

Chapter 3

TROU DE MEMOIRE: AUTHORIAL STATUS IN THE FICTIONAL TEXT

Aquin's second novel, Trou de mémoire, was published in 1968.¹ In an interview with Normand Cloutier in 1966, Aquin described his relationship with Trou de mémoire in the following manner: "J'ai déplaçonné dans tous les sens du point de vue de la langue et j'ai joué comme un maniaque, en brouillant les pistes."² Jean-Ethier Blais affirmed that "Trou de mémoire est, à mon avis, supérieur à Prochain épisode. C'est le même homme qui écrit, le même esprit qui raisonne et rêve; mais l'amplification des thèmes est évidente dans ce second roman."³ Jean-Pierre Martel described this second novel as "un gigantesque jeu bien orchestré, utilisant quantité de trappes et de voiles judicieusement placés."⁴

In this chapter of the study it is intended to examine the roles which the reader and narratee play as various narrators compete to establish themselves as the overriding authority for

¹Hubert Aquin, Trou de mémoire (Montreal: Le Cercle du Livre de France, 1968).

²Normand Cloutier, "James Bond + Balzac + Stirling Moss + ... = Hubert Aquin," Le Magazine Maclean 6(9): 42 (septembre 1966).

³Jean Ethier-Blais, "Un livre nouveau de Hubert Aquin. Trou de mémoire," Dossier de presse 1965-1980 (Sherbrooke: Bibliothèque du Séminaire de Sherbrooke, 1981), no pagination.

⁴Jean-Pierre Martel, "Trou de mémoire, un jeu formel mortel," Le Québec littéraire 2: 61 (1976).

the text. In addition, it is proposed to investigate the transformation of one of the narrators, i.e. the editor, from literary critic to writer of fiction. Particular emphasis will be placed upon the importance of the use of footnotes in order to extend the fictional world of the work and to cause the reader to question traditional assumptions about the concept of authority in fiction.

Traditionally epistolary novels are frame narratives, with the letter-writers and their correspondents functioning as second-level narrators and narratees. The first-level narrator is the "editor" and the first-level narratees are his public.⁵ In the foreword to Trou de mémoire, Olympe Ghezso-Quénum leads the reader to believe one of two things: (1) the novel which the latter is about to read will consist of a set of letters between Ghezso-Quénum and (an)other person(s), most probably P.X. Magnant, or (2) if the novel is non-epistolary, at least Ghezso-Quénum will be the protagonist. Given the expectations of the reader, the foreword may be said to be misleading. However, on the other hand, it incorporates nearly all the elements which Aquin will subsequently develop in Trou de mémoire.

The narrator ("je"), Ghezso-Quénum, addresses the narratee ("vous"), P.X. Magnant. Unlike the various "tu" in Prochain épisode, this narratee is represented as a character who neither knows the narrator nor has knowledge of the events narrated. However, as in Les Liaisons dangereuses, the narratee will eventually become a narrator in his own right. In addition to

⁵Susan Rubin Suleiman, "Of Readers and Narratees: The Experience of Pamela," L'Esprit Créateur 21: 93 (1981).

you and me as readers, there is at least one other reader of the text: the editor. His presence lends verisimilitude to Ghezso-Quénum's letter. The reader's (in this case everyone else but the editor's) initial response to the editor's presence is one of puzzlement. There is a hasty shuffling of pages to ensure that Trou de mémoire is in fact a novel. The editor's notes evolve from the typically impersonal third-person presentation (p. 7) to the royal "nous" (p. 10) to the highly charged "je" (p. 19). The editor as reader becomes another narrator, whose narratee is the implied reader of Ghezso-Quénum's and Magnant's texts. The fourth narrator/second editor of Trou de mémoire, Rachel Ruskin, is also introduced in the foreword -- as a character known to both Ghezso-Quénum and Magnant. Thus we have nearly all the potential "je"s created by Aquin, the implied author, as fabricator of the whole novel.⁶

The foreword itself reveals various narrative filters. Its very title, "En guise d'avant-propos", suggests that all may not be what it appears. The extensive use of parentheses functions as notes by the narrator, i.e. commentary upon his own narration. The knowledge which the reader gains of Ghezso-Quénum is, in part, an image of Magnant reflected in the African. The discovery, for example, that Bakounine and Thomas de Quincey are the Canadian's favorite authors leads to the revelation that they are "les deux seuls écrivains blancs que [Ghezso-Quénum] vénère" (p. 9). Furthermore, the reader's knowledge of P.X. Magnant is filtered first through Rachel

⁶As we shall observe later, there exists the possibility of even more writing subjects.

Ruskin and ultimately through Ghezso-Quénum:

Elle n'ignore pas que vous êtes pharmacien; elle m'a même laissé entendre que vous êtes très savant en pharmacie. Je puis vous dire qu'elle m'a fait vraiment un grand éloge de votre savoir pharmacologique; elle m'a même dit que vous étiez l'inventeur d'un sédatif nouveau, dérivé d'alcaloïdes et de je ne sais plus quoi au juste (p. 15).

The reader, therefore, may even come to regard his own presence as a kind of voyeurism, intruding upon Ghezso-Quénum's efforts to reveal himself to the Canadian ("je cherche à me manifester à vous", p. 13). One senses that the African would be embarrassed if he felt that anyone other than the addressee had read his letter.

The Foreword's preoccupation with the nature of discourse once again introduces dédoublement as an integral element in Aquin's second novel. Ghezso-Quénum has already established certain affinities between his addressee and himself before he suggests the uncanny fact that "vous avez prononcé mes propres paroles et ... vous avez chanté, si je puis dire, un hymne révolutionnaire qui est le double du discours que j'ai donné" (p. 10),⁷ hence his profound admiration for the power and "l'extraordinaire minutie de votre parole" (p. 9), preceded by the temptation to link addresser and addressee as "jumeaux".

The narrator exhibits a fascination for the typewritten page as something foreign to himself: "comme si la feuille ... n'avait rien à voir avec un texte de moi"; "ce document dont je m'éloigne" (p. 14). Despite the inherent alienation of the written word, Ghezso-Quénum cannot help but write "cette

⁷My own underlining.

lettre qui n'en finit plus". The act of writing stems from that very narcissistic impulse which he so vainly tries to deny. Having ostensibly discovered himself through oral language, i.e. the revolutionary speech delivered from the roof of a Renault, the narrator would now replicate that experience on the written page. He can only hope that it will have marginally more significance than the writing of directions for the medicines which he sells to his illiterate compatriots!

As was noted above, the Foreword introduces an enigmatic editor.⁸ In his capacity as a reader of both Ghezso-Quénum's letter and the subsequent text, he has elected not to write a traditional introduction but rather to make his presence known through the use of footnotes. These, in turn, point to a substantial knowledge of Africa and French Canada, rivalling that of Ghezso-Quénum and P.X. Magnant. Since the editor's narratee (you and I) could not be expected to fully appreciate all the references within the letter, he has sought to assist us to overcome cultural differences by means of the footnotes. Initially these appear to be reasonably straightforward and informative, e.g. the RDA refers to the Rassemblement Démocratique Africain, Magnant's speech was delivered just two months before the writing of the letter.

The editor, however, exhibits some curious idiosyncracies. We are told on page 15 that A.O.F. stands for Afrique Occidentale

⁸P.X. Magnant is the narratee addressed by Ghezso-Quénum. We are the implied readers of that letter. The editor is also a reader, who has chosen to address us, thereby assigning us the role of his narratee. Thus, to avoid confusion, unless otherwise indicated, reader will refer to you and me (both) as readers of the text and as narratees of the editor. The latter will simply be referred to as the editor.

Française, when in fact A.O.F. was first mentioned on page 12. In addition, it is quite doubtful whether he needs to explain that Lagos is indeed the capital of Nigeria! Ghezso-Quénum's remark about the Fon elicits a rather detailed ethnological observation about them based ostensibly on the research of a "real" text by René-Félix Le Hérisse and having little to do with the text of the letter. The editor then draws our attention to the fact that the surname of the Fon's liberator is the same as that of the author of the letter.

Just as the writer (Aquin) has imagined a certain reader to whom he addresses his message, so also the editor has formed a portrait of the narratee to whom he is addressing his particular message. The editor's footnotes make certain assumptions concerning the narratee's background and character: the latter does not in fact know that Lagos is the capital of Nigeria. Consequently the reader may find himself, on the one hand, wondering somewhat irritatedly just what kind of ignoramus the editor has presumed him to be;⁹ on the other hand, he may find himself feeling quite superior in his knowledge to that of the narratee. Since the narratee is a fictional construct within the novel, it is the reader who

⁹Critics have not always agreed on the "helpfulness" of the editor's notes. On the one hand, "Blackout is a novel made out of several documents which have apparently been put together by a fictional editor who also provides the reader with helpful footnotes." Russell M. Brown, "Blackout: Hubert Aquin's Surreal Mystery", Armchair Detective 13: 58 (1980). On the other hand, "le livre se présente d'abord comme une 'édition critique' du journal de Magnant, avec des notes à dessein parasites qui égarent le lecteur jusqu'à l'irritation sur des détails inutiles". Roland Bourneuf, "Formes littéraires et réalités sociales dans le roman québécois", Livres et auteurs québécois 1970, p. 267.

must wonder aloud.

The initial third of Trou de mémoire is presented in the form of extracts from P.X. Magnant's manuscript. Ghezso-Quénum's narratee now assumes the role of narrator; the editor becomes the reader of Magnant's text. It is the nature of the relationship between the various narrators/narratees/readers which is of most concern to us in our present study. The fact that Magnant professes to be writing "un roman infinitésimal et strictement auto-biographique" implies himself as the narratee: "Le roman d'ailleurs c'est moi: je me trouble, je me décris, je me vois, je vais me raconter sous toutes les coutures" (p. 19). However on several occasions he also directly addresses a "cher lecteur", a narratee who is not a character within the story. This same "lecteur" is, as before, also the narratee of the editor.

Magnant's "novel" shares and echoes many elements of that of the narrator/prisoner of Prochain épisode. In addition to being centered upon the "je", it too explores the nature and problems of writing. The "je" vacillates between two stages: apparent control over his subject matter versus inability to control the scriptural process. Magnant wishes to write a structureless work: "Ecrire un roman parfaitement désarticulé, c'est encore ce que je peux faire de mieux dans mon état" (p. 22). He cautions the reader, "ne vous cassez pas la tête pour expliquer mon récitatif" (p. 24) -- echoes of the "casse-tête" of Aquin's first novel. There is also the same concern for the intensity of the written word: "écrire au maximum de la fureur et de l'incantation" (p. 35).

Even more prevalent, as in Prochain épisode, is the

inability of the "je" to control writing:

l'intrigue charpentée que j'essaie vainement de
comprendre moi-même (p. 24)

le roman ne me vient pas aussi spontanément (p. 36)

notre histoire était écrite d'avance (p. 41)

Bête à mots, ma pensée s'essouffle à vouloir
rattraper (p. 41)

Ah si je pouvais au moins déchirer le calepin à
roman (p. 43)

ce roman est plus moi que moi-même. Il m'épuise
(p. 63)

je cours après mon récit comme Sherlock Holmes
après un assassin (p. 65)

This problem of "je" + "écriture/récit" is translated into the
need-to-conclude: "je suis ... en proie à cette obsession de
la finition irrémédiable" (p. 47). To end, to write "fin" is
to terminate the anguish and the fear ("J'ai peur", p. 32).

The reader, if he has already read Prochain épisode,
feels comfortable with the repetition of themes; they
constitute familiar territory. Superficially it appears that
the writer and reader will share the same communication as in
the first novel.

There are in Trou de mémoire however some subtle as well
as blatant additions. Certainly the insistence upon writing
as opposed to speaking is more pronounced. In addition to the
virtual lack of dialogue, the narrator insists upon the need
to write:

J'écris, je raconte une histoire -- la mienne --,
je raconte n'importe quoi; bref, j'enchaîne, je cumule,
je gaspille les effets secondaires, qu'importe!
Pourvu que je ne parle pas, pourvu que je résiste ...
Parler, me perdrait, car je finirais, chargé à bloc
comme je le suis, par m'épancher en rafales et par

raconter, n'y pouvant plus tenir, que j'ai tué. J'ai tué, oui! Que je le copie cinquante fois et cent fois, de gauche à droite, verticalement et en diagonale, sur mon vélin supérieur, mais que je ne le dise pas (p. 21).

To write a story is to have or, at least, to presuppose the existence of an audience other than oneself; to speak may possibly have as an audience only oneself.¹⁰ "Joan", says the narrator, "me dominait de façon inédite." (p. 41). Inédite is derived from editus (publié), underlining the need to control the process through writing.¹¹

A pharmacist (as is also Ghezso-Quénum), Magnant has decided to write a "roman policier axé sur la pharmacomanie" (p. 63), thus following the axiom of all good writers: "Write what you know best". He dreams of influencing a "sick" country, i.e. French Canada, and of regenerating it by converting its present illness into strength. Pharmacology as a science attracts him because of its "lois strictement invariables". It may also be for this same reason that Magnant has chosen a detective story as his particular fictional (yet autobiographical) mode. Numerous histories of the genre have been written and need not detain us here. It is useful, however, to call attention to the fact that Thomas Narcejac has written a study entitled Une machine à lire: le roman policier, in which he shows how the detective story "était, en quelque sorte, prisonnier d'une structure complexe dont les différentes composantes furent

¹⁰"Ecrire ce roman me sauve de l'incohérence stérile du monologue parlé." (p. 55).

¹¹Paul Robert, Dictionnaire alphabétique et analogique de la langue française, II (Paris: Société du Nouveau Littre, 1955), p. 1464.

successivement développées -- ce qui donna l'illusion d'une évolution -- mais dont la nature profonde est toujours demeurée la même".¹² Josée Dupuy also points to the readily identifiable underlying structure of the roman policier:

Un roman policier s'inscrit dans une série dont il est un simple numéro, identique à ses voisins, puisque toute série se fonde sur une rigoureuse normalisation. A l'inverse, le roman tout court [le roman 'littéraire'] est un objet unique (au moins dans les intentions de son auteur): ni l'ampleur du volume ni le contenu ne sont prédéterminés.¹³

Detective stories may be viewed as a kind of roman-problème,¹⁴ in which the author sets himself a problem (having conceived his ending first, he must now work to achieve whatever particular effect he wishes to have upon his reader) and a problem for his reader (the reader must enter the game and solve the riddle). The narrator's allusion to the laws of pharmacology and the reader's awareness of the underlying structure inherent in detective stories create the illusion of a narrative straightforwardness which Prochain épisode did not possess. Despite the games which the author may play with his "detective" and/or reader,¹⁵ the latter will eventually reach the point of "discovery", in which loose ends will be tidied up. Should the reader, having read Magnant's text, choose to skip ahead to the

¹²Thomas Narcejac, Une machine à lire: le roman policier (Paris: Denoël/Gonthier, 1975), p. 21.

¹³Josée Dupuy, Le roman policier (Paris: Librairie Larousse, 1974), p. 8.

¹⁴Narcejac, op. cit., p. 245.

¹⁵Narcejac, op. cit., p. 106. "Le romancier, pour garder l'avantage, se voit donc obligé d'égarer le lecteur."

final chapter of Trou de mémoire,¹⁶ he will discover an apparent "solution" to the story but will have missed the "problème".

Pharmacology, as the narrator observes, is by nature linked to death: "Le pharmacien (et j'en sais quelque chose!) se meut dans une aire de fascination; il est envoûté par la mort, la sur-existence ou la façon de passer de l'un à l'autre le plus élégamment possible" (p. 66). Whereas in Prochain épisode suicide was an important leitmotif, Magnant now proclaims the death of Joan and her resultant blood as "un fleuve majestueux qui coule à grands cris dans ce roman vaseux" (p. 37). Joan's death is played out against the backdrop of her sexual experience with the French Canadian. Thus Eros is linked to Thanatos: "forces perpétuellement insatisfaites et inquiètes; ... destruction et création, instinct de mort et instinct de vie".¹⁷ The novel begins with the death/destruction of Joan and ends with the expected birth/creation of a child, possibly another Joan. Creation, but more especially destruction, is linked in turn to the opposition of conqueror/conquered. The Cree were conquered by the French who were conquered by the British. Magnant first conquers and is then conquered by Joan: "je suis redevenu conquis à nouveau tellement j'étais séduit par ma nouvelle conquête" (p. 41).

The word game "conquis/conquête" is characteristic of

¹⁶Narcejac, op. cit., p. 240. "Si, d'ailleurs, le lecteur se sent trop pressé, il n'a qu'à se porter aux dernières pages du livre -- ce qu'il fait quelquefois, avec mauvaise conscience -- pour être renseigné."

¹⁷Alain-Bernard Marchand, "Les Manuscrits de Pauline Archange de M.-C. Blais: Eros et Thanatos", Voix et images 7: 343, 346 (1982).

Magnant's writing:

fleur fantôme de ta gorge, fleur fragile que j'ai
effleurée (p. 26)

égorgée de plaisir -- en quelque sorte -- et gorgée
de noir (p. 26)

pentotal -- pain total (p. 29)

crackpot ... craqué et dans le pot-au-noir (p. 30)

dégénéré, déguisé en destin (p. 31)

scotch tape on the rocks (p. 42)

Sancerre qui lui sancerrait tout le système (p. 69)

avec mon Strath (cona)-sur-Avon (p. 69)

Such conceits create small obstacles or stoppages in which the reader momentarily hesitates in his reading in order to fully savour the ironic, humorous, or alliterative element. They are signals which remind the reader that the fictional world in which he has entered is a non-conventional construct.

While the initial third of Trou de mémoire consists basically of P.X. Magnant's manuscript, the textual excitement is to be found at the bottom of each page, i.e. in the footnotes. Eco says of texts in general: "What one calls 'message' is usually a text, that is, a network of different messages depending on different codes and working at different levels of signification."¹⁸ In the reading of Trou de mémoire, ostensibly the narratee is confronted with three separate texts: those of P.X. Magnant, the editor and R.R. While the reader knows that they are all constructs invented by someone named Aquin and therefore constituting one text, the narratee must

¹⁸Umberto Eco, The Role of the Reader (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1979), p. 5.

decode the message sent by the addresser/narrator or, in this case, addressers/narrators.

Before proceeding on, it is useful at this point to examine the problem of footnotes in the text since footnotes play such an important role in Trou de mémoire. Shari Benstock has recently addressed this problem in a highly informative article,¹⁹ which will form the basis for discussion of this particular section of the study. She begins by quoting Hugh Kenner at some length since he touches on all aspects of the subject:

The book as book entails, then, Introductions, Prefaces, Apologies, and Dedications; Headings, Subheadings; Tables, Footnotes, Indices; even Pictures. The way in which some of these help mechanize the act of discourse is perfectly plain. Take the footnote for instance. The footnote's relation to the passage from which it depends is established wholly by visual and typographic means, and will typically defeat all efforts of the speaking voice to clarify it without visual aid. .

. . . .

