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The Phenomenology of Hallucinatory and Psychotic Experience in Mid-Twentieth-Century Fiction

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Thesis Abstract

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John Maurice Roy Foxwell

Both first-person and psychopathological accounts of hallucinations and psychosis tend to acknowledge a difficulty in expressing the phenomenology of such experiences. In particular, it would appear that these forms of experience involve a sense of ontological upheaval, in that they do not conform to the ordinary structure of the experience of the physical, consensual world. Within phenomenology and philosophy of mind, therefore, hallucinatory and psychotic experiences are often used to investigate the norms of our experience of 'reality'.

This study is concerned with novels that take up the 'linguistic challenge' presented by hallucinatory and psychotic experience – in other words, novels that attempt to convey what such experience is like. Drawing on reader-response theory, cognitive narratology and cognitive stylistics, I suggest that these novels prompt the reader to imaginatively enact the forms of hallucinatory and psychotic experience through a distortion of the norms that govern the ordinary representation of lived experience. At the same time, these texts also use hallucinatory and psychotic experience in order to explore the nature of the interaction between reader and text, and, more broadly speaking, between subject and world.

Although the attempt to convey the experientiality of hallucinations and psychosis is not necessarily confined to the mid-Twentieth Century, this period does present something of a 'clustering' of novels which make this attempt through similar stylistic and narrative techniques. Taking William Golding's *Pincher Martin* (1956), Muriel Spark's *The Comforters* (1957), Ken Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1962), and Doris Lessing's *Briefing for a Descent into Hell* (1971) as case studies, I explore how these novels engage with conceptions of the mind and reality which emerged during this period, and are thus concerned with phenomenological issues which are still relevant to both cognitive narratology and philosophy of mind. Finally, I suggest that understanding these novels as being phenomenologically oriented can inform the critical debate on the literary history of the Twentieth Century.

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Introduction

> I come now to the ineffable center of my tale; it is here that a writer's hopelessness begins. Every language is an alphabet of symbols the employment of which assumes a past shared by its interlocutors. How can one transmit to others the infinite Aleph, which my timorous memory can scarcely contain? ('The Aleph', p.129)

To appease the insufferable Carlos Argentino, the narrator of Jorge Luis Borges' 'The Aleph' agrees to descend into the cellar in order to bear witness to his host's 'discovery': a '"place where, without admixture or confusion, all the places of the world, seen from every angle, coexist"' ('The Aleph' ['TA'], p.127). Of course, the narrator expects to see nothing at all, being convinced by this point that Argentino is quite insane. However, he obeys his host's instructions, and lies down alone in the darkness before turning to look at the nineteenth step of the stairway. His sense of absurdity gradually becomes a sense of anxiety – perhaps Argentino will kill him 'in order to protect his delirium, in order to hide his madness from himself' ('TA', p.127) – but then, upon closing and opening his eyes, he sees the eponymous Aleph.

Yet the narrator, having reached the climax of his tale, abruptly breaks the flow of the narrative. Instead of describing the Aleph as he saw it, he reflects upon the nature of language itself and on the potential *impossibility* of describing his experience. In particular, he questions whether he can 'capture' the experience and thus 'transmit' it to his reader – and although he considers how in 'similar situation[s], mystics have employed a wealth of emblems', he rejects any 'equivalent image' as being 'polluted with literature, with falseness' ('TA', p.129). Yet non-figurative language is also unequal to the task, since 'language is successive', and 'What my eyes saw was *simultaneous*' ('TA', p.129). In this regard, it is because the narrator's experience does not share the same structure as ordinary experience (which is also successive), that language is deemed to be inadequate.

Nevertheless, the narrator tries to give the reader an impression of his experience of the Aleph. Through a sentence that stretches over a whole page, he presents not just a list of objects, but a list of *views* of objects:

> I saw the populous sea, saw dawn and dusk, saw the multitudes of the Americas, saw a silvery spider-web at the center of a black pyramid, saw a broken labyrinth (it was London), saw endless eyes, all very close, studying themselves in me as though through a mirror, saw all the mirrors on the planet (and none of them reflecting me)… ('TA', p.130)

And so it goes on, shifting wildly between the general and the specific, between the macrocosm and the microcosm, between the personally meaningful and the impersonally random. At times there appears to be some kind of organising principle guiding the shifts – imagistic (as with the spider's web and the labyrinth), or linguistic (as with the mirroring eyes and the actual mirrors) – but no sooner is such a principle made apparent than the next perspective disconfirms it. Yet as the absurd list draws to a close, the objects viewed become strange as well:

> …saw the coils and springs of love and the alterations of death, saw the Aleph from everywhere at once, saw the earth in the Aleph, and the Aleph once more in the earth and the earth in the Aleph, saw my face and my viscera, saw your face, and I felt dizzy, and I wept… ('TA', pp.130-131)

Not only does the narrator see metaphorical 'objects' (for whatever the 'coils and springs of love' are, they are not actual coils and springs to be seen by the human eye), and not only does he glimpse the impossibility of infinite recursion, an object which is both the container and what it contains, but he also breaks the boundaries of the text in order to include the reader in the world of the story. This metaleptic intrusion mirrors the infinite recursion of the Aleph itself, since the reader both 'contains' the story – insofar as the story 'exists' within the mind of the reader – and the story contains the reader – insofar as the reader is something which is seen *within* the story. Although the narrator has already acknowledged his own role in writing the story (upon seeing the Aleph), this is conspicuously the first and only time that he displays any awareness of his interlocutor. The strangeness of his experience requires him to do something equally strange in the transmission of it, in order that the reader might also – if only partially – feel something of that strangeness, and in a manner that is itself mimetic of the structure of the experience.

There is, as we might expect from Borges, a metafictional dimension to this episode, which is made more explicit through the context in which it is situated. Argentino is himself writing a poem that aims to capture the entire universe in verse, an undertaking which has been prompted by his own frequent experiences of the Aleph. Yet as the narrator's own story demonstrates, it is impossible to pin down the whole universe in language, just as it is impossible to experience the whole universe all at once. Both text and universe are only experienced successively, through time, as a continuously unfolding exploration; and if we ever did experience it all at once, we should not have the means to communicate that experience. What we might do, perhaps, is provide an *impression* of it by subverting the norms of language and narrative, in a way that partially imitates its structure – which is precisely what Borges does. Of course, we might not believe that such an experience is really possible, in which case the story is not imitative or 'mimetic' in the strictest sense of the term, since there

is nothing 'in the world' that is being copied. Yet it is still mimetic in the broader sense of being distinct from the 'diegetic', in that an attempt is made to 'show', rather than merely 'tell' or 'relate', the event to the reader.[1] To put the same point otherwise, the narrator not only tells us *that* he saw the whole universe simultaneously, but also tries to convey a sense of what that experience was *like*. Indeed, his preamble on the ineffability of the experience and the limitations of language makes it abundantly clear that he is trying to achieve this kind of mimesis, even as he bemoans its insufficiencies.

The problem which Borges' narrator identifies – the problem of conveying, through language, the nature of an experience which falls outside the common stock of human experience – is the very same problem confronted by the writer who would convey what it is like to experience a hallucination. For according to phenomenological, psychopathological, and first-person accounts of hallucinatory experience, it is an experience that differs not (or not just) in its content but in its form and structure, just as dreams, imaginings, and memories are also formally and structurally different from perceptual experience. Essentially, it is *like something* to dream, imagine, remember, and hallucinate, and all of these are different from what it is like to perceive (while also being different from each other). Yet pinpointing exactly how these experiences are felt to differ is not a simple matter, especially since our language is far better equipped for the discussion of experiential content than experiential form. Where hallucinations (and Borges' Aleph) differ from the other kinds of experience is that they are not a kind with which we are all familiar. Therefore, although it might not be too difficult to express and to grasp what hallucinatory experience is *not* like by contrasting it with other kinds of experience, conveying what it *is* like presents rather more of a problem. As Matthew Ratcliffe puts it, there is 'a particular linguistic challenge involved in attempting to convey kinds of intentionality that may be wholly unfamiliar to an interlocutor' (Ratcliffe 2017, p.54), since for most of us the word 'hallucination' has no experiential referent (unlike 'imagining', 'dream', and 'memory'). An even greater challenge is presented by the experience of psychosis

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[1] The distinction between 'telling' and 'showing' is usually attributed to Percy Lubbock, who states that 'the art of fiction does not begin until the novelist thinks of his story as a matter to be shown, to be so exhibited that it will tell itself' (Lubbock 1954 [1921], p.62; see also Rimmon-Kenan 2003 [1983], pp.108-109; Klauk and Köppe 2013). The equation of showing and telling (or scene and summary) with mimesis and diegesis is, as Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan points out, fairly common in Anglo-American criticism (Rimmon-Kenan 2003, p.108), and according to Tobias Klauk and Tilmann Köppe, 'there are a number of different labels attached to the distinctions in question' in narratology, although the distinctions being drawn are usually recognisable as the same ones (Klauk and Köppe 2013). However, it is worth remembering that the 'crucial distinction' is not really between 'telling and showing, but between different degrees and kinds of telling' (Rimmon-Kenan 2003, p.109). As the wide variety of labels suggests, exactly how this distinction is drawn varies a great deal amongst narratological theorists. My own way of drawing the distinction (as I expand on further in Chapter 1, Section 2), is based on experientiality, and the degree to which the narrative structurally resembles the narrated experience.

more generally, for which reason Karl Jaspers emphatically declares it to be '"*ununderstandable*" or closed to empathy' (Jaspers 1997 [1963], v.2, p.578).[2]

This study is concerned with writers who take up the 'linguistic challenge' presented by hallucinatory experience – in other words, writers who attempt to convey what hallucinatory experience is like. However, this does not mean that I take these writers to be aiming for some kind of accurate phenomenological 'description' of the experience (which is perhaps more what Ratcliffe has in mind), but rather that I understand them to be attempting to convey to the reader the sense or feeling of hallucination as a first-person, lived experience. As I shall attempt to demonstrate, textual narratives are particularly well-suited to the enabling of this form of experiential or 'empathetic' understanding, since they typically involve an engagement with (and immersion in) a world, in a manner that is structurally similar to lived experience in general.[3] Through the distortion of the norms which govern the ordinary representation of lived experience, narratives can prompt readers to enact experiences which recognisably differ from the overall experiential context within which they occur.

At the same time, however, textual narrative faces a problem common to all imaginative or 'simulative' experience, in that it is necessarily confined to one 'experiential modality' (i.e. imagination). Indeed, as I explore further in Chapter 1, Section 2, this problem is not solely confined to the mimesis (or 'showing') of hallucinatory experience, but to the mimesis of any difference between experiential modalities. Yet hallucinatory experience brings this problem to the fore precisely because it is not commonly shared – at least, not in its prototypical form – and because it is thus (for most of us) largely an experientially empty term. As a result, the mimetically inclined writer cannot rely on the reader's familiarity with the experiential modality in question, and must therefore attend more closely to the structure underlying the reader's interaction with the text in order to manipulate that interaction in the appropriate way. What we therefore tend to find in texts which attempt the mimesis of hallucinatory experience (and other atypical forms of experience) is a self-reflexive or 'metafictional' strain, as the

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[2] Although hallucinations and psychosis are separable – in that one can be present without the other – they often do appear together in twentieth-century texts. I return to this issue later in this section and in Chapter 1, Section 1.

[3] I am not alone in arguing for the potential of textual narrative in this regard. Thomas Flynn, for instance, points to how the 'arguments by example' of the phenomenologist and the existentialist 'almost beg for embodiment in imaginative literature, films, and plays' (Flynn 2006, p.22); Gregory Bateson et al. argue that 'The entire field of fictional communication, defined as the narration or depiction of a series of events with more or less of a label of actuality, is most relevant to the investigation of schizophrenia', particularly in relation to 'the formal problems involved in simultaneous existence *[sic]* of multiple levels of message in the presentation of "reality"' (Bateson et al. 1956, pp.261-262); and Marco Caracciolo points out that 'fiction seems especially suited for dealing with, and creating, experiential knowledge' (Caracciolo 2016a, p.51).

dynamics of readerly experience are explored in an overt or covert fashion (and again, Borges' 'The Aleph' presents an example of this trend). Moreover, to reflect on the nature of imaginative experience is to reflect, either directly or indirectly, on the nature of perceptual experience in general, both in that it is only as a result of their differences that we are aware of the experiential modalities as *having* particular forms or structures, and in that imaginative and perceptual experiences are also necessarily *similar* in some respects (or else we should not be able to have different kinds of experience of what is recognisably the same object). Metafictional reflection – at least, metafictional reflection on the reader's experience of the text – is thus often of a piece with phenomenological reflection on the nature of experience *tout court*.

Metafiction and the mimesis of hallucinatory experience thus often exist in a chiasmic relationship. On the one hand, hallucinatory experience is used to prompt a consideration of how the reader interacts with the world of the text; and on the other hand, the self-reflexive, boundary-breaking techniques of metafiction are used to prompt an enactment of the ontological upheaval that is characteristic of hallucinatory experience (and of psychotic experience in general). As a result, the techniques used in the mimesis of hallucinatory experience are themselves meaningfully related to the context of the work as a whole, feeding into an exploration of the interaction between reader and text, and, more broadly speaking, between subject and world. Essentially, these texts directly or indirectly thematise the nature of readerly experience and the nature of experience in general, in ways that are intrinsically bound up with how the mimesis of hallucinatory (and psychotic) experience is attempted. The linguistic and narrative 'mechanics' which are used to convey such experience are thus intrinsic to the meaning of the text as a whole, and tie in with a broader conception of the relationship between mind and world.[4]

In order to understand and interpret the mimetic techniques used in these novels, I draw on research from a number of different but related fields. With regard to how texts are processed and experienced, the three schools of thought on which my approach is primarily based are reader-response theory, cognitive narratology and cognitive linguistics/stylistics. In drawing on all three domains, I ground my own 'intuitive' understanding of the text through

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[4] In this regard (and in many others), my approach is similar to Caracciolo's in his analysis of Julio Cortázar's *Hopscotch* (1966 [1963]) and Vladimir Nabokov's *The Defense* (1964 [1930]), which have 'a somewhat special status, in that they deal with experience and experientiality at the thematic level. The idea here is that, by exploring the *theme* of experience, literary stories can have an impact on readers' conceptualizations of experience, exemplifying my theoretical claims. At the same time, my thematic readings point to the continuity between literary-critical interpretation and more basic modes of engagement with texts' (Caracciolo 2014a, pp.7-8).

reference to theoretical models of textual processing, while also demonstrating how these texts also occasionally offer insights which may inform or support these models.[5] As I shall attempt to demonstrate, to a certain extent these texts themselves metafictionally pre-empt some of the theory which I make use of in my analysis. With regard to how the experience of these texts can be interpreted, I draw on both classical phenomenology and contemporary philosophy of mind (and some aspects of social psychology). Indeed, these various schools and disciplines are certainly not incommensurable: reader-response theory, for instance, emerged from phenomenology via Roman Ingarden (who studied under Edmund Husserl), and contemporary theories of enactivism and the embodied mind often owe something of a debt to Maurice Merleau-Ponty.[6] Moreover, the psychopathological literature on which I base my understanding of hallucinatory experience is also closely related to phenomenology (indeed, to a certain extent, it *is* phenomenology). My guiding principle in navigating these theories is synthetic rather than exegetic, by which I mean that I am not intending to provide a detailed analysis of the particular thought-world of a philosopher or school of philosophy (although of course I attempt to deal with contradictions between individual ideas as and when they appear). Ultimately, my aim is to consider how these texts use hallucinatory and psychotic experience to explore the nature of our experience of reality (which is, incidentally, a use to which such experiences are frequently put in phenomenology and philosophy of mind).

The four novels which I use as case studies – William Golding's *Pincher Martin* (1956), Muriel Spark's *The Comforters* (1957), Ken Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1962), and Doris Lessing's *Briefing for a Descent into Hell* (1971) – are all texts in which hallucinatory and psychotic experiences are thematically foregrounded as well as mimetically represented. In this sense, they serve as prototypical instances of a broader category of narrative, a category which both uses experimental techniques in the mimesis of abnormal

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[5] To put it bluntly, 'the reader' is essentially myself, but I justify the generalisation of my own experience by explaining it in relation to a theoretical framework. In this regard, I am taking up the same position as Caracciolo when he states that, 'In some cases, all my argument needs is that a story could impact readers in the way I describe, even if this effect cannot be generalized across all readers. In other cases, it is the structure of readers' responses that interests me more than the exact content of those responses, which can vary substantially from reader to reader: my claim is, therefore, that the story-driven experience works in this particular way for me – and that it works in a structurally similar way for other people. I also explore aspects of the story-driven experience that may not be self-evident to some, perhaps most readers' (Caracciolo 2014a, p.13). To my mind, most (and perhaps all) forms of literary criticism, *qua* criticism, does this in some way or other, since even the comprehension of the text is first and foremost a personal interpretation. Therefore, I understand criticism as the legitimisation of the shift from the personal to the general through the appeal to some other frame of reference – be that linguistic, literary, historical, psychological, psychoanalytic, biographical, socio-political, etc. – which is how it attempts to avoid the charge of 'mere' subjective assessment.

[6] For example, *The Embodied Mind*, one of the seminal texts of enactive and embodied theories of cognition, begins by acknowledging that 'Merleau-Ponty's writings have both inspired and guided our orientation here' (Varela, Thompson, and Rosch 1991, p.xv).

experience while also using abnormal experience to reflect on the nature of conscious experience itself. While I have specifically chosen texts from the mid-Twentieth Century, this does not necessarily mean that this category cannot include texts from other periods. Indeed, as Uri Margolin points out in relation to fiction in general, 'The fictional presentation of cognitive mechanisms in action, especially of their breakdown or failure, is itself a powerful cognitive tool which may make us aware of actual cognitive mechanisms, and, more specifically, of our own mental functioning' (Margolin 2003, p.278). However, it is noticeable that during the mid-Twentieth Century we find a number of texts which explicitly focus on unusual forms of experience, and on hallucinatory and psychotic experience in particular.[7] I have chosen to examine four novels in depth rather than spreading my analysis over a larger array of texts, in part because my methodology requires an attention to linguistic and narrative detail, and in part because I wish to demonstrate that this approach yields interpretations that can inform the critical debate around these novels. I have chosen *these* four novels because they are by significant and widely read authors from this period, because each of these four authors appears to have had their own hallucinatory experience, and because, to put it bluntly, their novels are interesting enough to repay such attention.[8] In this regard I adhere to Jaspers' doctrine that 'experience is enriched not so much by the number of cases we have seen as by the depth to which we have penetrated in any one case', since the individual case has the potential to 'illuminate the rest' (Jaspers 1997, v.1, p.253).

Two points need to be addressed before we proceed any further: the relationship between hallucinations and psychosis and the justification for 'diagnosing' fictional experiences. First, hallucinations are by no means confined to psychosis, and psychosis does not always involve hallucinations. Psychotic hallucinations, and schizophrenic hallucinations in particular, seem to dominate the discussion of hallucinations – not least because of the prevalence of hallucinations in these conditions, but also perhaps as the result of a certain epistemological bias regarding whether or not the hallucination is believed in (which I examine further in Chapter 1, Section 1).[9] However, hallucinations can occur in a wide range of other states and conditions (ranging from bodily exhaustion to neurodegenerative diseases), and are

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[7] The implications of this 'clustering' of such texts I explore in the Conclusion.

[8] While I am not engaging in a form of biographical criticism, I consider it to be important that these authors did have their own hallucinatory experience since this justifies an understanding of their novels as offering first-person insight into the phenomenology of hallucinations.

[9] According to Flavie Waters et al., 'Approximately 70% of people with a diagnosis of SZ [schizophrenia] report AH [auditory hallucinations]' (Waters et al. 2012, p.684).

also reported in the absence of any other symptom.[10] Since the novels in this study often (but not always) situate hallucinatory experience within the context of psychotic experience, it will also be necessary to consider the mimesis of psychotic experience.

Second, this study focuses on texts in which the reader is either explicitly or implicitly invited to understand certain experiences as hallucinations. Sometimes the hallucinating character is also aware of this interpretation of his or her experiences, and sometimes other interpretations are also offered and also appear viable (to both reader and character). Indeed, real individuals undergoing hallucinatory experiences may well find themselves in much the same position, which is yet another dimension of hallucinatory experience that some of these texts imitate. Essentially, I am concerned with experiences which are 'abnormal', and which have some sensory quality – and the term which is commonly used to refer to such experiences is 'hallucinations'. In this context, whether or not the experience is thought to be of something 'real' is a different matter from whether or not it is phenomenologically distinguishable from perceptual experience (I shall return to this point in Chapter 1, Section 1). Essentially, this means that I hold the conception of hallucinations as mere perceptual errors to be insufficient (and, to a certain extent, misleading) – and when this conception is removed, calling something 'a hallucination' does not immediately dismiss it as irrelevant or 'wrong'. To put the same point another way, I am using terms like 'hallucination' and 'psychosis' simply to refer to unusual patterns of experience and ways of being which some individuals undergo but which the majority do not.

The invitation to the reader to understand these experiences as hallucinations justifies an understanding of these texts as (at least partially) mimetic (and in much the same way, Borges tells us what the experience of the Aleph *is* before he conveys what that experience is *like*). However, limiting myself to texts which invite a hallucinatory interpretation deliberately excludes texts which are 'experimental' or 'surreal' without any hint of a mimetic purpose being served (such as Samuel Beckett's *The Unnamable* (1953), Anna Kavan's *Ice* (1967), or any of the more extreme postmodernist fictions of the late Twentieth Century). My reason for doing this is not to draw some kind of sharp distinction between these texts, but rather to focus my analysis on texts which are prototypical of the literary phenomenon I am examining: the textual mimesis of hallucinatory (and psychotic) experience. In the Conclusion, I shall partly

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[10] In their review of the psychological literature on the prevalence of auditory hallucinations in the general population, Vanessa Beavan et al. discovered that 'studies produce hugely varied prevalence estimates' ranging from 0.6% to 84% (Beavan et al. 2011, p.281). As these authors note, 'The phrasing of questions […] does seem to affect response rates', as do 'the differing exclusion criteria used' (Beavan et al. 2011, p.289).

remove this theoretical scaffolding in order to explore the ways in which hallucinatory and psychotic experience relates to experimentalism and postmodernism more generally.

The first chapter, 'Contexts: Psychopathology, Narratology, and History', lays out the theoretical foundations of my approach in more depth, answering the 'what', the 'how', and the 'where/when' of this study. Section 1 deals with the 'what' – hallucinations – and provides an account of hallucinatory experience as it appears in psychopathology, phenomenology, and first-person accounts. Section 2 deals with the 'how' by setting out the model of readerly experience which informs my analysis. Finally, Section 3 examines the 'where' and the 'when' of my case studies, and considers some of the social and cultural factors which may have led to this focus on hallucinatory and psychotic experience in the mid-Twentieth Century.

Each of the following chapters considers one novel in detail and focuses on how the mimesis of hallucinatory experience in that novel engages with philosophical issues relating to our experience of reality. It is worth stressing at this point that although these texts have predominantly been read in terms of how they relate to politics and religion, my interest is in their philosophical and psychological dimensions. Of course, philosophy and psychology have implications for politics and religion, and at the same time politics and religion certainly affect philosophy and psychology, but a more detailed analysis of how these domains interact will have to wait for another time.

In Chapter 2, 'Attention, Embodiment, and Dualism in *Pincher Martin*', I examine the ways in which Golding's novel distorts the presentation of the protagonist's reality in order to explore the structure of ordinary lived experience. In particular, I consider how the novel critiques the self-world dualism of the Cartesian *cogito*, and points to the prereflective background that inheres in our experience of reality. The third chapter, 'Metalepsis, Agency, and the Sense of Self in *The Comforters*', examines how Spark uses hallucinations to reflect on how the sense of self relies on a conscious sense of agency. While this novel similarly critiques Cartesian dualism, it also suggests that self-world dualism is a vital heuristic which we use to make sense of our own experience, and that without the sense of agency reinforcing that dualism self and world collapse. Chapter 4, 'Metaphor, Imagination, and Social Agency in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*', focuses on how Kesey's novel plays with the conventions of figurative language in order to imitate the ontological confusion of hallucinatory and psychotic experience. I also suggest that this novel self-reflexively points to how metaphor structures and influences what we experience as reality. In the fifth chapter, 'Explanation, Expectation, and Meaning in *Briefing for a Descent into Hell*', I consider how Lessing's novel destabilises the reader's sense of being anchored in a storyworld in a way that mirrors the

psychosis of the protagonist. Moreover, I suggest that in espousing a form of ontological pluralism, this novel reflects on how and why we take one ontological domain to be our primary reality. Finally, my Conclusion, 'Towards a Phenomenological Dominant', reflects on the 'why' of this study, which is essentially bidirectional: why use textual narratives to understand hallucinations, and why use hallucinations to understand textual narratives? The answer to the first question lies in the way in which literary texts ask readers 'to *perform* or *discover* some aspects of our cognitive apparatus through hands-on experience' (Caracciolo 2016b, p.197), thus crossing from a propositional 'knowing that' to an experiential 'knowing how'. In this regard, literary texts can thus function as what Daniel Dennett terms '"intuition pumps"' (Dennett, quoted in Caracciolo 2016, p.197), in that the experience of the text can prompt the reader to reflect on the nature of experience itself in a certain way. The answer to the second question – 'Why use hallucinations to understand textual narratives?' – involves considering how these four novels (and others like them) might fit within the literary history of the Twentieth Century, and how a model which accommodates them can productively inform our understanding of modernist, postmodernist, and contemporary literature.

Chapter 1 – Contexts: Psychopathology, Narratology, and History

Section 1: Hallucinatory Experience

According to the most recent iteration of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (*DSM-5*), a hallucination is 'A perception-like experience with the clarity and impact of a true perception but without the external stimulation of the relevant sensory organ' (*DSM-5* 2013, p.822).[11] Similarly, the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines hallucination as 'The mental condition of being deceived or mistaken, or of entertaining unfounded notions', and (in pathological and psychological usage) as 'The apparent perception (usually by sight or hearing) of an external object when no such object is actually present' (*OED* 2018). Often such definitions include a distinction between hallucinations and 'illusions', since in the latter 'an actual external stimulus is misperceived or misinterpreted' (*DSM-5* 2013, p.822).[12] In other words, illusion involves a mistake about *what* the object is, but not a mistake about *whether* the object exists. Finally, the *DSM* acknowledges that 'The person may or may not have insight into the nonveridical nature of the hallucination' – that is, they may or may not 'recognize the false sensory experience' as false (*DSM-5*, p.822).

Such definitions do not, however, tell us a great deal about what it is like to experience a hallucination. Indeed, some philosophical and psychological approaches to hallucinations implicitly or explicitly suggest that hallucinatory experience is just like perceptual experience, with the simple difference that the former is anomalous or inaccurate.[13] Within epistemological philosophy we thus find concepts such as 'perfect hallucinations' ('something that presents perfectly the same appearance as, or cannot be introspectively distinguished by a perfect knower from, a veridical perception' (Farkas 2013, p.401)), and 'veridical hallucinations' ('when one hallucinates but when one's experience is accurate' in relation to the actual world (Macpherson 2013, p.6)). Such conceptions of hallucination – both the clinical and the

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[11] This definition is almost identical to Peter D. Slade and Richard P. Bentall's earlier definition of hallucination as 'Any percept-like experience which (a) occurs in the absence of an appropriate stimulus, (b) has the full force or impact of the corresponding actual (real) perception, and (c) is not amenable to direct and voluntary control by the experiencer' (Slade and Bentall 1988, p.23).

[12] As Flavie Waters et al. put it, in illusion the experience is 'elicited by an external stimulus but differs from the percept normally associated with the stimulus' (Waters et al. 2014, p.233).

[13] For example, what Fiona Macpherson terms 'common-kind' theories of perception and hallucination 'hold that the experiences had in perception are, qua mental states, exactly the same type as those had in hallucination. The difference between them is just that one is had when hallucinating, and the other when perceiving' (Macpherson 2013, p.16).

epistemological – necessarily rely on knowledge of what 'actually' pertains in a given situation in order to distinguish it from other states: a 'third-person view' of the experiential event.

Phenomenological philosophy, however, is interested in describing the 'first-person view' of experience. Subsequently, the 'difference between a perception and hallucination has to be established intra- and inter-experientially', rather than 'by appealing to a mysterious "viewer from nowhere" who can penetrate the "veil of appearances" in order to determine whether the intuitively given object of experience is matched by an object that exists in itself' (Zahavi 2017, p.88). In other words, since phenomenology investigates the nature of conscious, first-person *experience*, it is committed to the idea that the individual subject cannot somehow adopt a view of the 'actual world' as separate from his or her experience of it.[14] As a result, phenomenology tends to stress that there is indeed something that it is like to experience a hallucination, and that this is qualitatively different from veridical perception.

Broadly speaking, we can identify two approaches to hallucination which take different cases as their prototypes. The epistemological approach, in focusing on truth and error, is primarily interested in cases of hallucinatory *deception* – that is, cases where the hallucinating subject appears not to discriminate between hallucinations and perceptions – and from them extrapolates the metaphysical possibility of perfect and veridical hallucinations. As a result, 'The notion of hallucination most commonly discussed in [epistemological] philosophy is somewhat different from the notion used in psychology or psychiatry' (Farkas 2013, p.399). Those hallucinations which *are* recognised as different from perceptions are thus explicable as cases where the hallucination somehow falls short of the perfect standard, often because of their anomalous contents. Contrastingly, the phenomenological approach, in focusing on the first-person nature of experience, takes cases where the hallucination *is* distinguished from perception as prototypical, and considers cases of hallucinatory deception to involve an entirely different experiential context from that which pertains to ordinary experience of the world. In this regard, it avoids or rejects the notion of perfect hallucinations by suggesting instead that hallucinatory deception only occurs when *perceptual* experience, and the experience of reality as a whole, fall short of their typical standards. Ultimately, as I demonstrate throughout this study, our understanding of what a hallucination *is* necessarily influences and is influenced by

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[14] This position is more methodological than metaphysical, since it does not amount to saying that the world only exists 'in the mind'. Rather, it is a commitment to focusing on the world *as it is experienced*, since that is all the subject ever can access.

our understanding of reality, and therefore affects the ways in which we make sense of the world and our experience of it.[15]

Since this study is concerned primarily with the representation of actual hallucinatory experience, it is the phenomenological approach which I shall adopt here. As we shall see, first-person accounts of hallucination very often do contain descriptions of how the hallucinatory experience differs from ordinary perceptions. If there are indeed certain kinds of hallucination which are exactly the same as perceptual experience in their phenomenology, then I would suggest (along with Matthew Ratcliffe) that what both approaches have classed as hallucinations 'refer to two superficially similar but in fact completely different kinds of experience: an anomalous perceptual content and something that depends upon altered experiential form' (Ratcliffe 2015, p.107).[16]

Within the phenomenological and psychopathological literature, hallucinations are often described as being experientially distinct from perception and imagination. According to Ratcliffe, hallucination involves 'a distinctive and – to most of us – unfamiliar *kind of intentionality*' (Ratcliffe 2015, pp.105-106).[17] Something about the *form* of the experience – that is, the 'style of experiencing' (Ratcliffe 2015, p.105) – tends to differ from that of other experiential modalities, and in a way (or number of ways) that is recognisable if difficult to define. Indeed, it is because such experiences have 'a recognizable character of their own which distinguishes them' that they are often given a 'special name' (Van den Berg 1982, p.105), are attributed to a '"sixth sense"' (Merleau-Ponty 2002 [1945], p.239), or are referred to as

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[15] For instance, the clinical and common usage definitions of hallucination given earlier demonstrate a tacit commitment to the epistemological approach, since what appears to be important is that the hallucination is 'perception-like' and that it is not caused by a real, external object. While such a definition might be good enough for the diagnostician (who is, after all, taking a third-person view of the client), 'enforcing the surface analogy with abnormal perceptions could be clinically and conceptually misleading' (Raballo 2017, p.19), especially if one is looking to explain what hallucinations are, what the experience of them is like, and/or how they occur.

[16] Indeed, this distinction may well apply to the psychotic and psychedelic hallucinations I am dealing with here (which would fall within the latter category), and those hallucinations which occur as a result of a tangible physical impairment (such as in Charles Bonnet Syndrome or 'organic psychoses', which would fall within the former category). However, for a consideration of how hallucinations of anomalous perceptual content might also be said to structurally differ from ordinary experience see Ratcliffe 2017, pp.192-194.

[17] 'Intentionality', as it is understood in phenomenology and existentialism, is the way in which consciousness is directed towards its objects. As Thomas Flynn puts it, 'all consciousness is consciousness *of* an other-than-consciousness', and therefore 'it is the very nature of consciousness to aim toward (to "intend") an other' (Flynn 2006, p.17). In other words, a conscious state such as perceiving, believing, imagining, etc. is always *about* something, in that there is always something *that* is seen, believed, imagined. Since such conscious states are, in essence, ways of experiencing something, I prefer the term 'experiential modality' to 'intentional state', although for my purposes I consider the two to be effectively synonymous.

belonging to a different reality.[18] First-person accounts of psychotic hallucinations abound with references to this distinction:[19]

> I did not hear them as I heard real cries uttered by real people. The noises, localized on the right side, drove me to stop up my ears. But I readily distinguished them from the noises of reality. I heard them without hearing them… (Sechehaye 1951, p.38)

> 'It is not as strong as reality. It is like dreaming while you are awake, it is like a fairy tale. It is not really real. But yet it is real, it is like another world. There is no connection…' (Scharfetter 1980 [1976], p.153)

> 'The figures were there in space, but as if they had their own private space, peculiar to themselves…' (Jaspers 1997 [1963], v.1, p.71)

> '[W]ith these phenomena I experienced a world which had nothing to do with the world of the senses. Everything was "real", the forms were full of life. Later on the ordinary world still contained this other one with its own separate space and my consciousness was gliding between the two as it chose. The two worlds and their perceptions are utterly dissimilar…' (Schwab, quoted in Jaspers 1997, v.1, p.71).

> 'I saw the man only abstractly with my inner eye [….] I was aware of his attitude and general build, but we were apart in time and on different planes of existence' (Coate, quoted in Sass 1992, p.276)

There is thus, as Sass puts it, 'something about the hallucinations and delusions of such patients [which] sets their delusional worlds apart from the realm of normal, consensual reality' (Sass 1994, p.21).[20] Essentially, hallucinatory experience *feels* different from perceiving, imagining, etc., just as imagining *feels* different from perceiving, and remembering *feels* different from freely imagining, and so on.

Yet pinning down exactly what the difference (or differences) consists of proves to be rather difficult. The hallucinated object may feel 'somehow "not quite real"' and '"not fully present"' (Ratcliffe 2015, p.105), but this does not necessarily mean that it is sensorily vague or evanescent. For example, in Victor Kandinsky's experience of psychosis some

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[18] See also Louis Sass: 'Many schizophrenic patients seem to experience their delusions and hallucinations as having a special quality or feel that sets these apart from their "real" beliefs and perceptions, or from reality as experienced by the "normal" person' (Sass 1994, p.3).

[19] I shall primarily use the term 'psychosis' and its derivatives rather than 'schizophrenia' (which is subsumed by the category of psychosis) or 'madness' (which carries an excessive amount of cultural and intellectual baggage). Of course, all of these terms are problematic, but we need some way of referring to those patterns of experience and behaviour which fall outside of the norms *of the individual*, i.e. which constitute a significant break in the individual's habitual way of experiencing and behaving.

[20] Indeed, empirical data suggests that the majority of voice-hearers can reliably distinguish between their perceptions and their hallucinations, with less than a third stating that their voices were not distinguishable from real voices (Moritz and Larøi 2008, p.103). We shall return to this subgroup later in this section – for now, we are concerned with how the majority *do* make the distinction between perception and hallucination. It is important to remember, however, that in this context the distinction between perception and hallucination is *not* the same as the distinction between reality and unreality. For instance, Maurice Merleau-Ponty refers to a number of experiments involving psychotic patients in which real objects that corresponded with the patient's hallucinations were introduced into his or her environment. These patients appear to have been immediately aware that the real object was not the same as the hallucinated object, and many of them were startled to find real objects taking the place of their hallucinations (Merleau-Ponty 2002, pp.389-390).

hallucinations '"were relatively pale and indistinct. Others were bright with all sorts of colours, like real objects. They obscured real objects"' (Kandinsky, quoted in Jaspers 1997, v.1, p.72). Likewise, for Schwab '"Everything was 'real', the forms were full of life"', although at the same time this world he saw '"had nothing to do with the world of the senses"' (Schwab, quoted in Jaspers 1997, v.1, p.71). Yet despite often being 'elaborated with a remarkable degree of detail and specificity and with a certain quality of perceptual concreteness that rivals that of the real world', hallucinations also exhibit a kind of '"phantom concreteness," a feeling of almost material actuality characterizing what might be expected to have a more ephemeral and inner mode of being' (Sass 1994, p.87).[21] Moreover, hallucinations are sometimes described as taking place in either internal or external 'space', or as being difficult to place in either (Ratcliffe 2017, pp.55-57).[22] Yet even when they are said to occur in external space, the majority of subjects' hallucinations are also said to lack 'publicness', i.e. the sense that the hallucinated object can be experienced by others (see Aggernaes 1972; Garrett and Silva 2003). There is something of a contradiction here, at least in terms of how we normally conceive of 'external' space as precisely that space which *is* accessible to others; presumably, this is why hallucinations are often described as taking place within a separate reality or with some other sort of qualification. Finally, there is also sometimes a sense in which the hallucination cannot be ignored: '"I didn't always have the power to deflect my attention from them to other tangible objects. Every effort to do that was like rolling a millstone uphill"' (Jaspers 1997, v.1, p.141). As Kenneth Hugdahl et al. put it, hallucinations (in this case auditory verbal hallucinations) 'interfere with the ability to attend to the outer world around the patient, and the ability to inhibit, or suppress, the "voices" once they occur' (Hugdahl et al. 2013, p.301).[23] Whether or not all 'non-organic' hallucinations share this quality is difficult to determine; it is not often referred to, but it is also rather difficult to define. Indeed, all of the qualities referred to here are difficult to define, but that does not mean that they are not significant parts of what the

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[21] The term 'phantom concreteness', as Sass acknowledges, was originally coined by R. D. Laing in *The Divided Self* (1960), although Sass more clearly defines it as a 'strange phenomenal presence, the bizarre combination of unreality and specificity, of the mental and the seemingly physical' (Sass 1994, p.91).

[22] Hallucinations which are said to take place in 'inner space' are sometimes termed 'pseudo-hallucinations' (Jaspers 1997, v.1, pp.69-70). However, the term is potentially misleading, both in that 'it wrongly suggests that one kind of experience is somehow a poor approximation of another', and in that 'internal' hallucinations can 'have a sense of reality that is, in some respects, *more* pronounced' than external hallucinations (Ratcliffe 2017, p.100).

[23] As I explore further in Chapter 2, the fact that Hugdahl et al. are focusing on auditory verbal hallucinations does not necessarily mean that their account does not also apply to (at least some) visual hallucinations. However, in the case of hallucinations brought about by physical impairment, things may well be different. For instance, Oliver Sacks describes a patient with Charles Bonnet Syndrome whose hallucinations 'sometimes fascinated her, sometimes bored her', and 'seemed to have nothing to do with her' (Sacks 2012, p.4).

experience is like: as we shall see in the following section, the project of defining exactly how perceiving, imagining, dreaming, and remembering all differ is fraught with the same problems.

It is precisely because of these differences between intentional states that we should be careful with definitions which suggest that hallucinations are 'due to a failure to identify imaginings' (Currie 2000, p.170), as Ratcliffe points out (Ratcliffe 2017, pp.39, 62). In one sense – the aetiological – the definition is potentially non-problematic, but that is only because all experiences which are not said to be caused by the shared, 'real' world are imaginings *by default*. In other words, imaginings comprise the broad class of intentional objects which include a sensory aspect but which are somehow self-produced (in that they are not world-produced). Dreams, memories, and 'free' imaginings are all still 'imaginings' in this sense, even though they are given different names *because* they differ in their phenomenology. Of course, the phenomenology may in some ways point towards the aetiology (e.g. memories feel somehow non-malleable in a way that free imaginings do not, and this can be explained by the idea that in memory our imaginings conform to a broader schemata, thus following a kind of script or 'groove' that has already been carved out by prior experience).

