INTRODUCTION

Malraux has commented that Western civilization is the only
one which has slain its gods without replacing them with others.
According to the Peruvian novelist Mario Vargas Llosa, the
appearance of the novel is to a certain extent the result of that
"crime."[1] Since the time of medieval romances, the novel has had
some of its most resounding successes precisely when the reality
which inspired it was on the verge of collapse, when the society
which served as its source and paradigm was dying. The literary
worlds of Tolstoy, Proust and Kafka, for example, have been
inspired by societies in periods of decadence immediately
preceding historical collapse.

Vargas Llosa hastens to add that this relationship between
the historical evolution of a society and the refinement of its
novelistic expertise is a "predominant tendency" rather than a
dogmatic formula. He continues:

> This tendency may be defined by asserting that the most
> propitious moment for the development of prose fiction
> is when reality ceases to have precise meaning for a
> historic community because the society's religious,
> moral, or political values, which once provided the
> foundation for social life and the master key for
> perceiving reality, have entered upon a period of
> crisis and no longer enjoy the faithful support of the
> collectivity . . . . [Great novels] appear . . . when
> the erosion of the old order permits the community to
> perceive only confusion and chaos in the reality that
> surrounds them.[2]

[1]Mario Vargas Llosa, "The Latin American Novel Today:
Introduction," Books Abroad 44(1): 12 (Winter 1970).

[2]Ibid, pp. 12, 15.

Thus he sees this crisis of faith as awakening an intense need for fiction, i.e. for narrative images capable of creating a new reality. The Peruvian then proceeds to demonstrate how the fact that Latin American countries today are experiencing the most disturbing crisis in their history has contributed to the development of the "new" Latin American novelists, e.g. Carlos Fuentes, Manuel Puig, Severo Sarduy, García Márquez.

The tendencies described by Vargas Llosa need not, however, be limited to a discussion of Latin America. Various Canadian critics have drawn similar analogies to the political, social and cultural realities of Quebec as well. Patricia Smart, for example, has written: ". . . le Québec est en train de vivre une époque de transition, qu'il se tient précairement entre sa propre mort et la possibilité d'une résurrection ou d'une nouvelle naissance."[3] Gilles de La Fontaine speaks of "la thématique nationale, aussi constante que diverse, [qui] reflète les complexités et avatars d'une conscience collective trouble en état d'émergence."[4] Roland Bourneuf describes "la recherche d'une identité nationale et d'un destin collectif au Québec."[5]

Following Vargas Llosa's analysis, it is not surprising that these social, political and cultural phenomena should have

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[3]Patricia Smart, Hubert Aquin, agent double: la dialectique de l'art et du pays dans "Prochain épisode" et "Trou de mémoire" (Montreal: Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1973), p. 12.

[4]Gilles de La Fontaine, Hubert Aquin et le Québec Montreal: Parti pris, 1977), p. 107.

[5]Roland Bourneuf, "Formes littéraires et réalités sociales dans le roman québécois," Livres et auteurs québécois 1970, p. 265.

a literary counterpart.[6] In late 1965 Gilles Marcotte was to

write enthusiastically:

> Le premier roman de la saison littéraire est une
> bombe. On a beau faire, analyser, revenir sur le
> malaise qu'en suscite à plusieurs reprises la lecture,
> on n'arrive pas à récuser l'évidence qui s'était
> imposée au premier contact: "Premier [sic] épisode",
> roman de Hubert Aquin, est l'une des oeuvres
> littéraires les plus singulières, les plus richement
> écrites, qui aient vu le jour au Canada français.
> Voici un livre qui crée, avec une puissance explosive,
> sa propre forme. Nous ne sommes pas dans le roman
> traditionnel, et nous ne sommes pas non plus chez
> Robbe-Grillet ou Claude Simon.[7]

Acknowledging the anxiety ("l'inquiétude") which Aquin's first

novel must inevitably arouse in its reader, Marcotte continues:

> Si le roman de Hubert Aquin est révolutionnaire, il
> l'est au premier chef par rapport au sujet, en ce sens
> que s'y exerce, par les voies de l'imaginaire, la
> critique radicale d'un homme et de sa situation, de
> son monde. Ce monde étant le Canada français, figure
> immédiate de sa passion, mais aussi le lieu plus vaste,
> et en même temps plus intérieur, où il doit affronter
> ses démons.[8]

André Bertrand, for his part, says of Prochain épisode: ". . .

il ne fait pas de doute pour nous qu'Hubert Aquin signera tout

à l'heure quelques-unes des oeuvres marquantes de notre

littérature."[9]

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[6]Bourneuf (op. cit., p. 265) refers to "le changement
dans la conception du récit romanesque."

[7]Gilles Marcotte, "Une bombe: Prochain épisode," in
Hubert Aquin, Dossier de presse 1965-1980 (Sherbrooke:
Bibliothèque du Séminaire de Sherbrooks, 1981), no page
number given.

[8]Ibid.

[9]André Bertrand, "Prochain épisode de H. Aquin," in
Hubert Aquin, Dossier de presse, no page number given.

Françoise Iqbal has called Aquin the "grand-prêtre de
l'écriture."[10] The amount of discussion which his work has

provoked (as evidenced in the annotated bibliography at the

end of this study) as well as the literary prizes which were

bestowed upon him underline the impact which he has had upon

contemporary French-Canadian literature.[11] As Iqbal observes,

while at first glance his four novels may appear quite

dissimilar, they treat two themes -- revolution and writing --

which arise from a need to confront inherent tensions within

social, political and cultural infrastructures.[12]

In terms of the political and ideological content of

Aquin's work, much has already been written. Gilles de La

Fontaine's Hubert Aquin et le Québec, for example, analyses

Aquin's links to a national and cultural "reality" and

attempts to prove that Quebec constituted the major source of

his narrative inspiration.[13] In addition to the book already

cited, Patricia Smart has more recently written an article in

which she, unlike La Fontaine, views Aquin's last two novels

as apocalyptic visions of Western culture rather than

[10]Françoise Iqbal, "Hubert Aquin, grand-prêtre de
l'écriture," Québec français no. 24: 23 (décembre 1976).

[11]Aquin completed four novels: Prochain épisode
(Montreal: Le Cercle du Livre de France, 1965), Trou de
mémoire (Montreal: Le Cercle du Livre de France, 1968),
L'Antiphonaire (Montreal: Le Cercle du Livre de France,
1969), and Neige noire (Montreal: Pierre Tisseyre, 1974).
In 1969 he refused the Prix du Gouverneur-General for
Trou de mémoire. In 1970 he was awarded the Prix du
Québec for L'Antiphonaire, while in 1973 he received the
Prix David for his works to date. For Neige noire he
received the Prix de la Presse in 1974 and the Grand Prix
de la ville de Montréal in 1975.

[12]Iqbal, op. cit., pp. 23-28.

[13]La Fontaine, op. cit.

nationalist works.[14] Because of the extensive treatment already
given to the political aspects of Aquin's writings and also on
account of our remoteness from the political scene in Quebec,
this study concentrates, not upon "revolution", but rather upon
"writing/écriture". And while a text cannot be isolated from
the social, political and cultural environment in which it is
constituted, it may reveal from within itself much about its
own texture as well as the processes which helped to create it.

In 1968 Aquin addressed the specific problem of the
relationship between literature and its intended public: "A
ce point, la littérature doit accrocher le lecteur autrement
qu'en le bombardant de messages et qu'en lui dictant, mot à
mot, une version incontestable de la vie."[15] He believes that
literature, released from being "une entreprise de signification,"
should free itself from all formal or social constraints, in the
same way that the Quebec people were attempting to free themselves
from the "tutelage" of Ottawa.

A year later the novelist was to describe literature as an
"exchange" between reader and writer, the success of which
depends upon the degree of involvement and comprehension on the
part of the reader.[16] Writers are the very incarnation of the
nothingness ("le néant") about which they write; their task is
to give form to the internal emptiness which they expose, while

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[14]Patricia Smart, "Culture, Revolution and Politics in
Quebec," Canadian Forum 62(718): 7-10 (May 1982).

[15]Hubert Aquin, "Littérature et aliénation," Blocs
erratiques, ed. René Lapierre (Montreal: Quinze, 1977), p. 129.

[16]Hubert Aquin, "La mort de l'écrivain maudit," Blocs
erratiques, p. 148.

fervently hoping that their eventual public will find some

pleasure in the results: "à vous d'en décider péremptoirement,

cher lecteur, oui à vous de prononcer le verdict qui décidera

de mon sérieux et de mon authenticité."[17]

Five years later, Aquin explored in greater depth the

nature of the relationship between writer and reader and, more

specifically, between himself and his own public. Negating the

importance of writing as an outlet for the unconscious, the

novelist instead attributes to writing a communicative function:

it carries messages and articulates discourse in such a way as

to have more impact upon a "possible" reader. Literature is,

says Aquin, by its very nature intended to be read by someone

other than its own author:

> Il me paraît important d'insister sur l'altérité du
> lecteur, car cette altérité du lecteur atteste que
> l'écriture est une réalité vectorielle. L'écrit est
> toujours adressé à quelqu'un, à une personne collective,
> à un lecteur souvent improbable et imprévisible.
> L'écriture, si insensée soit-elle à certains égards, a
> toujours un sens. Elle est dirigée vers un lecteur-juge
> qui confère de la valeur à ce qu'il reçoit et condamne
> au néant ce qu'il rejette.[18]

Writing, he continues, is an inverse reading while reading is

inverse writing:

> L'écriture: une lecture inversée, cela veut dire,
> dans la pratique, que je suis préoccupé jusqu'à
> l'obsession par le lecteur. En écrivant, j'imagine que
> je me lis par les yeux de cet inconnu et je voudrais
> que son plaisir de lire mon texte ne soit pas uniforme,
> constant, prévisible en quelque sorte, mais avec
> plusieurs seuils d'intensité, enrichissant, capable de
> le surprendre, voire de l'ébranler et difficile à prévoir.

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[17]Hubert Aquin, "Propos sur l'écrivain," Blocs
erratiques, p. 261.

[18]Aquin, "La disparition élocutoire du poète
(Mallarmé)," Blocs erratiques, p. 263.

> Quand j'écris, je pense au lecteur comme à la moitié
> de mon être, et j'éprouve le besoin de le trouver et
> de l'investir.[19]

This preoccupation with the reader arises from a belief that literature fully exists not when the work has been written but rather when the reader absorbs the text, thereby becoming a co-creator.

Aquin is also concerned with the problem of "le moi", i.e. himself constituted as writing subject. Literature is viewed as an attempt to create a "jointure entre le moi et le néant."[20] He continues:

> Le texte s'écrit continuellement dans le texte
> ou le long des marges d'un autre texte. Le moi est
> un intertexte, la conscience du moi un commentaire
> désordonné -- marginalia parfois indiscernable mais
> pourtant toujours formante, instauratrice.[21]

At the same time, the novelist decries the position of the author in contemporary Quebec novels; novels have, according to Aquin, become "contaminated" by the author's presence to the extent that the reader is forced to play a kind of game which consists of either liking or detesting the personality of the author. Thus,

> J'en viens à préconiser une pratique de l'absence
> de telle sorte que les livres ne deviennent pas
> indiscernables à force d'être englués. A la limite,
> je me demande si la grande innovation littéraire ne
> serait pas de revenir à l'anonymat... A lecteurs
> anonymes, auteurs anonymes...[22]

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[19]Hubert Aquin, "La disparition élocutoire du poète (Mallarmé)," p. 263.

[20]Hubert Aquin, "Le texte ou le silence marginal?," Blocs erratiques, p. 269.

[21]Ibid, p. 271.

[22]Aquin, "La disparition élocutoire du poète (Mallarmé)," p. 267.

Several years later, he was to say in an interview with Gilles
Dorion: "Pour ma part, je ne peux pas imaginer que l'auteur
d'un livre soit pris pour le personnage qu'il met dans le
livre, sans tenir compte de l'humour, de l'ironie qu'il a
utilisée pour glisser le personnage dedans."[23]

In terms of Aquin's comments above, it is interesting to
note that three of his four novels are characterized by overt
narration, i.e. narration in which the speaker, or narrator,
readily reveals his presence.[24] In addition, we find various
first-person narrators, who are not merely eyewitnesses but
are also involved and implicated in the events which they
narrate. Their presence, as senders of messages, implies the
presence of receivers of messages, i.e. readers.

The nature of the relationship between author and reader
and, more especially, between narrator and narratee (concepts
which will be more fully developed in Chapter 1) has hitherto
not been subjected to any deep analysis. To the best of the
present writer's knowledge, no study has been made specifically
on the relationship of the narrator to narratee in Aquin's
novels. For this reason, we have paid close attention to this
particular sender and receiver pair. As the title of this
thesis indicates, we have discussed only three of Aquin's four
novels: Prochain épisode, Trou de mémoire, and L'Antiphonaire.
Since the principal area of investigation is the "je"
constituted overtly as writing subject and since Neige noire

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[23]Gilles Dorion, "Hubert Aquin: Entrevue," Québec
français, no. 24: 22 (décembre 1976).

[24]Seymour Chatman, Story and Discourse (Ithaca, NY:
Cornell University Press, 1978), p. 33.

is characterized essentially by so-called "third-person"

narration, we have chosen not to examine Aquin's fourth novel.[25]

Our approach is based upon the research done by Gerald

Prince in the area of narratology.[26] The first chapter is a

survey and synthesis of the recent work of such narratologists

as Prince, Gérard Genette, Seymour Chatman, and Susan Suleiman,

and includes a discussion of Iser's conception of the implied

reader. In addition, the thesis draws upon the writings of

Roland Barthes, Wayne Booth and Umberto Eco. Numerous French-

Canadian critics have been consulted as well, including

Françoise Maccabée-Iqbal, Patricia Smart, Gilles de La Fontaine,

and René Lapierre.

Hubert Aquin has also written commentary on his own texts.

While these comments are very valuable indeed, they shall not

constitute the deciding authority for textual interpretation.

As Robert Crosman so aptly observes:

> The idea that as readers we are constrained in our
> interpretations by the author's own interpretation is
> shot through with insuperable difficulties. For most
> texts we simply do not have such a statement from the
> author on its meaning. If we do have such a statement,
> it is apt to be ambiguous or contradictory, and it
> must be subjected to the same process of reader
> interpretation that we were trying to avoid in the

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[25]While according to Genette, as we shall observe in
Chapter 1, all narrating is by definition to all intents and
purposes presented in the first person, the fact still remains
that in Neige noire, unlike Aquin's three other novels, the "I"
is never vocalized. Cf Gérard Genette, Figures III (Paris:
Seuil, 1972), p. 252.

[26]"The French -- with their new-found etymological
enthusiasm -- have coined the word narratologie, the study of
narrative structure." Chatman, op. cit., p. 9.

first place.[27]

Therefore, the critical methodology employed is that of textual analysis. While we have assumed that no text is read independently of the reader's experience of other texts, we have tried to bypass problems associated with the figure of the author as well as other criteria _exterior_ to the text, and instead to focus our attention _on_ the text.

In our discussion of Aquin's novels, we have examined the circulation and exchange of narrative information. Chapter 2, for example, looks at the overt "I" narrator of _Prochain épisode_ as being a fusion of two narrators, each of which has his corresponding narratee. Particular attention has been paid to the way in which the implied reader becomes involved in the generative process of the text. In the case of _Trou de mémoire_, the roles which the narratee and implied reader assume are determined by the efforts of the various narrators within the novel to establish themselves as the overriding authority for the text. In _L'Antiphonaire_, on the other hand, each successive narrator acts as a filter for the previous narrator's work. In the final chapter, we have examined the intratextual grouping of four major participants in each of Aquin's novels -- implied author, implied reader, narrator, and narratee -- in terms of Renaissance geometrical logic.

Our study concludes with an annotated bibliography. Again, to the best of this writer's knowledge, no critical annotated

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[27]Robert Crosman, "Do Readers Make Meaning?," _The Reader in the Text_, eds. Susan Suleiman and Inge Crosman (Princeton, NJ: University of Princeton, 1980), p. 161.

bibliography about Aquin has yet been produced. Furthermore, we have sought to divide critical works by type. For example, books which specifically discuss Aquin and/or his work have been distinguished from those which only mention him briefly; interviews have been annotated separately from articles. The bibliography also includes annotations for those general works consulted specifically for this study.

Chapter 1

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE NARRATOR, NARRATEE AND IMPLIED READER

The basic fallacy of most literary criticism is, as Macherey
has observed, that there is a "hidden kernel", i.e. a single meaning,
around which a literary work has been constructed.[1] By some
marvelous process, commentary goes right to the heart of the text
and "delivers its secret". In point of fact, there is no hidden
centre to be exposed and explicated. Without involving ourselves
unduly with Macherey's theory of literary production, we would
simply point out that it is predicated upon the belief that a
literary text represents the writer's effort to say _something_ which
is, in actuality, never totally expressed. Thus one can readily
see the widespread application of psychoanalysis to literary
criticism techniques, especially as regards the unconscious.

This is not to say that certain forces cannot be discerned as
having had some influence on a text, e.g. language and style, history
and tradition.[2] However, Pingaud warns: "Ce qu'un écrivain veut
dire ne se confond jamais avec ce qu'il dit."[3] That is to say, along
with Macherey's absence or "decentred-ness", there is also implied

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[1] Pierre Macherey, _A Theory of Literary Production_, trans.
Geoffrey Wall (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), pp. 76-77.