One would like to know when it was invented; it is as radical a discovery as the scissors or the rocking chair, and presumably as anonymous. The man who writes a marginal comment is conducting a dialogue with the text he is reading, but the man who composes a footnote, and sends it to the printer along with his text, has discovered among the devices of printed language something analogous with counterpoint; a way of speaking in two voices at once, or of ballasting or modifying or even bombarding with exceptions his own discourse without interrupting it. It is a step in the direction of discontinuity: of organizing blocks of discourse simultaneously in space rather than consecutively in time.²⁰

Unfortunately Kenner provides no solutions to the problem of sources raised by the concept of modern-day footnotes and their

¹⁹Shari Benstock, "At the Margin of Discourse: Footnotes in the Fictional Text," PMLA 98(2): 204-225 (March 1983).

²⁰Hugh Kenner cited in Benstock, op. cit., p. 221.

origins in textual marginalia.

In examining footnotes in scholarly works, we discover that they serve as either commentaries on, or reference for, the parts of the text to which they are keyed. In their function as annotations, they are inherently referential; they reflect on the text and engage in dialogue with it. At the same time, they address a larger, extratextual world in an effort to relate that text to other texts: "every text folds into itself the pre-texts that it presents, which are traced by the very act of writing, of inscription."²¹ As marginal commentary, footnotes may admit the reader into a new world of critical discourse or may exclude him from the scholarly activity. "It is," Benstock maintains, "essentially this closed circle of reasoned criticism that footnotes negotiate, clarifying hidden assumptions, pointing out referential pre-texts, insisting that the author engage readers in the critical process."²² Footnotes may also function as afterwords if they are appended to a text which is not fully accessible to the reader. Benstock believes that in most cases they reflect a genuine ambivalence toward the text, toward the speaker in the text, and toward the audience.

What is of most concern to us at present is the use of footnotes in the literary text in order to extend, explain or define the fictional world of the work. These footnotes are obviously derived from the scholarly tradition and reflect the referentiality, marginality and inherently ambivalent attitude

²¹Derrida cited in Benstock, *op. cit.*, p. 220.

²²Benstock, *op. cit.*, p. 204.

of their scholarly counterparts. However, footnotes in fictional texts do not necessarily replicate all functions of commentaries in critical works:

... they may or may not provide citation, explication, elaboration, or definition for an aspect of the text; they may or may not follow "standard form"; they may or may not be subordinate to the text to which they are affixed. Most significant, they belong to a fictional universe, stem from a creative act rather than a critical one, and direct themselves toward the fiction and never toward an external construct, even when they cite "real" works in the world outside the particular fiction.²³

This latter point will be especially useful when we proceed with our analysis of Trou de mémoire, in which many "real" works are cited.

According to Benstock, while the historical (or literary) referent exists in a context outside the novel, inside the novel it becomes part of the fiction and is subject to the roles of the fiction which subsumes it. Therefore, once "inside" the fiction, both fictional characters and real personages exist at the same fictive level.²⁴ That is to say, if we assume that footnotes are connected fundamentally by subject matter and substance to the primary text and that their function (as text) is to comment on the text, then we assume that they will establish a link with the text to which they are keyed. If this link is not readily apparent, then we look for it, e.g. by going to the source of a "see" reference. This is, of course, precisely what one is expected to do in the case of scholarly works. However, in the case of literary texts, such

²³Benstock, op. cit., pp. 204-205.

²⁴Ibid, p. 221.

a task may be either impossible or useless -- regardless of whether the fictional text has cited real sources. Benstock concludes that "fictional footnotes generally 'lead' us nowhere except back to the text that engendered them."²⁵

In a literary work, footnotes tend to highlight the interplay between author and subject, and text and reader. This calling of our attention to the presence of author and reader on textual grounds also questions our traditional assumptions about the concept of authority in fiction. In critical annotations, much of the authority is established outside the text, i.e. the sources to which the footnotes refer. It is understood that "the present critical endeavor extends a pattern of thought that was begun in the past, that was applied to the immediate context through citation, and that will be continued in the future, when presumably the present text will itself be a citation in someone else's critical thesis."²⁶ In fictional texts these notes, as we have just seen, remain part of the fiction. Therefore, authority in fictional texts does not rely on extratextual sources but rather on the implied author.

Derrida's "pre-text" is always the primary text upon which footnotes comment. However, as Derrida has shown, notes are capable of undermining the inherent supremacy of the text by setting up a countertext in their commentary.²⁷ As we shall

²⁵Benstock, op. cit., p. 209.

²⁶Ibid, p. 206.

²⁷Ibid, p. 220.

shortly see in the case of Aquin's second novel, this new text comprises all the pre-texts which have been incorporated into the primary text, as well as the primary text itself. In short, "because footnotes in fiction cannot serve the ends they serve in the scholarly tradition, they parody the notational convention and draw attention to the faulted authority present in all such structures, most especially those employed by scholars."²⁸

In returning to our study of Trou de mémoire, we find that the editor assumes different roles in his capacity as creator of footnotes to the text. For example, he functions as a literary critic: "Le récit de P.X. Magnant se trouve d'emblée investi de propriétés masquantes" (p. 55), "découverte, le mot est un peu fort" (p. 68). The desire to criticize, as Macherey points out, stems from the desire to change the text, since it should be other than it is:

L'activité critique, entendue en son sens le plus large, semble impliquer une modification de son objet: critiquer, si ce n'est effectivement et activement changer, c'est évoquer la possibilité d'un changement et, à l'occasion, le provoquer. . . . Ainsi la critique a-t-elle à la fois un aspect positif et un aspect négatif: elle détruit ce qui est, par référence à une norme idéale, et construit, en substituant à une réalité initiale sa version "corrigée", "révisée", "conforme". . . . Ainsi la critique n'est jamais absolument satisfaite de ce qui lui est donné. . . . elle prétend, à la place du donné indiquer une possibilité autre.²⁹

While refusing and denouncing the "false", criticism announces the "true". Macherey goes on:

[La critique] veut construire et produire. . . . elle montre qu'elle a sur [l'oeuvre] d'une certaine

²⁸Benstock, op. cit., p. 220.

²⁹Pierre Macherey, Pour une théorie de la production littéraire (Paris: François Maspero, 1974), p. 25.

façon pouvoir, que, dans l'intervalle suscité par son geste initial de refus et d'écart, elle peut faire apparaître un objet inédit, peut-être d'une autre nature, mais que sans elle nous n'aurions jamais possédé.³⁰

The critic acts as the author's accomplice, correcting and modifying the work so that it may become definitive.

In his efforts to analyse Magnant's text, the editor creates his own. An excellent example is to be found at the beginning of Suite III when he discusses Magnant's use of the term "tissu d'art":

Dans cette optique, la littérature se trouve dépourvue de toute fin autonome, de toute fonction expressive. Elle est un masque absolu, un voile opaque, chargé d'hyperboles, un voile aveugle qui cache la réalité et doit la cacher! En quelque sorte, P.X. Magnant défonctionnalise la littérature: il en fait un tissu dont on recouvre une morte dont la nudité est, ni plus ni moins, effrayante. (p. 55)

The blatant "literariness" of the remark reflects not only upon the editor's background but upon his narratee's as well. Thus the latter can not help but appreciate the allusion to Chambre obscure and the suggestion that the possible influence of Nabokov on Magnant could provide "une thèse intéressante à faire" (p. 48). At the same time, one rather suspects that Aquin is having a bit of fun at the expense of those readers who might just do that!

As was pointed out, the editor is one of several readers of Magnant's text. At the same time, he exemplifies various types of readers. At the end of Suite II, for example, Magnant describes the words of his manuscript as "une somme incalculable de petites taches de sang" (p. 52), at which point the editor

³⁰Ibid, p. 26.

notes: "Ce détail est faux: le manuscrit de P.X. Magnant est écrit noir sur blanc". As a splendid example of a completely literal interpretation, it leaves the reader momentarily taken aback. He hastens to dissociate himself from a narratee who could be so "anti-literary".³¹ However, upon reflection, once again the reader may feel a sense of superiority and a closer relationship with Magnant in the semi-exclusion of the editor and his narratee.

On occasion the editor chooses a psychoanalytic approach to the text in an effort to elucidate its "meaning":

la manie du détail et le souci de précision scientifique
qui caractérisent la pensée (p. 27)

des fixations automobiles de l'auteur (p. 43)

le désir de formuler par énigmes des projets inavouables
(p. 48)

une volonté explicite de faire un produit littéraire
(p. 53)

And, on still another occasion, the editor plays the role of "stickler for detail" by introducing "un ami qui a des connaissances en paléontologie" (p. 27). The friend functions as an additional reader of and commentator upon the text. His comments both create and reinforce the editor's desire to appear, unlike P.X. Magnant, to be in complete control of the writing process.

In general the relationship between narrator and narratee is easier to study in the case of the editor than of P.X. Magnant, since the former directly addresses his audience more

³¹The fact that we are now describing a narratee who contradicts the one just described in the previous paragraph is indicative of the ways in which Aquin challenges his readers.

frequently and appears to be more concerned with self-manifestation. We shall now examine several narrative devices most commonly used by the editor in order to elicit a pre-determined response from his narratee.

Commentary, since it is gratuitous, conveys the overt narrator's voice more distinctly than most other features; commentary includes interpretation, judgment and generalization.³² The latter may be defined as the idea of self-evidence as characteristic of reason. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca have observed: "Self-evidence is conceived both as a force to which every normal mind must yield and as a sign of the truth of that which imposes itself because it is self-evident."³³ For example, the editor writes:

Selon toute vraisemblance, il s'est passé quelque chose (p. 32)

Il s'agit sans doute . . . (p. 44)

Ce prénom, bien sûr, est faux (p. 59)

Tout le monde sait très bien . . . (p. 70)

Such "truths" presuppose a socio-economic-moral background on the part of the narratee which corresponds fairly closely with that of the narrator/editor. They tend to be culturally derived and are designed to provoke as a response, "Oh, but of course. How true!"

The editor not only functions as different types of readers but he also represents three major types of narration: "third-

³²Seymour Chatman, Story and Discourse (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1978), p. 228.

³³Chaim Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca, The New Rhetoric, trans. John Wilkinson and Purcell Weaver (Notre Dame, Ill.: Notre Dame University Press, 1969), p. 3.

person impersonal",³⁴ first-person plural, and first-person singular. In the first instance, he goes to noticeable lengths to efface the "je/nous":

RDA: Rassemblement Démocratique Africain (p. 7)

WASP: White Anglo Saxon Protestant (p. 37)

Sils Maria, village situé à 4850 metres (p. 71)

Il est mort à 83 ans à Staten Island (p. 72)

Such statements hint at a shadowy narrator, hidden at the bottom of the page. In such instances, as we have previously observed, it is the irritated reader (you and I) who are expected to react.

The use of the first-person plural "nous", on the other hand, creates three distinct possible relationships: it may refer "royally to the narrator"; it may mean, exclusively, "you, the narratee" and "I, the narrator"; or, inclusively, "not only we two but every other like-minded (that is 'reasonable') person in the world".³⁵ Naturally the difficulty arises in determining which relationship is actually being specified:

nous n'avons pas pu vérifier l'authenticité des citations (p. 10)

notre souci d'honnêteté nous a souvent conduit (p. 32)

Il nous semble légitime d'établir ici (p. 32)

³⁴Chatman, op. cit., p. 209. "As I argue above, 'third person' is improperly used. In pure covert narration, the narrator does not refer to himself at all, so there is no real parallelism with 'first person narration.' In the latter the narrator indeed refers to himself through the first person pronoun. But in the former it is the character who is referred to by the third person pronoun: the narrator simply does not refer to himself at all."

³⁵Chatman, op. cit., pp. 256-257.

nos connaissances en pharmacie ne nous permettent
pas (p. 33)

Il nous paraîtrait inconvenant de publier ...
(p. 39)

Nous avons noté, à la lecture, plusieurs
modifications (p. 52)

Les relations . . . nous laissent deviner (p. 53)

Such a statement as "nous avons noté plusieurs modifications" invokes the royal "we"; only the editor has access to the manuscript; only he could have observed such changes. The narratee is dependent upon the narrator for such observations. A statement such as "nous n'avons pu vérifier", on the other hand, while invoking the royal "we", also suggests that the narratee could, if he so chose, obtain the complete text of Magnant's speech and actually verify all the citations.

"Nos connaissances en pharmacie", i.e. the lack of it, links narrator and narratee since the narratee is posited as having the same lack of knowledge of pharmacology as (supposedly) does the editor. "Les relations . . . nous laissent deviner" serves the same function inasmuch as the narratee is invited to share the same conclusion as the narrator. It even borders on the "every other reasonable person in the world" generalization as well.

Statements such as "il nous semble légitime d'établir ici", "il nous paraîtrait inconvenant", and "notre souci d'honnêteté" invoke a reader at odds with the narrator and his narratee. The judgments which the narrator communicates presuppose a set of norms quite contrary to the one which the reader presumably entertains. Despite the editor's insistence upon Magnant's "style 'legato'" as well as his own efforts to avoid producing

an impression of discontinuity, the reader has, by this time, realized that any such impression is more a result of the editor's interventions than of deficiencies in Magnant's style.

The first person singular "je" reveals even more facets of the mysterious narrator's personality: authoritarian ("je me suis permis de découper . . . le récit", p. 19), paternalistic ("je tiens à prévenir le lecteur", p. 39), conservative ("un épisode que je répugne à transcrire in extenso", p. 58), and hypocritically self-effacing ("assez arbitrairement je le reconnais", p. 19, and "par simple préoccupation d'honnêteté", p. 47). The commentary of "je" on the "story" (as "told" by Magnant) is based upon interpretation and judgment. Chatman says of interpretation, i.e. the explanation of the relevance or significance of an element in the story:

Whether the narrative is experienced through a performance or through a text, the members of the audience must respond with an interpretation: they cannot avoid participating in the transaction. They must fill in gaps with essential or likely events, traits and objects which for various reasons have gone unmentioned.³⁶

Traditionally the editor's function is to provide an anchor of reality for a fictitious collage. Aquin's editor has become obsessed with the need to participate; he has a compulsive desire to "fill in gaps": "En date du 19 février 1965, le quotidien LA PRESSE titrait" (p. 44), "Cette agence de détective privés [sic] n'existe plus" (p. 59). On the other hand, the fact that the editor first omits sections of the original text and then alludes to the missing contents

³⁶Chatman, op. cit., p. 28.

forces the reader to invent his own chapter.

Judgment involves some form of value opinion:

la manie du détail et le souci de précision scientifique
qui caractérisent la pensée et l'oeuvre de l'auteur
(p. 27)

le narrateur emploie un stratagème audacieux (p. 39)

l'aspect le plus incroyable de sa machination (p. 39)

l'auteur ne recule pas devant le mensonge (p. 53)

ce passage, franchement indécent (p. 58)

Par respect pour l'auteur (p. 66)

While apparently judging Magnant in terms of conventional moral norms (the use of adjectives such as "indécent" or nouns such as "honnêteté"), the editor also betrays a certain admiration for the pharmacist: "stratagème audacieux", "l'aspect le plus incroyable", "la manie du détail".

Aquin, for his part, uses judgmental commentary by the editor in a decidedly ironic mode. In regard to Magnant's reference to "ces bêtes pré-darwiniennes", we find the following footnote:

Un ami qui a des connaissances en paléontologie, m'a fait remarquer que, selon les auteurs modernes, les singes Rhésus ne sont pas dans la catégorie des Primates. Cet ami, à qui j'ai fait lire les passages où Pierre X. Magnant décrit les singes du laboratoire Redfern, de l'université McGill, croit plutôt que les singes "voyeurs", mentionnés dans le manuscrit, sont vraisemblablement des Gibbons . . . Ces quelques précisions ne paraîtront pas inutile au lecteur qui apprécie la manie du détail et le souci de précision scientifique qui caractérisent la pensée et l'oeuvre de l'auteur. (p. 27)

To whom then does "l'auteur" refer? To Magnant? No, because if he had been more precise, then the editor's friend would never have made his observations in the first place. More likely it refers to the editor, who seems most obsessed by "la

manie du détail et le souci de précision scientifique".³⁷ Thus the reader will appreciate his efforts, despite Magnant's "lies", to create an "accurate" text.

The editor would have his narratee as an ally against the "unreliability" of Magnant's text.³⁸ This posture, as we shall shortly see, allows the editor certain liberties with Magnant's novel. The editor, however, shows himself to be an unreliable narrator.³⁹ On the one hand, he states that "nos connaissances en pharmacie ne nous permettent pas d'induire avec certitude que la dégradation progressive de l'écriture manuscrite (dans les pages précédentes) provient d'un facteur biochimique" (p. 33) while, on the other hand, he observes: "Les effets mentionnés plus haut coïncident avec ceux de l'hydrate de chloral" (p. 68). The reader recognizes a discrepancy between what the editor actually says and the communication which he (the reader) is receiving from the author:

implied author $\overset{\text{---}}{\dashrightarrow}$ narrator \longrightarrow narratee $\overset{\text{---}}{\dashrightarrow}$ implied reader⁴⁰

The solid line indicates direct communication; broken lines

³⁷Of course, it may even refer to Aquin who, as author, has invented the text as well as the footnotes!

³⁸"Unreliable": not so much in Booth's sense, but rather in the sense that Magnant's text conflicts with the editor's "facts".

³⁹Wayne C. Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1961), pp. 157-158. "For lack of better terms, I have called a narrator reliable when he speaks for or acts in accordance with the norms of the work (which is to say, the implied author's norms), unreliable when he does not."

⁴⁰Chatman, op. cit., p. 233.

indicate indirect or inferential communication. Thus, while the narrator is professing his lack of pharmaceutical knowledge to the narratee, the author is letting the reader know that the "credible" message does not necessarily belong to the editor's discourse.

By presenting himself as "reliable" (in opposition to Magnant as "unreliable"), the editor then assumes the right to tell his own version and therefore become an authority in his own right (write). The chapter entitled "L'Incident du Neptune" is but a pre-text by which the editor will justify his increasing intervention. It is, at the same time, indicative of his own confusion as he attempts to establish a desired relationship to the text(s), i.e. Magnant's as well as his own:

Le texte de Pierre X. Magnant ne s'arrête pas là. Mais en recopiant son récit; -- et rendu à ce point --, il m'a semblé plus conforme à mon rôle d'éditeur de me présenter au lecteur. Car le "roman" de Pierre X. Magnant ne raconte pas tout. Et puisque j'ai résolu d'intervenir autrement qu'à titre de copiste, je tiens à le faire en mon nom propre. Par loyauté pour l'auteur et par respect pour son lecteur, je ne veux pas arranger le récit de Pierre X. Magnant et le transformer de telle sorte qu'il contienne, finalement, la vérité que je veux dévoiler. Il serait injuste, de ma part, d'infliger au manuscrit de l'auteur une distorsion qui le rende plus fidèle aux événements. (p. 73)

On the one hand, he rejects any notion of tampering with Magnant's manuscript so as to give it a chronological and spatial accuracy, which it supposedly lacks. The editor posits himself, therefore, as having the same knowledge of events as does the pharmacist. On the other hand, he then proceeds to demonstrate, as much to convince his narratee as himself, that the Québécois' "novel" is not really a novel and therefore has no right to exhibit questionable liberties within its narration:

mon propos n'est pas tant de porter un jugement littéraire sur cet écrit que de prévenir le lecteur sur sa qualité non-fictionnelle (p. 73)

Il convient, si l'on veut comprendre parfaitement le livre de Pierre X. Magnant, de le situer hors littérature, hors fiction et tout à fait hors roman (p. 74)

Non, le manuscrit de Pierre X. Magnant n'a rien à voir avec le roman ou la littérature fictive en général (p. 74)

rien n'est moins fictif, hélas, que ce qui fait l'objet de la narration étrange de notre auteur (p. 74)

Mais justement, l'auteur . . . n'écrit pas une oeuvre de fiction, il raconte ce qu'il a vécu (p. 75)

Il n'est donc pas logique selon la logique même du "roman", d'ignorer complètement une scène analogue, peut-être même plus bouleversante, qui s'est déroulée en un moment crucial du développement des événements et du récit (p. 78)

It is because of "un nombre aberrant d'ellipses et d'omissions toutes inexplicables" (p. 79)⁴¹ that the editor has assumed the right to personally intervene, while transcribing the "récit". By emphasizing the "real" or autobiographical qualities at the expense of the fictional, the editor pursues an ideal version of Magnant's work. In his reading of any text, a reader modifies that work; he questions and possibly even "corrects" the work. In his role as one of many readers of the pharmacist's text, the editor offers us insights into the type of relationship which a reader may establish with the text. He is a splendid example of what Macherey calls "normative fallacy": "By reference to an ideal norm [criticism] destroys that which is, substituting a revised, corrected and consistent version of

⁴¹ My underlining.

an initial reality."⁴² Unlike you and me in our role as Reader-of-the-Text, the editor actually writes down his "corrections" as well as his doubts and concerns.