However, the difficulty that is particular to hallucinatory experience is that the individual 'faces the task of conveying to others a type of experience that does not fit into familiar categories' (Ratcliffe 2017, p.39). For this reason, 'It is plausibly the interpreter, more so than the patient, who is responsible for mistaking an unusual experience for a simple perception or belief' (Ratcliffe 2017, p.39). As Theodore Sarbin points out, there are a number of factors which might influence whether the actual nature of an experience is accurately being communicated, especially if speakers lack the linguistic or conceptual apparatus to express themselves clearly (Sarbin 1967, pp.370-372). After all, 'For patients content is usually the one important thing [….] they muddle up hallucinations, pseudo-hallucinations, delusional awarenesses, etc., because they have never had to differentiate what seems to them so unimportant a matter' (Jaspers 1997, v.1, p.59). More importantly, 'The non-identity of [the] meaning of "real" for the diagnoser and the patient reflects some of the problems in the employment of the words real and reality' (Sarbin 1967, p.377).

Indeed, perhaps the central problem which hallucinatory experience raises is the question of what it means for something to feel 'real'. Ultimately, as William James puts it, 'Belief, the sense of reality, feels like itself – that is about as much as we can say' (James 1901 [1890], p.286). Karl Jaspers likewise states that

> What the *experience of reality* is in itself can hardly be deduced nor can we compare it as a phenomenon with other related phenomena. We have to regard it as a primary phenomenon which can only be conveyed indirectly. Our attention gets drawn to it because it can be disturbed pathologically and so we appreciate that it exists. (Jaspers 1997, v.1, p.94)

There is something that it is for something to be real, even if we cannot say what that something consists of – it is simply given to us as an 'awareness of reality' (Jaspers 1997, v.1, p.94) or 'fonction du réel' (Janet 1903, v.1, p.ix). In this regard, *belief, or the sense of reality, is a sort of feeling more allied to the emotions than anything else*' (James 1901, p.283). Like an emotion, 'The quality of reality is also something that varies in intensity, allowing objects of experience, including oneself, to take on an 'unreal' aspect' (Ratcliffe 2005, p.51), as happens in psychosis. Indeed, there is a sense in which the feeling of reality is akin to 'the old Humean dimension of "vivacity" or ***vividness***' (Thomas 2014, p.159), which is equally hard to define and yet which persistently reappears in discussions of the imagination.[24] In this context, vividness is not to be understood as 'brightness' or 'saturation', but rather 'a superior *force*', 'a superior influence' (Hume 1896 [1738-1740], v.3, p.629) – or, to draw more heavily on its Latin root, a sense of the 'livingness' of the thing experienced.[25] It is perhaps something rather like a 'pull' or a *compulsion*, which, like gravity, continuously orients us towards the world. This compulsory aspect is potentially why pain is sometimes considered such a good candidate for affirming what is undeniably real, since pain has an insistent quality which constantly draws attention to itself.[26]

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[24] It is worth nothing that at one point Pierre Janet distinguishes between 'La fonction du réel' and 'le sentiment du réel' (Janet 1903, v.1, p.xi), just as Jaspers sometimes refers to 'feelings of reality' as well as the 'awareness of reality' (Jaspers, 1997, pp.84, 94). In this regard, both Janet and Jaspers seem to conceive of the 'fonction' or 'awareness' of reality as a kind of primary faith, a pre-immersion, in the primary reality, but one which is partly constituted by the 'sentiment' or 'feeling' of reality (which would seem to be aligned with 'vividness'). Equally, although James allies the 'sense' or 'feeling' of reality with the emotions, he also adds a number of other qualifying conditions to the experience of reality which seem to push him towards a similar position as that held by Janet and Jaspers (and the issue is further complicated by the slight differences between the views expressed in *The Principles of Psychology* (1890) and *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902)). At the same time, however, James, Jaspers, and Janet all seem to end up blurring the distinction between the 'fonction' or 'awareness' of reality and the 'sentiment' or 'feeling' of reality, and the two do not appear to be entirely separate (or, indeed, entirely separable).

[25] Admittedly, as Amy Kind has noted (Kind 2017), Hume seems to be using the term 'vividness' in a way that conflates its two meanings, saying at one moment that memory 'paints its objects in more distinct colours' than imagination, and at the next that memory 'flows in upon the mind in a forcible manner' (Hume 1896, v.1, p.9). Yet both James and Merleau-Ponty also refer to 'vivid objects' (James 1901, p.301) and 'vital value' (Merleau-Ponty 2002, p.61) in describing the sense of reality, in a manner which suggests that the significant experiential aspect being referred to in all cases is essentially the same. As I suggest shortly, there is potentially a reason why the two meanings of vividness are difficult to separate, since what is bright and colourful tends to stand out from less bright and colourful surroundings and thus attracts our attention.

[26] According to James, 'Among all sensations, the *most* belief-compelling are those productive of pleasure or of pain. [John] Locke expressly makes the *pleasure-* or *pain*-giving quality to be the ultimate human criterion of anything's reality' (James 1901, p.306). The same notion appears in the novels under discussion (see Chapter 2,

However, this compulsion or vividness is only a part of what contributes to our overall sense of reality. At least two other factors pertain to what we think of as real perception: a sense of *presence*, and a sense of *resistance*.[27] A sense of presence is an awareness of the object as being available, and this sense can vary in degree depending on how available we feel the object to be. The wall behind me, although not being perceived at this moment, is still felt as 'real' in that it is accessible through possible movement. Presence is thus largely a matter of possibility, of a sense of the availability of things – or, as Ratcliffe puts it (borrowing from Edmund Husserl), 'a distinctive pattern of anticipation and fulfilment' (Ratcliffe 2015, p.101).[28] The sense of resistance is intrinsically bound up with our sense of agency, our sense of being in control of our physical and mental acts. Indeed, it is partly because we feel that we control the body that it has a certain 'transparency', as being that *through* which the world is experienced. If something is outside of our control, it opens up the possibility for *interaction*, a dynamic interplay between entities. Yet if everything were felt to be under our control, or if nothing were felt to be under our control, then no such interaction would be possible. In the former case, we should have nothing to interest us, because there would be nothing to accomplish, no possibility of success or failure of any kind; and in the latter case, we should not be able to take part in the interaction at all. As Jaspers puts it, 'What is real is *what resists us*', and 'The achievement of a goal against resistance or defeat thereby brings with it an experience of reality' (Jaspers 1997, v.1, p.94).

In the immediate experience of reality, the three aspects of presence, resistance, and compulsion/vividness are inseparable, and are not readily distinguishable. For example, in order for something to resist us, it would surely need to be present; for something to compel us, it would need to be independent of us, and therefore not entirely under our conscious control (i.e. freedom from and separateness from are mutually implied – the word 'independence' tends to serve both functions in our language); and for something to be present here and now, we must already have an attachment to *this* body in order to define the here and now, and such an attachment arises from the compulsive force of what is perceived. Therefore, with imagining, we might speak of a lack of presence, which usually goes hand-in-hand with a greater sense of

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Section 3, and Chapter 3, Section 2) – yet these novels appear to suggest that pain is far more important than pleasure as a means of affirming reality.

[27] Janet likewise refers to 'les opérations de la volonté' (the operations of the will), le sentiment du réel' (the feeling of reality), and 'le sentiment du présent' (the feeling of the present) when discussing the 'fonction du réel' (Janet 1903, v.1, p.xi).

[28] I shall return to the sense of presence in both the following section and in Chapter 2, Section 2.

control, and a reduced sense of the 'livingness' of the imaginary.[29] As Nigel Thomas suggests, the differences between the experiential modalities 'are best construed as differences of degree' rather than of kind (Thomas 2014, p.138). The different modalities thus inhabit a 'multidimensional spectrum', with (at least) the three experiential senses of 'vividness' (i.e. compulsion), 'presence', and 'resistance' or 'agency' being the adjustable determinant variables (Thomas 2014, pp.163, 159). It must be remembered that in being points on a spectrum (and a multidimensional spectrum at that), the modalities have prototypical centres and 'fuzzy' borders, which means that certain atypical experiences will thus be difficult to classify.

However, as I have suggested, usually the different features appear in tandem – that is, changes in one dimension tend to involve changes in another, like chained sliders on an equaliser. In a sense, we are 'tuned' to perceptual experience, and thus a radical separation of different variables will lead to a felt distortion in the experiential structure. Of course, what 'counts' for the individual as a distortion, *qua* distortion, will be largely a matter of habit or familiarity. If the only music we have ever heard is from a gramophone, the cracks and whistles will not be distortions but a part of what music *should* sound like. So hallucinations, and other 'reality distortions', are necessarily experiences which somehow involve a radical change in the norms of how experience ordinarily presents itself. The 'sliders' are at opposite ends of their respective scales: on the one hand, 'a need is experienced to regard the hallucinated object as real' (Jaspers 1997, v.1, p.96), while on the other, the experienced object 'lacks the full sense of "presence" that characterises mundane perceptual experience' (Ratcliffe 2015, p.106). Indeed, the first-person accounts cited earlier appear to attest to this unfamiliar discordance, in that they all seem to recognise a need to place the hallucinations within a spatiotemporal domain which is *not* continuous with the here and now. That some nonetheless attest to the reality of the hallucinations despite being self-reflectively aware of the apparent contradiction is illustrative of the distortion we are considering here. In essence, it would appear hallucination

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[29] Memory presents an interesting – and problematic – case of 'imagining' in this regard: a memory is not present in the way that a perceived object is present, yet many of the objects of memory are 'present' in that they are potentially *re*-accessible: like China or the moon, we have a kind of faith that we *could* access them. At the same time, there is a sense in which the exact experience of the object is *not* re-accessible (as Heraclitus famously put it, we cannot step in the same river twice). Likewise, a memory is in some senses more 'vivid' than free imagining, as Hume points out (Hume 1896, v.1, p.9), but is by no means as vivid as actual perception. Yet imaginings more generally are, as we shall see in the next section, essentially constructed *from* memories (which is why it is so hard to draw a sharp distinction between the two). Finally, we have a sense of memory being both under our control and not under our control – we can choose *to* remember, but we are not free to 'remember' whatever we like (for this would be to imagine, and not to remember). In a sense, a memory is an imaginary experience which involves a sense of the *limitation* of imaginative possibilities, exhibiting an 'anticipation-fulfilment profile' that distinguishes it from both free imagining and perceptual experience.

involves a radical flouting of the normal conditions of 'real' experience, which amounts to a felt sense of *ontological upheaval*.

What I have tried to demonstrate so far is that in the phenomenological and psychopathological literature, reality is not *merely* a matter of judgement or conceptual inference. As Merleau-Ponty puts it, hallucination 'brings us back to the pre-logical bases of our knowledge', for though it is 'not a sensory process, still less is it a judgement'; it is 'not a perception, *but it has the value of reality*' (Merleau-Ponty 2002, pp.389, 398, 399). However, this is not to say that judgement and intellection play no part in creating and sustaining reality, but rather that a part of what constitutes reality is

> a deeper function without which perceived objects would lack the distinctive sign of reality, as they do for the schizophrenic, and through which they begin to count or be valid for us. It is the momentum which carries us beyond subjectivity, which gives us our place in the world prior to any science and any verification, through a kind of 'faith' or 'primary opinion'… (Merleau-Ponty 2002, p.400)

At the same time, reality is structured and shaped by our understanding and judgement, i.e. our *interpretation*. There is not, however, a clean separation between the immediately experiential and the reflectively conceptual. On the one hand, as Jaspers suggests, our reality-judgements and interpretations are not always explicit (Jaspers 1997, v.1, p.95). On the other hand, experience and judgement necessarily interact with and transform each other. 'A judgment of reality can itself be transformed into a new direct experience' (Jaspers 1997, v.1, p.95), and 'as [Martin] Heidegger has emphasized, experience can be transformed by how it is interpreted' (Sass 1992, p.294). As a result, 'certain conceptual models of human existence, like the Cartesian, may not just disguise but also distort their objects' (Sass 1992, p.294). Indeed, as Jaspers points out, a dream 'is, so to speak, an abnormal event which is normal', since it involves a radical transformation of the 'psychic life' which nonetheless falls within the horizons of our 'normal' experience (Jaspers 1997, v.1, p.372). The same could be said of imaginings, memories, and inner speech – for an individual who had never experienced the forms of these modalities, a sudden experience of one of them would also potentially involve a sense of ontological upheaval since the experience would radically change his or her sense of how objects could be present to consciousness.[30] It is precisely this juxtaposition which characterises the 'morbid process', which 'break[s] into the psyche with an elementary force' (Jaspers 1997, v.1, p.132).

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[30] Note that here I am referring to a *felt sense* of ontological upheaval, in that the individual would have an experience of how objects could 'exist' in a new way. In this regard, I adopt the same ontologically pluralistic position as James when he states the things which we regard as 'unreal' in our practical life 'still have existence, though not the same existence, as the real things' (James 1901, p.291).

Ultimately, we cannot separate the hallucination from its context, and we cannot separate the experience from the individual's way of making sense of it. The sense-making is intrinsic to the experience, not just in terms of the particular experience, but in terms of the wider sense-making strategies which shape the individual's understanding of reality as a whole. As Frank Larøi et al. put it, 'the evidence suggests that the voice-hearing experience is deeply shaped by local patterns of understanding the self, the mind, and the fundamental nature of reality' – that is, they are 'shaped by local expectation and meaning' (Larøi et al. 2014, pp.217, 216).[31] We cannot, therefore, entirely separate the hallucinatory experience from the individual's ontological and epistemological understanding – that is, the understanding of what reality *is* and of how reality is accessed. Similarly, Jaspers asserts that 'Morbid psychic events depend in their content and in their form on the cultural milieu which is affected by them in turn' (Jaspers, 1997, v.1, p.46). To complicate the picture still further, Jaspers acknowledges that content also 'modifies the mode in which the phenomena are experienced; it gives them their weight in relation to the total psychic life and points to the way in which they are conceived and interpreted' (Jaspers 1997, v.1, 59). For instance, the hideous face of a devil, or a voice discussing *me*, is arresting in a way that birdsong or patches of colour are not, which accords with James' notion that reality is (at least partly) determined through *'relation to our emotional and active life'* (James 1901, p.295).[32]

If we take these factors into consideration, we can see how hallucinatory deception might arise despite the phenomenological difference between hallucination and perception. It appears that in psychosis, the consensual, intersubjective world loses its attraction, its vividness – as Eugène Minkowski puts it, there is a 'loss of vital contact with reality' (Minkowski, 2008 [1926] p.518). Objects may appear like '"stage accessories" or "pasteboard scenery"', and the world may be regarded as 'some kind of endless hologram' (Sass 1992, pp.48, 144) or be felt to appear '"as through a veil"' (Jaspers 1997, v.1, p.62). As Renee puts it, 'A wall of brass separates me from everybody and everything [….] Madness was finding oneself permanently

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[31] Larøi et al. present the example of an attempt to translate notions of thought insertion and withdrawal into the Iban language: 'In the Iban culture, thinking arises from the heart-liver region. It is not contained in the mind, which is somehow contained in the brain – a more Western conception' (Larøi et al. 2014, p.217). Therefore, 'in the process of making thought insertion/withdrawal questions intelligible to the Iban […] they lost their core Schneiderian meaning' (Larøi et al. 2014, p.217).

[32] Ratcliffe suggests something similar when he discusses one of Sacks' descriptions of a patient with Charles Bonnet Syndrome. The patient had 'insight' in that she was not only aware of and accepted her diagnosis, but also was fully aware of the unreality of her hallucinations. Indeed, these hallucinations 'seemed to have nothing to do with her', and thus 'sometimes fascinated' and 'sometimes bored' her (Sacks 2012, p.4). However, when at one point the patient's hallucinations 'seemed "absolutely real" to her, this was associated with their becoming "frightening"', which Ratcliffe explains by suggesting that 'affective anticipation contributes to a sense of perceptual presence' (Ratcliffe 2017, p.192).

in an all-embracing unreality' (Sechehaye 1951, p.24). The psychotic patient might thus 'perceive both the external world and the existence of his own ego, but he no longer *feels* their reality' (Sass 1994, p.24).[33] Without this attraction to the world, this necessary 'momentum which carries us beyond subjectivity' (Merleau-Ponty 2002, p.400), its claim to ontological primacy becomes negotiable. Since, as James points out, a hallucination or a mental image is only 'unreal' *in contrast to* the primary reality, the attenuation of the latter allows for other 'realities' to challenge or subvert its place at the top of the hierarchy (James 1901, pp.288-289). In this regard, the patient loses the sense of 'ontological security' (Laing 1990 [1960], p.39), the sense of being anchored or immersed in a world.[34] As both Sass and Ratcliffe point out – citing Ludwig Wittgenstein – such immersion is a necessary precondition of doubt, since 'the intelligibility of the attitude of doubt, depends on grasping something as potentially anomalous *relative to* a wider backdrop of experience' (Ratcliffe 2017, pp.156-157; see also Sass 1994, p.111). In other words, being able to doubt the reality of hallucinations and delusions requires being prereflectively certain of the reality of the context in which they occur. If such certainty is no longer felt, then perhaps all that is left to the individual is the possibility of determining reality through logic.

Yet when we try to access reality and the self solely through logic – as we might do in philosophical deliberation – we find ourselves confronted by a host of contradictions and paradoxes (some of which I explore in the following chapters). Indeed, Sass suggests that psychotic delusions arise through the partial reification of abstract philosophical insights into lived experience: 'it is possible for what is in some sense a fundamentally ontological experience actually to be transformed into one that is at least quasi-ontic in nature' (Sass 1992, p.294). For example, a 'solipsistic insight' regarding how the objects of experience depend on the individual's own consciousness ends up being 'taken to imply that [a perceived object…] is somehow flimsy in a material way, as if, say, it were made of tissue paper' (Sass 1992,

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[33] Note that a lack of vital attachment to the perceptual world as a whole would in some cases eventually entail a loss of the sense of that world's presence. As already observed, the sense of presence equates to a sense of accessibility, which is itself determined by the individual's sense of spatiotemporal orientation. However, if consensual reality is no longer felt to be real, then neither is the subject's lived-body (for as we shall see in Chapter 2, the lived-body and the world are intrinsically related). Without the body serving to anchor the subject in the 'here and now', the very conditions according to which presence is measured are no longer stable. Nothing, or everything, might be present, since nothing, or everything, might be felt to be accessible, depending on the world in which the subject feels his or her body to be oriented.

[34] Although R. D. Laing primarily focuses on the ontological insecurity of the individual's sense of self, I consider the term able to cover the sense of the ontological security of consensual reality as well. Indeed, the interconnectedness of self and world (which we shall explore further in the following chapters), means that the loss of one necessarily entails loss of the other. Laing, however, appears to be propounding an explanatory model which attributes causal priority to the ontological insecurity of the self, which I do not wish to commit to entirely here.

p.294).[35] Without being prereflectively grounded in the perceptual world – that is, without already having taken the reality of the perceptual world for granted – there is nothing to prevent intellectual reflection from radically changing the entire structure of the lived-world and the very nature of conscious experience. Delusions and hallucinations are, in this sense, cut from the same cloth, since both arise through the loss of the pre-logical faith in the consensual, perceptual world.[36]

In this regard, psychosis demonstrates that our immediate apprehension of reality is not *primarily* based in logic and judgement. As Merleau-Ponty puts it,

> In so far as we believe what we see, we do so without any verification, and the mistake of the traditional theories of perception is to introduce into perception itself intellectual operations and a critical examination of the evidence of the senses, to which we in fact resort only when direct perception founders in ambiguity… (Merleau-Ponty 2002, p.399)

A lack of the immediate certainty of reality in perceptual experience thus allows for hallucinations to feel as real as, or more real than, perceptual experience, *despite* their different phenomenology. Indeed, as Sass, Jaspers, and Eugen Bleuler all note, psychotic patients tend to display a kind of '"double-entry bookkeeping"' (Bleuler 1969 [1911], p.56) or 'double orientation' (Jaspers 1997, v.1, p.150; see also Sass 1992, pp.274-275), in that they seem to be 'simultaneously living in two different worlds' (Henriksen and Parnas 2014, p.544). Such patients 'know, for instance, where they are, what time it is and that they are having a mental illness. At the same time this is only an appearance, the golden age has arrived and time no longer matters' (Jaspers 1997, v.1, p.172). In essence, hallucinatory deception does not appear to be simply a matter of non-real objects somehow slotting in amongst real objects, but rather involves an attenuation of perceptual vitality which means that other experiential modalities can vie with perception for ontological primacy.

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[35] Some of the linguistic theories which I consider in the following section suggest that even abstract, propositional thought partly involves perceptual enaction in the metaphorical use of object schemas (Zwaan 2004, p.57). If this view is correct, it would lend support to Sass' notion that in psychosis propositional thought can mutate into lived experience.

[36] Indeed, for this reason that it is sometimes very difficult to distinguish between delusions and hallucinations, especially if the two processes exacerbate each other in a self-reinforcing feedback loop (i.e. when the hallucinations prompt the construction of a delusory framework, and the delusion appears to prompt further hallucinations). Moreover, trying to separate the two experiences proves problematic if we start to ask exactly *when* a belief in the reality of a hallucination becomes a delusion, since the belief in the reality of an experience does not neatly break down into occurrent and propositional parts. Indeed, we encounter a similar problem if we try to separate perceptual experience from belief in the 'propositional contents' of perceptual experience (e.g. 'I see x' and 'I believe that I see x'). As Merleau-Ponty points out, 'Reality is a solid tissue. It does not await our judgments to annex to itself the most surprising phenomena, nor to reject our most likely fancies' (Merleau-Ponty 2002, p.62).

Of course, hallucinatory deception is not solely confined to psychosis, although this is certainly the prototypical context in which it occurs. However, with non-psychotic hallucinations we still might expect to find some kind of distortion of the overall experiential context, such as in states of fatigue, exhaustion, or extreme anxiety. In such states, while the individual may not have lost his or her grasp on reality, the world still takes on an aspect which is qualitatively different from ordinary experience. Finally, we must be careful not to conflate different kinds of 'deception', for there is a great deal of difference between an object perceived with absolute certainty and a perceptual object which is felt to be somehow indeterminate or potential, and which awaits further exploration. Indeed, just as the phenomenology of perception is different in different states of consciousness, 'our momentary state of consciousness is not an even one throughout' (Jaspers 1997, v.1, p.139). The experience of the perceptual field can thus also vary in its phenomenology, with what is at the fringes of perception being indeterminate and 'negotiable' in a way that objects directly before us are not. This quality of negotiability or equivocacy does not usually pertain to what we ordinarily consider to be perception proper – and what is negotiable or equivocal is so precisely because it lacks not just the clarity, but also perhaps the presence and vividness of what is non-negotiable and unequivocal. Therefore, a hallucinatory deception which occurs on these fringes of the perceptual field – such as a vague humming or murmuring behind a wall, or a figure glimpsed through mist – is still phenomenologically different from prototypical perceptual experience, just as an actual perception which occurs on these fringes is phenomenologically different from prototypical perceptual experience.[37] Indeed, those states in which the whole world feels unreal, such as psychosis and fatigue, might be characterised as states in which *all* perceptual experience is relegated to the fringe – and it is telling, in this regard, that experiences of unreality are often metaphorically expressed in terms of distance and obstruction (e.g. '"Reality recedes from me"' (Laing 1990, p.146); '"everything is far away"' (Jaspers 1997, v.1, p.81); 'A wall of brass separates me from everybody and everything' (Sechehaye 1951, p.24)).[38] Therefore, in those cases where hallucination does appear to deceive – and thus does not incur a sense of ontological upheaval – we might conclude either that a significant sense of ontological change has *already* taken place, or else that the experience possesses a quality of negotiability which hardly qualifies it as an instance of deception proper. Although this study

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[37] Such experiences are perhaps very difficult to differentiate from imaginings and 'illusions', since they occur at the fuzzy boundaries of intentional state types. In this sense, they are very different from the kinds of hallucination which are felt to be absolutely real, yet are also unequivocally not a part of the consensual world.

[38] See also Sass: 'Patients will sometimes express Unreality by stating that everything seems distant, or as if behind plate glass' (Sass 1992, p.48).

focuses on more psychopathologically prototypical hallucinations – including those which occur in double-bookkeeping – it is possible that even in boundary cases the hallucination is still phenomenologically different from concrete perception. The difference itself, however, does not provide sufficient means to relegate it to a lesser place in the ontological hierarchy, and thus it still has potential to 'deceive' in the weak sense.

Hallucinations, it would seem, are more than a matter of perceptual error: they involve a different kind of intentionality, a different experiential structure. Essentially, there is something that it is like to experience a hallucination, and this is not the same as what it is like to experience a perception. An awareness of the difference of the hallucination does not, however, necessarily entail a lack of belief in its reality, especially if perceptual experience itself no longer feels real. Yet if hallucinatory experience involves a radically different intentionality to perceptual experience, how can it be represented in literature? What, in fact, does it mean to 'represent' the phenomenology of any experiential modality in textual narrative?

Section 2: Readerly Experience

In order to examine how hallucinatory experience might be represented in fiction, we need a rough model of how any experience is 'represented' in textual narrative in the first place. More specifically, we need a model of the reader's experience of textual narrative, since it is only in terms of the interaction between text and reader that we can speak of 'experience'. Such a model is not intended to provide an overarching account of all possible reader-text interactions, but rather to provide a normative account of those cases where readers approach textual narrative in order *to* experience something (which is itself the normal approach to narrative texts within most cultures).

According to Wolfgang Iser, 'fictional language provides instructions for the building of a situation and so for the production of an imaginary object' (Iser 1978 [1976], p.64). Similarly, Rolf Zwaan suggests that 'language is a set of cues to the comprehender to construct an experiential (perception plus action) simulation of the described situation' (Zwaan 2004, p.36).[39] Yet the construction metaphors used by both theorists should not be understood as

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[39] See also Lawrence Barsalou: 'On parsing the sentences in a text, surface syntax provides instructions for building perceptual simulations' (Barsalou 1999, p.592), and Marco Caracciolo: 'narrative texts are experience-providing machines that come with the instruction "imagine that…" and run on readers' own past experiences'

implying that this is an effortful process, or rather, that it *feels like* an effortful process. Indeed, Zwaan states that 'words *activate* experiences with their referents' (Zwaan 2004, p.36 [my italics]), which suggests a certain (but by no means complete) passivity on the part of the reader. In this regard, reading a passage of text 'activates something akin to actual memories […] not some abstract "recipe" for carrying out [the described] activities' (Caracciolo 2014a, p.46).[40] It is thus more helpful to think of 'language comprehension' as 'a vicarious experience' of what is described (Zwaan 2004, p.36) – which is, after all, how most readers tend to view their experience of narrative texts. The view which Zwaan is specifically arguing against here is that textual comprehension is purely a matter of manipulating amodal propositions (i.e. the computing of abstract symbols). Of course, language itself is an amodal representation (at least insofar as a signifier is abstract), and it does present propositional content. However, Zwaan cites a number of experiments which suggest that readers' representations contain more information than is provided solely by the linguistic propositions themselves, and that this information relates to the embodied experience of the referenced objects and events.[41] It is in this sense that 'Words or morphemes activate experiential representations that have much finer shadings than word senses and may include various shapes of the referent object – a perspective on the object' (Zwaan 2004, p.58).

However, we need to clarify what is meant by an experiential or perceptual 'representation', especially since Zwaan also seems to refer to such representations as 'simulations'. According to enactivist accounts of cognition, imagining involves simulating a perceptual experience of an object or event. What makes such experience 'representational is precisely that its object is mentally evoked or brought forth while also phenomenally absent' (Thompson 2007, p.151), as opposed to the non-representational experience of actual perception. What makes such experience simulative is that it involves the '(partial, abortive, and largely covert) enactment of the perceptual routine through which the identity of its object (*i.e.*, the thing imagined) would be recognized if actually present' (Thomas 2014, p.136). Of

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(Caracciolo 2012, p.55). All such approaches ultimately point back to the theories of Roman Ingarden, which argue that the reader '"clothes" the corresponding portrayed object in intuitive qualities; he sees it to a certain extent "in his imagination," so that it almost displays itself to him in its bodily form' (Ingarden 1973b [1968], p.57). In this sense, 'the reader must perform a function analogous to perception', and engages in a 'quasi-direct intercourse with the objects' referred to by the text (Ingarden 1973b, p.56-57).

[40] I explore this tension between the feelings of activity and passivity in the reading process further in Chapters 2, 3, and 4.

[41] For example, people interpret the verb 'approach' differently depending on the size of the verb subject. In comprehending '*The tractor is just approaching the fence*' and '*The mouse is just approaching the fence*', readers 'interpret the distance between the figure and the landmark as being longer when the figure is large (tractor) compared with when it is small (mouse) [….] Apparently, comprehenders behave as if they are actually standing in the situation, looking at the tractor or mouse approaching a fence' (Zwaan 1999, p.16).

course, the central claim of the enactivist position is that the objects of perception are *also* 'brought forth' or 'enacted', and that in this sense 'perceptual experience consists in the ongoing activity of schema-guided perceptual exploration of the environment' (Thomas 1999, p.218). We thus 'bring content to experience, by action' (Noë 2004, p.100), in that we perform particular patterns of exploration to determine what is around us. Schemata, in this sense, are procedures 'that specify how to direct our attention most effectively in a particular situation: how to efficiently examine and explore, and thus interpret, a scene or object of a certain type' (Thomas 1999, p.218).[42] Which schema we use in a given instance is determined by the overall context of our exploration, including the results or 'feedback' from previous explorations and the particular goals which we are trying to attain. Mental imagery is thus experienced 'when someone persists in acting out the seeking of some particular information even though they cannot reasonably expect it to be there' (Thomas 2018). Therefore, the similarity between perception and imagination is a '"structural resemblance"' (Caracciolo 2014a, p.101) of exploratory activity.

As Thomas stresses, the exploratory movements involved in imagination are only partial or 'abortive', in that the body is prepared for the necessary movements without having to actually carry them out to their full extent.[43] Moreover, since we are concerned here only with the movements needed to recognise the object as one of its type – and not any of its particular features – imaginary experiences can have a great deal of variability depending on how much content we bring forth. There is often a felt difference, for instance, between imagining how a particular chair would look if it were situated in the room we are in, and the brief imagining of a chair which occurs when reading a description of a room. The latter might not even, on reflection, seem to have called forth any kind of mental image, because we have made no effort to enact many other significant properties of the chair – its colour, its material, its design, etc. – for in such a case we are enacting instead the significant properties of the room. 'Experience is fractal, in this sense' (Noë 2004, p.135), in that there is always a degree of grain to which we could attend. What is a 'property' of one object can in itself become an intentional object with its own properties, and those properties can themselves be taken as

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[42] Gilbert Ryle similarly suggests that the perception of an object involves 'the use of a technique' or 'recipe', which we use when we feel there is sufficient reason to put it into practice (Ryle 1949, p.234).

[43] There is evidence to suggest that, when imaging, we spontaneously perform eye movements that correspond to the spatial relationships between imaged objects. This effect occurs, for instance, when we listen to spoken descriptions, retell spoken descriptions, and describe previously seen pictures (Johansson et al. 2006, p.1053). Likewise, it appears that 'covert oral behavior increases over base line during the covert performance of a wide variety of language tasks' (McGuigan 1970, p.321) – in other words, inner speech (including reading) involves increased muscular activity in our speech-producing apparatus (tongue, lips, throat, etc.).

objects with properties, and so on *ad infinitum*. Usually there is a minimal point at which we stop taking properties as objects (and certainly there is a point at which we lack words for the objectification of these properties), but this is largely because the objects at such a level cease to be meaningful for us.[44] Therefore, as Alva Noë puts it,

> A perceptual experience doesn't analyze or break down into the experience of atomic elements, or simple features. Experience is always of a field, with a structure, and you can never comprehend the whole field in a single act of consciousness. Something always remains present, but out of view. All you can do is run through features serially. (Noë 2004, p.135)

Similarly, we can always enact more of the properties of an imagined object over a more extended temporal period, in order to more fully realise our experience of it – and the more fully realised our experience of the imagined object, the more likely we are to be reflectively aware of it as a 'mental image'. Note that this does not mean that we actually 'mak[ing] a tour' (Sartre 2004 [1940], p.9) of the object (or of the space), as we might do in perception – rather, we are trying to combine the enaction of different perceptual experiences as experiences of the parts of a wider whole.

Understanding imagination as embodied and enactive does, however, suggest that some of the 'properties' of the object are imagined even in the most minimal cases. As schema-guided exploration, both perception and imagination involve a coupling of the experiencing body and the intentional object, which means that there is always some perspective on what is being experienced. Indeed, in terms of object recognition there is bound to be some variability in which movements are necessary. Recognising a chair from the front, for instance, is different from recognising one from the side, or from behind, or upside-down, and in order to attend to those features which determine the object as a chair we would need to perform a different set of movements in each case.[45] Whichever schema is chosen when imagining is likely to be determined by context, but not necessarily. There are bound to be cases where prototypicality – what Merleau-Ponty calls the 'optimum' perspective from which the object 'vouchsafes most of itself' (Merleau-Ponty 2002, p.352) – interferes with the context provided by previous imaginative acts, since in imagination this context is only sustained through memory, whereas

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[44] Potentially there are also bodily limitations on what we can bring forth – for instance, what we can focus on with the naked eye – but such limitations are in themselves a part of what determines what is and is not meaningful at the level of the human (and of course, with technologies that allow us to experience at an even finer grain than our senses allow, we can pursue the object horizon still further).

[45] What constitutes these 'determining features' is likely to be bound up with the object's 'affordances', i.e. the potential functions which the object can serve (the term 'affordance' is James J. Gibson's, but similar ideas are presented in the works of Heidegger and Jakob von Uexküll). What defines the chair as a chair is thus the possession of certain features which allow for it to be used as a chair, which would mean that identifying an object as a chair would involve attending to those features which would allow for such usage.

in perception it is provided by the world itself.[46] Moreover, if we conceive of this textually guided schema selection as 'the triggering of memories of past experiences', or 'experiential traces' (Caracciolo 2014a, p.5), then the particular simulation will potentially prepare other simulations which readers may also attend to, depending on their own 'experiential background' (Caracciolo 2104, p.64) or 'repertoire' (Iser 1978, p.82).[47] For instance, a reader who has experienced the trauma of being trapped in a burning building may well respond to the word 'fire' differently from a reader who has not; the word alone may be enough to trigger a whole train of simulations which have nothing to do with the textual context. Even so, imagining still involves a perspective, since in being a simulation of perception it necessarily involves the relationship between perceiving subject and perceived object. It is perhaps for this reason that perspective is 'necessary and, therefore routinely encoded during comprehension' (Zwaan 2004, p.58), since language routinely activates perceptual simulations.[48] (Of course, this does not mean that the reader *only* enacts such an experience when reading – as I explore further in Chapter 3, Section 1, there is also an extent to which reading involves auditory simulations – and the reader can focus attention on different aspects of the experience.)

Just as perception does not involve perceiving the entirety of the visual field in one fixation, but is only 'made available by *looking around*' (Noë 2004, p.57) – by running through features serially – so narrative can provide us with a sense that we are exploring a space by presenting us with a series of features. As David Herman puts it,

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[46] I explore the ways in which perception and imagination differ in this respect in Chapter 2, Section 2.

[47] The term 'experiential traces' is Zwaan's (Zwaan 2004, p.41). As Caracciolo puts it, such experiences are 'traces rather than full-fledged memories', because they are usually not reminders of 'a specific occurrence', but rather trigger 'the sensory residue left by a large number of past occurrences' (Caracciolo 2014a, p.46). Since Caracciolo terms such traces 'knowledge structures' (Caracciolo 2014a, p.46), it would appear that his account is essentially compatible with Thomas' conception of imagination as covertly or abortively enacting schemata which are inappropriate to our immediate environment.

[48] In order to account for 'abstract' language and information processing within his 'immersed experiencer framework', Zwaan refers to George Lakoff's (1987) conception of abstract reasoning as being essentially metaphorical (which is itself based on Lakoff and Johnson's seminal work on Conceptual Metaphor Theory (1980)). Briefly put, Conceptual Metaphor Theory holds that metaphors structure our normal conceptual systems, allowing us to understand abstract ideas (e.g. TIME, LIFE, THEORIES, CONTROL, etc.) in terms of other, more experientially basic domains (e.g. CONTAINERS, OBJECTS, DIRECTIONS, etc.). As a result, abstract reasoning is essentially based in physical schemata, which is potentially why we find it so difficult to escape object-based schemata in our reasoning about consciousness. This approach not only allows abstract language to be incorporated into Zwaan's theory, but also provides a means of explaining how abstract thought might mutate into lived experience in schizophrenia (see Section 1 of this chapter). However, there certainly does seem to be an extent to which we can focus our attention on different aspects of our language-based simulations and can thus be more or less conscious of certain experiential features (which might therefore give us the *impression* that we are dealing with a different kind of language or that we are adopting different stances in relation to the same text). In this regard, we might want to say that while the comprehension of language involves more than *just* the perceptual simulation of its referents, it does – or at the very least, *often* does – involve the activation of such simulations, especially when we read textual narrative with a view to narrative immersion.

> Stories, thanks to the way they are anchored in a particular vantage-point on the storyworlds that they evoke, and thanks to their essentially durative or temporally extended profile, do not merely convey semantic content but furthermore encode in their very structure a way of experiencing events. (Herman 2009, p.157)

In this regard, narrative can build on the pre-existent similarities between perception and imagination to prompt an experience which maintains its 'structural resemblance' (Caracciolo 2014a, p.101) or experiential 'isomorphism' (Herman 2009, p.157) to perceptual experience over an extended period. As Caracciolo stresses, this does not mean that readers 'fill in' all the omitted details to form 'a spatially coherent mental image' like a sketch or photograph (Caracciolo 2014a, p.101). Yet it is precisely because, according to the enactivist account, 'the perceived world is as sketchy and "gappy" as the mental imagery generated during the reading of narrative texts', that readers 'do not need to produce a continuous, pictorial mental image in order to experience the spaces of a storyworld' (Caracciolo 2014a, p.23).[49] Instead, the text prompts them to enact a series of perceptual simulations which, when integrated as an exploratory sequence, provide a sense 'of what it is like to experience' the space described (Caracciolo 2014a, p.101).

The extent to which the text either explicitly encodes or implicitly allows for the integration of perceptual simulations can vary a great deal (indeed, such integration can also be explicitly or implicitly precluded). What makes all the difference here is the degree of 'gappiness' which separates the different perspectives, and the extent to which the sequence maintains its structural resemblance to perceptual experience. Essentially, each simulation encodes a particular perspective, and therefore there is an extent to which each perspective differs (even in terms as minimal as a slight turn of the head or a change in ocular focus). There is thus an extent to which the degree of perspectival change referred to can either match or deviate from what changes would be possible for an embodied human experiencer, measured against the temporal flow of the discourse (i.e. the temporal flow of simulations). This temporal flow is fairly (although not completely) stable – the more explicitly the text encodes perspective (e.g. through prepositions), the more time will elapse between each simulation, and vice versa. Likewise, our actual experience of space unfolds at a relatively (although again, not completely) stable rate. Such stability is essentially interconnected with our sense of embodiment, inasmuch as to *be* embodied is to experience space in a particular way, and in terms of particular limitations. Therefore, the larger the scale of the shift in the perspectives

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[49] In this regard, enactivism often explicitly rejects 'pictorialist' accounts of mental imagery such as those put forward by Stephen Kosslyn (see Thomas 2018; Caracciolo 2014a, p.100; Thompson 2007, p.138)).

encoded by temporally consecutive simulations, the less such simulations will be likely to maintain experiential isomorphism.[50] To put the same point otherwise, the extent to which the text cues imaginative experiences which encode the same (or a sufficiently similar) perspective is likely to have a significant effect on the extent to which the reader feels that he or she is embodied within a particular environment. The simulated objects continuously point back towards a perceiving centre that seems to enact its world according to a similar set of possibilities and limitations that pertain to a human (or human-like) body.[51]

Again, the similarity to which I am referring is a similarity of structure – a matching of the spatiotemporal flow of simulations to the spatiotemporal flow of actual experience – and representations can conform to or deviate from this structure to various degrees.[52] For example, what is typically called a 'summary' is recognisable *as* a summary precisely because the two time-flows diverge a great deal, as we can see in the following example from Jorge Luis Borges:

> Droctulft was a Lombard warrior who during the siege of Ravenna deserted his own army and died defending the city he had been attacking. The people of Ravenna buried him in a church sanctuary…
> ('Story of the Warrior and the Captive Maiden', p.35)

The events which are referred to are abstracted to the point of being more object-like than event-like – there is a siege, a desertion, a death, and a burial. This is not necessarily how we experience our lives unfolding, but it is how we make sense of that unfolding by 'chunking' it into discreet and manageable units (Herman 2003, p.172). However, readers of this passage are not really in a position to enact these events as they unfold, and thus they are very far from enacting the exploration of a world from an embodied perspective. By contrast, this is precisely the position readers are prompted to adopt in the following example from Philip K. Dick's *Ubik*

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[50] As Monika Fludernik points out, experientiality and embodiment are necessarily interlinked: the feature which is 'most basic to experientiality is embodiment rather than specificity or individuality because these can in fact be subsumed under it. […] Embodiment and existence in human terms are indeed the same thing' (Fludernik 2002 [1996], p.22).

