inducing in each the dream of a bear' [Saunders 2017: 6]). For this reason, it presents the novel's first instance of a literalised metaperspective.

Due to the interleaving of perspectives this necessitates, the passage proves problematic with regard to precisely who may be considered focaliser. Least equivocally, Willie may be viewed as the initial reflector of the fiction, as cues on the phraseological point of view plane (the vocative 'Father' and the idiosyncratic euphemism 'a worm' [cf. 34]) indicate. Yet while the entirety of the two-page chapter from which the passage is excerpted is attributed to 'willie lincoln' (62), I believe this to be misleading, as I explore below.

Excerpt 7.2

> Mouth at the worm's ear, Father said:
> We have loved each other well, dear Willie, but now, for reasons we cannot understand, that bond has been broken. But our bond can never be broken. For as long as I live, you will always be with me, child.
> [...] Saying all this to the worm! How I wished him to say it to me And to feel his eyes on me So I thought, all right, by Jim, I will get him to see me And in I went It was no bother at all Say, it felt all right Like I somewhat belonged in
> In there, held so tight, I was now partly also in Father
> And could know exactly what he was
> Could feel the way his long legs lay How it is to have a beard Taste coffee in the mouth and, though not thinking in words exactly, knew that *the feel of him in my arms has done me good*. *It has*. *Is this wrong*? *Unholy*? *No, no, he is mine, he is ours, and therefore I must be, in that sense, a god in this; where he is concerned I may decide what is best*. *And I believe this has done me good*. [...] *But here: his exact proportions, his suit smelling of him still, his forelock between my fingers, the heft of him familiar from when he would fall asleep in the parlor and I would carry him up to—*
> It has done me good. [...]
> Dear boy, he said, I will come again. That is a promise.
>
> willie lincoln

(Saunders 2017: 61-2)

Within the excerpt, the literalised metaperspective is established through the four 'typical linguistic indices' of the sub-type noted in Section 7.1. Here, 'the self' (Laing *et al*. 1966: 4) is Willie Lincoln, 'the *other*' (*ibid*) Abraham Lincoln; the son enters the consciousness of his

father and is thus able to access directly his view of him. This '*view* through the *other's view* of me' is presented alternately through free and free direct thought, with the italicisation typographically demarcating the discrete consciousnesses of the two Lincolns within the passage. No longer is the metaperspective in any way hypothetical; as Willie observes, he has unfettered access to his father's consciousness and internal discourse: 'could know *exactly* what he was' (my italics). This discourse is peppered with value-laden language (e.g. '*he is mine, he is ours*', '*familiar*'), and evidences a deictic shift as the erstwhile *origo* Willie is referred to in the third-person ('he', 'his', 'him'). Finally, the bout of literal perspective-taking and the literalised metaperspective which it engenders is enabled by the introductory, prepositional phrase 'in / In there'. Indeed, this phrase proves salient for several reasons. Clearly, it achieves a key index of the literalised metaperspective, due to the repetition within the anadiplosis emphasising the very literal movement into the cognition of another which is integral to this particular sub-type. Moreover, given that the lack of end-stopping within the phrase recalls the poetic technique of enjambment, it may substantiate Mallon's (2017) textually-unverified identification of a 'Whitmanesque afflatus' (90) to the idiosyncratic dialogue of ghost-enactor Willie Lincoln. The adjectivisation here alludes to the American poet Walt Whitman (1819—1892), famed for his formal innovation; Willie is likewise associated with deviation in punctuation and paragraphing within Excerpt 7.2. This eschewal of the standard leads to the third significant aspect of the phrase 'in / In there': it proves indicative of Willie's distinct idiolect. This stylistic individualisation means that even when enactors are cognitively embedded one inside another, the distinct 'voices' (Clark 2017: n.p) associated with each may be distinguished.

In Excerpt 7.2, the differentiation between enactor idiolects is particularly prominent, with Willie and Abraham Lincoln possessing almost diametrically-opposed styles. For the former, youthfulness and lack of education are suggested on a variety of levels. Typographically, there is the omission of punctuation between clauses and sentences, sporadic paragraphing and multiple spacing; syntactically, there is an overreliance upon parataxis; grammatically, there is repeated use of the co-ordinating conjunction 'and'; similarly, lexically there is repetition of both words and phrases ('exactly', 'all right', 'me') which is suggestive of underlexicalisation, a concept linked by Wales (2011) to 'immature' (430) cognitive styles. Finally, the register Willie employs is consistently low and Anglo-Saxon, with over ninety percent of his discourse monosyllabic. [36] Even the mild, minced oath 'By Jim' is indicative of Willie's youth, alongside

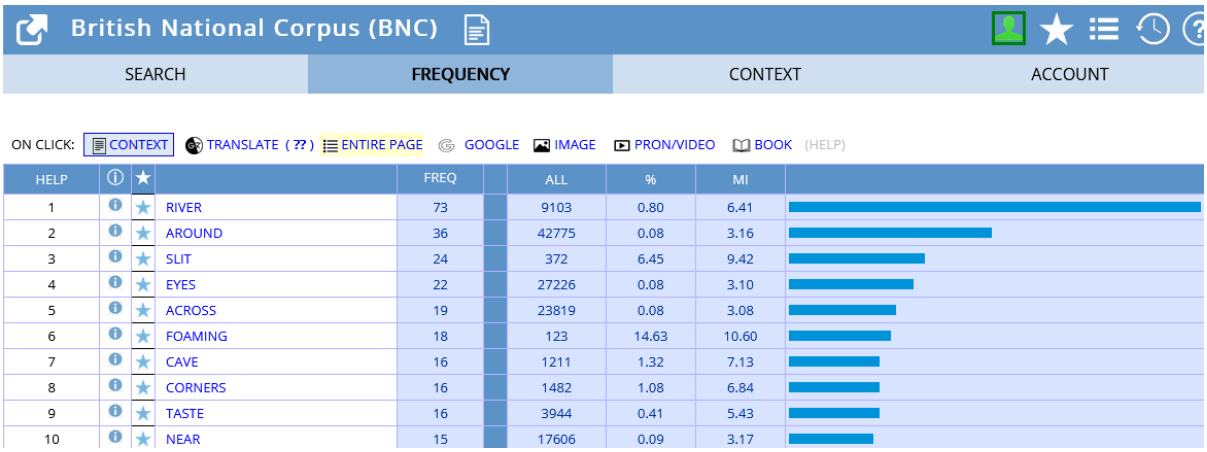
[36] This equates to 100 of the 111 words which may be attributed to Willie Lincoln.

flagging the novel's Text-actual World as that of a more conservative, religiously-influenced nineteenth-century.

Contrasting completely with the unsophisticated style of Willie is that of his father Abraham; indeed, the juncture between the consciousnesses of the two enactors is marked just as clearly by idiosyncratic language use as it is by italicisation. Abraham's distinctive style is made manifest through complex conjunctions ('therefore') within hypotactic constructions, highly formal punctuation (colons and semi-colons are employed even within the bounds of semi-conscious thought; cf. 'not thinking in words exactly') and a high, predominantly Franco-Latinate register. Overall, the language employed suggests an enactor with an aptitude for logical argument, as befitting Abraham Lincoln's Actual World counterpart; in *Lincoln as a Lawyer*, Frank (1963) notes 'Lincoln's transcendental skill with words' (143), ultimately proclaiming him America's 'most eloquent president' (156). Frank also suggests that this capacity within his political career was honed during Lincoln's years practising as a lawyer prior to his presidency; 'the cast of mind used in the solution [of problems] was much the same' (152) in both careers, Frank proposes. Meanwhile, it appears that Lincoln's distinctive 'cast of mind' also services the depiction of his Text-actual counterpart, presenting a linguistic style completely opposed to that of his son and therefore distinguishing between the two enactors as they inhabit the same consciousness. That a great amount of characterising detail can be unearthed from a scant few paragraphs only serves to corroborate Saunders' commentary on his writing practice: 'The reader can discern an incredible amount of nuance via diction and syntax and punctuation.' (Saunders, qtd. in Ellerhoff 2017: 241). Indeed, all three elements have proven stylistically salient above.

Nonetheless, some stylistic similarities between the mind style of Abraham and Willie are apparent. For instance, the President's inner dialogue makes comparable use of sentence fragments. However, for the more senior enactor this emphasises the spontaneity of his discourse, rendering it redolent of an internal monologue or stream-of-consciousness narration (cf. Kim Clarke in the previous chapter). Meanwhile, as in the discourse attributed to Willie, Abraham's discourse also employs aposiopesis ('I would carry him up to—') and mini-paragraphing. Each are markers of the online, and potentially sub-conscious ('though not thinking in words exactly') nature of Lincoln's thoughts; Willie's access to these latent levels of cognition impresses the efficacy of his perspective-taking. He is so fully embedded in his father's consciousness as to be able to probe it on multiple levels (cf. Section 7.6, below).

There are, however, some linguistic clues that Willie does not instantaneously assimilate to his father as cognitive host. Immediately prior to presenting the literalised metaperspective, Willie explains he can 'Taste coffee in the mouth', a locution which proves externally deviant and therefore telling. A search for the noun phrase 'the mouth' via the web-front end of the BNC reveals its top collocate to be *river*, as Fig. 7.2 indicates.



HELP		FREQ		ALL	%	MI
1	RIVER	73		9103	0.80	6.41
2	AROUND	36		42775	0.08	3.16
3	SLIT	24		372	6.45	9.42
4	EYES	22		27226	0.08	3.10
5	ACROSS	19		23819	0.08	3.08
6	FOAMING	18		123	14.63	10.60
7	CAVE	16		1211	1.32	7.13
8	CORNERS	16		1482	1.08	6.84
9	TASTE	16		3944	0.41	5.43
10	NEAR	15		17606	0.09	3.17

Fig. 7.2. Concordance lines for the phrase *the mouth* from the web front-end of the British National Corpus

Given that this top collocate is more than twice as frequent as the second most common result, it is apparent that the phrase *the mouth* is primarily employed in geographical rather than biological contexts. Moving from this linguistic evidence and description (*sensu* Spitzer 1948) to the nodes of literary interpretation and aesthetic function leads to the conclusion that Willie Lincoln is not fully accustomed to his supernatural capabilities and is uncertain as to how to navigate his new, duplex identity linguistically.