In Chapter 1 of this study, we observed the difference between Hubert Aquin (real author) and Aquin (implied author) and the ease with which one can make such a distinction, based upon the lack of personal familiarity with the first. We only "know" Aquin as a fictional construct. For you and me, Pierre X. Magnant is another fictional construct inasmuch as he exists only within the novel. He has no reality outside the text. However, within the editor's world, Magnant like Aquin exists as both real and implied author:

mon attitude deviendra plus intelligible au lecteur
si j'ajoute que ma relation avec Pierre X. Magnant
ne saurait se limiter à une simple relation
d'éditeur à auteur (p. 73)

étant donné l'état de mes connaissances et le degré
de ma familiarité avec Pierre X. Magnant (p. 79)

The editor experiences the added burden of his personal acquaintance with Magnant the Man as opposed to Magnant the Author (or Scriptor). The temptation for him is to substitute psychological biography for the text. He implies to his narratee that Magnant's work would be enriched by such a substitution. In the same way, he suggests that Luigi's "version" of the Neptune incident is more valid than Magnant's because it is, somehow, more "real".

Having, to his own satisfaction re-established the

⁴²Macherey, op. cit., p. 15. On page 7, he also writes: "Let us say, provisionally, that the critic, employing a new language, brings out a difference within the work by demonstrating that it is other than it is."

chronology of events and subsequently returned to Magnant's text (pp. 80-99), the editor proceeds to escape from the footnotes yet again: "le lecteur comprendra que l'écrit posthume de P.X. Magnant nécessite, ou justifie du moins, mes interventions" (p. 101). The "lecteur", or more accurately the editor's narratee, is postulated as being in agreement with the editor's intervention. The reader supplied by you and me is, on the other hand, undoubtedly at odds with the narratee since the former will have realized that the editor has fallen into the temptation/trap of attempting to provide all that which the text does not or cannot say.

In "Notes de l'éditeur", the first two paragraphs are presented in italics and in the editor's cautious but customary matter-of-fact tone. The moment at which he confronts Pierre X. Magnant's work, two things happen: the type face reverts to the normal Roman and the editor's style changes. Compare, for example,

Et voici que j'interviens maintenant dans ce livre
pour mettre en question les pages qui précèdent (p. 101)

with

La qualité du récit de Pierre X. Magnant ne m'interdit
pas de demeurer conscient de certaines carences ou de
certains défauts de sa prose (p. 101)

As his role has changed vis-à-vis the text ("recopiant", p. 73; "éditer", p. 101; "critiquer", p. 102), so has his style. His new role as literary critic/producer of a new text causes him to mask his formerly spontaneous observations in favor of a "literary" mode of expression. Inasmuch as he has assumed that his "lecteur", i.e. narratee, will resist his doubts about the authenticity of

Magnant's description of Nigeria,⁴³ the editor has felt the need to call upon a more "authoritative" style, i.e. one steeped in a schoolmaster tradition of pedagogy.

Writing about Prochain épisode and Trou de mémoire, René Dionne observes: "Dans le premier, le narrateur était le poursuivant; dans le second, c'est le lecteur".⁴⁴ In fact, at this point in the novel, we have the reader pursuing the editor pursuing the other elusive "je"(s) of the text(s). The postulation of a false writer has necessarily created another writing subject and a resultant violent outburst on the part of the editor: "Le mot 'sacrilège' n'est pas trop fort, car je ne saurais qualifier autrement une telle imposture et un manque aussi flagrant de respect dû à un auteur qui, par surcroît, est un ami" (p. 104). Moreover, he calls upon yet another reader to assist him: "Je me suis permis de solliciter une expertise psychiatrique d'un médecin-psychiatre dont j'ai raison de croire qu'il est objectif par rapport au récit de Pierre X. Magnant" (p. 105).⁴⁵

The editor's proximity to the text blinds him to the nature of his relationship with it. While he rails against the intruder for having changed Magnant's work ("qui a pris plaisir à le

⁴³"Et je crois loyal, dans un cas pareil, de faire part au lecteur de mon doute, même s'il résiste à le partager". Trou de mémoire, pp. 102-103. Unlike the previous case, we now have a reversal in which the narratee is postulated as being at odds with the narrator.

⁴⁴René Dionne, "Qui suis-je?", Romans du pays, ed. Gabrielle Poulin (Montreal: Bellarmin, 1980), p. 196.

⁴⁵Cf page 27, footnote 1. "Un ami qui a des connaissances en paléontologie ... a qui j'ai fait lire les passages . . ."

compléter par ce qui lui manquait le plus, c'est-à-dire par une surcharge de fiction et d'euphémisation", pp. 106-107), he conveniently forgets the nature of his own intrusions ("en complétant le récit qu'il a fait par des versions complémentaires", pp. 75-76). At the same time he calls upon his rights as a friend (who has now become "très cher") as well as a presumed knowledge of the author's intentions. However, the editor is not aware either of his own possible contradiction ("il faut peut-être vous dire que je suis le seul dépositaire du manuscrit original", p. 73, versus "une autre personne qui a eu accès aux papiers de Pierre X. Magnant", p. 106) or of the fact that, through critical commentary, he has betrayed a personal knowledge of Nigeria which he denies Magnant.

Thus the editor's interventions are designed both to establish the authenticity of his own text and to direct his narratee's reading along given lines. What then is the role of the reader? Having discovered the apparent unreliability of our self-appointed guide, do we then proceed to backtrack in order to verify the authenticity of his copious footnotes? If so, we shall discover, for example, that the correct issue number for the article cited in Comprehensive Psychiatry (p. 79) is no. 2, not no. 1. Has the editor purposely misled us, has Aquin been playing a game with us, or has Hubert Aquin quite simply been sloppy in proofreading the printer's galleys? Regardless of the answer, which is in any case probably unknowable, the reader will now find himself the only "reliable" destinataire.

The editor, for his part, begins to acknowledge his lack of objectivity (a quality which he assumes that he must necessarily

possess) and admits that his reaction to the text is modifying the novel:

Je sens même que je franchis le seuil indécent de la confession et qu'il suffirait de bien peu pour que je me mette soudain à affabuler. Insensiblement, les mots que je produis me conduisent dans une toute autre direction que ceux que j'avais coutume de lire, par métier, à longueur de journée. La fausseté même que j'ai décelée dans un fragment du manuscrit que j'édite ne me scandalise même plus; je croirais même qu'elle fait partie intégrante de l'écriture et que celle-ci, ni plus ni moins, est toujours apocryphe. (p. 108)

Dans une certaine mesure, je deviens moi-même ensorcelé par la parole écrite que je secrète maintenant comme une glu venimeuse qui, aussitôt jetée sur papier, acquiert la consistance même de ces arbres morts qu'on peut froisser d'une seule main quand ils sont métamorphosés en trame fulligineuse (sic). Je me grise finalement à ce jeu qui consiste, pour moi, à couvrir des enjambements de mon graphisme la forêt noire de mon enfance. (p. 108)

In an effort to revert to his former distance ("mais je m'égare", p. 108), he proceeds to reveal that Pierre X. Magnant suffered from a rather serious sexual impotency. This startling revelation, which could not have been deduced by the reader from the preceding "récit", is based upon the "discovery" of a "cahier noir", i.e. Magnant's personal diary.

The actual insertion of the diary is preceded by yet another startling piece of news: "Tout le monde sait, bien sûr, que P.X. Magnant a trouvé la mort de façon tragique dans un accident d'auto" (p. 110). As we have seen before, the use of self-evidence is ordinarily designed to elicit the response, "Oh, but of course!" Reminiscent of and structurally similar to the first footnote on page 70, this new footnote is a communication between narrator and narratee at the expense of the reader. In his effort both to undermine the validity of the pharmacist's text (p. 70) and to add autobiographical "facts" to the world of the novel (p. 110),

the editor assumes that his narratee will have read or had access to all the same newspapers as he.⁴⁶ The reader, on the other hand, is not inscribed within the text. As one would expect, his notion of reality is based upon reference to another context which is necessarily extratextual. Therefore, the editor's "information" is not readily "seizable" by the reader.

In the section entitled "Cahier noir⁽¹⁾", the editor gives no indication of the turmoil which we have been witnessing in the previous two sections. As we observed at the very beginning of the novel, there is again a use in the footnotes of the three major types of narrative voice: third person impersonal ("Ce culte de P.X. Magnant pour Nietzsche date sans doute de ses lectures de collège", p. 113), first-person plural ("Nous ignorons si la personne auquel (sic) il est fait allusion est Joan", p. 111), and first-person singular ("Il m'a semblé évident que le cahier noir . . .", p. 111). The critical structure appears to be intact. However, in the "Cahier noir (suite)", we find increasing signs of loss of control:

cet aveu assez incroyable nous mystifie (p. 115)

Y a-t-il un lien entre les deux? Difficile à dire ... (p. 119)

j'ignore ce qui s'est passé . . . (p. 119)

The editor's inability to explain everything leads him to conclude that "les omissions supposées finiraient par compter plus encore que ce qui est décrit, faisant de ces confessions le masque d'une confession qui n'est pas faite" (p. 117). Likewise it may also be

⁴⁶"Les découpures (sic) de journaux le démontrent", p. 70; "Les journaux ont publié des articles importants sur la mort de P.X. Magnant", p. 110.

said that the editor's commentaries are a rather unsuccessful mask on his part to disguise the nature of his relationship to the text(s).

In his second "Note de l'éditeur" on page 121, the editor openly admits his "failure" as editor/critic: "toute objectivité m'est interdite". We observe his final transformation from editor to writer, to which he has already alluded on page 108. His language becomes very closely linked to that of Magnant's:

editor: Je m'ensable (p. 121)

Magnant: je m'ensable (p. 98)

editor: les sables mouvants (p. 121)

Magnant: ces sables mouvants (p. 98)

editor: les entrelacs lagunaires qui semblent prolonger le littoral (p. 121)

Magnant: littoral entrelacé (p. 97)

editor: le sol morbide qui m'ensorcèle (sic) (p. 121)

Magnant: ces limans noirs qui m'ensorcellent (p. 98)

editor: délire hallucinatoire (p. 121)

Magnant: Je délire (p. 99)

editor: je m'étrangle (p. 121)

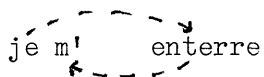
Magnant: une côte affaissée ... m'étrangle (p. 98)

editor: une inspiration malarique (p. 121)

Magnant: Ce cher aria médiéval me fait mal (p. 99)

The transformation into a writer, both signalled and aided by the adoption of another writer's language, subsequently leads to death: "je meurs en écrivain et je m'enterre dans une fosse noire en forme de lagune, tandis que ..." (p. 121). We have already observed other cases in which the speaker (je) is both subject and object of the verb -- the one who acts, the one who

watches himself act, and the one who acts upon himself:

je m' enterre


Such a construct validates and elucidates the process by which the "je/éditeur" (or "me", in this case) disappears in favor of "je/écrivain".

The imagery in the last line of the "Note de l'éditeur" ("je m'enterre dans une fosse noire en forme de lagune . . .") recalls the first "Note de l'éditeur" (pp. 101-113) in which the editor attributes the authorship of Magnant's text to someone else, since the text exhibits a knowledge of "cette frange de deltas et de lagunes qui, en quelque sorte, masque l'entrée du Niger" (p. 102)⁴⁷, which the French Canadian could not possibly have possessed. The mask, as Wunderli-Müller has pointed out, "nous protège nous-mêmes contre les attaques [d'autrui] tout en nous laissant la jouissance secrète de ce que nous cachons."⁴⁸ This idea of secrets and of hiding takes us full circle as we confront again, on page 121, the "fosse noire" into which the editor sinks. The imagery of this last line is linked metonymically, on the one hand, to the caterpillar/butterfly transformation and, on the other, to the Monster from the Black Lagoon. Readers of the text will have seen far too many horror films not to have caught the obvious cinematographic overtones. There is a sense of yet more mysteries to confront, which

⁴⁷My underlining.

⁴⁸Christine B. Wunderli-Müller, Le thème du masque et les banalités dans l'oeuvre de Nathalie Sarraute (Zurich: Juris Druck + Verlag Zurich, 1970), p. 35.

prefigures the revelations at the end of the novel. Certainly the use of "tandis que . . ." (with the emphasis upon the ellipsis) to end the section suggests further labyrinthine constructions.

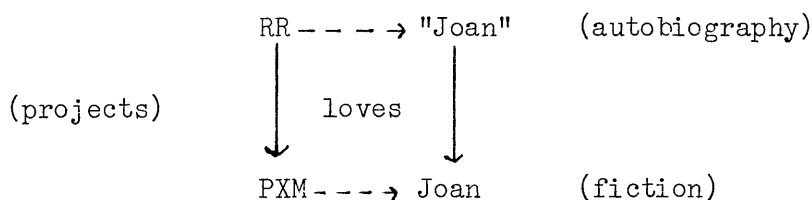
Whereas the previous sections of Trou de mémoire may have seen the editor step out of the footnotes, "Semi-finale" now allows RR to repeat the same gesture. This mysterious commentator has appeared, in fact, since page 43. The majority of the footnotes have functioned as commentaries upon Magnant's text: a few have stood in opposition to the editor's own comments. RR's audience is postulated as being the editor's narratee as well as possibly the editor himself. The editor's purpose, as we have seen, is to establish the validity of his text (at the expense of Magnant's); RR, on the other hand, seeks to undermine the editor's credibility without necessarily (or at least while confined to the footnotes) presenting an alternative text. Comments such as "Cette note de l'éditeur révèle une culture assez déficiente" (p. 49) or "ce passage -- attribué à P.X. Magnant --, je l'ai retrouvé, mot pour mot, sous la plume d'un grand essayiste français, Maurice Blanchot" (p. 78) are designed to show that RR can also play the game; RR is as cultured, learned and well-read in pharmacology as the other two.

The structure of RR's "Semi-finale" is based upon a particular relationship with the ever sacred lecteur, i.e. narratee:

Si j'ai reproduit le texte de l'éditeur à la suite du récit de Pierre X. Magnant, c'est que je crois que le lecteur doit lire ces textes selon le déroulement même de ma propre expérience et selon la succession existentielle qui a présidé à la constitution du dossier (p. 123).

The perspicacious reader will have congratulated himself on having remembered Ghezso-Quénum's reference to Rachel Ruskin and will consequently have deduced that RR in fact = Rachel Ruskin. But no, we are told that RR is but an "abridged" pseudonym and that the "je" construct has operated on the level of fiction: "je n'ai pas cessé d'inventer et de vouloir confectionner un roman" (p. 123). Pierre X. Magnant, we are informed, is not only an invention but also a projection/porte-parole of RR.

If we return to Lacan's schéma L, we observe how the (a) ' or imago (P.X. Magnant) functions in relationship to the "a/moi", or RR. The latter has fragmented the image which she has of herself⁴⁹ and then projected it onto the printed page in the form of a French-Canadian pharmacist. Joan, whom the reader might more logically have expected to be the alter ego, is the lesbian lover. Thus



The previous text has been "exposed" as fiction so that the "je", reminiscent of the editor's strategies, may now introduce autobiography: "la vérité dépasse peut-être la fiction" (p. 124).

⁴⁹RR identifies herself by saying "m'être identifie". Therefore, for the sake of simplicity, I shall henceforth refer to RR by the feminine pronoun.

RR's intervention only operates at the level of "semi-finale"⁵⁰ since the editor surfaces once more -- first in several footnotes ("la fin du texte désordonné de celle qui se veut RR", p. 134) and then in "Suite et fin". But everything is a continuation of something else and nothing ever ends, protests the reader. In fact, the reader's frustration and sense of helplessness in confronting this "texte désordonné" mirror the same problems and emotions experienced by "je"/RR in attempting to inscribe herself upon the printed page:

je me sens, ni plus ni moins, comme une effigie distordue qui, jamais regardée obliquement et selon le bon angle, reste infiniment une image défaite. Tableau secret aux lignes rallongées avec extravagance et non sans cruauté de ta part, je m'étire lamentablement dans une perspective que tu as préméditée et comme une anamorphose que nul regard amoureux ne rendra à une forme raccourcie, je veux dire: au temps retrouvé! Tableau secret, je m'allonge démesurément sur une feuille bi-dimensionnelle qui, par un effet d'optique, m'enserme comme un linceul indéchiffré: nature morte (pp. 129-130).

In many ways, "Suite et fin" structurally mirrors "Semi-finale": the evocation of the ever-present lecteur, the discussion of Holbein's "Ambassadeurs", the final interrogative phrase ("Mon amour, tu te souviens...?", p. 134; "mais qu'est-ce qu'un voile sinon un masque, la peau d'une peau?", p. 145), and the concluding footnote. In each case, a writing subject establishes him/herself as the overriding authority for the text, while repudiating (to varying degrees) that which has gone before.

⁵⁰Russell M. Brown, "Blackout: Hubert Aquin's Surreal Mystery," Armchair Detective 13: 59 (1980). "Within Aquin's own mystery this "solution", which comes just a little beyond the midpoint of the novel, resembles those false solutions which frequently occur in the middle of a classic murder mystery, often accompanied by the arrest of an innocent suspect."

While it may initially appear as if the editor has the last word both in his footnote to "Semi-finale" as well as the introduction of his own "Suite et fin",⁵¹ closer scrutiny reveals that it is, in fact, RR who carries the day. Whereas the editor actually footnotes his own interruptions, RR then proceeds to append an additional footnote to the editor's, i.e. page 140. The editor exits, accompanied by an ironic comment from the other writing subject: "Ce texte doit vraisemblablement se poursuivre; toutefois, nous n'en possédons pas la suite" (p. 145).

