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AND THE PRACTICE OF HENRY GREEN.

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1970

TOWARD LOVING: THE POETICS OF THE NOVEL  
AND THE PRACTICE OF HENRY GREEN

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## PREFACE

The original impulse behind this book was an interest in the novels of Henry Green. In the course of reading the few programmatic statements that Green has made about his novels and about the novel in general, statements regarding the "non-representational" nature of fiction, it became clear to me that there were certain conceptual inadequacies in even the most serious treatments of Green and in discussions of the novel in general. I became concerned with two different sets of formal problems: 1) problems relating to the forms of life or to values, to the novel's quest for authenticity in life; 2) problems relating to the novel as a form, as a way of writing. If we take the position of the earlier Gerog Lukacs that the novel is characterized by a powerful ethical impulse, by a quest for authenticity, then we will have to confute the kind of neo-Arnoldian criticism that offers such standards as "the main stream of life" and "traditional cultural forms." The extent to which the notion of a "great tradition" is a progressive or a reactionary one depends on the extent to which it aids us or hampers us in our efforts to locate the form of the novel within global social structures. To adopt Borges' example, if someone wrote War and Peace in

1970, copying Tolstoy's work word for word, would he have written the same book? My own antagonism to the nouveau roman made me aware of the dangers of a consumer's attitude toward values--sweetness and light being worth so much on the culture market. The second set of formal problems has to do with the inter-systemic aspects of the novel, with the fact that novels signify as well as refer. The notion of verisimilitude is at best a banality and at worst a deception if it does not allow for the idea that language is an articulation of reality (in the sense of a breaking up of what is undifferentiated) rather than a reflection of a reality which is ready made. As we shall see, moreover, the conflict between writing and "reality" is as much a source of the novel's heuristic value as the mimesis assumed by the notion of verisimilitude.

As a result of these concerns, my intention became one of using Green's novels as a spring-board for a discussion of some of the salient problems in criticism of the novel. The organization of this study reflects this intention: a very general introductory chapter, which explores the formal problems that I referred to above; and a sequence of chapters which, except for a short chapter on Henry Green, use Green's books to illustrate particular problems in analysis of the novel. By the end of the penultimate chapter,

however, it became apparent to me that in the course of trying to come to terms with certain problems in criticism of the novel, I had also been trying to come to terms with one particular novel by Henry Green--Loving. In other words two opposite (though, hopefully, not conflicting) movements were taking place in this study: an expansion in terms of the formal parameters which I found relevant to a discussion of the novel in general, and a contraction in terms of the particular test--Loving--toward which the book was moving.

Since I have not made a systematic treatment of Green's novels, a summary of each of these novels would have been awkward in the course of discussing some generic problem. Consequently, I have used Appendix I to provide a novel by novel summary in order to eliminate problems of reference as we go along. These summaries will provide necessary background for those readers who are unfamiliar with some or all of Green's novels and will hopefully draw them to some or all of these novels.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Freedom always inclines to dialectical reversals. She realizes herself very soon in constraint, fulfills herself in subordination to law, rule, coercion, system--but to fulfill herself therein does not mean she therefore ceases to be freedom.

Mann

The epigraph to this chapter relates to a problem that has been discussed in various ways by Percy Lubbock, Georg Lukacs, and Susan Sontag: the problem of form in the novel. The restrictions that one places on oneself in art are a priori means of exclusion, gambits in an exploration and articulation of experience. In terms of painting, one thinks of the size and shape of the canvas, which both limit and release certain perceptual explorations. One further thinks of certain painters who are simply paralyzed by a white, empty canvas and who must cover the canvas with a color (brown, for example) before they begin to compose. With regard to the novel, Susan Sontag points out that the twentieth century novel still lacks sufficient distance from nineteenth century premises, despite the work of writers like Proust and Joyce, "This passion for the documentation of 'experience', for facts, made the novel the most open of all art forms. Every art form works with some

implicit standard of what is elevated and what is vulgar--  
 except the novel. It could accommodate any level of language,  
 any plot, any ideas, any information. And this, of course, was  
 its eventual undoing as a serious art form." Georg Lukacs<sup>1</sup>  
 points out that the novel is "shadowed" by a literature of  
divertissement, which resembles the novel in all exterior char-  
 acteristics but which is essentially meaningless. What dis-  
 tinguishes the novel from other genres is the fact that its  
 ethical intention is an effective element in the construction of  
 the work.<sup>2</sup> Finally, Percy Lubbock states, "But still, as I say,  
 the aspects of a book that for the most part we detach and  
 solidify are simply those which cost us no deliberate pains.  
 We bring to the reading of a book certain imaginative faculties  
 which are in use all the day long, faculties that enable us to  
 complete, in our minds, the people and the scenes which the  
 novelist describes--to give them dimensions, to see round them,  
 to make them 'real'."<sup>3</sup> After considering the question whether  
 or not the design or lack of design of a novel makes any dif-  
 ference to our appreciation of it, and after pointing out that  
 our language for describing the novel is derived from other  
 arts, Lubbock states:

...from every side we make out that the criticism  
 of a book--not the people in the book, not the character  
 of the author, but the book--is impossible. We cannot  
 remember the book, and even if we could we should still  
 be unable to describe it in literal and unequivocal

terms. It cannot be done; and the only thing to be said is that perhaps it can be approached, perhaps the book can be seen, a little more closely in one way than in another. 4

Lubbock sees a contradiction between the book as process, as lapse and flow, and our conception of the book as a thing of size and shape, "Criticism is hampered by the ambiguity; the two books, the two aspects of the same book, blur each other; a critic seems to shift from this one to that, from the thing carved in the stuff of thought to the passing movement of life."<sup>5</sup> It is the conflict between duration and structure which is the central problem of this book.

Certain problems that bewitch discussion of the novel are less troublesome in discussion of verse. In English criticism we have not had the kind of systematic reevaluation of our methods for dealing with the novel that we have had during the past thirty years in relation to verse. In a recent book on the novel, David Lodge points out that F.R. Leavis

has two distinct 'images' as a critic: he is the critic of close analysis, of 'the words on the page'; and he is the 'moral' critic par excellence, insisting on the responsibility of literature to be 'on the side of life'. These two images are not irreconcilable--and both can be traced to some extent in everything Leavis has written. But is it not true that we think principally of his work on poetry in connection with the first image and of his work on the novel in connection with the second? 6

The difficulty seems to derive from the classical concept of art as an imitation of life. In relation to verse, we seem to have

7.

little difficulty now in recognizing that the formal parameters of verse (découpage or line ending, meter, rhyme) provide verse with certain internal laws which have nothing to do with verisimilitude. In relation to the novel, however, we often seem to talk about art as "imitation" almost as if the art work could be "taken for" an external reality to which it refers, like an impersonator being taken for the person he is impersonating. Christopher Caudwell, for example, states that "rhythm, preciousness and style are alien to the novel for novels are not composed of words. They are composed of scenes, actions, stuff, and people, just as plays are. A 'jewelled' style is a disadvantage to a novel because it distracts the eye from the things and people to the words--not as words, as black outlines, but as symbols to which a variety of feeling-tone is directly attached." (The underlining is Caudwell's) Aristotle's notion of diction seems to be an embarrassment in this account of the novel, as is the distinction made from Aristotle to Todorov between different modes of presentation--between narrative and scene. Caudwell wishes to minimize the mediation of experience by language, the heterogeneity between the signifier and the thing signified, "The poetic word is the logos, the word-made-flesh, the active will ideally ordering, whereas the novel's word is the sign, the reference, the conversationally pointing gesture." It is against this notion of fiction, as a sign whose adequacy we can judge by the efficiency, the

"painlessness" with which it refers us to an "external reality," that Lodge and contemporary French critics like Robbe-Grillet, Barthes, and Ricardou are rebelling. Just as Gilbert Ryle distinguishes between "knowing how" and "knowing that" in The  
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Concept of Mind, these latter critics want to distinguish between a prose that is ministering to a set purpose (convince people that a surtax is necessary, for example) and a prose that is in process, that is discovering itself as it goes along. They are not talking about autonomic writing but writing generated by laws peculiar to literary activity rather than laws peculiar to economics, ethics, or politics. In verse this point is easy to see: the "content" of a poem is determined in great part by the formal tasks which a poet assumes--to realize a given verse form (sonnet or villanelle) or a less traditional prosodic scheme; at the very least verse entails découpage, which provides formal resistance to the unfolding of propositions. The conventions of the novel are much less conspicuous, since, except for the chapter, they do not provide the resistance to natural discourse (as we see it, for example, in the anecdote) that the formal parameters of verse provide.

It is the ideological character of the novel's conventions which is the subject of the critiques of Alain Robbe-Grillet, Jean Ricardou, and Roland Barthes. In his essay "On Several Obsolete Notions," Robbe-Grillet polemicizes against

the traditional notions of "character," "story," "commitment," and "form and content." He points out that the novel of characters belongs to a period which marked the apogee of the individual, a period of economic individualism. He feels that our period is less anthropocentric, that it is characterized by a "larger" consciousness. He observes that the traditional "story" involves a prefabricated scheme of things, a "confidence in a logic of things that was just and universal." In the modern novel "it is not the anecdote that is lacking, it is only its character of certainty, its tranquillity, its innocence." His remaining points are that a work of art can be committed only to itself, that it is vitiated by any a priori goals (whether bourgeois humanist or socialist realist). In that sense form and content are one, since the novel is "about" its own explorations, "The public...readily associates a concern for form with coldness. But this is no longer true from the moment form is invention and not formula." <sup>11</sup> Barthes also points to the kind of teleological reassurance which the bourgeois novel gives, but he qualifies this reassurance as follows, "The preterite is the very act by which society affirms its possession of its past and its possibility. It creates a content credible, yet flaunted as an illusion; it is the ultimate term of a formal dialectics which clothes an unreal fact in the garb first of truth then of a lie denounced

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as such." Barthes seems to have some implicit notion of natural man confronting the plenitude of experience. That man is both reassured by the cause and effect nexus which the traditional novel imposes on duration and aware of the attenuation of experience which it involves. In fact, however, Barthes is describing the effect of the traditional novel on someone who no longer accepts its conventions as working models of reality. If one extended Barthes' discussion to other fields, Barthes' point would be applicable not to an eighteenth century scientist's response to Newton's laws but to a twentieth century physicist's response, conditioned by Einstein, Planck, and everyday events in a nuclear reactor; it would be applicable not to a Freudian's response to Freud's mythology of the mind but to the response of a twentieth century psychologist, who has read Malinowski, Sullivan, and Piaget; it would be applicable not to Herbert Spencer's response to Darwin but to that of twentieth century biologists and sociologists. I am skeptical whether Balzac or Balzac's readers experienced the preterite or the use of the third person as flaunting a credible illusion. Critics of the traditional novel like Philip Rhav, Irving Howe, Ian Watt, and Christopher Caudwell all talk of the importance of verisimilitude in the novel, but they clearly do not acknowledge a concomitant "unmasking" of this verisimilitude.

The problem of historicity is a difficult one in Robbe-Grillet and Barthes: it is not always clear whether they are being descriptive or programmatic, whether they are discussing aspects of the novel or aspects of the "new novel." Is the traditional novel to be condemned for its a priori humanistic values, or is it to be condemned because it is now an outmoded form? David Lodge's polemic is clearer: he is against a view of the novel which sees it in terms of more or less perfect translatability. What I mean by "perfect translatability" is as follows: In his Pour Une Sociologie du Roman, Lucien Goldman uses the Marxist distinction between use value and exchange value in order to posit a homologous relationship between the form of the novel and the structure of a bourgeois economy.<sup>13</sup> Use value has to do with the quality of a product and consequently with the quality of labor which produced the product, whereas exchange value has to do with the quantity of the product and the amount of labor. In aesthetic terms, use value would refer to the qualities which individuate a work of art; exchange value would refer to the qualities which enable us to exchange one work of art for another. A clear example of the latter is the efforts of anthropological researchers like Levi-Strauss to show the relations of homology and inversion between various myths. In the case of critics like Philip Rhav and Christopher Caudwell, the primary critical

concern is for the homologies between the events of a novel and political, social, economic "realities." This is what Rhav means when he says, "The poem and the story both use sounds which awake images of outer reality and effective reverberations; but in poetry the affective associations are organized by the structure of the language, while in the novel they are organized by the structure of the outer reality portrayed..."<sup>14</sup>

In this way, for example, one can discuss Theodore Dreiser's An American Tragedy in terms of Horatio Alger's Ragged Dick, and one can discuss both in terms of what we know of social and economic realities of American life. This approach has resulted in some of the most valuable criticism of the novel that we have (let us note Ian Watt's The Rise of the Novel as an example), but this kind of criticism does not exhaust what we can say about novels and is inadequate to deal with certain kinds of novels--the novels of Henry Green, for example. It is clear that the language of a novel is never merely nomenclature, as Rhav and Caudwell seem to feel. Novelists are not engaged in the Adamic activity of naming all the animals. The language of the novel is a system of interrelationships that articulate (and so generate) a reality; the language is not a mere inventory of references. The formal parameters which I shall be using are responses to the value system of writing - to the phenomenon of signification rather than reference,

mediation rather than transparency. With the challenge to "formal realism" that writers like Green offer, the problem of mediation becomes essential.

The following is a series of dichotomies which express the formal parameters which will be used in this study. A discussion of them will hopefully chart some of the salient difficulties in criticism of the novel: (1) habituation and defamiliarization, parameters which overlap considerably with the other categories; (2) l'histoire et le discours; (3) le sens et l'interprétation; (4) poetry and prose.

#### 1. Habituation and Defamiliarization

Philip Rahv says of the language of the novel, "All that we can legitimately ask of a novelist in the matter of language is that it must be appropriate to the matter in hand. What is said must not stand in a contradictory relation to the way it is said, for that would dispel the illusion of life and with it the credibility of the fiction." <sup>15</sup> In relation to critics like Philip Rahv, it is difficult to know how seriously they mean a phrase like "the illusion of life." Are they referring to a phenomenon like the anecdotes actors in soap-operas tell about receiving mail addressed to the character whom they play, giving them advice, commiserating with them? The notion of "appropriateness" is not objectionable in itself; no one would claim that the language of a novel should be inappropriate to

its fiction; however, ~~Rahv~~ seems to mean by "appropriateness" something like the "economy of creative effort" that Victor Shklovsky combats in his essay "Art as Technique." This notion has to do with the efficiency with which a work of art brings one to the perceptions which it intends to convey. Shklovsky distinguishes between "practical language" and "poetic language," the first of which expedites our apprehension of the "matter," the second of which purposefully impedes our apprehension of the "matter." Shklovsky points out that the process of education and socialization trains us to economize our perceptions, to extract from them what is useful for purposes of cognition, "The purpose of art is to impart the sensations of things as they are perceived and not as they are known. The technique of art is to make objects 'unfamiliar', to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and length of perception because the process of perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged. Art is a way of experiencing the artfulness of an object; the object is not important." (The underlinings are Shklovsky's)

Two points are noteworthy about Shkovsky's statement:

a) Although Shklovsky distinguishes between "practical" and "poetic" language, his concern with the novel is not primarily linguistic. The Russian formalists distinguish between story and plot: the former is "the action itself,"

the latter "now the reader learns of the action." <sup>17</sup> Of this distinction Shklovsky says, "The forms of art are explainable by the laws of art; they are not justified by their realism. Slowing the action of a novel is not accomplished by introducing rivals, for example, but by simply transposing parts. In so doing the artist makes us aware of the aesthetic laws which underlie <sup>18</sup> both the transposition and the slowing down of the action."

(The underlinings are Shklovsky's) In addition to this transposition of parts, the manipulation of point of view will also accomplish a "defamiliarization" or "deautomatization" of our perceptions. An example of this phenomenon is the changes in relative size of the protagonist of Gulliver's Travels. In his general essay and in his essay on Tristram Shandy, Shklovsky is more concerned with what we might call the "syntax of events" than with the syntax of sentences, although the use of a strange point of view may result in common words gaining unexpected meanings. When Jean Cohen, in Structure Du Langage Poétique, discusses poetic language, he divides his discussion into "niveau phonique" and "niveau sémantique," the first of which has to do with the deviations from natural language which are generated by the découpage (or line cut) of verse and the second of which has to do with deviations from natural language which are generated by various dispositions of the sentence. <sup>19</sup> As we have said, Shklovsky is primarily concerned with such matters as

point of view and the disposition of events. He is not attentive to the sentence as a grammatical unit, and presumably he would be more interested in the transposition of events in Faulkner's Absalom, Absalom than in the problems of rhetoric and sentence structure which that book raises.

b) The last sentence of Shklovsky's above statement (which Shklovsky underlines) is similar to the statements of position which Alain Robbe-Grillet and Jean Ricardou make in their work: the novel "does not express, it explores, and what it explores is itself."<sup>20</sup> Their position is that since the novel is a sign only of itself, since it is not an adjutant to reality, the novel does not have to discriminate between values, it does not have to reflect pressing human concerns; it is only :a way of writing."<sup>21</sup> We shall return shortly to the problem of what we might call the novelist's "ethical responsibility." It is necessary first to clarify a distinction which has been made since Aristotle between content and form, a distinction which Tzvetan Todorov makes in terms of l'histoire et le discours.<sup>22</sup>

## 2. L'histoire et le discours

In his article "Les Catégories Du Récit Littéraire," Todorov distinguishes between l'histoire, which comprises the internal relations of the narrative, and le discours, which

comprises the relations between the narrator and the reader.

L'histoire can be considered on two levels: the "logic of actions" and the relations between characters. In relation to the former, Todorov points out that all commentaries on the technique of récit note that there is a tendency in any work for certain actions, persons, or even descriptive details to be repeated. This law of repetition can be specified in classical rhetorical terms; antithesis, gradation, and parallelism. In relation to Les Liaisons Dangereuses, antithesis would involve a contrast between two successive letters, either because the letters concern different people or because they differ in content or tone. Gradation would involve the subtle changes in Mme de Tourvel's love for Valmont which underlie the repetition of the same sentiment which characterizes her sequence of letters. Parallelism involves at least two sequences which display elements which are both similar and different. The two kinds of parallelism are those which concern blocks of action and those which concern verbal formulas. Todorov adumbrates the attempts, growing primarily out of the study of folklore, to diagram these repetitions and variations. He concludes, "Il semble évident que, dans un récit, la succession des actions n'est pas arbitraire, mais obéit à une certaine logique. L'apparition d'un projet

provoque l'apparition d'un obstacle, le péril provoque une résistance ou une fuite, etc. Il est très possible que ces schémas de base soient en nombre limité et qu'on puisse représenter l'intrigue de tout récit comme une dérivation de ceux-là." <sup>23</sup>

In terms of character, Todorov is interested in a type of literature in which each character is defined entirely by his relations with other characters. The most notable example of this kind of literature is the drama, and Todorov points out that Les Liaisons Dangereuses, which is an epistolary novel, approaches the drama at several points. Todorov first outlines what he calls "les predicats de base" of Les Liaisons Dangereuses: characters enter into three kinds of relations--desire, communication, and participation. After positing certain rules which derive all other relations in the novel from these three, Todorov posits a series of "rules of action," which account for all of the changes in these relations that take place in the book. He points out that the fact that these characters are imaginary does not appear in the formulation of these rules. He claims that with the aid of similar rules, one could describe the implicit laws in the behavior of any <sup>24</sup> homogeneous group of people.

Let us note that in relation to the "logic of actions," it is doubtful that this kind of endeavor has much value for the novel. One can see the value in finding homologous relations

between story elements of folktales and myths--their translatability is their most salient characteristic. <sup>25</sup> In the case of the novel, however, it is difficult to see the value in trying to find a limited number of schemes which form the basis of each narrative. In the novel, as opposed to the myth, it is the individual form which certain schemes take which is of interest, not their generic classification. The problem of individuation is one which Northrop Frye does not handle in his discussion of archetypes. He does not really confront the issue whether archetypal criticism is more productive in relation to certain kinds of literature (drama, for example) than to others. Similarly, it is interesting to note Levi-Strauss' embarrassment, in his prefatory remarks to an analysis of Baudelaire's "les Chats," that a structural anthropologist is dealing with the most individuated of literary forms--poetry. His concession that in relation to poetry one must work on a lexical as well as a semantic level is the central position which <sup>26</sup> David Lodge takes vis-a-vis the novel. Regarding his approach to character, Todorov admits that this approach is valid only in relation to certain kinds of literature. If a novel has any degree of psychological complexity, Todorov's approach is inadequate. In relation to Henry Green's books, Todorov's techniques are especially difficult to apply because these books do not have the clear intrigues that characterize Les Liaisons

Dangereuses. Events and relations between characters in Green's books are often ambiguous, and subject to the suggestiveness of motifs which do not directly affect the action.

L'histoire is pre-literary in the sense that one's account of it could equally well be an account of a film, mime, or even a series of events in real life. Le discours has to do with the literary dimensions of narrative. It has three principal dimensions: le temps du récit, which refers to the difference between the time of the narration and the time of the fiction; les aspects du récit, which have to do with point of view; and les modes du récit, which have to do with the manner in which the narrator makes us familiar with the story.

In discussing le temps du récit, Todorov points out that temporal deformation is at the center of Russian formalist theory. He also points out that where there are many stories in a narrative, they can be disposed in three ways: l'enchaînement, l'alternance, and l'enchassement. In the first instance there is one story after another--after one is completed, another begins. In the second instance stories alternate: one story is interrupted by another and then resumes after the interruption. In the third instance one story contains another--the play within the play construction. Todorov points out that enchaînement and enchassement correspond respectively to the two fundamental syntactic modes: coordination and

subordination. He notes, finally, that an author can play with the differences between the time (or duration) of the story and the time of the writing or the time of the reading. He points to Tristram Shandy as an example of this phenomenon. <sup>27</sup>

In Appendix II there is a more detailed presentation, taken from Jean Ricardou's Problèmes Du Nouveau Roman, of this conflict between the axis of narration (or discours) and the axis of the story.

Les aspects du récit involve the relationship between the narrator and his characters. The narrator can have larger cognitive scope than his characters, the same cognitive scope, or less cognitive scope. These relations generate a distinction between Being and Seeming, the quotients of which depend on our confidence in the narrative point of view. <sup>28</sup>

Les modes du récit involve the difference between representation (or scene) and narration. At first Todorov identifies the former with la parole des personnages and the latter with la parole du narrateur. He finds this distinction unsatisfactory, however, because la parole des personnages can contain narrative sections and la parole du narrateur can contain forms of direct address to the reader (direct remarks, comparisons, general reflections, etc.). Todorov then offers an alternative distinction between "objectivity" and "subjectivity" in language. Objective language reveals nothing about the user of the

language, whereas subjective language reveals much about the user of the language. The aim of the former is to convey information about the world; the aim of the latter is to convey information about the speaker. Both kinds of language occur in narration and representation. Valmont's letters (the direct speech of a character in Les Liaisons Dangereuses) often convey little about Valmont and much about external circumstances. Valmont's assessment of these circumstances is given a great deal of authority. On the other hand, Flaubert's narration in The Sentimental Education often reveals as much about the narrator as about the situation he is discussing. From the operation of these modes an image of the narrator emerges, with certain values which are implicit in the book; concomitantly an image of the reader emerges--the "I" in semiology always implying a "you."

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In terms of the relation between le discours and l'histoire, the following is a preliminary summary of the issues which are relevant to Green's novels. Although there is not much temporal deformation in Green's works in the sense of events being displaced in time (the only real example of Green's use of this transposition of events is Caught), there is a good deal of montage--the use of alternation to give a sense of simultaneity. There is also a strong use of recurring motifs in Green's books to give them a synchronic dimension. As we mentioned above, Lubbock saw this synchronic dimension as the major problem in

criticism of the novel, feeling that the lapse and flow of the novel made a grasp of its pattern difficult. In terms of the "fit" between the narrative and the story (or le discours and l'histoire), it would seem as if the "fit" would be perfect in the case of direct discourse or dialogue. In this case mimesis would seem in fact to disappear, since we no longer have representation of reality but an insertion of reality itself--la

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parole. Henry Green, however, in a statement about "non-representational" fiction, posits a sort of metaphorical relationship between the dialogue in his books and dialogue in real life:

"Non-representational" was meant to represent a picture which was not a photograph, nor a painting on a photograph, nor, in dialogue, a tape-recording. For instance the very deaf, as I am, hear the most astounding things all round them, which have not, in fact, been said. This enlivens my replies until, through mishearing, a new level of communication is reached. My characters misunderstand each other more than people do in real life, yet they do so less than I. Thus when writing, I "represent" very closely what I see (and I'm not seeing so well now) and what I hear (which is little) but I say it is "non-representational" because it is not necessarily what others see and hear. 31 (The underlinings are Southern's)

Green's general critical position is that art is not representational at all, a position which I think rests on a misunderstanding. However, the point he is making is that art involves a selection of material in order to create a life of its own. And some notion of distance, of a dialectical relation between

even la parole of fiction and la parole of real life is surely valid. One may never have heard characters in real life speak the way Green's characters do, but the experience of Green's dialogue defamiliarizes our sense of how people communicate in real life. In terms of les aspects du récit, we discern Green's growing reluctance to assume greater cognitive scope than his characters. As a matter of fact, in a book like Concluding (one of Green's last novels) we know less at the end of the book than do some of the characters. Green says of his narrative wariness, "And do we know, in life, what other people are really like? I very much doubt it. We certainly do not know what other people are thinking and feeling. How then can the novelist be so sure?" In terms of les modes du récit, the dominant mode in Green's books is the scene. In his last two novels he approaches the play-like form which Henry James mastered in The Awkward Age.

### 3. Le Sens et L'interprétation

The most generic distinction which Todorov makes in "Les Catégories du Récit Littéraire" is between le sens and l'interprétation. Of the former Todorov remarks, "Le sens (ou la fonction) d'un élément de l'oeuvre, c'est sa possibilité d'entrer en corrélation avec d'autres éléments de cette oeuvre et avec l'oeuvre entière...Chaque élément de l'oeuvre a un ou plusieurs sens (sauf si celle-ci est déficiente), qui sont en nombre fini et qu'il est possible d'établir une fois pour

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 toutes." Of the latter Todorov says, "L'interprétation  
 d'un élément de l'oeuvre est différente suivant la personnalité  
 du critique, ses positions idéologiques, suivant l'époque.  
 Pour être interprété, l'élément est inclus dans un système  
 qui n'est pas celui de l'oeuvre mais celui du critique." 34

With regard to Living, Henry Green's second novel, an account  
 of the "logic of actions" would be an example of the first level  
 of criticism (le sens); an analysis of that book as a proletarian  
 novel would be an example of the second level of criticism  
 (l'interprétation). With regard to Caught, Green's novel about  
 London in 1941, an account of the relations between the charac-  
 ters would be an example of the first level of criticism (le  
 sens); an analysis of individual or group psychology (in which  
 a translation of the particulars of the novel into categories  
 of thought exterior to the novel is implicit) is an example  
 of the second level of criticism (l'interprétation). Finally,  
 if one discusses the motifs of a novel in terms of their lateral  
 relations, in terms of the various contexts in which they occur,  
 one is operating at the first level of criticism (le sens);  
 if one discusses the motifs of a novel in terms of their para-  
 digmatic value (roses=completion, perfection, the mystic  
 center, the heart, etc.), one is operating at the second level  
 of criticism (l'interprétation). Susan Sontag's essay "Against  
 Interpretation" is an incisive analysis of the dangers of the

second level of criticism--the primary danger being that the work tends to become encrusted with the interpretations which are supposed to elucidate it. <sup>35</sup> Works like Hamlet and Aristotle's Poetics become forms of scripture, to which the preoccupations and values of generations of critics become attached, and which consequently lose their individual articulation. Critics like Todorov (descendants of the Russian formalists) tend to restrict their critical attention to the level of sens, as do the novelists Robbe -Grillet and Ricardou in their discussions of the nouveau roman.

If we consider the following adumbration of the "field" of critical activity,

life	
( <u>praxis</u> )	
	values
	(form)
art	
(form)	
( <u>sens</u> )	

we note that there are two kinds of formalism: 1) the formalism of critics like Todorov, Robbe-Grillet, and Ricardou, who restrict their critical activity to the level of sens, the internal relations of elements within a work; and 2) the formalism of a critic like the earlier Georg Lukacs, who is concerned with the problem of how we can make life essential, of how we can realize values which make sense of duration. Both kinds of formalists wage a polemic against time: Lukacs because

time is a destroyer of values; Robbe-Grillet and Ricardou because time involves us in consideration of life (we shall see that Todorov is somewhat ambivalent in relation to time). For Lukacs a realm of praxis lies behind and is antecedent to language; that praxis is more important than the words one is writing. For Robbe-Grillet and Ricardou literature is no longer subsumed under the notion of mimesis: the novelist asks his reader "no longer to receive ready made a world completed, full, closed upon itself, but on the contrary to participate in a creation, to invent in his turn the work--and the world--and thus to learn to invent his own life." The word is primary, and no realm of praxis exists prior to the activity of the novelist. Ricardou will deal with problems relating to the time of reading and the time of the fiction (see Appendix I), but he will not deal with time as plenitude or deprivation, with time as completing something.

In order to put these problems in perspective, let us consider Georg Lukacs' Die Theorie Des Romans. Lukacs places the world of the novel between that of the epic on the one hand and tragedy on the other hand. In the former there is congruence between self and world, between the empirical and the intelligible; in the latter there is an unbridgeable gap between self and world, between the empirical and the intelligible. In the closed society of epic, neither the individual nor the world is problematic. The individual is a function

of a limited number of roles (priest, king, warrior, etc.) and his differentiation from other men is only in terms of his competence to fulfill that role (one symptom of which is his relations with the gods). Unlike the inscrutable, hypermetropic gods of tragedy, the participating gods of epic ensure the intelligibility of the action. Despite the rationalization of hybris, the tragic hero is alienated from the world and from his fate; his situation is a metaphor for the fact of death. Despite the capriciousness of the gods, the epic hero is at home in the world and is familiar with his fate. In the novel the forms of life are no longer immanent, as they are in the epic; but unlike the tragedian, the novelist attempts to bridge the gap between self and world, the empirical and the intelligible by means of reflection. Philosophy is both a symptom of the hiatus between self and world and the hope for bridging that hiatus. <sup>37</sup> The world of epic is timeless: as Auerbach points out, there is no sliding perspective in Homer; even events in the past are foregrounded in an absolute <sup>38</sup> present. In the novel the hiatus between inner and outer gives birth to a sense of time which is the destroyer of values. In Flaubert's Sentimental Education time becomes the track of disillusion. Concomitantly, however, memory becomes a means of redemption, a possible mode of reuniting the inner and the <sup>39</sup> outer. Another mode which the novel makes possible is that of prophecy or apocalypse, a mode which Lukacs (and E.M. Forster

als<sup>o</sup>) talks about in connection with Dostoevsky. The nouveau roman is, like the epic, a mode of absolute presentness. As we shall see in Chapter IV, Robbe-Grillet uses agrammatical syntax in The Voyeur in order to bring into the foreground of absolute presentness events that take place at different moments in time. Jealousy is written in the first person and in the present tense. Whereas the epic is timeless because the forms of life are immanent, the nouveau roman is timeless because it has cut its ties both with praxis and with values. To put it another way, the values in the nouveau roman are entirely ad hoc and provisional.

Despite the anti-mimetic program of Robbe-Grillet and Ricardou, and despite the cultural debacle which this program entails, the novel has traditionally responded to a problematic realm of praxis, and the openness of its form has reflected the quest for values which Lukacs talks about. In Aspects of the Novel, E.M. Forster accepts Abel Chevalley's definition of the novel as "a fiction in prose of a certain extent," qualifying that definition by saying that the extent should not be less than 50,000 words. He points out that no alternative definition will include The Pilgrim's Progress, Marius the Epicurean, The Adventures of a Younger Son, The Magic Flute, The Journal of the Plague, Zuleika Dobson, Rasselas, Ulysses, and Green Mansions, or else will give reasons for their

exclusion. He states: "Parts of our spongy tract seem more fictitious than other parts, it is true: near the middle, on a stump of grass, stand Miss Austen with the figure of Emma by her side, and Thackeray holding up Esmond. But no intelligent remark known to me will define the tract as a whole. All we can say of it is that it is bounded by two chains of mountains neither of which rises very abruptly--the opposing ranges of Poetry and of History--and bounded on the third side by a sea--a sea that we shall encounter when we come to <sup>41</sup> Moby Dick." That third side is prophecy, which Forster defines as follows: "Prophecy--in our sense--is a tone of voice. It may imply any of the faiths that have haunted humanity--Christianity, Buddhism, dualism, Satanism, or the mere raising of human love and hatred to such a power that their normal receptacles no longer contain them: but what particular view of the universe is recommended--with that we are not directly con-<sup>42</sup> cerned." Although prophecy is not a salient mode in the English novel, and although Lawrence is the chief exemplar of this mode in English fiction, the ethical impulse that I have described, the impulse to define oneself in relation to the world and the world in relation to the self, is present even in Dickens' books. Dickens, the great vaudevillian of English fiction, comes in Bleak House (and to some extent in Great

Expectations) to locate the obsessive behavior of his grotesques in a society of corrupt and vain human institutions.

The problems raised by the novel which the formalist (in terms of sens) is incapable of dealing with have to do with the cultural coordinates of the novel. Let us consider a sample of great novels: Moll Flanders, Emma, The Red and the Black, The Possessed, and Ulysses. On the axis of open-closed societies, it seems to me that Moll Flanders and The Possessed are aligned on the one hand, Emma and Ulysses on the other hand, with The Red and the Black somewhere in the middle. That is, Moll Flanders and The Possessed reflect highly open societies. In the first case, it is so difficult to make assumptions about the values operative in Moll Flanders that it is almost impossible to know whether there is any overall irony in the book. Conjunctions of elements (like love and money) which we would consider ironic might very well have seemed more or less consistent to Defoe, who reflected the burgeoning commercial ethos of his age. In the second case we have a society in process of dissolution, which is viewed in apocalyptic terms. The pressure of ideology in The Possessed, the moral and emotional convulsions which it provokes in the individual, make it impossible to make assured interpretations of surface action in the book. Dostoevsky's own ideology creates a structure which can find closure only in complete renewal. In The Red and the Black Julien Sorel's models for

conduct--the French revolution and Napoleon--are dissonant with the current historical moment. Julien's defeat is a function both of his own jejune sentiments and of the sheer force which he must expend in thrusting himself through a society which offers him no adequate arena for his energies. Emma gives more of the appearance of the closed society--that is, the moral economy of the book is so clear that Emma's rudeness to Miss Bates has a resonance in this book comparable to that of Shatov's murder in The Possessed. What is noticeable, however, in Emma, and distinguishes it from the closed society of epic, is Jane Austen's irony. Highbury is a society to which an intelligent person can accommodate himself, but the limiting coordinates of such a society are clearly foregrounded. Ulysses achieves an accommodation of the epic and the novel (it is not a mock epic, which works on the disparity between the two): the forms are immanent in the world which Joyce depicts, but they are self-consciously immanent. That is, between the naive epic of Homer and the self-conscious epic of Joyce falleth the shadow of philosophy.

When Todorov acknowledges that "an image of the narrator" (with a concomitant "image of the reader") is a crucial element in the reading of a novel, he opens the question as to what extent our awareness of cultural coordinates affects the image of the narrator that we form. It is our uncertainty

about this image, about the extent of congruence between the fictional narrator (Moll) and the pseudo-editor of her memoirs, that makes a reading of Moll Flanders so problematic. It is noteworthy that Todorov, after a long descriptive account of Les Liaisons Dangereuses, moves into some notion of the relation between the internal laws peculiar to the novel and the conventional laws which are exterior to it. He sees the two systems as engaged in a process of mutual infraction in the novel: in Les Liaisons Dangereuses the laws internal to the novel are violated at the end by the laws of the social context; in Dickens the laws of objective probability (which Todorov feels prevail in Dickens) are frequently violated by laws peculiar to the internal world of the novel, usually in the form of a deus ex machina.<sup>44</sup> The point of view of our study is that there is a subtle dialectic between the internal laws of the novel and the laws of the social context (among which I would include our scientific laws as well as our social conventions). If this dialectic is not apparent in the novel, there are two tendencies: if the internal pole does not seem to be present--that is, if the writer seems to be giving us a transcription of life--then the novel exists as a supplement to our limited experience, as "broadening" as a European tour; if the external pole is not present--that is, if we sense no mimetic responsibility in the novel--then the novel is only "a way of writing,"<sup>45</sup> and is of interest, presumably, only to

novelists. In The Winter's Tale characters keep remarking that the events are like an old winter's tale; the coincidences and improbabilities which make up the internal laws of the play are recognized as such by Shakespeare (as they are not by Hardy in his novels) and used to foreground the very immediate and poignant experiences of loss and renewal that the play involves. In Shklovsky's terms Shakespeare "lays bear" his devices,<sup>46</sup> and consequently, unlike Hardy, he guards himself against irony directed at their credibility.

#### 4. Poetry and Prose

The last generic distinction is between poetry and prose. I am going to discuss some of the salient differences between these two poles primarily because of the effort made in a recent book, David Lodge's Language of Fiction, to prove that one is as attentive to language in the novel as one is in poetry. Let us approach the difficulties raised by this book by assuming a continuum the two poles of which are poetry and prose. The purest form that we have of the former is the lyric poem; the purest form that we have of the latter is the scientific treatise. The thrust of poetry is vertical. Even when a lyric poem has some narrative push, like Edwin Arlington Robinson's "Reuben Bright," the narrative movement is halted and renewed by each line ending and line beginning, is reversed by the couplings (such as rhyme) which are generated

by line position and which create the paradigmatic sense of the poem. Jakobson has pointed out that "...the poetic function projects the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection into the axis of combination. Equivalence is promoted to the constitutive device of the sequence. In poetry one syllable is equalized with any other syllable of the same sequence; word stress is assumed to equal word stress, as unstress equals unstress; prosodic long is matched with long, and short with short; word boundary equals word boundary, no boundary equals no boundary; syntactic pause equals syntactic pause, no pause equals no pause. Syllables are converted into units of measure, and so are morae or stresses." <sup>47</sup>

(The underlinings are Jakobson's) In terms of the problem of closure, Wallace Steven's "Metaphors of a Magnifico" is a model poem:

Twenty men crossing a bridge,  
 Into a village,  
 Are twenty men crossing twenty bridges.  
 Into twenty villages,  
 Or one man  
 Crossing a single bridge into a village.

This is old song  
 That will not declare itself...

Twenty men crossing a bridge,  
 Into a village,  
 Are,  
 Twenty men crossing a bridge  
 Into a village.

That will not declare itself  
 Yet is certain as meaning...

The boots of the men clump  
 On the boards of the bridge.  
 The first white wall of the village  
 Rises through fruit trees.  
 Of what was it I was thinking?  
 So the meaning escapes.

The first white wall of the village...  
 The fruit trees...

Closure in poetry is a function of a satisfying simultaneity, not of a resolution through time. The first and third stanzas, and their two-line commentaries, proceed metonymically to try to generate a metaphor. In addition to the shift in content between the first and third stanzas the poetic line provides a difference in foregrounding. In the first stanza the fact and content of equivalence are expressed by "are twenty men crossing twenty bridges." The foregrounding of "are" in a single line in stanza three destroys the apodictic sense of "are" in the first stanza; "are" becomes an active verb, expressing a generative process. What is generated, of course, is the minimal metaphor of tautology (involving the least possible distance between tenor and vehicle). The penultimate stanza relinquishes this metonymic process and juxtaposes two descriptive statements, one introspective question, and one epistemological statement. The failure of synchronicity, of closure, is celebrated in the ellipses of the last two lines. The declension of perception, so to speak, has failed in this poem. By contrast, the voyages that Hart Crane takes are successful declensions of a moment of perception. The end is

implicit in the beginning, and the poems are a paradigm of the imaged Word which comes into view at the end of "Voyage VI."