Similar linguistic vacillation is in evidence in the excerpts in the following section, which focuses more generally upon the literalised perspective-taking which enables the literalised metaperspective of Section 7.5 to occur. However, steam stylistic analysis elucidates how increased exposure to the minds of others appears to rectify this initial uncertainty, as well as resulting in intradiegetic empathy.

Prior to the next section, mention must be made as to the ambiguity of the focaliser in Excerpt 7.2. As noted above, Willie clearly begins as *origo* within the Text-actual World; moreover, it is he who cues two different text-possible world-types within the passage. An Intention World

is triggered by the strong epistemic modal verb 'will' in 'I will get him to see me', while his Wish World ('How I *wished* him to say it to me'; my italics) ultimately initiates Willie's bout of literalised perspective-taking and concomitant literalised metaperspective. Following this, Willie cannot definitively be classed as sole focaliser. If Genette (1980) defines a focaliser as '*the character whose point of view orients the narrative perspective*' (186; italics in original), then both Willie and Abraham are candidates towards the latter half of Excerpt 7.2. Similar narratological ambiguity arising from the embedding of consciousnesses during literalised perspective-taking occurs in the excerpts of the next section.

7.6. '[G]limpses of one another's minds': Literalised Perspective-taking in *Lincoln in the Bardo*

As Excerpt 7.2 demonstrated, the literalised metaperspective is often accompanied by literalised perspective-taking; indeed, the latter commonly enables the former. The following quintet of brief quotations evidence literalised perspective-taking in action within *Lincoln in the Bardo*. Once more, this ordinarily hypothetical and therefore text-possible process takes place within the novel's Text-actual World (albeit with some incursions into the text-possible, as will be discussed presently). All five of the passages involve various bardo inhabitants entering into the consciousness of Abraham Lincoln, either jointly or together, as he wanders the Georgetown graveyard during a visit to his son's corpse (cf. Excerpt 7.2, above). Given that these scenes break the comparatively stringent accessibility relations E and F (Ryan 1991a, 1991b), it is unsurprising that they have formed a central point of focus for reviewers and critics of Saunders' novel. Clark (2017), for instance, refers to 'an extraordinarily powerful scene, [in which] we see the dead inhabiting [Lincoln's] body' (n.p). This process, and the literalised perspective-taking it enables, also proves 'extraordinarily powerful' for 'the dead' in question. Following Smith (1759), the ghosts 'enter [...] into [Lincoln's] body and become in some measure him, and thence form some idea of his sensations' (2-3): they are able to empathise with his predicament as a newly-bereaved father, as well as leader of a country embroiled in civil war. It is Hans Vollman who begins this process of literalised perspective-taking, soon to be followed by fellow shades Roger Bevins and the Reverend Everly Thomas.

Excerpt 7.3

> So in I went, into Mr. Lincoln, alone.
>
> hans vollman

(Saunders 2017: 230)

Excerpt 7.4

> [T]hen his (*our*) eyes shut, in a slow remembering sorrow-wince.
>
> hans vollman

(Saunders 2017: 236)

Excerpt 7.5

> Outside, an owl shrieked.
> I became aware of the smell rising up off *our* suit: linen, sweat, barley.
> I had thought not to come again.
> Thus thought Mr. Lincoln.
> [...] He does not (no) look like he is sleeping.
>
> hans vollman

(Saunders 2017: 243)

Excerpt 7.6

> What a pleasure. What a pleasure it was, being in there. Together. United in common purpose. In there together, yet also within one another, thereby receiving glimpses of one another's minds, and glimpses, also, of Mr. Lincoln's mind. How good it felt, doing this together!
> [...] One mass-mind, united in positive intention.
>
> roger bevins iii

(Saunders 2017: 254)

Excerpt 7.7

> In *our* mind the lad stood atop a hill, merrily waving to us, urging us to be brave and resolve the thing.
>
> roger bevins iii
>
> But (*we* stopped ourselves short) was this not just wishful thinking? Weren't we, in order to enable ourselves to go on, positing from our boy a blessing we could not possibly verify?
> Yes.
> Yes we were.
>
> hans vollman

(Saunders 2017: 309)

To begin with Vollman's solo inhabitation of Lincoln (Excerpts 7.3 to 7.5), the Actual World reader is presented with two nested Epistemic Worlds. To recap, this is a world-type which encompasses 'What [enactors] in the fictional world believe' (Stockwell 2002: 94); while one is that of Vollman, the other belongs to Abraham Lincoln. This perspectival embedding is perfectly illustrated by the duplication of the desiderative verb 'thought' in Excerpt 7.5. The former instance (in the past perfect reported clause) belongs to Lincoln, while the latter (within

the reporting clause) is an addendum by Vollman, as the formal vocative ('Mr. Lincoln') further impresses. The resulting effect is comically echoic, serving both to emphasise Vollman's role as mediator of Lincoln's direct thoughts and to problematise the identification of the focaliser in the passage, much as in Excerpt 7.2. Once more, the role of '*character whose point of view orients the narrative perspective*' (Genette 1980: 186; italics in original) is distributed between two different enactors. While Lincoln's affective perspective informs the excerpts (e.g. 'his (*our*) eyes shut in a slow remembering sorrow-wince'), it is Vollman who 'bec[omes] aware' of (multi-)sensory stimuli, spanning the auditory ('an owl shrieked') and olfactory ('the smell rising up off our suit').

Throughout the excerpts, Vollman's report of Lincoln's internal thought processes ranges across Leech and Short's (2007) speech and thought presentation continuum. Excerpt 7.3 evidences narrator's report of thought (NRT); in Excerpt 7.4, there is narration of internal states (NI; cf. Semino and Short 2004); in Excerpt 7.5, as alluded to above, direct thought (DT) is the thought presentation form of choice. The cumulative effect of this miscellany of thought presentation types is to suggest that President Lincoln's consciousness has been intercepted on every level during this episode of literalised perspective-taking. This impression of unimpeded access is furthered typographically. In Excerpt 7.5, parentheses are used to section off Lincoln's varying thought strata; the implication is that the interjection 'no' is a spontaneous expression of affect from the grieving president, belonging to a more sub-conscious level than the reasoned declaratives which sandwich it. Morse (2018) suggests that the novel *Lincoln in the Bardo* affords the Actual World reader access to 'Lincoln's 'stream-of-consciousness'' (31); the stylistic analysis here suggests this statement to be slightly reductive, for the text also accounts for Lincoln's *sub*consciousness. Nonetheless, Vollman evidently has privileged and extensive access to both levels. Indeed, the reference to a 'glimpse[...]' in Excerpt 7.6 is clearly litotic.

Another significant typographical feature evident in Excerpt 7.5, and shared by Excerpts 7.4 and 7.7, is the strategic use of italicisation. Iser (1978) suggests that:

> [S]ignals [including italicisation] are most frequently to be found where different depths of consciousness are to be plumbed. [This] enables the various layers of consciousness to be offset from one another without recourse to extraneous codes.
>
> (Iser 1978: 113)

Further, he notes that this strategy mitigates against readerly confusion in polyphonic or multiperspectival texts, and continues:

> This alternation can be accelerated to the point at which each new sentence switches viewpoint in a positive kaleidoscope of perspectives.
>
> (Iser 1978: 113)

Both observations resonate with Saunders' text. In Excerpt 7.5, for instance, perspectives do switch on a sentence-by-sentence basis. Lines 1, 2 and 4 are attributable to Vollman, while 3 and 5 are those of President Lincoln. Moreover, as suggested above, Vollman appears privy to 'different depths' of Lincoln's consciousness.

However, elsewhere italicisation is employed for purposes other than distinguishing between varied 'perspectives' or 'various layers of consciousness'. In Excerpts 7.4, 7.5 and 7.7, italicised pronouns (often also parenthesised) are used to emphasise the ghosts' awareness of their shared perspective. Excerpt 7.4, for instance, features the self-repair 'his (*our*) eyes shut', suggesting Vollman, much like Willie in Excerpt 7.2, to be uncertain as to how to navigate his new, embedded identically linguistically. Indeed, this self-directed microdialogue (Bakhtin 1981; cf. Wilson 2017) is reminiscent of similar quibbling by the enactor in Excerpt 7.1. Nonetheless, that this collective pronoun is parenthesised suggests this option to be of secondary importance at this point in the novel, with primacy being accorded to Lincoln's first-person perspective as discrete and distinct. Excerpt 7.7, in contrast, proves subtly different. While it too begins with italicised first-person pronouns (cf. Bevins' '*our*' and Vollman's '*we*') to imply self-conscious awareness of the conjoined identity resulting from 'co-habitation' (Saunders 2017: 257), towards the end of the passage pronouns appear unitalicised. Vollman peppers his erotema with unitalicised collective plural forms (e.g. 'we', 'ourselves', 'our'), following Bevins who has twice evoked an unitalicised 'us'. This latter enactor even transmutes an already affectionate, colloquial reference to Willie Lincoln as 'the lad' to 'our boy', a possessive noun phrase interpretable as indicating affective, legal or even familial attachment. Moreover, the phrase is redolent of Lincoln's linguistic reformulation ('*No, no, he is mine, he is ours*') in Excerpt 7.2; in Excerpt 7.7, Willie does appear to be an enactor who evokes affection in his father and the erstwhile self-centred bardo ghosts alike.

Meanwhile, it is the fourth excerpt above, narrated by Bevins, which focuses most centrally upon the concept of empathy. Both the experience itself and its aftereffects are considered within the passage, couched as part of Bevins' Epistemic World. The positive shading (Simpson 1993) is especially notable, corresponding to a realisation of the pleasure to be taken from empathising. For instance, the excerpt is loaded with positively-valent lexis (e.g. 'pleasure', 'good'), with cleft sentences suggestive of an 'impassioned' (Wales 2011: 57)

rhapsodising about the experience. This impression is continued through the intersentential epanalepsis (e.g. 'Together. United in common purpose. In there together [...].'), with the enthused momentum capped by Bevins' conclusive exclamative. As with the excerpt's opening sentences, this last – 'How good it felt, doing all this together!' – is left-branching, accentuating Bevins' enjoyment of this literalised form of perspective-taking via syntactic foregrounding. Compounding this, the precepts of cadence theory (see Wassiliwizky 2021) suggest that the paragraph-final position of this assertion will endow it with even greater resonance for the reader. While the bardo ghosts eventually recognise the efficacy of empathy in the Text-actual World, Saunders underlines its potency – 'a powerful thing' (Saunders, qtd. in Yeh 2017: n.p) – to those in the Actual World.

