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Pragmatics and the Aesthetics of Texts

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Table of Contents

Bianca Del Villano and Urszula Kizelbach
Introduction. Pragmatics and the Aesthetics of Texts 1

Pragmatics and the Aesthetics of Genres and Visual Arts

Maria Grazia Guido
A Possible-Worlds Approach to the Pragmatic Analysis of Metaphysical Imaging across Genres and Art Forms 7

Pragmatics and the Aesthetics of Special Purpose Languages

Annarita Taronna
Aesthetic Conventions and Pragmalinguistic Devices in Computer-mediated Communication. Q&A Websites as a Case Study 31

Esterino Adami
Pragmatics and the Aesthetics of Food Discourse 53

Pragmatics and Fiction

Janet Giltrow
Relevance Theory for Fiction 63

Michael Ingham
"In a Double Sense": Syntactic Ambiguity and the Pragmatics of Equivocation in Shakespearean Dramatic Dialogue 83

Sabrina Francesconi
"Blue-black caves of shade". The Language of Colour in Juliet's Trilogy by Munro 97

John Douthwaite
Natural Complexity. From Language to Text to Tradition 111

Reviews

Fausto Ciompi
A Review of Savina Stevanato, *"The Music of Poetry"?: T.S. Eliot and the Case of* Four Quartets, Pisa, ETS, 2018, € 16,00, pp. 180 141

Notes on Contributors 145

Bianca Del Villano – Urszula Kizelbach[1]

Introduction.
Pragmatics and the Aesthetics of Texts

What we observe is not nature itself, but nature exposed to our method of questioning.
Werner Heisenberg, *Physics and Philosophy*

1. The Ways of Pragmatics

Though relatively young as a field of research – fully developed only around the late 1970s[2] – Pragmatics has exponentially grown in the past decades. If the primigenial focus of the discipline is universally recognized as 'language in use', intended as the examination of the speakers' concrete linguistic choices in specific situations and contexts, it is also true that in the 2010s Pragmatics finds itself to be a more inclusive field of research, open to the solicitations coming from other branches of Linguistics (Discourse Analysis, Conversation Analysis, Historical Linguistics, Stylistics, to mention but a few), or from perspectives borrowed from Psychology, Sociology, Anthropology, Cognitive and Cultural Studies.

One decisive factor favouring this gradual opening has been the influence exerted by the so-called 'discursive (or post-modern) turn' on the traditional line of pragmatic studies. In the first days Pragmatics emerged as:

> a field of linguistic inquiry [...] initiated in the 1930s by Morris, Carnap, and Peirce, for whom syntax addressed the formal relations of signs to one another, semantics the relation of signs to what they denote, and pragmatics the relation of signs to their users and interpreters. In this program, pragmatics is the study of those context-dependent aspects of meaning which are systematically abstracted away from in the construction of context or logical form.[3]

Subsequent developments – in the wake of Austin and Grice[4] – traced further trajectories that detected and scrutinized the *performative* and *inferential* nature of language, capable of releasing meanings from the friction between intention and saying, between semantics and its possible contextual distortions.

With the spread of poststructuralism, the notion of performativity (be it linguistic or not) invaded any field of knowledge and became the pillar of the deconstruction that thinkers such as Derrida, Kristeva, Foucault, and Lacan, enacted against some assumptions of Western culture. Drawing on a philosophical reading of Saussure's concept of language as a differential and self-referential system, poststructuralism definitely debunked the idea that culture pre-exists language and that language is a neutral means of the representation of reality. On the contrary, language was exposed as radically

[1] Bianca Del Villano contributed to the "Introduction", writing section one, "The ways of Pragmatics"; Urszula Kizelbach contributed to the "Introduction", writing section two, "Pragmatics, Aesthetics and the Texts".
[2] Andreas Jucker and Irma Taavitsainen, *English Historical Pragmatics* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 2; Jacob Mey, "Pragmatics", in Jacob Mey, ed., *Concise Encyclopaedia of Pragmatics* (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 1998), 716-737.
[3] Laurence R. Horn and Gregory Ward, "Introduction", in Laurence R. Horn and Gregory Ward, ed., *The Handbook of Pragmatics* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), xi.
[4] J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Cambridge: Harvard U. P., [1955] 1962); H. P. Grice, "Logic and conversation" (1967), in P. Cole and J. Morgan, eds., *Syntax and Semantics III: Speech Acts* (New York: Academic Press, 1975), 41-58.

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active (performative) in the construction of the world, a mechanism deeply interwoven in the architecture of the human mind/psyche and of the sign-system characterizing a given society. It was in particular the work of Michel Foucault that inaugurated the acceptation of 'discourse' as used today, intended as the net of forces at play in the reception and production of meaning in a given historical moment and in a given place. From Foucault on, meaning, language and signs started being conceived as interactively connected with social practices, with the rules governing communities, with the technologies of power and knowledge historically situated.

Expectedly, Pragmatics, the field of study that had contributed so much to the evolution of the concept of performativity – *how to do things with words* – developed lines of research further exploring this direction. What dramatically changed in the aftermath of the postmodern turn was not the core of Austin and Grice's perspectives, but the idea that the context is presumptive, a given element out of which only meaning arises as something new.[5] Duranti and Goodwin give a perfect definition of how context was rethought on the ground of discursive studies: "Instead of viewing context as a set of variables that statistically surround strips of talk, context and talk are now argued to stand in a mutually reflexive relationship to each other, with talk, and the interpretive work it generates, shaping context as much as context shapes talk".[6] Thus, whilst the traditional trend considered Pragmatics as a "component, or even a level, in a linguistic theory", needful of an analytical normative approach able "to make generalizations that hold across all such instances in use",[7] the discursive trend inaugurated a "data-driven or empirical view of pragmatic actions", whereby "pragmaticians work alongside conversation analysists, discourse analysts, sociolinguists, (linguistic) anthropologists and other researchers".[8] More importantly, the latter started working not only on utterances – the "pragmatic equivalent of the syntactic unit of a sentence" – but on "*discourses* as units of study".[9] The result was a detour of the logico-semantic trend characterized by a rationalistic view of language and the development of a vision according to which the context is concurrently emergent along with meaning, an element that needs to be examined through the recourse to an interdisciplinary approach.[10]

Since the 1990s, Pragmatics has mainly but not exclusively worked in this direction, promoting numerous lines of inquiry based on the dialogue with other disciplines. Among these lines, particularly fruitful have been those exploring the interactive meaning/context dynamics in terms of an expansion of the latter, so that it could account on the one hand for "virtually unlimited social realit[ies]", and on the other for "internal phenomen[a] or mental construct[s]".[11] The interface between Pragmatics and Sociology, Anthropology, and Discourse Analysis, has in fact produced important results in the investigation of the interplay between norms, discourses and practices. Parallel to the concern with the centrality of language in the social reality has been the interest in the cognitive aspects implied in the production and reception/interpretation of language, an aspect that strongly contributed to moving the focus of the pragmatic analysis towards the role played by hearers rather than speakers. It would be

[5] I adopt here the terminology used by Dan Archer and Peter Grundy. "Introduction", in Dan Archer and Peter Grundy, eds., *The Pragmatic Reader* (London and New York: Routledge, 2011), 3.

[6] Alessandro Duranti and Charles Goodwin, "Rethinking Context: An Introduction", in Alessandro Duranti and Charles Goodwin, eds., *Rethinking Context. Language as an Interactive Phenomenon* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1992), 31.

[7] Archer and Grundy,"Introduction", 3.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Kasia M. Jaszczolt and Keith Allan, "Introduction. Pragmatic objects and pragmatic method", in Keith Allan and Kasia M. Jaszczolt, eds., *The Cambridge Handbook of Pragmatics* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 2012), 1, emphasis added.

[10] It is important to emphasise that the rationalistic and the discursive perspectives are not mutually exclusive; nor has the latter completely replaced the former. Though they represent two waves belonging to different times – the first has developed since the 1970s and the second since the 1990s – they are also relatable respectively to the Anglo-American and to the continental European areas of study.

[11] Archer and Grundy, "Introduction", 3.

impossible to reconstruct the richness and variety of these two complementary fields and their single components; what may be useful, on the contrary, is once again to emphasize how they have virtually designed a triangle in which subjects (speakers and hearers), language and culture (society and discourses) prove inextricably connected.

A missing element in this triangle – the text – has been provided by other sub-fields, among which particularly significant has proved Historical Pragmatics (born around the 1990s), whose contribution to the development of general Pragmatics has gone beyond the many implications and overtones of linguistic variation in diachrony.

The efforts made to legitimize the pragmatic analysis of written texts – whereas it was impossible to recover the natural language of periods antecedent to the advent of recording technologies[12] – have resulted in the refinement of specific methodologies applicable to artificial linguistic testimonies of past epochs. More importantly, the descriptive analysis of markers related to genre and other types of textual codifications,[13] combining with synchronic and normative studies on genre and with stylistic investigations over formal aspects of fictional texts,[14] has fuelled the production of a thick critical debate that, overtly or not, has led to consider any kind of codified text as a larger pragmatic unit of discourse, as a speech act or a communicative event in the right to be pragmatically studied as such.

2. Pragmatics, Aesthetics and the Texts

Pragmatics and the Aesthetics of Texts attempts to open a debate on all the pragmatic aspects so far discussed, according to a logic that aims to integrate the rationalistic and the discursive approaches. The volume offers for the first time – as far as we know – a perspective that interrogates textuality in relation to its aesthetic dimension. By 'aesthetic' we mean the formal organization of a fictional or non-fictional text, together with the set of specific cultural or aesthetic values and stylistic devices displayed by various textual genres, which can be subject to thorough pragmatic analysis.

The articles collected in this volume attempt to address the following problems and questions: Can all texts be analysed pragmatically? Does the genre of a given text with its constraints and/or possibilities force the use of a specific pragmatic theory? How does the text's aesthetics influence the pragmatic/stylistic analysis and the results the analyst is left with? What is the role of the social context and genre in the pragmatic analysis of communication within the text?

Given the complexity of these kinds of interrogations, Authors have exceptionally written very long contributions that could do justice to the complexity of the methodological frames applied to the texts. The volume is thematically organized in sections that clarify the nature and typology of the texts analyzed.

In Part One, *Pragmatics and the Aesthetics of Genres and Visual Arts*, we present Maria Grazia Guido's contribution "A Possible-Worlds Approach to the Pragmatic Analysis of Metaphysical Imaging across Genres and Art Forms". Guido's article is an ambitious attempt at interpreting metaphysical texts using the notion of possible worlds by combining cognitive-experiential linguistics

[12] On this aspect, see Andreas Jucker, "Historical Pragmatics", in K. Brown, ed., *Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics* (Oxford: Elsevier, 2006), 329-332; Jonathan Culpeper and Merja Kytö, *Early Modern English Dialogues. Spoken Interaction as Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge U. P., 2010).

[13] Irma Taavitsainen's historical pragmatic research has been fundamental in this respect. See in particular "Genre Dynamics in the History of English", in Merja Kytö and Päivi Pahta, eds., *The Cambridge Handbook of English Historical Linguistics* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 2016); "Changing Conventions of Writing: The Dynamics of Genres, Text Types, and Text Traditions", *European Journal of English Studies. Special Issue: Early Modern English Text Types.* 5/2, 2001, 139-150; "Genres and Text Types in Medieval and Renaissance English", *Poetica,* 47, 1997, 49-62.

[14] See Janet Giltrow, "The Pragmatics of the Genres of Fiction", in Miriam A. Locher and Andreas H. Jucker, eds., *Pragmatics of Fiction* (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2017), 55-91.

and possible world semantics. In an endeavour to find an interface between philosophy and logic, as well as pragmatics and literature, she embarks on yet another discipline, the fine arts, in her philosophical and linguistic analysis of Dali's paintings. She discusses various literary genres (Metaphysical poetry, Imagist poetry), utilizes relevant linguistic theories (Lakoff and Johnson's metaphor), and establishes a new link between the possible world construct in logic and the pragmatic analytical tool of cooperative maxims to emphasize the performative (pragmatic) nature of metaphysical discourse. Guido argues that in the process of 'imaging', readers of metaphysical texts discover new image archetypes, which are drawn from their primary-logic experience of the world and the exploration of displacement as part of human conceptualization. The article puts forward the idea that the interaction between the readers' cognitive and physical experience can give rise to novel interpretations of metaphysical discourse.

Part Two of the volume titled *Pragmatics and the Aesthetics of Special Purpose Languages* begins with Annarita Taronna's article "Aesthetic Conventions and Pragmalinguistic Devices in Computer-mediated Communication. Q&A Websites as a Case Study". Taronna in her analysis of digital communication tries to show that the influence of Q&A websites on their users' purchasing decisions relies heavily on the participants' pragmatic competence and their recognition of some powerful pragmalinguistic devices used by addressers and addressees (e.g. clear questions can cause users to be more willing to help). She looks at popular Q&A websites (e.g. Yahoo! Answers) and their narrative architecture, which is characterized by 'nowness' and 'recency', and employs the notion of the Community of Practice to analyse various communicative strategies used in computer-mediated communication in a specialized domain (golf). She discusses the role of English as the Lingua Franca of global Q&A websites and demonstrates how EFL in Q&A interactions can be used to determine the potential benefits of the membership in a digital brand community. Finally, Taronna talks about the emotional aesthetics of Q&A websites. She uses sentiment analysis to show how the participants associate emotions and opinions with certain linguistic aspects, e.g. how personal pronouns and adjectives can decide on the success of questions and answers, or how modal verbs can be used to express politeness and proximity, and how they can create the sense of solidarity among the users discussing the same topic.

Esterino Adami's "Pragmatics and the Aesthetics of Food Discourse" is a stylistic analysis of Jamie Oliver's cookery book *Jamie's Italy* (2005). Adami calls it a 'hybrid' genre, as it combines traditional Italian recipes with landscape photos and the personal comments of the author. His qualitative analysis of linguistic examples continues the scholarly trend of analyzing food discourse in TV cookery shows (see Matwick and Matwick 2014),[15] and in particular, in celebrity chef cookery books (see Johnston, Rodney and Chong 2014).[16] Pointing at various stylistic devices in recipes and at paratextual features in the book, Adami claims that Oliver's choice of certain linguistic expressions reinforces the reader's 'schema' of what is the 'authentic' Italian foodscape. Also, he looks at how metonymy (e.g. 'treviso is the Aston Martin of the radicchio family') and Italian loanwords (e.g. 'antipasti', 'al dente') add sophistication to Oliver's food description, or how rhetorical questions and figurative language in general can express the emotional involvement of the speaker. Adami uses stylistics to characterise the Italian cuisine from a stereotypical perspective; for example, he demonstrates how Oliver's use of social deixis underlines the speaker's stereotypical view of the Italians (e.g. 'mamma' to refer to 'mother').

[15] Keri Matwick and Kelsi Matwick, "Storytelling and Synthetic Personalization in Television Cooking Shows", *Journal of Pragmatics*, 71 (2014), 151-159.

[16] Josée Johnston, Alexandra Rodney and Philippa Chong, "Making Change in the Kitchen? A Study of Celebrity Cookbooks, Culinary Personas, and Inequality", *Poetics*, 47 (2014), 1-22.

In Part Three, *Pragmatics and Fiction*, we present Janet Giltrow's article "Relevance Theory for Fiction". Giltrow questions the validity of RT as an analytical tool to describe literature. She argues that much as RT has been applied to fields outside literature (e.g. linguistics, psychology, philosophy), it does not function as an 'engine of interpretation' or evaluation of literary texts. Relevance Theory, she says, depends on invented examples/scripts from more specialist genres connected to the social formation, and works better with non-literary (e.g. workplace, household) contexts. The analyst's application of intention towards literary texts within the RT framework can be risky, because the way of reasoning, inferencing, or understanding intention within RT clashes with our reasoning about the aesthetic. Giltrow's article postulates that Relevance Theory may shed an interesting new light on specialist literary interpretation and can be applied further to aesthetic or journalistic genres, but not as a hermeneutical tool used in the field of literature and literary studies, since its reasoning is too far away from the aesthetic values present in literary texts.

Michael Ingham in his contribution ""In a Double Sense": Syntactic Ambiguity and the Pragmatics of Equivocation in Shakespearean Dramatic Dialogue" investigates the pragmatics of Shakespeare's dialogue and demonstrates how syntax can influence the semantics of the play-texts. In particular, he shows how ambiguous syntactic constructions are situated in scenes and how they create the feeling of uncertainty in the reader. Moreover, he points at numerous links between the syntactic features of the dialogue and characterisation, i.e. he shows how syntactic complexity can reflect the moral ambivalence of the character, or the whole scene. He claims that the characters' bending or violating the rules of grammar and syntax (e.g. Gricean Cooperative Principle) enhances dramatic plot, and he compares Shakespeare's violation of the maxims of conversation to Wittgenstein's ideas on 'language games'. Using examples from various plays by Shakespeare, Ingham shows how the sentential complexity of embedded clauses at different levels of subordination contributes to the textual ambiguity and, eventually, to the ambiguous nature of dramatic interactions in some scenes, or how the liberal use of Verb-Subject and Object-Verb word order in declarative sentences creates the syntactic intricacy of dramatic dialogue.

Sabrina Francesconi's article ""Blue-black caves of shade". The Language of Colour in Juliet's Trilogy by Munro" serves as a practical framework for the quantitative and qualitative analysis of colour terms in fiction. Her socio-semiotic analysis of the language of colour in three stories from Alice Munro's collection *Runaway* (2004) is a further contribution to the studies on the discourse of colour (Berlin and Kay 1969; van Leeuwen 2011),[17] and by examining the symbolic meaning of colours in stylistic terms, she demonstrates how Munro uses colours to express indeterminacy in the stories. She discusses how certain parametric systems connected with colours, for example value or saturation, are verbally articulated via chromisms, compounds, or adjectives, and tries to establish which parameters reflect Munro's ideas most effectively. Francesconi examines colours' metafunctional role on examples and shows how colours are used to describe the characters or space in the stories (ideational function), or how colours generate emotions and what impact they have on the interpersonal relations within the narrative. By combining psychological and discursive methods of analysis, she puts a fresh, practical and valuable perspective on the study of colour terms in fictional texts.

John Douthwaite's article "Natural Complexity" is a stylistic analysis of an extract from the novel by Agatha Christie *Murder on the Orient Express*. Douthwaite, actually, combines stylistics with pragmatics, as in his study of the novel he looks at how relevant to the reader's understanding a given piece of information given by the author can be. He claims that many of Christie's lexical choices in the narrative are not accidental, and he shows how a single lexeme can lead to obvious inferences by

[17] Brent Berlin and Paul Kay, *Basic Colour Terms: Their Universality and Evolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969); Theo van Leeuwen, *The Language of Colour* (London: Routledge, 2011).

the reader. The author's 'motivated' linguistic choices matter especially in the genre of a crime story: they create specific effects by furnishing the reader's brain with insufficient information, they provoke the reader's inferences and activate their schemata, and finally they are used for expressing non-literal meanings. Douthwaite's analysis demonstrates that in the realm of fiction pragmatics (Speech Act Theory, Gricean maxims) cannot work on its own, and that the stylistic features of the text trigger the more complex processes of understanding, which help the reader better interpret the story. Douthwaite argues that much as Christie's crime stories may be perceived as simple and uncomplicated, her use of plethora of stylistic devices creates a lot of potential for the multifaceted meanings, and thus, opens up the space for the reader's complex ways of reasoning and inferencing.

We wish to thank the Authors for their patience and cooperation. Also, we are very grateful to the Reviewers of this volume. We wish to thank them for their careful reading and insightful comments, which have greatly improved the quality of this issue.

Maria Grazia Guido

A Possible-Worlds Approach to the Pragmatic Analysis of Metaphysical Imaging across Genres and Art Forms

Abstract: This article reports on an enquiry into the ways through which Metaphysical discourse, by disrupting the conventional linguistic uses that normally 'constrain' imagination into socially-accepted routines, is actually capable of restoring language to its original and creative mental/physical entirety within counterfactual possible-worlds contexts. It will be suggested that the best way of triggering in readers an explorative process of 'possible-worlds imaging', is to propose a reading approach that is visual as well as kinaesthetic, which would also enable readers to have an authorial role in the interpretation of Metaphysical texts. The theoretical construct of Metaphysical discourse analysis outlined in this paper introduces some elements of novelty that can be summarized as follows: firstly, current research on Possible Worlds has always associated this distinctively truth-conditional construct with the traditional Logical Semantics of an abstract kind, despite the fact that modality is involved – which in itself should represent a challenge to the Objectivist truth/non-truth polarity. This paper, instead, advances a novel association between Cognitive-Experiential Linguistics and Possible-Worlds Semantics. Secondly, Possible-Worlds Semantics has conventionally been concerned almost exclusively with the epistemic dimension of Modal Logic, which represents the domain of mental speculation underlying the tradition of Metaphysical thought. On the contrary, the correlation advanced in this paper between Metaphysical discourse in the traditional philosophical argumentation and Metaphysical discourse expressed through other linguistic and non-linguistic genres, rediscovers also the deontic dimension of Possible-Worlds Logic. This bimodal quality of Metaphysical language is here claimed to be founded on novel 'archetypal images' resulting from the readers' interpretation of Metaphysical texts. Indeed, such epistemic 'images' are here assumed to deontically elicit in readers' minds subjective emotional and even 'embodied' reactions to the visual representations that they imaginatively achieve from the 'deviating' forms of Metaphysical texts. Thirdly, this paper will formulate a novel correlation between the Possible-Worlds construct in Modal Logic and Pragmatics on the grounds of newly defined 'possible-worlds cooperative maxims' of 'experiential pliability' and 'cognitive suspension of disbelief'. It will be argued that these new pragmatic maxims proceed from the typical performative nature of Metaphysical discourse (which can be linguistic as well as visual), that 'deontically' induces 'imaging readers' to believe that the counterfactual contexts that it 'epistemically' represents in its composition can be conceivable and, thus, ready to be visually authenticated and even physically appropriated – as the case study reported in this paper will illustrate.

Keywords: *Metaphysical Discourse, Possible-World Logic, Metaphysical Imaging, embodiment processes, deontic and epistemic modalities, Objective Correlative*

1. The Bimodal Structure of Metaphysical Discourse

This article intends to demonstrate how the counterfactual semantic structure of a Metaphysical text of an argumentative type can influence its pragmatic interpretation within a possible-world context. This view will be seen to apply also to the structure of Metaphysical poetry and painting. It will be argued that a Metaphysical construction (either textual, or compositional) markedly deviating from the structure of accepted 'factual' logic, can prompt in receivers novel perceptions and interpretative responses involving not just their cognitive faculties, but also a whole process of emotional/physical embodiment.[1] Indeed, such an experiential embodiment and even physical enactment of this type of

[1] Maria G. Guido, *The Imaging Reader: Visualization and Embodiment of Metaphysical Discourse* (New

language formally and functionally diverging from the normal parameters of communication makes the interpretative process of a Metaphysical discourse resemble the process of poetry interpretation, insofar as it also involves an interaction between the reader's cognitive and physical background experience – or *body/thought schemata* –[2] and the atypical structure of the poetic text. The possible displacing effects that image-based, representational discourses may produce on readers' 'body/thought' schemata leads to the formulation of the first question justifying the present study:

(1) If poetic discourse can be defined as 'representational' on the grounds that its context does not refer to real situations of the actual world, but it takes shape from the verbal pattern of the poem,[3] is it possible to attribute the same definition to other discourse genres based on the representation of 'counterfactual events' – such as Metaphysics?

The focus on the discourse of Metaphysics is justified precisely by two interconnected features that can be identified in its structure:

(a) the distinctively epistemic and doxastic nature of this discourse, almost completely built on an interplay of propositional attitudes (e.g., to believe, assume, deduce, etc.),[4] making it resemble a constative act describing abstract speculations on possibilities, entailments, and beliefs;
(b) the markedly 'imagistic', concrete language through which abstract concepts are made 'visible' and, thus, capable of exerting the deontic force of a performative act (of obligation, requirement, and even permission) on the reader who may feel compelled to accept such speculations.

This 'bimodal structure' of the Metaphysical discourse reveals its indeterminate nature insofar as it can be both epistemic and 'representational' in its abstract propositional content, and deontic and 'referential' in its illocutionary force aimed at influencing its empirical readers' interpretations. Moreover, the concrete images employed in the formal pattern of a Metaphysical discourse to convey abstract concepts and to induce specific thoughts and states of minds in readers, make it close to the language of Imagist poetry. Imagism in Modernist poetry advocates a poetic language made up of "hard, clear and precise images" resembling the "abstract and geometrical art ... the exact curve of the thing, the dry hardness of classicism", to the point of suggesting the "elimination of every word that did not contribute to the presentation".[5] The aim is the creation of an Objective Correlative meant as a textual image described in these terms:

> The only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding an 'objective correlative'; in other words, a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that *particular* emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked.[6]

York/Ottawa/Toronto: Legas Publishing, 2005).
[2] Maria G. Guido, *The Acting Reader: Schema/Text Interaction in the Dramatic Discourse of Poetry* (New York, Ottawa, Toronto: Legas Publishing, 1999).
[3] Henry G. Widdowson, *Practical Stylistics: An Approach to Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford U.P., 1992), 32.
[4] Herbert P. Grice, "Utterer's Meaning, Sentence Meaning, and Word Meaning", *Foundations of Language*, 4 (1968), 147-177.
[5] David Daiches, *A Critical History of English Literature. Vol. IV: The Romantics to the Present Day* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1969), 1122-1123.
[6] Thomas S. Eliot, *The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism* (London: Faber and Faber, 1920/1986).

The Objective Correlative is therefore a representational image created within the semantic structure of the text with the purpose of conveying a particular illocutionary force – i.e., the writer's conditions of intentionality – aimed at producing a specific perlocutionary effect on readers, thus inducing in them a particular interpretation.[7] In it, therefore, there is a co-existence of *(a)* epistemic and doxastic modalities in the semantic devising of a counterfactual image with no reference to real-life 'objects, situations, or events', and *(b)* a deontic modality in the pragmatic elicitation of a specific response from actual readers by means of such textual image. The parallel with the counterfactual images of Metaphysical discourse is evident. In this paper, however, it is argued that the processing of a textual image implies more than simply producing a stimulus (a 'formula', in Eliot's words) for eliciting in readers a pre-determined response. A Metaphysical text, like an Imagist poem, can produce on a certain reader a particular effect that might be different from the one intended by the writer. This is due to the fact that readers and writers may possess quite different world-views – or *world schemata*[8] – through which they normally interpret everything – the semantic textualization of counterfactual images included. Besides, there is a crucial difference between the type of effect produced by a poetic image, and the type of effect produced by an image within Metaphysical discourse. Poetry plays on the readers' senses and imagination with its structure of sounds and images, thus inducing in them an all-involving, physical experience of *imagistic embodiment* of the poetic utterance, in many ways similar to the subjective interpretation of a dramatic discourse.[9] The discourse of Metaphysics, instead, is here assumed to trigger in readers a process of *embodied imaging*, where the physical dimension of interpretation represents only a stage towards the development of the readers' awareness of their speculative abilities of meaning-exploration within imaginative 'possible worlds'.[10]

2. Possible Worlds in Metaphysical-text Analysis

The application of the Possible-Worlds construct in Modal Logic to the pragmatic analysis of Metaphysical discourse is therefore essential in this study.[11] Being intrinsically hypothetical, a metaphysical discourse is primarily concerned with mental projections of possible worlds that obviously exist only within an imaginary dimension, not in reality. For this reason, such a discourse is inevitably formulated into a modal language containing non-truth-functional modal operators and conditional sentences.[12] Moreover, its semantic structure is assumed to be built on a 'visually-based system of transitivity' which is meant to help the reader understand the epistemic stance reported in

[7] Manfred Bierwisch, "Semantic Structure and Illocutionary Force", in John R. Searle, Ferenc Kiefer and Manfred Bierwisch, eds., *Speech Act Theory and Pragmatic* (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1980), 1-35.
[8] David E. Rumelhart, "Schemata: The Building Blocks of Cognition", in Rand J. Spiro, Bruce C. Bertram and William F. Brewer, eds., *Theoretical Issues in Reading Comprehension: Perspectives from Cognitive Psychology, Linguistics, Artificial Intelligence and Education* (Hillsdale, N.J.: Erlbaum, 1980), 33-58.
[9] Guido, *The Acting Reader*.
[10] Guido, *The Imaging Reader*.
[11] Sture Allén, ed., *Possible Worlds in Humanities, Arts and Sciences: Proceedings of the Nobel Symposium 65* (New York/Berlin: de Gruyter, 1989); Barbara Hall-Partee, "Possible Worlds in Model-Theoretic Semantics: A Linguistic Perspective", in Allén, ed., *Possible Worlds*, 93-123; Jaako Hintikka, "Individuals, Possible Worlds, and Epistemic Logic", *Nous*, 1 (1967), 33-62; Jaako Hintikka, "Exploring Possible Worlds", in Allén, ed., *Possible Worlds*, 52-81; David Lewis, *On the Plurality of Worlds* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986); Robert Stalnaker, "Possible Worlds and Situations", *Journal of Philosophical Logic*, 15 (1986), 109-123; Robert Stalnaker, "Semantics for Belief", *Philosophical Topics*, XV (1987), 177-199; Robert Stalnaker, "Modality and Possible Worlds", in Kim Jaegwon and Ernest Sosa, eds., *Blackwell Companion to Metaphysics* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), 333-337; Robert Stalnaker, "On Considering a Possible World as Actual", in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 65 (2001), 141-156.
[12] Robert Stalnaker, "Notes on Conditional Semantics", in Yoram Moses, ed., *Proceedings of the Fourth Conference on Theoretical Aspects of Reasoning about Knowledge* (San Matteo, CA: Morgan Kaufmann Publishers, 1992), 316-327.

the text by *visualizing* virtual entities (what Eliot defines as "objects, situations, or events") and hypothetical processes (e.g., material, mental, verbal actions) taking place within the representational 'possible world'. Since these entities and processes often 'semantically deviate' from conventional entities and processes of the real world, then the reader is deontically prompted by the textual structure itself to undergo a first-person pragmatic *embodiment* of such virtual entities and hypothetical processes in order to make sense of them by means of his/her own 'world schemata'. These two processes of 'visualization' and 'embodiment' of the metaphysical text may be said to be informed by the two primary metaphors representing the human initial conceptualization of experience and which Lakoff and Johnson define as 'Seeing is Understanding' (influencing epistemic visualization) and 'Manipulating is Understanding' (determining deontic embodiment).[13] The discourse outcome of this visualization-and-embodiment experience is expected to be an exploration of a number of subjective, interpretative possibilities with reference to the counterfactual environment of the possible world. This, as discussed later in this paper, should produce in readers a displacing sensation of being within an unreal dimension of existence which is similar, in many ways, to the experience of interacting with the virtual environments conveyed by Modernist poetry and visual art. Such an experience may explain the cognitive processes by which *imaging readers* of Metaphysical texts[14] seek coherence not simply on the referential, indexical level of the ordinary use of language in real situations, but also, and crucially, on the representational, iconic level of fictitious situations.[15] This would induce a reader to bridge logical inconsistencies in the text by activating non-logical cognitive processes of inference involving imagination.[16] The imaginative aspect of such interpretative processes raises a further question:

(2) How far can Metaphysical discourse be considered a specialized language, rooted in specific situational contexts and, thus, 'socialized' in everyday communication? And how far, instead, can it be considered as the textualization of imaginative and conceptual abstractions?

Indeed, Metaphysics cannot be easily classified as a specialized disciplinary discourse.[17] Conventionally, the language of disciplinary discourses is codified by the established textual norms sanctioned by actual communities of specialists to ensure felicitous interactions within their group on clear, shared and, above all, factual grounds.[18] Therefore, if we grant Metaphysics the status of a

[13] George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and Its Challenge to Western Thought* (New York: Basic Books, 1999).
[14] Guido, *The Imaging Reader*.
[15] See Stalnaker, "Possible Worlds and Situation".
[16] Judea Pearl, "Causation, Action, and Counterfactuals", in Alex Gammerman, ed., *Computational Learning and Probabilistic Reasoning* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1995), 235-255.
[17] Ken Hyland, *Disciplinary Discourses: Social Interactions in Academic Writing* (London: Longman, 2000).
[18] The 'clear and shared factual grounds' that constitute the rational structure of specialized disciplinary discourses are justified by the very function of such discourses that, exactly because of their specific theoretical foundations, are expected to meet the truth-conditions shared by a particular community of practice with reference to the actual world within which such a community has to operate. Even the specialized discourses of a scientific type, when they seem to advance hypotheses on possible extraordinary discoveries (e.g., the invisible subatomic particles in Particle Physics), they do so by grounding such hypotheses on exact experiments which are regarded as valid in that they are reproducible all the time with the same results, or on demonstrations based on statistical probabilities. It is here argued, instead, that differently from the specialized disciplinary discourses whose theoretical grounds need to justify their practical applications to domain-specific contexts of use in the actual world, and differently from the experimental scientific discourse that derives hypotheses from precise empirical data (which, eventually, can modify them as the experiments progress), metaphysical discourse is purely hypothesis-generated, without being justified by empirical data or by any reference to the real world. In fact, metaphysical theories do not need experimental evidence or statistical demonstrations insofar as they are only intuited, imagined with reference to counterfactual possible worlds. A similarity between metaphysical speculations and novel scientific discoveries can be found only in the discourse of scientific popularization, when ordinary people's sense of wonder at the new scientific findings may

factual and referential disciplinary discourse, how can we account for utterances like, for instance, those found in the following extract from Descartes' text?[19]

> From the metaphysical point of view, however, it is quite unintelligible that God should be anything but completely unalterable. It is irrelevant that the decrees could have been separated from God; indeed, this should not really be asserted. For although God is completely indifferent with respect to all things, he necessarily made the decrees he did, since he necessarily willed what was best, even though it was of his own will that he did what was best. We should not make a separation here between the necessity and the indifference that apply to God's decrees; although his actions were completely indifferent, they were also completely necessary. Then again, although we may conceive that the decrees could have been separated from God, this is merely a token procedure of our own reasoning: the distinction thus introduced between God himself and his decrees is a mental, not a real one. In reality the decrees could not have been separated from God: he is not prior to them or distinct from them, nor could he have existed without them.
> (Descartes, from *Conversation with Burman*)

Though apparently structured according to the standards of an argumentative discourse,[20] this Metaphysical text is actually built on a counterfactual logic. More precisely, it is possible to observe in it the 'bimodal structure' at work, on the grounds of a visually-based system of transitivity. 'Bimodality' is here represented as being composed of two levels of modality, each characterized by two cognitive dimensions affecting the writer/reader communication.

The first component of bimodality is constituted by the *representational level of epistemic and doxastic modalities* which devise the expression of the writer's thoughts and beliefs. At this level, the text is built on a semantic pattern of propositional attitudes accounting for two world dimensions that are assumed to co-exist in both writer's and reader's minds:

(a) The *indexical dimension of the actual world*, where the conventional sense of a concept – or 'primary intension' – is given by what the concept refers to in reality.[21] This is the dimension by which human beings normally make sense of things and ideas, thus determining their truth-conditions. Both writer and readers, as human beings, are therefore assumed to share, implicitly, such truth-conditions.

(b) The *iconic dimension of the possible world*, where the referent for a concept – or 'secondary intension' – may diverge from its conventional sense in the actual world.[22] This means that truth-conditions are determined by the semantic value that a concept acquires within the alternative and textually-constructed counterfactual world.[23] Within this dimension, also 'non-normal concepts' (and even 'impossible concepts') may be explicitly assumed to be true by both writer and readers, provided that they activate in their minds counterfactual-logic procedures.[24]

trigger in them metaphysical feelings of awe as they get the unsettling impression of facing an unknown and unfathomable world. And indeed, this displacing sensation at the cognitive and cultural challenges of novel scientific discoveries can be found, for instance, in John Donne's Metaphysical poetry of the 17th century – but also today, as in the case with the Higgs boson in Particle Physics popularly called "God's particle" – a definition that the scientist Higgs himself rejected as he considered it as emotionally misleading.

[19] See John Cottingham, ed., *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes: Volume 3, The Correspondence* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1984).

[20] Ernest Lepore, *Meaning and Argument: An Introduction to Logic through Language* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000).

[21] Joe Lau, "Pietroski on Possible Worlds Semantics for Believe Sentences", *Analysis*, 55 (1995), 295-298.

[22] Ibid.

[23] David Lewis, *Counterfactuals* (Harvard: Harvard U.P., 1973).

[24] Edward N. Zalta, "A Classically-Based Theory of Impossible Worlds", *Notre Dame Journal of Formal Logic*, 38.4 (1997), 640-660.

The second component of bimodality is constituted by the *referential level of deontic modality* which determines the illocutionary force of the Metaphysical text. At this level, the abstract dimension of theoretical speculation is displaced into an actual communicative context where the writer tries to pragmatically convey his intentionality conditions to empirical readers who, however, may diverge from the expected interpretation. Also this process can be defined as 'two-dimensional' and described in this way:

(c) The *dimension of text-production*, accounting for the writer's creation of the accessibility conditions for his readers to transcend the referential dimension of the actual world and come to inhabit the modal logic of the counterfactual world that he has constructed in his text. This means that, although the writer (Descartes, in this case) represents his thoughts and beliefs through the epistemic structure of his text, his argumentative register has indeed the deontic value of a performative act, operating at the referential level of the actual world to induce empirical readers to share his thought.

(d) The *dimension of discourse-interpretation*, accounting for the readers' actual use of their interpretative strategies to make sense of the Metaphysical text, based on their own world schemata. This means that different readers might associate different secondary, and even primary intensions with a sentence in the text.[25] Readers, for instance, may decide to follow a two-dimensional logic as they make sense of its semantic structure, and try to interpret it as a consistent discourse. Yet, in doing so, they must soon realize that it is impossible to ignore the counterfactual language of a Metaphysical text, as it is mainly built on non-truth-functional modal operators instantiating inference patterns that are valid only by reference to a paraconsistent logic.[26]

In the next section, this bimodal construct will be applied to the analysis of Descartes' extract.

3. The Representation Level of Epistemic and Doxastic Modalities: An Analysis of Belief Reports

At the *representational level*, Descartes, the writer, has built his text on a series of propositional-attitude sentences, each representing a 'belief report' signalled by a modal operator – i.e., epistemic verbs and adverbs.[27] Throughout this text, belief reports are of two types:

a. Standard belief reports in possible-worlds semantics, expressed by a *that*-clause whose semantic value is assumed to be identical to the intension of the embedded sentence, as in the following examples:

(a) It is quite unintelligible *that* God *should* be anything but completely unalterable.
(b) It is irrelevant *that* the decrees *could* have been separated from God.

b. Hidden indexical beliefs expressed by a relation between a subject, a proposition, and a contextually-specified mode of presentation set within a specific possible world under which the subject believes that the proposition is true,[28] as in this example:

[25] Lau, "Pietroski on Possible Worlds Semantics for Believe Sentences"; Paul M. Pietroski, "Possible Worlds, Syntax, and Opacity", *Analysis*, 53 (1993), 270-280.
[26] Zalta, "A Classically-Based Theory of Impossible Worlds".
[27] Stephen Schiffer, "Belief Ascription", *Journal of Philosophy*, 92 (1996), 102-107; Stalnaker, "Semantics for Belief".
[28] Lau, "Pietroski on Possible-Worlds Semantic for Believe Sentences".

(c) [God] *necessarily* made the decrees he did, since he *necessarily* willed what was best.

The two standard belief reports found in (a) and (b) are of an agentless indirect type, insofar as they are introduced by an impersonal clause with 'it' as a Subject placeholder. In both cases, the propositional attitudes are expressed by epistemic verbs ('should' and 'could') within the two *that*-clauses, rather than by a direct affirmation of belief within the main clause. Readers are thus assumed to derive the writer's direct belief report by a process of semantic presupposition involving the explicit identification of the individual to whom belief is attributed.[29] In the following examples (aa) and (bb), this individual is identified as 'Descartes the writer', or as 'the first-person pronoun *I*', representing the Subject of the belief reports associated with the embedded sentences:

(aa) I believe [Descartes believes] *that* God is alterable.
(bb) I believe [Descartes believes] *that* the decrees can be separated from God.

The concepts expressed by the propositional attitudes in (a) and (b), therefore, are assumed to coincide with the secondary intensions of the corresponding embedded sentences. These embedded sentences, in their turn, have truth-conditions that are equivalent to the truth conditions of the embedded sentences in the corresponding semantic presuppositions (aa) and (bb). In (aa), the semantic presupposition has been deduced by a process of *entailment*, involving the concept of *necessity*. In (bb), instead, the semantic presupposition has been inferred by a process of *compatibility*, involving the concept of *possibility*. In both cases, however, readers need to account also for the primary intensions underlying embedded sentences. This means that they have to make reference to the indexical dimension of the real world if they want to determine the truth-conditions and the modal status of the *that*-clauses in the iconic 'possible world' represented within the Metaphysical text.

This indexical/iconic interaction between real and possible worlds seems useless, instead, as regards the case of the hidden indexical belief found in example (c). Sentence (c), in fact, is heavily context-dependent, which means that it relies neither on primary nor on secondary intensions for its belief attribution,[30] as its truth-conditions can be inferred from the representational context within which it is framed. The representation of the context in sentence (c) is prompted by the epistemic adverb 'necessarily', stating the modal conditions of entailment that are valid within that specific context.

In other words, this sentence (c)

(c) [God] *necessarily* made the decrees he did, since he *necessarily* willed what was best.

which may appear inconsistent in the actual-world dimension (mainly for the lack of a concrete indexical referent for the Agent 'God'), can indeed be considered true in Descartes' possible-world dimension of representation. In it, the given anthropomorphic properties of God are compatible with the properties of 'making decrees' and 'willing what is best'. Within this counterfactual world, therefore, *de re* modal claims – such as the claim in sentence (c) – stating that something is *necessarily* or *possibly* something else, can be asserted without being 'prefixed' by expressions of 'angle', containing or implying the 'according to' operator.[31] Divers defines such modal claims as 'extensional', which indicates that they define their truth-value at the possible-world level

[29] Stephen Levinson, *Pragmatics* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1983), 199-204.
[30] Lau, "Pietroski on Possible-Worlds Semantic for Believe Sentences"; Pietroski, "Possible Worlds, Syntax, and Opacity".
[31] John Divers, "A Genuine Realist Theory of Advanced Modalizing", *Mind*, 108.430 (1999), 217-239.

independently from the truth-values at the actual-world level. This means that modal-logic processes, such as 'entailment' (claiming that a thing is 'necessarily' as it is) and 'compatibility' (claiming that a thing is 'possibly' as it is), are essential in the activation of a possible-world context. In this case, entailment creates a representational context within which the following semantic presupposition to sentence (c), inconceivable in the actual world, becomes conceivable as a logical deduction within Descartes' possible world:

(cc) God *must* have made the decrees he did, since he *must* have willed what was best.

So far, analysis has regarded the first level of the bimodal structure of a Metaphysical text, concerned with the representation of the epistemic/doxastic modalities by which the writer structures his thoughts and beliefs. At this level, readers are assumed to be aware of the two-dimensional modal logic underlying their process of meaning inference. In other words, they are expected to make sense of those semantic patterns of the Metaphysical text, that they perceive as non-coherent according to the actual-world logic, by projecting them on to the possible-world dimension of an alternative, paraconsistent logic that would make them meaningful. Descartes' textualization of his Modal Metaphysics[32] is a clear example of how Metaphysical discourse by its very nature starts from reality to extrapolate beyond it, thus transcending any accepted notion of time, space, and social contexts.[33] The purpose is to induce readers into an exploration of alternative semantic possibilities underlying conventional meanings. This interpretative procedure is totally different from the procedure that readers are conventionally required to activate in their minds as they interpret other generic types of disciplinary discourses. These, in fact, are embedded in shared social/professional contexts sanctioning their interpretation as an expression of meanings, cultural values and ways of thinking of particular social or professional groups, or communities of practice, in particular historical periods.[34] Hence the raising of another question:

(3) On the basis of such a lack of generic classification, then, is it possible to apply a Functional-Grammar approach[35] to the analysis of Metaphysical discourse, or does such discourse-type transcend any 'social semiotic' pattern of investigation?

The claim in this paper is that a Functional-Grammar approach is excellent for the analysis of the textual patterns of a Metaphysical discourse, yet it requires the integration of a Cognitive-Grammar model when applied to the investigation of the readers' responses to such textual patterns.[36] A Cognitive-Grammar perspective, in fact, may account for the empirical reader's processes of inference, explicature,[37] meaning construction (e.g., by creative *visualization* and *embodiment*) and, finally, interpretative *imaging*.

The need for a 'Cognitive-Functional' model becomes evident in the analysis of a Metaphysical text at the second level of bimodality, concerned with the *indexical reference* to a pragmatic

[32] See Alan Nelson and David Cunning, "Cognition and Modality in Descartes", *Acta Philosophica Fennica*, 64 (1999), 137-153.
[33] See Stephen Laurence and Cynthia MacDonald, eds., *Contemporary Readings in the Foundations of Metaphysics* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998).
[34] Hyland, *Disciplinary Discourses.*
[35] Mark A. Halliday, *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* (London: Arnold, 1994).
[36] Ronald W. Langacker, *Foundations of Cognitive Grammar: Vol. II, Descriptive Application* (Stanford: Stanford U.P., 1991), viii.
[37] Robyn Carston, "Implicature, Explicature, and Truth-Theoretic Semantics", in Ruth M. Kempson, ed., *Mental Representations: The Interface between Language and Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1988), 155-181; Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson, *Relevance: Communication and Cognition* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), 182.

communicative context within which writer and readers interact. At this level, the writer employs the functions of the language to convey his intentionality to readers, and readers are engaged in a cognitive interaction with the transitivity system, organizing the semantic patterns of the text, in order to achieve from it their own subjective interpretations. The pragmatic dynamics of this second level of bimodal analysis will be described in the following section.

4. The Referential Level of Deontic Modality: A Pragmatic Analysis of a Visually-based System of Transitivity

At the *referential level* of bimodality, it is possible to observe how Descartes, the writer, has constructed his Metaphysical text as an exchange on two pragmatic planes:

a. an *overt illocutionary plane* through which he intends to convey information about his beliefs and ideas, and
b. a *covert perlocutionary plane* through which he surreptitiously tries to offer readers his metaphysical view and expects them to accept it.

In other words, the dimension of text-production in Descartes' text simultaneously accounts for the two types of speech roles defined by Halliday as *proposition* (a statement of information about belief, knowledge, etc.) and *proposal* (offers, or commands) in relation to the Interpersonal Metafunction of language underlying communication.[38]

On the plane of *proposition*, the writer's stance is *epistemic* and *doxastic*. Descartes overtly makes his illocutionary point by means of constative utterances expounding his metaphysical thoughts and beliefs through a projection of 'non-logical images' conveyed by an interplay of mental and material processes. The most evident example of non-logical image is the central anthropomorphic figure of God, representing both the psychological subject (the Theme) and the logical subject (the Agent) of this text,[39] though they do not always coincide with the grammatical subjects of the clauses constituting it. Often, in fact, the image of God loses its thematic position as the psychological subject within a sentence to be postponed into a *that*-clause with 'it' as a subject-placeholder, thus reducing its concept to an experientially-distanced, rhematic 'fact'. The distancing of experience in metaphysical texts is not casual. In considering again the two examples (a) and (b):

(a) *It* is quite unintelligible *that* God should be anything but completely unalterable.
(b) *It* is irrelevant *that* the decrees could have been separated from God.

it is possible to notice that these two sentences are regarded in a Functional-Grammar perspective as 'fact reports',[40] although the facts reported here are of an abstract, mental kind. Actually, every 'fact' represented in a clause of mental process is not a factual event, but a 'metaphenomenon' – i.e., a mental reinterpretation of a factual event. This means that, within an interactive context, a 'fact' is linguistically created by the human 'participant' who 'thinks of it', 'conceives it' (the writer as a Senser, in this case) and, then, textualizes it 'as a projection' in embedded or hypotactic forms – typically, in the form of *that*-clauses with a declarative mood.[41] Yet, in a Metaphysical text like the one under analysis, facts are not even mental reinterpretations of factual events, since they are purely possible-worlds projections of beliefs, to be rather classified as 'chances', 'possibilities', or even

[38] Halliday, *An Introduction*, 68.
[39] Ibid., 31.
[40] Ibid., 122.
[41] Ibid., 115.

'impossibilities' wholly 'imagined' by the writer.[42] It is therefore claimed that the Metaphysical writer's process of 'imagining facts' can be described as a cognitive adaptation of shared 'image schemata' – by which the writer as a human being links perception to reason –to the abstract characteristics of the Metaphysical concepts s/he intends to convey through his/her text.[43] The result is a semantic structure of the text built on a 'visually-based system of transitivity' which does not correspond to the experiential system of transitivity normally applied to the everyday use of language. In Descartes' text, the abstract and, indeed, 'counterfactual' concept of God is adapted to the conventional image-schema of a powerful male human being (a recurrent personified idea in the 'Cartesian Theater')[44] who performs the semantic roles of Actor and Senser in, respectively, the material and mental processes constituting the transitivity system of this text. Yet, even this conventional image cannot account for a shared visual representation of such a transcendental entity. Here, in fact, the transitivity system does not represent any truth-functional semantic pattern applicable to a real-world context, though it is logically and experientially organized by the Ideational Metafunction of language underlying actual communication.[45] However, this 'visualization' of a 'counterfactual logic' does fulfil a specific pragmatic function:[46] that of allowing the writer to grant readers' accessibility to his non-consistent thought-development, thus permitting them to instantiate logically valid inference patterns by creating their own 'visual images'. Yet, the 'accessibility-by-visualization' to the semantic structure of a metaphysical text does not automatically imply the readers' achievement of an experiential proximity to the non-logical processes represented in it. In sentences (a) and (b) above, for instance, the pronoun 'it' employed as a subject placeholder emphasizes the experiential distance from the 'metaphysical fact' which is projected impersonally in a separate, hypotactic clause. This type of 'fact' projection has indeed an important function as an 'objective modulation' whereby the writer disclaims responsibility for his semantic abstraction.[47] Therefore, at the textual level of 'clause as a message', these projections of 'possible-world facts' through impersonal *that*-clauses are seen to be related to:

a. *epistemic and doxastic propositions*, whose overt illocutionary point is to present objectively to readers a metaphysical view (a 'vision', indeed) of a 'possible fact' (i.e., an epistemic 'noun of modality' concerning hypothetical chances, possibilities, or impossibilities),[48] which may imply no personal involvement from the writer's side, and may likewise require none from the readers' side;
b. a *deontic proposal*, whose covert perlocutionary point is to induce readers into concluding that what is reported is not just a 'possible fact', but it is rather a 'need' (i.e., a deontic 'noun of modulation' representing a category of 'facts' that requires the writer's and readers' commitment in believing it and, then, realizing it by subjective embodiment).[49]

As a result, this double-message coming from the language of Descartes' text can produce an ambiguous 'distance-proximity effect' on readers. On the one hand, they are overtly elicited to consider the writer's discourse as a sheer exposition of abstract ideas (point a.) and, on the other,

[42] Ibid., 267.
[43] George Lakoff, *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal about the Mind* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), 440.
[44] Daniel Dennett, *Consciousness Explained* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1991).
[45] Halliday, *An Introduction*, 106.
[46] See Lewis, *Counterfactuals*.
[47] Halliday, *An Introduction*, 269.
[48] Ibid., 267.
[49] Ibid., 268.

they are covertly induced to feel committed to the writer's stance (point b.). The application of b. to Descartes' text will represent the second 'plane of proposal' of the referential level of bimodality.

On the plane of *proposal*, therefore, the writer's stance is *deontic*. Descartes covertly makes his perlocutionary point by means of utterances whose pragmatic function is performative, as they are employed to bring readers to share his metaphysical thoughts and beliefs. This objective is pursued through a kind of argumentation textually built on an 'assert/deny' structure typical of the discourse of persuasion.[50] Thus, for instance, Descartes' extract starts with a circumstantial element of 'angle' characterizing the first clause ('From the metaphysical point of view')[51] which is, unexpectedly, impersonal, as it does not specify whose speaker's 'angle' it reports. Therefore, by using this introductory stance as a disclaimer for the assertions that shall follow, the writer seems to keep his distance from his own metaphysical contention. His overt intention, in this case, may be to reassure readers that his discourse is objective, detached and, thus, unchallenging. On the other hand, however, the writer might use this discourse structure to convey his covert intention of not endorsing the truth-values of what he asserts. Consequently, as readers proceed in their examination of the clauses that come next, they may experience a sense of displacement at perceiving that their interpretative freedom is limited by the writer's introduction of non-logical semantic constraints aimed at systematically diverting their normal cognitive operations of information processing. This is demonstrated by the transitivity system underlying Descartes' text that is built on a 'hypothetical syllogism' based on contraposition and 'vacuous truth' – which are typical features of Possible-Worlds Semantics.[52] The clauses in Descartes' text under analysis are ranked into two main counterfactual types, which are here defined as:

1. *Clauses of illogical compatibility*, semantically constructed as a mental projection of opposing polarities and, at the same time, epistemically modalized within a conditional logic. Furthermore, they are structured impersonally, with the pronoun 'it' as a grammatical subject in the thematic position, and the logical subject as the Rheme.
2. *Clauses of illogical contingency*, semantically constructed as hypotactic expansions 'by concession' and, at the same time, interconnected by means of relational processes of an intensive, attributive type equating two wholly contradictory concepts.

Examples (a) and (b) can be therefore regarded as instances of Type 1 (*clauses of illogical compatibility*):

(a) it is quite unintelligible that God should be anything but completely unalterable.
(b) It is irrelevant that the decrees could have been separated from God; indeed, this should not really be asserted.