The novel, on the other hand, is diachronic, linear in thrust. Closure in the novel is traditionally achieved by the passing of some character or characters from one set of circumstances to another which the novelist makes us anticipate (often marriage or death). Since in prose the "principle of equivalence" is not projected from "the axis of selection to the axis of combination," metonymy does not have to generate metaphor. Prose, that is, provides progressive disclosure, not retrogressive enrichment. To put it another way, poetry has a high redundancy quotient, whereas prose has a low redundancy quotient. If we move away from the idea of pure types, it is the resultant of the vectors of force--horizontal and vertical--which places a work on the continuum between poetry and prose.

The Russian formalist Shklovsky sees Tristram Shandy, in its recognition that one can never really supply an adequate documentation of circumstances (one of the special properties of the novel), as the most representative novel that we have. <sup>48</sup> One of the distinctive qualities, however, of Tristram is its frustration of perhaps our primary expectation in the traditional novel--that we are going to get somewhere: from one moment in time to another, one set of circumstances to

another. To one degree or another all novels work against this expectation--suspending linear movement, progressive development, in order to defamiliarize our sense of how we know things. But a temporal push is a primary condition of the traditional novel. As E.M. Forster points out, in his discussion of the "story": "So daily life, whatever it may be really, is practically composed of two lives--the life in time and the life by values--and our conduct reveals a double allegiance. 'I only saw her for a few minutes, but it was worth it.' There you have both allegiances in a single sentence. And what the story does is to narrate the life in time. And what the entire novel does--if it is a good novel--is to indicate the life by values as well... It, also, pays a double allegiance. But in it, in the novel the allegiance to time is imperative; no novel could be written without it." <sup>49</sup> The circumstantial particularity which is seen by Lukacs and others as characteristic of the novel is achieved by means of the anticipations that have been aroused by our sense of linear movement. In this sense the novel is like the periodic sentence, which holds our attention through numerous qualifying clauses because of our sense of impending progressive movement. The poem, on the other hand, "will not declare itself"; it holds our attention through the expectations it arouses of reiteration.

It is important to emphasize at this point that I have been discussing conceptual types, not literary performances. The conceptual type of the poem that I have been discussing is completely closed and self-referential. The conceptual type of the novel that I have been discussing is completely open and through composed. In reality the poem's symmetry and self-reflexiveness are never complete. As Wallace Stevens puts it, "it can never be satisfied, the mind, never." Significant asymmetries in the poem make us move from the synchronic to the diachronic, as one can see in Strauss and Jakobson's analysis of Baudelaire's "Les Chats." After they have analyzed the poem as a closed system of correspondences, they recognize that the poem moves diachronically from the real to the unreal to the surreal. Similarly, the novel's openness is modified by reiterative devices, such as motifs, which move the novel toward self-reflexiveness.

Jakobson's model of communication is as follows:

	Context	
	Message	
Addresser - - - - -	Contact	- - - - - Addressee
	Code	

"The ADDRESSER send 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 ver-

balized; a CODE fully, or at least partically, common to the addresser and addressee (or in other words, to the encoder and decoder of the message); and, finally, a CONTACT, a physical channel and psychological connection between the addresser and the addressee, enabling both of them to enter and stay in

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communication. Whereas the predominant poetic function of language is to focus on the message as such, the context (social, moral, physical, psychological) has been traditionally emphasized in criticism of the novel. It is with this critical emphasis that David Lodge takes issue in Language of Fiction:

"...we cannot assume in poetics that there is a denotative level of language at which meaning is embodied prior to the expressive activity of the writer. The paradox...is that the imaginative writer creates what he describes. It follows from this that every imaginative utterance is an "appropriate" symbolization of the experience it conveys, since there is no  
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possible alternative symbolization of 'the same' experience.

Aside from the tautological quality of Lodge's statement (one gets a certain experience from reading a work; if the work is revised one gets a different experience from it; therefore each "imaginative utterance" is appropriate to the experience which it conveys, since the same experience cannot be conveyed by any other utterance), Lodge's position is misleading on a number of counts: First, the mimesis which Erich Auerbach

talks about in connection with fiction is not some crude notion of reproduction or impersonation; it is a form of species identification. We recognize a character, a sequence of events, or a milieu as belonging to a class of persons, events, or settings which we can identify. Frequently we have experienced a member of that class in real life. What we call greater or lesser formal realism in a novel is a function of the degree to which members of a class of persons, events, or settings within a novel deviate from members of the same class of persons, events, or settings in real life or in other culturally assimilated novels. Consequently, although the message creates the context in a novel, the novel has traditionally invited our attention to the context as independent from the message. Lodge points out that the circumstantial particularity of the novel is a kind of anti-convention, which attempts to disguise the fact that a novel is discontinuous with real life. What Lodge does not see, however, is that the kind of defamiliarization that the novel has usually invited our attention to is not a defamiliarization of language. It is a defamiliarization that results from the deviation of plot from story--of the way we come to know a sequence of events from the sequence that we come to know. It is a defamiliarization that results from knowing much more or much less about a fictional character than we feel we know about

comparable people in real life. It is the defamiliarization that results from foregrounding one incident or characteristic that is ordinarily undiscernible in the reticulation of incidents or characteristics. The more the novel invites our attention to the message itself, the more the novel approaches either poetry or propaganda: on the one hand Finnegan's Wake, on the other hand For Whom the Bell Tolls and Catcher in the Rye.

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In saying that we cannot assume that "there is a denotative level of language at which meaning is embodied previous to the expressive activity of the writer," Lodge seems to be implying that the words of the novel come out of nowhere. Like Robbe-Grillet Lodge does not acknowledge the relation of the language of the novel both to natural language, which has commonly understood denotative meanings, and to the literary options that have been made in the past. In trying to subvert the idea that the language of prose is less integral to its meaning than the language of poetry or that the novel is more translatable than the poem, Lodge is inattentive to the net effects of the organizational differences between them. Because of the shift that Jakobson talks about ("the poetic function projects the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection into the axis of combination") poetry creates a system of relationships between words which is alogical, asential. The

fact of découpage (or line break) and the equivalent positions which are generated by meter and line are formal violations of natural language, and consequently of our chronological, subject-predicate, cause-and-effect model of reality. The language of the novel, because it lacks these formal parameters, is much less self-referential, much less regressive than is the language of poetry. We experience, therefore, more of the sense of "fit" between message and context than we do with natural language. One of the premises of formal realism, in fact, is that the message facilitates as much as possible our confrontation with the context. In so far as that confrontation is purposefully impeded, in so far as our attention is arrested by the encoding process itself, we may say that prose moves toward the pole of poetry. Philip Rahv would obviously characterize such a movement in the novel as "bad." I would take the position that even in novels of the "realistic" tradition, such a movement is occasionally noticeable and that in novelists like Henry Green the movement is salient. One cannot judge the effects of such a movement in an a priori fashion.

In relation to Lodge's position, however, let us note further that the putative analysis which he makes of the language of Manfield Park is such an analysis in only a trivial sense. His discussion of the "vocabulary" of Mansfield Park makes no more case for the foregrounding of language in

that book than one makes if one points out that people in Harlem will often ask to see a "chiropracter" for a cold rather than a "medical doctor." Although we are reading words when we read Mansfield Park, we are responding to a system of values to which those words refer rather than to the disposition of words themselves. The tension which Lodge discerns in the reading of the book relates not to the deformation of ordinary language (as in Jean Cohen's gratuitous or redundant epithets-- "blue angelus" and "wrinkled elephants"<sup>56</sup>) or to the écart essentiel that Ricardou points out between writing and perception (to be discussed shortly), but to our cultural distance from the standards of judgment in the book. This fact contrasts with Lodge's discussion of Henry James' The Ambassadors, which does have to do with our sense of the strain between language and experience.

Because of its length and because it lacks the vertical parameters which provide a system of cross references in poetry, it is unlikely that one can make the minute linguistic discriminations in the novel that one can make in poetry. In Wallace Stevens' "The Well Dressed Man with a Beard" one suspects that the inversion of the fifth foot of the last line, "It can never be satisfied, the mind, never," is significant because it is one of only two inverted fifth feet in the poem. The first of these inverted feet is "even;" which is almost

a palindrome for "never." The linguistic economy of the novel is obviously much different. Ricardou points out that there is an écart essentiel between the object of perception and the object of description, "La description est une machine à désorienter ma vision." <sup>57</sup> The linear character of writing disrupts the instantaneous character of visual perception. Similarly, the linear character of writing forces us to present simultaneous events alternately rather than simultaneously. One can note in Appendix I other ruptures between writing and perception which Ricardou points out. Except, however, for the architectural considerations which Ricardou discusses, these écarts are not formal properties of the novel; they are properties of natural language in so far as it attempts to transcribe perceptions. It is interesting, however, that Ricardou is trying to elevate these écarts into formal conventions of the novel. Most descriptions in the novel do not foreground the necessary deviation of literary description from visual perception. The nouveau roman is, however, a novel for the eye, and the elaborate, detailed descriptions of Robbe-Grillet flaunt the strain between the linearity of writing and the instaneity of visual perception. It is as if a new, hybrid mode of perception were being created--visual in reference but haptic in mode. Similarly, before the nouveau roman there are few instances in novels of repetition of narrative fragments.

Novels like The Voyeur and Jealousy are full of such repetitions. One way to explain them (and Robbe-Grillet himself opens this possibility in one of his essays) is that the subjectivity which observes is obsessive and pathological. Another way to explain them (after the first explanation has incurred Ricardou's antimimetic wrath) is to refer to Valéry's response to the traditional novel: "Perhaps it would be interesting, just once, to write a work which at each juncture would show the diversity of solutions that can present themselves to the mind and from which it chooses the unique sequel to be found in the text. To do this would be to substitute for the illusion of a unique scheme which imitates reality that of the possible-at-each moment, which I think more truthful. (The underlinings are Valéry's) One might say that Robbe-Grillet's novels are not concerned with something happening (in the unilinear sense which characterizes the traditional novel) but with all the possibilities of things happening that characterize each moment. Narrative fragments are repeated not because the narrator is pathological but because they are elicited time and time again as cogent possibilities by a consciousness that is really in a sort of pre-cognitive state. At any rate the only parameter which Ricardou discusses in Appendix I which has sometimes had the formal value which he assigns it

is the chapter. It is the only vertical parameter that we have in the novel that is comparable to the poetic stanza. As we shall see in Chapter IV, the paragraph may be used in the novel as an equivalent to the poetic line.

### The Format of the Book

At this point I should like to delimit the tasks which I have set myself in this book. It should be clear from this introductory chapter that I am concerned with certain critical problems in talking about novels, problems which stem from the openness of the novel's form. In choosing a subject for this study, therefore, I was careful to choose a novelist who is first of all self-conscious about what the novel is like as a literary form, who does not raise the kinds of ideological problems that Irving Howe deals with in Politics and the Novel, and whose novels consequently foreground, in ways that are particularly manageable, techniques for giving the novel shape and pattern. In terms of the epigraph by Mann that heads this chapter, Green submits his novels to certain internal laws which give him freedom in other respects to explore the qualities of experience.

This book is not a systematic examination of Green's novels. There is no compelling need that I feel to add another full length study to those of Edward Stokes, John Russel, and A. Kingsley Weatherhead. Mr. Stokes' book, The Novels of Henry

Green, provides a systematic analysis of Green's books in terms of les modes du récit and les aspects du récit (Stokes does not, of course, use this terminology), as well as an especially fine analysis of Green's stylistic traits and of the changes that occur in terms of Toynbee's classification of Green as one of the "terrorists" of language. <sup>59</sup> John Russel's book, Henry Green: Nine Novels and an Unpacked Bag, is a competent exploration of the complex vision which underlies Green's books. And A. Kingsley Weatherhead's A Reading of Henry Green is an occasionally interesting and often misleading interpretation of Green's books in terms of certain existential and psychological models. Each of these books provides us with a sense of Green's development as a novelist. In terms of an understanding of Green's work, therefore, these books are necessary supplements to the present study, which is organized around certain literary problems.

The format of this book is as follows: First, a brief chapter that gives some biographical information about Green, discusses his critical reception, and attempts to place him in the spectrum of twentieth century English fiction. Second, keeping in mind the problem of the linguistic economy of the novel as contrasted with the lyric poem, we shall consider the following linguistic problems: sentence length and structure; sentence sequences; the level of particularization (involving,

for example, the novelist's use of determiners); the use of connecting words (conjunctions, sentence connectors, subordinators); the use of grammatical deviation. Edward Stokes' book on Green is of great help in this regard. Third, we shall consider the larger notion of deviation in the novel, considering the ways in which the normal metonymic mode of the novel is sometimes converted into a metaphoric one. Some considerations in this regard are agrammatical syntax, compositional and bound motifs, tense, and the chapter. Fourth, we shall consider the problem of surfaces and depths in the novel, which has to do with the relationship between "the life in time" and "the life by values." This distinction is also analogous to the linguistic distinction between "surface structures" and "deep structures," which involves the kind of syntactic density which a sentence conveys. If we posit a kind of syntax of events as well as a syntax of sentences, we can examine the kinds of density which the syntax of events in Green's novels involves. Green states that "we seldom learn directly; except in disaster, life is oblique in its impact on people." The kinds of syntax of events implied by this statement differ radically from the kinds which attract Irving Howe in Politics and the Novel, "Even in its occasional programmatic devotion to the commonplace, the novel is still drawn, as it must be, to the test of extreme situations, the drama of harsh and ultimate

62  
conflicts." Finally, we shall attempt to come to terms  
with one of Green's novels, Loving, in order to test the  
formal questions that we have posed in this study.

## Footnotes

- 1  
Susan Sontag, "Nathalie Sarraute and the Novel," Against Interpretation, 1969, pp. 108-109.
- 2  
Georg Lukacs, Die Theorie des Romans, 1963, p. 71.
- 3  
Percy Lubbock, The Craft of Fiction, 1957, pp. 8-9.
- 4  
Lubbock, pp. 10-12.
- 5  
Lubbock, pp. 14-15.
- 6  
David Lodge, Language of Fiction, 1966, p. 66.
- 7  
Christopher Caudwell, Illusion and Reality, 1967, p. 200.
- 8  
Note that Else, in his formidable analysis of Aristotle's Poetics, evades the problems of lexical deviation that are raised in Chapter 22. See Gerald F. Else, Aristotle's Poetics: The Argument, 1967, pp. 567-568.
- 9  
Caudwell, p. 247.
- 10  
Gilbert Ryle, The Concept of Mind, 1949, pp. 25-61. Ryle's thesis is that the performance of a competence is not preceded by a "ghostly" rehearsal of propositions related to that competence.
- 11  
Alain Robbe-Grillet, "On Several Obsolete Notions," For a New Novel, 1965, pp. 25-47. For comparable discussions see Roland Barthes, "Writing and the Novel," Writing Degree Zero, 1968, pp. 29-40, and Jean Ricardou, "Une Question Nommée Littérature," Problèmes Du Nouveau Roman, 1967, pp. 16-20. The movies provide some of the clearest examples of the kind of cultural distortion which Robbe-Grillet talks about. With regard to character, for example, American war films make the implicit assumption that battles and even wars are decided by individuals. More than that, even a high quality film like Paths of Glory vitiates its putative anti-war stance by the implicit assumption which the film conveys that war would not really be so bad if everyone were like the character played by Kirk Douglas.

12

Barthes, p. 33.

13

Lucien Goldmann, Pour Une Sociologie Du Roman, 1964, p. 36.

14

Philip Rahv, "Fiction and the Criticism of Fiction," Kenyon Review, XVIII, 2, Spring 1956, p. 295.

15

Rahv, p. 297.

16

Victor Shklovsky, "Art as Technique," Russian Formalist Criticism, Ed. Lee T. Lemon and Marion J. Reis, 1965, p. 12. One is reminded of the agreement between Wordsworth and Coleridge with regard to the Lyrical Ballads, in which Coleridge's endeavor would be to make the supernatural or romantic seem familiar, and Wordsworth's endeavor would be to excite a feeling analogous to the supernatural in relation to everyday, familiar people and events. The way in which Wordsworth was to accomplish this was to awaken the mind from the "lethargy of custom." See Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Biographia Literaria, in The Selected Poetry and Prose, Ed. Donald A. Stauffer, Chapter XIV, p. 264.

17

Boris Tomashevsky, "Thematics," Russian Formalist Criticism, p. 57.

18

Victor Shklovsky, "Sterne's Trisrram Shandy: Stylistic Commentary," Russian Formalist Criticism, p. 57.

19

Jean Cohen, Structure Du Language Poétique, 1966.

20

Alain Robbe-Grillet, "From Realism to Reality," For a New Novel, p. 44.

21

Robbe-Grillet, "On Several Obsolete Notions," For a New Novel, p. 44.

22

Note that Todorov acknowledges that this distinction derives from the distinction made by the Russian formalists between story and plot. This distinction is also a late descendent of the distinction made in classical rhetoric between inventio and dispositio. Another reference point is the distinction which Racine makes in a preface to Andromache between fable and subject. See Tzvetan Todorov, "Les Catégories Du Récit Littéraire," Communications, VIII, 1966, pp. 126-127.

23

Todorov, pp. 128-132.

24

Todorov, pp. 132-137.

25

See Claude Lévi-Strauss, "The Structural Study of Myth," Myth: A Symposium, ed. Thomas A. Sebeak, 1965, pp. 81-106.

26

Roman Jakobson and Claude Lévi-Strauss, "'Les Chats' de Charles Baudelaire," L'Homme, 2, 1962, p. 5.

27

Todorov, pp. 132-137.

28

Todorov, pp. 141-143.

29

Todorov, pp. 143-147.

30

Socrates' final prayer in the Phaedrus, where he asks for a correspondence between the inner and the outer man, has to do with the relation between word and experience. In his polemic against the rhetoricians, Socrates is aiming at a living word which, as opposed to the opacity that rhetoric involves, generates a transparency between inner and outer. By "living word" I mean a word that can respond to questions, unlike the written eloquence of the rhetoricians. Plato's preference in the Laws (II,658) for epic as against tragedy has to do in part with the fact that epic seems to involve less feigning. For Aristotle, on the other hand, the norm is mimesis--not an accord between inner and outer man but a movement toward otherness. In this respect note Aristotle's stress on action rather than thought in the Poetics, since the latter would involve complete homogeneity between the signifier and the thing signified (Poetics, 6, 1450b).

31

Terry Southern, "The Art of Fiction XXII, Henry Green," Paris Review, V, Summer 1958, p. 66.

32

Henry Green, "A Novelist to His Readers," Listener, XLIV, November 9, 1950, p. 506.

33

Todorov, p. 125.

- 34  
Todorov, p. 126.
- 35  
Sontag, "Against Interpretation," Against Interpretation, pp. 13-23.
- 36  
Robbe-Grillet, "Time and Description," For a New Novel, p. 156.
- 37  
Lukacs, pp. 23-33.
- 38  
Eric Auerbach, Mimesis, 1957, pp. 4-5.
- 39  
Lukacs, pp. 114-134.
- 40  
Lukacs, pp. 157-158.
- 41  
E.M. Forster, Aspects of the Novel, 1954, p. 6.
- 42  
Forster, pp. 125-126.
- 43  
Note that Emma, which Forster finds somewhere in the center of English fiction, is at one end of the spectrum of world fiction. Austen is able to satirize norms which she values, but society is not a problem for her, as it is for Stendhal; it is a constant.
- 44  
Todorov, p. 151.
- 45  
Robbe-Grillet, "On Several Obsolete Notions," For a New Novel, p. 44.
- 46  
Shklovsky, "Sterne's Tristram Shandy: Stylistic Commentary," Russian Formalist Criticism, p. 30.
- 47  
Roman Jakobson, "Linguistics and Poetics," Essays on the Language of Literature, ed. Seymour Chatman and Samuel R. Levin, 1967, pp. 303-304.
- 48  
Shklovsky, "Sterne's Tristram Shandy: Stylistic Commentary," Russian Formalist Criticism, p. 57.
- 49  
Forster, pp. 28-29.
- 50  
Jakobson and Lévi-Strauss, pp. 5-21.

51

Jakobson, "Linguistics and Poetics," p. 299.

52

Lodge, p. 62.

53

Else translates a passage from Chapter 4 of the Poetics as follows: "For the reason they take pleasure in seeing the images is that in the process of viewing they find themselves learning, that is, reckoning what kind of given thing belongs to: 'This individual is a So-and-so.'" In a note to this passage Else remarks, "A squid, an antelope, or whatever. The connecting of the individual with the species is the crux of the matter." See Aristotle, Poetics, trans. Gerald F. Else, 1967, p. 20 and p. 85.

54

Lodge, p. 42.

55

It is important to make clear that I am not punning on the word "message" in relation to the idea of propaganda. I mean that we are sometimes aware that a writer's language is seducing us into a tacit agreement about values. A book that does this obtrusively often seems stylistically precious, especially with the passage of time. It is for this reason that Catcher in the Rye now seems outdate, whereas Huckleberry Finn does not.

56

Cohen, p. 128 and p. 145.

57

Jean Ricardou, "Une Question Nommée Littérature," Problèmes Du Nouveau Roman, p. 18.

58

Paul Valéry, The Art of Poetry, 1958, p. 104.

59

Philip Toynbee, "The Novels of Henry Green," Partisan Review, XVI, 5, May 1949, p. 489.

60

Richard Ohmann, "Literature as Sentences," Essays on the Language of Literature, pp. 231-241.

61

Henry Green, "A Novelist to His Readers," Listener,  
p. 506.

62

Irving Howe, Politics and the Novel, 1967, p. x.

## CHAPTER II

## HENRY GREEN

Henry Green is the pseudonym of Henry Vincent Yorke, a now retired Birmingham-London industrialist. In the preface to an interview which Terry Southern conducted with Green are these autobiographical notes:

I was born in 1905 in a large house by the banks of the river Severn, in England, and within the sound of the bells from the Abbey Church at Tewkesbury. Some children are sent away to school; I went at six and three-quarters and did not stop till I was twenty-two, by which time I was at Oxford, but the holidays were all fishing. And then there was billiards.

I was sent at twelve and a half to Eton and almost at once became what was then called an aesthete, that is a boy who consciously dressed to shock. I stayed that way at Oxford. From Oxford I went into the family business, an engineering works in the Midlands, with its iron and brass foundries and machine shops. After working through from the bottom I eventually came to the top where for the time being I remain, married, living in London, with one son. <sup>1</sup>

Green has attempted as far as possible to maintain his anonymity, pointing out in his interview with Southern the embarrassment that his career as a writer had caused him in the position as head of an industrial firm. The qualities that emerge from that interview and from John Russel's portrait of him, "There it is," are a combination of reticence and self-dramatization. In his interview with Southern, he uses his

reputation for being hard of hearing to make jokes about some of the evaluative questions which Southern asks him, as when he mistakes "subtle" for "suttee."<sup>2</sup> Russel says of this reticence, "Lifelong bouts of reticence--Green's autobiography and his public life both emphasize this reticence--and then the counter-attacks a man makes against himself for having thought too exclusively on himself: what might they not drive one to feel?"<sup>3</sup> With regard to Green's self-dramatization, Russel points out that Green undoubtedly suffered a major trauma during the war and that the split between Green's resilient characters and his own gloom and fitful misanthropy led Russel to conclude "that Green's own way of guarding himself may be through morbid exaggeration--with its attendant, protective humor and its faculty for communicating at least a little private information obliquely."<sup>4</sup> It is noteworthy that Green uses his own deficiencies of health in his books as thematic ploys and literary strategies. His deafness appears most emphatically in Concluding, where old Mr. Rock keeps mistaking what people say to him and inadvertently makes the kinds of verbal jokes which Green makes in his interview with Southern. That deafness is a model for the kinds of misunderstandings that pervade Green's books and provide much of their fabric. Green's diabetes and dyspepsia also appear in his books as indices of a constitutional rejection of living--most frequently overcome by his characters.

At nineteen, while still a schoolboy at Eton, Green began his first novel, Blindness, which was to be published in 1926. The first section of the book is a diary of John Haye, a schoolboy whose attitudes and experiences are those which Green had at public school. Among these attitudes and experiences are John Haye's aestheticism and his rebellion against the Officers Training Corps. The crisis in John Haye's life which defamiliarizes his circumstances and forces him into a more immediate confrontation of life is his accidental blinding. The turning point in Green's career is his decision, when the General Strike made him question his right to an inherited fortune, to leave Oxford in 1927 and to enter life in a Birmingham factory, "...it was an introduction to indisputable facts at last, to a life bare of almost everything except essentials and so less confusing, to a new world which was the oldest" (Pack My Bag, p. 236). Out of his experience as a factory worker comes his second book, Living, in 1929, which deals with life in the factory and which evinces a vigorous attentiveness to problems of prose style. Green eventually became head of his family's industrial firm and remained a hardheaded businessman throughout his career as a writer. It is remarkable that even during his business career he was an omnivorous reader and seems to have done much of his writing during lunchtime at his office. Russel points out:

That career took Green fairly much off on a tangent in the '30s--away, certainly, from the young intellectuals who were leading English letters to the left (though he was friendly with Auden and Isherwood), and away also, to some extent, from the close friends he had had while at Oxford and with whom his writings and beliefs most coincided: the non-political novelists Powell and Waugh. Green, Powell, and Waugh all followed a fairly similar course in that each as a writer struck out determinedly on his own... That Green, Powell, and Waugh all married the daughters of peers may also be indicative of their conservatism--a quality that one ascribes more hesitantly to Green, however, than to the others. During these years, Green was far less associated with the world of letters than were the other two... Through the '40s Green's tangent kept its veer when he chose the Fire Service while the others served as Army officers. Finally, Green has become a confirmed Londoner while Waugh and Powell have migrated permanently to the West Country.<sup>5</sup>

In 1939 Green published his third novel, Party Going, which deals with an effete class of the Mayfair rich. In 1940 he published his autobiography, Pack My Bag, which contains the following passage describing the prospect of war:

One is always caught up, one inevitably has to take a hand but what I miss now is the reluctance I had then /at the time of the General Strike/. It is not that one was ever afraid to die. One may resent being killed, but most of us are quite ready. What is despairing in my case is that I should acquiesce, in the old days I should never have done so, and that is my farewell to youth in this absolute bewilderment of July 1939, that I should be so little unwilling to fight and yet likely enough to die by fighting for something which, as I am now, for the life of me I cannot understand. (pp. 235-236)

One of the reasons that Green joined the Fire Service instead of the army is that it allowed him to keep a hand in his business.

The war had, however, an enormous and lasting effect on Green, and it was out of this experience that his books of deep emotional trauma, Caught (1943) and Back (1946), came. In terms of Green's position "except in disaster, life is oblique in its impact on people," the war provided one of those instances in which life's impact is most direct. As we shall point out, however, in our discussion of Back, Green can only get at the impact of this disaster obliquely--by means of an erotic plot. In Caught the inadequate responses of the protagonist to the intense stress which he suffers are supplemented by the author's more detailed evocations of this stress. Green's other novels are Loving (1945), Concluding (1948), Nothing (1950), and Doting (1952). By the time of his last two novels, Green seems to have developed a program for the English novel which departs significantly from his own past work. In 1950 and 1951 Green made three public statements concerning the English novel, in which he advocated a novel made up entirely of dialogue, with a minimum of stage directions.<sup>6</sup> None of Green's critics seems to believe that this program is the viable one for English fiction, though A. Kingsley Weatherhead gives these last books more credit for "textual liberty"<sup>7</sup> than do Green's other critics. In judging Green's achievement in this respect, probably our central test should be Henry James' The Awkward Age, where the novel approaches as

closely as possible the conditions of the play but is more complex than anything the stage could accommodate. In 1957 Green was commissioned to do a documentary on the Blitz, entitled London and Fire, 1940, which returned him to descriptive writing. The book has remained unfinished. John Russel reports that Green has begun a new book which is a kind of continuation of Pack My Bag, but that the War has again given him trouble and caused him to skip the 1939-1945 period. Russel points out, "The reason the new book cannot be strictly described as a continuation of Pack My Bag is that Green has literally forgotten this volume and all of his novels, as well. He has not reread any of them and doesn't appear to be interested in them." <sup>8</sup> If Green does publish another book, it will be interesting to see what this putative freedom from the past entails.

In discussing Green's range of characters, Edward Stokes observes:

Green's range seems to exclude a great deal; but, since artists, intellectuals, philosophers and university trained professional men (virtually the cast of To The Lighthouse, one notices) are, after all, a small minority, it actually includes far more than it excludes. Green's characters are mainly workers of various kinds (factory workers, office workers, domestic servants), business men (directors, managers, accountant, etc.) and the wealthy. Nearly all are people who are preoccupied with their own personal problems (their jobs, their family and other rela-

tionships), and who have neither time nor training nor inclination for larger, more abstract or more abstruse interests. Most of them are commonplace, average, ordinary ...<sup>9</sup>

It would be well to keep this range in mind when we consider Orville Prescott's characterization of Green as one of the "Comrades of the Coterie." Unlike Virginia Woolf Green does not limit his characters to those of special sensibility or intelligence. Like Virginia Woolf, however, and unlike a novelist like C.P. Snow, Green is more concerned with what we might call personality than with the Aristotelian notion of character. In a recent apology for C.P. Snow, George Steiner indicates the nature of this difference: "Both Snow and Duhamel are managers of sensibility, publicists, and arguers in the key of fiction. To both--and this may be the crucial discrimination--the daylight truth, scientific, political, social, is more compelling than the dynamics of feeling and  
10  
of language." At this point we might consider Green's critical reception and his place in the spectrum of English fiction.

Green's critical reception has been generally very favorable, although there has been some dispute as to the suitability of some of his literary experimentation to a priori commitments which critics assign to him as a novelist. At one end of the spectrum of attitudes toward Green is Robert Phelps, who states: "The writer in whose work there exists something like a true marriage between vision and medium, is,

today, so much the exception that in reckoning with him--with a poet like Robert Graves, or a novelist like Henry Green--we have to acknowledge a difference in kind. He is more, perhaps, like a composer. His works are more organic. They can be distinguished from, but never profitably compared to, those of less 'married writers'." <sup>11</sup> Philip Toynbee's view of Green's achievement is similar if somewhat more qualified. With regard to Green's experiments, Toynbee points out that Green was not satisfied to use the "journeyman" prose of Graham Greene or Christopher Isherwood: "Rather than write like this he has chosen to take risks with his medium. To put it more fairly, and with more dignity, I would say that Green has never doubted that his vision was a new one and that it needed a new kind of exposition. In his best books I believe that he has perfectly adjusted his medium to his vision, and the result has been three or four of the most <sup>12</sup> satisfactory English novels of our time. The one reservation which Toynbee has about Green's achievement is that his vision lacks "compassion," that his works lack a real "moral <sup>13</sup> effect," as contrasted with the works of E.M. Forster. On the other side of the spectrum are Orville Prescott and C.P. Snow, who see Green as a coterie writer. Mr. Prescott sums up this view as follows:

The three novelists we have been discussing, Henry Green, Ivy Compton-Burnett and Elizabeth Bown, all belong in the coterie classification because of their somewhat similar reaction to the modern world. Dis-

liking it intensely, finding it a cruel chaos inhabited by unfortunate victims of forces too strong for them--the spiteful, stupid and unhappy--they retreat from direct communication with their contemporaries and write peculiar puzzles for their own amusement. Their creative gifts are real; but they find it more attractive to experiment with technique, to string together pearls of sensibility, rather than to interpret the main stream of life.

A novel, I believe, should be built around a structural framework, with the intention of imposing a conscious design on a selection from experience. The novelist must be aware of the technique of his craft--just as an artist must have some unifying concept or design in his imagination in order to paint an effective picture. But excessive concentration on method rather than on matter is highly dangerous. It can reflect a feverish revolt against traditional cultural forms, an effete and unhealthy reaction which seems not far from decadence. When technique ceases to be a means and becomes an end in itself something is wrong, either in the artist or in his society. <sup>14</sup>

One is reminded by this statement of some of the criticism that was levelled at Tennyson and other Victorian writers for not dealing with matters of public importance in their work and for not expounding the necessary public optimism. It is noteworthy that in Victorian literature poetry represents a sort of underground for socially disapproved feelings. It is where the scholar-gipsy, among others, takes refuge. In the twentieth century the novel has become one of the forums in which our humanistic assumptions have been challenged. This challenge has taken its most radical form in the nouveau roman, where several "obsolete notions" are challenged by writers like Robbe-Grillet and Ricardou. But, as David Daiches notes a similar challenge has taken place in modern English fiction:

The older English novelist selected what were the significant things in the behavior of his characters on a principle publicly shared, and part of that publicly shared principle was the fact that what was significant in human events was itself manifested in publicly visible doing or suffering, in action or passion related to status or fortune. The modern novelist is born when that publicly shared principle of selection and significance is no longer felt to exist, can no longer be depended on. The reasons for this breakdown of the public background of belief are related to new ideas in ethics, psychology, and many other matters as well as to social and economic factors.<sup>15</sup>

In terms of Toynbee's missing the moral seriousness of Forster in Green's books, what Toynbee seems to be missing is the residue of the central, moral consciousness that we find in Tom Jones, which controls our responses to the book. In Howards End, which Lionel Trilling considers Forster's best book, we have such a central consciousness which not only controls our reading of the book but invades the consciousness of the book's characters. The utterances or thoughts of these characters, then, become clearly programmatic. At one point Helen Schlegel thinks, "Death destroys a man: the idea of Death saves him." At another point Forster remarks in his own voice, "Death destroys a man, but the idea of death saves him--that is the best account of it that has yet been given." At one point in the book, Margaret Schlegel remarks, "Had you thought it, then? That there are two kinds of people--our kind who live straight from the middle of their heads, and the other kind who can't, because their heads have no middle?"

They can't say 'I'." At another point in the book, Forster writes, "As he [Charles] watched his father shuffling up the road, he had a vague regret--a wish that something had been different somewhere--a wish (though he did not express it thus) that he had been taught to say 'I' in his youth." Forster's frequent lapses into the tendentious is one of the liabilities of his confident relationship with his audience. Similar lapses pervade Lawrence's books, where scenes become programmatic adjutants to Lawrence's ideas instead of realizations of the tensions which underlie those ideas. As contrasted with the scene in which Gerald Crich invades Gudrun's bedroom, tramping the dirt of the graveyard in with him, a scene which powerfully realizes the love-as-death which characterizes their relationship, we have the scene in which Ursula intrudes on Birkin, who is throwing stones at the reflection of the moon, crying, "Cybele--curse! The accursed Syria Dea! Does one begrudge it her? What else is there--?" Ursula and Birkin then engage in a long, labored discussion of the meaning of his action. This tendentiousness stems, however, from a different cause than Forster's: the assumption underlying Forster's "voice" is one of cultural homogeneity (like that assumed by Fielding), which makes for a confident relationship between Forster and his public. The assumption underlying Lawrence's "voice" is cultural discontinuity and heterogeneity, brought

about by industrial civilization. Two kinds of dangers beset a novel which is invested with the kind of prophetic impulse that characterizes Lawrence's novels. On the one hand the novel can become allegory, in the sense that the drive to translate the life of the novel into certain ideas may vitiate that life.<sup>18</sup> Birkin's throwing stones at the reflection of the moon is an example of this kind of translatability. On the other hand the novel can collapse into essay, which happens often in Birkin's extended disquisitions. At his best, however, in parts of The Rainbow and Women in Love, Lawrence is able to evoke the burdens of consciousness entailed by cultural change ("cultural" in an anthropological sense that includes technology).

The greater "moral value" that Toynbee finds in Forster has to do with the a priori moral concerns that invest Forster's books--concerns that have basically to do with the limitations of class and the power of tradition. Like the problems posed by the echo in Passage to India, Forster seems to ask important questions. Such a priori concerns are not motivations in Green's books, which eschew the kind of discursiveness that we have noted in Forster. Green's view is that at one time perhaps novels could be given life by means of authorial comment but that this is not true any longer. In contrast with Forster's constant overview of his récit and with the melodramatic plot constructions that he uses to generate "signi-

ficant" conflicts, Green states, "For how do we, each one of us, find out anything in the lives we each lead? Very little by reading, still less by what we are told. We get experience, which is as much knowledge as we shall ever have, by watching<sup>19</sup> the way people around us behave, after they have spoken."

Russel notes that in March, 1926, while Green was travelling on the continent, he "wrote some notes to himself about how he meant to use and remember books as opposed to how he would use and remember experience." Despite his omnivorous reading, despite the value that the schoolboy diarist in Blindness places on books ("What a force books are!") Green seemed to feel that a general recollection of books is what he should achieve, "He seemed to be cautioning himself about getting too bound up in artifacts. After he had drawn up a list of ways to remember, 'Remembering by quotation' drew disparagement from him; as for experience...he had put down on his list the phrase 'Re-<sup>20</sup>membering by the significant irrelevance'." This phrase seems to place him in the spectrum of twentieth century English fiction--away from the pole of the cultural ombudsman (represented by Forster) and in the area of "epiphany" that is represented by Joyce's Dubliners and Woolf's To the Lighthouse.<sup>21</sup>

Eric Auerbach describes this area as follows: "At the time of the first World War and after--in a Europe unsure of itself, overflowing with unsettled ideologies and ways of life, and

pregnant with disaster--certain writers distinguished by instinct and insight find a method which dissolves reality into multiple and multivalent reflections of consciousness. That this method should have been developed at this time is not hard to understand." He goes on to say that in this process "something new and elemental appeared: nothing less than the wealth of reality and depth of life in every moment to which we surrender ourselves without prejudice. To be sure, what happens in that moment--be it outer or inner processes--concerns in a very personal way the individuals who live in it, but it also (and for that very reason) concerns the elementary things which men in general have in common. It is precisely the random moment which is comparatively independent of the controversial and unstable orders over which men fight and despair; it passes unaffected by them, as daily life. The more it is exploited, the more the elementary things which our lives have in common come to light." As opposed to the class consciousness which plays so significant a part in Forster's novels, Auerbach sees "an economic and cultural leveling process...taking place," though it is only beginning. In terms of the life of the novel, that levelling process has come to fruition in the nouveau roman, which represents a complete democratization of human concerns. The significant difference between Green and Woolf is that Green resolutely insists on evoking the qualities of experience from the outside, by means of

description and dialogue. His terminus in this respect is the critical program which he fulfills (more or less) in his last two novels, where he attempts to create life solely by dialogue, "To create life in the reader, it will be necessary for the dialogue to mean different things to different readers at one and the same time." <sup>23</sup> These ambiguities, carefully controlled by their context, are supposed to evoke a cooperative response from the reader that involves him in the various possibilities of the inner life. Virginia Woolf, on the other hand, pursues life from the inside, by means of the reflective associations of her characters. The movement from To the Lighthouse to The Waves in this respect is like the progressive burial of a character in one of Beckett's plays: in The Waves we are completely trapped inside the consciousness of the characters, seemingly at the mercy of strings of associations which have no regard for our attention span. Green's terminus results in an attenuation of experience (we shall note later the self-conscious flatness of his last two novels): Woolf's terminus results in a sense of suffocation.

Green's novels are still in the bourgeois tradition in the sense that it matters that certain characters belong to one social class instead of another, in the sense that everyday concerns are important, and in the sense that his novels have some mimetic responsibility. When Green says that his

novels are 'non-representational," what he means is that he does not intend to give the illusion of presenting a transcript of life (like the transcript of a trial). His introductory remarks to Caught read:

This book is about the Auxiliary Fire Service which saved London in her night blitzes, and bears no relation, or resemblance, to the National Fire Service, or any individual of that Service, which took over when raids on London had ended.

The characters, while founded on the reality of that time, are not drawn from life. They are all imaginary men and women. In this book only 1940 in London is real. It is the effect of that time that I have written into the fiction of Caught.