[51] Of equal – if not greater – importance is the salience of the simulated objects, i.e. how relevant they are or would be to a human or human-like consciousness interacting with its environment during a certain period. However, salience is rather more difficult to analyse given how 1) it is dependent on the projects of the individual, which means that the reader may not feel as embodied within an otherwise coherent environment if the details seem irrelevant, and 2) texts sometimes deliberately include non-salient details in a way which is isomorphic to lived experience (such as when we are surprised at noticing something irrelevant when a pressing project *should* demand our full attention). I return to this point in Chapter 2, Section 1, although a full analysis of how salience relates to immersion falls beyond the scope of this study.

[52] Anežka Kuzmičová suggests something similar when she argues that 'in order to stimulate the reader's imagery, a bodily movement must be comparably *dynamically veracious*, i.e., […] the time the text passage takes to read ought to be commensurable with the duration of the movement as performed in the real world' (Kuzmičová 2012, pp.28-29). Although Kuzmičová is referring here to transitive (i.e. volitional) verbs of movement, she is concerned with the same 'matching' of discourse-time and world-time and how this temporal isomorphism can affect the reader's sense of the presence of the imagined world.

(1969), where Joe Chip – exhausted, and on the verge of death – struggles to enter his hotel room:

> When he found the proper door he had to stand erect, propped up, to insert the key in the lock. The effort finished him. The key still in his hand, he fell; his head struck the door and he flopped back onto the dust-choked carpet, smelling the odor of age and wear and frigid death. (*Ubik*, p.189)

Here, the temporal scale of events is roughly equivalent to the temporal scale of the narration. Likewise, the spatial scale is at the level of the human, with the narrative consistently referring to the kind of manipulable objects which fill our immediate surroundings. The reader is also consistently prompted to simulate perceptions of the environment in a manner that is congruent with a body's orientation in space: we progress from door, to key, to door, to carpet, with each small-scale shift of attention being precisely the kind of shift which would be available to us if we were engaging with this environment. Moreover, the objects themselves point back to the position of the perceiving subject – we are not given a description of how the carpet *looks*, for instance, because Joe has fallen back and not forward. If the text went on to describe a crack in the ceiling, this would be congruent with his position, while a description of the minutiae of the carpet hairs would not be. Of course, we are also told how Joe's body relates to this environment, which helps situate us in this space a great deal (I shall return to this point shortly). Yet even without being told which direction Joe is facing, a juxtaposition of carpet and ceiling would be incongruous because the availability of one would naturally seem to preclude the availability of the other without significant bodily movement. Take, for example, the following passage from Franz Kafka's 'Description of a Struggle' (1912):

> Meanwhile the banks of the river stretched beyond all bounds, and yet with the palm of my hand I touched the metal of a signpost which gleamed minutely in the far distance. ('Description of a Struggle', p.65)

The passage is disorienting precisely because the two experiences of the signpost – touching it with the hand and seeing it gleaming in the distance – are mutually exclusive, at least without a significant temporal gap introduced between them.[53] In still more extreme cases, such as the patchwork or 'cut-up' novels of writers like William S. Burroughs and Ann Quin, there is often little to no possibility for connecting fragments together into a coherent spatial manifold, since the text cues imaginings which imply a number of unrelated perspectives.

Of course, the reader does not necessarily *know* to what extent the shifts in perspective accord with the limitations of embodied experience, since there is often no actual space to

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[53] Disorientation is, of course, what Kafka is attempting to produce – not only is the short story full of such bizarre shifts, but the following sentence attests to the narrator's own confusion regarding the apparent contradiction ('This I really couldn't quite understand' ('Description of a Struggle', p.65)).

which the described space corresponds. However, place and situation schemata provide top-down indications of what kinds of experiences should be available within a given space (for example, when standing in the doorway of a house we should not be able to see the house's chimney). At the same time, explicit information given by the text provides bottom-up indications of how these perspectives relate spatially (for instance, an incredibly crooked chimney stack may well be visible from the doorway if it craned over the front of the house). In some cases, the indeterminacy of the textual description may allow for readers to understand the shift in perspective as one which requires a greater or lesser degree of movement, depending on how they relate the simulations together. Consider, for example, the following passage from Malcolm Lowry's *Lunar Caustic* (1963), in which Bill Plantagenet is stumbling drunkenly through the streets of New York:

> This time it is serious: he is nearly run over by a street car, he bangs his head on a wall, once he falls over an ashcan where he has thrown a bottle. (*Lunar Caustic*, p.9)

Readers can relate these disparate experiences to each other in a number of ways; for instance, one reader might assume that in evading the street car Bill bangs his head on the wall, which could only happen in a fairly narrow street. Another reader, however, might assume that a more significant gap in time – and thus space – intervenes between the two events, and so there is no need to assume that the events happen in a narrow street, or even the same street. In such cases, the context may cause one assumption to be more likely than the other – context, in this respect, including not only the 'what' of previous simulations (i.e. the objects simulated), but also the 'where' (i.e. the perspective encoded by those simulations). Essentially, readers might be more or less likely to assume a larger perspectival shift on the basis of the degrees of other surrounding shifts. In the Lowry example, for instance, readers already know that Bill is drunk and that his movements are erratic, so his accidents do not need to be explained by additional causes. Moreover, since the final clause refers to an event that appears to be disconnected from the other two, it might seem more reasonable to suppose that all three are disconnected. Linking these two aspects together, the reader may suppose that the spatiotemporal fragmentation is evocative of Bill's conscious state, and that in being drunk he is only intermittently aware of his environment. With a more sober protagonist, and without the final clause, the sentence might more conceivably describe a man leaping out of the way of a street car and knocking his head against a nearby wall. In this regard, the context influences the kind of simulations which readers are likely to enact, prompting them to cognise the elements of the narrative in the way that best maintains overall continuity.

As Caracciolo suggests, 'readers tend to use the body of a perceiving character as a prop for their own mental simulations', and in this way 'the presence of a fictionally actual body can help the reader position his or her virtual body within the fictional world' (Caracciolo 2014a, pp.166, 163). Moreover, when enacting the exploration of a non-actual world from a stable perspective, readers imaginatively inhabit or adopt the fictional body of a character. This '"fictionalization of the reader's virtual body"' fits in with a broader dynamic which is fundamental to the experience of narrative texts: the tension between what Caracciolo terms 'consciousness-enactment' and 'consciousness-attribution' (Caracciolo 2014a, p.158). Consciousness itself 'is not a thing – it is a qualitative "feel" that emerges from an embodied and evaluative exploration of an environment' (Caracciolo 2014a, p.160).[54] John Searle makes a similar point when he argues that consciousness 'is a series of qualitative states', and that there is 'no way for us to picture subjectivity as part of our world view because, so to speak, the subjectivity in question is the picturing' (Searle 1992, p.98). As Herman puts it, 'there is no way to step outside consciousness and observe it as it really is, since consciousness simply *is* the (act or process of) observing' (Herman 2009, p.155). By the same token, the consciousnesses of others (including fictional consciousnesses), are not observable or representable as things. However, 'the isomorphism between the structure of narrative and the structure of consciousness' allows for narratives to 'encode in their very structure a way of experiencing events', thus emulating 'through their temporal and perspectival configuration the what-it's-like dimension of conscious awareness itself' (Herman 2009, p.157). Readers can thus *enact* or *perform* the consciousness of a character, in that they can simulate a particular pattern of experiences which they then *attribute* to the character. In this regard, 'fictional consciousnesses are the experiences undergone by readers whilst reading a consciousness text, coupled with a consciousness-attribution' (Caracciolo 2012, p.51). In effect, to enact a consciousness is always to enact an experience *of* something, and thus to experience the consciousness of another individual is to enact the experience of their 'lived-world'. However, despite essentially incorporating the fictional consciousness that is being attributed to the character, readers do not entirely forget that this consciousness is not their own. There is, in this sense, 'an intersubjective tension between being oneself (attributing an experience to another subject) and being another (enacting his or her experience)' (Caracciolo 2014a, p.49). This framework does not mean we cannot talk about 'the perceiving character's perspective,

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[54] Jaspers likewise states that 'The psyche [which he states *is* consciousness] is not a thing but "*being in one's own world*"' (Jaspers 1997, v.1, p.7). It is also 'not an end state but becoming, developing, unfolding' (Jaspers 1997, v.1, p.7).

experience, and consciousness as if they were items we could relate to' (Caracciolo 2014a, p.105) – rather, it explains how we come to have a sense of what these are in the first place.

Since narratives 'encode in their very structure a way of experiencing events', they are 'uniquely suited to capturing what the world is like from the situated perspective of an experiencing mind' and are 'tailor-made for gauging the felt quality of lived experiences' (Herman 2009, pp. 157, 138). Indeed, Herman stresses that one of the 'basic elements' of narrative is precisely this encoding of 'what it is like to undergo events' (an element which he equates with Fludernik's notion of 'experientiality') (Herman 2009, pp.21, 143). As already stated, the encoding of 'what it's like' is a matter of structural resemblance – the cuing of simulations in a sequence that is experientially isomorphic in some way or other. Experientiality thus 'comes in different degrees' (Caracciolo 2014a, p.50) and is partly dependent on the extent to which the series of simulations is felt to retain such resemblance. Of course, in practice, narratives tend to oscillate in terms of how closely they resemble experiential structures, reserving a greater degree of isomorphism for those events which are particularly salient. Yet if a textual representation rarely or never cued perceptual simulations that might conceivably be part of the same episode of embodied exploration, it would hardly represent 'what it is like' to experience something. Such a representation would thus stray very far from the prototypical centre of the category 'narrative', and presumably move towards 'the fuzzy border separating narratives from descriptions' where we find forms such as '"chronicle"' and '"report"' (Herman 2009, p.138).[55]

Although so far I have focused primarily on the ways in which narrative representations can be structurally similar to perception, there are other ways in which a text can be experientially isomorphic. Emotions and moods also have an experiential structure, in that they involve experiencing the world (including the subject's own body) in a particular way. As with the experience of a space or of an object, language can represent what it is like to undergo complex and/or extended experiences by relating more basic or 'atomic' experiences together.[56] In this regard, a text might be said to *produce* an emotion or mood by cuing and

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[55] It is important to note that narrative is not just dependent upon experientiality. As Herman points out, 'the presence of what it's like coupled with a complete absence of event sequencing (as in [Jan] Alber's example of inarticulate screams of horror) likewise results in the expulsion of a text or representation beyond the frontiers of narrative' (Herman 2009, p.143).

[56] In this way, narratives not only draw on the 'experiential background' or 'repertoire' of the reader, but can also have a 'feedback effect' on this background by recombining experiential traces into 'new' experiences (Caracciolo 2014a, pp.158, 199). In other words, they can add to not just our **episodic memory**, i.e. our memory about specific situations and events that occurred at a particular time', but also our **semantic memory**, i.e. "our de-contextualised memory for facts about the entities and relations between entities in the world"' (Semino 1997, citing Eysenck and Keane, p.125).

relating the relevant kinds of simulations together, and by thus prompting the reader to enact a particular kind of 'lived-world'.

However, what we are particularly concerned with here is how a text can convey the sense of what it is like to experience different kinds of experiential (or 'intentional') modality – e.g. perception, imagination, memory, dreaming, hallucination, etc. We know that what it is like to imagine is different from what it is like to perceive – the two experiences have a different phenomenology, even if they are directed towards the same intentional object. The potential problem faced by textual representation is that it is limited to one experiential modality, unlike conscious awareness itself (which includes multiple modalities). When engaging with the storyworld, we are imagining – that is, we are simulating perceptual experience – but how then can a text produce an experiential difference between the simulation of perception and the simulation of other modalities? Of course, the text can always explicitly tell us that a particular simulation *is* an imagining, a dream, a hallucination, and so on, but this is not actually to represent what that experience is *like* (just as stating an emotion is not to describe the felt quality of the emotion). Yet there is potentially a way around this problem, since each experiential modality also has a kind of experiential form or structure: a way (or number of ways) in which it (prototypically) differs from actual perceptual experience. Dreams, for instance, tend to feel both vivid and present while we are having them, but they are often characterised by radical shifts in time, place, and person, and sometimes include bizarre contradictions which are somehow not felt to be contradictory.[57] Imaginings, on the other hand, tend to be characterised by a sense of somatic paucity, a sense of incompleteness, a lack of presence – they are always, as it were, being undermined by actual perception. At the same time, the objects of imagination are also often experienced as under the subject's volitional control in a way that the objects of actual perception are not (although this is by no means an absolute condition of imaginary experience). Although memories share many of the same features as imaginings, they feel, by contrast, uncontrollable: we can choose *to* remember, but we do not consciously choose *how* we remember (and if we do, we are aware of the experience as an imagining rather than a memory). These are by no means all of the differences which pertain to different experiential modalities (Colin McGinn, for instance, lists nine ways in which perception and imagination differ (McGinn 2004, pp.12-34)) – and some differences may well be impossible to convey. This is not necessarily a problem, since a structural resemblance is, *qua* resemblance, only partial. However, since all of the distinguishing features

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57 See Jennifer Michelle Windt and Thomas Metzinger 2007, p.201.

of an experiential modality are only recognisable *in comparison to actual perception*, narrative can thus attempt to convey the experientiality of an experiential modality by manipulating and subverting the norms of its presentation of actual perception. In this way, a set of simulations might have a recognisably different experiential texture to other sets – and depending on how this texture is felt to differ, it can produce something like the sense of experiencing in a different modality.

Hallucinations, as we have seen, are rather difficult to qualify in terms of their phenomenology. Often – and perhaps always – they are experientially distinct from actual perception, and are thus recognisable as occurring within a different modality, lacking the full sense of presence which characterises perceptual experience. However, since hallucinations are also characterised by the sense of reality – that is to say, the 'vividness' or 'compulsion' which is characteristic of perceptual experience – they potentially involve a sense of ontological confusion or 'ontological upheaval', since the sense of reality is separated from the features which might normally be said to 'belong' with it (i.e. the features which pertain to veridical perception). In this regard, hallucinations can be thought of as 'reality distortions', not (or not just) because they involve a distortion of the *contents* of reality, but because they involve a distortion of the *structure* of the experience of reality. Therefore, in order to examine how the structure of hallucinatory experience can be imitated in textual narrative we shall need to examine how readers construct and inhabit imaginary worlds.

According to Herman, 'storyworlds are mental models of who did what to and with whom, when, where, why, and in what fashion in the world to which recipients relocate – or make a deictic shift' (Herman 2002, p.5). Like mental models more generally, storyworlds constitute 'nonlingusitic representations of the situation(s) described by a sentence or a set of sentences, that is, a discourse' (Herman 2002, p.18), and in this regard correspond to what Zwaan terms 'situation models': 'mental representations of the state of affairs described in a text rather than of the text itself' (Zwaan 1999, p.15).[58] The processing and construction of such models Herman describes as 'worlding the story', which 'can be analyzed as a process of configuring (or reconfiguring) contexts, as well as scanning for specific textual cues that prompt readers to engage in the binding, priming, recalling, switching, and other world-building operations that involve such contexts' (Herman 2013, p.122). As *story*worlds, such

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[58] Although Herman does not explicitly relate his 'worlds' to Zwaan's 'situation models', he does state that he uses the term 'in a manner more or less analogous with linguists' use of the term *discourse model* [....] a global mental representation enabling interlocutors to draw inferences about items and occurrences either explicitly or implicitly used in a discourse' (Herman 2002, p.5).

models are concerned with sets of entities *and* the events in which these entities play a part. As *worlds* more generally, these models are representations of ontological domains which may or may not be continuous with the ontological domain which we regard as our 'reality'.

Any domain which is in some respect non-continuous with our reality – which contains, in other words, some entity or occurrence which it does not share with this reality – is a 'fictional world', an ensemble '*of nonactualized possible states of affairs*' (Doležel 1998, p.16). In this regard, 'Fictional worlds and their constituents, fictional particulars, are granted a definite ontological status' (Doležel 1998, p.16), since existence or 'reality' is separated from 'actuality'. In the terms of David Lewis' 'modal realism', '"actual" and its cognates' are '*indexical*' (Lewis, 1970, p.184), in that their reference varies depending on the context. In other words, '"the actual world" means "the world where I am situated," and all PWs [possible worlds] are actualized from the point of view of their inhabitants' (Ryan 2013). Any statement might thus be said to have a corresponding 'reference world' to which its signs refer, and in which those referents have 'existence'. Therefore, like the names of all fictional characters, 'The name *Hamlet* is neither empty nor self-referential; it refers to an individual of a fictional world' (Doležel 1998, p.16). In this framework, the 'truth' or 'falsity' of any statement is relative to the world occupied by the discourse participants – the world which, for them, is 'actual'.

Yet discourse participants can do more than just assess statements in relation to their own world; they can also imaginatively take another world as their point of reference, adopting, as it were, another ontological perspective. This change in perspective, or 'deictic shift' (Galbraith 1995, p.26; Segal 1995a, p.14; Zubin and Hewitt 1995, p.137), is part of what separates the experience of storyworlds from the experience of a more abstracted and theoretical model-building. It is on the basis of the sequence of non-actual experiences cued by the text that we gather a sense of spaces and events as existing within a continuous spatiotemporal continuum, i.e. a 'world' or 'reality'. The construction and experience of the storyworld thus go hand in hand, just as they do in our actual exploration of the actual world. The deictic shift describes the process by which the 'here-point' and the 'now-point' are '*displaced* within imagination to any arbitrary point' (Bühler 1990 [1934], p.149), in that we imaginatively adopt a position in time and/or space which is different from our actual position in time and/or space. This 'position' (which corresponds to what I have so far termed the 'perspective' of the experiencing subject), is what is known as the 'deictic centre' (or '*origo*',

as Karl Bühler terms it): 'the basic zero-point […] in relation to which all other elements are posited' (Semino 1997, p.33). [59]

In essence, the deictic shift refers to the taking up of any perspective which differs from the actual perspective, which we do whenever we remember our past, plan our future, think about how something looks from another person's point of view, and so on. As Bühler points out, even being able to give commands to another person in terms of *his* or *her* left and right might require adopting an 'orientation system' that is different from our own (Bühler 1990, p.118). Indeed, so many of our basic cognitive operations require shifts of this sort that it would appear that we 'inhabit' our actual deictic centre far less than we might think we do, which is potentially what David A. Zubin and Lynne E. Hewitt are suggesting when they state that we have a 'folk belief in the unitary nature of experience' (Zubin and Hewitt 1995, p.131). The actual deictic centre is thus the one we inhabit most frequently, and most continuously, which accords with the notion that a series of simulations which encode the same (or similar) perspectives can sometimes give us a more strongly felt sense of being embodied in a non-actual environment. It is in this sense that readers are 'recentered' in (Ryan 2001, p.104) or 'transported to' (Gerrig 1993, p.173) a fictional world: 'Through imagination and mental simulation, our real body can be used to bridge the ontological gap between reality and fiction; its virtuality consists precisely in the way it can be detached from the here and now, and projected into *another* here and now' (Caracciolo 2014a, pp.161-162). Bühler suggests something similar when he states that 'every displaced person takes his present tactile body image along with him, to put it metaphorically', since the 'present tactile body image is connected with an imagined optical scene' (Bühler 1990, pp.154, 153).

However, as Caracciolo stresses (*contra* Ryan), the reader's consciousness does not move about, 'since consciousness is not a spatio-temporally locatable entity. Even when an organism moves to a different sector of an environment, its consciousness cannot be said to move, but only to change as a function of the affordances of the environment' (Caracciolo 2014a, p.160). In other words, consciousness is the stable Copernican centre around which we move the world (even though we might generally think in terms of the 'folk belief' that we move our consciousnesses around a stable world). The various movement-metaphors used to describe the experience of narrative – deictic shift, recentering, transportation, etc. – can only

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[59] Although the term 'deixis' implies communication (through the activity of a 'pointing' or 'showing'), the sense in which it is used here relates simply to the position occupied by the experiencing subject. There is thus a distinction between the deictic shift itself – that is, the individual's adoption of a particular deictic centre or perspective – and the communicative prompts to adopt such a centre (which I shall refer to as 'deictic cues').

be said to be valid in that the deictic centre is always made sense of in terms of its relationship to other elements. To be 'here' is to relate to something in a way which differs from how I could relate to it from anywhere else. It is in this sense that we never imagine experiencing a 'there' – rather, we experience a non-actual 'here' which we understand as a 'there' in terms of how it relates to our actual 'here'. The same holds true for the other two primary deictic axes: imagining a 'then' means enacting a non-actual time-course in the actual present, and imagining being 'you' still involves being 'me' but in a different way (i.e. in terms of non-actual conditions). The experiencing subject is always here, now, and I, regardless of whether what is being experienced is actual or non-actual.[60] What makes us think of such experiences as being *of* there, then, and you is how we relate them back to our actual deictic centre (i.e. perspective). To be immersed or recentred in (or transported or shifted to) a fictional world thus involves consistently ignoring the relationship between the non-actual centre and the actual centre, and focusing instead on the relationships between two or more non-actual centres. What is worth stressing here is that there is still no experience of the imaginary 'there', 'then', or 'you' – there is only ever the imaginary experience of a 'here', 'now', and 'I' which differs in some way from another imaginary 'here', 'now', and 'I' which is not currently being imagined. In this sense, the deictic shift to which Judith F. Duchan et al. (and their contributors) are referring is the activity of relating imaginary experiences *back to an imaginary centre* as opposed to our actual centre. In other words, the deictic shift is the activity of taking one imagined centre as an ersatz 'actual' centre to which other centres are related.

The full implications of this approach become apparent when we consider the relationship between deixis and modal logic. To take an imaginary centre *as* an (ersatz) actual centre is to make a kind of ontological commitment to a particular spatiotemporal continuum (i.e. 'world' or 'reality'). Such an ontological commitment is often (although not always) necessary for the comprehension of narratives, which tend to be '*heterogeneous in their macrostructure*' (Doležel 1998, p.23) – that is, they tend to refer to more than one world, since characters themselves are often presented as making deictic shifts (in that they are described as remembering, imagining, dreaming, etc.). More broadly speaking, narratives can (and often do) include statements which are to be understood as referring to existents and events which are not spatiotemporally continuous with the existents and events which make up the 'story'

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[60] Searle suggests something similar when he states that 'When we study *him* or *her*, what we are studying is the *me* that is him or her' (Searle 1992, pp.20-21). As Alan Palmer acknowledges, 'Searle's point is true of fictional minds as it is of real minds. When we study Emma, what we are studying is the *me* that is Emma' (Palmer 2008, p.141). Caracciolo's notions of consciousness-enactment and consciousness-attribution describe essentially the same process in a more theoretically explicit fashion.

proper (such as counterfactuals and extended metaphors). Therefore, just as language can cue us to understand the difference between deictic centres in terms of place, time, and person, so it can also prompt us to understand such differences in terms of modality. To put this point otherwise, just as a non-actual 'here' can come to be conceived of as a non-actual 'there' when it is related to a different non-actual 'here', so the non-actual experience itself can come to be conceived of as 'actual' *in relation to* a different non-actual experience.[61] In this sense, readers organise their story-driven experiences into an ontological hierarchy, with one spatiotemporal continuum or 'world' serving as the primary reality.

According to James, we perform the same organisational operations with regard to experience *tout court*: '*Every object we think of gets at last referred to one world or another*' (James 1901, p.293). In relation to these worlds, the individual

> has dominant habits of attention; and these *practically elect from among the various worlds some one to be for him the world of ultimate realities*. From this world's objects he does not appeal. Whatever positively contradicts them must get into another world or die. (James 1901, pp.293-294)

Similarly, Marie-Laure Ryan argues that 'Mimetic texts project not a single world but an entire modal system, or universe, centered around its own actual world' (Ryan 2001, p.103). In this sense, they appear to 'reproduce the structure of the primary system' (Ryan 2001, p.104), in that 'an essential aspect of reading comprehension consists of distinguishing a domain of autonomous facts – […] the textual actual world – from the [other] domains' (Ryan 2001, p.103). Although James suggests that the process involves sorting experiences into different ontological categories, while deictic *shift* theory implies the movement of the experiencing subject between different worlds or realities, both are describing essentially the same thing (at least when it comes to modality). Consider, for instance, the following paragraph from William Golding's *The Spire* (1964):

> (1) Jocelin stood still, and (2) shot an arrow of love after him. (3) My place, my house, my people. (4) He will come out of the vestry at the tail of the procession and turn left as he has always done; then he will remember and turn right to the Lady Chapel! (5) So Jocelin laughed again, chin lifted, in holy mirth. (*The Spire*, p.8)

In this short passage, the reader is cued to imagine a number of events with different ontological statuses. Only (1) and (5) are descriptions of events in what is taken to be the actual world; (2),

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[61] James makes a similar point in relation to experience in general. Citing Baruch Spinoza, he states that 'The sense that anything we think of is unreal can only come, then, when that thing is contradicted by some other thing of which we think. *Any object which remains uncontradicted is ipso facto believed and posited as absolute reality*' (James 1901, pp.288-289). In this sense, 'The real things are […] the *reductives* of the things judged unreal' (James 1901, p.291).

for instance, cues the imagining of an activity which does not take place and an entity which does not exist in relation to (1) and (5). The qualifying 'of love' clearly marks (2) as metaphorical, and even though it is not clear whether Jocelin himself conceives of the experience in this way, the reader recognises that the arrow-shooting takes place in a different reality. It is 'metaphorical' since the world referred to in (1) and (5) has already been taken as real by this point in the narrative. The first-person pronoun introduced in (3) suggests that this sentence is Jocelin's inner speech, and (4) continues this inner speech through the future tense (which points back to the present in which Jocelin – and the reader – are 'situated'). However, (4) still cues the imagining of an event, even though it signals that this event has not actually happened (since it is *yet* to happen). We can conceive of the reader's comprehension of this passage either in terms of shifts (from world (1,5) to world (2), to world (3,4) and back to world (1,5)), or in terms of pre- and post-hoc categorisation ((1) actual perception, (2) imagining, (3) inner speech, (4) imagining (prediction), and (5) actual perception). In both cases the same ontological boundaries have slotted into place, and in accordance with the same ontological hierarchy.

However, texts can only be said to 'reproduce' the structure of the primary system in that they present particular affordances for understanding the cued imaginary experiences *according to that structure*. As Elena Semino points out, the interactive nature of the story-driven experience means that there is both a 'bottom-up dimension of text world creation (i.e. texts *project* worlds)', and a 'top-down component (i.e. readers *construct* worlds while reading)' (Semino 1997, p.125). In this regard, a useful parallel can be drawn between the cognitive strategies used for organising experience ontologically and the set of strategies used for making sense of other minds: our so-called 'folk psychology'. As Herman puts it, the term describes

> people's everyday understanding of how thinking works, the rough-and-ready heuristics to which they resort in thinking about thinking itself. We use these heuristics to impute motives or goals to others, to evaluate the bases of our own conduct, and to make predictions about future reactions to events. (Herman 2009, p.20)

In much the same sense we could be said to have a 'folk ontology': a set of 'fundamental entities, properties, and relations that are posited in our naive, common-sense, prereflective mode of thought', which make up 'What Strawson calls "the structure of our thought about the world"' (Goldman 1992, p.35), and which form the foundation of what Husserl terms the 'natural attitude' (Husserl 1983 [1913], p.51). As with folk psychology, folk ontology may or may not be 'correct' in its fundamental assumptions, at least inasmuch as the premises upon

which it relies might be theoretically challenged. To give an example, one of the fundamental heuristics of folk ontology is that there *is* a domain of autonomous facts, an actual world which does not rely on our experience of it in order to exist. This notion can, and indeed has been, challenged – such as in Fichtean solipsism or Berkeleyan idealism – but even if one were to accept these challenges as conceptually valid, such conceptual acceptance would not necessarily entail the abandonment of the heuristic in one's everyday activities. The same could be said of other folk-ontological heuristics, such as the separation between self and world (and mind and body). While we can certainly point to the flaws in these theories *qua* theories, they nonetheless form a basic part of how we make sense of our own being.

An analogous situation is presented in our experience of the sun rising. For instance, we can say that the sun does not 'actually' rise over the horizon (since it is rather the Earth which moves, and not the sun), and that the sun therefore only 'appears' to rise because of where we are situated. Yet even so,

> The sun 'rises' for the scientist in the same way as it does for the uneducated person, and our scientific representations of the solar system remain matters of hearsay […] we never believe in them in the sense in which we believe in the sunrise. The sunrise and the percept in general is 'real', and we spontaneously identify them as part of the world. (Merleau-Ponty 2002, p.401)

Even though we can recognise the appearance of the sun's movement as an illusion, doing so essentially requires simulating a non-actual perspective – a perspective from which we can view the Earth turning towards the sun – and holding that this view has greater ontological validity. What Merleau-Ponty appears to be getting at, however, is that we still do not take this simulation to be actual – it is not an experiential, but a conceptual reality – since our actual experience is of watching the sun move, and not the Earth. There is a sense in which the sun's rising *feels* real, even though there is a sense in which we *know* that it is not.[62] Likewise,

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[62] There is potentially a problem here regarding how we can reconcile this claim with Noë's assertion that perceptual content is partly 'virtual' (i.e. non-actual) in that it is not entirely constituted by what is actually accessed from one perspective and in one 'fixation' (i.e. all at once in a single moment of time). Our experience of the world is not only determined by our experience of how things look 'from here', but by our expectations of how they would look from other perspectives. Thus a circular plate, from all but two perspectives (directly above and directly beneath it), *looks* elliptical, but we experience it *as* circular. Indeed, Merleau-Ponty makes a similar point when he states that 'For each object, as for each picture in an art gallery, there is an optimum distance from which it requires to be seen, a direction viewed from which it vouchsafes most of itself' (Merleau-Ponty 2002, p.352), and in perceiving the object from our actual perspective we also experience it from its 'optimum' perspective in recognising it as the object that it is. However, this puts us 'in the vicinity here of a genuine indeterminacy in experience', since the plate both 'looks to be circular (it really does), *and* it looks to be elliptical from here (it really does)' (Noë 2004, pp.165, 164). There is thus 'a sense in which how things look depends on what you are interested in, or on what you ask, on how you probe' (Noë 2004, p.165). However, does this mean that the Earth could ever *really* look to be turning towards the sun, if we were to 'probe' in the right way? I think the *possibility* for such indeterminacy remains open, but only if our overall experiences of the Earth and of the sun included a number of actual experiences of the Earth-sun relationship from different perspectives (i.e. non-Earth-centric perspectives). We not only frequently experience the actual circularity of the plate, but we also

although we can conceptually assent to notions which challenge our folk ontology, to actually make sense of lived experience according to these notions would require a radical change in the very nature of lived experience. In some cases, this would entail psychosis, or enlightenment; in others, it would even entail experiencing in a way that would perhaps not be recognisably 'human'. It would appear that this is why Jaspers frequently refers to the 'ununderstandable' nature of psychotic experience, which he claims is 'closed to empathy' (Jaspers 1997, v.2, p.578). In schizophrenia, as he puts it, there is 'a lack of grasp on the essentials, at least for what can be said to be essential in the social, objective and empirically real world' (Jaspers 1997, v.1, p.219) – and what I am describing here as folk ontology would certainly be related to such 'essentials'.[63] As I shall explore in further detail in the following chapters, folk ontology might be 'wrong' in a theoretical sense – in that, if some of its premises were absolutely correct, our experience of the world would be radically different – yet it can still be an essential part of how we prereflectively (i.e. subpersonally, non-consciously) structure and make sense of experience. Therefore, the undermining of folk ontology by lived experience can *also* bring about a radical change in our experience of the world. Essentially, what we are concerned with is not really a transition from 'falsity' to 'truth' (or vice versa), but a transition from one mode of being to another.

Much as narratives can rely to a greater or lesser extent on the reader's effective use of folk-psychological heuristics (and can thus be more or less explicit regarding characters' mental states), they can also vary in terms of how much they rely on the reader's use of folk-

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experience its circularity in the way that its actual profile changes as we move (as Noë suggests). The same is not true of the experience of the sun rising – we do not ever actually experience the Earth turning, and we do not ever experience the relationship differently as a function of the way we move. If we were able to leap into outer space, or if we could feel the Earth's revolutions in our body, then things might be different, since the 'optimum perspective' would be less easy to discern.

[63] I believe there is an extent to which Jaspers is correct in this assumption, if he is understood as suggesting that we cannot fully imagine the experience of the psychotic lived-world *at will*, as if it were a matter of simply switching interpretive frameworks. This does not mean that psychotic experience is closed to 'understanding' in all its forms, but only to a complete *empathetic* understanding (and as J. Hoenig and Marian W. Hamilton point out, Jaspers' use of the word 'understanding' [*Verstehen*] is complex, and 'Words which would fully convey his exact meaning do not exist in either German or English' (Jaspers 1997, v.1, p.xvii)). Indeed, Jaspers qualifies his position when he states that 'We cannot comprehend neurotic or psychotic phenomena simply as exaggerations of normal experiences and activities but we can, nevertheless, bring them closer to ourselves by the use of analogies (e.g. schizophrenic thinking may be compared with experiences that occur when one is falling asleep)' (Jaspers 1997, v.2, pp.575-576). It would therefore appear that Jaspers is suggesting that we *can* attain some degree of empathetic understanding, but that this is not to fully inhabit the psychotic lived-world. Of course, there is an extent to which no individual can ever *fully* inhabit the lived-world of another, but with psychosis there appears to be a greater degree of difference between lived-worlds (which first-person accounts also sometimes attest to in comparing the psychotic episode with the periods of 'ordinary' experience before and after it).

ontological heuristics.[64] The example from *The Spire*, for instance, gives some cues for ontological organisation, but is by no means explicit in its modal directions. Essentially, we do not always need to be told how to organise or relate simulated experiences in terms of their modality – we recognise, for instance, that a particular statement is figurative, or refers to a character's imaginings. Indeed, (one of) the distinctions between metaphor and simile is that the latter provides an explicit modal deictic cue, whereas the former does not.[65] Of course, there is always room for error and confusion – just as readers can puzzle over why a character did something, they can be uncertain as to whether an object was 'real' or whether an event *actually* occurred within the storyworld. Equally, upon abandoning the ersatz centre, they can ponder the same questions in relation to their actual world (and some narratives intentionally create such doubt – see Chapter 5, Section 1). In this regard, Ryan separates 'a moment of construction from a moment of evaluation' (Ryan 2001, p.105), although such reflective evaluation is only necessary when there is sufficient cause for doubt (and what is 'sufficient' will, naturally, vary from reader to reader). At least as far as the worlds of fiction are concerned, most narratives do attempt to avoid inducing doubt and confusion most of the time – but it is only because of a shared folk ontology that writers tend to know when and where the potential for doubt can arise, and so can take steps to avoid it (or exacerbate it).

Areas of doubt and indeterminacy are, essentially, matters of boundary-placement. They occur when readers do not know whether the referent (or rather, their simulation of the referent) is part of a particular world, and therefore cannot tell where the ontological boundaries should be placed, or what sort of ontological boundaries are required. An ontological boundary exists whenever an experience is understood as occurring within a different spatiotemporal continuum from another experience – that is, when they are understood as being experiences *of* different worlds. Not all boundaries are the same, since some allow for different kinds of things to cross between them, and some only allow for crossing in one direction. For example, an imagining should not be able to alter the physical world, but it *can* affect the individual's emotional state; what the individual does in a dream does not become incorporated into his or her past or sense of self, but *can* have an effect on his or her future; imaginings and ideas *can*

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[64] Indeed, to a certain extent folk psychology supervenes upon folk ontology. In order to be able to understand others as 'having' minds, we need to be able to understand that their lived-worlds are different from ours, and to understand how certain shared elements can have different properties in each.

[65] As I explore in more detail in Chapter 4, the situation is a little more complex, given the ways in which metaphors structure our experience of the world. In this context, however, I am referring specifically to those metaphors and similes which Robyn Carston describes as 'metarepresented' (Carston 2010, p.295), where we simulate an experience of the 'metaphor-world' and then relate that experience to the storyworld in some way or other.

be in the 'subworlds' of multiple different characters, but should originate from their shared world in some way; and so on and so forth. There should also only be one world which offers itself as the primary reality – and even in cases where a first-person narrator is not considered to be 'reliable', the very idea of judging the narrator's reliability already takes a primary fictional real for granted.[66] Finally, there are ontological boundaries which are particular to narrative and linguistics: for instance, characters should not be able to interact with a third-person narrator or be aware of the narrative act, and 'metaphor-worlds' should only contain salient particulars from the target domain.[67] In this sense, folk ontology provides the skeletal structure around which we can model the heterogeneous worlds of narrative into a coherent storyworld, just as folk psychology provides us with the belief-desire-goal framework according to which we model the mental processes of characters.

All of these 'rules' can be broken – that is, the reader's capacity to make sense of the experiences prompted by the text according to the standard models of folk ontology (or folk psychology) can be deliberately impeded, thus requiring the use of further sense-making (i.e. 'naturalising') strategies. For example, an ontological boundary which *should* separate two experiences, and which the reader has sufficient cause to believe *does* separate them, can be openly transgressed, thus throwing the entire ontology of the storyworld into doubt.[68] Again, this transgression of boundaries can be conceived of either in terms of the deictic shift framework (in which case we might say that the reader is 'caught between' two worlds), or in terms of the Jamesian categorisation framework (in which case we might say that an experience breaks the category boundary). Most troubling, in this regard, are violations of the narrative and linguistic boundaries, since it is on the basis of these boundaries and the rules surrounding them that readers can begin to 'world' the story in the first place. Such rule-breaking draws the reader's attention to the text *as* an 'experience-providing machine' (Caracciolo 2012, p.55), just as 'broken or malfunctioning equipment, discovered-to-be-missing equipment, or in-the-way-equipment', in thus becoming 'un-ready-to-hand', ceases to be 'phenomenologically

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[66] For this reason, I am only concerned here with the idea of 'unreliable' narration insofar as, with the appropriate cues, it provides the reader with a sense-making strategy for resolving a text's apparent contradictions (see Yacobi 1981, p.118).

[67] Both of these norms are expanded on in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4, respectively.

[68] In many respects, this sense of radical ontological doubt is akin to Tzvetan Todorov's description of the 'hesitation' between different explanatory frameworks which characterises 'the fantastic' as a genre (Todorov, 1973, p.26). However, the various conditions which Todorov stipulates as being necessary for the fantastic proper, along with his conceptualisation of the fantastic as a 'genre', make the straightforward application of his framework to my case studies problematic. Since such an application does not seem to allow for any additional interpretive moves, I have decided to avoid the difficult business of bringing his and my approaches into alignment.

transparent' (Wheeler 2017). Although the text is still providing an experience – the experience of the 'machine' itself – it ceases to provide adequate 'resource[s] for worldmaking' (Herman 2013, p.144). In this sense, we can speak of the 'unworlding of a story', which is

> a way of describing what happens when the mechanisms of narrative worldmaking, rather than functioning in the background as an enabling condition for narrative experiences, themselves become the focus of a given text or representation – often with anti-immersive, illusion-breaking effects… (Herman 2013, p.144)

Yet if the unworlding of the story is bound up with an experience *within* the story – that is, an experience which is also being attributed to a character – then the collapse of the ontological hierarchy is paradoxically figured as a 'represented' experience. In other words, the reader's experience of the unworlding of the text can, with the right cues, also be attributed to a character who is at the same time a part of the now unworlded storyworld. The four novels which I examine in this study align this experience of ontological collapse with the hallucinatory and psychotic experiences of their characters, and in this way attempt to convey the lived experience of such states – the what-it's-like dimension – by inducing in the reader an experience which is isomorphic to them.