In sentence (a), at first readers may feel displaced by the self-contradicting association in the thematic clause between the mood adjunct of degree 'quite',[53] signalling positive polarity, and the denying prefix '-un' in 'unintelligible' signalling negative polarity. Then, in the ensuing *that*-clause, readers experience again the same displacement, projected this time as a modalized extension (introduced by the variation-marker 'but') of the previous incompatible polarities. Moreover, the modal operator 'should', signalling a median degree of 'probability', modalizes also the intensional relationship between 'God' (the logical subject) and the contradictory polarities characterizing him.

[50] Michael Billig, *Arguing and Thinking* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1996).
[51] Halliday, *An Introduction*, 158.
[52] Lewis, *Counterfactuals*.
[53] Halliday, *An Introduction*, 83.

Also this time, the contradictory polarities are constituted by another mood adjunct of degree, 'completely', signalling positive polarity and, again, the denying prefix '-un' in 'unalterable' signalling negative polarity. Since the beginning of this extract, therefore, the image of God comes out blurred by what readers may perceive as an illogical compatibility of opposites, which makes the cognitive processing of the sentence very difficult, but also conceptually and 'visually' challenging.

The same degree of difficulty in meaning inference may be faced by readers in sentence (b). Here, a semantic notion of negation is introduced in the dominant impersonal clause – 'It is irrelevant' – which confers the value of 'possibility' to the ensuing projected *that*-clause represented by an 'impossibility'-type of conditional sentence ("that the decrees *could have been separated* from God"). The agentless passive voice used in the *that*-clause makes it difficult for readers to visualize the possible actors of this 'separation' process. Moreover, the readers' cognitive difficulty in immediately achieving a semantic presupposition from the 'possible-impossible' concept conveyed by the initiating clauses is further heightened by the clarification conveyed by the continuing clause. This is characterized by two mood adjuncts of intensity: 'indeed', in a thematic position stressing an interpersonal stance, and 'really', following the modal negation 'should not', stressing an experiential stance. Moreover, the modal operator 'should not', in "this should not really be asserted", has an ambiguous value: it could denote epistemic possibility, but also deontic recommendation – which represent two quite different signals sent to the readers as they are engaged in interpretation. This means that readers need to resort to a subjective process of 'explicature'[54] to achieve a logical interpretation from what they assume to be the modality (epistemic or deontic) of the communicative context encoded by the writer in his text.

The following sentences from Descartes' text, on the other hand, represent examples of 'type 2' counterfactual clauses (i.e., *clauses of illogical contingency*):

(c) For although God is completely indifferent with respect to all things, he necessarily made the decrees he did, since he necessarily willed what was best, even though it was of his own will that he did what was best.
(d) We should not make a separation here between the necessity and the indifference that apply to God's decrees; although his actions were completely indifferent, they were also completely necessary.
(e) Although we may conceive that the decrees could have been separated from God, this is merely a token of our own reasoning.

In all these three complex sentences there is a circumstantial element of *contingency* marked by the concessive expressions 'though' and 'although',[55] which normally enhance a causal-conditional logical-semantic relation among the clauses.[56] Yet, in this Metaphysical text, logical-semantic relations do not follow 'normal' cognitive routes – in fact, they are patterned according to what Lewis defines as a 'paraconsistent hypothetical syllogism'.[57] Thus, for example, the concessive clause in (c) introduces a relational process of an intensive type, where the intension is signalled by a high degree of attribution, conveyed by the positive-polarity adverb 'completely', which ascribes the attribute 'indifferent' to its Carrier – i.e., the personified entity of 'God'. Yet, the sense of passivity conveyed by the attribute 'indifferent' is immediately denied by the obligation-adjunct of modality represented by the adverb 'necessarily'. This adverb is iterated twice in this sentence to stress the contradiction with a different entity of 'God' as an Agent, this time, whose material processes ("he necessarily made the decrees") and mental processes ("he necessarily willed what

[54] Sperber and Wilson, *Relevance*, 182-183.
[55] Halliday, *An Introduction*, 155.
[56] Ibid., 324.
[57] Lewis, *Counterfactuals*.

was best") are believed to have a high value of certainty. Again, the image of God is characterized by opposite notions of 'passivity' and 'dynamism', which make its visual processing quite challenging. The final concessive embedded clause of this complex sentence introduces another impersonal disclaimer which, however, does not seem to enhance the confused notion of God as a simultaneously passive/active entity.

In sentence (d), nevertheless, the writer abandons the impersonal stance and tries to involve readers directly in his paraconsistent thought-processes. This is signalled by the first-person pronoun 'we', associated with the deontic operator 'should' denoting an expected response of inclination. The concessive enhancement by means of the causal-conditional element 'though' reiterates the same non-logical correlation between the opposite concepts of 'necessity' and 'indifference' attributed to God, only that this time it is directly expressed through a relational process of an intensive type. Here, the intension is represented by the relation between God's 'actions' and the opposite attributes 'indifferent' and 'necessary', emphasized – as in sentence (c) – by the polarity-adverb 'completely' ("although his actions were *completely* indifferent, they were also *completely* necessary").

Sentence (e) contains another concessive clause introduced by 'though', where the writer tries to involve readers on an epistemic level, this time. This is represented by the expression of possibility "we *may* conceive", suggesting in readers a potential mental process which is, however, soon denied by the projection of an 'impossibility'-type of conditional sentence by means of a *that*-clause ("that the decrees *could have been separated* from God"), and minimized by the intensity-adjunct of mood 'merely'.[58]

So far, analysis has regarded the possible plan of propositional attitudes and illocutionary/perlocutionary points intended by Descartes as the writer of this text. Obviously, the writer's intentionality has been achieved from the text by a process of subjective interpretation. Yet Descartes' notion of the centrality of reason to determine the truth-values of the real world, in total detachment from the 'misleading' bodily experience, can be inferred from the whole macro-text of his works.[59] This notion, indeed, may explain the lack of actual guidance in Descartes' text for readers to 'visualize' the abstract and contradictory entities of 'God' and his 'decrees'. The vague conventional image of the anthropomorphic God does not seem to be of any effective help. Hence, a further question:

(4) What are the possible perlocutionary effects that this Metaphysical text may induce in empirical readers?

The reply may be that precisely this absence of clear visual input from the text may produce a truly creative interpretative outcome. The tenet is: since readers are deliberately denied any 'model-visualization' of God, and since even the conventional image of this entity appears inconsistent with the representation of processes and attributive intensions ascribed to it in the text, then, paradoxically, readers may feel free to represent God according to their own *imaging* parameters. This means that readers may allow their 'image-schema archetypes' to pragmatically interact with the deviating possible-worlds semantic structure of the text. In this way, the transitivity system would acquire a subjective 'kinesthetic' dimension, exclusively taking place within each *imaging reader*'s mind.[60] This leads to the formulation of the last question:

(5) What is actually meant by 'imaging' in this interpretative context?

[58] Halliday, *An Introduction*, 83.
[59] See René Descartes, *Correspondance avec Arnauld et Morus*, ed. by Genevieve Lewis (Paris: Vrin, 1953).
[60] Guido, *The Imaging Reader*.

By the term *imaging* it is here meant that process by which empirical readers of Metaphysical texts resort to their archetypal practice of developing embodied image schemata in order to make sense of their experience,[61] as it will be illustrated in the following section.

5. Metaphysical Imaging: The Rationale

The experiential dimensions of conceptual archetypes was investigated by a number of Experiential-Cognitive linguists[62] who have revealed how such archetypes reflect the explorative roles that primitive human beings originally experienced as "sentient creatures and manipulators of physical objects"[63] within contexts of the world that were totally novel to them. This early exploration of meanings was based on the testing of hypotheses that, once verified, were accepted as truths and "appropriated as the prototypes of basic linguistic categories (e.g. agent, patient, and experiencer for subject, direct object, and indirect object, respectively)".[64] Such primary 'physical' mode of meaning exploration and categorization seems to be definitively lost in today's experience of interaction with the world, as it is reflected in contemporary Objectivist views of Metaphysics, Semantics, and Cognition, regarding 'role archetypes' simply as abstract, disembodied, and decontextualized categories.[65]

The research illustrated in this paper, instead, has been grounded on the tenet that, in the interpretation of a Metaphysical text, the reader's cognitive processes cannot follow a common, truth-functional logical development insofar as Metaphysical language is essentially divergent from any conventional social-semiotic forms and functions regulating the use of most ordinary as well as disciplinary discourses. This justifies the claim for the reader's rediscovery of the primary explorative experience of embodying 'potential role archetypes'.[66] This rediscovery of the early experiential procedures of meaning conception involves a quest into the semantic possibilities, necessities, consistencies, entailments and, ultimately, impossibilities that lie unrealized at the root of human experience. The implication of such a quest, therefore, is that Metaphysics requires from readers a readiness to transcend the everyday experience of reality – and its conventional interpretations – by displacing it into the modal logic of different possible worlds evoked by the very semantic structure of a Metaphysical text. The possible worlds represented in Metaphysical texts provide alternative models of contexts – and objects in those contexts – which would count modal statements in the text as true if they meet certain relevant conditions within the contexts of those possible worlds, allowing an experiential exploration of the very 'imaginative' roots of being – an exploration that is triggered by the writer's 'logically-deviating' and 'imagistic' textualization of his/her Metaphysical discourse.

The reader's awareness of such characteristics of Metaphysical discourse is here assumed to trigger a similar 'sense of estrangement' presumably felt by early human beings towards the novel objects and situations of the real world. Research evidence shows that this initial feeling of

[61] Lakoff and Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh*.
[62] Mark Johnson, *The Body in the Mind: The Bodily Basis of Meaning, Imagination, and Reason* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987); Lakoff, *Women, Fire and Dangerous Things*; Leonard Talmy, "How Language Structures Space", in Herbert L. Pick and Linda P. Acredolo, eds., *Spatial Orientation: Theory, Research, and Application* (New York: Plenum Press, 1983), 225-282; Leonard Talmy, "Force Dynamics in Language and Cognition", *Cognitive Science*, 2 (1988), 49-100.
[63] Langacker, *Foundations of Cognitive Grammar*, 285.
[64] Ibid., 552.
[65] See Johnson, *The Body in the Mind*, ix-xvi; Lakoff, *Women, Fire and Dangerous Things*, 157-195.
[66] See Paul Kugler, *The Alchemy of Discourse: An Archetypal Approach to Language* (Lewisburg: Bucknell U.P., 1982); Eve E. Sweetser, *From Etymology to Pragmatics: Metaphorical and Cultural Aspects of Semantic Structure* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1990).

defamiliarization prompted in our ancestors an all-involving, primary-logic experience of exploration into modal phenomena,[67] which enabled them to develop the embodied archetypal images (or 'image schemata') at the basis of the human conceptualization of the world.[68] By analogy, it is here suggested that the same sense of estrangement is initially experienced also by an 'imaging reader' towards the possible worlds represented in a Metaphysical text, within which s/he attempts to visually re-explore, pragmatically re-embody and, lastly, cognitively re-semanticize concepts, objects, contexts and situations that s/he perceives as deviating from similar concepts, contexts, and situations of the real world.[69] In other words, this estrangement is the result of a schema/text interaction which induces readers to realize that the images that they derive from the Metaphysical text are semantically and pragmatically 'divergent' from their everyday schematic experience of language. The experience of displacement produced by such a realization is at the basis of the readers' discovery of novel image archetypes that normally are not employed to make sense of everyday experience.

It seems necessary, at this point, to specify what constitutes, in a Metaphysical text, a 'divergent formal structure' that (a) impedes readers to process its language by normally resorting to their world-schemata, and (b) prompts them to develop novel 'image archetypes' in order to infer a logical sense from the text. The hypothesis suggested in this paper is that a Metaphysical text has to be identified with a particular formal structure characterized by an 'illogical schematic distance' between two concepts. The implication is that one concept should be entirely alien to the other – because they are normally stored under two different semantic fields within the reader's real-world schemata – but, then, they are unexpectedly brought together within the same 'possible-world' context represented through the language of the Metaphysical text. Such a distance is explicitly designed by the writer with the purpose of compelling the reader's imagination to establish a coherent relationship between the two discrepant concepts inducing in him/her a fresh sensitivity for possible alternative perceptions of the world. The interpretative reaction of the 'imaging reader' to the 'illogical schematic distance' between concepts in the Metaphysical text is here assumed to be the cause of their quest back to the roots of human cognition, in search for remote 'image archetypes' which could suggest novel meaning-associations never experienced in everyday life. This quest, in fact, should clarify the nature of Metaphysical discourse as a prototypal use of language, allowing simultaneous cognitive 'epistemic' representations of thoughts, and communicative 'deontic' references to actions to be taken upon those thoughts. Such coincident experience of both modalities is assumed to be induced in readers by a visual conceptualization of logically-discrepant entities and processes of the possible world represented in the text, perceived by readers as if they were experienced afresh by the early human beings. The assumption is that in dealing with a possible world constructed within a Metaphysical text, readers allow their own conventionally-shared social-semiotic schemata (through which they make sense of the actual world) to interact with the paraconsistent deviations and non-logical images that they achieve from the text so as to project possible meanings within imaginary contexts in the attempt to make sense of the non-coherent textual patterns. The implication is that, if at the actual-world level the primary-intension relationship between two distant concepts – such as, for instance, 'clock is cloth' – is [< (a), True>, <(b), False>], at the counterfactual-world level, the secondary-intension relationship – meant as a function from

[67] William A. Croft, *Syntactic Categories and Grammatical Relations: The Cognitive Organization of Information* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990); Gilles Fauconnier, *Mental Spaces: Aspects of Meaning Construction in Natural Language* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1985).
[68] Mark Johnson, *The Body in the Mind: The Bodily Basis of Meaning, Imagination, and Reason* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987); Lakoff, *Women, Fire and Dangerous Things*.
[69] Guido, *The Imaging Reader*.

worlds to referents – is [< (a), True>, <(b), True>].[70] This means that if a 'clock' can be only a 'clock' in the actual world (a), in a possible world (b) this concept picks out the referent 'cloth' as if it were actual. Obviously, the same type of illogical association can be attained with other types of concepts, such as, for example, the abstract concept of 'God' associated with the concrete concept of a 'male human being', seen in Descartes' previously examined Metaphysical text. The new image created by such a unification of distant concepts is supposed to induce in readers opposite modal responses: on the one hand, it triggers new epistemic thought-processes and, on the other, its deontic force prompts fresh reactions and behaviours. In this sense, the effect of this new Metaphysical image can be equated to the earliest 'bimodal' impact of the entities and processes of the world on human beings – an impact at the basis of the creation of image archetypes. This image-based interpretative strategy, typically characterizing Metaphysical argumentation, is also shared by Metaphysical poetry and art. Indeed, the counterfactual intensional relation 'clock is cloth' has actually been employed by Dalí in his famous Surrealist paintings of clocks hanging out like cloths on dry tree-branches. Being 'estranged' in such a counterfactual context, the clock loses its real-world connotations and suddenly appears before the viewers' eyes like the vision of some unknown object, thus triggering in their minds novel perceptions, feelings, and thoughts. Such simultaneous involvement of the three dimensions of mental processes – perception, affection, and cognition in the interpretation of visual art is particularly relevant in the process of Metaphysical-poetry reading.[71] Also in this case, the poet employs a formal strategy consisting in a juxtaposition of two completely different conceptual images to stimulate in readers fresh sensibilities involving both reason and emotion. John Donne, for example, in his Metaphysical sonnet *The Sunne Rising*, adopts the same 'clock-cloth' intensional relationship explored above, and creates the metaphor "houres, dayes, moneths, which are *the rags of time*".[72] In traditional Metaphysical argumentation, this juxtaposition of opposite conceptual images comes to be foregrounded against the background of philosophical debate. So that, for instance, also Nietzsche in one of his Metaphysical arguments, introduces an adaptation of the same incongruent visual image to represent 'time' as an "enormous, rapid series of *shredded, melted moments* ... neutralizing every impression".[73]

In sum, by considering this parallelism between Metaphysical argumentation and Metaphysical poetry and art it is possible to conclude that the discourse of Metaphysics is not to be associated with any specific register – not even with a unique genre – as in the case, instead, with most disciplinary discourses. Indeed, differently from the socio-cultural contexts of the actual world, sanctioning possibilities and necessities into specific registers, the contexts of Metaphysical discourse not only deviate from ordinary modal phenomena, but even from the standardized registers and genres that provide a conventional and agreed expression to them. This can be explained by the fact that a metaphysical discourse does not refer to the dimension of everyday communication, but represents alternative dimensions of 'visionary' imagination re-inventing experience. Indeed, Metaphysical discourse transcends genres in the same way as it transcends actual-world logic. As a result, this type of discourse can be rendered into a multiplicity of genres, registers and visual images, with the purpose of inducing imaging readers to interpret it by undertaking their own experiential journeys into diverse and personalized possible worlds.[74] The only constant feature characterizing a Metaphysical discourse is the bringing together of the most distant concepts to create brand-new archetypal images invoking in readers fresh bimodal responses consisting in simultaneous epistemic conceptualizations and deontic reactions – like the original archetypal images at the foundations of

[70] See Lau, "Pietroski on Possible-Worlds Semantic for Believe Sentences".
[71] Halliday, *An Introduction*, 118.
[72] John Donne, *The Collected Poems of John Donne, ed. by Roy Booth (Ware, Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions, 1994).*
[73] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Opere*, Volume VIII, ed. by Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (Milan: Adelphi, 1964).
[74] See Lubomír Dolezel, "Possible Worlds and Literary Fiction", in Allén, ed., *Possible Worlds*, 221-242.

human consciousness. 'Bimodality', in this sense, is assumed to be the textual basis of the 'imagistic prompt', allowing the expression of the readers' diverse 'metaphysical states of mind' – as it will be illustrated in the following report of a case study.

6. Metaphysical Imaging: Principled Applications

The purpose of this section is to describe the various phases of the *imaging process*, starting from the structure of the Metaphysical text, which functions as a prompt to readers' and viewers' perception of its 'deviant' form, and developing into the pragmatic processes of 'epistemic visualization', 'deontic embodiment' and, finally, 'body/thought imaging'.

Halliday's metafunctions of language will be adopted as a general scheme to describe these phases,[75] which can be defined as:

1. The *Textual/Compositional Perception Phase*, to be related to Halliday's Textual Metafunction. This first phase is concerned with the writer's 'unusual' linguistic organization of the Metaphysical text aimed at 'impeding' the readers' initial perception of its form so as to induce in them a sense of estrangement. This strategy applies to every Metaphysical genre and register, visual composition included.
2. The *Visualization Phase*, to be related to Halliday's Ideational (logical/experiential) Metafunction. This second phase regards the activation of relevant image schemata already present in the readers' minds, allowing them to interact with the deviating form of the text. The result is the reader's production of 'novel archetypal images' enabling him/her to visualize the new epistemic domains s/he achieves from the text by projecting them on to alternative possible-worlds that the text itself evokes within his/her 'mental spaces'.[76]
3. The *Embodiment Phase*, to be related to Halliday's Interpersonal Metafunction. This third phase is focused on the readers' actualization of the previous possible-world representations into a referential space of pragmatic interaction with the text, where the text exerts its deontic force on readers. Readers may interpret this force differently, according to the different perlocutionary effects that this text produces on them. At this stage, readers are expected to activate two *pragmatic maxims of cooperation*, valid only within a possible-world environment, which are here defined as:

(a) The *maxim of experiential pliability*, requiring the readers' experiential adaptation to the paraconsistent logic of the possible worlds usually prompted by the formal structure of the Metaphysical text, and
(b) The *maxim of cognitive suspension of disbelief*, requiring the readers' detachment from real-world logic in order to activate strategies of embodiment of the counterfactual possible-world suggested by the Metaphysical text.

4. The *Imaging Phase*, which is inclusive of all the three metafunctions outlined above as it engages readers into the activation of 'imaging processes' through which they undertake pragmatic explorations of the Metaphysical text first by 'appropriating' the novel archetypal images achieved from the textual language and then by 'incorporating' them within their own experiential schemata. In doing so, 'imaging readers' achieve from the Metaphysical text their diverse discourse interpretations. This is the phase that will be explored in the following case-

[75] Halliday, *An Introduction*.
[76] See Fauconnier, *Mental Spaces*; Mark Turner and Gilles Fauconnier, "Conceptual Integration in Counterfactuals", in Jean-Pierre Koenig, ed., *Discourse and Cognition: Bridging the Gap* (Stanford: CSLI/Cambridge, 1998), 285-296.

study report.

The longitudinal case study introduced at this stage was developed with a group of Italian university students of English linguistics and literature who represented the sample of subjects for this enquiry and who were expected to develop an *imaging* ability for the interpretation and embodiment of the possible worlds introduced by a Metaphysical text. The case study started with the reading of T.S. Eliot's Metaphysical poem *The Waste Land*,[77] chosen for its typically Imagist structure and for its analogies with the visual composition of Metaphysical and Surrealist paintings. De Chirico, in his paintings, disrupts space and time categories (mainly under the inspiration of Freud's and Einstein's Relativist currents of thought which were highly influential in his – and Eliot's – times), by foregrounding, for instance, ancient Greek, classical forms against a background of contemporary geometrical figures. Such a space/time visual disruption was meant to induce in viewers a sense of out-of-time displacement of the foregrounded figures, which would allow viewers to rediscover conventional objects and forms under new, refreshing perspectives capable of prompting in them unexpected emotions and sensitivities, and revealing new, imaginary worlds. This is the same effect that was sought after also by Modernist musicians, such as Strawinsky who, in his symphonic work *Le Sacre du Printemps*, foregrounds the metallic, sharp noises of a chaotic and stressing contemporary metropolis – trumpet sounds similar to motor horns – against a background of rhythmical, drumming footsteps of ancient, barbarous hordes advancing in the steppe, conveying, by means of two dissimilar 'sound images', the same oppressing sensation of impending menace. A similar foreground/background interplay of incongruent images, brought together by textual coordination and juxtaposition, and triggering in readers a displacing sense of contradictory thoughts and sensations, can be found also in Metaphysical argumentation of a traditional type.

The aim of the case study, therefore, was precisely to elicit in the subjects an imaging process of visualization and embodiment of the images conveyed by a Metaphysical composition.

The first step of the study was meant to provide the case-study subjects, as 'imaging readers', with preliminary visual-art elicitation by introducing a Surrealist painting by Salvador Dalí entitled *The Metamorphosis of Narcissus*, where atmospheres and images are similar to those found in Eliot's Metaphysical poem *The Waste Land.*

[77] Thomas S. Eliot, *The Waste Land*, with the addition of *Notes* from *The Criterion* and *The Dial* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1922).

Fig. 1: Salvador Dalí, *The Metamorphosis of Narcissus*, 1937, Tate Gallery, London. ©Tate

As in Eliot's poem, also in Dalí's painting there is a juxtaposition of disparate images, brought together within the same visual frame: i.e., from primordial images of vegetation myths to a modern chess-board; from images of bent human figures cut in dry stone to images of humans clustered together like Dante's representations of doomed people in Hell. Moreover, these images in Dalí's painting are organized into a pattern of foregrounded and backgrounded levels, so that images placed in the background are subordinated to foregrounded ones, exactly in the same formal way as Imagist poetic texts, like Eliot's poem, are organized. The case-study subjects, therefore, were initially asked to describe the images they perceived in Dalí's painting, specifying their foreground and background position in the picture, and attempting a coherent correlation among them. In this way, they were expected to develop imaging processes based on their emotional experience of the possible world represented in the work of art.

The following 'Protocol 1' reproduces the transcription of a 'think-aloud recording' by a subject as he tries to find a coherent correlation among the images in this painting:[78]

> *Protocol 1:*
> *Subject's recording (dots correspond to pauses in speech, due to thinking or dictionary checking):*
> "There is a human body made of rocks in the foreground.... He is bent on himself ... he is coming out of water.... There are other people in the background, they are many ... they make desperate gestures, one puts her hands in her hair, another raises his arms to the sky.... In the foreground there is another strange image, a ... huge hand made of rocks ... resembling the image of the rocky man, ... keeping a stone egg from which a plant comes out. In the background there is a ... chess-board... and also a rocky, gray mountain, ... and a gray, menacing sky".

After becoming aware of the structure of the painting and of the emotions that its very form prompted in them, subjects were introduced to the second step of this case study as they were encouraged to turn their interpretation of the work of visual art into another Metaphysical genre – a poem, this time, that they were asked to create by grounding it on their impressions of Dalí's painting.

[78] Karl A. Ericsson and Herbert A. Simon, *Protocol Analysis: Verbal Reports as Data* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1984).

The objective was to make them aware of the aesthetic interpretative choices based on their judgements of meaning-relevance. In this case, the bimodal quality of the Metaphysical discourse is kept latent in the representation of the possible worlds, here described as if they were 'real' through the use of the 'factual' present tense and simple aspect. This is the Metaphysical poem created by the same subject who produced 'Protocol 1':

> *Creative Text 1: Metaphysical poem*
> A Rocky Being painfully comes to life
> Bent on himself, out of the cold, still lake,
> And behind him, cut by an inner knife,
> Crowds in despair wish that their lives could end.
> But before them, huge like a mountain, raise
> The Fingerstones holding the Endurance Egg,
> From which a Flower sprouts its hoping face
> Ready to play on the chess-board of Time.

This poem clearly shows the capacity of this subject to create metaphysical links among images by using formal devices of coordination ('And'), juxtaposition ('But'), subordination ('From which'), and even 'poetic' lexical condensation ('Fingerstones') and illogical schematic distance between two concepts ('Endurance Egg'). In doing so, this subject also demonstrates his ability to establish relevant foreground/background relationships among the images that he subjectively achieved from Dalí's painting.

As a third step of this case study, subjects were then required to explore another Metaphysical genre – namely, they were asked to write a brief Metaphysical essay providing argumentative support to the meaning that they attributed to the Metaphysical poem they creatively derived from their previous description of Dalí's painting. In this way, they were expected to conceptualize the concrete poetic images into an abstract philosophical thought, on the assumption that the unification of concrete images and abstract concepts is at the very source of Metaphysics.[79] What follows is the 'philosophical essay' provided by the same subject who developed the poem in 'Creative Text 1' from his own description of Dalí's painting in 'Protocol 1'. In his essay, the subject explains what he meant in his Metaphysical poem:

> *Creative Text 2: Metaphysical argumentative genre*
> "I want to talk about the painful transformation of the human soul into a hopelessly lifeless essence that, eventually, revives with almost imperceptible flickers of spiritual hope. The human soul is reduced to a cold, hardened being, arid like a dead stone, issued by an indifferent dried earth and by dull-still water. The human soul has become spiritually dumb in a world of despair, inhabited by crowds of doomed people freezed into the pains of their sins, unbearable, like cutting knives. The hardened human soul endured all this in silence, for a long time. Then, slowly, a faint hope for a possible re-birth of the spirit sprouts from the soul like a little plant".

Through the writing of a Metaphysical essay like this, subjects were assumed to become aware of their 'imaging processes' informing the interpretation of a Metaphysical text and allowing them to create novel 'archetypal images' from the counterfactual representations of 'possible worlds'.

In other words, in order to believe that an image, known to be false in the actual world, may nevertheless be true in a possible world, 'imaging readers' of Metaphysical texts need to activate in their minds imaging processes involving the pragmatic-cooperation principle previously formulated

[79] See Phyllis E. Whitin, "Exploring Visual Response to Literature", *Research in the Teaching of English*, 30.1 (1996), 114-140.

into the maxims of 'experiential pliability' and 'cognitive suspension of disbelief'. Thus, for instance, the imaging readers of the Metaphysical poem reported in 'Creative text 1' know by their own experience that there is no 'Rocky Being coming to life', or 'Fingerstones holding the Endurance Egg' in the actual world. However, their ability to conceive these fantastic creatures as 'novel archetypal images', and their cognitive pliancy enabling them to project the existence of such creatures on some alternative world, allow them to suspend their disbelief and actually conceive the existence of such creatures on an alternative 'possible world' which becomes 'imaginatively real'. Accordingly, it is possible to postulate that although a proposition like 'there is a Rocky Being coming to life' is false in the actual world, it is true in a possible world (namely, the one that the writer has constructed in his Metaphysical text) and, therefore, it is possible. This is a typical 'false syllogism' characterizing the counterfactual modal nature of the Metaphysical discourse.

After turning their own Metaphysical poems inspired by Dalí's painting into an essay conceptualizing the Metaphysical images that they had created for the poetic text, the subjects entered the 'fourth step' of the case study as they were asked to read a Metaphysical text of an argumentative type. The text in question was taken from Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* – a visionary argumentative passage on the subject of 'metamorphosis',[80] which characterizes the present case study since its beginning. This is an abridged version of the text (dots stand for omitted parts):

> *The Three Metamorphoses*
> Of three metamorphoses of the spirit do I tell you: how the spirit becomes a camel, the camel a lion, and the lion at last a child....
> Like the camel that, when laden, hastens into the desert, so speeds the spirit into its desert.... Here the spirit becomes a lion; he will seize his freedom and be master in his own wilderness.
> Here he seeks his last master: for victory he will struggle with the great dragon.
> "Thou-shalt," is the great dragon called. But the spirit of the lion says, "I will" ... to create freedom for oneself, and give a sacred No even to duty....
> But tell me, my brothers, ... why must the preying lion still become a child?
> The child is innocence and forgetting, a new beginning, a game, a self-rolling wheel, a first movement, a sacred Yes.

Having read this philosophical text for the first time, subjects focused on the deviant formal construction of its argumentation by adapting Halliday's functional categories to their analysis.[81] In particular, they were required to reflect on the shift from abstract to concrete categories ("how the spirit becomes a camel, the camel a lion, and the lion at last a child"), as well as on the deontic modal verb phrase 'Thou-shalt' and on the 'yes/no' adverbs turned into nominalizations ("Thou-shalt is the great dragon called"; "sacred No" / "sacred Yes"). As a whole, this text represents a process by which inner, mental states or concepts come to be perceived by a Senser (the 'speaking voice' of the passage) as if they were outer, material actions or things. This is typical, for instance, of the argumentative style of the Metaphysical sermons produced at the beginning of the seventeenth century in England (cf. the sermons by John Donne and Lancelot Andrews), full of allegorical and hyperbolic figures, plays of words and false syllogisms. Indeed, this deviant textual construction can be considered as a 'prompt to inner visualization and outer embodiment' for the 'imaging reader'. The evidence is provided by the protocols collected after the subjects' reflection upon such peculiar argumentative structures of Nietzsche's text. Having analyzed its functions, in the next fifth step of the case study, subjects were elicited to activate their *imaging* processes by focusing on how such

[80] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1883/1978).
[81] Halliday, *An Introduction*.

deviant textual images contributed to the structuring of argumentation. In doing so, they were encouraged to 'visualize' and then to physically and emotionally 'embody' within a real space of enactment the shifting and contradictory images that they achieved from the text. In particular, they were elicited to:

a. visualize in their minds the metamorphosis from one concrete thing to another; from one abstract thought to a concrete thing; from one concrete thing to an abstract concept;
b. visualize the metamorphosis from material to mental processes and categories – and vice versa; from one grammatical category to another (e.g., from verb to noun; from noun to adjective, etc.);
c. embody their 'possible-worlds' visualizations through 'physical gestures',[82] subjectively expressing the essence of their own emotional and, indeed, 'bodily' reactions to the incongruous images of the Metaphysical text that they were exploring by physically and emotionally 'improvising' on it.

What follows is the protocol of a subject's retrospective report on the activation of his own imaging processes involving the visualization and embodiment of Nietzsche's passage:

> *Protocol 2:*
> *The imaging reader's visualization and embodiment of the textual images in the metaphysical argumentative text (physical-theatre improvisation workshop)*:
> "I saw the spirit as a camel with a heavy burden, which wears out its body and soul. I started feeling this burden on my own shoulders, bending my knees. I started walking sad and humiliated towards the desert with the desert in my soul. There, I met the Dragon I once adored. THOU-SHALT was his name and his shape. He was raising in all his glory, but I didn't believe in him any more, so I opposed to him my NO. As I shouted the sacred NO, I began to raise higher, higher, and my body was immediately filled with energy, and I soon became a fiery lion, defending my territory, my I-WILL. I put my hand-palms on the floor and started walking menacing, roaring NO louder and louder till the dragon disappeared. Then, my lion-walk slowly turned into a child's crawl. All my energy shifted into my heart and I began to feel warm and happy. I started giggling YES, till the burden in my soul and my aggressive mood disappeared and I really felt a free, innocent and pure spirit".

This 'Protocol 2' clearly illustrates this subject's embodiment of the Metaphysical argumentation, showing how a spiritual metamorphosis can be pragmatically experienced as a physical metamorphosis in the Metaphysical context of a possible world through the subjective creation of novel mental and physical 'archetypal images'. In this context, such fantastic metamorphoses are not only possible through the reader's own body and in his 'pictorial writing', but they are also representative of the spiritual dimensions of his soul. Hence, such an experience accomplished the very dictate of T.S. Eliot's Metaphysical poetry – namely, the creation of *objective correlatives.*[83]

7. Conclusions: Objective Correlative Revisited

From the protocols examined so far it is possible to discern that the perception of poetic language is not to be merely reduced to its relevance to the readers' ordinary background experience and knowledge (or 'world schemata'). On the contrary, this case study has explored the process by which

[82] Michael Chekhov, *To the Actor: On the Technique of Acting* (New York: Harper and Row, 1953).
[83] Eliot, *The Sacred Wood*.

the form of Metaphysical language enhances the readers' displacement of their individual experience into an imaginative, 'artistic' dimension where the verbal, visual, and physical dimensions of the experience of the Metaphysical text come to be framed within possible-worlds time/space categories. Such an 'out-of-time artistic space' can be thus defined as a cognitive, virtual space that readers build in their own minds during the process of interpretative interaction between their own conventional world schemata and the deviating schematic forms of the Metaphysical text. Within this subjective artistic space, readers feel free from any social and behavioural constraint on their imagination. As a consequence, they feel encouraged to explore a wide range of imaginative associations between the objective images conveyed by the Metaphysical language and the subjective cognitive, affective and perceptive associations such images trigger in their minds.

It has been claimed in this paper that readers start achieving their own interpretative discourse from the Metaphysical text through an associative process which, in many ways, is analogous to the 'objective correlative' process described by Eliot (1920) – i.e., from an estranged and objective *'optic perception*' of the formal properties of the text to an emotionally-based *'imaging process*' of subjective interpretation. Yet, the process of Metaphysical discourse interpretation explored in this study can be said to take just its origin from Eliot's theory of the Objective Correlative. In fact, its rationale has been developed further, on the assumption that the objective correlative is not a textual stimulus, a 'formula' – in Eliot's terms – for eliciting in readers a pre-determined response (i.e., "that *particular* emotion") because readers' responses to Metaphysical language are subjective and multiple. Besides, the objective correlative is not even a textual device just limited to the creation of a 'mental artistic space' for readers to 'give vent' to their own imaginative associations regardless of textual and semantic constraints. Indeed, this paper has maintained that the process of Metaphysical discourse interpretation implies more than that. Readers look at the Metaphysical text and they are able to see what the text is epistemically referring to in the world. In this way, they make semantic sense of the textual structure of clauses and words. Apart from their inferring the 'referential sense' of the text, readers can also infer an 'illocutionary meaning' – that is, the deontic 'force' that particular text has got for them. This is the dimension of Eliot's notion of the Objective Correlative, meant as a textual image created to convey a 'particular' force which should correspond to the effect it produces on readers ("the formula of that *particular* emotion"). Clearly, Eliot's position does not correspond to truth, for a Metaphysical text like a poem can have, on a particular reader, a certain 'effect' that may be different from the one intended by the writer, since writer and readers possess different world schemata through which they interpret the formal organization of the typically counterfactual images represented in the text. Hence, the readers' reactions to an image in the text (or objective correlative) depend on what effect it might have on them. Therefore, the location of meaning is to be identified neither in the text nor in the author's schemata alone, but in the readers' subjective world schemata as they interact with the 'deviant' semantic form of the Metaphysical text. This paper has argued that the nature of Metaphysical cognition is not only linguistic, but also inherently 'visual' and 'bodily', as the five senses are the primary ways to experience the world, and, consequently, the essential ways to conceptualization. 'Imaging', thus, is meant as the reader's ability to experience Metaphysical discourse, which ultimately depends on an explicit influence of the peculiar linguistic form of the text on readers' subjective 'body/thought' schemata.

The ultimate claim of this paper is that 'imaging readers' should 'step out' from purely mentalistic interpretations of Metaphysical texts that transcend the body, and feel instead entitled to make Metaphysical language and its images their own (i.e. to appropriate them to their own schemata) by, at first, 'visualizing' them and, then, by even 'embodying' them within an artistic space that they should be able to actualize into a three-dimensional 'virtual-reality'. This is a 'possible-world reality' within which readers can 'physically' move freely as on a theatrical stage,

and upon which every word, image, and gesture may acquire the status of a 'tangible' work of Art.[84] Considering the artistic space as an actual stage, a three-dimensional space for the readers' physical actualization of their own visual imagination, implies the possibility for imaging readers to 'plunge' – physically – into the imagery that they achieve from the Metaphysical text and, then, to explore its possible meanings thoroughly, through the sensorial emotions that such imagery triggers in both their bodies and their minds.

[84] See Guido, *The Acting Reader*.

Annarita Taronna

Aesthetic Conventions and Pragmalinguistic Devices in Computer-mediated Communication. Q&A Websites as a Case Study

Abstract: The aim of this article is to investigate the aesthetics of informal text-based Computer-mediated communication (CMC) such as the Q&A websites (e.g.: Stack Exchange, GitHub, Quora, Yahoo! Answers, etc.) conceived of as a distinctive medium of communication based on cosmopolitan *brand communities* that share the same field of expertise and a common interest in a particular topic. Since these Q&A websites have gradually become one of the major sources of information today, surpassing corporate websites in terms of influence on purchasing decisions, the scope here is to detect whether their success is also due to a set of powerful pragmalinguistic devices, which may reveal that clear questions can make people more willing to help.[1]

Furthermore, these assumptions will also help to outline new and different insights into the role of context in Q&A websites, thus providing evidence for the existence of possible relationships between the reputation of community members, the specialised domain, and the uniqueness of the temporal-historical dimension in on-line interactions. By interacting in digital communities and in on-line forums or social networks, users can ask questions and receive feedback regarding specific topics, opinions, and experiences, thus generating debates, the exchanging of ideas and the raising of emotions. More specifically, by adopting sentiment analysis for recognizing the positive/negative semantic orientation of texts and their emotional style,[2] we will attempt to demonstrate that the aesthetics of such informal texts written by using English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) is influenced by how we express, understand, and are affected by the shaping of subjectivity;[3] how we associate emotions and opinions with certain linguistic aspects, such as specific words or syntactic patterns;[4] and how we can classify linguistic expressions according to the type of opinion that they convey.

Keywords: *computer-mediated communication, English as a Lingua Franca, digital communities, pragmalinguistic devices*

1. Introduction

The worldwide diffusion of social media has profoundly changed the way we communicate and access information. Indeed, nowadays the Internet has become a prime venue for social interaction[5] through online services such as emails, chat rooms, instant messaging, blogs and Twitter, where people share aspects of their daily lives, talk about interests with like-minded others, keep in touch with family and friends, and express their opinions without formality and constraint. In the midst of all this social

[1] See Muhammad Asaduzzaman et al., "Answering Questions about Unanswered Questions of Stack Overflow", *Proceedings of the 10th IEEE Working Conference on Mining Software Repositories (MSR 2013)* (San Francisco: EEE Press Piscataway, 2013), 97-100.

[2] See Nicole Novielli et al., "Towards Discovering the Role of Emotions in Stack Overflow", in *Proceedings of the 6th International Workshop on Social Software Engineering* (2014), 33–36.

[3] See Claudia Caffi and Richard W. Janney, "Toward a Pragmatics of Emotive Communication", in Claudia Caffi and Richard W. Janney, eds., *Involvement in Language*, special issue of *Journal of Pragmatics*, 22.3/4 (1994), 325–373; Klaus Krippendorf, *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2004).

[4] See Douglas Biber and Edward Finegan, "Styles of Stance in English: Lexical and Grammatical Marking of Evidentiality and Affect", *Text*, 9 (1989), 93–124; Susan Hunston, *Corpus Approaches to Evaluation: Phraseology and Evaluative Language* (New York: Routledge, 2011).

[5] See Mary L. D'Amico, "Internet Has Become a Necessity, US Poll Shows" (1998), http://www.cnn.com/TECH/computing/9812/07/neednet.idg/.

activity, people are forming relationships with those whom they meet on the Internet, thus setting the tone for particular types of interaction and enabling both identity expression and community building. As a result, identity and community have long presented focal concepts of interest for new media researchers, who have recently focused on the private/public balance present in each social networking site, as well as on the structural and design elements of online social networks employed to foster connection-sharing, social capital generation and effective communication.[6]

On these premises, this study aims to understand and examine how social networks and interactions become successful when using structural and thematic features that facilitate communication and create what Castells[7] termed a culture of "real virtuality" (358), that is, the symbolic representations of everyday communicative routines that these social networks create for their users, so as to understand the significance of virtual architecture and multimodal aesthetics. While websites may include photographs, music clips, and immersive virtual worlds, millions of participants experience online communities through text: people go online to talk (write) and listen (read), and so written text is a key factor for the success of both the communities as a whole and their individual members. Indeed, people start conversations hoping to derive benefit from the group; depending on the response they get, current and prospective members will either continue to participate or they will leave.

Furthermore, it becomes apparent from relevant research that the investigation of linguistic factors, that is, looking at how questions, answers and comments are formulated,[8] can influence the success or the failure of an interaction. Accordingly, this study will review some of the most relevant theories related to social networking, several of which can inform the linguistic processes and choices underlying the architecture and the aesthetics of informal text-based computer-mediated communication. To this end, echoing Austin's[9] influential assumption that the basic units of communication are not individual words and phrases, but that we are always "doing things with words" (92), this study takes into consideration a small corpus of excerpts from the online community of Yahoo! Answers related to golf and golf resorts. The selection[10] of these excerpts serves to demonstrate that the minimal unit of communication is not necessarily a full sentence, but rather the performance of certain kinds of acts, such as making statements, asking questions, giving orders, exchanging opinions, etc.[11]

From a genre perspective, the analysis of authentic small units of informal text-based computer-mediated communication poses a number of interesting questions related to the study of how individuals or organizations cope with this variety of communicative contexts, the classification of communicative events sharing communicative purposes and recognised conventions accepted by a

[6] See Danah Boyd and Nicole B. Ellison, "Social Network Sites: Definition, History and Scholarship", *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 13.1 (2008), http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol13/issue1/boyd.ellison.html, 5 November 2008; Judith Donath, "Signals in Social Supernets", *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 13.1 (2007), http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol13/issue1/donath.html, 5 November 2008; Nicole B. Ellison et al., "The Benefits of Facebook 'Friends:' Social Capital and College Students' Use of Online Social Network Sites", *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 12.4 (2007), http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol12/issue4/ellison.html, 5 November 2008.

[7] See Manuel Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000).

[8] See Tim Althoff et al., "How to Ask for a Favor: A Case Study on the Success of Altruistic Requests", in *Proceedings of the 8th International AAAI Conference on Weblogs and Social Media*, ICWSM / New York: Association for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence, 2014), 12-21; Tanushree Mitra and Eric Gilbert, "The Language that Gets People to Give: Phrases that Predict Success on Kickstarter", in *Proceedings of the 17th ACM Conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work and Social Computing* (New York: ACM,, 2014), 49–61.

[9] See John L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962).

[10] The selection takes into account questions and answers generated on the Yahoo! Answers website from July to October 2017.

[11] John R. Searle et al., *Speech Act Theory and Pragmatics* (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1980), vii.

discourse community,[12] the definition of text construction and organization, and the identification of the specificities and regularities of language use which make digital discursive practices easily recognisable and susceptible to being categorised into genres. It is also important to note that the introduction of informal text-based computer-mediated communication into existing genres has not only generated a spate of new studies exploring them, but also a kind of "genre-networks",[13] typically comprising a whole set of genres, as well as combining obligatory elements and genres that may characterise specific types of interactions. All these genre-related features have contributed to the growing success of digital communities in which people increasingly participate both to ask and to resolve domain-specific problems through Question and Answer (Q&A) websites, such as Yahoo! Answers, Stack Overflow, GitHub, Quora, etc. Since these Q&A websites have gradually become one of the major sources of information today, the scope here is to detect whether their success is also due to a set of powerful pragmalinguistic devices, which may reveal that clear questions can make people more willing to help.[14] Finally, by adopting sentiment analysis for recognising the positive/negative semantic orientation of texts and their emotional style,[15] we will attempt to demonstrate that the aesthetics of such informal texts written using English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) are shaped by how we associate emotions and opinions with certain linguistic aspects.

2. Issues of Genre and Computer-mediated Communication (CMC): An Integrated Approach

The term "social media" is often used in public discourse as an umbrella term for a range of digital media that may be used to interact with others through network technologies, such as blogs, wikis, social book-marking, social network sites, photo and video sharing, and other primarily Internet-based phenomena. As a result, a new era of networked, interactive forms of communication has emerged in recent years which affects the interpersonal exchange and personalised expression of ordinary users, and which facilitates mutual orientation and content creation framed in terms of "user-generated content" and "users as producers".[16] Against this background, the aim of this section is to set the informal text-based computer-mediated communication[17] like that generated on the Yahoo! Answers website within a genre-based framework for social media and to introduce a new set of linguistic features and aesthetic conventions enacted in such text-types as Q&A websites. To this end, a brief

[12] See John Swales, *Genre Analysis. English in Academic and Research Settings* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1990); John Swales, *Research Genres. Explorations and Applications (*Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 2004); Vijay K. Bhatia, "Methodological Issues in Genre Analysis", *Hermes, Journal of Linguistics*, 16 (1996), 39–59; Vijay K. Bhatia, *Worlds of Written Discourse. A Genre-Based View* (London: Continuum, 2004).

[13] Marina Bondi, "Language Policy in Web-Mediated Scientific Knowledge Dissemination: A Case Study of Risk Communication across Genres and Languages", in Ramón P. Alastrué and Carmen Pérez-Llantada, eds., *English as a Scientific and Research Language* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015), 85–111: 88.

[14] See Muhammad Asaduzzaman et al., "Answering Questions".

[15] See Novielli et al., "Towards Discovering"; Novielli et al., "The EmoQuest Project: Emotions in Q&A Sites", in *Proceeding AVI'16, Proceedings of the International Working Conference on Advanced Visual Interfaces, ACM* (New York, NY, USA, 2016), 334–335.

[16] Boyd and Ellison, "Social Network Sites", 92; Marika Lüders, "Conceptualizing Personal Media", *New Media and Society*, 10.5 (2008), 683–702: 685.

[17] In the last decade, the alternative term "Electronically mediated intercultural communication (EMIC)" has been proposed. It involves intercultural interactions through meditated digital devices. According to Sangiamchit (Chittima Sangiamchit, "ELF in Electronically Mediated Intercultural Communication", in Jennifer Jenkins et al., eds., *The Routledge Handbook of English as a Lingua Franca*, London and New York: Routledge, 2018, 345-57) the term EMIC replaces CMC in order to illustrate the more varied ways of current digital communication. It is defined as intercultural interactions through computer mediated networks on electronic devices, such as computers, laptops, mobile/smarthphones and tablets. EMIC brings distinctive characteristics to the communication process, and this results in dynamic and highly flexible online intercultural communication. These characteristics are delineated across four aspects: multilingualism and multiculturalism, multiway communication, multimodality, and mobility.

review of the concept of genre as it has been used in CMC research can help to explore the relationship between media text production and reception, and the shift from traditional narrative forms of telling to the innovative aesthetic conventions of digital stories.

Genre analysis has developed within several research disciplines, among them – and, for the present purpose, most importantly – in CMC, applied linguistics, and pragmalinguistics.[18] Most of the studies of genre in CMC are grounded in either functional-linguistic genre theory[19] or rhetorical genre theory[20] and draw on classic methods for textual analysis. In all three of the fields mentioned above, a functional perspective of genre has become influential, one that shifts the focus of genre analysis from content/form-based description and classification to an understanding of genre in terms of function and purpose.[21] At a functional level, genre constitution entails a continuous process and negotiation of relevant skills and knowledge through communicative practices. According to Yates and Orlikowki,[22] the constitution of a genre is only realised insofar as the communicative practices, conventions and expectations linked to the genre are socially shared and recognised among a group of users and recurrently expressed in text. As a result, with CMC ordinary users increasingly become producers, texts are constantly modified and expanded, and the separation of audiences and senders becomes consequently obsolete.

In keeping with this, we can argue here for the relevance of a more interactionist-pragmatic approach within functional genre theory, stressing how such genres as those related to CMC emerge and are negotiated, stabilised and destabilised online over time. This approach is integrated by applied linguistics as primarily associated with the works of John Swales, whose genre definition emphasises the communicative purpose as follows:

> A genre comprises a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognised by the expert members of the parent discourse community and thereby constitute the rationale for the genre.[23]

The emphasis on communicative purpose, or why people in a discourse community use language the way they do, entails an analytical focus on the detailed use of language in terms of linguistic style and content by acquiring meaning from the social context in which it is embedded. With this in mind, Miller[24] introduces and emphasises the pragmatic context in which the genre is used for understanding the social action that it accomplishes. This pragmatic concept of genre is in a sense more open, dynamic and flexible, since it is not necessarily defined by a specific form or type of content,[25] but by a communicative or compositional structure.

All these assumptions raise the question of whether the concept of genre must be reformulated – theoretically and methodologically – in the study of social media in general and in the specific case of Q&A websites. The latter can hardly be seen as constituting a single genre: they are "hypergenres" or

[18] In line with Leech (Geoffrey N. Leech, *The Pragmatics of Politeness*, New York: Oxford U.P., 2014) by pragmalinguistics we mean the interface between pragmatics and linguistic form, i.e., the way a language (both polite and impolite forms) is used for politeness as a characteristic of human behaviour.
[19] See Bhatia, "Methodological Issues"; Swales, *Genre Analysis.*
[20] See Charles Bazerman, *Shaping Written Knowledge. The Genre and Activity of the Experimental Article in Science* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988); Carolyn R. Miller, "Genre as Social Action", *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 70.2 (1984), 151–167.
[21] Morten B. Andersen, "TV og genre", in Peter Dahlgren, ed., *Den Mangtydiga Rutan* (Stockholm: Skrift serien JMK, 1994) 207-225: 17.
[22] See Joanne Yates and Wanda J. Orlikowski, "Genres of Organisational Communication: A Structurational Approach to Studying Communication and Media", *Academy of Management Review*, 17.2 (1992), 299–326.
[23] Swales, *Genre Analysis*, 58.
[24] Miller, "Genre as Social Action", 163.
[25] Ibid., 155.

"genre-networks",[26] typically comprising a whole set of genres and combining obligatory elements and genres that may characterise specific types of interactions. As we are going to discuss later on in this section, the adaptation of existing genres to the web-mediated communication and the introduction of new web-native genres like Q&A websites has generated informal text-based, computer-mediated forms of communication, characterised by specific aesthetic features and conventions which help to attract the attention of the audience amidst a vast universe of online information. This new textual aesthetics has been announced in the past decade by a shift from genre studies to narrative studies, particularly with respect to a growing recognition of the diversity of digital text types and activities. Indeed, several scholars have turned their attention away from "large" autobiographical narratives to "small stories", which occur spontaneously in every virtual domain and community.[27] Coincidentally, the analytical focus on small stories comes at a moment in history when more narrative activities are taking place in online contexts than ever before. Research in the field of digital narratives has only recently begun to catch up with trends and developments in information and communication technologies, and with their related unexplored digital genres. Among the most influential studies in the field, we can mention Georgakopoulou's contribution on emails,[28] Myers's[29] on blogs and wikis, and Page's[30] on Facebook. Though focusing on different genres, all these narrative scholars indicate "nowness"[31] and recency, as opposed to pastness and reflection, as pivotal and distinctive features of narratives in CMC contexts.

Online question and answer fora related to some specific topics, as well as requests for suggestions and recommendations – sometimes referred to by marketing scholars as electronic word of mouth (eWOM) – constitute a genre that continues to grow in both popularity and influence. Since narratives concerning Q&A websites have not been extensively attested or systematised, later on in this study (section 4) we also focus on the ways in which digital users of Q&A sites address, reach out to, and engage with the readers of their small narratives by shaping an emotional aesthetics and style based on a specific set of pragmalinguistic features. This issue is a relevant one, since, given the overwhelming amount of information confronting today's Internet users, digital narrators must find ways of engaging and connecting with their unknown audience. Therefore, because the attention here is to what authors of Q&As do to engage their audience with their narratives, we draw on Besnier[32] and adopt the following descriptors, which are commonly associated with involvement in discourse:

-the attention that speakers pay to the needs of their interlocutor;
-the interactional aspects of communication;
-the cooperative construction of discourse and the display of positive affect toward interlocutors;
-conversationalists' willingness and ability to initiate and sustain verbal interaction;
-the creation/display of "engagement"; and
-interpersonal dynamics (e.g., the maintenance of a good rapport among participants).

[26] Bondi, "Language Policy".
[27] See Mark Freeman, "Life 'on holiday'? In defense of big stories", in Michael Bamberg, ed., *Narrative. State of the Art* (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 2007), 155–164; Id., "Stories: Big or Small. Why Do We Care?", Ibid., 165–74; Alexandra Georgakopoulou, "Thinking Big with Small Stories in Narrative and Identity Analysis", in Bamberg, *Narrative*, 122-30; Id., *Small Stories, Interaction, and Identities* (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 2007).
[28] Ibid.
[29] See Greg Myers, *The Discourse of Blogs and Wikis* (London: Continuum, 2010).
[30] See Ruth Page, *Stories and Social Media* (London: Routledge, 2012).
[31] Myers, *Discourse*, 69.
[32] See Niko Besnier, "Involvement in Linguistic Practice: An Ethnographic Appraisal", *Journal of Pragmatics*, 22 (1994), 280–289.