The somewhat abrupt introduction of Ghezso-Quénum's diary sends us back to the very beginning of Trou de mémoire, in which we had his letter to P.X. Magnant with its insistence upon various "coincidences" and upon the fraternal (even twin) nature of their relationship.⁵² Curiously enough, one can even go back further -- to the very beginning of Prochain épisode. Ghezso-Quénum's opening lines ("Je viens de voir à l'instant s'éteindre les rayons lumineux", p. 147), his mention of Lake Léman ("le lac Léman", p. 152), and the allusion to his introspectiveness ("mer mille fois plus morte: mer intérieure", p. 152) very much evoke the opening lines of Aquin's first novel: "Cuba coule en flammes au milieu du lac Léman pendant que je descends au fond des choses" (p. 7). The sojourn in Lausanne is not without its parallels as well.

⁵¹"Nous préférons laisser cet appel de détresse comme nous l'avons trouvé: dépourvu de sens" (p. 134).

⁵²Jean-Pierre Martel, "Trou de mémoire: oeuvre baroque", Voix et images du pays 8: 79 (1974). "Le système de correspondance irrationnel évoqué dans la lettre inaugurale rapproche significativement Pierre X. Magnant et Ghezso-Quénum."

Ghezso-Quénum's relationship with RR is reminiscent of the narrator/hero's relationship with K. Both narrators are pursued, at one point or another, by their respective antagonist (P.X. Magnant/H. de Heutz). In each case the woman has (or is suspected of having) an affair with the "enemy"; neither the narrator nor the reader is present at the moment of the encounter. The dédoublement of both the narrator in Prochain épisode as well as K (the mysterious 'tu') is equally to be found in Trou de mémoire. At one point RR is referred to as Joan (p. 158). On another occasion, Ghezso-Quénum in pursuit of the missing RR actually states: "mais je suis un autre" (p. 156)⁵³ and later "je devenais cet être incroyable" (p. 181).

The blurring of the "je" is linked to the need to win back RR's affection and esteem ("je veux la reconquérir", p. 177), which is in turn linked to the need to know all ("J'ai besoin de tout savoir", p. 170). The latter desire immediately recalls to mind the editor's very same obsession. The more obsessed one becomes with such a need, the more difficult it becomes to keep the "je" in perspective. The extent to which this operates is illustrated by the fact that RR requests Ghezso-Quénum to supply his version of her rape: "Elle m'a tellement supplié de lui faire mon propre récit de l'événement, de lui raconter -- oui, moi! -- comment cela s'est passé" (p. 179)! Her own version,

⁵³ Within the context of the novel, "suis" is quite logically derived from "suivre". However, given the manner in which Aquin has continually played with games throughout Trou de mémoire, it would be difficult to imagine that he had not purposely intended the double meaning. Moreover, in Point de fuite (Montreal: Le Cercle du Livre de France, 1971), page 18, Aquin writes: "mais je suis toujours un Autre".

under the pressure of drugs, reveals the immense schism in all writing subjects: "Ce conflit se déroule entre ce qu'elle pense et ce qu'elle ne dira jamais" (p. 192). The conflict mirrors other dichotomies which we have already seen at work in the text: Eros/Thanatos, truth/fiction.

The final chapter is entitled, appropriately enough, "Note finale". However, lest the by now wary reader suspect another "false bottom", the narrator hastens to assure him that "tout a une fin. Le texte s'arrête ici" (p. 193). Based on this author's own initial reading, the reader first equates the "je" with Aquin, then with RR, and finally (and correctly) with the editor. The description of the confrontation between Olympe Ghezso-Quénum and Charles-Edouard Mullahy (the editor) is ostensibly written along the lines of the dénouement of a traditional detective story, in which the two "pôles" discussed by Narcejac are finally reconciled in favor of the positive one.⁵⁴ That is to say, the reader is made to feel secure by being given enough information from which to derive the solution.

According to Dupuy,

Il y a toujours un coupable; il est toujours découvert, du moins connu du lecteur. . . . On ne se saisit de lui qu'au dernier moment.

Enfin dans la dernière étape, l'enquêteur, ou le coupable lui-même, élucident entièrement l'énigme, expliquant le mobile, la genèse, la réalisation du crime, ne laissant aucun détail dans l'ombre.⁵⁵

The reader discovers that the novel has not only been narrated but

⁵⁴Narcejac, op. cit., pp. 217-222. "Peut-être vaudrait-il mieux parler de deux pôles, l'un positif, l'autre négatif, produisant un courant qui constitue la vie même du roman policier."

⁵⁵Dupuy, op. cit., p. 65.

also edited by the "criminal". The one most concerned with Truth/Justice has perpetrated Fiction/Crime as well.

In following Dupuy's analysis of the structure of detective stories, we find that the solution to the problem within the story must be rational. Moreover,

Elle est exhaustive et simple: elle répond à toutes les questions posées au départ, explique tous les indices:

<u>Situation initiale</u>		<u>Situation finale</u>
	E	
	N	
Incohérence	Q	Ordre
	U	
Mystère	Ê	Clarté
	T	
Inquiétude	E	Satisfaction

Récit

Le passage du puzzle au tout intelligible se fait sans l'intervention du hasard, grâce au raisonnement seul.⁵⁶

Does the "Note finale" then of Trou de mémoire fit the criteria outlined above? Most readers will undoubtedly be forced to answer in the negative. A close reading of the text reveals that the apparently simple solution (P.X. Magnant = Charles Edouard Mullahy = the editor) does not provide all the answers. RR's revelation that Ghezso-Quénium had rented a hotel room under the name of Magnant, as well as her reference to P.X. Magnant as the author of the "pseudo-journal de Monsieur Ghezso-Quénium" (p. 187) are not designed to put the reader's mind at rest.

If one examines the critical literature which has appeared

⁵⁶Dupuy, op. cit., p. 87.

about Trou de mémoire, one is immediately struck by the general lack of agreement on several fundamental issues. While several may concur that the reader is forced to ask "Qui parle?", critics have offered various hypotheses as to the actual number of narrators represented by "je".⁵⁷ Desaulniers points to the presence of four:

Des indices assez clairs cependant montrent que c'est un quatrième je, masque de masques qui reste anonyme, qui énonce bel et bien les trois autres: un "arrangeur" -- non pas le faussaire que l'éditeur dénonce entre lui-même et le manuscrit de P.X. Magnant -- est à l'oeuvre, qui, lui, ne signe pas les notes qu'il met au bas des pages (p. 126, 127, 129, 132, etc.), mais identifie objectivement même les notes de RR, sur un texte de la même RR, par la mention: "Note de RR" (p. 201, 202, etc.). Cet "arrangeur" est préalable à tout, c'est lui qui énonce tout le roman, c'est grâce à lui que l'énoncé-livre s'est arrêté sur ce que nous connaissons être la fin, page 204; en fait il aurait pu prendre la parole à son tour: "J' [X] ai écrit tout ce qui précède, et si j'ai pris le masque de RR, c'était afin de ..." Et ainsi, de rebondissement en rebondissement le livre-énoncé aurait pu aller à l'infini...⁵⁸

Martel, in an extremely enlightening article on Aquin's use of dédoublement in order to hide himself, suggests the existence of three narrators: Pierre X. Magnant, Olympe Ghezso-Quénum and RR.⁵⁹ Cagnon, for his part, reduces the number to two: "In Trou de mémoire, de Quincey is the favorite author of character Ghezso-Quénum alias author P.X. Magnant alias the editor/narrator/

⁵⁷ Lucie Brind'Amour, "Sur Trou de mémoire: le révolutionnaire pris au piège", Voix et images 5(3): 560 (printemps 1980). Leo-Paul Desaulniers, "Ducharme, Aquin: conséquences de la 'mort de l'auteur'", Études françaises 7(4): 405 (nov. 1971). René Dionne, op. cit., modifies the question slightly by asking: "Qui suis-je?"

⁵⁸ Desaulniers, op. cit., p. 408.

⁵⁹ Martel, op. cit., p. 89.

scriptor. Character/editor RR similarly evokes de Quincey".⁶⁰

For those who tend to regard the "je" as "l'auteur-narrateur-Aquin, lui-même poursuivant, à la recherche de son identité",⁶¹ then the narrators are seen as fragments or, more commonly, as masks of the one writing subject. Falardeau, for example, mentions "la décomposition narcissique du sujet narrateur et de l'objet de son écriture".⁶² Brind'Amour, for her part, finds that there really is no solution:

Franchement, on ne sait qui parle sauf à accepter que le jeu s'arrête avec le mot FIN. Car en effet, qui parle? Je parle. Moi éditeur, moi auteur, moi Olympe, moi Rachel, moi??? Moi le soleil. Je parle, de l'angle sous lequel je vois les choses. Je dis: je mens. Peut-être que je mens quand je le dis. Je suis récit-écrit qui n'a de réponse à la question qui parle, sauf à mentir.⁶³

In an interesting footnote to her article, she observes

A ce qu'on m'a dit, Я en russe (ou en tchèque) signifie je. Mis devant un miroir, ce signe redevient R. et R2: RR. Mais quel est ce je(u) doublé, dédoublé et miré (inverse, renversé) qui édite le roman et en donne une version finale?⁶⁴

Aquin's use of anamorphosis,⁶⁵ which is closely linked to the problem of narrative perspective, has, as one might logically

⁶⁰Maurice Cagnon, "Palimpsest in the Writings of Hubert Aquin," Modern Language Studies 8(2): 88 (1977).

⁶¹Dionne, op. cit., p. 196.

⁶²Jean-Charles Falardeau, "La littérature québécoise. Hubert Aquin," Liberté 10(5-6): 88 (1968).

⁶³Brind'Amour, op. cit., p. 560

⁶⁴Ibid, p. 565.

⁶⁵Falardeau, op. cit., p. 89. "C'est-à-dire l'opération qui consiste à placer un dessin déformé face à un miroir cylindrique ou conique pour reconstituer l'image originale d'un objet."

expect, also failed to elicit a uniformity of critical response. According to Falardeau, "aucune image ne se reforme au point de convergence des monologues qui s'entrecoupent et se referment les uns sur les autres comme des portes à coulisses".⁶⁶ Thus, in his view, since Aquin has wished to illustrate "la mort du roman", the reader is ultimately doomed to fail in his effort to decode the text. One reads the microtexts "sans que l'on puisse dire lequel est le dernier et le vrai 'roman désarticulé'".⁶⁷ On the other hand, critics such as Martel and Brown have insisted quite strongly upon the importance of distance and angle, i.e. perspective, in order to understand the mystery (+) story.⁶⁸ Looking at the text as Pre-Text, Cagnon writes:

The plural anamorphic planes of the text may be known only to one aware of the exact angles at which to position himself for looking upon the text: "il faut lire le texte . . . non pas selon l'angle normal d'une lecture, mais d'un autre point de vue . . . qui lui redonne sa vraie perspective et toute sa plénitude" (140). That is, by spatialization of reading itself; reading obliquely, as it were, according to an anamorphic decoding grid so as to grasp fiction as merely possibilities, but in all its possibilities, and all experienced and understood in an ultimate simultaneous mix of inner time and mental space.⁶⁹

These possibilities, as we have already seen, have been presented in terms of the opposition Eros/Thanatos, symbols par

⁶⁶Falardeau, op. cit., p. 89.

⁶⁷Bourneuf, op. cit., p. 267.

⁶⁸Martel, op. cit., p. 85. Russell Brown, "In Search of Lost Causes: The Canadian Novelist as Mystery Writer," Mosaic 11: 7 (1977).

⁶⁹Cagnon, op. cit., p. 85.

excellence of creation and destruction.⁷⁰ It is generally agreed that the "personnage principal" of the novel is Joan/Death. Her erotic relationship with Magnant and her subsequent death are reminiscent of Sade's world in which the ultimate "jouissance" is in fact Death itself. The ideal is to die precisely at that moment at which the climax is reached and therefore to avoid the multiplication of one's self, i.e. through procreation. Eroticism is, by its very nature, anti-procreative; it safeguards the uniqueness of the Self.

"Créer, c'est vivre deux fois."⁷¹ Through his relationship with Joan, Magnant has realized the potential for creation within himself. However, her destruction has frustrated any subsequent creative effort. RR becomes for him, therefore, a simulacrum of the dead sister; his pursuit of her is inevitable. And it is precisely for this reason that Magnant/editor retains, while repudiating, RR's "Semi-finale".

Whereas, as we previously noted, traditionally eroticism has been opposed to procreation, Aquin turns the tables by presenting a pregnant RR at the conclusion of the novel. The begetting of a child is both the ultimate dédoublement and the

⁷⁰Yvon Belaval, "The Author and Love," Yale French Studies no. 11: 10 (1953). "[Eroticism's gaze] is the criminal's gaze, and there is nothing about it that cannot be said about crime, whether we censure it with horror, or praise its beauty and creative powers. Associated with destruction and death -- the important epochs of eroticism are those of great carnage and revolution -- it seems pathological -- both for the group in which it is raging and for the individual -- and at the same time grandiose. It is linked with the idea of evil."

⁷¹Albert Camus, Le mythe de Sisyphe (Paris: Gallimard, 1942), p. 128.

ultimate creation. It ensures a multiplicity of Self in a way that the multiplication of "je" upon the printed page could never achieve. The text is only when someone chooses to read it, but the child IS in his own right.

While Trou de mémoire may be structured in terms of the dédoublement of characters played out against various thematic contrasts, it is also

un grand trou que tous ont voulu camoufler, mais dans lequel tous ont quand même disparu. Trou de mémoire laisse deviner le néant dissimulé derrière lui, mais son but premier n'en demeure pas moins de dresser un somptueux paravent devant ce néant inhérent à toute chose (même à ce paravent).⁷²

Along these lines it is interesting to note that Aquin admitted in 1975 in an interview that he had actually forgotten the original ending which he had intended for the novel:

J'avais perdu le plan de Trou de mémoire et cela m'a obligé à une performance absolument épuisante. Lorsque j'ai perdu le plan, j'étais déjà bien avancé dans la rédaction et je dois dire qu'une fois le livre bien avancé, j'oublie le reste du plan, je ne me casse pas la tête, je sais que tout est pensé. Au moment où j'ai perdu le plan j'avais malheureusement oublié la fin; c'était trop compliqué. J'ai dû en reformuler un. J'en ai refait deux ou trois je crois, c'est-à-dire des plans qui changeaient, des versions possibles, avec des variantes.⁷³

Thus the absence is a very real one in terms of the writing of the novel.

Brind'Amour believes that in the novel, "il y a beaucoup de doubles pour le trou: 'silence en tant qu'intervalle entre deux cris' (TM, 57); coupures, manques, passages donnés pour

⁷²Martel, op. cit., p. 102.

⁷³Anne Gagnon, "Hubert Aquin et le jeu de l'écriture," Voix et images 1(1): 7 (sept. 1975).

illisibles, pour non finis, omis, découpages arbitraires de la réalité et du texte: PERTES. Trou est le nom par lequel je nomme le nom perdu, le non-nom, la perte du nom, la méconnaissance du nom."⁷⁴ An understanding and a decoding of Trou de mémoire are based upon the reader's ability to reconstruct the "image défaite" which RR mentions on page 129. To identify it is to name it.

If we go back to the idea of fiction as possibilities, then we can consider "trou" as the absence of all the other possible narratives from among which the eventual narrative could have been chosen. This absence or "trou" "creuse la forme du livre, en l'engageant dans un interminable conflit avec lui-même."⁷⁵ Aquin's second novel would seem to be concerned less with what constitutes the end product than with all the other directions in which it could have gone.

⁷⁴Brind'Amour, op. cit., pp. 561-562.

⁷⁵Pierre Macherey, Pour une théorie de la production littéraire (Paris: François Maspero, 1974), p. 284.

Chapter 4

L'ANTIPHONAIRE: THE FILTERING OF TEXTS

In 1969 Le Cercle du Livre de France published Aquin's third novel, L'Antiphonaire.¹ Réginald Martel described it as a novel "d'une extrême importance, d'une grande intensité . . . et d'une beauté sinistre."² Jean Royer equated any attempt to discuss the novel with an effort to describe "une toile d'araignée gorgée de mouches. C'est tenter de tirer des ficelles interdites. C'est se buter à un labyrinthe indéchiffrable."³ Jean Ethier-Blais wrote in December 1969: "Je ne sais trop que penser de ce dernier roman d'Hubert Aquin."⁴

In this fourth chapter, it is intended to examine the narrators of both the sixteenth-century and twentieth-century manuscripts in terms of Genette's concepts of the experiencing "I" and the narrating "I". In addition, it is proposed to investigate the ways in which each successive narrator (Beausang → Chigi →

¹Hubert Aquin, L'Antiphonaire (Montreal: Le Cercle du Livre de France, 1969).

²Réginald Martel, "Sur mon chemin j'ai rencontré . . .", Dossier de presse 1965-1980 (Sherbrooke: Bibliothèque du Séminaire de Sherbrook, 1981), no pagination.

³Jean Royer, "L'Antiphonaire d'Hubert Aquin," Dossier de presse, no pagination.

⁴Jean Ethier-Blais, "L'Antiphonaire de Hubert Aquin. Les procédés de rhétorique de Cornificius," Dossier de presse, no pagination.

Christine) acts as a filter for the previous narrator's work. Particular emphasis will be placed upon the importance, both intra and extratextually, of the mediation of the whole of literature.

In examining Aquin's first two novels, we have seen excellent examples of overt narration, i.e. communication in which the speaker, or narrator, has readily revealed his presence. The various first-person narrators are not merely eyewitnesses but also are involved and implicated in the events which they narrate. Trou de mémoire has provided, in addition, an example of unreliable or "self-incriminating"⁵ narration, in which a narrator deliberately deceives his narratee. As Kellum observes, "the first person seems to be the natural voice of unreliable narration, for it is the experiencing-I who narrates most unreliable narratives."⁶

Overt narration is not, of course, necessarily done always through the first person. It may also be done through the use of third person pronouns. As has previously been noted, regardless of how minimally evoked it may be, commentary conveys a narrator's voice more distinctly than any other feature -- with the exception of the explicit self-mention of first-person narration. Comments go beyond the simple acts of narrating or describing; they "resonate with overtones of propria persona."⁷

Rien ne peut conserver ce caractère aussi imprévisible dans son déroulement. Flaubert l'a dit. D'autres, dont Mahomet et sans doute saint Paul, ont aussi été frappés de

⁵Sharon S. Kellum, "The Art of Self-Incrimination: Studies in Unreliable Narration" (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, University of California, 1976), p. 2.

⁶Ibid., p. 289.

⁷Seymour Chatman, Story and Discourse (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1978), p. 228.

la puissance affreuse de cet événement classé maintenant sous le nom étrange d'aura. L'aura précède immanquablement la décharge hypersynchrone qu'on appelait jadis le mal sacré ou le haut mal. Jean-William Forestier était menacé, en ce neuvième jour des vacances qu'il passait à San Diego avec sa femme, et pour la neuvième fois, par cette crise icto-comitiale que Christine d'ailleurs savait maintenant être provoquée par une bradycardie paroxystique manifeste, soit, en termes nosologiques, par le fameux syndrome d'Adam-Stokes. (p. 9)

L'Antiphonaire opens with a generalization, i.e. a comment/observation that reaches beyond the world of the fictional work into the "real" universe.⁸ "Real" people (albeit writers), we are told, have reached the same conclusion about the mysterious characteristics of aura. The initial medical reference posits yet again a narratee reasonably conversant with medicine as well as allied fields.