[2] Roland Barthes, _Le degré zéro de l'écriture_ (Paris: Seuil,
1953), pp. 24-27.

[3] Serge Doubrovsky, _Pourquoi la nouvelle critique_ (Paris:
Mercure de France, 1968), p. 36.

the fallacy of applying a writer's comments about his literary

production or even a single text to his work, as if he were any

more privileged as a critic than others might be.[4]

Because of the ambiguity of writing and the polyvalence

which establishes it, each literary text offers several possible

readings, i.e. ways in which to approach the work. Treated as

an _object_, the text seems to "reveal" a new facet to each

approach, without one's ever having the sensation of having

understood its totality (which, in point of fact, does not exist

as a neatly definable entity).[5] In short, each reader confronts

a text for which there exists a multiplicity of points of view.

The text produces an emotional as well as conceptual response;

in studying the significance of the text, one examines one's

reaction, i.e. the modification in one's sensitivity/perception

which remains "engraved".[6]

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[4]The author of any text has his own perspective, as
evidenced when Richard Burgin, in conversation with Jorge Luis
Borges, comments upon one of the Argentine's most complex short
stories: "Just like in 'The Theologians', the two men were the
same to God." Borges: "Yes, that's true. I never thought of
that." Richard Burgin, _Conversations with Jorge Luis Borges_
(New York: Avon, 1968), p. 146. Barthes writes: "The Text
can be read without its father's guarantee: the restitution of
the intertext paradoxically abolishes the concept of filiation.
It is not that the author cannot 'come back' into the Text, into
his text; however, he can only do so as a 'guest', so to speak."
Roland Barthes, "From Work to Text," _Textual Strategies_, ed.
Josué Harari (London: Methuen, 1979), p. 78.

[5]Doubrovsky, op. cit., p. 43. "Les significations
psychiques, existentielles, métaphysiques, historiques, éthiques
. . . forment le tissu vivant de la littérature; et un texte
n'est rien d'autre, précisément, qu'une certaine _texture_."

[6]Dámaso Alonso, _Poesía española: ensayo de métodos y
límites estilísticos_ (Madrid: Gredos, 1971), pp. 24-25.

The present thesis proposes to examine specifically narrative

text. In his "Introduction à l'analyse structurale des récits,"

Barthes writes:

> De plus, sous ces formes presque infinies, le récit est
> présent dans tous les temps, dans tous les lieux, dans
> toutes les sociétés; le récit commence avec l'histoire
> même de l'humanité; il n'y a pas, il n'y a jamais eu
> nulle part aucun peuple sans récit; toutes les classes,
> tous les groupes humains ont leurs récits, et bien
> souvent ces récits sont goûtés en commun par des hommes
> de culture différente, voire opposée: le récit se
> moque de la bonne et de la mauvaise littérature:
> international, transhistorique, transculturel, le récit
> est là, comme la vie.[7]

"Any narrative," writes Holloway, "may be considered as a set of

items, whether characters, initial facts about them or their

setting, or events that happen to them."[8] Like Barthes, Prince

views narrative as the representation of real or fictive events

and situations in a time sequence.[9]

According to structuralist theory, each narrative text has

two essential parts: the story or content, i.e. the chain of

events (actions and happenings) as well as the existents

(characters and setting), on the one hand and the discourse, i.e.

the means by which the content is communicated, on the other.

As Chatman observes, "in simple terms the story is the what in a

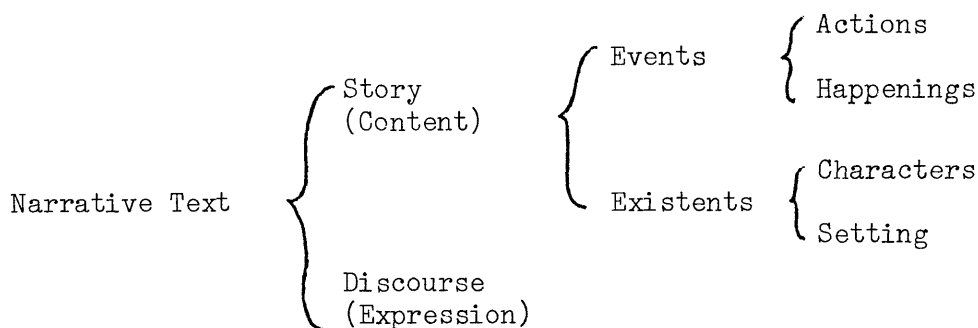narrative that is depicted, discourse the how."[10] We may

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[7]Roland Barthes, "Introduction à l'analyse structurale des récits," Communications 8: 1 (1966).

[8]John Holloway, Narrative and Structure: Exploratory Essays (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 75.

[9]Gerald Prince, Narratology: The Form and Functioning of Narrative (Berlin: Mouton, 1982), p. 1.

[10]Seymour Chatman, Story and Discourse (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1978), p. 19.

represent the above distinction as:

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                                              ⎧ Actions
                               ⎧ Events      ⎨
               ⎧ Story        ⎨               ⎩ Happenings
               ⎪ (Content)   ⎨
               ⎨              ⎩ Existents     ⎧ Characters
Narrative Text ⎨                            ⎨
               ⎪                             ⎩ Setting
               ⎪ Discourse
               ⎩ (Expression)
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Emile Benveniste's analysis of the difference between the

récit historique (historical narrative) and discours (discourse)

has undoubtedly provided much of the basis for Chatman's

discussion of this fundamental distinction.[11] In "Les catégories

du récit littéraire," Tzvetan Todorov defines the two as follows:

> Au niveau le plus général, l'oeuvre littéraire a deux
> aspects: elle est en même temps une histoire et un
> discours. Elle est histoire dans ce sens qu'elle
> évoque une certaine réalité, des événements qui se
> seraient passés, des personnages qui, de ce point de
> vue, se confondent avec ceux de la vie réelle. . . .
> Mais l'oeuvre est en même temps discours: il existe
> un narrateur qui relate l'histoire; et il y a en face
> de lui un lecteur qui le perçoit. A ce niveau, ce ne
> sont pas les événements rapportés qui comptent mais
> la façon dont le narrateur nous les a fait connaître.[12]

The function of language in communication has perhaps been

best explained by Roman Jakobson in his well-known analysis of

the six major elements:

> The ADDRESSER sends a MESSAGE to the ADDRESSEE. To be
> operative, the message requires a CONTEXT referred to
> . . . , seizable by the addressee, and either verbal
> or capable of being verbalized: a CODE fully, or at

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[11]Emile Benveniste, Problèmes de linguistique générale,
I (Paris: Gallimard, 1966), pp. 237-250.

[12]Tzvetan Todorov, "Les catégories du récit littéraire,"
Communications 8: 126 (1966).

least partially, common to the addresser and the addressee . . .; and finally, a CONTACT, a physical channel and psychological connection between the addresser and the addressee, enabling both of them to enter and to stay in communication.[13]

Since a narrative is a communication, it presupposes a sender/ addresser and a receiver/addressee. Senders may be further subdivided into the real author, the implied author, and the narrator (if any); receivers into the real reader, the implied reader, and the narratee (if any):[14]

Narrative text

Real author → | Implied author ⟶ (Narrator) ⟶ (Narratee) ⟶ Implied Reader | → Real reader
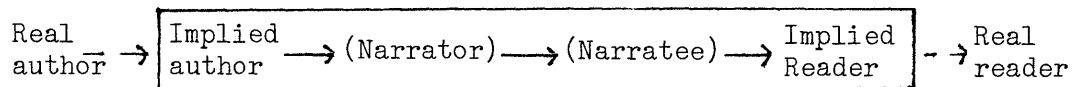
The real author and the real reader are flesh-and-bones individuals who sit at desks writing narratives or sit in arm-chairs reading them.

While most narratologists would probably affirm that, in a sense, the real author and real reader can communicate, it has become an established convention in the type of approach we are adopting to ignore the real author when discussing his text. No real author can be "present" in that text in the same way that a reader is "present" when he reads it. For this reason, Chatman has, in the above diagram, presented a communicative process in which both the real author and the real reader are outside the narrative transaction as such.

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[13]Roman Jakobson, "Linguistics and Poetics," Style in Language, ed. Thomas Seboeck (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1960), pp. 350-377.

[14]Chatman, op. cit., p. 151.

The term "implied author"[15] was recommended by Wayne Booth

to designate the creation by the real author, in the process of

writing, of an "implied version of 'himself'," an "official

scribe" or "second self":

> As he writes, [the real author] creates not simply an
> ideal, impersonal 'man in general' but an implied
> version of 'himself' that is different from the implied
> authors we meet in other men's works . . . . Whether we
> call this implied author an 'official scribe', or adopt
> the term recently revived by Kathleen Tillotson -- the
> author's 'second self' -- it is clear that the picture
> the reader gets of this presence is one of the author's
> most important effects. However impersonal he may try
> to be, his reader will inevitably construct a picture
> of the official scribe.[16]

The concept is more easily grasped if one studies different

narratives written by the same real author but presupposing

different implied authors. Booth suggests, for example, that

one examine the implied authors of Jonathan Wild, Amelia, and

Joseph Andrews.[17]

The implied author is "implied" because he is

reconstructed by the reader from the narrative. He is the

designer of the story; he has invented everything including

the narrator. However the implied author can tell us, the

real reader, nothing since he has no direct means of

communicating. His counterpart is the implied reader, i.e.

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[15]"Scriptor, as he is now called in France to reflect
his diminished authority." Vicki Mistacco, "The Theory and
Practice of Reading Nouveaux Romans: Robbe-Grillet's
Topologie d'une cité fantôme," The Reader in the Text, eds.
Susan Suleiman and Inge Crosman (Princeton, NY: University
of Princeton, 1980), p. 375.

[16]Wayne C. Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction (Chicago:
University of Chicago Press, 1961), pp. 70-71.

[17]Ibid., p. 72.

the audience presupposed by the narrative itself. Like the

implied author, the implied reader is always present.

As Robert Ellrich has pointed out in his study of Rousseau,

authors would hope to be writing for an ideal reader, who may be

defined as

> . . . a reader who feeds back only what is convenient
> and agreeable, who understands without effort exactly
> what the writer wishes him to understand, and who
> provides, so to speak, the fulfillment of the writer's
> every desire.[18]

Obviously such a reader is seldom in evidence. Therefore a

writer must have in mind an implied reader, whose attitudes and

responses he must attempt to control.

Wolfgang Iser, who has written extensively about the

concept of the implied reader, describes him in the following

manner:

> . . . the implied reader as a concept has his roots
> firmly planted in the structure of the text; he is
> a construct and in no way to be identified with any
> real reader.[19]

His is a role which the real reader is expected to assume and

which Iser defines as both a textual structure and a structured

act.[20] That is, when the real reader accepts this role, his

act of reading is not an arbitrary one; rather, it is

"structured" by the various perspectives which are immanent to

the text. Iser identifies two textual perspectives as

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[18]Robert J. Ellrich, <u>Rousseau and His Reader: The
Rhetorical Situation of the Major Works</u> (Chapel Hill, NC:
University of North Carolina Press, 1969), p. 22.

[19]Wolfgang Iser, <u>The Act of Reading: A Theory of
Aesthetic Response</u> (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University
Press, 1978), p. 34.

[20]Ibid, p. 35.

constitutive of the implied reader's role: those of the narrator
and of the "fictitious" or "intended" reader.[21]

Additional readers have been postulated, including the
actual reader, the archreader, the average reader, the competent
reader, the encoded reader, the imaginary reader, the mock
reader, the model reader, the postulated reader, the superreader,
and the virtual reader.[22] The proliferation of "readers" stems,
it would seem, from the inherent difficulty in defining and
describing the nature of the narrative's audience. This
difficulty has led to a confusing of the real and implied readers
with the narratee, a term first introduced and developed by
Gerald Prince,[23] and which will be examined shortly in more
detail.

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[21]In terms of discourse, Iser's "fictitious" reader is
synonymous with Chatman's "narratee".

[22]See, for example, Wayne Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction
(Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961); Jonathan Culler,
Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics and the
Study of Literature (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press,
1975); Stanley Fish, Self-Consuming Artifacts: The Experience
of Seventeenth Century Literature (Berkley, CA: University of
California Press, 1972); Wolfgang Iser, The Implied Reader:
Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction From Bunyan to
Beckett (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974).

[23]Roland Barthes mentions "le contact entre le narrateur
et le narrataire" ("Introduction à l'analyse structurale des
récits," Communications 8: 10 (1966)) but does not elaborate.
Gérard Genette also mentions "le narrataire" in Figures III
(Paris: Seuil, 1972), pp. 265-267. Prince's works include
"Notes Toward a Categorization of Fictional 'Narratees',"
Genre 4: 100-105 (1971); "On Readers and Listeners in
Narrative", Neophilologus 55: 117-122 (1971); his excellent
"Introduction à l'étude du narrataire," Poétique 14: 178-196
(1973); "On Presupposition and Narrative Strategy," Centrum
1: 23-31 (1973), and "Reading and Narrative Competence,"
L'Esprit Créateur 21: 81-88 (1981).

All narrative, by definition, implies at least the existence of a narrator -- someone who tells or speaks the story. That teller or speaker must be an "I" since "I" designates the one who speaks.[24] As Genette observes, from a linguistic point of view, given that the narrator can at any instant intervene as such in the narrative, every narrating is, by definition, to all intents and purposes presented in the first person.[25] Therefore the one speaking/telling/narrating is always the "I" even if that "I" is never vocalized.

In relation to this ever-present discursive "I", one finds Genette to be particularly helpful with his distinction between mood (mode) and voice (voix). He offers the following definitions:

> mode [mood] (relationships determined by the distance and perspective of the narrative with respect to the history); and . . . voice (relationships between the narrative and the narrating agency itself: narrative situation, level of narration, status of the narrator and of the recipient, etc.).[26]

Therefore according to Genette, mood addresses the question "Who is the character from whose point of view the narrative perspective is oriented?", while voice addresses the question "Who is the narrator?" On occasion narrative studies tend to confuse "Who sees?" with "Who speaks?"

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[24]Benveniste, op. cit., p. 228.

[25]Genette, Figures III, p. 252.

[26]Gérard Genette, "Time and Narration in A la recherche du temps perdu," in Aspects of Narrative: Selected Papers from the English Institute, ed. J. Hillis Miller (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), pp. 93-94.

Thus while the one who speaks is always "I", the one who

sees, i.e. the one from whose perspective the events are "seen",

may be someone other than the narrator. This has frequently

led to references to "third person narration". Rideout comments:

> What has traditionally been called a "third person
> narrative (or narrator)," then, is a narrative in
> which the one who sees is referred to in the third
> person as "he" or "she" and the one who speaks is
> unobtrusive almost to the point of silence.[27]

Furthermore, narrators may stand at different levels of

narrative. Genette distinguishes three narrative levels: the

extradiegetic, the intradiegetic and the metadiegetic. The

extradiegetic is that which could also be called the level of

discourse; it is external to the narrated events which make up

the story (what Genette calls the récit premier and Todorov

l'histoire) and pertains to their narration. The intradiegetic

level is that of the histoire or story, the events narrated in

the récit premier. And the metadiegetic level is a narrative

within a narrative (récit au second degré), such as a story

told by one of the characters of the récit premier or primary

narrative to an audience at the same level. Thus, the

narration of the récit premier is by definition extradiegetic,

while the narration of the metadiegetic level is by definition

intradiegetic.[28]

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[27]Phyllis Rideout, "Narrator/Narratee/Reader Relationships in First Person Narrative: John Barth's The Floating Opera, Albert Camus' The Fall, and Günter Grass' Cat and Mouse (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, Florida State University, 1981), p. 19.

[28]Gérard Genette, Figures II (Paris: Seuil, 1972), pp. 202, 212.

Assuming that there is only one narrative person, i.e. the first person, regardless of how invisible s/he may be, we can observe two different attitudes towards the narrated events -- heterodiegetic or homodiegetic.[29] A narrator is heterodiegetic if he is neither a participant in nor an observer of the narrated event. While the heterodiegetic narrator is a fictional construct at the level of discourse, he has never existed in the world of the _histoire_. A narrator is homodiegetic if he functions as a fictional personage at the level of the story as well as at the level of discourse. Additionally there are two varieties of homodiegetic narrator: the one who is also the protagonist of the story which he tells (whom Genette terms "autodiegetic")[30] and the narrator who is only a witness/observer of the events he relates.

Genette has further refined his categories of narrators:

1) the extradiegetic-heterodiegetic (a narrator who is external to the _histoire_ and not a character in it, commonly the silent or occasionally intrusive "I" of the authorial omniscient narrator, e.g. Homer in the _Iliad_).

2) extradiegetic-homodiegetic (a narrator who tells a story in which he was either an observer/witness or a participant from a point some time beyond it. This constitutes a retrospective first-person narrative, e.g. Gil Blas).

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[29] Ibid, p. 202.

[30] Genette, _Figures III_, p. 253.

3) intradiegetic-heterodiegetic (a character in the histoire who tells a tale within the primary narrative and in which he has no part, e.g. Scheherazade).