However, the ways in which these novels frustrate (and thus foreground) folk-ontological heuristics serve not only an experiential function, but also a thematic function. In this regard, the attempt to represent the phenomenology of hallucinatory and psychotic experience which these novels undertake also brings certain problems into view which relate to how we experience fiction – an experience which itself reflects certain aspects of how we experience the world. To put the same point otherwise, there is a certain reciprocity between hallucinations and metafiction in these novels. On the one hand, metafiction (as the self-reflexive unworlding of the story), is used in the mimesis of hallucinatory experience; and on the other hand, hallucinatory experience is used to explore the nature of the reader's experience of textual narrative, and, by extension, the subject's experience of the world.

Section 3: Hallucinations and Psychosis in the mid-Twentieth Century

Although both hallucinations and psychosis are fairly frequent in literature – indeed, it is sometimes said that the novel 'began' with the madness of Miguel de Cervantes' Don Quixote – there does appear to have been a clustering of novels which focused particularly on these forms of experience during the mid-Twentieth Century. Aside from the four novels I take as

my case studies, there appeared during this period a number of texts by significant literary figures within which hallucinations and psychosis are narratively and thematically significant: Samuel Beckett's *Watt* (1953), Aldous Huxley's *The Doors of Perception* (1954), Patrick White's *Voss* (1957), Evelyn Waugh's *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold* (1957), William Burroughs' *Naked Lunch* (1959), Anthony Burgess' *The Doctor is Sick* (1960), Philip K. Dick's *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch* (1965), John Fowles' *The Magus* (1965), Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966), and Thomas Pynchon's *The Crying of Lot 49* (1966), to name just a few. The mid-Twentieth Century also saw the publication of several important autobiographical and semi-autobiographical accounts of schizophrenia: Mary Jane Ward's *The Snake Pit* (1946), Marguerite Sechehaye's *Autobiography of a Schizophrenic Girl* (1951), Barbara O'Brien's *Operators and Things: The Inner Life of a Schizophrenic* (1958), Joanne Greenberg's *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden* (1964), and the first translation into English of Daniel Paul Schreber's *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness* (1955 [1903]).[69] As Doris Lessing put it, "'There was a certain atmosphere abroad in the late fifties and sixties – I mean, of course, unofficially – to do with mental illness'" (Lessing, quoted in Rubenstein 1979, p.199). I shall consider how this clustering relates to *literary* history in the Conclusion – for now, I wish to outline how changing conceptions of hallucinations, psychosis, and the mind in general, may well have led to an increased interest in these subjects in both the academy and the general public.[70]

Perhaps most famously, the mid-Twentieth Century saw the burgeoning popularity – and eventual prohibition – of hallucinogenic drugs. Prior to their valorisation by the 'counterculture' of the mid- to late-1960s, however, hallucinogens were already provoking both excitement and consternation in Anglophone psychiatry. Throughout the 1950s, hallucinogens (primarily LSD and mescaline) were administered to psychiatric patients suffering from a whole range of disorders, with wildly differing results being produced by different laboratories. For some clinicians, the importance of these substances lay in their 'psycho-' or 'psychotomimetic' properties: the way in which they produced behaviours which appeared similar to psychotic (particularly schizophrenic) symptoms.[71] In the paper in which he coined the term 'psychedelics' (after considering six other appropriate terms), Humphry

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[69] Indeed, the popularity of *The Snake Pit* and its 1948 film adaptation was such that the Rockland State hospital (in which Ward was treated) set up a research unit designed to improve its negative public image and boost staff morale (Moncrieff 2013, p.36).
[70] Since the historical developments I consider here appear to have pertained to some degree throughout the Anglophone world, I shall not be focusing too closely on the particularities of national difference.
[71] See Leonard S. Rubin (1957) for a discussion of experiments involving LSD.

Osmond lists a number of avenues of research which include 'exploring the mind under unusual circumstances', and 'training and […] educating those who work in psychiatry and psychology, especially in understanding strange ways of the mind [*sic*]' (Osmond 1957, p.420).[72] According to Osmond, R. W. Hyde 'and others' were using psychedelics 'to enlarge the sympathy of members of a psychiatric staff for patients in their care' – a practice which, Osmond optimistically suggests, 'may one day be obligatory for those working in psychiatry' (Osmond 1957, p.424).[73] In essence, during this period hallucinogens appear to have been viewed as potential routes towards an increased understanding of psychosis (and, by extension, the 'ordinary' mind as well). By the mid-1960s, this fairly modest project had turned into the dream of 'pushing human consciousness beyond its present limitations and on towards capacities not yet realized and perhaps undreamed of' (Masters and Houston 1966, p.316).

At the same time, the perceptual isolation (or 'sensory deprivation') studies at McGill University suggested that non-psychotic individuals could experience vivid hallucinations if deprived of adequate perceptual stimulation. Although subsequent experiments in other laboratories did not reproduce the same results (at least not to the same degree), the McGill studies captured the public imagination: 'Here, truly, was a manipulation that made a *difference* – unlike so many pallid experimental situations, a difference you could almost taste' (Suedfeld 1969a, p.3). Indeed, the experiments were so widely publicised that J. P. Zubek gives 'counter-suggestion' as one of the potential reasons why subsequent studies did not produce the same results (Zubek 1964, p.39).[74] Moreover, according to Marvin Zuckerman it was primarily the hallucinations reported by the subjects which 'gripped the interest of clinicians and theorists as well as laymen', not least because they 'suggested the possibility of a "miniature psychosis"' and because 'there were many anecdotal accounts of hallucinations under sensory-deprivation-like conditions which the experimental approach seemed to confirm' (Zuckerman 1969, p.85). As Robert R. Holt puts it, there had been such a great deal of attention to 'imaginal phenomena in the popular press', that students would come to experiments 'expecting startling visual experiences. As one of them put it in the course of a study in our laboratory, "Hallucinations are the thing in universities now, you know"' (Holt 1964a, p.258).

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[72] Incidentally, it was Osmond who introduced Aldous Huxley to mescaline. Huxley's subsequent book-length account of the experience, *The Doors of Perception* (1954), also considers how his drugged state might mirror that of the schizophrenic patient (Huxley 1954, pp.41-46).

[73] Indeed, as Osmond points out, the practice has historical precedent: the nineteenth-century psychiatrist B. A. Morel 'used hashish to show his students the sort of world that might be endured by some mentally ill people' (Osmond 1957, p.420).

[74] In other words, 'The phenomena have received such wide-spread publicity in the daily press that, as a consequence, many subjects serving in recent experiments may not have experienced them' (Zubek 1964, p.39).

As Peter Suedfeld notes, there were important 'practical problems' which served to generate this interest in sensory deprivation research (Suedfeld 1969a, p.8). One such problem was the 'performance decrement of individuals performing low-variability tasks' such as radar operators, truck drivers, pilots, polar explorers, etc. (Suedfeld 1969a, p.8), who could all be 'troubled by the emergence into consciousness of vivid imagery, largely visual but often kinesthetic or auditory, which they may take momentarily for reality' (Holt 1964a, p.257). One significant concern was the effect that sensory deprivation might have on astronauts: 'our national prestige […] may hinge on our knowledge of the conditions that induce hallucinations' (Holt 1964a, p.257). Indeed, Lt. Colonel Charles A. Berry published an article in 1961 on 'Man, Drugs, and Space Flight' in which he roundly rejects the view that '"since space pilots would certainly develop hallucinations within days if not hours after take-off, they should be given hallucination drugs to block the incapacitating visions", [which] should "ignite a controlled mental fire to fight an uncontrolled mental fire"' (Berry 1961, p.423). Unfortunately, Berry does not tell us where this view came from, but he spends the majority of the article detailing the difficulty of the astronaut's tasks in order to emphatically demonstrate that the 'necessity of peak performance and alertness' leaves 'no place' for hallucinogenic drugs (Berry 1961, pp.423-424).

Another significant issue which the McGill studies were attempting to address – and which, according to D. O. Hebb, was the primary issue being addressed when the project began – was the '"problem of brainwashing"' (Hebb, quoted in Suedfeld 1969b, p.154). '"The chief impetus, of course, was the dismay at the kind of 'confessions' being produced at the Russian Communist trials"' (Hebb, quoted in Suedfeld 1969b, p.154), although the later reports of the attempted brainwashing of American prisoners during the Korean War doubtless increased the salience of the problem a great deal, especially for the general public.[75] Indeed, a part of what was 'new' about brainwashing was the notion that some kind of 'special or novel scientific "gimmick" for influencing behavior was involved' in Communist practices (Biderman 1962, p.550), although in the early 1960s academic books and articles began to challenge this idea. According to Albert D. Biderman, 'A great deal of pseudo-scientific speculation was authoritatively disseminated, variously claiming that "brainwashing" was "really" conditioning à la Pavlov's dogs or was accomplished by using drugs, hypnotism, or the sensory deprivation

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[75] Indeed, it was in relation to the Korean War that the term 'brainwashing' was first used in 1950 in a newspaper article by Edward Hunter (Seed 2004, p.27). By 1960 over two hundred articles on the subject had been published in 'mass-circulation journals' such as *Time* and *Life* (Seed 2004, p.48).

effect' (Biderman 1962, p.553).[76] Nonetheless, the idea of brainwashing 'went on to become a powerful and long-lived cultural fantasy', ultimately becoming 'decoupled from communism and deployed to theorize frightening new forms of domestic social and political influence – especially American media and corporate power' (Melley 2008, p.148). In a sense, the concept of brainwashing served to culturally foreground and reify the more general idea that the core beliefs, commitments, and actions of individuals were open to direct manipulation, which took on a new and frightening reality in the light of recent psychological theories and pharmacological technologies. Descartes' thought experiment of the 'Evil Demon' deceiving his senses and thus convincing him of a false reality now seemed to have something of a real-world correlate. In this regard, brainwashing presents the face of what Alan Sinfield characterises as, 'the fear of the age, which is of being manipulated and determined, however benignly' (Sinfield 2013 [1983], p.113).

Yet perhaps one of the most significant contributions to the idea of brainwashing appeared the year just before the term was coined: George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949).[77] In this novel ontological relativism is taken to an extreme, as Winston's 're-education' in the Ministry of Love leads to his rejection of 'self-evident' truths. Most significant, in this respect, is the scene in which Winston finally comes to reject both the evidence of his own senses and the evidence of logical thought (i.e. the 'synthetic' and the 'analytic' truths of logical positivism):

> O'Brien held up the fingers of his left hand, with the thumb concealed.
>
> 'There are five fingers there. Do you see five fingers?'
>
> 'Yes.'
>
> And he did see them, for a fleeting instant, before the scenery of his mind changed. He saw five fingers, and there was no deformity. Then everything was normal again, and the old fear, the hatred, and the bewilderment came crowding back again. But there had been a moment […] when two and two could have been three as easily as five, if that were what was needed. (*1984*, pp.270-271)

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[76] Biderman is not, however, saying that sensory deprivation played no part in the process, only that there was no new scientifically applied 'technique' used by the Communists which differed markedly from the methods of coercion and persuasion used in times past (e.g. by the Church).

[77] As David Seed points out, there are three other novels which 'all describe different kinds of brainwashing before the letter': Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We* (1924 [1921]), Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932), and Arthur Koestler's *Darkness at Noon* (1940) (Seed 2004, p.1). All four novels experienced some form of revival during the 1950s: a republication of the original 1924 translation (*We*, 1954), a radio broadcast and a follow-up essay by the author (*Brave New World*, 1956 and 1958), a stage play (*Darkness at Noon*, 1951), and both a cinema and a television film (*Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 1956 and 1954).

Winston has long been aware of the *theoretical* possibility that the Party will ultimately make two plus two equal five, yet has never considered this to be an *experiential* possibility. In other words, he has remained convinced that he himself will not ever feel or believe that two plus two equals five, or that the past did not happen, or that gravity is a lie. While he knows that 'any Party intellectual would overthrow him in debate', employing 'subtle arguments which he would not be able to understand, much less answer', he nonetheless feels certain that reality itself is not open to negotiation, that he is 'in the right' in maintaining that 'The solid world exists, its laws do not change. Stones are hard, water is wet, objects unsupported fall towards the earth's centre' (*1984*, p.84). He cannot doubt the validity of his own subjective experience, regardless of what might be demonstrated through philosophical logic.

Yet O'Brien *does* eventually make Winston doubt the reality of his own experience, and thus undermines his absolute ontological faith. Notably, it is through technological manipulation that Winston experiences two plus two equalling five. There is first the electrical torture which leads to a hallucination of 'a forest of fingers [….] impossible to count […] somehow due to the mysterious identity between five and four' (*1984*, p.264). Then there is a delusional state of ontological neutrality produced by the electroshock machine, in which Winston actually does see five fingers (or at least, *believes* he sees five fingers), and in which two plus two can equal anything at all. Of course, this does not completely break Winston – the experience is only transitory – but he acquiesces to O'Brien's assertion that '"it is at any rate possible"' to experience four as five (*1984*, p.271). It is on the back of this acquiescence that O'Brien tries to convince Winston of the Party's radical form of ontological relativism: that it is fallacious to suppose that 'somewhere or other, outside oneself, there was a "real" world where "real" things happened' (*1984*, p.291). Instead, since 'All happenings are in the mind', it follows that 'Whatever happens in all minds, truly happens' (*1984*, p.291).

As with brainwashing itself, it is not that Orwell's novel introduced a radically 'new' conception of reality. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* essentially puts into practice the Nietzschean idea that there is no truth beyond 'interpretation', and that power determines which interpretation prevails at a given time. Yet *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is nonetheless symptomatic of a turn (or return) to relativism in multiple schools of philosophical, psychological, and sociological thought, which David Carr characterises as 'a widespread phenomenon of mid-twentieth century intellectual life' (Carr 1985, p.20). Ludwig Wittgenstein, W. V. Quine, Thomas Kuhn, R. D. Laing, and Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann all produced works in the fifties and sixties which either explicitly argue for, or can be readily interpreted as arguing for, the idea

that reality is constructed rather than discovered.[78] In this regard, although logical positivism experienced something of a revival in the early 1950s, the late fifties and early sixties saw a gradual erosion of the positivist faith in incontestable and value-free 'facts'.[79] To a certain extent, Orwell's novel anticipates this shift, but at the same time engages in (and at least *appears* to propound) a form of linguistic relativism which was already well-established and which was essentially paving the way for ontological relativism.[80]

Two of the most significant sites of conflict between relativism and realism bear directly on psychosis and hallucinations. The first is the question of whether insanity is *just* a matter of rebelling against a prescribed social norm, of holding ideas or engaging in practices which are contrary to the aims of the dominant political power. Such a conceptualisation of insanity appears to render psychiatry as an executive arm of state control (and history abounds with instances of psychiatry being used in this fashion). Indeed, in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* this is precisely how insanity is characterised, and Winston's 're-education' in the Ministry of Love is described by O'Brien using the language of therapy: '"[We aim] To cure you! To make you sane!"' (*1984*, p.265). To put it bluntly, if reality is ultimately a relative matter, then the definition of insanity as being 'out of touch with reality' appears to be essentially meaningless. As Laing puts it, 'In the context of our present pervasive madness that we call normality, sanity, freedom, all our frames of reference are ambiguous and equivocal' (Laing 1990, p.11). Yet for the realist (and usually the psychiatrist) there is something self-evidently wrong about this position – although psychiatry can be 'abused', there is still something about the behaviour of psychotic patients which is undeniably different from the behaviour of people from even the most radically different cultures.[81] Ian McEwan rather aptly characterises the issue in *Saturday* (2005) through the debate between the constructivist Daisy and her realist father, which ends

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[78] The same shift, as Carr points out, took place in phenomenology, in that the heirs to the tradition 'moved away from Husserl's antirelativism' (Carr 1985, p.19).

[79] See Patricia Waugh 2012, pp.34-45. As Waugh points out, the return to positivism in the fifties was also reflected in the work of a 'new generation of post-war fiction writers, including Kingsley Amis, Angus Wilson and John Wain', collectively referred to as 'The Movement' or the 'Angry Young Men', who 'lean[ed] on a revived logical positivism as the presiding ethos of their new kind of novel' (Waugh 2012, p.34).

[80] Consider, for instance, the following statements by Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf: 'The worlds in which different societies live are distinct worlds, not merely the same world with different labels attached' (Sapir 1949 [1929], p.162); 'We are thus introduced to a new principle of relativity, which holds that all observers are not led by the same physical evidence to the same picture of the universe' (Whorf 1956 [1940], p.214).

[81] Even Laing (at least in his early work), certainly does not suggest that psychiatry is in itself an unethical form of ideological control, or that its object (psychosis) is non-existent, but merely that the psychiatric methodology is misguided. Indeed, this is precisely where Thomas Szasz takes issue with Laing's 'antipsychiatry', which as he sees it simply involves 'the inversion of values ("only the mad are sane") and the replacement of observation by metaphor ("voyages in inner space")' (Szasz 2009, p.61). For Szasz, however, 'the practice of forensic psychiatry is a form of social control' and is thus 'a threat to a free society, because it is based on mysticism and deceit, not rational thought and honesty' (Szasz 1989 [1963], p.78).

when Henry, 'in a rhetorical coup, offer[s] her a tour of a closed psychiatric wing' (*Saturday*, p.92).

The second site of conflict relates to the matter of immediate sensory experience – the point in the debate at which realists start slapping tables and kicking stones.[82] In taking such actions, the realist is attempting to demonstrate the absurdity of the relativist's position by showing that its conceptual framework is incommensurable with actual experience: the table (or the stone) 'solidly resists and proves itself not to be a dream or a social construction' (Latour 1989, p.106). In much the same way, Winston finds himself unable to fully accept O'Brien's arguments *despite* acceding to their logic (at least before he enters Room 101).

> Anything could be true. The so-called laws of Nature were nonsense. The law of gravity was nonsense. 'If I wished,' O'Brien had said, 'I could float off this floor like a soap bubble.' Winston worked it out. 'If he *thinks* he floats off the floor, and if I simultaneously *think* I see him do it, then the thing happens.' Suddenly, like a lump of submerged wreckage breaking the surface of water, the thought burst into his mind: 'It doesn't really happen. We imagine it. It is hallucination.' He pushed the thought under instantly. The fallacy was obvious. (*1984*, p.291)

The passage points to what, for Winston, is as much a phenomenological problem as an ontological one: the experiential refuses to cede reality to the ideational, irrespective of the dictates of rational thought. Reality still *feels* 'out there' rather than 'in here' – and it is telling that 'hallucination' is invoked when the 'in here' is given superior reality status, since this reference demonstrates the dualistic separation of mind and world which underwrites the epistemological conception of hallucination as perceptual error (see Section 1 of this chapter). In this regard, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* provides an instance of how the relativist-realist debate ultimately ends up having to deal with the question of how the mind relates to the world – as does the problem of hallucinatory experience.

The mid-Twentieth Century also saw the 'official' arrival of Continental Philosophy in the Anglophone world with the first English translations of seminal second-generation phenomenological and existentialist texts (e.g. Jean-Paul Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* (1956 [1943]), Martin Heidegger's *Being and Time* (1962 [1927]), and Maurice Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* (1962 [1945])).[83] Of course, both phenomenological and existentialist thought were evidently in circulation before these translations – as early as 1950, for instance, Iris Murdoch was giving radio talks on existentialism and continued to publish articles on the subject throughout the decade. Moreover, as Murdoch points out, there are some

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[82] See Derek Edwards, Malcolm Ashmore, and Jonathan Potter (1995) for an interesting discussion of this common rhetorical move.

[83] The early sixties also saw the first English translation of Jaspers' *General Psychopathology* (1963 [1913-1959]).

similarities between the anti-dualist positions found in the work of philosophers such as Sartre and Ryle.[84]

> What we are all working upon, it might be said, is *le monde vécu*, the lived world, what is actually experienced, thought of as itself being the real […] and not as being the reflection or mental shadow of some other separate mode of being… (Murdoch 1999c [1952], p.131)

In effect, both Ryle and the phenomenologists/existentialists either directly or indirectly challenge the conception of mind and world as separable 'things'.[85] Since consciousness is always intentional (i.e. a consciousness *of* something), the idea of 'mind' disintegrates the moment it is pulled away from the world, just as a pure, objective world – uncontaminated by the shaping mind – is completely inaccessible. In other words, the existentialist and phenomenological position is that 'we are in the world by a relationship of being in which, paradoxically, the subject *is* our body, our world, and our situation, by a sort of exchange' (Flynn 2006, p.61). Of course, refuting the distinction of 'out there' and 'in here' brings its own set of questions, not least the question of what it means to be a subject in the act of making sense of the world, the question of how we make sense of the world, and the question of why we end up with the intuitive distinction between mind and world in the first place.

A third – and not unrelated – contextual factor which has a bearing on hallucinations and psychosis concerns the 'anxiety at the loss of […] religious sensibility' in the mid-Twentieth Century (Sinfield 2013, p.93). Moreover, after the Second World War and the Stalinist Purges this loss of religious sensibility 'ran parallel with a failure of confidence in the secularist goals of science and politics', both of which 'had taken horrifying directions' (Sinfield 2013, p.95; see also Dollimore 2013, p.73). As Murdoch put it, 'The deep confidence has gone', while acknowledging at the same time that 'we are all unprecedentedly self-conscious about the images and symbols which make our lives supportable. We know too much psychology' (Murdoch 1999e [1970], p.225). The 'existentialist' and 'mystical' novels of the mid-century were, as Murdoch saw it, a response to this prevalent sense of anxiety.[86] Within

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[84] Indeed, both Ryle and J. L. Austin later characterised their approaches as phenomenological (in 1962 and 1957 respectively), even though neither was drawing on the phenomenological tradition.

[85] Although phenomenology is not existentialism, the two schools are frequently entangled, especially since existentialism often draws on phenomenology. Murdoch, for instance, appears to use the two terms somewhat interchangeably when referring to mid-twentieth-century continental philosophers.

[86] As Waugh points out, this sense of anxiety characterises fiction before, during, and after the Second World War, and manifests as a kind of 'delusional mood' or 'atmosphere' in which the distinction between inner and outer, the subjective and the objective, begins to break down (Waugh 2016, p.198). Similarly, Victoria Stewart notes that in the short fiction of writers such as Elizabeth Bowen and Roald Dahl 'A lack of certainty as to the boundaries between actuality and hallucination characterizes […] stories that draw the reader into the strange new world of the war' (Stewart 2016, p.122). What is perhaps distinct about the slightly later fictions I am concerned with here is that these tendencies are made far more explicit, as hallucinatory and psychotic experience comes to be focused on in more detail. However, it is undeniable that all of these authors were writing in the shadow of the

the existentialist novel this anxiety manifests in a quest for authenticity which valorises the assertion of will over the demands of being, without recourse to some 'spiritual elsewhere [which] has ceased to exist' (Murdoch 1999e, p.225). The mystical novel, on the other hand, 'attempts to express a religious consciousness without the traditional trappings of religion', and responds to the existentialist position with 'the uneasy suspicion that perhaps after all man is not God' (Murdoch 1999e, p.226).[87] Both types of novel, however, 'lack the consolations of metaphysics', and thus 'most mystical novelists have existentialist characteristics, so prevalent is this way of looking at the world' (Murdoch 1999e, pp.234, 226).[88]

There are two ways in which these developments have a bearing on hallucinations and psychosis. The first is related to the existentialist concern with 'limit' or 'boundary' situations, which reveal – or rather, bring to our attention – that which eludes our conceptualisation (Flynn 2006, pp.44, 57-58). As Sinfield points out, this view is the obverse or 'flip-over' of the view presented by psychology and ethology, which assumes that 'breakdown under pressure indicates our true nature' as depraved, 'fallen', etc. (Sinfield 2013, p.103). Instead, 'extreme situations lift us into "absolute consciousness"' (Sinfield 2013, p.103). In a similar vein – although without, perhaps, the same valence – Murdoch suggests that the purpose of Sartre's *La Nausée* 'is to reveal to us our real situation by contrast with one from which a familiar element has been removed', thus leaving us 'face to face with a brute and nameless nature' (Murdoch 1999a [1950], p.107). The psychotic break, as a kind of ultimate 'limit situation', is thus conceived of as an opportunity for self-discovery and the recuperation of authenticity, rather than as a failure of adaptation or a perpetual state of epistemological error.

Secondly, even as research into hallucinatory experience threatened to reduce religious or mystical experiences to a species of electrochemical accident – like a neurological waiter spilling a tray of drinks, to borrow once more from McEwan (*Saturday*, p.5) – the existentialist and relativist frameworks provided ways of recuperating these experiences as meaningful without necessarily having to reject scientific evidence. Ambiguous figures, so beloved of Gestalt psychology (which influenced both Wittgenstein and the phenomenologists), demonstrated that an object could be experienced as a completely different object depending on how it was apperceived by the experiencing subject. Similarly, we can experience others as

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Second World War and responding to an environment of rapid socio-historical change, within which various foundational certainties were felt to be shifting or slipping away.

[87] Perhaps unsurprisingly, all four of my case studies are what Murdoch would term 'mystical novels' (indeed, Murdoch includes Spark and Golding in her list of mystical novelists, alongside Graham Greene, Patrick White, and Saul Bellow).

[88] See also Sinfield: 'existentialist preoccupation with religion sometimes represented a persistence of the religious sensibility, and it proved vulnerable to religious recuperation' (Sinfield 2013, p.101).

people like ourselves, or as complex physical-chemical systems, yet 'There is no dualism in the sense of the coexistence of two different essences or substances there in the object, psyche and soma; there are two different experiential Gestalts: person and organism' (Laing 1990, p.21). As a result, the idea of 'objectivism' is replaced by the idea of scientific rationalism as being one framework among others for making sense of the world. Indeed, within ontological relativism (which subsumes other forms of relativism), what is held to be real is entirely dependent on the conceptual system within which it appears, thereby precluding the possibility of any epistemologically innocent account of 'truth' or 'fact'. A pluralist understanding of reality, meanwhile, recognises the possibility of multiple realities, and suggests that the individual is engaged in the continuous navigation and organisation of different worlds.[89] Again, hallucinations and mystical experiences – especially as experiences which automatically call ontology into question – provided (and continue to provide) a particularly fertile ground for these issues to be explored.

These are at least some of the main contextual factors which made hallucinatory and psychotic experience of particular interest to both the Anglophone public and academy during the mid-Twentieth Century. Of course, novels and autobiographies played a role in *instigating* as well as responding to such discourses, and the hallucinatory and psychotic experiences of individual authors were often partly responsible for the production of these texts. Moreover, these texts certainly do not unproblematically 'endorse' the relativist and existentialist views I have considered here, as the literary debate surrounding these texts frequently demonstrates. Yet what does seem characteristic of this period is, as Lessing points out, a change in attitudes towards mental illness, which understandably corresponded with changing conceptions of both the mind and reality in multiple discourses.[90] However, since many of the theories and debates which began during this period are still at issue (a few after something of a hiatus), the texts which engage with them are also still relevant to contemporary philosophy, psychology, and literary theory.

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[89] Ontological relativism and ontological pluralism are not entirely distinct, and overlap in several places. However, perhaps a key difference (which will be important in the following chapters), is that relativism potentially carries the implication that there is *no* 'truth' or 'reality' (physical, ethical, spiritual, etc.), whereas pluralism allows for the possibility that there might be multiple, perhaps even contradictory, truths and realities.

[90] Indeed, yet another significant change during this period was the emergence of cognitive approaches to psychology which turned attention back towards the 'the subjective phenomena of consciousness' after behaviourism and psychoanalysis (Holt, 1964b, p.651).

Chapter 2 – Attention, Embodiment, and Dualism in *Pincher Martin*

Hallucinatory experiences are more than ordinarily common in the works of William Golding. There is the voice of the pig's head which Simon hears in *Lord of the Flies* (1954); the 'presence' of the angel Jocelyn feels at his back in *The Spire* (1964), and the confusion of dreams and visions he experiences once the spire is built; the various spirits and voices Matty encounters in *Darkness Visible* (1979), and Mr Pedigree's pre-death vision of Matty himself; and 'the hallucination' which appears to Pincher in *Pincher Martin* (1956), as well as the novel's closing revelation that the entirety of its action has not taken place 'in reality'. Even *Free Fall* (1959), which only presents madness from the outside (through Beatrice Ifor's catatonia), originally contained a hallucination in the early drafts. During Sammy's solitary confinement in the prison camp, a 'circular aperture opens in the wall and he sees blue space and, against it, the head and shoulders of a man in "living black"' (Carey 2009, p.230).

Whether Golding himself ever had hallucinations is questionable. John Carey's biography refers to two experiences recorded in Golding's journals which seem at least hallucination-like: the vision of a white cockerel strutting along the bars of his cot, and the vision of a stag's head appearing above the bracken during a family walk in Savernake Forest (Carey 2009, pp.1-2, 24). There is also the curiously ambiguous episode Golding describes in 'Egypt from My Inside' (1982), in which he helps a museum curator to unwrap a mummy. He 'remembered and still remember[s] everything in vivid and luminous detail', and although he knows that while he had these experiences he 'was somewhere' he cannot say where exactly that was ('Egypt from My Inside', p.78). Of course, all of these experiences took place in childhood, and since the first two apparently occurred at eighteen months and four years respectively, it is highly unlikely that they are 'memories' in the strictest sense of the word. What is more to the point is the importance that Golding later afforded them, since according to Carey he remembered the vision of the white cockerel as 'a glimpse of "the spiritual, the miraculous" that he hoarded in his memory as a refuge from "the bloody cold daylight I've spent my life in, except when drunk"' (Carey 2009, p.2).[91] Moreover, while convinced that he had seen both cockerel and stag he also knew 'that it was not an ordinary kind of seeing', 'not

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[91] According to Peter Green, while Golding was in Greece rewriting *The Spire* he would also hallucinate after heavy drinking (Carey 2009, pp.277-278).

like dreaming, nor like waking,' and that both creatures were 'from another world' (Carey 2009, p.1).

Unlike Muriel Spark and Ken Kesey, however, Golding does not appear to have stated any kind of deliberate intention to write about the phenomenology of hallucinatory experience. Yet it is clear from his novels that he was interested in conveying the experientiality of unusual modes of being or states of mind. His experiments with the attribution of agency in *The Inheritors* (1955), for instance, are clearly designed to prompt the reader to enact an atypical perspective, and it is unsurprising that both Michael A. K. Halliday (1971) and Roger Fowler (1977) use this text as a primary case study for expounding their concepts of 'mind style'.[92] Both *Pincher Martin* and *The Spire*, meanwhile, focalise protagonists who are losing (or have already lost) their grip on reality, and as a result the storyworlds of these novels are often confused and distorted. Moreover, in *Pincher Martin* there is an almost obsessive focus on different kinds of 'seeing', to the extent that the protagonist's own unremitting attention to the phenomenology of his perceptions itself contributes to conveying the sense of his encroaching madness.

Indeed, *Pincher Martin* is particularly interesting with regard to hallucinatory experience. Not only does the novel contain several instances of what appear to be hallucinations, but it also suggests in its final sentence that almost all of the preceding narrative has itself been one long hallucination, experienced by Pincher in the moment(s) of his death. The ending of *Pincher Martin* 'doubles' the novel in providing a completely different frame for naturalising its oddities, so that, in effect, two *Pincher Martin*s are created: the *Pincher Martin* of the first reading, which is the tale of a marooned sailor losing his sense of reality as he goes mad on an empty rock; and the *Pincher Martin* of the second reading, in which no part of Pincher's world (with the possible exception of the novel's opening moments) was ever real to begin with.

This chapter focuses primarily on the 'first' *Pincher Martin*, and on how the formal structure of the text works to evoke both the phenomenology of hallucinatory experience and the phenomenology of the delusional mood or 'atmosphere' (Jaspers 1997 [1963], v.1, p.98) that characterises the early stages of schizophrenia – a state of unreality and/or hyperreality which Louis Sass refers to as the *Stimmung* (Sass 1992, p.45). Indeed, in both form and content many of Pincher's experiences on the rock are strikingly similar to descriptions found in phenomenological accounts of schizophrenia, such as those of Sass, Karl Jaspers, and R. D.

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[92] See Chapter 4, Section 1, and the Conclusion, Section 2, for discussions of mind style.

Laing. Whether or not Golding attempted any of his own research (outside of personal experiences he may or may not have had), is rather doubtful – as Carey puts it, 'Golding trusted his imagination and did not care for research' (Carey 2009, p.285). Yet in some respects, the parallels are perhaps more interesting if they are purely coincidental, inasmuch as they would suggest that Golding lighted on them through the imaginative consideration of his subject. In particular, the fact that Golding was aware while writing the novel that Pincher is a man divorced from his physical body has implications for how hallucinations and the *Stimmung* might arise.

Within previous criticism (which tends to focus on the 'second' *Pincher Martin*), Golding has been treated predominantly as a 'Christian novelist', not least because of his frequent use of Christian frameworks in his attempts to explain his work.[93] *Pincher Martin* in particular is often seen as taking a 'religious turn' (McCullen 1978, p.226), although critics vary in their interpretations of exactly what kind of religious 'message' is being propounded.[94] At the same time, the novel is frequently understood in terms of the Classical and Romantic allusions littered throughout the text (far more prominently than Christian ones), although these are almost always interpreted as intentionally ironic. Pincher's status as a Promethean figure – as a man marooned on a rock, defying God and his lightning – is qualified not only by his failure, but also by his moral ugliness.[95] Indeed, Golding is often regarded as a 'moral fabulist' as well as a Christian novelist (and the two positions overlap somewhat), with *Pincher Martin* being considered as much a 'morality play' as a tale of survival.[96]

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[93] Dennis Keene goes so far as to say that 'William Golding is a Christian novelist: one has to start with that otherwise the novels will not make sense. (This isn't only a fact I have dredged up from the books themselves: Mr. Golding has said as much)' (Keene 1963, p.2). However, Golding later changed in his belief 'that the author has a sort of *patria potestas* over his brainchildren', acknowledging that '"What is in a book is not what the author thought he put in it, but what the reader gets out of it"' (Golding, quoted in Surette 1994, p.204).

[94] See, for instance, David Anderson 1978, p.10, Philip Redpath 1986, p.157, Philippa Tristram 1978, p.49, and Paul Crawford 2002, p.93, all of whom offer competing views of *Pincher Martin*'s attitude towards God, determinism, and religious authority.

[95] Indeed, the novel provides conflicting views of Pincher as both Promethean hero and 'cosmic maggot' (Tiger 1974, p.135), and the 'Romantic affirmation of the will that could see in Satan's attitude toward God promethean qualities (we think of Shelley and Blake) is neatly, even hilariously, qualified by the Romantic music that accompanies Christopher's purging enema' (Whitehead 1971, p.33). However, several critics have questioned whether Golding does enough to 'damn' Pincher and undermine the Romantic affirmation of the human will (see Mark Kinkead-Weekes and Ian Gregor 1984, p.156; Leon Surette 1994, p.221; and Ted E. Boyle 1978, p.26).

[96] As Virginia Tiger points out, Golding himself described *Pincher Martin* as 'a straightforward morality play' (Tiger 1974, p.115; see also Arnold Johnston 1978, p.106). In Maurice L. McMullen's view, all of Golding's novels are concerned with the same issues: 'free will versus necessity, the Fall from innocence, the origin and manifestation of evil, [and] the search for meaning' (McCullen 1978, p.226). Crawford, however, suggests that *Pincher Martin* is particularly engaged 'politically and satirically with the "historical moment" in an interrogation of the English totalitarian personality', attacking the complacent fantasy of 'British immunity from fascist brutality and totalitarianism' (Crawford 2002, p.92).

Yet several critics have also considered Golding's 'religion' to be more conflicted, and more self-contesting, than a straightforwardly Christian reading of his novels suggests. According to John Carey, the apparent opposition between the scientific and the spiritual was a subject 'of perennial interest to Golding', and in 'virtually everything he wrote, as he acknowledged', 'two opposed kinds of being' are set against each other (Carey 2009, p.175).[97] Tiger similarly argues that 'In each of the novels, there is the effort of bridgebuilding between the physical world which contemporary man accepts and the spiritual world which he ignores', and that in this fashion 'He is obviously trying to restore a lost dimension to the contemporary human understanding' (Tiger 1974, p.32). For both Tristram and Redpath, the 'problem' Golding continuously wrestles with is specifically one of 'language and its relationship to the physical and metaphysical world' (Redpath 1986, pp.13-14; see also Tristram 1978, p.49). Indeed, Golding conceived of '"The job of the novelist"' as '"scrap[ing] the labels off things […] to show the irrational where it exists"', in order to offer '"a recognizable picture of the mystery"' (Golding, quoted in Tiger 1974, p.30). The tension between the reality of the 'mystery' or the '"numinous"' (as Golding once termed it (Surette 1994, p.208)), and the reality of scientific rationalism, is further exacerbated in *Pincher Martin* by a form of epistemological – and essentially existential – anxiety, as Golding attempts to tackle 'the most puzzling paradox of modern literature, the paradox of solipsism and communion' (Josipovici 1971, p.302).[98] In this regard, *Pincher Martin* can be understood as engaged with what is essentially a phenomenological question: the question of how the individual subject relates to, experiences, and understands the world.

The first section of this chapter deals with Pincher's apparent psychosis, demonstrating how a great deal of Pincher's experience can be understood within the framework of psychosis, and examining how the experiential feel of the psychotic world is conveyed through various formal devices. To begin with, I focus on the so-called 'film-trailers' – which seem to partake of the nature of dreams, memories, and hallucinations all at the same time – and point to how they create a sense of phenomenological and ontological uncertainty through various forms of 'world-play'. Drawing on enactivist theories of perception and mental imagery, I go on to

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[97] Indeed, Carey's biography abounds with examples of Golding's oscillation between different schools of belief throughout his lifetime: his father's atheistic rationalism, his early hallucinations, his disdain for '"all religion, all mysticism, all possibility of spiritual experience"' while a student of biology at Oxford, his later enthusiasm for (and even later rejection of) Steinerism and its attempt 'to find a bridge between the world of the physical sciences and the world of the spirit', and his attraction to Jungian psychology and 'Jung's belief that life has a spiritual purpose beyond the material' (Carey 2009, pp.48, 1-2, 24-25, 45, 48-49, 243, 336).

[98] See also Patricia Waugh 2016, p.203, and Lee M. Whitehead 1971, pp.24-25, 34-36.

examine how the novel evokes a sense of the unreality of Pincher's world, in a fashion that mirrors the various reality distortions that are a part of the experience of the *Stimmung*.

In the second section I focus on 'the hallucination' which Pincher experiences in the penultimate chapter. Continuing the theme of the first section, I consider how the presentation of the hallucination explicitly draws attention to the structure of the imaginary in order to convey a sense of the phenomenological difference of hallucinatory experience. In so doing, I combine enactivism with classical phenomenology in order to construct a framework which accommodates the sophisticated understanding of mental imagery which structures the presentation of Pincher's hallucination.

Finally, the third section explores how the distortions of Pincher's reality are prompted by his loss of the sense of the primary real, which is in turn intrinsically related to the loss of his physical body. I suggest that several of the parallels between Pincher's experience and the experience of psychosis can thus be understood in terms of the experience of a disembodied subject, and that the novel is critiquing the self-world dualism of the Cartesian *cogito*.

Overall, I argue that *Pincher Martin* is engaged in a form of phenomenological enquiry which is itself prompted by a sense of ontological uncertainty. In this regard, it is a novel which seems concerned with investigating how and why reality is not just a conceptual matter, but is something phenomenologically *felt*. Both 'the hallucination' and the various forms of reality distortion which Pincher experiences on the rock can thus be considered as part of a broader project of phenomenological exploration, as a way of examining the ordinary features of experience and the 'natural attitude' by positing a subject who is radically dissociated from both.

Section 1: (De)Realising a World

Pincher Martin does not have much of a plot, at least in the normal sense of the word. A man is shipwrecked on a rock in the middle of the Atlantic after his ship is hit by a torpedo. After a gruelling climb he finds shelter, food, and water, and builds a cairn of stones in the hopes of attracting the attention of any passing ships. He tries to occupy himself with various projects to increase his chances of survival and rescue, but none of them come to fruition. As the days pass he finds himself frequently reliving moments of his past in what appear to be dreams or hallucinations, during which he loses his sense of place and time enough to occasionally

register surprise on returning to the rock. He suspects food poisoning and gives himself an enema using his lifejacket. A storm arrives, he has a conversation with 'the hallucination', and finally appears to have lost his sanity completely as 'black lightning' begins to rip the world apart. The last chapter, acting as a sort of coda, deals with a naval officer (Davidson) coming to collect a body from a Hebridean islander (Campbell). Through their conversation, we learn that the body is that of our protagonist, and that he drowned before he had the chance to take off his seaboots – which, as the reader has been reminded several times, he apparently removed while he was struggling in the water after the shipwreck. The reader is thus prompted to find some way of making sense of the apparent contradiction. As a result, critics tend either to state that the experience on the rock is a pre-death hallucination – with its analogue in the tradition of drowning men having their lives 'flash before their eyes' – or, following Golding's own interpretation of the novel, that it takes place in a post-death Purgatory. Tiger even conflates the two perspectives in arguing that 'the struggle on the rock is meant to be a physically dead man's hallucination' (Tiger 1974, p.109).[99] Ultimately, there is no account of what is 'really going on' in *Pincher Martin* which is so complete that it forecloses any of the others – all that can be said with a reasonable degree of certainty is that Pincher's experience on the rock takes place in a realm that is ontologically separate from the one inhabited by Campbell, Davidson, and Pincher's own physical body.