Ultimately, literalised perspective-taking can be considered integral to the novel *Lincoln in the Bardo*, as well as closely tied to the 'Apparent Narrative Rationale' (Saunders 2008: 189) of Saunders as an author of 'moral fiction' (Boddy 2017: 4). The six instances analysed above have shown it to be achieved by several stylistic means; these include the depiction of idiosyncratic mind-style, the judicious use of italicisation and parenthesis, and variation in pronominal use. Moreover, and as predicted in Section 7.3, above, the effect of the literal perspective-taking for the text-actual ghostly enactors has been increased empathic identification with the plight of bereaved President Lincoln. They have become 'sensitive to the experiences and perspectives of others' (Basseler 2017: 153-4) through adopting the perspective of 'the other' (Laing *et al*. 1966: 4).

In the final, closing section of this chapter, I continue to crystallise precisely how this intradiegetic affect resonates on the extradiegetic level, i.e. with Actual World human beings engaged in the process of reading. I also summarise this chapter's key findings in relation to the literalised metaperspective, tying this somewhat more niche sub-type to the other three examined in previous chapters.

7.7. Concluding Remarks

This final case-study chapter has considered the sub-type of the literalised metaperspective, alongside the process of literalised perspective-taking which it often involves. The case-study novel selected to showcase this metaperspectival sub-type was Saunders' (2017) *Lincoln in the Bardo*, and it was suggested that both literalised perspective-taking and the literalised metaperspective were made possible by the particular accessibility relations (Ryan 1991a,

1991b) of the novel, tied to its generic classification. The literalised metaperspective is thus the first of the metaperspectival sub-types surveyed in this thesis to be restricted in this way.

The literalised metaperspective also proved the first metaperspectival sub-type to subvert the pattern of 'typical linguistic indices' established across Chapters 4, 5 and 6. Namely, though once again involving evaluative lexis as a key indicator, hypothetical discourse presentation as a second non-particularised index was replaced by direct or free direct discourse presentation, alongside prepositions and a shifted deictic centre, as three typical linguistic indices specific to the literalised metaperspective as sub-type. It was demonstrated that this altered discourse presentation type foregrounds the direct and unmediated access to the thoughts and feelings of 'the other' (Laing *et al*. 1966: 4), while the latter two aforementioned particularised indices (prepositions; a shifted deictic centre) emphasised the very literal movement into another's consciousness which engenders the literalised metaperspective.

In the Text-actual World, this realised what Basseler (2017) referred to as 'Saunders' version of narrative empathy' (154) in a non-hypothetical sense, as the bardo's ghostly enactors 'overc[a]me [their] built-in, self-centred confusions' (*ibid*) through centring themselves in another self. This led them to 'tell [...] alternative stories' due to their privileged access into 'the experiences and perspectives of others' (*ibid*). Moreover, this dynamic is mirrored on the Actual World level. Whilst reading, after fictionally recentering (Ryan 1991b) into the Text-actual World, and as Iser (1974) recognises, 'someone else's thoughts [...] take form in our consciousness' (294). Discourse architectural diagrams (e.g. Fig. 7.1) prove that this embedding of perspectives is complex; the readerly addressee is exposed both to 'the thoughts of the author' (Iser 1974: 293) indirectly, and to those of the novel's enactors directly. It is this which explains the common equation between the exposure to fictional minds and the development of empathy (Keen 2007). Clear parallels thus appear to the 'glimpses of one another's minds' (Saunders 2017: 254) that the literalised perspective-taking and literalised metaperspectives of the bardo ghosts involve. Ultimately, it is apparent that entering into the consciousness of another and/or adopting a perspective other than one's own is integral to the enterprise of reading fiction.

The following, eighth, and final chapter of this thesis is Janus-faced: it looks back across the findings of the preceding seven chapters, and forwards to project future directions for the topics covered. In this way it addresses the metaperspectivally-inflected interrogative of another

recent, Booker-winning work: ‘What comes next for me? I know that’s what you’re wondering.’ (Adiga 2008: 318).

‘What comes next for me? I know that’s what you’re wondering’: Conclusions and Future Prospects

8.0. Preliminaries

This thesis, couched within the disciplines of narratology and stylistics, has investigated hypothetical perspectives and scenarios in contemporary [Man] Booker Prize-winning fiction. Its central unifying thread has been the concept of the metaperspective – or, ‘*my view* of the *other’s* (your, his, her, their) *view* of me.’ (Laing *et al*. 1966: 4) – four distinct permutations of which were examined across the four case-study chapters. The granular, predominantly ‘steam stylistic’ (Carter 2012: 108) analyses within these chapters were informed by a combined cognitive—ontological methodological approach, which I dubbed the ‘Best of Both Worlds Theories’ approach.

As a concept coined over 50 years ago by social psychologists, and thereafter largely neglected, the interdisciplinary application of the metaperspective is the first of this thesis’ original contributions to knowledge. Its second innovative feature has been the methodology employed: an amalgamated text-possible, or ‘Best of Both Worlds Theories’ approach, informed by both Text World and possible-worlds theories.

For the remainder of this chapter, I review the insights gleaned from adopting this text-possible approach in the study of hypothesis and the metaperspective in contemporary [Man] Booker Prize-winning fiction (‘Conclusions’), alongside suggesting promising areas for further study (‘Future Prospects’). Given the innate human tendency towards ‘constantly supposing’ (Laing *et al*. 1966: 4), the field of study is a fertile one, and far from fully charted. I conclude by emphasising the relationship of reciprocity, with regard to hypothesis and the metaperspective, between the Actual World and the Text-actual World. As Gavins and Steen (2003) acknowledge, literature is a microcosm of life: ‘literature is grounded in some of the most fundamental and general structures and processes of human cognition and experience.’ (2).

8.1. Original Contributions Revisited

I outlined in the introductory chapter both the original contributions and new coinages this thesis offers. Having explained the methodology undergirding these innovations in Chapters 2 and 3, and subsequently applied them in the analysis of 'case-study' [Man] Booker Prize-winning works of fiction in Chapters 4 to 7, I am now in the position to revisit, recap, and hence consolidate these developments.

8.1.1. New Methodology

Chapter 2 presented a 'Best of Both Worlds Theories' approach which combined the ontologically-based possible worlds theory as employed in narratology with the cognitively-grounded Text World Theory that has recently informed much stylistic analysis. Incorporating the possible world-based element proved sensitive to ontological complexities, for instance allowing me to differentiate between various distinct reader figures in Chapter 4, as well as the often overlapping realised and unrealised textual scenarios excerpted throughout case-study Chapters 4 to 7. This was bolstered by the cognitive capacities of Text World Theory, which allowed me to account for the readerly processing of each quoted excerpt, and was especially insightful as a supplement to the reader-response data of Chapters 4 and 6.

Despite the common heritage of these two worlds-based theories, this synergy is one which has, up to now, remained relatively unharnessed (for an exception, see Lugea 2013), yet the dual approach has proven effective here. Moreover, it follows several other studies in combining two erstwhile discrete stylistic theories to illuminating effect (e.g. Mastropierro 2017; Semino 2003).

Overall, I believe this thesis to have achieved its first aim, as stated in the Introduction, which I reproduce below.

> 1) To demonstrate further, following Adam (2021), the feasibility of the combined cognitive/ontological text-possible, or 'Best of Both Worlds Theories' approach.

8.1.2. New Terminology

A key contribution of this thesis has been the introduction and application of the concept of the *metaperspective* into the domain of literature. Indeed, this was the remit of the second, double-barrelled aim cited in the Introduction:

2) To propose the heretofore social-psychological concept of *the metaperspective* as not only applicable, but often integral, to literature, and to align it with existing stylistic frameworks.

Chapter 3 was instrumental in demonstrating how this relatively underused social-psychological concept tessellated with existing stylistic frameworks. Further to this, four distinct metaperspectival sub-types, each with their own attendant criteria and characteristics, were identified. These sub-types comprised the *discourse-architectural*, *communal*, *racialised* and *literalised metaperspective*, each of which were defined following the format of Laing *et al*.'s original (1966: 4) definition. Each then formed the core of their respective case-study chapters (Chapters 4 to 7). To recap, the four terms can be glossed as follows.

1. **The discourse-architectural metaperspective**

   The metaperspective relating to the production and reception of discourse; or, *My view* of my *discourse partner's view* of me.

2. **The communal metaperspective**

   The metaperspective relating to some social collective; or, *My view* of the *community's view* of me.

3. **The racialised metaperspective**

   The metaperspective relating to colour, culture, and or ethnicity; or, *My view* of the *other's* racially inflected *view* of me.

4. **The literalised metaperspective**

   The metaperspective which makes literal the ordinarily figurative, hypothetical notion of adopting another's perspective; or, *My view* through the *other's view* of me.

It was identified that each metaperspectival sub-type has several characterising features, termed *typical linguistic indices*, with several of these features shared by all four sub-types. Table 8.1 documents the typical linguistic indices pertaining to each specific sub-type, as well as highlighting the points of convergence in emboldened font.

Metaperspectival sub-type	Discourse-architectural	Communal	Racialised	Literalised
Typical linguistic indices	- **Hypothetical discourse (speech/thought/writing) presentation** - **Evaluative lexis** - Direct address - Compositional deixis - Textual deixis	- **Hypothetical discourse (speech/thought/writing) presentation** - **Evaluative lexis** - Third-person exclusive pronominal reference - Communal discourse (speech/thought/writing) presentation.	- **Hypothetical discourse (speech/thought/writing) presentation** - **Evaluative lexis** - Semantic field of race	- Direct or free direct discourse (speech/thought/writing) presentation - **Evaluative lexis** - Prepositions - A shifted deictic centre
Related phenomena		- Communal hypothetical focalisation - Inverted communal hypothetical focalisation	- Controlling images - Double consciousness - Intradiegetic recentering	
Generic classification				- Fantastic - Magic realism - Science fiction. [37]

Table 8.1. The four metaperspectival sub-types, their key linguistic indices and related phenomena

[37] Note that the options listed here are indicative rather than exhaustive, and are based upon discussions within the present thesis.