Subsequent readings of L'Antiphonaire could conceivably lead the reader, for his part, to regard the opening line as essentially metatextual. The "caractère aussi imprévisible dans son déroulement" can just as easily refer to the actual writing of the novel as to a particular illness. Certainly the reference to Flaubert may be a gentle nudge to the reader alerting him to the metatextual possibilities. Such a reading of the text undoubtedly causes the reader to be more aware of the presence of the narrator and, by extension, the implied author. This is especially true in the case of L'Antiphonaire which, unlike Aquin's first two novels, initially avoids first-person narration.

Expressions such as "la superbe Cutlass", "rocs se diluant doucement", and "paysage merveilleux" seem to be the product of Christine's own judgment; they suggest the presence of a covert

⁸ Chatman, op. cit., p. 243.

narrator, verbalizing a character's perceptions. Phrases such as "elle faisait machinalement" and "contemplant béatement", on the other hand, underline the presence of an overt narrator. Christine is the focal point of the narrator's attention. She is a "character"⁹ as is Jean-William or the briefly-mentioned Robert Bernatchez. While she perceives the situation around her, i.e. the events in her motel room in San Diego, there is also taking place another act of "perception". Actually Chatman refers to it as "conception" inasmuch as the narrator is reporting the contents of Christine's mind from his/her (i.e. the narrator's) own point of view.¹⁰ The perceptual point of view may be the woman's but the voice is that of the narrator. And whereas characters perceive phenomena within the world of the work, narrators tend to describe events and characters from a perspective outside the story, as in the following example:

La respiration profonde de Jean-William, couché à ses côtés, divisait en intervalles (sic) réguliers le temps mort qui s'étirait pour Christine et se traduisait synchroniquement en un long ruban d'ennui et de désolation -- entrelacs solitaire et interminable, entité vermiculaire dont la préhension lente et sûre ressemblait à l'étreinte d'un serpent. Images sordides que celles-là, mais ce furent les dernières précédant l'assoupissement de Christine. La nuit était descendue sur les contreforts de la Sierra Nevada autour de la ville; le ciel, hanté par des formes oblongues, s'était assombri pour la durée d'une nuit. Nuit profonde, douce, presque chaude ... (p. 13)

In addition, on one level, we have the narrator's conceptual view of Christine; on a second level, we have Christine's conceptualization of Jules-César Beausang, who is the focal point

⁹That is to say, from the view point of narratologistes that characters are the means rather than the ends of a story.

¹⁰Chatman, op. cit., p. 155.

of her attention. There are several interesting aspects of the relationship of Christine Forestier with Jules-César Beausang which are highlighted at the beginning of L'Antiphonaire: (1) her continual reading of his work and subsequent note-taking and (2) her ability to link sixteenth-century ideas with twentieth-century phenomena, as when she speaks of a "paysage merveilleux qui lui rappelait les considérations de Beausang au sujet des théories optiques de ses contemporains Vasari et Leonardo" (p. 10).

On the one hand, we have you and me as Readers-of-the-Text; on the other, there is also Christine as Reader of Beausang's text -- in the same way that l'éditeur in Trou de mémoire was Reader of Pierre X. Magnant's text. There is, however, one essential difference in Aquin's third novel: unlike Christine, we have no access to the sixteenth-century manuscript(s) other than that which is provided to us through Christine's quotations and bibliographical references. And as to the value and authenticity of these, we will have more to say later on in the examination of apocryphal texts. For the moment, it is sufficient to note that our conceptions of those sixteenth-century manuscripts are filtered through Christine's reading. Moreover, whereas in Prochain épisode and Trou de mémoire, there was a sense of writing replacing action,¹¹ here reading has been substituted for writing. That is to say, the reading, taking notes and commenting upon Beausang's work is, to a certain degree, a substitution for the

¹¹Prochain épisode: "je mitraille le papier nu" (p. 14); "Je brûle les mots" (p. 46). Trou de mémoire: "écrire au maximum de la fureur et de l'incantation" (p. 35); "cette activité transitoire -- écrire! -- devient l'activité principale de ma vie" (p. 55).

"thèse qu'elle se proposait d'écrire" (p. 10) but which is, in fact, never actually written.

In examining the nature of the narrator of the first chapter, it is useful to look first at what Sartre refers to as "elle-sujet" and "elle-objet".¹² In his discussion of Mauriac's La fin de la nuit, he notes how the author first identifies himself with Thérèse Desqueyroux and then suddenly abandons that perspective in order to consider her from outside. Sartre criticizes Mauriac for having misled his reader to believe that he was going to tell his story totally from the point of view of Thérèse. What is of interest to us in our present study is Sartre's point that the very use of "third-person" narration carries within it inherent ambiguities. "Elle" (not only applied to Thérèse but to any other female character in a novel as well) can stand for a character of whom we see only the exterior. "Elle" therefore has the function of "elle-objet". On the other hand, "elle" can be linked to an intimacy of thought whose nature is such that one might logically have expected it to have been expressed in the first person. Sartre observes that "les romanciers utilisent ce mode d'expression tout conventionnel par une sorte de discrétion, pour ne pas demander au lecteur une complicité sans recours, pour recouvrir d'un glacis l'intimité vertigineuse du 'Je'."¹³ In such a case, the reader is confronting the "elle-sujet"; the "elle" is a "moi" held at a distance from the "moi" of the reader. In "Thérèse eut honte de ce qu'elle éprouvait", the reader is familiar with the shame which

¹²Jean-Paul Sartre, Situations, I (Paris: Gallimard, 1947), p. 39.

¹³Ibid, p. 38.

Thérèse is enduring.

In looking at L'Antiphonaire we find that the "third-person", i.e. extradiegetic-heterodiegetic, narrator exists only in the first chapter. It is interesting to note the relationship between narrator and principal character:

Elle reprit son livre de Beausang et le lut, la tête renversée sur la tête du lit. La naïveté de l'écriture de Beausang, "le Plin du 16e", confine parfois à une certaine infatuation quand, quittant le champ de la minéralogie, il se met à faire l'écrivain attentif à son propre moi, attentif jusqu'à l'obsession aux moindres fluctuations de son humeur ... La figure de cet auteur ancien inspirait aussi une certaine pitié à Christine (pp. 12-13).

The first sentence is a straightforward set description. The second sentence would, upon initial reading, appear to constitute a subtle commentary on the part of the narrator; the use of the present tense shifts the perspective from Christine to the narrator: s/he has momentarily intruded (albeit subtly) in order to offer a generalization. The last sentence, especially with its use of "aussi", however, then "trips" the reader inasmuch as the impression is now given that the narrator has not expressed his/her own opinion but has merely peered into Christine's mind. We have, therefore, a shifting of perspective from one to the other which parallels Christine's passing back and forth between the sixteenth and twentieth centuries. Thus there is a kind of preparing of the reader for subsequent narrative strategies within the text.

Towards the end of the first chapter, the narrator interjects a parenthetical remark which is structured in paragraph format:

(Robert Bernatchez ne savait rien de cela; il avait aimé Christine, mais onze ans, c'est long. Christine avait épousé Jean-William, Robert avait épousé Suzanne; et il ne fut plus question du passé, sauf à des instants étranges quand Jean-William, détruit par une crise, forçait sa femme à lui raconter tout dans les détails et

jusqu'au bout ... C'étaient des instants de supplice,
intolérables, invivables, épuisants pour lui et pour
Christine: les deux en sortaient avariés, amers,
dégoutés l'un de l'autre, défaits ...) (p. 15)

Bernatchez does not in fact reappear until page 73. The manner in which he is first introduced is quite unexpected and leaves the reader somewhat perplexed as to the narrator's intentions.

Certainly Bernatchez is a source of conflict between wife and husband; more importantly he is also a "source of narration" in the sense that Christine orally relates to Jean-William her past affair with Bernatchez. Even more significantly Bernatchez, in turn, forces Christine to recount all the details of her past love affairs, especially her sexual encounters with Jean-William: "... il m'a obligée de parler après, de parler, de lui raconter (en larmes) tous mes malheurs et la vérité, l'abominable vérité" (p. 76). While Michael Beausang has demonstrated the significant relationship between the sex act and music in the novel,¹⁴ there is undoubtedly an equally important link between sexuality and verballity, i.e. the need to "confess".

In returning to an analysis of the introduction to the novel, one must ask: "Who is the narrator?" According to Maurice Cagnon, it is Bernatchez's wife:

The "voice" which opens L'Antiphonaire in the third-person narration leading to Christine's first-person narration (17-242) is, we learn only at the end, none other than Suzanne B-Franconi (alias Robert Bernatchez's ex-wife and Albert Franconi's soon-to-be widow), signatory of the book's Postface -- and yet another character palimpsest of Christine Forestier/Hubert Aquin scriptors.¹⁵

¹⁴Michael Beausang, "Music and Medicine", Canadian Literature 58: 71-76 (autumn 1973).

¹⁵Maurice Cagnon, "Parody and Caricature in Hubert Aquin's L'Antiphonaire," Critique: Studies in Modern Fiction, 19(2): 10 (1977)

Cagnon has presented a very good case for a reading of L'Antiphonaire as a parody of narrative-fictional techniques. However, interesting as his assertion about Suzanne may be, there is no textual evidence for reaching such a conclusion. Stylistically the introduction to L'Antiphonaire is very tightly and logically constructed. Suzanne's postscript, on the other hand, gives the impression of a garrulous, somewhat shallow, gossipy woman. Moreover, it seems unlikely that she would possess the knowledge about Beausang and his writings which is exhibited by the narrator of the introduction.

It may be that the narrator is Christine and that the first chapter represents an abortive attempt on her part to create a viable narrative format. That is to say, according to this hypothesis one would assume that Christine had initially decided to be an omniscient narrator but that she had found that particular format unsuitable and has therefore allowed the "novel" to lapse. If such is the case, then we would now be confronted with a homodiegetic rather than heterodiegetic narrator or, perhaps more accurately, a homodiegetic attitude posing as heterodiegetic. Christine does note in the second chapter that her book is composed of "les documents et les pièces diverses" from her file.¹⁶ As the reader will have been quick to observe, the book has in fact already started before Christine ever says "ici débute le livre que j'ai constitué" (p. 17). Her beginning, therefore, gives an impression of one's having started in medias res.

On the other hand, Keypour believes that it is more likely

¹⁶My emphasis.

that Aquin is our enigmatic narrator:

. . . Aquin reste immanent au livre, et en abdiquant la parole ne fait que distancer le récit tout en y restant présent. Car, il y a d'abord ces sept premières pages où il parle en tant qu'auteur pour exposer les composantes principales des intrigues. Il les connaît donc autant que Christine et avant elle.¹⁷

With Christine as intermediary, the text is viewed as a communication between author and reader about the nature of its own fabrication. The fragmented vision which Christine has of reality and of her récit is contrasted with the global perspective belonging to Aquin as both author and narrator.

As we have observed in his previous novels, the presence of a narrator also presupposes the existence of a person to whom the narrator addresses his/her story, i.e. the narratee. If one accepts the premise that the omniscient narrator is also Aquin/implicit author, then the implied reader may logically be expected to ally himself with the narratee. That is to say, at this point there is no suggestion that there is any hidden communication between implied author and reader at the expense of the narrator and his/her addressee. However, as we shall observe later in this chapter, there exists yet another possibility as to the narrator's identity.

The tone of the beginning of the second chapter is reminiscent of Aquin's previous novels:

Ici débute le livre que j'ai constitué à même les documents et les pièces diverses de ce dossier. Sans titre, sans logique interne, sans contenu, sans autre charme que celui de la vérité désordonnée, ce livre est composé en forme d'aura épileptique: il contient l'accumulation apparemment inoffensive de toute une série d'événements et de chocs, le résultat du mal de vivre et aussi sa manifestation implacable. Rien ne

¹⁷N. David Keypour, "Hubert Aquin: L'Antiphonaire," Présence francophone, no. 6: 126 (printemps 1973)

m'a motivée, rien ne motivera jamais personne à écrire ainsi, sans ordre, ce que je m'apprête à écrire. Rien n'est nécessaire; ce qui revient à dire que tout est aléatoire ou presque tout. La neuvième crise de Jean-William est à peine amorcée que, déjà, je m'en éloigne, je suis sur le point de la distancier, (sic) de lui trouver un double imaginaire, une sorte d'extension temporelle incommensurable. Je me meus sans émotion dans un espace-temps dont les frontières sont difficiles à discerner . . . (p. 17)

The insistence upon the lack of internal order and logic recalls the "incohérence" of Prochain épisode (p. 14) and the "roman parfaitement désarticulé" of Trou de mémoire (p. 22). In addition, the reflexive structure in "Je me meus sans émotion dans un espace-temps dont les frontières sont difficiles à discerner" reminds us of similar structures in the earlier works.

As we have seen, such a structure underlines the self-consciousness of the narrator, i.e. the propensity to comment upon discours as well as récit, to view oneself in the act of writing.¹⁸ In fact, the narrator of L'Antiphonaire helps to provide a definition of "self-consciousness" when s/he describes Beausang as an "écrivain attentif à son propre moi" (p. 12).

While Christine/narrator is confiding to her narratee her lack of spontaneity

je compose ce livre calmement, froidement, sans hallucinogène pour me stimuler, sans espoir pour

¹⁸"A self-conscious novel is one that systematically flaunts its own condition of artifice and that by so doing probes into the problematic relationship between real-seeming artifice and reality A fully self-conscious novel is one in which from beginning to end, through the style, the handling of narrative viewpoint, the names and words imposed on the characters, the patterning of the narration, the nature of the characters and what befalls them, there is a consistent effort to convey to us a sense of the fictional world as an authorial construct set up against a background of literary tradition and convention". Robert Alter cited in Chatman, Story and Discourse, p. 250.

m'égarer, sans même l'espoir (secret) de lui conférer la signification et l'importance qu'on accorde volontiers (par postulat) aux livres d'un auteur le moins coté (p. 18).

Aquin/implicit author is enjoying a little game with his reader. As a fictional construct within the story, the narratee has never heard of Aquin, let alone read his novels. The implied reader, on the other hand, may find himself comparing the "calmement" and "froidement" of L'Antiphonaire with "je mitraille le papier nu" of Prochain épisode, or "sans hallucinogène pour me stimuler" with "quelques grammes d'amobarbital" of Trou de mémoire. It would certainly be difficult not to regard the mention of "un auteur le moins coté" as an ironic reference by Aquin to the notoriety which he enjoyed after the publication of the above-mentioned novels.¹⁹ Moreover, the fact that Christine is writing a Ph.D. dissertation ("sa thèse de doctorat en philosophie des sciences") recalls the editor's suggestion in Trou de mémoire that, as regards the possible influence of Nabokov on Magnant (read "Aquin"?), "il y aurait une thèse intéressante à faire à ce sujet"!

In examining Trou de mémoire, we looked specifically, among other things, at the narratee ("cher lecteur") as evoked by the narrator. The beginning of Christine's journal is ostensibly addressed to no one in particular, other than perhaps Christine herself. The use of "ne parlons pas" (p. 17), however, implies the existence of some kind of addressee. While granting that the phrase in itself is a linguistic convention used here for purely

¹⁹"Une oeuvre qui s'impose comme une des plus émouvantes et des plus prestigieuses des jeunes lettres québécoises." Gilles de Lafontaine, "Entre l'art et la vie: Hubert Aquin," Écriture française, no. 1: 7 (1979).

rhetorical reasons, it does, nevertheless, suggest a mutual understanding between the reader of Christine's journal and Christine herself. She has no need to elaborate; her "reader", i.e. narratee, already understands.

The narratee is evoked in traditional form as the (inevitable) "cher lecteur" on page 20: "cher lecteur, le 'pharmacotriba' ne tient plus en place". Later addresses to the narratee illustrate Christine's attempts to define for herself her "universal audience", i.e. the concept of mankind as perceived by an individual or a particular culture:²⁰

chères lectrices incompréhensives	p. 45
cher lecteur	p. 69
chers lecteurs	p. 204
lecteur, oh unique et sombre lecteur	p. 210

In narratives a given type of narrator generally evokes a corresponding type of narratee, e.g. an overt narrator evokes an overt narratee.²¹ Thus Christine/je produces lecteur/vous. However, the varying methods by which she actually addresses her audience correspond to her inability to define clearly her own role as writing subject:

moi je le sais	p. 55
j'avais compris	p. 142
j'en sais quelque chose	p. 175

²⁰Chaim Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca, The New Rhetoric, trans. John Wilkinson and Purcell Weaver (Notre Dame, Ill.: Notre Dame University Press, 1969), p. 37. "Written dialogue, even more than spoken dialogue, assumes that the single hearer incarnates the universal audience".

²¹Chatman, op. cit., p. 255.

versus

je me replace	p. 58
je ne me supportais plus	p. 80
je ne me connais plus	p. 237
je me désintègre	p. 237

We also observe the contrast

moi qui vous parle	p. 175
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versus

moi - Christine - je	p. 192
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In the first instance the narrator has no problem with her self-image, while, in the second, her identification with Chigi creates a virtual stuttering within the text. This particular narrative situation will be studied in more depth later in this chapter.

Christine's relationship with her audience may be examined in terms of some of those same narrative devices at which we looked in our discussion of Trou de mémoire. Christine, as narrator, is concerned about the narratee's reading of her text; she invites him/her to identify with the narrator's own point of view, e.g. through the use of "nous", "notre" and "nos":

de nos jours	p. 59
il nous décrit	p. 84
le récit ... nous a été retransmis	p. 133
l'épisode ... d'Antonella nous fournit	p. 159
notre cher Zimara-Chigi	p. 234

This is particularly true in cases in which the narratee is being asked to concur with Christine's interpretation of the sixteenth-century manuscript. In such cases, "nous" underlines the same

cultural heritage of both narrator and narratee. "Nous" and its variant forms also serve as a means of linking Christine's and Beausang/Chigi's texts, which have been written four centuries apart.

The interpretive competence of Christine's narratee varies according to the former's state of mind. On the one hand, she may choose to underline the fundamental distance between writing/ experiencing and reading:

vous ne saurez jamais	p. 68
Avez-vous pensé que . . .	p. 69
Vous ne pouvez pas savoir	p. 127

These phrases, along with "comme je vous l'ai appris" (p. 129), reaffirm that it is Christine who is in control of the writing process, just as "n'allez pas croire" (p. 222) or "il faut que . . . je vous décrive" (p. 210) reaffirm her right to "tell" the story and to express that which is "true" in her fictional world. Such traditional techniques are designed to remind her audience of its dependence upon her as narrator. Similarly, expressions such as "croyez-moi" (p. 204) and "vous devez me croire" (p. 207) are designed to shake the reader, to signal him, in short to remind him that the text is being addressed to him and that he must participate.

Christine may also choose to anticipate her audience's reactions:

on dirait: à plaisir	p. 40
(je réponds pour tous ...)	p. 44
vous le savez déjà	p. 58
affreux, me direz-vous!	p. 208

Vous me direz que . . . p. 220

Forcément, vous auriez raison p. 220

Since, as Perelman notes, "mere questioning of a statement is . . . sufficient to destroy its privileged status,"²² i.e. its status as a "true" statement, Christine attempts to anticipate any reader response which would undermine her authority as teller-of-the-tale.