The complexity of *Pincher Martin*, however, results not so much from the ending or the 'plot' as from its carefully constructed sense of strangeness. There is quite clearly something 'going on', as both the novel's form and content break with convention in a way that generates what Crawford (using Tzvetan Todorov's terminology), describes as its 'fantastic hesitation' (Crawford 2002, p.38). Essentially, the reader senses that there is something about the text that requires 'naturalization' – a term which Jonathan Culler uses to describe how readers bring whatever is 'strange or deviant' into a 'discursive order' (Culler 1975, p.137). In other words, 'If readers encounter initially odd, inexplicable elements, they

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[99] Leon Surette has objected to this view on the grounds that 'it makes no sense to speak of after-death experiences as "hallucinations"' (Surette 1994, p.223). However, it could equally be asked whether it makes sense to speak of 'after-death experience' either. In both cases (as with dreams), we are talking about experience which is not of the physical, consensually validated world – the only real difference with 'after-death experience' is that it is not framed by experience of the 'real' world. Moreover, in the case of *Pincher Martin*, Golding seems to be suggesting that real death is the negation of the self, of individual identity – but without these, does it make sense to speak of experience at all? This, it seems, is the sense in which Golding used the term 'purgatory' to define Pincher's ordeal on the rock: as a state which precedes the eradication of the self, it is also a state which precedes 'death', and yet is one in which the mind is separated from the real, physical body (again, as in dreams). Indeed, the list of alternative titles which Golding proposed for the US edition of *Pincher Martin* (1. *Crustacean*; 2. *Aftermath*; 3. *Epilogue*; 4. *The Chinese have X-Ray Eyes*; 5. *Perchance to Dream*; 6. *What Dreams May Come*), suggest that he had this similarity in mind (Carey 2009, p.204).

will attempt to recuperate these items by taking recourse to available interpretative patterns', ultimately naturalising such items 'within a frame that re-familiarizes the initial oddity' (Fludernik 2002 [1996] p.23). For the majority of *Pincher Martin*, it appears that the strange 'reality breakdowns' can be 'explained away as the result of physical or mental illness' (Crawford 2002, p.90), so that Pincher's own deteriorating condition provides the naturalising frame.[100] Indeed, the novel appears to invite this strategy, since Pincher himself senses that his sanity is under threat: '"I must watch my mind. I must not let madness steal up on me and take me by surprise. Already – I must expect hallucinations"' (*Pincher Martin* [*PM*], p.81). Just as after-death experience is thematised through Nathaniel's musings on eschatology, so madness is also thematised through Pincher's own monologues while on the island. For instance, he notes that '"The whole problem of insanity is so complex that a satisfactory definition, a norm, has never been established"', following this observation with the question: '"surely the normal child in its cot goes through all the symptoms of the neurotic?"' (*PM*, p.173)). Although in one sense the ending appears to shift thematic focus from psychosis to eschatology, it actually relies for its effect on the degree to which the reader is convinced that the novel's strangeness can be explained by Pincher's psychosis (indeed, without the revelation of the final sentence this would be a viable, if not the *prevailing*, interpretation). Therefore, the novel does represent the formal experience of psychosis, even if it concludes by providing a metaphysical explanation for that psychosis. In other words, on the first reading of the novel, Pincher is mad (until the final sentence); on the second, he is not in the 'real' storyworld, existing either within a construction of his own mind or in purgatory (or both). However, the phenomenology of Pincher's experiences does not change, and nor does the way in which the text attempts to make the reader enact those experiences (I explore the implications of this duality in the third section of this chapter).

The strangeness of Pincher's experience on the rock is partly produced by the sense that he is not securely anchored in one reality. For instance, he occasionally appears to re-experience memories from his past, yet to an immersive degree that far outstrips ordinary acts of remembering. At first, Pincher decides that these 'film-trailers' (as he calls them) must be dreams: '"I was asleep then. I was dreaming about Alfred and Sybil. Go to sleep again"' (*PM*, p.90). However, the very fact that he needs to rationally determine what kind of experience he has had suggests that the phenomenology of the experience is not immediately apparent to him

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[100] To use Tamar Yacobi's terminology, the oddities and contradictions are more likely to be integrated according to the '*perspectival principle*' (i.e. as a function of the 'observer through whom the world is taken to be refracted') rather than the '*existential principle*' (i.e. as actual existents of the fictional world) (Yacobi 1981, pp.116-118).

and is therefore different from any kind of experience he has had before. Moreover, it becomes increasingly doubtful that Pincher actually sleeps at all. For one thing, it seems that he never experiences what might be called the 'interruption' of sleep, and instead shifts between worlds so abruptly that he registers surprise upon returning to the rock ('"Where the hell am I? Where was I?"' (*PM*, p.90)). There is no apparent change in the form of his conscious awareness, and thus no apparent change in his conscious state – just the sudden reappearance of the world of the rock.

A similar sense of disorientation is induced in the reader, although this is produced instead through the lack of modal deictic cues upon *entering* (rather than leaving) the world of the film-trailers. Rather than being marked with any reference to a change in Pincher's intentional state, there is a kind of covert shift, a tipping over of the imaginary into the actual:

> He lay and meditated the sluggishness of his bowels. This created pictures of chrome and porcelain and attendant circumstances. He put the toothbrush back, and stood, looking at his face in the mirror… (*PM*, p.88)

A world that is initially abstract and shapeless (since porcelain and chrome are *substances* rather than objects), suddenly becomes realised in terms of definite objects with which Pincher can interact. Indeed, in being referred to with the definite article, these newly introduced objects appear not as schematic *re*presentations of their object categories, but as particular instances of those objects which have already been categorised. In this regard, they attain an air of independence or 'pre-existence', inasmuch as they are presented as having already been apperceived by Pincher as part of his actual surroundings, rather than being summoned up through an act of imagination. Yet although the two environments are clearly discontinuous, there is no prompt to the reader that the deictic centre has shifted. The resultant disorientation is, of course, quickly overcome, since the two environments are so obviously discontinuous that a modal shift is made retroactively. Indeed, in this case the modal shift is bound up with naturalisation, since it is through considering the film-trailer *as* an ontologically distinct environment (in this case, a dream) that the reader can make sense of the apparent textual conflict.

Although the shift I have examined is designed to be disorienting, it is perhaps not so to a high degree. However, as the novel progresses this kind of ontological discontinuity becomes increasingly frequent, in some cases being accompanied by significant variations which require further changes in the reader's explanatory framework.[101] Perhaps most

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[101] As we shall see in Chapter 3, *The Comforters* employs a similar technique, although in that novel the changes are perhaps more pronounced.

significantly, Pincher begins to experience the film-trailers even when performing various tasks during the day, thus calling into question their status as 'dreams'. The world of the film-trailers and the world of the rock also come to be increasingly entangled, as objects appear to exist in both:

> [He] looked down at the pool. The little fish hung in the sunshine with a steady trickle of bubbles rising by it from the oxygen tube. The bottles at the back of the bar loomed through the aquarium as cliffs of jewels and ore. (*PM*, p.134)

The reader has earlier been told that there is indeed a fish in this particular pool, and until the final two words of the second sentence it seems that Pincher is still observing the world of the rock. The two worlds thus seem to merge as one object (the fish) appears to exist in both simultaneously. There are also cases where different objects from both worlds occupy the same space, such as the moment when, during a memory/hallucination, Pincher grabs 'the binnacle and the rock' in the same movement; or when he feels the 'undulations' of the floor as he hunts for his cigarette (these undulations being part of the floor in his shelter, but not of the floor in the room in which he is smoking with Nat) (*PM*, pp.55, 72). These cases of double occupation usually occur shortly before the film-trailers come to an end – indeed, as I suggest in the third section of this chapter, the sensations they produce are partly responsible for Pincher's return to the world of the rock. For the moment, the importance of this merging of worlds is that not only the experiencing 'centre' but also the objects *of* experience are capable of shifting between these worlds; the ontological boundaries that should ordinarily keep them distinct no longer hold.

The hallucinated memories of the film-trailers thus introduce multiple worlds which can vie with the 'real' world of the rock for ontological primacy – yet they are also formally designed to convey a sense of ontological destabilisation, to provide the reader with moments of hesitation and confusion as the reality status of certain existents is brought into question. For example, upon going down to collect mussels Pincher sees:

> a coralline substance close to his face, thin and pink like icing [….] He stroked the smooth stuff with one finger. They called that paint Barmaid's Blush and splashed on gallons with the inexpert and casual hand of the wartime sailor. [….] There were interminable hard acres of the pink round scuttles and on gun shields, whole fields on sides and top hamper, hanging round the hard angles, the utilitarian curves, the grudgingly conceded living quarters of ships on the Northern Patrol, like pink icing or the coral growths on a washed rock. He took his face away from the casing and turned to climb the ladders to the bridge. (*PM*, pp.99-100)

Here the shift in place occurs through a kind of three-part chiasmic pattern, whereby the source of the simile changes place with the target. First there is the coral growth, which is like icing,

which is like the paint on the ship; and then the paint is like icing or coral growth. The primary ontological ground shifts from one realm to the other as the 'real' world of the rock becomes itself the source, rather than the target, of the simile.[102] However, since the coral growth was introduced first, and since it belongs to the world of the rock (which so far the reader has taken to be the primary real), the sense of ontological tension is increased with its reintroduction as a simile. In switching from metaphor target to metaphor source, the world of the rock is relegated to a lesser place in the ontological hierarchy, since by textual convention the source is *less real* than the target. Again, a sense of momentary disorientation is produced as the text shifts its ontological ground.

The hallucinated memories of the film-trailers thus introduce multiple worlds which can vie with the 'real' world of the rock for ontological primacy, providing the reader with moments of hesitation and confusion as the reality of certain existents and environments is brought into question. Of course, the reader might not respond to each and every case of deviance and incongruity, and the effect is perhaps more cumulative than instantaneous. Yet the strangeness of the film-trailers is only one part of Pincher's encroaching psychosis, of his loss of the sense of the primary real. Throughout the novel Pincher appears to experience a whole spectrum of unusual forms of experience, ranging from illusions and hallucinations to peculiarly vivid and persistent kinds of 'seeing-as'. His hands, for instance, begin frequently to appear to him as two lobsters, although physical sensation or effortful concentration usually turns them back into hands. The seagulls, which he first imagines as 'flying reptiles [....] thinking into their smooth outlines all the strangeness of bats and vampires' (*PM*, p.57), are soon almost exclusively referred to *as* reptiles, as if the initial 'seeing-as' has concretised into semi-literal vision. Likewise, when at first he hears the thunder there are 'times when [the crevice] was a tin box so huge that a spade knocking at the side sounded like distant thunder. Then after that there was a time when he was back in rock and distant thunder was sounding like the knocking of a spade against a vast tin box' (*PM*, pp.143-144). At this point, it is unclear whether Pincher is actually hearing thunder – he has yet to see the lightning on the horizon – but when at last the storm arrives, his 'centre' is convinced that the sound it hears is indeed 'the grating and thump of a spade against an enormous tin box' (*PM*, p.189). This is known with 'certainty' (*PM*, p.189), but is only revealed after Pincher's mouth has run through various other explanatory possibilities, as if he is deliberately trying to hide the knowledge from

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[102] *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* provides frequent examples of this kind of literalisation (or 'realisation') of metaphor. I therefore consider this technique in more detail in Chapter 4.

himself. Indeed, when he first hears the noise it is said that 'the centre could confuse it for a while with thunder' (*PM*, p.188), the confusion thus being figured as a deliberate, effortful evasion of the 'truth'. Yet, for the reader, this apparent truth bears all the hallmarks of a delusion: it is an apparently fallacious notion which has grown from one of two possibilities into an incorrigible fact regarding Pincher's reality. What all of these forms of seeing-as ultimately have in common is that they serve to derealise Pincher's world, the world of the rock, by reifying to an unusual degree what are initially imaginative projections onto that world.

The various kinds of experience examined so far – film-trailers, hallucinations, seeing-as – are all, broadly speaking, reliant on the same formal mechanism: the involvement or intrusion of other worlds, other realities, which then vie with the world of the rock for ontological primacy. They are also all, again broadly speaking, hallucinatory experiences, at least insofar as they involve Pincher's awareness of what cannot reasonably be supposed to be a genuine part of his environment. Yet the derealisation of Pincher's world is not just brought about by ontological competition; it also appears to both Pincher and the reader as strange, as somehow unnatural or abnormal. In this regard, Pincher's experience exhibits many of the features of the '*Stimmung*' (Sass 1992, p.45) or 'delusional atmosphere' (Jaspers 1997, v.1, p.98), a state which characterises the prodromal stage of psychosis and which may persist long after the psychotic break. According to Sass, in this state:

> everything is totally and uncannily transformed: the fabric of space seems subtly changed; the feeling of reality is either heightened, pulsing with a mysterious, unnameable force, or else oddly diminished or undermined – or, paradoxically, things may seem (as one patient put it) both 'unreal and extra-real at the same time.' (Sass 1992, p.44)

Sass further defines the *Stimmung* according to four typical features: 'Unreality, where the world is devoid of feeling or authenticity; Mere Being, where the sheer fact of existence defies speech and understanding; Fragmentation, where details or parts overwhelm the synthetic whole'; and finally, 'Apophany', a sense of 'fugitive significance' in which there is 'some definite meaning that always lies just out of reach' (Sass 1992, pp.51-52). In this last state, which typically occurs at a later point during the psychotic break, 'things may take on an exemplary quality, as if they represented other objects or essences, existing not as themselves but as tokens of types lying elsewhere' (Sass 1992, p.50).[103]

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[103] Jaspers' account of the delusional atmosphere is slightly different, but remains broadly similar: 'Patients feel "as if they have lost grip on things, they feel gross uncertainty which drives them instinctively to look for some fixed point to which they can cling"' (Hagen, quoted in Jaspers 1997, v.1, p.98). At the same time, 'the environment offers a *world of new meanings*', and as a result '"I noticed particularly" is the constant remark these

Several of the features of the *Stimmung* which Sass describes appear to be present in Pincher's experience on the rock. For instance, his world begins to seem increasingly unreal to him, such as when he looks 'down the High Street and it was a picture. He shut his eyes and then opened them again but the rock and sea seemed no more real' (*PM*, p.124). After the 'gap of not-being' – his fainting fit – he similarly observes that '"This side of the gap is different from the other [….] Then where there was bright, solid scenery is now only painted stuff, grey under the pilot light"' (*PM*, p.169).[104] At the same time, the world of the rock is particularly difficult to image – indeterminate and half-formed – even when it is not being overtly described as unreal. So many of the descriptions are of abstract or formless substances, 'things', 'blobs', 'stuff', 'projections', 'complications', 'jumbles', 'whiteness', etc.[105] There are also spatial distortions and deliberate instances of imprecision, so that the size of objects is sometimes difficult to grasp. A 'patch of galactic whiteness', for instance, is a moment later revealed to be 'a hand connected to him' (*PM*, p.49). A 'curtain of hair and flesh' that falls over 'the picture on the wall' is, the reader comes to realise, Pincher's own closing eyelid (*PM*, p.161). Indeed, this spatial confusion is at one point overtly described: 'dimensions were mixed up [….] He could not gauge size at all' (*PM*, p.40). The horizon can thus be at one moment 'so far away that it had no significance and the next, so close that he could stretch out his arm and lay hold' (*PM*, p.143).[106] There are also numerous instances of defamiliarisation and 'delayed decoding' (Watt 1979, p.175), with objects often becoming recognisable to Pincher and/or the reader only after concentration and effort.[107] For instance, when Pincher is first washed up on the rock he sees a 'pattern in front of him' (*PM*, p.23) which is at first meaningless – and when at last he sees the pebbles on which he is lying he also sees 'a whiter thing beyond them. He examined it without curiosity, noting the bleached wrinkles, the blue roots of nails, the corrugations at the finger-tips' (*PM*, p.25). The reader is presented with details which eventually coalesce into

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patients make, though they cannot say why they take such particular note of things nor what it is they suspect' (Jaspers 1997, v.1, p.99).

[104] This description of the world as being occupied by painted scenery – later repeated during the storm, when the rock seems 'like cardboard, like a painted flat' – provides one of several parallels between *Pincher Martin* and the account provided by Marguerite Sechehaye's patient Renee, whom Sass quotes at length in describing the *Stimmung*: 'At these moments, objects could take on the look of "stage accessories" or "pasteboard scenery"' (Sass 1992, citing Sechehaye, p.48).

[105] In one sense, perhaps, these indeterminate objects *are* easy to image, but so lacking in meaningful referential content that they provide little imagistic information regarding Pincher's environment (even if they do provide imagistic information regarding Pincher's own experience of his environment, which is precisely the point).

[106] A similar experience is described in Franz Kafka's 'Description of a Struggle' (see Chapter 1, Section 2).

[107] Such 'delayed decoding' is often also formally equivalent to what Sass terms 'Fragmentation', especially in those cases where Pincher is described as not fully recognising the object he is encountering.

a hand, but which at first – given the non-specificity of size and shape – could be anything, and therefore has no imagistic quality save its whiteness.

This overall sense of indeterminacy and ambiguity – or 'opalescence', to use Roman Ingarden's metaphor (Ingarden 1973a [1931], p.254) – serves to put the world of the rock at a further remove, frustrating the sense of direct and immediate access which is characteristic of the sense of the 'presence' of reality. Of course, at times the novel is incredibly, almost obsessively, detailed in its descriptions – so much so that Ted E. Boyle complains of 'the mass of boring detail the story contains' (Boyle 1978, p.27) – yet detail in itself does not automatically lead to a sense of presence or reality. As Marie-Laure Ryan observes, 'the immersive quality of the representation of space depends not on the pure intensity the information – which translates in this case as length and detail of the descriptions – but rather on the salience of the highlighted features and on the ability of descriptive passages to project a map of the landscape' (Ryan 2001, p.124). After all, according to the enactive account of perception, 'When we see, we do not represent the whole scene in consciousness all at once' (Noë 2004, p.72). As inattentional blindness demonstrates, we do not experience the details of our entire visual field in a single instant, like a kind of snapshot, and this necessarily means that there is a great deal within our visual field that we literally do not see. Even within foveal vision, 'whereby we see rich color and fine detail, […and which] comprises only about 2° of visual angle' (Thomas 2014, p.155), there will be detail which we do not see because we do not attend to it. However, our experience of the world is not riddled with gaps, for it is through 'a pattern of "meaningful" – that is to say, evaluative – interactions' that the world is '"enacted" or "brought forth"' (Caracciolo 2014a, p.102). Seeing an object 'involves evaluating its function (usually, but not necessarily, in a pre-conceptual way) within a larger context of human interactions and projects' (Caracciolo 2014a, p.56), and therefore there will be details which are available in the world but which remain unseen simply because they lack meaning for us.[108] Of course, these projects do not have to be ongoing, and as a result what we see is often not relevant to our immediate goals and activities, especially if practice prompts us to bring forth certain objects more often.

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[108] As Evan Thompson notes, such enactivist accounts of 'a body-oriented world of perception and action' are essentially akin to Jakob von Uexküll's notion of the '*Umwelt*', 'an animal's environment in the sense of its lived, phenomenal world, the world as it presents itself to that animal thanks to its sensorimotor repertoire' (Thompson 2007, 59). Indeed, for von Uexküll 'an animal is able to distinguish as many objects as it can carry out actions in its environment. If it has only a few actions and a few effect images, its environment will then consist of few objects [….] With the number of actions available to an animal, the number of objects in its environment also increases (von Uexküll 2010 [1934], p.96).

There is, in this sense, an isomorphism or 'structural resemblance between real experiences (perception) and story-driven experiences (imaginings)' (Caracciolo 2014a, p.23). Of course, there are significant differences between the two. For one thing, the reader's exploration of the storyworld 'is not completely free, since it is guided by the authorial design. We assume that what is left outside the text is just not interesting enough to repay attention' (Caracciolo 2014a, p.102). Furthermore, narrative functions rather like a scale model of experience, being radically stripped-down by comparison. After all, it is part of 'the power of narrative to chunk phenomenal reality into classifiable, knowable, and operable units' (Herman 2003 p.174), and it can do so by minimising the criteria of what is meaningful, thereby extracting 'from the stream of experience a delimited set of participants, states, actions, and events and structures into a coherent whole' (Herman 2003, p.174). In this regard, the illusion of the Barthesian '*effet de réel*' (Barthes 1989 [1968]) functions by momentarily expanding the meaningful beyond the ongoing projects of the narrative participants, both in terms of the participants in the discourse world (narrator and narratee), and the storyworld(s) (characters).[109] The details and objects which appear to signify only themselves (and thus reality (Barthes 1989, p.148)), do so in a way that is still largely isomorphic to lived experience: engaged in certain activities, we do sometimes feel that we happen to notice details which are not relevant to the activity at hand. We are, as it were, engaged in a vast array of projects at any one time, from biological imperatives all the way up to overall life-goals. Equally, the urgency of the project at hand will naturally affect what is brought forth from our environment: there is a great deal of difference between, for instance, the environment we experience when we run as exercise and the same environment experienced when we are running for our lives.[110]

Of course, experiential isomorphism can only take us so far when considering the 'appropriateness' of the degree of detail in narrative. Not only does the context of the rest of the narrative as a whole set up a 'horizon of expectation' (as Hans Robert Jauss would term it), but conventional horizons established by the corpus of texts from a particular time-period, and belonging to a particular genre, will also inevitably play a part in shaping readerly expectations (Jauss 1970, p.12). Within this network of expectations, there is bound to be a point at which an excess of detail in narrative can be 'deliberately exploited as a way to express the alienation

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[109] This distinction between 'text world' (the storyworld) and 'discourse world' (the world in which the narrative is told and received), is made explicit in Paul Werth's 'Text World Theory' (Werth, 1999, p.17), although a similar idea would appear to lie behind notions of an 'implied author' (e.g. Booth 1983 [1961], p.71).

[110] Although in moments of extreme crisis people sometimes feel themselves to be noticing a far greater degree of detail than usual, this feeling could conceivably arise because *any* detail which is brought forth according to another project appears far more incongruous than it would otherwise do, given the overriding importance of the project at hand.

of the subject from the surrounding world' (Ryan 2001, p.124), at least when focalisation prompts us to attribute the apprehension of such details to an experiencing consciousness.[111] In other words, with the right contextual markers an excess of irrelevant detail becomes the enaction of an abnormal experiential state, a state in which the subject's normal interactions with the world are suspended. Such a state would either be one of being cut adrift from the world, without any kind of imperative structuring world-oriented projects (and therefore salience), or else of being 'lost in a clutter of data' (Ryan 2001, p.124), feeling the world intrusively impinging on consciousness (and if the former were largely or completely sub-personal, it might conceivably lead to the latter). This last certainly seems to reflect Pincher's own experience, for there are moments when the rock is overtly described as being 'far too hard, far too bright, far too near' (*PM*, p.140). Likewise, when Pincher attempts to '"account for everything"' by blaming it on his own madness, '"hardness"' and '"brilliant reality"' are included in the list of features he feels he needs to account for (*PM*, p.190). In this regard, the world of the rock shifts between being unreal and extra-real, indeterminate and excessively detailed, distant and 'too near', in the paradoxical state of being which Sass describes as part of the *Stimmung*.

Yet perhaps the feature of the *Stimmung* that is most in evidence in *Pincher Martin* is 'Apophany', the sense of fugitive meaning, which becomes increasingly prominent in the final chapters. There is, for instance, Pincher's sense that '"There is a pattern emerging"', a pattern which he cannot grasp since '"even my dim guess at it makes my reason falter"' (*PM*, p.163). After the fainting fit, the 'gap of not-being', this sense of veiled and threatening meaning increases: 'It was something that must not be remembered [....] something about a pattern that was emerging' (*PM*, p.172). An interesting difference here between Pincher's position and Jaspers' account of the delusional atmosphere is that according to Jaspers 'to reach some definite idea at last is like being relieved from some enormous burden' (Jaspers 1997, v.1, p.98). In Pincher's case, however, the definite idea seems more terrifying than the general atmosphere of uncertainty. The reader, on the other hand, is in a position more akin to that which Jaspers describes. He or she knows what caused Pincher's fainting fit – the memory of the hallucinated lobster – yet at this point its significance is still largely unexplained. It could, of course, merely be Pincher's fear of recognising his own madness – the fact that when he first saw the lobster he did not judge the reality of his perception – yet this still does not fully

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[111] In this sense, while unfocalised passages of lengthy description are still enactions of experience, they are not attributed to an experiencing consciousness within the storyworld and thereby avoid generating the assumption of an alienated subject.

account for the emerging 'pattern' which is somehow so threatening. For the reader there is thus a sense of meaning deferred, although at this point it is perhaps still more likely to be considered something that is only 'meaningful' for Pincher, a grand, overarching delusion which will be yet another symptom of his madness. Indeed, Pincher's world often seems on the brink of revealing something to him, inasmuch as it is either about to speak or speaking words he cannot hear or understand. Often it is the sea which is responsible for this aura of communication, in its 'formless mad talking', its 'roars and incompleted syllables' (*PM*, pp.21, 19). Yet at times the birds also seem to threaten speech, at least in that they are described as having 'said nothing' (which implies that they could speak if they chose) (*PM*, p.143). It seems, therefore, that Pincher perceives language, or the possibility of language, in the world around him, yet at the same time it is either a language that lacks meaning or that refuses to let itself be known.

The pervasive sense of the strangeness and unreality of Pincher's world is not only conveyed through the world itself, but also through Pincher's self-reflexive focus on the phenomenology of his own perceptions. He is almost constantly aware of 'seeing through a window', a window 'divided into three lights by two outlines or shadows of noses' and framed by 'the arches of his skull' (*PM*, p.82). He often has a sense of staring through or under these arches, of seeing and interacting with the space in front of them; his own perspectival viewpoint is thus located somewhere behind them, so that he feels himself to be looking out from within the dark 'globe' of his own head (*PM*, p.129).[112] At one point he even leans forward 'to peer round the window-frame but it went with him', which suggests that he is also aware of the strangeness of this over-consciousness of the body (*PM*, p.82). He promptly tries to dismiss this strangeness by arguing that this '"is the ordinary experience of living. There is nothing strange in that"' (*PM*, p.82). In one sense, of course, Pincher is correct: we can see the outline of our own nose and the arches of our eye-sockets, and we do see past and through them respectively. This conception of the visual field bears many similarities with Ernst Mach's observation that, upon closing his right eye, his left eye is 'presented' with a kind of picture, within 'a frame formed by the ridge of my eyebrow, by my nose, and by my moustache' (Mach 1914 [1897], p.18). According to the enactivists, however, this is a biological fact, not a phenomenological one (and for this reason Mach's accompanying sketch of the visual field,

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[112] Golding uses the same technique in *The Spire*, so that Jocelyn also has experiences of seeing 'round his nose' (*The Spire*, pp.23, 138). However, this image of seeing past or through the contours of the head is not repeated as relentlessly as it is in *Pincher Martin*.

complete with eyebrow, moustache, and nose, is often given as the epitome of the position which they are attacking). As Thompson points out,

> Given the poor resolution of peripheral vision, Mach must have moved his eye in order to draw the detail at the periphery. Furthermore, besides these overt shifts of visual attention involving eye movements, he must have made covert shifts of mental attention while holding his eye still thereby changing his mental focus while holding peripheral vision constant. His drawing is thus a representation that abstracts and combines the contents of many attentional phases of visual experience. It is a static representation of a temporally extended, dynamic process of sensorimotor and mental exploration of the scene. (Thompson 2007, p.145)

In other words, 'we do not experience the entirety of our visual field as having the clarity and detail of what we focally attend to' (Thompson 2007, p.145), even if we might *think* that we do upon reflection.

As Alva Noë suggests (citing Ludwig Wittgenstein's argument), Mach's picture demonstrates 'what happens when one uses a pictorial method to try to depict, not the physical, but the experiential. At best, one depicts the physical' (Noë 2004, p.71). In this regard, Mach's picture indirectly reveals 'what is sometimes referred to as the *transparency* of perceptual experience': the fact that 'when we try to describe it, we see through it, as it were, to the world' (Noë 2004, p.72). Pincher's perceptual experience, however, often seems to veer towards opacity rather than transparency. In the most extreme instances, his experience of the world itself is almost completely null, such as when 'the eyes looked, received impressions without seeing them', or when 'the window was filled with a pattern of colour' (*PM*, pp.32, 161).[113] Such descriptions provide nothing in the way of perceived objects but instead describe only the fact of seeing itself – 'seeing' without perceptual content. By contrast, Pincher occasionally has moments of relief when he 'live[s] again on the surface of his eyes', is 'extended normally through his limbs' and is 'out in the air' (*PM*, p.76). In these periods, he does not feel himself to be in the act of perceiving the world but is instead in direct contact with the world itself, without the curious sense of his body somehow intruding between himself and his environment: 'His sight was right on the outside and he lived in the world' (*PM*, p.166). However, such relief tends to be short-lived, and soon he finds himself 'seeing through a window again [….] inside himself at the top end' (*PM*, p.82). It would seem, therefore, that Pincher is more than usually aware of the intrinsic *physical* features of his experience; that is, he is more than usually aware

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[113] Noë's descriptions of post-operative congenital cataracts patients provide an interesting point of comparison when considered alongside these passages. Although surgery initially 'restores visual *sensation*' to these patients, 'the sensations don't add up to experiences with representational content'; they can discern differences in colour (and possibly shape), but only through reflection and deduction do these shapes and colours become particular objects (e.g. faces, windows, etc.) (Noë 2004, p5).

of his body as an object to be experienced, rather than the medium through which experience occurs. This distinction might be characterised as the difference between, say, experiencing the roughness *of* a stone and experiencing the pattern of friction that is felt when I run my fingers across it, or of experiencing the redness *of* a ball and experiencing a patch of varying shades of red within my visual field (an attitude such as a painter might adopt, for instance).[114] Pincher himself appears aware of a similar distinction when he sees the rock and sea as 'a pattern of colour that filled the three lights of his window', and later again when 'the pattern of colour [… becomes] sight again' (*PM*, pp.124, 162). Whether or not one part or aspect of experience is always categorically not a part of conscious awareness at any given moment, or else one part of experience is foregrounded and the other backgrounded, is not necessarily at issue. What *is* important here is that our attention is usually directed towards objects and their properties (i.e. physically transparent), and not towards the medium through which we perceive them (physically opaque). In Pincher's case, however, both the frequency and duration of this kind of physical opacity is far greater than normal.

I will return to the implicit causal explanation for Pincher's perceptual opacity in the third section – for now, I shall consider how it functions as part of a project which encompasses the novel as a whole. As all four of my case studies demonstrate, the mid-twentieth-century fiction which features psychosis often foregrounds phenomenological issues, usually through introducing forms and modes of phenomenological uncertainty (the significance of which I address in the Conclusion). *Pincher Martin* is, perhaps, one of the most conspicuous examples of this trend. Pincher's movement into psychosis, in this context, serves to move him beyond the Husserlian 'natural attitude' (Husserl 1983 [1913], p.51) and thus prompts the explicit foregrounding of phenomenological themes – in much the same way as phenomenological discourse uses psychosis to draw attention to the 'givens' of experience through their absence. Quite apart from the indeterminate modality of the film-trailers, the physical opacity of Pincher's perception, and the alienation of the *Stimmung*, the novel also directs attention towards classic phenomenological problems such as binocular vision, object recognition, Gestalt formation, and the sense of reality. This last is perhaps the most important in *Pincher Martin*, since it bears a significant relationship to the novel's focus on mental imagery and the range of similar intentional states (hallucination, dream, 'seeing-as', etc.). Pincher is constantly seeing 'pictures' (the word is repeated almost exhaustively), and at times the context suggests

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[114] A more complex example is provided by instances of self-touching, which I examine in Section 3 of this chapter.

that these pictures are almost seen *as* pictures, possessing a kind of concreteness which implies a literal rather than metaphorical usage of the term. When first arriving on the rock, for instance, Pincher sometimes sees his pictures 'inside the skull, behind the arch of the brow and the shadowy nose [….] right in the indeterminate darkness above the fire of hardnesses. If you looked out idly, you saw round them' (*PM*, p.26). This description is almost an *ad absurdum* extrapolation of the so-called 'picture theory' of mental images – the notion that such experiences 'are to be explained by the presence of representations, in the mind or brain, that are in some sense *picture-like*' – which is 'deeply entrenched in our language and our folk psychology' (Thomas 2018). Pincher's 'pictures', however, are far more like pictures than mental images; the fact that he can 'look round them' suggests that they quite literally occupy space *inside his head*. At one point they fall 'through his mind like a dropped sheaf of snapshots', and again later 'the snapshots whirled and flew like a pack of cards' (*PM*, pp.157, 159). Pincher's images are thus not only concretised *as* pictures but also, like his veridical perceptions, become experientially opaque, experiences *of* pictures and not of what they represent. According to this form of picture theory, Pincher's film-trailers could thus be considered as instances of concretisation in the opposite direction: rather than experiencing his mental images as *re*presentations to the point where their representationality occludes their content, he experiences them as direct *presentations* of objects to the point where their content occludes their representationality.[115] Given that in both extremes Pincher's experience of mental images is certainly atypical, the novel presents something of a *ratio ad absurdum* argument against picture theory. Unlike Pincher, we do not experience mental images as physical pictures located somewhere behind the eyes – yet equally (unlike Pincher) we can distinguish them from perceptual experience.

Section 2: The Presence of Figure and Ground

These implicit problems regarding mental imagery – what it is, how it comes about, and how we can distinguish it from perceptual experience – are further complicated in *Pincher Martin* with the occurrence of 'the hallucination' towards the end of the novel (*PM*, p.194). Unlike the film-trailers, Pincher is at first in no doubt as to what kind of experience he is having:

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[115] As I explore in the following section, the picture theory of mental images is itself undermined in *Pincher Martin*.

> Immediately the hallucination was there. He knew this before he saw it because there was an awe in the trench, framed by the silent spray that flew over. The hallucination sat on the rock at the end of the trench and at last he faced it through his blurred window. (*PM*, p.194)

As the description makes clear, neither the perceptual qualities nor the contextual incongruity of the hallucination itself are what alert Pincher to the fact that he is having a hallucination. In other words, it is not a post hoc judgement of reality that leads him to believe that he is hallucinating; rather, he has a direct *awareness* of the hallucination's appearance. Yet when he does at last 'see' it, he also notes that it manifests curious experiential qualities:

> The eye nearest the Look-out was bloodshot at the outer corner. Behind it or beside it a red strip of sunset ran down out of sight behind the rock. The spray still flew over. You could look at the sunset or the eye but you could not do both. You could not look at the eye and the mouth together. He saw the nose was shiny and leathery brown and full of pores. The left cheek would need a shave soon, for he could see the individual bristles. But he could not look at the whole face together. It was a face that perhaps could be remembered later. It did not move. It merely had this quality of refusing overall inspection. One feature at a time. (*PM*, p.195)

Compared to the rest of the novel, this description (and the description of clothing which follows, which is also 'difficult to pin down' (*PM*, p.195)), at first appears fairly conventional. It is, after all, a commonplace of literary description that objects can only be presented 'one feature at a time', at least if such objects are to be presented with the kind of minute and irrelevant detail which signifies the real (in the Barthesian sense). The novel even seems to make a similar point, since Pincher himself begins to doubt that he is indeed hallucinating when he sees 'the tiny shred of spittle' on the corner of the lips and observes '"I could never have invented that"' (*PM*, p.194). Yet such detail can only ever appear diachronically; as Wolfgang Iser points out, 'When we imagine Tom Jones, during our reading of the novel, we have to put together various facets that have been revealed to us at different times – in contrast to the film, where we always see him as a whole in every situation' (Iser 1978 [1976], p.138). In this regard, 'Like the blind person's cane, or the beam of a flashlight in a dark room, the reader's consciousness explores the storyworld' (Caracciolo 2014a, p.102), leaping from vague objects to sharp details but never really seeing 'the eye and the mouth together'. What is therefore particularly odd about this description is that it explicitly draws attention to the way in which the fictional world is revealed in this piecemeal fashion, especially since it suggests that Pincher also finds the experience unusual.

Moreover, Pincher's hallucination is explicitly figured as involving a loss of perceptual freedom. Directly before it appears, Pincher not only predicts that he will see hallucinations but also that '"they will fetter [his] attention to them"' (*PM*, p.194). In the light of the features that the hallucination manifests this notion of fettered attention seems particularly important,

especially since much of the description is framed in a negative form which expresses the *limitations* of Pincher's perceptual activities.[116] As I shall explore further in the following chapter, there is an extent to which the reader is, while actually reading, robbed of his or her capacity for agency, '"working under the pressure of someone else's necessity"' (*The Comforters*, p.107). 'As soon as I replace my direct perception of reality by the words of a book, I deliver myself, bound hand and foot, to the omnipotence of fiction' (Poulet 2007 [1972], p.58). This relationship between text and reader can be figured not so much as a loss of agency as a radical reduction in the horizons of possible experience, at least in terms of the exploration of the storyworld. It is a wilful 'fettering of attention' that, as I explain in more detail shortly, works in tandem with the diachronic nature of narrative presentation to evoke within the reader the sense that he or she is *exploring* a world, and not just reading a text.

It would appear, therefore, that Pincher experiences the face in much the same way as the reader. The sudden shift to the second person ('You could look [….] You could not look') is already in itself an invitation to compare the reader's imaginary and Pincher's hallucinatory experiences. Furthermore, the extensive use of negatives and modal verbs creates a sense of potential but not fully actualised seeing. Yet the novel also contains several other subtle indications that Pincher is in some way in a similar position to the reader. When he is first inspecting the rock 'with understanding', for instance, he observes that 'the less compressed layers had worn away into trenches full of edges *like the cut pages of a book*' (*PM*, p.77 [my italics]). Similarly, there is the 'considerable book' hewn by the lightning from the rock itself, with its 'strange engraving in the white cover' (*PM*, p.177). While the pattern formed is not of words, 'which would have killed him instantly' – perhaps because the naturalistic impossibility of words carved by lightning would have made him aware of the fictionality of his world – his eye still follows 'the indented and gouged lines again and again' (*PM*, p.177), in an imagistic parody of the act of reading. Directly after the hallucination, as the black lightning begins to

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[116] This notion of fettered attention does indeed appear to be part of the phenomenology of (at least some) hallucinatory experiences. According to Kenneth Hugdahl et al., in schizophrenia 'AVHs attract attentional focus', and 'the "voices" drain the attentional and cognitive capacity of the patients, making them unable to direct attention away from the "voices" and to cognitively suppress the experience' (Hugdahl et al. 2013, p.301). As a result, when such hallucinations occur, patients 'appear to have less ability to exhibit cognitive control of and disengage from the "voices" […] and thus less ability to attend to events around them' (Hugdahl et al. 2013, p.301). However, if we understand attention as a form of creation, the 'active constitution of a new object' (Merleau-Ponty 2002, p.35) as opposed to some kind of mental spotlight, then hallucinations do not 'attract' attentional focus but *are constituted* by attentional focus. Of course, both views imply a sense of having lost the ability to direct attentional focus (i.e. a loss of the sense of perceptual agency), yet the attention-as-constitution view suggests that hallucination and the loss of attentional freedom are inextricably linked. (While Hugdahl et al., focus exclusively on auditory verbal hallucinations, it seems reasonable to assume that the phenomenology of visual hallucinations is similar in this respect).

tear the world apart, he sees the rock as 'no more than an island of papery stuff round the claws' (*PM*, p.201) – again alluding to its nature as a fictional construction, literally made out of paper. 'The rock between the claws', however, is 'solid', 'square', and with 'an engraving on the surface' (*PM*, p.201) – clearly the same 'book' struck from the rock earlier. As he watches, 'the black lines sank in, went through and joined' (*PM*, p.201). The penultimate image of Pincher's struggle is thus of Pincher clutching a book (complete with black lines of writing) between his claws (i.e. hands), placing him in the same physical position as the reader.[117] Finally, as several critics have noted, the novel concludes with a metafictional gambit, inasmuch as it posits an equivalence between Pincher's situation and the reader's: both, after all, have been imagining – and inhabiting – the world of the rock.[118] 'In this way', Josipovici asserts, 'the act of reading becomes the subject of the novel, and the final twist shocks the reader into the recognition of what novels normally pass over in silence: the difference between our imagination and the world' (Josipovici 1971, p.253). At the same time, however, the equivalence which is established between hallucination and the act of reading also invites the reader to consider the similarities between these two experiences (as we shall see in the following chapter, *The Comforters* draws the same comparison).