Green's novels differ from the traditional novel (which, despite the crisis in public confidence which Daiches and Auerbach point to, is still being written) in that his style is more exclusive. To the dismay of Orville Prescott and C.P. Snow, Green eschews exposition and explanation and eliminates much of the documentation of circumstances (both internal and external) that we are accustomed to in the traditional novel. His novels veer toward the poetic pole in the sense that his manipulation both of the syntax of sentences and of the syntax of events generates a movement in his books from the metonymic mode that Jakobson sees as typical of the novel to the metaphoric mode that he sees as typical of poetry. Green's sense of how the act of writing generates its own rules moves him

toward the kinds of formulations that we find in Ricardou and Robbe-Grillet. Green states:

The colour used by painters in painting might seem to indicate that painters see more colour than do the general public. This, however is doubtful. It is extraordinary the number of professional painters there are with poor eyesight. It is more likely that as they become expert at their art they get involved in the tones and composition of their picture while they are painting, one tone or shade of colour leading to another until this evolves into a harmonious whole which may have little direct relation to nature. Thereby painters produce something which isn't, that is to say, the result is non-representational, and yet if and when the painting is successful, it has a life of its own. This is also true of a good novel.<sup>25</sup>

Aldous Huxley's theory in The Art of Seeing might be cited as a heuristic model of the yield this kind of novel has--a yield determined by the dialectic between the laws internal to the novel and the laws external to it. Huxley suggests certain exercises in that book which deautomatize our sense of seeing in order to sharpen our perceptual ability. His theory is that by increasing our awareness of how we perceive and by exercising our ability to recognize what we perceive,<sup>26</sup> we can actually improve our seeing. Shelley's theory of the imagination is a similar model for the ways in which imaginative activity which seems to have no immediate practical function (unlike the "useful" themes of a novelist like C.P. Snow) can ultimately make the greatest contributions to our sense of civilization.

In terms of the novel's ambitiousness, one does miss in Green the powerful ethical drive and the total sense of industrial civilization that one gets in Lawrence. In terms of formulating a program for "the English novel of the future," however, it is difficult to judge whether or not the ambitions of a Lawrence are now viable in the novel, much less the assurance of an E.M. Forster. It may be that to fulfill such ambitions, the novel will turn to the kinds of documentary-drama we are not getting in the theater with such playwrights as Weiss and Hochsuth. On the other hand we have the position of Robbe-Grillet and Ricardou, who deny that the novel has any social function and who wage a polemic against history. Barthes describes this alternative as follows:

...neutral writing in fact rediscovers the primary condition of classical art: instrumentality. But this time, form as an instrument is no longer at the service of a triumphant ideology: it is the mode of a new situation of the writer, the way of certain silence has of existing; it deliberately forgoes any elegance or ornament, for these two dimensions would reintroduce Time into writing, and this is a derivative power which sustains History. If the writing is really neutral, and if language, instead of being a cumbersome and recalcitrant act, reaches the state of a pure equation, which is no more tangible than an algebra when it confronts the innermost part of man, then Literature is vanquished, the problematics of mankind is uncovered and presented without elaboration, the writer becomes irretrievably honest.<sup>28</sup>

Still another alternative is novels like Ulysses, Finnegan's Wake, and Beckett's trilogy, which reflect the growing self-consciousness of Western civilization--the effort of each new

writer to assimilate the major efforts of Western civilization in his mediation of contemporary experience. The heuristic value, however, of this "scholastic stink" (see Buck Mulligan) is doubtful, and the works which we have pointed to remain anomalies in twentieth century English fiction. In terms of Green's status as a "terrorist of language," we note that Green is a "gentleman terrorist"--like the "gentleman socialist" in politics. If at opposite poles of a literary spectrum we place the "neutral" writing of the nouveau roman and the typographical agraphia of Mallarmé, and if in the center we place the public speech of a George Orwell, we can locate Green in an intermediate position: unlike Orwell, Green manipulates and dislocates language in order to accommodate the oblique quality of his vision of life; unlike the revolutionaries at either end of the spectrum, Green wishes to maintain a relationship with the langue of his predecessors, a relationship that entails social and historical overtones.

## Footnotes

- 1  
Terry Southern, "The Art of Fiction XXII, Henry Green," Paris Review V, Summer 1958, pp. 61-62.
- 2  
Southern, pp. 64-65.
- 3  
John Russel, "There It Is," Kenyon Review XXVI, Summer 1964, p. 440.
- 4  
Russel, pp. 438-439.
- 5  
Russel, pp. 446-447.
- 6  
See Henry Green, "A Novelist to His Readers," Listener, XLIV, November 9, 1950, pp. 505-506; "A Novelist to His Readers," Listener, XLVI, March 15, 1951, pp. 425-427; "The English Novel of the Future," Contact, I, August 1950, pp. 21-26.
- 7  
A. Kingsley Westherhead, "Structure and Texture in Henry Green's Latest Novels," Accent, XIX, 2, Spring 1959, pp. 111-122.
- 8  
Russel, pp. 251-252.
- 9  
Edward Stokes, The Novels of Henry Green, 1959, p. 29.
- 10  
George Steiner, "Last Stop for Mrs. Brown," New Yorker, July 12, 1969, p. 84.
- 11  
Robert Phelps, "The Vision of Henry Green," Hudson Review V, 4, Winter 1953, p. 614.
- 12  
Philip Toynbee, "The Novels of Henry Green," Partisan Review, XVI, 5, May 1949, p. 490.
- 13  
Toynbee, pp. 494-495.
- 14  
Orville Prescott, In My Opinion, 1952, pp. 104-105.
- 15  
David Daiches, The Novel and the Modern World, 1960, pp. 4-5.
- 16  
E.M. Forster, Howards End, 1921, quotations are from p. 239, p. 324, p. 234, and p. 329 respectively.

17

D.H. Lawrence, Women in Love, 1950, p. 281.

18

Note Eric Auerbach's distinction between figura and allegory in this respect.

19

Henry Green, "A Novelist to His Readers," Listener XLIV, November 9, 1950, p. 506.

20

Russel, p. 444.

21

The other end of the spectrum is represented by the nouveau roman, whose polemic with humanism results in a form of cultural deprivation.

22

Erich Auerbach, Mimesis, 1957, pp. 487-488.

23

Green, "A Novelist to His Readers," Listener XLIV, p. 506.

24

Morris Halle and Roman Jakobson, Fundamentals of Language, 1956, pp. 77-78.

25

Henry Green, "The English Novel of the Future," Contact I, August 1950, p. 21.

26

Aldous Huxley, The Art of Seeing, 1942.

27

It is important to remember that, as many critics of Green have pointed out, Green is not easily classifiable. Despite the differences between his ethical drive and that of Lawrence, between his ambitions for meaning and those of Lawrence, Green often deals with "important," immediate themes in his books. Caught, for example, deals with the kinds of stress which men experience during war. Such stress involves changes in social relationships, new differentiations of authority, and threats to personal security. Concluding, which is generally acknowledged to be Green's most mysterious book, has its matrix in a brave new world of civil service tyranny. The beginnings of such a world can be seen in Nothing, which contrasts the drab, civil-servant lives of its younger characters with the decadence of its older characters, remains of the Mayfair rich. Such themes can be found in all of Green's books, which yet bear no resemblance to the novels of Orwell or Powell.

28

Roland Barthes, "Writing as Silence," Writing Degree Zero, 1967, pp. 77-78.

## CHAPTER III

## THE NORMS OF LANGUAGE

Edward Stokes, in his book The Novels of Henry Green, gives a comprehensive survey of the stylistic traits of Green's books. Toward this survey, which is supported by statistical tabulation, Max Cosman expresses a vulgar condescension that is by no means atypical in literary criticism:

But integrating the mass of material he does have, and, in addition, tabulating and measuring for himself Green's elements of expression, Mr. Stokes comes to a host of conclusions, the most characteristic of which are highly idiosyncratic. 'Loving,' says one of them, 'has more preterit verbs than any other novel except Living.' 'Blue,' goes a second, 'is actually the most frequently occurring color in Caught.' 'Natural imagery,' points out still another, 'is more plentiful in Concluding than in any novel since Party Going.' And a fourth, apropos of sentence-lengths, reports that 'Back is much closer to Loving, Nothing, and Doting than to the other novels.'

Such information may very well cause some readers to feel as Walt Whitman did when he heard a certain learned astronomer anatomize the mystery of the stars. It has had no such effect, however, on Mr. Green. Quite the contrary. It has impressed him very favorably.<sup>1</sup>

The title of Mr. Cosman's article is "The Elusive Henry Green," and Mr. Cosman seems determined to keep Green that way. Quoting the results of tabulations out of context can always make them seem gratuitous or "idiosyncratic," but one wonders by what standard Mr. Cosman denigrates these conclusions. Mr. Cosman has presumably read them in context, and yet he gives

us no indication in his brief article as to why they are not pertinent to a general description and evaluation of Green's works. It seems to me that what Mr. Cosman means is something like this: most people look at frogs from the outside; they see frogs as wholes which have a certain shape, color, and manner of moving. The biologist who piths the frog comes to certain idiosyncratic conclusions about it because he violates the frog's integrity. If one is interested, however, in knowing more about what a frog is than we can derive from everyday observation, the biologist's analyses are essential. These analyses also reveal much about the relationship of frogs to other animals. In the same way Mr. Stokes' methods reveal qualities of Green's books which would be unavailable otherwise or provide means of testing our intuitions about these qualities. They tell us something about the way we read, and they provide more explicit means by which we can compare the qualities of Green's books with those of other novels. Surely Mr. Cosman would not claim that his critical intuitions are unerring divining rods which need no correction or support from quantitative analysis. It is only if Mr. Cosman sees the critic's role as restricted to the level of interpretation (in Todorov's sense of the word), to commentary on human values, or as restricted to the "ooing and aahing" mode of criticism that Mr. Stokes' approach becomes supererogatory.

Before adumbrating Mr. Stokes' general findings, let me place the above quotations in context. When Mr. Stokes points out that there are more preterit verbs in Loving than in any other novel by Green except Living, he goes on to say that there are fewer verbs of any other kind in Loving than in any other novel by Green. In comparing Loving with Party Going, for example, he sets up the following table:

	<u>Party Going</u>	<u>Loving</u>
1. Preterit (type 'did')	319	388
2. 'Had done' type	70	28
3. 'Might (etc.) do' type	65	18
4. 'Was doing' type	43	21
5. 'Did...do' type	27	8
6. 'Do/does' type	24	3
7. Others	37	17
Total	585	483

Mr. Stokes concludes from these figures (and from another table which gives percentages from all of Green's novels except

Blindness) that in Loving Green restricts himself more than he does in his other books to the "fictive present" (the preterit), to action and observable behavior, and that the past in this book is not the backdrop that it is in Party Going. Moreover, the absence of the present tense indicates a scarcity of commentary and of interior monologue, "...And finally the third line provides another indication of the greater decisiveness, concreteness, and immediacy of Loving, compared with Party Going; or, to put the distinction more fairly, the large number of verbs compounded of 'might' and similar auxiliaries indicates that the interest of Party Going lies much more in the relationship between actions and in motives, than in the actions themselves.<sup>2</sup> The fact that Mr. Stokes' interpretation of the data may be questionable does not invalidate the suggestiveness of the data. Clearly the kinds of observation which Mr. Stokes makes are relevant to the degree of awareness to which we can aspire in our experience of Green's books. I have quoted Mr. Stokes' last observation because it seems to me to be insufficiently subtle. As I shall show in the chapter on surfaces and depths, there is very little interest in Party Going in motives. Although there is greater interior presentation in Party Going than in any of Green's other novels, that novel raises the question of the exhaustibility of personality more cogently than do any of the other novels. Moreover, although the "might do" grammatical mode (which includes also the

auxiliaries "may," "must," "would," "could," and "should") implies a relation between two moments in time, it does not necessarily imply a relation between two actions or an interest in motives. The mode expresses anticipation or potentiality. The only clear case of this mode connecting two actions is when one has an "if...then" (or comparable) clausal structure. Putting this question aside, however, the observations which arise from data of this sort should make us test more explicitly our intuitions about what we are reading.

When Mr. Stokes points out that blue is the color which occurs most frequently in Caught, he is rigorously examining a phenomenon which is more salient in Green than in any other author I have read: the sense that certain kinds of experiences are being registered on a kind of spectroscope. If we recall Susan Sontag's observation that "form--in its specific idiom, style--is a plan of sensory imprinting,"<sup>3</sup> we see how important the frequency of certain colors is in Green's books for the imprints which scenes make on us. I shall expand on this idea in the section on bound and compositional motifs. This mnemonic concern applies also to the incidence of natural imagery in Green's books.

Finally, the question of sentence length, as well as sentence structure, is very important in terms of the kinds of resistance which an author's style offers to the progressive movement of the novel. If we can posit the hypothesis that

the attention span which an author typically demands in his sentences (the degree of which is determined by the length of the sentence combined with the complexity of its subordination) reflects the amount of rational control that he is attempting to exert over his context, then alignments among Green's novels in terms of sentence length can be revealing.

At this point let us summarize some of Edward Stokes' findings: The basis of Green's style is the short, syntactically simple sentence.<sup>4</sup> The kinds of sentence sequences that we get in Green vary from book to book. For example, Back is characterized more than any of the other novels by long sequences of short sentences. Party Going is characterized by a relative homogeneity of sentence lengths. Caught and Concluding have about the same distribution of sentence lengths, but because of differences in subject matter and technique we are more aware of both the very short and the long, elaborate sentences in Caught<sup>5</sup> than we are in Concluding. Stokes' interpretations of his statistics vary in cogency, sometimes falling into the fallacy of imitative form. He is correct, for example, when he observes that in Back we find "extended sequences of short sentences, which are not mere stage directions but which record the action of Charley Summers," and that this style reflects the damage from which the central character is suffering.<sup>6</sup> He is also correct when he points out that more happens in

Caught than in Concluding and that "in Concluding the short sentences tend to occur singly or in pairs, intermingled with dialogue, whereas in Caught, where there is much more scene without dialogue, scene in indirect speech and summary, they often come in fairly large clumps." He further points out,

There is, then, a further distinction to be made between the styles of Caught and Concluding. Because we are more aware of the short sentences in Caught, we are also more aware of the long and elaborate ones. We are more aware in Caught of the alternation of sharp observation and colloquial realism with opulent rhetoric (sometimes with the modern implication of insincerity and exaggeration) and poetic imagery. In Concluding, on the other hand, realism is confined almost entirely to the dialogue; in the non-dialogue there is a constant heightening of the language, a constant spontaneous welling-up of imagery.<sup>7</sup>

He falls into the fallacy of imitative form, however, when he claims that the homogeneity of sentences in Party Going is appropriate to the unity of time and place and to the homogeneity

8

of the group involved. To attempt to imitate syntactically a mode of awareness, a movement of consciousness, is appropriate; to use a syntax which is in some way appropriate to a thing (like a homogenous group) or a condition (unity of time and place) is at best only an affectation.

Other mannerisms of Green which Stokes points out are:

- 1) a habit of replacing the article or possessive pronoun by demonstratives; 2) replacement of the third person pronouns "it" and "them" by "this" and "these"; 3) a fondness for referring to characters not by names or as "he," "she," or "they,"

but as "this man" (or "the man"), "that one," "these two," etc.<sup>9</sup>

With regard to individual novels, Stokes points out that Living is characterized by: the partial extirpation of the definite article, frequent omissions of "there," numerous fragmentary, verbless sentences, frequent inversions and distortions of normal word order, repetitions, the use of a redundant "so" in comparisons, an occasional use of "like" instead of "as if" or "as though," and numbers not spelled out but given as Arabic numerals.<sup>10</sup> The use of Arabic numerals in this book about factory life reminds us of the appearance of specification sheets or order forms; the use of "like" instead of "as if" or "as though" gives a colloquial quality to the narrative. Of the ellipses in Living, Green states in an interview with Terry Southern,

I wanted to make that book as taut and spare as possible to fit the proleterian life I was then leading. So I hit on leaving out the articles. I still think it effective, but would not do it again. It may now seem, I'm afraid, affected.

The interviewer then asks, "Do you think that an elliptical method like that has a function other than, as you say, suggesting the tautness and spareness of a particular situation?" Green replies, "I don't know, I suppose the more you leave out,<sup>11</sup> the more you highlight what you leave in ..."

With regard to Green's mimetic explanation of this prose mannerism, one notes that Green does not assume a luxurious prose when dealing with the rich in Living, Party Going, Doting, and Nothing. In fact these ellipses characterize the early scenes which deal with the wealthy Duprets in Living and recur in Party Going. Moreover, some of Green's other mannerisms in Living, such as inversion and redundancy, cannot be explained by reference to the spareness of proletarian life. Whatever mimesis Green thought that he was indulging in, it is clear that the primary motivation behind these mannerisms was an interest in English prose as an instrument of awareness. That is, it is something of an affectation to say that one is going to leave out the articles in one's sentences in order to reflect the fact that the material circumstances in one's book are rather spare. It is not uninteresting (whether one is successful or not) to say that one is going to leave out the articles in one's sentences in order to foreground nouns in a peculiar way. There are two kinds of effects (contrary to one another) which the omission of articles can have:

1. It can give the effect of changing the status of common nouns to proper nouns. That is, the removal of articles (especially an indefinite article like "a") would remove an object (or person) from a category of objects (or persons) and

stress its singleness. The kind of consciousness which this phenomenon would reflect is primitive, unabstracting.

2. It can give the effect of making the noun more generic-- unmodified "bird" becomes "birds," member becomes species. As we shall see in Party Going, that species then becomes a member of a genus which is difficult to define because it is a mode of consciousness.

A third effect can result from the rearrangement of word order as well as from ellipsis: a closer packing together (and thus a greater conspicuousness) of the most salient words of the sentence. Of this last effect especially and of Green's mannerisms generally, Philip Toynbee states that Green was obviously averse to the looseness of modern English but that his solution in Living was mistaken:

It is true that a great fault of current speech lies in the proliferation of superfluous and meaningless sounds...Some severity is needed. But "the" is both an innocent and a useful word and to concentrate so heavy a gun against it seems a curious misdirection of this writer's fire-power.

He feels that the omission of the definite article and the emphatic inversions are self-conscious and irritating, especially  
12  
in view of the ordinary statements that are being made.

It seems to me that Toynbee's judgment is somewhat too summary. One notes, for example, the problem that Auden had with "the" in "Spain, 1937":



again makes the impressions more immediate. My intuition is that Green included the article in the last sentence to create a rhythm which more effectively rounds off the section: "He was grimed with the black sand" brings us to rest more effectively than does "He was grimed with black sand" after the heavy packing of stresses in the previous sentence. Typographical spaces follows this passage, and we move into a new scene. In order to give more credibility to this intuition, I am going to show Green's attentiveness to prose cadence in more detail.

Some of the redundancy that Stokes points out in his survey of Green's prose mannerisms has to do with prose rhythm. Like the song into which characters in O'Casey's plays sometimes burst, Green's prose rhythm serves to heighten certain moments. The epigraph to Living, which is extracted from a scene in which Mrs. Eames speculates about her child, is an example of such heightening, "As these birds would go where so where would this child go?" This sentence scans as follows (with the heavy pause after "where"): u//u// u//u//, the first module exerting pressure on the second to accent "would" instead of "this." The phrase "and now time is passing now," (p.260) where the "is" is a hinge connecting two different three-syllable modules, is a second example. (Let us note to the Satanic reader that the first module cannot exert the same

pressure on the second module in this case because one cannot  
 accent the second syllable of "passing")<sup>u / / u /</sup>. "Was low wailing low  
<sup>u u /</sup>  
 in her ears" (p.108) includes an antispast and a choriamb  
 (a kind of negative reiteration)--as equivalent units not of  
 time but of energy. As these examples show, the redundant  
 syllables call attention to the configurations of syllables in  
 a way that normal prose does not. Similarly, careful varia-  
 tions of sentence length and inversions and other distortions  
 of word order attract attention to the cadence of the sentence  
 and to the larger cadence of the paragraph. In this paragraph,  
 for example,

Evening. Was spring. Heavy blue clouds stayed over  
 above. In small back garden of villa small tree was with  
 yellow buds. On table in back room daffodils, faded,  
 were between ferns in a vase. Later she spoke of these  
 saying she must buy new ones and how nice were first  
 spring flowers, (p.11)

there is a gradual expansion of the sentence unit which gives  
 a distinctive and pleasing cadence to the paragraph. The in-  
 version in the following sentence, "Mr. Bridges went down  
 through works in Birmingham till Tupe he found," (p.111) also  
 draws attention to the cadence of the sentence. The following  
 paragraph illustrates a number of possibilities.

Water dripped from tap on wall into basin and into  
 water there. Sun. Water drops made rings in clear  
 coloured water. Sun in there shook on the walls and  
 ceiling. As rings went out round trembling over the  
 water shadows of light from sun in these trembled on  
 walls. On the ceiling. (p.40)



tempo in this paragraph, which is a sort of set piece, a moment of intensified perception.

In summary, Green is experimenting in Living with methods of energizing English prose and of making it a more expressive instrument of awareness. With regard to the ellipses that characterize the book, one recalls the shock that Green experienced when he entered factory life, "...it was an introduction to indisputable facts at last..." (Pack My Bag, p.236). The elision of "filler" words makes one's awareness of those facts more immediate and particular (the elisions do not imitate in any sense the relative spareness of material circumstances).<sup>14</sup> What one can object to in Living are lapses in tact which occasionally characterize Green's use of stylistic devices. The stripped style seems inappropriate in this passage, which describes a scene between wealthy Mrs. Dupret and her son:

She pushed button of bell; this was in onyx. She laid hand by it on table and diamonds on her rings glittered together with white metal round onyx button under the electric light. Electric light was like stone. He was cut short by her. He was hurt at it. He kept silence then. (p.37)

Whose awareness, or what quality of awareness, is being evoked in this scene? Green seems to be imitating himself. The worst errors in tact occur in his inversions of syntax, which sometimes distract rather than heighten or please: "You were to him speaking, and he began quietly answering, then, suddenly,

he was acting, sincere in feeling, but acting, and words were out pouring, fine sentiments fine." (p.113) In Green's next book, Party Going, he has developed a surer control over these stylistic devices.

The opening paragraphs of Party Going are as follows:

Fog was so dense, bird that had been disturbed went flat into a balustrade and slowly fell, dead, at her feet.

There it lay and Miss Fellowes looked up to where that pall of fog was twenty foot above and out of which it had fallen, turning over once. She bent down and took a wing then entered a tunnel in front of her, and this had DEPARTURES lit up over it, carrying her dead pigeon.

No one paid attention, all were intent and everyone hurried, nobody looked back. Her dead pigeon then lay sideways, wings outspread as she held it, its dead head down towards the ground. She turned and she went back to where it must have died for it was still warm and, everything unexplained, she turned once more into the tunnel back to the station.

She thought it must be dirty with all that fog and wondered if it might not be, now it was dead, that it had fleas and they would come out on the feathers of its head but she did not like to look as there might have been blood. She remembered she had seen that with rabbits' ears when they had been shot and she remembered that swallows were most verminous of all birds--how could it have died she wondered and then decided that it must be washed.

As Miss Fellowes penetrated through at leisure and at last stepped out under a huge vault of glass--and here people hurriedly crossed her path, and shuttled past her on either side--Miss Crevy and her young man drove up outside and getting out were at once part of all that movement. And this affected them for if they also had to engage in one of those tunnels to get to where they were going, it was not for them simply to pick up dead birds and then wander through slowly... (pp. 7-8)

The elision of articles before "fog" and "bird" gives these words a vague, generic quality. <sup>15</sup> One is being given here more than a particular fog or a particular bird--one is being given "fogs" and "birds," which, occurring in various contexts throughout the book, becomes signals for certain kinds of awareness. <sup>16</sup> As we shall see, the sense of weightlessness which these opening sentences create is reinforced by Green's flat, paratactic style. In the first paragraph note that the correlative conjunction "that" is elided before "bird" as well as the article. The chiasmus "went flat" and "slowly fell" gives a slow motion effect as it delays the verb "fell." "Dead," surrounded by commas, further retards the action of the sentence. Finally, the pseudo-anaphoric "her" further increases our sense of uncertainty.

In paragraph two the imbalance of the two coordinate clauses foregrounds the short clause "there it lay." The flat, paratactic style creates a sense of equality among all elements of the sentence. There is little de-emphasizing of elements by subordination or by quickening of tempo. "Carrying her dead pigeon" is foregrounded partly by its position at the end of the sentence, partly by its occurrence after the awkwardly inserted "and this had DEPARTURES lit up over it," and partly by its redundancy (we know that she is carrying the pigeon). The phrase "there it lay" is also foregrounded by its redundancy,

as well as by the coordinative imbalance of the sentence. Finally, the word "DEPARTURES" is foregrounded typographically as well as by its occurrence in a phrase which would normally be subordinated but which is coordinated in this sentence. Throughout the book these typographically foregrounded signs act as ominous signals, much in the way that Jean Luc Godard's signs act in his films.

One notes the use of asyndeton in the opening sentence of paragraph three (the use of asyndeton is one of Green's general mannerisms). The effect of asyndeton is carried over to the next sentence, the three units of which are given more autonomy than would be the case in another context. They seem three independent units (as in the first sentence) instead of one independent unit and two dependent ones. In the last sentence we have an emphatic use of the pseudo-organizational "and," as well as the use of a distracted and distracting "for" which seems to explain something but does not. The "everything explained" is a cryptic qualifying phrase which implies that more has taken place than we are aware of.

The fourth paragraph is packed with the "might" type of auxiliaries which Stokes talks about in connection with Party Going and Loving (though not all the auxiliaries in this paragraph occur with active verbs). One has "must be," "might not be," "would come out," "might have been," "how could it have died," and "must be wished." These auxiliaries stress the sense

of latent possibilities in this situation, possibilities which are obliquely rendered throughout the rest of the book. This paragraph also shows that although the norm of Green's sentences is the short, syntactically simple sentence, Green is also master of the run-on sentence (and to a lesser extent of the syntactically involute sentence). The lack of commas and the accommodating quality of "and" create a bluntness of discrimination which we shall discuss further. At this point, let me just point out that the exaggerated paratactic style of these opening paragraphs suspends the ordinary discriminations that sentences make by subordination, but that subtle and unexpected emphases are provided by the characteristics that I have discussed--sentence organization, use of auxiliaries, typology, redundancy, and elision.

The fifth paragraph illustrates another device which Green occasionally uses, similar to the use of redundancy in its occasional suggestiveness. The sentence "And this affected them, for if they also had to engage in one of those tunnels to get to where they were going it was not for them simply to pick up dead birds and then wander through slowly," is peculiarly pedantic. The suggestiveness of this pedantry comes from one's trying to figure out what question this sentence would be an appropriate answer to. If it is not for them "simply to pick up dead birds and then wander through slowly," whom is it for?

This use of pedantry recurs later in the book,

Now both Julia and Angela had kissed their young men when these had been cross, when Mr. Adams had made off down in the station and when Max had stopped chasing Julia to sit in his chair.

People, in their relations with one another, are continually doing similar things but never for similar reasons. (p.114)

As we shall discuss further in the chapter on surfaces and depths, the pedantry deflates the solemn weighing of motives that characterizes the conventional novel. Another effect of the fifth paragraph is to draw our attention to the use of prepositions and pointing adverbs. The reasons that prepositions and adverbs do so much work in these opening pages are that:

1) they are foregrounded against the grid of non-relational "ands"; 2) in the context of fog we become sensitized to certain movements--movements up and down, into and through; and to certain positions--in and on, inside and outside. At the beginning our first orientation in this fog (both descriptive and syntactic) is up and down: "up to where that pall of fog" and "down toward the ground." Then one moves "into the tunnel," "back to the station"; one "engage(s) in one of those tunnels" and "wander(s) through." Later in the book one becomes aware of the great difference between "drowning in their depths" (pertaining to Robin and Miss Fellowes) and "clinging together on these depths" (Thomson and Emily). (The underlinings are mine.) Moreover, one has in this book a parody of the Dantesque vertical stages--underground, ground level, and above ground.

One notes that in Party Going the vault of the railroad station covers everyone, whether he is underground (as Miss Fellowes and the two mortuary grannies are at the beginning), at ground level (the crowd at the station), or above ground (the party-goers). That vault cannot be seen by those underground; it looks green to those at ground level; and it looks blue to those closer to it, in rooms above the crowd. We shall see that this chromatic shift is significant always in the economy of Green's books. One clear example in the book of the foregrounding of prepositions is when some characters are described as going "in under into one of these tunnels." (p. 9)

Green's paratactic style in this book accommodates the seriatim quality of literary description, what Ricardou calls the écart essential between the object of perception and the object of description. <sup>18</sup> This écart is a general property of literary description (both physical and psychological), but particular literary descriptions exert more or less pressure against this écart. As I have pointed out, strain is placed on our attention in proportion to the number of units that we are forced to keep in suspension and in relation to one another as we move through the sentence. This mnemonic strain is characteristic of the late Jamesian style, as it is here parodied by Max Beerbohm,

That it hardly was, that it all bleakly and unbeguilingly wasn't for "the likes" of him--poor decent Stamfordham--to rap out queries about the owner of the to him unknown and unsuggestive name that had, in these days, been thrust on him with such a wealth of commendatory gesture, was precisely what now, as he took, with his prepared list of new Year colifichets and whatever, his way to the great gaudy palace, fairly flicked his cheek with the sense of his never before so let himself in, as he ruefully phrased it, without letting anything, by the same token, out.<sup>19</sup>

James attempts in this late style a spatialization of psychological description, a synchronization of what must necessarily be presented in a linear, temporal, and progressive mode. A similar problem characterizes the physical descriptions of Robbe-Grillet's books, particularly those of Jealousy. The strategy of Jealousy is as follows: at the beginning of the book, Robbe-Grillet gives us a map of a house and its environs. He also gives us an index of significant moments in the book ("Now the shadow of the column...p.39," "The brush descends the length...p.66," etc.). His literary descriptions then dissolve these objects and spatial relations into linear movements. Our attempt to re-spatialize these elements is the strain to which we have referred above. We must re-read, as we must in James, to overcome the temporal. Robbe-Grillet in fact provides literal re-readings, i.e. repetitions of descriptive units, which parody our re-readings of the same passage. Henry Green's "ands" (and to some extent the other conjunctions like "so," "for," "but") parody the linear character

of literary description, as does his use of asyndeton. We do not suffer the mnemonic discomfort of James' involute sentences of or Robbe-Grillet's spatial dissolutions; what we do experience, however, is the discomfort of cognitive weightlessness. 20

Mr. Stokes points out that Green does move occasionally into passages which are more elaborate and complex stylistically. He observes that the half-dozen longest sentences in the book are of great thematic and symbolic importance, as opposed to Living where almost all the long sentences are ironical commentaries on the wealthy Duprets. 21 The longest and most elaborate of these sentences is the following:

Looking down then on thousands of Smiths, thousands of Alberts, hundreds of Marys, woven tight as any office carpet or, more elegantly made, the holy Kaaba soon to set out for Mecca, with some kind of design made out of bookstalls and kiosks seen from above and through one part of that crowd having turned towards those who were singing, thus lightening the dark mass with their pale lozenge faces; observing how this design moved and was alive where in a few lanes or areas people swayed forward or back like a pattern writhing; coughing as fog caught their two throats or perhaps it was smoke from those below who had put on cigarettes or pipes, because tobacco smoke was coming up in drifts; leaning out then, so secure, from their window up above and left by their argument on terms of companionship unalloyed, Julia and Max could not but feel infinitely remote, although at the same time Julia could not fail to be remotely excited at themselves. (p. 150)

This sentence, with its string of details held in suspension by the delayed appearance of the subject, with its parenthetical interruption between "...carpet or" and "with some kind...", and with its difficult causal "through one part of..." (at first seen deceptively in parallel with the spatial "from

above") arrests forward movement and compels attention to pattern--Julia and Max vis á vis the crowd.

One of Green's mannerisms in this book which Stokes refers to but does not explore is the use of the demonstrative in place of the article. In at least two instances this replacement has figurative value. In describing Miss Fellowes' delirium, Green writes, "And then when she thought she must be overwhelmed, or break, this storm would go back and those waters and her blood recede, that moon would go out above her head, and a sweet tide washed down from scalp to toes and she could rest." (p. 76) No moon has previously been mentioned in this passage, and so the "that" points to a context for "moon" which precedes the passage. It is "that moon" which presides over such delirium, and "that moon" is later identified by Edwards when, in response to Thomson's lust, he says, "You want the moon." (p. 203) In another passage in the book, one has the following sequence: "...Their porter then made difficulties and did not want to come with them; he would only offer to put her things in the cloakroom, so her young man, Robin, had to tip him in advance and so at last they too went in under into one of those tunnels. Descending underground, down fifty steps, these two nannies..." (p. 9) The "these two" seems at first to refer to Robin and Angela, and this temporary deception creates a kind of metaphorical equivalence between them and the two nannies. Is the blandness of Miss Crevy and

Robin equivalent to the mortuary quality of the two nannies? This question, in addition to the ambiguous use of shifters ("he," "she," "it," "they," etc.), will be discussed in the chapter on deviation.

Mr. Stokes' stylistic evaluation of Green's other books is quite adequate. He is especially good in pointing to the fluctuations in Caught from the simple to the elaborate, from the prosaic to the poetic; and in discriminating between those luxuriant and complex passages that are crucial in the development of the plot and those which appear to be mere virtuoso pieces. The best example of a lapse in tact that Stokes points to is this passage describing Mrs. Howell's emotional condition after her daughter has left her husband and come "home":

For she mourned the fruit of her own body, what had, so to say, been grafted on her by Howells, but which in the fulness of time, when ripe, had dropped away alive, with a live life of its own she did not comprehend, to be grafted by a stranger with his helpless bundle that in spite of the process was part of Mary's flesh and blood, this baby that bore a strange name; this it was she mourned, not for the marriage, the flowering, the development or for that its mother had borne, all these being in the course of nature, but she mourned the mother, her own daughter, that she had come back. (pp. 81-82)

Mr. Stokes rightfully notes that this attempt to dignify Mrs. Howells fails miserably. The effect of this passage is that of taking one of Dickens' "grotesques" and giving her the part of the mother in "Riders to the Sea." Mr. Stokes is also especially good in observing the fact that "the things we

have accepted in Caught, Loving, and Back as fresh and vivid perceptions...seem stale and shop soiled" in his last two novels. What strikes one in reading Nothing is "the disproportion, the lack of connection and relationship, the effect of lush, artfully designed patches of purple (or rather of white, rose, and blue) arbitrarily superimposed on the abstract, colourless background." <sup>23</sup> Mr. Stokes is referring to the fact that the poise between dialogue and description which characterized Loving has been lost in Nothing and Doting. The descriptions in the latter books have strong elements of self-parody in them, as does the gratuitous detail in Doting that Peter is to bring a goose with him back to school (birds are a constant motif in Green's books).

In view of Stokes' fine survey of the general stylistic peculiarities of Green's work and of the characteristics of particular novels, I have chosen in this chapter to concentrate on the kinds of interest Green showed in his second book in English prose and to indicate the ways in which he learned to control the stylistic devices in that book. The major point that I have been trying to make is that because of its size and because of its lack of the formal parameters that characterize verse, it is impossible for the novel to foreground language all the time. From using ellipsis and distortion of word order pervasively (though not consistently) in Living,

Green learns to use these devices as responses to stress in Party Going. The ear that Green develops for prose cadence in Living grows in sensitivity in his later books, as this climactic passage in Loving shows:

Accordingly she picked up the bag of scraps. She began to feed the peacocks. They came forward until they had her surrounded. Then a company of doves flew down on the seat to be fed. They settled all over her. And their fluttering disturbed Raunce who reopened his eyes. What he saw then he watched so that it could be guessed that he was in pain with his great delight. For what with the peacocks bowing at her purple skirts, the white doves nodding on her shoulders round her brilliant cheeks and her great eyes that blinked tears of happiness, it made a picture. (p. 248)

This paragraph moves deliberately in short sentences from detail to detail, but the sentence unit begins to expand and the tempo of the prose to increase with sentence six, with the beginning of Raunce's response to this brilliant scene. Green's control over prose movement is complete in this book, which of all Green's books comes closest to fulfilling Susan Sontag's ambition to thwart interpretation, "Ideally, it is possible to elude the interpreters in another way, by making works of art whose surface is so unified and clean, whose momentum is so rapid, whose address is so direct that the work can be...just  
24  
what it is."

## Footnotes

- 1  
Max Cosman, "The Elusive Henry Green," Commonweal, V, 72, 1960, p. 474.
- 2  
Edward Stokes, The Novels of Henry Green, 1959, p. 226.
- 3  
Susan Sontag, "On Style," Against Interpretation, 1966, p. 43.
- 4  
Stokes, p. 191.
- 5  
Stokes, pp. 202-229.
- 6  
Stokes, pp. 229-231.
- 7  
Stokes, pp. 207-214.
- 8  
Stokes, p. 203.
- 9  
Stokes, p. 191.
- 10  
Stokes, pp. 196-198.
- 11  
Terry Southern, "The Art of Fiction XXII, Henry Green," Paris Review V, Summer 1958, p. 73.
- 12  
Philip Toynbee, "The Novels of Henry Green," Partisan Review, XVI, May 1949, pp. 491-492.
- 13  
W.H. Auden, Collected Shorter Poems, 1927-1957, 1967, p. 16.
- 14  
The best example that we have in American poetry of this celebration of the fact is Ralph Waldo Emerson's "Hamatreya":  
  
    Bulkeley, Hunt, Willard, Hosmer, Meriam, Flint,  
    Possessed the land which rendered to their toil  
    Hay, corn, roots, hemp, flax, apples, wool and wood.
- 15  
We have noted that in Living these elisions usually have a contrary effect: to change common nouns to proper nouns, to particularize.

16

A similar effect is achieved in Yeats' "The Lover's Song,"

Bird sighs for the air,  
Thought for I know not where.  
For the womb the seed sighs.  
Now sinks the same rest  
On mind, on nest,  
On straining thighs.

The use of "bird" without an article gives it a more generic quality. That quality is suggested by the positional coupling of "bird" and "thought." "The seed" is shifted, by means of inversion, to another position in the line and consequently retains its concreteness. One notes a contrary process in Part IV of T.S. Eliot's "Dry Salvages": "Whether on the shores of Asia, or in the Edgware Road." Eliot is playing with the original designation "the Edgware road," which has become "Edgware Road" ("road" having become part of the proper name). As a synecdoche for Europe, this onomastic ploy gives the effect of diminution in parallel structure with "the shores of Asia."

17

Another interesting example of Green's use of redundancy occurs at the end of the first chapter, "Once free of them she went to where he had shown her and, partly because she felt so much better now, she retrieved her dead pigeon done up in brown paper." (p. 13) The redundant "done up in brown paper" is a suggestive and ominous detail at the end of this sentence and at the end of the chapter. In Jean Cohen's terms, the use of this redundant detail in the position of a restrictive phrase is agrammatical and compels us to find affective reasons for its use.

18

Jean Ricardou, "Une Question Nommée Littérature," Problèmes Du Nouveau Roman, 1967, p. 19.

19

Max Beerbohm, "The Guerdon," Parodies, ed. Dwight MacDonald, 1960, p. 147.

20

In his discussion of parataxis and hypotaxis, Eduard Norden takes a different position. He asserts that Vergil's frequent substitutions of a clause connected with the main statement merely by et or que for a clause that normally would be introduced by a subordinator (like cum or simul) reflects a desire to implicate this clause more closely in time with the main clause. Eduard Norden, P. Vergilius Maro Aeneas Buch VI, 1926, pp. 378-380.

21

Stokes, pp. 204-206.

22

Stokes, pp. 208-210.

23

Stokes, pp. 220-231.

24

Susan Sontag, "Against Interpretation," Against Interpretation, p. 21.