These descriptors reveal that "involvement" can be understood as consisting of a range of discursive resources that index some type of connection or interaction among participants. Specifically, in the case of Q&A websites, involvement between the asker and the answerer is also activated and made explicit through several other textual components. Adapting the traditional Labovian narrative elements[33] to the purposes of this study, we introduce here the narrative architecture characterising a typical Q&A interaction followed by illustrative excerpts[34] taken from the dataset:

1. The abstract takes the form of a summary statement, which introduces the general topic of a question and an answer. It is an optional component and, in most of the Q&As, tends to coincide with the story preface.
2. The story preface, which used to be a convention of oral narratives, is carried over into a digital context. In an asynchronous online narrative such as Q&A websites, a story preface becomes a symbolic resource. In the examples shown below, askers open their questions by drawing their readers into their stories through the use of resources such as first-person singular or plural pronouns, a verb with an explicit reference to their previous experience, and the posing of a question concerning the new experience for which they are asking for.
3. The orientation section provides background information about the story's who, when, and where. This is a recurring component, given that Q&As related to golf and golf resorts tell about and ask for golf settings, hotel stays, and travel information. In these specific small pieces of stories, orientation takes on a special relevance since it can provide reviews or reports of planning activities and experiences that took place prior to travel. In addition, as can be seen in the example below (question 9), the orientation segment in the Q&As may also be optional or coincide with another narrative component, that is, the complicating action.
4. Evaluation is another defining feature of a Q&A structure, and it can occur in any and all phases of the narrative. Therefore, it is not surprising that 100% of the examples in the dataset include some form of explicit evaluation in the formulation of both the questions and the answers. That is, the main purpose of the online Q&A collected in the dataset is to rate, evaluate, describe, and, on that basis, to ask for questions or to provide recommendations to others for – or against – a particular golf resort or service. As the examples below show (answer 2; question 2; answer 2), evaluation appears frequently, is expressed using a variety of pervasive evaluative syntactical (e.g., "would be no problem") and lexical forms (e.g., "he was lovely and very helpful"; "the food was delicious, absolutely fantastic!!"; "the staff there are really nice and down-to-earth"; "it seems really nice"; "he had a wonderful time and the reception was excellent"; "It's nice to see that you had a great stay"), and can be found in every excerpt.
5. Along with evaluation, a complicating action is traditionally the other defining feature of a Q&A narrative. The complicating action is normally realised linguistically via a series of past tense clauses that are sequentially ordered. In this genre, the most highly narrative accounts tend to include forms of temporal deictics. In several cases, rather than being comprised of actions and events (as one would expect), the complicating action is instead built up through negative descriptions marked by a simple listing of unpleasant or negative characteristics (see question 9: "it was horrible, the worst hotel I've ever stayed in") that can constitute the

[33] See William Labov and Joshua Waletzky, "Narrative Analysis: Oral Versions of Personal Experiences", in June Helm, ed., *Essays on the Verbal and Visual Arts: Proceedings of the 1966 Annual Ethnological Society* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1967), 12–44.

[34] From now on since all the examples are reported from the original online texts, several mistakes can appear here and there.

complicating action. Sometimes, the latter can replace or can coincide with the orientation statement, as in the same question 9.

6. Like the abstract and the orientation, the resolution is optional. It serves as an end to the narrative personal experience shared in the question and/or in the answer.
7. The coda, which is also an optional element of a Q&A structure, nearly always takes the form of some type of advice, suggestion, warning, directive, or admonition. The coda is one of the sections of the Q&A narrative structure in which the askers or the answerers appeal directly to readers, commonly through the use of second-person pronouns or adjectives, as seen in question 9 ("I just wanted your feedback").

Question n.4:	
We go away twice a year on a golfing holiday and play a comp against each other. However we play it over 9 holes and then change the teams for the 2nd 9 of the day etc. We have managed to find a few places that provide accomodation includnig meals etc. But they seem to be hard to find. What we need is: Accomodation, Breakfast and Dinner Included, the ability to book tee times for each 9. (So we can play 9 holes have a break then play the other 9. Rather than go straight round). Any ideas of places would be great. We are based in essex but driving is not a problem. Would like sum where within 4 hours if possible. thanks guys.	ABSTRACT STORY PREFACE ORIENTATION
Answer n.2:	
If you come to the states I have the perfect place for your group - Etowah Valley Golf Club in North Carolina. They have package deals, rooms, great breakfast buffet, and dinners included as well as all the golf you can play each day for a set price. They have three nine hole layouts and would be no problem scheduling your nine hole matches with a break inbetween. Might be worth the airfare to play this wonderful course in a beautiful setting.	ORIENTATION EVALUATION RESOLUTION
Question n.9:	
BallyKisteen Hotel and Golf Resort?	ABSTRACT
has anyone been to this hotel? because...i have stayed in it, the staff was absolutely fantastic!	STORY PREFACE
They were always cleaning up or checking up on people to make sure they were okay. i was reading the reviews and such on them and people were saying it was horrible "the worst hotel I've ever stayed in" I have to strongly disagree.	ORIENTATION + COMPLICATING ACTION
There was one staff member in particular his name was Thomas...wish I knew his last name :/ so I could tell the front desk that he was lovely and very helpful. The food was delicious, absolutely fantastic!!	EVALUATION
The rooms were clean and big andhad everything you needed basically. (I stayed in one of the apartments)	RESOLUTION
I just wanted your feedback.	CODA
Answer n.2:	
Honestly, I live 2 minutes up the road from it and I never have heard any bad feedback from it. I have used the public swimming pool and gym there many times and I agree that the staff there are really nice and down-to-earth. It seems really nice from the outside and a lot of my male friends are actually members of the golf course there. My manager got married there recently and he told me he had a wonderful time and the reception was excellent. Its nice to see that you had a great stay so I'd recommend that you put your feedback up at some Irish hotel website. I know that they would appreciate that back at the hotel :)	STORY PREFACE ORIENTATION + EVALUATION RESOLUTION CODA

From the examples above, we can infer that, in emergent informal text-based computer-mediated communication, genres intersect when user interactions unfold across such dynamic practices as Q&As by introducing new constraints as well as new affordances for narrative activities.

3. The Language Politics of Online Communities: No ELF, No Help

From international business to the Internet and from science to music, English is the new lingua franca. Indeed, it has become commonplace to identify the rise of English as a world language characterising both human and virtual interactions. Crucially, since the emergence of the Internet has reinforced an interconnectedness between people across the globe, English has become the most dominant language in online communication and an important means for wider communication among users belonging to different first languages and cultures.[35] In this light, no area of media production exemplifies the growing importance of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) better than social networking, where users are routinely addressed by large numbers of messages in English regardless of their cultural heritage and native language. More specifically, along with Seidlhofer's definition of ELF as "a way of referring to communication in English between speakers with different first languages",[36] Jenkins[37] offers an extended definition that involves communication in English between participants who have different "linguacultures" (164), whether they are categorised as native speakers, second language users, or foreign language users.

Substantial descriptive research on ELF has been under way for more than a decade now, to the point where the acronym ELF refers not only to a particular context of language use (that is, situations in which speakers of different first languages use English as their main communicative medium of choice), but also to a new research paradigm in linguistics documenting a set of various shared and stable features and processes. ELF is, in fact, essentially defined and characterised by its variability, flexibility, and linguistic creativity.[38] Thus, the aim of ELF research is to approach language contact as a social and pragmatic phenomenon by looking at how it manifests itself linguistically in a group of speakers. However, since within online communication studies ELF research is still in its infancy,[39] this section aims to provide some theoretical assumptions investigating the pivotal role that ELF plays in the shared practices of digital communities developed around Q&A websites. Indeed, since ELF is most often used as the lingua franca of online communication among users from a multitude of linguistic and cultural backgrounds,[40] we attempt to capture the multidimensional realities of ELF use in such communities as perceived by their members in terms of a language used to both represent

[35] See Paul Bruthiaux, "Squaring the circles: issues in modeling English worldwide", *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 13.2 (2003), 159–178; M. Dewey, "English as a lingua franca and globalization: An interconnected Perspective", *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 17 (2007), 332–354; David Crystal, "Two thousand million?", *English Today*, 24 (2008), 3–6; Alastair Pennycook, *Global Englishes and Transcultural Flows* (London: Routledge, 2007); Paola Vettorel, *English as a Lingua Franca in Wider Networking: Blogging Practices* (Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton, 2014).

[36] Barbara Seidlhofer, "English as a Lingua Franca", in Albert S. Hornby, ed., *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English* (Oxford: Oxford U.P., 2005), 339.

[37] Jennifer Jenkins, *English as a Lingua Franca: Attitude and Identity* (Oxford: Oxford U.P., 2007).

[38] See Maria Grazie Guido, *English as a Lingua Franca in Cross-Cultural Immigration Domains* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2008); Marie-Luise Pitzl, "World Englishes and Creative Idioms in English as a Lingua Franca", *World Englishes*, 35.2 (2016), 293–309.

[39] See Christopher Jenks, "Are You an ELF? The Relevance of ELF as an Equitable Social Category in Online Intercultural Communication", *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 13.1 (2013), 1–14; I-Chung Ke, and Hilda Cahyani, "Learning to Become Users of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF): How ELF Online Communication Affects Taiwanese Learners' Beliefs of English", *Systems*, 46 (2014), 28–38; Paola Vettorel, *English as a Lingua Franca*.

[40] See Maria Grazia Guido and Barbara Seidlhofer, "English as a Lingua Franca: Theory and Practice", *Textus*, 27.1 (2014), 7–16; Paola Vettorel, *English as a Lingua Franca*; Philip Seargeant et al., "Language Choice and Addressivity Strategies in Thai-English Social Networks Interactions", *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 16.14 (2012), 510–531.

shared experiences and knowledge and to create those experiences. All this inevitably entails a consideration of membership in a "discourse community"[41] that shares a common social space and history, and a common system of standards for perceiving, believing, evaluating, and acting.[42]

Discourse community has also been reconceptualised by Jenkins[43] and Seidlhofer[44] in terms of ELF communities of practice. To the end of this study, we can conceive here online users who regularly interact with each other in such Q&A websites by means of a shared communicative repertoire as an example of an ELF community of practice. The concept of a community of practice was first introduced by Lave and Wenger[45] as part of their theory of situated learning, but they did not specify the term in detail. One year later, Eckert and McConnell-Ginet recognised and explored as follows the concept of a community of practice as an analytical tool for their sociolinguistic research on language and gender:

> A community of practice is an aggregate of people who come together around mutual engagement in an endeavor. Ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, values, power relations – in short, practices – emerge in the course of this mutual endeavor. As a social construct, a community of practice is different from the traditional community, primarily because it is defined simultaneously by its membership and by the practice in which that membership engages.[46]

The prominence Eckert and McConnell-Ginet give in their definition to emerging "ways of talking, beliefs, values, power relations" as these aggregates' shared "practices", will be shown to prove particularly helpful for an examination of ELF in its social contexts, to identify and describe in-group social parameters and how these govern its members' linguistic and communicative behaviour.

Some years later, Wenger[47] restored the concept of a community of practice and offered as an additional heuristic device the following list of features which indicate whether and to what degree a community can be shaped:

1. Sustained mutual relationships – harmonious or conflictual;
2. Shared ways of engaging in doing thing together;
3. The rapid flow of information and propagation of innovation;
4. Absence of introductory preambles, as if conversations and interactions were merely the continuation of an ongoing process;
5. Very quick setup of a problem to be discussed;
6. Substantial overlap in participants' descriptions of who belongs;
7. Knowing what others know, what they can do, and how they can contribute to an enterprise;
8. Mutually defining identities;
9. The ability to assess the appropriateness of actions and products;
10. Specific tools, representations, and other artifacts;
11. Local lore, shared stories, inside jokes, knowing laughter;
12. Jargon and shortcuts to communication as well as the ease of producing new ones;

[41] Sandra L. McKay, *Teaching English as an International Language: Rethinking Goals and Approaches* (Oxford: Oxford U.P., 2002).
[42] See Claire Kramsch, *Language and Culture* (Oxford: Oxford U.P., 1998).
[43] See Jenkins, *English as a Lingua Franca*.
[44] See Seidlhofer, "English as a Lingua Franca".
[45] See Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger, *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1991), 97-98.
[46] Penelope Eckert and Sally McConnell-Ginet, "Think Practically and Look Locally: Language and Gender as Community-Based Practice", *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 21 (1992), 461–490: 464.
[47] See Etienne Wenger, *Communities of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1998), 125-126.

13. Certain styles recognised as displaying membership; and
14. A shared discourse reflecting a certain perspective on the world.

A close reading of these features reveals the full communicative complexity of language dynamics in digital communities, in their varied manifestations, and in their multilayered repertoire. Incidentally, these language dynamics characterising the community of practice have been recently problematised and expanded by Ehrenreich[48] as a powerful analytical tool developed around three criterial dimensions: mutual engagement, its joint enterprise, and a shared repertoire. For a community of practice to evolve as a coherent group, its members need to interact on a regular basis. A community of practice only evolves as a result of the relationships that its members have established through their mutual engagements. Additionally, a joint enterprise is the goal or purpose that motivates the participants' interrelated actions, as their negotiated response to their situation on the basis of a shared repertoire which can be very heterogeneous and can comprise both linguistic and non-linguistic elements. English (as a Lingua Franca) is most probably part of a community's "shared repertoire", inextricably linked with the community members' mutual engagement and their joint enterprise.[49] All three of these dimensions, which are not fixed at any given point in time, but mutable and adaptive, can enable pragmatic explorations and empiric analyses of ELF in digital communities of practice.

More specifically, from a pragmatic perspective ELF research has developed exponentially in recent years, and the initial emphasis on systematic and recurrent features has been replaced by a focus of ELF's flexibility and fluidity, which has translated into more contributions on pragmatic criteria, conventions, and devices. These latter aspects are discussed in more concrete detail in the next section of this study with a thorough analysis of the excerpts collected in the dataset. However, what is worth mentioning here at least is a brief introduction to some of the most relevant discourse markers and strategies which contribute to theorising ELF talk as a joint achievement of the interlocutors, who successfully engage in their interactional and interpretive work in order to sustain the appearance of normality.[50] Strategies such as repetition and self-repetition, paraphrasing and reformulation, monitoring and self-monitoring, repair initiation and self-repair, are used as proactive measures which allow speakers to negotiate their meanings and routinely support each other, and to resolve a communication problem afterwards. By resorting to their own strategic pragmatic competence, ELF participants appear to adopt a "let-it-pass" principle, that is, in Firth's terms, "an interpretive procedure that makes their interactional styles robust and consensual by accommodating anomalous usage and ambiguous linguistic behaviour".[51] Generally, such pragmatic strategies are introduced by specific discourse markers which express meanings of information management and also mark the interpersonal relations between interlocutors. They range from very short, fixed expressions to longer units of more or less variable sequence. Among them, we focus here on two prototypical expressions (i.e., "I think" and "I don't know") which appear with a high frequency in digital interactions as demonstrated by the following excerpts:

Question 2:
Hi. Anyone stayed at the Oasis Golf Resort in tenerife? What's it like?? Thanks xx

[48] See Susanne Ehrenreich, "Communities of Practice and English as a Lingua Franca," in Jenkins et al., *The Routledge Handbook of English as a Lingua Franca*, 37–48.
[49] See Susanne Ehrenreich, "English as a Lingua Franca in Multinational Corporations. Exploring Business Communities of Practice", in Anna Mauranen and Erina Ranta, eds., *English as a Lingua Franca. Studies and Finding* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2009), 126–151.
[50] See Alessia Cogo and Juliane House, "The Pragmatics of ELF," in Jenkins et al., *Handbook of English*, 211.
[51] Alan Firth, "The Discursive Accomplishment of Normality: On 'Lingua Franca' English and Conversation Analysis", *Journal of Pragmatics*, 26 (1996), 237–259: 247.

Answer 1:
Ignore the previous answer **I think** he/she is just trying to wind you up. what that person (I'm being polite) describes does exist in Tenerife as it does in every city, town and holiday resort throughout Spain, in the southern resorts of Tenerife most of that type of activity occurs in Playa las Americas in a district called Veronicas which is some distance from where you are staying, there are plenty of places to go to enjoy your holiday without going near the Veronicas. Have a nice holiday.

Question 3:
Are the Scottish happy about Donald Trump building a huge Golf Resort in Scotland?
Answer 5:
If it genuinely is a world class course and attracts inward investment to the country **I think** it is a good thing. We have a lot of good courses already so if just another run of the mill golf course **I think** it is unnecessary. Wildlife will still be able to live on the golf course, it is not that damaging to the environment from my experience a golf course is a good use of natural land.

Question 7:
Has anyone ever stayed at the oasis golf resort in tenerife, and can you tell me what its like?
Answer 2:
I think this is part of the Fiesta hotel chain? If so, I stayed at the Fiesta Oasis Floral hotel in May in Playa Paraiso, Tenerife. It was lovely. The staff were polite and helpful. It was as clean as clean can be and the pool area was quite large. The only complaint I had is a bulb out in one of the lifts. I didn't realise 'til I got in and the doors closed! It was pitch black and I sh*t myself. Also, if you're going all inclusive it has pretty decent food. It's foreign enough to make you feel a little exotic, but English enough to ensure you don't go hungry. Oh and they had fridges full of sandwiches and freezers with ice creams in by the side of the pool for you to snack on during the day. I'd rate it 8/10 overall. Ofcourse, if this isn't even the same hotel group as yours then this has been absolutely helpless, but hey - hope it was a nice read :-D

Question 26:
Can someone tell me the email address for Ocean Blue & Sand Golf & Beach Resort in Dominican Republic? I booked via my bank so I want to email them direct and make sure we get two beds in our room and not just one king size.
Answer 1:
here's a website, **I think** it is them. there is an email address at the bottom but it might just be for bookings

Question 28:
What is the best way fo a golf holiday package to thailand?
Answer 1:
Thanks Doug. Here I am. Hopefully the guy who ask the question is not really a hecker. Otherwise, I should really like to be introduced!!!?? Just came back from a game myself and played really bad, for not playing for three weeks. My group played worse though, so I got all the money!!!! Went all to lunch! I am gonna watch Bristish open now. About the golf tour in Thailand, there are so many. I think there are more than 200 golf courses throughout Thailand. If you really like the exotic of it, there is one golf course on an island called Samui Island. The name of the course I think is Santiburi (the town of peace). The famous course in Thailand is the Blue Canyon on the island of Phuket (hosting of the Johny Walker Classis that Tiger won I think over Ernie) […]

Question 37:
Soviva resort? Has anyone any knowledge of this resort in tunisia. Am going there in May and can,t get much info
Answer 1:
are you talking about the resort at vinaros,costa del azahar. if so it is a small resort ,good golf a very nice quiet area.about 5/10k to beaches. the coast around there is not as built up as other costas, yes there are english there but it is mainly Spanish. **I think** to get the best out of the area you need transport.

Question 43:
st andrews golf clubs are they any good ????? need help as i am thinking of buying a full set
Answer 3:
The name sounds like something off brand like a starter set. They add a famous golf name like St. Andrews to make them sound fancier than they really are. This is not the case for these clubs. I am not sure if these are the same clubs you are considering. I visited the website listed below and **I think** these clubs would be cool to play with. It was not too long ago that I swung an old fashioned wood, the kind with the metal plate on the bottom, screwed in with wood screws. It was a nice club and I hit it about as well as I hit my 5 wood. It would be classic to have a set of these. They do seem a bit pricey though.

Question 6:
Victoria Golf and Beach resort - Dominican Republic. Not sure if I can be bothered carrying them all the way over. Is the course worth it?????
Answer 1:
I'm not a golf player , but have seen the golf course , **i don't know** what does and doesn't make a good golf course . however its set in lovely surroundings and there were always people playing on it . pretty sure you could hire the clubs anyway especially as now your baggage weights and hand luggage as changed ! enjoy your holiday . p.s. just mailed my Friend in Dominican republic she says yes its worth it , quite challenging , and nice club house with excellent food . hope this helps have nice time ..

Question 16:
I want to go to Alicante in June. I have never been there before and want some advice. I am going with my friend and we prefer resorts. We love to play golf, and want to try a few courses. Does anyone has a suggestion for me?
Answer 1:
I can recommend La Finca Golf & Spa resort, that is located near the coast in Algorfa, Torrevieja, Alicante. It is a 4/5 star resort, with 3 golf courses. These golf courses are owned by the hotel itself and are very beautiful. I have been there myself, and **don't know** much other good hotels. Hopefully, it is helpful, but you can have a look on their website: http://www.lafincagolfresort.com/

Question 28:
What is the best way fo a golf holiday package to thailand?
Answer 3:
don't know answer to your question but unlike icecube I do know that it is THE OPEN not British Open

As shown by the Q&As above, ELF speakers frequently use "I think" and "I don't know" in their prototypical meanings and opt for formal structures.[52] More specifically, "I think" is used to express the speakers' subjective opinion, and "I don't know" is used to express speakers' insufficient knowledge about a topic of the discourse. Both markers are much more frequent in the formulation of answers than of questions and the more fluent speakers are, the more they use these situational and interactional expressions. Finally, all the general aspects discussed in this section underlie the importance of using ELF in the Q&A interactions within digital communities in a way that helps to meet the needs of individual members and the group as a whole. Indeed, it is through ELF communication that digital community's members determine whether the potential benefit of membership is worth the cost of participation, thus becoming aware that no ELF no help.

4. The Emotional Aesthetics of Q&A Websites

In this last section, we want to demonstrate that the emotional style of a question does influence the probability of promptly obtaining a satisfying answer by investigating two main research goals: (a) how the language used in Q&As varies with respect to the communicative intention and question typology, thus making it possible to distinguish between subjective and objective statements; (b) how the effectiveness of Q&As can be associated with certain linguistic aspects, such as specific lexical items, syntactic patterns, and distinctive pragmatic expressions which convey emotions and opinions appropriately through text in order to better achieve interactional goals in Q&As.

In line with Gray et al. (2013),[53] language use in question-asking can be viewed as an activity meant to enact an episode of social capital conversion. Emerging from the sociological tradition but now employed by a range of disciplines, social capital theory has been used to study outcomes such as educational outcomes and civic participation, but, in this study, it refers to the benefits associated with online sharing practices which individuals resort to in order to harness the latent resources of their personal connections by asking questions and requesting other kinds of assistance. Although most of the questions may elicit answers that have the potential to be useful to the asker, not all questions are attempts to solicit actual information or action. Some may be mere attempts to initiate conversation, communicate a need for social support, or achieve other interpersonal goals. For example, Morris et al. labeled these questions as "rhetorical" and defined them as "aimed at prompting discussion rather than eliciting practical answers".[54] More specifically, we have adapted Morris et al.'s question typology to the present study in order to identify the specific types of questions appearing in our dataset in an attempt to gain a sense of how the type of information solicited might be related to the quality of responses and relationships with responders.

Question examples were rated according to the following distribution of question categories:

[52] See Nicole Baumgarten and Juliane House, "*I Think* and *I don't know* in English as Lingua Franca and Native English Discourse", *Journal of Pragmatics*, 42.5 (2010), 1184–1200.
[53] See Rebecca Gray et al., "Who Wants to Know?: Question-Asking and Answering Practices among Facebook Users", *CSCW '13*, February 23–27, 2013, San Antonio, Texas, USA, 1213–1223.
[54] Meredith R. Morris et al., "What Do People Ask Their Social Networks, and Why?: A Survey Study of Status Message Q&A Behavior," in *Proceedings of the 28th International Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems, ACM* (Atlanta, Georgia, USA, 2010), 1739–1748: 1743.

Question type	**Number of instances (% of total[55])**	**Examples from the dataset**
Suggestion/Recommendation	14 (28%)	"What golf course would you reccommend playing on the algarve?"
Factual knowledge	7 (14%)	"Soviva resort? Has anyone any knowledge of this resort in tunisia. Am going there in May and can't get much info"
Social coordination/invitation	0 (0%)	0
Request/favor	22 (44%)	"Can anyone help me im looking to book a golf and im trying to find a golf resort somewhere in europe to go"
Opinion/poll	11 (22%)	"Has anyone ever stayed at the oasis golf resort in tenerife, and can you tell me what its like?"
Rhetorical	2 (4%)	"Are the Scottish happy about Donald Trump building a huge Golf Resort in Scorland?"
Non-questions	0 (0%)	0

Table 1: Distribution of questions categories from the dataset

Studying these instances in Q&A websites can offer insight into the ways digital interactions and tools are changing the fabric of everyday life for their users with respect to their communicative intentions, by helping them not only to achieve interpersonal goals but also to get things done – resolve problems, get advice, share opinions and information, learn about new opportunities, and participate in sundry other activities that help day-to-day life go more smoothly. Additionally, the focus on language use in Q&As typology is also important for investigating the emotional aesthetics underlying these small texts, thus expanding their classification and distinguishing between subjective and objective statements. Indeed, by relying on sentiment analysis – also referred to as subjectivity analysis, review mining, or appraisal extraction – we can determine the emotive quality (the sentiment) of a piece of text. Sentiment can be characterised as positive or negative evaluation expressed through language. Research on sentiment analysis[56] extracts information about informal

[55] The total of the percentages is bigger than 100% since the same question can correspond to more than one category.

[56] On these premises, we also need to mention that the state of the art of sentiment analysis has been outlined under different umbrella terms in linguistics and other social sciences. In linguistics, studies of affect (See C. Daniel Batson et al., "Differentiating Affect, Mood, and Emotion: Toward Functionally Based Conceptual Distinctions", in Margaret. S. Clark, ed.,

texts from positive and negative words (i.e., tokens, stems, lemmata), from the context of those words, and from the linguistic structure of the text. With the worldwide diffusion of social media and digital communities, a huge amount of such textual data has been made available, thus attracting the interest of researchers in this domain and posing new challenges due to the presence of slang, misspelled words, hashtags, and links, thus inducing researchers to define novel approaches that include consideration of microlinguistic and extralinguistic features.

In particular, research in linguistics, communication, and psychology has explored, on the one hand, how we express, understand, and are affected by the expression of subjectivity or objectivity[57] in the language use of digital interactions and communities, but also how the effectiveness of Q&A can be associated with certain linguistic aspects, such as specific lexical items, syntactic patterns, and distinctive pragmatic expressions,[58] which convey emotions and opinions appropriately through text. Exploring the effectiveness of asking questions on Q&A websites, Morris et al.[59] found that characteristics of the question itself predicted the quality, quantity, and speed of responses. Crucially, a concise style of question-asking, a defined scope (or audience), and the inclusion of a question mark were associated with more and higher quality responses within shorter periods of time (26). However, only recently has research begun to investigate other linguistic factors, looking at how questions are formulated.[60] Among them, it is worth mentioning here the visible presence of lexical cues of gratitude and appreciation which make a request more likely to be successful, as the following examples from our dataset show:

Question 2:
Hi. Anyone stayed at the Oasis Golf Resort in tenerife? What's it like?? **Thanks** xx

Question 10:
Hi, I was just wondering if anyone has been to the gloria golf resort in turkey. **please** could you give your opinions/what to expect and tips for going. **please** could you also state when you went and at what time of year. **Thanks in advance!**

Question 12:

Emotion: Review of Personality and Social Psychology, Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1992, 294–326), subjectivity and point of view (See Ann Banfield, *Unspeakable Sentences: Narration and Representation in the Language of Fiction*, Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982; Ronald W. Langacker, "Subjectification", *Cogn. Linguist.*, 1, 1990, 5–38; Elizabeth Closs Traugott, "Subjectification in Grammaticalization," in Dieter Stein and Susan Wright, eds., *Subjectivity and Subjectivisation: Linguistic Perspectives*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge U.P., 1995, 31–54; Id., "(Inter)subjectivity and (Inter)subjectification: A Reassessment," in Kristin Davidse et al., eds., *Subjectification, Intersubjectification and Grammaticalization*, Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010, 29–74), evidentiality (See Alexandra Aikhenvald, *Evidentiality*, Oxford: Oxford U.P., 2004; Wallace Chafe and Johanna Nichols, *Evidentiality: The Linguistic Coding of Epistemology*, Norwood, NJ: Ablex, 1986), attitudinal stance (See Douglas Biber and Edward Finegan, "Adverbial Stance Types in English", *Discourse Process*, 11, 1988, 1–34; Id., "Styles of Stance in English"), modality (See Joan Bybee and Suzanne Fleischman, eds., *Modality in Grammar and Discourse*, Amsterdam and Philadelphia: Benjamins, 1995; Frank Palmer, *Mood and Modality*, Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1986; Paul Portner, *Modality*, Oxford: Oxford U.P., 2009), and appraisal (See James R. Martin and Peter R. R. White, *The Language of Evaluation*, New York: Palgrave, 2005) all aim to explain how we use language to convey emotions, evaluation, and subjectivity.

[57] See Claudia Caffi and Richard W. Janney, "Toward a Pragmatics of Emotive Communication", in Claudia Caffi and Richard W. Janney, eds., *Involvement in Language*, special issue of *Journal of Pragmatics*, 22.3/4 (1994), 325–373; Klaus Krippendorf, *Content Analysis*.

[58] See Douglas Biber and Edward Finegan, "Styles of Stance in English"; Susan Hunston, *Corpus Approaches to Evaluation.*

[59] See Meredith R. Morris et al., "What Do People Ask Their Social Networks.

[60] See Althoff, "How to Ask a Favor"; Mitra and Gilbert, "The Language that Gets People to Give".

My boyfriend and I and another couple are travelling to Alicante this June but we need a cheap transfer company to take us to our resort, La Finca Golf Resort in Algofa. If anyone could help that would be great. **Thanks!**

Question 19:
Has anyone stayed in the Houda beach and Golf resort in Tunisia If so I would be most grateful of any views you are willing to share. If so **I would be most grateful** of any views you are willing to share.

Question 27:
Hi ive been looking for honeymoon places and a person told me that sandles was brilliant and I have just had s look and it does look beautiful. Does anyone know around houw much it cost or has anyone been before/ **Thanks for you help.**

As theorised by Althoff et al.,[61] expressing gratitude in a question has been found to positively correlate with the success of the request because it can be seen as a sign of positive disposition and politeness towards the future answerer. In order to measure the sentiment load of a text, that is, the overall positive/negative polarity of a text as well as the sentiment strength, we can look not only for affective lexicon in the body of questions, answers, and comments, but also for such morphosyntactic patterns as the use of first-person pronouns and their related possessive adjectives; the use of second-person pronouns and their related possessive adjectives, and the use of modal verbs. Crucially, the research goal here is to show how these three categories appear in the dataset as specific pragmatic features of Q&A interactions engendering positive or negative emotions in order to better achieve the users' communicative goals. Specifically, in line with some influential studies in pragmatics and applied linguistics,[62] it is known that pronouns establish a relationship between the sender and the addressee. In particular, first-person singular pronouns and adjectives (*I, me, my*) may indicate a sort of closing down behaviour, whereas first-person plural forms (*we, us, our*) create a sense of solidarity and social identity. On the other hand, second-person forms (*you, your*) may suggest a social distance. From these general assumptions, we can infer that the pragmalinguistic category of personal pronouns and adjectives implicitly reinforces or weakens the speaker's illocutionary strength. In the specific case of this research, the semantic analysis solicited by the questions in which first-person pronouns and adjectives occur shows an increase in the addressee's negative emotional response, as in the following excerpts:

Question 8:
hi **me** and **my** friends were lookin for a good way to end out time at school next year and were thinking of goin abroad to an irish golf club can anyone reccomend a resort in ireland which is quite cheap bt stil has a good golfcourse aswell as good facilities :D
Answer 1:
Doesn't exist mane! You can't put cheap and good Irish resort in the same sentence. If you want to play over there, you're going to have to ante up!
Answer 2:
A cheap golf course. I am mystified. I don't think they exist, certainly not in Ireland, where everything is expensive.
Answer 3:

[61] See Althoff, "How to Ask a Favor".
[62] Moira Burke et al., "Introductions and Questions: Rhetorical Strategies That Elicit Response in Online Communities," in Charles Steinfield et al., eds., *Communities and Technologies* (London: Springer, 2007), 21–39.

yes - no such thing and even the expensive ones are crap and they won't let you on the signature courses in case you hurt them.$1000 for a fourball per round

Question 9:
BallyKisteen Hotel and Golf Resort?
has anyone been to this hotel? because...**i** have stayed in it, the staff was absolutely fantastic! They were always cleaning up or checking up on people to make sure they were okay. **i** was reading the reviews and such on them and people were saying it was horrible "the worst hotel I've ever stayed in" **I** have to strongly disagree.
There was one staff member in particular his name was Thomas...wish **I** knew his last name :/ so **I** could tell the front desk that he was lovely and very helpful. The food was delicious, absolutely fantastic!!
The rooms were clean and big andhad everything you needed basically. **(I** stayed in one of the apartments)
I just wanted your feedback.
Answer 1:
No, I have never stayed there. You said:"how could i own it and not know who my workers are?" thats every hotel owner .....i think you own it.. You said:"how could i own it and not know who my workers are?"
Answer 2:
Honestly, I live 2 minutes up the road from it and I never have heard any bad feedback from it. I have used the public swimming pool and gym there many times and I agree that the staff there are really nice and down-to-earth. It seems really nice from the outside and a lot of my male friends are actually members of the golf course there. My manager got married there recently and he told me he had a wonderful time and the reception was excellent. Its nice to see that you had a great stay so I'd recommend that you put your feedback up at some Irish hotel website. I know that they would appreciate that back at the hotel :)
Answer 3:
I haven't been, I'm quite jealous it sounds wonderful. You should email the Hotel Manager and let them know what a fantastic time you had, people are quick to complain but you should give credit where credit is due. Just mention "Thomas" there can't be that many helpful people called Thomas working there, I'm sure they will know who he is. I'm not going on holiday this year we've had a green house instead, sighs .....
Answer 4:
There is no pleasing some people. I have looked at the reviews in Tripadvisor and in general, it appears to have pleased most people. I can see why you are annoyed, having had such a good time yourself. Why don't you e mail them and let them know about your satisfaction and give Thomas a mention.
Answer 5:
Do you own the place? Edit: It could be part of your cunning plan to get some free publicity for the hotel ;-)

Moreover, an emotional negative answer is usually made more explicit by such specific linguistic strategies as the use of negatives ("*Doesn't exist mane!*"; "*You can't put cheap and good Irish resort in the same sentence. If you want to play over there, you're going to have to ante up!*"; "*No, I have never stayed there*") reinforced by graphic devices (i.e., exclamation marks, ellipsis points) and emotional negative markers like some adjectives ("*I am mystified*"; "*There is no pleasing some people*"; "*I can see why you are annoyed*"; "*It could be part of your cunning plan to get some free*

publicity for the hotel ;- ") or adverbs also known as *flow shifters* (e.g., *however, but*). In order to investigate the emotional charge of a statement, the variation in the use of subject and object personal pronouns and adjectives can contribute to accounting for the existence of possible relations between linguistic forms and contents, the elicited emotions, and the number of solicited answers within the communicative context of contemporary digital communities.

Differently, the use of second-personal pronouns and their related possessive adjectives in the questions tends to increase the (positive and negative) emotional content of the sentiment in their respective answers, but without influencing their polarity or increasing their number, as shown by the following excerpts:

Question 10:
Hi, I was just wondering if anyone has been to the gloria golf resort in turkey. please could **you** give your opinions/what to expect and tips for going. please could **you** also state when **you** went and at what time of year. Thanks in advance!
Answer 1:
its a great hotel very luxury and theres everything for everyone. i went there and am going again tomorrow ...best food best sea best everything
Answer 2:
It is one of the best resort hotels in Turkey. As a matter of fact all the hotels in Belek are good. Famous people from all around the world, like Maria Sharapova chooses Antalya Belek for their holiday destination. So you are lucky :)

Question 15:
What are the best things to see and/do in the resort of Golf de Sur in Tenerife? Also are there any recommended restaurants, shops, attractions, beaches e.t.c. that **you** can tell me about?
Answer 1:
fabulous resort ,mainly golf,plenty of very good restaurants and tapas bars ,the square in the centre has every kind of shops and bars,you are only ten minutes by taxi from the airport and another ten minutes to all the night life you could ever want ,higher a car,,enjoy !!!!!!!!!!!!!!
Answer 2:
Check out the link below for different views and experiences....
Answer 3:
Have a look through these lot.

We may assume that this result is a direct implication of the experiential value that the pronoun "*you*" conveys when formulating the question. This is also confirmed by the high degree of sentiment which is present in the answer. By feeling particularly solicited and honored for sharing his/her own experiences concerning specific places or luxury golf resorts, the "you"/the addressee resorts to a narration marked by a sequence of highly emotional adjectives ("its a great hotel very luxury"; "*fabulous resort, plenty of very good restaurants*"). All these features are used to encourage the questioner to trust the expert addressee, to repeat the successful experience ("best food best sea best everything", "*enjoy !!!!!!!!!!!!!!*") or to avoid it if the expectation was frustrated.

Drawing on the framework of mitigation,[63] the present research also reveals that an increase in the use of modals in questions can engender an increase in the number of answers (positive or negative) and can serve as mitigators/a mitigation function in the specialised domain of golf as a luxury sport.

[63] Claudia Caffi, "On *Mitigation*", *Journal of Pragmatics*, 31 (1999), 881–909; Id., *Mitigation* (Amsterdam and Tokyo: Elsevier, 2007).

As the following excerpts from the dataset show, the use of modals in asking questions and giving answers can be considered a mitigating strategy since they generally indicate prediction (*predictive modals*: *shall/will, would*), possibility (*possibility modals: can; may, might, could*), or necessity (*necessity modals: ought, should, must, need*), as well as introduce a polite request with a degree of certainty which varies according to the interlocutor's reply (Leech 1983, 71).

Question 1:
What golf course **would** you recommend playing on the algarve? There will be 3 of us, handicaps between 14 and 18...
Answer 1:
You'**ll** find everything you **need** to know here. Just click on one of the venues and it **will** list all the courses local to it. You **may** want to consider Italy or Czech Republic in the future. Unheralded world class golf but with better scenery and nightlife. But I **shouldn't** be telling you about the latter, it's a secret! Enjoy Portugal

Question 34:
I am looking at buying a 5 day Disney ticket. My dad and brother **wouldnt** be interested in going to the parks but **would** like the golf. If myself and mam got 5 day tickets **would** my dad and brother be able to use the same tickets for golf? I heard the parks check the tickets by finger prints, is this true, and **would** it be the same for the golf?
Answer 1:
If you want to access the golf course, make sure you add the "Water Park Fun & More Option." Base ticket alone will only give you access to one Theme Park. Here's what Disney states: "Include the Water Park Fun & More Option* to enjoy admission to other exciting attractions at the Walt Disney World® Resort: Select from two fabulous Water Parks, DisneyQuest® Indoor Interactive Theme Park, Disney's Wide World of Sports® Complex or a round of golf at Disney's Oak Trail Golf Course, a relaxed, nine-hole walking course designed for the entire family." Same tickets for different persons? Bad news: no you can't. Once the tickets have been used for entry into the park, they are non-transferable; they can only be used by the original person. You're right about the finger scan. It measures the length and gaps between your fingers. If the tickets are used, the scan won't match up to the original ticket holder. As a result, your ticket will get rejected. Good news: you can transfer them as long as the tickets have not been used before.
Answer 2:
Disney's Oak Trail Golf Course is a beautiful 9-hole course with rolling greens and exciting challenges. Certified by Audubon International as a Cooperative Wildlife Sanctuary, Disney's Oak Trail Golf Course lets you test your skills with holes ranging from 132 to 517 yards from the white tees; holes 5, 6 and 7 are routed around a deep canal and a picturesque pond. Operated by Arnold Palmer Golf Management and featuring junior tees for younger golfers, this walking course is fun for the whole family.
Answer 3:
No you can't sorry but you can buy separate tickets for the Golf Courses. It would be best to stay on Disney property to take advantage of discounts on both tickets, transportation, and golfing. 5 day Magic Your Way ticket for two people is $485.64 (lol...if you're wondering...you probably already know that)
Answer 4:
If they want to play any serious golf, that will have to be booked separately. It cannot be added to your park ticket. There is only one mild 9-hole course that can be an option on your ticket. Yes, park tickets are checked, and two people cannot share a ticket.

Answer 5:
At Fantasia Fairways the fellow made turf has been flattened down.The ball will in simple terms roll throughout which makes aiming pictures pointless.Scoring would be pointless additionally that would upset aggressive kinds. Your superb shot at a hollow in a single is with the Earl's French Dip into the au jus. Earl is humorous at lunch while Disney casting shows up they appear like Edna Mode from The Incredibles. At night go turn on the tennis court lights nextdoor that are on a timer.Disney might have blacklight tennis like blacklight bowling yet which would be imagineering.Is it halftime in u . s . or the Eiger Sanction?

In the excerpts selected here, as well as in many others collected in the corpus, the use of modals implies a variation not only of the certainty degree, but also of the degrees concerning affectivity, politeness, and proximity, since they seem to create a sense of solidarity and expectation among the users while discussing some topics which can be controversial or can divide the users' opinions.[64]

The investigation into the use and the functioning of personal pronouns and adjectives, as well as modals, has contributed to determining which communicative practices and pragmalinguistic strategies are enabled—more or less consciously—by the speakers when the latter formulate questions to ask for specific advice (*altruistic requests*) in specialised domains like golf. Among them, we have also detected additional pragmalinguistic devices which make English as a Lingua Franca in the digital community of golf a creative language characterised by these distinctive features: negotiation, mediation, accommodation strategies between the sender and the addressee/the questioner and the answerer; use of story-telling structure in answers; and evidentiality. They all will constitute the object of our future investigation.

5. Conclusions

This study has attempted to provide a discussion of informal text-based computer-mediated communication like Q&A websites conceived of as a distinctive medium of communication based on cosmopolitan *brand communities* that share the same field of expertise and a common interest in a particular topic. Focusing on the premise that the majority of online communities are text-based, an analysis of the concept of genre related to the particular environment of CMC has been provided to demonstrate the potential dynamism of these digital communities in terms of language use, discursive resources, and narrative practices. This analysis has led to the emergence of a new textual aesthetics characterised by distinctive textual features and conventions which help to attract the attention of an audience and index some type of connection or interaction within digital communities.

As a result, the genre of Q&A websites can be understood as a system of interrelated and interdependent communicative genres founded upon norms of everyday interaction adapted to the online setting and upon a multilayered shared repertoire comprising both linguistic and non-linguistic elements. As suggested by the discussion offered in this study, a relevant role within this community's "shared repertoire" is played by the use of English as a Lingua Franca which helps digital interlocutors successfully engage in their interactional and interpretive work in order to sustain the appearance of normality.[65] ELF is used by vibrant virtual communities of online users not only to introduce, present, and connect themselves on different social networking sites, but also to negotiate and adapt their knowledge and resources to their communicative interactions. All this has inevitably entailed a consideration of the way ELF is used for communication, particularly in online experiences, as an

[64] See Milica Savic, "Politeness through the Prism of Requests, Apologies and Refusals", in Id., ed., *Politeness through the Prism of Requests, Apologies and Refusals: A Case of Advanced Serbian EFL Learners* (NewCastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014).
[65] See Cogo and House, "The pragmatics of ELF," in Jenkins, *Handbook of English*, 211.

ideal setting to observe the situational characteristics of digital interactions in terms of discourse markers and pragmalinguistic features.

To this end, the research approach adopted has been predominantly qualitative because of the lack of consolidated investigations into the pragmatic niceties of the interactional and networked textual fabric of Q&A websites. By reporting the results of an empirical study involving the Yahoo! Answers website related to golf, our study has attempted to provide evidence that pragmatic competence is necessary if one wants to communicate effectively in a language, since words in use can only be understood in terms of what we do with them. This includes mastering certain linguistic strategies such as the use of specific lexical items, syntactic patterns, and distinctive pragmatic expressions which may reveal that more effective questions can make people more willing to help. Among them, we have briefly discussed how the high presence of lexical cues of gratitude and appreciation, as well as the pragmatic categories of personal pronouns and adjectives, as well as modal verbs, work at many levels and on many dimensions in emotive terms by engendering great impact on the quality and on the success of questions and answers. As it stands here, pragmatics has offered the theoretical space where psychological, sociological, and (micro-)linguistic dimensions can be integrated, thus proving the empirical reasons which explain why Q&A websites have gradually become one of the major sources of information today, surpassing corporate websites in terms of influence on purchasing decisions.

Esterino Adami

Pragmatics and the Aesthetics of Food Discourse. *Jamie's Italy*

Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to investigate the pragmatic and aesthetic dimensions of *Jamie's Italy* (2005), a 'hybrid' cookery book, authored by British celebrity chef Jamie Oliver, which actually collects and blends various genres by incorporating Italian recipes, professional photographs and personal commentaries. In particular, I will consider how such dimensions envisage the concepts of authenticity and identity, and their stylistic renditions operating in English-language food discourse. In constructing and reinforcing the prototypical (British) schema of authentic Italian foodscape by means of various semiotic resources and paratextual features (Eggins 2004, Stockwell 2002), the author's language choices also reflect and negotiate the representations of identity in the contemporary world (Perianova 2010). In pragmatic terms, authenticity is a keyword in food discourse as it projects a sense of realism and accuracy by referring to specific traditions and contexts. By analysing a selection of passages, my paper will specifically discuss the following issues: 1) the pragmatic present-day notion of authenticity, and its complexities and possible transformations in food discourse; 2) the strategies used in *Jamie's Italy* for the aesthetic, linguistic and textual depiction of traditional Italian food; 3) the construction of an ideological and stereotypical (e.g. romanticised) perspective of Italian cuisine, and by extension of the entire country.

Keywords: *authenticity in food discourse, language of food, Jamie Oliver, language and identity*

1. Introduction

Far from merely being a type of specialised language, or a restricted code, food discourse constitutes one of the most rooted and pervasive themes in human cultures, whose manifestations span a wide range of contexts, texts and forms, from fiction and cinema to contemporary television competitive cooking shows, websites and mobile applications. A complex social domain that according to Lévi-Strauss' paradigm of 'the raw and the cooked'[1] (1964) bisects civilisations, food imagery is linguistically, culturally and symbolically constructed through texts and discourses, across places and times, in order to convey ideologies and perspectives. Literary texts are often replete with food references,[2] but food is even more prominent in language, for instance, since it constitutes an abundant source for the creation of metaphors, idioms and set phrases, especially in English, as demonstrated by Pinnavaia.[3] As such, it also contributes to the indexicality and representation of identity and authenticity by connecting traditions, habits and practices, in a mediation between a local and a global dimension. Siding with Pennycook's[4] contention that language viewed as a social practice emerges from the activities it performs, I will here use the interlinked notions of identity, authenticity and circulation as guiding paradigms for my analysis, since they work as fundamental recurring elements in the complex cultural scenario of our epoch.

In this paper I set out a preliminary investigation of some pragmatic and aesthetic articulations of food discourse, in particular by considering how identity and authenticity are represented in and shaped

[1] Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Le Cru et le Cuit* (Paris: Plot, 1964).
[2] See for example the papers collected in Francesca Orestano, ed., *Non solo porridge. Letterati inglesi a tavola* (Milan: Mimesis, 2015).
[3] Laura Pinnavaia, *Sugar and Spice...: Exploring Food and Drink Idioms in English* (Monza: Polimetrica, 2010).
[4] Alastair Pennycook, *Language as a Social Practice* (London: Routledge, 2010).

by texts. I will draw qualitative data from *Jamie's Italy*,[5] a 'hybrid' cookery book, authored by British celebrity chef Jamie Oliver and published in 2005, which actually collects and blends various genres by incorporating Italian recipes, professional photographs and personal commentaries. In recent times, food discourse has attracted scholarly attention from a variety of approaches and perspectives, for example with studies devoted to the narrative characterisation and synthetic personalisation in TV cookery programmes,[6] or exploring how celebrity chefs carefully build up their fashionable personas against the backdrop of race, gender and class.[7] The language and performative style of Jamie Oliver too has been the object of various research projects, for instance by investigating his role as a cultural intermediator[8] or by looking at the cultural translation of his Italian food discourse for an English audience.[9]

However, Jamie Oliver's texts have often been overlooked, perhaps being deemed as banal examples of 'lowbrow' culture. In reality, they reveal an array of linguistic devices and strategies as they modulate and give contour to meanings. In constructing and reinforcing the schema of 'authentic Italian foodscape' by means of various semiotic resources and paratextual features, the chef's language choices also reflect and negotiate the representations of identity in the contemporary world.[10] By investigating a selection of passages from *Jamie's Italy*, this article will specifically investigate the author's textual rendition and discuss the following issues:

1. The pragmatic present-day notion of authenticity, and its complexities and possible transformations in food discourse;
2. the strategies used in the book for the aesthetic, linguistic and textual depiction of traditional Italian food;
3. the construction of an ideological and stereotypical (e.g. romanticised) perspective of Italian cuisine, and by extension of the entire country.

Methodologically, I will follow an interdisciplinary approach that benefits from contributions and tools from various disciplines, including critical stylistics, discourse analysis and cultural studies. The aim thus is to examine how in the postmodern and globalised age the shapes of food discourse, for Oliver, do not simply reside in eye-catching lexical borrowings or concern rigidly defined text-types, but rather they embed and evoke the manipulation, innovation and hybridisation of cultural and (trans)national identity-related issues.

2. Identity and Authenticity in Food Discourses and Texts

Before tackling the concept of authenticity, I will start with the general notion of identity, which in linguistics has been studied from a variety of perspectives and very often has been considered as the sum of various aspects of our personality (or self), starting from fundamental elements such as gender and ethnicity.[11] However, a more recent trend of analysis has broadened its scope in order to illuminate

[5] Jamie Oliver, *Jamie's Italy* (London: Penguin, 2005). All in-text citations from this edition are inserted with page reference in brackets.
[6] See for example Keri Matwick and Kelsi Matwick, "Storytelling and Synthetic Personalization in Television Cooking Shows", *Journal of Pragmatics*, 71 (2014), 151-159.
[7] See for example Josée Johnston, Alexandra Rodney and Philippa Chong, "Making Change in the Kitchen? A Study of Celebrity Cookbooks, Culinary Personas, and Inequality", *Poetics*, 47 (2014), 1-22.
[8] Nick Piper, "Jamie Oliver and Cultural Intermediation", *Food, Culture and Society*, 18.2 (2015), 245-264.
[9] Linda Rossato, "Le Grand Culinary Tour: Adaptation and Retranslation of a Gastronomic Journey across Languages and Food Cultures", *The Translator*, 21.3 (2015), 271-295.
[10] Irina Perianova, "Identity and Food in the Globalizing World", in Maria Georgieva and Allan James, eds., *Globalization in English Studies* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), 23-45.
[11] See for example Richard Jenkins, *Social Identity* (London: Routledge, 2004).

other features, such as the way we behave, the way we dress and also the way (and what) we eat or how we prepare food. This approach may be positioned within a broad area of study, including the idea of 'Discourses' (with capital letter) put forward by Gee, namely "ways of being in the world, or forms of life which integrate words, acts, values, beliefs, and social identities, as well as gestures, glances, body positions, and clothes".[12]

Similarly it is akin to the 'major/minor' identity categorisation elaborated by Lakoff by which the former refers to features such as ethnic belonging and sexual preference, whilst the latter relates to mundane aspects such as attires, music and "taste in the consumption and preparation of food".[13] Food discourse is representative of such 'Discourses' and, rather than being driven by the mere fulfilment of a physiological need, it often constitutes a central social domain in human culture and turns out to be an important indicator of our identity that operates through language use too. Our approach to food in fact is mirrored in the linguistic manifestations, since the words, structures and styles we use to talk about food point to the creation of sets of values, meanings, and ideologies. For Beccaria, for example, "parlare è come inghiottire ciò che si vede, o ciò che si legge. Parlare o scrivere del gusto è un riassaporare, è memoria di un sapore, ricordo di un profumo".[14] The Italian linguist's synesthetic metaphor brings to the fore the paramount position of food and eating for human civilisations and juxtaposes it with other activities and abilities, including cognitive and perceptual ones such as speaking, writing, thinking and recalling. In this light, food is instinctively tied to nourishment and existence of course, but it is also much more than that and emerges as a noteworthy constituent of cultural discourse as well as a metaphor for negotiations and ways of being.

Identity is thus the very first element to consider in approaching the complexity of current foodscapes, but I argue that we need to reflect on other key words as well, in particular the interconnected notions of authenticity, which has become a type of buzzword in this arena, and circulation, to refer to the transmission of shared patterns of the language of food. For various reasons, there seems to be a kind of obsession with the idea of authentic food, as shown by overused fixed expressions such as "real food", "home-made", "traditional" or "natural", probably as a reaction towards homologation and sameness in taste. In reality, as Jurafsky[15] convincingly demonstrates, the idea of authenticity should be balanced with the concept of circulation: similarly to languages, recipes and foodways do circulate, spread, and settle across the world, generating, affecting or transforming behaviours and habits. Different types of cuisines actually share, at least partially, some components like ingredients, ways of cooking, procedures, rites and other. Moreover, authenticity might even be read in the relationship that the subject who approaches and consumes food establishes in a broader ontological sense and in relation to ethical principles, as proposed by Kara Schultz for instance and her Heidegger-inspired interpretation of the expanding present-day culture of food.[16]

From this perspective, food discourse is not merely concerned with the dimensions of identity, but it also illuminates areas of contacts and hybridity that stem from historical roots and are further amplified by globalisation processes. Evidence can be found in the philological transformations of the names of food staples, which are culture-bound words but also offer insights into the development of societies and communities, and their behaviour, simultaneously divided and united by practices, customs and styles.