As Marco Caracciolo argues, in certain respects the act of reading is structurally similar to engaging with the real world, being another form of interaction, of '"doing and undergoing"' (Caracciolo 2014a, p.73).[119] The 'temporally extended, dynamic process of sensorimotor and mental exploration' that occurs in veridical perception (Thompson 2007, p.145) is mirrored in textual narrative, since narrative likewise brings forth existents in an extended temporal sequence. Since 'it is no part of ordinary phenomenology that we experience the whole [scene or object], every bit of it, in consciousness, all at once' (Noë 2004, p.56), the fact that we likewise do not encounter the totality of the storyworld 'all at once' is not a problem. Yet unlike the real world the storyworld does have objective 'gaps', and we cannot, as it were, look in whatever direction we choose because if we do the storyworld will not be there. The horizons of possible experience are therefore different for the two worlds: in the real world there *is* always more to see. The reader's attention (while actually reading), is thus (paradoxically)

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[117] Redpath has also drawn attention the metafictional connotations of this image, but in his view 'The claws resting in front of Martin are reflections of the writer's hands resting on the table or clutching the pen as he writes' (Redpath 1986, p.152).

[118] As Gabriel Josipovici puts it, 'what Pincher Martin imagines and projects as reality is what Golding has imagined and created, and what the reader lives as reality while he is engrossed in the book' (Josipovici 1971, p.253). For similar views see Redpath 1986, p.28; Crawford 2002, pp.91-92; Tristram 1978, p.52; and Waugh 2016, p.203.

[119] The phrase, as Caracciolo acknowledges, is John Dewey's, but Caracciolo extends his argument beyond its original remit.

wilfully fettered in its exploration of the storyworld. The feeling of being immersed in the storyworld thus partly depends on the extent to which we can forget that our attention is fettered by necessity – the extent to which we feel that there is, as it were, a wealth of detail that *might* be accessed (as in veridical experience), but which we are not bringing forth because there is currently something more meaningful that is using our attentional resources. In effect, it is not just that 'we *assume* that what is left outside the text is just not interesting enough to repay attention' (Caracciolo 2014a, p.102 [my italics]), but that we try to allow ourselves to become *convinced* that this is the case in order to experience the storyworld as a world rather than a textual narrative.

In certain important respects, the presentation of Pincher's hallucination appears designed to foreground this relationship between text and reader. On the one hand, the second person modal verb construction implies that the text is a set of instructions guiding the reader's imagination (as several theorists have suggested – see Chapter 1, Section 2). Yet on the other hand, it makes a pretence of opening up the horizons of attentional possibility within the storyworld ('You *could* look at the eye *or* you *could* look at the sunset'), suggesting that the reader has the freedom to choose between attentional objects within a stable perceptual field (as in actual perception). In the same sentence, however, this freedom is curtailed ('but you could not do both'), and in the next it is limited still further ('You *could not* look at the eye and the mouth *together*'). Of course, according to the enactivist position, precisely the same restrictions apply to veridical perception – indeed, the diachronic nature of perception is necessitated by the limitations of attentional focus. However, an acute awareness of these limitations is surely *not* a part of the ordinary phenomenology of perception – it seems to us that we do, when looking at a face, see the eye and the mouth together. '[I]t is a basic fact of our phenomenology that we enjoy a perceptual awareness of at least some unattended features of the scene' (Noë 2004, p.59). For Noë, this awareness is based on the sense of the presence 'of that which, strictly speaking, we do not perceive', since what is unseen is still present 'in the sense that [it is] perceptually accessible to us' (Noë 2004, pp.60, 63). The unseen, for Noë, includes the detail we are not attending to, the occluded parts of objects, and objects that are strictly outside our field of vision (e.g. what is behind us, or in the room next door), although they are present to different degrees (Noë 2004, p.65). As Caracciolo points out, the illusory sense that there is a whole storyworld which is also 'present' – that the imaginary tomato, say, has an imaginary reverse side or imaginary colour – occurs because our sensory imaginings involve the same 'sensorimotor patterns' as actual perception (Caracciolo 2014a, p.95). Building on Rolf Zwaan's notion of 'experiential traces', Caracciolo argues that our imaginings

are not modally discreet in the way that a term like 'mental *image*' suggests, but instead draw on the same sensorimotor relationship between body and world that pertains to actual perception (Caracciolo 2014a, p.100). Just as the unseen parts of the world are present because they could be accessed through movement, so the unseen parts of the storyworld are pseudo-present because it seems they could be accessed through (imaginary) movement. In both cases, the (real and pseudo-)presence of unattended features is 'virtual' in that we feel these features *could* be brought into consciousness (Caracciolo 2014a, p.103).[120]

Yet Noë's assertion that 'One of the results of change blindness is that we only see, we only experience, that to which we attend' (Noë 2004, p.59) is perhaps too strong, since it causes him to lump together within the 'unseen' things which are more phenomenologically distinct. Although he does distinguish between what is within the visual field (but not attended to) and what is outside of it (or occluded within it) on the basis of what he calls 'object-dependence', he explicitly figures object-dependence in terms of how the 'movements *of the object* produce sensory change' (Noë 2004, p.64). In effect, the distinction relies on the capacity to distinguish between self-directed and other-directed change. Yet there is a crucial subjective difference between what is within the visual field (but not attended to), and what is outside of it. This difference, I suggest, is not to do with movement at all, and has an important bearing on why the phenomenology of mental imagery is different to the phenomenology of veridical perception.

According to Nigel Thomas, 'mental images are, in a sense, *made of attention*', since 'mental imagery is (or supervenes upon) the (generally covert and partial) enactment of those specific acts of directed attention that would be necessary for the perceiving of the imagined object, if it were actually present to the senses' (Thomas 2014, p.151). In other words, 'We imagine, say, a cat, by going through (some of) the motions of examining something and finding that it is a cat, even though there is no cat' (Thomas 1999, p.218). Maurice Merleau-Ponty puts forward a similar view when he suggests that 'To say that I imagine Peter is to say that I bring about the pseudo-presence of Peter by putting into operation the "Peter-behaviour-pattern"' (Merleau-Ponty 2002 [1945], p.210). Therefore, we cannot be going through these motions of seeing a (non-present) cat *at the same time* as performing the motions of seeing another (present) object. It is perhaps partly for this reason that we struggle to 'place' mental

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[120] Of course, if we do *not* feel that the unattended features of the storyworld could be brought into consciousness then the storyworld is not pseudo-present. In this respect, the sense of being 'caught up in the story' is, paradoxically, a sense that we are not following the directions of the narrative out of necessity (because there is no more of the storyworld to see), but that we are exploring the storyworld as we want to, in terms of whatever most compels our attention.

images within our visual field, since the very act of creating a mental image precludes attending to our visual field. In a sense, when we are imaging we do not 'see' the objects within our visual field *as objects*, since to do so would require us to enact the schemata appropriate to those objects (and thus lose the mental image).

At base, Thomas' understanding of attention seems similar to Merleau-Ponty's inasmuch as it is conceived as being 'literally a question of creation', or 'the active constitution of a new object which makes explicit and articulate what was until then presented as no more than an indeterminate horizon' (Merleau-Ponty 2002, p.35). The visual field presents *something*, but it is only through the act of attention that a part of this 'something' is formed into a particular object. Yet there is still also a part of this field that necessarily remains left behind, that is still a part of our experience and yet not resolved into anything meaningful – the ground of the figure-ground relationship. As Sean Dorrance Kelly puts it,

> if I am looking at the lamp in front of me, then there is a sense in which the books, the wall, and the door behind it are all part of my visual experience. They are not determinate in my experience of them, however, the way the lamp might be thought to be. They are in some sense yet to be clarified, present to me as indeterminate… (Kelly 2005, p.82)

There is a sense, therefore, in which we 'see' indeterminacy, or are perceptually aware of 'indeterminate visual presence' (Kelly 2005, p.82), as part of the experience of seeing an object within the visual field. The object is not divorced from its context; to see is to see both object and context, both figure and ground, both the determinate and the indeterminate. This understanding of perception is still compatible with change blindness – after all, the context is still experienced as indeterminate, and so changes in detail, colour, etc. are bound to go unnoticed. It is equally compatible with Noë's account of presence being caused by the sense that we *could* access the detail that is currently not in consciousness. The difference is that there is a sense in which we do 'see' the background in the act of seeing the figure – hence why we experience seeing the object as being *within a context* – and that this indeterminate background is still part of the experience of seeing.

If, however, mental imagery is made of attention, and if attention is the creation or bringing forth of objects out of indeterminacy, then it would appear that we cannot form a mental image of indeterminacy in the way that it appears to us in our visual field. For this reason, we can never form an image of both an object and its context (i.e. both figure and ground). Likewise, we cannot simultaneously image the detail of an object *and* the object itself, since detail and object stand in the same figure-ground relationship as object and environment. This difference between perception and mental imagery would suggest that our sense of seeing

the eye and the mouth together when we look at an actual face is based on the perception of the indeterminate visual context within which each appears. Even though we do not simultaneously see the eye and the mouth together – and certainly not in detail – but move our attention from one to the other, each appears within a similar context and thus each appears to be a part of the same 'look', as if they are indeed being seen together. For mental imagery, there is no such context. To image detail is to completely lose the whole within which that detail appears, just as to image an object is to image it without a ground. This would explain why mental images are so vague, so evanescent – why we cannot, to use Daniel Dennett's famous example, count the stripes on an imagined tiger (Dennett 1969, pp.136-137). The detailed parts of the image have no *visual* context to bind them together; we can 'go through the motions' of examining something and seeing that it is a face, or a mouth, or a 'tiny shred of spittle' on the corner of the lips, or each in turn and in rapid succession, but each part will never appear as being part of a visual whole in the same way as it would in real perception.

However, it certainly seems to us that we can and do image objects and details that are bound together within a context. We can form an image of Pincher standing on the rock, for instance, just as we can imagine an eye and a mouth as being part of the same face. Moreover, the relationship between these parts is not entirely a matter of propositional imaginings – it is not just that we imagine *that* Pincher is on a rock or imagine *that* the eye is part of a face. This is where Noë's account is particularly useful. We have a sense of the pseudo-presence of the unattended parts of the object or scene because we can turn attention towards them, in much the same way as we can in veridical perception. Similarly, we feel that we are imaginatively 'looking' at a scene because we enact (in imagination) the motions that would be necessary to access its various parts. Indeed, the empirical data on the eye-movements made during mental imagery suggests that people do 'spontaneously tend to move their eyes in a spatiotemporal pattern that parallels the distinctive eye-movement pattern that they would have used in actually viewing the object or scene being imagined' (Thomas 2014, p.141). There is at least an extent to which it is this 'spontaneous but unconscious eye movement pattern that sustains the image' (Thomas 2014, p.141) – although, *contra* pictorialist theories of imagery, I would argue that these movements *constitute* the sense of exploring spatially related objects or details as opposed to being necessitated by the prior appearance of some kind of inner picture. There is thus a sense in which mental imaging involves a whole system of bodily actions and potentials in much the same way as actual experience. In forming a mental image, we might have a sense of the pseudo-presence of the whole scene or object – inasmuch as objects or details within it are *felt* to exist in a spatial relationship to each other – and indeed we might imaginatively (or

actually, in the case of eye-movements) enact the movements which combine these objects or details in space. However, a part of what the mental image lacks is the way in which these details and objects are *also* 'combined' in vision, the way in which the background is also 'seen' in the perception of the figure. There is perhaps more than one way in which something can be 'present', and a difference between the indeterminate *visual* presence of the background and the kinds of presence which relate to the spatiotemporal manifold. Such differences are, I believe, necessary to account for the phenomenological distinction between the experience of the presence of unattended detail within the visual field and within the field outside of it.

Yet any form of pseudo-presence is still not phenomenologically the same as actual presence. As Merleau-Ponty points out, even when we image objects which could conceivably be part of our environment, they nonetheless 'stand forth from it in the theatre of the imaginary' (Merleau-Ponty 1956, p.62). Similarly, hallucinations 'are played out on a stage different from that of the perceived world, and are in a way superimposed' (Merleau-Ponty 2002, p.395).[121] As we have seen, this last certainly seems true of Pincher's hallucination, at least at first. Since Pincher later sees 'the eye and the sunset merge' (*PM*, p.196) (for reasons which I will address shortly), this suggests that the hallucination initially refuses to be seen in conjunction with the surrounding environment. In both hallucination and mental imagery, the real refuses to coalesce with the non-real, at least in part because to image is, as it were, to turn away from the real world, whereas to see is to turn towards it. Moreover, that which is within our visual field is insistently present, while mental images are necessarily absent. Perception is an interaction, a 'rhythm of "doing and undergoing"' (Caracciolo 2014a, p.77). Therefore, while both perception and mental imagery involve agency, imaging only involves part of this dynamic – there is, as it were, nothing to 'undergo'. This might explain why there is an extent to which mental imaging is usually *felt* to be more effortful than perception, and why several theories of mental imagery therefore posit that the difference between this activity and veridical perception is based on agency or the 'will'. According to Thomas, it is a view found in the works of Jean-Paul Sartre, Colin McGinn, Jonathan Ichikawa (and perhaps Wittgenstein), and it rests on the tacit assumption 'that perception, and visual perception in particular, is, in its fundamental essence, *passive*, something we suffer' (Thomas 2014, p.141). Enactivism, on the

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[121] Jaspers also refers to cases in which 'Figures appear in the whole visual field, but there is no integration with objective space: "The figures grouped themselves round me 3-6 metres away. Grotesque human figures, who made some kind of noise like a jumble of voices. The figures were there in space, but as if they had their own private space, peculiar to themselves. The more my senses were diverted from their usual objects, the more distinct grew this new space with its inhabitants. I could give the exact distance but the figures were never dependent on the objects in the room nor were they hidden by them; they could never be perceived simultaneously with the wall or the window etc."' (Jaspers 1997, v.1, p.71).

other hand, asserts that perception is also something we do (as does Merleau-Ponty's theory of attention). Therefore, the difference is perhaps not so much one of whether agency is involved, but the extent to which we work with or against the grain of what is present (the 'worldly offering' as Daniel D. Hutto puts it (Hutto 2008, p.50)).[122] A similar view is, according to Tom Sparrow, 'fundamental to Merleau-Ponty's philosophy […] the idea that everywhere we turn the world is exceeding perception while at the same time instructing us on how appropriately to access its reality' (Sparrow 2014, p.43).

The description of Pincher's hallucination, when considered in the light of this framework, foregrounds the structure of the imaginary and the ways in which the storyworld is and is not present to the reader. In particular, it draws attention to the limitations or 'failings' of the imaginary, defamiliarising the reader from his or her own reading experience in order to suggest a sense of the phenomenological difference of hallucinatory experience. As with all defamiliarisation, attention is directed to those features of experience which are passed over unnoticed – in this case, the structure of the imaginary itself. It is also, of course, perfectly possible that at least some hallucinations share the same incomplete figure-ground dynamic as mental images, and that the description in *Pincher Martin* is phenomenologically accurate in both this regard and in relation to the sense of 'fettered attention' which accompanies it. As I have observed, the reader's attention is certainly not 'fettered' in the same way – it is a metaphorical equivalence, not an actual one (and Georges Poulet would no doubt agree).[123] Yet in *Pincher Martin* these (potential) similarities are defamilarised in order to give the hallucination a particular experiential *feel* that is different from the rest of the text. In this way, the text attempts to deal with the problem of conveying the experiential difference of the hallucinatory state by shifting into a metafictional key, thus using the reader's self-consciousness of the imaginary state itself to evoke this sense of difference.

Yet Pincher's hallucination manifests one more quality which makes it distinct from mental imaging, in that it has an effect on his sense of the reality of the world around him. When Pincher looks at the hallucination's seaboots they make 'the rock behind them seem like cardboard, like a painted flat' (*PM*, p.195). The seaboots themselves, however, are 'good and

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[122] Again, this conception does not seem to be incompatible with Noë's idea of 'object-dependence', but it does not appear to be what he is suggesting in his use of the term.

[123] On the other hand, it is also possible that actual hallucinations display an 'unfamiliar *kind of intentionality*, which lacks the full sense of "presence" that characterises mundane perceptual experience' (Ratcliffe 2015, pp.105-106) precisely because the hallucination is experienced as present in some respects and not in others. If perceptual presence is conceived of as being generated by a number of interlocking systems, it would certainly make sense to think of hallucinations as instances where those systems are no longer working in tandem. Therefore, an object might seem to be fully *visually* present, but not fully present in relation to the spatiotemporal manifold (or vice versa).

shiny and wet and solid', a pair of 'immovable, black feet' on 'the cardboard rock' (*PM*, pp.195, 196). The solidity of the boots against the unreality of the rock seems to suggest a shift in the sense of reality, or at least – since Pincher has previously felt the rock to be unreal – that the sense of reality is somehow flapping around loose, shifting from the world of the rock to the worlds of the film-trailers to the hallucination. The hallucination, however, explicitly makes him aware of having lost the sense of the primary real in a way that the film-trailers have not, since it places realities in direct conflict. As a result, his world begins to collapse, as does his sense of the distinction between different kinds of experience. Indeed, when he sees 'the eye and the sunset merge' (*PM*, p.196) he brings his arms across his face, presumably to block out the sight. For this merging suggests a loss of any kind of phenomenological distinction, that there is *no* primary real to be found anywhere. Similarly, when he realises that the lobster he saw was a hallucination, his 'response' is to lose consciousness and forget, to block out the world (*PM*, p.167). For although the lobster appears 'At once, as if his eye had created it', and although it seems 'different in dragon-shape, different in colour' (*PM*, p.111), it does not appear as a hallucination because it seems as real (or unreal) as the world in which it appears. This is what Pincher realises, the terrifying truth that he must '"remember to forget"' (*PM*, p.169) after his loss of consciousness: the truth that, for him, there is no transcendent ontological realm which is more real than any of the others.

The revelation of the novel's ending explains why Pincher is not securely anchored in a primary reality: all of his experiences, after his image of the Cartesian diver, have been a hallucination, or at the very least have taken place on a different ontological plane to the physical world. His sense of having a distorted and unnatural relationship with the world of the rock is thus completely understandable, since in truth there is no relationship at all. Yet this explanation has further implications for how we ordinarily engage with the real world, especially in light of the similarities between many of Pincher's experiences and the experience of psychosis. In the following section I thus examine how the portrayal of Pincher's ordeal can be understood as a sophisticated exploration of the relationship between mind and world.

Section 3: Embodiment and Ontology

As the reader discovers at the end of the novel, Pincher's actual body was never divested of its seaboots, a fact which implies that all his experiences which took place during and after their

removal also did not 'actually' occur. There is, as we have seen, 'a kind of metafictional edge' (Waugh 2016, p.203) to this discovery, an acknowledgement that 'the narrative […] has no existence outside the mind' (Tristram 1978, p.52). More specifically, it is the *experience* of the storyworld that has no existence outside the mind. As we saw in Chapter 1, Section 2, 'the character's perspective, experience, and consciousness are not given anywhere in the text; they are not objects' (Caracciolo 2014a, p.105). Rather, the perspective, experience, and consciousness which the reader has of the storyworld are attributed to the character. However, part of the tension between consciousness-enactment and consciousness-attribution would appear to involve the tacit assumption that the character's experience is of a different phenomenological kind to the reader's, and that the character is experiencing his or her world in terms of actual perception rather than mental imagery. Pincher's 'seeing' of the face is thus a case of an unusually high degree of overlap between the reader's actual experience of the storyworld and the experience attributed to the character, just as his physical relationship to the 'book of rock' closely overlaps with the reader's physical relationship to the actual book. Yet in establishing this equivalence between the character's and the reader's experience, Golding's novel allows for the metafictional edge to cut both ways. In other words, while *Pincher Martin* gives 'a knowing nod to the reader's own flirtation with delusion in the assimilation to and co-construction of an imaginary world' (Waugh 2016, p.203), it also invites us to understand Pincher's experience of that world as being more akin to the reader's experience of a fictional environment than is usual for characters within a fiction. Most significantly, it foregrounds the particular dynamics of embodied interaction which characterise the reader's relationship with the fictional environment, and thus allows for us to understand Pincher's relationship to his world in similar terms.

As has been noted, our imaginings are embodied, being 'deeply rooted in our real body and in memories of our past sensorimotor interactions with the environment' (Caracciolo 2014a, p.161).[124] In this regard, 'our real body can be used to bridge the ontological gap between reality and fiction; its virtuality consists precisely in the way it can be detached from the here and now, and projected into *another* here and now' (Caracciolo 2014a, pp.161-162). However, as Caracciolo acknowledges, 'readers can never be *actually* transported to a fictional world' (Caracciolo 2014a, p.161). Even if imaginings are embodied, there is a lack of the sense of physical entanglement that occurs when we are engaged in exploring the real world. Presumably this is because the body is always already entangled with an environment, and in

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[124] See Chapter 1, Section 2 for further details.

a way that is almost impossible to break free from (with states such as sleep and perceptual deprivation removing or at least reducing this sense of bodily entanglement). Therefore, when it comes to the world of the story, we are always aware that our access to it is 'virtual', and never actual, since our actual body is always already anchored in the world in which we are reading the book. As we discover at the end of *Pincher Martin*, and as the overlap between Pincher's and the reader's experiences suggests, Pincher is also never properly anchored in the world of the rock, since his body is still floating somewhere in the mid-Atlantic. This is not to say that the reader's and Pincher's experiences of the world of the rock are exactly alike – far from it – but rather that by suggesting an equivalence between the two, the novel points towards how the prereflective consciousness of the body's entanglement with its environment is essential in maintaining a sense of the primary real. Just as, for the reader, all of the fictional worlds in the novel are experientially equivalent in terms of their ontological status (in that all of them are experienced as being unreal in comparison to the real world in which the reader is reading), the worlds of Pincher's film-trailers can completely displace the world of the rock because he has no sense of a real body anchoring him to a particular time and place. Although, as discussed in Section 1 of this chapter, Pincher and the reader experience feelings of disorientation at slightly different points during the film-trailers, there is still a global equivalence between their experiences with regard to how the worlds of the novel are, in one sense, placed on an ontologically level playing field.[125] This levelling of worlds occurs precisely because neither the reader nor Pincher has an actual body (or at least in Pincher's case, not one that he is conscious of) actually located in any one of them.

With the implications of the novel's ending in mind, passages which were once either curious or simply irrelevant appear imbued with a new meaning on a second reading, in that they seem to relate to Pincher's lack of a prereflective awareness of his own body. To begin with, it seems as if his knowledge of his body is based on his memory of the kind of body he *ought* to have: 'He remembered his hands again and there they were in the darkness'; 'He saw his seaboot stockings and thought his feet back into them'; 'His feet were selective in a curious way [....] They only became a part of him when they were hurting him or when he could see them' (*PM*, pp.11, 34). While in these moments Pincher is aware of bodily sensations – the pain in his feet, for instance – the strange 'selectiveness' of his feet implies that they are somehow *absent* unless visual or tactile sensation bring them to his conscious awareness.

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[125] As I discuss further in Chapter 5, Section 1, there is certainly a sense in which the various storyworlds of a novel are *not* ontologically level in relation to each other. The distinction that is being pointed to in *Pincher Martin*, however, is between all such storyworlds and the reader's actual world.

Moreover, the very fact that he finds this selectiveness to be curious suggests that this state of being is abnormal, and that in normal experience we do have a sense of our whole body even when we are not attending to its sensations. After all, feeling a sharp stone under my foot does not suddenly make me aware that my foot is part of me – I was already aware that it was part of me, even though I was not attending to it. I do not need to fixate on the body as the object of perception in order to be aware in some sense of having, or more precisely of *being*, a body. As Dorothée Legrand points out, 'At a prereflective level, the body is not invisible: it is experienced. However, it is not opaque either, in the sense that it is not taken as an intentional object of consciousness' (Legrand 2007, p.504). Therefore, if I touch one hand with another,

> Experience of the touched hand corresponds to an observational consciousness: the touched hand is taken as an intentional object of consciousness. Experience of the touching hand is different. It corresponds to what I call here pre-reflective bodily consciousness. At this level, the body is not an object of experience, it is the subject of experience and it is experienced as such… (Legrand 2007, p.499)

Pincher, however, is sometimes only aware of his body (or at least some part of it) when his consciousness is directed towards it as an intentional object. In such moments, his awareness of his body appears to be solely reflective, and parts of it can thus seem to disappear when he is not attending to them (or rather, to have been absent until he returns attention to them).

This framework goes some way towards explaining the aforementioned 'physical opacity' of Pincher's perceptions: in order to maintain a sense of the body, he attempts to experience the touching hand *as the touched hand as well* (to use Legrand's example). In other words, he is attempting to experience the body as the object of experience at the same time as he is experiencing the world as the object of experience. According to Merleau-Ponty, this is an impossibility, since 'In so far as it sees or touches the world, my body can therefore be neither seen nor touched' (Merleau-Ponty 2002, p.105). In the act of perception, 'my body itself is a thing which I do not observe: in order to be able to do so, I should need the use of a second body which itself would be unobservable', thus leading to an infinite regression (Merleau-Ponty 2002, p.104). Of course, Pincher only faces the problem of trying to experience his body and the world during those periods when he can only experience his body as an object – that is, when he lacks the prereflective awareness of the body as lived. There are, as noted in the first section, brief periods when Pincher does regain his sense of being normally embodied, when he 'live[s] again on the surface of his eyes' and is 'extended normally through his limbs' (*PM*, p.76). In such moments, he can feel that 'His sight was right on the outside and he lived in the world' (*PM*, p.166). The very fact that these conditions appear as being worthy of note suggests that most of the time they do not hold true for Pincher, and that for him his body is

either opaque or invisible. Most of the time at least, he can only experience his body as an object, in much the same way as he experiences other objects in the world.

For Legrand, the positing of a prereflective, 'non-observational ground' is necessary to explain how, in self-observation, we '*recognize* that the same self is both the subject and the object of observation', since 'any observational act implies a *dissociation* of the self which is cut into an observing subject and an observed object' (Legrand 2007, pp.498-499). Although Legrand is referring here to the 'self' in general, she later stipulates that 'The necessity of a non-observational ground to observational consciousness is also advocated at the bodily level', for the reasons just outlined (Legrand 2007, p.499). However, without this prereflective, non-observational ground it would appear that this dissociation becomes phenomenologically *felt*. Sass suggests something similar with regard to schizophrenic experience: 'as attention turns inward, the patient begins to notice, and to feel distanced from, phenomena previously identified with the self [….] bodily sensations or thoughts start to seem somehow at a remove' (Sass 1992, p.228). Indeed, we can see how objectification, dissociation, and disembodiment might form a feedback loop, if we understand the sense of disembodiment to prompt an observational consciousness of the body which causes a sense of dissociation which leads to a sense of disembodiment (and so on *ad infinitum*). Since 'Such experiences tend to feed upon themselves' (Sass 1992, p.228) in this fashion, it would be difficult to grant any one of them causal priority; all that need be acknowledged here is that a sense of bodily dissociation is a part of the cycle.

The sense of bodily dissociation certainly seems to be a part of Pincher's experience, occurring to some degree in all of the worlds he inhabits. On the one hand, he often lacks a sense of ownership of his body, with references to the body and the body's parts being depersonalised (i.e. referred to with the definite or indefinite article as opposed to the possessive pronoun) with what appears to be unusual frequency.[126] Even in those cases where the possessive is used, this can sometimes serve to foreground the sense of dissociation through contradiction or juxtaposition. For instance, Pincher's body parts are described as acting under their own agency (e.g. 'His mouth said things but he could not hear them so did not know what they were'), acting in concordance with him ('He and his mouth shouted through the uproar'),

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[126] A cursory analysis reveals that the ratios of personalised to depersonalised body parts which apparently belong to Pincher are as follows (in order of frequency): Body (3.125:1); Hand(s) (3.56:1); Eye(s) (3.8:1); Mouth: (2.214:1); Head: (7.88:1); Feet or Foot: (5.33:1). These measurements are only a rough guide – I excluded all references which were relatively ambiguous (c.8.4%) – but they appear to correlate with the pattern I describe in this section. For instance, it is to be expected that the head is the most frequently combined with the possessive pronoun, given that Pincher feels himself to be situated inside it. Likewise, the mouth is the most depersonalised body part, since in the later chapters it begins to manifest its own agency and talks automatically.

spatially distant from him ('He remembered his hands again and there they were in the darkness, far away'), or coming back into his possession ('The dull pain of the blow extended him into them again and they became his hands') (*PM*, pp.171, 192, 11, 131-132). All in all, these kinds of description suggest that Pincher sometimes experiences his body and its parts in exactly the same way as he experiences objects in the world, as things absolutely separate from himself.

Yet even when Pincher does appear to be 'in possession' of his body, his relationship with that body is still often distorted in some way or other. Quite apart from the intrusions of physical opacity, his body appears at times as a kind of unruly puppet, 'no longer obedient' to the movements which he 'think[s]' or makes 'inside the dark skull' (*PM*, pp.21, 16). Even when the body does obey him, he has a sense that 'the control system had broken down for his legs had to be given deliberate and separate orders as if they were some unhandy kind of stilts that had been strapped to him' (*PM*, p.57). At the same time, an ill-defined something, 'so nakedly the centre of everything that it could not even examine itself', exists somewhere 'in the darkness of the skull' (*PM*, p.45). In many respects, this 'centre' appears to be a kind of homunculus, 'wielding the exterior body as by strings' (*PM*, p.175): it thinks, commands, and feels emotion. More importantly, perhaps, it seems that the centre also perceives, in that it is the thing looking through the 'window' of the eye-sockets. The centre thus constitutes itself as a 'here' which allows for the body to be relegated to a 'there'. It also allows for mental images to be understood (and, in Pincher's case, actually seen) as pictures 'inside the skull, behind the arch of the brow and the shadowy nose' (*PM*, p.26) – in other words, on the hither side of the window.

A number of critics have suggested that in attempting to prove 'his own existence from the inside out', Pincher is 'simply the modern heir of Descartes' (Hynes 1985, p.130). In this view, the novel represents 'an ironic sublation of the Descartes dictum [*sic*]: *cogito ergo sum*' (Tiger 1974, p.138), 'ironic' in that it carries the *cogito* into 'the grandiloquent paradoxes of full-blown solipsism' (Waugh 2016, p.202). Yet through the various distortions of Pincher's experience, the novel also challenges the core of dualistic thought: the separation of the mind from the body, and the separation of the self from the world. Indeed, Pincher himself attempts to rationalise his experience through a dualistic framework: '"I was always two things, mind and body. Nothing has altered. Only I did not realize it before so clearly"' (*PM*, p.176). Despite Pincher's protestations, however, the novel suggests throughout that something *has* altered, and that Pincher's newfound epistemological 'truth' rides on the back of a phenomenological distortion. In this regard, the conceptual separation of mind and body is also, in Pincher's case,

an experiential separation which often manifests as a sense of bodily dissociation. Therefore, rather than using the tools of rationalism to point to the problems of dualism – such as the infinite regression which results from introducing a homunculus or 'Ghost in the Machine' (to use Ryle's term (Ryle 1949, p.22)) – the novel imagines the lived experience of absolute dualism in a way that bears a marked similarity to the experience of psychosis.

Just as Pincher's experience reflects the prodromal state of the *Stimmung* described by Sass and Jaspers, his experience of his own body finds a number of close parallels in psychopathological accounts of schizophrenia. R. D. Laing, for instance, goes so far as to say that 'In many schizophrenics, the self-body split remains the basic one', and suggests that 'The "self" in such a schizoid organization is usually more or less unembodied' (Laing 1990 [1960], p.162). Laing also states that 'The unembodied self becomes hyper-conscious', and in this state of disembodiment 'the individual experiences his self as being more or less divorced or detached from his body. *The body is felt more as one object among other objects in the world than as the core of the individual's own being*' (Laing 1990, p.73). Sass similarly argues that 'Many schizophrenic patients often do feel separated from the lived-body', and quotes several patients who describe states which sound much like Pincher's own: '"Body and soul don't belong together; there's no unity"'; '"I'm behind the bridge of my nose – I mean, my consciousness is there"'; '"I have to stop to find out whether my hand is in my pocket or not"' (Sass 1994, pp.48, 70; 1992, p.229).[127]

Moreover, Laing posits that when the self is separated from the body 'The "inner" self becomes itself split, and loses its own identity and integrity' (Laing 1990, p.161). In this state, there is 'an "I" that cannot find a "me"', and so the patient 'either does not know who or what he is or he has become something or someone other than himself' (Laing 1990, p.172). Pincher seems to undergo an analogous sense of separation when his name breaks away from him and ceases to 'be sealed on the centre' (*PM*, p.161). In becoming separated from him, Pincher's name seems to somehow become reified as a (missing) part of his self: 'The centre knew self existed, though Christopher and Hadley and Martin were fragments far off' (*PM*, p.161). What is particularly notable is that this split first occurs when Pincher addresses himself in the second person ('"I'll hand it to you, Chris"' (*PM*, p.129)). As I explore further in Chapter 3, Section 2, the splitting of the self is already implicit in forms of self-dialogue and appears to become a

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[127] Jaspers similarly suggests that 'As the result of constant reflection on the body and its functions, subjective syndromes develop with partly objective effects. Finally, expectations and fears drive consciousness into a life which concerns itself chiefly with the body and which in the process of looking for itself, actually loses itself' (Jaspers 1997, v.1, p.133).

lived split when the individual lacks a sense of what Laing terms 'primary ontological security' (Laing 1990, p.39). In Pincher's case, this ontological insecurity stems (at least in part) from his sense of disembodiment. Indeed, it is only after this splitting of self occurs that Pincher begins to feel his mouth acting of its own volition. It thus appears that without the anchor of the subjective body to unify the dialoguing 'selves', they becoming concretised as separate agents, one of which resides *in* the body (the centre) and one of which *is* a part of the body itself (the mouth). Yet even the centre, perhaps, is not fully to be identified with the self – it is, after all, another depersonalised 'it', linguistically separate from the 'he' whose centre it is. Thoughts can form 'behind the eyes but in front of the unexamined centre', yet still be kept in abeyance if he refuses to 'allow [them] to become attached to him in realization' (*PM*, p.161). Yet if they are not attached to Pincher, and if he has not already realised them, then whose thoughts are they? An array of entities jostles on the page, all attributed to – but none fully identified with – Pincher himself.

The relationship between body and self thus has an effect on the self itself – yet it also affects the relationship between the self and the world. In Pincher's case world and body become confused, so that at times he experiences his body as a world. The pains in his body, for instance, oscillate between being 'a luminous landscape […] a universe' which he observes while hanging in space, and the products of a body into which he is 'extended to every excruciating corner' (*PM*, p.123). The inside of his skull is frequently described as a 'globe' which he inhabits, and at one point he even (tellingly) feels himself to be floating 'in the middle of this globe like a waterlogged body' (*PM*, p.49). Finally, the externalisation of the body reaches its apogee in his 'delusion' that the rock is his own absent tooth. In this instance, it is not that the body is experienced as a world which he inhabits, but that the world is experienced as a (missing) part of the body. Inside and outside fuse as his tongue recreates 'the old, aching shape': 'It touched the rough edge of the cliff, traced the slope down, trench after aching trench, down towards the smooth surface where the Red Lion was, just above the gum' (*PM*, p.174). In the terms of psychoanalysis, this confusion of world and body is akin to the 'loss of ego boundaries separating self from world' (Sass 1992, p.269), which is posited as one of the primary symptoms of schizophrenia.[128] More specifically, however, the objectification of the

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[128] It is worth noting that Sass disagrees with the psychoanalytic notion that the loss of ego boundaries is a form of regression to an infantile stage. For Sass, the schizophrenic's pronouncements are not necessarily literal statements about physical truths, but are attempts to express the broader ontological 'truths' of the patient's world. However, as observed in Chapter 1, Section 1, Sass acknowledges that such ontological insights can be transformed into 'quasi-ontic' experiences (Sass 1992, pp.294-295), so that the patient can become confused 'not only in expressing but even, odd though it may sound, in *experiencing* his own experience' (Sass 1992, p.295). Certainly, Pincher's experience does appear to have a broader ontological significance (albeit one that the reader

body and the formation of a homunculus mean that world and body come to be experienced in the same way. As Laing puts it, normal experience can be represented schematically as '(self/body) ⇌ other', while in psychosis the situation is 'self ⇌ (body-other)' (Laing 1990, p.82). If the latter case applies, 'The seed is thus sown for a persisting running together, mergence, or confusion of the interface between here and there, inside and outside, because the body is not firmly felt as me in contrast to the not-me' (Laing 1990, p.175). In normal experience, therefore, there is a union of self and body that shapes and is in turn shaped by the experience of the world; however, in psychosis the separation of the body from the self means that the body is experienced as an object like other objects in the world, allowing for an abnormal union of world and body which again shapes and is shaped by experience.

Yet Laing's formulation should not be taken to mean that, in normal experience, the body is separate from the world. Indeed, it is precisely because the body is also an object in the world that it is physically entangled with its environment, and in normal experience the union of self and body allows this physical entanglement to be *felt* to apply to the individual, becoming a *sense* of physical entanglement. The body thus 'occupies an ambiguous transitional position between "me" and the world' (Laing 1990, p.131), and is a part of the process by which the world is felt to come into being. Therefore, though psychotic patients 'will usually have an intellectual awareness of where they are located, they may not *feel* as if they are in that place and time, for they lack that all-important source of orientation and stability: the sense of grounding in the lived body' (Sass 1992, pp.144-145). *Pincher Martin* appears to suggest a similar insight in that it creates a connection between Pincher's bodily dissociation and his loss of the primary real. The first time that Pincher sees his hands as lobsters, for instance, he is staring down at his own body; yet 'There was no body to be seen, only a conjunction of worn materials. He eyed the peculiar shapes that lay across his trousers indifferently for a while until at last it occurred to him how strange it was that lobsters should sit there' (*PM*, p.131). The first of these two sentences is curious, precisely because the use of language is subtly deviant from common usage. After all, we still say that we 'see' a body even when it is completely wrapped in a shroud, and so normally we speak of the visible 'skin' or 'flesh' when we want to differentiate between what is clothed and unclothed. We certainly do *not* say – or, I would argue, feel – that we see 'no body' when we look at a clothed body, especially when that body

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might not immediately recognise), but it also appears that Pincher is also experiencing the rock as his absent tooth in a literal (ontic) sense.

is our own.[129] Pincher, however, does indeed feel that he sees no body, precisely because he has no sense of the body that extends beyond conscious perception. The hallucination of the lobsters on his lap therefore has a double significance. On the one hand, as a hallucination relating to the body it serves to emphasise that Pincher is not fully embodied, since the vision of the lobsters is not automatically corrected by the lived experience of the hands themselves. It is only when they are imbued with sensation – the pain of being cracked against the rock as Pincher flings the lobsters away – that he is 'extended […] into them again' and they become his hands (*PM*, pp.131-132). On the other hand, it appears that not being extended through his body is what causes him to genuinely take the hallucination for reality.

Conversely, when Pincher *does* feel himself to be embodied he also feels himself to be firmly anchored in reality. Indeed, during his first night on the rock he actively courts disembodiment in order to escape from pain, eventually replacing the world of the rock with a film-trailer (at this point the film-trailers can still be naturalised as dreams, and this early episode certainly seems to encourage this strategy). Having crawled inside his sleeping-crevice at the end of the second day, however, he finds that 'he could not fall into the pit because he was extended through his body [….] Instead of the apocalyptic visions and voices of the other night he had now nothing but ill-used and complaining flesh' (*PM*, p.68). In being 'extended through his body' he is thus anchored in the world of the rock, the world to which that body is bound. With this framework in mind, it is possible to see how the 'trick' of the novel's ending fulfils an important function. The final word forges a link between the 'two novels' – the *Pincher Martin* of the first reading, and the *Pincher Martin* of the second – and in so doing suggests a conceptual relationship between Pincher's situation in each of the two readings. The insane Pincher of the first reading is, we find, disembodied, and this 'explains' his madness, his loss of the primary real. At the same time, the disembodied mind of the second reading is an insane mind, unable to generate both a world *and* the embodied experience of a world.