## CHAPTER IV

## DEVIATION IN THE NOVEL

We have already discussed Roman Jakobson's model of communication and his account of the poetic function. In another work Jakobson elaborates on what he calls "the metaphoric and metonymic poles":

In poetry there are various motives which determine the choice between these alternants. The primacy of the metaphoric process in the literary school of romanticism and symbolism has been repeatedly acknowledged, but it is still insufficiently realized that it is the predominance of metonymy which underlies and actually predetermines the so-called "realistic" trend, which belongs to an intermediary stage between the decline of romanticism and the rise of symbolism and is opposed to both. Following the path of contiguous relationships, the realistic author metonymically digresses from the plot to the atmosphere and from the characters to the setting in space and time. He is fond of synechdochic details. In the scene of Anna Karenina's suicide Tolstoy's artistic attention is focused on the heroine's handbag; and in War and Peace the synechdoches "hair on the upper lip" or "bare shoulders" are used by the same writer to stand for the female characters to whom these features belong.<sup>1</sup>

It is important to realize that the "realistic" novel which Jakobson discussed above is still normative for fiction in general and for English fiction in particular. It is Robbe-Grillet's contention in For A New Novel that despite the dislocations brought about by Proust, Joyce, Faulkner, Beckett, and others, the "realistic" or "bourgeois" novel is still a powerful norm against which the writer of the "new" novel must relentlessly rebel. In the introductory chapter we discussed

this norm of the novel--in terms of a strong linear or temporal push, a univocal anecdote, and a relative lack of self-reflexiveness--and the forms which deviations from that norm have taken. In this chapter I would like to discuss in more detail the kinds of deviation which are conspicuous in Green's novels, novels which have some relation to the novels discussed by Ralph Freedman under the rubric "the lyrical novel."<sup>2</sup>

Despite the fact that we do not have in the novel a formal grid that "projects the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection into the axis of combination," there are devices in relation both to the syntax of sentences and the syntax of events which move the novel toward the metaphoric pole. By virtue of these devices, the anecdote loses its "innocence," its univocalness; the novel moves closer to Valéry's prescription for a novel which presents "the possible-at-each moment," which he thinks is more truthful than the univocal sequences of the traditional novel.<sup>3</sup> In this chapter I am less interested in the differences between Green and other "lyrical" novelists or between Green and novelists like Robbe-Grillet than in self-reflexive devices which are common to them all. Of the devices that we shall consider, rhyming is a mode of relating fictional elements: bound and compositional motifs are the elements which are related: enjambment in the novel is a device for violating the organizational commitments of the paragraph; the chapter is an architectural commitment comparable perhaps

to the poetic line or the poetic stanza; and the agrammatical use of tense is a device for internal distancing rather than for temporal shifting. These devices will now be examined in detail.

### I. Rhyming

The primary mode in the novel which "projects the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection into the axis of combination" is what Jean Ricardou calls "rhyming." Ricardou points out that the successive arrangement of literary signs necessarily entails a limitation of the number of objects or the complexity of a single object in a description. Such a necessary limitation is not characteristic of films, where there is an instantaneous perception of a diversity of objects and qualities. This phenomenon has two consequences for the novel: 1) because of their essential rarity, the objects described in the novel gain an increased significance; and 2) their rarity relates them, increases the intensity of their relations, and disposes them "to rhyme." Furthermore, the qualities of a literary object tend to generate other objects<sup>4</sup> which incarnate the same or similar qualities. "Rhyming" is consequently a literary phenomenon--that is, a phenomenon which is peculiar to the relations between words--rather than a mimetic phenomenon--that is, a phenomenon which relates to the mimetic responsibility which most writers have expressed

vis-a-vis "life." This distinction is made by Henry Green in his comparison of painting and fiction (quoted in Chapter II), where he claims that painters do not see more color than does the normal person but develop a compositional sense which enables them to give their painting a life of their own. It is this internal play of forces, apprehended without too much difficulty in criticism of painting or of poetry, which has eluded many critics of the novel.

The phenomenon of rhyming, therefore, is generated by the mind's ambition for order, for pattern, for poetic justice:

Oh! Blessed rage for order, pale Ramon,  
The maker's rage to order words of the sea...

It is a symptom of the fact that the perceptual whole is always less than the sum of its parts. That is, in making sense of our experience we define the whole in terms of only some of its parts. This is true at a primary level of articulation (perception) and it is reinforced at a second level of articulation - that of writing. In writing what is lost in terms of reference (the limitation of objects or of their complexity that Ricardou notes) is gained in terms of sense. This découpage, which characterizes man as an animal that labors for sense, has its formal and most arbitrary representation in the line ending of a poem. Semantic découpage, of which metonymy and metaphor are examples, is a lesser mode of

arbitrariness. The best example of this phenomenon is Dickens, who had to contend with the disruptions of continuity entailed by serial publication. In Dickens the salient qualities of a character will generate settings, situations, and facts ad infinitum which evince those qualities. In this way metonymy is transformed into metaphor, contiguity into equivalence. In Hard Times, for example, the shift in axis is as follows:

from	Grandgrind's character--appearance--ideas-- his children--his house, etc.
to	Authoritarian rigidity and abstractness (rubric)
	character
	appearance
	ideas
	his school
	his children
	his house
	etc.

To one extent or another this process takes place in all novels and works against their horizontal thrust. Before I illustrate how this rhyming process works in Green's novels, I should like to discuss the notions of bound and compositional motifs, which are the elements that enter into the rhyming mode.

## II. Bound and Compositional Motifs

The notions of bound and compositional motifs are derived from Boris Tomashevsky's "Thematics," although I have reduced his more elaborate scheme to these two notions and have changed his terminology. Tomashevsky defines a motif as

follows, "The theme of an irreducible part of a work is called the motif; each sentence, in fact, has its own motif." Let us note that a motif may be a molecule of action, a character trait, or a descriptive detail. Tomashevsky then distinguishes between "bound motifs" and "free motifs" as follows: "Usually there are different kinds of motifs within a work. By simply retelling the story we immediately discover what may be omitted without destroying the coherence of the narrative and what may not be omitted without destroying the connections among events. The motifs which cannot be omitted are bound motifs; those which may be omitted without disturbing the whole causal-chronological course of events are free motifs." What Tomashevsky refers to as "free motifs" I refer to as "compositional motifs," since I wish to emphasize their special function in shaping our consciousness of events rather than their lack of causal responsibility. Moreover, it is not always possible to assign a motif to one of the two categories which Tomashevsky outlines. For example, the law suit in Bleak House, without which the story cannot proceed, is a clear example of a bound motif. The fog in that same book, which has symbolic import as well as descriptive interest but which is not necessary to the progress of the story, is a clear example of a free motif. The fog in Party Going, however, seems to be a bound motif in the sense that it requires the party-goers to remain

in the station hotel and engage in the combinations and permutations of relationships which that confinement requires, but the power of the motif is unaccounted for by that function. The fog motif is expressive of epistemological difficulty on the one hand and death on the other hand, and this compositional function (in the sense of Wallace Stevens' jar in Tennessee which gave composition to the landscape though "It did not give of bird or bush,/Like nothing else in Tennessee" is far more important than its "realistic" function (its function in the cause and effect nexus which we presuppose as a working model of reality).

Another way to view the difference between bound and compositional motifs is that they are analogous to kinds of evidence given in a jury trial. It is common in jury trials for an attorney to elicit information or judgments from a witness that are subsequently challenged by the opposing attorney as being irrelevant or immaterial--whether the testimony is based on hearsay, or based on materials which are not in evidence, or concerned with persons or issues which are not technically relevant to the trial. Although the jury is instructed to disregard the testimony that they have heard, they cannot, of course, forget the testimony, which helps to shape their judgments. In terms of the emotional economy of Party

Going, Miss Fellowes dies a number of times, although in "realistic" terms she does not die. The frequent anticipations and evocations of her death establish the compositional if not the chronological fact of her death. That compositional death, in turn, reinvokes the actual death of the pigeon which begins the book. At the end of Loving, the compositional fact of Raunce's death is evoked by his cry "Edie," made in the exact tone with which the dying Mr. Eldon cried out "Ellen." In actual fact Raunce leaves for England with Edie, where they live "happily ever after." The central compositional fact of Concluding is the death of a young girl even though the chronological fact of that death is never established and even though the girl's fate has been shrouded in mystery. In other words, the bound motif is admissible evidence, whereas the compositional motif is inadmissible evidence which we hear anyway. That inadmissible evidence replenishes the store of possibilities which Valéry would like to see presented at any given moment in the novel.

In the remainder of this section I shall examine one of Green's books, Concluding, in order to illustrate Green's use of rhyming in relation to compositional motifs. Lateral references will be made to some of Green's other books in order to substantiate or clarify points which we make about Concluding. The outline of Concluding is as follows: Mr. Rock is an old

scientist living in retirement with his neurotic granddaughter Elizabeth in a cottage provided for him by the government. The cottage is situated on the grounds of a state-supported school which trains girls to be civil servants. Miss Edge and Miss Baker, the spinterish principals of the school, wish to remove Mr. Rock from his cottage in order to have the cottage for an extra workman. During the course of the book, two of the girls, Mary and Merode, disappear from the school. One of them (Merode) is found and cannot account for their disappearance; the other remains missing. Mr. Rock and his daughter attend the annual dance that the school gives, despite the continued disappearance of one of the girls. At the dance Mr. Rock confronts a tacit conspiracy against him of his granddaughter and her lover, Sebastian Birt, the subterranean intrigues of a group of girls, and a drugged proposal of marriage by Miss Edge. Under difficult-to-navigate circumstances Mr. Rock returns home with his granddaughter, who subsequently returns to the dance. It is not true, as Edward Stokes says,<sup>7</sup> that Concluding is characterized by a "formless coherence." The story curve is clear though inconclusive, like the curve of Ulysses or The Trial, and unlike The Voyeur in which the story seems to dissolve while it unfolds. Nor does one face the problem in Concluding that one faces in The Waves, where there is no real story line to check the prolonged lyrical

associations of internal reverie. The problem in Concluding is not to unravel what has happened to the missing girl but to register the reticulation of possibilities that are crystallized out of the compositional motifs.

As we have suggested, the elements which enter into the rhyming mode need not be static elements (such as descriptive details); they may themselves be modes of action, kinds of relationships. It is important, moreover, to distinguish between the grammatical status of the motif (whether it is a thing, a relationship, or an action) and its activity as part of the rhyming process. I shall clarify this point as I adumbrate the most salient compositional motifs in Concluding:

a. Modes of relatedness--between man and man and between man and his environment. The motifs which come under this category are motifs of sensory deprivation and of verbal inadequacy.

b. Elements of light and color. These are static elements vis-à-vis the modes of relatedness, but they also become in effect modes of relatedness, creating circuits between our awareness and preconscious elements. If we recall again Susan Sontag's description of form as a kind of "sensory imprinting," then we can discern a kind of literary spectroscope in Green's novels which projects and registers emotional events in terms of colors.

c. Flora and fauna. Like the elements of light and color, these motifs are static elements vis-à-vis the modes of relatedness. Moreover, although any motifs which enter into the rhyming process become dynamic by virtue of that process, these motifs tend to be more static and analogical than the others.

d. Other motifs, which are less easily categorizable. Drowning, for example, is a motif which is closely associated with awareness of light and darkness. The local motif of Mary's doll is delimited by a very subtle metonymic process that involves the conflict between chromaticism and patterns of black and white that occurs in the book. Although drowning is a kind of action and a doll is a descriptive element, by virtue of the work done on these motifs by the rhyming process, the latter becomes the more dynamic motif in terms of its impact on the reader.

The distinction that I am making between static and dynamic motifs (both in terms of their grammatical status and in terms of their function in the rhyming process) is rather different from the distinction which Tomashevsky makes between static and dynamic motifs:

A story may be thought of as a journey from one situation to another...Motifs which change the situation are dynamic motifs; those which do not are static...Free motifs are usually static, but

not all static motifs are free. Thus we assume that if a murder is necessary to the progress of the story, one of the characters must have a revolver. The motif of the revolver, as the reader becomes aware of it, is both static and bound--bound because without the revolver the murder could not be committed.<sup>8</sup>

Finally, Tomashevsky says, "Dynamic motifs are motifs which are central to the story and which keep it moving; in the plot, on the other hand, static motifs may predominate."<sup>9</sup> The grammatical distinction which I make between motifs does not depend on their changing or not changing a "situation": like Lafcadio's gratuitous act, some grammatically dynamic motifs (like Miss Fellowes' picking up and washing a pigeon in Party Going) may seem gratuitous in terms of the development of the story. The point is that kinds of sensory loss (like blindness or aphasia) tend to suggest different parts of the sentence than do types of flora and fauna. The other point has to do with the reader: because of the work done on motifs by the rhyming process, some motifs tend to have a much more dynamic effect on the reader than others. One notes as a parallel that the elaborate Miltonic simile is much more dynamic than the simple analogy--the latter creating a kind of closure, the former generating what Geoffrey Hartman calls<sup>10</sup> a "counterplot." As I discuss these motifs in more detail, I hope that their effects will become clear.

a. Motifs of sensory deprivation and verbal inadequacy

One of Henry Stack Sullivan's best known ideas is that of "selective inattention." We are inattentive to those details of our experience which are either irrelevant or threatening to us. Shklovsky's definition of art in terms of "defamiliarization" or "dehabituation" is an attempt to see art as a systematic way of renewing our awareness, of compelling us to confront qualities of our experience which have been screened out by the socialization process. Defamiliarization, then, is a systematic correction of selective inattention.

One of Henry Green's frequent ploys is to use motifs of sensory deprivation or verbal inadequacy in order to defamiliarize interpersonal relations and relations between characters and their environment. <sup>11</sup> The peculiar effect of this strategy is to intensify our sense of human separateness. In the following critical statements, Green's notions of "non-representational" fiction and of obliquity are very close to what Shklovsky means of defamiliarization. Similarly, the mimetic problems which he points to underline the tenuous quality of personal communication (as opposed to the standardized communication of journalism) and the fact of human separateness:

"Non-representational" was meant to represent a picture which was not a photograph, nor a painting on a photograph, nor, in dialogue, a tape-recording. For instance the very deaf, as I am, hear the most astounding things all round them, which have not, in

fact, been said. This enlivens my replies until, though mishearing, a new level of communication is reached. My characters misunderstand each other more than people do in real life, yet they do so less than I. Thus when writing, I "represent" very closely what I see (and I'm not seeing so well now) and what I hear (which is little) but I say it is "non-representational" because it is not necessarily what others see and hear.<sup>12</sup>

...the journalist's approach must be the most direct of which he is capable, and the novelist's approach must be oblique. In life the intimations of reality are nearly always oblique. In other words, you learn more from the lies of someone who is speaking to you, if you can find these out, than you will from direct statements which generally only represent a portion of what the person you are speaking to believes. A direct lie can be infinitely revealing, and a half-truth when heard gets us nowhere. Accordingly, the treatment of dialogue by the novelist will be oblique, that is to say, there should be no direct answers in dialogue. If the fictional characters A and B are talking together in narrative, A should ask a question on which B should ask another, although the natural fatigue of the reader over such inconclusiveness should be carefully watched for.<sup>13</sup>

The strategy, therefore, behind Green's use of the motifs that we are examining in this section is as follows: Green is aware of the disparity between the generic quality of words and the peculiar refractions of individual experience. This awareness makes him cautious about the possibility of direct personal communication. His own deafness and blindness become analogues in his novels for the separateness that must be overcome in human relationships and in the individual's apprehension of his environment. The artist's awareness,

however, of these limitations forces him into a more self-conscious use of his artistic medium (in the painter's case, colors, in the novelist's case, words) to attain a "new level of communication." Green's earlier point about the number of painters who have poor eyesight seems to be a kind of reformulation of Edmund Wilson's notion of a wound that characterizes artists--the effort to overcome the deficiency<sup>14</sup> generates extraordinary modes of communication.

In Blindness the loss of sight means a loss of security for John Hayes, an undermining of the relations between self and environment, "Everything was abstract now, personality had gone." (p.93) This horror of abstractness is reflected in the ex-minister's horror of cats in that book, "They don't see flesh and blood, they see an abstract of everything." (p.130) In Concluding characters are primarily blinded not to light but by light--by sunlight. With regard to the sun, Green narrates an incident in his autobiography Pack My Bag in which a young man is persecuted by some girls at a hunt's ball because he complimented one of them. Green's comment on this incident is, "It must be a question of the sun." (p.227) In Blindness Joan, who is bursting with sexual vitality, thinks, "She loved the sun, he took hold of you and drew you out of yourself so that you couldn't think, you just gave yourself up." (p.132) The frequent blinding or dazzling by

sunlight in Concluding is then expressive of the bombardment of personality by the sheer energy of life (as it is manifested in both light and heat). It is a result of plentitude, as opposed to the deprivation in Blindness.

15

When Mr. Rock enters Mrs. Blaine's kitchen he is isolated from the girls by the "loud" sunlight that bisects the kitchen, "They were no more to him than light blue shadows." (p.21) He is susceptible, however, to an intuition of "female curiosity" behind the cone of light in which he sits, which is "like the smell of a fox that has just slunk by, back of some bushes." (p.2) He is also susceptible to his general bodily impressions, "And in a moment the old and famous man was left alone at table, altogether blinded by increasing brightness, before an empty plate and a cup that was warm, behind a rumbling stomach, left to dread the journey back with full buckets." (p.29) This coenaesthesia is expressed in a later scene where Elizabeth and Sebastian, arms about each other, stop in the sunlight, which "as a load, a great cloak to clothe them, like a depth of warm water that turned the man's brown city outfit to a drowned man's clothes, the sun was so heavy, so encompassing betimes." (p.55) In another scene Miss Edge and Miss Baker sit in a room which is partitioned into three parts by the sun as it comes in the windows. They sit in shadow between the windows, separated by a wedge of sunlight.

Miss Edge pushes some azaleas into shadow before attempting to work out some solution to the disappearance of the two girls. Miss Baker, perplexed by Miss Edge's attempted explanation, "in perplexity turned toward Miss Edge, and was blinded by the sun." (pp.164-167)

The most striking use of this motif is Miss Marchbanks' interrogation of Merode, in which she places Merode where the sunlight in the room will dazzle her. For Merode, however, this dazzling is protection against the mechanical insistence of Miss Marchbanks' interrogation. Later in the scene, as the latter tries to get the facts of her escapade, Merode is no longer "blinded in sunlight, her eyes had caught on one of the black squares, as that pajama leg had earlier been hooked on a briar." (p.69) The black and white squares of a dado, as we shall see, are in opposition to the chromatic in this book, the former representing an abstract reduction of the latter. As Miss Marchbanks keeps questioning Merode about her experience (the erotic nature of which is intimated by the pajama leg caught in the briar), Merode begins to sicken, as Miss Fellowes does in a less well-defined situation in Party Going. She is no longer dazzled by sunlight during the interrogation but "mesmerized by the black and white receding pavements." (p.69)

Deafness, aphasia, and mimicry are more univocal analogues in this book for the separateness of human personality (the last comes under the heading of "verbal inadequacy" because it is an avoidance of communication). Mr. Rock's deafness is a source of continual misunderstandings throughout the book. Some of these misunderstandings are hilarious, as when Mr. Rock mistakes Mr. Adams' "you and your sort" for "lose the fort" and Adams tops him with "booze the port." Some of these misunderstandings reveal private meanings, as when Mr. Rock mistakes "you mean the weather" for "end of her tether" in relation to the missing girl. At least one of these misunderstandings is disturbing: Mr. Rock is not sure whom the police sergeant is referring to when he asks, "Now she's not disappeared, I hope, sir?" The police sergeant is referring to Rock's goose, but Mr. Rock is not sure whether or not he is referring to the missing girl. He echoes, "Disappeared? I know nothing." (p.151) But Mr. Rock does know something, as does George Adams (the woodman), and in that sense they are implicated in the girls' disappearance. They both understand the unnatural strain to which the girls at the school are subjected, and this implication in the girls' situation explains subtle, seemingly gratuitous expressions of guilt or defensiveness. For some reason Adam is relieved

at the beginning of the book "to hear just a girl hollering." (pp.10-11) Later he becomes somewhat paranoid after he has been questioned by Miss Baker. Mr. Rock is "horrified" at the disappearance of the two girls when he hears about it; later he notices "with a dreadful reluctance" that the uppermost pedal of the policeman's bicycle still turns. (p.74) The bicycle subsequently becomes associated with sexual release: as Miss Edge commits herself to proposing to Mr. Rock, she feels "as though on top of a hill in a dream on a bicycle with no brakes." (p.241) Despite their awareness of the stress which the system has exerted on the girls, Rock and Adams are both isolated by their egotism, by their efforts to keep what is theirs. Mr. Rock's deafness is one of a constellation of traits having to do with old age and impending death--the most isolating of facts.

Elizabeth's aphasia and Sebastian's mimicry are also analogues for separateness. The only time that Elizabeth can talk coherently or Sebastian can sustain his own voice is when they are alone together. Sexual fulfillment, like the sun in which they "drown," brings them out. Even together, however, and always with other people, their self-assertion can break down under stress. Sebastian uses a false "bantering tone with which to speak of his profession" in response to Elizabeth's scrutiny of their relationship. (p.44) Later in the

book Sebastian assumes his lecturer's voice in an attempt to subdue Elizabeth's efforts at self-revelation. In that scene Elizabeth becomes incoherent in trying to express the relation between humans and animals in terms of the inscrutability of their motivations. Not only is she incoherent in this discussion, but she incorrectly assumes that the people around her know the real subject of the discussion--which is Mr. Rock's cottage. (pp.206-209)

Just as the motifs of sensory deprivation slide subtly from their function as analogues of human separateness in Green's books to formal means of defamiliarization (which result in a "new level of communication"), so the motif of mimicry slides subtly from its "representational" function to a formal function. In Party Going, for example, the central deficiency of the party-goers (which is associated with the illness of Miss Fellowes) is a lack of fellow-feeling. Green guards against sentimentalizing this norm as follows: there is an unidentified man in the book who keeps making gratuitous appearances, somewhat like the Cheshire cat in Alice in Wonderland. He first appears as a "rough looking customer" who commiserates with Miss Fellowes on the bad service at the bar. He is later seen watching Miss Fellowes and winking each time that he looks away. He later follows Miss Fellowes as she is carried into the hotel, and he assumes a variety of

accents with Alex, who thinks that he may be the house detective. He is later described as looking like an escaped prisoner. Still later, having been used by Robert to get a message through to Thomson (Julia's chauffeur), he is described as someone who "always interfered." He comes into contact with all the characters in the book and is in transit between lower and upper classes (both in terms of his changing accent and in terms of his actual mobility). He represents a kind of parodic fellow-feeling, funny because it is so gratuitous. Green is very careful in this book not to sentimentalize the communal feeling among the masses below, at the same time that he establishes such a feeling as a norm for the book. The protean stranger (appearing at first as a threatening house detective because he is in some way to find the party-goers out) is a parody of the central value in Party Going.

Mimicry or echoing is also a formal or literary quality of Concluding, as well as a quality of "life" which it represents or recreates. The constant mimicry in this book is one aspect of the multiplying resonances, the rhymings of compositional motifs that take place in the book. Not only is there constant mimicry in the book by the characters (Sebastian mimics particular people and types of roles constantly, the girls imitate Sebastian and Miss Marchbanks, and Rock mimics Miss Edge), but there are also false echoings of what has been

said or done which lead to all kinds of false rumors and red herrings. There is also a mysterious echo, the acoustics of which are under dispute in the book. This acoustical dispute makes the source of the cry "Mar-ee, Mar-ee" problematic. When Merode's aunt, echoing Miss Marchbanks (although neither she nor the two principals are aware of this fact), suggests sleepwalking as an explanation of the two girls' disappearance, "Miss Baker was so flabbergasted at this forgotten echo of the dawn that, without more ado, she took the woman up to Merode at once." (p.135) Again the source of this "echo" is not clear since the principals have not mentioned or heard the suggestion of sleepwalking before. The form of the book is that of series of ripples from a central disturbance which remains obscure although intimated.

b. Elements of Light and Color

In discussing the blindness motif, we touched briefly on light and color motifs, which are always conspicuous in Green's work. We can initiate our discussion of these motifs by recalling Shelley's ambivalent lines from Adonais:

Life, like a dome of many-colored glass,  
Stains the white radiance of Eternity,  
Until Death tramples it to fragments.

At the opening of Concluding, Mr. Rock is described as coming out of the fog, "His white head was gray, and white the reflected torch light on the thick spectacles he wore." (p.5)

The inversion of the second clause, with "white" shifted from  
 an epithet to an attribute,<sup>16</sup> foregrounds the word "white."

Mr. Rock's three animals are white, and Mr. Rock observes that Ted (the goose) and Daisy (the pig) might be mistaken for each other at a distance because of this common trait. A suggestion of Shelley's "white radiance" comes in when the sun makes the goose "a blaze of white." (p.72) During the last scenes of the book, Mr. Rock's thoughts are on death. As he descends the terraces from the mansion: "He cautiously lifted boots one after the other in an attempt to avoid cold lit veins of quartz in flagstones underfoot because they appeared to him like sunlight that catches in sharp glass beneath an incoming tide, where the ocean foams ringing an Atlantic." (p.245) This white light, which in Shelley's metaphor precedes and survives the refractions of life's prism, is the whiteness of death. (We shall note soon that whiteness also associates the animals metonymically with the girls.) In Concluding one has, consequently, a kind of white "meta-light," which is refracted by life into the chromatic. And as opposed to the radiance of eternity, motifs of sunlight, moonlight, and artificial light evoke varying forms of vital energy, or  
<sup>17</sup>  
 varying apprehensions of it.

As I have indicated in the discussion of blindness, sunlight is identified with vitality and growth (Mr. Rock's

old age is expressed by Mrs. Beame's ambiguous statement, "You're one who's never in the light..." (p.26) The sun generates and reveals primal energy: when Sebastian finds one of the missing girls, her knee is described as follows: "A knee which, brilliantly polished over bone beneath, shone in the sort of pool she had made for herself in the fallen world of birds, burned there like a piece of tusk burnished by shifting sands, or else a wheel revolving at such speed that it had no edges and was white, thus communicating life to ivory, a heart to the still, and the sensation of a crash to this girl who lay quiet, reposed." (p.56) The sunlight reveals in another passage the submarine life of the impulses:

... a redhead caught fire with sun like a flare and, out of the sun, eyes, opening to reflected light, like jewels enclosed by flesh coloured anemones beneath green clear water when these yawn after shrimps, disclosed great innocence in a scene on which no innocence had ever shone, where life and pursuit was fierce, as these girls came back to consciousness from the truce of a summer after luncheon before the business of the dance. (p.109)

At one point in the book, sunlight is specifically associated with sexuality: in a conversation which Mr. Rock cannot follow, Mrs. Baines and the girls associate sunlight with pregnancy. (pp.26-27) In so far as sunlight is associated with the erotic, it is associated with a healthy erotic.

Moonlight, on the other hand, is associated with the uncanny and the forbidden. The sexuality with which it is associated is a warped sexuality. In Caught Pye, who becomes a kind of "Pierrot lunaire" in the book, acts out his torment, concerning a false recollection of incest, compulsively in moonlight. In Concluding Mr. Rock and Elizabeth go to a "ball" at night, where all sorts of uncanny things happen. In the moonlight ("a huge female disc") Mr. Rock enters the shade of the "enormous, over-hanging portals" and is lost there "as if by magic." Elizabeth then sees his "dead hand come forth to stab the bell a second time." (p.190) This scene is a kind of descent into Hades and partial emergence. A kind of magical or fairy tale sequence of events follows: Mr. Rock's eyes are "lensed eyes" (he wears glasses, but the phrase suggests a snake); Liz gives a "gasp of disenchantment"; Mrs. Blain says of Mary that "she might've given her a ring (involving a pun on "ring" in this context); the staff do not hear the "cold hum of violins in sharp, moonstruck window glass"; as the staff hurry closer to the dance, "the whole edifice began to turn, even wooden pins which held the paneling noiselessly revolved to the greater, even greater sound"; Mr. Rock is led down into a strange, subterranean lair, where there are initiation rites, "ancient music," and a "rajah's treasure of Moira's eyes"; Mr. Rock emerges from his ordeal

telling his daughter that the girls are fiends; Mr. Rock enters Miss Edge's study, where she is smoking a "weed," holding it like a wand; Mr. Rock has to descend a cliff, moving backward (like a crab) in a metaphorical ocean; the mysterious cry of "Maree" occurs three times; the goose, Ted, flies for the first time and the other two animals come home, the pig, Daisy, with a satin slipper around her neck. These uncanny goings-on, this moonlit world are suggestive of the repressed and forbidden preconscious. When gods are banished, they go underground and become fairies. Green almost never engages in psychological analysis, in direct psychological probing; instead, by means of the repetitions and associations of compositional motifs, he suggests the preconscious life which underlies personality, as well as the warping of that life.

With regard to "stained" light or artificial light and with regard to colors, Caught provides more dramatic examples. In that book we are alerted very early to the evocative power of colors, and of filtered and reflected light: "It was disastrous that the woman who took the boy away should be his Fireman Instructor's sister. Hardly less fatal that the store had been lit by stained glass windows in front of arc lamps which cast the violent colours of that glass over the goods laid out on counters." (p.12) One understands immediately

why the first statement is true, but why are those violent colours so fatal? Green elaborates: "For both it was the deep color spilled over these objects that, by evoking memories they would not name, and which they could not place, held them, and then led both to a loch-deep unconsciousness of all else." (p.12) What is fatal about these colors is the circuit which they create between the personality and the preconscious. As I have pointed out, Green does not plumb the inner life, but he realizes surfaces which often suggest the common springs of personality.

Early in the book Richard Roe recalls the store in which his son Christopher was kidnapped. The store is lit by stained glass windows, which flood the store with color, and by neon light. The predominant color in the trading scenes which the windows depict is blue, which is associated with a kind of Aegean sea of the imagination. It is later a property of moonlight, which is often associated with fantasy. The colors violet and yellow are associated in an early episode with a kind of death wish. The store reminds Richard of the fire station, which in turn reminds him of an abbey which he visited as a child. He had been taken around a ledge just below the windows of the abbey and had experienced the "terror of the urge to leap." His back is to "deep violet and yellow Bible stories on the glass." (p.11) The colors reflected on the flagstones are the colors that it seems his blood has

turned. Later in the book Pye has a dream about the mental hospital where his sister is a patient, in which bars cast over him a "zebra light" and "dry, striped men with yellow surgeon's dress asked about his business." (p.85) Pink and red are the most disturbing colors in the book; they are associated with both war and sex. The reflected light on the sidewalks, which transforms London during the bombardment, is pink. Inside the store in which Christopher is kidnapped by Pye's frustrated sister, neon lights shed a pink glow that mixes with the other color tones. Woman's nails as well as toy fire-engines are red. Richard Roe meditates at one point that it would have been better to paint the real engines "pink, a boudoir shade, to match that half light which was to settle, night after night, around the larger conflagrations." (p.149) The reflection of lamps in an intimate nightclub is coral. Violet, as I have pointed out, is initially associated with the death impulse; it is later, as a mixture of red and blue, associated with various kinds of intimacy. A gentian bulb lights the basement in which the firemen race cockroaches. Richard Roe recalls this light when he is sitting in a similar light in a nightclub, listening to the "blues" (which are usually pictured as indigo rather than ordinary blue). (pp.111-112) Green is associated with initiation: the firemen are "green" at their first fire, and the heavens turn green for a moment

outside the perimeter of the glow shed by the fire. (pp.181-182) It is also associated with decadence: Prudence, the young woman whose favors Pye shares and pays for, is dressed in green, the color of a cod's head which a kitten swipes at in the gutter. (p.64)

I do not wish to distort the book by making the use of these colors over-schematic or by forgetting that they are objective, descriptive elements, but the peculiar "fatality" of the colors in the kidnapping episode and the insistent foregrounding of these colors during crucial scenes seem to give them a metaphorical function. However schematic or unschematic their use, colors (and especially light-dyes) establish circuits with the well-springs of feeling. Green's novels are sometimes like fictive spectroscopes that generate spectra in accordance with affective principles.

18

The rich chromaticism of Concluding, the prism of colors which Miss Edge admires through the frame of her window (p.15), is contrasted with the black and white perspective of the dado:

The panelling was remarkable in that it boasted a dado designed to continue the black and white tiled floor in perspective, as though to lower the ceiling. But Miss Edge had found marble tiles too cold to her toes, had had the stone covered in parquet blocks, on which were spread State imitation Chinese Kidderminster rugs. As a result, the receding vista of

white and black lozenges set from the rugs to four feet up the walls, in precise and radiating perspective, seemed altogether out of place next British dragons in green and yellow; while the gay panelling above, shallow carved, was genuine, the work of a master, giving Cupid over and over in a thousand poses, a shock, a sad surprise in such a room. (pp.11-12)

This description is a kind of abstract design of the entire book. As we have seen, Merode, who has been found in a dazzling "fallen world of birds," sickens on the black and white lozenges of the dado, an awareness of which accompanies Miss Marchbanks' interrogation of the girl. The effect of the switch from dazzling sunlight to the black and white dado is like that of a recent science-fiction film, in which a scientist develops and uses a chemical which gives him x-ray vision. That visual alteration turns the world into a waste land, a jumble of skeletons. The clearest contrast between the chromatic and the black and white pattern occurs at lunch, where Miss Winstanley (who is in love with Sebastian) suggests that the school get Chinese pheasants for the grounds. The red and gold plumage of these birds contrast with Miss Baker's recollection of a "black and white farm" where she was brought up. Later on Miss Edge, wondering what to do about a directive she has received to begin a pig farm, says of Miss Baker, "...her colleague would just remark...'how quaint, how black and white'." (p,125) It is interesting that Miss Edge, who is hated by the major characters in the book (much more than

Miss Baker), is yet better able to appreciate if not participate in the variegated richness of life than is the sentimental Miss Baker.

c. Flora and Fauna

Other compositional motifs that generate underplots in the book relate to flowers and animals. In Concluding these motifs tend to work in a more analogical fashion than do the motifs of light and color, though the analogies always remain more like the Miltonic simile than like the illustrative simile or metaphor. Flowers, for example, are associated on the one hand with the girls. The girls carry red and white flowers and gold azaleas. (p.58) The first colors have been associated with Merode, whose hair and pyjamas are red and whose face is white (her "red hair was streaked across a white face"--p.56); the gold of the azaleas has been associated both with Marion, whose hair is golden, and with Moira, whose legs have a gold haze. A mass of bloom is later described as being "almost the color of Merode's hair in her bath" (p.95), and Merode is described as a water lily. Once these associations are established, the poignancy of the girls' inevitable aging can be expressed at the dance by means of these blooms:

A white bunch of children, stood in the doorway, fell open to let him through like a huge dropped flower losing petals on a path. (p.230)

...and a second time that group of children opened, reclosed behind the couple trailing after, having parted as another vast bloom might that, torn by a wind in summer, lies collectedly dying on crushed fallen leaves, to be divided by one and then two walkers, only for a strain of wind to reassemble it, to be rolled back complete on the path once more, at the whim of autumnal airs again. (p.231)

On the other hand, flowers are also associated with intuitions of sexual disturbance. As Miss Baker and Miss Edge return to the estate, Miss Edge scans the "eunuch scentless flowers" lining the road for Merode and Mary. (p.75) Later Miss Edge, suspecting that the girls in the lunch hall are sharing a secret relating to the gathered masses of flowers, becomes "deathly hot" and concludes that a corpse is beneath the flowers. In small talk Miss Winstanley points out that azaleas can bring on hay fever, "'And pine branches asthma,' Edge said, rather wild, not yet herself quite." (p.104) In this context these disorders take on the aspect of psychosomatic manifestations of repression. Contrasted with the traditional azaleas and rhododendrons with which the school has always decorated itself on special occasions are the fir trees covered with salt which Miss Marchbanks prefers as decorations. Late in the book the moon is described as "now all powerful, it covered everything with salt, and dewigged

distant trees." (p.189) As we recall, that moon has also been described as a "huge female disc."

Animal imagery pervade the figures of speech in the book. In Mrs. Baine's kitchen feminine curiosity is described as like the "smell of a fox that has just slunk by, back of some bushes." (p.24) This motif (unlike Lawrence's fox) is associated with feminine vitality. At one point, after Miss Baker has heard the hidden, naked Elizabeth laugh at her, she is described as "a hen, watching behind for a fox." (p.154) Hens are unfortunate animals in Green's books: In Blindness "a hen was taken with asthma over her newly-laid." (p.98) Joan has a "crazy hen" in the disused conservatory, "She was crazy because she would cry aloud for hours on end and Joan never knew why, though perhaps it was for a chick that a fox had carried off once." (p.134) This conflict between hen and fox is clearly a suggestive one for Green and takes on significance from its context.

Mr. Rock's animals seem to express different modes of sexuality: his goose, Ted, becomes associated with a notion of sexual power. The enigmas of Concluding are summed up in the following riddle, which Miss Edge and Miss Baker try to unravel, "Who is there furnicates (sic) besides his goose?" (Actually, they are not even sure whether this is an accurate version of the riddle which they receive in the mail.) At

lunch Miss Edge complains about the danger which the goose represents, "A blow from one its great wings...one blow, in one of its savage tempers, and the miserable bird could smash a leg." (p.106) The lovesick Miss Winstanley tries to point out to Miss Edge that her description of Ted's power and potential destructiveness is more appropriate to swans than to geese. With regard to Miss Edge's assertion that the goose could "smash a leg," we recall the deceptive description of Merode when she is found: Her "red hair was streaked across a white face and matted by salt tears, who was in pyjamas and had one leg torn to the knee." (p.56) The coordinating "and" makes it appear as if Merode's leg, not her pyjama leg, is torn to the knee. As confirmation of this deceptive intention, we note that later, when Miss Edge tells Merode's aunt that Merode "has torn the leg," the aunt replies, "But you told me she was not hurt." (p.130) Ted is then connected with the compositional if not the actual fact of an injury that Merode has suffered the previous night. The latter has been found in a "fallen world of birds." (p.56) In this connection, we recall that the repressed Miss Marchbanks' ulcer is described as "a blood stained dove with tearing claws" (p.41) and that Miss Marchbanks wants the senior girls to report deviant behavior "before the bird is flown, so to speak." (p.50) Perhaps the climactic moment of the book is Ted's flight (the

goose has never flown before). This flight seems to be an explosion of all the tension that has accumulated throughout the book. Its timing seems to be appropriate in that the uncanny sequence of events which Ted's flight climaxes relates at least in part to repressed or underground sexuality. Ted's flight is then parodied by the flight of a white slipper that has been mysteriously tied around Daisy's neck; it also takes off at the end, "He hurled the show away. Once it was no longer in moonlight it disappeared, the thing might have flown." (p.254)

Like Ted, Daisy and Alice (Mr. Rock's pig and cat respectively) are associated with the erotic life of the book. That they are identified with each other by color and by analogy (at the end Daisy follows "like a cat" in fits and starts) means that they are a sort of paradigm of this life. In this respect note that a kind of declension takes place twice in the novel: Mr. Rock thinks, "Elizabeth, Eliza, Liz" (p.8), and the trio of names "Marion, Merode, Mary" occur later. At one point Miss Baker confuses Mary with Merode (p.131); at another point Miss Edge notes that the doll, which seemed to be a miniature of Mary, "could be Merode or even Marion (p.131); later still Elizabeth is mistaken for Mary. (p.190) The impersonal uniformity of institutional life (all of the girls' names begin with the letter "m") parallels and is antithetical to the pre-personal common springs of sexuality.