[12] James Paul Gee, *Social Linguistics and Literacies* (Oxon: Routledge Falmer, 1996), 127.
[13] Robin Tolmach Lakoff, "Identity a la Carte: You Are What You Eat", in Anna De Fina, Deborah Schriffin and Michael Bamberg, eds., *Discourse and Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 2006), 143.
[14] Gian Luigi Beccaria, *Misticanze* (Milan: Garzanti, 2009), 32, "to speak is like to swallow what you see, or read. Speaking or writing about taste is a kind of re-tasting, a memory of a taste, or a smell" (my translation).
[15] Dan Jurafsky, *The Language of Food* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2014).
[16] Kara Shultz, "On Establishing a More Authentic Relationship with Food: From Heidegger to Oprah on Slowing down Fast Food", in Joshua Frye and Michael Bruner, eds., *The Rhetoric of Food: Discourse, Materiality and Power* (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), 222-237.

In other words, traditional cuisines can often be viewed as the final outcome of various evolutionary cultural (and implicitly linguistic) processes, which in some cases have extensively drawn from other contexts. Social anthropologist Kate Fox for example highlights the variegated composition of British cuisine, and affirms that "Greek, Italian, Indian and Chinese food have been part of the English diet for decades".[17] With this premise, it is worth investigating the ways in which food traditions have been linguistically constructed and manipulated in the British context, although the attitude toward food-related issues has not always been positively connoted in the UK. For instance, Fox holds that "an intense interest in food is regarded by the majority as at best rather odd, and at worst somehow morally suspect",[18] but today's context is probably slightly different, in particular thanks to the established popularity of celebrity chefs like Gordon Ramsay, Delia Smith, Jamie Oliver in the UK, or Marcella Hazan in the USA, as well as various worldwide famous cooking shows and programmes.

To carry out my analysis, I will concentrate on a specific text type, i.e. the recipe, which superficially belongs to the procedural typology as it presents instructions about how to cook a specific dish. In reality, however, as a peculiar genre, it is linguistically and stylistically complex in its discursive construction and meaning-making process.[19] In particular, from a systemic functional perspective, Eggins[20] identifies a series of standard structural patterns in recipes, including the following components:

- title (a nominal group or a noun phrase);
- enticement (a full sentence with a 'be' clause followed by positive attitudinal or evaluative words like 'traditional, succulent or tempting');
- ingredients (a sequence of nominal groups, whose head is premodified by measuring words, sometimes with abbreviations, e.g.: 90g (3 1 oz.) fresh white breadcrumbs);
- method (clauses in the imperative mood + meanings of location, time and manner, with action-oriented verbs);
- serving quantity (typically an elliptical declarative, i.e. a part of a clause, for example 'serves 4' rather than the full clause 'this dish serves 4'. The structure is declarative in the sense that it provides information but does not require us to do certain operations).

Of course the sequence and the type of information above may vary, but as a whole this is the prototypical structure governing the genre of recipes. Other types of approaches are possible, and Coller for example highlights the narrative status of recipes in Labovian terms by identifying the recurrent categories of title, list, orientation components, action, evaluation and coda.[21] Moreover, as Norrick notes, the narrative dimension of recipes is particularly remarkable when they are told in a television cookery programme, where they even acquire a conversational tendency mixed with an instructional modality in order to project identity and reinforce a community.[22]

Acknowledging the contention that food and meals "serve as a vehicle of bonding, affiliation, belonging, acceptance, and therefore esteem, as well as a means of self-actualization",[23] the recipe textual typology can function as a tool to represent aspects of identity in a dialogic, or collaborative, relationship between authors and readers and at the same time serve to construct a sense of authenticity by upholding and reviving traditions via specific models and patterns. Indeed, according to Lakoff,[24]

[17] Kate Fox, *Watching the English* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2004), 300-301.
[18] Ibid., 297.
[19] See Lakoff, "Identity a la Carte", and Jurafsky, *The Language of Food*.
[20] Suzanne Eggins, *Systemic Functional Analysis* (London: Continuum, 2004), 66-69.
[21] Colleen Cotter, "Claiming a Piece of the Pie: How the Language of Recipes Defines Community", in Anne Bower, ed., *Recipes for Reading: Community, Cookbooks, Stories, Histories* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997), 59-60.
[22] Neal R. Norrick, "Conversational Recipe Telling", *Journal of Pragmatics*, 43 (2011), 2740-2761.
[23] Perianova, "Identity and Food", 23.
[24] Lakoff, "Identity a la Carte", 157.

"recipe-writing is an art form that has changed over time, and as with menus, the changes are related to the writer's assumptions about the relationship shared with the reader". For example, the formal and didactic nature of recipes is currently being redesigned to a certain extent, so that specific quantities and methodological instructions may be accompanied by personal addresses, colloquial language and imprecise information.

3. The Linguistic Construction of Authenticity and Identity in Jamie Oliver's Italian Recipes

I will now look at the idea of authenticity in food discourse in relation to Italian gastronomy, as perceived from an English point of view, and will specifically focus on *Jamie's Italy* (2005). Italian food has always been enormously appreciated in Britain, and the world in general, and its impact emerges in a wide range of domains, from literature to advertising and more generally language. In the English literary context, the Victorian author William Morris praises the healthy qualities of Italian breadsticks in his utopian work *News from Nowhere* (1890) whereas the contemporary writer Ian McEwan adds some Italian food echoes in his novel *Enduring Love* (1997), but many other examples could be cited. Linguistically, the Italian influence is relevant not only in specific names for foods and products, e.g. Garibaldi biscuits, but also and especially thanks to the large quantity of Italian food-related borrowings in the present-day English lexicon. Even a cursory research in the *Oxford English Dictionary*[25] will reveal that the semantic fields of food and drinks extensively include Italian loanwords, spanning a variety of entries such as antipasto, minestrone, polenta, provolone, tagliatelle and zuppa.[26] In locating the domain of food and drinks within the broader area of the language of tourism, Dann puts forward the suggestive label "gastrolingo" and among its features he notices "a tendency to over-use foreign words, particularly French and Italian expressions, without further explanation",[27] a stylistic choice that not only adds overtones of sophistication, but also discloses the intention to project a desired identity and personality.

In recent times, a main figure in the construction of food discourse in the UK, featuring ties to Italian gastronomy too, is represented by James ('Jamie') Oliver, the popular chef and restaurateur, who started working at Antonio Carluccio's Italian restaurant in Covent Garden and was even awarded an MBE in 2003. Over the last 15 years, he has appeared in various cooking shows and has authored a number of cookbooks, dealing with several types of cuisine, not only trying to promote local products of the English tradition but also introducing healthier ways for the preparation of food staples, with a special focus on food education. In particular, he has collaborated with various charities and elaborated campaigns against the idea of 'junk food', especially addressed to school kids, with the aim to raise awareness on the importance of a healthy and balanced diet.

It is first necessary to provide some background information about the book under investigation, which actually juxtaposes 'traditional' Italian recipes with professional photographs and commentaries ("My thoughts on" + name of the dish) as well as some brief autobiographical details, intertextually evoking ideologies and mental images, or schemas of a 'romanticised' Italy, a country apparently made up of food enthusiasts: "Since I was a teenager I've been totally besotted by the love, passion and verve for food, family and life itself that about all Italian people have, no matter where they're from or how rich or poor they might be" (viii). The book includes 132 recipes divided into these double-labelled categories: antipasti / starters, street food and pizza, primi / first courses (soups, pasta, risotto), insalate

[25] See www.oed.com (2018).
[26] A typical problem with lexicology and lexicography concerns the fact that vocabulary is a dynamic component in a language and constantly undergoes transformations, expansions and reductions through time, and thus it is difficult to study it in quantitative terms without a diachronic reference. However a valuable reference in this respect is Laura Pinnavaia, *The Italian Borrowings in the Oxford English Dictionary* (Rome: Bulzoni, 2001).
[27] Graham M.S. Dann, *The Language of Tourism* (Walliford, Oxon: Cab International, 1996), 237.

/ salads, secondi / main courses (fish, meat), contorni / side dishes, dolci / desserts. The structural components theorised by Eggs above are present and attentively developed. In particular, the enticement section is worth noticing since it is expanded into a fully-formed text enriched by details about the ingredients, the history of the recipe itself or other anecdotal references, thus enhancing the pragmatic (i.e. instructional) nature of the text as well as its aesthetic, narrative and even poetic dimension, thanks to attention-getting devices and tactics. Furthermore, in matching the Gricean maxims of quantity and quality that prescribe providing the necessary type and amount of information for the communicative act to take place,[28] in this case concerning quantities, times and methods, the recipes collectively shape their communicative force by supporting the imagined reader and user of the recipes themselves as a non-professional or amateur cook via different linguistic strategies.

From a stylistic point of view, in a text the presence of a particular element or construction is significant as it signals certain meanings, but at the same time the absence of specific words that one would expect in that communicative context is relevant too. In a book that from the very title, and cover, strives to suggest a faithful and genuine idea of a country and its culinary tradition, the fact that the words 'authentic' and 'authenticity' do not actually appear may shed light on the author's general view: in fact Oliver seems to prefer the word 'real', which is abundantly used, as exemplified by the following forms: "I wanted to find the food of the 'real' Italy" (xi), "My best advice is to get out of the touristy places and into the real Italy" (xv), "What on earth can I say about pasta? Well, if you want the real truth, the moment I stopped cooking sloppy, sticky, uninteresting, predictable pasta and started making pasta that was delicious, using the same commodities and ingredients that the Italians use at home, was the moment that my cooking changed for ever" (84). The monosyllabic, more direct term 'real' thus seems to produce a closer sense of involvement in the reader, with a marked impact and persuasive force, sometimes even with tautological, hyperbolic and paradoxical echoes as in the last example ('real truth').

As a whole, the register adopted by Oliver is quite informal, captivating and sometimes even colloquial. Although it naturally draws from the specialised lexis of gastronomy, it also exhibits everyday words, structures and forms of address, as in the following examples: "some real ballsy flavour" (129, for the risotto recipe), "absolutely moreish" (266, for the aubergine parmigiana), the vocative "ok, tigers" (121) or the onomatopoeic vague indication "a good splash of olive oil" (106, for the Tuscan pici with tomato and meat sauce). Oliver's style thus combines a mixture of specialised language, colloquial items and creative devices, as illustrated by the innovative metonymic form "Treviso is the Aston Martin of the radicchio family" (254), or the unusual consonance-based expression "the real bloody treat to eat" (284), with regard to the recipe of torta di riso (Florentine rice tart). The two examples here appear to indicate the permutation and combination of items from core (with generic intensifying colloquial adjectives like "bloody") and non-core (with the specific term "Treviso" to indicate a long, thin kind of radicchio) vocabulary in coining new linguistic forms, namely a "continuum of expressive possibilities for making utterances more intimate, as well as for intensifying and evaluating utterances".[29]

Of course, the entire book is grounded on a wealth of Italian loanwords specially appertaining to local products (e.g. cavolo nero, 70), names of dishes (e.g. antipasti, 260), sometimes in a compound hybrid form (e.g. chicken cacciatora, 222), cooking methods (e.g. al dente, 90), but also with reference to people and family relations/memberships, for example when the author explains that "the poor old mammas have got used to bulking out soups easily by adding pasta, bread and beans" (63). The frequent appellation *mamma* (or sometimes *nonna*) immediately evokes time-honoured stereotypes of the Italian population and such address forms are also instantiations of personal deixis, which occasionally take the

[28] George Yule, *Pragmatics* (Oxford: Oxford U.P., 1996), 37-38.
[29] Ronald Carter, *Language and Creativity* (London: Routledge, 2004), 117.

form of onomastic terms in the name of dishes like Nonna Fangitta's tuna (204), Nada's cake (294), nonna Giusy's fish with couscous (207), or pasta Norma style (88), for which the author actually confesses "I haven't got a clue who Norma is, but I'm sure she's a good old girl!" (88), further reinforcing positive values and echoes of family relations and bonds. Therefore the authenticity of the dish is progressively constructed with the support of clichés and stereotypes, along with distant, almost exotic echoes of an imagined and crystallised tradition.

Deictic personal items also play an important role in the negotiation between authenticity and identity, in particular via pronoun usage in a tripartite referential framework: with "we" (the British) versus "they" (meaning the Italians) thanks to a facilitating agent ("I", i.e. Jamie Oliver, who repeatedly stresses his personal and even emotional closeness to Italian culture and food, and thus grants himself the role of mediator). The author thus constructs his social positioning by strategically negotiating a sense of belonging, for example with an exclusive 'they' to designate the Italians via a slightly distancing pronoun: "I love the fact that they [the Italians] think their own regional way of cooking is the best, and how they are so proud of their local produce" (IX). Conversely the author employs an inclusive reference, as in the case "[flavours] very accessible to us back in Britain" (116), to refer to the British and illustrate an ideal collective English readership as the book's implied addressee. In other passages, however, Oliver also seems to boast an acquired 'semi-Italian' identity: for example when he talks about the various options for making white risotto, he works out an egocentric perspective and patronisingly affirms that "if a local Italian turns his nose up, well, I don't care, because in this chapter I consider myself a know-it-all" (129). According to Wales,[30] personal pronouns "display a richness of rhetorical and social connotation beyond the strictly denotational" and indeed they allude to the sensitive relations between various subjects in a blend of attraction, difference and belonging.

In other words, the use of personal referents is driven by the power of implying and assuming[31] by which 'authentic' identities are constructed and projected for ideological purposes: Oliver's colourful presentation and linguistic manipulation of recipes intentionally calibrate the extra meaning of what is actually said and play with the sense of implicature, namely the "additional conveyed meaning".[32]

In documenting the archive of culinary traditions in Italy, the volume also employs other strategies, such as hyperbolic constructions like "Everyone loves them [beans] there!" (248), rhetorical questions ("What on earth can I say about pasta?", 84), and figurative or evaluative language ("a smooth, silky egg sauce", 90, "the best tuna meatballs", 203, and "the best prawn and parsley frittata" 44). Once again the use of such devices affects the boundaries of the recipe genre by flouting maxims of quantity and quality, but in reality they function as eye-catching elements that also display an emotional involvement, rather than slowing or impeding the communicative flow. Let us consider hyperbole, for instance: this rhetorical figure is based on the idea of exaggeration and amplifies in metaphorical terms the content of an assertion. However, according to Wales,[33] "hyperbole is not the same as telling lies: there is normally no intention to deceive one's listeners, who will no doubt infer the true state of affairs". For Oliver, hyperboles are a way to attract the reader's attention and establish a further connection by reducing distances between cultures and speakers, so that the English readers may feel close to the domain of Italian food.

4. Representing Food for Thoughts, Words and Images

In the attempt to build up the imagery of authenticity, the overall production of meaning in the book benefits from a broad range of stylistic, semiotic and paratextual resources. To approach the way in

[30] Katie Wales, *Personal Pronouns in Present-Day English* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1996), 50.
[31] Leslie Jeffries, *Critical Stylistics* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 93-105.
[32] Yule, *Pragmatics*, 37.
[33] Katie Wales, *Dictionary of Stylistics* (Longman: London, 1995), 222.

which readers process and visualise the contents of the recipes and the other textual and non-textual elements that make up Oliver's book, it is useful to bring in modality, an interdisciplinary notion that "explicitly introduces the viewpoint of the text's producer".[34] Realised by a range of language items such as auxiliary and lexical modal verbs, adverbs and more complex structures, modality is traditionally seen in relation to obligation (deontic modality), desirability (boulomaic modality) and knowledge (epistemic modality). To illuminate such concept, let me quote a longer extract which Oliver uses as an introductory part for the section dedicated to salads:

> In Italy, salads are eaten as a matter of course, very often after the secondo. If you've never been to Italy, some of the recipes in this chapter will reinvent what you perceive as a salad. And if you're not the salady type, you don't know what you're missing. In comparison to Italy, it's horrific to see what the British consider a salad. No wonder lots of people here think they don't like them. If you are one of these people, I hope this chapter helps you to change your view.
>
> (*Jamie's Italy*, 152)

A possible critical interpretation of this excerpt should consider its modalised quality, i.e. the presence of modal structures and the effects they produce in readers. As Gavins points out, "in all types of discourse, human beings frequently generate unrealised and remote text-worlds through language".[35] Very often specific devices and strategies, for example the use of hypothesis, function as triggers through which speakers conceptually construct and speculate on possible alternative worlds. The quotation above once again presents and contrasts two perspectives, the Italian and the British ones, and suggests a number of possible, desirable but so far unrealised worlds. For this purpose, the author employs conditional sentences (three times), perceiving and feeling verbs ("perceive", "hope"), negation ("never", "don't", "no wonder") and collectively these elements envisage an alternative scenario, in which English people are led to change their mind and start appreciating salads.

The book under investigation here is also characterised by the professional photographs taken by David Loftus and Chris Lerry, which with their saturated colours collectively strive to visually index a romanticised, almost 'poetic' image of the country. As scholars such as Kress and van Leeuwen have demonstrated,[36] photos and images do not simply have an aesthetic relevance, but they are also endowed with an inner representational power that contributes to the meaning-making process in discourse, and the text under examination here proves to be no exception. In *Jamie's Italy*, recipes, in fact, are combined with a series of beautiful pictures of sunny landscapes, rural populations (including photos with religious references like those of priests, saints and churches, again typically imagined as part of a certain vision of traditional, authentic and somehow backward southern Italy) and colourful ingredients. The pictorial rendition of Oliver's project triggers a further note of mythologizing inasmuch as it somehow tends to favour picturesque and spectacular elements, almost turned into stereotypes and clichés of a faraway and imaginary Italy. Sometimes there are also striking images of bloody wild game that serve to add a touch of dramatic intensity, although Oliver tries to mitigate their disturbing force by elucidating his editorial choices. Commenting on a photo of a shepherd seeing to a lamb hanging and ready to be slaughtered, he affirms: "I'm highly aware that the picture opposite is both graphic and gruesome, and so I'm going to explain why I decided to use it in the book and also why this whole chapter is quite visually gritty" (210). This quotation and the passage from which it comes operate as a form of hedging, i.e. a technique of "qualification and toning-down"[37] that contextualises the image thanks to a cultural

[34] Jeffries, *Critical Stylistics*, 115.
[35] Joanna Gavins, *Text World Theory* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh U.P., 2007), 118.
[36] Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen, *Reading Images. The Grammar of Visual Design* (London: Routledge, 1997). Unfortunately, due to copyright restrictions, it is not possible to reproduce photos from the book, and as a consequence rather than carrying out a multimodal analysis I will have to limit myself to a purely descriptive approach.
[37] Wales, *Dictionary of Stylistics*, 215.

clarification about the rites of traditional rural cultures and their handling of butchery practices, whose strong impact is acceptable for Oliver because it is situated within a specific and self-balancing cultural milieu.

In these sections it is possible to unveil an 'ecological' significance as well because the author explicitly tackles the sensitive theme of hunting and the consumption of meat, namely practices that were quite customary in old-fashioned societies but that tend to be totally different today due to social and economic world dynamics. Not only does Oliver evoke this sense of a mythicized past, but he also considers the present, in particular criticising the overuse of poor quality and unhealthy meat in Britain: "because the majority of people don't want to see the dead animal that their cut of meat is coming from, big corporation have jumped in to solve the problem – out of sight, out of mind" (120). Since the author has included many meat-based recipes in his book, he feels it is his duty to discuss the question of animal produce and consumption. Against the endless spread of food industries that typically offer low quality, and sometimes even unhealthy products, Oliver suggests a new 'ethical' vision that traces its roots to the original peasant communities, which were regulated by a set of precise norms aimed at maintaining an equilibrium within a territory. To some extent, thus, the ideological stance shown by Oliver in these parts of his volume seems to be positioned near those food books that aim to raise awareness regarding the production, sustainability and consumption of food, and all its moral and critical implications, and that for Shultz[38] express a form of authenticity. However, one may question whether, in spite of Oliver's positive and environmental intentions, the language at work here is, at least to some extent, tinted by an ideological evaluation of key notions such as tradition and authenticity that once again mythologize the past in (un)real reminiscent and nostalgic terms.

5. Conclusions

The manifestations of food discourse that I have briefly examined in this paper pivot around the coterminous aspects of identity, authenticity and circulation that emerge in the constructions of texts and I specifically focused on the genre of recipes. As Jurafsky[39] holds, "a cuisine is a richly structured cultural object, with its component flavor elements and its set of combinatory grammatical principles, learned early and deeply" and the language of food testifies to the changes and transformations of individual and society. Alongside the cardinal issue of identity, I have dealt with the intertwined notions of authenticity and circulation. If 'authentic' is a recurrent word in recipes, and other food-related text-types such as menus and advertising, in reality it can be argued that it refers to a broad, all-encompassing concept that often tends to ignore contacts and transformations, e.g. the meaning of an authentic recipe depends not only on the fact it is passed on through generations but it is also affected by the power of circulation of foods and cultures because new ingredients and trends may introduce changes that eventually generate new traditions, even in linguistic terms. Likewise to what happens with languages, food discourse is thus governed by a variety of dynamics like adoption and transformation of 'new' elements, as well as exchanges and borrowings, which eventually become the norm and not the exception. Jamie Oliver too follows these paradigms, for example when he justifies his intention to include his personal and revised recipe of insalata caprese (salad from Capri): "I like to make mine ... So I wanted to do my take on this brilliant combination" (170). Innovation, elaboration and adaptation are therefore part and parcel of food discourse and they testify to the transformation of gastronomy and its social and cultural role across time and space.

It is almost a truism to affirm that worldwide Italian food is frequently reinvented practically, but also linguistically, with fanciful eye-catching words, for example in the names of the elaborated dishes

[38] Shultz, "On Establishing a More Authentic Relationship with Food", 234.
[39] Jurafsky, *The Language of Food*, 184.

offered by Italianate cafes and restaurants, but there are cultural, social and commercial reasons behind such acts and in the British context Kate Fox[40] holds that "when it comes to food, we behave like teenage fashion victims". Jamie Oliver's position in such domain is more complex as he tries to mediate between the stereotyped image of Italy and Italian foodscapes, in a certain measure still coloured by a kind of romantic allure, and the reality of the country and its culinary traditions that he personally experienced and appreciated. His recipes thus represent texts, or narratives to borrow Cotter's reading,[41] that evoke, construct and challenge identity and the sense of community since they are meant not only to provide instructions about how to cook certain dishes, but also to illustrate a kind of cultural journey within and across a country and ultimately build up text worlds and representations of the world.

In conclusion, I claim that the materials I have here considered go beyond a mere informative or procedural nature, providing details about the ingredients required for a dish, as they also try to persuade readers and turn them into customers by ideologically constructing cultural and imaginary worlds, and thus implicitly bargaining/negotiating new identities, as in the case of the linguistic and photographic representation of Italy as a traditional southern destination for food enthusiasts. In thus doing, they partake of a broader social practice that establishes a sense of identity through linguistic forms that break clear-cut categories of belonging and otherness by substituting authenticity with imagined geographies and hybrid identities. Perianova,[42] with Anderson in mind, stresses that "social identity is significantly a question of imagined communities, of imagining oneself to share a common history of destiny or fate with thousands or millions of others one can never know". The same argument is shared by Lakoff[43] in her analysis of the language of food that aims to show "human identity as a continual work in progress, constructed and altered by the totality of life experience".

[40] Fox, *Watching the English*, 300.
[41] Cotter, "Claiming a Piece of the Pie".
[42] Perianova, "Identity and Food", 27.
[43] Lakoff, "Identity a la Carte", 142.

Janet Giltrow

Relevance Theory for Fiction

Abstract: Relevance Theory has been dismissed as inapplicable to literary genres first for its failure to come up with interesting and plausible new interpretations and second for its demonstrations' depending on contexts that are personal and immediate compared to the timeless public stages of the literary utterance. The first complaint is easily addressed: RT is not a hermeneutic tool; the laboriousness and banality of putative interpretations are not evidence in themselves of RT's incapacity to explain the inferential conditions of literary genres. The second complaint is addressed first by revisiting the typical demonstration of Relevance principles and finding that interlocutors' implicature-generating indirectness is a communicative efficiency insofar as it enriches shared consciousness. The ostensive-inferential model is then taken towards the literary field by first demonstrating its working in a (simple) expression in visual art.

Beyond these ground-level demonstrations, the chapter recognises problems with RT's relying on Grice's 'intended meaning' – for intention comes up against the 'intentional fallacy' in literary appreciation. Suggesting that a more pragmatic sense of intention could ease some fallacy fears, the chapter brings to the table Taylor's[1] reminder of Grice's distinction between natural and non-natural meaning, and, further, proposes that the inferential structure of literary genres produces a depth of field so fertile that it may be a clue to if not strict evidence of Sperber and Wilson's[2] 'dedicated module'. The chapter concludes by proposing intertextuality and, in addition, indirectness itself as projects for exploratory applications of RT to literary utterance, and then offers three very brief case studies, from Austen,[3] Zola,[4] and Dreiser.[5]

Keywords: *relevance; intention; intentional fallacy; dedicated module; ostensive-inferential*

1. Introduction

As the editors of this volume note, it is not clear that all pragmatic theories are equally appropriate to all inquiries into language and communication. One pragmatic model, Relevance Theory (RT), has recently been dismissed as inapplicable to legal language[6] on the very grounds for this volume on aesthetic genres: that is, context. Relevance Theory, it is contended, cannot account for language use in what is said to be the relatively impoverished context of legal genres. Often focussing on conversations between well-acquainted speakers, Relevance Theory can seem customised for situations where there is a lot of overlapping consciousness amongst participants – a 'rich' context to draw on in making inferences. Enduring through time and across many readings, the legal text is said to be 'autonomous', or context-independent, and the same could be said for literary genres: enduring through time and across readings by unforeseeable readers and readings; unfettered but also unsupported by context.

[1] Paul A. Taylor, "Meaning, Expression, and the Interpretation of Literature", *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 72.4 (2014), 379-391.
[2] Dan Sperber and Deidre Wilson, "Pragmatics, Modularity and Mind-Reading", *Mind & Language*, 17.1-2 (February-April 2002), 3-23.
[3] Jane Austen, *Sense and Sensibility* (Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 2004).
[4] Émile Zola, *Germinal*, trans. by Peter Collier (Oxford: Oxford U.P., 1993).
[5] Theodore Dreiser, *Sister Carrie* (New York: Doubleday, 1900).
[6] Brian Slocum, "Pragmatics and Legal Texts: How Best to Account for Gaps Between Literal Meaning and Communicative Meaning", in Janet Giltrow and Dieter Stein, eds., *The Pragmatic Turn in Law* (Boston and Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton, 2017), 137-140.

This chapter begins (§1) by reporting some objections to Relevance Theory's being applied to literature and then, in reply, (§2) scripts a version of Relevance Theory for approach to aesthetic genres through (§3) the ostensive-inferential model. I suggest the fitness of the model for an exemplary literary genre like haiku (§4), and the use of RT, including the 'dedicated module' (§5), in some standing problems in literary interpretation (§6). Throughout, however, we are aware of the hostility of traditional literary values to Relevance Theory's application to literature: we confront the 'intentional fallacy' (§7) for its expression of those values. Throughout, we are also aware that RT is, for literary study, a methodological misfit. The final section (§8) suggests some early, tentative steps towards methodological fitness, and offers – in a most humbly speculative, tentative spirit – a few examples of Relevance analysis of literary fiction.

2. Objections to Relevance Theory's Application to Literary Fields

In her pragmatic stylistics of literary fiction, Black[7] dismisses Relevance Theory, rejecting in particular Pilkington's[8] claims for RT's applicability to literature. At best RT in literary study only mimics what 'any successful reader' does anyway,[9] and at worst follows the 'institutionalised' trend towards "major searches for weak effects".[10] It is true that Pilkington[11] at that time supported RT's role in literary studies in terms like these, familiar from Sperber and Wilson's inaugural proposals,[12] but not limited to these) for Relevance Theory. Pilkington, for example, describes "the richest poetic thoughts" arising from the activating of a "wide network of contextual assumptions".[13]

While Black provides a good example of literary studies' resistance to Relevance Theory, her rejection does not decide the case. For one thing, Black seems to take 'weak' in 'weak effects' in the folk sense of negligible or ineffective rather than in its technical sense as a measure of grounds for inference. In Black's folk sense of 'weak', RT leads literary study to ludicrous lengths for results so frail they may not even survive the return trip. Moreover, like other Relevance-Theory sceptics, Black mistakes the literary job of RT to be to produce interpretations, as if RT had been introduced as a way of finding meanings that would otherwise be out of reach. The actual role of Relevance Theory is as a potential method of inquiry into the production and reception of literary genres, and into the range of language behaviours or customs which count as 'interpretation'.

Black is not alone is mistaking RT for a hermeneutical tool. Soon after the second edition of *Relevance Theory* was published, Green[14] acknowledged RT's application to fields outside literature – "linguistics, literary studies, psychology and philosophy"[15] – but also saw comparatively 'minute' effect in literary studies. The effects are only small because "Relevance Theory cannot tell us what a text means".[16] It is of no help in text analysis and "cannot lead to stimulating readings of literary texts",[17] and when it is used for interpretation it can be an especially poor tool, inducing readings of "the most naive and intentionalist kind".[18] Like other linguistic theories which Green reviews, Relevance Theory

[7] Elizabeth Black, *Pragmatic Stylistics* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh U.P., 2006).
[8] Adrian Pilkington, *Poetic Effects: A Relevance Theory Perspective* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2000).
[9] Black, *Pragmatic Stylistics*, 150.
[10] Ibid., 83.
[11] Pilkington, *Poetic Effects*.
[12] Dan Sperber and Deidre Wilson, *Relevance: Communication and Cognition*, Second Edition (Oxford and Cambridge: Blackwell, [1986] 1995).
[13] Pilkington, *Poetic Effects*, 118.
[14] Keith Green, "Butterflies, Wheels, and the Search for Literary Relevance", *Language and Literature* 6.2 (1997), 133-138.
[15] Cit. in Sperber and Wilson, *Relevance*, 225.
[16] Ibid., 134.
[17] Ibid., 137.
[18] Ibid., 134.

is not up to the job of literary interpretation, and is especially tainted by the Intended Meaning of Grice's Speaker. (We return to *intention* below, in its being driven out by the New Criticism in particular, and by 'close reading' generally.) Green is not unconvincing in disparaging statements of literary meaning produced by RT in its first long decade. But the main point here is not that the statements are amateurish and unsophisticated in comparison with literary-critical reasoning but that these RT critics are mistaken in taking Relevance Theory as an engine of interpretation, or in evaluating it as such.

Both of these problems with the application of Relevance Theory to literary genres can be addressed. Folk senses of 'weak' could be replaced by more technical ones, and Relevance Theorists could refrain from making statements of literary meaning as finales to their analyses. Not only are statements of literary meaning – 'readings' – expressions of a highly cultivated professional domain and rarely produced successfully by outsiders, but RT itself suggests that it is time to rethink interpretation, paraphrase, and other vehicles for re-routing indirect meaning. We come back to the problems of 'readings' below.

3. Relevance Theory – A Script

A third problem is Relevance Theory's depending on invented examples. Green's[19] dismissing of Relevance Theory and its literary applications, following the second edition of *Relevance*,[20] begins with a Peter-and-Mary joke[21] caricaturing Sperber and Wilson's means of demonstrating Relevance as a core principle of communication. Typically, Peter and Mary – or, let's say, Ann and Bob, for our purposes – are talking together. Ann and Bob, like Peter and Mary, share a home, a circle of friends, an engagement calendar, and to a certain degree a frame of mind. Their exchanges are not exactly small talk, which orients strangers to one another, but still in what Bakhtin in 'Speech Genres'[22] called 'primary' genres: they are informal in the sense of being structured below the level of 'secondary' speech genres, which gear speech to a regularised situation, such as an interview or a sermon or a marketplace transaction. Tethered to an informal or casual, continuing, familiar but not rote context, Ann and Bob's interaction is often exemplified by either Ann or Bob responding to the other indirectly – as in Mary answering Peter about her changing a lightbulb by reporting a headache – and leaving the Hearer to infer the Speaker's intention: that is, the Relevance of the headache in the lightbulb context.

Like Mary, our Bob also answers questions indirectly. By following the indirection, we can lay out Relevance Theory towards its possible use in study of aesthetic genres.

> Ann: Where's Carl?
> Bob: Wednesday is two-for-one.

What does Bob's answer have to do with Carl's whereabouts? Bob and Ann do both know the day is Wednesday, so at least Ann can infer Bob's intending to mean that it is today that is 'two-for-one'. But this is not what Ann asked.

Bob's reply could be deemed perverse. It does not even seem to be about Carl. In Grice's original terms, it could be deemed uncooperative, and flouting of conversational maxims. Yet Bob offers it in good faith, as an answer, and Ann accepts it as such. The good faith is a Presumption of Relevance: the

[19] Green, "Butterflies".
[20] Sperber and Wilson, *Relevance*.
[21] Q. How many relevance theorists does it take to change a lightbulb?
A. Three including Peter and Mary, who at some unspecified point says: Peter: Are you going to change that lightbulb? Mary: I have a headache (Green, "Butterflies", 133).
[22] Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, ed. by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, trans. by Vern W. McGee, Slavic Series no. 8 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986).

act of Bob's utterance presumes that what is said will matter to Ann – will, that is, more or less readily improve her knowledge of the world as framed by the question.

RT sceptics may see in this exchange simply Ann's having to figure out Bob's intention – seemingly encrypted, made teasingly obscure, like the poem in English class. Carried over to poems and novels, the inferential structure of the Ann-and-Bob scene could then make literature look like a one-way, unitary experience: figuring out what the writer secretly means, according to, as Green says, a 'naive intentionalism'.

Acting for Relevance Theory, Ann and Bob actually tell a different story. Their exchange is neither uni-directional nor unitary. First, the meaning intended by Bob *depends on*, is involved with, *what Ann knows*, and what Ann knows Bob knows. If only Bob knew that 'two-for-one' is a special offer at The Yellow Dog neighbourhood craft-beer pub – the answer would be perverse to the point of nonsensical. Even with Bob knowing that Ann knows about The Yellow Dog's marketing, he must also know that Ann knows of his brother Carl's taste for beer, or, at least, that she knows of his, Bob's, estimate of this taste.[23]

Second, while the inference to be drawn – the 'strong implicature' – is that <Carl is at The Yellow Dog> – *that is not what Bob said.* His intended meaning depends on Ann's activated knowledge of the world: his reply has 'switched on' Ann's assumptions about Carl, about The Yellow Dog, about beer: in other words, the indirect response has brought much more to the table than the direct response would have done. In some ways, the indirect response could be more efficient than 'he's at The Yellow Dog'. It says more.

And, third, the 'more' is indeterminate: it cannot be paraphrased; it is not unitary. Stretched or shared unevenly across two mentalities, the assumptions switched on by Bob's reply could support a range of inferences, some of which may cantilever beyond the Speaker's Intention, or the Hearer's grasping of that Intention.

Further, some objections to RT's application to literature – Black, above, could be an example – find implausibly laborious and cognitively costly the long 'searches' said to go on while contextual assumptions are sought and tested for their readiness to work with what has been said, for some Relevance, some cognitive benefit worth the trouble. I have taken out of this account <search> and introduced <switch on> to be better able to characterise the rapid-fire responses to the presumption of relevance in utterance itself – and to be ready for the 'dedicated module' at which Sperber and Wilson arrive in 2002 (see below).[24] Bob's answer 'switches on' certain assumptions for Ann, brings attention to them, makes them 'manifest', to use the term from RT.

Ann and Bob's exchange illustrates the inferential nature of communication.[25] From Bob's stating that Wednesday is two-for-one, Ann infers that Carl is at The Yellow Dog, the inference deriving from assumptions shared across two consciousnesses – assumptions about Carl, about beer sales, even about the time of day. The exchange plays out in what people call a 'rich context', one stored with knowledge shared in proximity and in its mutual reach (what Ann knows Bob knows that she knows). That kind of context is not presumed by the public genres – legal, literary, journalistic, for example. And unlike Bob,

[23] As anyone who is troubling to follow this will already be saying to themselves, there are many other steps which could be inserted – assumptions about marketing alcohol, about alcohol, etc., as well as the mutuality which should be inserted at each step – Bob knows Ann knows Bob knows.... I recognise them, but leave them out for conceptual as well as practical reasons.

[24] Dan Sperber and Deidre Wilson, "Pragmatics, Modularity and Mind-Reading".

[25] In its indirectness – veering sharply away from the surface topic <Carl's whereabouts> – Bob's reply is a pronounced case of inference. But RT, e.g., Robyn Carston, *Thoughts and Utterances: The Pragmatics of Explicit Communication* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002) and related pragmatics, e.g., François Récanati, *Literal Meaning*, (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 2004) establish that all communication is inferential, not only cases with a glaring gap between utterances or between context and utterance. For example, had Bob answered Ann with 'He's at the Yellow Dog', Ann would still have to infer Bob's intention to mean <buying and drinking beer inside The Yellow Dog> – not standing outside or working behind the bar or living in the upstairs flat, and so on.

Speakers in these genres will not have a Hearer's question to prompt them, as Bob has Ann's, and unlike Ann, Hearers will not have framed the scope of attention with their own turn as Speaker. But even in obviously interactive genres – job interviews, medical examination by a specialist, classroom or courtroom questioning – the 'rich' proximity of Ann's and Bob's frames of mind will be missing. There will not be the same kind of warrant for indirect answers – "I have a headache"; "Wednesday is two-for-one" – the same kind of resource for implicature.

Building on the common ground of Peter and Mary, or Ann and Bob, Relevance Theory can seem to be an explanation suited for households, workplaces or playing fields, and particularly ill-suited to the literary field.[26] Relevance Theory has seemed to be too coarsely familiar to suit literary situations. Literary readers do not have questions like Peter's or Ann's for Mary and Bob, and are unknown to writers in literary genres, just as literary authors are strangers to their readers. But what if the literary writer enjoys renown – contemporary celebrity or historical reputation? Why can't readers infer the Speaker's Intended Meaning, as Ann infers Bob's?

Intention is a hazardous material in the literary field, regarded as toxic to reasoning about the aesthetic. Green is not alone in disdaining 'naive intentionalism' but, rather, joins a long tradition of contempt for finding 'the meaning' of a poem – 'what the poet is saying' – or the moral of the story. But does RT's *intended meaning* really rank beside the stating of the moral of the story? Let's check the measure of Speaker intention.

With his indirect response, Bob mobilises assumptions in Ann's consciousness and in the mental space between himself and Ann. Carl's thirst for beer, or for company; Carl's improvidence, or stinginess, for example. As these materials switch on, so may some understandings about what is usually said about Carl, or left unsaid. Since *Bob said* "Wednesday is two-for-one", he must in some way *intend* to activate these assumptions: this is his intention. Meanwhile, Relevance Theory distinguishes between the implicature <Carl is at the Yellow Dog>, said to be a 'strong implicature', and other implicatures which might be derived from materials drawn on to connect Carl's whereabouts with 'Wednesday is two-for-one'. These are said to be 'weak', and have been, from the earliest presentations of RT, called 'poetic effects'. Although the distinctions between strong and weak depend a lot on degrees of 'responsibility' – the Speaker is more responsible for 'strong', the Hearer has to take some responsibility for 'weak' – these materials have been *selected by Bob*: they are *intended*. Inferring Bob's 'intention' is, in the RT version, a speculative venture, an "experiment in estimating the consciousness of another",[27] as is Bob's intending itself.

There must be an efficiency to the otherwise costly indirectness. Bob's roundabout efforts in arranging for the strong implicature and Ann's in inferring his intention – tracking his indirection – are repaid when the context for thinking (together) about Carl's whereabouts is enriched by the assumptions switched on by the indirect reply. It is not only that (weak) inferences array themselves across a range in their uncertainty. It's that what Bob intends Ann to infer *could not be said any other way*.[28] There is no paraphrase for Bob's intention, no proposition to translate his meaning, even though his utterance may make Ann ponder, and respond like-minded in turn – "Carl can't resist a free beer" – on her own 'responsibility', as Relevance Theorists say. Or she might report to another person the gist of what Bob said – "He said Carl was, as expected, at the pub. You know how stingy Carl is!" – but this is an up-take of Bob's intention, re-intended for another audience.

[26] Metaphor may once have presented a potentially prestigious literary connection for Relevance Theory. However, by 2008 Sperber and Wilson were 'deflating' the distinctions of figurative language, and reducing the value of metaphor for RT demonstrations.

[27] Janet Giltrow, "Form Alone: The Supreme Court of Canada Reading Historical Treaties", in Natasha Artemeva and Aviva Freedman, eds., *Genre Studies around the Globe* (North American and International: Tratfford Publications, 2015), 207-224.

[28] Laughingstocks as Peter and Mary may be, Mary's indirect reply to Peter on the matter of the light bulb, *may speak volumes* – as "No, I am not going to change that light bulb" would not.

Moreover, Bob's intention is framed by his entertaining of what Ann can have in mind. Bob's utterance *depends on another mind for its meaning*, for it to have meaning. And the other mind is not matched with his as if along a telepathic wire or by means of a code. It is off-set. Can the same be said of the aesthetic utterance? Does it depend on another mind in the same way? We will keep this question open while we look at the model of communication on which Relevance Theory is based.

4. The Ostensive-inferential Model

Scripted in Relevance-Theoretic terms, Ann and Bob establish the inferential dimension of communication. As Relevance Theorists often remind us, the uttered sentence is only evidence of a meaning intended by the speaker, not the intended meaning itself. From this condition unfolds the completion of RT's ostensive-inferential model of communication. The uttering of the sentence – the use of the sounds and structures of language – is an ostensive action: Bob intentionally 'shows' to Ann these sounds, which are grounds for her inferring meaning.

We might get more to grasp in the 'showing' part of what Bob is doing if we imagine that, following Ann's "Where is Carl?", Bob says nothing. Rather than speak, he picks up a flyer which has arrived through the mail slot – a flyer picturing The Yellow Dog and announcing weekday special prices. Because Bob is recipient rather than producer of this message, Ann can't take for granted *Bob's intention* that she infer a meaning from his picking up the flyer[29] – as she could from hearing him speak. Re-using a found object rather than composing a fresh utterance,[30] Bob has to give Ann grounds for presuming his intention to communicate rather than simply to read the flyer for his own information. He has to catch her eye, perhaps, or wave the flyer in front of her. As either Speaker or waver, Bob is showing Ann something relevant to her question.

The ostensiveness of what Bob is doing when he says "Wednesday is two-for-one" might be still more easily grasped when we find, in another part of town, Dave, a graphic artist. Dave has issued an edition of etchings of a beer-and-bar image and the wording <two-for-one-Wednesdays>; he has framed one of his prints and put it in the window of his studio. This ostensive action – framing and displaying (rather than pushing through the letter slot) – would prompt passersby and visitors to the studio to recognise an intention to mean, and a Presumption of Relevance. With that recognition, in the minds of some of these visitors or a few of the passersby, certain assumptions will be switched on – about imagery, font, technique, colour, line, and other materials of design, as well as Dave's reputation and artist's statements. And to the minds of some people come assumptions about traditions of selling and drinking beer, or of the contemporary flyer genre. The intention to mean – including its presumption of relevance – is unmistakable – but the Speaker's meaning itself in so many words can hardly be captured, let alone measured on the strong-to-weak scale, even as 'poetic effects'. It may take special training to infer intentions from this kind of ostensive action, and follow up with statements: "Dave, a local artist, has published a print edition suggesting that today's mediation of commercial imagery appropriates manipulative traditions of conviviality....". Less specialised training however ensures that passersby generally 're-key', in Goffman's[31] term, the action of advertising a half-price beverage, and they don't infer Dave's intention to provide a beer, or two.

Relevance Theory detractors see RT, with its ostensive-inferential model, as not fit to leave the house, not ready for public appearances let alone aesthetic performance. It is true that producers of the

[29] Just seeing the flyer, without Bob's intervention, might answer Ann's question, reminding her of bargains and beer in the context of Carl's whereabouts. But the inference would *not be the same* as the one drawn from Bob's reply. That one is derived from conditions of mutual consciousness, including the condition of Bob's intention.

[30] One could feasibly argue that <Wednesday is two-for-one> reports the speech of the flyer designer, or of a flyer, or another drinker, or possibly Carl himself – that the words are not 'original' to Bob.

[31] Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1974).

flyer do not know the flyer's recipients the way Bob knows Ann; nor do their recipients know them as Ann knows Bob. But Relevance Theory still contends capably with the flyer genre. Coming through the mail slot, the flyer can be immediately discarded as irrelevant by someone who does not drink beer *or* by someone who may one day, in years to come, consider choosing a day of the week for going for a drink with a friend – but it is not worth the effort to keep the flyer in anticipation of that future possibility. The flyer is not relevant, and goes in the bin, for the effort/effects quotient is not favourable. Or the flyer may arrive in the letterbox of someone planning to change the venue of their Wednesday-night drink with friends. In this case, the recipient may derive the strong implicature that they should go to the place advertised. Or the flyer may arrive in Carl's letterbox – and offer no effects for effort, for Carl already knows the sales pitch and has derived inferences. Relevance Theory accounts for the flyer genre, and the 'response rate' in direct-mail advertising.

Relevance Theory also accounts for the display of Dave's etching – an aesthetic rather than marketplace genre, composed with unidentified but not entirely unknown viewers in mind and distributed publicly. For some of those whose visual field is entered by Dave's etching, the image and wording promise only the most remote, even unimaginably unreachable cognitive effects, not worth any investment of processing efforts. Others (many fewer) pause to gaze, entertain thoughts, put a lot of effort into inferring intentions of meaning and further implications. Another category of viewer might put much less effort into looking at the etching, their glance may linger but entertain only a few thoughts (colour, font, texture) and derive fewer inferences as to the artist's intentions and fewer or no materials for further inference about genre or the echo of sales pitch, and so on.

Can literature be usefully thought of as ostensive-inferential, something shown, with an intention to mean? Or is it misleading to demonstrate ostension through visual art – the framed print on display? Is literature like this – reticent and indirect but intending? Or is the coinciding of the visual show with the verbal ostension just an artefact of theory?

5. Literature and the Ostensive-inferential Model: The Case of Haiku

Even as literary values can be offended by expressions of Relevance Theory, there are also some potential sympathies, at just this intersection of the visual showing and the verbal ostension. The haiku is one genre at this intersection.

Haiku was of great interest to the literary modernism which also fiercely attacked the 'fallacy' of 'intentionalism' – attacked the notion that it was the writer's intended meaning that should be inferred from the literary utterance. Haiku[32] is said to be "the use of a visual language that regularly juxtaposes concrete yet incongruous images; and a meaning that arises through this play of images in a way that is suggestive rather than deliberate or explicit"[33]. How far do the terms for haiku line up with the RT terms demonstrated by Bob's utterance? Both the haiku and the exemplifying exchange between Bob and Ann are brief. Is Bob's utterance 'incongruous'? We could say that it is incongruous in its indirectness seeming not to hear Carl as the topic and talking about weekday specials. We could say that in each case the 'incongruity'/indirectness is a prompt to inference, to find the relevance, the connection. Like the haiku, Bob is 'suggestive', rather than 'explicit; rather than one meaning or the sole meaning, Ann gets a strong implicature escorted by weak ones, for which she takes 'responsibility'. While both incongruity and indirectness could be substantially or briefly challenging to the Hearer, neither should be dumbfounding (and if they are, RT could explain the nature of the difficulty). If, following Relevance Theory, we say that Bob shows an intention to communicate simply by the act of speaking itself, we

[32] My account here of haiku owes everything to Hoyt Long and Richard Jean So, "Literary Pattern Recognition: Modernism between Close Reading and Machine Learning", *Critical Inquiry* (2016), 235-267.
[33] Earl Miner, cit. in Long and So, "Literary Pattern Recognition", 239.

must be able to say something like this for the haiku: it uses language, it is 'framed', so to speak, for viewing. However, rather than address, as Bob's utterance does, one Hearer, it is exhibited for public showing. What happens to the Presumption of Relevance in this difference? Such a question is feasible because the idea from Relevance Theory on ostensive-inferential communication and the idea from the New Criticism and Modernist poetics do line up. And the parallels in themselves are worth contemplating for they show up despite the forces pushing these tracks apart. For Relevance Theory in its Gricean traditions and in its innovations privileges Speakers and their meanings, whereas the New Critics did the opposite: the quotation above, on haiku's meaning 'arising', is only one example of the New Critics' erasing of writers' subjectivities from the conceptualisation of interpretation.

6. Aesthetic Genres and the Dedicated Module

The critical conception of haiku, at least, shows potential alignments with the ostensive-inferential model. But the literary perspective on Relevance Theory generally sees only RT's demonstration in the invented couples, and laborious parsing of the unsaid premises of their interaction, and clumsy paraphrase to the truth-conditional standards once in effect for reasoning in pragmatics. These are not pleasing to the literary ear.

Relevance Theory meanwhile points to a way around Peter and Mary, and the awkward audit of their familiarity. Fifteen years after RT's book-length début,[34] declared for a further specialisation of the mind's modularity: the human brain has evolved a dedicated capacity to support communication – a cognitive infrastructure, that is, to support Ann and Bob in their inferences and estimates. In linguistic-pragmatic terms, the dedicated module could be regarded as down the road from earlier way points: Background Knowledge, Common Ground, Mutual Knowledge, Given and New, and Presupposition broadly. The way for the dedicated module is also cleared by Theory of Mind,[35] and 'mind-reading'.

Can literary-leaning pragmaticists – or literary specialists themselves – follow the path past 'poetic effects' to the dedicated module? Few would have disciplinary expertise to work with the module, and pragmaticists may be better outfitted for ground-level inquiries into language use than work in neural regions. And in the event that the evolutionary generalisations about the module were taken up, they could seem – to literary specialists – to echo once traditional but now problematic avowals of the universality of literature as expression of the human condition.

Acknowledging these concerns, I suggest nevertheless that *the* very *fact of the claim* for modularity – how the claim itself comes about, the circumstances it entertains – is worth recognising for pragmatic approaches to literary genres. Sperber and Wilson propose this modularity on grounds which are sympathetic to aesthetic values.

First they establish that people could not take the ordinary path to inferential conclusions to get to implicatures. The path would be too long, the process too laborious. Similarly, RT-sceptics have objected to fully worked-out Peter-and-Mary premises and deductions as implausible. So, can the 'mind-reading' module take over from the general inferential capacity? The mind-reading module supports observing, for example, persons taking their places in a bus queue: we nearly instantly infer their

[34] Sperber and Wilson, "Pragmatics, Modularity and Mind-Reading".

[35] For non-specialists, Theory of Mind was most famously demonstrated by K. H. Onishi and R. Baillargeon, "Do 15-month-old Infants Understand False Beliefs?", *Science*, 308 (2005), 255-258; Heinz Wimmer and Josef Perner, "Beliefs about Beliefs: Representation and Constraining Function of Wrong Beliefs in Young Children", *Cognition*, 13.1 (1983), 103-128 – for the 'verbal' demonstration of ToM; see also Luca Surian, Stefania Caldi and Dan Sperber, "Attribution of Beliefs by 13-month-old Infants", *Psychological Science*, 18.7 (2007), 580-586, when very young children, pre-verbal, under experimental conditions saw a puppet observing the location of a prize – a desirable object; then witnessed the puppet leaving the room and, in its absence, the researcher moving the prize, putting it in a drawer. When, next, the puppet returned to the scene and went right to the drawer, the child subjects exhibited signs of consternation: *that's not right!*

motives, goals, preferences; the action makes sense. But the persons are not trying to tell us, or anyone else, anything. Crucially, Sperber and Wilson argue that joining a bus queue is not the same order of action as speaking to someone. The communicative act involves the speaker's anticipating the Hearer's frame of mind: it involves, that is, the Presumption of Relevance. The mind-reading model is not geared to go through the estimates of mutual consciousness.

Few pragmaticists, let alone literary specialists, will be prepared to follow Relevance Theory to Sperber and Wilson's answer to this problem: a 'dedicated module', one evolutionarily designed to handle the requirements and output of the ostensive-inferential model. Pragmaticists, literary-leaning or not, have no methodology for testing or applying the proposal for the dedicated module. Yet their methodologies do establish, over and over, the inferential nature of communication and, at the same time, do not support the unrealistically laborious outlay in premises and deductions. Even as a black box to pragmaticists, the dedicated module marks the location of a cognitive architecture which can house minds' estimates of one another, as well as estimates of those estimates. With such accommodation, whatever their neural design, there are not only facilities for Ann and Bob's domestic inferences but also for those involved in public genres, including aesthetic ones.

The dedicated module offers a prominent neural home to intention and interpretation, but neither pragmaticists nor literary specialists have the keys to these new premises. They could however turn to the module's blueprint – its functional design – to get beyond not only the invented couples but also some stubborn notions about what Relevance Theory calls 'underdeterminacy'. One is that inference is just a follow-up to decoding, the consolation prize when explications fails. Even a pragmaticist such as Black[36] takes a fall-back position on inference and the underdeterminacy of the sentence. Inference, she says, can be necessary because it would take too many words to say exactly what we mean: without the assumptions supporting implicature, communication would be "long-winded and clumsy".[37]

Neither a word-saving measure nor, in aesthetic genres, the stylish means of only 'suggesting' and not saying, or even of inserting hidden meanings, underdeterminacy gets a fresh brief from the module dedicated to managing the resources of mutual knowledge for interpretation. Switching on assumptions and assigning them – in varying degrees and along varying trajectories of experience and affiliation – to interlocutors, the proposed dedicated module creates a depth of field for meaning, both everyday and aesthetic.[38]

7. Problems of Interpretation

Before trying to reconcile Speaker's Intention with the anti-intentionalism of close reading, and then suggesting avenues for Relevance-Theoretic inquiry into literary fiction, I will point to an area where aesthetics has already picked up pragmatics. Taylor[39] has taken Grice to problems of interpretation in literature, and, looking back with him to Grice's 'Meaning',[40] we can see the principle of ostension already at work.