On the other hand, occasionally Christine changes the nature of her relationship to the narratee. On several occasions she simply refers to (rather than addresses) the narratee as "le lecteur":

(pour le lecteur) p. 197

j'ai le pénible sentiment que le
lecteur a déjà compris p. 198

(cet étalement de théories que je
fais devant le lecteur . . .) p. 218

Her discourse, then, becomes self-directed, while communicating a strong sense of the fictional world which she is in the process of constructing. In addition phrases such as

(mais moi je le sais puisque j'ai
lu beaucoup de livres sur le
seizième siècle) p. 55

Beausang a dû prendre illégalement
(voler semble inharmonieux) p. 56

Il ne savait pas (et elle non plus) p. 57

also display that self-consciousness which is so characteristic of Aquin's narrators in general.

On another occasion Christine directly addresses her

²²Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, op. cit., p. 68.

narratee in an effort to elicit a corroborative opinion:

(suspect, ne trouvez-vous pas? ...) p. 135

The narratee is actually encouraged to participate, especially in the problematic area of interpreting Beausang/Chigi's texts.

Christine even goes one step further towards the end of her journal when she writes

Enfin vous savez tout . . . de ma vie p. 209

vous en savez tout p. 210

In this instance she abdicates her previous position as unique teller-of-the-tale, reverses roles, and gives part of the burden of creating the text to the narratee. In fact, Christine's writing process becomes overtly reader dependent. That is to say, the author (or Christine, in this particular case) is no longer the sole source of meaning; the reader's relationship to the text is viewed as essential to the understanding of that text.

Aquin himself placed great importance upon the role of the reader in his novels. In an interview in 1976, the following exchange took place between Gilles Dorion and the novelist:

Dorion: Est-ce que vous voulez vous moquer de vos lecteurs ou les mystifier?

Aquin: Non, je cherche à les mystifier, mais en leur donnant une récompense qui est la suivante selon moi: c'est que si eux comprennent bien ce jeu, en réalité, ils finissent par me dominer, ce n'est pas moi qui les domine. Ma technique essaie d'être mystifiante.²³

In another interview with Anne Gagnon, he made the following

²³Gilles Dorion, "Hubert Aquin: entrevue," Québec français 24: 22 (décembre 1976).

remarks:

Aquin: . . . En fait je me décharge, dans l'écriture ou dans mes livres, d'une certaine partie de mon agressivité; je deviens agressif contre le lecteur tout en me réjouissant qu'il soit éventuellement là en train de me lire et du coup, une fois que je l'ai bien attrapé dans la lecture, là je le piège, je lui rends la lecture quasiment impossible ou à tout le moins difficile.

Gagnon: C'est un rapport sado-masochiste?

Aquin: J'accepte bien volontiers. Je me venge du lecteur, je l'admets. C'est une relation bien ambivalente. Je me réjouis de sa lecture mais je suis méchant pour lui à l'instant même où je suis conscient qu'il me réjouit de sa lecture.²⁴

He asks for the complicity of his reader. The communication between author and reader, writing and reading, will be complete only if the reader is willing to "play the game". The game is a two-edged sword, however, in that not only the reader must sharpen his wits but the writer also must be capable of truly challenging his reader to the fullest.

Jane P. Tompkins, in both her introduction and her conclusion to Reader-Response Criticism, has briefly outlined authors' attitudes toward their readers, the kinds of readers various texts seem to imply, the role actual readers play in the determination of literary meaning, the relation of reading conventions to textual interpretation, and the status of the reader's self.²⁵ Her underlying purpose is not only to examine

²⁴Anne Gagnon, "Hubert Aquin et le jeu de l'écriture," Voix et images 1(1): 9 (septembre 1975)

²⁵Jane P. Tompkins (ed.), Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), p. ix.

how various critics have addressed the problem of determinate meaning but also to illustrate the progression in critical movements towards a new understanding of discourse. Tompkins discusses the revolutionary negation of any direct relationship between the life of a work and the life of its creator, the formalist definition of a literary work as an object of knowledge with its resultant emphasis on interpretation, and more modern trends which have ceased to locate meaning in the text constituted as a fixed object and which favor instead a recognition of the reader's role in creating meaning.

One cannot consider Aquin as an actual follower of the more recent theories of reading as promulgated by Bleich, Fish, Culler and Michaels, for example.²⁶ As we shall eventually observe, whereas Christine's relationship to Beausang/Chigi's manuscripts exhibits some of the characteristics of their attitudes towards the reading process, Aquin's concept of his reader is somewhat more traditional. He regards reading as an intellectual process, which implies that such an activity is still text- (rather than reader-) centered.²⁷ In the same interview with Dorion, the

²⁶See David Bleich, Subjective Criticism (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978); Stanley E. Fish, Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1980); Jonathan Culler, Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics, and the Study of Literature (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1975); and Walter Benn Michaels, "The Interpreter's Self: Peirce on the Cartesian 'Subject'," The Georgia Review 31: 383-402 (Summer 1977).

²⁷Tompkins, op. cit., pp. xxiv-xxv. "A text which is "reader-dependent" acknowledges the role of the reader in making meaning, while a "reader-centered" text locates meaning in the reader's self and conceives the self as another text."

novelist describes reading as "une expérience intellectuelle extrêmement bouleversante et ce n'est peut-être pas cela que le lecteur cherche, mais c'est cela qu'il trouve. S'il ne le trouve pas, ça veut dire que j'ai manqué mon coup."²⁸ Thus, while attributing an important role to the reader in the interpretation of his works, Aquin has not gone so far as to reject the notion of text as object. His reader is expected to react to that which is already implicit in the structure of the work.

In Trou de mémoire we observed how l'éditeur functions as a reader of and commentator upon Pierre X. Magnant's manuscript. Christine Forestier, in L'Antiphonaire, functions in much the same way as she confronts both Beausang and Chigi's works. There has been a tendency among some critics to mention Beausang as if he were the sole source of Christine's récit.²⁹ This may stem from the fact that the narrator in the introductory chapter presents us with a picture of Christine reading an "in-folio" of the sixteenth-century writer and taking notes. Jules-César Beausang is then actually quoted several times at the beginning of the novel, e.g. pages 11 and 26. Renata Belmissieri is introduced in her capacity as a courier of one of the writer's treatises. At the moment of Jean-William's attack, his wife is deep in thought about both Jules-César and Renata. The crucial scene between Renata and the printer, Carlo Zimara, is juxtaposed with Beausang's death agonies. In short, Aquin has created an atmosphere in which Beausang's

²⁸Dorion, op. cit., p. 21.

²⁹For example, Ben Shek, "The French-Canadian Novel, 1967-1972: An Overview," in Creative Literature in Canada Symposium (Ontario Ministry of Colleges & Universities, 1974), pp. 18-26; Patricia Smart, "The Antiphonaire," Queen's Quarterly 81(2): 313-314 (Summer 1974).

manuscripts provide a logical frame of reference. Thus, in a casual first reading of the novel, one neglects to ask: "Who is the source of information concerning those events about which Beausang could not possibly have had any knowledge?" As readers peering over Christine's shoulder, we are not initially sensitized to changes in authorial status, i.e. who functions as the primary source of Christine's "information".

While questions may be raised about such a source, further questions certainly arise concerning the nature of Jules-César Beausang's actual works. Whereas those works are postulated as the source for Christine's study of medicine in the sixteenth-century, we (readers) actually know very little about his writings. Following the murder of the San Diego pharmacist by Jean-William and Christine's efforts to come to terms with this, she feels the need suddenly and quite gratuitously to comment upon Beausang's style:

Si je me fie à ce que j'ai lu de Beausang, je crois qu'on peut en déduire facilement qu'il se rangeait volontiers du côté des auteurs "hispaniques" -- ceux dont on qualifie les livres d'être un torrent d'épithètes et un abus des procédés littéraires énigmatiques. De fait, je crois volontiers que Beausang a un penchant manifeste pour le grandiose, l'énigme et la cacozélie (p. 109).

And yet actual quotations from his work ("La terre vit comme tous les êtres vivants; elle est une personne plus grande, plus vaste que les autres créatures de Dieu", p. 11; "Tout doit être mis à l'épreuve de l'expérience", p. 26) give no evidence of such characteristics.

Extratextually Jules-César Beausang never existed, unlike authors such as Lucilio Vanini or Marsilio Ficino who did and who are duly cited by Christine. Intratextually Beausang was a

disciple of Paracelsus, published De natura fossilium in Basel in 1531, wrote Traité des maladies nouvelles which was entrusted to Renata Belmissieri, married the younger sister of Geu de Bres, and so forth. He is, therefore, a construct by Aquin. At the same time, he is also constructed by Christine for whom everyone she mentions is "real". Her narratee also shares this sense of "reality". Her reader, on the other hand, is aware that his understanding and appreciation of this sixteenth-century writer are filtered through Christine's "readings".

As is a common practice in Aquin's novels, we have filters upon filters. Christine's source of knowledge about Jules-César's last days as well as Renata's movements are based upon "le journal du célèbre médecin dans l'édition qu'en a faite d'abord le prêtre turinois, l'abbé Leonico Chigi" (p. 57).³⁰ Thus Chigi as editor of the journal has embellished the manuscript with personal additions. Certainly his own status as reader/writer has already been established from the outset: Antonella's and Renata's arrival interrupts his reading of the Theatrum chemicum:

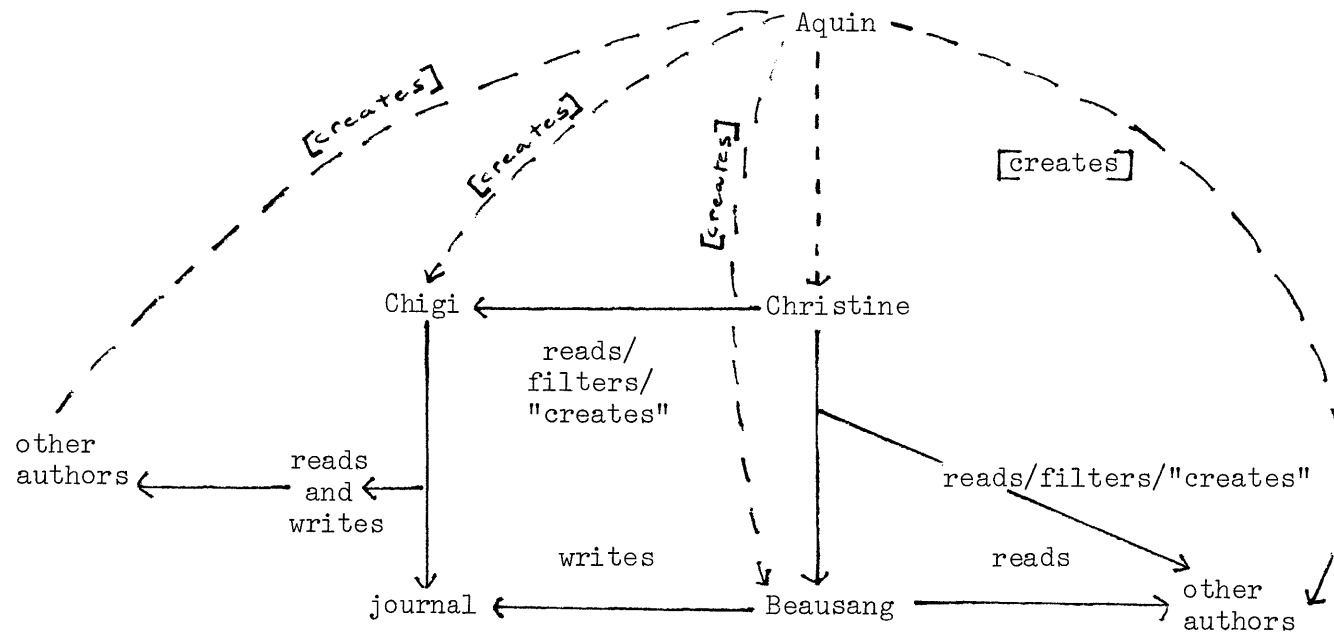
En ce 10 août 1536, à Turin, l'abbé Leonico Chigi lisait le "Theatrum chemicum", tout en arpentant le petit jardin qui formait la cour intérieure du presbytère de l'église paroissiale de San Tomaso. Du moins c'est ainsi qu'il nous décrit minutieusement son emploi du temps en ce jour mémorable (p. 84).³¹

Again Christine acts as a filter for Chigi's work, which, in turn, filters Beausang's.

If we were to present as a diagram the complexity of the reading/writing processes, then our interrelationship might be expressed in the following way:

³⁰My own underlining.

³¹My own underlining.



Creation is equivalent here to the writing process, i.e. Aquin "writes" Beausang and Chigi into the novel. The use of dotted lines and brackets indicates that the source of the creation is extratextual. In the same way, Aquin constructs Christine as the narrator. She, in turn, creates the two sixteenth-century writers in the sense that she acts as a filter for their works. We do not actually read their words; except for occasional fragments quoted by Christine and attributed to Beausang, we read instead Christine's interpretations of their writings.

Beausang and Chigi are depicted as avid readers. Their readings include real authors as well as others ostensibly invented by Aquin.³² The novelist's use of such a plethora of names has, as a point of interest, provoked varying degrees of enthusiasm among Canadian critics. On the one hand, Shek speaks of the "dazzling array of erudition and pseudo-erudition";³³ Dorion notes "l'étalage d'érudition et de culture dont [Christine] fait preuve sans pédanterie ni affectation";³⁴ Leonard points to "une action éblouissante dont la complexité désarçonne le lecteur habitué aux compositions rationnelles et progressives du récit classique et à l'analyse des caractères. L'éclatement des structures rejoint l'éclatement du langage . . ."³⁵ On the other hand, in a somewhat

³²The dotted line from Aquin to other authors is only partially correct inasmuch as some authors cited in L'Antiphonaire actually existed.

³³Shek, op. cit., p. 23

³⁴Gilles Dorion, "La littérature québécoise contemporaine, 1960-1977. II. Le roman," Études françaises 13 (3-4): 325 (octobre 1977).

³⁵Albert Léonard, "Un romancier virtuose," in Les Critiques de notre temps et le nouveau roman (Paris: Editions Garnier Frères, 1972), p. 165.

ambivalent fashion, Tétu has called attention to "l'abus des citations" while admitting that in general such citations are quite plausible.³⁶ According to Jean Bélanger, "Hubert Aquin s'amuse presque, pourrait-on dire, à ensevelir son lecteur sous une multitude de notations historiques, médicales et autres".³⁷

Mélançon, for his part, observes:

On peut y voir la manifestation d'un plaisir de citer pour le plaisir de citer ou d'une fascination pour les listes et les catalogues puisque ces noms qui n'apparaissent qu'une seule fois, ces apaxs pourrait-on dire, paraissent gratuits dans une perspective fonctionnelle, puisqu'ils viennent gonfler anarchiquement la somme des informations que le lecteur doit maîtriser et qu'ainsi ils viennent perturber le processus de déchiffrement du texte par une sorte de brouillage, par un bruit continu de parasites. On les rencontre de place en place comme des corps étrangers à la trame du récit et, faute de pouvoir les identifier tous sans consulter interminablement des atlas et des dictionnaires biographiques (entreprise décevante dans la mesure où elle se révèle fastidieuse et peu utile, sinon nuisible puisqu'elle entraîne sur de fausses pistes, à l'intelligence du texte), on les reçoit comme interchangeables, équivalents les uns aux autres. Cette impression se trouve confirmée par le plaisir qu'Aquin semble éprouver à évoquer un même lieu ou un même personnage sous différents noms ou sous différentes formes de son nom, brouillant volontairement les pistes, égarant le lecteur.³⁸

The comments of Tétu, Bélanger and Mélançon fail to take into consideration what we have already observed, in our analysis of Trou de mémoire, about the nature and function of footnotes. Like footnotes, the bibliographical references in L'Antiphonaire

³⁶ Michel Tétu, "L'Antiphonaire," Livres et auteurs québécois 1969, p. 28.

³⁷ Jean Bélanger, "L'Antiphonaire," Etudes françaises 6(2): 215 (mai 1970)

³⁸ Robert Mélançon, "Le Téléviseur vide ou comment lire L'Antiphonaire," Voix et images 3(2): 252 (décembre 1977)

draw attention to the faulted authority present in the work. However, Mélançon does go on to show how the accumulation of names, when linked to the two major story lines, tends to interrupt the linear succession of events as well as to remind the reader that he is in the process of reading. That is to say, the constant allusion in L'Antiphonaire to writers is a metatextual device designed to call attention to the inability of the reader to abstract himself successfully from the world outside the novel. Everything is designed to emphasize that artifice which we call WRITING.

As is the case in Trou de mémoire, one faces the problem of the viability and desirability of actually verifying the multitude of authors and works to which Aquin/Christine alludes.³⁹ Cagnon's response to this question is closely allied to the position which has been adopted in this study in regard to Aquin's second novel:

Apocryphal text(s): whether or not the numerous Medieval and Renaissance authors named or alluded to in L'Antiphonaire can be aligned on a curve of historical authenticity is irrelevant, as is the veracity of the texts quoted and attributed to them, and indeed of the very text(s) titled L'Antiphonaire. Aquin's anti-phonally grafted passages, concepts, and schema are legible and visible in the manner of textual puzzle or scriptural game. The text mocks its own "irritating overabundance of unverifiable historical references" (207) and Chigi-Beausang-Zimara's "translations, adaptations, plagiarisms . . . which still remain unauthenticated" (219).⁴⁰

³⁹For example, examination of Library of Congress' National Union Catalog reveals that Alexander of Aphrodisias did write commentaries on Aristotle and that men such as Alexander of Hales, Marsilio Ficino, and Simon Stevin also existed. On the other hand, Lucilio Vanini did not die in 1532 but was strangled and burned at Toulouse; de Calcar was Jan Stephen van Calcar; and Francesco Patrizi's surname has been misspelled as has Andrea Cesalpini's.

⁴⁰Maurice Cagnon, op. cit., p. 7.

Cagnon also notes that this collage of references is a variant of "parody-caricature" -- a literary device which Aquin favors in his works.

In returning to our diagram of some of the more obvious interrelationships within the novel, one notices the importance of the journal(s). What would seem to be a reasonably straightforward situation -- Jules-César Beausang has written a journal which has been edited and then published by Leonico Chigi, and later read and interpreted for us by Christine Forestier -- becomes a complex fusion of writing subjects. Chigi, as it would seem from the novel, is the real source of Christine's information, rather than Beausang. Once this has been established and Chigi then becomes the focus of narrative attention, it is not hard for the reader (and Christine's narratee as well, one would imagine) to follow his travels and adventures under various assumed guises.