As the above schematic underscores, all metaperspectival sub-types share evaluative lexis as a typical linguistic index. Three of the four types (excluding the literalised metaperspective) also feature hypothetical discourse presentation, be it in the form of speech, thought, or writing. These patterns, concretised by the tabulation, are unsurprising. The metaperspective is inherently concerned with the subjective viewpoint of 'the *other*' (Laing *et al*. 1966: 4), which inevitably entails evaluation. Further, this evaluation is always necessarily of a suppositious nature. As Laing and colleagues state, we are 'constantly supposing' (*ibid*) others to be seeing us in particular ways, hence the centrality of hypothetical discourse to most metaperspectival sub-types. The exception to the rule is the literalised metaperspective, due to its defining reconfiguration through which any hypothetical perspective-taking become literal. Supposition is extraneous when one may enter into the mind of another and achieve the other's viewpoint through this manoeuvre. Relatedly, unique to this variant is the presence of a 'Generic classification' caveat. Due to its characteristic making literal of what is ordinarily hypothetical, and attendant subversion of accessibility relations (Ryan 1991a, 1991b), the literalised metaperspective may only appear in a specific and restricted subset of genres.

Both the second and third of the metaperspectival sub-types suggested required the conception of further new terminology. (In the figure above, these are included within the row entitled 'Related phenomena'). The former, the communal metaperspective, was aligned with communal hypothetical focalisation, and its complementary inverse, inverted communal hypothetical focalisation. Communal hypothetical focalisation was defined as

> the viewpoint generated by collective supposition about past, present, or future events.

In short, communal hypothetical focalisation is conjecture courtesy of a community. As Chapter 5 demonstrated, the subject of communal hypothetical focalisation tends to be an individual, or minority group, behaving in some way counter to the norms, values, and/or expectations of a community. Reference to Ryan's (1985, 1991b) Obligation World, text-possible world-type 3, was hence frequent.

Correspondingly, I suggested inverted communal hypothetical focalisation to be a similar phenomenon, albeit a phenomenon in which the perspectival direction is reversed. With inverted communal hypothetical focalisation, it became instead the subject of scrutiny who engaged in supposition about the thoughts, feelings and behaviours of the community. Inverted communal hypothetical focalisation thus entailed

> the viewpoint generated about collective supposition.

In short, inverted communal hypothetical focalisation is conjecture centred around a community.

The clear affinity between this concept and the communal metaperspective was subsequently highlighted. However, the two concepts were seen to differ with respect to the subject of the community's supposed viewpoint. The former, inverted communal hypothetical focalisation, has a broader scope; the subject of the latter is necessarily the party constructing the communal metaperspective. Meanwhile, both communal hypothetical focalisation and inverted communal hypothetical focalisation were also situated within Herman's original (1994, 2002) four-way hypothetical focalisation framework. Doing so advanced understanding of the schematic, while also further integrating the coinages of this thesis into current narratological-stylistic theory.

A similar improvement upon existing theoretical terminology was suggested in Chapter 6. Here, Ryan's original (1991b) concept of '[fictional] recentering' inspired the identification and labelling of a recursive variant: *intradiegetic recentering*. This term denotes all those instances in which a text-internal enactor explicitly adopts the perspective of another enactor within the fiction. Yoking it to other phenomena investigated during this thesis, intradiegetic recentering thus involves enactors engaging in perspectival supposition. Linguistically, intradiegetic recentering was seen to be signalled by a shifted deictic system and a change in register. Paralleling the discussion above, it may be objected that intradiegetic recentering duplicates the concept of the metaperspective, rendering it redundant. However, I once again countered that while there is affinity between the two concepts, they are not identical. Intradiegetic recentering is a process, the conscious, prolonged adoption of another's viewpoint on the world; the metaperspective is a stance, involving the adoption of another's viewpoint on the self.

Cumulatively, the examination of the stylistic features discussed above within the four 'case-study' novels allowed me to realise the third aim of this thesis:

> 3) To contribute a stylistic (literary linguistic) perspective to the critical study of international, contemporary, prize-winning literary fiction.

Frequently, my stylistic analyses have been seen to dovetail with the commentary of authors, press, and/or literary critics upon the [Man] Booker Prize-winning works under scrutiny. Whilst this analytical triangulation confirms often intuitive, impressionistic insights into the novels, it also provides the specific linguistic criteria with which to do so. This clearly echoes

Spitzer's (1948) philological circle, with linguistic description based upon linguistic evidence informing the literary interpretation of aesthetic function (cf. Fig. 1.1).

Yet equally, I cannot claim my own analyses as infallible. The following sub-section first acknowledges, then attempts to account for, some potential objections which may be made to this thesis. In doing so, I hope to validate the conclusions drawn above.

8.2. Limitations of this Thesis

One potential drawback of this thesis is the methodology employed. The steam stylistic analysis within this thesis is inherently introspective, and hence unavoidably subjective. Nonetheless, throughout I have endeavoured to follow Simpson's (2014) '3 Rs'. According to this mnemonic:

> stylistic analysis should be rigorous
> stylistic analysis should be retrievable
> stylistic analysis should be replicable.
>
> (Simpson 2014: 4)

The first criterion dictates that the method adopted 'be based on an explicit framework of analysis' (*ibid*). The framework informing this thesis, the 'Best of Both Worlds Theories' approach, was outlined at length in Chapter 2, and has been the scaffolding upon which the steam stylistic analyses of Chapters 4 to 7 have been built. Each and every textual excerpt has been categorised within this jointly cognitive-ontological model to achieve consistency. Likewise, a set of 'explicit terms and criteria' (Simpson 2014: 4) were first defined and subsequently applied across Chapters 2 to 7, among them the *metaperspective*, *[inverted] communal hypothetical focalisation*, and *intradiegetic recentering*. The consequent cache of metalanguage ensures retrievable results (criterion 2). Finally, throughout the thesis, each passage under consideration has been transcribed in its entirety. It is this approach which makes the analysis replicable, allowing for maximum transparency and encouraging others to test the cogency of my argument.

Admittedly, it is difficult to wholly oust the spectre of researcher subjectivity. While it is true that several of the phenomena highlighted ([inverted] communal hypothetical focalisation; intradiegetic recentering; various metaperspectival types) have typical linguistic indices, these features are never binding, nor does their appearance necessarily constitute one of the aforementioned phenomena. Moreover, some features are shared among several phenomena. Analysis must therefore always be conducted on a qualitative, case-by-case, and potentially

subjective basis, as opposed to a more objective, quantitative, corpus-linguistic one. Nonetheless, as and where applicable I have bolstered introspective analyses with small-scale corpus linguistic data. The approach adopted is consequently corpus-*informed*, as opposed to corpus-*driven*, as Walker and McIntyre (2019) differentiate. As explained in the Introduction, this is an approach which 'offers the stylistician a means of checking and validating (or invalidating) what might otherwise be fairly subjective claims about a text.' (McIntyre and Walker 2019: 61). Incorporating contemporary press reviews (e.g. Chapter 5) and reading group responses (Chapter 6) has also enabled me to supplement my own introspective analysis. Overall, the conclusions drawn prove less subjective than *inter*subjective.

Another limitation of this study is its small sample size. Due to restraints of both time and space, only four novels were selected to act as case studies for their respective chapters. Nonetheless, the selection of these specific case studies was informed by a variety of criteria, textually-external as well as textually-internal, and therefore cannot be viewed as mere whim on the part of the researcher. Moreover, in the following subsection, I aim to offset this quantitative limitation by suggesting comparable works in which similar stylistic phenomena are apparent. However, my comparable case studies do still retain several of the parameters of the preceding chapters. For one, they are all (barring one exception) contemporary, i.e. post-2000, works of literature; for two, each have been awarded the [Man] Booker Prize, meaning that they are a) solely prose, and b) likely to be classified within the genre of literary fiction. While these criteria have proven a boon to my stylistic analysis (cf. Section 1.4), it does not follow that the phenomena identified in these works are exclusive to literature of the fictional, prize-winning, contemporary, or literary variety. Further research could legitimately apply the notion of the metaperspective to literature from other eras or other genres (e.g. science fiction or popular fiction), poetry, or even non-fiction, given that the concept originated in the context of social psychology. The section below makes some suggestions as to how this may be achieved.

Meanwhile, the proposed text-possible framework is clearly adaptable to any discoursal context. For the reasons outlined in Section 2.3, and despite their erstwhile theoretical divorce, I strongly believe that marrying the cognitive insights of Text World Theory with possible world theory's ontological foundations will prove a rewarding framework for future stylistic study.

8.3 Case Studies: Comparisons

It will be instructive to compare the conclusions drawn in the 'case-study chapters' (Chapters 4-7) with other [Man] Booker-winning works from the same contemporary (i.e. post-2000) time frame. This will help to validate my findings by demonstrating them to be applicable not only in isolated instances or in single works of fiction, but more broadly across the genre of literary fiction as a whole. The wider application of the various terms I have coined across this thesis – *[inverted] communal hypothetical focalisation*, *communal metaperspective*, *discourse-architectural metaperspective*, *intradiegetic recentering*, *literalised metaperspective*, *racialised metaperspective* – will also help to test the boundaries of the respective concepts. As Gavins (2007) observes:

> The improvement of a particular analytical approach is often most successfully achieved when the limits of that approach are tested in full and the perimeter of its applicability is established.
>
> (Gavins 2007: 165-6)

To this end, the following four sub-sections explore comparable instances of the phenomena listed above within other works from the [Man] Booker-winning back-catalogue. Throughout, comparisons are made between my own primary 'case-study' sources and secondary source works of scholarship, so as to point up areas for future investigation. Complementing this is the following section, Section 8.4, which details additional metaperspectival sub-types beyond the four examined in Chapters 4 to 7 which would merit further study. Following Gavins, this also allows me to test 'the perimeter of applicability' for the concept of the metaperspective.