4) intradiegetic-homodiegetic (a character at the level of histoire who becomes a narrator in the second degree by telling his own story, e.g. Ulysses in Books IX-XII of the Odyssey).[31]

Both Iser and Booth make a distinction between the man who writes the book (real author), the man whose attitudes shape the book (implied author), and the man who communicates directly with the reader (narrator).[32] The narrator is the speaker or the one currently "telling" the story as opposed to the implied author who decided whether to have a narrator and, if so, how prominent he should be. An unmediated narrative which does not give the sense of the narrator's presence or which has gone to lengths to efface it, may be called, according to Chatman, "nonnarrated" or "unnarrated".[33] And just as there may or may not be an overt narrator, there may or may not be an overt narratee, i.e. the narrator's interlocutor. Within the story, the narratee performs as audience for the narrator; he is the one (or ones) to whom the narrator specifically addresses himself. And just as the narrator may or may not ally himself with the implied

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[31]Genette, Figures III, pp. 255-256.

[32]Iser, The Implied Reader, p. 102. As we shall see in our discussion, "reader" as used here is equivalent to Prince's "narratee".

[33]Chatman, op. cit., p. 33.

author, the implied reader furnished by the real reader may or may not ally himself with the narratee.

Susan Suleiman has recently proposed that a "moratorium" be placed on the concept of the implied reader and that more attention be paid to the narratee, the actual reader, and to the possible relationships between them. She affirms: "As one actual reader I can testify that narratees are important to my own experience when I read. Indeed, that experience takes place in good part through them."[34] It is for this reason that more attention has been devoted in this first chapter to narrator/narratee than to author/reader.

As the addressee who decodes the message directed to him by the addresser or narrator, the narratee exists as a fictional construct within the story. And just as narrators may operate at different levels, so too may narratees. If the narrator belongs to the extradiegetic level of the narrative, so too will the narratee; in the same way, the narratee of an intradiegetic level narrator will function at that level.

As noted earlier, Iser does not speak of a narratee as such but rather uses the concept of "fictitious reader" to fulfill a similar function. This fictitious reader, whom he also calls the "intended reader", is essentially the one to whom the narrator addresses his story. Iser describes him as

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[34]Susan Rubin Suleiman, "Of Readers and Narratees: The Experience of Pamela," L'Esprit Créateur 21: 89-97 (1981).

. . . an embodiment of particular, contemporary
dispositions -- he is a perspective rather than a
person, and as such he takes his place alongside (and
intermingled with) the other perspectives of narrator,
characters, and plot. He incorporates specific
historical views and expectations, but only for the
purpose of subjecting them to the modifying influence
of all other interacting perspectives.[35]

In addition, Iser makes a distinction between the

fictitious/intended reader and the implied reader:

We must then differentiate between the fictitious
reader and the reader's role, for although the former
is present in the text by way of a large variety of
different signals, he is not independent of the other
textual perspectives. . . . The intended reader, as
supplier of one perspective, can never represent more
than one aspect of the reader's role.[36]

Iser, therefore, views the role of the implied reader as being

partially determined or structured by a variety of textual

perspectives, of which the fictitious reader, or narratee, is

but one. The fictitious reader/narratee is not the same as

the implied reader; rather he is only one aspect of the latter's

role. Chatman confirms this: "The narratee-character is only

one device by which the implied author informs the real reader

how to perform as implied reader, which Weltanschauung

to adopt."[37] Accordingly, the implied reader is a role which

the real reader must assume as he interacts with the narrative

text.

In order to facilitate discussion, Prince has postulated

a zero degree narratee,[38] a hypothetical construct who functions

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[35]Iser, The Act of Reading, p. 153.

[36]Ibid, p. 33.

[37]Chatman, op. cit., p. 149.

[38]Prince, "Introduction à l'étude du narrataire," p. 179-182.

as a composite of those characteristics which are common to all
narratees unles contraindicated by the text. We may summarize
these features as the ability to understand the language of the
text; sufficient knowledge of the grammar and syntax of the
language in order to understand the message; a basic knowledge
of the rules which control the construction of a story; capacity
for logical reasoning; and the ability to remember everything
that the narrator tells him so that he knows when an event has
been foreshadowed or when the narrator has repeated a description.

In addition, Prince establishes certain limitations which
may be said to be common to all narratees, unless otherwise
indicated by the text. Unlike the implied reader, the zero
degree narratee is quite limited in his perspective on the text:

> Il ne manque donc pas de caractéristiques positives.
> Mais il ne manque pas non plus de traits négatifs. C'est
> ainsi qu'il ne peut suivre un récit que dans un sens bien
> défini, qu'il est obligé de prendre connaissance des
> événements en allant de la première page à la dernière,
> du mot initial au mot final. En outre, il est dépourvu
> de toute personnalité, de toute caractéristique sociale.
> Il n'est ni bon ni méchant, ni pessimiste ni optimiste,
> ni révolutionnaire ni bourgeois, et son caractère, sa
> place dans la société ne viennent donc jamais colorer sa
> compréhension des incidents qu'on lui décrit. D'ailleurs,
> il ne sait absolument rien des événements ou des
> personnages dont on lui parle et il ne connaît pas les
> conventions régnant dans le monde où ils prennent forme
> ou dans tout autre monde. Tout comme il ne voit pas ce
> que connote une certaine tournure linguistique, il ne se
> rend pas compte de ce que peuvent évoquer telle ou telle
> situation, tel ou tel fait romanesque. Les conséquences
> en sont fort importantes. Sans le secours du narrateur,
> sans ses renseignements et ses explications, il ne peut
> ni interpréter la valeur d'un acte ni en saisir les
> prolongements.[39]

Thus the narratee is very much confined to the structure of the
text as established and even interpreted by the narrator.

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[39]Prince, "Introduction à l'étude du narrataire," p. 181.

The notion of _vraisemblance_ does not concern the narrator's addressee. Since reality can only be judged by reference to another context, i.e. extratextual, and since the narratee exists only within the text, then he has no basis/experience upon which to "judge". Writing is necessarily mediated by previous writing; however, the zero degree narratee has no knowledge of previous writing.

At this point it is important to mention briefly the work which Piwowarczyk has done in revising and expanding Prince's definition of the zero degree narratee. Prince has suggested that because the zero degree narratee knows the language of the narrator, s/he also knows the referents of the sign in the language.[40] Piwowarczyk, through an examination of examples from _La Religieuse_, shows that knowledge of the referents of certain "marked" common nouns should not be assumed by the zero degree narratee, since such knowledge defines the narratee's familiarity with the practices of specific professions, creeds, classes, etc. In the case of proper nouns, knowledge of the referent must never be assumed; knowledge of the meaning of a proper noun can be granted only when such knowledge might be reasonably assumed by all competent speakers of the language.[41]

Based upon her modifications of Prince's criteria, she then outlines a "more complete" definition of the zero degree narratee:[42]

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[40]Prince, "Introduction à l'étude du narrataire," pp. 180-181.

[41]Mary Ann Piwowarczyk, "The Narratee and the Situation of Enunciation: A Reconsideration of Prince's Theory," _Genre_ 9: 165 (1976).

[42]Ibid, pp. 165-166.

Characteristics suggested by Prince	Modifications, clarifications, or additions

I. The degree zero narratee has perfect knowledge of:
  1) the language of the narrator
  2) the grammar of a story (intuitive knowledge of what constitutes a story)
	(limited by 3, 4, and 5)

II. The degree zero narratee has <u>no</u> knowledge of:	3) the referents of marked common nouns 4) the referents of proper nouns 5) the meaning of some proper nouns 6) any language other than that used to tell the story

7) connotations/implications of either a sign or a situation
  8) other texts
  9) the story prior to the telling of the story, including
    a) the events
    b) the characters	

	c) the locations d) the narrator
10) the conventions of the real world or the world of the story	

III. The degree zero narratee is:
  11) able to reason logically
  12) able to remember all that has been told
  13) obliged to follow the linear and temporal progression of the text
  14) without any particularizing social, personal or physiological characteristics which determine his/her identity	

	15) a participant in the situation of enunciation whose status and spatial-temporal location are undefined

According to the revised definition, the zero degree narratee possesses only those linguistic abilities which permit transmission and eventual comprehension of the text.

In returning to Prince's concepts, we find that there are various types of narratees, categorized by their degree of involvement in the text.[43] If a narrator has gone to great lengths to efface his presence, then his narratee will seem as "invisible" as the addresser. On the other hand, inasmuch as the narrator may write the story (especially if it is a diary) for himself, he may then be his own narratee.[44] A story may be addressed either directly or indirectly to a narratee, who may either be or not be a character within the story. It is also possible that a story may have two narratees, or the narrataire principal and the narrataire secondaire: "le narrataire à qui sont destinées toutes les narrations de tous les narrateurs, est le narrataire principal. Au contraire, le narrataire à qui une partie seulement des événements est racontée, le narrataire qui ignore certains faits plus ou moins importants, est un narrataire secondaire".[45] Miselis has postulated the interesting observation that in stories containing more than one narrator and narratee, it is possible that one narratee may actually be

[43]Prince, "Notes Toward a Categorization of Fictional 'Narratees'," p. 100.

[44]In anticipation of the observation that all writing is self-directed, Prince observes: "En un certain sens, tout narrateur est son propre narrataire. Mais la plupart des narrateurs ont également d'autres narrataires qu'eux-mêmes". "Introduction à l'étude du narrataire," p. 179.

[45]Prince, "Introduction à l'étude du narrataire," p. 190.

independent of the control of one of the narrators.[46] This will

be examined shortly in relation to Suleiman's recent work in this

area.

Inasmuch as the narrator must necessarily make certain

assumptions concerning the narratee's background and character,

he therefore forms a picture of that narratee to whom he tells

his story. Consequently the reader can then reconstruct that

portrait by compiling and analysing those assumptions as they

manifest themselves in the text. As Prince points out, although

each narratee is described on the basis of the zero degree

narratee, the text may negate some of those previously defined

characteristics. Thus it is the deviation from the zero degree

which helps to create the portrait of each specific narratee.[47]

The narratee may have a number of functions within the

narrative. One of the most important and obvious is that of

mediator: "Le rôle le plus évident du narrataire, un rôle qu'il

joue toujours en un certain sens, est celui de relais entre

narrateur et lecteur(s), ou plutôt entre auteur et lecteur(s)."[48]

Often his mediation comes through direct signals addressed to

him by the narrator which defend certain values, dispel

ambiguities, emphasize some events, justify certain actions or

underline their arbitrariness. At other times, when the

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[46]Karen L. Miselis, "The Narratee in the Novels of Albert Camus" (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1977), p. 19.

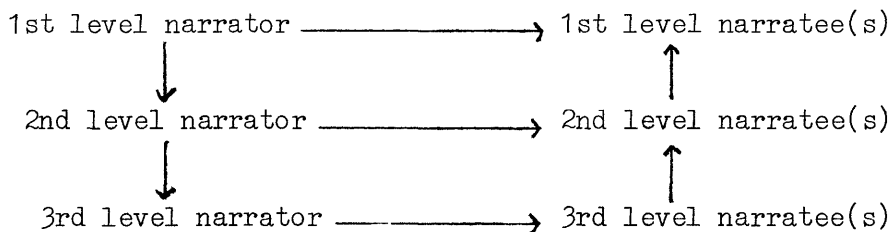[47]Prince, "Introduction à l'étude du narrataire," p. 190.

[48]Ibid., p. 192.

narratee appears to be absent or when his relationship to the narrator is developed in an ironic mood, his role as mediator is much more indirect. But if we consider the narratee (as we do the narrator) a fictional construct which is always theoretically present, then the text will always be in some degree mediated by a fictional receiver.[49]

More recently Suleiman has expanded upon Prince's ideas and has established categories of narratees according to the various possible levels of narration in a given work. These may be represented schematically as:[50]

Actual author ⟶ Actual readers (from author's contemporaries to present)

"Implied author" ⟶ "Implied reader"

1st level narrator ⟶ 1st level narratee(s)

2nd level narrator ⟶ 2nd level narratee(s)

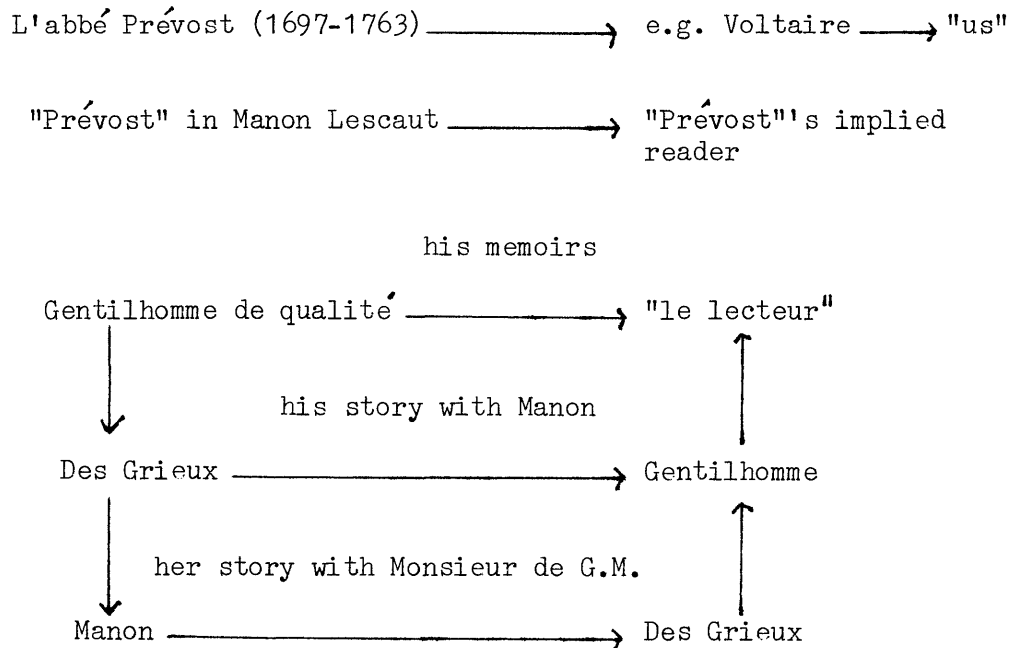3rd level narrator ⟶ 3rd level narratee(s)

According to Suleiman, the first level narratee receives the same story as the second level narratee but, at the same time, receives a story that the latter does not; the other levels function in a corresponding way.

As a concrete example, Suleiman applies her schéma to Manon Lescaut with the following results:

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[49]Rideout, op. cit., p. 49.

[50]Suleiman, "Of Readers and Narratees," p. 90.

L'abbé Prévost (1697-1763) ————————→ e.g. Voltaire ————→ "us"

"Prévost" in Manon Lescaut ————————→ "Prévost"'s implied
reader

his memoirs

Gentilhomme de qualité ————————————→ "le lecteur"

his story with Manon

Des Grieux ——————————————————→ Gentilhomme

her story with Monsieur de G.M.

Manon ——————————————————————→ Des Grieux

Each narrator addresses a more or less precisely defined narratee,

and each level of narrator is subordinated to another. For

example, the second level narrator is subordinated to (because

he is included in the narrative of) the first level narrator;

the third level narrator is subordinated in the same way to the

narrators of the other two levels. Suleiman observes: "What

is at stake here, then, is the circulation and exchange of

narrative information, with a hierarchy based on the

comprehensiveness of the information a given narrator sends and

a given narratee receives."[51]

In an earlier piece of writing,[52] Suleiman   developed

the concept of the first-level narratee, i.e. the one who

receives the whole narrative rather than just a part, as the

inscribed or encoded reader of the work. How then, she asks,

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[51]Suleiman, "Of Readers and Narratees," p. 91.

[52]Susan R. Suleiman, "Introduction: Varieties of
Audience-Oriented Criticism," The Reader in the Text, pp. 3-45.

does the notion of inscribed reader differ from Booth's notion
of the implied reader? The major difference is that the latter
functions as an "ideal" interpreter of the text, while the
former's place must be located "somewhere this side of
interpretation."[53] She continues: "An interpretation of the
work necessarily takes account of the inscribed reader, as well
as of narratees that may be present in the work on other levels,
but it treats the inscribed reader as simply one element among
other meaning-producing elements in the text (e.g., temporal
organization, variations in point of view, system of characters,
thematic structures)."[54] The inscribed reader therefore has no
privileged status as far as interpretation is concerned; a
description of the inscribed reader in a text permits a variety
of interpretations or even the possibility of offering no global
interpretations regarding the text at all. Booth's notion of
implied reader, however, necessitates a global interpretation
since the implied reader is expected to "agree" with the values
of the implied author. As Suleiman observes, these values
ultimately determine the meaning of the work as a whole.

We have already observed that Suleiman is uncomfortable
with the concept of the implied author and the implied reader.
Unlike the actual/real author and actual/real reader who exist
or have existed within the language of the text, the implied
author and his counterpart do neither. Instead they are elusive
interpretive constructs, who are as "fragile and vulnerable as

[53]Ibid, p. 14.

[54]Ibid.

interpretation itself."[55]

One can certainly have considerable sympathy for the concept of implied author. It forces us to confront the text and (especially if there is one) the "je" constituted overtly as writing subject. It helps us to avoid the pitfall of continually discussing Author X (who was born in 19--, loved his mother, hated his father, and died in 19--) as if that real author consciously projected his background into his text. At the same time, the construct of the implied author may reveal facets of Author X which no personal history might ever mention or even be aware of.