Grice distinguishes between 'natural' meanings and non-natural meanings. Natural meaning is what one might infer from independent observation. For example, from a very long queue at the bus stop, one might infer that the bus is not on time. This is a 'natural' meaning: no one is *showing* the queue in order

[36] Black, *Pragmatic Stylistics*.
[37] Ibid., 81.
[38] Discussing the pragmatics of genres of fiction, Janet Giltrow, "Pragmatics of Genres of Fiction", in Miriam A. Locher and Andreas H. Jucker, eds., *Pragmatics of Fiction* (Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton, 2017), 55-92, suggests that overhearing may be a 'fundamental condition' of fiction. In calling on the dedicated module, this condition would construct depth of field, especially through the complexities of Reported Speech.
[39] Taylor, "Meaning, Expression, and the Interpretation of Literature".
[40] Herbert Paul Grice, "Meaning" [1948, 1957], in Grice, *Studies in the Way of Words* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P., 1989).

that an inference be drawn. Non-natural meaning, on the other hand, is inferred from, in the broadest sense, people's showing of things to other people, for inference, utterance being the central category of such showing. So, for an 'utterer' A to have meant something, is equivalent to "A intended the utterance of *x* to produce some effect in an audience by means of the recognition of this intention";[41] "for *x* to have meantNN anything, not merely must it have been 'uttered' with the intention of inducing a certain belief but also the utterer must have intended an 'audience' to recognize the intention behind the utterance".[42] Grice's reasoning around intention stayed close to problems of disambiguation of sense: "where there is doubt about which of two or more things an utterer wishes to convey" we turn to "context" and "and ask which of the alternatives would be relevant to other things he is saying or doing".[43] His example is basic: choice between a bicycle *pump* and other *pump* as a fire rages. But the terms of Grice's distinction lead straight to RT's ostensive-inferential model: *intention* and *recognition* of the intention.

> Bob tells Ann that all the umbrellas have gone missing from the hall stand and that he himself had just recently replenished the household's supply of umbrellas. Simply by addressing Ann with this pair of statements, Bob activates the Presumption of Relevance, and, under the same presumption, Ann will estimate Bob's intention, including the connection between the two statements. From the pair of statements, uttered by Bob, Ann derives the implicature: <Bob has done everything he can to ensure a good supply of umbrellas while others have in their negligence defeated his efforts> attributing to it a high degree of strength, knowing Bob. This is an *internal* and *non-natural* meaning: Bob intended this meaning to be derived from his utterance. Ann however may infer further *what Bob did not intend*, for example, <Bob is accusatory and self-righteous>. This is a natural ('external') meaning derived from the occasion of the utterance and not from a communicative intention.

When RT's ostensive-inferential model is sharpened with Grice's distinguishing between two types of inferred meaning, there is an opportunity for contributing to discussion of problems of literary interpretation.

Taylor applies Grice's terms to a standing problem in literary interpretation, exemplified by Jules Verne's *The Mysterious Island*, and racism discernible in that novel (following Carroll).[44] Against claims that the novel cannot be interpreted as racist because Verne did not intend racism – intended, instead, a sympathetic representation of African Americans – Taylor suggests that the novel's racism is a natural meaning: it is 'direct' (rather than 'interactional') expression of "implicit feelings and attitude under the influence of which Verne composed the work".[45] Just as Bob does not show Ann – remind her of – his work with the household's umbrellas so that, recognising his intention, she will infer that he is a self-righteous scold, Verne did not compose the novel to enable inference about his own racialist outlook. This example may show that, while the natural/non-natural meaning distinction is useful to literary studies, it may also be too cut-and-dried as to intention. Relevance Theory's scale of strong-to-weak implicature may help with this, to allow further gradations of meaning in *The Mysterious Island*: after all, if Verne arranged this ostensive-inferential situation, can his intentions be exculpated from every implication?

[41] Grice, "Meaning", 220.
[42] Ibid., 217.
[43] Ibid., 222.
[44] Noël Carroll, "Art, Intention, and Conversation", in Gary Iseminger, ed., *Intention and Interpretation* (Temple University Press, 1991), 97-131; Noël Carroll, "Anglo-American Aesthetics and Contemporary Criticism: Intention and the Hermeneutics of Suspicion", *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 51 (1993), 245-252.
[45] Taylor, "Meaning, Expression, and the Interpretation of Literature", 389.

Relevance Theory could also refine treatment of 'intertextuality', an often noticed feature of literature. Taylor[46] works with the example of some lines from a poem resembling or partly repeating lines from Shakespeare. The reader could surmise that the resemblance is 'accidental' – or perhaps that it draws unwittingly from the public fund of often repeated but seldom attributed literary quotations, and surmise further that no allusion is to be recognised or inference to be drawn from the fact of repetition. Relevance Theory could take the case further, past just the fact of allusion. Estimating the consciousness of the Speaker, the Hearer might estimate the likelihood that the Speaker knows the words as Shakespeare's; the likelihood that the Speaker can accurately estimate the Hearer's knowledge of Shakespeare, and so on. If the wording is to be recognised as Shakespearean and that is the extent of the recognition, what is to be inferred? Is it only the 'allusion', as Taylor says – shared but limited knowledge of Shakespeare – that is relevant? Or does the Speaker's estimate specify more narrowly – and accurately if the Hearer recognises the wording as from *The Merchant of Venice*? Assumptions about *The Merchant of Venice* thus switch on for contextual effect. On the Speaker's part, estimates may have to be made as to *how well* the Hearer knows Shakespeare and *The Merchant of Venice*, to infer the intention; the Hearer meanwhile estimating how well the Speaker knows the extent of the Hearer's knowledge of Shakespeare, and *The Merchant of Venice*. In the absence of such grounds, is it natural meaning that Hearers resort to, drawing inferences on their own responsibility? Or could there be a special case of 'weak implicature' where Speaker and Hearer share responsibility for some meanings? For example, say the Hearer has more specifics in mind from *The Merchant of Venice* than the Speaker actively contemplated: it is still the Speaker who arranged for the apt allusion; the Hearer brings to it an unforeseen but 'now-that-you-mention-it' assumption. While the measure '*weak* implicature' effectively separates strong-implicature <No I am not going to change the lightbulb> or <Carl is at the Yellow Dog> from fainter implications, it may not be a thorough-going term for aesthetic interpretation – or even for some kinds of everyday interpretation which the aesthetic project could bring to our attention.

While intertextuality itself is often pointed to as one of the features of aesthetic-literary genres, a Relevance-Theoretic analysis could show that its phenomenology is by no means simple or obvious, and must make big demands on the dedicated module, indeed may be hardly feasible without some functionary like that module. Moreover, the ostensive-inferential model exposes the hazards of common ground to Speakers and Hearers, ground far more *hap*-hazard when it is heavily cultivated with literary history. It is an august field compared to the domestic confidentiality of Ann and Bob, but in some ways just as thoroughly presumptuous.

8. Good intentions and Bad Ones

Across conceptualisations of intention, pragmatics and aesthetics confront each other, like antagonists across a borderland. For Gricean and Relevance-Theoretic pragmatics, intention is a warrant for meaning. Intention is also a pronounced term in the New Criticism – where it is emphatically repudiated through the 'anti-intentionalism' of the 'close reading' tradition of Anglo-American literary studies and literary education.

In "The Intentional Fallacy" Wimsatt and Beardsley[47] condemn the idea that a poem is like a will or contract insofar as the critic must, like the judge, determine the meaning intended. They also declare that the poem "is detached from the author at birth and goes about the world beyond his power to intend

[46] Ibid., 381.
[47] William K. Wimsatt Jr. and M. C. Beardsley, "The Intentional Fallacy", *The Sewanee Review* 54.3 ([1932] 1946), 468-488.

about it or control it".[48] They agree with other critics (I. A. Richards, Renée Wellek)[49] that the poet is not the authority about the poem, and that general human experience rather than particular life history provides the interpretive context: you don't need to know anything about the poet in particular.[50] Wimsatt and Beardsley feel that poets themselves are not good at talking about poems, even about their own poems. "A feat of style by which a complex of meaning is handled all at once",[51] poetry succeeds by being in every part 'relevant', all irrelevant parts having been excluded ("like lumps from pudding"),[52] so there is no need to infer the intention of the speaker, as you would need to with non-poetic, 'practical' utterances, which are more slapdash and imperfect. This is an explanation for inference substantially different from the one Relevance Theory offers through the ostensive-inferential model.

Accordingly, applications would be different. Here is an example. Wimsatt and Beardsley say they agree with fellow-critic Bateson, who has plausibly argued that Tennyson's "'The Sailor Boy' would be better if half the stanzas were omitted, and the best versions of ballads like 'Sir Patrick Spens' owe their power to the very audacity with which the minstrel has taken for granted the story upon which he comments".[53] From a New Critical perspective, going ahead with the story – 'taking for granted' – without a lot of explanation is a poetic technique with an aesthetic effect: 'power'. From a Relevance-Theoretic point of view, it is the Presumption of Relevance in the balladeer's estimating of the awareness of his audience. When an Over-Hearer comes across the utterance, rather than the Hearer about whom the balladeer had evidence for estimating consciousness, the virtuosity of the Over-Hearer's dedicated module – specialist in mutual consciousness, in how minds entertain the frame of other minds – finds not only the story of the noble voyage and sad loss but also that further depth of field: the hearing of the story by the others estimated by the balladeer.

Along related lines, Wimsatt and Beardsley discard as useless the information that Coleridge had read the *Travels* of the late-18th-century naturalist William Bartram. They see this information as "[leading] away from the poem", rather than to its meaning: "it would seem to pertain little to the poem to know that Coleridge had read Bartram",[54] and that there are connections between passages in Bartram and passages in "Kubla Khan". A Relevance-Theoretic view would take account of Coleridge's estimate of his Hearer as one who has read Bartram. In fact the Romantic poets did read Bartram, enthusiastically, including Wordsworth, who published with Coleridge in *Lyrical Ballads*, the volume in which "Kubla Khan" appeared. With this account, Relevance Theory would go beyond the fact of intertextuality to the Presumption of Relevance and the activity of the dedicated module: assumptions about Bartram, what Coleridge could surmise readers could know about Bartram which could provide grounds for inference, and the sketching of intention – and what readers could surmise that Coleridge could surmise.

On modernism's most notorious intertexualities, Wimsatt and Beardsley speak magisterially. They are contemptuous of reading for traces even where the poet lays down the tracks:

> The question of 'allusiveness,' for example, as acutely posed by the poetry of Eliot, is certainly one where a false judgment is likely to involve the intentional fallacy. The frequency and depth of literary allusion in

[48] Ibid., 470.
[49] Ivor A. Richards, *Principles of Literary Criticism* [1924] (New York: Routledge, 2001); René Wellek and Austin Warren, *Theory of Literature* (New York: Harcourt, 1949).
[50] Wimsatt and Beardsley, "The Intentional Fallacy", 471. Wimsatt and Beardsley seem to hear context as shutting down the conversation. They write: "for every [poetic] unity, there is an action of the mind which cuts off roots, melts away context – or indeed we should never have objects or ideas or anything to talk about" (Ibid., 480). Is it that the orphaned utterance, like the note in the bottle, will attract aid in the form of speculations about what might have been in mind?
[51] Ibid., 469.
[52] Ibid., 469.
[53] Ibid., 484.
[54] Ibid., 479.

> the poetry of Eliot and others has driven so many in pursuit of full meanings to *The Golden Bough* and the Elizabethan drama that it has become a kind of commonplace to suppose that we do not know what a poet means unless we have traced him in his reading – a supposition redolent with intentional implications.[55]

After showing the mistake that would be made by tracing a line in "Prufrock" to Donne,[56] they also dismiss Eliot himself answering the question *were you thinking about Donne?*: "Our point is that such an answer to such an inquiry would have nothing to do with the poem 'Prufrock;' it would not be a critical inquiry. Critical inquiries, unlike bets, are not settled in this way. Critical inquiries are not settled by consulting the oracle".[57] That is, the question and the answer would not be in the terms of aesthetics.

A Relevance-Theoretic approach to allusion or intertextuality goes differently. William Bartram *is* relevant to the ostensive-inferential project that is the writing and reading of "Kubla Khan", contributing to its cognitive effects. Which is not to say that *no* intention could be inferred by a reader who did not recognise the allusion but that the materials for inference would be different from those available to the reader who did recognise the allusion. (Can we say that allusion is always basis for inference, that is, always sponsored by the Presumption of Relevance? Or should we here make provision for the 'accidental' or even conventional repetition, and a different order of inference?)

"The Intentional Fallacy" is of course by no means the only outspoken avowal of New-Critical principles, or of close reading in its heyday or today. For follow-up to the mid-century declarations and dictates, I borrow from an early 21st-century "Introduction" to *Close Reading*[58] to gather more indication of opposition between aesthetic values and pragmatic analysis.

Dubois'[59] telling of the New Criticism's origins story emphasizes its rejection as 'sociology' or 'history' of critical practice which located the aesthetic text in its times, culture, and class, or located the poetic utterance in the context of the writer's personal experience and temperament, material or affective disposition. We may feel that in our era we are long past the text-alone, context-free vision of the New Critics. But it could be argued that objections to RT's application to literature inherit the convictions of the New Criticism. The shared atmosphere (the 'rich context') supporting Ann and Bob, Peter and Mary is the opposite of the nearly airless summit of aesthetic expression, measured by literary appreciation.

Have objections also inherited the New Critical celebration of the aesthetic text? Even as the New Criticism rejected the deferential philological traditions of literary study, it seems at the same time to glorify aesthetic expression itself: "the feat of style"[60] acclaimed by Wimsatt and Beardsley is one expression of this reverence. Even as the writer was occluded, the aesthetic expression was, as Dubois says, an object of "love",[61] or awe. Thus the 'close readings' of the New Criticism can offer, even in their analyses, eulogistic terms: we saw an example above, when Wimsatt and Beardsley find 'power' in the taking-for-granted in 'Sir Patrick Spens'. Relevance Theory offers no measures or means for praising the literary text, or loving it.

In practical or ordinary interaction, even in public genres like those of journalism or politics, a Hearer may come across an ambiguity or uncertainty. The Hearer may resolve the difficulty by surmising what the Speaker could have intended, given what the Hearer knows about the Speaker. In close reading, difficulty is not supposed to be resolved this way. What happens instead? Is the dedicated module unplugged? Moreover, difficulty is to be expected in aesthetic genres. From Dubois' review of New-

[55] Ibid., 482.
[56] Ibid., 487.
[57] Ibid., 488.
[58] Andrew Dubois, "Introduction", in Frank Lentricchia and Andrew Dubois, eds., *Close Reading: The Reader* (Durham: Duke U.P., 2003).
[59] Ibid., 3-5.
[60] Wimsatt and Beardsley, "The Intentional Fallacy", 469.
[61] Dubois, "Introduction", 9.

Critical principles, we know that close reading has to make plain what is obscure, by its attention to "the concentrated language which is the medium of poetry".[62] Blackmur declares that poets, in this case, Eliot, Pound, and Stevens, "load their words with the maximum content; naturally, the poems remain obscure until the reader takes out what the poet puts in".[63] The aesthetic text has to be read, read again, and re-read. And meanwhile the critic is imagining the poet packing his poem, concentrating his language, putting things in to be taken out – another version of intention?

9. Relevance-Theoretic Approaches to Literary Fiction

Broad colonies of interpretive texts settle around literary texts, just as they do around sacred texts, and around legal texts. In each case, the interpretive genres are specialist. They are geared to the social formation, and contribute to it: the interpretive utterances are used for social purposes both declared and tacit. The professional interpreter is trained to these purposes – although in each case folk interpretations can also show up. A Relevance-Theoretic approach to literature should be clear and emphatic in its intention *not* to join the field of literary interpretation. An RT approach may however shed light on the processes of specialist literary interpretation.

In this role, Relevance Theory steps off the straight line of its descent from philosophy of language – and away from the role played by the invented example, and Peter and Mary. Demonstrating the principle, the example is invented to sustain refinement and revisions to the principle as well as the challenge of counter-examples. Grice's examples demonstrated the CP and the Maxims, and also sustained the challenges which generated Relevance Theory, the demonstrations of which in turn sustained Relevance Theory through the further refinements of loosening and enrichment, and reasoning about explicit and literal meaning, and about the dedicated module, and beyond. The reasoning enabled by invented examples advances Relevance Theory, and can point to literary genres. But it is not directly transferrable to them. It is not a methodology for applied inquiry.

If Relevance Theory were to be applied to any area of discourse – not only to aesthetic genres but to the genres of, for example, journalism, the marketplace, health and medicine – it would have to find a way past invented demonstrations. Inventions could still dramatize and even configure the interest of Relevance Theory for the area of discourse, but the method of application would have to follow a line of inquiry tracking issues both local to the genres in question, and general to the phenomenon of Relevance itself.[64] I propose two such lines of inquiry for literary applications.

8a. Allusion/intertextuality: Long prized in literary genres is the literary allusion: an indirect reference to another literary text. Most commonly, the reference is made by repeating wordings from the other text, without explicit attribution. Although literary allusion is widely expected, it is far from well understood in its ostensive-inferential characteristics. The Speaker 'shows' wordings to the Hearer, estimating the Hearer to know – or at least to *know of* – the original utterance, and to know it well enough to bring to mind assumptions which can form the basis for inference to establish relevance: what does this allusiveness have to do with what is being talked about? Where is the benefit in paying attention to this repetition? With "How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child" does the Speaker intend only an antique flavour for a lament about parental disappointment? How is the Presumption of Relevance fulfilled by that flavour? Or does the Speaker estimate the Hearer reaching deeper to bring to mind Lear's own self-regarding manipulations and disbursements, the parent's own involvement in the legacies of ingratitude? What is the ostensive-inferential structure of "Kubla Khan" *with* or *without* Bartram's *Travels* in the context? When the allusion's life-span expires – the period when the Romantic

[62] Blackmur, cit. in Dubois, "Introduction", 21.
[63] Blackmur on Eliot, Pound, Stevens, cit. in Ibid., 21.
[64] Daniel Dor, "On Newspaper Headlines as Relevance Optimizers", *Journal of Pragmatics* 35 (2003), 695-721 is an excellent early example of Relevance-Theoretic inquiry applying itself to questions raised by the genres being studied.

poets took mutual interest in the publications of this far-venturing naturalist – can it be artificially revived by a scholarly insertion? When the podcast on hiking in the Rocky Mountains begins "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times", is it the Speaker's intention that Hearers not only recognise the allusion to Dickens but also switch on Victorian perspectives on the French Revolution, on family melodrama across terror and suffering in the 'two cities' of Dickens' title? Probably not and if not, is an inferential structure for allusion like this one characteristic of non-aesthetic rather than aesthetic genres?

8b. 'Weak' effects: Sperber and Wilson's[65] early differentiation between 'strong' implicature and 'weak' implicature, with the spin-off 'poetic effects' accompanying the latter, has accomplished a lot, as Pilkington's relatively early *Poetic Effects*[66] shows. It may soon be time to go back to these terms, to improve their capacity to account for range of intention and interpretation that is wider or more delicately differentiated than strong/weak, non-poetic/poetic. Literary genres are a good place to start work on such improvements.

'Poetic', of course, should not be taken narrowly: poetic effects are not just about poems. Yet it can be acknowledged that even if the phenomenon bridges non-aesthetic and aesthetic genres, it also has a special place in the aesthetic genres. In her declaration for the cognitive/communicative continuity between literary and other types of utterance, Wilson says that attempts to spell out the weak implicature destroy the poetic effect.[67] We could say, similarly, that to translate Bob's "Wednesday is two-for-one" into <at the Yellow Dog> forsakes the assumptions switched on by the indirect version: assumptions about Carl's sociability or loneliness, about thrift or thirst, not to mention more remote assumptions about happy-hour marketing. Not only was <at the Yellow Dog> not uttered, it was *not what Bob said*. In the literary field, indirectness – as crudely illustrated by Bob's reply to Ann's question and also claimed more elegantly as we saw for the 'suggestiveness' of haiku – is so highly valued that directness is excluded. Literary expression which is didactic is despised, or seen as not 'literary' at all, whether the moral of the story is delivered through a narrator's statements, or through 'flat' characters getting what they deserve.

Accordingly, a Relevance-Theoretic approach to literature will have to take to the project not only its socio-cognitively sophisticated, dedicated-module-assisted explanation for meaning but also some new way of representing the analysis and explanation, so as to not 'spell out'. The vestiges of truth-conditional propositions and deductions 'destroy' rather than capture the poetic effect. Computational methods might be explored for other means of representation.

To know more about 'weak' implicature in its variety – that is to apply Relevance Theory – we might look at actual patterns of inference, demonstrated in published professional interpretations and possibly also in folk interpretations found in abundance online. With more data on actual literary utterance it might be possible to stabilise and refine the idea of the Speaker taking main responsibility for strong implicature, the Hearer for weak. Would we say that it is 'irresponsible' to spell out weak implicature? How is responsibility re-assigned at the frontier of intention, at the distinction between natural and non-natural meaning? What is the nature of the Hearer's responsibility when it is in fact the Speaker who has arranged for the weak implicature, arranged by an ostensive act for the inference?

All of these questions could be attempted in the language-philosophical tradition. But without application – and methods for 'applied Relevance Theory' – to problems and instances beyond the philosophical, we will still not know about the pragmatics of aesthetic genres; we will have no data, and we will resort again to familiar assumptions about the literary genres – that they make readers feel and think, and also entertain them.

[65] Sperber and Wilson, *Relevance*.
[66] Pilkington, *Poetic Effects*.
[67] Deidre Wilson, "Relevance and the Interpretation of Literary Works", *UCL Working Papers in Linguistics*, 23 (2011), 74.

8c. Comparative Relevance Theory: In the meantime, to begin to acclimatise Relevance Theory to the atmospheres of fiction, and adapt its analyses to demonstrations more congenial than the early deductive-tending ones, projects could set out on a loosely comparative basis. Most speculatively, and with only the sketchiest of method – if any at all – I will conclude with brief comparative sightings of ostensive-inferential structures in three novels*:* Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* (1900), Zola's *Germinal* (1885).

Readers enter into *Sense and Sensibility* through an explanation of a property in Sussex: its ownership and the succession of title. The 'legal inheritor' of the property, Mr Henry Dashwood, is described as having

> by a former marriage ... one son: by his present lady, three daughters. The son, a steady respectable young man, was amply provided for by the fortune of his mother, which had been large, and half of which devolved on him on his coming of age. By his own marriage, likewise, which happened soon afterwards, he added to his wealth. To him therefore the succession to the Norland estate was not so really important as to his sisters; for their fortune, independent of what might arise to them from their father's inheriting that property, could be small.[68]

When the owner of Norland dies, his passing is accounted in property terms: "secured", "no power of providing", "charge on the estate", and the deceased owner's "mark of affection for the three girls, ... a thousand pounds a-piece".[69] Marriage and offspring are Presumed Relevant to cash, financial interest, and land-holding, for inference to be drawn. The sudden death of husband and father, Henry Dashwood himself, is shown to readers in similar terms: "ten thousand pounds, including the late legacies, was all that remained for his widow and daughters", with further accounts of "four thousand a-year", "three thousand".[70]

In any story, the death of husband and father could be reported with a strong Presumption of Relevance, likely but not necessarily borne out by <*bereavement, grief, mourning, tears, desolation, melancholy or depression, regret...*> But Austen shows readers a storyteller whose estimate of Hearers' consciousness leads to presumptions instead of the relevance of lump sums, *legacies, life interests.* Inferences about the father's death, about the land itself are estimated – by this storyteller for the estimated audience – to be drawn from assumptions about sums, successions, and entailments. Especially the Speaker estimates the Hearers as knowing what a speaker intends by 'L10,000' – what this sum means for the Dashwood women. 20th- and 21st-century readers of Austen have had to infer from characters' actions or speech or narrators' attitudes the meaning of 'L10,000', what inferences can be drawn.

Yet some Hearers may feel that there is a further Presumption of Relevance, or Intention to Mean – namely, the Relevance of the very presumption itself that 'L10,000' and 'a thousand pounds-a-piece' are themselves relevant to the topic of the loving father's death. Ostensive-inferentially, Austen shows readers – whose consciousness she estimates – a storyteller in turn estimating the consciousness of Hearers and presuming – for those Hearers – the Relevance of the lump sums. Some readers then and now may infer meanings, find implications on the plane where the father's death means 'L10,000' and material disappointments. Other readers may find a depth of field, and aesthetic effect, in the stratification of consciousnesses: Austen's showing the telling of the father's death in terms of lump sums, and making this show available for inference.

This could be one structure, or phenomenology, of inference in literary fiction and possibly characteristic of Austen.

[68] Austen, *Sense and Sensibility*, 3.
[69] Ibid., 4.
[70] Ibid. 5.

In *Sister Carrie*, Dreiser also writes about the prospects of youth, including income, but from the lowest ranks of the labour market in late 19th-century America. Dreiser may be well known – rather than universally admired – for the panoramic authority of his storytellers and their insights into people's motives and frailties playing out in the historical moment of the socio-economic order. Here the storyteller tells us what we need to know about the affective measure of Carrie's leaving home: "A gush of tears at her mother's farewell kiss, a touch in her throat when the cars clacked by the flourmill where her father worked by the day, a pathetic sigh as the familiar green environs of the village passed in review, and the threads which bound her so lightly to girlhood and home were irretrievably broke".[71] Unlike the lump sums in *Sense and Sensibility*, *tears, kiss, throat, pathetic sigh* may seem more immediately satisfying to the Presumption of Relevance: an eighteen-year-old is leaving her Wisconsin home to join her sister and brother-in-law in Chicago. Like bereavement, feelings stirred by leaving home are always relevant. Even in their absence, they might be telling about a mind or heart. What can readers infer about Carrie from her feelings on leaving home – or, more accurately, about Dreiser's intention in having his storyteller show this departure, with its particular affective profile? At first it might seem too obvious to mention (just as the relevance of most utterances will seem too obvious to mention) the relevance of nostalgia, a family poignancy. But, reading a little further, and we find Carrie's feelings for home soon stirred another time. On the train, she has met the travelling salesman Drouet, a "masher", as the storyteller says. The narrator having generalised about women's "philosophy of clothes", their disregard of men dressed on just the wrong side of "an indescribably faint line in the matter of ... apparel"[72] but also their self-consciousness when they see men dressed well beyond the line:

> [Carrie] became conscious of an inequality. Her own plain blue dress, with its black cotton tape trimmings, now seemed to her shabby. She felt the worn state of her shoes.
> 'Let's see,' [Drouet] went on, 'I know quite a number of people in *your town*. Morgenroth the clothier and Gibson the dry goods man.'
> 'Oh, do you?' she interrupted, aroused by *memories of longings* their *show windows* had cost her.[73]

In fiction, clothes are always potentially relevant; characters' outfits are often a basis for inference. But there is more here – a '*philosophy* of clothes', something to do with Carrie's mentality. And in fact in Dreiser's fiction, not only *Sister Carrie*, but *An American Tragedy* (1925), the storyteller often points to clothes – their purchase, the desire for finery or the shame of shabbiness, the cost of fashion for both men and women. So readers might trust the Presumption of Relevance here to profitably entertain assumptions from which to draw inferences about Carrie's nostalgia for merchandise. If readers continue to construct inferences about Carrie and her separation from home, they will have more here – *town, memory, longing* – but these come with strings attached: the 'philosophy of clothes' and 'show windows'. The project of inferring from the storyteller's showing of these mentions and memories is further complicated when Carrie arrives at her sister's flat and we are shown her brother-in-law: Hanson "was a silent man, American born, of a Swede father, and now employed as a cleaner of refrigerator cars at the stock-yards. To him the presence or absence of his wife's sister was a matter of *indifference*".[74] Just as many read Austen for love matches and annuities adding up, many have no doubt read *Sister Carrie* on 'the picture plane', so to speak – *will she get this job? how much has she saved for that pair of shoes?* But others will experience the depth of field rendered by these much more unsettling – and generative – Presumptions of Relevance, and the project of inferring this girl's place and prospects in turn-of-the-century America.

[71] Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*, 1.
[72] Ibid., 3.
[73] Ibid., 3, italics added.
[74] Ibid., 8, italics added.

Readers of *Sister Carrie* who read with literary history in mind might think of Zola, and *Au Bonheur des dames* (1883), about the retailing revolution, the passions excited by fashion merchandising, and imbricated with the overturning of craft economies. But for a last application of the ostensive-inferential model to literature I will go instead to Zola's *Germinal*.[75]

The story begins with the hunger and exhaustion of the coal-mining families, the crowding of generations into cramped quarters, the cold relieved only by the body-heat from the overcrowding. It needs no didacticism or spelling out, for implicated conclusions arrive robust and commanding – inferences of the injustice of this misery. *Germinal* was in fact read and embraced as an act of protest on behalf of the industrial working classes. Robust as these meanings and clear as Zola's intentions may have been, however, *Germinal* was itself indirect. Rather than explain in so many words the injustice of the economic order, it told a long and complicated story about families, jealousies, lovers, countryside, drink and violence, food and shelter. And the inferential structure of its indirectness is itself an engine of complexity.

On the morning LaMaheude's family wakes to hunger and toil, the Grégoire household also wakes. Whereas there is almost nothing to eat in La Maheude's hovel, chez Grégoire there is abundance; there is warmth and comfort. These conditions in themselves are relevant in the contrastive context of the coalminers' suffering, especially as M. Grégoire is a shareholder in the coalmine. It's not hard to draw inference, as the mass of readers of *Germinal* did in its hour and in the century following. But the structure of inference is more complex than just a 'strong implicature 'of unfairness and time for change. For one thing, this isn't only an iteration of the divide between the haves and the have-nots. The story goes into details of the business history of capital accumulation: the rush for mineral wealth in the region in the 18th century; investors' struggle with landowners and government; industrial accidents; the entrepreneurial determination that secured the capital which eventually went to the happy Grégoires. M. Grégoire says to his cousin and neighbour, Deneulin, "You know I refuse to speculate. I live in perfect peace, and I would be crazy to plague myself with business worries"[76] to which Deneulin concedes: "You may be right: the money which other people earn for you is the money which pays you best".[77]

Even while the misery of the family of La Maheude may still be in mind, and readers may be tempted to the inference of the corruption of the abundance in the Grégoire household, they hear also of "religious faith",[78] of perfect and mutual *affection* between husband and wife, of laughter – "the whole household *happily amused* at the realization that [daughter] Miss Cécile had slept for twelve hours at a stretch".[79] Having heard also about the worn-out bodies of the coal miners, diseased, disabled and even deformed from a life of labour and deprivation, they also hear that Monsieur Grégoire "despite his sixty years, ... had a *pink complexion, with kind, honest, open features*"[80] and of his cousin Deneulin that "[a]lthough he was over fifty, his close-cropped hair and thick moustache were *jet black*".[81] And Cécile herself before her breakfast is "as fast asleep as an *angel in heaven*", "with *milk-white skin*, chestnut hair, and ... round cheeks"[82] and, after feeding on fresh-baked brioche, "*full of food*".[83] M. and Mme Grégoir feel "profound *gratitude* for a valuable investment which had kept the family in *comfort and idleness* for a century", "cradling them in their big, *soft beds* and fattening them at their *sumptuous table*", for the "40 000 franc income as well as their savings ... all effortlessly consumed in the interests of Cécile...".[84]

[75] Zola, *Germinal*.
[76] Ibid., 82.
[77] Ibid., 83.
[78] Ibid., 79.
[79] Ibid., 80.
[80] Ibid., 76.
[81] Ibid., 81.
[82] Ibid., 77.
[83] Ibid., 84.
[84] Ibid., 79.

With, in its time, a mass readership rallying to the story's implicated conclusions, *Germinal* nevertheless configures in its depth of field further inferential structures where not only money and a rich meal but also *gratitude, faith, pink cheeks,* and *affection* are presumed relevant to business history.

Finally, while literary specialists would probably dismiss Relevance-Theoretic analyses as not concerned with aesthetics, they would certainly dismiss Picketty's[85] reading of Austen in his *Capital in the Twenty-first Century.* Picketty turns to Austen (and other novelists, Balzac in particular) for data on the long-term rate of return on capital (it is 5%). He gets these data from the inferable Common Ground shared by Austen and her readers, and generations of readers through the 19th century, a long period without inflation. Austen's readers understood the distribution of wealth and the 'permanence' of the social distinctions which flowed from the deep inequality of that distribution;[86] they knew the rate of return on capital,[87] and the income necessary for a 'comfortable' life, and for a "truly comfortable" life.[88] For these readers, L10,000 or L3000 switched on many assumptions, as grounds for inference. In the extending of these assumptions across the mentalities and situations Austen shows readers, there is a lot of work for the dedicated module.

And, as literary specialists dismiss the brief, tentative RT analyses presented here or Picketty's distinguished readings, the fuller response to the dismissal must await a fuller account of genre – not only literary genres but also the literary-critical ones. This account should take as a main point of reference Levinson's[89] brilliant but under-appreciated conceptualisation of Activity Types on the basis of their inferential horizon.

[85] Thomas Picketty, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, trans. by Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P., 2014).
[86] Ibid., 105, 240.
[87] Ibid., 53.
[88] Ibid., 410.
[89] Stephen C. Levinson, "Activity Types and Language", *Linguistics* 17 (1979), 365-399.

Michael Ingham

"In a Double Sense". Syntactic Ambiguity and the Pragmatics of Equivocation in Shakespearean Dramatic Dialogue

Abstract: My paper will focus on form and function in the pragmatics of Shakespearean dialogue in respect of syntax. It will discuss the interpretation of semantic roles in his dramatic dialogue, and particularly the way in which ambiguous constructions are situated in scenes in order to create a feeling of uncertainty and ambivalence, both in the specific dramatic context and in the poetics of the play as a whole. This profound sense of ambiguity – which lies at the heart of tragedies such as *Macbeth* and *Hamlet* and histories such as *Henry V*, but is also present in a significant number of comedies – is constructed, as I argue and exemplify, not only through the dramatic ironies of plot and character, but crucially by the language and the slippage resulting from functional shifts of grammar and syntax. As has been observed by a number of commentators, the consequent persistent flouting of Gricean conversational maxims of quantity, quality, relation and manner is an intrinsic tool of the poetic dramatist's art and Shakespeare represents an outstanding example of this phenomenon. Likewise, the performative and declarative speech acts of dramatic dialogue can be seen to contribute to such flouting of conversational norms and maxims. The article will also discuss the relationship between linguistic ambiguity and character ambivalence with specific examples.

Keywords: *relevance, intention, intentional fallacy, dedicated module, ostensive-inferential*

1. Introduction: Syntax and Ambiguity

One of the most effective ways of investigating subtly codified and varied representations of the past is through an appraisal of language and style. In this respect, studies of Shakespearean language have tended typically to concentrate on paradigmatic characteristics of his creative use of language at the expense of syntagmatic elements. Thus, analysis of elements in the language of Shakespeare and his contemporaries has focused mainly on lexical, morphological or phonological elements, while the linear order of words has been considerably less well researched. Jonathan Culpeper[1] has drawn attention to the often underrated significance of syntax in Shakespearean texts, and suggested that more research is required in this area. He also notes, like Stanley Hussey,[2] how syntactic nuances in the Shakespeare text help to establish characterisation. However, such discussion is often restricted to instances where syntactic features relate to cognitive organisation of speech, and downplays the complex but important relationship between form and function. Jonathan Hope is one of the few scholars who have devoted time and energy to detailed studies of syntactic features in Shakespeare's oeuvre. Here he makes the necessary link between aspects of syntax and thought and emotion in Shakespeare's depiction of character:

> In terms of classical rhetoric, Shakespeare's classical style can be seen to shift towards the psychological level, as his syntax seeks ways to appeal to our emotional experience of the world and represent the subjectivity of his characters in play in the moment-to-moment flow of speech and thought.[3]

[1] See Jonathan Culpeper, *Language and Characterisation: People in Plays and Other Texts* (Harlow: Pearson, 2001), 202.
[2] See Stanley S. Hussey, *The Literary Language of Shakespeare* (London and New York: Longman, 1982), 75.
[3] Jonathan Hope, *Shakespeare and Language: Reason, Eloquence and Artifice in the Renaissance* (London: Bloomsbury, 2010), 169.

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Hope's quantitative and qualitative findings in relation to Shakespeare's grammatical and syntactic choices have benefited from stylometric research methods more common to stylistics. In *Shakespeare and Language* he devotes a chapter to an analysis of word order and syntactic construction in Shakespeare. Other commentators, including Blake[4] and Delabastita[5] have also laid stress on the functions of ambiguity in Shakespeare plays. In *Shakespeare's Language: An Introduction* N. F. Blake identified the functional shifts, or multifunctionality, in Shakespeare's grammatical usage that promote ambiguity and complexity in his dramatic language. "Word order", he argues, "can ... be used to achieve rhetorical arrangements in which the meaning may be difficult to disentangle, particularly for an audience in the theatre".[6]

As Blake points out, many such syntactic complexities arise from a combination of archaism and poetic license untypical of modern standard English, where grammar conventions are designed to disambiguate and clarify in accordance with Paul Grice's semantic cooperative principles,[7] in particular his maxim of manner. Blake discusses the ambiguity created by the looser organisation of the dramatic verse, as well as the uncertainty arising from the freer sense of phrasal attachment legitimated by early modern English, particularly of participles and relative clauses. He notes how modern poetic licence permits limited syntactic variations, but observes that "Shakespeare ... alters the word order much more drastically than this so that ambiguity can easily result".[8]

To what extent Shakespeare's uses of ambiguity correspond to William Empson's theory of seven types of poetic ambiguity is moot. For one thing, speculating on what the author had in mind when encoding ambiguity in his dramatic texts, would be idle; thus, the fourth, fifth and seventh types of Empson's taxonomy, relating to what the author has in mind when writing, cannot be usefully applied to Shakespeare's dramas. That said, his discussion of ambiguity in relation to meanings that co-exist harmoniously, to potential alternative meanings that are resolved into one, and to apparently unconnected meanings or meanings that are contradictory, can all be applied to the myriad examples to be found in Shakespeare's body of work. Perhaps emphasis should be placed less on the divisions in the author's mind, as Empson saw it, and more on the divisions in those of his characters and also of his readers and audiences. Empson's ground-breaking insights into the close relationship between figurative language in literature and various types of ambiguity – conceptual, semantic and grammatical – has informed and influenced literary-linguistic investigations of the topic.

Before discussing types and examples of ambiguity that may be encountered, it is important to differentiate between the early modern context of reception and that of modern-day readers and audiences. Archaic locutions and grammatical structures that are complex or ambiguous for a modern reader/listener might well have been perfectly clear to an early modern audience for whom Shakespearean grammar was either vernacular or only slightly archaic, often depending on whether the play was a comedy or a history. For today's readers disambiguation can be achieved through contemporary English paraphrasing that parses and restructures the original early modern wording. Still, in the context of today's Shakespearean performance, both performers and audiences need to establish a clear interpretation of each phrase in the original language, solving the potential confusions posed by archaism, ellipsis, and syntactic complexity.

[4] See N. F. Blake, *Shakespeare's Language: An Introduction* (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1983).
[5] See Dirk Delabastita, *There's a Double Tongue: An Investigation into the Translation of Shakespeare's Wordplay with Special Reference to* Hamlet (Amsterdam and Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1993).
[6] Hope, *Shakespeare and Language*, 121.
[7] See Paul Grice, "Logic and Conversation", in Peter Cole and Jerry Morgan, eds., *Syntax and Semantics. 3: Speech Acts* (New York: Academic Press, 1975), 41–58.
[8] Blake, *Shakespeare's Language*, 119.

Neuro-cognitive research[9] has demonstrated how the brain is capable of retaining alternative meanings of a complex sentence simultaneously, exploring possible parsings of phrases in the processing of linear information, before arriving at a conclusive interpretation of meaning, rightly or wrongly as the case may be. This applies particularly to semantic role uncertainties in the sentence, or other temporary ambiguities where the listener does not have the advantage of the reader's 'lookahead' strategy. In some cases, though, uncertainty remains, particularly where the text and scene pragmatics appear to promote ambiguity for dramatic and characterological reasons. In such cases, where temporary sentential ambiguity – whether unambiguous for early modern audiences or ambiguous for contemporary audiences – shades into dramatic ambivalence, it is more productive to explore this phenomenon via strategies of pragmatic analysis. Paul Grice's cooperative principles, specifically his four conversational maxims offer such an analytical tool.

2. Cooperative and 'Uncooperative' Principles of Dramatic Discourse

Notwithstanding, as my chapter will contend, and commentators such as Burton[10] and Herman[11] have previously noted, Gricean co-operative principles cannot be applied straightforwardly to dramatic dialogue in the same way they can to unscripted conversational analysis. Indeed, Burton maintains that, in the context of a scene and of a play as a cultural intervention, it is precisely this "deviance from linguistic norms"[12] that makes it rich in pragmatic meaning and worthy of close textual and subtextual analysis. It is clear that strict adherence to Grice's maxims for cooperative exchange would undermine the crucial dramatic elements of deferral, revelation, recognition, and dramatic irony that invest the text with its literary and philosophical value to a shared cultural heritage. In short, conscientious application of the cooperative principles would undermine the vital component of dramatic conflict.

Rather, we need to posit a parallel set of maxims that function as a dramatic alternative to Grice's cooperative principles, and in the process draw upon his notions of implicature and, most importantly, of violation or flouting of maxims. These would be in line with the argument advanced by Herman[13] that in dramatic discourse the cooperative maxims can be violated specifically in order to generate what Grice designated "implicatures".[14] Such a set of alternative principles would incorporate both the play's spoken text and its subtextual features, and would embrace written text, subtextual implicature and the non-verbal communication that would naturally complement these in a specific performance of the text. In this respect, of course, they would function in a similar way to the cooperative principles.

To review Grice's maxims briefly, they are:

> The maxim of quantity, where one tries to be as informative as one possibly can, and gives as much information as is needed, and no more.
>
> The maxim of quality, where one tries to be truthful, and does not give information that is false or that is not supported by evidence.
>
> The maxim of relation, where one tries to be relevant, and says things that are pertinent to the discussion.

[9] See Thomas A. Farmer, Sarah A. Cargill and Michael. J. Spivey, "Gradiency and visual context in syntactic garden-paths", *Journal of Memory and Language*, 57.4 (2007), 570–95; Philip Davis, "The Shakespeared Brain", *The Reader*, 23.2 (2007), 39–43.

[10] See Deirdre Burton, *Dialogue and Discourse: A Sociolinguistic Approach to Modern Drama Dialogue and Naturally Occurring Conversation* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980).

[11] See Vimala Herman, *Dialogue as Interaction in Plays* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998).

[12] Burton, *Dialogue and Discourse*, 6.

[13] See Herman, *Dramatic Discourse* (London: Routledge, 1995).

[14] Grice, "Logic and Conversation", 54.

> The maxim of manner, when one tries to be as clear, as brief, and as orderly as one can in what one says, and where one avoids obscurity and ambiguity.

Thus, a contrary set of maxims reflecting violations of the above might, I suggest, look something like this:

> The maxim of superfluous quantity where one may deliberately obfuscate or dominate the exchanges (although this maxim probably shouldn't be applied to formal speeches and soliloquies which abound in Shakespeare's plays, at least without specific reason).
>
> The maxim of dubious quality, where one may deliberately deceive or mislead or speak disingenuously.
>
> The maxim of inapposite relation, where one may deliberately introduce extraneous or irrelevant material in order to increase the obfuscation alluded to in the first maxim.
>
> The maxim of uncooperative manner, where one may deliberately equivocate and/or employ obscurity and ambiguity for ulterior motive.

As is the case with the cooperative principles – which represent optimum conditions for communicative clarity that are frequently not achieved in real interactions – these 'uncooperative principles' would be situated at the extremity of a cline of possible interactions. In the same way that Grice argues that his maxims can overlap, these 'reverse maxims' would also combine with one another within a particular scene to convey nuances of meaning of both a textual and a subtextual nature. Equally important, what we might describe as 'the uncooperative principles' would be interspersed with more cooperative principles, as one might expect from an intellectually and poetically rich dramatic text such as a Shakespeare play, in which the characterisation of deceptive or unreliable characters is usually complex.

Such cooperative and non-cooperative elements in character interaction form part of a nexus of rhetorical strategies, together with constative and performative speech acts and the turn-taking features of dramatic dialogue. They thus contribute to character construction and attribution of motives at both text and performance levels. Lynne Magnusson, referring to "the continuous address that dramatic dialogue is making to the audience",[15] reminds us that the semantics of stage discourse are intrinsically double. The addresser and addressee are at one and the same time the onstage interlocutors and the dramatist and audience in this dual process of theatrical communication. The characteristics of such a rule-based system can also be extended to apply to other examples of ambiguity and to violations of cooperative principles. In more philosophical terms they intersect with Ludwig Wittgenstein's ideas on language games. Wittgenstein's emphasis on the contextual factors at play in his language games theory and relativism of meaning[16] can be usefully related to dramatic dialogue. Cooperative principles (as well as the flouting of these principles) and speech act categories operate fundamentally as part of a rule-based system in relation to language functions, akin to the way that the rules of grammar and syntax determine form and meaning. Violations or bending of rules in dramatic dialogue, in instances of ambiguity or ambivalence, have the effect of enhancing the dramatic plot by deferring both the resolution of meaning and a harmonious (or otherwise definitive) conclusion.

However, ambiguity – deliberate or unwitting, encoded or construed – depends not only on these functional semantic aspects of language. At both the lexical and the syntactic level, it depends on the form of words chosen to work "in a double sense" at textual and performative levels. This quality of

[15] Lynne Magnusson, "Dialogue", in Sylvia Adamson et al., eds., *Reading Shakespeare's Dramatic Language: A Guide* (London: The Arden Shakespeare, 2001) 130-143:140.
[16] See Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1958).

doubleness is heightened by the familiar tension that exists in language between form and function, further complicated by the "looser" syntax (to recall Blake's term above) and more flexible usage of Renaissance English. So, in accordance with Hamlet's line: "There is nothing good or bad but thinking makes it so" (*Hamlet*, II.2.233-4) we recognise that transient and provisional meanings are construed by each interlocutor in the pragmatic context of the particular scene, with all its attendant dramatic motivation and subtextual resonance. Qualities of frankness and/or speciousness are in constant interplay and false-hearted, ambivalent, or even positive characters may have good reason to dissemble or at least be economical with the truth in specific contexts, while speaking without guile in others. Hamlet is a prime example of this in his exchanges with his mother, depending on the private or the public nature of the exchange.

As my paper seeks to demonstrate and exemplify, the device of syntactic and grammatical ambiguity in Shakespeare's text is a more complex, but also highly effective, discourse tool for promoting dramatic uncertainty and deferral of meaning; in this way it operates in tandem with the deviations from normative cooperative principles and the oscillation between cooperative and 'uncooperative principles'. It is precisely in this structural ambiguity and carefully constructed indeterminacy that Shakespeare's dramatic ingenuity can be appreciated. In the following section I will discuss examples of locally ambiguous propositions that are disambiguated by the end of the phrase or sentence, as well as more globally ambiguous examples that cannot be so easily parsed and ultimately resist conclusive interpretation.

I will also show how sentential complexity arising from embedded clauses at various levels of subordination and strategies of thematisation or stylistic fronting contribute to the textual ambiguity and ultimately dramatic interaction of specific scenes. The blurring of semantic roles in a proposition, where agent and patient of the action may not be immediately apparent, also plays its part in creating an unsettling indeterminacy in the language that echoes dramatic indeterminacies of character interaction and plot detail. Other archaic syntactic features such as double or multiple negation and the liberal use of Verb-Subject (VS) or Object-Verb (OV) word-order inversions in declarative sentences likewise add to the impression of syntactic intricacy. This is particularly the case in Shakespeare's dramatic verse, where they may appear to be deployed partly for metrical reasons as much as semantic ones.

Another syntactic feature that is relevant to any discussion of ambiguity in the context of cooperative or uncooperative pragmatic strategies is the positioning of main clause and subordinate clauses. Conventionally the central proposition of the utterance is foregrounded by being placed in the main clause, and supporting information is provided in relative or adjunct clauses. However, fronting and highlighting subordinate clauses and increasing the level of subordination tends to reverse these polarities and 'background' the key information. Characters who foreground relative or adjunct clauses and front them in their dialogic turns are usually in violation of the Gricean maxim of manner.

As Ingham[17] has demonstrated with reference to political discourse in the English Civil War period, reversing the relationship between the main and subordinate clauses 'foregrounds the less significant information at the expense of the more significant; crucially, such structural manipulation on the part of the speaker are likely to plant presuppositions in the mind of the interlocutor, and influence and distort reception of the communication. In view of the predominantly political ethos of Shakespeare's corpus of histories and tragedies – not to mention the trickery and double-dealing that pervades the comedies – the arrangement and degree of subordination employed by speakers for the purpose of deception or manipulation is clearly a relevant pragmatic strategy in any investigation of structural ambiguity.

[17] See Richard Ingham, "The Syntax of Foregrounding and Backgrounding in English Civil War Political Discourse: A Text Analysis", in Annamária Fábián and Igor Trost, eds., *Sprachgebrauch in der Politik: Grammatische, lexikalische, pragmatische, kulturelle und dialektologische Perspektiven* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, Forthcoming 2018).

3. Examples of Syntactic Ambiguity and Confusion in Semantic Roles

A well-known example of syntactic ambiguity discussed by Delabastita,[18] following Gibbons,[19] occurs in *Romeo and Juliet* in a scene between Juliet and Lady Capulet in which the secretly married Juliet employs equivocating ambiguity to mislead her mother. It is necessary for her to dissemble her true feeling about Romeo and express both sorrow for her cousin Tybalt's death and hostility toward Romeo and the Montagues. Juliet's artful response is a model of equivocation:

> Indeed I never shall be satisfied
> With Romeo till I behold him – dead –
> Is my poor heart so for a kinsman vexed.
> (*Romeo and Juliet*, III.5.94-6)

These lines convey two plausible but antithetical constructions of meaning, depending on whether the adjective 'dead' is parsed together with what goes before it in the more regular Subject-Verb-Object + Modifier sequence, or with what comes after in the inverted sequence of Modifier-Verb-Subject. To her mother she appears to be wishing Romeo's death in revenge for his slaying of her cousin, but to herself she is expressing the fervent wish to see her husband of one night alive again. Although we may describe it as a type of 'garden path'[20] utterance, it is not consistent with the common garden path sentence that is ultimately disambiguated. While Lady Capulet hears what she wants to hear in Juliet's turn, the audience is complicit with the speaker in construing a second ulterior meaning. Thus, a powerful effect of dramatic irony is created that hinges on the subtextual doubleness of syntactic as well as lexical reference. In terms of characterisation and plot development, Juliet's tergiversation under duress contrasts sharply with the character's previous frank and more transparent speech acts, and foreshadows the fatal outcome of the artifice engineered by Friar Laurence. In terms of cooperative dialogic principles the utterance is a flagrant violation of the maxim of manner, and constitutes instead equivocation for ulterior motive.

There are similar examples of structural ambiguity in Shakespeare that, unlike the case with typical garden path sentences, resist persuasive disambiguation. In the following example proposed by Blake[21] ambiguity relates to the position of a simple phrase in the utterance, and to whether the listener interprets it anaphorically or cataphorically. Citing Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk's response to the King's sentence of banishment from the opening act of *Richard II*, Blake argues that the following couplet contains conflicting, but equally valid, propositional meanings:

> Farewell, my liege, now no way can I stray
> Save back to England all the world's my way.
> (*Richard II*, I.3.206-7)

He notes that everything depends on whether one construes the phrase "save back to England" as being attached to the preceding or the following phrase. The lack of a comma before "all the world's my way" in the early quartos makes this example a hermeneutic conundrum. In the context of the scene the weight of probability is that the actor is more likely to interpret the middle phrase as the character's

[18] See Delabastita, *Double Tongue*.
[19] Brian Gibbons, ed., *William Shakespeare's* Romeo and Juliet (London: Arden, 1980), 189.
[20] This linguistic concept refers to a sentence that is temporarily ambiguous in its opening segment, but is normally resolved in its concluding one. A noted example would be "The lorry parked outside the house left", which creates temporary semantic confusion by employing two apparent main verbs. The proficient reader or hearer disambiguates the sentence by parsing 'parked' as a past participle and 'left' as the main verb.
[21] Blake, *Shakespeare's Language*, 125.

reluctant acceptance of his impending life-long exile from his native land. However, the tendency to construe the qualifying phrase as attached to the preceding main clause – all the more marked in standard modern English – endows the line with an undertone of wistful uncertainty that is highly apt in the context of a play of shifting power, impetuous decision-making and rapid changes of fortune. In pragmatic terms the equivocating speech act, far from representing an uncooperative violation of dialogic maxims, or of Mowbray's oath of loyalty to his King, reveals a dogged loyalty to the ungrateful monarch on whose behalf he was challenged to the duel with Bolingbroke. Subsequent news of Mowbray's death in Venice brought by the Bishop of Carlisle in Act Four of the play (IV.1.99-100) resolves any doubts regarding the possibility of him straying back to England; ironically his former adversary who has defied the terms of his own exile and done exactly what Mowbray can no longer do, wishes to repeal the latter's exile and gain his support in order to confer greater legitimacy on his usurpation of power. The play's pattern of ambivalence and dramatic irony is produced precisely by the sum of these linguistic parts; thus we observe how apparent garden-path local ambiguity overlaps productively with carefully crafted poetic ambivalence.

> Myself the crying fellow did pursue,
> Lest by his clamour – as it so fell out –
> The town might fall in fright.
> (*Othello*, II.3.226)

This is an example of syntactic ambiguity from Act Two of *Othello* proposed by Hope.[22] Here two Noun Phrases stand before the Verb Group 'did pursue'; given that sentence Objects can be situated pre-verbally – not just in archaic English, but even in certain contexts of contemporary usage – the reader/listener has to decide which Noun phrase is Subject and which is Object. As Hope points out, the most likely interpretation in the context of the scene and the play's characterisation of Iago has 'myself' as Subject and 'the crying fellow' as Object, but this disrupts the more regular adjacency of Subject and Verb, and might plausibly be rejected in favour of the reverse interpretation in which 'the crying fellow' pursues the character speaking the line. The action of the scene, preceding 'honest' Iago's prevarication in his sly and long-winded explanation to Othello of the brawl, obviates any potential ambiguity or ambivalence, however. We have witnessed Iago's manipulation of his dupe, Roderigo, and know from what has gone before that Roderigo, after instigating the affray, slipped away on Iago's bidding when the drunken Cassio was challenged by Montano.