8.3.1. Comparable Discourse-architectural Metaperspectives

Within the ready-made corpus of contemporary [Man] Booker-winning fictions, two novels in particular amply showcase the discourse-architectural metaperspective. The first is Peter Carey's (2000) historical adventure novel, *True History of the Kelly Gang*, a fictionalised (despite the title) account of the life and times of infamous Australian bushranger Ned Kelly. The novel, which won the 2001 Booker Prize for Fiction, is structured as a series of thirteen letters written by Kelly to his unborn daughter; each are prefaced by an explanatory, pseudo-editorial note outlining the details of composition, and functioning as a frame narrative. The intended recipient of Kelly's letters is therefore a text-possible construction at the time of their completion: projected progeny belonging to some hypothetical future. Employing my text-possible world framework, she may thus be positioned as an enactor within Kelly's Speculative

Extension to the Epistemic World, or world-type 2. Finally, the novel is bookended by two faux-historical accounts of the bushranger, purportedly from the Melbourne Public and Sydney Mitchell libraries, respectively, which form a further frame narrative. The resulting discourse architecture of *True History of the Kelly Gang* is diagrammed in Fig. 8.1.

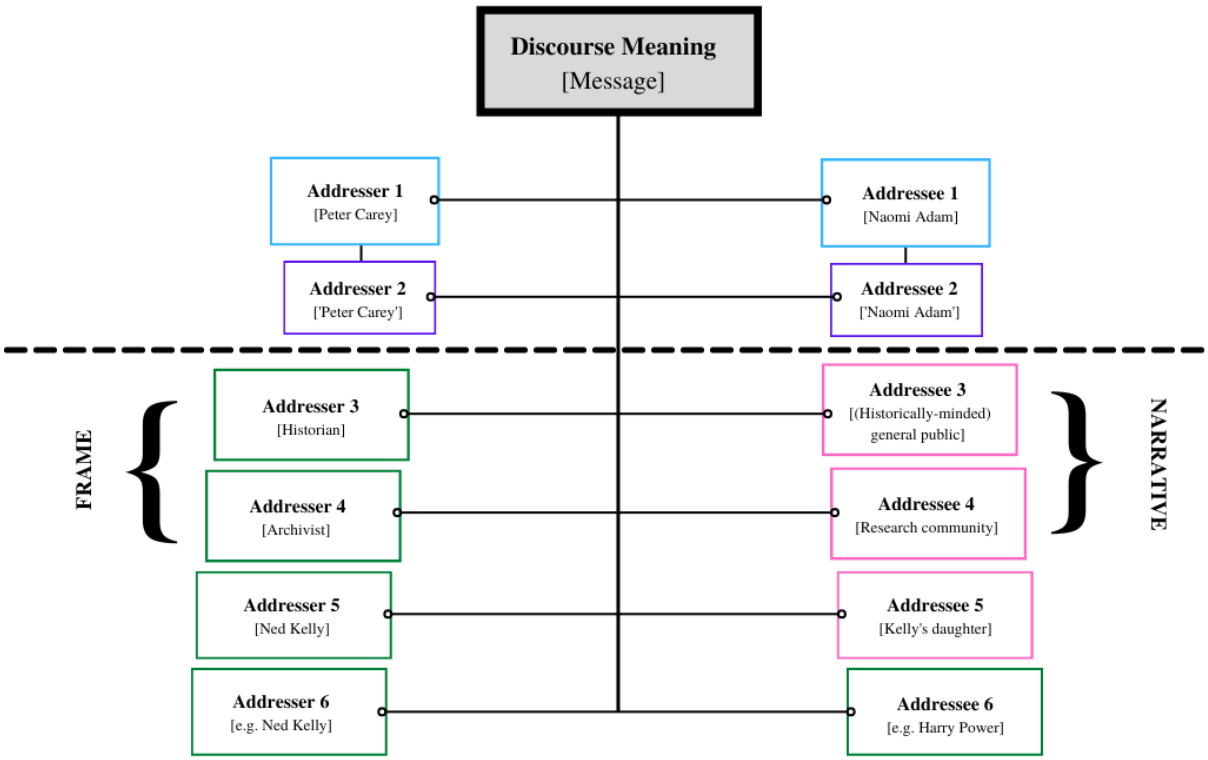


Fig. 8.1. A discourse-architectural diagram of Carey's (2000) *True History of the Kelly Gang*

Discourse-architecturally, it is clear that Carey's novel recalls Atwood's (2019) *The Testaments*. Both comprise at least one 'frame narrative' tier, and both feature a focaliser-protagonist engaged metafictionally in the act of writing the novel, each of whom direct their discourse at an unknown, yet nonetheless elaborately evoked, discourse partner. This discourse-architectural similarity is also evident linguistically. As in *The Testaments*, Carey's novel highlights the discourse situation through recourse to textual and compositional deixis. In this regard, the epistolary salutation 'Dear daughter' is especially frequent (e.g. Carey 2000: 173, 385), as is the related direct address form 'My daughter' (e.g. 181, 244, 385), redolent of Aunt Lydia's appeal to 'My future reader' in *The Testaments*. Once more, as with Atwood's

corresponding noun phrase, Carey's is predominantly placed sentence-initially, affording it perceptual prominence (Wassiliwizky 2021). The intended readership, and wider discourse-architectural scenario, are consequently foregrounded.

This perceptual prominence is evident on the textual as well as sentential level: the introductory paragraphs of the novel feature prominently a discourse-architectural metaperspective. Here is how the novel opens:

Excerpt 8.1

> [M]y dear daughter you are presently too young to understand a word I write but this history is for you and will contain no single lie may I burn in hell if I speak false.
> God willing I shall live to see you read these words to witness your astonishment and see your dark eyes widen when you finally comprehend the injustice we poor Irish suffered in this present age. How queer and foreign it must seem to you and all the coarse words and cruelty which I now relate are far away in ancient time.

(Carey 2000: 7)

Established in this excerpt is the Speculative Extension to the Epistemic World of protagonist-focaliser Kelly. While grounded in his present knowledge of the 'injustice' meted out to himself and his compatriots, it evokes how his suffering will be received in the future. Tense variation (e.g. 'we poor Irish suffered', 'it must seem') and temporal locatives ('in this present age', 'in ancient time') indicate this discoursal split. Clearly, this recalls the discourse-architectural situation engendered by the construction of 'my future reader' in *The Testaments*.

The prospective outlook is situated with Kelly's daughter, who becomes 'the *other*' (Laing *et al*. 1966: 4) bounding Kelly's metaperspective. She is the readership who, much as with Aunt Lydia's 'student of history' reader, is evoked in granular detail (note the umbratic pre-modifier in the noun phrase 'your dark eyes'); it is her presumed perspective conveyed via the evaluative adjectives 'queer' and 'foreign'. Finally, as in the excerpts taken from *The Testaments*, remarkable certainty is displayed in the construction of the metaperspective. Here, this is evident in the pragmatic entailment (note especially the prospective 'to see you read these words to witness your astonishment') alongside strong epistemic modality ('it must seem').

The second novel to feature a discourse-architectural metaperspective which accords with that of *The Testaments* (2019) is Aravind Adiga's (2008) debut, *The White Tiger*. As an epistolary novel, the recipient of the 2008 Man Booker Prize also bears a resemblance to Carey's novel generically and discourse-architecturally.

Set in present-day India, *The White Tiger* charts the fortunes of Balram Halwai, from impoverished chaiwallah to successful entrepreneur – via the pre-meditated murder of his employer, Mr. Ashok. This upward trajectory is recounted autodiegetically, in a series of letters penned over seven consecutive nights, and addressed to 'The Desk of [...] His Excellency Wen Jiabao' (Adiga 2008: 3), the Chinese premier. While Jiabao is a text-actual rather than text-possible enactor within the novel (as well as being an Actual World historical figure), he and Balram never meet in the Text-actual World. The putative recipient of Balram's letters is thus every bit as hypothetical as those who form 'the *other*' (Laing *et al*. 1966: 4) in *The Testaments* and *True History of the Kelly Gang*. Therefore, although these two novels feature unequivocally text-possible discourse recipients, the metaperspective constructed in *The White Tiger* is ontologically equivalent. More precisely, applying my text-possible framework, Balram's conceptualisation of President Jiabao can be classed as an enactor in the former's Speculative Extension to the Epistemic World. This discourse-architectural scenario is represented below, as Fig. 8.2.