In effect, *Pincher Martin* attempts a species of phenomenological investigation, taking a subject whose lived experience is radically different from the norm in order to foreground the foundational grounds of experience which are usually taken for granted. In this regard, the novel challenges certain aspects of what Merleau-Ponty terms the 'empiricist' and the

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[129] Pincher's experience of the materials rather than the body also appears to allude to René Descartes' observations upon looking 'out of the window' at people in the street: 'I say in ordinary language that I "see" them […] but what can I "see" besides hats and coats, which may cover automata? I judge that they are men; and similarly, the objects that I thought I saw with my eyes, I really comprehend only by my mental power of judgment' (Descartes 1954 [1641], pp.73-74). Yet although Descartes is perhaps right in one sense (in that, from a 'third-person' view, hats and coats are all that is visually available), the actual 'first-person' experience is of people, and such experience does not await reflective judgement.

'intellectualist' approaches to experience (although this certainly does not mean that *Pincher Martin* is in complete agreement with Merleau-Ponty's theories). On the one hand, the novel questions the empiricist prioritisation of 'sensation', pointing to how we do not primarily experience 'sense-data' (since this would involve objectifying and observing the body), but rather the object that 'produces' the sensation. For Pincher, this observational state precipitates into a state of dissociation precisely because he is lacking a prereflective awareness of the body, a lived context that is not entirely reducible to bodily sensation. The very fact that bodily sensations make his body *reappear* to him suggests that there is something more to bodily experience which, in his case, is absent. Moreover, sensation in itself is not enough to create a sense of reality. In those moments when Pincher feels his world to be unreal, it is not because the world cannot be seen or touched but rather because of some more fundamental change in his relationship to it.[130] When, for instance, he sees the High Street as a 'picture', his first response is to test his visual faculties: 'He shut his eyes and then opened them again but the rock and the sea seemed no more real. They were a pattern of colour that filled the three lights of his window' (*PM*, p.124). The second of these two sentences seems empirically redundant – after all, if perception is built up from sensations then it is already logically implied that Pincher sees a pattern of colour filling his visual field in order for him to see the rock and the sea. However, in explicitly stating this implication the text seems to suggest either or both of the following possibilities: that the visual sensation alone is not enough to imbue what Pincher sees with the sense of reality; or that it is because Pincher experiences the world *as* sensations that it seems to him somehow unreal.

On the other hand, the intellectualist prioritisation of 'judgement' is equally problematised in the novel, usually in being taken to an absurd extreme. When Pincher is lying in his crevice, for instance, there are

> times when it was larger than the rock, larger than the world, times when it was a tin box so huge that a spade knocking at the side sounded like distant thunder. Then after that there was a time when he was back in rock and distant thunder was sounding like the knocking of a spade against a vast tin box. (*PM*, pp.143-144)

It seems here that Pincher's experience of his entire situation changes depending on his judgement of what the sound is (hence why in the second sentence he is 'back in rock'). In the same way, the seagulls seem to have genuinely become 'flying reptiles' by the end of the novel,

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[130] According to Jaspers, perception and the sense of reality are indeed separable, since 'Awareness of reality may fail us, even when we concretely perceive. For instance it is lost in "derealisation" and "depersonalisation"' (Jaspers 1997, v.1, p.94).

as if Pincher's original consideration of them as such has ultimately concretised into a literal truth. Part of the reason these experiences seem psychotic to the reader is that, from the privileged vantage-point which holds both the 'world' and Pincher's consciousness in view, it appears that 'judgement' is given far too much power to alter the world that Pincher experiences. At the same time, 'judgement' is also shown to be too poor to account for the lived experience of the body, since for Pincher this experience requires an effort of conscious thought which again seems abnormal (such as when he *thinks* his feet back into his seaboot stockings). Therefore, if the novel's overarching conceit is that the mind can make a world, it is nonetheless tempered by the implication that the mind alone cannot sustain the normal lived experience of a world. In other words, the novel suggests that if the world were entirely created by the mind then experience would have a different form, a form which closely parallels psychopathological accounts of schizophrenia. Therefore, intellectualism is shown to be as deficient as empiricism in accounting for the whole of lived experience, especially when it comes to the experience of the sense of reality.

Conclusion

There is a sense in which *Pincher Martin* is a highly anxious novel, constantly seeking to problematise the conceptual frameworks which underwrite our understanding of experience and reality. In this regard, it stands in an interesting relationship both with Golding's other early novels and other mid-twentieth-century novels which feature hallucination and psychosis. Like the other case studies that I examine in the following chapters, it attempts to convey aspects of the lived experience of psychosis through the dissolution of boundaries between worlds which would ordinarily appear to be ontologically separate. In *Pincher Martin* this blurring of boundaries is caused by a range of techniques rather than relying mainly on one form of stylistic or narrative deviance. Broadly speaking, the novel places worlds in conflict at the same time that it moves towards a state of world collapse, thus evoking the sense that reality has become disturbingly fluid. On the one hand, it courts a form of modal disorientation, shifting in time and place, or between the literal and the figurative, without appropriate deictic cues. On the other hand, it destabilises and impedes the experience of the world which the reader invests in as the primary reality of the storyworld, distorting the forms conventionally used for the narrative representation of human experience (often through defamiliarisation and

delayed decoding). 'The hallucination' of the seaman also functions to evoke the sense of world collapse, defamiliarising the reader from the imaginative act itself in order to gesture to the unreality of the fictional world.

Yet the metafictional implications of the hallucination are not just a part of the attempt to achieve a kind of experiential isomorphism. In drawing a parallel between the imaginary and the hallucinatory, Golding's novel focuses attention on attention itself, and in doing so raises the question of the phenomenological difference between experiential states. The hallucination thus plays a part in *Pincher Martin*'s broader phenomenological project, which is to probe the nature of perceptual experience. Indeed, the novel as a whole displays a great deal of accord with both classical and current phenomenological thought, presenting as it does an *ad absurdum* critique of both mind-body and self-world dualism. In questioning the grounds of perceptual experience in this fashion, *Pincher Martin* also interrogates the grounds for the experience of the sense of reality, suggesting that this experience is not purely a matter of knowledge, judgement, or sense-data. There is a sense that Pincher can only occasionally grasp what Jaspers calls the 'total relational context', which 'is founded in the way we *experience space and time*, in the mode of *body-awareness* and the *awareness of reality*' (Jaspers 1997, v.1, p.58). It would appear that Pincher's awareness of reality is lacking precisely because his experience often occurs without this total relational context and is primarily of the isolated parts of the overall sense of reality rather than of an integrated whole. As the phenomenology of mental imagery demonstrates, we cannot simultaneously produce both the object *and* its context, both the figure *and* the ground – and Pincher, constructing the entirety of his experience of the world of the rock, can only produce one or the other.

When viewed in the context of Golding's other early novels, however, *Pincher Martin*'s focus on the phenomenology of perception and reality appears to stem from an uneasiness regarding the problems of ontological relativism. In *The Inheritors*, the world is clearly shaped by the minds of 'the people' – their different understanding of what is and is not possible means that they sometimes quite literally perceive a different world. Sammy, the protagonist of *Free Fall*, wrestles with ontological relativism more directly, and ends up positing a form of ontological pluralism as the only way to make sense of his world. In considering the irreconcilability of rational empiricism and spiritual faith, he is forced to conclude that 'both worlds are real. There is no bridge' (*Free Fall*, p.253). Coming between these two novels, *Pincher Martin* pushes the implications of ontological relativism to their absolute limit, thus questioning the extent to which reality is purely 'constructed' by the 'mind'. Regardless of whether or not Golding intentionally took psychosis as his model, it can be said that *Pincher*

Martin is an imaginative exploration of what would happen if mind, body, and world were separate, and if they did not stand in that dynamic relationship which blurs the line between shaper and shaped. The novel thus seems to be engaged in a desperate search for firm ontological ground – yet ultimately, it suggests that granting priority to any part of this trinity must either fall short in accounting for lived experience, or else tip over into absurdity.

Although the relativism I have been considering here is primarily ontological, it has serious potential to undermine the validity of our scientific, religious, and ethical commitments. We can thus understand why, as 'Christian apologist' and 'moral fabulist', Golding was so troubled by relativism, and why his early novels were committed to exploring the extent to which the individual constructs his or her own reality. As *Pincher Martin* demonstrates, however, the mind is not completely free in constructing reality, since a mind which is separated from any form of relationship *with* something or someone becomes an insane mind producing an insane world.[131] The 'reality' which feeds only on the self is ultimately not self-sustaining – in both senses of the term – and both reality and the self inevitably collapse under the effort of maintaining themselves. In pragmatic terms, therefore, ontological relativism is shown to be effectively meaningless, since we are not free to simply create the reality we choose – and it is perhaps in this sense that *Pincher Martin* delivers what Golding considered to be '"a blow on behalf of the ordinary universe"' (Golding, quoted in Johnston 1978, p.103).

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[131] Laing makes this point explicitly when he states that 'Phantasy, without being either in some measure embodied in reality, or itself enriched by injections of "reality", becomes more and more empty and volatilized' (Laing 1990, p.85). As a result, 'the person who does not act in reality and only acts in phantasy *becomes himself unreal*' (Laing 1990, p.85).

Chapter 3 – Metalepsis, Agency, and the Sense of Self in *The Comforters*[132]

'"[T]he mechanics of the hallucinations are well managed"' – so said Evelyn Waugh in his reply to Alan Barnsely, Spark's literary agent, upon reading proofs of *The Comforters* prior to its publication in 1957 (Waugh, quoted in *Curriculum Vitae [CV]*, p.207). The comment is intriguing, particularly in light of the fact that Waugh, like Spark, had also suffered from hallucinations which led him to a write a novel on the same subject, *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold*, also published in the same year (1957). Yet Waugh's novel – perhaps not one of his most celebrated – engages with the issue in a very different fashion to Spark's. There are no metafictional 'mechanics' brought into play, and instead the book reads rather like a slow-paced thriller in which it eventually becomes apparent that the only logical explanation for the 'ordeal' is that Pinfold is hallucinating. Not so in *The Comforters*, in which the protagonist, Caroline, hears the voice of the narrator telling the very story in which she is a character. This metaleptic intrusion into a character's consciousness, quite apart from its attendant metafictional implications, appears to have captured something of the phenomenology of hallucinatory experience which *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold* did not, and Waugh himself admitted that he was 'struck by how much more ambitious was Miss Spark's essay, and how much better she had accomplished it' (Waugh 1957). This seems, indeed, to have been a part of Spark's aim, for although she states in her autobiography *Curriculum Vitae* that she intended to write a novel about her experience of hallucinations – which, unlike Waugh's, were visual rather than auditory (*CV*, p.206) – within the novel itself she has Caroline feel 'a suffocating sense that she might never communicate the reality of what she had heard' directly after she has 'explained her distress' in straightforward terms (*The Comforters* [*TC*], p.55).

Spark's own experiences of hallucination and delusion occurred in 1954, shortly after her induction into Roman Catholicism. Like Waugh, she had been 'taking the wrong sort of pills' (*CV*, p.207), in her case using amphetamines as an appetite suppressant. For a few months she insisted that T. S. Eliot 'was sending her threatening messages' (Stannard 2009, p.151), having seen the words in his books form 'anagrams and crosswords' which appeared to be part of a meaningful code embedded in his (and other authors') works (*CV*, p.204). While recovering, she 'fixed upon' the idea of writing a novel about this 'brief but extremely intense

word-game experience' – yet at the same time, she decided that in order to 'square it with my literary conscience to write a novel, I had to work out a novel-writing process particular to myself, and moreover, perform this act within the very novel I proposed to write' (*CV*, pp.205, 206). As she told Frank Kermode, *The Comforters* was thus '"a novel about writing a novel, about writing a novel sort of thing', which she wrote to '"work out the technique"' (Spark, in Kermode 1963, p.79).

Previous approaches to *The Comforters*, as Spark's most overt 'inquiry into the way fictions work' (Kermode 1968, p.204), have tended to focus heavily on what might be termed the novel's metafictional elements. Interpretations of both this novel and Spark's entire *oeuvre* have also noted that her work frequently displays what David Herman terms a 'reflexive focus on narrative form', in that she 'turn[s] to literature itself to discover the essentials of literature' (Herman 2010, pp.2, 4).[133] In this regard, her fiction has often been associated with the tradition of the *nouveau roman*, which also often displays a tendency to self-reflexively foreground the fictionality of the narrative.[134] McQuillan in particular argues that this post-Realist 'redistribution of novelistic possibilities' which is characteristic of the *nouveau roman*, functions with 'a view to bringing the reader to an awareness of their own "construction"' (McQuillan 2002a, pp.10, 9, 12) – a feature which is, as Patricia Waugh stresses, common to metafiction, in that 'metafiction helps us to understand how the reality we live day by day is similarly constructed, similarly "written"' (Waugh 2001 [1984], p.18). Thus in the novels of writers such as Spark, B. S. Johnson, and John Fowles, 'Although characters are paraded as fictions, often this in order to suggest that we are all, *metaphorically*, fictions' (Waugh 2001, p.59). Likewise Kermode, although he interprets Spark's work in relation to a specifically Catholic rather than metafictional or *nouveau romaniste* framework, concludes his analysis by stating that 'The interest of this for nonbelievers is that even they must make worlds like plots. Even if they reject the Absolute itself as a fiction, they are by nature structure-makers', and are thus 'as well equipped as a Catholic to understand the power and beauty' of Spark's work (Kermode 1968, p.209).

Several of the critics who have drawn attention to Spark's fondness for metafictional play have also pointed to the often antagonistic relationship between her characters and their narrators, to the 'curious, uncanny, "battle" between an author and her fictional creation, the

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[133] See, for instance, Bran Nicol 2010, p.114; Patricia Stubbs 1973, p.6; Marina MacKay 2010, p.110; and Randall Stevenson 2010, p.99.

[134] See Stevenson 2010, p.99; Herman 2010, p.3; Nicol 2010, pp.123-126; and Martin McQuillan 2002a, pp.9-15. However, for a more critical view of the tendency to align Spark 'unproblematically with the emergent postmodernism of the *nouveau roman*', see MacKay 2010, pp.95-96.

character, for control of the novel' (Nicol 2010, p.112). Nicol observes that this was 'one of the key elements that preoccupied Spark as a writer' (Nicol 2010, p.112), and Malcolm Bradbury also notes that 'a preoccupation with the relation of an author to a fiction and its agents' (Bradbury 1987, p.272) is a central feature of Spark's work. Questions of free will, autonomy and control are, as Stevenson has argued, 'central issues' in *The Comforters* and, indeed, in several of Spark's other novels (it is often paired with *The Driver's Seat* in this respect) (Stevenson 2010, p.99). On the one hand, the battle for control of the novel can be viewed as a way of foregrounding the fictionality of the characters, calling into question the extent to which they are, in fact, fictions, in line with the metafictional/*nouveau romaniste* aims noted above. On the other hand, as Kermode has argued, this battle can be viewed in the light of a Christian framework as drawing a parallel between God's relationship with his creation and the novelist's relationship with her characters. As Waugh puts it, 'For Spark, freedom is limited to self-conscious role-playing because in fiction characters are trapped within the novelist's script, and in "reality" people are part of the book written by the hand of God' (Waugh 2001, p.119).

Regarding questions of free will and autonomy, *The Comforters* has an interesting relationship with James Hogg's *Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824), a novel which is also explicitly concerned with the possibility of free will. Both Herman (2010, p.7) and Gerard Carruthers (2010, p.26) have cited Hogg's influence on Spark's writing, and indeed, the two novels share certain similarities. For one thing, both feature a protagonist who may or may not be hallucinating, and in both it is unclear as to whether those protagonists do or do not have the capacity for genuine autonomy. It is also implied that both protagonists write the novel that the reader is reading (the sub-title of Hogg's novel is '*as written by himself*', and at one point the protagonist attempts and fails to print his journal), although as Nicol has observed, in the case of *The Comforters* this view is somewhat problematic.[135] However, it is telling that both Spark and Hogg use the context of hallucinations to explore the question of free will, since in both of their novels their protagonists are thrust into a state of radical uncertainty as they begin to doubt the extent of their control over themselves and the world around them. In many respects, therefore, *The Comforters* is a novel about control, agency and autonomy, as much as it is 'a novel about novels'.

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[135] Nicol lists features of the novel which resist this interpretation, finishing his argument with 'Whatever the conclusion, it renders the author a more deceitful, unreliable figure than before' (Nicol 2010, p.124).

Yet *The Comforters* can also be read as a novel 'about' hallucinations. As Evelyn Waugh observes in his 1957 review, the novel attempts 'to combine two distinct themes, each with its own leading character. The first theme is the mechanics of story-telling, the second a case-history of insanity' (Waugh 1957). Since the former of these two themes has already been thoroughly researched, I engage instead with the latter, exploring how Spark uses the creative space which fiction provides to model a form of hallucinatory experience in a fashion that conveys aspects of that experience to the reader. Therefore, rather than viewing Caroline's hallucinations as being primarily representative of something else, or as providing a sort of vehicle for introducing the novel's metafictional play, I view hallucinatory experience itself as the object of representation. In this light the novel's metafictional elements function as part of that representation, simultaneously eliciting a specific type of readerly response which mimics the experientiality of hallucinations while also signifying the destabilisation of Caroline's sense of self which results from her hallucinations.

In the first section I consider the mechanics of Spark's representation of hallucinatory experience in *The Comforters*, using frameworks from cognitive narratology and reader-response theory to explain how the novel attempts to convey certain experiential aspects of voice-hearing to the reader. It appears that Spark was keenly aware of the difficulty of conveying a sense of the distinct phenomenology of hallucinatory experience through narrative prose, and her use of metalepsis is thus not only isomorphic to the sense of ontological upheaval which such experiences often entail (see Chapter 1, Section 1), but also points to a pre-existent similarity between the experiences of reading and voice-hearing.

The second section examines how the metafictional devices which Spark uses to convey the experientiality of hallucinations also serve to represent the psychological effects of hallucinatory experience on the experiencing subject. In particular, I examine how the novel suggests that hallucinations undermine Caroline's sense of self by compromising her sense of agency, and how Spark thus uses the context of hallucinatory experience to explore the relationship between agency and the self. Drawing on insights from psychology and philosophy of mind, I show how Spark's novel suggests an implicit relationship between the capacity to perform agentive action and the capacity to identify oneself as a persistent spatiotemporal entity, to locate and define the 'I' in relation to the world. In this light I explore the connection which the novel establishes between Caroline's experience of voice-hearing and her experience – or perhaps, her delusion – of being a fictional character narrated into existence by an author in another dimension. I then go on to examine how Spark suggests that the experience of hallucinations prompts a dissolution of the boundaries of the self, since the occurrence of such

experiences undermines several foundational assumptions on which the senses of self and agency are based.

Section 1: Reading the Voice

While *The Comforters* does have an ostensible 'plot' – a somewhat trite and overly coincidental narrative about a diamond-smuggling grandmother and her family's attempts to interfere in her affairs – in many respects it serves only as a kind of self-consciously fictional backdrop for the far more unusual, and hence more interesting, experiences of the young literary critic Caroline Rose. At approximately a quarter of the way through the novel, Caroline begins to hear the clicking of a disembodied typewriter, followed by a chorus of voices narrating her actions after she has performed them (as a result, the reader encounters certain sentences and paragraphs twice: first as narration, and then as the sounds which Caroline hears in the storyworld). To Caroline's distress the voices quickly prove themselves able to access her thoughts as well as her actions, and eventually Caroline becomes convinced that they are in fact from one person, '"a writer on another plane of existence"' (*TC*, p.64) writing a story about the characters in the novel. The voice confirms this, and Caroline subsequently attempts to prove her independence by thwarting one of its proleptic assertions regarding her future actions. When the attempt fails Caroline becomes able to 'overhear' portions of the text which relate to characters distant from her in space and time, which appears to impede the narrator's ability to narrate the story. Finally, once the diamond-smuggling plot has been resolved, Caroline decides to write a novel about '"Characters in a novel"' (*TC*, p.213), and the novel ends with the implication that another of the characters, Laurence Manders, has read 'the book' and discovered within it a facsimile of a letter which he wrote and promptly destroyed (*TC*, p.214).

The exact dimensions of Caroline's experiences in *The Comforters* are thus difficult to establish, primarily because the set of 'rules' governing the relationship between the novel and the fictional world it creates are subject to numerous changes. These changes manifest themselves in the relationship which Caroline has with the narrator, or rather, the narrative voice, which she occasionally 'picks up' as it narrates the story. Once Caroline settles on her 'delusion' of the 'transdimensional author', the narrator becomes more individualised, engaging in more overt commentary on Caroline's behaviour which cannot be ascribed to the

mental functioning of any of the characters.[136] The range of narrative instances which Caroline 'overhears' also increases, so that she begins to hear portions of the text which relate to characters separate from her in space and time. Yet the narrative voice also begins to find that 'It is not easy to dispense with Caroline Rose', for once Caroline has started reflecting on the form of the novel and commenting on the passages she overhears she starts to exert 'an undue, unreckoned influence on the narrative from which she is supposed to be absent for a time' (*TC*, p.144). Still more surprisingly, Mrs Hogg, whom Caroline has dismissed as being '"Not a real-life character"' (*TC*, p.146), begins to disappear when she is unobserved by the other characters. Considering these fairly disparate and contradictory elements, any interpretative strategy which attempts to naturalise them all within a single frame – in other words, which attempts to explain exactly what Caroline hears, and how or why she is hearing it – will be necessarily selective. Accordingly, this section explores how such features contribute to an overall aesthetic effect, rather than attempting to explain them via the logic of the storyworld itself.

If we understand fictional language as providing instructions for the enaction of a storyworld (see Chapter 1, section 2), and of words as 'activat[ing] experiences with their referents' (Zwaan 2004 p.36), then it would appear that readerly immersion involves focusing attention on the enacted world and away from the language which prompts its construction. According to Roman Ingarden, the 'limited and narrow consciousness and abilities of the reader' necessarily result in certain 'strata of the work [being] grasped only peripherally, so that they become blurred on the edge of the field of awareness' (Ingarden 1973b [1968], p.91). Therefore, while we might be aware of the language of the text while reading, such an awareness will in most cases be secondary to the primary awareness of the storyworld constituted by our interaction with that language. As Ingarden puts it,

> During reading, we are usually absorbed in apprehending the objectivities portrayed in the work, which then seem to occupy the foreground of the concretization. The details of the semantic stratum, such as the peculiar sentence formation and the way the meanings of the sentences are then interrelated, will then hardly be grasped for themselves because, in reading, one generally only passes through them to reach the portrayed objects. (Ingarden 1973b, p.91)

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[136] To avoid confusion, I shall refer to the sounds which Caroline hears as 'the voice' rather than 'the voices', although (at least at first) they appear to sound like a chorus rather than a singular voice. Equally, I shall refer to Caroline's belief in the transdimensional author as her 'delusion', even though in one sense she is completely 'correct' – she is, after all, a fictional character being narrated by '"a writer on another plane of existence"'. As I suggest in Chapter 1, Section 1, the 'accuracy' of a delusion or hallucination is not at issue here – for, as Karl Jaspers points out, 'a delusion may be correct in its content without ceasing to be a delusion' (Jaspers 1997 [1963], v.1, p.106). It is, rather, the *form* of the experience which determines whether or not it is a hallucination or a delusion.

Note that Ingarden is careful to modify his observations with a certain amount of equivocation ('usually', 'hardly', 'generally', etc.), since he is describing a trend rather than a universal law. Immersion or 'aesthetic illusion' is, as Werner Wolf points out, 'characterized by an asymmetrical ambivalence' which 'derives from the positioning of aesthetic illusion on a scale between two poles, mutually exclusive, of total rational distance […] and complete immersion […] in the represented world' (Wolf 2014). For fictional language can draw attention to itself in a way that makes the reader primarily aware of the language and secondarily aware of the storyworld, just as the reader might choose to focus their attention on the language and keep the storyworld at the periphery. However Wolf, like Ingarden, observes that 'the position between these poles always maintains a certain proximity to the pole of immersion', and immersion 'in many cases seems to be the default option during the reception process of representations' (Wolf 2014).

In effect, as Sven Birkerts observes, 'we generally don't remember the language at all, unless it's dialogue. For reading is a conversion, a turning of codes into contents' (Birkerts 2006, p.87). The reason Birkerts makes an exception for dialogue appears to be that there is a distinction between the language which is cognised primarily as instructions for the enaction of a simulation (i.e. 'code'), and the language which has existence *as language* within the storyworld, and is thus one of the 'portrayed objects' (i.e. 'content'). In other words, dialogue cues the reader to simulate the experience of hearing language spoken, as what Christopher A. Kurby et al. term an 'auditory imagery experience' (Kurby et al. 2009, p.457). At the same time, of course, dialogue itself prompts an experiential simulation of its referents as a necessary part of its comprehension as language (see Chapter 1, Section 2). Our experience of fictional language is thus not an all-or-nothing affair, but a field within which the reader focuses his or her attention, allowing for certain aspects of the experience to predominate while others remain peripheral.[137] What is, perhaps, distinctive about dialogue is that it *also* cues the reader to simulate an auditory experience.[138]

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[137] We can observe such shifts between content and code in narratives where a character begins to tell a story for a significant amount of time, as in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899). In such cases, the framing storyworld of the narrator begins to 'decay' until the effort of maintaining the two storyworlds simultaneously – of regarding the utterance as both content and code – becomes too much to bear, and the frame world is forgotten in order for the utterance to become code so that the simulation of the related storyworld can be focused on more fully. This in turn suggests that while language as content prompts the enaction of further simulations, such simulations tend to be regarded peripherally (if at all) while such language is being cognised as an auditory utterance in the primary storyworld.

[138] Recent research in cognitive neuroscience and audionarratology appears to support the idea that dialogue prompts auditory simulations. Neuroimaging data gathered by Bo Yao et al. points to a distinction between how direct speech and indirect speech are processed by the brain, since 'silent reading of direct versus indirect speech engenders differential brain activation in voice-selective areas of the auditory cortex' (Yao et al. 2011, p.3146).

By having Caroline hear the narrative itself as a voice within the storyworld, Spark causes the reader to encounter certain stretches of narration twice, the first time as code, and the second time as content. While the two passages are, in most cases, linguistically identical, the text cues the reader to cognise the repetition as an auditory imagery experience by presenting it as a sound which Caroline hears, just as dialogue is also cued to be heard as content rather than code. Since the two passages are linguistically identical, their juxtaposition foregrounds the phenomenological difference between language-as-code and language-as-content in a way that normal instances of direct speech and thought do not. Of course, the reader may not be specifically aware of what has changed – i.e. that their intentional stance to the language has shifted – but they will nonetheless be aware that *something* has changed, and that this 'something' is tied to the fact that the voice's utterance possesses a felt quality that is phenomenologically distinct from the rest of the text. By presenting the voice's utterances in italics Spark also visually signifies the voice's different intentional aspect, which in turn serves to differentiate the voice's utterances from both preceding code and other auditory content.[139] Spark's use of metalepsis thus enables her to portray a voice that feels to the reader as if it does not 'belong', and which is recognised as being an experience phenomenologically distinct from that of overhearing the discourse of other characters. This strategy is notably different from Waugh's presentation of Pinfold's hallucinations, which are not depicted as distinct from any other dialogic exchanges in the novel and which subsequently do not elicit the sense of phenomenological strangeness which Spark attempts to evoke through verbal doubling in *The Comforters*.[140] That Spark considered this a necessary quality for the voice to possess is also suggested by her description of her own experience of (visual) hallucinations, in which she states that 'as long as this sensation lasted, I knew they were hallucinations' (*CV*, p.204). As

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This in turn 'suggests that, even during silent reading of text, direct speech may be more likely to activate "audible speech"-like representations than indirect speech' – or, at they later put it, 'mental simulations of voice' (Yao et al. 2011, pp.3146, 3151). However, the results of the lexical decision experiments of Marianne Abramson and Stephen D. Goldinger suggest that 'acoustic representations activated in silent reading are best characterized as inner speech rather than abstract phonological codes', and that although inner speech 'is "articulated" faster than overt speech' it still shares certain characteristics with overt speech (Abramson and Goldinger 1997, pp.1059, 1065). There would thus appear to be *some* auditory component to all linguistic comprehension, although the reading of direct speech would appear to involve a more extensive enactment of an appropriate auditory simulation (see also Anežka Kuzmičová (2013) who uses Yao et al.'s research to support her introspective phenomenological analysis of the reading of direct speech).

[139] Indeed, italicisation is itself typically indicative of the fact that silently read text is nonetheless cognised as internally heard speech, since it produces an effect of prosodic emphasis which can potentially affect the text's meaning.

[140] This does not necessarily mean that Waugh did not experience his own voices as phenomenologically distinct from his perceptions – indeed, his praise of Spark's technique in representing hallucinatory experience, and his acknowledgement of 'how much better she had accomplished it', suggests instead that he recognised the mimetic appropriateness of her use of metalepsis.

discussed Chapter 1, Section 1, such awareness is common amongst people who experience hallucinations, which appear as phenomenologically different from perceptual experience and thus exhibit 'a distinctive kind of intentionality' (Ratcliffe 2015, p.106).

Moreover, *The Comforters* also captures something of the intrusive and uncontrollable quality of voice-hearing in that the voice does not feel as if it belongs in the storyworld. In its first iteration, the stretch of narration that is later repeated functions as code in that it constitutes Caroline's being, directing the reader to construct the mental representation of Caroline and her thoughts and actions. Its reappearance as content, as something that she herself experiences, is from the reader's perspective paradoxical and impossible, and is therefore disturbingly intrusive. Since up until this point (approximately a quarter of the way through *The Comforters*), the novel has kept within the bounds of realism, the metaleptic intrusion of the voice is still more shocking to the reader in that it violates those expectations which the novel itself has already established. Indeed, it is likely that for those readers who first encountered *The Comforters* in 1957 this effect would have been even more pronounced, given that Spark was a new writer (and was yet to establish her distinctive oeuvre in which such metafictional play is fairly commonplace), and that the novel was published before the advent of postmodernism proper.[141]

Yet part of the brilliance of Spark's technique is that the voice's appearance *continues* to be intrusive to the reader because the 'rules' governing the nature of the passages which Caroline is able to overhear keep changing. While the voice initially confines itself to 'remarking her own thoughts' (*TC*, p.43) – quite literally 're-marking' them as opposed to remarking *on* them (and Spark's omission of the prefix here is telling) – it quickly begins to broaden its range, commenting on Caroline's mental states, the things which she has '*failed to register*', her status as a fictional character, and even her future actions (*TC*, pp.45, 47, 70, 95). As a result, each occurrence of the voice disrupts the reader's interpretative frame, so that he or she must continuously apply different frames or schemata to the voice in order naturalise its appearance, in a manner that is analogous to Caroline's own varying attempts to make sense of her experience. Therefore, not only are readers forced to grapple with a phenomenon which violates the ontology of the storyworld they are immersed in, but their attempts to control it by naturalising it comprehensively within a sensible schema or frame are continuously thwarted. The voice thus remains intrusive for the reader precisely because the rules governing its

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[141] These features of the novel may explain why Spark's publishers were initially unwilling to publish *The Comforters* at all, until Waugh's favourable response to the proofs Barnsley had sent him convinced them to do so (*CV*, p.208).

appearance remain unfixed – unlike, say, the voices in Waugh's novel, which remain disturbing for Pinfold but not for the reader, who is able to naturalise them without much difficulty by using the explanatory frame of the hallucinating character (the 'perspectival principle', as Tamar Yacobi puts it (Yacobi 1981, p.118)) to account for the novel's oddities.[142]

The very fact that Spark needed to use such metafictional mechanics to achieve a mimesis of AVHs which was more 'successful' than Waugh's more straightforward approach is in itself indicative of an already-present isomorphism between the phenomenology of reading and voice-hearing. As Lyndsey Stonebridge points out, '[l]iterature […], it is often claimed, is one place where you can hear the voices of others without actually going mad: in some ways it is the consciousness of this fact that makes fiction fiction' (Stonebridge 2005, p.453). However, since the phenomenology of reading is already so natural to us as readers that it passes unnoticed, it follows that defamiliarising and experimental metafictional devices, such as Spark's use of metalepsis, have the potential to reacquaint us with the strangeness of this experience in a way that can imitate the experience of hearing voices.

It appears that Spark herself suggests this relationship between reading and voice-hearing within *The Comforters*. On the one hand, her reflections in *Curriculum Vitae* on why she tried to represent auditory rather than visual hallucinations – despite the fact that she herself experienced the latter – reveal a keen awareness of the dynamics of reading. She acknowledges, for instance, that 'From the aspect of method, I could see that to create a character who suffered from verbal illusions on the printed page would be clumsy. So I made my main character "hear" a typewriter with voices composing the novel itself' (*CV*, p.207). This comment suggests that Spark gave some thought to how readers encounter literary texts, and her use of metafiction in *The Comforters* – quite apart from producing the phenomenological effects already described – provided her with a means of examining certain aspects of the experience of reading in more detail.

On the other hand, Spark's use of metalepsis means that Caroline not only hears a voice but also engages with a text – the very same text, in fact, with which the reader is also engaged. In this sense, Caroline is also another reader (or hearer, to be more precise), of the novel. Although, at first, she encounters the text a few moments after readers do, as time goes by she begins to 'hear' almost simultaneously with them – or rather, the narrator refers analeptically to which passages Caroline has or has not '"picked up"' rather than embedding her experiences within a scene (*TC*, p.146). After a passage concerning Mrs Hogg's breasts, for instance, during

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[142] See Chapter 2, Section 1 for more details.

which the narrator describes her many and varied attempts to contain their unmanageable vastness, a single sentence of the narration is repeated without italics, followed by Caroline's comment that the section is in '"Bad taste"' – after which the narrator informs the reader that Caroline has, 'in fact, "picked up" a good deal of the preceding passage, all about Mrs Hogg and the breasts' (*TC*, p.146). Not only does this imply that Caroline was reading/hearing in tandem with the reader, but it also places her in a more conspicuously 'readerly' relationship with the text in that she begins treating it as an aesthetic object which she can subject to criticism. Furthermore, the sentence contains an instance of textual deixis in referring to 'the preceding passage', thus foregrounding the textuality of the text even as it refers to Caroline's perceptual activity (i.e. what she has 'picked up'). The resultant impression is that Caroline has experienced the narration *as narration*, as part of a novel which she is picking up in a manner more akin to the reader and less akin to a character hearing a disembodied voice. Indeed, Spark's particular choice of verb here – or rather, her avoidance of the verb 'hear' in this instance – is also indicative of the analogy she is pursuing, that of Caroline as reader as well as voice-hearer.

According to Abramson and Goldinger, it would appear that the 'acoustic representations' produced during reading are essentially akin to inner speech (Abramson and Goldinger 1997, p.1059). This view would imply that, while reading, the reader's capacity for inner speech is already in use in a way that precludes the simultaneous generation of self-authored inner speech.[143] As Georges Poulet describes it, the reader thus becomes 'the prey of language. There is no escaping this take-over' (Poulet 2007 [1972], p.58). In a sense inner speech is therefore 'hijacked', and, along with it, the reader's capacity for introspective thought. In the act of reading the reader is thus made to think thoughts that are not self-authored (even though they are self-produced), so that his or her '"mind is working under the pressure of someone else's necessity, and under the suggestive power of some irresponsible writer"' (*TC*, p.107). Like the reader Caroline is incapable of holding out 'for what she wanted and what she didn't want in the way of a plot' (*TC*, p.109), even though normally in narrative fiction the author sustains the illusion that the characters, as participants in the storyworld, *do* have an influence on the plot. However, *as* a 'reader' Caroline loses her capacity for agency, or rather, becomes aware of her incapacity for agency.

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[143] I know of no experiments that specifically examine whether this is indeed the case – however, it seems as though it would be impossible for anyone to generate two genuinely simultaneous streams of inner speech (the dialogic nature of inner speech, which I examine in greater detail below, still requires that we cognise the different articulations one after another). Indeed, if we could cognise two streams of inner speech simultaneously this would make dialogic inner speech somewhat unnecessary.

As we saw in Chapter 2, Section 2, the reader's engagement with and exploration of the storyworld manifests a curious dynamic in that it involves a paradoxically wilful 'fettering of attention'. The more we can suppress our awareness of the text's guiding hand, the more easily we can convince ourselves that we are exploring and engaging with a fully realised world, a world rich in other details that *might* be accessed. At the same time, the more we can suppress our awareness of our own activity in generating the simulations of the storyworld, the more we can realise the 'otherness' of the storyworld and experience it as a *thing* with which we can interact (I explore this point further in Chapter 4, Section 1). Finally – and most pertinently with regard to *The Comforters* – the more we can suppress our awareness of the constructive agency *behind* the text, the more we can immerse ourselves in the illusion of the storyworld as an ongoing event, as something happening *now*, the course of which is yet to be decided. Readers tend to be fairly proficient at suppressing all three forms of awareness, which is why Poulet's assertion that readers 'deliver' themselves, 'bound hand and foot, to the omnipotence of fiction' (Poulet 2007, p.58) is not necessarily unreasonable. After all, effective suppression involves not being reflectively aware of the activity of suppress*ing*, and the closer readers are to full immersion, the more they relinquish their capacity for agency.

Because of the metaphorical connection which the novel establishes between reading and voice-hearing, Caroline's loss of a sense of agency as a reader also suggests that a loss of a sense of agency is attendant upon the experience of hearing voices. Indeed, as I discuss in more detail in Section 2 of this chapter, Caroline's growing sense of distress upon hearing the voice narrating her thoughts is in part tied to her awareness that such an occurrence also implies that her thoughts might not be her own – or, rather, that they are beyond her control. Therefore, one similarity between reading and voice-hearing which *The Comforters* suggests is that in both types of experience one 'hears' the words of another which are not self-authored, yet which are nonetheless self-generated (regardless of whether or not they *feel* self-generated). Furthermore, the presence of this 'other' who features in both types of experience and who is simultaneously a part of and yet distinct from the self, might well produce the feeling of the self being 'split' – although how this feeling will be interpreted and emotionally experienced will depend heavily on context (since the activity of reading establishes a context in which such a split is to be expected).[144] Indeed, during reading, as Poulet observes, this splitting of self

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[144] Stonebridge's aforementioned observation – that '[l]iterature […], it is often claimed, is one place where you can hear the voices of others without actually going mad: in some ways it is the consciousness of this fact that makes fiction fiction'(Stonebridge 2005, p.453) – would also appear to suggest that reading establishes a context in which we expect to hear the voices of others, and that it is partly our consciousness of this context which prevents the experience from being disturbing.

results from the feeling that 'this *thought* which is alien to me and yet in me, must also have in me a *subject* which is alien to me. It all happens, then, as though reading were the act by which a thought managed to bestow itself within me with a subject not myself' (Poulet 2007, p.60). Yet since this 'schizoid distinction' ultimately delivers the reader from 'egocentricity' (Poulet 2007, pp.63, 67), Poulet implies that it is an effect to be desired. One of the all-important differences between reading and voice-hearing, however, is that the reader is continuously engaged with the text, and never *completely* immersed in the storyworld.[145] The reader is always peripherally aware of the mediating object (the text) in trying to engage with the mediated object (the storyworld) and can, therefore, ultimately designate the novel itself as the source of the 'alien subject'. As I go on to discuss, Spark's novel explores how and why this splitting of self which results from the experience of hearing voices can produce distress outside the context of reading.

Since the reader is still peripherally or at least marginally aware of the text's existence, the experiences of reading and voice-hearing remain phenomenologically distinct. Yet it is their underlying similarity which posed such a challenge to Spark's attempt to convey the experientiality of auditory hallucinations, since the activity of reading is already imitative of voice-hearing in a way which is so familiar to us that it passes unnoticed. Her use of metalepsis thus serves to defamiliarise the reader from the usual experience of reading – in a manner that can be interpreted, in turn, as an attempt to convey the phenomenology of hallucinatory experience. However, the way in which Spark uses metafictional play in order to represent (or rather, prompt the reader to enact) hallucinatory experience also has further implications regarding how such experiences affect the individual subject. For while the metaleptic intrusions of the narrative voice perhaps make Caroline seem a more overtly *fictional* character than fictional characters tend to be, the novel still cues readers to attribute experiences and feelings (i.e. consciousness) to Caroline as they would to any other character. In the following section I thus examine how *The Comforters* uses a specific form of metafictional play in order to model Caroline's experience of auditory hallucinations, and explore how this novel reflects a sophisticated understanding of the relationship between agency and the individual's sense of self.