We also know from the context that Iago hasn't in truth pursued his accomplice in deceit, and has merely feigned pursuit while Montano's attention was engaged with the quarrelsome Cassio. Equally the alarm bell is rung at Iago's insistence. Audiences or readers of the play are necessarily privy to Iago's gulling of Othello since they both see and hear his double-dealing; the dramatic irony created by their 'complicity' with Iago is a key element in the play's intrigue, and increases Othello's increasing sense of isolation and self-delusion. So, while the lines might prompt temporary and local ambiguity for the reader or listener, there is no possibility of misconstruing the meaning and confusing the semantic roles of the agent (Iago) and patient (Roderigo). Globally speaking, both in the scene and the play as a whole, the confusion and misapprehensions are on Othello's part, not that of the audience; hence Iago's sentence is disambiguated by a combination of its verbal and its dramatic contexts. Again, as with the *Romeo and Juliet* example, there is a disingenuous cooperative principle on the part of the speaker, one that is deliberately undercut by his artful violations of the maxims of quality, relation and manner.

> I do love nothing in the world so well as you: is not that strange?
> (*Much Ado About Nothing*, IV.1.265-6)

[22] See Hope, *Shakespeare and Language*.

A residual sense of ambiguity is also created by this example from the comedy *Much Ado About Nothing* where the elliptical phrase "so well as you" again raises an issue with semantic role assignment. Syntactically 'you' could function as either Subject or Object, and semantically as either agent or patient of the verb, although in context it needs to be interpreted as the latter. Benedick, in the tense and serious atmosphere that follows Claudio's false denunciation of Hero, finally declares his love for Beatrice directly to her face, but not without a hint of ambiguity created by the gapped adjunct phrase, "so well as you". In the context it would normally seem likelier to construe Benedick himself as the agent of a gapped phrase, implying "as much as I love you". Nevertheless, an alternative construal, to the effect, "as much as you love some unspecified person, or thing – but possibly "me" is equally valid semantically and syntactically. Beatrice's equivocal response is couched in hypothetical propositional structures and laced with negatives – including the titular "nothing": "It were as possible for me to say I loved nothing so well as you: but believe me not". This initial disavowal, inverting Benedick's cautious avowal, inevitably defers immediate disambiguation of the substance of their exchange.

Given that many of Benedick's and Beatrice's interactions hitherto have been predicated on deliberate equivocation, witticisms and double entendres, the possibility of ambiguity in this exchange is perfectly feasible. Moreover, neither character attempts anything approaching a recognisable cooperative principle in their more humorous exchanges in earlier scenes, and so the listener or reader is primed for double meanings and wordplay. In the more light-hearted context of the trick played on Benedick by his comrades-in-arms in Act 1, Scene 2, doubleness is inevitably perceived as part of a recurrent pattern in the comedy. Ironically, at this earlier point of the play when the suddenly lovestruck Benedick is called to come in to dinner by Beatrice – purportedly against her will – he concludes "there's a double meaning in that", simply because he is desperate to find ulterior meaning in Beatrice's plain and unambiguous statement. In the later more fraught scene in Act IV following Hero's collapse the roles are reversed; here Beatrice engages in a series of evasions right up until she resolves the indeterminacy by declaring her reciprocal feelings for Benedick and immediately demanding that he kill Claudio.

In the earlier part of the play any observance of Gricean cooperative principles in the witty and frequently caustic exchanges between Benedick and Beatrice would be wholly at odds with the dramatic context and comic tone. In this scene, however, as the future couple inch their way toward mutual understanding and common ground, cooperative principles and more felicitous speech acts are in evidence, but the positive mood is then dispelled by Benedick's initial refusal to cooperate. His capitulation and agreement to challenge his young friend end the scene on a more cooperative note, without further ambiguity and accompanied by more affirmative speech acts. This dramatic device of deferral of meaning (Derrida's *différance*) and sudden clarification is conducive to the misunderstandings and uncertainties that permeate Shakespeare's plays – especially his comedies. Wittgenstein's theory of 'language games', referenced in the introductory section, also helps shed light on the deferral of meaning that is intrinsic to Beatrice's and Benedick's "merry war" and "skirmish of wit" (*Much Ado*, I.1), since it is analogous to the rules of a game where moves are made. This applies less to the courting couple's wordplay *per se*; rather to the rules that govern their interaction, and so is more similar to the rules of engagement that determine war games, for example.

A further example of language games can be found in the verbal sparring of Richard Duke of Gloucester with Queen Elizabeth's party in Act 1, Scene 3 of *Richard III*, when Richard uses his verbal dexterity to outmanoeuvre his adversaries, and to complement the cunning he employs in seizing the crown. It exemplifies the phenomenon of negative concord which was conventionally used by Shakespeare and his contemporaries. Although no longer correct in standard modern English of today, double or multiple negation in the language has a long history, and was not ruled 'ungrammatical' by

prescriptive grammarians until the mid-18th century. In this example cited by Abbott[23] the second negative in the first-line proposition appears to neutralise the first:

> You may deny that you were not the cause
> Of my Lord Hastings' late imprisonment.
> (*Richard III*, I.3.90-1)

In pragmatic terms the negative concord of the allegation that the Queen plotted to imprison both Clarence and Hastings reflects Richard's equivocation and posturing. This doubleness, as in his dissimulation with Clarence, typifies his behaviour during the first three acts of the play. Logically the double negation here implies that the Queen was innocent of the charge; however the ambiguity created by the double negative serves to obfuscate the substance of Richard's accusation. In a scene where speech acts such as swearing and prophesying are highly relevant to dramatic truth Richard's seemingly emphatic negative concord tends to undermine his own propositional meaning, even if Rivers' vigorous refutation that follows is interrupted by the irrepressible schemer. However, in other contexts we see multiple negation used emphatically and unambiguously:

> Besides, there is no king, be his cause never so spotless, if it come to the arbitrement of swords, can try it out with all unspotted soldiers.
> (*Henry V*, IV.1.164-6)

This scene in the English camp on the eve of the battle of Agincourt – the "touch-of-Harry-in-the-night" scene – involves an impromptu debate between common soldiers and the disguised King on the ethical responsibilities of the monarch. The example of potential syntactic confusion offered here is locally ambiguous on account of its multiple negation strategy, but its accumulation of negatives only remains ambiguous if the line is decontextualised. In the context of the scene itself any likely confusion caused by Henry's use of a triple negative is immediately resolved by the pragmatics of the exchange, and the triple negative construed as the rhetorical device that it clearly is. In other contexts where double or multiple negation is used in Shakespeare, such as the final act of *Richard II* – "What are thou? And how comest thou hither / Where no man never comes" (V.5.69-70) – the effect is emphatically negative. In theory the double negative could be construed counter-intuitively as a positive, i.e. "where some people sometimes come", but again the context of Richard's miserable incarceration in this scene makes the meaning amply clear. Double or multiple negation is therefore a potential source of temporary ambiguity for today's actors and audiences, while it was very unlikely to be so for their early modern counterparts.

The last, and in many ways most intriguing, example is taken from the opening act of *2 Henry VI*, a scene in which a group of characters – including the Duchess Eleanor, wife of the King's uncle Humphrey of Gloucester, – watch the conjuror Bolingbroke summon a spirit in Gloucester's garden. The spirit is treated as an oracle and questioned as to the fortunes of the King and his two principal supporters. It responds thus:

> The duke yet lives that Henry shall depose
> But him outlive and die a violent death.
> (*2 Henry VI*, I.4.30-1)

While the more likely interpretation is that the Duke will depose King Henry, it is also perfectly feasible on the face of it for the Duke to be deposed following his acts of rebellion against the crown.

[23] Edwin A. Abbott, *A Shakespearian Grammar* (1870), Third Edition (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications Inc., 2003), 295.

The etymology of the word from old French suggests a meaning equivalent to "remove from high office", thus not entirely discounting the possibility of the Duke's deposition by royal mandate.

In this instance a 'garden path' effect is created by the ambiguous interpretation of Henry as potentially either Subject or Object of the Verb 'depose' and also the corresponding functional ambiguity relating to the nominal head, 'the duke'. The ambiguity is also generated by the relative pronoun 'that', which here can either be construed as equivalent to 'who'. i.e. making the Duke subject, or equivalent to 'whom, making the Duke Object. If the Duke is taken to be the Subject of the action, on the grounds that deposition in Shakespeare is usually associated with kings, the ambiguity appears to be resolved by taking 'Henry' as a preposed Direct Object of the Verb phrase 'shall depose'. Nonetheless, the combination of the apparent nominal Subject, 'Henry' and the auxiliary Verb phrase 'shall depose' inclines the fast reader, and even more so, the listener, to take the 'garden path' option.

Besides, the subsequent line muddies the waters by introducing further ambiguity. The identity of the Duke remains unclear in the spirit's prophecy, a Shakespearean equivocation that is more familiar in the context of the witches' fortune-telling in *Macbeth*, of which more will be said in the following section of the paper. Resolving ambiguity here depends on taking the antecedent of the pronoun 'him' in the second line to be either the Duke or King Henry. In other words, who is predicted to outlive whom, and who is predicted to die 'a violent death'? Parsing the line after the adversative 'but' yields no absolute certainty, which is not normally the case with local garden-path structural ambiguity. Instead the sentence becomes more of a garden maze than a garden path, as one attempts to construe its meaning with assurance. Since this prophecy is predicated on the conventional ambiguity of the riddle device, here transmitted by a conjured, and therefore cryptic, source, it is unsurprising that the speech act is uncooperative, as opposed to cooperative, and as much is concealed as is revealed by the augury. Moreover, the exchange between Bolingbroke and the spirit cannot be considered in any respect conversational.

There is, of course, good dramatic reason for preserving ambiguous signification in the context of the scene and the play overall. History and the second and third parts of the *Henry VI* trilogy show that Richard Plantagenet, Duke of York, deposes Henry, and that the usurper's violent death in battle does indeed precede Henry's own demise during his incarceration in the Tower. However, the younger son of the usurper, Richard, later Duke of Gloucester and Richard III, is portrayed by Shakespeare as brutally murdering Henry, and thus outliving him, only to die violently at Bosworth Field. Could the prophecy be interpreted as referring to him, therefore, since he helped his brother Edward to depose the King by disposing of the final obstacle before his brother's coronation (at least in Shakespeare's factually dubious representation of the event)?

Unlike the first example of structural ambiguity cited above, which is character-driven and an element of Iago's armoury of verbal deceit, this one derives its deliberate ambiguity from its riddle-like quality befitting the auguries of a conjured spirit. Bolingbroke, the conjuror, refers to the latter as a "false fiend" when these auguries prove slippery. When the 'séance' led by Bolingbroke and the witch, Margaret Jourdain, is interrupted by York and Buckingham and all participants arrested, York reads the transcribed oracles, and makes a pertinent remark: These oracles are hardly attain'd / And hardly understood (I.4.7-11). His judgment – dramatically ironic at this point of the play, because it will prove relevant to the utterer – serves to underline the link between locally ambiguous meaning that resists subsequent disambiguation and more global dramatic ambivalence evoked by plot and character construction. The prophecy retains its opaque and inscrutable nature, and its spirit of equivocation haunts the 'Wars of the Roses' plays. Such carefully constructed plot and character-related ambivalence is achieved and underpinned by linguistic subtleties and implicatures, for which syntactic ambiguity generated by its form-function tension is – as the above discussion shows – highly relevant.

4. Moral Ambivalence and Syntactic Complexity: Examples from Shakespeare Scenes

In the closing scene of *Macbeth* the protagonist's moment of comprehensive *anagnorisis* occurs in his fatal duel with Macduff, as he realises the full extent of the witches' duplicity, putting "the word of promise" in his ear, only to "break it to [his] hope". His recognition of having been their dupe is indicated in the reference to "juggling fiends ... / That palter with us in a double sense" (*Macbeth*, V.8.20). The phrase invokes the theme of doubleness that is not only present in the language of the witches' incantations and portents, but constitutes a recurrent motif in the play's language and characterisation. The moral equivocation of Macbeth himself, as he vacillates between thought and deed in the opening act, is echoed by the deceptive binaries of "foul and fair" weather but also of actions. This recurrent binary symbolism is echoed by other equivocating external portents, such as the raven and martlet, that haunt not only the castle but the play as a whole. Such signs and meanings, often half perceived or read only for surface signification, are woven into the dramatic texture of the play. Portents of success and failure are manifested partly by external physical phenomena but also, crucially, by language, which like visual imagery in the mind's eye can amount to little more than "a false creation proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain" (*Macbeth*, II.1.39-40). Extremes of passion, as Shakespeare also shows in the more romantic-comedic context of *Much Ado About Nothing* and the characters of Benedick and Beatrice, can induce the perception of double meaning and implicature, as well as skewed judgement on the part of the hearer. Similarly, in *All's Well that Ends Well*, a complex web of equivocation is at the heart of the plot, characters and theme of the play. Diana, in the final trial scene of the play, seems to speak in riddles and paradox, when she says of Bertram:

> Because he's guilty, and he is not guilty:
> He knows I am no maid, and he'll swear to't;
> I'll swear I am a maid, and he knows not.
> (*All's Well that Ends Well*, V.3.289-91)

As the resolution of the ambiguities, paradoxes and equivocations that pervade the plot and characterisation of this so-called 'problem' comedy illustrates, the genre calls for a festive celebratory outcome and a mood of forgiveness despite the pain and confusion that precedes it. In tragedies, however, this is not the case; here "nothing is but what is not" (*Macbeth*, I.3.145) and equivocation and paradox cannot be resolved by the kind of *deus ex machina* device employed at the end of *All's Well that Ends Well*. Paradox and inversions of the natural order baffle, mire and traduce the protagonists, bringing them nothing but confusion and despair. Ambivalence, as in the witches' prophecies or the supernatural oracle in *2 Henry VI* referenced above, can be discerned in the manifestations of nature, the actions of others and the language conventions of sociopolitical interaction in many Shakespeare plays, and is often seen to exercise a corrosive effect on the characters. As Terence Hawkes has noted in respect of *Macbeth*: "Murder is to politics what lechery is to love and equivocation is to language".[24]

Despite its abundant linguistic subtleties, Shakespeare's shortest play makes relatively little use of syntactic opaqueness or complexity in the dramatic dialogue of its characters. In terms of maxims of quantity, quality, relation and manner there are constant evasions and violations arising from riddles and half-truths in the dramatic exchanges; these more central tergiversations are reflected in the more marginal exchanges of neutral or minor characters such the Porter, who delays Macduff with his rambling disquisition on equivocation and equivocators, or Ross who equivocates with Macduff by telling him his wife and children are "well" and "at peace when [he] left them". The latter's discourse strategy of being "a niggard of [his] speech", though seeming to comply with the Gricean maxims of

[24] Terence Hawkes, *Shakespeare's Talking Animals: Language and Drama in Society* (London: Edward Arnold, 1973), 153.

quantity, manner and relation, in dramatic context of the exchange flouts the maxim of quality. His responses may be metaphorically accurate, but they are literally false and evasive.

Minor characters can even contribute to political intriguing at the heart of the play through the ambiguity and semantic obfuscation created by deliberate syntactic complexity. Thus, at the opening of *Henry V* we are privy to the Machiavellian realpolitik of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Ely in their discussion in an ante-room prior to their meeting with the newly crowned young King. The motor for the perpetuation of the Hundred Years War and successful invasion of France turns out to be nothing more than a strategy safeguarding the Church's excessive wealth and influence. The two 'men of God' conspire to circumvent the likelihood that the new King will enact a law set in motion by his deceased father aimed to curb both their wealth and their influence. As was the case with the illegal Bush-Blair invasion of Iraq in recent times, Henry's campaign in France proves no more than a distraction and a sham, embarked on for ulterior motives and instigated in this case by the Church. In his opening scene Shakespeare shows how the unscrupulous clerics contrive to pull the wool over Henry's eyes; he then lets us witness how in the subsequent scene of their royal audience their 'weasel words', liberally sprinkled with pedantic historical references and couched in structural complexity and convolution, takes its effect on the young King. Not only does the Archbishop have "the sin upon my head, dread sovereign" (I.2.102) he has blood on his hands, particularly after the King poses a straightforward question to him in the naive expectation of a straightforward answer.

The linguistic strategy employed by the Archbishop and Bishop in I.2 is an object lesson on being economical with truth and extravagant with language. His ulterior motives are revealed to the pre-informed audience via his shameless flouting of the Gricean maxims of quality, quantity, relation and manner to the extent that the 'reverse maxims', as proposed above, operate in their stead. The language of his dialogue achieves this aim through a process of embedding meaning in levels of subordination that serve to obfuscate the key question of whether Henry has or hasn't a rightful claim on French territory. Two of the Archbishop's speeches, in particular, from Act 1, Scene 2, lines 178 to 240 and lines 329 to 366, illustrate this skillful dialogic technique and exemplify the effect of cumulative subordination. One key indicator of guile and specious reasoning is an accumulation of non-finite particle clauses and/or adjuncts placed before the main clause that supposedly contains the propositional meaning of the utterance. The foregrounding of such subordinate finite or non-finite clauses, in what is known in Hallidayan functional grammar as the theme part of the sentence, has the effect of planting the speaker's presuppositions in the mind of the hearer and making the latter segment, the rheme, appear a conclusive syllogism. It correspondingly backgrounds the key information of the main clause by passing quickly over possibly contentious arguments and assuming them as given information.

All of the Archbishop's speeches in this scene, and these two long speeches especially, employ this same tactic, luxuriating in redundancy, speciousness and linguistic complexity; the decisive part of the second speech from lines 333 to 359 is particularly prolix, consisting of only two sentences, each over-burdened with subordinate clauses and adjuncts. Here, following a main clause referring irrelevantly to honeybees, the prevaricating prelate piles clause upon clause in the first of the two interminable sentences. Having repeated this tactic in the second sentence, his concluding words "End in one purpose and be all well borne/ Without defeat" seem unequivocal – until on close analysis we realise they are governed by the noncommittal modal main verb, "may", secreted in the forest of preceding subordination. The inevitable result, as Shakespeare demonstrates in this highly ambivalent work, is that, rather than emulating Gertrude's curt request to the long-winded Polonius for "more matter and less art" (*Hamlet*, II.2.98), Henry allows himself to be seduced – though not too reluctantly perhaps – by the "sweet and honeyed sentences" (I.1.53) of the churchmen.

5. Conclusion

In my article I have sought to advance the claims of Blake, Culpeper, Hope, Delabastita and others that there is a significant and intricate relationship between semantics and syntax in Shakespearean play-texts. Unlike Henry's claim to France, there is strong textual support for the argument that the moral ambiguity of characters and the ambivalence inherent in both characters and dramatic situation are reflected in examples of grammatical-syntactic ambiguity and structural complexity in Shakespeare's multi-faceted poetic uses of language. The application of cooperative, or indeed uncooperative, principles to dramatic discourse (like that of other pragmatic features not dealt with in this article, such as politeness and face) can yield fresh and instructive insights when allied to functionality, functional shifts and syntactic complexity. However, further work needs to be done, comparing and contrasting syntactic ambiguity in verse passages with prose, as well as comedies with tragedies, and early plays with late ones, in order to arrive at a better understanding of Shakespeare's deployment of syntax as a core strategy of dramatic discourse. For example, establishing a database of cases of syntactic ambiguity in Shakespeare's dramatic verse and non-dramatic poetry would serve as a valuable resource for further investigation of the ambiguity and ambivalence that are central to his poetic sensibility.

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Sabrina Francesconi

"Blue-black caves of shade". The Language of Colour in Juliet's Trilogy by Munro

Abstract: Using a socio-semiotic multimodal stylistic approach, this article inspects the language of colour in "Chance", "Soon", "Silence", three interrelated stories by Alice Munro. Far from expressing abstract, universal and idealised concepts to be inscribed within a generative system of hues, it claims that colour language is meta-functionally conceptualised and socio-semiotically configured. First, it draws a map of verbal chromatic expressions by considering chromisms, compounds, adjectival and verbal patterns. Second, and in line with van Leeuwen's (2011) "semiotics of colour", it retrieves colour expressions according to a graded system (including the parameters of colour value, saturation, differentiation, modulation, mixing, purity, transition, hue), and, as such, as carrying symbolic and emotive implicatures. Third, it argues the metafunctional potential of the language of colour in ideational, interpersonal and textual terms for descriptive, emotional and cohesive concerns respectively. Ultimately, it claims that the language of colour, consciously, meticulously and systemically adopted, is functional in expressing Munro's indeterminacy and elusiveness. Generally modulated, mixed and fluid, colours are, indeed, captured and rendered in their shaded, dynamic and transitory manifestations.

Keywords: *Alice Munro, colour, language, parameters, modulation, transition*

Because of the woman at the cleaners, the sick child,
she wore the wrong green dress.
(Alice Munro, "Tricks")

1. Introduction

The penultimate story of the collection R*unaway*,[1] "Tricks", opens with Robin, waiting for her avocado-green dress from the laundry. Through a flashback, the reader meets the 26-year-old nurse on the train to Stratford, Ontario, where she plans to watch a performance of *Antony and Cleopatra* by Shakespeare. After the play, she loses her handbag in the theatre's toilet. Luckily, the young woman happens to meet Danilo, originally from Montenegro, who offers to pay for her rail ticket. He brings her to his clockmaker's shop to take the money; they eat and spend a good time together. As she wants to give the money back, Danilo invites her to come back in a years' time, to the same place, with the same green dress. The meeting ends with a kiss on the railway platform.

One year later, Robin leaves to Stratford to attend *As You Like It*. The dress is not ready at the laundry, so she buys another dress, yet, of a different type of green, a lime green. After this second play, she goes to the shop to meet Danilo and give back the money. Surprisingly, the man does not recognize her, after she desperately tries to grab his attention; he rudely shuts the shop's door in her face.

It is only after many years, at the hospital where she is working, that Robin discovers that the man in the shop was probably Alexander, Danilo's deaf-mute twin brother. Upset, the nurse thinks about tricks in life, but cannot avoid blaming her "wrong green dress" for her unlucky destiny (269). Thus, "Tricks" narrates of the irreducibility of green-colour shades (as well as of the implacability of green

[1] Alice Munro, R*unaway* (London: Vintage, [2004] 2006). All quotations from "Tricks" and from the *Trilogy* are taken from this 2006 Vintage edition of R*unaway*, with page number in parenthesis.

dresses). It expresses the author's awareness of and concern for specific and distinct colour hues, and invites considering multifarious implicatures of colour conceptualization and configuration.

Drowning on these insightful references to colours, this work concentrates on the use and function of the language of colour in "Chance", "Soon", "Silence", three stories by Alice Munro, collected in the same volume which includes "Tricks", R*unaway* (2004).[2] The three texts are closely intertwined, weaving together the threads of the same female character's life, Juliet. "Chance" captures the personal growth of a young woman, born in a small town near Toronto: after a B.A. and M.A in classics, she lives her first professional experience as a temporary teacher in British Columbia. Set in Whale Bay, North of Vancouver, "Soon" revolves around a young mother of the 13-month-old baby Penelope, living with Eric, a fisherman she had met on a Toronto-Vancouver train. Some months later, Juliet pays a visit to her parents in Ontario, to let them know about the child, and to check her mother's frail health condition. She also discovers that a painting by Chagall she had bought for her parents has been left in the attic, as her father found the artwork embarrassing. The protagonist travels back to the North and her mother dies. Years later, Eric finds his death during a violent storm and his body is burnt on the beach. "Silence" opens the secrets of a middle-aged person, abandoned by her daughter who avoids any contact and denies any explanation. For years, Juliet keeps looking for Penelope, obsessively but vainly. Juliet's stories have been turned into a film by Pedro Almodovar, *Julieta*, shot in Spain and in Spanish, and presented at the 2016 Cannes film festival.

Using a socio-semiotic multimodal stylistic approach, this paper inspects the language of colour in the *Trilogy*. Far from identifying abstract, universal, idealised concepts to be inscribed within a generative system of hues, it claims that colour language is, instead, metafunctionally conceptualised and socio-semiotically configured. First, it draws a map of verbal chromatic expressions, by considering chromisms, compounds, adjectival and verbal patters. Second, it outlines a discourse of colour in the short stories, postulating the predominance of the parametric system of modulation, and inscribing dynamism within a multimodal stylistic framework. Third, it argues the metafunctional potential of the language of colour, in ideational, interpersonal and textual terms, for, respectively, descriptive, emotional, and cohesive concerns. It concludes that the language of colour, consciously, meticulously and systemically adopted, is functional in expressing Munro's indeterminacy and elusiveness.

2. Literature Review

Literature on the language of colours is rich and encompasses a wide range of disciplinary domains perspectives. This section briefly outlines some studies moving from generative to semiotic approaches to colour discourse. The seminal study on colour names, *Basic Colour Terms*, by Berlin and Kay, is based on a universal classificatory vocabulary.[3] The authors have postulated the existence of 11 universal basic colour categories: white, black, red, green, yellow, blue, brown, purple, pink, orange and grey. They have mapped the presence of such categories in 98 languages, identifying different stages of the evolution of colour vocabulary: some languages at a first stage, such as Ngombe in Congo and Dugum Dani in New Guinea, only contain a term for white and a term for black, whereas some other languages at a seventh stage, such as American-English and Hungarian contain all the above eleven terms. In their interviews Belin and Kay had rigid rules for colour name validity: they only considered monolexemic words (thus excluding compounds like 'lime-green', for instance), or colour terms, which could be applied to a wide range of fields (thus excluding 'blond', for instance).

[2] The three short stories were first published, together, on the *New Yorker*, between 14 and 21 June 2004: *Chance* (130-142), *Soon* (142-9, 150-7), *Silence* (157-8, 160, 163-4, 166, 168-172, 175-6, 178-80, 183).
[3] Brent Berlin and Paul Kay, *Basic Colour Terms: Their Universality and Evolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969).

Alongside Berlin and Kay's study, other contributions from a range of disciplines have enriched the critical and scientific debate on colour discourse. In his extended and notorious inspection of colours, the French historian and anthropologist Michel Pastoureau argues that colours carry deep symbolic meanings, of which we are often unaware.[4] Language itself epitomises such meaning potentials, it its pervasive 'colourful' idiomatic expressions. It is not by chance that we commonly refer to 'the black market', to 'a black sheep', as well as to 'the blue blood'; or that we say that something happens only 'once in a blue moon', or makes us become 'green with envy', or 'to see red'. Symbolic meanings profoundly impact human life in its multifarious expressions, ranging from art, politics, religion, psychology, and sociology.

In this vein, van Leeuwen's socio-semiotic theory rejects abstract and universal colour concepts, and addresses authentic instantiation of colours. Van Leeuwen's theory is, then, a socio-semiotics of colour, accounting for how society "uses colour for the purposes of expression and communication",[5] that is, addressing how colours have been used and are being adopted to express and communicate feelings, thoughts, ideas, as well as to socially interact. The aim of this theory is, thus, the study of semiotic resources, semiotic practices, as well as semiotic change. Attention is devoted to how new colours and colour names have been introduced, manipulated and developed across history after the discovery of new pigments through how colours have been symbolically used in political, religious and folklore events, to how colours express feelings, ideas and perspectives in art, architecture and fashion. The following section outlines the theory for the present work.

3. Metafunctions, Reality Principles and Modality

In order to analyse the language of colour in its behaviour and function, this article adopts a socio-semiotic multimodal stylistic approach, which combines socio-semiotics,[6] visual analysis[7] and functional stylistics.[8] The integration of socio-semiotic multimodality and stylistics for the methodological framework is related to both content and form. It responds to Munro's narrative being concerned with multisensoriality and materiality, and as being shaped by the semiotics of modes and modal resources. Moreover, it acknowledges that the Canadian writers' style profoundly challenges the borders between written and oral modes.[9]

Kress and van Leeuwen have addressed colour as a mode, claiming its availability, as a resource for making meaning in a socio-cultural group.[10] As such, colour serves the three Hallidayan metafunctions or lines or strands of meaning, which embrace the main general purposes language is used for:[11]

[4] Michel Pastoureau, *Le Petit Livre des Couleurs* (Paris: Éditions du Panama, 2005).
[5] Theo van Leeuwen, *The Language of Colour* (London: Routledge, 2011), 1. See also Günther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen, "Colour as a Semiotic Mode: Notes for a Grammar of Colour", *Visual Communication*, 1.3 (2002), 343-368, and Günther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen, *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*, Second edition (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), Chapter 5.
[6] M.A.K. Halliday, *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*, Third edition (London: Routledge, 2004).
[7] Ibid.
[8] Patricia Canning, "Functionalist Stylistics", in Michael Burke, ed., *The Routledge Handbook to Stylistics* (London: Routledge, 2014), 45-67.
[9] On Munro's conversational style, see Linda Pilliere, "Alice Munro's Conversational Style", *Etudes de Stylistique Anglaise*, 8 (2015), 37-56; Isla Duncan, *Alice Munro's Narrative Art* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Lynn Blin, "Conversationality and the Infraordinary in Alice Munro's 'The Shining Houses', in *"With a roar from underground": Alice Munro's Dance of the Happy Shades, Etudes de Stylistique anglaise*, 8 (2015), 127-143; Michael Toolan, "The Intrinsic Importance of Sentence Type and Clause Type to Narrative Effect: Or, How Alice Munro's 'Circle of Prayer' Gets Started", in Dan McIntyre, ed., *Language and Style* (London: Palgrave, 2010), 311-327.
[10] Kress and van Leeuwen, "Colour as a Semiotic Mode", 346.
[11] Halliday, *Functional Grammar*, 29-31.

1. The first is the ideational metafunction, which sees the clause as representation, and is concerned with depicting the world, the content of the narrative. Colours can, accordingly, fulfil ideational meanings, and be used to denote things, entities and processes, such as, in flags or brands.
2. The second is the interpersonal metafunction, enacting interpersonal relations among participants, establishing social relations and perceiving the clause as exchange. Colours, indeed, act upon participants, impact on characters, as they express, inspire or generate feelings and emotions.
3. The third is the textual metafunction, concerned with the construction of the text, in terms of organisation, cohesion and coherence, and conceiving the clause as message. Like in webpages, magazine or brochure covers, colours are used to create textual organization, coherence and/or foregrounding.

In this vein, language behaviour and language function negotiate reality conceptualisation and configuration, e.g., how reality is perceived and represented. Kress and van Leeuwen's framework (2006) identifies main reality principles or orientations: the naturalistic, sensory and abstract ones.

1. In the first case, reality is depicted in the most faithful possible way, with naturalistic colour modulation and differentiation, and a naturalistic distribution of light and shade.
2. In the case of sensory reality principle, feelings, emotions and moods are expressed, and the pleasure principle plays a dominant role.
3. Finally, the abstract modality principle entails processes of decontextualisation, idealisation and essentialisation: the visual configuration achieves an analytic dimension and impersonal stance.

The three reality principles are encoded by the grammar system of modality, "an expression of indeterminacy"[12] in reality representation, whereby language enables one to temper a proposition by communicating degrees along a continuum. In verbal language, modality can be expressed via a range of items, such as modal verbs, adverbs of probability or of frequency. This article is specifically concerned with verbal configurations of the parametric system of colour, as projecting the grammar of modality, reality principles, metafunctions, and, ultimately, style.

Hence, colours can be perceived as a continuum, where one colour flows gradually into another. For instance, green is not a rigid and fixed colour, but gradually flows into other colours, running from almost yellow on the one hand, to almost blue on the other hand. As such, hues can be located within colour schemes, which show graded and shaded colour instances, and their "complex and composite meaning potential"[13] can be analysed accordingly. Various modality markers frame modality within the semiotic system of colour, namely, colour value, saturation, differentiation, modulation, mixing, purity, transition, hue. Colour features are not mapped in terms of binary choices (e.g., 'saturation' *vs* 'desaturation'; 'modulation' *vs* 'flatness'), but according to a graded system, as a matter of degree.[14]

Exploring the tension between a level of content and a level of expression, this article examines a socio-semiotic conceptualization and a functional configuration of the discourse of colour in the *Trilogy*.

[12] Ibid., 148.
[13] Kress and van Leeuwen, *Colour as a Semiotic Mode*, 355.
[14] Van Leeuwen, *Colour*, 57.

4. Text Analysis

In this section, text analysis first observes the presence, frequency and behaviour of colour-related terms and expressions, then maps parametric configurations of the language of colour, and, finally, discusses its metafunctional component and potential.

4.1 *Presence and Frequency of Chromisms*

The *Trilogy* shows 100 colour-term occurrences, including 37 in "Chance", 36 in "Soon" and 27 in "Silence". The proportion of absolute terms is coherent: 17, 13, and 14 respectively.

	Chance	Soon	Silence	Tot.
terms	17	13	14	44
occurrences	37	36	27	100

The most frequent chromisms are 'black' (17), followed by 'white' (14), 'green' (10), 'yellow' and 'brown' (8), 'red' and 'gray' (6), and 'blue' (5). Especially used in the central story, the black colour qualifies Juliet and Sarah's dresses ("black minidress" (90) for Juliet; the "black linen skirt down to her calves and a matching jacket" (89) for Sarah), as well as Irene's appearance (her "thick, springy black hair, pulled back from her face into a stubby ponytail", (91) as well as her "thick and rather hostile black eyebrows" (91). In "Chance", it is used to depict the landscape, like the "dark gray or quite black" rocks (51), the "black spruce" trees (52) and the "black water, black rocks, under the wintry clouds, filled the air with darkness" (65).

The white colour is present in Chagall's ekphrasis opening "Soon", in "the profile of a pure white heifer" (87), with "the whites of his eyes shining" (87). It also appears, later in the same story, in the "blistered and shabby white paint" (91) of Sam and Sarah's house, in Sarah's "white hair flying out in wisps" (98), whereas, towards the end of "Silence", it resonates with the "white baby" (151), generated by the Queen of Ethiopia.

The third recurring colour is green, with 10 occurrences. "Chance" features "dark-green, zipped shrouds" (52), "dark-green curtains" on the train (79), and the "bright-green" pie Ailo had cooked for Ann's wake (76). If "Soon" writes of the "green-faced man" of Chagall's painting (87), the "shiny lime-green cloth" of Sarah's turban, collar and cuffs (89), in "Silence", the green colour is almost absent.

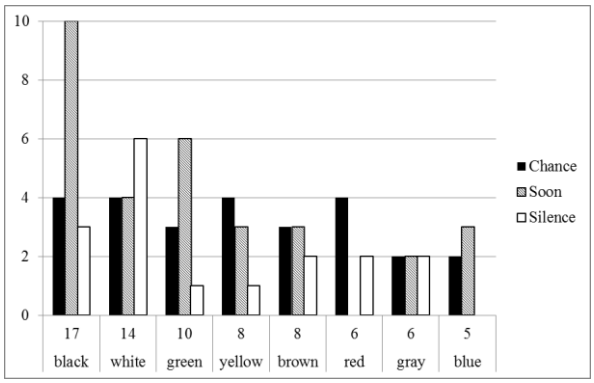
The fourth recurring colours are yellow and brown, with 8 occurrences each. The two items of vocabulary co-occur in the modulated "brownish-yellow light" (98) of Sara's room, generated by bamboo shades hung on all the windows of the former sunroom. In "Chance", yellow is the colour of the "large yellow dog" (74) welcoming Juliet before entering Eric's house, and Ailo's "yellowish-white hair loose over her shoulders" (75). Towards the end of "Soon", a saturated yellow colour marks Penelope's "duck-shaped yellow soap" and the "well-pressed yellow skirt" of the minister (117). The only occurrence in "Silence" is used to mark its absence, as in: "[a]ll wore ordinary clothes, not yellow robes or anything of that sort" (129).

Brown signals the status and change of Juliet and Sam's hair: readers first meet Juliet's "light brown hair" (52), then Sam's "light-brown floppy hair" (89) in the second story, and finally, know that "[d]uring the years that it had been dyed red it had lost the vigor of its natural brown—it was a silvery brown now, fine and wavy" (150). Worth-mentioning are also the man on the train's "tan and brown checked jacket" (54), as well as the "reddish-brown dog" (75), the second of Eric's dogs, in "Chance".

The same number of occurrences, 6, is shown by red and gray. Red appears in the "dark red" of the station building (58), in the "Dreary Railway Red" (64) Juliet menions in her letter to her parents, as

well as in the "red-limbed arbutus" (82) in "Chance". "Silence" mentions the fact that Juliet's colour, over the years, had been "dyed red" (150), and captures a red sky, in the portion "where the sun had gone down" (147). As for the gray colour, the narrator in "Chance" reports "dark gray" rocks (51), and "some gray at the sides" on Eric's dark and curly hair (71). In "Soon", the car's paint had "faded to gray" (91), while Sara's hair is "going gray"; a woman Juliet meets in "Silence" has "[l]ong black hair streaked with gray" (127).

Blue only has a frequency of 5, including the "dark-blue shirt" and the "flecks of blue and gold" on the "maroon tie" worn by the suicidal (54), Ailo's "green or blue eyes" (91), "the original blue paint" (91) of Sam's car in "Soon", and the "blue-black caves of shade" (94).



Acknowledging the relevant frequency and distribution of colour terms, the following section looks more specifically at modal configurations of colour discourse, addressed as a graded system, and, as such, as carrying multifarious emotional implicatures.

4.2 *The Parametric Configuration of Colour Discourse*

Within a socio-semiotic approach to the language of colour, various parametric systems can be envisaged – value, saturation, differentiation, modulation, mixing, purity, transition, hue – which are verbally articulated through chromisms, compounds, adjectival and verbal patterns.

Adjectives like 'light' and 'dark' express respectively tints or shades of a hue, and configure the parametric system of value. The scale of value is the gray scale, the scale from maximally light (white) to maximally dark (black). The following excerpts show adjectives pre-modifying the hue term and framing the system of value:

> Most of the berths were already made up, the **dark-green** curtains narrowing the aisles, when he walked her back to the car (79).

> Juliet had described Sam as looking like her – long neck, a slight bump to the chin, **light-brown** floppy hair – and Sara as a frail pale blonde, a wispy untidy beauty (89).

As epitomised by the two instances, the adjectives 'light' ("light-brown floppy hair") and 'dark' ("dark-green curtains") represent the two extremes of the parameter of value. In-between them are a range of light-related adjectives, which may simultaneously be ascribed to colour intensity, as in the following:

> [Ailo] sets before Juliet, with the coffee, a piece of pie – **bright** green, covered with some shrunken meringue (76).

> The jacket's collar and cuffs were of a **shiny** lime-green cloth with black polka dots (90).

Albeit also related to the presence of light, green-related adjectives like 'bright' and 'shiny' mainly configure the parameter of saturation, which expresses chromatic vividness and vibrancy.

The semiotic system of colour differentiation can be measured on a scale that goes from a wide and varied palette of colours, through a reduced palette, to monochrome, and is generally expressed via the conjunction 'and', in order to juxtapose colour names, as in the following:

> Tasselled loafers, tan slacks, **tan and brown** checked jacket with pencil lines of maroon, dark-blue shirt, maroon tie with flecks of blue and gold (54).

> Perhaps in Heather's house, in the **white and green and orange sunroom**, with Heather's brothers shooting baskets in the backyard, news so dire could hardly penetrate (144).

The first instance ("tan and brown") is non-problematic, as it adopts an unmarked 'A and B' solution. Differently, the three colour names in the second instance ("white and green and orange") are divided by two conjunctions 'A and B and C'. Being isolated, separated, dissociated by the conjunction, the three items of vocabulary project, following Pilliere,[15] an analytical approach, a "dissociative point of view". This is contrasted to an unmarked A, B and C solution (absent in the *Trilogy*), whereby readers are invited to cast an overall, synthetic gaze, and capture chromatic associations and echoes.

The syntagmatic combination of colour expressing the system of differentiation can be slightly modified by a paradigmatic combination of colours, verbally articulated through the conjunction 'or'. If syntagmatic differentiation is achieved through a 'both-and' pattern, paradigmatic differentiation projects an 'either-or' tension, as in the following:

> [Irene's] eyes were **green or blue**, a light surprising color against this skin, and hard to look into, being deep set (91).

This second solution ("green or blue") relies on choice between two options and, on a narrative level, highlights the narrator's and the focaliser's perceptive limits: she *does not know* whether the eyes' colours were blue or green. More than colour-based description, what readers are left with are the narrator's and/or focaliser's uncertainties.

Colour modulation refers to the adoption of tints and shades of the same colour, in opposition to flat colours. In the following instance, the predeterminer 'silvery' (defined by the *OED* as "grey-white and lustrous", when related to hair) modifies the brown colour, creating a unique tint:

> During the years that it had been dyed red it had lost the vigor of its natural brown – it was a **silvery brown** now, fine and wavy (150).

[15] Linda Pilliere, "Alice Munro's Conversational Style", *Études de Stylistique Anglaise*, 8 (2015), 37-56. See also Lynn Blin, "Alice Munro's Naughty Coordinators in 'Friend of My Youth'", *Journal of the Short Story in English*, 55 (2010), 85-108.

However, more frequent in Munro is the -ish suffix, adding a negative connotation to the modifying colour, and inscribing an emotional component within colour discourse:

> And now a small **reddish-brown dog** arrives to join in the commotion (75).
>
> Ailo is a tall, broad-shouldered woman with a thick but not flabby body, and **yellowish-white hair** loose over her shoulders (75).
>
> Bamboo shades had been hung on all the windows, filling the small room – once part of the verandah – with a **brownish-yellow light** and a uniform heat (98).

The modulation process is performed by two colour terms ("reddish-brown", "yellowish-white", "brownish-yellow"): the second is modulated by the first, and the first is modulated by its connoting suffix. Colour modulation is, elsewhere, expressed with some locutions:

> His hair was dark and curly **with some gray at the sides**, his forehead wide and weathered, his shoulder strong and a little stooped (71).
>
> Long black hair **streaked with gray**, no makeup, long denim skirt (127).
>
> Tasselled loafers, tan slacks, tan and brown checked jacket with pencil lines of maroon, dark-blue shirt, maroon tie **with flecks of blue and gold** (54).

Through a variety of verbal expressions ("some gray", "streaked with", "flecks of blue and gold"), excerpts differently configure colour modulation, whereby the language of colour disrupts colour flatness. Elsewhere – and on rare and less relevant occurrences – the opposite of modulation, a flat, homogeneous and undifferentiated colour is achieved by the means of locutions or premodifying items, as follows:

> Wide hips, strong arms, long hair – **all** blond with **no** white – breasts bobbing frankly under a loose shirt (81).
>
> The pews and other church furnishings had been removed, and **plain** white curtains had been strung up to form private cubicles, as in a hospital ward (129).

Overall, colour modulation is the most relevant parameter in Munro's narrative, both in terms of a) frequency of modulated colour expressions and in the b) complexity and variety of their articulation. Notably, modulation is functional in expressing coding orientation and/as modality in the *Trilogy*, related to the credibility and reliability of propositions. As such, the language of colour can be related to previous studies on Munro's language.

Somacarrera[16] addressed linguistic modality in three of Munro's stories, owing that they convey the narrator's attitude towards the truth of the narrated events. The Spanish scholar specifically observed epistemic modality, whereby the narrator indicates the confidence or lack of confidence in the truth of the proposition expressed. Results showed that the predominant system is that of epistemic *possibility*, expressing a low degree of speaker's commitment, via modal adverbs like 'perhaps', 'maybe', or modal

[16] Pilar Somacarrera, "Exploring the Impenetrability of Narrative: A Study of Linguistic Modality in Alice Munro's Early Fiction", in *Studies in Canadian Literature/Études en littérature canadienne*, 21.1 (1996), 79–91.

auxiliary verbs like 'would', or expressions, such as, 'she could not tell if', 'she did not know', 'she could not remember'. Observations on this article seem to be consistent with Somacarrera's results: a 'brownish-yellow' colour term may, semiotically and epistemically, correspond to 'perhaps', 'maybe' and 'would' in her analysis. (On the opposite side of the cline, fully saturated colours – a 'vivid' or 'vibrant red' – may express epistemic certainty and correspond to patterns, such as, 'surely' and 'must').

In-between modulation and differentiation is colour mixing, whereby two distinct colours are dis/connected by a hyphen:

> The hardwood trees were humped over the far edge of the fields, making **blue-black caves of shade**, and the crops and the meadows in front of them, under the hard sunlight, were gold and green (94).

Verbally expressed by compound colour names, where the hyphen both dis/joins the two equally important lexemes, mixedness pertains to the criterion of purity in colour theories,[17] highly valued in antiquity, and developing a scale from maximally pure, undiluted colours, to mixed, hybrid colours. If the previous instance epitomises mixed colour ("blue-black"), the following instances feature pure colour ("pure white"), on the other extreme end of the purity cline:

> Two profiles face each other. One the profile of a **pure white** heifer, with a particularly mild and tender expression, the other that of a green-faced man who is neither young nor old (87).

Interestingly, the latter excerpt refers to the description of Chagall's painting from Juliet's perspective. As she herself reveals to a friend in a dialogue, the young woman loved the artwork, as it reminded her of her parents and their simple and genuine life. This is why she had bought a printed copy for them (88).[18]

Overall, the language of colour in Munro seems to challenge determination and stability both synchronically and diachronically; the stories features dynamic transitions, intended as natural or artificial colour transformation:

> [Irene] had thick, springy black hair, pulled back from her face into a stubby ponytail, thick and rather hostile black eyebrows, and the sort of skin that **browns** easily (91).

> Rooms in [Sam's] mind closed up, the windows **blackened**—what was in there judged by him to be too useless, too discreditable, to meet the light of day (114).

Diachronic chromatic modulation is either achieved through intransitive transformative processes of colour, such as, "browns", "blacken", "fade", or through go + chromism syntagm:

> The original blue paint showed in streaks here and there but **was mostly faded to gray**, and the effects of winter road salt could be seen in its petticoat fringe or rust (91).

> Sara's soft, fair, flyaway hair, **going gray and then white** (150).

[17] Van Leeuwen, *Colour*, 61.
[18] See Robert Thacker, *Alice Munro: Writing Her Lives: A Biography* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2005, revised in 2011).

> During the years that **it had been dyed red** it had lost the vigor of its natural brown – it was a silvery brown now, fine and wavy (150).

Both concerned with colour fluidity and transition, the first two instances indicate natural transformation ("faded to gray" and "going gray and then white"), whereas the third expresses an induced transformation ("it had been dyed red"). Transition may also be tempered, as in the following:

> When the professor read that word (which she could not now remember), his forehead had gone **quite** pink and he seemed to be suppressing a giggle (81).

The adverb 'quite' operates as a modifier and, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, means "fairly, rather, somewhat, a bit, a little". It then expresses that the tranformation into the pink colour is moderate, relative, to a certain degree. This hedging strategy is consistent with observations made as for modality, and seems to integrate the system of dynamism and the principle of indeterminacy.

As instances show, the systemic and meticulous language of colour is functional in expressing Munro's indeterminacy and elusiveness. This is epitomised by the following passage, showing an in-between solution between static and dynamic, where a tension is generated, between the progressive form of the intransitive transformative verb suggesting a diachronic movement (shading) and the still semantics of the utterance.

> His fur was long, **silvery shading into white** (57).

The last parameter is hue, encompassing the scale from red to blue. In line with a socio-semiotic approach, Munro explores a wide range of highly specific hues, consistent with a naturalistic view. The more conventional and stable red is replaced by a composite and layered system, including 'rasperry', 'crimson', 'maroon', as in the following:

> Yesterday, at the station, with her pencilled eyebrows and **raspberry lipstick**, her turban and suit, she had looked to Juliet like an elderly Frenchwoman (not that Juliet had seen many elderly Frenchwomen), but now, with her white hair flying out in wisps, her bright eyes anxious under nearly nonexistent brows, she looked more like an oddily aged child (98).

> She saw that the water and urine in the bowl was **crimson** with her blood (61).

> Tasselled loafers, tan slacks, tan and brown checked jacket with pencil lines of **maroon**, dark-blue shirt, **maroon** tie with flecks of blue and gold (54).

Instances show that the system of hue rejects general and abstract definitions of colours, in favour of specific and irreducible ones. This is also reminiscent of the green colour in "Tricks", perceived and represented as an abstract green, but a specific and distinct type of green, such as, avocado, lime, vivid, deep, bright, dark, light green. Not confined to the red colour (with 'raspberry', 'crimson' and 'maroon'), a multifarious declination of a hue can be also found in the *Trilogy* with reference, for instance, to 'brown', with the following colour terms: 'tan', 'copper' and 'auburn'.

Acknowledging a seemingly paradoxical grammar of colour complexity and ungraspability, the following table sums up the proposed parameters, and their verbal configuration in the stories. This is to be intended as an open framework, to be constantly developed and honed.

Parameter		**Verbal strategy**	**Example**
Value		light-related adj. + colour term	dark-green curtains
Saturation		shiny + colour term	shiny lime green
Differentiation	syntagmatic	colour term and colour term	tan and brown
	paradigmatic	colour term or colour term	green or blue
Modulation		CTish colour term	yellowish-brown
Mixing		colour term - colour term	blue-green
Purity		purity-related Adj. + colour term	pure white
Transition		colour process	blacken
Hue		colour term	crimson

5. Discussion

After checking frequency, outlining and illustrating the parametric systems for the analysis of the language of colour in the *Trilogy*, the following section discusses their metafunctional role within the narrative and addresses the ideational, interpersonal and textual lines of meaning.

As for the ideational metafunction, colour discourse is used for the description of characters, space, and things, as in the following two instances:

> Tasselled loafers, **tan** slacks, **tan and brown** checked jacket with **pencil lines of maroon**, **dark-blue** shirt, **maroon** tie with **flecks of blue and gold**. (54)

> The **original blue** paint showed in **streaks here and there** but was **mostly faded to gray**, and the effects of winter road salt could be seen in its petticoat fringe or rust. (91)

In the first instance, readers meet the character of a man, on the train from Toronto to Vancouver, who is going to sit in front of Juliet, try and start a conversation, before she leaves for the toilet. Later, the man would commit suicide and Juliet would feel guilty. This character is depicted through a carefully composed palette of dark and homogeneous colours, including 'tan', 'maroon', 'brown' and express the parameters of differentiation and value. In the second excerpt, the language of colour signals the passing of time and its effects on the old Pontiac, Sam's car. It used to be blue but it is now gray, with marks of rust. Through the use of lexemes, such as, 'flecks' and 'streaks', both excerpts adopt strategies which disrupt colour flatness.

Beside ideational value, colours have interpersonal meanings, act upon participants, impact on characters, as in the following instances about characters and setting, respectively:

> She had thick, springy black hair, pulled back from her face into a stubby ponytail, thick and rather **hostile** black eyebrows, and the sort of skin that browns easily. (91)

> This morning we stopped at some godforsaken little settlement in the northern woods, all painted **Dreary Railway Red**. (64)

The two colour-related adjectives ("hostile" and "dreary") clearly connote the red and black colours expressively, and signal how they act upon viewers. Darkness in Irene depicts her introvert, uncanny attitude, while the Railway Red expresses a gloomy atmosphere and seems to anticipate the tragedy Juliet is going to witness. A further example of emotion-loaded colour language can be found in the already quoted and negatively connoted "brownish-yellow light". Colour terms in Munro, then, project emotional values among represented participants (characters) and interactive participants (readers and represented participants). Hence, analysis of colour has cast light on the sensory representation of reality, based on emotional and affective concerns and on psychological implicatures.

Colours also project textual meanings, related to coherence and cohesion. The following instances show colour combination in terms of congruence or dissonance:

> Her eyes were green or blue, **a light surprising color against this skin**, and hard to look into, being deep set. (91)

> Then she figured it out—Sara was wearing **a black linen skirt down to her calves and a matching jacket**. The jacket's collar and cuffs were of a shiny lime-green cloth with black polka dots. A turban of the same green material covered her hair. She must have made the oufit herself, or got some dressmaker to make it for her. **Its colors were unkind to her skin**, which looked as if fine chalk dust had settled over it. (89-90)

In the first instance, Irine's eyes are of an unexpected, "surprising" colour, with her skin ("the sort of skin that browns easily"). The narrator points out the dissonant colour combination. In the second instance, Sara's clothes are captured in their internal cohesion ("matching jacket") but in their incoherent, dissonant effect when colours are seen in relation to her skin ("unkind to her skin"). Munro's narrative is, thus, concerned with effects and implicatures of colour co-occurrences and mutual relations.

After observing the metafunctional value of the language of colour in terms of ideational, interpersonal, and textual meanings, attention should be devoted to the reality principle underlying the texts, as affected by parametric systems. How is reality perceived and represented in the *Trilogy*? In a faithful, realistic, naturalistic way? Or in a sensory, affective, emotional one? Or, differently, in an abstract and idealised modality? On the one hand, Munro profoundly relies on the system of hue and adopts highly precise colour terms, such as, 'raspberry' and 'crimson'. On the other hand, she frequently adopts a range of strategies of modulation – often emotionally charged – such as 'flecks', 'streaks', 'lines of' or 'brownish-yellow'. This twofold concern for what is specific and affective creates a tension, in the *Trilogy*, between naturalist and sensory coding orientations.

If the *Trilogy* shows a naturalistic-sensory interaction, within "Soon" we find an embedded tension towards the abstract reality principle, expressed by Chagall's painting. In opposition to modulation and dynamism manifested in her narrative and privileged by her narrators, Chagall's painting is indeed based on saturation ("the whites of his eyes shining") and purity ("pure white heifer"), as well as on white-

green colour contrast.[19] This is not surprising: very often does Munro's layered narrative embed, evoke, project other systems, horizons in a constant deferral of meaning. Chagall's green is not 'tricky', unlike the one dressed in "Tricks" by Robin, the specialist in psychiatric nursing with "greenish-gray eyes" (240). A green, in Munro's narrative, may be a "dark green", a "bright green" a "lime green" or a "green or blue", because shades and grades matter and make meaning. And because the language of colour, carefully and parametrically configured, expresses and celebrates the elusiveness of Munro's art.