We have pointed out that Ted is associated with aggressive power. Daisy, although she too has traces of malevolence, is associated with an unselfconscious fleshiness. The "great pink mouth" is associated with the wet, pink mouths of the girls. (p.60 and p.122) The pig is also associated with Elizabeth, who has been experiencing the pleasing lethargy of sexual satisfaction with Sebastian. At one point "the group around Daisy ceased to exclaim the better to watch the woman old enough to be its mother"--Elizabeth. (p.59) At another point Miss Baker is afraid that the sergeant might be referring to Elizabeth when he says, "He's got his sow along after all." (p.151) Daisy's "golden fangs" remind us, however, of the fierce though innocent impulses that we glimpsed in the dissolving view of the girls that begins the middle section of the book. In this connection note Elizabeth's expression of "satisfied guile" as she plans her evening with Sebastian. (p.36) One of Mr. Rock's most pressing concern is to fight "swine fever," about which he talks to Sebastian, Moira, and Miss Edge. He wants to give a "brief weekly homily on the care of pigs" to the girls, after which, when they are older, one or more might be encouraged to have a go at this filthy swine fever." (p.174)

Alice is associated with the enigmatic aspects of the erotic. She is related to Mary's doll, and Miss Marchbanks,

in trying to find out what has happened to Mary and Merode, keeps referring to Alice as a kind of link in a mysterious chain. (p.66) In our first view of the cat, she keeps "herself dry where every blade of grass bore its dark, mist laden strings of water." (p.5)

In Party Going we noted that the fall of a bird disturbs us as we read the book, like the proverbial fallen sparrow. The movements of birds in that book, moreover, seem to signal some sort of psychic condensation or sublimation. The fall of the bird which opens Party Going is like the condensation of the fog; the flight of birds in that book is like the evaporation of the fog. We have noted that in Concluding birds function as expressions of libidinal energy. More generally, however, birds seem to signal an abundance of life. A cloud of starlings rising from the woods is concomitant with the girls' rising in their dormitories "with a sound of bees." (p.19) In a few other scenes the girls, expectant or animated, are compared to birds. Later in the book Mr. Rock witnesses the return home of swarms of starlings, swooping "through a thickening curve, in the enormous echo of blood, or of the sea." (p.177) Mr. Rock, whose thoughts are on death through the last part of the book, says of the experience, "I'm glad I had that once more." The movement of birds is also a signal for the movement of time and for a shift in awareness. Birds

rise at dawn, roost at noon, and settle at evening. The three sections of Concluding correspond to these movements (though the middle section takes place at tea-time rather than noon).

One sequence in the book is as follows:

A single pigeon, black in thickening sky, flex  
swift and on past the park.

It was dusk. (p.187)

That progression, foregrounded by the fact that each sentence is a paragraph, is a progression of mood as well as of time.

One of the recurring animal motifs in Green's books is the trapped or dead mouse (in Concluding Green varies the motif by giving us a bat). In Caught Richard Roe and his son come across a dead mouse in the summer house; in Back Charlie Summers says that when he was in the prison camp he kept a mouse in a cage that he had made; in Loving a mouse is trapped in the works of a weathervane; in Concluding, as Miss Edge opens her velvet curtains, a "horrid bat" flies into the room. The use of this motif is especially clear in Loving and Concluding: In Loving the weathervane is connected by an elaborate bit of machinery to a pointer that indicates different positions on a map of Ireland. This arrow is stuck, its tip pointing to Clancarty, which is indicated on the map by "two nude figures male and female recumbent in gold crowns," and whence Mrs. Jack has previously returned without her

panties. (p.45) Charlie Raunce later discovers that a mouse trapped in the works has jammed the arrow in this compromising position. Throughout the book nice are used as oblique references to the erotic. Mrs. Welch refers to Edith and Kate as "two legged nice" (p.52); as Edith and Kate are about to enter Paddy's room, Kate screams, "And what if there's a mouse?" (p.52); the aggressive little Albert tells the young girls of the house that he heard of a man who "bit the 'eads off of mice for a pint" (p.61); etc. In Concluding the bat intrudes into the room from curtains which are described as "red lilies over a deeper red." Miss Edge dives for a wicker basket which contains the pieces of an anonymous letter that she has received that morning, and when she rises and takes off the basket, a piece of paper with the word "fornicates" (sic) on it is caught in her hair. (p.12)

d. Other Motifs: 1. Mary's Doll

A story which Miss Baker narrates leads us metonymically from the color motif to another salient motif or underplot in the book: that of Mary's doll. The incident which Miss Baker narrates is as follows: "Yet, you know, where I was brought up in the country, on a black and white farm," she lied..."I was out to pick apples one day and the pigs were loose in the orchard. It was rather thundery weather, so I had my mackintosh, which I left below while I was up the ladder.

But I suppose I must have been preoccupied, because they ate it, every scrap." (p.152) This mackintosh figures in another incident: At lunch Miss Edge suspects that Mary's corpse is to be found under the flowers which have been collected for decoration. Later on she discovers a "rabbity Rag Doll dressed gaily in miniature Institute pyjamas, painted with a grotesque caricature of Mary's features on its own flat face, laid disgustingly on a bit of mackintosh, embowered by these blooms." (p.140) Still later Miss Edge accounts for her fainting at the sight of this doll by saying that she had thought that it was a dead rabbit and she has a "terror of rabbits dead." (p.141) These passages must remain somewhat enigmatic, though one can point out the suggestiveness of the collocation of details: A doll that is a miniature version of Mary is discovered after flowers have been carried away (some notion of "deflowering" is suggested perhaps, with one possible result). It is discovered on a piece of mackintosh, which in Miss Baker's story is eaten by pigs (and is thus suggestive of the placenta). The doll is described as "rabbity," and Miss Edge says that she mistook it for a dead rabbit, of which she has a horror (abortion is suggested, and one remembers that the inversion "terror of rabbits dead" foregrounds both of the inverted words). One notes that later, when Mr. Rock and Elizabeth are arguing whether to inform the supervisors about

the missing girl, "Unseen, a rabbit, which had come out of its hole fifty feet away, stamped a hind leg back." (p.172) One also notes in this connection that the doll is associated with a cat named Alice. Miss Marchbanks has placed the doll on Merode's lap: "This small weight woke the girl who, when she first opened eyes, saw what she dizzily took to be Alice, exactly as Miss Marchbanks had offered the animal curled up at rest." (p.134) One recalls that Alice in Wonderland, which has elements suggestive of birth trauma, is a book about growing up. One then notes the description of Merode in a "fallen world of birds" and Moira's remark about Alice, "What mightn't Alice be able to tell?" (p.50) This reticulation of suggestions, displacements, and compressions accounts for the dream-like quality which Mark Schorer assigns to the book.

## 2. Drowning

With regard to the scene that we quoted in the section on light and color motifs, which describes Mr. Rock's descent into an ocean, there are various kinds of drowning in Concluding, as well as glimpses into the depths (again these glimpses in Green's novels are not analytically probing, they are not explorations of personality). Sebastian and Elizabeth drown in sunlight, in sensual fulfillment. Their love-making is rendered in grotesque marine imagery. (p.55) As Mr. Rock descends into the girls' underground lair, he puts "a foot

forward as though about to enter an ocean." (p.203) This drowning is latent in the previous one (describing Sebastian and Elizabeth), for it makes Mr. Rock aware of the fiendish aspect that repressed, forbidden sexuality can take on. As I pointed out above, when the gods are driven underground, they become fairies and are terrible. Mr. Rock emerges from this experience referring to the girls as "fiends." At the beginning of the section on light and color motifs, we quoted a passage which gives a kind of dissolving view of the girls under the aspect of sunlight, a view of the submarine life of the impulses. The run-on sentence, generated by strings of participles, prepositions, and subordinators, becomes somewhat bewildering to follow and makes the relation between the innocence and fierceness of these girls problematic. <sup>20</sup> This scene undergoes what Ricardou calls an éclatement: <sup>21</sup> elements of it recur separately in other scenes of the book. At the dance a girl chosen to dance "would give a little start, open those great eyes, much greater than jewels..." (p.198) As a number of girls solicit Mr. Rock for a dance, he "could feel their moist fingers' skin, the tropic, anemone suction of soft palms on rheumatic, chalky knuckles." (p.233) Suspicions about Mary having actually drowned are resonant with the instances of compositional drowning that I have cited: "Who could say what might be in that water." (p.52) Finally,

the drowning of Mr. Rock as he descends the terraces of the school on his way home is related to death. Later in his voyage home Mr. Rock, who is afraid of the dark, anticipates his walk through the beeches: "Then he recollected the black tide that was almost upon them. Indeed, raising eyes from a treacherous path, he saw the beeches like frozen milk, and grozen swimming-bath blue water, already motionless in a cascade, soundless from a height, not sixty yards in front.

(p.249) The pun on "beech" that the drowning image generates connects this passage with the scene of Sebastian's and Elizabeth's lovemaking among a fallen beech. As in Lawrence, death and abundant life are alternative expressions of the erotic in this book.

#### Summary

Green's use of compositional motifs, then, creates a dissolving view of the events in the story, in which human actions and values give way to their pre-verbal, sensory equivalents. The careful use of these motifs provides a means of "sensory imprinting" for the effective themes of the book. In another sense, the relation between the bound and compositional motifs can be expressed by two lines from the last verse of Wallace Stevens' "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird":

It was snowing  
And it was going to snow.

In that poem anticipation of an event is the event. Perception

or awareness never really begins and never really ends. In Party Going the characters are "party going" only in an anticipative sense ("it was going to snow"); the "party going" in a progressive present sense ("it was is snowing") is outside of the chronological span of the book. In Caught Pye has a dream about the mental institution to which his sister is confined and then pays an actual visit which has the same disturbing associations as his dream (such as an equivalence between the mental hospital and the fire brigade). Green's compositional motifs make us aware of the fact that though we may think that it is snowing (that the significant event is taking place before us), it is only about to snow (the event dissolves into a multitude of affective and conative possibilities). These compositional motifs keep replenishing our sense of the possible, of the latent, much in the way that Valéry prescribed. One of the best examples of how this dissolving view operates over the course of a whole work is C.K. Chesterton's The Man Who Was Thursday, where the ostensible plot dissolves very gradually as we go along into the real plot of the book.

In his discussion of Tom Jones, Ian Watt comes to the following conclusion with regard to character and plot:

Tom Jones, then, would seem to exemplify a principle of considerable significance for the novel form in general: namely, that the importance of the plot is in inverse proportion to that of character. This

principle has an interesting corollary: the organization of the narrative into an extended and complex formal structure will tend to turn the protagonists into its passive agents, but it will offer compensatingly greater opportunities for the introduction of a variety of minor characters, whose treatment will not be hampered in the same way by the roles which they are allotted by the complications of the narrative design.<sup>22</sup>

I should like to propose a comparable hypothesis: that the significance and power of free or compositional motifs vary in inverse proportion to the significance and power of bound motifs. The complaints that are usually expressed about Thomas Hardy concern the power and obtrusiveness of his bound motifs: the reappearances of the firmity woman and Newson in The Mayor of Casterbridge; the overheard conversations in the same novel; the chance meetings and failures to meet in Tess of the D'Urbervilles (the former include Tess' chance meeting with Alec after the latter has become a preacher; the latter include Tess' failure to find Angel's parents at home and Angel's failure to find Tess' note); and the role of Little Father Time in Jude the Obscure. Hardy has frequently been praised for his free or compositional motifs: the Roman ruins in The Mayor of Casterbridge; Flintcome Ash, with its arctic birds and demonic thresher, in Tess of the D'Urbervilles; and Jude's catching cold the day he finally arrives at Christminster in Jude the Obscure. One notes, on the other hand, that writers like Dashell Hammett and Laclos have been praised by the French structuralists for the intricacy of their bound

motifs. A corollary of the above hypothesis is that the novelist whose work is characterized by many and/or powerful bound motifs is strongly deterministic in world view, whereas the novelist whose work is characterized by many and/or significant free or compositional motifs is strongly synchronistic in world view. The difference is this: the determinist is attentive to the cause and effect relationships of events that take place serially. The "synchronist" (if you will pardon the malapropism) is attentive to meaningful relationships between events occurring at a given moment in time. Two examples of such a world view are: 1) the view of Occasionalists that events in the outer (or objective) and inner (or subjective) worlds are parallel (this parallelism being guaranteed by God); and 2) the view that is implicit in the Chinese Book of Changes that all events taking place at a given moment are meaningfully related to one another (without positing God as a guarantor). Hardy is a determinist with a strong sense, however, of the synchronistic relations of man and nature; Green is a "synchronist" who is not particularly impressed with the human legislation of events and who has no compelling notion of fate. In discussing the lyrical novel, moreover, Ralph Friedman makes the following point about the lyrical novelist's relation to time: "Facts and relations, rendered formless by the deceptive time sequences

of the external world, are brought together in the artist's apprehension, in his 'rhythmical' or 'formal' recreation of life in abstract or 'symbolic' forms." <sup>24</sup> Compositional motifs, then, are contemporaneous in a poetic sense--in terms of an availability which is not earned by a narrative sequence.

### III. Enjambment

In the novel there is an equivalent to the enjambment in verse: a kind of enjambment that violates the integrity of the paragraph rather than that of the line. In Party Going this enjambment is used to generate an extremely rapid montage that creates a metaphorical equivalence between neighboring elements. Frequently, the hinge for this montage is the pseudo-organizational "and": "Already both had been made to regret they had left such and such a dress behind and it was because he felt it impossible to leave things as they were with Angela...that Robin came back to apologize." (p.20) This sentence moves from an account of Claire and Evelyn discussing their clothes to a completely disconnected (in a metonymic sense) account of Robin returning to find Angela. The "and" acts as an equal sign which equates two species of fatuousness. If we compare the sequence of paragraphs to the sequence of lines in a verse, the clause following "and" is <sup>25</sup> a kind of contrerejet. It violates the homogeneity of the paragraph and belongs metonymically with the following

paragraph. The écart or deviation involved in this displacement must be resolved metaphorically.

Robbe-Grillet, for instance, is rather expert at using the contrerejet in The Voyeur:

Mathias had no time to wait for what was going to happen next--supposing that anything was going to happen next. He was not even certain the moans came from this house; he had guessed they came from a source still closer, less muffled than they would have been by a closed window. In thinking it over he wondered if he had heard only moans, inarticulate sounds; had there been identifiable words? In any case it was impossible for him to remember what they were. Judging from the quality of her voice--which was pleasant, and not at all sad--the victim must have been a very young woman, or a child. She was standing against one of the iron pillars that supported the deck above; her hands were clasped behind the small of her back, her legs braced and slightly spread, her head leaning against the column. Her huge eyes inordinately wide (whereas all the passengers were squinting because the sun had begun to break through), she continued to look straight ahead of her, with the same calmness with which she had just now looked into his own eyes.<sup>26</sup>

The "she" in this passage is what Jean Cohen, following Jespersen, calls a "shifter" word, a word whose meaning varies with the situation. <sup>27</sup> The underlined "she" refers anaphorically to a girl who was being menaced in a scene which Mathias viewed on his way to the boat; the "she" refers cataphorically to a girl on the boat who is looking at Mathias. The menace connected with the first girl is transferred to the second girl vis-à-vis Mathias, and that menace is transferred still further as the book goes on. We are never quite

sure if any scene is "real" in the sense of being part of a nexus of events that we can call a "story," or whether it is a latent possibility in the situation, a menace projected by Mathias' pathological obsession. In other words, at each moment we have the option of taking a scene as an event or as a digression.

An example of rejet that occurs in Party Going reads as follows: "Alex came up and said what they saw now was like a view from the gibbet and she exclaimed against that. And Miss Fellowes wearily faced another tide of illness. Aching all over she watched helpless while that cloud rushed across..." In this example the first sentence of the paragraph belongs metonymically with the previous paragraph, which deals with the people present at Alex's remark. Instead it encroaches upon the following paragraph, which is entirely discontinuous with the situation in which the remark occurs. What this montage, pivoting on "and," accomplishes is to juxtapose Alex's intuition of death onto Miss Fellowes' experience of it.

An example of rejet that occurs in The Voyeur is: "There was something missing from the drawing, although it was difficult to tell exactly what. Mathias decided that something was either not correctly drawn--or else missing altogether. Instead of the pencil, his right hand was holding the wad of

cord he had just picked up from the deck. He looked at the  
 group of passengers in front of him..."<sup>28</sup> In this case the  
rejet connects the "something missing" from Mathias' drawing  
 with the cord that he has picked up from the deck and which is  
 connected with the menaced girl on ship. Like the menace  
 which I discussed above, this "something missing" pullulates  
 as the book goes on.

In Party Going other words besides "and" are pivots in  
 the rapid montage that takes place in the book:

And as she turned back Thomson went by with her  
 luggage, light from his taxi curving over her  
 head. She did not know, and he did not know she  
 was there, he was taken up in his mind with how  
 difficult it was going to be for him to find Miss  
 Henderson and how most likely he would miss his tea.

Meantime, as he was letting himself into his  
 flat, Max was wondering if he would go after all. (p.19)

The shifter "he" seems at first to refer to Thomson (there has  
 been a string of "he's" and "him's" referring to Thomson before  
 this occurrence of the shifter). It creates a metaphorical  
 equivalence between Max and Thomson, who are both in a quandary.  
 This conceit, however, points up the significant difference  
 between Max and Thomson: Max can do what he wants, whereas  
 Thomson is bound to a responsibility.

Another example is the following use of the shifter  
 "it": "There was that poor boy Cumberland, his uncle had  
 been one of her dancing partners, what had he died of so young?"

One did not seem to expect it when one was cooped up in London and then to fall like that dead at her feet." (pp.24-25) The "it" here conjoins young Cumberland's death and the fall of the bird. In this connection one notes that there is a "Robin" Adams in the book, that Julia objects to Angela's calling Embassy Richard "Embassy Dick like any bird" (Embassy Richard is a relative of young Cumberland), and that in response to Edward's injunction to "pick up some bird, alive or dead," Thomson says, "Not wrapped up in brown paper..." (p.159) The gratuitous death of the bird generates numerous echoes throughout the book.

Still another example hinges on the shifter "these":

Their porter then made difficulties and did not want to come with them; he would only offer to put her things in the cloakroom, so her young man, Robin, had to tip him in advance and so at last they too went in under into one of those tunnels.

Descending underground, down fifty steps, these two nannies saw beneath them a quarter-opened door... (p.9)

"These" seems at first to refer to Robin, Miss Crevy, and the porter but really modifies "two nannies." As we pointed out in the previous chapter, the ambiguous function of "these" is foregrounded by the fact that it appears in a position which would normally be occupied by "the." The blandness of Miss Crevy and Robin seems to be equated with the mortuary quality of the two nannies.

The wittiest example of this deception occurs in the following passage:

Also she felt encouraged and felt safe because they could not by any change get up from below; she had seen those doors bolted, and through being above them by reason of Max having bought their room and by having money, she saw in what lay below her an example of her own way of living because they were underneath and kept there.

"Aren't you glad you aren't down there?" she said, and he replied he wondered how it was going to be possible to get them out.

"Have you ever been in a great crowd?" she said, because she had this feeling she must exchange and share with him.

Down below Amabel broke into their silence by saying... (p.152)

The "down there" plants the deception that is to occur with the phrase "Down below": Max and Julia have been talking of the crowd outside the hotel ("down there"), whereas the "down below" refers to the sitting room that Max has hired. This deception evokes an image of the glamorous Amabel in the crowd outside.

The following sequence is an example of rapid montage without enjambment or a deceptive shifter word:

'Have you ever been to Barshottie?'

'No,' she said, 'why do you ask?'

Miss Fellowes was better. She was having a perfectly serene dream that she was riding home, on an evening after hunting, on an antelope between

rows of giant cabbages. Earth and sky were inverted, her ceiling was an indeterminate ridge and furrow barely lit by crescent moons in the azure sky she rode on. (p.104-105)

The effect of this passage is rather complex. The author's statement, "Miss Fellowes was better," seems to be a response to Angela's question as to why Alex wants to know whether she has been to Barshottie. Both the fact that Miss Fellowes is better and the imagery of her recuperative dream seem to have a metaphorical relationship to Barshottie, Scotland. They are both indeed versions of pastoral. The Barshottie, Scotland landscape occurs as the last of three pictures on the walls of the hotel rooms. These three pictures are what Ricardou, after Gide, calls "la mise en abyme."<sup>29</sup> "La mise en abyme" is the play within the play or the inclusion in heraldry of one blazon within another. The first picture, that of Nero fiddling with eight fat women near him, is a caricature of Max and his women. The second picture, that of a girl being menaced by a man while another disappears behind curtains, is a caricature of Amabel being left to Embassy Richard while Max goes off. The third picture is that of a serene landscape in Barshottie, Scotland--one of a few landscapes (including the inverted one of Miss Fellowes' dream) which occur as metaphorical possibilities in this fog-bound book. The effect of these evocations of landscape is like that of the montage in Ezra Pound's short poem, "In a Station of the Metro,"

The apparition of these faces in the crowd;  
Petals on a wet, black bough.

This stunning movement from inside to outside is a compositional motif in Party Going. The quiescent landscape of Miss Fellowes' dream (which needs no psychoanalytic elaboration) occurs after fits of delirium which seem to portend a stroke. Like other evocations of landscape in the book, it is part of a pastoral "counter-plot" that evokes certain possibilities in the story's situation. Appendix III gives a more detailed discussion of this "counter-plot" in Party Going.

The use of enjambment also serves as a preparation for Robert's non-sequitur and the coincidence that ensues. Robert has been sent to find Max; when he comes across Max in the bar, he denies that he has been sent to find him and says instead that he is looking for Miss Fellowes. No sooner does he realize that this remark is completely unmotivated (he is looking for Max), then he sees Miss Fellowes in the bar. As the book goes on, Robert tries at various times to make people realize how extraordinary this sequence of non-sequitur and coincidence is, but no one is very impressed. His wife says to him, "Why are you always like this? Yesterday I asked you to put more coal on the fire and you passed me the egg." (p.51) Robert keeps wondering whether there is "anything in" his having blurted out Miss Fellowes' name like that. In Appendix

III I connect Miss Fellowes with the notion of "fellow feeling" (which is moribund in the context of the book), and I interpret Robert's amazement as a response to the extraordinary availability of this notion among his sterile group of party-goers.

#### IV. The Chapter

Perhaps the chapter is more nearly comparable to the poetic line (or verse) than is the paragraph because it is a formal, graphic convention of the novel rather than a convention of formal discourse. The question is whether the chapter works against the diachronic push of the story in the same way that the line works against the horizontal push of the sentence. In Appendix II we note Ricardou's position that typographical blanks can, without indicating any temporal hiatus in the fiction (the story), create a regular periodicity in which two phenomena occur: 1) the temporary abatement of the story (effected by the rest at the end of each chapter) foregrounds the act of writing which is habitually masked by the anecdote; 2) the continuity of the writing is itself contested by the regular architecture which the chapters provide. One way to interpret Ricardou's statement that the fiction may be only a mediation of the conflict between the "writing" and the "architecture,"<sup>30</sup> is in terms of Jean Cohen's notion of metaphorical "replacement." Cohen's thesis

is that all of the écarts which he points to in his discussion of poetic language must be resolved metaphorically.

There is consequently a kind of metaphorical "replacement" of the syntactic "displacement" that is committed by various

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poetic devices. As the most conspicuous of the conflicts between the anecdote and the work which is done on the anecdote, the chapter can invite metaphorical or synchronic resolutions of chronological displacements. Under the notion of displacement, I also include the phenomenon of the availability of motifs which are not earned by the narrative sequence (for example, the repetition of the bird motif in Party Going).

The relation of one chapter to another varies along the vertical-horizontal, synchronic-diachronic axes. Moll Flanders, which is notably through-composed, which invites no regression of attention, has no chapters at all. The only kind of regression which Dickens' novels invite is a function of inadequate memory--that is, we look back to another chapter to recollect what happened or to reidentify some character. In Dickens the chapter is a function of serial publication. In Henry Green's novels, by contrast, we are invited to oscillate backward and forward between chapters in order to note compositional changes and similarities. This invitation is made chiefly by the compositional motifs that we have been dis-

cussing, but in a novel like Nothing it is also made by configurations of characters and events.

Except for the mystery or adventure tale, where the pause at the end of a chapter is used for suspense, for teasing the reader's interest in the story, the chapter disrupts our involvement in the story, "unmasks" the anecdote. The first effect of the chapter is to provide an efficient "breathing" unit for the writer. As Green points out, referring to the Victorian Novel:

The reason for great tracts of prose in narrative was that the cinema, which has taught the modern novelist to split his text up into small scenes, had not in the days when Proust was writing and before yet exerted its influence. Accordingly, the novelist in those days, who had twenty, thirty pages or more to cover in a chapter, needed bridges to carry him from one moment of action to another, and the only reasonable bridge was a spate of moralizing or philosophy.<sup>32</sup>

Green's notion of "cutting" in the novel has its ancestry in Wordsworth's notion of "spots of time," Poe's discussion of the attention span, and Joyce's notion of epiphany. It becomes in Green's case (if not in Wordsworth's) part of an anti-expository bias. The second effect of the chapter, as we have pointed out, is to provide synchronic interest in the design of the book rather than involvement in its anecdote. Perhaps the most demanding use of the chapter is made in Henry James' The Awkward Age, which is one of the most difficult novels in the English language.

In The Awkward Age the novel approaches the condition of a play, but because of the greater amount and complexity of material in this novel than a play would allow, it is obscure. Since, moreover, the world which this dramatic manner deals with is unfamiliar, the difficulty of understanding what is going on is increased. What James does, however, to alleviate somewhat the objectivity of his presentation, is to supply ten chapters, each of which is named after one of the characters. The chapters then provide nodes around which our baffled attention can gather, signals as to the way in which a given stretch of material is organized. For example, the first chapter, "Lady Julia," is named after a woman who never appears in the book and who is in fact dead. She is a specter that haunts all that comes afterwards, an incontrovertible standard of judgment. Despite Henry James' account of the donnée of this book (see his preface to The Awkward Age), we note that the real intrusion into the world of this novel is not that of Nanda (the young woman who is coming down stairs for the first time to join her mother's wordly circle) but that of Mr. Longdon (whose old fashioned standards challenge the standards of this world).

The architecture of Robbe-Grillet's The Voyeur is much different and reminds one of the effect of découpage and ellipsis in Wallace Stevens' "Metaphors of a Magnifico," which we have quoted in Chapter I. The ellipsis after "That

will not declare itself" in verse two and the découpage after "are" in verse three represent moments of decision, of contemplation regarding the possibility and implications of going on. The typographical blanks between the three sections of The Voyeur are signals for something unknown having taken its course. These hiatuses undermine the integrity of the story, call into question our assumptions about the sequence of events that we have witnessed, as do the literal repetitions of events that characterize the opening pages of the novel. The architecture of this book, in other words, undermines the security that narrative continuity gives us (the kind of security which we would have if "Metaphors of a Magnifico" were written out, without ellipsis or découpage, in a prose definition, however tautological or gratuitous) and compels us to recompose a number of possible stories as we go along. The conflict between narrative and architecture makes the fiction (or story) a drama of narrative decision, decision which ultimately devolves upon the reader (this is probably the more accurate interpretation of Ricardou's statement). Robbe-Grillet proclaims: "For, far from neglecting him, the author today proclaims his absolute need of the reader's cooperation, an active, conscious, creative assistance. What he asks of him is no longer to receive ready-made a world completed, full, closed upon itself, but on the

contrary to participate in a creation, to invent in his turn the work--and the world--and thus to learn to invent his own life."  
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In Henry Green's novels there are two basic kinds of synchronic relationships between chapters (they are not mutually exclusive): 1) relationships that are achieved by the rhyming of compositional motifs that we have discussed; and 2) relationships that are achieved by similar dispositions of more conspicuous elements of the novel. Concluding is divided into three distinct parts, between which a blank page indicates a lapse of time. Each of these parts is divided into chapters, between which a typographical blank does not necessarily indicate a lapse of time or a progression forward in time. Chapters I and II of Concluding over-lap in interesting ways (they take place at approximately the same time): Mr. Rock senses that above the fog, at some clear height, there is a flight of birds; in the second chapter Miss Edge sees a cloud of starlings rise from "her" woods and then hears the girls arising upstairs "with a sound of bees." In the first chapter, Mr. Rock predicts that it will be a fine day in the end; in the second chapter Miss Edge says grudgingly that the sun will shine (grudgingly because she and Miss Baker have to go to town). In the first chapter Mr. Rock and Mr. Adams discuss the possession of their cottages;

in the second chapter Miss Edge and Miss Baker discuss their desire for Mr. Rock's cottage. In the first chapter Mr. Rock and Mr. Adams "sluice through" the woods which are covered with fog; in the second chapter Miss Edge views the woods and the fog through which Mr. Rock and Mr. Adams are coming. In Chapter I Mr. Rock and Mr. Adams hear the echo of someone calling "Mar-ee"; they discuss the problems of locating the echo's source, and Mr. Adams is mysteriously "relieved to hear just a girl hollering." In Chapter II Miss Edge thinks that she hears someone call, and when Miss Baker says that she does not hear anything, Miss Edge says mysteriously, "I wonder." In Chapter I we have the declension "Elizabeth, Eliza, Liz"; in Chapter II we have the declension "Mary, Merode, Marion." These internal resonances create a reticulation of latent meanings and possibilities as the book goes on and pose subtle interior distances between us and the story. In the case of a mystery or adventure tale, we are not permitted any distance from the story, our closeness to which is increased rather than decreased by the use of chapters.

A much cruder interior distance between us and the story is created in Green's last two novels, Nothing and Doting, the choreography of which allows us no more involvement in the characters and their predicament than do the "turns" of a ballet. In an article on Mr. Green's late novels, A.

Kingsley Weatherhead states: "The scenes of Nothing arrange themselves into patterns after the manner in which rhyming lines form patterns in various stanza formations or couplets. For the purpose of illustrating this phenomenon, I have considered as matching any two scenes in which there is an identity or a maximum of similarity between lengths, characters involved, and the topics of dialogue. Mr. Weatherhead gets the following results: the first six scenes match as follows: AABCCA; the next four scenes are paired off into matching couplets. Mr. Weatherhead explains the incongruous third scene ("B") as follows: "Of the scenes between the second and the sixth, the third is incongruous and matches nothing: this is devoted to a dialogue between Philip and Mary, two whose deeds and words lack the selection and polish that society requires, who contribute nothing to society and hence nothing to the pattern and symmetry dear to it. In Part II, where the disposition of relationships is being disrupted and reorganized, there is no formal order among the scenes. In Part III order is again established, and Mr. Weatherhead's adumbration of the scenic alignments in this part resembles his adumbration of the first part. Employing John Crowe Ransom's distinction between "structure" and "texture," Mr. Weatherhead concludes:

Symmetry, and hence structure, is finally satisfied, but within it, the texture has exercised its rights. For the structure of Nothing, while it inevitably attenuates the liberty and autonomy of texture and tends to inhibit individuality and foster the stereotype, offers an essentially benevolent government. And texture can find its freedom, albeit a chartered one, in and according to structure. It does not have to run away and live it up in the woods.<sup>36</sup>

Although Mr. Weatherhead's description of the "rhyming" among chapters is very helpful, his evaluation of Nothing (and Doting) is inadequate. In these books Mr. Green's ambition is to produce the kind of novel which Henry James produced in The Awkward Age--a novel which approaches the condition of a play. The reason which Green gives, however, for not writing a play is not the same reason that The Awkward Age is perhaps the most unstageable of James' novels. It is not that Green's last two novels are too involute for production on the stage but that Green does not want to have actors and producers mediate between his work and the audience. The effect of Green's architecture in these books is not to provide nodes for our attention (we have no difficulty following what is going on in Green's last two novels, as contrasted with the difficulties of The Awkward Age but to mock the wills and actions of his characters. This irony is not the subtle irony directed against Mrs. Brook in The Awkward Age; it is farcical because Green is not able or willing to evoke the complex issues that surround the notion

of civilization, of manners, issues which James is able to evoke so cogently. One notes, incidentally, that Green violates his prescription for a novel of pure dialogue rather obtrusively in these two novels. In Doting there are continual stage directions (especially with regard to voice) which, because of their frequency and their lack of strategic importance, are more obtrusive than James' subtle stage directions in The Awkward Age. There are also in Doting two elaborate descriptions of a night club scene, at the beginning and at the end of the book, which, coupled with a seemingly gratuitous Saint Peter theme, are apparently supposed to give the book some realization which is not provided by the dialogue. In Nothing we have one very elaborate description, which is puzzlingly involute, and a few briefer descriptions. In his chapter on "Styles and Manners" Edward Stokes gives an admirable summary of the stylistic disharmony in these books:

Stylistically, Nothing reminds me of a pawpaw tree-- a leafless, spindly-limbed plant out of which sprout, incredibly, and with no apparent relationship to the slender branches which can barely support them, and from which it is inconceivable that they can draw their sustenance, a few monstrous, blobular fruit. That is what strikes one in reading Nothing-- the disproportion, the lack of connection and relationship, the effect of lush, artfully designed patches of purple (or rather of white, rose and blue) arbitrarily superimposed on the abstract, colourless background. And as the colours, which in earlier novels had strong emotional resonance, have here

become mere pictorial clichés, so the long sentences, which in earlier novels had flowered naturally and had almost invariably been of special thematic significance, have here become mere exercises in elaboration.<sup>39</sup>

In other words, texture does not really "exercise its rights" in these books, as Mr. Weatherhead claims.

In discussing la description créatrice, a mode of description which generates affective associations as it goes along without being controlled by a particular idea or emotion, Ricardou says of the eroticism generated by one novel: "Il faut donc souligner ici un phénomène essentiel. Entièrement produit ici par une écriture obéissant à des directives formelles, l'erotisme accroît peu à peu son densité. S'il franchit ce seuil et devient sens hypothétique, il cessera d'être une conséquence de la description et deviendra source d'inspiration." (The underlining is Ricardou's) There is a similar threshold in the use of chapters: if the repetitions between chapters become so obtrusive as to trivialize the act of narration, the novel becomes self-consciously minor. In Samuel Beckett's case a contestation of the story by the narrative is just barely maintained (the "barely" is constantly insisted upon by Beckett's narrators); the narrative seems to be always absorbing the story, which keeps reappearing. It is as if Beckett had reduced King Lear to

the storm and heath scenes, and his narrative rehearsed many of the salient responses of Western civilization to the funny and terrible images of those scenes. In Green's last two novels, the narrative in turn seems almost absorbed by the architecture, by the choreography of scenes. After Green's earlier novels (and especially after Loving) it appears as if Green opted at this time for A Comedy of Errors rather than for As You Like It or Twelfth Night.

In terms of seeing the chapter as a formal, graphic unit in the novel comparable to the line or the stanza in poetry, let us note that there are no trans-chapter enjambments in Green's novels.

#### V. Tense

A consideration of tense might have been included in our chapter on the norms of language, but the use of tense can be seen in clearer perspective in this chapter on deviation, which of necessity overlaps some of the material in that previous chapter. A discussion of tense involves a consideration of the shifting relationship between the axis of the narrative and the axis of the story, which Ricardou outlines. The narrative can make available to us at any time in our reading events which form an irreversible progression in the time of the story. The book by Green that has the clearest diachronic

commitments is his first book Blindness, the tripartite format of which signals a clear developmental curve ("Caterpillar," "Chrysalis," and "Butterfly"). Caught does not have the clear diachronic commitments that characterize Blindness.

The dissonance between narrative time and fictional time (the time of the story) is indicated by the following phrase from Caught: "...some months earlier, as will appear." (p.10)

This prolepsis, involving paradoxically an anticipation of the past rather than of the future, is equivalent to the spatial movements which words like "and" bring about in Party Going and provides an enrichment of moments which is normally unavailable to us in the flow of time. The interaction between present, past, and future moments are then more important in this novel than the movement from one point in time, from one situation, to a further point in time, and another situation. This kind of oscillating movement defamiliarizes our sense of the present by making available the future or by postponing the past. One recalls the Merlin of Edwin Arlington Robinson's poem of that name, who remembers forward.

Putting aside for a moment the "agrammatical" use of tense that we shall consider shortly, the question of defining tense in the arts is rather complex. In the novel, for example, the narrative past tense is a fictive present tense

in the sense that the narrated events occur as we read. They are not past events for the reader--they take place each time that he reads about them. The narrative past tense is past, however, in so far as the reader is aware of work having been done on those events. That is, in Ricardou's terms, whenever the reader is aware of an expansion or a contraction of the narrative in relation to the fiction, he is aware of the pastness of the narrative past tense. Moreover, the awareness that one can reread is an integral part of one's reading experience (this awareness is parodied by Robbe-Grillet in The Voyeur, where one has literal repetitions of events).<sup>41</sup> In the film there is no real present tense--the action of the film takes place in a kind of temps impar-fair which makes any kind of direct address to the audience a kind of jolt. The film incorporates in its mimesis the technical means of repetition and continuation. One can imagine a movie theater which is not doing very much business, where one night a film is shown over and over again without an audience being present. In the theater, on the other hand, one can have absolute presentness. This fact has led to the kinds of violations of the proscenium which have become clichés in contemporary theater.

The shift from the past tense in The Voyeur to the present tense in Jealousy indicates Robbe-Grillet's desire

to eliminate the illusion that there is a denotative level of reality which precedes the making of the book. In Jealousy we are attending the making of a book, according to certain internally consistent laws of association; we are not reading about events in a "real world" which the narrative is doing work on--in the sense of condensation or elaboration. The narrative in some sense becomes the fiction: "Thus the duration of the modern work is in no way a summary, a condensed version, of a more extended and more "real" duration which would be that of the anecdote, of the narrated story. There is, on the contrary, an absolute identity between the two durations." <sup>42</sup> Green's polemic against mimetic responsibility (or against verisimilitude), like that of most authors before Robbe-Grillet, is more subtle. There is no tendency in Green toward the kind of situation that we have in Beckett's The Unnamable, where the novel becomes a voice talking about the necessity to keep on talking. The disjunction between narrative and fiction in Green assumes an a priori reality which is not susceptible to Robbe-Grillet's peculiar neo-Berkleyan dismay. Mr. Entwhistle's dread of cats in Blindness reminds one of the description of the banana trees in Jealousy: "I do hate cats, they frighten me so. There is something so dreadful about a cat, the way she

seems to be looking at nothing. They don't see flesh and blood, they see an abstract of everything." (p.130) Mr. Entwhistle would think Robbe-Grillet something of a cat.

In addition to the privileged relation to time which the prolepsis in Caught indicated, there is in Green an agrammatical tense shift, which is spatial rather than temporal. The shift into the present tense moves one closer to the subject of the narrative--like the close-up in films:

The cock was angry and he watched his hens for a moment with a sense of humiliation, one claw stopped in mid-air...Everything was too soft--the sun, and the dew, and gentle weeds. He wanted heat, heat. Between intervals of killing things on himself he stretched out his neck and told this to the world, and that he was king of this castle.

Joan upstairs is putting on her stockings. What a lot of holes there are in them, but no matter, Sunday today. How will Father take the church bells? Last Sunday he had not minded very much. It is going to be beautifully hot, and Father will hate that too, poor old thing. George hated the heat, only she loved it. The wonderful sun! (pp.113-114)

Another example that shows the foreground-background shift that this kind of tense shift involves is as follows:

She moves to a looking-glass and wrestles with her hair. In the glass was the brown-papered wall behind, the paper hanging in strips, showing the yellow plaster beneath. Those holes in the roof. And there was the rash that broke out in the top right-hand corner of the glass where the paint had come off the back. She was so miserable. The only

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chair has no back, and the front leg is rickety, so that you have to lean over to the right when you sit down. (p.115)

A special instance of this movement is a shift into the present tense that is prelusive to direct discourse, which is absolute presentness:

She was wearing rough tweeds, and she was smelling of soap, because it was near tea time.

He turns his head on the pillow, the nurse rises, and Mrs. Hays walks firmly up the room.

"Well, how are you?" (p.44)

This shift in tense is agrammatical in the sense that it violates our normal grammatical expectation that a shift in tense indicates a shift in time. Green does not continue to use this device in later novels--perhaps because he felt that it was too crude a means of foregrounding and because it is too closely parodied by the kinds of errors in shifting tense that are made in grammar school compositions.