Christine, on the other hand, has enormous difficulties in differentiating between the sixteenth-century scholar, his editor, and his publisher. If we examine her references, we find

Beausang--du moins, tel qu'il est dit dans le livre	p. 133
Beausang-Chigi	p. 134, 135
Chigi-Beausang	p. 134, 135, 151, 152, 154, 159
Chigi (son double)	p. 134
Leonico Chigi-Beausang	p. 134, 150
Leonico Chigi (alias Beausang)	p. 152
Leonico Chigi (dit Beausang)	p. 153
l'abbé Leonico Zimara de Turin	p. 178
l'ancien prêtre turinois (ou le nouveau Zimara)	p. 179

notre Chigi (alias Beausang, alias l'assassin de Genève)	p. 179
le prêtre turinois (Chigi-Zimara)	p. 191
le grand Chigi (alias Jean-William, alias Beausang, alias Léonard de, alias Alfarabi . . .)	p. 209
ce cher Zimara	p. 234
Zimara (alias Chigi)	p. 234
Zimara (ou le pseudo-Zimara)	p. 234
notre cher Zimara-Chigi	p. 234

Christine's problem would seem to be the result of a relationship to which we, as readers, are not witnesses. It is not illogical to assume that both Beausang's and Chigi's journals are written in the first person and that subsequently each talks about himself as existing in a time prior to the journal entries. Thus the "I" of the narrator of what Genette calls an autodiegetic narrative⁴¹ is not the same "I" as the subject of the events which are narrated. Although each "I" is the same person of the verb, i.e. first person, and represents the fictional character, the "I" of the discourse is different from the "I" of l'histoire.

Here we have an extradiegetic-homodiegetic narrator, i.e. a narrator who tells a story in which he was a participant and tells this story from a point in time beyond it. It is, if you will, a retrospective first-person narrative. Barthes explains:

. . . when the narrator is explicitly an I (which has happened many times), there is confusion between the subject of the discourse and the subject of the reported action, as if -- and this is a common belief -- he who is speaking today were the same as he who acted yesterday. It is as if there were a continuity of the referent and the utterance through the person,

⁴¹Gérard Genette, Figures III (Paris: Seuil, 1972), p. 253.

as if the declaring were only a docile servant of the referent.⁴²

Thus one ignores the fact that the telling of a tale is as least as important as the tale itself. Barthes continues:

When a narrator recounts what has happened to him, the I who recounts is no longer the same I as the one that is recounted. In other words -- and it seems to me that this is seen more and more clearly -- the I of discourse can no longer be a place where a previously stored-up person is innocently restored.⁴³

In looking at the case of the sixteenth-century journal(s), we find that the natural dichotomy between the "I" who speaks and the "I" who acts is further complicated by the fact that the original narrating "I" (Beausang) has been superseded by a second narrating "I" (Chigi), pretending to be the first: "Chigi imitant les grandes périodes de Beausang avait intégré l'oeuvre frelatée à son propre récit" (p. 133).

Since we never actually read the sixteenth-century works, we are very much dependent upon Christine's interpretation. As their narratee, she has chosen to respond to these journals by re-writing them in twentieth-century mode, e.g. by adopting modern dialogue:

-- Eh bien voilà... Oui, dit Chigi, j'étais en train de recevoir sa confession... Mais, vous comprenez, le secret du confessionnal m'empêche de...

-- Oh, ça, je le comprends, dit le sergent, mais... vous pouvez, j'imagine, me décrire comment la scène s'est passée après...? (p. 92)

The anachronistic nature of the dialogue and descriptions

⁴²Roland Barthes, "To Write: An Intransitive Verb," The Structuralists From Marx to Lévi-Strauss, eds. Richard and Fernande DeGeorge (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1972), p. 162.

⁴³Ibid.

filtered to us by Christine is further underscored by virtue of the fact that terms such as "police" and "policier" (p. 93) did not even exist at the historical moment in which the exchange between Chigi and the police is said to have occurred. "Police" came into usage, in its modern sense, in 1606; "policier" occurs, in its modern acceptation, around 1790.⁴⁴

In returning to our problem of the "I" who speaks and the "I" who acts, we find that Christine has attempted to resolve the problem of Chigi as extradiegetic-homodiegetic narrator by assigning him different "titles" based upon the various roles which he has assumed both as writer and as participant in l'histoire.⁴⁵ We have already looked at these titles on pages 166 and 167 of this study. There would seem to be an assumption on the part of Christine that the assuming of a new name modifies not only the I who acts (Chigi has to pretend to be a sixteenth-century scholar and medical practitioner called Beausang) but also the I who speaks. For example, Christine observes:

A croire, dut se dire le jeune prêtre, que la fréquentation de gens de mauvaises moeurs ne fait qu'entraîner une sorte de processus contagieux (mot de Beausang, qu'il a sans doute pris dans le vocabulaire de grand médecin dont il se voulait la réincarnation). (p. 136)

Certainly the author/editor of a journal who is first introduced to us as "l'abbé Leonico Chigi", reading the Theatrum chemicum, is not the same character who dies from syphilis under the guise of "l'abbé Leonico Zimara de Turin". Modifications in the narrating

⁴⁴Paul Robert, Dictionnaire alphabétique et analogique de la langue française, V (Paris: Société du Nouveau Littre, 1962), pp. 449, 451.

⁴⁵Cf particularly pages 134-135 of L'Antiphonaire.

"I" can only be guessed at inasmuch as we have no access to the actual journals.

Christine's modification, as we have already observed, has consisted of her evolution from reader to writer. She draws upon her readings to help structure her own approach to the writing process:

Artiste rompu aux diverses techniques de l'écriture, Chigi s'évertua à inventer des histoires fictives et, d'autre part, il me semble avoir tellement mieux réussi lorsqu'il s'est adonné à son autobiographie. Cette technique qui lui venait peut-être de la lecture quotidienne de son bréviaire (soit: un chapitre par jour) ressemblait à une technique de fragmentation; ainsi, Chigi composait son récit autobiographique en plusieurs fragments (ou tableaux) mal reliés les uns aux autres, disloqués, disjoints. L'ensemble donne une forte impression de discontinuité, de découpage brutal! Rien n'est plus étrange que cette manière discordante qui brise encore plus qu'elle ne compose et qui défait, au fur et à mesure, le peu qui a été assemblé. A mes yeux, ce procédé n'a rien de privatif ou d'inefficace dans la confection d'un livre quel qu'en soit le sujet; il pourrait s'agir tout aussi bien d'un traité scientifique que d'un livre de fiction, la lecture n'en serait pas plus difficile parce que l'auteur aurait utilisé cette méthode de fragmentation. Du moins, c'est ce que je crois bien naïvement. Peut-être suis-je en train de projeter sur la méthode employée par Chigi parce que sa vision atomisée de la réalité et la façon qu'il a de la représenter me conviennent personnellement? Rien d'autre. Je suis fragmentaliste . . . (pp. 217-218)

Previous discussion in this chapter has dealt with Christine's difficulties in defining her role as writing subject. As an autodiegetic narrator, she is necessarily fragmentaliste, i.e. her approach reflects an inherent dichotomy in je constituted as the writing subject. Following Genette's analysis, the narrating "I" belongs to the extradiegetic level or the level of discourse whereas the experiencing "I" belongs to the

intradiegetic level of l'histoire.⁴⁶ The I/narrator recounts the story of the I/character; however, since they are generally separated by time, and always by function within the narrative text, they are not the same "I". The I/narrator will elucidate what the I/character will experience, since the latter does not yet possess a privileged perspective.

"The I of the one who writes I," according to Barthes, "is not the same as the I which is read by thou."⁴⁷ The "I" which experiences is a creation of the "I" which narrates, in the same way that events and existents are a creation of the I/narrator.⁴⁸ An early classic example is to be found in Dante's Divina Commedia. In looking at the opening lines of Canto I of the Inferno, we find:

Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita
mi ritrovai per una selva oscura
che la diritta via era smarrita.

Ah quanto a dir qual era è cosa dura
esta selva selvaggia e aspra e forte
che nel pensier rinnova la paura!
(I, 1-6)⁴⁹

Midway along the journey of our life
I woke to find myself in some dark woods,
for I had wandered off from the straight path.

How hard it is to tell what it was like,
this wood of wilderness, savage and stubborn
(the thought of it brings back all my old fears)⁵⁰

⁴⁶Gérard Genette, Figures II (Paris: Seuil, 1969), pp. 202, 212.

⁴⁷Barthes, op. cit., p. 163.

⁴⁸Chatman, op. cit., p. 19.

⁴⁹Dante Alighieri, Inferno, ed. Natalino Sapegno (Firenze: La Nuova Italia, 1968).

⁵⁰Dante Alighieri, Dante's Inferno, trans. Mark Musa (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1971).

Various narrative devices which we have previously discussed in relationship to Aquin's work are certainly in evidence, e.g. the use of the reflexive to establish the *io* both as subject ("[io] ritrovai") and object ["mi"] in the past. The interjection "ah" reminds the reader of the presence of a narrator who functions within a present in which he is writing: how hard it is now ("è cosa dura") to say what it was like then ("qual era"). The use of annominatio,⁵¹ e.g. "selva" and "selvaggia", and of polysyndeton (e . . . e) underscores the narrator's attempt to verbalize what he has experienced as a protagonist.

There is, of course, considerably more that one might add to the above discussion of the first Canto. However, within the context of this study, the point has simply been to show that "il dualismo fra il personaggio e il poeta" is not a new concern.⁵² Rousset, for example, did a very interesting study in the 1960's of the works of Marivaux, in which he introduces the useful concept of the "double registre".⁵³ Marivaux's work, Rousset argues, tends to show us both the novel as a created product and the process by which it is created. Whether the author interrupts the narration in order to speak directly to the reader or to one of his characters, or whether he interrupts in order the more fully to introduce himself, the author is establishing "le double registre

⁵¹ Thomas G. Bergin, An Approach to Dante (London: The Bodley Head, 1965), p. 280.

⁵² Antonino Pagliaro, "Il proemio del poema sacra," Lectura Dantis Mystica (Firenze: Olschki, 1969), p. 23.

⁵³ Jean Rousset, Forme et signification (Paris: Corti, 1963), pp. 45-64.

du récit et du regard sur le récit."⁵⁴ In the case of La Vie de Marianne, Marianne is a "spectator character" in that she judges and comments upon her past experiences:

... La Marianne du présent a pour la Marianne du passé le regard d'un auteur pour un personnage dont il connaît la destinée et qui lui est à demi étranger; narratrice d'elle-même, mais d'une elle-même éloignée, elle intervient constamment dans son récit, comme le faisait l'auteur de Pharsamon; elle se commente et se juge comme il commentait et jugeait ses héros; elle se regarde en spectatrice, comme le faisait le narrateur des Lettres contenant une aventure. A la fois complice et détachée, elle est en mesure d'interpréter et de traduire en clair ce que son coeur vivait confusément.⁵⁵

The narrator-character becomes his own spectator.

In returning to Dante, we find that the opening line of the Inferno is of particular interest as regards L'Antiphonaire. On the one hand, the poem actually begins in medias res; on the other hand, although Christine opens her récit with "ici débute le livre que j'ai constitué" (p. 17), the fact that one has already read a chapter by an unidentified narrator creates an impression in the reader, by the time the latter reaches the second chapter, of also having started in medias res.

Recalling Christine's use of reflexive verbs ("je m'apprête", "je m'en éloigne", "je me meus", p. 17) and the resulting establishment of a split (subject/object) in the narrator, we may then regard Christine's act of writing as an attempt to know herself. When compared with Trou de mémoire, for example, L'Antiphonaire is far more self-directed than directed outwards. Like Dante's "selva", Christine's world reflects a state of mind

⁵⁴Ibid, p. 50.

⁵⁵Ibid, p. 52.

characterized by uncertainty, doubt, anguish and, above all, the frustration of writing. "Quanto a dir qual era è cosa dura" becomes in twentieth-century French Canada:

c'est moi qui ne saurai jamais vous dire
tout ce qui s'est passé p. 68

les mots que je tente d'aligner sur le
papier p. 196

inutile aussi de vous faire revivre ce
que j'ai vécu p. 210

It is interesting to note that, along with the various dichotomies established in the text, Christine herself divides her writings into two elements: "thèse" and "livre". For example, on various occasions she writes:

j'ai perdu mon sujet de thèse quelque part p. 18

Quand j'ai commencé ma thèse sur ce sujet p. 39

(ma recherche pour la rédaction de ma thèse) p. 83

jamais je ne finaliserai cette thèse p. 131

la thèse que j'avais entreprise p. 138

je ne publierai jamais ma thèse p. 176, 181

while on other occasions we find:

J'ai commencé ce livre sans raison p. 44

j'ai fini le dernier chapitre de ce livre p. 197

Je reconnais que ce livre (le mien) . . . p. 207

ce livre qui me tue p. 217

Theoretically the "thèse" is based upon her research on medicine in the sixteenth century, whereas the "livre" deals with Christine's personal life. However, as Patricia Smart observes, "Christine begins to compose a novel that will be a giant jigsaw puzzle made up of the fragments of her life and of her

research".⁵⁶ The clear distinction, made at the beginning of the novel, between Christine's journal and the sixteenth-century story gradually disappears as the novel progresses. This "disintegration" parallels the writer's sense of her own "disintegration":

je me désintérais	p. 78
je me désintègre	p. 213, 237

The relationship between the sixteenth and twentieth-century manuscripts has been studied in some detail by various critics. In a recent work René Lapierre examines the way in which "la thèse manquée" is a simple symptom of the crisis in which Christine is about to become involved. Her failure both in her work and her life quickly causes her to abandon herself to writing.

Les multiples versions de l'histoire de Christine, d'Antonella, de Renata et de Suzanne (qui apparaît plus tard dans le roman) commencent ainsi à se répondre et à se mêler, à se disjoindre et à se superposer; c'est le croisement de toutes ces voix qui crée peu à peu, à la manière des univers dédoublés de tous les autres romans d'Aquin, la texture du récit, son chant antiphonique.⁵⁷

Beverley Smith, in a review of Alan Brown's translation, provides a fairly lengthy plot summary and then concludes that the plot, which is quite complex in its own right, is only part of what the novel is all about. The plot, i.e. Christine's "adventures", serves as the backdrop for the counterplot, i.e. the events of the sixteenth century. Smith does make some erroneous statements about the novel, e.g. the attribution of the death of

⁵⁶Smart, op. cit., p. 314.

⁵⁷René Lapierre, L'Imaginaire captif: Hubert Aquin (Montreal: Quinze, 1981), p. 94.

both Beausang and Chigi to syphilis (Beausang dies, in fact, from typhoid). On another occasion she equates the counterplot with Beausang's life-story. However, as we have already demonstrated, Beausang quickly drops out of the picture in the course of the novel; it is Chigi who, with Antonella, becomes the real focus of interest. Notwithstanding these oversights, Smith is quite right in calling our attention to the "multi-layered fabric" with which Aquin invites the reader to unravel.⁵⁸

Bourneuf, for his part, states: "L'Antiphonaire présente peut-être deux versions de la même destinée individuelle dans deux contextes historiques différents. L'alternance montre donc ici l'identité des situations existentielles et la relativité de nos systèmes de pensée."⁵⁹ Christine discusses the fate of various historical figures in the light of her own experiences and, inversely, her own readings become superimposed on that experience in such a way that her perception of it is greatly modified. Bourneuf notes that "parfois les événements du contre-récit vont annoncer ceux qui se passeront dans le récit principal, celui-ci se trouvant donc 'en retard' , , , En d'autres occasions, le contre-récit renvoie l'écho d'événements qui ont eu lieu dans le récit principal."⁶⁰ According to Merivale, the material of Christine's thesis turns into a fiction which assumes

⁵⁸Beverley Smith, "Through the Looking Glass," Books in Canada 2: 4 (1973)

⁵⁹Roland Bourneuf, "Un procédé narratif: les récits alternés," Canadian Review of Comparative Literature 2: 133 (1975)

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 137.

the shape of her own story.⁶¹

Keypour in a recent article has created a schéma in which he categorizes events according to whether they fit into one of three categories: ". . . nous appellerons A l'ensemble des faits se rapportant à l'année 1969; B, ceux se rapportant au XVIIe siècle ($--\rightarrow a$ et $--\rightarrow b$ étant respectivement la transition vers A et B); C, tout élément atemporel."⁶² According to an analysis of the novel's contents based upon these categories, he has derived 44 "séquences", of which the first 13 may be represented as:

Séquences	Axes	Pages
1	A B C	9-16
2	A B	17-23
3	C A $--\rightarrow b$	25-28
4	B	29-33
5	B $--\rightarrow a$	35-40
6	A $--\rightarrow b$	41-51
7	B	53
8	B C $--\rightarrow a$ B	55-64
9	A	65-72
10	A	73-82
11	B	83-86
12	B	87-95
13	A	97-106

The first sequence is the only one of the 44 which contains all the categories. This is logical inasmuch as the first chapter of L'Antiphonaire, in its introductory capacity, presents all the various elements which will be developed later as the novel progresses.

⁶¹Patricia Merivale, "Neo-Modernism in the Canadian Artist-Parable: Hubert Aquin and Brian Moore," Canadian Review of Comparative Literature 6: 196 (1979)

⁶²Keypour, op. cit., p. 121.

Although initially B is more frequent than A, actually A appears a total of 31 times in the novel while B appears only 15 times. This, according to Keypour, "proves" that Christine's major concern is to write about the sixteenth century while keeping in mind her own life. For this reason she shifts insensiblement from the past to the present and vice versa.

Category C is also not without importance:

Les séquences conceptuelles C ont un rôle formel important. Elles présentent, à la lecture, le défilé des événements, à la manière des pages descriptives ou des analyses psychologiques et sociales des romans traditionnels; elles permettent d'éviter ce qu'aurait d'artificiel l'alternance de A et B; et, elles voilent la concordance ou le voisinage des faits semblables dans les deux intrigues. En même temps, elles campent tant soit peu les personnages dans leur époque, les étoffent; et, par l'abondance des dates, références et citations, elles augmentent la crédibilité accordée au manuscrit de Jules-César Beausang. C'est là aussi que Aquin introduit ses propres vues sur le roman, le style et les procédés narratifs.

Chronique du XVII^e siècle et autobiographie ne restent alternées que d'un point de vue purement formel. En fait, le contenu du texte montre, et l'auteur l'a consciemment voulu, que les deux développements entretiennent un rapport d'échange et de fusion, ce qui conduit à une analyse des rapports du réel et de l'imaginaire, et enfin, au sens esthétique immanent au roman.⁶³

Iqbal, for her part, has chosen to analyse L'Antiphonaire in terms of the importance of memory: "Bref, l'Antiphonaire situe dans le champ de la mémoire l'activité scripturaire mais, tout en désignant qu'il est mémoire, il affirme qu'il est de concert trou de mémoire."⁶⁴ That is to say, memory is mentioned

⁶³Keypour, op. cit., p. 123.

⁶⁴Françoise Maccabée Iqbal, Hubert Aquin romancier (Quebec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1978), pp. 207-208.

because the novel shows obvious traces of previous récits, e.g. the plethora of writers whom Aquin cites, as well as traces of a rhetoric and technique of composition which go back to the medieval period. For this reason, Iqbal speaks of a "mémoire des âges."⁶⁵ The lapse of memory, or "trou de mémoire", manifests itself in the sense that the various reminiscences are not structured in terms of any kind of logical order but tend rather to appear in a somewhat haphazard fashion.

Iqbal's concluding remarks have, among other things, briefly addressed the relationship between Aquin's perceptions of "la remémoration panoramique" and those of Jorge Luis Borges. Undoubtedly anyone already familiar with the Argentinian's writings cannot help but note certain affinities with the writings of the French-Canadian novelist. Certainly the citing of spurious and doubtful works as well as the emphasis upon a spy story/detective novel format in Prochain épisode (and continued in Trou de mémoire and L'Antiphonaire) have very Borgesian overtones.