The implied reader is, in a sense, a more difficult and nebulous construct. It is all very well for us to talk about Hubert Aquin (real author) and Aquin (implied author), because we never knew him. He is therefore much more a fictional construct than a real person. But his addressee is us (among others). So that when critics discuss "the reader and the text" or "the narrative competence of readers", they are still talking about us (among others). Our reading of the text will be to a degree different from that of everyone else. As Meyerhoff notes, "I know who I am by virtue of the records and relations constituting the memory which I call my own, and which differs from the memory structure of others."[56]

Other readers (or the "Other Reader" as Italo Calvino

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[55]Ibid.

[56]Meyerhoff quoted by Iser, The Implied Reader, p. 145.

calls him)[57] may choose to furnish the implied reader presupposed by the implied author. However, we may choose, within certain limits,[58] to "read" the text in a way not originally intended by the author. For example, while Tasso may have intended us to read the _Aminta_ as a story of social oppression combined with an analysis of the influence of Love, we may choose to read it in terms of the negation of Self. Thus, while supplying a reading validated by the text, we are not, strictly speaking, supplying a reader presupposed by the author. In a sense, we have allowed the real reader to interfere with the role of the implied reader. It may be partly for this reason that Suleiman eschews that particular interpretive construct.

This thesis does not propose to study exclusively the relationship of the narrator with his narratee. Such a perspective would be both restrictive and reductive. It will be necessary at times to discuss the nature of Aquin's own relationship to his work. At other times we shall examine the experience of real readers, i.e. our own, that of individual critics, and a critical consensus of individual reading experiences.

Nevertheless, following Chatman's model of narrative communication, we find that, in general in Aquin's novels,

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[57]Italo Calvino, _If on a Winter's Night a Traveler_, trans. William Weaver (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1981).

[58]"You cannot use the text as you want, but only as the text wants you to use it. An open text, however 'open' it may be, cannot afford whatever interpretation." Umberto Eco, _The Role of the Reader_ (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1979), p. 9.

the narrator and narratee tend to be the most interesting sender and receiver pair. For this reason, it is proposed to examine, within the context of narrative as a communication process, the roles and function of the narrator and the narratee as well as their relationship both to each other and to the role of the implied reader. We hope to point out ways in which these roles and relationships help to structure our reading of these novels.

An examination of the implied author does not lie within the scope of this study. One does, of course, invoke such a concept whenever one talks about meaning in narrative communication. Like the implied reader, the implied author is a fictional construct based upon the entire text. But since the concept of the implied author in any particular work will be only partially developed, our study will largely confine itself to the narrator and narratee.

Chapter 2

PROCHAIN EPISODE: THE IMPORTANCE OF INTERTEXTUAL FRAMES

As we have briefly seen in the "Introduction", with the publication in 1965 of Prochain episode, Hubert Aquin unleashed immense interest in his first novel.[1] Quebec critics described it as "une bombe" and "un bon suspense".[2] While Blois asked "Prochain épisode ... Est-ce le roman d'un grand rêve?" and Bertrand demanded whether "Prochain épisode est-il un chef d'oeuvre?", Barbeau wondered whether Quebec might not have found its first Nobel prize winner.[3]

In this chapter of the study it is intended to examine the overt "I" narrator of this novel as being a fusion of two narrators (prisoner and hero), each of which has his corresponding narratee. It is proposed to investigate the circulation of narrative information in terms of not only these narratees but also the implied reader. Particular emphasis will be placed upon the

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[1]Hubert Aquin, Prochain épisode (Montreal: Le Cercle du Livre de France, 1965).

[2]Gilles Marcotte, "Une bombe" Prochain épisode," Dossier de presse 1965-1980 (Sherbrooke: Bibliothèque du Séminaire de Sherbrooke, 1981), no pagination; Anonymous, "Un bon suspense," Dossier de presse, no pagination.

[3]Blois, "Prochain épisode ... Est-ce le roman d'un grand rêve?", Dossier de presse, no pagination; André Bertrand, "Prochain épisode est-il un chef-d'oeuvre?", Dossier de presse, no pagination; Raymond Barbeau, "Notre premier Prix Nobel," Dossier de presse, no pagination.

importance of intertextual frames within the role which the implied
reader is expected to assume.

In the opening "chapter" of Prochain épisode, the narrator
reveals both his presence and his intentions: "Un seul problème
me préoccupe vraiment, c'est le suivant: de quelle façon dois-je
m'y prendre pour écrire un roman d'espionnage?" (p.7). The
introduction of the spy genre immediately creates certain
expectations on the part of the reader. As Kermode has observed,
the principal object for the reader of a detective story (of which
the spy story is a derivation) is to discover, by hermeneutic
activity, the solution to a problem raised at the beginning.[4] In
the case of Prochain épisode, the problem is initially raised at
the level of "discours" rather than "récit".

The narrator establishes as the subject of his text the very
act of writing. On the one hand, he is encumbered by restrictive
literary traditions and, on the other, he dreams of creating a
truly original text:

encaissé dans mes phrases (p.7)   je rêve de faire
                                        original (p.7)

mon parcours écrit (p.7)

grand nombre de règles (p.7)   je ne peux déjà
                                        plus le rattraper (p.9)

un genre littéraire aussi
  bien défini (p.8)
                                     un système que je
la tradition du roman   crée (p.15)
  d'espionnage (p.8)

mon alphabet qui m'enchaîne (p.9)

ma prose cumulative (p.13)

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[4]Frank Kermode, "Novel and Narrative", The Theory of the
Novel: New Essays, ed. John Halperin (New York: Oxford
University Press, 1974), p. 159.

At the same time, he establishes a parallel between his actual
physical predicament (incarceration) and his desire to be free:

l'enfermé (p.7)   l'imprévisible (p.7)

   l'Institut ... emprisonne (p.12)   je meurs de sortir
                                            (p.12)

   ma vitre pénitentiaire (p.14)   le monde libre (p.13)

   It would seem initially as the narrator wrestles with the
problem of creation that the implied reader subsumes the role of
the narratee. That is to say, without the presence of an overt
addressee, the implied reader becomes the audience for the
narrator as well as for the implied reader. However, the reader
eventually discovers that the work is in fact directed towards a
mysterious "tu", ostensibly the narrator's beloved, who is never
revealed ("ton nom secret") and who, unlike the implied reader,
is posited as capable of understanding all the various textual
allusions. In addition, one may also posit the narrator as his
own narratee since he writes as much for himself as for "tu";
inasmuch as he tells himself his own story, he is his own
audience.

   Having decided to write a spy story, the narrator refuses
to create a super-hero. Instead he introduces Hamidou Diop,
replete with all the necessary attributes for a traditional
detective/spy story: "Moyennant l'addition de quelques espionnes
désirables et la facture algébrique du fil de l'intrigue, je
tiens mon affaire" (p.9). The narrator, however, creates the
possibility only to destroy it: "Ecrire un roman d'espionnage
comme on en lit, ce n'est pas loyal: c'est d'ailleurs impossible"
(p.9) and further on, "je refuse illico d'introduire l'algèbre

dans mon invention" (p.14). The reader is warned to eschew any

facile reading of the text, of the "casse-tête" which the narrator

seems to fabricate almost in spite of himself: "Je n'ai plus rien

à gagner en continuant d'écrire, pourtant je continue quand même"

(p.13).

Hamidou Diop's role as hero is short-lived; he is replaced

by "je", the narrator/hero of the novel in the process of being

written by the narrator/prisoner, who is also "je". Here Aquin

plays with his reader, inviting him to read beyond the level of

detective story. In "Hamidou joue double" (p.19), one could

substitute "je" for Hamidou; in "inutile en tout cas de ...

questionner Hamidou Diop sur l'identité de son interlocuteur"

and in "tout en faisant ces considerations sur la duplicité de

mon héros", one could read "créateur" for the underlined words.

Such a reading is consistent with the fact that "je" is both

the narrator (prisoner) worrying about his creation and the

actual creation (hero) wandering the streets of Lausanne.

The problem of creating/writing is raised in terms of

oppositions:

céder à l'inertie (p.12)	continuer à écrire (p.12)
sortir (p.12)	tracer des courbes (p.12)
le goût d'en finir avec ma prose cumulative (p.13)	pourtant je continue quand même (p.13)

The narrator/prisoner rejects traditional approaches: "Je

laisse les vrais romans aux vrais romanciers" (p.14). In his

attempts to come to terms with his writing, he acknowledges

it both as a crisis and a catharsis: "Je mitraille le papier nu ...
et soudain je retombe sur mes pieds, sain et sauf, plus vide que
jamais, fatigué comme un malade après sa crise" (p.14).

In his longing to be free again, the narrator identifies
himself with Balzac's Ferragus: "je veux ... vivre magiquement
l'histoire d'un homme condamné" (p.16). He has dreamed of "fuyant
chaque jour ..., m'habillant avec les vêtements de mes hôtes,
masquant mes fuites" (p.16). And yet, within the confines of the
clinic, he finds himself stripped·of all masks only to discover
that "ma face me terrorise" (p.16).

The opening "chapter" of Prochain épisode is exhausting for
the narrator/prisoner as well as for the reader. The emotion
rises to a crescendo on several occasions: "Je mitraille le
papier nu"; "Je veux m'identifier à Ferragus". There are also
corresponding letdowns: "je retombe ... plus vide que jamais,
fatigué ..."; "tout me déserte ... laissant fuir à jamais le
précieux sang". The tension is derived from the fact that the
fictional world refuses to be constructed according to the model
which the narrator has constructed. As Purdy observes,
"L'histoire voudrait venger une impuissance réellement vécue; le
discours refuse cette vengeance littéraire en affirmant la réalité
irréfutable de l'impuissance."[5]

In "chapter" two, the reader must make an "inferential walk".[6]

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[5]Anthony George Purdy, "Analyse du roman de Hubert Aquin,
Prochain épisode (unpublished Master's thesis, University of
Western Ontario, 1975), p. 86.

[6]Umberto Eco, The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the
Semiotics of Texts (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press,
1979), p. 32.

That is to say, he must "walk" outside the text in order to

supplement the discursive structures. Fictional works often take

advantage of such "walks" so as not to have to tell too much.

The reader becomes an active principal of interpretation and is

involved in the generative process of the text. He is encouraged

to make hypotheses about the course(s) which the story may take

or to forecast the outcome of actions already taken. In both

cases the reader bases his hypotheses upon previously recorded

narrative situations (intertextual frames). To identify these

frames he has to "walk" outside the text in order to find

intertextual support. According to Eco, these interpretative

moves or inferential walks are "elicited by discursive structures

and foreseen by the whole textual strategy as indispensable

components of the construction of the _fabula_."[7]

In the case of _Prochain épisode_, the reader is asked to

infer that somewhere between the two chapters the narrator/

prisoner has decided to substitute himself in place of Hamidou

Diop: "tandis que je m'introduis, enrobé d'alliage léger, dans

un roman qui s'écrit à Lausanne, je cherche avidement un homme

qui est sorti du Lausanne Palace après avoir serré la main de

Hamidou Diop" (p.19).

In terms of this substitution, structurally we have the

use of the reflexive verb, "s'introduire", in which the speaker

is both subject and object of the verb: the one who acts, the

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[7]Ibid. Eco distinguishes between _fabula_ (story) and
sjuzet (plot or discourse): "The _fabula_ is the basic story
stuff, the logic of actions or the syntax of characters, the
time-oriented course of events . . . . The plot is the story
as actually told, along with all its deviations, digressions,
flashbacks, and the whole of verbal devices (p.27).

one who watches himself act as well as the one who acts upon
himself:

$$je\ m'\quad introduis$$
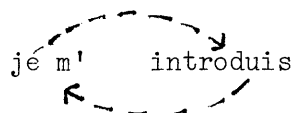
Such a construct validates and foreshadows the eventual doubling
of the "je" into "je" (prisoner) and "je" (protagonist of the
detective/spy story). At the same time Aquin uses another
reflexive construct: "un roman qui s'écrit". Even though it is
true that a reflexive may be used to convey a passive meaning,
in this instance it also conveys the impression of a novel which
(quite literally) writes itself -- suggesting a non-traditional
relationship between creator and creation. As Barthes notes in
his discussion of the verb "écrire", "In the modern verb of
middle voice to write, ... the subject is immediately
contemporary with the writing, being effected and affected by
it".[8]

Having dispensed with Hamidou Diop as the hero of his spy
story, the narrator does not mention him again until page 63, at
which time he is evoked in connection with a mysterious
cryptogram. Inasmuch as the narrator deems himself to be unable
to continue with his story-line until he has solved this mystery,
one can consider the cryptogram as being in opposition to the
story. In fact the cryptogram is presented as if it had been

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[8]Roland Barthes, "To Write: An Intransitive Verb", The
Structuralists From Marx to Lévi-Strauss, eds. Richard and
Fernande DeGeorge (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1972), p. 166.

invented by someone other than "je". It is an "équation à multiples inconnues", a signpost to the reader that the text itself will have no easy solution(s).

The cryptogram is worthy of a brief look if only because it helps to elucidate the dynamics of the various adresser and addressee pairs. One page 21 of the novel, it appears in the following format: CINBEUPERFLEUDIARUNCOBESCUBEREBESCUAZURANOC- TIVAGUS. The narrator, wishing to appear to operate at the sophisticated level of the traditional international spy, attempts to break the code by determining the frequency and value of the various letters. The predominance of the vowel "U" mystifies and frustrates him, and he abandons his efforts. At the same time, his addressee dutifully concurs that the code is indeed impenetrable and reads on.

If however the implied reader, for his part, decides to test the accuracy of the narrator's efforts, he discovers several blatant discrepancies:

Letter	Number of Times Used	
	Narrator	Reader
E	7	7
U	7	7
R	5	4
B	4	4
A	4	4
C	4	5
S	3	3
I	3	3
O	2	2
G	2	1
P	1	1

Letter	Number of Times Used	
	Narrator	Reader
F	1	1
L	1	1
V	1	1
Z	1	1
N		3
D		1
T		1
Total:	46	50

Furthermore, if the reader looks carefully at the cryptogram when it next appears on page 63 (CINBEUFLEUDIARUNCOBESCUBEREBESCUAZUR- ARANOCTIVAGUS), it has mysteriously gained two additional letters: AZURA<u>RA</u>. This would account for the fact that the narrator has found 5 R's but not for the fact that he has counted only 4 A's!

If, on the other hand, the reader chooses to re-arrange the original single phrase of 50 letters into five groups, he discovers that the narrator's reference to Latin ("quelque transcription en caractères latins d'une grossièreté vernaculaire," p.63) carries some weight:

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CINBEUPERF
LEUDIARUNC
OBESCUBERE
BESCUAZURA
NOCTIVAGUS
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"Noctivagus" is defined as "wandering by night; currus (of the moon)."[9] The adjective is derived from "nox" ("Night; sleep;

[9]D.P. Simpson (comp.), <u>Cassell's New Latin-English English- Latin Dictionary</u> (5th ed.; London: Cassell, 1968), p. 394.

lower world; death. Fig.: obscurity; confusion, darkness, peril").[10] "Currus", for its part, has the figurative meaning of "a chariot, car; a racing car".[11] One recalls that it is when the narrator/hero is following H. de Heutz ("cette promenade nocturne", p.55) that he is knocked unconscious and taken by car to a château.

The point here is not to analyse the cryptogram in great detail but rather to illustrate the comprehensiveness (or lack) of information which is exchanged by each sender/receiver pair. At the level of narrator/narratee, the former appears to have done his homework but has failed to solve the problem; the narratee is expected to sympathize with the inherent difficulties and commiserate with the lack of success. At the level of implied author/implied reader however, the latter perceives that the narrator is either unreliable or has merely made a computational error. In either case, the reader recognizes a discrepancy between what the narrator actually says and the communication which he is receiving from the implied author. Aquin is letting his reader know that the latter will have to fully participate, e.g. do some detective work of his own, if the literary work is to be actualized through a convergence of reader and text.

The problem of deciphering the cryptogram leads the narrator/prisoner once again to describe his relationship to his writing:

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[10]Simpson, op.cit., p. 397.

[11]Ibid, p. 163.

> Coincé dans ma sphère close, je descends, comprimé, au fond
> du lac Léman et je ne parviens pas à me situer en dehors de
> la thématique fluante qui constitue le fil de l'intrigue.
> Je me suis enfermé dans un système constellaire qui
> m'emprisonne sur un plan strictement littéraire, à tel point
> d'ailleurs que cette séquestration stylistique me paraît
> confirmer la validité de la symbolique que j'ai utilisée
> dès le début: la plongée. Encaissé dans ma barque funéraire
> et dans mon répertoire d'images, je n'ai plus qu'à continuer
> ma noyade écrite. Descendre est mon avenir, plonger ma
> gestuaire unique et ma profession. Je me noie. (p.22)

The images are weighted ("descendre", "comprimé"), geometric

("plan", "sphère"), and finite ("encaissé", "enfermé", "coincé").