### Summary

This chapter was originally entitled "Agrammaticalness in the Novel" instead of "Deviation in the Novel." I felt that Jean Cohen's notion of "anti-grammatical" language ("anti-prose") or at least Chomsky's notion of "agrammaticalness" would have a good deal of cutting edge in examining Green's novels. The major difficulty with the concept of "agrammaticalness" is that one can not apply it to units

larger than the sentence without losing its preciseness. Following Jean Cohen, I was able in the chapter on the norms of language to discuss the agrammatical use of redundancy ("... she retrieved her dead pigeon done up in brown paper."), where redundant modifiers usurp the positions of restrictive modifiers. In trying to apply the concept of "agrammaticalness" to the use of enjambment in the novel, I found that I was beginning to blur the concept--applying it to the paragraph instead of the sentence. The concept becomes blurred still further in applying it to rhyming motifs and to the chapter. The only device which we have discussed in this chapter that I still feel merits the appellation "agrammatical" is the peculiar shift in tense that we noticed in Blindness, where we are forced to change the lexical category of words like "is" in order to accommodate their use as "distancers," as spatial words.

It is useful, however, to maintain a kind of affiliation between the notion of deviation in the novel and the notion of agrammaticalness. Both critics like Ian Watt and Georg Lukacs, who applaud the notion of "formal realism" and critics like Roland Barthes, Alain Robbe-Grillet, and Jean Ricardou, who decry the notion of "formal realism," take the position that the so-called "realistic" or "bourgeois" novel has been and still is the norm for prose fiction. When a novelist,

44

therefore, "lays bare" his devices, when he draws our attention to the disparities between the axis of the story and the axis of the narrative, when he makes available to us motifs which are not earned by the chronological sequence of the story, when his prose clearly departs from the norm of reportage, he is deviating from the general norm of "formal realism." To some extent, of course, all writers of any worth have made such departures, but there is really a qualitative difference between the self-reflexiveness of a novel like The Waves and the cyclic format of a novel like Esther Waters. The differences between the accumulation of material objects in Balzac and the enumeration of physical details in Robbe-Grillet have been discussed exhaustively by French critics. Like Chomsky's notion of "competence" in grammar, our sense of verisimilitude is violated by the deviations that I have discussed in the novel. Like Jean Cohen's notion of "replacement," where violations of prose sense are resolved by metaphorical meaning(s), the violations of "formal realism" that we have noted generate metaphorical relationships.

45

The essential difference, of course, is that our sense of verisimilitude is much less rigorous than our

46

linguistic competence.

In the next chapter I shall discuss the notion of surfaces and depths in fiction. As I pointed out in the introduction, this distinction is first of all similar to the notion of surface structure and deep structure in linguistics. The analysis of a passage of description or a bit of action may yield a multitude of potential statements. This distinction, then, is similar to Todorov's distinction between sens and interprétation, and to Ricardou's distinction between description créatrice and sens hypothétique. The discussions in the next chapter and in the final chapter, in view of the debacle of values which has been noted by such critics as Daiches, Auerbach, Barthes, and Robbe-Grillet, amount to an apology for surface.

## Footnotes

- 1  
Roman Jakobson and Morris Halle, Fundamentals of Language, 1956, pp. 77-78.
- 2  
Ralph Freedman, The Lyrical Novel, 1963.
- 3  
Paul Valéry, The Art of Poetry, 1961, p. 104.
- 4  
Jean Ricardou, "Plume et Camera," Problèmes Du Nouveau Roman, 1967, pp. 70-72.
- 5  
Boris Tomashevsky, "Thematics," Russian Formalist Criticism, ed. Lee T. Lemon and Marion J. Reis, 1965, p. 67.
- 6  
Tomashevsky, p. 68.
- 7  
Edward Stokes, The Novels of Henry Green, 1959, p. 172.
- 8  
Tomashevsky, p. 70.
- 9  
Tomashevsky, p. 70.
- 10  
See Geoffrey Hartman, "Milton's Counterplot," Milton: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Louis L. Martz, 1966, pp. 100-108.
- 11  
We shall note other kinds of loss or deficiency in the next chapter, which are signals for a problematic participation in one's environment. The protagonists of Caught and Back suffer an erotic loss which becomes an evocation of the generalized sense of loss that they feel as a result of the dislocations of war. The protagonist of Back, moreover, loses his leg during the war; the protagonist of Caught is hard of hearing. A number of Green's characters suffer from indigestion, one of his characters develops diabetes, and still another is gradually eroded by operations as the book goes on.
- 12  
Terry Southern, "The Art of Fiction XXII: Henry Green," Paris Review V, Summer 1958, p. 66.
- 13  
Henry Green, "The English Novel of the Future," Contact, I (August 1950) p. 25.

14

In terms of their status as analogues for human separateness, note the metaphorical equivalence of seeing and hearing in the following phrases from Concluding: there is a "megaphone of light" (p.21); there is a "blinding silence" (p.203); the sunlight "shone so loud" (p.21); and the fog bank makes "all daylight deaf beneath" (p.3). In relation to the last phrase, there is a lovely passage in the Inferno, Canto I, "And such as is he who gains willingly, and the time arrives which makes him lose, so that in all his thoughts he laments and is sad, such did the beast without peace make me, which coming on against me, was pushing me back, little by little, thither where the sun is silent." See Dante Allighieri, The Divine Comedy, trans. Charles Eliot Norton, 1941, p. 4.

15

The exceptions are Miss Baker's "sightless condition," which is a result of her sentimentality; Miss Marchbank's "blinding headache," which is a result of her repression; and Miss Edge's "culpable blindness," which is one way of viewing her repressiveness.

16

Cohen, p. 141. An epithet applies to only part of the extension of a noun and, if used grammatically, occurs in this form: the red balloon, where it limits the noun. An attribute applies to the entire extension of a noun and, if used grammatically, occurs in this form: the elephant is wrinkled, where it does not limit the noun.

17

In the above quotation, the "cold lit veins of quartz" and the "sunlight that catches in sharp glass beneath an incoming tide" seem otherworldly, dead. This passage differs sharply from the descriptions of brilliant, warm sunlight that pervade the book.

18

This characteristic links Green with Wallace Stevens, whose "harmonium" of colors humanizes the world which he perceives.

19

Mark Schorer, "The Real and Unreal Worlds of Henry Green," New York Times Book Review, December 31, 1950, p.5.

20

If one compares Yeats' "murderous innocence of the sea" (an image of history in "A Prayer for My Daughter") with his "ceremony of innocence" (an image of civilization in "The Second Coming"), one sees a similar play on the notion of innocence.

- 21  
Jean Ricardou, "L'Histoire Dans L'Histoire," Problèmes,  
p. 185.
- 22  
Ian Watt, The Rise of the Novel, 1965, p. 279.
- 23  
See Arnold Geulincx, Annota Ad Metaphysica, in J.P.N.  
Land, Arnoldi Geulincx Antverpiensis Opera Philosophica,  
1891-1893, II, p.296 and p. 307.
- 24  
Ralph Freedman, p. 191.
- 25  
With regard to Enjambment, rejet occurs when most of  
the sentence is in the first line and only a segment is  
carried over to the next line. That segment is the rejet.  
Contrerejet is when most of the sentence is in the second  
line and only a segment has occurred in the first line.  
That segment is the contrerejet. These are common terms  
in French metrics.
- 26  
Alain Robbe-Grillet, The Voyeur, 1958, p. 20.
- 27  
Jean Cohen, p. 157.
- 28  
Robbe-Grillet, The Voyeur, p. 14.
- 29  
Ricardou, "L'Histoire Dans L'Histoire," Problèmes,  
p. 173.
- 30  
Ricardou, "Temps De La Narration," Problèmes, p. 170.
- 31  
Jean Cohen, pp. 199-225.
- 32  
Green, "The English Novel of the Future," Contact, I,  
August 1950, p. 22.
- 33  
Alain Robbe-Grillet, "Time and Description," For a  
New Novel, 1965, p. 156.
- 34  
Kingsley Weatherhead, "Structure and Texture in Henry  
Green's Latest Novels," Accent, XIX, 2, Spring 1959,  
pp. 116-117.
- 35  
Weatherhead, p. 118.
- 36  
Weatherhead, pp. 118-120.

37

Green, "The English Novel of the Future," Contact, I, August 1950, p.22.

38

We shall further discuss this theme, and the use of allusive metaphors in general, in the next chapter.

39

Stokes, pp. 221-222.

40

Ricardou, "Description Créatrice," Problèmes, p. 108.

41

In the Phaedrus the written word is a lesser word because of its repeatability.

42

Robbe-Grillet, "Time and Description," For a New Novel, 1965, pp. 152-153.

43

Noam Chomsky, Syntactical Structures, 1957.

44

Victor Shklovsky, "Sterne's Tristram Shandy: Stylistic Commentary," Russian Formalist Criticism, p. 30.

45

Cohen, pp. 199-225.

46

In this respect note Ricardou's discussion of a tale by Borges, in which the "real" and the "virtual" (dreams, hallucinations, etc.) are equated by the homogeneity of the style. Ricardou summarizes the reader's acceptance of certain improbable events in fiction as follows, "...toute lecture d'une fiction se caractérise par une inattention et une crédulité fondamentales." (The underlinings are Ricardou's) "Realités Variables, Variantes Réelles," Problèmes, pp. 29-31.

CHAPTER V  
SURFACES AND DEPTHS

There is an interesting conflict between the views of Victor Shklovsky and Georg Lukacs regarding the conspicuousness of artistic means in the novel. Shklovsky says of Sterne (whose novel Tristram Shandy Shklovsky considers "the typical novel in world literature"): "Sterne even lays bare the technique of combining separate story lines to make up the novel. In general, he accentuates the very structure of the novel. By violating the form, he forces us to attend to it, and, for him, this awareness of the form through its violation constitutes the content of the novel."<sup>1</sup> He concludes the essay on Sterne by saying: "The forms of art are explainable by the laws of art; they are not justified by their realism. Slowing the action of a novel is not accomplished by introducing rivals, for example, but by simply transposing parts. In so doing the artist makes us aware of the aesthetic laws which underlie both the transposition and the slowing down of the action."<sup>2</sup> (The underlining is Shklovsky's) Lukacs, on the other hand, points to a gap between the novel and the lyrico-epic forms. He states: "Die formende, Gestalt und Grenze gebientende Tat des Subjekts, diese Souveränität im beherrschenden Schaffen des Gegenstandes ist die Lyrik der epischen

Formen ohne Totalitat.<sup>3</sup> In the novel, however, this lyrical self-assertion must be hidden behind the rigorous objective structure which the novelist builds up. The novel is characterized by its effort to seize the "non-significance" of life in its nakedness, without any "management" of that "non-significance"; the resulting form which this effort takes can then establish a bridge toward the absolute.<sup>4</sup> Lukacs' criticism of verse might just as well be applied to Shklovsky's critique of Tristram Shandy: in verse the techniques for achieving form, which are hidden in the novel, are revealed; and if prose cautiously closes the distance between the limited reality of the novel and the totality which is the novelist's goal, the rapid flights of verse manifest that distance "in all its nudity."<sup>5</sup> David Lodge indirectly discusses Lukacs' model of the novel when he says: "The circumstantial particularity of the novel is thus a kind of anti-convention. It attempts to disguise the fact that a novel is discontinuous with real life."<sup>6</sup>

From Lukacs' point of view, some of the traits of Green's writing that we have discussed, traits which project "the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection into the axis of combination," are lyrical short-circuitings of the novelist's quest for meaning. Green's books lack the elaborate and sustained metonymic achievements of Balzac and Tolstoy,

whose works become metaphors for entire civilizations. His books lack what Lukacs calls "philosophy," which is a symptom of and an attempt to bridge the gap between inner and outer, self and world, the empirical and the intelligible. At least his ambitions in this respect are limited, intermediate. If the question which the epic generates is "how can life become essential?"<sup>7</sup> (an answer to which Homer gave before the question was formed), the questions which are generated by Green's books are first of all less final and second less detailed in their process of formulation. Green's gerundive titles are disclaimers against the ambition for closure. Two of his nongerundive titles, Back and Caught, are adjectival. Only Green's first novel, Blindness, has a title which suggests well-roundedness. The lack of exposition which Green points to as characteristic of the novel of the future is accompanied in Green's best novels by a use of "poetic" devices which evoke traditional "humanistic" problems without documenting their context. One might, as I have said, extrapolate from Lukacs a wariness about Green's metaphoric short-circuiting of the cautious elaborations of prose and claim that the meanings arrived at by this method are unearned and idiosyncratic.

This quality of short-circuiting, of unearned meaning, seems to me to be more characteristic of allusive metaphors than of internal metaphors. By the former I mean metaphors

which compare one item (A) within the work to another item (B) outside the work. By the latter I mean metaphors which are generated by the repetition or "rhyming" of certain motifs within the work, by which those motifs accumulate certain tones and meanings. In the latter case these metaphors will be effective only if the contexts in which the motifs appear are well realized. If these contexts are not well realized, there are two possible results: 1) one may not be aware of the motif; or 2) its repetition will seem abstract, algebraic, like the insertion of an  $x$  in an equation instead of a concrete particular. The same provisions are true regarding the validity of allusive metaphors except that unearned allusive metaphors tend to be more seductive. The kind of metaphor that I have in mind is one in which B has a rich cultural context which gives a false sense of meaning and profundity to A. An example is Edward Albee's Zoo Story, which, like Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf, is not really about its putative theme. The play deals with a man named Jerry who, accosting another man named Peter on a park bench, proceeds to taunt and humiliate the latter until he drives Peter to kill him. The major portion of this one act play deals, however, with the horror of Jerry's life and specifically with sexual horror-- in the form of a libidinous landlady and her dog ("malevolence with an erection"). Albee was not content, however, with

writing a brief play about sexual horror but felt that he had to invest Jerry with social significance, a message-for-us-all. The facile way that he does this is to invest Jerry with a Christ parallel: Jerry impales himself on a knife, Peter cries "Oh my God," and Jerry says, "I came unto you... and you have comforted me." The stage direction "He laughs, so faintly," which occurs in place of the above ellipsis, is Albee's anticipation of the audience's ironic reaction to this pretentiousness. In other words, this motif is not realized in the play; it is only referred to.

Similarly, in Doting there is a Saint Peter motif which is apparently being used ironically but which seems rather ponderous in view of the delicate fabric of the book. It provides a facile and overly crude irony, as if Green is not certain whether we have really appreciated the absurdity of his "doting" characters. It also seems to extend the significance of this "doting" to an entire civilization--an extension which the substance of the book cannot really bear. Arthur Middleton dotes on a young woman named Annabel Paynton; in retaliation Arthur's wife, Diana, almost has an affair with their friend Charles Addinsell; when things get too warm, Arthur passes Ann on to Charles, who is also unsuccessful in seducing her; in attempting to break up Charles' relation with Ann, Diana introduces Charles to Ann's friend Claire Belaine,

whom Charles successfully seduces. Diana and Arthur have a son Peter, who is something of a prig. At the end of the book, all the characters come together in a nightclub for a going-back-to-school party for Peter. The book ends, "The next day they all went on very much the same." The book is for the most part self-consciously flat, as we can see if we examine the chapter endings (which, like poetic line ends, are salient places for "rhyming"). The second chapter of the book ends:

He snored.

"There, sleep my darling," she murmured.

The fifth chapter of the book ends:

"There, sleep my darling," she mumbled.

And in a moment or two he snored.

This formula, in its mindless connection of motifs (the reversal in sequence vitiates all but a temporal relationship), keeps our apprehension of the action on the surface. Similar chapter endings accomplish the same arresting of the attention at the surface. Chapter I ends with this sequence of dialogue:

"So what?" Miss Paynton demanded.

"Nothing" the boy replied.

"Steak's cold" Mr. Middleton grumbled.

"Darling, Peter was so hungry" his wife explained.

Chapter III, in which nothing of much consequence happens, ends with this sentence-paragraph: "Soon after this he paid the bill and they left without arranging to meet again." Most of the other chapters end with a similar flat sentence

(often consisting of compound sentence patterns or predicates)--either of action or of dialogue.

In the first and last chapters of the book, however, there are two elaborate descriptions of the nightclub in which the Middletons hold a party for Peter. Mr. Stokes has pointed out the stylistic disharmony which these descriptions create. In addition, a Saint Peter theme is worked on vis-à-vis Peter. During the book Peter is a fisherman, and Diane refers several times to the number of fish he has caught (he ends up with twelve). The night club where they gather for Peter's party is called Rome, where they are to watch some wrestlers as part of the stage show. At one point "a near miracle occurred," and they are served their meals. Peter keeps returning to his "goblet" throughout the meal. He at first wets himself with ice-water from the wine bottle but later avoids getting wet. Peter keeps saying "Oh God" through the scene, the last time when a conjuror comes on stage. This evocation of Roman decadence and of a priggish and ineffectual Simon Peter is rather a heavy joke which undermines the delicate farce of the book.

S.L. Goldberg, in his book on Ulysses, indicates the ways in which myths (or allusive metaphors in general) can be used. He points out that the Homeric parallel, unlike the Shakespeare or even the Christ parallel, is never realized drama-

tically in Ulysses. It extends the reference of the work  
 without deepening its meaning. Goldberg sums up his views  
 as follows: "The two sorts of universality, poetic and  
 referential, apparently coincide in the book, but really one  
 depends upon the other. The intellectual and imaginative  
 vision of life as eternal pattern depends on the imaginative  
 assent we give to Joyce's art, on the truth and power of  
 Bloom and Stephen as images of genuine human predicaments."  
 Neither Albee's "serious" use of allusive metaphor nor Green's  
 comical use of it are sufficiently earned.

Green's internal metaphors (or the rhyming of what I  
 have been calling compositional motifs) are not short-circuit-  
 ings of an expository process. Despite the fact that there  
 are few compositional motifs in Doting and Nothing, there is  
 also little exposition. If we recall Susan Sontag's view of  
 form as "a plan of sensory imprinting," we can see that inter-  
 nal metaphors are ways of imprinting certain kinds of aware-  
 ness on the reader's mind. The fall of the pigeon at the be-  
 ginning of Party Going poses the same kind of challenge to  
 our awareness as the movement which is described at the be-  
 ginning of Wallace Stevens' "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a  
 Blackbird":

Among twenty snowy mountains,  
 The only moving thing  
 Was the eye of the blackbird.

The fallen pigeon, as it recurs in various contexts, becomes a node around which accumulate many of our impressions concerning love, death, and fellow feeling in the book. This motif, like the color motifs in Caught, does not "stand" for an experience, like an algebraic sign; it is a signal that something familiar is taking its course, familiar because we have experienced the signal in various contexts. In each new context we then ask: what aspect of the situation is the signal calling our attention to?

In "A Novelist to his Readers" Green argues against the kinds of exposition, the kinds of explanation that characterize the great novels of Tolstoy, Balzac, and George Eliot. He states: "Do we know, in life, what other people are really like? I very much doubt it. We certainly do not know what other people are thinking and feeling. How then can the novelist be so sure?"<sup>10</sup> If, according to Lukacs, man and his environment have become problematic in the novel, Green's cautiousness is symptomatic of the fact that the "fall" from the innocence of the epic has not yet been completed. George Eliot's characters could not be known in the way Achilles or Odysseus were known, but they could be investigated. Green's characters are problematic in two senses: 1) we are not certain very often whether or not their substance is exhausted by their appearance; and 2) if there is some

residue which is not expressed by appearance, we can only approach that residue obliquely, through uneasy intuitions.

Let me give examples of these phenomena.

One of the motifs in Party Going is that of surfaces and depths. During Miss Fellowes' delirium she is threatened with drowning by increasingly tempestuous waters. Robin is described as "drowning in his depth" (p.37) as he struggles with his feelings for Angela Crevy. After discussing the value of fellow-feeling, Thomson is described as pitying himself and the girl Emily (who has given him a friendly and unexpected kiss) as they cling together "on dim whirling waters." (p.162) Amabel is pictured in the bathroom after having taken a bath; her image is clouded over by steam from the bath, and only gradually, as her body turns from pink to white, does more and more of herself begin to be reflected. (p.175) The images of surfaces and depths have to do with a question which is central to Green and to the novel in general: to what extent do appearances exhaust their substances? This question can be posed as a general philosophical question about the world or it can be restricted to our expectations concerning the significance of literary details. For example, in talking about Charles Dickens' grotesques, one can raise two questions: 1) Is it not possible that human personality is in fact exhaustible by a limited number of conspicuous traits and that our notion of psychological depth are only

ways which our more sophisticated intelligences (as compared with other animals) have devised to while away the time between repetitions of experience? 2) If, with the writers of the so-called nouveau roman, we say that the novel does not have mimetic responsibility, are not Dickens' grotesques as satisfying a mode of "characterization" as Dostoevsky's "deep" characters?

The depiction of Amabel's image being clouded over by steam and reappearing as her skin turns from pink to white refers us to the question of the exhaustiveness of appearance. Amabel seems to be exhausted by her appearance, and that appearance is summarized as follows by Evelynna: "If people vary at all then it can only be in the impressions they leave on others' minds, and if their turns of phrases are similar and if their rooms are done up by the same firm and, when they are women, if they go to the same shops, what is it makes them different, Evelynna asked herself and then gave the answer: money." (p.145) One notes, with regard to Amabel's inner life, that Amabel is capable of going to sleep immediately whenever she wants. Max is also exhausted by his appearance, an appearance which is not, moreover, completely reliable. All that we really know about Max is that he is rich, handsome, and idle, drinks a lot and sleeps with many women, and is not terribly careful about the way he spends

his money. Part of Max's attraction, moreover, is "in his having started so well with someone even richer than himself." (p.89) As it happens, however, he and the older woman with whom he is linked have never met.

After Julia has told Max about her charms and demands that Max tell her about his childhood toys, Max considers it an "unlucky business" and makes up a toy doll to meet her expectations. With regard to Max's inner life: "When he thought, he was only conscious of uneasy feelings and he only knew that he had been what he did not even call thinking when his feelings hurt him." ( p.107) These feelings, moreover, seem to pertain almost exclusively to sex.

Julia is exhausted by her charms: expressions of her childish egotism and talismans against brutal reality. Like Max she is not one for words i.e., for thought: "If she had no memory for words she could always tell what she had worn each time she met him. Turning over her clothes as they had been packed she was turning over days." (p.45) Angela Crevy, who is the least "respectable" member of the group, in terms of social acceptance, is almost always referred to as "Miss Crevy" by Green. She is described as follows: "She was very pretty and dressed well, her hands were ridiculously white and her face had an expression so bland, so magnificently untouched and calm she might never had been more than amused

and as though nothing had ever been more than tiresome." (pp.26-27) In the following and last sentence of the paragraph, her "young man" Robin Adams is described as follows, "His expression was of intolerance." The images used to describe them (lilies in a pond, etc.) are subverted by "if you will" and "if you like," as if such metaphors were really redundant or gratuitous. Robin's exhaustibility is subtly indicated later in the book, "Meanwhile Mr. Robin Adams, Miss Angela Crevy's young man..." (p.95) The redundancy of the full name (including the "Mr.") and of his identification vis-a-vis Angela seems to underline the exhaustiveness of this identification.

With regard to mimetic responsibility, it is clear that this problem of the exhaustibility of personality or the exhaustiveness of appearance is supposed to have mimetic significance. The authorial comments about the identical furnishings of Max's and Amabel's apartments generalize the phenomenon: "There were in London at this time more than one hundred rooms identical with these...If people then who see much of each other come to do their rooms up the same, all one can say is they are like household servants in a prince's service, all in his livery." (p.133) But this problem of depths and surfaces involves not only questions about a particular group of characters but also the problem of nar-

rative strategy in a general sense. By using free indirect speech Green combines both questions. Regarding Alex's reaction to Amabel's arrival, Green says: "In this way he showed how he had been taken in by Amabel, whose wish it was that she should not show haste. In this way also he showed again how impossible it is to tell what others are thinking or what, in ordinary life, brings people to do what they are doing." (p.149) It is then problematic how much of the superficiality (in a nonpejorative sense) of Green's books is accounted for by the apparent superficiality of some of his characters or by his reticence with regard to probing human personality.

One of the essays in Robbe-Grillet's For a New Novel is entitled "New Novel, New Man": Robbe-Grillet's account of the new novel is also an account of a cultural debacle--man can no longer believe in a nature controlled by and invested with value by man. The modern novel can assume no a priori significations: it is an exploration which creates its own significations as it proceeds. The only commitment of literature is to literature. Robbe-Grillet's novels are novels of surfaces. He calls these novels subjective because the point of view is limited by a single intelligence; it is not the pervasive point of view of God--the omniscient author. Although the novels consist of elaborate enumerations of

objective details, and although Robbe-Grillet repudiates our traditional humanistic designs on the world and insists that objects must be presented in their otherness, the consciousness that views these objects is described as follows: "Not only is it a man who, in my novels for instance, describes everything, but it is the least neutral, the least impartial of men: always engaged, on the contrary, in an emotional adventure of the most obsessive kind, to the point of often distorting his vision and of producing imaginings close to delirium." (The underlinings are Robbe-Grillet's) This kind of intelligence, like Benjy's in the first section of The Sound and the Fury, makes apparently for total presentness and surface. Such an intelligence is completely without self-reflexiveness and is fully defined by its impressions.

To put the problem another way, the flatness of Robbe-Grillet's books is not too far from the kind of flatness that would result from having Bleak House narrated by Mr. Krook. We might characterize The Trial as a kind of algebraic version of the social and psychic dislocations and the obsessive behavior that characterize Bleak House. Robbe-Grillet, assuming this obsessiveness as a literary convention, would then abdicate the humanistic questions that still pervade The Trial. If we can entertain for a moment the perverse idea in comparing Robbe-Grillet and Dickens, Robbe-Grillet's novels

are really closer to the early Dickens than they are to the late Dickens. The obsessive behavior in Dickens' early novels is gratuitous, like Robbe-Grillet's jealousy or sadism; the obsessive behavior in Bleak House, and to some extent in Great Expectations, is generated by heartless, vain, and corrupt social institutions.

If we return now to the problem of surfaces and depths in Party Going, we note that Green resembles Robbe-Grillet in that he is a creator of surfaces rather than a plumber of depths; he must also, like most modern novelists, create values as he goes along by means of internal metaphor. As David Daiches puts it, "The modern novelist is born when that publicly shared principle of selection and significance is no longer felt to exist, can no longer be depended on."<sup>12</sup> But one senses that depths are problematic in Green, as they are not in Robbe-Grillet; and despite the internal laws that we have discerned in Green's books (having to do with "rhyming" and other forms of deviation from "rapportage"), one seldom senses in Green's books that their momentum comes from the act of describing, as Ricardou discusses it in his chapter on description créatrice, "Ainsi un roman est-il pour nous moins l'écriture d'une aventure que l'aventure d'une écriture."<sup>13</sup>

(The underlining is Ricardou's) It is noteworthy that there are numerous authorial intrusions in Party Going ("I" instead

of "Eye"), which express a priori designs. At one point, for example, Green asks for his reader's indulgence with regard to his metaphorical descriptions: "If you will" and "if you like" preface these descriptions. (p.27) At another point he intrudes with an omniscient "as we shall see."

(p.134) The book by Green which comes closest to Ricardou's description créatrice is Back, in which the name "Rose" generates a kind of time-lapse photography of blooming and dying roses in the book. It is notable that the hero and central consciousness of the book is suffering from war trauma, which he is obsessively re-experiencing.

With regard to the problem of depths, one notes that Robin and Miss Fellowes are drowning in their depths, whereas Thomson and Emily, clinging together, are on "dim whirling waters." For Green that dimness is an a priori,  
 14  
 to be evoked but not to be probed. Green's usual tactic is to realize surfaces which suggest, without quite revealing, that dimness. In his book on Green, John Russel states parenthetically that "reflections and reverberations are Green's favorite devices for robbing space of  
 15  
 its limits." Just as linear description is the literary equivalent to (and defamiliarization of) visual perception, so the expansion and repetition of surfaces (with their accompanying pulsations of awareness) are Green's equiva-

lents to (and defamiliarization of) the discursive probing of depths. Let us compare two passages in order to clarify this statement. In Chapter XX of Middlemarch, George Eliot gives a marvellous exposition of Dorothy's situation in Rome with her new husband. Description and interpretation are subtly modulated into each other as this account proceeds:

To those who have looked at Rome with the quickening power of a knowledge which breathes a growing soul into all historic shapes, and traces out the suppressed transitions which unite all contrasts, Rome may still be the spiritual centre and interpreter of the world. But let them conceive one more historical contrast: the gigantic broken revelations of that Imperial and Papal city thrust abruptly on the notions of a girl who had been brought up in English and Swiss Puritanism, fed on meagre Protestant histories and on art chiefly of the hand-screen sort; a girl whose ardent nature turned all her small allowance of knowledge into principles, fusing her actions into their mould, and whose quick emotions gave the most abstract things the quality of a pleasure or a pain; a girl who had lately become a wife, and from the enthusiastic acceptance of untried duty found herself plunged in tumultuous preoccupation with her personal lot...<sup>16</sup>

Eliot gradually moves into the crisis in Dorothy's marriage, scrupulously examining the coordinates of Dorothy's feelings. This kind of penetration into one of his characters would seem indecent to Green, who creates surfaces that suggest but that do not "give way." In the following scene from Loving, the description suggests the qualities which are latent in the characters' situation, but these qualities are held in suspension, qualified as the book goes on, without ever yielding to discursive translation.

"No," she said muffled, "no," as O'Conor's life was opened, as Kate let the sun in and Edith bent to look.

What they saw was a saddleroom which dated back to the time when there had been guests out hunting from Kinalty. It was a place from which light was almost excluded now by cobwebs across its two windows and into which, with the door ajar, the shafted sun lay in a lengthened arch of blazing soversigns. Over a corn bin on which he had packed last autumn's ferns lay Paddy snoring between these windows, a web strung from one lock of hair back onto the sill above and which rose and fell as he breathed. Caught in the reflection of spring sunlight this cobweb looked to be made of gold as did those others which by working long minutes spiders had drawn from spar to spar of the fern bedding on which his head rested. It might have been almost that O'Conor's dreams were held by hairs of gold binding his head beneath a vaulted roof on which the floor of cobbles reflected an old king's molten treasure from the bog...

...Then they were arrested by movement in the sunset of that sidewall which reflected glare from the floor in its glass.

For most of one side of this room was taken up by a vast glass-fronted cupboard in which had once been kept the bits, the halters and bridles, and the martingales. At some time O'Conor had cut away wooden partitioning at the back to make a window into the next chamber, given over nowadays to his peacocks. This was where these birds sheltered in winter, nested in spring, and where they died of natural causes at the end. As though stuffed in a dusty case they showed themselves from time to time as one after another across the heavy days they came up to look at him. Now, through a veil of light reflected over this plate glass from beneath, Edith could dimly see, not hear, a number of peacocks driven into view by some disturbance on their side and hardly to be recognized in this sovereign light. For their eyes had changed to rubies, their plumage to orange as they bowed and scraped at each other against the equal danger. Then again they were gone with a beat of wings and in their room stood Charley Raunce, the skin of his pale face altered by refraction to red morocco leather.

The girls stood transfixed as if by arrows between the Irishman dead motionless asleep and the other intent and quiet behind a division. Then dropping everything they turned, they also fled. (pp.53-55)

I have quoted from this scene so extensively both because it is the richest scene in the book and because it is so unseamed in texture--even the brief ellipsis which I made seems rather a violation of its spell. Although the perceptions in this scene are mediated by words, there is a sense in which the scene does its work on the reader at a pre-verbal or pre-cognitive level. Like the phenomenon of subliminal advertising, which immediately loses its effectiveness once we are made aware of what is being done to us, the effectiveness of Green's surfaces depends on Green's ability to make us refrain from interpretation while the book goes on. If once we found the source of the echo in Concluding, the spell of the book would be lost.

We have discussed the use of internal metaphors in Green's novels to give us intuitions of depth. In his article "A Novelist to his Readers," Green describes a related method of achieving depth by means of surfaces: "Where and how he places his characters in fiction is for the writer the context of his story. The superimposing of one scene on another, or the telescoping of two scenes into one, are

methods which the novelist is bound to adopt in order to obtain substance and depth." <sup>18</sup> This too is a form of metaphor, as we indicated in discussing the rapid montage in Party Going. One example of this super-imposing of one scene on another in Party Going is the movement back and forth between the chauffeurs Thomson and Edwards "down below" in the crowd and Max and Julia in an upstairs room in the hotel. Thomson, consigned to Julia's luggage in the crowd of people waiting for the fog to lift, gets a friendly kiss ("... its's fellow feeling, that's what I like about it") from a strange girl. In the hotel Julia, who is childishly self-absorbed, says, "Poor Thomson...d'you think he's all right, and what about his tea?" She then immediately seeks some reassurance from Max regarding their trip. We then switch back to Thomson, who is defending the girl's action against Edward's priggish objections and is extolling the virtues of fellow-feeling. (pp.160-162) The good natured generosity of that kiss contrasts with the sexual sparring that goes on among the party-goers. The fellow-feeling that Thomson talks about contrasts with the mutual exploitation that occurs among the party-goers. One is reminded by Green's statement about depth of the special glasses that were used years ago in the movies to resolve superimposed images into three dimensions.

A variation of this use of montages is the use of cross-purpose dialogue. In Loving Miss Burch and Mrs. Welch talk at cross purposes to one another as do Miss Burch and Nanny Swift. In one scene as Miss Burch tries to interest Mrs. Welch in the erotic "goings on" between Raunce and her girls, Mrs. Welch keeps talking about her "little terror," Albert, who has just killed a peacock. The phrase "there you are" is a frequent gambit in Green for avoiding discourse or for shifting the grounds of conversation. With regard to the "mad Irishman" Paddy's possible wrath about Albert's act, Mrs. Welch says:

"As to that I've only to pluck it," Mrs. Welch said, "and 'e won't never distinguish the bird from a chicken they're that ignorant the savages. Mrs. Tennant can't miss just the one out of above two hundred. But I won't deny it give me a start."

"There you are," Miss Burch said, "but listen to this. I was upstairs in the Long Gallery this morning to get on with my work when I heard a screech, why I thought one of the girls had come by some terrible accident, or had their necks broke with one of the sashcords going which are a proper deathtrap along the Passage out of the Gallery. Well what d'you think? I'll give you three guesses."

"You heard me 'oller out very likely," Mrs. Welch replied, watching the door yet that Albert had shut behind him. (pp. 49-50)

In this scene Miss Burch's concern for Raunce's social and sexual aggressiveness (she is concerned with Raunce's having taken Mr. Eldon's place as butler as well as his having made

advances to her girls) is juxtaposed on Mrs. Welch's tacit admiration for her nephew's aggressiveness and her desire to protect him. In another scene Miss Burch's desire to air her grievances with regard to Raunce and Mrs. Jack (who has been "caught" in bed with Captain Davenport) is frustrated by Nanny Swift's desire to think the best of the situation and especially of her "little girl," Mrs. Jack. The nostalgia of the two women for past times results in a kind of syncope of thoughts and memories. (pp.127-136) In another scene Mrs. Tennant and Mrs. Jack talk at cross purposes-- Mrs. Tennant airing her grievances with regard to the servants and Mrs. Jack interpreting many of her remarks as characterizing her adultery. (pp.196-203)

Another variation of montage is the mise en abyme, which we discussed in Chapter IV in relation to Party Going. As we pointed out, the mise en abyme is a play within a play or the inclusion in heraldry of one blazon within another. As Ricardou points out, the story is often contested by the mise en abyme--as the action in The Fall of the House of Usher is contested by the story which the narrator reads to Usher or as Oedipus' actions are contested by the pronouncements of the oracle. <sup>19</sup> In Loving Nanny Swift tells the children a story about six little doves that are poor and hungry: "A wicked tempting bird" comes to the father to ask for the

hand of one of the doves..." While Nanny Swift tells them this story with shut eyes (just as she later shuts her eyes to the facts which Miss Burch is trying to tell her about Mrs. Jack), the children witness the "quarelling, murdering and making love again" of the doves on the dovecot. The aggressive little Albert, after sardonically describing these goings-on, threatens the girls that he is going to bite off the head of one of the doves, "In the pub down in the country. There was a man there bit the 'eads off of mice for a pint." (pp.55-61) Nanny Burch's story is an implicit injunction for the children to remain innocent of "quarreling, murdering and making love again" even as they are witnessing these life processes and even as the girls are coming under the sway of the tough, proletarian Albert.

The form itself of Loving, a fairy tale with a "once upon a day," a missing ring, and a "lived happily ever after," is itself a kind of adumbrated mise en abyme that contrasts with the exigencies of living and loving which become more apparent as the book goes on. None of the princes or knights in fairy tales have indigestion, which in Green's novels is a sign of a constitutional rejection of life. Dale, the frustrated suitor in Living, has severe indigestion; Charlie Summers in Back has a block in his stomach; Richard Abbot has choking fits in Nothing; Charlie Raunce suffers from

dyspepsia in Loving, which is exacerbated by his need for Edith and his venturing out of doors. Charlie's compositional "death" at the end of Loving is a fall into experience, like the compositional injury which Merode suffers in "the fallen world of birds" in Concluding. His murmured cry "Edie," made in the tone with which Mr. Eldon cried out "Ellen" on his death bed, is an anguished response to the plenitude of life which Edith offers him. At the end Raunce and Edith do not live "happily ever after" in a kingdom that has been purged of its dragons; they leave their castle (which, as Green tells us, is to be bombed anyway) to go to England, where there is a war going on.

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A similar conflict between an anecdotal flatness (which is best exemplified in the fairy tale) and the pulsing exigencies of life takes place at the end of Back: "So she had asked him to marry her, and had been accepted. She had made only one condition, which was that they should have a trial trip. So it was the same night, under Mr. Mandrew's roof, that he went to her room, for the first time in what was to be a happy married life." (p.246) This anecdotal, anticipative flatness is contested by the mature awareness of the last sentences, "And she knew what she had taken on. It was no more or less, really, than she had expected."

The most obvious mise en abyme is the story of Sophie Septimanie de Richelieu, which occurs in the middle of Back and which both parallels and contests the experience of Charlie Summers. An eighteenth century memoir narrates that Septimanie fell in love with a young nobleman but was forced by her father to marry a dull Count of better family. The young man was killed, but subsequently Septimanie met his half-brother, who was also his double. After Septimanie created some scandal at court by her feelings for the young man, he was done away with, and Septimanie pined away and died. In the main story Charlie Summers comes back from the war, having lost a leg and having been interned in a prisoner-of-war camp. He is obsessively concerned with the loss of his loved one, Rose, and meets Rose's half-sister, Nancy, who resembles her. At first believing that Nancy is Rose and that a deception is being practiced on him, he comes to accept Rose's death and marries Nancy. Edward Stokes says of the mise en abyme, "This parallel, like the legendary overtones, has the effect of universalizing the novel's central situation, of making it seem, not something merely 21  
bizarre and unlikely, but an archetype of human experience." In an article on Back, Stephen Shapiro qualifies this statement:

The odd thing about Stokes' comment is that he neglects to specify the content of this archetype. Surely Stokes is not claiming that all men and women fall in love with the doubles of dead lovers and then fail to distinguish between the living and the dead. Charley's situation is universal only on an unconscious level. The "dead" lover we all know is the repressed memory of our erotic connection to our parents. The pressure past events exert on consciousness results in a partial fusion of past and present in the person of the loved object. When Septimanie and Charley fuse the dead with the living they are symbolically enacting--in an 'abnormal' way--the 'normal', unconscious process of choosing to love someone who represents a compromise between present possibilities and infantile desires.<sup>22</sup> (The underlining is Shapiro's)

Both men fail to see the mise en abyme as a contestation of the main story as well as a parallel to it (if the archetypal dimensions of the main story are as clear as Mr. Shapiro thinks, why do we need a mise en abyme to repeat the archetypal pattern?). Mr. Shapiro makes the same mistake that Kingsley Weatherhead frequently makes in his book on Green (which we shall discuss shortly): in interpreting Back he is insufficiently attentive to its surface, and he tends to reify some of his own figures of speech. For example, Shapiro states, "Charley's return home is ultimately to signify his rebirth. And the connection of birth with war, anxiety, death, and sex is quite provocative." <sup>23</sup> Rebirth is only Mr. Shapiro's way of describing Charley's development in the novel, but he then reifies his own figure by including it in a complex of elements that really are in the novel

(war, death, anxiety, and sex). By this gambit he can now call our attention to a suggestive Freudian constellation. Mr. Shapiro criticizes Stokes and Russel for not getting at the "real" meaning of the title (which Mr. Shapiro takes as meaning "back" to the womb), but Mr. Shapiro conveniently ignores the surface reference of the title, which signifies "back" from the war. It is clear from Green's autobiography Pack My Bag and from John Russel's article on Green, "There It Is," that the war was a devastating experience for him. Russel states:

So anyone familiar with his work would expect that war and fire would leave their mark on him. He was then thirty-five; first with his hands and lungs, afterward with his imagination, he had to come to grips with the fact of the whole place burning. But five more novels followed Caught and the three stories, and one might have supposed that in his imagination the War had receded. Without knowing him or knowing of his nightmare dreams at night, one could hardly be expected to realize how massive and lasting the effect of the War has been on him.<sup>24</sup>

This fact will enable us to see how the mise en abyme functions in Back.