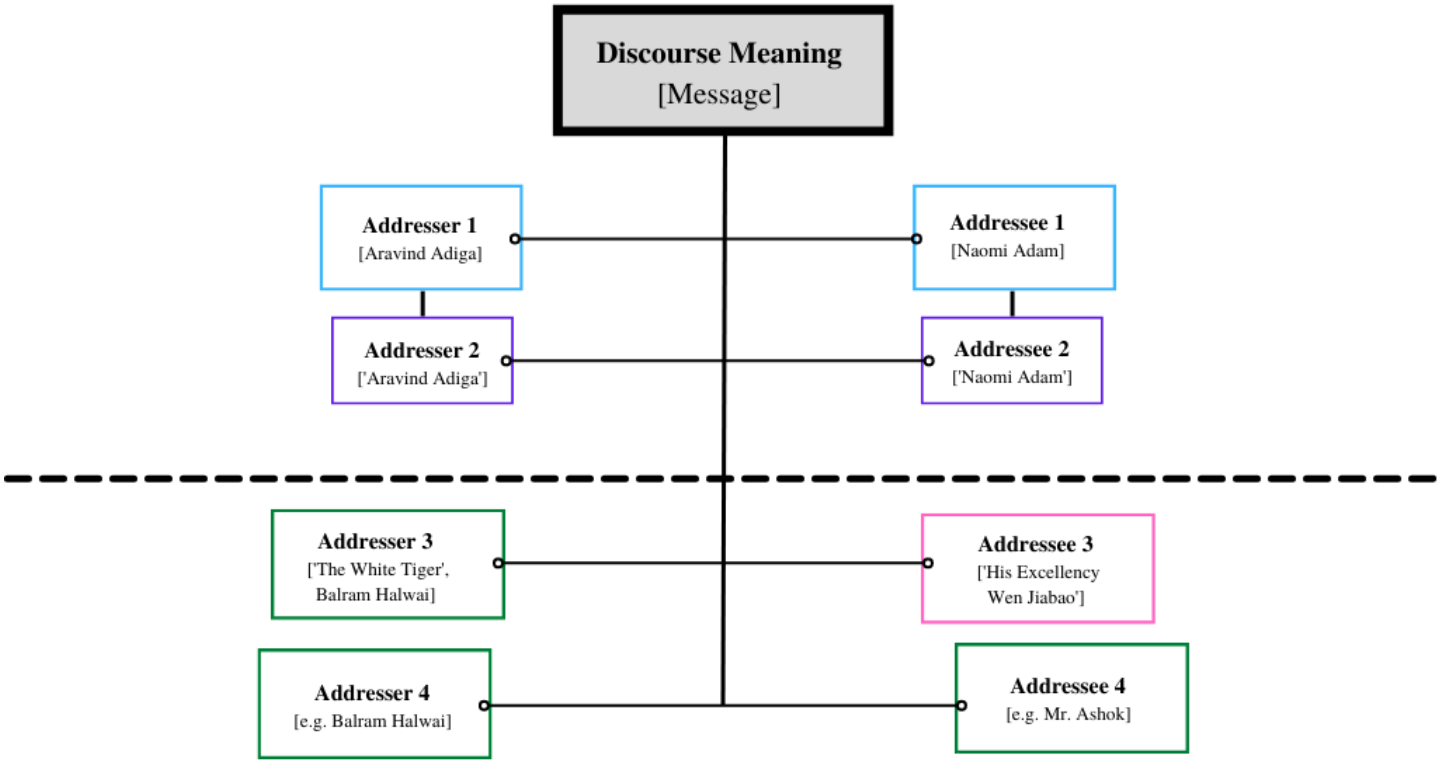


Fig. 8.2. A discourse-architectural diagram of Adiga's (2008) *The White Tiger*

Balram begins with variations on the above-quoted epistolary address in the first three of his letters (i.e. 3, 45, 95), which once again functions to foreground the discourse-architectural scenario. The resultant compositional and textual deixis here echo the typical linguistic indices of the discourse-architectural metaperspective, as reviewed in Chapter 4. Alongside this, Balram employs frequent nominal and/or pronominal address to the President throughout his letters. Often, this direct address co-occurs with the construction of a discourse-architectural metaperspective, as in the following, select quotations:

Excerpt 8.2

> And when I grin, is it true – as *you* no doubt imagine by now – that my lips widen into a devil's rictus?

(Adiga 2008: 45; my italics)

Excerpt 8.3

> What's that I hear *you* say, *Mr. Jiabao*? Do I hear *you* call me a cold-hearted monster?

(Adiga 2008: 315; my italics)

Excerpt 8.4

> What comes next for me? I know that's what *you*'re wondering.

(Adiga 2008: 318)

Thus clearly evoked is an overwhelmingly negative discourse-architectural metaperspective, bounded by Balram Halwai as the self (ego) and President Jiabao as the other (alter). It is significant to note the preponderance of interrogatives in the above quotations. As Goatly (2021) observes, the interrogative mood is 'more interpersonal' (139) than that of the declarative norm, thereby 'imply[ing] the presence of an interlocutor who will respond.' (*ibid*). Halwai capitalises upon this semantic logic above, evoking a *bona fide* discourse partner and masking the ultimately suppositious nature of this figure. Also interesting to note is the level of epistemic certainty attached to these metaperspectives. Largely, strong epistemic modality is in evidence: there is 'no doubt' as to Mr. Jiabao's perceptions, as Balram 'know[s]' the conclusions he will draw. However, although it has been observed in the two novels analysed above, this relative certainty is not a mandatory element of the metaperspective. Excerpt 8.3 evidences much more uncertainty as captured by its successive interrogatives, and instances of similarly tentative metaperspectives have been examined across this thesis. In developing the literary application of the metaperspective, it will be interesting to consider how the full spectrum of epistemic modalities may be employed in constructing a metaperspective. Feasibly, metaperspectives may range from the tentative (e.g. 'By now you may be wondering' [Atwood 2019: 61]) to the tenacious (e.g. 'I know what they're thinking.' [James 2014: 279]), subsuming anything in between. Some scale modelled upon that created by Werth (1999: 380) in his exposition of epistemic sub-worlds could prove revealing.

Furthermore, as both of the novels surveyed above are examples of epistolary fiction, it would be instructive to broaden the parameters of this thesis to consider further the role of discourse-architectural metaperspectives within this genre. This is not to say that the discourse-architectural metaperspective is the sole preserve of this particular genre – clearly, *The Testaments* would not apply in this instance – but nonetheless it may prove a fruitful field of enquiry, given that letters automatically presuppose the existence of both a writer and a reader. In this regard, studies conducted by Norledge (2020) and Nuttall (2017) into the Text World Theory ramifications of epistolary fiction may also prove enlightening.

8.3.2. Comparable Communal Metaperspectives

Both the novels surveyed in Section 8.3.1 aligned well with Chapter 4's case-study novel, Atwood's (2019) *The Testaments*. In other instances, the metaperspectives explored through this thesis do not fully represent their respective sub-type. The communal metaperspective as surveyed in Chapter 5 is a case in point. In this chapter, textual examples were given in which middle sister conjured her neighbours engaged in what amounted to defamation of character (e.g. ''[T]hey're fostering illicit togethernesses downtown at those risky bars and clubs.'' [Burns 2018b: 172]). However, this negativity is not a necessary condition of the communal metaperspective. Instead, as referenced previously, evaluative lexis of any valency is a key linguistic indicator.

As a work which thematises comradeship, Flanagan's 2014 Man Booker-winning historical novel *Narrow Road to the Deep North* (2013) features positively-valent communal metaperspectives. Take, for instance, the following quotation. It displays reflector and commanding officer Alwyn 'Dorrigo' Evans' metaperspective as he projects how he is viewed by his unit. In short, it is what he supposes to be 'their opinion of him' (cf. Laing *et al*. 1966: 4):

Excerpt 8.5

> The men called Dorrigo Evans *Colonel* to his face and *the Big Fella* everywhere else. There were moments when the Big Fella felt far too small for all that they now wanted him to bear. There was Dorrigo Evans and there was this other man with whom he shared looks, habits and ways of speech. But the Big Fella was noble where Dorrigo was not, self-sacrificing where Dorrigo was selfish. It was a part he felt himself feeling his way into, and the longer it went on, the more the men around him confirmed him in his role. It was as if they were willing him into being, as though there had to be a Big Fella, and [...] their growing respect, their whispered asides, their opinion of him – all this trapped him into behaving as everything he knew he was not. As if rather than leading them by example they were leading *him* through adulation.
>
> (Flanagan 2013: 48-9; italics in original)

If in this passage the subject of the metaperspective is Dorrigo, the '*others*' [...] *view*' (Laing *et al*. 1966: 4) is supplied by his men. It is their direct speech which is evoked through the italicised epithets of the first line (cf. Iser 1978: 113). Meanwhile, the key linguistic indices of the communal metaperspective remain the same. Once more, collective pronouns with exclusive reference ('they', 'their', 'them') enable the construction of a third-person, group viewpoint. However, the hypothetical viewpoint here lauds as opposed to lambasts its constructor. The evaluative lexis used is positive, not negative; the 'whispered asides' constitute 'adulation', not defamation. Yet the replacive opposition triggered by the disjunctive

modifiers in the passage's fourth sentence ('noble where Dorrigo was not, self-sacrificing where Dorrigo was selfish') reveal this metaperspective to clash with Dorrigo's self-conception. The consequence is a performance, as encapsulated by the theatrical metaphor ('It was a part he felt himself feeling his way into'; cf. 'He knew he now had his part to play as the Big Fella' [Flanagan 2013: 72]) as he tries to conform to the collective camp conception. Concomitantly comes the impression of a split self (i.e. Dorrigo, the '*Colonel*' versus '*the Big Fella*'); given that, in this novel at least, the split-self and metaperspectival phenomena co-occur, it would be instructive to investigate the latter in relation to Emmott's (2008) work on the former. This would enable further tessellation between the formerly social-psychological concept of the metaperspective and established stylistic studies, strengthening the second aim of this thesis as outlined in the Introduction.

If the conformity of opinion that the collective pronoun signals privileges the group over the individual, this neatly captures the mentality which enables the Australian company to survive their ordeal in a Burmese prisoner-of-war camp. The traumatic experience produces 'a strange animal, a single organism that somehow survived together.' (Flanagan 2013: 230). Once again, the linguistic nuances of a communal metaperspective prove to be thematically significant on a larger, discoursal level. In further investigations of the communal metaperspective, this link between the stylistic and the thematic should be borne in mind.

8.3.3. Comparable Racialised Metaperspectives

Given that [Man] Booker Prize-winning novels often focus upon some facet of (post)colonial history (Adam 2022a; Huggan 1997; Strongman 2002), it is unsurprising that racialised metaperspectives appear frequently across the roster of past winners. Novels including Paul Beatty's (2015) *The Sellout*, Kiran Desai's (2005) *The Inheritance of Loss*, and Bernardine Evaristo's (2019) *Girl, Woman, Other* depict racialised metaperspectives at play in various societies and cultures, during various eras, ultimately illustrating the expansive scope of the concept. The scope of applicability of the racialised metaperspective is in no way limited to the 1970s Jamaican context of *A Brief History of Seven Killings*.