The narrator must confront the natural limitations on his ability

to be original, since language and style are really accidents of

history and tradition which he must accept. As Barthes says,

"C'est sous la pression de l'Histoire et de la Tradition, que

s'établissent les écritures possibles d'un écrivain donné".[12]

The narrator specifically links his writing/_récit_ to his past/

le lac: "Descendre mot à mot dans ma fosse à souvenirs, tenter

d'y reconnaître quelques anciens visages blessés, inventer

d'autres compagnons qui déjà me préoccupent, m'entraînent dans

un noeud de fausses pistes ... (p.24)".[13]

As has been suggested before, the narrator sees himself

at times as having forfeited control over the text: "je ne

parviens pas à me situer en dehors de la thématique fluante

qui constitue le fil de l'intrigue"; "inventer d'autres

compagnons qui ... m'entraînent dans un noeud de fausses

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[12] Roland Barthes, _Le degré zéro de l'écriture_ (Paris: Seuil, 1953), p.27

[13] Cf _Prochain épisode_, p.69. "Sensible uniquement au mouvement des eaux qui me poussent le long des rivages éblouis et me font glisser sous le socle des Alpes, je me laisse aller. Mon passé s'éventre sous la pression hypocrite du verbe".

pistes"; "un suicide qui n'en finit plus" (p.26). Imprisoned and subjected to surveillance, he confronts without enthusiasm blank sheets of paper. To write is to fill blank sheets of paper with words. To begin to write is undoubtedly the hardest task of all, since by its very nature, it demands a choice of words which will ultimately give direction to the work as a whole.[14] The narrator/ prisoner has already "written" one-sixth of his text but he has yet to begin!

If the real reader has been asked thus far to furnish an implied reader, it also becomes increasingly apparent that he must furnish two narratees as well:

[narrator/prisoner]:

Avant de te recontrer, je n'en finissais plus d'écrire un long poème. (p.31)
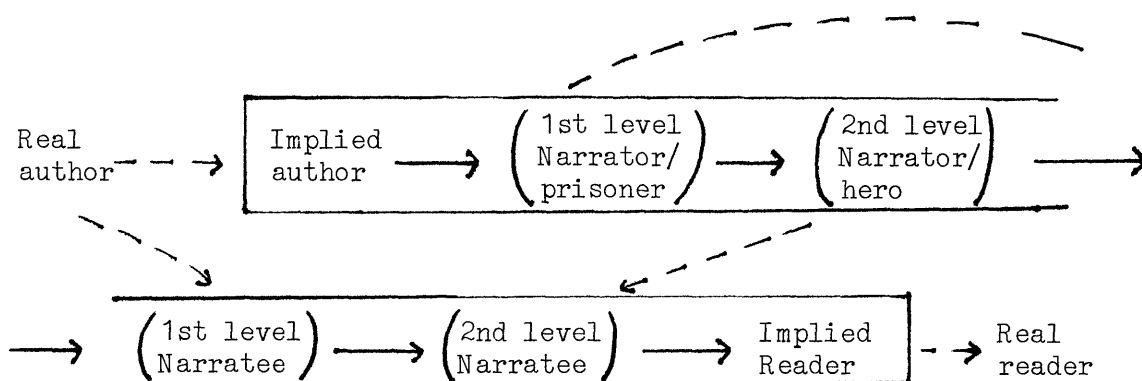

[narrator/hero]:

Entre le 26 juillet cubain et la nuit lyrique du 4 août, entre la place de la Riponne et la pizzeria de la place de l'Hôtel-de-Ville, à Lausanne, j'ai rencontré une femme blonde dont j'ai reconnu instantanément la démarche majestueuse. (p.29)

Whereas the narrator/prisoner addresses a mysterious, feminine "tu", the narrator/hero addresses no one in particular. And yet his presence, by definition, demands the existence of a narratee:

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[14]Normand Cloutier, "James Bond + Balzac + Stirling Moss + ... = Hubert Aquin", Magazine Maclean 6(9):41 (septembre 1966). "Une impuissance devant la page blanche".

Real author ⟶ Implied author ⟶ (1st level Narrator/prisoner) ⟶ (2nd level Narrator/hero) ⟶

⟶ (1st level Narratee) ⟶ (2nd level Narratee) ⟶ Implied Reader ⟶ Real reader

While "tu" may presuppose that there is a conscious linking by the prisoner of the blonde woman (K) and herself, the hero's narratee may not. Strictly speaking, only the implied reader and the first level narratee are immanent to the complete text. The second level narratee is immanent only to the hero's narrative; he does not even know of the existence of "tu".

The implied reader, on the other hand, is confronted with the frustrating task of attempting to distinguish between the two narratives -- a desire which springs from his need to impose order upon the text. Aquin does not facilitate his task:

> Après douze mois de séparation et douze mesures d'impossibilité de vivre un mois de plus, après une nuit de marche depuis la Place de la Riponne jusqu'au niveau du lac antique et à la première heure de l'aube, nous sommes montés dans une chambre de l'hôtel d'Angleterre, peut-être celle où Byron a chanté Bonnivard qui s'était jadis abîmé dans une cellule du château de Chillon. K et moi, inondés de la même tristesse inondante, nous nous sommes étendus sous les draps frais, nus, anéantis voluptueusement l'un par l'autre, dans la splendeur ponctuelle de notre poème et de l'aube. Notre étreinte aveuglante et le choc incantatoire de nos deux corps, me terrassent encore ce soir, tandis qu'au terme de cette aube incendiée je me retrouve couché seul sur une page blanche où je ne respire plus le souffle chaud de ma blonde inconnue, où je ne sens plus son poids qui m'attire selon un système copernicien et où je ne vois plus sa peau ambrée, ni ses lèvres inlassables, ni ses yeux sylvestres, ni le chant pur de son plaisir. (p.32)

In this passage the author alludes to previous textual elements

in order to create a fragile symbiosis between the two narrators:

World of narrator/prisoner	World of narrator/hero
vingt-deux jours loin de ton corps (p.11)	douze mois de séparation (p.32)
ce soir (p.12)	l'aube (p.32)
un long poème (p.31)	notre poème (p.32)
accroupi ... sur un papier blanc (p.27)	couché seul sur une page blanche (p.32)
ma blonde inconnue (p.32)	une femme blonde dont j'ai reconnu ... (p.29)
noyée dans tes yeux bruns (p.31)	perdu dans les yeux noirs de K (p.39)

In the first two examples, temporal references create an obvious

separation between the two narratives. Examples 3 and 4, on the

other hand, are clearly linked to the prisoner's world as

previously evoked by him. In example 5, the prisoner depicts the

sensual delights of " [sa] blonde inconnue" -- "inconnue" because

K, to whom he is alluding, belongs to the world of the hero.

Martha Dvorak has cited the sixth example as one in which K's

attributes are contradictory, i.e. the allusion first to "tes

yeux bruns" and then to "les yeux noirs."[15] She has made the

natural mistake of assuming that the narrator/hero is the sole

"voice" for this chapter and that "tu" must therefore be K. Thus

she has made an inferential walk which is not yet substantiated

by the text.

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[15]Martha Dvorak, "Une analyse structurale des personnages dans Prochain épisode de Hubert Aquin", Revue de l'Université d'Ottawa 45: 372 (1975).

"Il était près de six heures quand nous avons quitté notre chambre à l'hôtel d'Angleterre" (p.37). Although much has been made of the novel's opening line ("Cuba coule en flammes ..."), little attention has been paid to the fact that the actual "story" (the hero's narrative) does not begin until nearly one-quarter of the way through the book and that it does so in a classic narrative tradition.

Within an intertextual frame, one recalls Valéry's satirical comments on the writing of novels, e.g. his reference to the Marquise and her going out at 5 o'clock.[16] Barthes, for his part, maintains that the Marquise and her _sortie_ (with its stylistic features) represent that phenomenon which we call traditional narrative literature -- a phenomenon which links the novel to History and provides society with an illusory continuum:

> Lorsque l'historien affirme que le duc de Guise mourut le
> 23 décembre 1588, ou lorsque le romancier raconte que la
> Marquise sortit à cinq heures, ces actions émergent d'un
> autrefois sans épaisseur; débarrassées du tremblement de
> l'existence, elles ont la stabilité et le dessin d'une
> algèbre, elles sont un souvenir, mais un souvenir utile,
> dont l'intérêt compte beaucoup plus que la durée.[17]

While it is true that Barthes is essentially criticizing the use of the "passé simple" and third person narration (which are not characteristics of _Prochain épisode_), nevertheless there are temporal ("six heures") and spatial ("l'hôtel d'Angleterre") echoes in the opening line of the hero's narration, which provide the sense of stability alluded to above.

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[16]Paul Valery, _Oeuvres,_ I (Paris: Pléiade, 1957), p.1467.

[17]Barthes, _Le degré zéro de l'écriture_, pp. 47-48.

Temporal and spatial elements also bring to mind the traditional detective/spy tale. The nomenclature for the various characters is in keeping with the genre. K, if not actually named, has at least been provided with an identifying initial. While "je" (narrator/hero as well as narrator/prisoner) may be nameless, his quarry is known by many names: Carl von Ryndt, de Heutz, de Heutg, H. de Heutz, François-Marc de Saugy, de Saudy. K refers to him as von Ryndt, as does 'je", until page 48 when he becomes and remains H. de Heutz. It is the historian, not the banker, whom the hero seeks.

The initial reference to H. de Heutz is integrated as part of an "autobiographical" reminiscence. De Heutz is linked with Caesar and later with Scipio Africanus. Moreover the narrator suggests a correlation between the topic of the Belgian's talk and the narrator's own past. De Heutz, however, belongs to the future world of the spy story rather than to the autobiographical past of the narrator. Aquin plays ironically on the use of "histoire" as history ("histoire helvétique") and as story-to-become ("ma propre histoire").

K's description underlines the elusive nature of their enemy: "De Heute ou de Heutz - enfin, le double de von Ryndt" (p.40); "von Ryndt (ou le belge)" (p.41); "ne te fie pas à son nom" (p.39); "von Ryndt a peut-être une fois de plus changé de nom" (p.41). According to the narrator/hero, de Heutz is characterized by "son invraisemblance et son indétermination" (p.52). He is all the more dangerous for his ability to wear/change masks. The enormity of the deception is further aggrandized by the hero's question: "Mais cette Banque

Commerciale Saharienne, elle existe vraiment ou bien c'est comme

notre Laboratoire de Recherches Pharmacologiques SA?" (p.43).

Moreover, von Ryndt's 300SL Mercedes is replaced by de Heutz'

blue Opel.

 The protagonist, for his part, describes himself as "un

terroriste" and "un Ferragus insaisissable et pur" (p.53). He

goes on: "J'étais prêt, moi aussi, à venger Balzac coûte que

coûte en me drapant dans la pèlerine noire de son personnage."

Like his opponent, his masks are varied: "ces deux personnes

avaient de bonnes raisons de me croire également un collègue et

ami de H. de Heutz"; "je rentrerais une fois de plus dans mon

personnage de correspondant de la Canadian Press en Suisse";

"j'ai commencé, transmué en romaniste" (p.51). Like his

opponent, he too sins on the side of lack of verisimilitude:

"Je continue dans l'invraisemblance" (p.61).

 He finds himself caught between a fictional world/story-

that-might-have-been and the world/story-that-might-be. He

becomes infused with the spirit of Ferragus, attributing to

him superhuman powers, recreating him. The character of

Ferragus is translated by the narrator almost exclusively in

terms of power and in terms of an imaginary situation played

out against a background in which everything and everyone are

notable for their power. For the hero, Ferragus represents

the dream of a possible increase in his own ability. As

Tremblay writes:

> Personnage exemplaire, Ferragus concentre en une seule
> figure toute l'énergie d'une nature plurielle qu'il sait
> maîtriser tout en assumant les différentes forces de
> ceux qui l'entourent. Ferragus est l'un qui possède et
> rassemble à la fois tous les rapports de symbolisation

qui constituent la recherche du narrateur: fraternité
et unité dans la réalisation de la force et du combat,
et, par la suite, tous les efforts romanesques
d'identification.[18]

It is just as the narrator/hero reaches a kind of "crescendo
of identification" that de Heutz abruptly leaves the Café du Globe.
Caught up quite literally in his opponent's world ("il m'était
difficile de le suivre sans adopter son rythme précipité", p.54),
the hero finds himself drawn into "l'aire germinale de la grande
révolution". And, while dreaming of important political exiles,
he is quite unceremoniously knocked unconscious. In each instance,
an external act ends the reverie.

The confrontation with H. de Heutz[19] is pivotal to the
development of the narrator/hero's plot since here we find
introduced elements which will figure again later in the narration,
e.g.

La pièce où je me suis retrouvé était splendide (p.57)	c'est une pièce vraiment remarquable (p.123)
J'étais fasciné par la grande armoire avec des figures d'anges (p.51)	Je demeure en extase devant [le buffet Louis XIII avec un guerrier nu] (p.124)
deux enfants (p.61)	les enfants (p.149)

That the adversary is de Heutz is a "fact" which both narratee and
reader are to assume unquestioningly. However, the narrator/hero
does, ever so briefly, raise a suspicion of doubt as to the identity

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[18]Christiane Tremblay, "Lecture d'Hubert Aquin: Prochain
épisode" (unpublished Master's thesis, McGill University, 1971),
p. 18.

[19]For the sake of simplicity, the narrator/hero's quarry
is referred to as H. de Heutz in this study.

of his interrogator when he describes him as "un inconnu, H. de Heutz sans aucun doute".[20] (p.60) Aquin plays, therefore, with certain expectations on the part of readers of spy stories: the hero is a spy inasmuch as he presents himself as such; a spy would never waste time pursuing someone who was not his intended adversary; the hero is far too resourceful a person to remain the unwilling prisoner of his adversary; the hero must escape, thereby vindicating his unfortunate and embarrassing capture.

The interrogator is not described: "mon interlocuteur se tenait devant moi à contrejour, si bien que je ne discernais pas son visage" (p.58). Instead, he serves as a mirror, reflecting the uncertainty, lack of assurance, and fear on the part of the hero; in addition, he mirrors the paralysis of the narrator/ prisoner: "En ce moment même, je n'arrive pas à souffler à mon double les quelques phrases d'occasion qui le sortiraient du pétrin". The prisoner immediately intrudes upon the hero's narrative, identifying his own analysts in the psychiatric prison with de Heutz: "la silhouette parahélique de mon interlocuteur me bloque" (p.58): "un inconnu placide qui ne sait pas encore ce que je suis venu faire dans sa vie" (p.59).

Beginning his cover story with an authoritative grade B movie utterance ("je veux voir votre supérieur"), the narrator/ hero descends to pure Melodrama, complete with abandoned wife and children. Rejecting the previous narrative events as "une farce sinistre", he goes on to present Melodrama as Truth and to

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[20]Later, in his confrontation with de Heutz in the forest, the hero reïers to himself as being "devant un homme impossible à identifier" (p.88).

employ "la pression hypocrite du verbe" (p.69): "j'ai abandonné",
"j'ai perdu", "je suis parti", "j'ai fui", etc. His audience, de
Heutz, is asked to "swallow" a pathetic story seemingly lacking in
imagination, a story about individual failure. De Heutz is to
become a "narrataire crédule".[21] The implied reader, for his part,
feels a sense of superiority because of his knowledge of the
protagonist's intentions; in addition, such knowledge with its
inherent exclusion of H. de Heutz creates a closer relationship
between the protagonist and the reader.

In examining the "cover" story, we note that just as the
narrator/prisoner has doubled himself as narrator/hero, so has
the narrator/hero doubled himself as narrator/family man. As has
been shown, the presence of each narrator demands the existence
of a corresponding narratee, whose reading of the text depends
upon the amount of information to which he is privy. Consequently
the reading of a seemingly simple statement such as "vous m'avez
pris pour un espion" (p.62) depends upon the narratee addressed.
On the one hand, de Heutz, who is a "listening" narratee, is asked
to ignore his previous question ("Alors on joue aux espions?") and
to accept Melodrama as Truth. That is to say, he is expected to
accept the "fact" that the hero is not a spy but is in fact the
innocent victim of an unpleasant error. The "reading" addressee
of the narrator/hero (the second level narratee) is expected to
identify the underlying irony: the hero is in fact a spy who is
pretending not to be one. The first level narratee (the addressee
of the narrator/prisoner) is a relatively unknown factor whose

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[21]Dvorak, op. cit., p. 374.

reaction cannot be posited.

The reader, on the other hand, may be reading the text at a totally different level since Aquin is once more underlining the fact that the reader should beware of interpreting the hero's narration as a traditional spy story. The reader may have assigned the category "spy" to the hero when in fact he should have been asking instead: "Is this really what the story is about?"

The introduction of the mysterious cryptogram again breaks the new story line (narrator/hero --> family man) and sends the second level narratee back to the originally suggested plot (Hamidou Diop = hero). The narrator's (and narratee's) frustration at his inability to decipher "le message hypercodé" is replaced by the need-to-act (capture H. de Heutz), followed by the need-to-reflect (subsequent chapter). Gradually the narrator/prisoner ("autant je suis accablé en ce moment") intrudes upon the hero's narrative ("autant je me sentais libre alors"). Concerned about his relationship to the text, he likens it to the "continuation cryptique d'une nuit d'amour" (p.70). The point of view of his narratee has been expanded from "toi, interlocutrice absolue" (the enigmatic woman) to "des interlocuteurs innés" and "tout le monde" (universal audience). In the same way in which the prisoner/narrator struggles to decipher the "messsage" hidden in the cryptogram, so must the narratee/reader treat the text ("mon livre à thèse") as a cryptic version of the story which has yet to be written.