While Iqbal has chosen to employ the term "memory", we would prefer to talk about "mediation", in the sense that all writing is mediated by previous writing. As T.S. Eliot has shown, there is an historical sense which compels poets (read "writers") to write within the whole of literature:

. . . the historical sense compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order. . . . No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone.

⁶⁵Iqbal, op. cit., p. 208.

His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists. You cannot value him alone; you must set him, for contrast and comparison, among the dead. I mean this as a principle of aesthetic, not merely historical, criticism.⁶⁶

There is a dialogue of texts inherent within that text with which the reader is interacting.

E.M. Forster approaches the problem in a different manner but with similar results. He argues against chronological comparisons; we cannot, he maintains, consider fiction by periods. Instead he suggests that one consider a more suitable image: that of all novelists writing their novels at once. We are asked to imagine all novelists working simultaneously in a kind of external version of the reading room of the British Museum:

Empires fall, votes are accorded, but to those people writing in the circular room it is the feel of the pen between their fingers that matters most. They may decide to write a novel upon the French or the Russian Revolution, but memories, associations, passions, rise up and cloud their objectivity, so that at the close, when they re-read, some one else seems to have been holding their pen and to have relegated their theme to the background.⁶⁷

That "someone else" is their self, but a self which carries within it the mark of untold generations.

Both Borges and Aquin are concerned with metafiction or what del Río defines as "reflexive fiction . . . : fiction about fiction; fiction raised to the Nth power whose square root is fiction."⁶⁸

⁶⁶T.S. Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent", Selected Essays 3rd ed. (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), p. 14.

⁶⁷E.M. Forster, Aspects of the Novel (London: E. Arnold, 1927), p. 34.

⁶⁸Carmen M. del Río, "Borges' 'Pierre Menard' or Where is the Text?", Kentucky Romance Quarterly 25: 459 (1978). Del Río's commentary has provided the basis for the subsequent discussion of Aquin.

Borges' classic example is undoubtedly his short story entitled "Pierre Menard, autor del Quijote",⁶⁹ which consists of an article written by an anonymous narrator in defence of Pierre Menard, his recently deceased literary precursor. Other members of Menard's circle had already kept alive the memory of the insignificant details of his literary activities, to which the narrator refers as his "visible" works, i.e. the works which Menard published. The narrator then reveals what he considers to be Menard's most important plans, his "subterranean" activities. Menard's secret project was to rewrite Don Quijote word for word, but only a few passages of Menard's Don Quijote survived him. Whereas the narrator recognizes the work of a genius in comparison with the original, the reader simply notes that Cervantes' text and that of Menard are verbally identical!

As del Río observes, Borges invents a writer of the Quijote just as Cervantes invented a writer of the Quijote.⁷⁰ Both authors then proceed to make their respective writers' texts the object of their own narratives which, by their very nature, have to be a metanarrative, which not only proposes itself as fiction, but also and simultaneously as a commentary on fiction/on itself.

The parallels with L'Antiphonaire now begin to emerge. Aquin's creation, Christine Forestier, is apparently writing a critical essay about a particular author, Jules-César Beausang, and his literary creation. The introduction of Beausang's name in the company of so many historical beings creates the illusion

⁶⁹Jorge Luis Borges, Ficciones (Buenos Aires: Emecé, 1956), pp. 35-47.

⁷⁰del Río, op. cit., p. 461.

of verisimilitude. Of course, the conscientious reader, who is quite content to accept Christine as a literary construct, will discover on investigation that Beausang, together with all his literary works, is an invention of Aquin as well. That is to say, Jules-César Beausang exists only within the frame of criticism. His existence is totally textual; he himself is a text. This discovery in turn has implications for the criticism/discussion (Christine's commentary) itself.

As in Borges' case with "Pierre Menard", not only do we have a critical frame "framing"⁷¹ fiction and vice versa, but also and simultaneously we are confronted with a fictional frame framing itself ad infinitum.⁷² In a study of Virginia Woolf's novel Between the Acts, Barbara Babcock-Abrahams analyses the phenomenon of "reflexivity" in fiction; she notes that "Quotation from and allusion to other writers constitutes a dialogue with other literary texts and creates within the narrative an intertextual space which comments both backward to the original text and forward to the present narrative scene."⁷³ In L'Antiphonaire the reader experiences a similar phenomenon, i.e.

⁷¹Boris Uspensky, Poetics of Composition, trans. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1973), p. 145. Uspensky defines a frame: "The transition from the external to the internal point of view and vice versa may be considered as a natural frame in painting. The same phenomenon may be noted in a literary work."

⁷²del Río, op. cit., p. 460.

⁷³Barbara Babcock-Abrahams, "The Spectacle of Fabrication: Between the Acts's Mirror of 'Making Up'," Virginia Woolf: The Forms and Facts of Fiction, ed. Ralph Freedman (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), p. 9. These bibliographical details have been supplied by del Río, op. cit., p. 468. However, we have been unable to verify the existence of this particular work.

the interaction within a single text of a narrative which is both a story and simultaneously a commentary upon another story. Del R  o aptly describes the effect for the reader as one of "literary vertigo".⁷⁴

Aquin's reader is forced to experience the intertextual (or "multitextual" as del R  o would call them) relationships. The reader experiences the text as text: he experiences not only the relationship of the text to himself and/or to the author/narrator but also the relationships of the text to itself as it is reflected in other texts. A result of these multitextual convergences and intersections within a single text is the creation of an intertextuality as defined by Julia Kristeva in her essay "Probl  mes de la structuration du texte". Kristeva defines a text as "productivity", as a permutation of texts, an intertextuality. She goes on to say that "Le mode concret de r  alisation de l'intertextualit   dans un texte pr  cis donnera la caract  ristique majeure ("social", "esth  tique") d'une structure textuelle."⁷⁵ In Borges' case, the manner of realizing the intertextuality is absolutely literary; the novel is perceived as a literary phenomenon.

In L'Antiphonaire Aquin is constantly requiring that the reader recognize the act of reading, writing and elucidation as symbols for the metareality which he tries to represent. Everything is calculated to underline the inherent bookishness of the work. As Tamayo and Ruiz-D  az have rightly said of Borges'

⁷⁴Del R  o, op. cit., p. 461.

⁷⁵Julia Kristeva, "Probl  mes de la structuration du texte," Collection "Tel Quel" (Paris: Seuil, 1968), pp. 229, 311.

frequent quotations: "To quote is equivalent to interrupting the syntactical direction with the interpolation of a foreign fragment. Interruption and distraction are two qualities inherent in citation."⁷⁶ The interruption, fragmentation and deflation produced by footnotes is constantly working to break through our conventional response to literature. Every time another book is cited, another footnote added or another quotation inserted, the reader is momentarily taken aback: the spell is broken. The reader realizes that he is reading: the illusion is destroyed.

Aquin does what Juan Goytisolo maintains about Cervantes: "From the very beginning of the work, Cervantes invites us to contemplate it not as a tranche de vie or a piece of reality, but as a literary object . . ." ⁷⁷ And John Updike notes that such a phenomenon is the "answer to a deep need in contemporary literary art -- the need to confess the fact of artifice."⁷⁸ This need to "confess the fact of artifice" makes Aquin's literature a highly reflexive, self-directed process.

While Aquin may not actually subscribe to Borges' perception of the experience of the world/reality as a text which men read and simultaneously write, his conception of reading and writing have produced an extremely reflexive, creative fiction. Del Río's comments about "Pierre Menard" are equally applicable to L'Antiphonaire:

⁷⁶ Marcial Tamayo and Adolfo Ruiz-Díaz, cited by Christ, op. cit., p. 111.

⁷⁷ Julio Ortega, "An Interview with Juan Goytisolo," Texas Quarterly 18: 69 (1975)

⁷⁸ John Updike, "The Author as Librarian," The New Yorker, p. 246 (30 October 1965)

When we, readers, enter these textual worlds or worlds of textuality, we find ourselves at the locus where fiction converges on fiction, texts converging on texts creating a space of meaning, a space where the signifier and the signified are in a tense, dynamic, reflexive relationship.⁷⁹

In discussing L'Antiphonaire in terms of the relationship between the sixteenth and twentieth-century texts, one needs also to examine the role of the postface(s). Chesneau has attempted to put the postface into some kind of perspective by noting its inherent weaknesses as well as its strengths:

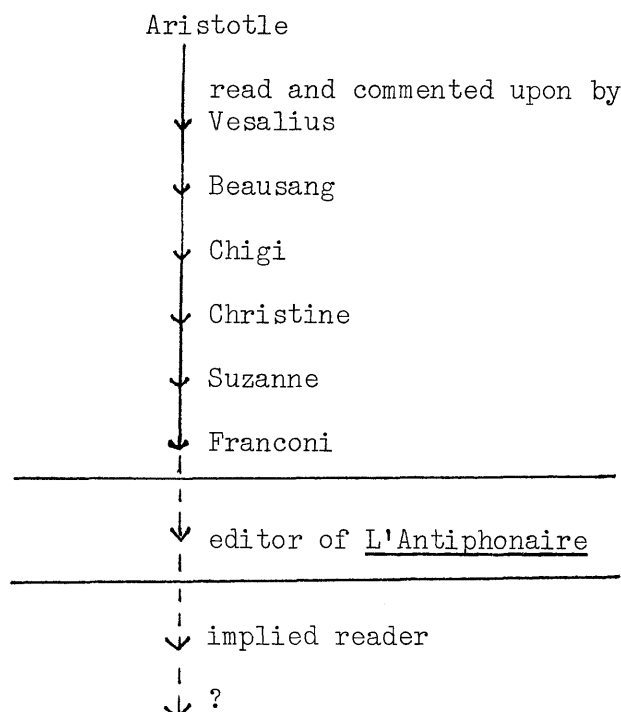
L'existence même de cette Postface pose un problème, car elle n'était pas artistiquement nécessaire, le drame qui fait le sujet du livre se dénouant automatiquement à la mort de Christine. Toutefois la Postface a au moins deux mérites. En premier lieu, elle affirme la toute-puissance du schéma générateur: la lecture, faite par Suzanne, d'un manuscrit où est raconté un viol pousse un homme à se tuer. Les trois éléments de la séquence funeste se retrouvent ici. En second lieu, la Postface opère un relais du schéma, qui se met à jouer pour d'autres personnages et à un autre degré. Le texte maléfique a subi ici une sorte de dégénérescence, l'obscur manuscrit de Christine remplaçant les "livres rares" qu'elle cite. Néanmoins, la dégénérescence ne fait pas obstacle à la transmission de l'effet funeste, ce qui souligne encore le pouvoir du schéma.⁸⁰

Thematically there are obvious links to the main text: Suzanne and Albert's trip to California parallels that of Christine and Jean-William; Albert and Suzanne have gained access to Christine's manuscript and have provided additional information in the same way that Zimara and Chigi have added "facts" to Beausang's. Thus we see an additional emphasis upon the role of the intratextual reader, i.e. narratee. As each "reader" confronts a manuscript, he

⁷⁹Del Río, op. cit., p. 466.

⁸⁰Albert Chesneau, "Déchifrons [sic] L'Antiphonaire," Voix et images 1(1): 31-32 (septembre 1975)

comments upon the text and thereby creates another one, which is then read by someone else who in turn makes his comments, and so forth. Within L'Antiphonaire we can actually start with Aristotle and map a linear sequence which tentatively ends with Franconi:



The solid arrow indicates the way in which writing is mediated by previous texts; each text as it is confronted and subsequently reproduced by the next reader/commentator becomes a "new text". Each new reader is concerned in the novel with "une quête forcenée des faits".⁸¹ As in Trou de mémoire there is an obsession for presenting Truth which results in a rewriting of the text at hand. Each intratextual reader (i.e. narratee), with his need to tell "all the facts", necessarily becomes a writer/"scripteur" (i.e. narrator). The broken lines indicate processes which occur intra as well as extratextually. The fact that

⁸¹Keypour, op. cit., p. 127.

L'Antiphonaire exists implies the presence of an intratextual editor who has gathered together Christine, Suzanne and Franconi's writings.

Therefore, having now examined the writing processes which have created the novel, we may postulate an unidentified editor as the author of the first chapter. The editor need not be Aquin, which premise opens up possibilities for additional commentary upon the text by someone else who can add yet more "information". As Aquin has demonstrated in his works, there is always someone who can do this.

We have seen earlier in this chapter the manner in which Christine places part of the burden of creating her text on her narratee. Extratextually the implied reader stands as another source of meaning. His ability to postulate relationships between "facts" which may not always be readily apparent to the characters (or even the implied author!) leads to the possible creation of yet another "new text". Critical articles and books are excellent examples of this process.

In developing further this idea of the new (yet old) text linked to memory, it is again useful to refer to Borges and more specifically to his ability to play with his public by mixing the planes of reality and fiction and by creating situations in which life consciously copies literature.

Borges has disconcerted his reader by showing him "the perturbing spectacle of the inverse temporal flow, of the presently existing future, of a life which is wholly in the past, and of a past which is illusory or easy to erase or transformable at

will."⁸² He has offered us a world in which Time possesses many branches and Man lives an infinitely increasing number of lives or the repeated circles of the Eternal Return which converts men into automatons dedicated to copying the same gestures for the nth time.

Borges has depicted characters who do not recognize in works of art the symbols of their own destiny. Such a one is the protagonist of "La espera" ("The Wait"), who sees files about the life of a rogue without recognizing them as proclamations of his own end or reads the Divine Comedy without seeing in it a premonition of his infernal sorrows. In "El jardín de senderos que se bifurcan" ("The Garden of Forking Paths"), Yu Tsun, lost in the labyrinth of his destiny, recalls another labyrinth, the one created by his ancestor Ts'ui Pên; in "Los teólogos" ("The Theologians") there are two enemies, one of whom sends the other to the stake. And then they discover that they are the same man. For Borges the universe is a labyrinth multiplying itself in infinity. In "Las ruinas circulares" ("The Circular Ruins"), a man, through his dreams, invents another man, only to discover at the end that he, in turn, is not real either: a more powerful mind than his is inventing him.

To the bifurcation of times, Borges has added two other intertwined themes -- infinite multiplication (plurality of worlds) and determinism.⁸³ For example, the Argentinian writer

⁸²Ana María Barrenechea, Borges, The Labyrinth Maker, trans. Robert Lima (New York: New York University Press, 1965), p. 111.

⁸³Barrenechea, op. cit., p. 110.

see the possibility of the nonexistence of that which had been and also the infinite consequences of the modification of a single event in the past. In short, to undermine the reader's belief in the concreteness of life, Borges attacks those fundamental concepts on which the security of living itself is founded: the universe, personality, and Time.

Of particular interest in our study of L'Antiphonaire is Borges' concern for cyclical time. Certainly, in Aquin's third novel, the coupling of men and women in the same time frame (Christine/Jean-William, Christine/Robert, Renata/Carlo Zimara, Antonella/Chigi, Beausang's wife/Beausang, Suzanne/Robert, and Suzanne/Franconi) is contrasted with antithetical as well as analogous situations which link both past and present.⁸⁴ For example:

<u>Present</u>	<u>Past</u>
epileptic man (Jean-William)	epileptic woman (Renata)
woman violated by men (Christine → druggist + Franconi)	woman violated by men (Renata → Zimara + Chigi)
<u>man</u> beats his <u>wife</u> , kills a <u>rival</u> , renders wife's <u>lover</u> impotent	<u>woman</u> beats and kills <u>husband</u> , sends <u>rival</u> to her death, takes rival's potential <u>lover</u> as her own (Antonella + Zimara + Renata + Chigi)
(Jean-William + Christine + druggist + Robert)	man kills consort's lover (Chigi → Antonella's lover)
man kills wife's lover (Jean-William → druggist)	<u>wife</u> abandons <u>husband</u> for someone else (Antonella → Zimara → Chigi)
<u>wife</u> abandons <u>husband</u> for someone else's husband (Christine → Jean-William → Robert [Suzanne]) (Suzanne → Robert → Franconi [Mrs. E. Taylor])	

⁸⁴Iqbal, op. cit., pp. 201-202.

woman reads scholar's
manuscript
(Christine — → Beausang)

man reads scholar's
manuscript
(Chigi — → Beausang)

We have already discussed this last situation in some detail earlier in this chapter.

Maurice Cagnon has described L'Antiphonaire as a "collage" in which space-time shifts and palimpsests (Italy, Switzerland, France/California, Canada; Middle Ages, Renaissance/present day) function as metamorphoses or doubles. He gives as examples: California/Christine as victim (of Jean-Williams's epileptic violence and of pharmacist Gordon's rape) = Italy/Renata as victim (of epilepsy and of printer Zimara's and priest Chigi's rape); California, Canada/Christine as scholar-scriptor = Switzerland, France/Chigi as scholar-scriptor; chemist Jules-César Beausang's writings (a scholarly and autobiographical mixture titled "Treatise of New Illnesses"), his flights, exile, and death = Doctor Christine Forestier's projected dissertation ("Medical Science in the 16th Century," its academic discourse gradually dismissed in favor of her autobiography), her flights, exile, and death.⁸⁵

There are those who view Christine as the present-day alter ego of those very personages about whom she has read or whom she has invented. Mélançon points out that Christine as writer and doctor is interested in the character of another medical writer, Beausang; both Christine and Antonella are notable for the number of sexual partners with whom they take up.⁸⁶ Christine herself describes Renata Belmissieri as her

⁸⁵Cagnon, op. cit., pp. 7-8.

⁸⁶Mélançon, op. cit., p. 248.

double: "Pauvre Renata Belmissieri, mon double, cette jeune fille qui me sert de personnage-victime . . ." (p. 29).

For the reader there is a sense of history repeating itself, of life copying literature. Borges' quotation from Marcus Aurelius underlines this concept of cyclical or circular time: "I remember that all things revolve, and revolve again through the same orbits, so it is all the same for the spectator to see the orbit in one century or in two or for infinity."⁸⁷ This is not to say, of course, that the cycles need be identical but rather that they be at least similar. The repetition of events and/or personality traits, whether it be exact or only slightly different, collapses time and plunges us into "the eternity of the present."⁸⁸ Dates, e.g. 16th versus 20th century, become meaningless in view of history's perpetual repetition of itself.

Linked to the repetition of actions and characters is the use of allusion, which also collapses time. As we have previously seen, allusion tends to minimize the time separating the works as well as the individuality of their respective authors. According to Ronald Christ, "allusion unites text and reference in a point of time and space which eliminates both the separateness of the

⁸⁷Ronald J. Christ, The Narrow Act: Borges' Art of Allusion (New York: New York University Press, 1969), p. 20.

⁸⁸Christ, op. cit., p. 23. Mélançon, for his part, writes: "Cette alternance des deux histoires et la multiplication des symétries peut faire penser qu'Aquin a tenté d'exprimer une conception cyclique de l'histoire" ("Le Téléviseur vide . . .," p. 249). Bourneuf notes that "les événements vécus par les personnages du XVIIe siècle semblent appeler irrésistiblement une répétition moderne dans le destin de Christine comme si l'Histoire n'était qu'un éternel recommencement" ("Un procédé narratif . . .," p. 137.

passages and of their authors."⁸⁹ The plethora of literary allusion in L'Antiphonaire telescopes time and creates the illusion of a single text captured in an eternal present.

⁸⁹Christ, op. cit., p. 34.