As a satire of contemporary race relations in the United States, Beatty's (2015) *The Sellout* is an obvious candidate for comparison. In 2016, the novel became the first work by an American author to receive the [Man] Booker Prize, and it is incontrovertibly informed by an American sensibility. Indeed, it has been hailed as a 'respon[se] to America's tortured relationship with race in the past and the present.' (Donnelly 2015: n.p), and was inspired by

an article on the formation of Black identity (Beatty 2015: 291). The premise of the novel is the attempted reintroduction of segregation and slavery into the Los Angeles hometown of the eponymous focaliser: '[T]he resegregation of Dickens' (224). As part of this project, the Sellout erects a 'phony construction site' (192) for an all-White middle school directly adjacent to an underperforming comprehensive in which the majority of pupils are Black. This 'on-call Caucasian panopticon' (209) results in the development of a racialised metaperspective among the schoolchildren, providing a wealth of textual excerpts for steam stylistic investigation. The intertextual allusion to Bentham's (1791) notion of the 'panopticon' also illuminates a potential avenue of future research. Additionally, the repeated trope of the eye throughout the novel (see, e.g. Beatty 2015: 193, 197) recalls du Bois' (1903) concept of double consciousness, described as 'this sense of always looking at oneself through the eyes of others' (102; cf. Stewart n.d).

Another novel which may be read in tandem to *A Brief History of Seven Killings* with regard to the racialised metaperspective is Bernardine Evaristo's (2019) *Girl, Woman, Other*. The novel – joint winner of the 2019 Booker Prize alongside Atwood's *The Testaments* – centres around an examination of Black British womanhood. Several of the novel's thirteen focalisers display consciousness of social perceptions of their minority racial identity. Indeed, a sense of 'other'-ness is acknowledged in the very title of the novel (though the title can also be interpreted as referring to a non-binary gender identity).

This social estrangement and consequent racialised consciousness is evident in the following two excerpts. They are focalised by, respectively, the Afro-Caribbean migrant Winsome and the newly-wed, mixed-race Grace.

Excerpt 8.6

> soon as we arrived, people wasn't just unfriendly, they was downright hostile, who were these two monkey people arriving on their likkle island?

(Evaristo 2019: 261)

Excerpt 8.7

> it became very clear to Grace that this slovenly scrap of a girl [...] was never going to take orders from
> a half-caste, a negress, Queen of the flaming Nile or not

(Evaristo 2019: 391)

In the second of the two examples quoted above, the racist invective, indicated typographically by a paragraph break, is assigned to the White maid Agnes as 'other' (Laing *et al*. 1966: 4). In the former example, meanwhile, the racist, animalistic rhetoric supposedly stems from the

community at large, the hypothetical discourse inferred from their 'downright hostile' outward behaviour. Indeed, in subsequent paragraphs 'the whole town' (261) continue their diatribe *en masse*; consider, for instance, the direct speech imperatives 'you can't work here, *they said*' and 'you can't eat here, *they said*' (*ibid*; my italics). This is redolent of the *irrealis*, gossip-laden discourse of 'the community' in Burns' (2018b) *Milkman*, as surveyed in Chapter 5. Excerpt 8.6 thus highlights once more the potential for the four metaperspectival sub-types covered in Chapters 4 to 7 of this thesis to overlap, or be combined; Winsome's metaperspective above is both racialised *and* communal.

With Chapter 6 highlighting similar instances of racialised and communal metaperspectives acting concurrently, it would be instructive to consider further which other pairings are feasible. May there be communal + discourse-architectural metaperspectives? Perhaps discourse-architectural + racialised metaperspectives? Alongside this, one may interrogate those combinations which appear less than likely. How, for instance, would a communal + literalised metaperspective manifest itself (though see Excerpt 8.9, below)? The six logical permutations proffer plenty of food for future scholarly thought.

Finally, further illuminating comparable instances of the racialised metaperspective may be found in the work which won the Man Booker Prize in 2006. Desai's historical novel *The Inheritance of Loss* (2005) interrogates the socio-political interrelations between East and West, with its three predominant text-actual worlds located in 1930s London, 1980s New York, and a remote Himalayan mountain village also in the 1980s. Frequent migration between the three continents (Europe, America, Asia) by the enactors affords ample opportunity for the presentation of racialised metaperspectives, as they engage in conjecture about the perspective of a racially alternate other. The experience of Jemubhai Popatlal Patel, an Indian student in 1939 Cambridge, is indicative.

Excerpt 8.8

> [E]lderly ladies [...] moved over when he sat next to them in the bus, so he knew that whatever they had, they were secure in their conviction that it wasn't even remotely as bad as what he had. The young and beautiful were no kinder; girls held their noses and giggled, ''Phew, he stinks of curry!''
> Thus Jemubhai's mind had begun to warp; he grew stranger to himself than he was to those around him, found his own skin odd-coloured, his own accent peculiar. [...] In fact, he could barely let any of himself peep out of his clothes for fear of giving offence.

(Desai 2005: 39-40)

In this passage, observable racial prejudice (e.g. 'girls held their noses and giggled') is interwoven with Jemubhai's construction of a racialised metaperspective. This confirms Laing *et al*.'s (1966) observation that metaperspectives meld 'actual' and 'supposed attitudes, opinions, needs, and so on the other has in respect of me' (4). Hence Jemubhai presupposes the disparaging beliefs of 'elderly ladies' on public transport, couching what is ultimately conjecture with certitude via a strong epistemic desiderative verb. From his restricted Epistemic World ('he knew') the Epistemic Worlds of others are projected. These elderly ladies, then, form 'the *other*' (Laing *et al*. 1966: 4) to Jemubhai's self.

Due to the fraught and racially-stratified environment in which Jemubhai lives, this is a self crippled by double consciousness. The following paragraph attests to this with its introductory, figurative verb phrase ('Jemubhai's mind had begun to warp'), supporting Chapter 6's contention that racialised metaperspectives and double consciousness often co-exist. Repeated self-reflexive pronouns ('his own skin [...] his own accent') are the linguistic indices of the self-estrangement the phenomenon triggers.

The excerpt above also impresses that racialised metaperspectives need not be limited to any specific racial combination. While du Bois' original (1903) formulation of double consciousness pertained to a specifically (African-)American context, in Chapter 6 I argued with Gilroy (2002: 126) that the concept was equally applicable to 'post-slave populations in general'. In light of Excerpt 8.8, one may wish to amend this proviso to '*post(-)colonial peoples* in general', given the double consciousness inherent to the cognition of the Indian enactor Jemubhai whilst living in London. The concept of the racialised metaperspective, meanwhile, is pleasingly flexible in this regard. As a suppositious standpoint relating to colour, culture, and/or ethnicity, it encompasses all and any racially-inflected hypothesising. In short, it is not solely a black-and-white issue, figuratively or literally. The parties involved ('the self' and 'the *other*' [Laing *et al*. 1966: 4]) may be of any race, so long as there is some social discrepancy between them. Indeed, although the 'selves' triggering the metaperspective in the passages above have belonged to the socially subordinate group, socially superordinate individuals may just as easily construct a racialised metaperspective.

8.3.4. Comparable Literalised Metaperspectives

The sub-type of the literalised metaperspective is somewhat more niche than the other three. Certainly, it is the only sub-type with a 'generic classification' restriction (see Table 8.1). While this does not mean that the concept is inapplicable to novels besides Chapter 7's case

study, *Lincoln in the Bardo* (2017), it does render it difficult to find comparable examples of the literalised metaperspective within the prescribed corpus, i.e. contemporary (post-2000) [Man] Booker Prize-winning novels. This points up a limitation of this thesis already acknowledged above (see Section 8.2): that of the relatively restricted nature of the corpus of fiction under consideration. However, broadening the parameters of the present thesis to encompass all [Man] Booker Prize-winning works since the inception of the award in 1969 unveils a suitable comparable example in Salman Rushdie's (1981) *Midnight's Children*.

The novel – crowned 'Booker of Bookers' in 2008 to mark the Prize's fortieth anniversary – is a magical-realist retelling of the history of modern-day India, funnelled through the personal (pre)history of focaliser Saleem Sinai. Its generic classification is not incidental; as with Saunders' *Lincoln*, it proves crucial for the generation of literalised metaperspectives that several of Ryan's (1991a, 1991b) accessibility relations are severed. [38] Among the relations compromised by Rushdie's novel is Relation E/*natural laws*, or that of physical compatibility. Indeed, given that the literalised metaperspective is premised upon the subversion of this relation, it would be worthwhile investigating this phenomenon further in genres which typically break this relation. According to Ryan (1991b: 34), this relates to six distinct genres: fairy tales; legends; fantastic realism (which subsumes both the fantastic and magical realism); nonsense rhymes; jabberwockism; sound poetry. Moreover, further exploration of any of the latter three categories would go some way to addressing this thesis' bias towards prose, as noted in Section 8.2, above.

In *Midnight's Children*, the Text-actual World does not 'share natural laws' (Ryan 1991b: 33) with the Actual World, partially due to Saleem's 'ability to look *into* the hearts and minds of men.' (Rushdie 1981: 277; my italics). As this platitude is meant quite literally, it results in Saleem seeing himself through the eyes of the other: the prototypical literal metaperspective. Acknowledging this literalisation, he explains: 'I have stated before that I am not speaking metaphorically, what I have just written [...] is nothing less than the literal, by-the-hairs-of-my-mother's-head truth.' (Rushdie 1981: 277-8). Hence Saleem enters variously into the minds of his childhood crush (263-4), his mother (297), and his alter-ego *doppelgaenger* (304-07), among others. All excursions evidence the literalised metaperspective. As a brief illustration, in the passage below Saleem describes the summative experience of entering into the minds of

[38] However, as ever, this generic classification is relative. This is especially significant in the context of *Midnight's Children* for, as its author notes: 'In England people read *Midnight's Children* as a fantasy, in India people read it as a history book.' (Rushdie, qtd. in Todd 1996: 290). Once more Reader Knowledge Worlds (Raghunath 2017) impinge upon narrative processing.

similarly magically gifted children across the Indian sub-continent. The telltale literalised preposition, part of the fronted verb phrase, is syntactically foregrounded.

Excerpt 8.9

> Arriving in their infinitely various minds, I was obliged to get beneath the surface veneer of front-of-mind thoughts. [...] I went to some pains to alleviate the shock of my entry. In all cases, my first transmission was an image of my face, smiling in what I trusted was a soothing, friendly, confident and leader-like fashion. [...] It took me a little while to realise that my picture of myself was heavily distorted by my own self-consciousness.