In Caught roses have erotic associations, as they do in Back. By the time we come to the following sentence, we have been conditioned to these erotic associations, "The air caught at his wind passage as though briars and their red roses were being dragged up from his lungs." (pp.178-179) In this passage there is a telescoping of the themes of sex and war,

a telescoping which has to do with the kinds of erotic longing which the stress of war evokes in the book. In fact war is equated with sex at one point. As Prudence compares Pye's longing for her to the pilot John's longing for his target, she thinks, "War is sex." (p.119) At another point Richard Roe reflects that it would have been better to paint the engines "pink, a boudoir shade, to match that half light which was to settle, night after night, around the larger conflagration." (p.149) With regard to this theme, Green makes an interesting observation in Pack My Bag, the autobiography which he writes under the exigencies of impending war:

Another story preyed on us then, and, as I have said before, one remembers only the horrible of times like those. It was the tale of Germans being so short of fats they boiled their own dead down with ours to make food. This lie which we took for truth gave me exactly those awed feelings I had when we talked of sex. Sex was a dread mystery. No story could be so dreadful, more full of agitated awe than sex. We felt there might almost be some connection between what the Germans were said to have done and this mysterious urgency we did not feel and which was worse than eating human fats; or so it seems now, looking back on what many call their happiest time. (p.47)

He also expresses his bewilderment, his sense of passivity with regard to the war:

One is always caught up, one inevitably has to take a hand but what I miss now is the reluctance I had then. It is not that one was ever afraid to die.

One may resent being killed, but most of us are quite ready. What is despairing in my case is that I should acquiesce, in the old days I should never have done so, and that is my farewell to youth in this absolute bewilderment of July 1939, that I should be so little unwilling to fight and yet likely enough to die by fighting for something which, as I am now, for the life of me I cannot understand. (pp. 235-236)

The equation "war is sex" translates as follows: neither Green nor the characters in Green's books have a sense of the totality of war (in terms of its social-historical dimensions). As Lukacs would express it, these novels have lyrical rather than epic ambitions. Green attempts to translate the stress of war into personal-lyrical terms. War is sex or war is the loss of a loved one in the sense that the characters' experience of war is relatively dissociated from its social-historical dimensions (as it is not in Stendhal, Tolstoy, or Sartre). Under the stress of war these characters are set adrift from their familiar modes of existence and are made to come to terms with their human separateness. Problems of sex, love, death, authority, and fellowship are defamiliarized by the disjunctions which war brings about. The experience of war is translated into these terms rather than into social-historical terms. In Caught Richard Roe says of Pye (who has committed suicide), "But it was sex finished him off, and sex arising out of his authority." (p.195)

The mutual contestation of the main story and the mise en abyme in Back is similar to the contestation of the

courtly love ethic in Chaucer's Troilus and Cressida by the realities of war and human nature. Unlike the loss of love in the eighteenth century memoir, Charlie's loss of love, and his obsessive reenactment of that loss, is part of an overall sense of loss and dislocation that Charlie is suffering "back" from the war. In Caught Richard Roe has lost his wife, and this loss is a kind of synecdoche for the generalized sense of loss that he feels. The "heraldic deer" (p.13) that he sees in the book are a synecdoche for the life "before the revolution." In Back Charlie Summers has gone through a literally unspeakable experience during the war and in a prison camp. In A Reading of Henry Green, A. Kingsley Weatherhead notes that in Loving, Nothing, and Concluding characters can deal publicly with private desires or anxieties by translating them into figurative terms that are decorous and manageable. In Nothing, for example, Jane Weatherby uses her daughter Penelope as a kind of metaphor for her own desires and fears. As soon as these are resolved in the book, Penelope is packed off to a board-

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ing school. A similar process is at work in Back: "'Oh Rose, Rose,' he cried out in himself, not noticing he did this without having real regret, 'Oh, why did you'? He began to cry, in his self pity seeing himself again with his hands,

like a monkey's, hung up on the barbed wire which had confined him within the camp." (p.210) As Mrs. Grant cries out at her husband's death bed, "Come back," Green says, "And the culmination of all this was about to remind Summers of something in France which he knew, as he valued his reason, that he must always shut out." (p.218) It is noticeable that the only occasion on which Charlie speaks directly of his experience in the prison camp, he says, "I had a mouse out there." (p.234) This remark is connected metonymically with his observation with Nancy of a cat and its kittens, and we recall that in Green's novels mice always have erotic associations. Mr. Mead, Charley's employer, sums up Charley's plight as follows, "It's sex is the whole trouble. There you are. Sex." (p.221) Green's point in all this seems to be that under stress certain areas of our experience (and especially sex) become kinds of neuralgic indices of that stress. The time-lapse effect of blooming and withering roses in Back, Charley's obsession with Rose, are Charley's way of reenacting and managing the trauma that he has suffered in war and his generalized sense of loss. In terms of narrative strategy, moreover, this process is Green's way of evoking the quality of Charley's experience without

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having to plumb it. Whatever the suggestive value of Mr. Shapiro's Freudian interpretation of Back in dealing with

certain details, Mr. Shapiro does a disservice to the surface of Green's book by not dealing with it in its own terms.

The mise en abyme in Back, like the play within the play in Hamlet, is a model for what the book is like in broad outline but what it is very unlike in realization.

In terms of the problem of surfaces and depths, A. Kingsley Weatherhead's book on Green is an example of the kind of interpretation against which Susan Sontag maintains her polemic. Mr. Weatherhead says of his purpose:

This study considers each of Green's novels and discovers some kind of order in the theme of self-creation. Characters emerge from childhood or other static situations, descend with whatever pains into the dark for the discovery of self, and break through alienation into community; or they partly proceed thus; or, faced with the opportunity, they altogether decline to. Then the order so discovered sometimes reveals in turn the significance of structures in the novels; and it offers a rationale for incident, imagery, and characters that are manifestly not of the "story" and do not contribute primarily to atmosphere.<sup>27</sup>

In discussing his procedures, he says: "Some of the literature of philosophy and psychology, notably Kierkegaard, Sartre, and Freud, is also cited. Such literature either treats in abstraction some of the problems that Green has materialized or describes processes that are analogous to

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his techniques." The difficulty is that despite Mr. Weatherhead's frequent perceptiveness, his apparatus often appropriates Green's novels instead of illuminating them; his scheme tends to become Procrustean. In discussing Party

Going, for example, Weatherhead says, "The sexual encounter is no mere animal comfort for the party as it is for Thomson, Julia's chauffeur, who seems to regard it as an alternative to tea. It is, or may be, a significant part of the process of self-creation." He then talks of the improper, narcissistic sexuality which is offered by Amabel as opposed to the proper sexuality (involving a mutual giving and taking) that is offered by Julia. <sup>29</sup> In this discussion Mr. Weatherhead is inattentive to the way in which the book actually works. In plumbing depths, he is inattentive to surfaces. We have pointed to the context of Thomson's sexual encounter and his response to it. In contrast to Thomson's notion of fellow-feeling, Julia says to Max about the crowd below, "After all...one must not hear too many cries for help in this world." (p.100) In contrast to Thomson's casual acceptance of a good-natured kiss, we have Green's ironically pedantic "explanation" of the motives behind Julia and Angela having kissed their "young men":

Now both Julia and Angela had kissed their young men when these had been cross, when Mr. Agams had made off down in the station and when Max had stopped chasing Julia to sit in his chair.

People, in their relations with one another, are continually doing similar things but never for similar reasons. (p.114)

Angela's kiss is a form of dismissal; Julia's kiss is meant

to "keep Max sweet" for the trip. Julia is no less self-absorbed than Amabel; her approach to men is simply different--child-woman instead of femme fatale. The passage which Mr. Weatherhead quotes to show the mutual giving and taking that characterizes Julia's sexuality, "And as she hoped this party would be, if she could get a hold of Max, it would be as though she could take him back into her life from where it had started and show it to him for them to share in a much more exciting thing of their own, artichokes, pigeons and all, she thought and laughed aloud," (p.255) is more expressive of childish regression than of mature sexuality. The sentence which precedes this passage is, "So like when you were small and they brought children over to play with you and you wanted to play on your own then someone, as they hardly ever did, came along and took them off so you could do what you wanted." The wilfullness of that sentence governs her designs on Max (whom she is going to "get a hold of").

Similarly, Mr. Weatherhead says that in Party Going Green chooses the metaphor of travelling to describe growth. As a matter of fact, "The journey to the South of France tends to lose its real nature in accommodating itself to  
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its archetypal function." First of all, it is important to note that the novel is not about a journey; it is about

waiting for a journey. The only journey that takes place in the book is that of Miss Fellowes, who, after her illness, "looked as if she had been travelling." (p.247) The journey is outside the framework of the book, and in terms of archetypes one might take the journey to the South of France as a metaphor for death just as well as (or even better than) a metaphor for growth. Julia has her daydreams of childhood, but she and the effete Alex are the two characters in the book (except for the delirious Miss Fellowes) who are most conscious of death in their situation. Alex thinks of himself as dead, a ghost driving through the streets (p.37); later he thinks about the different quality of dying depending on one's social class. (p.195) When Max lies about his whereabouts and says that he had to see his lawyer, Julia thinks that perhaps he had wanted to make out his will (p.59); she then sees the hall of the station as a huge doctor's waiting room, similar to what it would be like when "they were all dead and waiting at the gates." (p.59) One bit of montage in the book is the alternating descriptions of the claustrophobic Alex and Julia climbing the stairs of the hotel and of people carrying the ill Miss Fellowes up the stairs. The point is that travelling is not used archetypally in the book, or at least its context confounds any clear archetypal significance. Unlike Kim's journey in

Rudyard Kipling's book (where the journey does signify a process of growth and discovery) or the journey in Outward Bound (which univocally signifies death), the journey in Party Going is first of all only present in an anticipative sense; secondly, it is only one of a number of similar journeys that Max has sponsored; and thirdly, it comprises a number of elements. The fall of the pigeon at the beginning of the book is as much a journey as the flight of seagulls out to sea which Julia takes as a good omen. Even Julia's omen is ambiguous, however: "And now she remembered those two birds which had flown under the arch she had been on when she had started, and now she forgot they were seagulls and thought they had been doves and so was comforted." (p.161) This passage is very subtle: It is first noteworthy that Julia now remembers having seen only two birds, whereas she really saw three. (p.19) Second, the substitution of doves for gulls has to do with the connotations which the two kinds of birds have (doves--symbols of peace; gulls--scavengers). It is also one of a few such substitutions in Party Going. The bird that falls at the beginning of the book is a "pigeon," but it is later called a "swallow" by Miss Fellowes. The latter can refer, with qualifying words, to birds of other families resembling swallows: it can thus

refer to a variety of domestic pigeon [see the OED for this 1668 usage]. The word "dove" also formerly applied to all the species of pigeon native to or known in Britain but is now restricted to the turtle-dove and its congeners [see the OED]. Other birds which become part of this generic complex are seagulls and geese (through metonymy, not through taxonomy). At one point Evelyn wonders whether the bird in brown paper would have been less odd if it had been a goose or another bird. (p.212) The missing bird (as three seagulls [doves] become two) can only be the bird that tumbles to death at the beginning of the book. At another point in the book, Edwards says to Thomson, "Go on if you like and pick up some bird, alive or dead, Thomson, get yourself your cup o'tea if you feel like it." Thomson replies, "Not wrapped up in brown paper..." (p.158) As I pointed out in the section on enjambment, death in this book is associated with a lack of fellow feeling; and it is this tacit equation that vitiates Mr. Weatherhead's interpretation of Julia's role in the book.

Mr. Weatherhead's scheme also distorts the role of Miss Fellowes in the book:

The main business of the novel is the "departure" of young people for maturity. In a word, it concerns the death of youth, the abstract, which formerly had been presided over by the nannies and Miss Fellowes.

Miss Fellowes now sees fit to watch over the death of youth and to grant it a decent burial. Her care of the pigeon figures her last proper function as a guardian of youth. But if she had finally disposed of it her usefulness would be at an end. She would be case off, like nannies elsewhere in Green when their maturing proteges pass beyond their control. Naturally she seeks to protract her usefulness; hence she clings to the bird, clinging thereby to life itself.<sup>31</sup>

It is Mr. Weatherhead's search for a repressive parent figure in these books (which have to do with growth and self-discovery) that leads him to make this distortion. But it is clearly not life "done up in brown paper" that Miss Fellowes retrieves when she begins to feel better; it is death.

Moreover, as I have shown in discussing the use of birds in Party Going, the pigeon is not "only a local figure in a novel of which the large figurative structure now needs

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consideration." It is the single most powerful compositional motif in the book--the fall of the pigeon dominating the atmosphere of this book as the echo dominates the atmosphere of Concluding. Miss Fellowes, as her name indicates, is a touchstone for fellow feeling in the book, and the death of the pigeon signifies the death which the lack of or warping of that quality entails. The sexual associations of the pigeon motif are also part of a complex that includes fellow feeling, sex, and death. Thomson and Emily remain on the "dim, whirling waters," whereas Robin and Miss Fellowes are drowning. Most of the party-goers at one time or another

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abuse Miss Fellowes; Alex even asks at one point whether anyone really cares whether she dies or not. (pp.190-191)

In the section on enjambment we noted the use of nonsequitur and coincidence that the enjambments in Party Going prepared us for. For no apparent reason Robert blurts out the name of Miss Fellowes while he is supposedly looking for Max; moreover, no sooner does Robert mention Miss Fellowes than he sees her at the bar. Like the ancient mariner, Robert compulsively tells the story of this nonsequitur and coincidence to anyone who will listen, but without making much of an impression. Robert thinks that he has found "his ruined temple" (the goal of his childhood games) in Max but really finds it in Miss Fellowes, who is associated with some intuition of fellow feeling. It is that possibility, unlooked for in the moral economy of Robert's circle ("You could make Robert Hignam do some things, he would carry messages, but they knew he would never stay behind because his wife had to"--p.230), which is so uncanny to Robert.

In his commitment to an a priori psycho-philosophical scheme, Mr. Weatherhead commits similar distortions in his interpretation of other novels. Despite his frequent perceptiveness (especially in relation to Green's last novels), he is like Arnold Kettle in sometimes masking what a novel is like to read by the demands of a priori ideas.

## Footnotes

- 1  
Victor Shklovsky, "Sterne's Tristram Shandy: Stylistic Commentary," In Russian Formalist Criticism, ed. Leo T. Lemon and Marion J. Reis, 1965, pp. 30-31.
- 2  
Shklovsky, p. 57.
- 3  
Georg Lukacs, Die Theorie des Romans, 1963, p. 46.
- 4  
Lukacs, p. 47. One is reminded by this discussion of the bridge which Sin and Death build to connect Hell and Earth after Satan has realized his fallen condition and before he experiences it to the full. There is implicit in Die Theorie des Romans a notion of a "fall" from the world of epic to that of the novel, a "fall" which, as in Milton, entails the possibility of maturation.
- 5  
Lukacs, p. 47.
- 6  
David Lodge, Language of Fiction, 1966, p. 42.
- 7  
Lukacs, p. 24.
- 8  
S.I. Goldberg, The Classical Temper: A Study of James Joyce's ULYSSES, 1961, pp. 149-150.
- 9  
Goldberg, p. 196.
- 10  
Henry Green, "A Novelist to his Readers," Listener, XLIV, 1132, Nov. 9, 1950, p.506.
- 11  
Alain Robbe-Grillet, "New Novel, New Man," in For a New Novel, 1965, p. 138.
- 12  
David Daiches, The Novel and the Modern World, 1960, pp. 4-5.
- 13  
Jean Ricardou, "Description Creatrice," Problèmes Du Nouveau Roman, 1967, p. 111.
- 14  
The finest evocation of this theme of surfaces and depths in English or American fiction is in Moby Dick. Hart Crane's warning in "Voyage II" has its ancestry in Melville, "The bottom of the sea is cruel."

15

John Russel, Henry Green: Nine Novels and An Unpacked Bag, 1960, p. 132.

16

George Eliot, Middlemarch, 1956, p. 143.

17

Note that the exposition that I have discussed in Party Going, which has a higher proportion of such exposition than any other novel by Green, is minimal in ambitiousness.

18

Henry Green, "A Novelist to His Readers," Listener, March 15, 1951, p. 425.

19

Ricardou, "L'Histoire Dans L'Histoire," Problèmes Du Nouveau Roman, pp. 171 ff.

20

As we shall see in the last chapter, this pattern is similar to the pattern which Todorov sees as characteristic of the novel in general: an infraction of the interior reality of the novel by the exterior reality of the social context. See Tzvetan Todorov, "Les Catégories Du Récit Littéraire," Communications, VIII, 1966, p. 150.

21

Edward Stokes, The Novels of Henry Green, 1959, p. 119.

22

Stephen A. Shapiro, "Henry Green's Back: The Presence of the Past," Critique, VII, 1964, p. 94.

23

Shapiro, p. 89.

24

John Russel, "There It Is," Kenyon Review, XXVI, 1964, pp. 437-438.

25

A. Kingsley Weatherhead, A Reading of Henry Green, 1961, pp. 125-126.

26

For an alternative strategy in a comparable situation, see Andreyev's The Red Laugh. The difference between the two works is like the difference between Frost's "The Mountain" and Hart Crane's "Island Quarry": Frost's narrator circles around the mountain; Crane penetrates it.

27

Weatherhead, p. 3.

28

Weatherhead, p. 5.

29

Weatherhead, pp. 45-46.

30

Weatherhead, p. 51.

31

Weatherhead, p. 46.

32

Weatherhead, p. 47.

33

We are alerted early in the book to the possibility of word play with the characters' names. We note the redundancy of "Alex Alexander" and the assonance and echoing n's of "Evelyn Henderson." We then note that Robert, whose name means "bright fame," has his last name mispronounced twice in the book; that Alexander, whose name means "defender of men," has little interest in women; that "Amabel," which means "love beautiful," is the name of the femme fatale of the book; that "Angela Crevy" suggests a craving angel, which is either a devil or a prig (Angela leans more toward the latter); that Robin is like the pigeon in being discarded and reclaimed in the book; and that the name "Richard," which has glamorous associations (it means "rich and strong"), belongs to a character who resembles the effete and epicene Alex.

## CONCLUSION

TOWARD LOVING

In the preface I mentioned the fact that I began this study with the intention of using Green's novels as particularly manageable ways of dealing with certain formal problems in the novel. In the process I have attempted to locate Green in terms of his responsiveness to these formal problems: 1) the problems relating to the novel's ethical drive; 2) the problems relating to the novel's inter-systemic relations. At the same time, however, that I was using Green's novels to clarify these formal parameters, I found that I was using these parameters to come to terms with one of Green's novels--Loving. Without the preceding chapters I could never have worked through the ways in which a novel like Loving must be read. About this novel Edward Stokes writes: "In the first place, while I do not think that Green's vision has relaxed in Loving, this novel is not, it seems to me, his most important or most impressive novel. It is a masterpiece, but it is a minor masterpiece; it may be the most perfect, the most completely harmonious of Green's books, but it lacks the depth of psychological insight, the emotional resonance of Caught, Back, and Concluding."<sup>1</sup>

Stokes' gentle derogation of this novel has to do with Green's "comic" vision: "Although Loving is clearly a much more important novel than Nothing and Dotting, the fact that Green's vision in Loving, as in the other two novels, is essentially comic, suggests that, for Green at least, the conversational method is viable only for not necessarily trivial, but certainly for un-tragic material and experience." It seems to me that this critical vocabulary lacks any real cutting edge. Novels tend to resist the "tragic" classification, since they characteristically deal with the adventitious. That is, a genre that specializes in a documentation of circumstances is not easily assimilated to a mode which relentlessly carves out the essential. John O'Hara's Appointment in Sumatra, for example, is actually undercut by its "tragic" format, a format that inadvertently ridicules the circumstances of the protagonist's death. What we often refer to in the novel as "tragic" are the kinds of ultimate conflicts which Irving Howe examines in Politics and the Novel, conflicts which seem to magnify the importance of individual decision. Such conflicts are seen nowhere in Green's works, which have little if any social-historical ambition. Even in the two novels which reflect most clearly the impact of war, Caught and Back, neither the author nor the characters express any awareness of the social-historical

dimensions of the war. None of the characters makes decisions which reflect political or ideological pressure. Green's novels are "comic" in two senses: 1) none of his characters are more formidable than Green's readers; 2) his novels tend toward a reintegration of the individual into the society, rather than an isolation of the individual from the society. The protagonist of Caught, Richard Roe, overcomes his sense of dissociation through the common effort of fire-fighting. He arrives at an understanding of his own experiences during the war partly by means of his sympathetic understanding of Pye, who is ruined by the authority that war confers on him. The protagonist of Back, Charlie Summers, achieves at least a partial return "back" from the war. The anecdotal anticipation of a happy marriage at the end of the book is not unlike the "over in England they were married and lived happily ever after" that ends Loving. The reservations that we have about the situation at the end of Loving are also not unlike the reservations that we have at the end of Back. Although it is certainly true that the tone of Loving is rather different from the tone of Back and Caught, the difference is not that the latter two are more "serious" or more "profound" than Loving; it is that the tone of Loving is much more complex than Mr. Stokes takes account of. It is comparable to the nuances of tone

that characterize Twelfth Night and As You Like It, plays which, if they are less intense than Macbeth or Othello, are more various. It is noteworthy that one of the few conspicuous "false steps" that Green takes is in the direction of tragedy. The theme in Caught of Pye's incest, which is supposed to dramatize the loss of personal security which the war brings about, actually detracts from that theme, provides a "fingerhold" for the kind of interpretation that Susan Sontag talks about pejoratively.

The problem of valuation, especially as it relates to the notion of "depth," is very difficult. One gambit that is often used is to equate "depth" with inclusiveness. In that sense Thomas Mann, for example, would be a greater writer than Kafka. If with Susan Sontag, however, we take intensity as a standard of imaginative excellence, then Kafka is a greater writer than Mann. If we combine the two notions (in proportions that are difficult to specify), so that we are responding both to breadth of vision and intensity of realization, then the problem of valuation becomes more difficult if also more productive. We do not really know very much about the effects that novels have on our internal economy. Robbe-Grillet says of his own books, which are self-consciously impoverished culturally, "For, far from neglecting him, the author today proclaims his absolute need

of the reader's cooperation, an active, conscious, creative assistance. What he asks of him is no longer to receive ready-made a world completed, full, closed upon itself, but on the contrary to participate in a creation, to invent in his turn the work--and the world--and thus to learn to invent his own life." <sup>3</sup> (The underlining is Robbe-Grillet's)

It may be that The Magic Mountain, by virtue of the discursiveness which seems to give it so much scope, is actually limited by that discursiveness in terms of its transfer value; whereas The Trial, by its insistence on its own internal laws, has enormous transfer value. What I mean is that to some extent Mann's discursiveness exhausts the heuristic value of the experiences which he creates i.e., they have been annotated, so to speak; whereas the more seamless quality of Kafka's books makes them more effective heuristic wedges i.e., they seem to provoke inquiry everywhere without satisfying it. Presumably Robbe-Grillet is pointing to the heuristic value of his own works in this sense, but the primitive level of awareness in Robbe-Grillet's books triturates our world rather than recreates it. Kafka's works stimulate the allegorizing movement of the mind without ever yielding to it; they are perpetual models of inquiry. Robbe-Grillet's works stultify inquiry by their democratization of all experience, by dead level sequences (like his

inventory of banana trees in Jealousy) that have the same effect on the mind as the child's pastime of counting telephone poles on a trip.

It may be the very harmoniousness of Loving, its seamless quality, that deceives Mr. Stokes into underestimating its emotional carry-over. More than any other book by Green, Loving seduces the reader into suspending both interpretation and judgment until the book is finished. In terms of this stanza from Wallace Stevens' "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird,"

I do not know which to prefer,  
The beauty of inflections  
Or the beauty of innuendoes,  
The blackbird whistling  
Or just after,

Loving is characterized by the "just after," whereas Back and Caught have more of "the blackbird whistling." With regard to Green's dictum that "we seldom learn directly; except in disaster, life is oblique in its impact upon people," John Russel notes, "Blindness, Caught, and Back, different from the -ing novels, start from situations in which life's impact has been direct." <sup>4</sup> In re-reading Loving I was reminded of the statement a philosophy professor once made in class, "You read Hume one day, and one night months later you wake up screaming."

Stokes' classification of Loving with Nothing and Dotting as "conversational novels" is highly misleading even if it is statistically sound; for Green's narrative strategy in the novels up to Nothing and Dotting is more homogeneous than Stokes makes out. Despite the varying proportions of "scene," informal character portrayal,"etc. that Stokes notes in these novels, and despite the differences in style, Green's achievement is that of a "lyrical" method<sup>5</sup> which "imprints" some of the intuitions that we derive from the dialogue. Green's resourcefulness reaches its height in Loving: there are three virtuoso descriptive passages which telescope many of our intuitions about the life of the book. The most important of these passages is the extended description of Paddy's room (pp.53-55) that we have quoted in the last chapter; the others are the description of Kate and Edith dancing in the empty ballroom (p.65) and the description of Edith surrounded by birds at the end of the book. Besides these set descriptive pieces, there are other descriptive elements that "register" some of the intuitions that we derive from the story. Virginia Woolf wrote of Hardy and Meredith, "This would seem to prove that a profound poetic sense is a dangerous gift for a novelist, for in Hardy and Meredith poetry seems to mean something impersonal, generalized, hostile to the idiosyncrasy of character, so

that the two suffer if brought into touch." <sup>6</sup> In Loving Green attains his finest balance between the idiosyncrasy of character and the pre-personal qualities of experience--the dissolving view that we get in Concluding of the submarine life of the impulses, the "quarelling, murdering, and making love again" that we get in Loving. The former is achieved primarily by dialogue and story (though not exclusively); the latter is achieved primarily by description and by the disposition of certain actions.

The overall parabola of Loving is as follows: At the beginning of the book Mr. Eldon, the butler, is dying, attended by Miss Burch, the head housekeeper. As he lies dying, Mr. Eldon keeps repeating the name "Ellen." Since there is no blackout in Ireland, there are no blinds or curtains on the windows; yet he is almost completely isolated, "From time to time the other servants separately or in chorus gave expression to proper sentiments and then went on with what they had been doing." (p.3) The sentence "Came a man's laugh" seems to come from a great distance, the omission of the structure word "there" creating a sort of syntactic hiatus. It is Raunce's laugh that intrudes into this death'bed scene, as Raunce intrudes into other static scenes later on. During the enchanted scene in Paddy's room, Raunce suddenly intrudes, "The girls stood

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transfixed as if by arrows between the Irishman dead motionless asleep and the other intent and quiet behind a division. Then dropping everything they turned, they also fled." (p.55) He intrudes into the scene of Edith and Kate dancing together, "'The little bitches I'll show 'em,' he said and suddenly opened." (p.65) He intrudes into a scene in a fake Grecian temple, where Edith is playing blind man's bluff with the two girls and "Raunce's Albert," "...Raunce entered upon a scene which this noise and perhaps also his presence had instantly turned to more stone." (p.123) The effect of these intrusions is ambiguous: on the one hand his aggressiveness, his purposefulness contrasts with static, almost enchanted scenes. On the other hand his presence seems to have a petrifying effect in the last scene, and seems to dissipate the beauty of the other two. This ambiguity, among others, pervades the book and gives it its peculiar tone.

After Eldon's death Raunce successfully seeks Mr. Eldon's position in the household, an attempt which is opposed by Miss Burch (who was apparently in love with Mr. Eldon). She says at one point to Raunce, "...you'll never get a Mr. out of me not ever, even if there's a war on." (p.16) In this respect Raunce's situation reminds us of Pye's in Caught, whose undoing is brought about by a sudden assumption of authority during the war. Kate also refuses to call him "Mr. Raunce," and only agrees to do so after

Raunce has won Edith. When Miss Burch asks Raunce, "Would you be in a draught?" she is referring to what she considers Raunce's unmerited assumption of authority and responsibility. (p.13) At another point Raunce says to "his" Albert, referring to Mrs. Welch's investigation of some missing waterglass, "It won't wash your acting the innocent my lad. The moment she come in that door between the scullery and where we was sitting over our tea I could tell you felt the draught." (pp.61-62) The draft is treacherous for Raunce's swollen glands and dyspepsia, which are symptoms of his assumption of authority as well as his "loving."

Raunce is described as a "pale individual, paler now." In that respect he is like his pantry-boy Albert, who is always described as "looking sick." (p.3) When Miss Burch is being most acidulous to Raunce, "'And how many months would it be since you went out?' she asked like vinegar." (p.15) Recalling Mr. Eldon's window at the beginning, we note that Raunce refers to going outside as "wrong side of the window." (p.24) At the end of the book he is on "the wrong side of the window," preparing to leave for England. Before the overwhelming vision of Edith surrounded by birds, "'Edie,' he appealed soft, probably not daring to move or speak too sharp for fear he might disturb it all. Yet he used exactly that tone Mr. Eldon had employed at the last

when calling his Ellen. 'Edie' he moaned." Eldon, however, dies, whereas Raunce leaves for England with Edith, where they live "happily ever after." (p.248)

If what I have just described is the overall parabola of the story, its realization in terms of "insinuating" motifs is remarkably rich. In one respect the book deals with a dying feudal class, unable to maintain the social structure which gave it its viability. The one anticipative detail that Green makes available to us in the book is that the castle is eventually to be burned down. (p.65) This fact hangs over the book and lends a kind of funereal or nostalgic quality to the narrative. On the one hand the servants, in the midst of the dislocations caused by the war, are trying to maintain some morale. In two scenes the servants discuss the question of duty and morale. During one of them Edith asks Raunce, "'Well we're not crossin' over to the other side are we?' She looked sharp at him. He seemed dreamy." Raunce replies that they are not, "Not so long as we can find that ring...And keep the house from bein' burned down over our heads. Or Mrs. Jack from running off with the Captain so Mrs. Tennant goes over for good to England.'" (p.176) On the other hand Mrs. Tennant, who is described as looking like a parrot at one point (p.203), accounts for the generational differences as follows, "'I think everything's

partly to do with the servants,' Mrs. Tennant announced as if drawing a logical conclusion." (p.221) One notes that Mrs. Tennant's name suggests a lack of real proprietorship. "The castle itself is a kind of eighteenth century folly in Eire" (p.230), and the details of its decor are kinds of high tuba notes in the orchestration of the book. In the following description, Raunce is a kind of lower class knight traversing various landscapes to get back to his own "kingdom." Note that the "prize" that he brings back, "a withered trumpet," like the social order that he is trying to maintain, is dying:

In one of the malachite vases, filled with daffodils, which stood on tall pedestals of gold naked male children without wings, he had seen a withered trumpet. He cut off the head with a pair of nail clippers. He carried this head away in cupped hand from above thick pile carpet in black and white squares through onto linoleum which was bordered with a purple key pattern on white until, when he had shut that green door to open his kingdom, he punted the daffodil ahead like a ruggar ball. It fell limp on the oiled parquet a yard beyond his pointed shoes. (p.10)

The transformation of the withered trumpet into a ruggar ball is a kind of synechdochic class survey. One notes also that in Loving the waning of social power of this feudal class is accompanied by a waning of sexual power--the heir of the castle, Mr. Jack, is sexually effete.

The play between the social and erotic themes of the book is enormously subtle. As I pointed out in Chapter III, where I discussed Green's control over prose movement, Loving comes closest of Green's books to fulfilling Susan Sontag's ambition to thwart interpretation: "Ideally, it is possible to elude the interpreters in another way, by making works of art whose surface is so unified and clean, whose momentum is so rapid, whose address is so direct that the work can be... just what it is." <sup>7</sup> The form of Loving is indicated by one of the most brilliant scenes in the book. Raunce comes upon Kate and Edith dancing in an empty ballroom:

They were wheeling wheeling in each other's arms heedless at the far end where they had drawn up one of the white blinds. Above from a rather low ceiling five great chandeliers swept one after the other almost to the waxed parquet floor reflecting in their hundred thousand drops the single sparkle of distant day, again and again red velvet panelled walls, and two girls, minute in purple, dancing multiplied to eternity in these trembling pears of glass. (p.65)

In the book motifs are refracted into various possibilities latent in the book's situation. For example, the peacocks are one element in the decor of the castle: in this respect they are kinds of museum pieces, "As though stuffed in a dusty case they showed themselves from time to time as one after another across the heavy days they came up to look at him." (p.55) Their cries, however, provide a kind of trombone

underlining of the erotic in the book. As Kate and Edith discuss what they would do if they found Raunce or "Raunce's Albert" in their room, the peacocks below begin to parade. When Edith gives a screech at one of Kate's suggestions, "A peacock screamed beneath but they were so used to this they paid no notice." (p.40) A bit later, a "real outcry from the peacocks" signals the appearance of Mrs. Jack and Captain Davenport, who are having a passionate affair. (p.41) When Edith makes her first appearance in the book, she is wearing a peacock's feather in her hair and is carrying a "gauntlet" full of peacock's eggs, which she is going to use as an erotic charm. (p.5) Later in the book, at the beginning of Charley's courtship of Edith, Charlie bends down and picks up two peacock's feathers, which he offers to Edith:

"Whatever should I do with those?" she asked low.

"You wore one the week of the funeral," he replied.

"Not now," she said. They walked on with a space between. (p.94)

The shriek of the peacocks is associated with other shrieks in the book. When Raunce enters the sick-room at the beginning of the book, Albert "looked to listen as for a shriek." (p.4) Raunce is violating the pathetic intimacy between Miss Burch and Mr. Eldon. Later in the book, Raunce is standing in front of a map of Ireland. On the map is a

pointer which is operated by a weathervane. Raunce notices that the arrow is stuck in one position, "with the arrow tip exactly on Clancarty, Clancarty which was indicated by two nude figures male and female recumbent in gold crowns. For the artist had been told the place was a home of the old kings." (p.45) Mrs. Jack walks in and notices that the arrow is pointing to the place where she has been having an affair with Captain Davenport. In her agitation to remove the guilty sign, she breaks the pointer. Raunce asks Kate and Edith to show him where the works of the weathervane are, so that he can see what is wrong with the mechanism. Caught in the gear wheels of the mechanism is a live mouse. As Edith lets out a shriek and faints, the mouse responds in a "paper-thin scream." (p.48) As I have mentioned in my discussion of bound and compositional motifs, the mouse becomes one of the signals for the erotic in the book.

The peacocks are associated most closely with Paddy, the Irish lampman who takes care of them. Paddy is first of all mistrusted as an Irishman; in connection with the I.R.A. he might murder everyone in the house. His thick Irish brogue is unintelligible to everyone except Kate, who is his sweetheart. One of the most amusing parts of the book is when Mrs. Tennant expresses disbelief that Raunce cannot understand Paddy. When Mrs. Jack admits that she cannot understand

him either, Mrs. Tennant says, "But my dear it's not for us to understand O'Conor...We don't have to live with the servants. Not yet." (p.224) In view of her earlier statement that she feels that they are in "enemy country" in Ireland, this observation also has to do with the relations between the Anglo-Irish and the Irish. Her statement regarding the servants occurs after Paddy has locked up the peacocks and will not let them out. But as Kate tells Edith, "...Paddy's not what you suppose..." (p.211) In the virtuoso passage describing Paddy asleep in his room (quoted almost in full in the last chapter), Paddy is depicted first as an ancient Irish king preserved in cobwebs. When Edith wants to make a crown for him out of the ferns in the corner, Kate asks, "You aim to make him a bishop?" But if Paddy is one of Ireland's legendary kings (and potentially a bishop, as Irish history unfolds), he is a somewhat decayed one. His "fine set of teeth" (p.102) are rotten:

Romantic Ireland's dead and gone,  
It's with O'Leary in the grave.

Paddy is more, however. At the table, as the servants are discussing Mrs. Jack's sexual misadventure with Captain Davenport, "...a great braying laugh started out of the lampman. It swelled. It filled the room." This laughter is infectious, "These two girls did not giggle this time, they both deeply laughed." (p.87) Paddy appears as a kind of satyr in this

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scene. Later, as Kate is combing his hair, "Paddy's enormous head began to show signs of order with parts of the tangle, which might have been laid by hail, starting to stand once more wildly on its own on his black beanfield of hair after a ground frost." (p.96) Paddy appears here as a heathen god of the earth. In this respect, Paddy's connection with the peacocks has to do with the life of the impulses that Green evokes so well. But if his decayed teeth remind us of Raunce's constant injunction to "clean your teeth before ever you have anything to do with a woman," we can see that the effect of these motifs is ambiguous, as is Raunce's intrusion into Paddy's chamber, as is the ending of the book. When Edith asks Kate whether she is really considering taking Paddy as a husband, Kate replies, "There's nobody else. A girl gets lonely." (p.211)

Let us note, finally, that when "Mrs. Welch's Albert," who is a real proletarian tough, arrives at the castle, one of the first things that he does is to strangle one of the peacocks. He subsequently comes to dominate the young ladies of the house. Later, when Kate is contemplating smearing herself with the peacock's eggs as an erotic charm, she says to Edith, "But if 'e came upon it Edie 'e'd strangle me." Edith responds smiling, "Like little Albert did to one of his peacocks?" (p.213) These echoes and innuendoes provide

the shimmering texture of the book.

Another motif that is subtly refracted in Loving is the theme of Mrs. Tennant's ring. Mrs. Tennant mislays a ring. Shortly afterwards she leaves the castle to go to England, leaving the servants in charge. An "I.R.A." man comes down to investigate the loss of the ring (he is from the "Irish Regina Assurance") and as a result of his investigation refuses to recommend that his company pay for the loss. The loss of the ring and Michael Mathewson's investigation throw the house into a turmoil from which it does not recover. One significance of the ring is expressed by Charley, when, in response to Edith's question as to whether or not they are going over to England, he answers, "No...we're not. Not so long as we can find that ring..." (p.176) The ring, then, has something to do with Mrs. Tennant's authority and with the servants' sense of duty. After the loss of the ring, "Raunce's Albert," after a futile heroic gesture in taking the blame for its loss, goes off to join the air force, and Raunce and Edith eventually leave for England. Despite the fact that the ring is eventually returned, its loss remains a source of great concern to Mrs. Tennant, who feels that she cannot trust the servants anymore.

When the ring is lost, Miss Burch states, "We shall have to make them open up the drains for us that's all..."

(p.68) This motif is then reiterated throughout the book. When Mrs. Tennant returns from England, Mrs. Welch (who has been using the household's fear of the Irish as a way of masking the quantity of gin that she has been buying from the shopkeepers) tells Mrs. Tennant, "I happened to be stood by the larder windows when I 'ad a terrible stench of drains very sudden. Quite took my breath away. Just like those Irish I said to myself as I stood there, never to clean a thing out." The following exchange ensues:

"You don't imagine...?" Mrs. Tennant began to ask. She sat down on a kitchen chair.