6. Conclusions

This article has outlined a seemingly paradoxical grammar of colour complexity and ungraspability operating within Munro's *Trilogy*. Consciously, meticulously and systematically adopted, the language of colour in Munro is indeed multifaceted and multifarious and rejects simplistic and conclusive theoretical and analytical grids. First, and from the viewpoint of form, it is polymorphic and uses a variety of solutions at the level of expressions, such as similes, prefixes, suffixes, adjectives, compounds. In their verbal configurations colours are generally modulated, mixed and fluid, that is they are often captured in their shaded, dynamic and transitory manifestations. Second, and from the viewpoint of content and function, colour discourse is polysemous, and fulfils simultaneously ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions. The language of colour, indeed, operates at the level of affect, generates emotional feelings, and delineates the horizon of epistemic modality for the writer's narrative. A fluid and layered semiotic system, ultimately; it casts light on Munro's aesthetics, on her narrative ungraspability and elusiveness.

This essay is limited in extent and scope. Further research should: first, integrate the language of colour analytic framework with parameters deriving from the language of light; second, expand the scale of research to the whole corpus of 14 Munro's story collections and through the adoption of a software-based analysis, in order to check the frequency and validity of hypotheses; third, examine the language of colour in an intersemiotic process of film adaptations of literary texts.

[19] Héliane Ventura, "Le village Chaosmique d'Alice Munro", *Études Anglaises*, 67.3 (2014), 318-331.

John Douthwaite

Natural Complexity.
From Language to Text to Tradition

Abstract: The major thrust of this article is to demonstrate the extremely complex nature of even the apparently simplest communicative events such as polite conversation at a railway station and illustrates how and why communication is complex. The text selected to elucidate the complex mental processing involved in producing and comprehending messages enables a second objective to be achieved, namely a reconsideration of the 'meaning' of the work of Agatha Christie, especially with regard to the socio-political analysis that might be carried out using the crime story as a vehicle and the ideological stance she takes in the light of recent research questioning the traditional view of Christie as a 'solid' representative of the Golden Age of crime fiction. Such a reconsideration involves examining factors such as context in its widest sense, genre, tradition and calls up the question of the nature and value of a work of 'literature', starting from the premise that *all* communication is complex.

Keywords: *crime, society, ideology, pragmatics, indirectness, implicitness, mental processing, genre*

Because of the woman at the cleaners, the sick child,
she wore the wrong green dress.
(Alice Munro, "Tricks")

1. Introduction: Investigating Natural Language

Natural Language philosophy laid the theoretical foundations demonstrating that everyday language, or more in general communication, is an extremely complex process. Grice demonstrated effectively that much more is meant than what is said; Austin showed clearly how an utterance (U) has manifold levels of meaning and can concurrently perform more than one illocutionary and perlocutionary force; Sperber and Wilson showed the workings of the inferential engine in the uncovering of 'hidden' meaning; all these theorists produced contextual theories of meaning in the wake of anthropological research.[1] Context was seen initially as a given in which the speech event takes place and then as an emergent situation co-constructed by the speakers in the developing of the ongoing speech event. Discourse analysts[2] and genre analysts[3] and Critical Discourse Analysts[4] stress the importance of textual factors as well as dealing with ideological content. Behaviour and ideology cannot be fully investigated without bearing in mind the cultural dimension[5] and the behavioural norms laid down by society, beginning with

[1] See Bronislaw Malinowski, *Coral Gardens and their Magic* [1935] (London: Allan and Unwin, 1978); Alessandro Duranti, *Linguistic Anthropology* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1997).
[2] See Teun van Dijk, ed., *Discourse Studies: A Multidisciplinary Introduction. Volume. 1: Discourse as Structure and Process. Volume 2: Discourse as Social Interaction* (London: Sage, 1997).
[3] See Vijay Bhatia, *Analysing Genre. Language Use in Professional Settings* (London: Longman, 1993).
[4] See Norman Fairclough, *Language and Power (London: Longman, 1989).*
[5] See Ron Scollon and Suzanne W. Scollon, *Intercultural Communication*, Second Edition (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 2001).

politeness.[6] Conversational analysts[7] examine the structure of conversation with regard to the rules governing turn taking and other organizational principles.

However, analysing a text employing these methodological approaches does not do full justice to the richness of meaning conveyed by that text. Analysis may be piecemeal, revealing only certain features of the text and not its entirety. Hence, this paper will engage in a stylistic analysis of an extract from a novel. An entire section (the first of the two sections constituting the first chapter of the novel) has been selected in order to have a significant, 'complete' 'text' and not just a short snippet, so that factors such as context, co-text and discoursal features may be seen at work.

The text selected comes from Agatha Christie's *Murder on the Orient Express*. The reasons motivating the choice are a) the language is 'simple', b) the concepts are simple, (concrete *hic et nunc* objects and daily events), hence there would appear to be no immediately discernible obstacles to full comprehension, c) it is a crime novel, a genre which until recently both theory and the 'man in the street' deemed was not serious literature, and it therefore did not contain any 'deep' concepts or issues requiring contemplation and (critical) re-reading, unless one wished to reiterate the pleasure and escapism it provided. The selected extract thus offers a tangible illustration of just how complex the most unassuming text can be. For reasons of space, the first paragraph will be analysed in some depth, (part 2 of this paper), while the rest of the section will receive detailed but not extensive attention (part 3 of this paper). However, the section which I have classified as 'small talk' (sentences 23-52) will receive only passing attention since it is less varied in technique.

Parts 2 and 3 will concentrate basically on sentence level, hence sentential and sub-sentential meaning. Part 4 will extend the analysis from the sentential and sub-sentential level to the level of text and discourse. The analysis will this be pragmatic and stylistic. Instead, section four will approach the broader questions set in this volume such as how genre affects the message and the issue of the relationship between pragmatics and aesthetics. Naturally, there can be no divide between the levels. They constitute means of approaching text analysis, which has to start somewhere and somehow. Independence of levels is non-existent. It is simply a useful heuristic tool. Hence, the early sections focus more on micro-meaning and its relation to macro-structure while the fourth section does the opposite. But it is merely a question of degree. The final section, (5), draws conclusions. Those drawn from sections 2 and 3 are 'definitive', so to speak, and therefore not reiterated, while those drawn from section four are tentative since they point to possible macro-interpretations of the Christie's. They thus indicate areas of possible future investigation.

2. Plumbing Complexity – The First Paragraph

> [1] It was five o'clock on a winter's morning in Syria.

The locutionary force of Sentence [1], (henceforth S1) is that of describing a state of affairs, namely establishing time at a certain geographical location. However, this Austinian description, while correct, (or viable),[8] identifies very little of the manifold communicative functions performed by S1, which will be unfolded as we proceed. It thus demonstrates that classic Austinian theorising on speech acts identifies only one of the 'meanings of meaning',[9] to paraphrase Ogden and Richards. (Note that the illocutionary

[6] See Penelope Brown and Stephen C. Levinson, *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1987).
[7] See Emanuel Schegloff, *Sequence Organization in Interaction* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 2007).
[8] A critique of pragmatic theory is not a remit of this paper. My objective is to apply pragmatic and stylistic theory to reveal the great complexity and multifacetedness of messages and communication. I thus take the theories employed as operationally viable and effective.
[9] See Charles K. Ogden and Ian A. Richards, *The Meaning of Meaning* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1923).

and perlocutionary forces of S1 will be dealt with below). First of all, speech acts constitute low level generalisations. Namely, they pinpoint conceptual meaning at the level of sentence/utterance. They are generally devoid of context and co-text, two crucial sources of information which help the reader comprehend the text. Secondly, they fail to recognise two levels of meaning: on the one hand, micro-levels (sub-sentential meaning), and on the other hand, macro middle and high levels of generalisation (supra-sentential or discoursal meaning).[10] Third, they may fail to recognise a myriad of other types of meaning, such as recognising focaliser, point of view and attitude. Such 'failings' are, of course, not intended as a criticism, since classic speech act theory does not claim to perform all of these functions. Theoretical constructs such as those listed in the introduction have been developed to probe these domains. Let us examine the micro and macro levels in turn.

Sub-sentential meaning can be crucial in creating implications and implicatures. In S1 the first piece of information is highly specific, namely time: "five o'clock ... morning", the second piece of information is relatively specific – "in Syria"[11] – while the third piece of information "a" is generic. Presenting information as generic in a U where other information is presented as specific is a linguistic device which indicates that (in principle) the author is signalling that that information is less important than the information conveyed precisely. Stated differently, the author is conveying to the reader through this specific linguistic selection that the exact day on which the action takes place is not particularly important. Note that this explanation does not include the reason why such information is deemed to be less important by the author. In contrast, the exact time, 5 o'clock in the morning, and the fact that it is a winter morning, are flagged as being extremely important. Here too, no reason is specified to account for importance. However, the reader can 'fill out' part of the implicit the meaning by relating such information to his knowledge of the world (the standard way comprehension is achieved): Syria in winter is extremely cold. This mental operation of induction based on knowledge of the world helps explain why the precise location is not relevant, in Gricean terms, that is to say, why it is not relevant to the author/narrator's communicative goal: the relative location considered together with the time of the year are sufficient to imply a very low temperature.

We have thus introduced another dimension of 'meaning', the value of information,[12] and in so doing we have employed a sliding scale, or gradation – the relative importance of each piece of information in relation to the other pieces of information in the U (and in co-text).

Yet another domain which is also of great significance in any text, and especially so because it often escapes the reader's notice, is information that is missing. In this case, given the relatively great precision of the contextual information, it is noteworthy that the year in which the action takes place is withheld. The significance of this will be considered two paragraphs below.

Once such basic facts about the linguistic make-up of the text have been established, the questions which then require an answer are why the writer/narrator assigns the values he does assign to each piece of information in a given linguistic unit and why certain information is provided while other information is suppressed. Answering these questions is tantamount to examining the operation of Grice's Cooperative Principle, especially the maxims of Relation (or Relevance) and Quantity.[13]

However, Gricean maxims cannot operate in isolation. This being the first U in the novel, one of its functions is to establish context. This immediately takes us from sub-sentential level to the supra-sentential level. First of all, Syria takes us to the Middle East. Second, this fact should be related both to

[10] See John Douthwaite, *Towards a Linguistic Theory of Foregrounding* (Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 2000).
[11] Again, I must beg the reader's indulgence, since from a strict theoretical standpoint, "at five o'clock in the morning" is not necessarily exact (was it 5 o'clock and zero seconds?), and so is not necessarily more precise than "in Syria". However, the communicative effect is that time appears to be more precisely specified than location. Perfection is not of this world, nor of pragmatics, given the nature of language and of mental processing (Ibid.).
[12] Ibid.
[13] See Paul Grice, *Studies in the Way of Words* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard U.P., 1991).

the title of the novel, *Murder on the Orient Express*, and to the fact that the train will be blocked in a snowdrift between Vincovi and Brod, i.e. the main action takes place in the Balkans. In order to achieve 'full comprehension' (a chimera, in an absolute sense, given the complexity of communication), this information should be related to our knowledge of the world - in this specific case to the fact that the novel was written between 1925 and 1933, namely 10-15 years after the end of World War I, which was ignited in the Balkans (!) by a young Serbian nationalist assassinating Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the throne of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, in Sarajevo in 1914. In conclusion, the theme of Orientalism seeps through well before Said persuasively brought Western attention to this explosive issue, an issue which is of central concern to world politics even today, the name Sarajevo constituting conclusive proof of this view. Naturally, the broad statement that Orientalism, hence Alterity, are key components in this 'detective story' is not justified by the one sentence, but reading on in the novel will bring forth far greater evidence in support of this thesis.

The argument illustrated above begins to explain the relevance of the opening sentence to the novel as a whole. If we now turn to the suppression of the year in which the action takes place, then we may hypothesise that inference drawn above from contextualisation, (that is to say, from the date of publication of the novel), namely the action is set not long after the World War I, then this too forms part of contextualising the novel, as will be confirmed later.

Contextualisation is crucial in helping to identify the ideological framework that the novel evokes and which plays its determining role in motivating thought and behaviour. To anticipate just one example of what will gradually emerge, when the crime is discovered and the passengers realise they might be stuck in the snow for days, the 'illuminated' and highly opinionated Mrs Hubbard makes her voice felt in her customary manner:

> "What is this country anyway?" demanded Mrs Hubbard tearfully.
> On being told that it was Yugo-Slavia, she said:
> "Oh! One of these Balkan things. What can you expect?"[14]

Returning to speech act theory, it should be remembered that while Austin developed speech act theory to elucidate the workings of oral communication, later scholars have successfully applied his theory to written communication. As stated above, I have, at this stage, only dealt with locutionary force. Illocutionary and perlocutionary forces have yet to be explicated. Two major reasons account for this fact. First, so far I have been examining only sub-sentential and supra-sentential meaning. Secondly, the opening sentence provides insufficient information to enable illocutionary and perlocutionary acts to be identified: a) no addressee has been identified so it is not possible to assign illocutionary and perlocutionary forces, b) the default addressee at this stage can only be the reader, c) insufficient information is provided by S1 to enable the inferential engine[15] to extrapolate illocutionary and perlocutionary forces. What I have suggested, is that the sub-sentential information provided has the aims of beginning to create context and of setting mental processing working. including the key cognitive operation of triggering prediction.[16]

A third crucial function of (the sub-sentential components of) the opening sentence is to motivate the reader to continue reading by arousing his curiosity. Moreover, this is a general function of any text. Clearly, one strategy writers employ to achieve this goal in text types such as detective stories is to furnish limited, imprecise information to prompt the brain into thinking. This hypothesis may be instantly confirmed by turning to the title to the chapter, "An important passenger on the Taurus Express"

[14] Agatha Christie, *Murder on the Orient Express* (1934) (London: HarperCollins, 2001), 58.
[15] See Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson, *Relevance: Communication and Cognition* [1986] (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1995); Douthwaite, *Foregrounding.*
[16] Douthwaite, *Foregrounding.*

that I (deliberately) failed to comment on initially. Christie's first words violate manner (sub-maxim: avoid obscurity), intentionally provoking the reader to unconsciously ask himself the key questions "Who is the "important passenger" and why should he/she be on the Taurus express?" in order to capture his attention from the word go. Note also that "the Taurus Express" also begins to depict the social *milieu* in which the story is set.

We now continue our analysis of what I termed above the 'sub-constituents' of meaning by moving on to S2.

> [2] Alongside the platform at Aleppo stood the train grandly designated in railway guides as the Taurus Express.

"Alongside the platform at Aleppo" situates the action at a train station. From this the reader infers that at least some of the action will probably take place in the open air. Relating the new information to the old results in the inference that the sensation of cold is intensified: being in the open air at five o'clock on a winter's morning in Syria will not be very pleasant for the characters involved. At a cognitive level, such information activates schemata[17] that prepare the reader to comprehend quickly the text that follows.

Introducing the second sentence thus demonstrates that texts exhibit both cohesion and coherence,[18] two linguistic phenomena which help structure the text and facilitate comprehension. For instance, the reader does not even for a second reflect on the fact that introducing "Syria" in S1 means that the reader takes for granted that "Aleppo" introduced in S2 is a town in Syria and that the information has been effortlessly expanded into something more precise. Technically speaking, "Aleppo" is a cohesive item linked to "Syria", and the mental operation of recognising this link is carried out unconsciously, and above all, unquestioningly, which is directly connected to the next point.

Secondly, it should also be noted that Aleppo is, essentially, a duplication of "Syria". Cohesion, in the form of substitution on the paradigmatic axis with a member of the same class, (proper name: "Aleppo" for "Syria"), is employed to make essentially the same concept appear as novel and not as boring repetition, which would risk a reduction in motivation to read on.

The mention of Aleppo should also trigger our knowledge of the world concerning that town. Aleppo is one of the oldest continuously inhabited towns in the world, it was the third largest city of the Ottoman Empire, it was a key town in the Silk Road, after World War I it ceded its northern hinterland to modern Turkey. This skeletal outline illustrates the point that Aleppo is at the 'heart' of the Orient.

Two consequences of this analysis are important.

First, the 'Western' murder described in the novel is committed in the Orient, not in the West. It should not be forgotten that colonisation involved a great deal of 'violent' Western activity, much of which was condoned when not actually justified by the West itself for obvious reasons.

'Condoning' in crime novels is especially easy since the genre is considered by many to be lowbrow and escapist and thus devoid of 'serious' content which is supposedly the preserve of high-brow literature. Hence, there is nothing to 'condone'. Everything is as 'natural' as can be, nothing is questioned.

Stated differently, the reader's prior attitude to the text will determine in great measure the way he interprets the text. To illustrate this precept, take winter. This season plays symbolic functions in our culture – death, desolation, destitution, both physical and moral/metaphysical (to give just one example, think of Yeats' "The Second Coming" and, more directly, "The Journey of the Magi").[19] Yet a reader

[17] Ibid.
[18] See Michael Halliday and Ruqaiya Hasan, *Cohesion in English* (London: Longman, 1976).
[19] The first stanza reads as follows:

who believes crime novels function exclusively as entertainment will not envisage such links. However, Christie's crime fiction is intensely moralistic and ideological. It is also replete with intertextual This latter point in itself should suffice to set off a critical reading of Christie's oeuvre.

Ultimately, crime, by definition, is based on ideology, for criminal activity represents what a given society judges as evil and is rooted in the socio-economic conditions of its time. In addition, the action which society takes to deal with crime is equally revelatory of social values. Hence, even those crime novels which one might judge as pure escapism still perform a social function, and must be judged as such. The critical literature on the subject abounds and I will refer the reader to four of the many significant works in the field: Knight (1980), Mandel (1984), Kayman (1992), Pepper (2016).[20]

Thus, committing the murder in the Orient is not simply a clever plot hatched to avoid detection, (geographically distant from where the murdered man would be more quickly recognised – had Poirot not been on the train!), for instance, but also evokes colonialism, no matter how indirect that link might at first appear.

The link between colonialism and detection, though not necessarily immediately obvious, is a strong one.[21] It must be borne in mind that Poirot shares with the classic figure in crime detection – Sherlock Holmes – the feature of being infallible.[22] They are part of the same social system. Infallibility has many consequences, one of which is crucial here. Poirot will take upon himself the responsibility of 'condoning' the crime, once he has discovered identity of the murdered man, of the perpetrators and of their motive in committing the crime. He thus acts, as does Holmes, as public prosecutor, judge and jury all in one and emits the final sentence.[23] This dominant behaviour is, in the final analysis, based on the very same ideology that was offered to justify colonialism – the dominator acts in the name of the supposed good of the dominated. (One might wish to recall that perhaps the worst example of colonial exploitation was King Leopold's Belgian Congo). Thought and action cannot be divorced from the socio-historical and ideological context in which they occur.

The second consequence of activating our knowledge of the world concerning the Balkans is that it helps remind us that the history of that part of the globe still plays a central role in modern life. The 'Arab Spring' followed by the Syrian war (2012-2016), to 'modernise' the argument, the game being played in the region by the 'great powers' are all consequences of a socio-political situation with very

A cold coming we had of it,
Just the worst time of the year
For a journey, and such a journey:
The ways deep and the weather sharp,
The very dead of winter.

[20] See Stephen Knight, *Form and Ideology in Crime Fiction* (London: Macmillan, 1980); Ernest Mandel, *Delightful Murder: A Social History of the Crime Story* (London: Pluto Press, 1984); Martin A. Kayman, *From Bow Street to Baker Street: Mystery, Detection and Narrative* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1992); Andrew Pepper, *Unwilling Executioner. Crime Fiction and the State* (Oxford: Oxford U.P., 2016).

[21] See, for instance Mukherjee who argues that the discourse on crime was one of the instruments employed by the British in India to dominate the colony (Upamanyu Mukherjee, *Crime and Empire*, Oxford: Oxford U.P., 2003). See also Douthwaite, "The Social Function of the Detective Fiction of the Golden Age", *Lingua e Diritto. La Lingua della Legge, la Legge nella Lingua, Publif@rum*, 18 (2013), http://publifarum.farum.it/ezine_articles.php?art_id=263, 13/03/2013.

[22] Knight (1980) provides a partial discussion of how Christie fits into the mainstream of the genre.

[23] Literally speaking, Poirot leaves the final decision up to the Director of the railway company. However, this act of 'abdication' is humbug, since Poirot knows full well what the Director's decision will be! At the lowest level of motivation, the Director has no wish to cause a scandal and the unpleasant consequences it would have for the railway company – social mores and economic interests lie at the heart of social behaviour. (See the reference to *Nostromo* later in this paper.) Returning one moment to Christie's moralistic stance discussed in the previous paragraph, one might also note here that the murderers are twelve – again public prosecutor, judge, jury and executioner. Given the nature of the victim, Poirot 'condones' the crime. Taking the law into one's own hands is a recurrent theme in crime fiction and is at the core of the ideological debate on the nature of law and law enforcement.

deep historical roots. The ideology which Christie conveys[24] in the novel is in the mainstream of the Western tradition.

Returning to indirectness and sub-sentential meaning, in a similar vein to the manner in which geographical location is 'expanded', the reader is not explicitly informed that the action opens in a railway station. However, the lexeme "platform" connected to the proper name "Taurus Express" make this inference unavoidable as well as unconscious – child's play in fact. Nonetheless, the condensed analysis offered up to this point should hopefully be sufficient to prompt the conclusion that all the linguistic analyses outlined so far are anything but superficial and trivial. They only appear to be such since the brain does all the processing involved unconsciously and effortlessly. The introduction of the "Taurus Express" does not simply provide the reader with specific information concerning means of transport – the literal function of the linguistic expression. It does much more. Again establishing context is crucial, for it introduces the domains of the social and cultural background of the participants in the novel, and in the first instance, social class. The trains run by the *Compagnie Internationale des Wagons-Lits*, of which the Taurus Express which Poirot first takes and the Orient Express on which he continues his journey were not for the penniless. This anticipates the line-up of ('Western') characters that will be found on the Orient Express and that make up the socio-economic, historical, political and ideological backdrop of the novel and which determine its 'ultimate' or 'ideological' meaning.

Indeed, perhaps the most important function of Chapter 3 is to present the characters to the audience, their social and geographical origin constituting the crucial factors in building a 'portrait of that Western' society which condemns the Italian *Mafioso* to death.

Before continuing, a central point must be made: everything that has been said and argued so far is based on the presupposition that Christie's selections are 'motivated', in the Russian Formalist sense of the term.[25] They are neither chance selections nor lucky selections, but are pondered because they are intended to create specific effects, to convey one or more non-literal meanings. This further presupposes that Christie is a 'good' writer, that is to say, one who is in control of the means of writing and who is producing far more than what was originally considered to be low brow literature of little value. It is only if this premise is recognised as valid that the critic can explain the (Gricean) relevance of Christie's selections, or, to put it differently again, accept my interpretations as valid or potentially valid.

We now return to the micro-analysis to make two central points. First, S2 is constructed employing inversion, namely it exhibits the syntactic structure A-PRED-SU[26] in lieu of the standard SU-PRED-A, namely:

> [2] Alongside the platform at Aleppo stood the train grandly designated in railway guides as the Taurus Express.
>
> [2a] The train grandly designated in railway guides as the Taurus Express stood alongside the platform at Aleppo.

Inversion removes "The train" from informationally-strong thematic position[27] thereby diminishing its value as information while concurrently fronting the prepositional phrase performing the function adverbial. (Note that we have returned to the concept of information value, with another means of signalling value, syntagmatic position in the clause). However, in this case the prepositional phrase does not become more important information by dint of occupying thematic position. Instead it performs a

[24] Note that 'conveys' does not entail 'shares.'
[25] See Douthwaite, *Foregrounding.*
[26] A = Adverbial function, Pred = Predicator, SU = Subject.
[27] See Michael Halliday and Christian Matthiessen, *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* (London: Arnold, 2004).

staging function,[28] as if it were given information.[29] Inversion also means that "Aleppo", which would occupy end focus[30] in the 'normal' version is moved to the 'middle' of the sentence, thereby losing value as information,[31] while "the Taurus Express" comes to occupy end focus and is thereby flagged as important information. This foregrounded construction[32] constitutes one piece of linguistic evidence for the various contextual-ideological features outlined above.

The second central point starts from the realisation that S2 flouts the Gricean quantity maxim by providing more information than strictly necessary to convey the basic conceptual content transmitted by S2, whose essence may be illustrated by 2b:

[2b] Alongside the platform at Aleppo stood the Taurus Express.

Stated differently, what has to be accounted for is the presence, hence the relevance, of the postmodifying non-finite clause "grandly designated in railway guides as". The clue lies in the adverb "grandly", which performs a (negative) evaluative function and thus conveys someone's point of view. There being no characters as yet present in the text, then the evaluation must be that of the 3rd person narrator. This in turn enables "designated in railway guides" to be identified as irony, if not sarcasm, performing the illocutionary force of criticising railway publicity, if not the railway itself, (a point which will be recur). Note that this in no way detracts from the class aspect mentioned above, for even if the said train is not so 'grand', the cost of the ticket places it beyond the financial reach of the have-nots.

Instead, the central point is that the narrator subterraneously intrudes in the novel from the very start, in this case by expressing narratorial/authorial stance, and must therefore be considered a participant to be constantly borne in mind in interpreting the novel.

It is, furthermore, a typical feature of Christie's writing, a device she employs in order to align the reader with her own world view (or to 'pander' to whom she thought was her target audience – as we shall see, the question is still open).

[3] It consisted of a kitchen and dining-car, a sleeping car and two local coaches.

The illocutionary force of S3 is to furnish an explanation/justification to the negative value judgement expressed by the narrator in the non-finite clause in the preceding U. The addressee is thus the reader.[33] Again, the language is indirect. We infer that the train is short (only four coaches). Note that 'short', 'only' and 'four' are employed as negative modalisers here,[34] the adjective 'short' and the numeral 'four' being culturally based, as well as metaphorical (the conceptual metaphors SHORT IS BAD and GOOD IS MORE". Two coaches are "local", from which we infer the passengers will not belong to the social elite travelling to the West in the "sleeping car". Note again, "local" pitted against "sleeping" constitutes a covert method of establishing social status. Turning to numbers, not only is the train "short", but of the four coaches, two are "local", one is the "kitchen and dining car", leaving only

[28] See Gillian Brown and George Yule, *Discourse Analysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1983).
[29] See Halliday and Matthiessen, *Functional Grammar*.
[30] Ibid.
[31] See Douthwaite, *Foregrounding*.
[32] Ibid.
[33] The reader might find my insisting on what he deems an obvious point strange. However, as we shall shortly discover, Christie is a skilful manipulator of the modes of speech and thought presentation and it is not always immediately obvious who the focaliser is. Furthermore, establishing this fact is crucial to determine illocutionary and perlocutionary forces, as stated above.
[34] See John Douthwaite, "A Stylistic View of Modality", in Giuliana Garzone and Rita Salvi, eds., *Lingue e Linguaggi Specialistici* (Roma: CISU editore, 2007) 107-156; John Douthwaite, "Using Speech and Thought Presentation to Validate Hypotheses Regarding the Nature of the Crime Novels of Andrea Camilleri", in David Hoover and Sharon Lettig, eds., *Stylistics: Prospect and Retrospect* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), 143-167.

one coach carrying high status passengers. The reader will hopefully pardon this extended explanation, but it should not be forgotten that what I have just described are mental operations triggered by linguistic mechanisms and which take place in a totally automated, unconscious fashion. We are never aware of the complexity of what appears to be the simplicity of our thoughts and deeds.

A final reason justifying the need for detailed explication is that if we now read the title and the first paragraph all in one go without stopping to ponder over the considerations that have been offered above, then all the important sub-sentential meanings I have identified go by the board, since the basic impression is that we have a trite first paragraph which simply tells us we are at a railway station in a foreign land early one bitterly cold winter morning, thereby prompting the question "Why six pages of explanation? What's all the fuss about?" While I have been talking about 'important matters' such as mental processing, colonialism, class and ideology, the conceptual content of the sentences analysed seems 'miserly'. The writing seems to deflate everything into the mundane, the insignificant. (The issue of questioning my method will be taken up later).

3. Extending the Analysis – The Remaining Part of the Extract

> [4] By the step leading up into the sleeping-car stood a young French lieutenant, resplendent in uniform, conversing with a small lean man, muffled up to the ears, of whom nothing was visible but a pink-tipped nose and the two points of an upward curled moustache.

S4 is one long sentence realising the entire second paragraph, in itself a signal of the importance of the paragraph. It introduces the two main characters in the chapter, one of which is our 'hero' Poirot. What is crucial here is not so much the fact that the text presents two characters, but *how* they are presented and the significance this will have for the rest of the novel, especially regarding Poirot.

Like S2, S4 employs inversion (standard would be: 'a young French lieutenant, resplendent in uniform, stood by the step leading up into the sleeping-car, conversing ...'). Again the linguistic mechanism is employed to stage the information. First the French lieutenant is introduced (colonialism again, since the action is set in Syria, evoking, specifically, military power), and, crucially, is evaluated by the narrator ("resplendent"). Here too quantity is flouted since too much information is provided ("young" and "resplendent in uniform"), especially when one considers that this is the first and last time the character will appear in the novel and his role in the main action is non-existent.

Subsequent co-text helps recover the implicatures – the lieutenant is proud of his role and is trying to do his duty to the best of his abilities in order to further his career. Hence what appears to be objective, external, physical description, ("resplendent in his uniform"), is actually a way of conveying the character's attitudes and goals. The fact that no name is provided indicates that what is important is not the individual identity of the person, but his social constitution. He is symbolic of a certain sector of his society. The fact that he is proud of what he is doing signifies he accepts and lives by the beliefs of the dominant society. One might also note the ever so gentle fun the narrator is making of the military man confirms authorial/narratorial intrusion and the attempt to align the reader to the world view propounded.

There then follows a second external, physical description, that of the other character present, who turns out to be Poirot. (Note that my use of 'turns out to be' is not casual.) Here negativity abounds: every single content word can be taken as expressing criticism, with a human entity being reduced to almost non-human status since only the tip of the person's nose and the tips of his moustache are visible. The effect is also highly comic, resulting in a diminishing of the status and importance of the character, an outcome which is heightened by the contrast with the "resplendent" young officer, whose description precedes that of Poirot. Being introduced second is another pragmatic device ("be orderly", again) which further decreases the character's importance. Thus, we proceed from (apparently) more important to less important. Diminishing status by gentle mockery is a typical Christie ploy with regard to her

investigative heroes and heroines. While illocutionary and perlocutionary forces at sentence level are to make the character (Poirot, Miss Marple) present an unimportant self to the world, one important macro-level effect is to lull the criminal adversary into believing they are innocuous, thus lowering his psychological defences and making the commission of a revelatory mistake more probable.

Immediate confirmation is had of this hypothesis, since one of the main characters in the story, Mary Debenham, who is the third and final character introduced in this opening chapter, and one of the perpetrators of the murder, has the following thought on seeing Poirot for the first time in her life: "[67] A ridiculous-looking little man. [68] The sort of little man one could never take seriously."

Indeed, only 4 pages later in the novel, there occur two episodes where perhaps the two most important characters in the 'criminal group' give away important 'information' which sets Poirot thinking – his first clues – that something is amiss:

> As they [Colonel Arbuthnot and Mary Debenham] looked down towards the Cilian Gates, standing in the corridor side by side, a sigh came suddenly from the girl. Poirot was standing near them and heard her murmur:
> "It's so beautiful! I wish – I wish –"
> "Yes?"
> "I wish, I could enjoy it!"
> Arbuthnot did not answer. The square line of his jaws seemed a little sterner and grimmer.
> "I wish to heaven you were out of all this," he said.
> "Hush, please. Hush."
> "Oh, it's all right." He shot a slightly annoyed glance in Poirot's direction. Then he went on: "But I don't like the idea of your being a governess ...".[35]

Here we are on the Stamboul train. Poirot overhears the conversation of the two people. Mary Debenham's defences are clearly down, thanks to her having misjudged Poirot. Instead Arbuthnot[36] is extremely wary. He thus warns Mary to use caution and changes the (dangerous) subject.

Later in the journey, the train stops at Koyna:

> M. Poirot was content to watch the teeming activity of the station through a window pane. After about ten minutes, however, he decided that a breath of air would not perhaps be a bad thing, after all. He made careful preparations, wrapping himself in several coats and mufflers and encasing his neat boots in galoshes.
> Thus attired he descended gingerly to the platform and began to pace its length. He walked out beyond the engine.
> It was the voices which gave him the clue to the two indistinct figures standing in the shadow of a traffic van. Arbuthnot was speaking.
> "Mary –"
> The girl interrupted him.
> "Not now. Not now. When it's all over. When it's behind us – then –"
> Discreetly M. Poirot turned away. He wondered.[37]

The final sentence, "He wondered", conveys Poirot having judged what he has just heard as 'abnormal', a clue that something is not quite right. Again, the source of the abnormality is Mary Debenham's reiterated lack of caution.

Before moving on to S5, a small number of linguistic comments will illustrate Christie's technique.

[35] Christie, *Murder on the Orient Express*, 20.
[36] Arbuthnot is a colonel in the army, he has served many years in India (!), and he too underestimates Poirot. See Douthwaite, *The Social Function of the Detective Fiction of the Golden Age*.
[37] Christie, *Murder on the Orient Express*, 21.

The first interesting point about the second sentence in the extract just quoted, "After about ten minutes, however, he decided that a breath of air would not perhaps be a bad thing, after all", is the final expression "after all". This phrase is typical of speech. Furthermore, it is preceded by a comma, hence, on a syntactic level it constitutes a verbless clause. Thus, it has been rankshifted up, rendering the information it conveys more important. This grammatical status, together with the fact that the unit occupies end focus in the sentence and is graphologically highlighted by its brevity and by being preceded by a comma, thereby isolating it in the sentence, as well as by occupying end focus position, flags the expression as constituting a very important component. The preceding expression "he decided" introduces indirect speech, but thanks to the segmenting function performed by the comma, the form becomes hybrid, turning it virtually into Free Indirect Thought (FIT). In other words, we are penetrating Poirot's consciousness.

This fact is important for two main reasons. First, the preceding sentence saw Poirot deciding to remain in the train because of the cold. In typical Christie fashion, this is not stated explicitly, but is inferable from co-text and context, (the emphasis on the cold weather). Furthermore, Christie is gently making fun of Poirot, This she does by flouting two Gricean maxims. First she provides too much information: "M. Poirot was content to watch" could have been stated more simply as 'M. Poirot watched'. The inclusion of the emotional/mental state signals the flouting of the quality maxim, since in actual fact Poirot is far from "content" on being stuck in the train with nothing to do, a hypothesis which a further violation of quantity, "teeming with activity", immediately confirms. The inclusion of the adjective "teeming" (quantity) together with its status as head of the phrase "teeming with activity" underscoring its importance make it seem as if one can almost feel Poirot wishing to go outside and participate! This then helps explain the violation of quantity and quantity in the second sentence: Poirot is not telling the whole truth – "a breath of air would not be a bad thing" is simply the excuse he dreams up to justify getting off the train thus contravening his decision to remain on board to avoid catching his death of cold. The behavior verges on the child-like. This brings us to the second main reason.

The next sentence describes the "careful preparations" and the almost ludicrous quantity of clothes he puts on. This is, of course, a reiteration of the description with which Poirot was presented to the reader at the beginning of the novel (the second half of S4). The effect is exactly the same – comic. There follows the conversation between Arbuthnot and Mary Debenham which Poirot overhears. Hence the reader recalls Mary's initial judgement regarding Poirot's innocuousness precisely when she makes another mistake which provides Poirot with his second clue since Christie has preceded the mistake with the mockery of Poirot. Christie's writing is very tightly-knit. We now continue to S5.

> [5] It was freezingly cold, and this job of seeing off a distinguished stranger was not one to be envied, but Lieutenant Dubosc performed his part manfully.

S5 would again appear to be pure description external description of the world and reporting, hence neutral omniscient narration. Again reality is decidedly more complex.

The first indicator is the degree adverb "freezingly" premodifying the adjectival head "cold". The use of this evaluator again reveals the fact that point of view is being expressed; moreover, its metaphorical nature gives the impression that the focaliser is the character himself and not the narrator, for its use makes the reader 'live' the sensation of bitter cold the character is experiencing. This also confirms the Gricean relevance of the three concepts/details which form the core of S1 – "five o'clock in the morning" "winter" and "Syria". The second indicator is proximal deictic "this", which constitutes strong evidence that the focaliser is the French Lieutenant, since a narrator would have employed distal 'that' or, more simply, the definite article 'the'. The third indicator is the use of the informal lexeme "job", which expresses distaste, (hence point of view again), in *lieu* of a formal noun such as 'task' or 'duty', which would have linguistically mimicked the 'rank' of the task to be carried out and would have

consequently been more 'neutral', thereby suggesting the narrator at work. Instead, the deployment of such an expression which deviates from the high style of the S5 (as indicated by the expression "was not one to be envied", with impersonal "one" reinforced by the impersonality of the passive voice), seems to insinuate Dubosc's real feelings emerging despite his self-control. The fourth and fifth indicators are the coordinating conjunction "and" together with the syntactic structure of the first two clauses. Together these five linguistic devices suggest conversational style, hence the lieutenant's thoughts, rather than an external omniscient narrator objectively reporting the mental state of the character. The use of the indefinite article "a" bolsters the argument, since the man whom the officer is "seeing off" is of no importance to him personally, it is only part of his "job", a thesis confirmed by S22. The lieutenant is again indirectly revealing his attitude. The verb "seeing off" is also highly colloquial, again suggesting internal thought.

Finally, the last clause sees a change in style, to slightly greater formality indicating more external report in contrast to preceding internal narration, hence a shift to the narrator (e.g. "Liuetenant Dubosc" – honorific plus surname - "performed" – formal lexical verb). Indeed, the comment "manfully" would violate the Leechian modesty maxim (see note 40) were the observation attributable to the officer. We thus deduce the last clause expresses the narrator's point of view. Confirmation of this interpretation derives from the fact that since the officer is not engaged in battle but simply accompanying a guest to the station on a bitterly cold morning, then "manfully" also performs the function of Christie gently mocking the lieutenant, again. So what Christie is mocking is ideology, for "manfully" suggests she is evoking the dominant, white, colonial male.

Before proceeding, two final observations are in order regarding S5. First, while the deployment of "stranger" indicates, at a literal level, that the lieutenant is unacquainted with Poirot and implies that he does not know what Poirot is doing there in Aleppo (a point which subsequent co-text will confirm – Us 7-20), the use of the noun also calls up the concept of Alterity, a point which the 'low brow reader' will be blithely unaware of. Support for this interpretation is provided by S10, with Dubosc's use of "Belgian", as will be explained shortly. The noun thus also performs a deictic function here, indicating the officer as focaliser. Second, "distinguished" expresses a positive value judgement which again confirms that the French officer conforms to the mores and behaviours of his reference group. His commanding officer classifies Poirot as "distinguished", hence Dubosc follows suit. Stated differently, "distinguished" is not Dubosc's own, independent judgement. The issue is not one of individuality but of social identity, hence reference group identity.

Returning to the discussion of "manfully", S6 exploits the Gricean manner (sub maxim "be orderly") to continue the gentle mockery of Dubosc and his ideology: "Graceful phrases fell from his lips in polished French". These are not exactly the behaviours describing a brave soldier under enemy fire. The adjectives "graceful" and polished" refer more to the salon than to the battle front. These concepts are reiterated in SS 69-71.

> [69] Lieutenant Dubosc was saying his parting speech. [70] He had thought it out beforehand and had kept it till the last minute. [71] It was a very beautiful, polished speech.

The small talk that the two men have been socially obliged to engage in (SS 23-52) is yet another strong brush stroke in the picture of polite society that is being drawn and the ideology that such a society is based on. Note that one implication of S70 is that Dubosc has spent time and energy on preparing his speech (rather than cleaning his gun), confirming yet again his whole-hearted adherence to the ideology of his reference group. The fact that Dubosc had needed to 'think it out before' might also indicate limited intelligence, though other explanations are also possible, including limited practice in the art of the social graces. Such an explanation does not cancel the implicature, however.

S71 is lavish with degree expressions which reveal the intensity of Dubosc's conformity, a psycho-social trait which is depicted elsewhere in the text (e.g. S22). The fact that Dubosc had overheard part of the conversation between his General and Poirot (S15) but "as to what it had been all about, Lieutenant Dubosc was still in the dark" (S22) is simply another indirect way of expressing the concept that Dubosc is a soldier who follows orders, willingly, since, significantly, despite not having understood the conversation, the soldier expresses no curiosity in the matter! The importance of these individual features resides in the fact that they form part of the larger ideological canvas, which emerges forcefully from the part of the conversation Dubosc has overheard, and to which we now turn.

> [5] It was freezingly cold, and this job of seeing off a distinguished stranger was not one to be envied, but Lieutenant Dubosc performed his part manfully. [6] Graceful phrases fell from his lips in polished French. [7] Not that he knew what it was all about. [8] There had been rumours, of course, as there were in such cases. [9] The General – *his* General's – temper had grown worse and worse. [10] And then there had come this Belgian stranger – all the way from England, it seemed. [11] There had been a week – a week of curious tensity. [12] And then certain things had happened. [13] A very distinguished officer had committed suicide, another had resigned – anxious faces had suddenly lost their anxiety, certain military precautions were relaxed. [14] And the general – Lieutenant Dubosc's own particular General – had suddenly looked ten years younger.

We have already noted that the first two clauses in S5 are focalised through the lieutenant, while the final clause is pure narration. The coordinating conjunction "but" serves not only on a semantic level to introduce a contrast in meaning, but also to signal a change in mode of speech and thought presentation.[38] S6 is also pure narration. Again the narrator's mocking voice can be distinguished in both "graceful" (the pure adherence to form, since the content performs only the phatic function of maintaining social relationships, with both men being bored and embarrassed) and, above all, in the lexical verb "fell", used metaphorically, which expresses a negative value judgment (bar for those who find delight in falling and breaking a bone in the process).

S7 moves into FIT, as the forward-shifting test demonstrates: 'Not that I know what it's all about'. Other linguistic signals in SS 7-14 confirm this interpretation: i) the plethora of dashes, breaking the smooth flow of the sentences, thereby indicating conversation and not organised, narratorial report. Two of the most glaring are the breaks in S10, giving the impression of developing thought (" - all the way from England"), an interpretation bolstered by the use of the intensifier "all the way", and in S11, where the interruption at the dash indicates a first part where the thought has not even been completed; ii) the deployment of expressions such as "of course" (S8) reinforces the breaking up of sentences into units depicting thought in formation rather than objective, neutral, highly-organised narratorial report; in addition, "of course" expresses a value judgment, someone's point of view; iii) deictic markers, such as "this" in "this Belgian stranger", performing a negative evaluative function parallel to its deployment in S5 ("this job"). It is no chance, I would suggest, that SS 5 and 10 both flaunt the lexeme "stranger". In S10 the premodifying adjective following the demonstrative adjective changes from "distinguished" (expressing the respect due to such a personage) to "Belgian", again underscoring the theme of Alterity, given the attitude French and Belgians had towards each other at the time; iv) the use of the coordinating conjunction "and", (S12, reiterated in S14), also suggests a conversational tone, especially so since it is semantically and grammatically redundant, violating the Gricean quantity maxim. Hence its function is to signal informal language; v) the intensive use of modalisers. In addition to those already quoted we might add "rumours" (S8), "curious" and "tensity" (S11), "very", "distinguished, "suicide", "resigned", "anxious", "suddenly", "precautions", "relaxed", all in S13, "suddenly" and "looked younger" in S14; v) the use of intensifiers such as "all the way" and "suddenly" (twice) again indicate point of view

[38] See Elena Semino and Mick Short, *Corpus Stylistics: Speech, Writing and Thought Presentation in a Corpus of English Writing* (London: Routledge, 2004).

through revealing the emotional state of the focaliser; vi) the deployment of "certain" in S12 and S13 exploits the manner maxim through deliberate vagueness, vagueness being a typical trait of conversation.

Identifying voice is, naturally, not simply a scholastic exercise. By placing us in Dubosc's mind, Christie is i) guaranteeing the authenticity of what is expressed, (Semino and Short's faithfulness principle)[39], ii) exposing the reader more vividly to the soldier's thoughts, attitudes and emotions, c) consequently gaining alignment to her position.[40] It is no coincidence that one of the sincerity conditions developed by Austin to account for the success (or "felicitousness") of a speech act is that the speaker must have the requisite thoughts, feelings and intentions. In simple terms, if in proposing marriage I fail to manifest the thoughts and feelings associated with that social act, (e.g. if I do not consciously and explicitly manifest the feeling that I am in love with the girl), then the lady I wish to convince will fail to believe I really love her and think that I am only after her money. Consequently my speech act will fail and my perlocutionary goal will not be achieved.

Let us turn to how this operates in SS8-14. One implication of S8 is that rumours, by definition, might not be true. The illocutionary force of S9 is to confirm that these particular rumours had some truth in them by offering supporting behavioural evidence: his General's temper had grown steadily worse. One reason why tempers grow worse is that something is going badly wrong.

What might be noted about my explicature is its vagueness. This reflects the vagueness of the text. Nothing is said EXPLICITLY. The expressions "rumours" and "such cases" are both unspecified. The evidence offered is indirect (worsening temper), hence the imprecision of my explanatory expression "one reason why". These violations of the Gricean manner and quantity maxims may be attributed to the fact that Dubosc does not know – he, and consequently I, are hypothesising on the basis of the limited evidence available to us, as is all hypothesising.

This line of argument also helps confirm we are tracking the lieutenant's thought processes and observing his emotions, from within. Hence the significance, in S9 of the interruption through the reiteration of the lexeme "General", of the modification of "The General" into "*his* General", with italics underscoring the heavy emotional commitment of the subordinate to his superior officer, and creating the implicature that the General is not usually bad-tempered, creating in its turn the further implicature that the situation is both highly unusual and extremely serious.

All the sentences up to and including S14 may be linguistically and pragmatically characterised in this way. Vagueness is exhibited in "this Belgian stranger", "it seemed" (S10), "curious tensity" (S11), "certain things" (S12), "a very distinguished officer", "another", "anxious faces", "their anxiety", "certain military precautions, "relaxed" (S13).

Furthermore, Christie constantly employs the same linguistic devices: flouting and exploiting Gricean maxims, degree and gradation, the manipulation of speech and thought presentation modes, modalisation, point of view, metaphor, manipulation of the pragmatic statuses on the syntagmatic axis (theme, end focus, contrastive focus).

Such intense linguistic patterning can, of course, only be symbolic. What is being depicted is the hushing up of a scandal, demonstrating embarrassment/guilt, allegiance to the *esprit de corps*, as the subsequent paragraph amply demonstrates. The key sentences here are:

> [16] "You have saved us, *mon cher*," said the General emotionally, his great white moustache trembling as he spoke. [17] "You have saved the honour of the French Army – you have averted much bloodshed!

[39] Ibid.

[40] See Mick Short et al., "Revisiting the Notion of Faithfulness in Discourse Report/(Re)presentation Using a Corpus Approach", in *Language and Literature*, 11.4 (2002), 325-355.

First, Christie depicts the General, carefully selecting highly significant physical and behavioural traits: i) for a high-ranking officer, a "moustache" was almost as mandatory as the uniform; b) "great" emphasises the preceding point; iii) "white" symbolises 'old age', which in turn implies that respect must be shown to the wearer of the moustache, because of his age, one indicator of experience, hence of expertise and reliability; iv) "emotionally" is again a guarantee of the truthfulness of the concepts expressed by the speaker, v) "General" by ideological definition refers to aa person who is worthy of respect by dint of his expertise (ideology not contemplating the possibility that someone who gets to the top of his profession is not necessarily an expert in that profession!), vi) "emotionally" exemplifies the sincerity condition illustrated above. In addition to confirming the General's sincerity, one might also note the culture-bound nature of the behaviour, differing radically from the British stiff upper lip, which presumably constitutes another motive for its inclusion. The social portrait is again to the fore.

Second, the words spoken are equally significant in depicting a society and its ideology: i) "saved" is a powerfully redolent lexeme, since it implies concepts such as an extreme situation, strenuous, even superhuman effort, perhaps beyond the call of duty. This represents not only a strong echo of god-like Sherlock Holmes and the detective tradition in general, but also anticipates the second salvation in the novel, Poirot saving his friend the director of the railway company (and consequently the company) from scandal and the perpetrators of the crime from prison, ii) "*mon cher*" evokes emotion and a deep degree of intimacy and camaraderie, as develops when people experience extreme situations together, a concept which is reiterated by the referent "us", where group identity and group values are called on as justification, which also anticipates 'the second saving' (to outrageously paraphrase Eliot); iii) "honour" is the lynchpin of a soldier's behaviour, iv) "French Army" again calls to mind colonialism; it also exploits hyperbole (degree again) to emphasise just how important Poirot has been to the French cause (despite being Belgian), v) "averted much bloodshed" is an extremely positive value judgement, for although death is a staple diet for a general commanding troops in a colony, the idea that is implicit in the concept is that force and its negative consequences are to be avoided wherever possible – a great humanitarian ideal!

However, the most important mechanism revealing (and subterreaneously criticising) ideology is, to my mind, the exploitation of the Gricean manner maxim, again the sub-maxim "be orderly". As cannot be reiterated too often, order is symbolic. This is far from being simply a question of ideational meaning, as in

> [a] The man drank a bottle of whiskey and fell into the river.
> [b] The man fell into the river and drank a bottle of whiskey.

In example a, the implications are that the man gets drunk, which causes him to lose control of his actions and being near the river he falls into the river. The inversion of the order in which the information is presented in example b implies a totally different chain of cause-effect events. The man falls into the river, the water is cold, this significantly lowers his body temperature, the man gets out of the river and drinks a bottle of whiskey in order to warm his body.

Order may affect not only ideational meaning, as in the preceding pair of examples, but may engage all the dimensions of the meanings of meaning. In the case of S17, order symbolises importance, which is, to reiterate the central concept I have been trying to drive home, *ideologically* based. On the general principle that first is more/most important, the General clearly implies the worldview that the honour (sic!) of the French Army is more important than avoiding death in armed conflict. The General, and Christie, could hardly be clearer than that. History, of course, is replete with examples where the General's principle comes to light and mindless bloodshed is the result of ideology and human stupidity.

To mention only two, the Charge of the Light Brigade in the Crimean War and the Battle of Arnhem during World War II, to show this is not the exclusive terrain of the French.

> [20] To which the stranger (by name M. Hercule Poirot) had made a fitting reply including the phrase, "But indeed do I not remember that once you saved my life?"
> [21] And then the General had made another fitting reply to that disclaiming any merit for that past service, and with more mention of France, of Belgium, of glory, of honour and of such kindred things they had embraced each other heartily and the conversation had ended.

We now 'officially' discover that the second character is Poirot.

The text continues to be focalised through Dubosc. S20 is conversational in style: it is grammatically ill-formed, starting with a relative clause, demonstrating that it should have formed, syntactically speaking, part of the preceding sentence, the part in brackets represents an aside typical of speech or of an afterthought.

Not only is S20 a new sentence, but it constitutes the beginning of a new paragraph, clear indicators of the importance of the information it conveys. Foregrounding the sentence in this way brings this fact starkly to the reader's attention. Foregrounding continues by placing important information (the character's name), generally a graphological signal indicating information of lesser importance (irony and further mockery of the ignorant lieutenant, for the way the phrase is couched indicates he has no idea who Poirot is!) The sentence is foregrounded for at least three reasons: a) it reveals the character's identity; b) it instantly shows Poirot's adherence to the ideology of the society in question by his respecting linguistic norms, as demonstrated by the socially powerful adjective "fitting" premodifying the head noun "reply"; c) it exploits Gricean quantity and relevance by opting to disclose only one of the snippets Dubosc overheard: the General having saved Poirot's life once renders Poirot honour-bound to defend the General if and when necessary. More importantly, indirectness is again at a premium, as is demonstrated by the syntactically incorrect interrogative form "do I not remember" when Poirot recalls full well such a vital fact! This form of politeness again signals belonging to a given social group, which entails, of course, adhering to the behavioural norms of that group. The social game continues quite subtly, for although the repetition of "fitting" blatantly constitutes (obligatory) reciprocity, changing mode of presentation from Poirot's direct speech (DS) in S20 to narration (N) in S21 ("the General had made another fitting reply") is a brilliant ploy. Poirot has distanced himself from his action by his use of the syntactic structure analysed above. The General in turn distancing himself from his own action is signalled by a change in mode of speech presentation, since reciprocity should, in theory, be signalled linguistically by parallelism in linguistic form. But what renders these two sentences so subtle is that the two linguistic devices just described actually duplicate the distancing effect which is implicitly achieved through the exploitation of Leech's Politeness Principle.[41] While Poirot exploits the maxim of praise, the General exploits the diametrically opposite maxim of modesty. Distancing is thus a mechanism employed to play down their own role in the affairs referred to, again manifesting adherence to sociolinguistic behavioural norms.[42]

The continuation of the General's turn in S21 returns us to the core of ideology: "and with more mention of France, of Belgium, of glory, of honour and of such kindred things they had embraced each other heartily and the conversation had ended". The change in syntactic construction beginning with the coordinating conjunction "and" again indicates conversational style, hence Dubosc as focaliser. Again

[41] See Geoffrey N. Leech, *Principles of Pragmatics* (Burnt Mill, Harlow: Longman Group Limited, 1983).
[42] Clearly, the selection of the linguistic expression is a choice attributable to the characters themselves, while the choice of mode of speech and thought presentation is made by the author/narrator. Hence, the duplicative effect is, in actual fact, a combined effort of character and narrator. I bring this point to the reader's attention to underscore the fact that the text is even more complex than the explanations I can provide in the space available.

quantity and manner are exploited. One implication of the "mention of France" is that Poirot is praising French society and through such praise is concurrently and indirectly praising the General himself, a member of that society, and "Belgium" implies the General doing likewise to laud Poirot. Next come "glory" and "honour", reiterating the respect of ideology identified in S17. It might be noted that the reiteration of "glory" and "honour" stands in stark contrast with the 'concern' expressed in S17, "you have averted much bloodshed". Given the amount of space devoted to such matters clearly underlines where the General's real values are.