Mention has already been made of the doubling of both the narrator and narratee. Brochu expands this idea to include de Heutz:

> L'intrigue d'espionnage, par contre, met en relation le
> double (moi fictif) avec un autre (Heutz) dans une relation
> fermée, où l'autre s'impose comme transcendance et comme
> obstacle. C'est la relation "allo-duelle" (de allos, "autre
> de plusieurs"), où l'autre est à ce point étranger, extérieur,
> incommunicable, dénué de transparence, qu'il réfléchit vers
> le double sa propre image. Au lieu d'ouvrir (comme une vitre)
> sur la collectivité et la révolution, à l'instar de la femme,
> il renvoie (comme un miroir) le double à lui-même.[22]

Having caught de Heutz off guard and subsequently captured him,

the protagonist finds himself in a reversal of roles at the level

of both "récit" and "discours". Not only does the new victim

employ Melodrama as Truth but he also has the effrontery to

recount exactly the same tale of illness, bankruptcy, abandoned

family, etc.

Confronted with the same roman-feuilleton which he has

served to de Heutz, the narrator/hero is rendered immobile from

shock. Having outlined the situation to his adversary ("c'est

vous ou moi"), he is distressed to discover that the distinction

"vous/moi" has been obliterated:

> L'histoire qu'il persiste à me raconter me pose une énigme.
> Pourquoi a-t-il choisi de me réciter exactement la même
> invraisemblance que je lui ai servie sans conviction ce
> matin même, alors qu'il me tenait en joue dans le grand
> salon du château d'Echandens? Son audace même me fascine
> et, ma foi, me le rend presque sympathique. Quand il a
> commencé son baratin, il savait déjà que je ne pouvais pas
> tomber dans une trappe aussi grossière. Il a sûrement
> prévu que je ne serais pas dupe de son stratagème incroyable.
> Dans ce cas, s'il a brodé sur le schéma que j'ai moi-même
> développé ce matin, ce n'est pas par accident, ni par une
> combinaison fortuite due aux simples lois de la probabilité.
> H. de Heutz a donc obéi à un plan précis. Il avait une idée
> derrière la tête en m'entraînant dans cette charge
> d'invraisemblance et d'ironie. Laquelle? Peut-être a-t-il
> voulu me transmettre un message chiffré. (p. 86).

The family man whom the narrator/hero failed to become now has a

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[22]André Brochu, L'instance critique (Montreal: Leméac,
1974), p. 366.

name: François-Marc de Saugy; hence H. de Heutz, Carl von Ryndt

and de Saugy constitute "cette noire trinité" into whose trap the

protagonist has fallen.

The mirror image is maintained for more than 25 pages, either

through the repetition (and allusion to the repetition) of key

phrases:

narrator/hero	de Saugy
la vérité est plus simple (p.61)	la vérité est plutôt décourageante (p.81)
jouer la comédie (p.61)	j'ai joué un rôle (p.81)
j'ai été pris de panique (p.61)	j'ai été pris de panique (p.82)
je ne veux plus vivre (p.61)	je ne veux plus vivre (p.85)
tuez-moi (p.62)	tuez-moi (p.86)

toute cette histoire ressemble ... (p.82)

la même histoire alambiquée (p.82)

la même invraisemblance (p.86)

or through the use of phrases dealing with seeing/looking:

cet inconnu que je regarde (p.87)

je continue de le regarder (p.88)

The initial cover story is designed to reveal to the reader

the mechanism of its own fabrication, the artifice of its

construction. Despite the lack of originality and the fact that

this story has already been told countless times, the narrator/

hero is successful in creating at least doubt in his adversary's

mind. Some critics have chosen to regard the protagonist's story-

telling efforts as being an unqualified success. For example,
Dvorak writes: "... le narrateur-héros réussit à tromper son
auditeur en lui imposant l'illusion romanesque."[23] The text
does not actually support such a reading. On page 62 we are
told that "chose certaine, [H. de Heutz] hésitait"; on page 63
we observe that "il me tendit le papier bleu, sans détourner le
canon de son revolver de mon visage."[24] Thus the text validates
the assumption that the narrative illusion created by the hero
achieves only partial success.

It is the mirror image created by H. de Heutz which is of
more interest. Despite his protestations ("Je vous jure que je
ne vous raconte pas une histoire. C'est la vérité" (p.82)), de
Heutz offers in fact a more successful version of the hero's
"histoire" -- more successful because it creates more confusion
on the part of the narrator/hero than does the latter's version
on the part of H. de Heutz. In addition, as Dvorak points out,
it is not the image of reality or the content of the story which
matters but rather "la compétence narrative": "L'épreuve
consiste à raconter un récit acceptable, le but désiré d'être un
narrateur crédible. Ainsi le héros est en même temps le sujet
et le destinataire de la communication."[25] Competency is judged
on the basis of one's ability to vary the narrative forms which
man already possesses rather than to invent new ones. Dvorak
concludes:

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[23]Dvorak, op. cit., p. 375.

[24]My underlining.

[25]Dvorak, op. cit., p. 376.

Apparemment la vraisemblance n'est pas le critère.
Au contraire, il s'agit de la masquer à travers le récit.
Le pouvoir du récit se trouve dans le mystère de sa
création. La fonction du récit 'n'est pas de représenter
mais de constituer un spectacle énigmatique.' Ainsi nous
voyons comme indications

L'histoire qu'il persiste à me raconter me pose une
énigme (p.86)
Son mystère déconcerte ma préméditation (p.87)
une sorte de mystère me frappe d'une indécision sacrée
(p.88).

Le pouvoir de la parole se révèle dans ce récit qui est
banal uniquement à force d'être le véhicule de générations
innombrables de narrateurs, et ceci à force d'être efficace,
d'obliger le narrataire à céder à l'illusion.[26]

Intratextually the narrator/hero and de Heutz (as each

other's narratee) are posited as having knowledge of the modus

operandi of the traditional spy: the endangered hero will choose

deceit as a subterfuge for escaping his predicament.[27] The reader,

for his part, resorts to intertextual frames, i.e. already recorded

narrative situations. The implied author expects his audience to

draw upon suppositions already actualized by other texts, e.g.

Fleming's novels.

In his attempt to achieve originality, the narrator/prisoner

has created two doubles: the hero and H. de Heutz. The latter's

presence has provoked a veritable paralysis in the two narrators:

"je m'immobilise" (p.88 - hero) and "ma main n'avance plus" (p.91

- prisoner). The mirror image of the Belgian historian forces

the prisoner to re-think his writing, thereby creating a widening

spiral in which the reader is continually sent back to the

beginning of the text. One need only compare:

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[26]Ibid.

[27]Claude Bremond, "La logique des possibles narratifs,"
Communications 8:60-76 (1966).

Je n'écris pas, je   mon livre m'écrit
  suis écrit (p.89)   and   (p.94)

<u>with</u>

Cela est écrit (p.7)   and   mon parcours écrit (p.7)

or

Quelque chose me dit qu'un modèle antérieur plonge mon
  improvisation dans une forme atavique (p.89)

<u>with</u>

je ne parviens pas à me situer en dehors de la thématique
  fluante qui constitue le fil de l'intrigue (p.22)

Just as the initial reading of the cryptogram forced the
narrator/prisoner to accept the natural limitations on his ability
to be original, so too do the events in Coppet Forest provoke the
same response: "l'originalité à tout prix est un idéal de preux:
c'est le Graal esthétique qui fausse toute expédition" (p.92).
The will to write is stronger than the perceived failure to display
mind-dazzling originality; it is equated with the will to know
oneself: "je suis ce livre" (p.92). The text is posited as
providing a personal history -- all the more important inasmuch as
the Québécois have none.[28]

Barthes, in <u>Le degré zéro de l'écriture</u>, establishes writing
as an act of historical solidarity, forging links between creation
and society.[29] It is by its very nature ambiguous since, on the

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[28]"C'est vrai que nous n'avons pas d'histoire" (p.94).

[29]Barthes, <u>Le degré zéro de l'écriture</u>, p. 26. "Placée au
coeur de la problématique littéraire, qui ne commence qu'avec
elle, l'écriture est donc essentiellement la morale de la forme,
c'est le choix de l'aire sociale au sein de laquelle l'écrivain
décide de situer la Nature de son langage."

one hand, it is derived from the confrontation between the writer

and his social milieu while, on the other, it forces him back to

the origins of his creativity. Aquin's narrator's admission that

"ce roman métisse n'est qu'une variante désordonnée d'autres

livres écrits par des écrivains inconnus" (p.90) echoes Barthes:

"une rémanence obstinée, venue de toutes les écritures précédentes

et du passé même de ma propre écriture, couvre la voix présente de

mes mots".[30]

H. de Heutz is particularly attractive to the narrator/hero

because the former is an historian -- an historian of the Roman

wars. He would necessarily have that sense of roots in History

which the hero does not. The latter senses his own loss when he

speaks of "la correlation subtile que j'ai décelée entre ce

chapitre de l'histoire helvétique et certains éléments de ma

propre histoire" (p.12). Complaining that he has no idea of the

outcome of the situation in Coppet Forest, the narrator none the less

continues to write.[31] To take up once more the "thread" of his

story is to discover that story: "L'écriture ... découvre mon

passé et mon choix, elle me donne une histoire, elle affiche ma

situation, elle m'engage sans que j'aie à le dire."[32]

The appeal to the feminine narratee to help him again find

the thread is in itself an additional commentary on the writing

of the text. The act of writing is more important than the person

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[30]Ibid, p. 28.

[31]More precisely, the work continues to be written, following
Barthes' theory according to which "we should no longer say today
'j'ai écrit' but, rather, 'je suis écrit'." Barthes, "To Write:
An Intransitive Verb," p. 166.

[32]Barthes, Le degré zéro de l'écriture, p. 42.

to whom it is addressed, since writing begets more writing. Like
Sara in Rousseau's Lettres à Sara, "tu" has become a receptacle of
the pen's output rather than its recipient. The mental image of
"tu", to whom the discourse is directed but through whom it never
passes (since nothing passes through a receptacle) is the
personified mediator toward whom the text is being written.[33]
"Tu" abets the implied author in his desire to turn narcissistically
to himself, to the page, and to his reflection in language.

As Carroll has shown, the text as a flat surface offers a
printed reflection of the writer, since all phenomena, including
language, can be reduced to a surface reflection upon the page.[34]
By having written "je" on the first page of the text, the author
has inscribed himself on that page and, by extension, in the text;
at first, "je descends au fond des choses", later "je descends en
moi-même". From the very opening, the author has hoped to look at
himself as if to see a fixed mirror image; instead he has seen
shadows and silhouettes. Writing, therefore, offers the
possibility both of textual unification of the fragmented writing
subject and of that subject and his text. The narrator(s) remains
perplexed by H. de Heutz in all his multiplicity; the author and
reader recognize them as multiple others of that monolithic identity
known simply as "je".

As we have already observed, the narrator/prisoner's

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[33]Robert C. Carroll, "Rousseau's bookish ontology," Studies
on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century 79 (1971): 125.

[34]Gaston Bachelard, Lautréamont, nouv. éd. augm. (Paris:
José Corti, 1956), pp. 51-52. "Nous ne vivons que sur une surface."

reflections upon the writing of a text alternate with the narrator/
hero's actual narration. Beginning with page 99, the hero introduces
a subtle change: he re-tells an event, i.e. his capture of de Heutz.
Moreover, he re-interprets it:

H. de Heutz n'a opposé aucune résistance à mon injonction (p.100)

versus

Il hésita surpris et méfiant sans doute (p.65)

as well as creates a "ghost chapter" in order to explain the
subsequent chain of events. We shall examine shortly in more detail
the concept of the "ghost chapter".

Until the scene in the forest, the narrator/hero had
established a linear structure, with the quarry (B) always ahead of
the pursuer (A). Although the actual pursuit route may be circular
in nature, this does not alter the fact that spatially B precedes A:

Lausanne ——→ Vevey ——→ Montreux ——→ Château d'Oex

Genève ——→ Coppet

Morge

Château d'Echandens
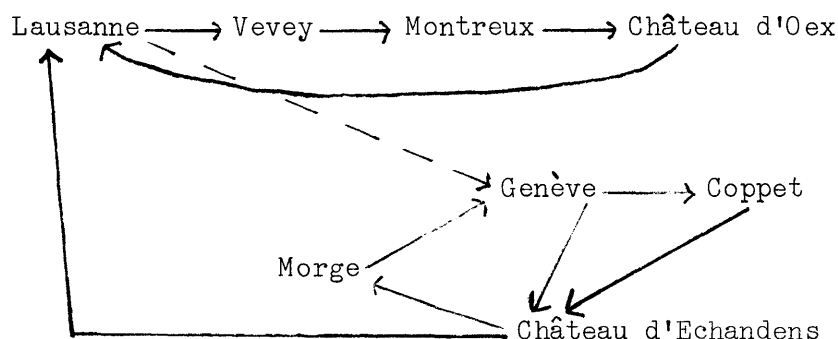
The presence of a third person (C) is hinted at on page 5 (C $\xrightarrow{\text{pursues}}$
A $\xrightarrow{\text{pursues}}$ B) but is not analysed nor even mentioned again until page
105. The reader accepts the existence of C as a given element,
necessary so that the initial confrontation between A and B can
occur; he may even briefly wonder whether C is the woman
accompanying H. de Heutz as the latter leaves the Café du Globe.
Thus,

$$A \xrightarrow{\text{pursues}} B + C$$

A with arrows forming a loop labeled "pursues"
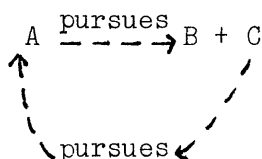
On page 99, the hero steps out of the text in order to impose

a chain of chronological relationships upon the sequence of events

which he is about to narrate. He postulates the presence of D (not

C, since there exists no proof that C = D)[35] and creates a "minimal

story", which

> consists of three conjoined events. The first and third
> events are stative, the second is active. Furthermore
> the third is the inverse of the first. Finally, the
> three events are conjoined by three conjunctive features
> in such a way that (a) the first event precedes the
> second in time and the second precedes the third, and
> (b) the second event causes the third.[36]

The sequence may be represented therefore as:

E stat [then] E act [then] [as a result] E stat
(+)   (-)

The only specified relationship between the first and the second

event is chronological. However, all three events are related by

common semantic elements and have a type of "isotopic" unity.[37]

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[35]The narrator/hero, however, does make the observation:
"Il m'a semblé un moment (me suis-je trompé?) que l'autre était
une femme: sans doute, celle qui marchait au bras de H. de Heutz
dans les rues de Genève . . ." (p. 105).

[36]Gerald Prince, Grammar of Stories (The Hague: Mouton,
1973), p. 31.

[37]A.J. Greimas, "Eléments pour une théorie de l'interprétation
du récit mythique," Communications 8:30 (1966). "... par isotopie
nous entendons un ensemble redondant de catégories sémantiques qui
rend possible la lecture uniforme du récit, telle qu'elle résulte
des lectures partielles des énoncés après résolution de leurs
ambiguïtés, cette résolution elle-même étant guidée par la recherche
de la lecture unique."

In looking specifically at the narrator's minimal story, we find that

H. de Heutz is a prisoner in hero's car, then a blonde pursues car, then H. de Heutz is free

Meaning is transformed according to the pattern: before -- mediation -- after.[38] By following Chambers' suggested structure and by supplying the conjunctive features which are implied in the text, we have:

E stat = H. de Heutz is in trunk of hero's car

CF   = [then]

E act = A blonde follows car/distracts hero

CF   = [then]

CF   [as a result]

E stat = H. de Heutz is free

As a structure, the narrator/hero and his narratee find themselves quite comfortable with it: the postulated minimal story tidies up any loose ends and creates a logical linear sequence, especially as the narrator observes, "quand on connaît H. de Heutz." (p.101). The narratee dutifully concurs.

The reader, on the other hand, asks himself: "But who really 'knows' H. de Heutz?" He compares the narrator/hero's assumption about de Heutz with his previous description of the latter as "un homme impossible à identifier" (p.88). The reader is further baffled by the parallel situation which the narrator also creates

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[38]Ross Chambers, "Change and Exchange? Story Structure and Paradigmatic Narrative," Australian Journal of French Studies 12 (3): 329 (Sept-Dec 1975).

with H. de Heutz' accomplice, who is tentatively categorized as
female:

Statement	Qualification
l'autre était une femme (p.105)	il m'a semblé; me suis-je trompé? (p.105)
j'ai d'abord vu des cheveux blonds (p.105)	comment se fier à une vision si fugace? (p.105)
cette femme blonde (p.106)	je la sentais seulement (p.106)

The reader is aware that Aquin has already used the same device in
the case of de Heutz in order to create confusion and thereby
prevent a facile reading of the text. The narrator/hero has
established H. de Heutz as his quarry (p.48); has briefly questioned
the veracity of his assumption (p.88); and has resumed referring to
his enemy as "de Heutz". Having questioned the identity of the
accomplice as well, the narrator finally establishes "her" as "une
femme blonde au volant d'une auto" (p.109). In both cases, the
reasoning process is circular:

affirmation

doubt
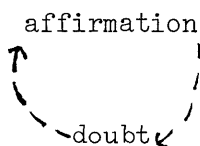
In fact, the narrator complains that "je n'ai fait que circonscrire
la même voûte renversée" (p.110).[39]

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[39]Jacqueline Viswanathan, "Prochain épisode d'Hubert Aquin
(Analyse temporelle)," Présence francophone, no. 13:117 (automne
1976). "Le mouvement de régression et de répétitions se marque
d'ailleurs aussi au niveau du contenu, ainsi la répétition de
l'histoire de la femme et des deux enfants, ou la reproduction
de situations semblables (la mise en joue de H. de Heutz) ou le
parcours répétitif de l'auto du narrateur."