"A terrible stench of drains," Mrs. Welch repeated. "And me that had thought we were goin' to have them all up while you was away with Mrs. Jack."

"The drains?" Mrs. Tennant echoed.

"That's what was said," Mrs. Welch insisted.

"Who said? I never gave orders." (p.191)

The ring, drains, and I.R.A. motifs are juxtaposed in one of Green's marvellous passages of syncopated conversation. The household is in an uproar over the loss of the ring and the appearance of the "I.R.A." man, Michael Mathewson. Raunce claims that the insurance investigator is really an I.R.A. agent and that if he (Raunce) had answered the door instead of Bert, he would never have let him in. Miss Burch then "surprisingly" breaks out, "'Then they'll needs must dig the drains up,' she cried in what seemed to be great agitation,

'I've said so all along now haven't I?'" As Raunce is reassuring her that there is no need for such extreme measures, Paddy (interpreted by Kate) states that Michael Mathewson could not have been an I.R.A. agent because they only use the back door. (p.170-171) The I.R.A. agent (like the dog Badger, which we shall discuss shortly) is a member of the underground. His "underground" activities are suggested by the shades of meaning which the ring takes on, as well as by other motifs which interweave with the ring motif. When Michael Mathewson visits the castle, he defines his job as follows, "I come down when they claim a loss." (p.157) One of the people who claims a loss in the book is Mrs. Welch, who has lost her waterglass, which Edith has taken. We note that Edith also finds Mrs. Tennant's ring, and that as much in the castle begins to fall apart Edith continues to blossom (not without some growing pains). Mrs. Welch deteriorates as the book goes on. After she interrogates her girls about their relations with the tradesmen, she cries out, "Oh my waterglass." (p.70) A little later, in complaining to Miss Burch about the loss of the waterglass, Miss Burch says that Mr. Eldon would have been able to recover it for her. Mrs. Welch replies, "Not what is short out of my jar he never could." (p.70) One of the other situations that has thrown the household into confusion is the affair between

Mrs. Jack and Captain Davenport. One recalls in connection with the underground that "Captain Davenport seeks after treasure in a bog." (p.32) Finally, the peacock that "Mrs. Welch's Albert" strangles is first buried by Mrs. Welch, recovered by the dog Badger, hung in Mrs. Welch's larder by Raunce, and then stuffed in "Raunce's Albert's" boiler by Mrs. Welch.

The other "underground" investigator is the dog Badger. At the end of the book, as Raunce and Edith are discussing their impending departure, "'Why look who's here,' she exclaimed. He opened his eyes and found Badger wagging his tail so hard that he was screwed right round into a crescent. The dog seemed deeply ashamed of something." (p.247) The dog has appeared to them before, bringing Raunce the carcass of the peacock. One of the nicest bits of metonymy in the book is the donkey that keeps following "Raunce's Albert" around. (p.151) A similar use of Badger reinforces the peculiarly ambiguous tone of the ending, a tone which is as mellow as the ending of Back. Raunce (whose name suggests "rancid") has been described throughout the book as having the same unhealthy pallor as his pantry-boy Albert. His dyspepsia is a sign of his constitutional rejection of "living" and "loving." In connection with the drainpipes motif, Raunce is described at one point as slipping "inside like an eel into its drainpipe." (p.11) He is described as

"gliding" (p.64) and like "a ghost without a head." (p.13) Like Nanny Swift, who, on her deathbed, is described in turn as gray and then blue about the lips (pp.129-134), Raunce's face is described as "very white and green and grey" (p.246), and is then described as "an ugly purple." (p.246) Charlie says at one point, "I shouldn't wonder if you made fun of this as you've done before but I love you so much my stomach's all upset an' there you are." (p.232) At the end of the book, when a combination of the deterioration of the household, Albert's decision to join the air force, and Raunce's mother's implied disapproval of his remaining out of the war prompt Raunce's decision to go to England, Edith says to him, "You're fed up, Charley, on account of your stomach." Charley replies, "It's too bloody neutral this country is." (p.237) Despite his inability to "digest" the life that is opening up to him, Raunce says, "Just lately I been wondering if my life weren't just starting." (p.118) The ending expresses both the plenitude of life that is becoming available to him and the constitutional inadequacies that he must overcome.

The peculiar tone of this book can be seen very clearly in one of its moments. Mrs. Welch participates in a number of the comic aspects of the book. As I have said, she tries to frighten her "girls" out of having anything to do with

the tradesmen because she is surreptitiously buying gin from them and charging it to the house. Her cross-purpose conversations with Miss Burch are very funny. But her deterioration is the most conspicuous sign of the deterioration of the house; her besotted denunciation of the household to Mrs. Tennant on the latter's return is the first direct challenge to Mrs. Tennant's authority and the first real betrayal among the servants. At one point, as she pours herself another measure of gin, she explains her behavior as follows, "'For why?' she asked herself aloud, 'because it ain't no use.'" (p.112) In Loving one sees very clearly the phenomenon that Todorov describes as a mutual infraction of the laws internal to the novel and the laws external to it.<sup>10</sup> Just as Raunce invades the scenes of almost enchanted beauty (and a motif of charms and spells pervades the book), the outside world begins to invade the world of the castle more and more as the book goes on. At the end of the book Raunce is on the "wrong side of the window," and we know, for Green has told us, that the castle is soon to be bombed. The ambiguity of the ending has to do in part with this invasion of the outside world. On Mr. Eldon's deathbed there is a mass of daffodils, the properties of which are in dispute between Raunce and Miss Burch (Raunce connects the daffodils with hay fever). The mass of daffodils gives a suffocating

effect to the room, and Raunce's gesture of kicking the daf-  
 fodil foreshadows his leaving the castle. <sup>11</sup> The ending of  
 the book, however, allows another interpretation. One might  
 see the ending of Loving as representing a kind of failure  
 rather than a success. The shame attributed to Badger would  
 then be an uncovering of the shame implicit in Raunce's  
 abandonment of the castle when the effort to keep things to-  
 gether becomes too strenuous. Shortly before Raunce decides  
 to leave the castle, he has lectured Kate and Edith on their  
 responsibility to their masters. At the end he chooses to  
 leave without giving any notice. <sup>12</sup>

Even the "loving" of the book has a deceptive surface.  
 In the previous chapter we discussed the mise en abyme in  
Loving--Nanny Swift's story by the dovecot, which contrasts  
 with the "quarrelling, murdering, and making love again"  
 that the children are watching. We also noted the fairy tale  
 format of the book as a kind of implied mise en abyme. Under-  
 neath much of the comedy of the book (which has to do with  
 the idiosyncrasy of character) there is a struggle which  
 comes under the heading of "quarrelling, murdering, and mak-  
 ing love again." As Nanny Swift's story begins, Raunce comes  
 out of an unused door in the castle wall. Later in Nanny's  
 story Edith and Kate come out. Like Raunce they signal the  
 children to be quiet, using a gesture which the children

imitate. When Kate and Edith ask the children where Raunce is, Nanny Swift comes to this part of the story, "And then they were in great peril every mortal one." (p.58) This peril is insinuated throughout the story, having to do with a complicated sexual competition that we sense in the book. As Raunce is approaching the ballroom where Edith and Kate are dancing, "'What are they up to now?' he asked half under his breath. 'What's Edith after?' he repeated. He was grave all of a sudden." (p.64) He is described as "like the most silent cat after two white mice." (p.65) He says to himself, "The little bitches I'll show 'em..." (p.65) When Charley leaves the ballroom, one has the following sequence: "Well would you believe that?" Edith murmured half giggling. But Kate was looking at her like she might have been a stranger and she stopped. "All right come on," Kate said vicious, "we're not goin' to stay here all night are we?" (p.67) When Edith says in the midst of this scene, "It's over now," there is the implication of something unstated, something which takes on the aspect of a spell. <sup>13</sup> One notes also that the detail of Kate's "gimlet" eyes occurs twice in connection with Edith's relationship with Raunce. The insinuation of this competition is very subtle, however, and its effect is distorted by its analysis.

As in Concluding the world of Loving is full of echoes (the refractions of the two girls in the ballroom scene are a kind of visual equivalent to the "Mar-ee" echo in Concluding). In one respect the echoings, the mimickings in the book foreground the idiosyncrasies of speech and manner that differentiate people most conspicuously. As Raunce begins to suffer under his feelings for Edith, his "surface manner" appears less and less often. Toward the end of the book, Raunce states, "The way things are shapin' it wouldn't come as a surprise if places such as this weren't doomed to a natural death so to say." Edith replies, "Go on with you... Why if Mrs. Tennant loses all her dough there'll always be those that took it. Don't you tell me there isn't good pickings to be had in service long after our children have said thank you madam for the first bawlin' out over nothing at all that they'll receive." Green then says, "She was beginning to speak like him." (p.237) The other echoings of the book are the "rhymings" of compositional motifs that I talked about in Chapter IV. Sometimes, as in Concluding, there are echoings of one character by another which seem to stretch verisimilitude a bit, as when Edith quotes Raunce's line, "'There's many a time I'd give her a long bong jour.'" (p.216) These echoings generate a kind of homogeneity between the "story" demands (having to do with verisimilitude,

chronological progression, etc.) and the prerogatives of the "lyrical novel." Needless to say, Green is in very careful control of them. This homogeneity is similar to the homogeneity between the "real" and the "virtual" that Ricardou talks about;<sup>14</sup> it is also similar to the homogeneity between narrative and dialogue which one discerns, except in the set descriptive pieces.

In terms of the shallower "depths of psychological insight" that Mr. Stokes discerns in Loving, it seems to me that what Mr. Stokes is responding to is the subtle interior distance which separates us from the characters (this distance does not become farcical, as in Doting and Nothing). Mr. Stokes notes in a chart tabulating Green's use of certain techniques that in Loving, Nothing, and Doting there is no "informal character revelation"--that is, no attempt to record the thoughts and impressions of characters as they occur. Among Green's other books, there are percentages of 17%, 21%, 15%, 16%, and 17% in the use of this technique.<sup>15</sup> In Loving, as a consequence, we are at a distance from the characters' interior life. As we have noted, that interior life is insinuated into our awareness by the reticulation of compositional motifs. The characters' "presence" (which I am using in the sense almost of "stage presence") is imprinted in our awareness by their characteristic speech patterns and by what Keats call "stationing." Keats says

about Milton, "He is not content with simple description, he must station--thus here we not only see how the Birds' with clang despised the ground,' but we see them 'under a cloud in prospect.' So we see Adam 'Fair indeed and tall--under a plantane<sup>1</sup>--and so we Satan 'disfigured--on the Assyrian

16

Mount.'" This kind of stationing in Loving brings Green's characters alive. The final description of Edith is a marvelous example of "stationing," and it includes elements that have acquired enormous suggestive power throughout the book (note that previously the doves and the peacocks have been associated through the detail of their "ruby eyes," one of Green's vivid color registrations):

Accordingly she picked up the bag of scraps. She began to feed the peacocks. They came forward until they had her surrounded. Then a company of doves flew down on the seat to be fed. They settled all over her. And their fluttering disturbed Raunce who reopened his eyes. What he saw then he watched so that it could be guessed that he was in pain with his great delight. For what with the peacocks bowing at her purple skirts, the white doves nodding on her shoulders round her brilliant cheeks and her great eyes that blinked tears of happiness, it made a picture. (p.248)

### Summary

I have tried in this chapter to make a case for my intuition that Loving is a major book and is the book that one must come to terms with in understanding Green. The social and psychological coordinates of Loving are even more carefully controlled than they are in Caught and Back. They simply operate more obliquely and are held in more careful

suspension within the work. As to the notion of "seriousness," it seems to me that Mr. Stokes has not been sufficiently attentive to the tone of Loving, which shifts subtly from Raunce's "You should clean your teeth before ever you have anything to do with a woman" to Mrs. Welch's "For why? Because it ain't no use." In a sense Loving is as much about war as is Caught or Back. None of these novels really treats the war in its social-historical dimensions, though Caught and Loving treat a morbund social class (the peacocks in Loving are, like the "heraldic deer" in Caught, an emblem of this class). As I pointed out in the last chapter, Green's ambitions are what Lukacs would call "lyric" rather than "epic." Psychologically, the situation in Loving is more complex than the situations in Back or Caught because the characters in Loving are withdrawn from the war though not from the general sense of dislocation that the war brings about. They do not face the persistent, univocal threat of bombing day after day and so they invent their own threats as outlets for their anxiety: "'We're livin' under a shadow these days,' Raunce announced, 'that's the way it is with all of us. There's matters you mightn't take account of in normal times get you down now.'" (p.172) They worry about being massacred by the I.R.A. They fret over the drains. Eldon dies at the beginning of the book and Miss Burch,

Nanny Swift, and Raunce become ill as things seem to be falling apart. The stress that they are under is translated into problems of sex, love, authority, and fellowship. Raunce's situation in Loving is not dissimilar from Pye's in Caught-- both have responsibility placed on them that they are not fully prepared for. The ending of the book might be interpreted either as an abnegation of responsibility or as an embracing of responsibility in a wider context (the world outside the castle).

As I pointed out in the introductory chapter, the modern novelist may not have the authority any longer to write an epic novel. A "technetronic" civilization has two obvious consequences for the traditional or "realistic" novel:

- 1) In this kind of civilization, the interest in the traditional novel in the social trajectory of the individual no longer seems terribly compelling; the individual seems less and less able to control his environment (though Man controls the environment more and more effectively):
- 2) The rapidity of technological and social change makes the writing of an epic novel rather unlikely. Moreover, much of the authority which the novelist has traditionally had for a documentation of experience has passed to the social scientist. A book like Loving, on the other hand, is a persistent heuristic wedge into experience. To evoke Susan Sontag's phrase again,

it is a form of "sensory imprinting" which invites the allegorizing movement of the mind without satisfying it. Its value is that of the greenest of thoughts in the greenest of shades.

## Footnotes

1

Edward Stokes, The Novels of Henry Green, 1959, p. 94.

2

Stokes, p. 94.

3

Alain Robbe-Grillet, "Time and Description," For A New Novel, 1965, p. 156.

4

John Russel, Henry Green" Nine Novels and an Unpacked Bag, 1960, p. 10.

5

See Ralph Freedman, The Lyrical Novel, 1963.

6

Virginia Woolf, "Phases of Fiction," Granite and Rainbow, 1958, p. 137.

7

Susan Sontag, "Against Interpretation," Against Interpretation, 1969, p. 21.

8

Paddy has earlier been connected with the affair between Mrs. Jack and Captain Davenport. Paddy "knows Clancarty," as Kate points out. At Clancarty Captain Davenport "digs after the old kings in his bog." Edith knows that the last time Mrs. Jack had been over to view the excavations she had returned without her drawers. In view of this fact, the following exchange is strikingly like Harold Pinter at his funniest:

"That Captain Davenport? Now where would I have heard he seeks after treasure in a bog?"

He got no answer.

"Do they dig for it," he went on, "or pry long sticks into the ground or what?" he mused aloud.

"Are you thinking you'll have a go?" Kate said. (p.32)

9

The ring has been hidden under half an empty eggshell by "Mrs. Welch's Albert" (and thus it is connected with the peacocks motif). The ring is retrieved for Edith by "Miss Moira," Mrs. Jack's daughter, as a wedding present. When Edith expresses confidence that Miss Moira will get her the ring, "Raunce halted when he heard this. He looked at her almost in alarm." (p.176) The fact that "Miss Moira" should return the ring to Edith accords well with the fairy tale format.

10

Tzvetan Todorov, "Les Catégories Du Récit Littéraire,"  
Communications, VIII, 1966, p.150.

11

Flowers are used in Loving with still another nuance. As Raunce is preparing to invade the ballroom where Kate and Edith are dancing, "He picked this /a bowl/ up, set it aside, then dipped his fingers in the rustle of potpourri which lay within. Walking on again he sniffed once at his fingers he had dabbled in the dry bones of roses and to do this was a habit with him the few times he was over in this part." (p.611) This gesture, as we can see even more clearly in a passage from Blindness, is like the taking of oxygen: "She passed through the Great Hall. She buried her head violently into a pot of dead roses." (p.88)

12

One of the most striking examples of this phenomenon of infraction is the ending of Lord of the Flies, where the appearance of the ship's officer changes the whole scale of values that the book has created.

13

I was reminded somewhat of "Cristabel" by this scene-- by Edith's apparent "start" out of a spell and by Kate's "gimlet" eyes.

14

Jean Ricardou, "Réalités Variables, Variantes Réelles,"  
Problèmes Du Nouveau Roman, 1967, p.29.

15

Stokes, p. 75.

16

Written in Keats' copy of Paradise Lost. In  
Poetical Works and Other Writings, ed. Forman, 1939, V,  
pp. 303-304.

## APPENDIX I

## PLOT SUMMARIES OF GREEN'S BOOKS

Blindness (written while Green was still a schoolboy at Eton and published in 1926) is about a young man named John Haye who, while returning home from his public school, is blinded by a stone that a small boy throws at the train window. The novel deals with John's efforts to reintegrate his life and with his maturation from the supercilious schoolboy that we see in the first section of the book. John's stepmother, Mrs. Haye, is instrumental in his recovery; she sacrifices their country home in order to move to London, where John feels that he can become a writer. The novel has a subplot dealing with a girl named Joan Entwhistle and her father (an alcoholic ex-minister) who live as social pariahs in a dilapidated house.

Living (1929) deals with life in a Birmingham factory. Old Mr. Dupret, the owner of the factory, is now bedridden, and his callow son takes over its management. The basic conflict in the book is between young Mr. Dupret and Mr. Tarver, the engineer, on the one hand and the older workers on the other hand. Among the latter are Mr. Bridges (known as "'Tis 'im" by the men), the works manager; Tupe, Mr. Bridges' spy; Mr. Craigan, the oldest and best molder in the

in the factory; and Mr. Gates, a braggart and poltroon who lives in Mr. Craigan's household with his daughter Lily. When old Mr. Dupret dies, the older workers are dismissed. Other characters in the book are Bert Jones, a young man with whom Lily unsuccessfully runs away; Jim Dale, Lily's ineffectual suitor, who lives in Mr. Craigan's household; Mr. and Mrs. Eames, a happy and procreative couple; and Hannah glossop, a jejune society girl with whom young Dupret falls in love. Concomitant with the conflict in the factory is Mr. Craigan's loss of authority in his household.

Party Going (1939) deals with a group of wealthy Londoners who are fog-bound in a train station while waiting to depart for the South of France. The sponsor of the party is Max Adey, an enormously rich young man. Other members of the group are Julia Wray, a spoiled young woman with whom Max hopes to have an affair; Angela Crevy, an attractive young woman who is at the margin of social acceptability, and her boy friend Robin Adams (who is not coming on the trip); Evelyn Henderson, who is the young "old maid" of the group; Claire and Robert Hignam, other members of Max's circle; Alex Alexander, who, as his name indicates, is redundantly epicene; Amabel, the glamorous femme fatale of the book, from whom Max is trying to escape; Miss Fellowes, Claire's aunt, who becomes sick at the beginning of the

book; and Embassy Richard, whose petty imbroglios are endlessly discussed throughout the book and who finally makes an appearance in the last pages. There are also Thomson and Edwards, Julia's and Max's chauffeurs respectively; and a mysterious man, with a variety of accents and mannerisms, who is "always interfering."

Caught (1943) deals with the experiences of Richard Roe, who is apparently from Green's own social class, in the Auxiliary Fire Service during the war. Richard is a widower, and his son Christopher lives in his father's country house with Richard's sister-in-law Dy, with whom Richard has an anticipative sexual relationship. The book is unusual for Green in that it leaps backward and forward in time: Christopher had been kidnapped by the sister of Richard's fire-instructor (and eventual superior) Pye, who is later destroyed by the pressures of his new authority. Under these pressures he becomes dependent on a woman named Prudence, whose favors he expensively shares: and he suffers increasingly from the delusion that he once had incestuous relations with his sister, who is in a mental hospital. At the end of the book, Richard's new-found maturity is indicated by his sympathetic understanding of Pye and his sense of comradeship with men from a lower social class. Other characters in the book are Hilly, a girl from the fire-station with whom

Richard has an affair; Chopper and Shiner, regular firemen; old Piper, whose resourcefulness in looking out for himself results in an undermining of Pye's authority; and Mary Howells, who has a mentally ill daughter and who is also resourceful in looking out for herself.

Loving (1945) deals with the relations among servants, and between servants and masters, in an Irish castle during the war. At the beginning of the book, Eldon, the old butler, dies and Raunce, the footman, successfully claims his place. He meets resistance from Miss Burch, the head housekeeper, and from Mrs. Welch, the cook. Raunce falls in love with one of the maids, Edith, with whom he is eloping as the book ends. The other maid, Kate, is involved with Paddy, the Irish lampman, whose speech can be understood only by Kate. Other characters are Mrs. Tennant, the owner of the castle; Mrs. Jack, her daughter-in-law; Captain Davenport, with whom Mrs. Jack is having an affair while her husband is at war; Mrs. Welch's tough little proletarian nephew, Albert; Nanny Burch, who took care of Mrs. Jack as a child and now takes care of Mrs. Jack's little girls; Raunce's pantry-boy, Albert, a callow young man whose ineffectuality contrasts with the tough aggressiveness of Mrs. Welch's Albert; and Michael Mathewson, a lisping insurance

investigator whom Raunce takes (or pretends to take) for an I.R.A. man.

Back (1946) is concerned with the efforts of Charley Summers, a veteran returned from the war with an amputated leg, to readjust to civilian life. Obsessively concerned with the loss of his loved one, Rose, he meets Rose's half-sister, Nancy Whitmore, who resembles her. After suspecting through most of the book that the people around him (Nancy, Rose's husband James, Rose's father Mr. Grant, Charley's landlady Mrs. Frazier, and a ubiquitous acquaintance named Arthur Middlewitch) are in collusion to disguise the fact that Rose is alive and is in fact Nancy, Charley comes to accept Rose's death and is to be married to Nancy Whitmore at the end. Other characters are Mrs. Grant, who is severely disorganized psychologically until Mr. Grant becomes sick; Dorothy Pitter, Charley's secretary, with whom James sleeps because Charley is too slow; and Ridley, Rose's son, who Charley mistakenly thinks may be his son.

Concluding (1948) deals with an old scientist, Mr. Rock, who (sometime in the future) lives retired at a state school that trains girls to be civil servants. Miss Edge and Miss Baker, the elderly spinsters who run the school, want to remove Mr. Rock from his cottage (which the state

has granted him for life). Other characters are Rock's neurotic granddaughter, Elizabeth; Elizabeth's lover, Sebastian Birt, who teaches at the school; Miss Marchbanks and Miss Winstanley, frustrated spinsters; Mr. Adams, the woodman; Mrs. Blain, the cook; and a bevy of girls whose names begin with M (Mary, Moira, Merode, Marion, etc.). Two of the girls, Mary and Merode, have disappeared; when Merode is found, she cannot account for her disappearance or for the whereabouts of Mary. This mystery is unresolved as the book ends.

Nothing (1950), the first of Green's two dialogue novels, is about the affairs of wealthy middle-aged Londoners after the war. John Pomfret, a middle-aged widower, is having an affair with Liz Jennings which is dwindling out. Jane Weatherby, who is an old flame of John's, is having a similar affair with Richard Abbott. John's daughter Mary and Jane's son Philip, who are both civil servants, decide to get married. Philip especially is a rather priggish and humorless young man. By cleverly procrastinating in making definite plans about the wedding and by playing on the priggishness and velleities of her son, Jane breaks up the proposed marriage. Instead, she marries John Pomfret. Jane has a daughter, Penelope, whom she uses to express her own wishes and anxieties. Throughout the book an old friend,

Arthur Morris, is gradually being eroded by surgery in the hospital.

Doting (1952) has to do with the infatuation of a middle aged man, Arthur Middleton, for a young woman named Ann Paynton. In retaliation Arthur's wife, Diana, almost has an affair with their friend Charles Addinsell. When things get too warm for Arthur, he introduces Ann to Charles in order to get her off his hands. Charles, like Arthur, tries unsuccessfully to seduce her. Diana, attempting to break up this relationship, introduces Charles to Ann's friend Claire Belaine, whom Charles successfully seduces. At the end they are all together at a party given for Arthur's priggish son, Peter, who is going back to school. The social class of these characters is the same as that of Nothing and Party Going, and they are the only books of Green which are limited primarily to this class.

Finally, Green's autobiography Pack My Bag was written in 1938-1939. Its reticence is remarkable in view of the intense pressure under which it was apparently written.

I was born a mouthbreather with a silver spoon in 1905, three years after one war and nine before another, too late for both. But not too late for the war which seems to be coming upon us now and that is a reason to put down what comes to mind before one is killed, and surely it would be asking much to pretend one had a chance to live. (p.5)

## APPENDIX II

## LE TEMPS DE LA NARRATION AND LE TEMPS DE LA FICTION

Another of this constellation of distinctions is that between le temps de la narration and le temps de la fiction.<sup>1</sup> Jean Ricardou points out that the narrative fragments a, b, and c can correspond to segments of the fiction which are dispersed in various points of the duree:

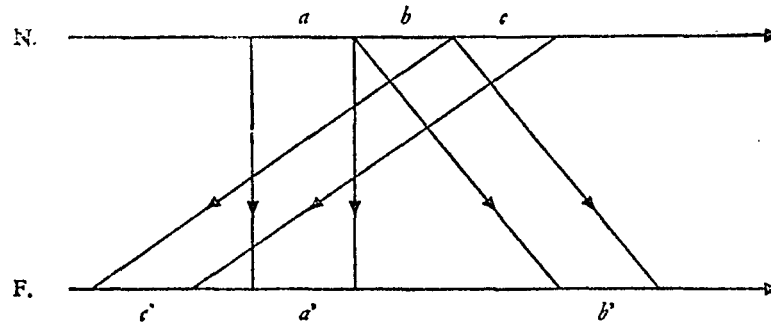


figure 1

For example, a' might be a present scene, b' a projected one, and c' a flashback. Another example which Ricardou cites of the disjunction between narrative and fiction is a novel which imposes on the narrative axis the same unities as it does on the axis of fiction--that is, we know that the narration begins in one month and ends five months later. But the narrative makes reference to events that occur before

the beginning of the narrative, so that the two axes will look like this.

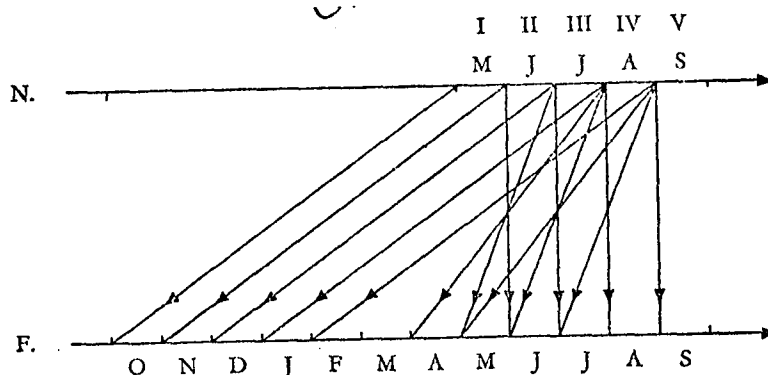


figure 2

Consequently, reading the chart we note that the narrative that extends through the month of May covers events that took place in October; and the narrative that extends through the month of July covers events that took place in May as well as events that take place in July. Ricardou further points to the ways in which the relation between the two axes controls the tempo of the narration:

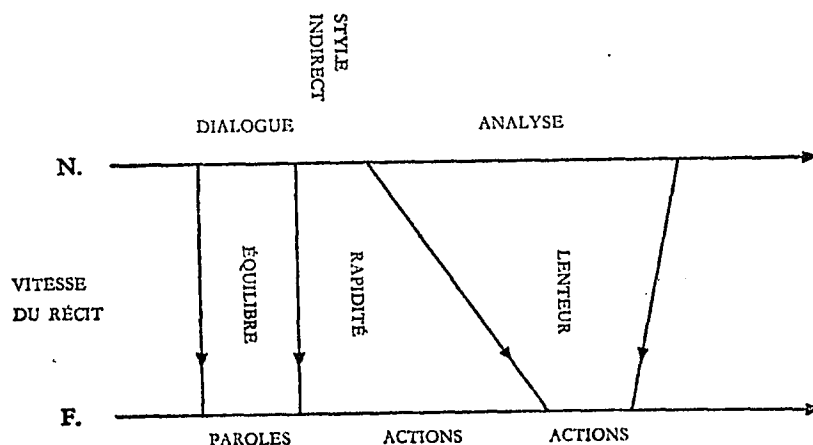
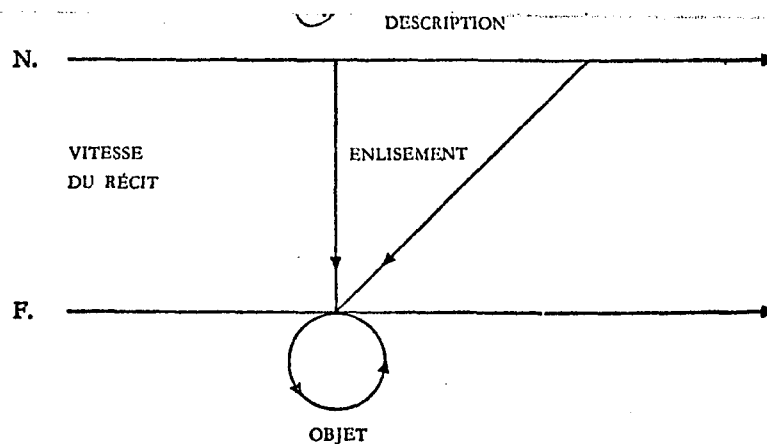
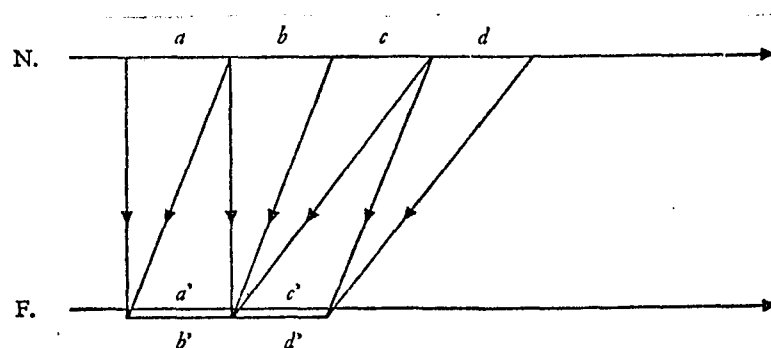


figure 3

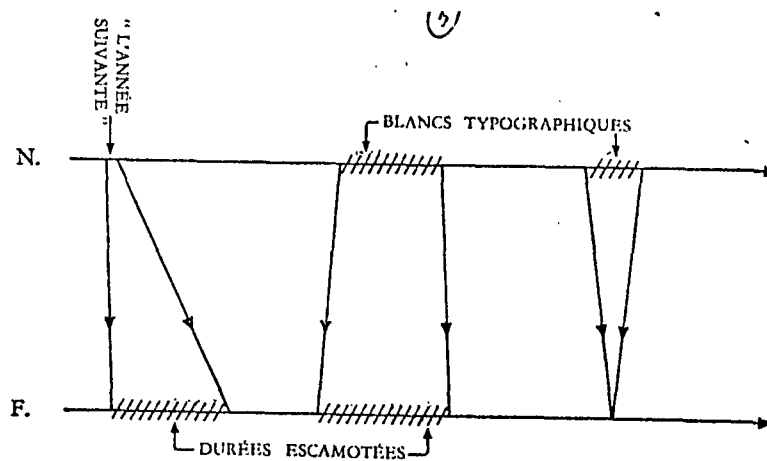
The only time that there is a perfect equilibrium between the two axes is in the case of direct speech. One can speed up the narrative by indirect summary (as in a breathless passage of Flaubert's The Sentimental Education which Ricardou discusses); one can slow down the narrative by means of analysis or description:



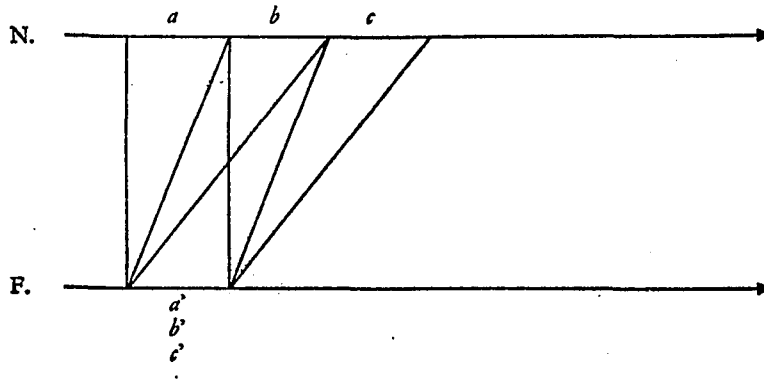
Ricardou also points to the fact that because of the linear character of writing, one can present simultaneous events only through alternation:



In this case a' and b' occur simultaneously, as do c' and d', but they can be narrated only alternately. Ricardou also points to three kinds of disruption of continuity-- one textural and the other two architectural. First, temporal formulas like "later" or "the next year" immediately conjure away the duree. Second, chapter endings (which form part of the architecture of the novel) can create a temporal hiatus in the fiction. Third, typographical blanks can, without underlining any interruption in the fiction, create a regular periodicity in which two problems are superimposed: the temporary abatement of the story (effected by the rest at the end of each chapter) foregrounds the act of writing, which is habitually masked by the anecdote; on the other hand, the continuity of the writing is contested by the regular architecture of the book:



A similar unmasking of the writing and its contestation by the architecture of the book occur when a narrative fragment is repeated:



Here the narration is prolonged, whereas the fiction is  
 2  
 immobilized.

## Footnotes

1

Jean Ricardou, "Temps de La Narration, Temps de La Fiction," Problèmes du Nouveau Roman, 1967, p. 161.

2

Ricardou, pp. 161-170.

## APPENDIX III

## THE PASTORAL COUNTERPLOT

Although the fog outside the station and outside London is worse than it is inside the station and inside London, metaphorical evocations of landscape reinforce our sense of claustrophobia with the fog-bound station and the fog-bound city. They create a kind of pastoral counterplot. The seats in the bar are "like chrysanthemums with chromium plated stalks." (p.23) When Mr. Roberts looks out over the station from his office, it "might" (Green does not say that it does) look "like November sun striking through mist rising off water." (p.86) Julia has the exact same impression later in the book. (p.86) At another point a summer landscape is evoked, "Through those lidded windows, the curtains so thick and heavy they seemed made of plaster on stage sets, there faintly whispered through to them in waves of sound as in summer when you are coming on a waterfall through woods and it is still unseen...what were shouted protests or cheering or just hubbub of that crowd away below, all this gently came in and passed them by." (p.149) Julia's changed mood is described as being like a changed landscape. (p. 241) The most complex example of this motif is Robert Hignam's memory of the bamboo grove of his childhood, evoked by the stiff bodies of the crowd. As

you shall see, the pedantic syntax of the passage underlines the surprising availability of this pastoral landscape to a man like Robert, who is summarized as follows, "You could make Robert Hignam do some things, he would carry messages, but they knew he would never stay behind because his wife had to." (p.230) The "but" in this sentence is perhaps the strongest adversitive conjunction in the book. The pastoral scene occurs as follows: "Robert thrust on and on. When small he had found patches of bamboo in his parents' garden and it was his romance at that time to force through them: they grew so thick you could not see what temple might lie in ruins just beyond. It was so now, these bodies so thick they might have been a store of tailors' dummies, water heated. They were so stiff they might as well have been soft, swollen bamboos in groves only because he had once pushed through these, damp and warm." (p.47) The "only because" points up the tenuous availability of this landscape.

In the midst of the mortuary environment of the train station, this pastoral counterplot operates in a complex way, in the manner that Empson points out in his discussion of the Alice books. Onto the grid of the pastoral, onto the grid of childhood is imposed the complexities of adult relationships. Julia shares Robert's reminiscences of childhood, only she expands the complicates the pastoral images. The bamboo grove that Robert remembers was really only

"overgrown artichokes," as Julia looks back on it. Julia, without Robert's knowing it, had planted a toy pistol (one of her charms) in the middle of the grove. She feels that their childhood games were made more secret by her excitement at this fact, and that it was this secrecy which Robert remembered of the games. Later on Julia dug up the pistol and kept it, somewhat deteriorated, as one of her charms. Another one of her charms is an egg which has elephants inside it (which seems to suggest the pangs of labor). She attributes to this egg (a kind of talisman that she possesses vis-a-vis her own) the power of preventing her from having been carried away into the sea by an unfurled umbrella.

(pp.109-110) Julia's epicene quality, suggested by her charms and by her childish apprehension of sex (at the end of the book, she wants to take Max "back into her life from where it had started and show it to him for them to share in a much more exciting thing of their own, artichokes, pigeons and all..."), reminds one of Lewis Carroll's Alice. Note that when Julia hears some Welshmen singing about the rape of a Druid's silly daughter, "She thought only they knew what it meant, but it sounded light-hearted." (p.152)

Empson says of the Alice books:

The symbolic completeness of Alice's experience is I think important. She runs the whole gamut; she is a father in getting down the hole, a foetus at the bottom, and can only be born by becoming a mother and producing her own amniotic fluid. Whether his mind played the trick of putting this into the story or not he has the feelings that would correspond to it. A desire to include all sexuality in the girl child, the least obviously sexed of human creatures, the one that keeps its sex in the safest place,<sup>1</sup> was an important part of their fascination for him.

Later Empson says: "So far from its dependence, the child's independence is the important thing, and the theme behind that is the self-centered emotional life imposed by the detached intelligence."<sup>2</sup> One notes that Julia's charms (a pistol which was once buried in a grove of artichokes, a top, and an egg with elephants inside it, which prevented her from being carried out to sea by an umbrella) are talismans against danger, perhaps against the kind of "sexual fit" which Evelyn attributes to Miss Fellowes (p.124). These charms are always associated with Julia's childish egotism; whenever she wishes to talk about herself, she talks about her charms.

The pastoral counterplot, then, does not offer a crude contrast of country and city, outer and inner, or life and death, although it incorporates such a contrast. It evokes certain affective possibilities in this mortuary environment, whether these possibilities are regressive (like Julia's taking Max back into the garden of artichokes) or

progressive (like Robert's discovery of Miss Fellowes). The counterplot can also evoke a ludicrous dissolving view of the characters: Amabel's "mountain face" (p.176) is as ludicrous a metaphor as some of the figures which occur in Ford's The Good Soldier. Her "hummingbird eyes" also verge on the ludicrous (p.154); the comparison of her to an Okapi goes over the line (p.140). At one point Max is described as an old buck who is being kicked to death by his women (p.180), which evokes a marvellously ludicrous picture.

## Footnotes

1

William Empson, "Alice in Wonderland," Some Versions of Pastoral, 1960, pp. 260-261.

2

Empson, p. 261.

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## AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Bruce Bassoff was born on January 18, 1941 in New York City. After graduating from Birch Wathen High School (a private college preparatory school) in 1958, he entered Brandeis University as a National Brandeis School and in 1962 he received his BA degree (Magna Cum Laude, Phi Beta Kapa). In September 1962 he won a Regents Teaching Fellowship and entered the Graduate School of Columbia University where he received a MA degree from the English Department a year later (1963). He then left Columbia and began working, first as a social worker and then as a teacher in the Junior High School System of New York City. In 1966 he was admitted to the Graduate School of the University of the City of New York where he will receive a Ph.D. degree in English Literature in June 1970.

In 1969 he was awarded an International Teaching Fellowship under the Fulbright-Hayes Act and is now teaching at the Sorbonne, University of Paris. In September 1970 he will begin a teaching assignment at Brooklyn College. He is married and has no children.