Next comes a behavioural act expressing strong emotions "embraced", intensified by the adverb "heartily", duplicating the realisation of the Austinian sincerity which guarantees the veracity of the communicative act expressed through the emotion. Significantly, attention is directed explicitly to the fact that such an emotional show of allegiance to social norms brings the conversation to a close, though the pragmatic link is partially hidden by the use of the coordinating conjunction "and": "and the conversation had ended". Indeed, such a closure is extremely strange (foregrounding) for a) it is cold and distant b) it goes against standard expectations as to closures. More usual would have been, 'and Poirot departed'. Instead Christie wishes to focus attention on the nature of the conversation itself, its phatic and ideological nature. However, she again makes gentle fun by the play on formal "kindred" contrasting with informal and vague "such" and "things". The clash of styles demeans the preceding ideological discourse, while on the other hand the noun "kindred" appears to appeal to the noun 'kind', as in 'mankind' (species, group) to invoke yet again solidarity, while for Christie it constitutes gentle sarcasm.

The following paragraph seems a particularly successful episode of *jouissance*,[43] a phenomenon which Christie delights in engaging in:

> [22] As to what it had been all about, Lieutenant Dubosc was still in the dark, but to him had been delegated the duty of seeing off M. Poirot by the Taurus Express, and he was carrying out with all the zeal and ardour befitting a young officer with a promising career ahead of him.

Having already made a number of observations on this paragraph, what I wish to stress here is Christie's playfulness. Note first the heavy alliteration drawing attention to the language itself. Take the letter "d": "had", "Dubosc", "dark", "delegated", "duty", "ardour", "ahead". The first part of S22 (up to the coordinating conjunction "but") is informal and focalised through Dubosc. Conceptually, his openly admitting his ignorance, and the play on "Dubosc" and metaphorical "[in the] dark" suggests disarming ingenuousness. The second part is far more formal (lexical choice sufficing to demonstrate this, e.g. "delegated", "ardour", "befitting"), to the extent of suggesting pompousness, an attitude attributable to the narrator. The tone of the paragraph thus paves the way for the following section, the fairly lengthy conversation that goes from S22 to S52 and which seems to come directly from the theatre of the absurd. It would not have gone too far amiss in a play by Ionesco.

> [23] "Today is Sunday," said Lieutenant Dubosc.
> [24] "Tomorrow, Monday evening, you will be in Stamboul."

With just some slight modification, which I humbly offer without any claim to being anywhere near Ionesco or Beckett's heights, SS23-24 would fit into, say, *Waiting for Godot*: "Today is Sunday. Tomorrow is Monday. Monday evening perhaps Godot will come".

[43] Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author", in *Image Music Text*, trans. and ed. by Stephen Heath (New York: Hill, 1977).

What, of course, is significant is that Christie draws attention to the social situation and to the linguistic mechanisms at work in that context:

> [25] It was not the first time he had made this observation.
> [26] Conversations on the platform, before the departure of a train, are apt to be somewhat repetitive in character.

This constitutes firm evidence that i) Christie is well aware of her craft and of her objectives, ii) her selections are motivated, as suggested earlier, iii) she constantly intervenes.

One of the functions realised by the 'absurd' section is, naturally, comicity and the continuation of the gentle mockery Christie has engaged in from the outset. Such comicity would seem to deflect from the real pathway – the detective novel, and may thus be taken as a ploy akin to that of making Poirot appear ridiculous and ineffectual. If the reader did not know he was reading a Poirot novel, he would have little inkling of where this is all leading.

We now move forward to the central ideological debate that takes place with the introduction of Mary Debenham into the action.

> [53] Above their heads the blind of one of the sleeping-car compartments was pushed aside and a young woman looked out.
> [54] Mary Debenham had had little sleep since she left Baghdad on the preceding Thursday. [55] Neither in the train to Kirkuk, nor in the rest house at Mosul, nor last night on the train had she slept properly. [56] Now, weary of laying wakeful in the hot stuffiness of her overheated compartment, she got up and peered out.
> [57] This must be Aleppo. [58] Nothing to see, of course. [59] Just a long, poor-lighted platform with loud furious altercations in Arabic going on somewhere. [60] She tried to force the window down lower, but it would not go.

In S53 cohesion is put to effective use through fronting the adverbial phrase "[A]bove their heads", therefore foregrounding the phrase. This enables attention to be moved smoothly from the two men on the platform to the new character who is being introduced and who is placed in the final clause in the sentence in order to create a new centre of attention.

The parallelism with the opening paragraph should be noted: a) both S2 and S53 exhibit a marked theme, though this is achieved through inversion in S2 and through left dislocation in S53, b) the lack of a name, c) the 'naturalness' of the situation, event and details, creating a convincing sense of realism. One crucial component is that the presentation of the information follows time and logical sequence: first a noise is heard "above their [the men's] heads", then the blind is seen being pushed aside, and finally the woman appears, d) sequencing and the non-identification of the person again function to arouse curiosity.

This set of factors allows, naturalises, and consequently hides, the abruptness of the introduction of the name – the thematic constituent of S54. More 'normal' would have been the inclusion of an intermediate, transitional sentence functioning as presentation of the new character, such as 'It was Mary Debenham, a lady who had been working as a teacher in Syria. She had had little sleep ...'.

Instead, the illocutionary force of S53 confirms the smoothness of the transition: explanation plus justification. A woman has just opened the blind of her compartment at five o'clock on a bitterly cold winter morning at a train station in Syria. One naturally asks why. Again, realism is perfect, as it is throughout the chapter. The sub-sentential components are also perfect. For instance, the inclusion of time "on the preceding Thursday" coupled with "little sleep" implies that despite being very tired through lack of sleep, Mary Debenham had woken up at five in the morning. This, of course, is

somewhat strange, the reader will think. S55 is yet another sentence which exploits intensification, for the (presumably) last three places Mary has slept are mentioned to reinforce the concept that she "had had little sleep", established in the preceding sentence. Stranger and stranger. Thus, S56 provides the explanation that will satisfy the reader's textually-provoked curiosity: the compartment is so overheated that it prevents Mary from sleeping and she becomes frustrated ("weary of laying wakeful"). Furthermore, the places mentioned show that she has travelled over 800 miles in the last few days in trains of a hundred years ago which have previously been criticised by the narrator, factors which will have added to her tiredness (relevance).

Note the persistent use of intensification/repetition, flouting yet again the quantity maxim: "hot", "stuffiness", "overheated". One function realised by such floutings is again that of making the reader live through what Mary is experiencing. It also indicates thoughts and feelings rather than simply physical conditions. It also makes for realism. Finally, it prepares the ground for the move into Free Direct Thought (FDT) in S57.

Multifunctionality and the importance of seemingly minor details does not finish here. Note the imprecision (hence the violating of the manner maxim) of the expression "the preceding Thursday". It *creates* the sensation of a lengthy period of time, which in turn constitutes one of the factors accounting for Mary Debenham's tiredness. However, since the precise time is unknown, then it could, in theory have been even only two or three days previously. In this case, quantity is exploited by furnishing a lot of vague information: leaving Baghdad, the train to Kirkuk, a night in Mosul, some time spent on the Taurus Express. The imprecision prevents the acquisition of exact knowledge while the quantity of information provided creates the impression of a long period having passed.

Given that a) the subject of the last clause in S56 ("she") refers to Mary Debenham, b) the syntactic form of S57 ("This must be Aleppo") indicates that STP mode is FDT (proximal "this", the use of the present tense), c) given the exploitation of the manner maxim (sub-maxim be orderly), then with this new paragraph beginning at S57 we have moved effortlessly into the character's mind and are observing her thoughts. The ungrammatical form of S58 confirms conversational tone and FDT mode. The illocutionary force may be hypothesised as expressing disappointment – there being nothing to 'distract' her, she will continue to be bored and frustrated.

S59 is also ungrammatical, and semantically constitutes an expansion of the preceding thought, confirming we are tracking Mary Debenham's mind. As with much of the chapter, this sentence appears at first reading to be void of any deeper significance. Here, too, this is far from being the case. "Just" in informationally-strong sentence-initial position expresses attitude – the disappointment and frustration. The adjective "long" uses a physical quality, (great quantity of space), to intensify the sense of boredom and frustration – you look around but all you see everywhere you look is that empty platform. The adjective "poor-lighted" suggest the performing of two functions: i) had there been anything to see on the long platform, the poor lighting would not have helped the process of perception ii) social criticism – these foreigners spend little money on public utilities. Stated differently, all the linguistic items analysed in this paragraph are negative evaluators.

The reader might well think I am stretching the text too far, for what I am suggesting is that a racist attitude is being projected and that I have based this interpretation on two 'minor' pieces of evidence ("just", "poor-lighted") which are, moreover, far from being conclusive. The fact of the matter is that any interpretation is founded on co-text, context and knowledge of the world. Generally, a feature of a linguistic device do not occur in isolation, as we shall immediately see.

Thus, the next indicator is the attitude expressed in the final prepositional phrase: "with loud furious altercations in Arabic going on somewhere". This is the first direct reference to Arabic culture, and the feature selected for communication is that of "loud furious altercations", three negative value judgements. The reader might again object: 'But if that was what was happening, then Mary Debenham

is not manifesting a racist attitude toward the Other, but merely reporting what is objectively true – there were Arabs arguing loudly.'

Two major arguments can be mustered against this objection.

First, we have only Mary's word (for we are still in FDT) that the people were indeed arguing, for it is an established fact that volume varies from one culture to another.[44] What in an English conversation might well be an indicator of a row might not be such in a different culture where a higher volume is the norm for 'ordinary' conversation.

Second, perception is selective.[45] When I look out of the window and see and hear what is out there, I cannot describe/report the plethora of details perceptible, for it would be time-consuming as well as pointless, that is to say, it would violate the quantity principle (efficiency) and it would not be goal-directed, i.e. it would not be communicative. This may be demonstrated in this specific case by Mary not listing the number of lamps on the platform, the colour of the lamps, how tall the lamps are, the number of benches, the colour of the benches, the material of which they are made, and so on and so forth. Thus people select to communicate only those things which are of interest to them, which affect them, and/or which are relevant to their goals. In the final analysis, behaviour is socially determined, hence it is culturally determined. If I am born in a certain country, then the statistical probability is that the religion I (think I) opt for will be that which is socially dominant. This, of course, is the process of socialisation, without which any society is doomed to an extremely swift end. Of all the things that Mary could theoretically have mentioned she chooses to convey those which for her are significant. Furthermore, she communicates only two pieces of information: poor lighting and loud furious altercations, both negative evaluators. Thirdly, she adds "in Arabic", providing a highly specific identity marker. Otherness could have been omitted simply by suppressing that prepositional phrase. Fourthly, she adds "somewhere", from which it may be inferred that the people referred to are not in her direct line of vision. But she fails to state that Poirot and Dubosc are talking just a few metres away from her, despite their being highly visible and just as easily audible as the distant Arabs. The strangeness of this fact is compounded by her current situation: she is bored, hence the two men conversing would have aroused her interest. In conclusion, in revealing what she perceives she reveals her ideology., just as we all do.

S60 adds weight to this interpretation. While SS57-59 are presented in FDT mode, S60 moves into N mode. However, signals such as the syntactic construction of "it would not go" (the reporting of 'It won't go', which is what the character would think, whereas a narrator is more likely to employ a construction such as 'it didn't open' or 'she couldn't open it') shows that the sentence is focalised through Mary Debenham.

On the pragmatic level, the illocutionary forces realised by the first clause in the sentence ("She tried to force the window down lower") are effect and solution to a problem. She is hot, she cannot turn the heating down, so she seeks a solution: opening the window. Note the use of the lexical verb "force down" in lieu of standard 'open'. The implication, of course, is that the train is badly manufactured and maintenance work is not done, an implication which was first advanced by the narrator himself in S2 and analysed earlier, triggered by the sarcastic expression "grandly designated". The illocutionary force of the second part of the clause "but it would not go", expresses failure of the solution adopted, implying once again criticism of the quality of the rolling stock. Note finally that the lexical verb "tried" presupposes failure. So what has failed is not simply attributable to a couple of physical defects, (overheating and a window that will not open), but to an entire cultural way of life.

Now I do not wish to argue that Mary Debenham is a racist. I do, however, contend that perception is culturally determined, hence what she 'sees' and what she 'hears' or selects to see and hear, are

[44] See John Douthwaite, *Teaching English as a Foreign Language* (Torino: SEI, 1990).
[45] Ibid.

components which are 'different' because they are 'filtered' through the lens of her Western identity. In other words, what she perceives is relevant because it establishes her group identity, which is, in its turn, important in the novel because the action is based on issues of morality and justice. And it is a continuation of the indirect 'discussion' of ideology that was begun in the very title of the chapter, not to mention the title of the novel, since "Murder" and "Orient Express" are value-loaded terms.[46]

Strangeness continues with the next paragraph.

[61] The wagon Lit conductor had come up to the two men.
[62] The train was about to depart, he said.
[63] Monsieur had better mount.
[64] The little man removed his hat.
[65] What an egg-shaped head he had.
[66] In spite of her preoccupations Mary Debenham smiled.
[67] A ridiculous-looking little man.
[68] The sort of little man one could never take seriously.

We start by identifying the modes of speech and thought presentation in this paragraph, since this is essential to gauging effect. S61 appears to have the form of narration. However, a) the previous paragraph was presented in FDT and N focalised through the character, no linguistic signal of a transition to a different mode of presentation is offered (the default situation in communication being that linguistic construction and/or linguistic device changes when something significant in the text changes) (Gricean manner maxim, sub-maxim 'be orderly'), b) the lexical verb employed is "come" and not 'go', suggesting movement towards the deictic centre, and Mary is near the two men, c) as co-text will immediately bear out, we immediately return into Mary's consciousness. In conclusion, this is N mode focalised through Mary Debenham.

S62 would appear to constitute reported or indirect speech (IS), were it not for the omission of the conjunction "that", the presence of the comma, and the inclusion of "he said" following that comma. Hence S62 is a hybrid form between IS and Free Indirect Speech (FIS). A more radical interpretation might be entertained: since the reporting clause is an 'addition', almost an afterthought, S62 may be hypothesised as being FIS, Mary is repeating to herself (though for the reader's benefit), the conductor's words. Again, we appear to be in Mary's mind. This is important since what requires an explanation when one encounters an expression of the type 'he/she said' is the identity of the reporting entity.

S63 is clearly Free Direct Speech (FDS), spoken by the wagon Lit conductor. The problem is, of course, that no signal has been offered to indicate that we have moved into the conductor's consciousness. Nor does there appear to be a plausible reason as to why it should be important to penetrate his mind, especially since the speech act he is performing is simply that of inviting the passenger to board the train. Hence the hypothesis the source of consciousness is still Mary.

The syntactic form of S64 appears to suggest pure N. However, N mode and S mode are renowned for sharing the feature of possessing the same syntactic form.[47] A sentence such as 'He was ill' could constitute N mode of FIT mode. The locutionary force of S64 is that of describing a past action. (A fuller analysis will be offered below for reasons of relevance). The question arises as to who could be communicating such a fact. First, the only possible focalisers are the narrator, the soldier and Mary.

[46] In "A Stylistic View of Modality" I demonstrate how even linguistic items defined by the code as value-free, or neutral, can, depending on the use they are put to in a text, become value-loaded terms. Thus, while "murder" is a negative modaliser by linguistic definition, the name of a train is, in theory, value-free. However, we saw earlier that in this Christie novel, the names of trains is anything but neutral, for they immediately evoke a context and its accompanying social structure and ideology.
[47] See Elena Semino and Mick Short, *Corpus Stylistics*, 11.

Second, again no linguistic signal has been provided to signal a change in consciousness. This would suggest Mary as the source of the signal.

S65 seals the preceding argument. It is clearly colloquial and it blatantly expresses a value judgement. It constitutes FDT. The conductor has played no active role so far, so such a judgment would be irrelevant since it would not be goal-directed. It is out of character for the lieutenant. The colloquial style is foreign to the narrative mode so far. The narrator is also excluded by the fact that S65 is in FDT.

S66 is steadfastly in N mode. The narrator is reporting Mary's mental states ("preoccupations", "smiled"). By so doing, the narrator confirms topic unity and continuity.[48] Stated differently, he is confirming that we have been seeing and hearing what Mary has been seeing and hearing and have been following her thoughts and emotions.

SS67-68 are Mary's FDT. They express her value judgements, the first personal, the second almost aphoristic. In other words, in one way or another, in this paragraph we never leave Mary Debenham's head.

This latter fact of the entire paragraph being either Mary thinking or her thoughts and feelings being reported is important for at least two vital reasons.

First, we now discover that she DID see the Poirot and the lieutenant, whereas the previous impression obtained from the preceding paragraph had been that she had not. Now this discovery adds strong evidence to the thesis advanced above that what she thought about – the information she conveyed in SS58-60 – enables the reader to infer her ideology.

The second important reason is that, as stated above, like many other characters who meet Poirot in Christie's novels, she erringly comes to the immediate conclusion he is innocuous.

What should be noted is that the thesis is reinforced rhetorically through climax. Significantly, the paragraph presents two climactic points. The second, at paragraph end, (SS67-68), has already been commented on. The first occurs at S63 where the conductor's words are presented verbatim. This is so, because the conductor is actually imparting an order, though ever so politely, naturally. So the fall in climax in the following sentence, S64, sees Poirot obeying the order. 'Ah!', the reader will say, 'but the text says that Poirot took off his hat, not that he got on the train'. Christie never fails to be indirect. Removing his hat is the initial step in the codified closure sequence which standardly brings conversations to an end, a non-verbal signal respectfully announcing the closing ceremony, a ritual which goes from S69 to S78. The fact that Poirot embarks on this ritual concurrently provides the textual opportunity for Miss Debenham to make her gross misevaluation. The proverbial two birds with one stone.

Aspects of this ritual have been commented on earlier, so I will make two final points.

First, as has been noted above, Poirot falls into the detective tradition. One aspect of this tradition, and one which is especially relevant to the private or unofficial detective, is his god-like stature. He is the best, and no one can out-do him – in any sector – including linguistic repartee.[49] Thus when Dubosc finishes his "beautiful, polished speech" (S71), "[n]ot to be outdone, M. Poirot replied in kind" (S72).

Second, in communication, far less is said than is meant. The reader must fill out the signal with meaning for himself. Hence, the importance of aspects such as knowledge of the world and empathy – in the first instance, how people tick. One can readily imagine a slightly modernised Dubosc thinking (hence intending), by his utterance "Brrrrr", something like: 'Hells bells – I've had to get up at four o'clock in the morning to accompany this imbecile-looking dwarf and freeze to death, just to please my General. Still, it was probably worth it, seeing how the old man has regained his old jovial spirit since the dwarf arrived.'

[48] See Brown and Yule, *Discourse Analysis*, Chapter 3 *passim*.
[49] See John Douthwaite, *Detective Stories* (Genova: Cideb, 1995), XLI-XLII.

4. The Wider Canvass: Text, *Oeuvre*, Tradition and Aesthetics

The core thesis that has been illustrated in this paper is that complexity is the hallmark of all communication, even of those communicative events that appear to be simplicity itself. Stated differently, there is no such thing as simplicity in communication.

If complexity and multifacetedness are the norm, then they cannot necessarily be taken *per se* as indicators of aesthetic value. To begin to tackle this question we now focus more on the level of text (the entire text) and *oeuvre* and its relation to genre, to the social structure and culture that produce the work, and to the tradition that that particular work and genre are embedded in.

The case of Christie is particularly significant in relation to complexity and aesthetics for two main reasons. First, because literature is generally deemed as having 'more to say' than 'ordinary conversation', and second, because until recently Christie was traditionally held to be a producer of entertainment rather than Literature with a capital L. Namely Christie's texts were judged to be devoid of complex 'material' requiring a) intellectual effort for its comprehension and b) the pondering over moral issues.[50] Here we enter the realm of aesthetics and the value of 'literature'.

Until recently, if any social message was detected in Christie's crime novels, it was taken as being patently and adamantly conservative: the protection of the *status quo*, the standard ideological position of classic crime fiction. However, in the case of Christie's production, critics held that her underlying objective could be pinpointed more precisely: the defense of middle class interests in the face of economic crisis and diminishing buying and saving power (akin to what has been happening in Europe and elsewhere in the last decade and more).

Knight provides one 'classic' statement of this position in a work that is considered to be central to criticism of the crime fiction genre:

> Her [Christie's] stories realized the attitudes and resolved the anxieties of many people, especially women, whom earlier crime stories did not interest or satisfy. Three features of her own formation were basic. As a woman she had no interest in the active male narcissism common to much male crime fiction; being of upper-middle-class she firmly believed and recreated the values of the English property-owning bourgeoisie; having almost no formal education she offered nothing more difficult than sharp observation and orderly thought as the systems by which crime was detected and disorder contained.[51]

While one may concur with Knight's first contention that, as a woman, Christie was not interested in the '*macho*' trend(s) in crime fiction, (e.g. 'hard-boiled' crime writing), I hope I have demonstrated that Christie's writing is far more complex than the simple offering of "sharp observation and orderly thought". The extreme degree of indirectness in even Christie's simplest sentences constrains the reader to seek the 'orderliness' that lies *below* the surface, and the 'sharp observation' of itself requires a certain degree of mental processing to comprehend its significance. The analysis carried out and the results obtained therefrom call for a reappraisal of Knight's contention that Christie merely "recreated the values of the English property-owning bourgeoisie ... she firmly believed [in]".

I will limit the discussion to three major aspects.

Firstly, Christie the author/narrator constantly 'intervenes' with gentle mockery or burlesque even, directed at *all* her characters, hero included. This does not exactly argue for whole-hearted identification with the values of her own 'class', for such representatives of that class as appear in her novels do not avoid debunking. Nor are they always paragons of virtue or outstanding intellectuals. Stolid, middle-

[50] Readers will hopefully pardon this highly succinct appraisal of aesthetics and of the fact that it sounds like "The Great Tradition", an unintentional side-effect. Space and objectives prevent in depth treatment.
[51] Knight, *Crime Fiction*, 107.

class Mrs. Hubbard represents a cogent example of the kind of social criticism Christie engages in no matter who the butt of her irony or sarcasm is. Here is another gem from the lady:

> Mrs Hubbard was off again.
> "There isn't anybody knows a thing on this train. And nobody's trying to do anything. Just a pack of useless foreigners. Why, if this were at home, there'd be someone at least *trying* to do something".[52]

The most significant point here is that the authorial intervention which precedes Mrs Hubbard's turn is critical: "was off" and "again" are stark negative evaluators. The informal lexical verb is a negative modaliser while 'again' presupposes reiteration of the 'crime' and consequently implicit criticism and possibly emotions such as frustration, indignation.

The second highly significant point is that what might first appear to be out-and-out racism (as conveyed by expressions such as "just a pack of useless foreigners") is toned down by Mrs Hubbard softening her position through expressing the concept "trying". Since the lexical verb presupposes[53] that success is not guaranteed or, in this case, that failure is to be expected, Mrs Hubbard is portrayed as being aware of the fact that her 'race' is not god-like, hence perfect, but human, hence fallible. Further softening occurs through depicting her as highly frustrated and incapable of controlling her nerves. We thus witness her crying.

What Christie paints, therefore, is not a two-toned portrait, but one where at least some of the colours of the palette are present. Mrs Hubbard is not quite a totally flat character. This stricture applies to all Christie's major characters, none excepted.

The third interesting point about Mrs Hubbard is that at the end, we discover she is actually Linda Arden, Mrs Arden's mother and an actress. Hence Mrs Hubbard is a total fiction. This poses the moot question as to whether the stereotypes she represents are 'true' or not. The answer to this question is not crucial, inasmuch as one can argue, for instance, that she copied an extant stereotype. However, the minimal response raised by this issue is that Christie has created ambiguity.

The fourth point strengthens the third. Throughout the novel Christie constantly draws attention to the fictitious nature of her work (e.g. "the threatening letters were in the nature of a blind. They might have been lifted bodily out of an indifferently written American crime novel", p. 282), again calling into question what her 'real' objectives are in producing this work.

The second major line of argument is, on the contrary, concerned with the real, inasmuch as Christie deals with the problems of her time. True, many of her novels ARE concerned with the waning of social and economic importance of the English middle class, but this is by no means her sole concern. For instance, a 'late' novel published in 1970, six years before her death, entitled *Passenger to Frankfurt*, sees Christie engaging with the resurgence of neo-Nazi groups all over the world and an attempt by the authorities to control and contain such violent, destructive right-wing movements. *A propos* of such political groups, it should not be forgotten that the rise of extreme ring-wing movements is linked to the impoverishment of the middle class, which consequently supports such movements in an attempt to regain the socio-economic position it has lost, showing Christie's interests are wide-ranging and not limited to the country monied classes.

Given such premises, the last two decades has witnessed a reappraisal of Christie's work, arguing that it more complex and problematic than previous critics held, as well as more wide-ranging in its thematic and moral concerns.

[52] Christie, *Murder on the Orient Express*, 57.
[53] See Stephen C. Levinson, *Pragmatics* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1983).

Following in the critical path drawn by Plain[54] and Rowland[55] on culture and gender in the work of Christie, Makinen[56] devotes a book to Christie's position on the gender question. She argues that Christie denied the extant view that women were different from men, (as represented by the low brow newspaper *Daily Mirror*, which she examines), claiming that female villains were

> as equally bad as the male villains … Often the women […] are revealed as having a moral weakness in their character ... From the 1930s to the 1970s, Christie's villains unproblematically assume either gender, and the female villains enact exactly the same motives as the males, delineated ... as money, fear, revenge and love and fuelled by a moral immaturity and egoism. It is interesting to note how ... the *Daily Mirror*'s attempts to construct female murderers as emotional or monsters, the crimes tied to domestic love and jealousy, [while] Christie gives her women more public-focussed motives of greed and vanity, and takes pains to normalize them as ordinary people.[57]

Essentially, Christie sees women 'as they are', so to speak, and not as traditional male stereotyping would have us see them – angels of the house, turned into devils in the case of those females engaged in criminal activity. This is tantamount to arguing that women are the product of their own environment just as much as men and that Christie consequently analyses that environment in her novels. Hence they are moved by "the same motives as the males" and commit the same crimes.

Makinen's conclusion that "Christie's texts repudiate the othering of English femininity, representing it as a central, unalienated 'part of us'" leads her to ask a further question: "what occurs to the portrayal of gender when the further formulation of the 'alien' or 'other', that of race and nationality, compounds the depiction?" While accepting the traditional view that Christie is conservative, Makinen's analysis of a number of the novels which take place on foreign terrain using the tools of literary criticism lead her to conclude that Christie is far from being a producer of monologic texts. On the contrary, her novels are replete with contradictions:

> Christie's detective novels have a complex relationship to the practice of 'othering' foreign, Mediterranean cultures of the West and the East. She does create binary divides between national cultures, reinforce national stereotypes, and she uses the foreign countries as sites of to re-define Englishness, at times specifically English femininity. But the texts are more dialogic and open than one might traditionally expect. In the western Mediterranean countries the authorial point of view is European, rather than English, while in the eastern Mediterranean countries divergent cultural mores are allowed an equally valid authority. English prejudices against the Jew and the Greek are unpacked to backfire against the Anglo-Saxon depictions … [and] her representation of other countries and gender are complex, ambivalent and complicated.[58]

My analysis employing the tools of stylistics and pragmatics leads me not simply to concur with some of the points made above by Makinen, such as "complex, ambivalent and complicated", but perhaps to go even further. Chritie's lampooning of *all* her characters suggests not only a more critical attitude towards the world in general, but a deliberately critical attitude which sits ill with a squarely conservative stance, which, to boot, reflects the worldview of one particular social class.

[54] See Gill Plain, *Twentieth Century Crime Fiction: Gender, Sexuality and the Body* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Press, 2001).
[55] See Susan Rowland, *From Agatha Christie to Ruth Rendell: British Women Writers in Detective and Crime Writing* (London: Palgrave, 2001).
[56] See Merja Makinen, *Agatha Christie: Investigating Femininity* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006).
[57] Ibid., 156.
[58] Ibid., 181.

The complexity of her writing technique, which, following King Lear's advice, I have attempted to anatomise, would indeed suggest motivation, in the Russian Formalist sense, to return to a much earlier point, thus bearing out the contention of conscious critique.

One macro argument supporting my view is Christie's basic ideological tenet that people are fundamentally evil, a point constantly reiterated throughout the majority of her novels.[59] If this hypothesis is any way near correct, then it eliminates 'difference', whatever factor that difference may be attributed to in the concrete situations she deals with.

"Wickedness", the term Christie uses frequently together with "evil" to describe the human condition, is not distributed amongst the world's population along lines of class, race, nationality, gender and so forth, but is hard-wired, instinctual, or whatever variant of the conservative theory of human nature one wishes to champion.

The third major argument concerns the market, hence the conditions of production. Christie did write to be read. If Ngugi wa Thiong'o is content initially with lower sales (and consequently is happy with writing in Gikuyu before having his works translated into English), Christie was not. Nugugi is declaredly ideologically committed and the postcolonial 'ocean' which sees this sector as almost 'independent', has paved the way for Ngugi, making his choice a given point in his career to write first in his native tongue one that did not lose the market position he had conquered. Hence, one final factor to be considered is that to remain at the top of the bestsellers list one must in some way attract the buyer. One essential ingredient in achieving this goal is not to alienate the target reader's worldview. Being critical and conservative at the same time in the way Christie seems to be in her novels does seem to be a shade contradictory, ambivalent, *mon vieux* as Poirot would put it? The counter-hypothesis is that ambivalence is a tool employed to make her works *appear* conservative while actually trying to undermine the social and ideological structures she unveils in order to avoid turning her readers against her.

The point returns us to the aspects Christie does concentrate on. While above I sustained that more extensive analysis is required, the starting point of such analysis what she selects to reveal about her characters appears to relate directly to her ideological stance, to their position in society, to the constraining norms of the genre, of its tradition, and of context. We thus move from sentential and sub-sentential levels to supra-sentential, discoursal level

> ... In any case, Poirot gave him [Dr Constantine] no time for questions. Opening the door into the corridor, he called for the conductor.
> The man arrived at a run.[60]

Here domination, a typical trait of the detective hero, is to the fore. First Poirot allows the doctor who examined the corpse no opportunity to set him questions. This renders the doctor a powerless person, a non-entity, totally at Poirot's beck and call. Then Poirot issues a peremptory order to the conductor, confirming he is in command. His power is demonstrated here by a behavioural act, "the man arriv[ing] at a run". Speed is not necessary here for functional reasons, (e.g. saving someone who is dying), but an indicator that the M. Bouc, the company director, has given strict orders for total obedience to Poirot and that the conductor is very dutifully toeing the line.

Power is further emphasized by two linguistic markers: i) the form of reference "the man" demotes the conductor by failing to call him by his name, since Poirot knows him full well; ii) the deployment of the preposition "for" in the lexical verb "called for" in *lieu* of 'called' conveys the idea that Poirot uttered the order in such a way as to be indirect, distancing himself from the conductor, for instance by

[59] For a discussion of this thesis see Douthwaite, *Agatha Christie*, section 5.2.4 and *passim*.
[60] Christie, *Murder on the Orient Express*, 87.

not popping his head out of the door and looking at the man in the eye but simply shouting out loud 'Conductor'. Both these linguistic signals remove the person's individual identity reducing him to the status of his working role.

Clearly, these are indicators of the context – of the power structure and of Poirot executing his duties in that power structure in total and solitary command. Despite having no real official, legal status. Such behaviour also constitutes part of the identity of the mainstream detective as all-powerful. It is thus genre-evoking and genre-confirming.

Complexity is again to the fore: indirectness, genre, tradition, context are all at work concurrently to create multiple meanings, Despite this important fact, all the implications identified are not difficult to grasp consciously, nor do they lead to the kind of comprehension and questioning of life that one expects from great literature. They do not appear to be of any signal importance beyond the telling of the detective story. For instance, no criticism is implied of the power structure.

Another example will seal the point. Here Poirot is interrogating Colonel Arbuthnot, a true (viz. stereotypical) Brit, as well as one of the major players in the planning and execution of the 'murder', a point I will take up three paragraphs below. The Colonel has already expressed his extreme distaste for America and Americans. Poirot is interrogating him concerning the night of the murder when Arbuthnot spent the crucial hours around the time of death of Cassetti chatting to a young America, MacQueen, hence a person to be counted as a probable witness of what happened. Here is part of what he has to say:

> "But I liked this young fellow. He'd got hold of some tomfool idiotic ideas about the situation in India; that's the way of Americans – they're so *sentimental* and *idealistic*. Well, he was interested in what I had to tell him. I've had nearly thirty years experience of the country. And I was interested in what he had to say about the financial situation in America. Then we got down to world politics in general."[61]

Arbuthnot's benevolent judgemental attitude shows he has a high opinion of himself. Christie's criticism of the colonel resides in the fact that she implies that Arbuthnot fails to realise that he likes the young American not because of his character, intelligence or other positive traits, but because the man listens to him instead of attacking his British stance! We induce that MacQueen had indeed questioned the British position on India ("He'd got hold of some tomfool idiotic ideas about the situation in India") and that Arbuthnot 'put him right' on the issue!

Following Christie's implicit criticism of the colonel, what, of course, is decisive here is that we are given neither MacQueen's criticisms, nor Arbuthnot's defence of British policy in India, or of colonialism in general. Arbuthnot takes it for granted that he is (morally) right. And this is crucial, for it is part of his general, moral and ideological stance, which for Arbutnot justifies the fact that he is part of both the jury and the 'firing squad' that 'executes' Cassetti. Indeed, when questioned by Poirot, Arbuthnot replies, "say what you like, trial by jury is a sound system'.[62]

Three core matters derive from the preceding argument. First, colonialism and Empire – the socio-economic and ideological structures that constitute such entities – are taken for granted and constitute the (unstated) backdrop and unseen determinant of the novel, as happens in a number of English novels, (Austen, to name but one). Second, Arbuthnot takes for granted the correctness of his moral/political position, and as a British soldier and officer he is in the forefront of defending the Empire – a concrete illustration of the preceding general point. Third, Christie's position on the topic of colonialism is not clear. On the one hand she has offered no concrete arguments on Arbuthnot's part and then offers no concrete criticisms of the colonel's position. On the other hand Christie has Poirot criticize him, as well as criticising him herself in other parts of the novel, as in the following extract:

[61] Ibid., 170-171, emphasis added.
[62] Ibid., 175.

> "I can assure you that Miss Debenham could not possibly be indicated."
> "You feel warmly in the matter," said Poirot with a smile.
> Colonel Arbuthnot gave him a cold stare.
> "I really don't know what you mean," he said.
> The stare seemed to abash Poirot. He dropped his eyes and began fiddling with the papers in front of him.
> "All this is by the way," he said. "Let us be practical and come to facts. This crime, we have reason to believe, took place at a quarter past one last night".[63]

When Poirot insinuates to Arbuthnot that he is not objective in the matter of Miss Debenham because he is sentimentally involved with her ("you feel warmly in the matter", with the double play on "warmly"), Arbuthnot demonstrates his intellectual and emotional weaknesses by getting angry and trying to dominate Poirot by giving him "a cold stare" and saying he has not understood what Poirot is driving at. He fails to realise that his anger has betrayed him, since it constitutes for Poirot evidence that his prior hypothesis was right. With another subtle ploy which again Arbuthnot fails to understand, ("The stare seemed to abash Poirot", where the operative word is "seemed", thereby denying what the sentence appears to assert, namely that Poirot was 'abashed'), Poirot changes the subject for he has achieved his goal of ensnaring Arbuthnot and doesn't want the Colonel to realise that this is so. Hence he pretends shame caused by the Colonel's hard stare and verbal response. Here Christie adroitly and economically provides us with three features of Arbuthnot's personality, which concurrently constitute criticisms of the Colonel, adding them on to his air of superiority and moral righteousness she had depicted with equal bravura in Arbuthnot's report of his conversation with MacQueen, to which I now return.

Immediately following Arbuthnot's positive evaluation of trial by jury, comes the following extract:

> Poirot looked at him thoughtfully for a moment or two.
> "Yes", he said. "I am sure that would be your view".[64]

The most obvious interpretation is that the tone is somewhat critical, Poirot dissenting not with the position expressed on the concept of trial by jury, but in general with Arbuthnot and his stance. However, he proffers no argument, nor, crucially, must it be forgotten that Poirot himself is part of that colonial system (let us recall Leopold's Belgian Congo) and that Poirot is returning from helping the French army in Syria. Most ambiguous. The framework is that of Empire and colonialism, but the framework is not filled in.

This indicates lack of analysis and lack of depth. Contrast this with the following extract:

> "that your husband does not like me. It's a small matter, which, in the circumstances, seems to acquire a perfectly ridiculous importance. Ridiculous and immense; for, clearly money is required for my plan," he reflected; then added, meaningly, "and we have two *sentimentalists* to deal with."
>
> "I don't know that I understand you, Don Martin," said Mrs Gould, coldly, preserving the low key of their conversation. "But, speaking as if I did, who is the other?"
>
> 'The great Holroyd in San Francisco, of course,' Decoud whispered, lightly. 'I think you understand me very well. Women are *idealists*; but then they are so perspicacious.'

[63] Ibid., 169-170.
[64] Ibid., 175.

> But whatever was the reason of that remark, disparaging and complimentary at the same time, Mrs Gould seemed not to pay attention to it. The name of Holroyd had given a new tone to her anxiety.
>
> ...
>
> Decoud admitted that it was possible. He knew well the town children of the Sulaco Campo: sullen, thievish, vindictive, and bloodthirsty, whatever great qualities their brothers of the plain might have had. But then there was that other *sentimentalist*, who attached a strangely *idealistic* meaning to concrete facts. This stream of silver must be kept flowing north to return in the form of financial backing from the great house of Holroyd. Up at the mountain in the strong-room of the mine the silver bars were worth less for his purpose than so much lead, from which at least bullets may be run. Let it come down to the harbour, ready for shipment.[65]

This is, of course Joseph Conrad's magnificent novel *Nostromo*, which engages with capitalism, empire, colonialism on the one hand, and psychology, motivation and personal interest on the other hand, and the interrelationship between social structure and personality – momentous themes, dealt with by Conrad in great analytical depth and subtlety. The extract has been selected because the two lexemes "sentimental" and "idealistic" appear in both Christie and Conrad, both functioning as negative valuators, launching as they do serious accusations as to the validity of the foundations on which the personal judgements emitted by the people in question (Macqueen in Christie and the capitalists Gould and Holroyd in Conrad, both of whom claim they are doing good for the population by espousing capitalism and colonialism). The simple point is that Conrad tackles the subject in depth while Christie skirts round it, since it merely (so to say) forms the backdrop. Despite this criticism, however, such traits pointed out by Christie and criticism of those traits does give rise to contradictions of the type I highlighted above. Stated differently, the 'aesthetic quality' of the two works is different, Christie's work remains a detective novel while Conrad's *oeuvre* is an epic.

Now one might argue that it is unfair to compare Conrad with Christie. Though I do not concede the point, if, for the sake of argument, one does compare like with like, then we move to the two main strands in crime fiction – the detective story as entertainment and conservation and the detective story as a vehicle of social criticism.[66] If one compares Andrea Camilleri's crime novels where Montalbano is the police investigator, with the Poirot and Miss Marples novels, then it again emerges that Camilleri writes serious social novels[67] with penetrating analytical insights, (though by no means reaching the heights of great writers such as Conrad), while Christie's novels avoid tackling the problems they evoke head on, remaining murky and ambivalent as regards the socio-political issues they raise, thereby fostering the impression that they are basically escapist literature.

Indeed, if one were to count the number of comments devoted to evoking negative stereotypes of Otherness in a novel such as *Murder on the Orient Express*, then the quantity of snide remarks is enormous. Remove them and the novel risks falling apart, not simply for quantitative reasons. This risk is increased n-fold if one adds that the same strictures apply to Christie's intense deployment of comicity.

Murder on the Orient Express calls up the fundamental question of justice and how to define and regulate 'deviant' social behavior. But it never answers the questions it poses. A recurrent happening in much crime fiction. One modern filmic example is the American television series "Law and Order" where the issue is raised more than once but never debated.

[65] Joseph Conrad, *Nostromo* (1904) (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963), 187-188, emphasis added.
[66] See Douthwaite, *Detective Stories*.
[67] See Douthwaite, "A Stylistic View of Modality"; "Using Speech and Thought Presentation to Validate Hypotheses Regarding the Nature of the Crime Novels of Andrea Camilleri".

5. Conclusion: What to Do Next

Since the analyses in sections 2-4 derive from the application of pragmatics and stylistics, may be deemed feasible, if not proven. They constitute the backbone of the paper. However, observations have also been advanced as to possible macro-interpretations, or at least features hypothesised, of the text require further investigation. In this sense one major function of this paper may be claimed to be preparatory. The hypotheses advanced by Makinen, myself and others may, and should, be tested by close reading of the type presented above. The next step would consist of analyzing the entire novel, and then other Christie crime novels, to collect evidence supporting or disproving the contentions made.

The aim is to uncover the ambiguities, relate them both to the characters and what they stand for, and to the other socio-contextual features which go into the constitution of the character: place of birth (hence culture and society), gender, age, social class, political opinions (or, more broadly, point of view/worldview), and so forth. The distribution of stance according to the social identity factors outlined above should provide a strong, if not definitive key, to working out what the deeper significance of Christie's production really is.

The same kind of analysis should be applied to Christie's extensive and wry use of humour.

An important methodological tool that will be required is analysis using corpora. However, as I have tried to demonstrate, the final word lies with pragmatics and stylistics – applied first at sentence level, and then analysed for the constants in linguistic patterns that emerge at text level and how these patterns are correlated to social identity in historical context. Pragmatics and stylistics are eminently suited to his job.

Savina Stevanato, *"The Music of Poetry"?: T.S. Eliot and the Case of* Four Quartets (Pisa: ETS, 2017), pp. 180
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Reviewed by Fausto Ciompi

Savina Stevanato's critical reconsideration of *Four Quartets* is an attentive and insightful reading of Eliot's late masterpiece that intersects three different methodological perspectives and stances:

> I interpret the poem's musicality through an integrated approach consisting of three investigative categories based on: up-to-date theoretical notions and tools from the intermedial research field which, from both formalist and cultural perspectives, support the validity of verbal musicality even when no real music is involved; a cultural and aesthetic contextualization of Eliot's poetics within modernist poetics; a textual analysis of the poem (15-16).

In spite of this ecumenical preface, a superficial reader of selected passages from Stevanato's book would probably come away with the wrong impression that this is "old-fashioned textual criticism", as A.S. Byatt satirically describes the practice of close reading in one of her bestselling novels dealing with the endless mannerisms of the academy. And, to an extent, the superficiality of this reader would be excusable because especially Stevanato's third and final chapter, "The 'Musical Ways' of *Four Quartets*", is indeed a sustained effort in critical immanentism, a careful and reliable analysis of the text's formal and stylistic features. Not to mention the fact that Stevanato's phraseology is semiotic throughout, as shown, to quote just one further example, by the title of a paragraph appearing in chapter two: "The Musicality of Signifiers and of Signifieds". And not to mention the more substantial thing that, although the aim of this second chapter is the contextualization of Eliot's text within the modernist scene, its focus is on context in a strictly aesthetic sense. The reader must not expect a contextual discussion of *Four Quartets* in the manner of such eminent critics of Modernism as, say, Lawrence Rainey or Robert Scholes. Stevanato's cultural investigation does not concern Eliot's socio-cultural background or the historical issues that produced modernist music and Eliot's modernist poetry. To her, as indeed to Eliot, culture is in fact always high culture and strictly related to aesthetics and poetics. As such, it has certainly little to do with the by-products of mass civilization whose exploration is perpetrated by mainstream cultural studies. Consequently Stevanato devotes vast portions of her book, especially the whole second chapter significantly titled "Towards *Four Quartets*", to a discussion of Eliot's poetics and of the aesthetic ideas that influenced his creativity. But not only does Stevanato's approach differ from most contemporary contextual studies, which notoriously cultivate area perspectives, extra-aesthetic issues and group-related interests. It also results, on the other hand, conspicuously un-Adornian. While Adorno, the high priest of modernist music, elaborated on Benjamin's concept of constellation in order to bring together conflicting views of contemporary music and demonstrate the transience of traditional value-laden notions, namely history and nature, Stevanato does her best to prove that Eliot's poetical masterpiece tries to transcend time and dissolve it into eternity. While Adorno and his epigones recognize the discontinuous and fragmented character of modernist art, which never tends to the smooth reconciliation of its contradictions or to a preordained end, according to Stevanato in *Four Quartets* Eliot aims at transcending the imperfections of time by dissolving it into the self-contained perfection of eternity. In fact, following Neubauer, Stevanato claims that Eliot's "mindset is always directed towards totality" (66). He is one of those modernists who are

mainly concerned with such concepts as wholeness, harmony, truth, essence and progress. While these artists are unstintingly striving after unifying procedures and the restoration of unity, the opposite type of modernist writer, F.M. Ford being the paradigm offered, privileges the notions of chance, heterogeneity, and chaos. In other words, the first kind of modernist never succumbs to incumbent disintegration and insists on conjuring up remedial strategies. Jürgen Habermas' idea of modernity as "incomplete project", one to be constantly resumed and emendated, comes to mind here. While modernists *a la* Ford express their bewilderment at the "smashing and crashing ... the breaking and falling" (V. Woolf, "Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown", qt. by Stevanato, 66) by mimicking poetically the world's chaos, modernists *a la* Eliot testify to their longing for harmony by constantly imagining unifying textual projects. Eliot's and Joyce's mythical method, Pound's metaphor of the attracting magnet, Eliot's view of the poet as catalyst are obvious points in case. I will return to this fundamental claim of Stevanato's book with reference to its symbolist implications, but not before having briefly considered the structure and contents of the volume.

Chapter one offers a historical overview of the relationship between music and poetry duly providing an up-to-date discussion of intermedial studies that have moved across the two disciplines. Starting from Calvin Brown's seminal study, *Music and Literature: A Comparison of the Arts* (1948), going through Wolf's and Scher's fundamental contributions that since the Eighties and Nineties have explored the still "rough theoretical ground", and culminating in the discussion of the most recent conceptualizations of intermediality, Stevanato examines the milestones and the most productive developments of intercodical studies. At the end of her well-researched excursus, in the wake of Wolf's theorizations Stevanato concludes that *Four Quartets* should be considered an intracompositional phenomenon that specifically includes intermedial reference. This means that, although the poem imitates other media (namely music) and at the same time thematizes them, *Four Quartets* clearly remains a monomedial work displaying only one semiotic system: verbal language. Sound strategies may only *point* to another medium, music, but not fully integrate it into the textual machinery. Stevanato thus rejects as artificial the readings of *Four Quartets* that tried to transfer coded musical patterns (sonata, quartet) into the fabric of Eliot's text. The interart relationship is intended by Stevanato as essentially metaphorical, which, on the other hand, does not entail that critics have to resort to extemporaneous impressionism. Quite the opposite. The textual instruments adopted by Stevanato – those provided by theorists like Jakobson, Lotman and Marcello Pagnini – are in fact methodologically sophisticated and neatly defined. Stevanato produces a selective but certainly correct reading of the structuralist-semiotic poetics in the versions offered by these authors, taking from them what may prove instrumental in her interpretation of *Four Quartets*, the main point being the notion that the poem constitutes a semantically saturated structure, one in which each single component is structurally relevant and formally motivated. A notion which, incidentally, Pagnini regarded as the most lasting legacy left by structuralism and which he called "textual functionalism".

When I highlight Stevanato's selective attitude, I also imply that she does not discuss other forms of functionalism, for instance those elaborated by Mukarowsky or by Fónagy, whose researches on the semantics of sound and the partially natural character of signs in poetic language could possibly be an interesting point of intersection with Eliot's view of ordinary language as strictly related to the poetic elaboration. This could mean that Stevanato rejects the psycho-physiological correlations postulated by Iván Fónagy because, as once argued by a critic, they are a problem of physiology, not of poetics. But taking Mukarowsy and Fonagy as fellow travellers would have probably distracted Stevanato from her ultimate goal: to demonstrate that Eliot's poetry constantly aspires towards the condition of music and reveals its aspiration by self-reference and introversive semiosis, which are the typical traits of musical language. From this viewpoint, significance is undecomposable and can be grasped only through the immanent structural whole. Stevanato stresses this specific point because she is convinced, as is Brown, that "Harmony ... is impossible to factually convey in literature because it requires simultaneity, never

literally present in the verbal code" (42). Therefore tonality, repetition, variation/contrast, balance come out as the musical devices amenable to poetry, and in particular to Eliot the author of *Four Quartets*, in order to musicalize language though never managing to achieve the supreme immanence of music. The periodic organization of the message, Stevanato argues drawing on Stankiewicz, is thus a remedial strategy that Eliot's poetry adopts, in analogy with music, to overcome the inherent linearity of verbal discourse and consequently suggest the simultaneity which is accessible only to the sister art. "In my end is my beginning" is just the most popular cipher of the poem's circularity, whose effects of recursivity and attempted simultaneity (a more complex phenomenon, at which poetry can only hint) are amply distributed in the text.

The first chapter also presents an interesting philosophical coda in which Susanne Langer's conception of music is briefly sketched. The attention granted to cello player and philosopher Langer is another clever move by Stevanato. Langer the theorist of rhythm as immanent in all organisms provides Stevanato with an operating key which enables her to put together the idea of human behavior as rhythmically organized and the notion of art as formal (symbolic) translation of human sentience. To Langer, music is a tonal analogue of emotive life, an unconsummated, organically rhythmical symbol that constitutes an indistinguishable unity of form and content. As was the case with semiotic functionalism, Stevanato is here shoring supportive fragments against the foundation of her under-construction house. At the height of her journey through theories and methodologies, in fact, we understand that she is suggesting a nearly-symbolist reading of Eliot's *Four Quartets*, one in which Mallarmé replaces Donne as inspiring totem, one in which feeling and sentience take the place of impersonality, one in which Coleridge's romantic organicism is as comfortably at home as Dante's poetics of structural integrity and wholeness. And indeed Eliot's brash definition of Coleridge as the corruptor of taste, provided in his 1923 essay on "The Function of Criticism", was later completely revised by Eliot, who, among other things, praised the great romantic poet for the modernity of his critical approach. But this certainly does not entail the full-hearted romanticization of Eliot's late phase. In his late style, when Mallarmé takes the place of honour once granted to Donne (who, incidentally, is never mentioned in Stevanato's essay), Eliot is still a classical and now symbolist poet, while in his early phase he was classical and metaphysical. This is my only point of difference with Sevastano, who extends the definition of symbolist to Eliot's high-modernist phase, whereas, it seems to me, high-modernist Eliot was hardly interested in sublimating reality into symbolic essences, nor did he aim at grounding supersensible ideas in pure language, concepts or feelings. Rather, he followed the opposite trajectory and translated metaphysics into chains of events and fragments of things, providing what Pound would call "luminous details". As a high modernist, which is not the same as avantgardist, Eliot was a classicist who did not cancel tradition but entertained a competitive relation with it. In his 1927 essay on Baudelaire he could thus praise Dante for his magisterial ability in imposing order on matter, whereas Baudelaire, put to the same task, proved simply confusing. This was, incidentally, a point which Jacques Maritain could not grant to Eliot. Still, Dante's neat allegorical clarity and concreteness evidently worked better to him than Baudelaire's vague theory of correspondences.

The risk of confusion is in fact always present to Eliot, who, in his early phase reacts against it, as suggested by Stevanato in chapter two, by conjuring up a mythical order, while in his late phase he replaces the mythical method with musical poetry as a structural principle. His obsessive relational sensitivity to equivalence thus eventually triggers a research into the "beyondness" and transcendental significance of music. Like the French symbolists, Eliot was interested in the ultimate essence of reality. Unlike them, as Stevanato acutely observes, he understood musicality in terms that were not purely acoustic but encompassed the semantic component of words. He thus replaced the notion of relational by that of "points of intersection" between two opposite dimensions that tend to a supersensible communion. This concept of point of intersection between the timeless with time is developed by Stevanato in chapter three, where the critic discusses with remarkable acuteness the contrapuntal

arrangement of subject-matter, the incarnated Word as the privileged locus of encounter between conflicting dimensions, the organization of the text's horizontal linearity, the way in which it fosters the vertical dimension, recurrence and metatexuality as structuring principles.

Far more complex is Stevanato's analysis of the poem's macro-framework, which, in her interpretation, consists of four poems, each containing five movements: "each movement is characterized by its own structure which remains, on the whole, unchanged throughout the four poems and the twenty movements. This framework of equivalent sections and sub-sections, and the length of the poem greatly favour recursive interrelations and thus the principle of intersection" (114).

Ingenuously conceived, impeccably crafted and demanding as they are, sections two and three of this final chapter are among the strong points of Stevanato's book. Here the critic analyzes the intersection of two thematic areas, which unsurprisingly she calls *Time* and *Eternity*, and convincingly demonstrates how their interweaving involves both reiteration and variation, linearity/circularity and eternity, the syntagmatic and the paradigmatic axis of the text. The reader's perplexity at the apparent obviousness of Stevanato's hermeneutic programme, as it was initially formulated by the critic, is eventually dissolved. She does not demonstrate what everybody already knows and what Eliot himself clarified. She skillfully deals with time and eternity as structural and thematic notions that act 'musically' in the text at the micro-level of phonetic recurrence as well as at the macro-level of the overarching structure of the four quartets. She thus provides new impetus for further discussion about Eliot's late masterpiece, which is no small achievement for the study of such an over-interpreted text.

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