(Rushdie 1981: 303-04)

This is a 'realis[ation]' engendered by the exercising of the literalised metaperspective. Saleem becomes privy to the perspectives of others upon himself, much as Dorrigo Evans supposes himself to be in Excerpt 8.5, and the result is a similar personal reevaluation. Additionally, the above excerpt is yet another which evidences the combination of two metaperspectival sub-types. Alongside the literalised metaperspective appears the communal metaperspective, as Saleem summarises the experiences of '[a]rriving in *their* infinitely various minds' (my italics).

8.4. Additional Metaperspectival Sub-types: Some Suggestions

As so versatile a subject, there is certainly no reason why the sub-types of the metaperspective should be limited to the four (i.e. discourse-architectural, communal, racialised and literalised) examined above. These proposed variants cannot be considered exhaustive. Other metaperspectival sub-types most definitely do exist; their study should illuminate areas of divergence as well as convergence with the four sub-types already established in Chapters 4 to 7. Below, I suggest but two additional metaperspectival sub-types evidenced in post-2000 [Man] Booker-winning works of fiction, with the caveat that these suggestions themselves are not exhaustive. For example, widening the parameters to account for, say, the entire [Man] Booker-winning oeuvre since the inception of the award in 1969, or for the genre of literary fiction as a whole, or for another genre altogether (e.g. science fiction, popular fiction, crime fiction), will inevitably result in the discovery of further additional metaperspectival sub-types. I offer only two here – familial metaperspectives, zoological metaperspectives – by way of illustration. As Jahoda (1966) recognises, the scope of the metaperspective far transcends its original application to married couples (the 'marital metaperspective'; see Chapter 3): '[T]he method clearly extends to all other dyads' (v). This proves a satisfyingly unprescriptive springboard for future scholarly study.

8.4.1. The Familial Metaperspective

The familial metaperspective, I suggest, would be generated by supposition about the perspective of a member of one's family in relation to oneself. In short, it is a metaperspectival sub-type relating to relatives. Consequently, the proposed sub-type bears affinity to Laing *et al*.'s original application of the metaperspective, resulting in what I have dubbed, above, as the *marital metaperspective*. However, with the familial metaperspective, the onus would be on not the relations between spouses, but between other members within the family unit. It could therefore be defined as follows:

> *My view* of my *relative's* (father, mother, sister, brother, son, daughter) *view* of me.

The following extract proves a case in point. It comes from Julian Barnes' (2011) novel *The Sense of an Ending*, which was declared Man Booker winner the year of its publication. The passage presents a metaperspective generated by the father—daughter dyad, with the father the autodiegetic narrator Anthony 'Tony' Webster, and his daughter the married, thirty-something Susie.

Excerpt 8.10

> I get on well with Susie. Well enough, anyway. But the younger generation no longer feels the need, or even the obligation, to keep in touch. At least, not 'keep in touch' as in 'seeing'. An email will do for Dad – pity he hasn't learnt to text. Yes, he's retired now, still fossicking around with those mysterious 'projects' of his, doubt he'll ever finish anything, but at least it keeps his brain active, better than golf, and yes, we were planning to drop over there last week until something came up. I do hope he doesn't get Alzheimer's, that's my greatest worry really, because, well, Mum's hardly going to have him back, is she? No: I exaggerate, I misrepresent. Susie doesn't feel like that, I'm sure. Living alone has its moments of self-pity and paranoia. Susie and I get on fine.

(Barnes 2011: 61-2)

Here, it is sentences 5 to 7 which constitute the familial metaperspective, as father Tony conjectures about daughter Susie's viewpoint upon him. While the former enactor is 'the self' (Laing *et al*. 1966: 4), the latter is 'the other' (*ibid*). Through this metaperspective, Tony is portrayed negatively, as both outdated and curmudgeonly. This is achieved largely by means of the evaluative lexis assigned to Susie (e.g. 'mysterious') within the hypothetical free direct discourse. The construction of this familial metaperspective is bolstered through the process of intradiegetic recentering on the part of father Tony. He momentarily delegates his position as *origo* to the suppositious reconstruction of his daughter for which he is responsible, hence the shifted pronominal system (e.g. 'he', 'his', 'him'), familial vocatives ('Dad', alongside 'Mum'), and distal deixis ('there'). Each of these features are linguistic indices of the

phenomenon of intradiegetic recentering, as remarked upon in Chapter 6. That the metaperspective – how Susie may 'feel' about her father – is unverified is subsequently pointed up by the disnarration of the negation 'No: I exaggerate, I misrepresent.'. This is another technique frequently employed in tandem with the metaperspective, and again one considered in detail in Chapter 6.

Familial metaperspectives may be predicted to form a relatively frequent sub-type of the metaperspective, given the centrality of familial relations to most people's lives. Indeed, as family relationships are often the first social bonds formed in an individual's life, familial metaperspectives are likely to be deeply ingrained. Meanwhile, as hinted above, the father—daughter metaperspective displayed in Excerpt 8.10 represents only one among many possible permutations of the familial metaperspectival sub-type (e.g. mother—son, brother—sister etc.). The familial metaperspective as it occurs in fiction is thus a fertile field for future study. Nonetheless, it is also the father—daughter sub-type which features in Carey's (2000) *True History of the Kelly Gang*, as discussed in Section 8.3.1, above. Combined as this familial metaperspective is with a discourse-architectural one, further credence is lent to the argument that different metaperspectival types may be merged.

8.4.2. The Zoological Metaperspective

Where Jahoda's (1966) overview of the metaperspective does prove undesirably prescriptive is in her glossing of the phenomenon as deriving from 'the experiences, perceptions and actions which occur when two *human beings* are engaged in a meaningful encounter.' (v; my italics). Ignoring for the present the problematic quantifier (previously discussed in relation to Chapters 5 and 6), there is one further issue with this assertion: its anthropocentrism. Conversely, I would suggest there is no inherent reason the metaperspective need be limited to human beings. Certainly, Chapter 6 has already explored an instance in which one human enactor (Kim Clarke) conjectures the perspective of another, non-human one (a seagull). Thus I propose the existence of a zoological metaperspective, to be defined as follows:

> *My view* of an *animal's view* of me.

Clearly, there is some asymmetry in this definition, for it retains a human in subject (and focalising) position. For this reason, I choose not to refer to this particular sub-type, as would perhaps be intuitive, as the animal metaperspective. This epithet would imply that the animal was responsible for constructing the metaperspective: in Laing *et al.*'s (1966) terms, the *ego,*

not the *alter*. The pre-modifier *zoological* ('relating to animals generally' [OED 2022, s.2]) is a more suitable descriptor.

Yann Martel's magic-realist novel *Life of Pi* (2001) recipient of the 2002 Man Booker Prize, is a case in point. The fabula of the novel is quantitatively dominated by an analogical Fantasy World in which several of the central human enactors are assigned animal counterparts. Therefore, protagonist Pi is equated to a Bengal tiger, and his mother to an orang-utan, whilst a Taiwanese sailor is represented by a zebra, and a ship's cook a hyena. (Note that this is only one of two possible interpretations of the novel: 'The story with animals.' [317]). Thus undergirded by this analogy, the work frequently constructs zoological metaperspectives. The following passage proves indicative. It relays Pi's musing upon finding himself the sole human occupant of a lifeboat cast adrift in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. Instead, his companions are an assortment of the zoo animals he once shared the sunken liner *Tsimtsum* with, including the aforementioned hyena. The hyena momentarily becomes the '*other*' (Laing *et al*. 1966: 4) on whose behalf a zoological metaperspective is constructed.

Excerpt 8.11

> Did the hyena sense something of my mastery? Did it say to itself, ''Super alpha is watching me – I better not move''? I don't know. At any rate it didn't move.

(Martel 2001: 136)

Here, it is the first clause of the hypothetical direct speech which constitutes the zoological metaperspective. It undeniably reveals '*my view* of *the other's* [...] view of me.' (Laing *et al*. 1966: 4) in rendering the hyena's suppositious viewpoint through blatant, arguably comic, anthropomorphism. (Interestingly, this anthropomorphism occurs despite Pi's protestations that he is 'not one given to projecting human traits and emotions onto animals.' [Martel 2001: 4]). Meanwhile, the adoption of zoological jargon in the above excerpt ('Super alpha') mirrors the later depiction of a zoological metaperspective involving a tiger.

Excerpt 8.12

> He only saw that the alpha here, this odd, unpredictable tiger, had been somewhat excited.

(Martel 2001: 236)

Taken from towards the end of the novel, this second excerpt evidences Pi becoming much more comfortable with the process of constructing zoological metaperspectives. Gone are the rhetorical questions evidencing weak epistemic modality, to be replaced by a confident, categorical assertion. This categorical assertion serves to mask the conjecture which underlies

the metaperspective. Consequently, between them these two instances of the zoological metaperspective highlight the wide range of epistemological stances metaperspectives may display.

Further examples of zoological metaperspectives within the novel *Life of Pi* abound; I am restricted here only by lack of space. Other instances which may be explored from a steam stylistic standpoint include supposition about the perspective of sharks (218), whales (229-30) and meerkats (266) on Pi. The zoological metaperspective also dovetails with the recent surge in academic studies adopting an ecocritical stance, and could prove valuable in this research context (see especially Sands [2019] on entangled empathy). It would, additionally, illuminate Nelles' (2001) study of animal focalisation. This would help to further the second aim of this thesis, as stated in the Introduction, in tying together established stylistic frameworks with the concept of the metaperspective.

8.5. Concluding Remarks

Concluding the foreword to Laing *et al*.'s (1966) monograph, Jahoda (1966) states: 'The aim of the current publication is to stimulate others to use the method so that its potential can be gauged.' (v). Over the course of this thesis I endeavoured to take up this gauntlet in the application of the concept of the metaperspective to literature, and my attempts to incorporate it into the stylistic study of hypothesis. Meanwhile, to paraphrase Jahoda, I hope that this thesis will stimulate others to interrogate the subject of hypothesis and the metaperspective in language and literature, allowing its potentially to be more fully gauged. Given that we humans are 'constantly supposing' (Laing *et al*. 1966: 4), the future potential of the metaperspective is vast.

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