Furthermore, if the reader examines the elements of the narrator/hero's minimal story rather more closely, he finds that the first two elements may have been either simultaneous in time or even reversed chronologically:

H. de Heutz is in car   [and]   blonde pursues car (hero?)

or

blonde pursues car (hero?)   [before]   de Heutz is in trunk

The casting of doubt upon the mediating element, i.e. the blonde, in the cause-and-effect chain prefigures the confusion which the reader will experience at the end of the novel when he attempts to identify the addressee of de Heutz' phone conversation.

The minimal story which we have just examined is a kind of "ghost chapter", which according to Eco may be described as follows:

> The text implicitly validates a "ghost chapter", tentatively written by the reader. In other words, the author is sure that the reader has already written by himself a chapter which is not manifested at the level of discursive structures, but which is taken as actualized as far as the narrative sequence is concerned.[40]

If, for example, chapter 3 of a Bond thriller concludes with M suggesting to 007 that there is a sinister plot underway in Madrid and if chapter 4 begins with Bond having a drink with a gorgeous blonde in the bar of the Hotel Castellana, then the reader assumes that: M has informed his agent of all pertinent details relating to the plot; someone has made the necessary travel arrangements;

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[40]Eco, op. cit., p. 215.

Bond has flown to Madrid, checked into the hotel, had a shower,
etc. The reader has therefore written his own "chapter" in which
he fills in all the missing details. Writers of detective stories
frequently make use of this device in order to trick the reader.
Aquin has actually gone one step further; he not only assumes that
his reader will have written a "ghost chapter" about the blonde in
the car but he also has his narrator/hero write one for the reader
as well! Ideally subsequent developments will either authenticate
or inauthenticate the hypotheses hazarded by the reader.[41]

In the following chapter, the narrator/hero creates yet
another "ghost chapter", in which he imagines H. de Heutz and his
accomplice in hot pursuit. Thus, the narrator assumes the same
perspective as the reader: both can only invent H. de Heutz'
probable course of action and resultant state of mind. The hero
views as brilliant his own stratagem to disguise himself as his
prey, de Heutz, in order to elude detection. The narratee is
assumed to be capable of appreciating such brilliance because of
a knowledge of "la logique courante de notre métier" (p.116).
Here Aquin plays upon certain expectations on the part of his
reader as to the logical structure of the genre in general as
well as upon the reader's acquaintance with a large number of
spy stories and films in particular. Consequently the reader
will not ally himself with the narratee inasmuch as the former
will have recalled any number of precedents for a similar
"counter-disguise".

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[41]Ibid, p. 32.

As has already been shown in this paper, the narrator/hero's

preoccupation with the contents of the château has been prefigured,

e.g. the Italian wardrobe (p.57). The first item of furniture to

catch his eye is the Louis XIII buffet with its single nude warrior

carved in bas relief upon the door. The hero is fascinated by the

corporeal beauty of the human figure and wonders who might be its

logical adversary. As if in answer, he spies a lacquered commode

with two warriors who "tendus l'un vers l'autre en des postures

complémentaires, sont immobilisés par une sorte d'étreinte cruelle,

duel à mort" (p.127).

Continuing with his examination of the room, he discovers an

1876 edition of Stoffel's Histoire de Jules César, Guerres

civiles,[42] followed by a reproduction of Benjamin West's "The

Death of Wolfe":

> Je remarque qu'il a accroché, juste au-dessus de la commode,
> une reproduction gravée, très rare, de "La mort du général
> Wolfe" par Benjamin West, dont l'original se trouve à la
> Grosvenor Gallery chez le marquis de Westminster. Cette
> gravure vaut maintenant plus cher que le grand tableau qui
> appartient au marquis de Westminster. C'est un véritable
> chef d'oeuvre que le peintre a tiré lui-même de son tableau:
> il en existe très peu d'exemplaires, dont celui du palais
> de Buckingham, celui du Musée de Québec et un autre qui
> appartient au prince Esterhazy. (p. 128)

In an enlightening article, Laurie Ricou has shown how the

narrator/hero appreciates the engraving for its aesthetic appeal

and fine workmanship, quite apart from its obvious mythological

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[42]Apparently a spurious edition of Stoffel since it does
not appear in either of the two major bibliographical sources.
Both the Catalogue général de la librairie française (Paris:
Librairie Nilsson, 1892), tome 12 (1886 à 1890), p.955 and the
National Union Catalogue: Pre-1956 Imprints (London: Mansell,
1978), vol. 570, p.581, list the earliest edition of Stoffel's
work as a 2-volume history, published in 1887 by Plon, Nourrit
et Cie. Aquin subtly underlines the unreliability of his
narrator.

[Truncated...]

representation as "the ultimate icon of the Conquest."[43] He goes

on to point out that, from an extratextual point of view, the

original "Death of Wolfe" has a reputation for historical accuracy,

a reputation falsely created by West and unsupported by historians.

From an intratextual point of view, Aquin has created an artificial

history for the painting: there is no evidence that West ever made

an engraving from his own painting; there are three painted copies

of the picture, but they are not housed in the locations mentioned

by the narrator. Ricou acknowledges a deliberate "confusion" by

Aquin and concludes:

> The repeating doubleness of Aquin's novel is imaged in
> the engraving. . . . The narrator/hero is at war, yet he's
> suspended in inaction; de Heutz is his enemy and yet he
> loves him, and identifies with him, and depends upon him;
> he rejects his history, and yet must draw upon its mythology
> to understand himself. . . . In The Death of Wolfe, Aquin
> recognizes the value of both symmetry and excess decoration,
> he senses the process that mythologizes a historical event,
> and he sees that the painting might reveal/mirror the
> infinitely repeating doubleness .. and the suspended waiting,
> of his own fictional form.[44]

Since the text offers the reader both a printed reflection

of the writer and the possibility of textual unification of the

fragmented writing subject, then in like manner the contents of

H. de Heutz' château offer the narrator (and his corresponding

narratee) a reflection of de Heutz and the possibility of

unifying the latter's various manifestations. The narrator/spy,

confronted with "ces signes immobiliers", has difficulty, however,

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[43]Laurie Ricou, "Never Cry Wolfe: Benjamin West's The Death of Wolfe in Prochain Episode and The Diviners," Essay on Canadian Writing no. 20:179 (Winter 1980-81).

[44]Ricou, op. cit., p. 181.

in doing just that:

> Mais l'homme que j'attends est-il bien l'agent ennemi
> que je dois faire disparaître froidement? Cela me paraît
> incroyable, car l'homme qui demeure ici transcende avec
> éclat l'image que je me suis faite de ma victime. Autre
> chose que sa mission contre-révolutionnaire définit cet
> homme. Sa double identité est disproportionnée avec le
> rôle qu'il remplit . . . Mais si ce n'est pas H. de Heutz
> qui demeure ici (lui ou Carl von Ryndt ou même ce
> lamentable François-Marc de Saugy, qu'importe!) et qui
> couvre son espace vital de tous ces ornements, qui donc
> est l'autre? (p.129)

Following the narrator's lead, the narratee becomes caught in a

web of possible answers, a web as convoluted as the ex-libris on

the Stoffel book.

The reader, on the other hand, with his inherent need to

impose organization upon the text, notes the progression in

images from One to Multiplicity: the single nude warrior becomes

two warriors, each complementing the other. The West engraving

is a copy of the original; it is but one of three. While

Berthiaume would have the reader progress from one warrior to

two warriors to the ex-libris as the ultimate multiple image,[45]

the text itself leads the reader back to One:

> Pourtant, à force de scruter ce chiffre hermétique,
> je vois bien que, contre toutes les apparences, ce ne
> sont pas là des lettres de l'écriture arabe, mais les
> initiales mêmes de l'homme qui s'intéresse à "L'Histoire
> de Jules César, guerres civiles" du colonel Stoffel.
> (p.131)

As the narrator attempts to solve the "enigma" of the ex-libris,

he first describes it as "anonyme" and later qualifies it as

"plus indéchiffrable qu'anonyme". Imagined Arabic characters

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[45]André Berthiaume, "Le thème de l'hésitation dans Prochain
Episode," Liberté 15(1): 146-147 (1973). "Le un devient deux
qui devient plusieurs qui, en définitive, se dissout ou plutôt se
liquéfie ..."

become the initials of the book's owner. The multiple images are
but reflections ("mirrors" as Ricou calls them) of the one man.
The two warriors are really a mirror image, one of the other:
"tendus l'un vers l'autre en des postures complémentaires."[46]

The multiplications of both the narrator (prisoner and hero,
with the implied possibility of Diop) and the quarry (de Heutz,
von Ryndt, de Saugy) as well as the resultant symbiotic
relationship, have been dealt with quite extensively by Canadian
critics. Bélanger mentions "personnages dédoublés, affrontés à
eux-mêmes comme à l'autre:"[47] Kattan has suggested that "H. de
Heutz est un frère siamois du Québécois en révolte;"[48] Pelletier
refers to him as the "double projeté du narrateur."[49] "De Heutz",
writes Marcotte, "c'est l'ennemi, et c'est le double."[50]
Lefebvre chooses to refer to the adversary as von Ryndt, who
"représente l'occupant ou le double bourgeois du héros lui-
même."[51] Major observes: "Le dédoublement le plus significatif
à propos de ce personnage [i.e. de Heutz] s'effectue entre le

[46]My underlining.

[47]Marcel Bélanger, "Hubert Aquin ou la démesure de l'écriture,"
Magazine littéraire 134:75 (1978)

[48]Naim Kattan, "Lettre de Montréal," Canadian Literature 28:55
(Spring 1966)

[49]Jacques Pelletier, "Nationalisme et roman: une inévitable
conjonction," Revue des sciences humaines 45(173):74 (janvier-mars
1979)

[50]Gilles Marcotte, Les bonnes rencontres: chroniques
litteraires (Montréal: Hurtubise HMH, 1971), p. 191.

[51]Jocelyne Lefebvre, "Prochain Episode ou le Refus du Livre,"
Voix et images du pays 5:163 (1972)

narrateur et de Heutz."[52] For as Bernard asks: "Comment détruire

l'adversaire qui n'est rien d'autre que votre double? Le tuer

n'est-ce pas se tuer soi-même?"[53]

The actual process by which the various dédoublements take

place can best be explained, as Weinmann has suggested in his

"Narcisse et l'autre: pour un ethnotype québécois,"[54] through

reference to Lacanian theory. Lacan's writings abound with

references to what he calls the Imaginary order (nonverbal:

perception), the Symbolic order (verbal: discourse), and the

Real, which is not synonymous with external reality, but rather

with what is real for the subject, the id. This distinction is

derived in part from the phase of childhood which Lacan calls

the stade du miroir:[55] the primary alienation of the child from

"himself" and his subsequent discovery of his Self. The infant

before the mirror in Lacan's analysis has no formed ego. He

cannot stand alone and has no mastery over body movements. The

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[52]Jean-Louis Major, "Hubert Aquin," Histoire de la littérature française du Québec, ed. Pierre de Grandpré, [vol] 4 (Montreal: Librairie Beauchemin, 1969), p. 170.

[53]Michel Bernard, "Prochain épisode ou l'autocritique d'une impuissance," Parti pris 4 (3-4):85 (nov-dec 1966).

[54]Heinz Weinmann, "Narcisse et l'autre: pour un ethnotype québécois," Voix et images 3(2):266-276 (décembre 1977) .

[55]Jacques Lacan, Ecrits, I (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1966), p. 90. "Il y suffit de comprendre le stade du miroir comme une identification au sens plein que l'analyse donne à ce terme: à savoir la transformation produite chez le sujet quand il assume une image, -- dont la prédestination à cet effet de phase est suffisamment indiquée par l'usage, dans la théorie, du terme antique d'imago." The basis for my own interpretation of Lacan has been provided by Anthony Wilden (ed.), The Language of the Self, by Jacques Lacan (New York: Dell, 1968).

child experiences the "corps morcelé", i.e. the fragmented or
uncoordinated body image prior to the mirror phase. At the
beginning of the phase, the child has thought of the image of
himself in the mirror as belonging to the Other, i.e. another.
At a given moment, the child perceives the image of the other
human being as belonging to himself; he discovers a corporeal
unity which is lacking to him at this particular stage of his
development.

Lacan interprets the child's fascination with the image as
an anticipation of his maturing to a future point of corporeal
unity by identifying himself with this image. Having first
perceived himself as the Other, the subject identifies his
sentiment of Self in the image of the Other. Thus the first
effect which appears in human beings is the alienation in the
subject. It is in the Other that the subject identifies and
even senses himself at first. The mirror image allows him to
identify with the corporeal unity of other human beings. As
a result, the ego is another self and the stade du miroir is
the source of all later identifications.

In the Schema L, Lacan has diagrammed the relationship
between the ego and the id, as well as the structure of
intersubjectivity:
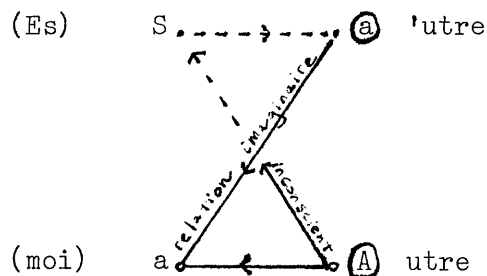
The S is the id: "the alleged basic and primitive tendencies of the human mind";[56] "the subject barred from consciousness."[57] The a is the ego, "that part of the personality that is conscious of the environment and adapts to it."[58] It is the image which I have of myself. ⓐ ' is the image which I have of the Other, the image that the Other has of me, and that which is reflected of my id in the Other. Ⓐ is the id of the Other, the Other constituted as absolute subject.

Inasmuch as the mirror stage is a decisive moment in the fixation of one's self image, it is of paramount importance that it be transcended so as to avoid reproducing "à l'infini" the repetitive image of one's self, i.e. "le drame de Narcisse", as Weinmann calls it. In the latter situation, the mirror image ("l'autre du moi") becomes fused with the rest of the world. The ego, the Other and the world are fused as one since the narcissistic ego is incapable of distinguishing between the Real and the Imaginary order. Weinmann writes:

> Mon regard posé sur moi se perd dans l'infini jeu de miroirs, qui ne mirent finalement qu'une conscience vide d'elle-même. Mais c'est justement le caractère fantômatique et fantasmatique de sa conscience qui fascine Narcisse: c'est sa réalité. Son reflet est son autre. Par là il évite la confrontation, la lutte (au sens de l'antagon grec) avec l'Autre.[59]

Thus, in Prochain épisode, if the narrator/hero not only doubles himself but his own double as well (de Heutz), the

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[56]Clarence L. Barnhart (ed.), The World Book Encyclopedia Dictionary, I (Chicago: Field Enterprises, 1966), p. 976.

[57]Wilden, op. cit., p. 165.

[58]Barnhart, op. cit., p. 629.

[59]Weinmann, op. cit., p. 271.

constituted as author?"

As we have already seen, having initially discussed the nature/problem of his relationship to writing in a metaphorical way (the water image, the image of descent, etc.), the narrator/prisoner then proceeds to project himself, as narrator/hero, into a proposed spy story. The ensuing complexities raise all kinds of problems for the reader as to the nature of "je". At times, it is indeed quite difficult to distinguish whether the narrator/prisoner or narrator/hero is "speaking". As a result of a quick, superficial reading of the text, the reader is apt not to even make such a distinction, with the result that his two narratees blend into one as well.

The structure adopted by Aquin in <u>Prochain épisode</u> allows him to both create a story (hero chases assigned quarry) and comment upon it ("le roman que j'écris"; "mes personnages qui m'attendent", etc.). The text alternates irregularly between the two. Structurally the novel resembles a labyrinth. Amprimoz writes of "le labyrinthe encyclopédique du texte qui nous oblige à tout moment à consulter les dictionnaires spécialisés (historiques, littéraires, artistiques, atlas, etc. ...)."[62] Lefebvre suggests that "l'allusion au mythe de Thésée fixe la vision qu'a l'auteur de son propre récit: un labyrinthe dans lequel, contrairement au héros mythologique, il se perd."[63] The "dead ends" are, in part, the mirrored images which the

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[62] Alexandre Amprimoz, "Le logocentrisme de <u>Prochain épisode</u>: l'essentiel, l'irréductible d'une théorie scripturale," <u>Présence francophone</u> no.10:91 (printemps 1975)

[63] Lefebvre, op. cit., p. 149.

possibilities are endless. For each "je", for example, there is

a corresponding blonde (prisoner + enigmatic woman; hero + K; de

Heutz + accomplice) and a corresponding narratee. Of course, the

more mirror images which "je" creates of himself, the more he

puts off an inevitable confrontation with the Other. Without

necessarily viewing this problem from either an existential or

Lacanian point of view, Canadian critics have tended to discuss

the Other (de Heutz, specifically) in socio-economic-political

and/or cultural terms.[60] That is to say, in terms of Lacan's

Schéma L, Prochain épisode is generally discussed in terms of

intersubjectivity, i.e. the confrontation(s) of two "characters"

as subject.

Since the schéma can represent, as well, the relationship

of the id to the ego, then one may also read the text as a

discussion of the principal narrator's alienation from himself,

in which the doubling (more correctly, multiplicity of images)

of the narrator/prisoner is a response to the author's problem

of inscribing himself as "je" upon the page. In an attempt to

answer the question: "de quelle façon dois-je m'y prendre pour

écrire un roman d'espionnage?", the narrator has necessarily

had to confront the nature of "je". Berthiaume is quite right

when he observes that the real question here is "Qui suis-je?"[61]

One might qualify that question by asking as well: "Who am I,

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[60] Jean Bouthillette, Le Canadien français et son double
(Montreal: L'Hexagon, 1972), p.71. Ronald Sutherland, "The
Fourth Separatism," Canadian Literature no.45:9 (Summer 1970).
Michel Bernard, op. cit., p.84. J. Ethier-Blais, Signets, II
(Montreal: Le Cercle du Livre de France, 1967), p.235.

[61] Berthiaume, op. cit., p. 137.

narrator projects: Orpheus, Ophelia, Ferragus, Bonnivar. The non-traditional nature of the labyrinth is made even more manifest as the novel concludes.

In returning to the plot, we find that having once more lost control over events, the narrator/hero finds himself writing yet another "ghost chapter" for de Heutz and his accomplice, in which the latters' movements are accounted for within the château earlier in the day. The narrator then writes a brief "chapter" in which he describes what he will do upon de Heutz' arrival, which description leads him to imagine the present activities of his enemy. The "chapter" (in fact, one long paragraph) leads from:

[probably] happened	[probably] will happen	[probably] is happening
accomplice hidden in castle	de Heutz will be surprised to see hero	de Heutz is looking for hero in all the wrong places

As a ghost chapter and minimal story, the explanation fails since the resultant E stat is postulated <u>before</u> the E act;

E stat	E stat	E act
accomplice hidden	de Heutz' surprise	de Heutz seeking hero

There are no tidy ends, as there were in the previous minimal story (p.99).

Vaguely aware that he is losing control over his ability to come to terms with de Heutz, the narrator/hero vacillates between doubt ("Avec lui, on ne sait jamais", p.134) and certainty ("Je connais trop H. de Heutz", p.135), succumbing finally to "l'impression de non-sens que m'inflige tout ce qui entoure cet
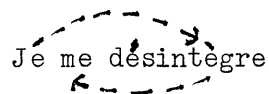
homme" (p.135). Debating whether to phone in order to ascertain the
time of day, he non-concludes: "Sait-on-jamais?"[64] Certainly the
reader has already been asking himself this very question throughout
his reading of the text. In addition, the interrogative "sait-on?"
gives the lie to the narrator's affirmative use of "connaître" + de
Heutz (pp.101,135).

The narrator/hero's presence in the château eventually produces
a feeling of imprisonment,[65] which both echoes the beginning of the
text and prefigures its conclusion. The anguish is further
compounded by a sense of nothingness: "le vide". The latter is
qualified by the adjective "insensé" which sends us back to "non-
sens". There follows an interesting play on opposition: "vide"
vs. "édifier", "personne" vs. "je". On the one hand, we have:
"Personne ne vient à moi, personne ne peut me rejoindre" (p.137).
On the other, we are presented with "je" linked to "édifier" +
"existence" ("J'avais donc édifié mon existence", pp.137-138) in
opposition to "le vide" (pp.136, 137). Although the act of writing
may represent an attempt either to avoid or to deny the existence
of "le vide", the end result is failure. The "je" continually
frustrates attempts to define it as a monolithic identity by
dissolving into multiplicity:

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[64]Serge Doubrovsky, Parcours critique (Paris: Editions
Galilée, 1980), p.66. He discusses "le tour, nécessairement
interrogateur, pour l'écrivain moderne, de toute référence:
comment savoir, comment était-ce? ... La genèse d'une écriture
(et le principe ultime de son fonctionnement) doit donc être
recherchée dans le mouvement, propre à chaque écrivain, par
lequel il contourne l'impossibilité même d'écrire."

[65]Cf. p. 120: "Cette chère prison d'époque.
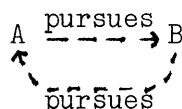
Je me désintègre

"Je" is the one who acts, who watches himself act and who acts upon himself. While "je"/hero may perform his assigned tasks in the spy story, it is "je"/prisoner who has created him. So that if the latter succeeds in frustrating the former, he also succeeds in frustrating himself. As Lefebvre has observed, the principal narrator becomes lost in his own construct.[66]

The labyrinth, as an internal construct rather than one imposed from outside, has already been hinted at since the beginning of the text: "tracer des courbes sur le papier" (p.12), "les courbes manuscrites" (p.120), "je suis en train de rédiger un casse-tête" (p.12), "un dessin chargé qui s'enroule sur lui-même" (p.130). An impassioned plea to his unidentified narratee ("mon amour, à moi!", p.139) cannot prevent the realization that "j'ai perdu le fil de mon histoire et me voici rendu au milieu d'un chapitre que je ne sais plus comment finir" (p.142).

Whereas previously the relationship between narrator/hero (A) and his quarry (B) has been diagrammed linearly as:

$$A \xrightarrow{\text{pursues}} B$$

it now has become circular:

$$A \xrightarrow{\text{pursues}} B$$
$$\text{pursues}$$

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[66]Lefebvre, op. cit., p. 149. Cf. Prochain épisode, p. 97: "J'ai besoin de retrouver le fil de notre histoire."

inasmuch as the narrator writes: "L'auteur de ce cryptogramme de fausses rencontres et d'ambiguïtés me cherche plus encore que je ne l'ai poursuivi" (p.146). In addition, the distinction between the various "characters" of the novel becomes even less clear, not just because the narrator/spy proclaims that "secrètement je suis entré en lui" (p.146) but also because of Aquin's jeu de mots with "l'auteur" and "cryptogramme". "L'auteur" can refer to Aquin himself as the implied author, to the narrator/prisoner as author/creator of the spy, to de Heutz as author/source of the hero's predicament, and even to Diop as supposed author of the cryptogram.[67] Playing upon Pirandello's Sei personnagi in cerca di un autore, one could provide as a sub-title for Aquin's novel Un personaggio in cerca del suo proprio autore. The cryptogram, for its part, is not only the supposedly encoded message but also the "hidden meaning" of the ex-libris as well as the labyrinthine structure of the plot: "fausses rencontres et . . . ambiguïtés" (p.146).

The ambiguities or dead ends which the reader has encountered before are amassed in an entanglement of references used by de Heutz in his telephone conversation with his accomplice: "tu" [K?] , "il" [narrator/hero?] , "le code" [the cryptogram?] , Stoffel [the same spurious edition?] and "les enfants" [an invention of narrator/spy and de Saugy/de Heutz]. The reference to the children is a climactic moment in the novel inasmuch as it sends the very clear message: "Dear reader, no through road to answers. If you have been so foolish as to have continually tried to 'solve the mystery(s)',

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[67]"Ce cher très cher Hamidou m'avait mis dans un joli pétrin avec son message secret" (p. 63).

despite clear indications to the contrary, then surely by now you

must have realized the futility of such gestures."

Aquin has a further bit of fun towards the end of the novel

with K's message, which sends us back to the phone conversation:

une journée incroyable (p.149)   une affaire incroyable (p.158)

je te raconterai tout ça   je te raconterai bientôt
    plus tard (p.149)   (p.158)

The reader asks himself whether, having read this "roman/histoire

incroyable", he has in fact been told anything. The promise of

"telling all" has been extended any number of times throughout the

novel but has yet, it would seem, to be fulfilled. K's reference

to Hamidou Diop in a post-script is a particularly humorous

authorial intrusion.

It comes undoubtedly as no surprise to the reader that the

narrator/hero is eventually arrested upon his return to Montreal.

As we have already seen, his actual incarceration has been

prefigured in the story. Everything has been leading to the moment

in which the narrator/hero becomes narrator/prisoner. The failed

meeting with K unleashes not only the evocation on the part of the

hero of his feminine counterpart but more especially a great

outpouring of sentiment on the part of the prisoner for his beloved

"tu" (pp.153-154). Whereas previously the hero has tended to speak

about K through the use of either the third person singular ("K" or

"elle") or the first person plural ("nous"), the prisoner has

tended to speak directly to his blonde ("tu"). However, in the

chapter just preceding the announcement of his arrest, "je" mingles

creator with creation, creation with addressee.

The penultimate chapter stands as yet one more attempt to tell/
finish the spy story: "il était exactement onze heures quand . . ."
(p.161), an echo of the attempt to begin the story: "il était près
de six heures quand . . ." (p.37). The phone call to M[68] with its
"langage hypercodé" (p.160) as well as its emphasis on verbal
descriptions ("je flânais", "je suis redescendu", "je me suis
dirigé", "j'ai composé" [p.160] or "j'ai retrouvé", "j'ai traversé",
"j'ai acheté", "je suis entré", "j'ai traversé" [pp.162-163])
underscore the attempt to be faithful to the rules of the genre.
With the arrest of the narrator(s), theoretically the spy story has
ended. Or has it? Whereas initially the narrator asked himself
"de quelle façon dois-je m'y prendre pour écrire un roman
d'espionnage?", he now asks himself "de quelle façon dois-je m'y
prendre pour terminer un roman d'espionnage?" After all, "une fin
logique", while expected by the reader, also permits the author to
tidy up loose ends.

As Barthes has written, ultimately the passion which animates
us as readers of narrative is the passion for/of meaning.[69] Since
for Barthes "meaning" is constituted by a completion of codes in a
fullness of signification, then this passion appears to be finally
a desire for the end. Brooks, for his part, has developed this
concept along Freudian lines and has shown that the beginning in
fact presupposes the end. The very possibility of meaning depends
upon the anticipated structuring of the ending; otherwise "the

[68]Lest we forget the code initial of James Bond's chief?

[69]Barthes, "Introduction à l'analyse structurale du récit,"
p. 27. "La passion qui peut nous enflammer à la lecture d'un
roman n'est pas celle d'une 'vision' (en fait, nous ne 'voyons'
rien), c'est celle du sens."

interminable would be meaningless."[70]

A plot starts (or at least gives the illusion of starting) from that moment at which the story is stimulated into a kind of tension, which subsequently demands narration. The beginning is viewed therefore as an awakening, as the birth of ambition, desire or intention. Endings (death, non-narrability) are structured against beginnings (Eros, the desire of narrative) in a way which necessitates the middle as "détour", i.e. as a struggle toward the end under the compulsion of imposed delay. Hence the desire of reading is desire for the end, reached through a complicated "détour" which is the plot of the narrative. It is characteristic of textual energy in narrative that it should always be "on the verge of premature discharge, of short-circuit."[71] The reader experiences the fear of this as well as the fear of endlessness.

In examining Prochain épisode, we are aware that the inherent structure of the text precludes an ending which will in essence tidy up loose ends. The effort to conclude leaves author, reader, narrator and narratee all facing the same things: "papier" and "mots". This imagery is certainly very closely linked with that of the first chapter:

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la densité mortuaire de l'écrit (p.164)	les eaux mortes de la fiction (p.15)
le sang des mots (p.167)	le précieux sang (p.17)

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[70]Peter Brooks, "Freud's Masterplot", Yale French Studies no.55/56: 283 (1977).

[71]Brooks, op. cit., p. 296.

ma mise en scène (pp.165-166)   un rituel de parades et
                                 de mises en scène (p.16)

le désordre (p.166)   l'incohérence (p.14)

la frêle opacité du   le papier nu (p.14)
     papier (p.164)

le mot qui me manque (p.165)   les mots-clés (p.7)

je cherche une fin logique   je cherche mes mots (p.11)
     (p.167)

As a way of providing an ending, Aquin, in the last chapter of

Prochain épisode, plays with the concept of "alternate story";[72]

the narrator assumes the power to report what _might_ have happened:

"If character A had done X", etc. Such narration may be

represented as:
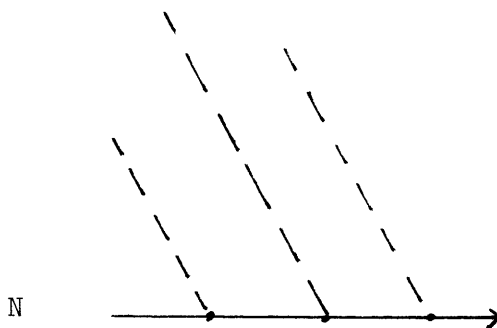
The straight line represents the story; the dotted lines are those

directions in which the story could have gone had the hypothetical

statements been realized.

Bart has developed the same concept in considerable detail

in his study of "hypercreativity" in the works of Stendhal and

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[72]Eco, op. cit., p. 34.

Balzac.[73] The result is what he calls "para-stories", i.e. <u>excursi</u>

in which the author wonders how matters would have stood if

something central to the plot were other than the way in which it

is depicted in the narrative. The author then begins to imagine

the resultant state of affairs and thereby creates "excursions"

which are parallel to the main story. The use of the conditional

sentence with a past contrary-to-fact clause is particularly useful

in alerting the reader to the fact that he is being asked to

consider what would have been the situation or what might have

taken place if something else had transpired. As Bart points out,

the para-story may have the effect of producing in the reader a

feeling of sympathy towards a character whose plight might have

been considerably more pleasant <u>if only</u> "character A had done X"

or "event Y had/had not transpired."[74]

In the case of <u>Prochain épisode</u>, we find for example:

si K était avec moi

        elle me confirmerait que ...

si je l'avais retrouvée

        K me dirait que ...

si je lui avais fait une description

        je l'aurais tué

Si je n'avais pas épuisé   j'aurais fait une proposition
   mes forces

        je lui aurais demandé

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[73]B.F. Bart, "Hypercreativity in Stendhal and Balzac,"
<u>Nineteenth-Century French Studies</u> 3(1&2):18-39 (Fall-Winter 1974-
1975). "Such an urge to create situations, events, characters or
other fictions beyond what the current work can contain within its
normal bounds manifests itself ... when an author asks himself how
matters would have stood, if something central -- say the situation
of the hero -- were other...and the author then starts to conjure
up the new state of affairs." (p. 18)

[74]Ibid, p. 23.

The alternate story postulated by the narrator provides the tidy

ending so longed for by both narrator and narratee: the

confirmation that de Heutz is indeed the enemy, the death of the

enemy by the hand of the narrator/hero, and the happy reuinion of the

narrator/hero with his lover. The alternate story eliminates doubts that

"l'homme ... n'est pas H. de Heutz" (p.169) or that "K le

connaissait donc, mais comment pouvait elle savoir que je le

connaissais" (p.171).

However, the nature of such a "story" is that it is precisely

an alternative rejected by the author. While allowing the reader

to follow extratextually such a tangent to his heart's delight, at

the same time it stands in opposition to the basic story line of

the text itself. Aquin has repeatedly made use of "ghost chapters"

(especially those outlined by the narrator) to confuse the reader

and thwart his expectations as to what constitutes a "typical" spy

story. The alternate story serves the same purpose inasmuch as it

dangles before the reader the possibility of a traditional

conclusion only to deny that possibility.

The narrative has come full circle: prisoner and hero are

now one and the same. On the one hand, the prisoner has only to

finish the story which he initially began in order to kill time

and abolish both boredom and despair; on the other hand, the hero,

by becoming the prisoner can/will also write a story about a

certain French-Canadian "spy" and a certain H. de Heutz. There

can/will be no conclusion. Carroll observes:

> A seminal transferal of the self to the book occurs
> through the medium of the pen and the trance of its inky
> stain. Yet without a perpetual act of writing the entire
> self can never be transferred because there is continually
> more of the author's existence to transfer to the text.
> In this sense there is no finished book until the man who
> is its author is finished, that is dead. In this romanesque
> world existence begets writing and writing begets existence.
> The writer is trapped as Edmond Jabes declares 'entre ce
> qui est écrit et ce qui sera écrit', or 'entre l'ouvrage
> achevé et l'oeuvre à écrire'.[75]

Aquin denies his reader the textual unification of a
fragmented writing subject. He does, however, make one concession
to his faithful reader; he invites him to write his own concluding
"ghost chapter" along the lines suggested by the narrator. On the
one hand, the latter suggests that "non, je ne finirai pas ce livre
inédit", which sends us back to "mon livre inédit" of the opening
lines of the book and thereby frustrates closure. As Brooks
observes: "It is the role of fictional plots to impose an end
which suggests a return, a new beginning: a rereading. A
narrative, that is, wants at its end to refer us back to its
middle, to the web of the text: to recapture us in its doomed
energies."[76]

On the other hand, the considerably longer final paragraph
outlines the story as it was-supposed-to-have-been/could-be-yet-
in-the-future. The rather poetic evocation of the long-awaited
Quebec revolution suggests that "come the revolution, words will
have no meaning; only acts will signify". Benveniste describes
the future tense as "un présent projeté vers l'avenir, il implique

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[75]Carroll, op. cit., p. 124

[76]Brooks, op. cit., p. 297.

prescription, obligation, certitude."[77] However, according to
Benveniste, in terms of choosing verb tenses for the "récit
historique", the future is a non-narrative tense since the very
obligation and certainty which it implies are subjective
"modalités" and therefore not historical attributes. And yet
Aquin, for his part, has definitely established the future as a
narrative tense. It is only in the "certainty" of the future
that the narrator will write "en lettres majuscules le mot: FIN"
and that there will be that recognition which Brooks defines as
the moment of the death of the reader in the text.[78]

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[77]Emile Benveniste, _Problèmes de linguistique générale_
(Paris: Gallimard, 1966), p. 245.

[78]Brooks, op. cit., p. 296.