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[145] Indeed, Wolf (2014), Marco Caracciolo (2014a, p.161), and Karl Bühler (1990 [1934], p.150), all stress that immersion (in the various frameworks within which they conceptualise it), is never total – it is, rather, a movement *towards*, rather than a destination *reached*.

'"But this is intolerable." "Doesn't it depend on how you take it?"' (*TC*, p.63). This exchange, between Caroline and her spiritual mentor Father Jerome, occurs at a major turning point in the novel, since it is here that Caroline 'realises' that she is hearing the narrative of '"a writer on another plane of existence"' (*TC*, p.64). Caroline's interpretation is, of course, one way of 'taking it', and the content of the voice's utterances changes accordingly, announcing the fictitiousness of all of the characters when it next appears. Yet perhaps more significantly, Father Jerome's response suggests that what is primarily important is not the experience itself, but rather what it signifies to the experiencer, i.e. Caroline. In turn, what is distressing about Caroline's experience – what makes it intolerable to her – is not just the content of her hallucinations but what their occurrence suggests to her, and the way in which the fact of their presence troubles the foundations of her sense of self. Spark thus uses the framework of hallucinatory experience to explore those foundations, and in this regard the particular content of Caroline's hallucinations can be viewed as part of Spark's overall attempt to articulate her views on real-world selves and their relationship to questions of agency. Therefore, irrespective of whether or not Spark's representation of Caroline's hallucinatory and psychotic experiences is strictly 'realistic', this representation serves to explore the potential effects of such experiences upon the individual.[146]

Upon deciding that the voices she hears are the utterances of an '"irresponsible writer"' (*TC*, p.107) from another dimension, what appears to trouble Caroline above all – and what she protests against most strongly – is the possibility that she is *being narrated*, and that not only are her '"thoughts and actions [being] controlled by some unknown, possibly sinister being"' (*TC*, p.108), but that her own existence is open to question. The one appears to imply the other, for it is only after she has interpreted the voices as the transdimensional utterances of an author writing about her life that she hears the narrator claim that 'the characters in this novel are all fictitious, and do not refer to any living persons whatsoever' (*TC*, p.70). Her subsequent attempt to thwart the voice's proleptic assertion that she and Laurence are to travel by car to Smuggler's Retreat is thus a fairly logical attempt to prove her own existence: if she can act

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[146] As it happens, the psychopathological literature does contain examples of psychotic patients whose delusions appear remarkably similar to Caroline's. Jaspers, for instance, refers to a patient who 'called his whole fantastic world "the novel"' (Jaspers 1997, v.1, p.78), while Louis Sass describes another who 'said that he used to be a drawing in a book, until he got away and came to the hospital' (Sass 1992, p.315). Indeed, Sass states that it is characteristic of schizophrenic delusions to 'focus on highly general or universal issues rather than on more personalized or worldly concerns like jealousy or persecution': 'the schizophrenic will claim to be a machine, will equate himself with the sun, or will say he is only a character in a book' (Sass 1992, p.270).

contrary to the narrator's story, she cannot be a fictional character in his work. Of course, since her attempt fails she begins to cast about for other ways of proving her own existence, claiming, for instance, that "'this physical pain convinces me that I'm not a wholly fictional character. I have independent life'" (*TC*, p.168). Yet even here she is conceding that she feels herself not to be a wholly 'real' person either, and evidently her inability to exercise free will has led her to doubt her ontological purchase as an actual being in the world. While she might be convinced that she has the capacity to experience sensations, this capacity is not in itself enough to convince her that she is wholly 'real', since it is evident that the ability to perform conscious acts – an ability which she feels divested of because of the controlling power of the narrator – constitutes an intrinsic part of her sense of self, or, to be more precise, her sense of being a self. The particular dynamics of Caroline's delusion and the metafictional quandaries it gives rise to are thus the more overt part of the novel's exploration into exactly why the senses of self and agency are connected in this fashion.

Aside from creating situations which directly challenge Caroline's capacity for agency, the conceit of the author narrating a character into existence is also suggestive of why the capacity for agency is essential to the construction of the sense of self. As Elisabeth Pacherie suggests:

> What we do tells us, and others, a lot about who we are. On the one hand, who we are determines what we do. On the other hand, acting is also a process of self-discovery and self-shaping. Pivotal to this mutual shaping of self and agency is the sense of agency, or agentive self-awareness, that is, the sense that one is the agent of an action. (Pacherie 2011, p.442)

On becoming aware of the narrative voice, however, Caroline can no longer be sure whether her actions have their point of origin in herself, or whether they are dictated to her in order that they might fit with the narrator's "'slick plot'" (*TC*, p.107). While this does not mean that she feels as if her actions are not her own (as is the case in certain delusions such as alien hand syndrome), it does mean that she cannot partake in the bi-directional process of self-discovery and self-shaping because she cannot know whether her "'mind is working under the pressure of someone else's necessity'" (*TC*, p.107), which, as a result of her delusion, is how she begins to view the minds of others. While usually 'Agents are seen as first causes or uncaused causes, origins of actions to which authorship can be ascribed' (Wegner and Sparrow 2004, p.1202), Caroline's belief in the power of the transdimensional author means that she cannot trust that she is really the first, uncaused cause of her own actions. For this reason, her actions can no longer serve as reliable indications of the network of beliefs, desires and goals which is essential to her sense of who she is.

Spark's representation of Caroline's initial experience of hearing the voice is also indicative of the connection between self and agency, in that it shows how hallucinations disrupt and problematise that connection. Above all, Caroline fears that the voices are 'hallucinations sent forth from her own mind' (*TC*, p.44), and thus tellingly locates the distinction between sanity and madness in the sphere of action by deciding that it is a question of whether she is '"being haunted"' or '"haunting [her]self"' (*TC*, p.45). As Daniel M. Wegner suggests, the self is 'the picture of a virtual agent, a mind that is apparently guiding the action', and this picture is a construction based on an accumulation of 'causal inferences about how our minds seem to be involved in producing our behaviours' (Wegner 2005, p.30). Caroline, however, is faced with the possibility that 'her own mind' is producing behaviours over which she has no control, and this opens up the further possibility that what she considers as her own self is actually 'split'. Indeed, even in thinking about her own mind as a result of her experiences she necessarily conceptualises her mind as being somehow distinct from herself, as one of her self's properties or constituent parts rather than actually *being* the self itself. This conceptualisation opens up the possibility that there is something within her, some part of the domain of her self, which is performing actions over which she has no control – that she is both unconscious affect*er* and conscious affect*ed*. In an attempt to resist the deconstruction of self that this splitting or bifurcation would entail she subsequently decides to entertain the more outlandish notion that the voice is the product of an external agent who can access her thoughts, thus choosing to radically destabilise her entire worldview rather than her own being. Her environment begins to manifest further agentive properties as a result of this projective transfer, and as she packs her bags to escape the flat she feels 'as if she expected some invisible hand, concealed in each object, to close over hers before she had got possession of it' (*TC*, p.46-47), suggesting that as a result of attributing the voice to the outside world she now senses the immanent presence of another agent in her immediate environment. Furthermore, the image of the hand closing over her own creates the impression that she feels somehow akin to the passive objects she is trying to manipulate through her actions, and that she has thus become the affected patient and her environment the affecting agent. Eventually, of course, she settles on the delusion of the transdimensional author to account for this impression of an immanent agent, which ironically leads her to doubt her own ontological being altogether.

To a certain extent, it appears that Caroline's hallucinations (and subsequent delusion) are of a piece with her tendency towards acute self-reflexivity. Indeed, she sometimes narrates her own actions as a 'technique' to bring her mind to order, to prevent 'ideas cracking off in

all directions' (*TC*, p.35). Yet this tendency to externalise herself starts to become uncontrollable even before she begins to hear hallucinations:

> Every now and then a cynical lucidity would overtake part of her mind, forcing her to comment on the fury of the other half. That was painful. She observed, 'The mocker is taking over.'

> 'Very funny, very funny,' said Caroline out loud. (*TC*, p.36)

As this passage demonstrates, self-reflexivity opens up the possibility of infinite regression, since there is always yet another remove from which the mind or the self can be externalised and treated as an object. Rather than healing the split within herself, therefore, Caroline's delusion of the transdimensional author serves instead to exacerbate her self-reflexivity. Ironically, she becomes unable to 'act naturally' because her 'determination to behave naturally in the face of that situation [being watched by the narrator] made her more self-conscious' (*TC*, p.104). In this regard, Caroline's gradual movement towards psychosis is effectively a movement from excessive reflection on the self to the derealisation of the self, as she enters into a state of radical doubt concerning what her self actually *is*.[147]

Moreover, the destabilisation of Caroline's reflective or 'higher-order' sense of herself as an agent demonstrates how the sense of agency serves to situate the self in the world both spatially and temporally. As Wegner observes,

> the self can be understood as a system that arises from the experience of authorship, and is developed over time by a set of controlled processes that manage memories and anticipations of authorship experiences. We become agents by experiencing what we do, and this experience then informs the processes that determine what we will do next. (Wegner 2005, p.32)

The self is thus the 'picture of a virtual agent, a mind that is apparently guiding the action', and this picture is an accumulation of 'causal inferences about how our minds seem to be involved in producing our behaviours' (Wegner 2005, p.30).[148] In this regard, the sense of the self as a kind of 'controller' which chooses to act in certain ways is a construction based on numerous past experiences which seem to tally with this general impression. It is thus developed in time and through time, even though it appears static and continuous. Spark subtly suggests this sense

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[147] The idea that 'hyperreflexivity' (i.e. excessive self-reflection and subsequent self-alienation) is intrinsically bound up with the derealisation of self and world is central to Sass' (1992 and 1994) conceptualisation of schizophrenia. Sass and Josef Parnas present a concise account of how this occurs when they suggest that schizophrenia involves a disruption of the ordinary 'tacit-focal structure' (Sass and Parnas 2003, p.430). Hyperreflexivity, as an 'exaggerated self-consciousness involving self-alienation', makes focal and explicit something which is normally tacit (Sass and Parnas 2003, p.429). '[W]hat once *was* tacit' is thus 'no longer being inhabited as a medium of taken-for-granted selfhood', which thus results in 'diminished self-affection': the 'diminished intensity or vitality of one's own subjective self-presence' (Sass and Parnas 2003, pp.429-430).

[148] Wegner here seems to be referring specifically to the exercising of the conscious will that sometimes appears to produce a subsequent action.

of the self as emergent in time by manipulating what appears to be a colloquially idiomatic utterance. When Caroline declares '"I refuse to have my thoughts and actions controlled by some unknown, possibly sinister being. I intend to subject him to reason. I happen to be a Christian. I happen –"' (*TC*, p.108), Laurence interrupts her, leaving the 'I happen' hanging as what appears to be an unfinished declarative. As a result, this idiomatic synonym for 'I am' – typically used as an intensifier – takes on another meaning in being divorced from the infinitive 'to be' which usually follows it. On its own, 'I happen' implies a slightly different mode of being, a slightly different mode of self-definition, from the stative 'I am'. For 'I am' implies that the 'I', and whichever qualifier is chosen to follow the 'am', exists somehow outside of time, possessing a metaphysical permanency which is unrelated to the actions of the 'I' *in* time. 'I happen', on the other hand, captures the sense that the 'I' does exist in time, that each moment it is happen*ing* through time, defined by its constant interaction with the world around it. Therefore, Caroline's refusal to have her thoughts and actions controlled by another being – or rather, her fear that this might be the case – takes on an added significance in that her ability to identify as an 'I', the 'I' that is Caroline, relies on her capacity to act and to think, to *happen* rather than merely *be*, since the happening defines the being.

Yet agentive action also serves to situate the self spatially as well as temporally – or rather, its temporal aspect allows us to draw boundaries between ourselves and the world. Since, as Alan Palmer claims, '[a]ction arises when an agent wants to change some aspect of their environment and believes that an action will successfully bring about that change' (Palmer 2008, p.118), it would appear that there is a degree of separation between the agent and environment, the former active, affect*ing*, and the latter passive, affect*ed*. Yet as Lambros Malafouris points out, the subject's '*conscious agency judgement*' might not be identical with the 'proper origin' of an action (Malafouris 2008, p.26). Instead, agency is the 'emergent product of material engagement' which 'constantly violates and transgresses the physical boundaries of the elements that constitute it' (Malafouris 2008, pp.34, 35). In this regard, our conception of ourselves as agents is a basic and often incredibly useful heuristic which mediates our experience of our relationship to the world (for example, both future action-planning and retrospective action-recognition – outside of the immediate embodied action – require us to have a conception of ourselves as being distinct from our environment). In thus having a sense of what part we have played in relation to an ongoing temporal flux (since the world is perpetually changing), we are able to continuously and prereflectively differentiate ourselves from our environment and from other agents. Our habitual experience of agentive action thus not only relies on a distinction between self and world, between inner and outer,

but also partly constitutes this distinction by providing us with a sense of being affecters affect*ing* the world around us.[149] Indeed, according to James Russell, the development of 'the *conception* of self–world dualism' – i.e. an 'awareness of one's place in the physical universe as at once an object within it and an experiencer of it' – is based in early experiences of agentive action (Russell 1996, p.72). Yet while Russell argues that the experience of agency is necessary for the development of this '"theoretical" notion' of self–world dualism (Russell 1996, p.72), it would also appear that the notion of self-world dualism is necessary for the acquisition of a similarly 'theoretical notion' of ourselves as agents. In other words, our sense of ourselves as agents both relies on and reinforces our sense of being separable from our immediate environment, which is likewise a basic and necessary heuristic for the ordinary navigation of space and time.

Caroline's initial experience of hearing the typewriter and the voices demonstrates how the sense of agency and self-world dualism reinforce each other, since in locating her sanity along the axis of agency (i.e. in relation to whether or not she is being haunted or haunting herself) she displays a hyper-awareness of her own impact on the world around her. Because she fears that without her conscious control her mind has projected sounds into her environment, she also begins to fear any unintentional changes to her environment which her body produces. After accidentally knocking over a glass dish, she subsequently feels a need 'To protect herself from the noises of her movements' (*TC*, p.47), since such unintentional noises further serve to exacerbate her sense of being unable to control her effects on her environment. As she escapes the flat she therefore attempts to reassert this sense of control by performing intentional acts which produce noise:

> Coat – hat – handbag – suitcase; Caroline grabbed them and hustled out of the door, *slamming* it to. She rattled downstairs and out of the front door, which she *slammed* behind her. At the top of Queen's Gate, turning in from Old Brompton Road, she got a taxi and secured herself inside it with a *slam* of the door. (*TC*, p.47 [my italics])

By slamming every door between herself and her flat, Caroline repeats her actions in a way that forcefully demonstrates her ability to create deliberate auditory change in her environment. As a result, she feels she has 'secured herself', just as she felt a need to 'protect herself' from creating unintentional changes to her environment. The use of such verbs in this context implies not only that Caroline feels herself to be under threat, but also that she feels able to alleviate

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[149] Of course, the converse is also true: when we feel that we have been affected by the world, we are again drawing a boundary between what is being affected (ourselves) and what is affecting that change (something outside of ourselves over which we have no control).

this threat through action, by re-establishing her sense of being in control of how she affects the world around her. The 'threat', in this case, comes from the way in which Caroline's hallucinatory experiences have undermined her conceptual notion of self-world dualism because they demonstrate that the mind can produce sensations which feel as if they have come from the world 'outside', thus destabilising the boundary between self and world. In this regard, Caroline's repetitive actions can be seen as part of an attempt to preserve her notion of self-world dualism by reinforcing her sense of being an agent deliberately altering her environment.

Furthermore, Caroline's attempt to effectively 'push' the voices into her environment by attributing them to an external agent can also be understood as an attempt to maintain both her sense of self-world dualism and her sense of the controlling self. Since hallucinations demonstrate that the mind has the capacity to produce sensations which feel as if they have come from the external world, they also underscore how the mind takes an active part in producing the individual's environment, and how in this regard the individual has no control over the mind's activities. In other words, for Caroline to accept that the voice is a hallucinatory product of her own mind she would also need to accept the implication that her mind is playing a part in producing her environment, and that the dualistic boundary between mind and world is in fact an impression formed *by* experience rather than a principle *of* experience. Since the deconstruction of this boundary would also suggest that her mind is doing things that are beyond her control, and that the sense of control is itself subject to the operations of that mind, she subsequently chooses to entertain the impossible notions which eventually lead to her delusion. Ironically, of course, this delusion eventually undermines her sense of ontological being altogether, since she feels divested of her capacity for genuine agency.

Spark's representation of Caroline's initial experience of hearing the voice thus suggests that part of what is distressing about hallucinatory experiences is that their presence destabilises the foundational assumptions upon which the senses of agency and self are based. On the one hand, hallucinations imply that the self is not unified and coherent but is in fact split, since they suggest that the mind is, in a sense, its own agent and able to act of its own accord. Such an implication is likely to be strongly suggested by verbal hallucinations, since our usual experience of linguistic utterances is that they are produced by an agent who possesses a network of beliefs, desires and goals which informs the utterance. On the other hand, hallucinations undermine the sense of the self as an entity distinct from the world with which it interacts, since they have the potential to radically destabilise the separation between mind and world, between the 'internal' and the 'external'.

Yet Spark's representation of her characters' thoughts and perceptions over the course of the whole novel appears to suggest that hallucinations *reveal*, rather than produce, the internal division within the self. In particular, the novel suggests that the mind is both the agent and the patient of internal verbal thought (inner speech), and that in order for one part of the mind to utter such thoughts there must be another part which listens, processes, and responds to them. For instance, the 'little exercise' which Mervyn Hogarth performs in his head after his meeting with Ernest demonstrates that thought is self-reflectively responsive:

> Fares 13s. but had to come to London anyway; dreariness of food but it was free; disappointment at subject of discussion (Ernest had invited him to discuss 'matters of interest to you') but satisfaction about Eleanor's break with Stock and consequent money difficulties; annoyance at being touched for money but satisfaction in refusing; waste of time but now Manders wants to say something further, which might possibly redeem the meeting or on the other hand confirm it as a dead loss. (*TC*, pp.138-139)

In presenting Mervyn's thoughts 'laboured out' in this fashion (*TC*, p.138), Spark shows that thought is essentially dialogic in nature, since each segment contains an argument and a counter-argument which presents an alternative viewpoint on the situation. The parallel structure of the segments creates the impression that this dialogue is occurring between two conflicting parts of Mervyn, while the 'but' which echoes throughout the passage emphasises the internal split. However, as Spark points out both before and after the passage, the whole process occurs with an almost imperceptible rapidity which makes it *seem* instantaneous to Mervyn. Yet even in brief, 'un-laboured out' representations of thought Spark suggests that mental utterances are directed at an internal addressee. The distinct oddness of the sentence 'Louisa thought, "I thought not."' (*TC*, p.114), which arises from the repetition of the word 'thought', draws attention to the fact that this instance of inner speech presupposes the presence of an interlocutor. Rather than avoiding the unusual construction by employing a form of thought report (for instance, 'Louisa was not surprised'), Spark instead demonstrates that Louisa articulates her lack of surprise to herself despite the fact that, since this is an affective response to Mrs Hogg's reply, no such articulation is strictly necessary. In effect, Louisa is telling herself that she 'thought not', which implies that some part of her is also *being told*. Spark thus suggests that the fact of inner speech, and its inherently dialogic nature, is itself indicative of a division within the self, since its occurrence places the thinker into both passive and active roles. This simultaneous duality attendant on self-authored thought is also imagistically represented by Caroline's initial perception of Laurence's recording machine as 'a large black box-like object which at first she took to be a large typewriter' (*TC*, p.64), which presents a symbolic conflation of speaker (typewriter) and listener (recorder). As Henry James

suggests in the Preface to *The Princess Casamassima*, 'the teller of a story is primarily, none the less, the listener to it, the reader of it, too' (James 1921 [1886], p.x), and in *The Comforters* this dual status of teller as told is also shown to apply to self-authored thought. Therefore, while Caroline's degree of awareness of the division within her own self, occasioned by her hallucinations, is certainly atypical, it would appear that Spark is suggesting that it is the nature of the self to be intrinsically divided – even though this split is not typically *felt* in the phenomenological sense.

Similarly, even as Caroline becomes distressingly aware of the dissolution of the boundary between self and world as a result of her hallucinatory experiences, the novel as a whole emphasises the fact that this boundary is also something of an illusion. On the one hand, as Michael Gardiner observes, '*The Comforters* picks up on the way the *nouveau roman* had shaken the stable and discrete perspective of classical realism, to leave narration open to viewpoints that change according to the object described' (Gardiner 2010, pp.28-29). The novel thus demonstrates that the mind takes an active part in constructing the world by showing how characters understand events and perceive objects according to different interpretative frameworks, in a way that ultimately changes the world that is perceived. For instance, the activities of Mervyn Hogarth and Louisa Jepp are presented from three radically different perspectives: from the perspective of Caroline, who views them as the implausible constructions of a novelist effecting a '"phoney plot"' (*TC*, p.107); from the perspective of the Baron, who interprets them according to a framework of black magic and sorcery; and from the perspective of Laurence, who approaches the matter empirically in the fashion of the classic detective. Although Laurence's interpretation is eventually 'confirmed' by the other characters, Caroline's is no less accurate in that it is confirmed by the fact of the text itself, which does indeed attempt to organise events into a slick plot. Yet on the other hand, *The Comforters* also represents the blurring of the boundary between mind and world linguistically, in a way that suggests that the minds of the characters are intrinsically connected with the world in which they are placed. As Palmer notes, 'Once it is understood that the mind extends beyond the skin, the inner/outer distinction becomes more and more difficult to sustain' (Palmer 2008, p.139), and *The Comforters* appears to point to the tenuousness of this inner/outer distinction by implying a connection between the contents of characters' minds and what appear to be descriptions of the external world. In the style of Alain Robbe-Grillet's *Les Gommes* (1953), words and phrases from the narration are frequently echoed in the characters' dialogue (and vice versa), thus creating the impression that the internal worlds of the characters and the external world of the text somehow diffuse into one another. In this light Caroline's

hallucinations, which are repetitions of far longer passages of the narrative, can be regarded as more extreme instances of this merging of text and character, of world and mind, which occurs throughout the novel. Therefore, Spark's representation of the interaction between mind and world throughout the novel implies that hallucinatory experience has the potential to prompt what is essentially an *exaggerated* awareness of the transient nature of the boundary between the self and its environment.

The Comforters can thus be understood as using hallucinatory and delusional experience to engage with a complex phenomenological problem regarding the nature of our experience of being in the world. The radical destabilisation of Caroline's basic folk-ontological heuristics suggests that although we can certainly entertain the possibility that this dualistic separation of mind and world is something of an illusion, it is a different thing altogether to have that separation undermined by actual experience. Self-world dualism, the unitary theory of self, and the absolute separation of human agent and material patient, can all be dismissed as theoretically unsound, but they are nonetheless essential heuristics which prereflectively structure and shape our experience. In this regard, although *Pincher Martin* engages in an *ad absurdum* critique of mind-body and self-world dualism in order to demonstrate that our ordinary experience is not actually characterised by such radical separation, *The Comforters* explores what happens when dualism can no longer be used as a heuristic, when the boundaries between self and world are felt to collapse. In effect, Spark's novel demonstrates that even if our folk-ontological heuristics do not accurately describe the nature of ordinary experience, they nonetheless play a part in structuring and maintaining our sense of the reality of both the world and the self.

Conclusion

The experimental metafictional devices which feature in *The Comforters* can be viewed as carrying out two distinct yet integrated functions. On the one hand such devices convey the phenomenology of hallucinatory experience by evoking certain types of readerly response. The metaleptic intrusion of the narrative voice into the storyworld serves to imitate the disturbing, reality-altering quality of hallucinatory experiences, while the different intentional aspect which is common to such experiences is mimicked by the phenomenological difference attendant on the repetition of 'code' passages as identical 'content' passages. Furthermore, the

novel's metafictional play works to defamiliarise the reader from those already familiar and thus unnoticed aspects of the phenomenology of reading which are akin to the phenomenology of voice-hearing, such as the sense of the split self and the loss of agency.

On the other hand, the dynamics of the relationship which Spark creates between Caroline and the narrative voice are also representative of how hallucinatory experience affects the experiencing subject. By toying with conventions regarding the autonomy and ontology of fictional characters, Spark shows how hallucinations (especially auditory verbal hallucinations), have the potential to destabilise one's sense of self by undermining some of the foundations upon which the self is based. In particular, their occurrence implies that the mind is capable of acting independently of the controlling self, thus threatening the agentive nexus which is shown throughout the novel to be crucial to the construction and maintenance of the sense of self.

In this way Spark attempts to allow the reader to inhabit Caroline's hallucinatory experiences through their interaction with the structure or 'format' of the narrative, as well as through the kind of empathetic identification which readers normally feel for characters. However, rather than being the kind of emotional engagement with experiences of suffering which Spark disparages in 'The Desegregation of Art' (1971), this is a form of empathy which is designed to be distinctly troubling. For even as the novel plays with the reader, self-consciously demonstrating that the reader's mind is also '"under the suggestive power of some irresponsible writer"' (*TC*, p.107), it also demonstrates that the experience of reality and of the self is partly based on a network of folk-ontological heuristics rather than stable and absolute truths. However, in using metafictional play to destabilise the ontological foundations of its storyworld, *The Comforters* attempts to demonstrate how reality is shaped by the experiencing subject, thus clearing the way for a kind of ontological pluralism. As Caroline tells Laurence in response to his attempt to record the voices on a Dictaphone, '"This sound might have another sort of existence and still be real"' (*TC*, p.65). The material, empirically verifiable world which Laurence understands as the only reality is ultimately shown to be as much of an 'illusion' as anything else, at least insofar as its realisation as the sole and exclusive real is similarly dependent on the folk-ontological heuristics of the experiencing subject. Indeed, for the reader, both the storyworld and the world inhabited by the transdimensional author are equally 'real' (which is why Caroline's 'delusion' is nonetheless accurate). In this manner, the reader is faced not with the problem of trying to determine the 'true' reality behind the novel, but rather the problem of trying to reconcile multiple realities within a coherent ontological framework. Understanding *The Comforters* as attempting the mimesis of hallucinatory and

delusional experience thus suggests that Spark's engagement with religious and spiritual issues regarding the nature of free will was also bound up with an engagement with phenomenological issues regarding the self, agency, and reality.

Chapter 4 – Metaphor, Imagination, and Social Agency in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*

'"I could do it weird. I could do it so that people, when they left there, couldn't find the exit"' (Kesey, quoted in Safer 1992 [1977], p.152). This was Ken Kesey's plan for the on-screen version of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, for which he was originally contracted to write the screenplay. However, he ultimately left the project and vowed never to see Miloš Forman's adaptation, since the filmmakers wanted him to expunge Bromden's narration and focus on the conflict between McMurphy and Nurse Ratched. '"It's the Indian's story"', he later told Beverly Grunwald, '"not McMurphy's or Jack Nicholson's"' (Kesey, quoted in Boardman 2008 [1979], p.62), and indeed, without Bromden's hallucinatory vision the film lacks the 'weirdness' which Kesey felt to be so important.

Like Muriel Spark, Kesey began his debut novel after experiencing drug-induced hallucinations – in his case, occasioned by the LSD which he was administered as a test subject for the CIA's Project MK-ULTRA (Dyck 2008, p.162). For Kesey, however, this experience prompted more of a breakthrough than a breakdown, especially in relation to the psychiatric patients on the ward where he worked as a hospital orderly: '"I studied inmates as they daily wove intricate and very accurate schizophrenic commentaries of the disaster of their environment, and had found that merely by ingesting a tiny potion I could toss word salad with the nuttiest of them"' (Kesey, quoted in Pratt 1977, p.xi). In pursuit of the kinds of experience which were to feature in his novel Kesey even went so far as to have a friend 'give him a dose of electric-shock therapy so he could write authoritatively about it' (Tanner 2008 [1973], p.174). Moreover, it appears that Kesey was keenly aware of the need to manipulate narrative and linguistic conventions in order to convey the experientiality of the psychotic patient's lived-world. As he stated in a letter to Kirk Douglas, '"You need to take the reader's mind places where it has never been before to convince him that this crazy Indian's world is *his* as well"' (Kesey, quoted in Tanner 1983, p.23).

Criticism on *Cuckoo's Nest* has tended to adopt a predominantly structuralist approach, reading the novel as a kind of American transformation of 'Puritan allegory' following in the tradition of Hawthorne and Melville (Kunz 1992 [1975], p.81).[150] Indeed, Bromden's assertion

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[150] See, for instance, James R. Huffman 2008 [1977], p.32; Peter G. Beidler 1992 [1977], p.9; Mark McGurl 2009, p.208; and Jack Hicks 2008 [1981], p.75, who all similarly suggest that this novel attempts to present 'truth' allegorically (through the use of metaphor and/or symbol).

that 'it's the truth even if it didn't happen' (*Cuckoo's Nest* [*CN*], p.13) is frequently – almost universally – cited as an invitation to read the novel in this manner. Aside from the 'truth' couched in Bromden's hallucinations and delusions, *Cuckoo's Nest* appears to be almost excessively rich in its symbolism: 'Teased by shaped that elude him, one critic after another goes wading through the fog and finds that it is full of allusions. Not one of them comes back with a satisfactory discussion of the novel as a whole, but all have interesting points to make' (Pratt 1977, p.xii).[151] However, several critics have not just focused on *Cuckoo's Nest*'s allegorical 'message', but have also considered how Kesey's novel either directly or indirectly engages with debates around language and symbolism. Kunz, for example, argues that Kesey attempts a 'revitalization of totemism from an existentialist posture', which is 'intimately related to his dependence upon symbolization' (Kunz 1992, p.98). In this regard, 'Symbolization constitutes what, how, and why *Cuckoo's Nest* means' (Kunz 1992, pp.99-100). In a similar vein, John W. Hunt suggests that Bromden 'is insisting that answers to basic questions cannot hang upon so fragile a peg as "fact"', and that he 'thus announces a highly sophisticated metaphysics in which [….] facts take on meanings fully understandable only with reference to the "system" of which they are elements' (Hunt 1992 [1977], p.15).[152] Drawing on ideas from ordinary language philosophy, Lars Bernaerts likewise suggests that *Cuckoo's Nest* points to how declaratives (such as psychiatric diagnoses) '*realize* the correspondence between the proposition and reality' – that the illocutionary act of the speaker 'creates a reality while he is claiming to be representing one' (Bernaerts 2010, p.290). Other critics have similarly observed that *Cuckoo's Nest* plays with metaphorical conventions, and Elena Semino and Kate Swindlehurst have provided an in-depth account of how Bromden's language, and the 'metaphorical system' which structures his narrative, 'produces the impression of a mind that works oddly, that tends to perceive things in an unusual way: the impression, in other words, of a distinct and identifiable mind style' (Semino and Swindlehurst 1996, p.150).

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[151] For example, Hicks (2008, p.78) Ruth Sullivan (1992 [1975], pp.51-52), Janet Larson (2008 [1984], p.97), James F. Knapp (2008 [1978], p.51), and Bruce E. Wallis (1992 [1972], pp.103-104), all offer interpretations of McMurphy as a Christ-figure; Don Kunz, however, suggests that he 'is developed more fully as the [Native American] cultural hero, the Creator and the Changer' (Kunz 1992, p.95), while Raymond M. Olderman contends that he is 'a successful Grail Knight, who frees the Fisher King [Bromden] and the human spirit' (Olderman 1992 [1972], p.68). Aside from religious and mythic interpretations, there are also critics who draw out allusions to cultural archetypes (Beidler, for instance, argues that the novel presents a reversal of the archetypal narrative of the 'Great White Father' bringing the 'unsophisticated Indian forward into the white man's world' (Beidler 1992, pp.7-8)), or other novels (both Terrence Martin and Joseph J. Waldmeir note the references to Melville's *Moby-Dick*, although for Waldmeir McMurphy is Ahab (Waldmeir 1964, p.203), while for Martin he is the whale (Martin 2008 [1973], p.38)).

[152] See also Thomas Scally: 'From the outset there is a recognized incongruity between the true and the factual' (Scally 1982, pp.357-358).

A number of critics have also – either implicitly or explicitly – understood Kesey's novel in terms of existentialism, focusing on how Bromden comes to be able to make his existence meaningful. Kunz, Hicks, and Huffman all suggest that a significant part of Bromden's recovery is due to his reacquisition of the ability 'to pull memory and present experience together' (Kunz 1992, p.94), which is intimately connected with his ability to form new and different meanings.[153] Likewise, although John Clark Pratt does not openly refer to existentialism, he argues that *Cuckoo's Nest* shows us how 'what counts is the point of view with which we must always go forward', and that 'how we bring [the struggle] clear in our own minds is entirely, and rightfully, up to us' (Pratt 1977, p.xv). Bernaerts, Scally, and Hunt, meanwhile, focus on Bromden's status as a narrator, and regard his narrative act (in telling the story in the first place) as a demonstration of his renewed capacity for meaning- (and thus world-)making. However, as Knapp points out, we are faced with something of a paradox if we attempt to integrate these existentialist ideas with the allegorical (and particularly Christian) readings of the novel. 'Kesey has been seen to affirm both independence and inter-dependence', promoting 'a vital individualism, whose price is personal isolation, at the same time that he offers a vision of the necessity of inter-dependence and mutual brotherhood' (Knapp 2008, pp.49, 43). Moreover, Bromden's status as a narrator is somewhat problematic, since his narrative style 'complicates our sense of the narrative as issuing from outside the ward' (McGurl 2009, p.208).[154] Terry Sherwood, for instance, even goes so far as to suggest that it is possible that Bromden never actually escapes from the hospital, and that '*all* events in the book are hallucinations' (Sherwood 1971, p.109). Whether or not we agree with Sherwood's reading of the novel, it does highlight a set of potential problems with regard to Bromden's status as a narrator which arise from the temporal separation of the tale and the telling of it.[155]

The reading of *Cuckoo's Nest* put forward in this chapter considers how the techniques used to represent Bromden's hallucinatory and psychotic experiences are intrinsically connected to a phenomenological exploration of how we make sense of reality. In this regard, my approach examines the ways in which Kesey's novel self-reflexively considers how the reader makes sense of the ontology of the storyworld, and how the individual subject makes sense of the ontology of experience in general. The first section examines Kesey's attempt to

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[153] Cf. Hicks 2008, p.76; and Huffman 2008, p.37.
[154] I examine exactly which features complicate this issue in Section 2 of this chapter.
[155] Scally attempts to reconcile some of *Cuckoo's Nest*'s apparent contradictions by arguing that the novel is self-reflexively engaged in a consideration of 'the relation between the writer and his voice', and the problems of capturing the truth of past experience from the perspective of the present (Scally 1982, pp.364-365).

represent hallucinatory experience through the manipulation of the conventions which structure figurative language. Using frameworks from metaphor theory, cognitive linguistics, and possible worlds theory, I show how Kesey – like Spark – metaleptically violates textual boundaries in a manner designed to evoke aspects of the phenomenology of hallucinatory experience, in particular the peculiar feeling of perceiving a different kind of reality. I then discuss how *Cuckoo's Nest* explicitly and implicitly reflects on metaphor and imaginary experience, and how Bromden's hallucinations provide a means of exploring how we engage with actual and non-actual worlds. The second section focuses on how Kesey's depiction of Bromden's gradual recovery reflects an understanding of how the sense of reality is intimately connected with the individual's sense of being a social agent, and how this is in turn integrated with the conceptual separation of self and world. In doing so, I suggest that Kesey's avowed intention to experiment with narrative voice has produced a narrator whose status *as* narrator is ambiguous, insofar as the novel invokes certain contradictory conventions of first-person narrative. Finally, I consider how Kesey, like Spark and William Golding, appears to be wrestling with the implications of ontological relativism, and how his novel seems to proffer a form of socially engaged pluralism as an alternative to positivism.

Section 1: Metaphors and Multiple Worlds

The plot of *Cuckoo's Nest* centres around the power struggle between the new in-patient of a psychiatric ward (Randall Patrick McMurphy), and the nurse who runs the ward (Nurse Ratched). At first McMurphy seems to cause mischief for his own amusement, but as he comes to sympathise with the plight of the other patients he attempts to 'cure' them in his own way. Although some of the patients do appear to benefit from McMurphy's influence, the result is ultimately tragic: one of the patients (Billy Bibbit), commits suicide, and McMurphy's subsequent attempt to kill Nurse Ratched results in his lobotomisation. Yet much of the novel's complexity arises from the fact that it is narrated by Chief Bromden, a psychotic patient who feigns deaf-mutism and who appears to experience paranoid delusions and hallucinations. For Bromden, the world is being controlled by the all-powerful 'Combine', which uses sophisticated electronic technology to make people more pliable. He thus regards the psychiatric ward is a place in which the Combine's agents attempt to 'fix' the defective 'product' (i.e. the patients) in order to return them to the mechanised world outside. Over the

course of the novel, Bromden's delusions and hallucinations appear to abate and he breaks his façade of deaf-mutism, largely as a result of McMurphy's influence. The variations in Bromden's mental state thus reflect the dynamics of the power struggle between McMurphy and Nurse Ratched, while also in themselves constituting much of the novel's drama. Indeed, the two 'stories' – Bromden's and McMurphy's – are intertwined throughout the novel, but they become fully integrated in the denouement when Bromden kills the lobotomised McMurphy and breaks out of the hospital.

As Semino and Swindlehurst point out, 'from the very beginning of the novel, Bromden's language […] produces the impression of a mind that works oddly, that tends to perceive things in an unusual way' (Semino and Swindlehurst 1996, p.150). Above all, they observe, it is his unusual use of metaphor that creates this impression, especially given the occasional 'literalisation' or 'realisation' of metaphors, whereby the distinction between literal and figurative language breaks down and Bromden 'seems to believe that people, for example, really are machines' (Semino and Swindlehurst 1996, p.152). However, this belief does not seem to be merely propositional, since the way in which such metaphors are realised imply that they are descriptions of quasi-sensory experiences (and Semino and Swindlehurst do suggest at one point that these metaphors 'reflect his distorted perceptions' (Semino and Swindlehurst 1996, p.153)). As I suggest in Chapter 1, Section 1, delusion and hallucination are not easily separable, and do not break down neatly into occurrent and propositional parts, just as a perception and the belief in the 'propositional contents' of that perception are not necessarily distinguishable (depending, of course, on what is meant by 'belief', which raises a host of philosophical problems in and of itself). Indeed, this ambiguity, which is further exacerbated by the question of whether Bromden really is the narrator (which I discuss in Section 2 of this chapter), serves to undermine a dualistic conception of mind and world by keeping the descriptions of Bromden's mental activity and the descriptions of his environment from being entirely separable, thus blurring the distinction between what he believes his world to be and what he experiences his world as being. Essentially, the metaphorical patterns in *Cuckoo's Nest* are designed to allow the reader to enact Bromden's lived-world. The more conspicuous cases of realised metaphor can thus be understood as the more sensorily immediate kinds of reality-distortion which are characteristic of 'hallucinatory' experience.

At first, although the narrative might appear to contain more metaphors than usual, it does seem to conform to the conventions of figurative language usage. Moreover, as Semino and Swindlehurst observe, Bromden's metaphors tend to be 'extensions' of common conceptual metaphors such as BIG IS POWERFUL and PEOPLE ARE MACHINES (Semino and

Swindlehurst 1996, p.164), so that, in the opening paragraphs, it is mainly their frequency which might strike the reader as being somewhat atypical. On the second page however, (approximately 700 words into the novel), the description of Nurse Ratched begins to manifest qualities of semantic deviance:

> She goes into a crouch and advances on where they're trapped in a huddle at the end of the corridor. She knows what they been saying, and I can see she's furious clean out of control. She's going to tear the black bastards limb from limb, she's so furious. She's swelling up, swells till her back's splitting out the white uniform and she's let her arms section out long enough to wrap around the three of them five, six times. She looks around her with a swivel of her huge head [....] her painted smile twists, stretches to an open snarl, and she blows up bigger and bigger, big as a tractor, so big I can smell the machinery inside the way you smell a motor pulling too big a load. I hold my breath and figure, My God this time they're gonna do it! This time they let the hate build up too high and overloaded and they're gonna tear one another to pieces before they realize what they're doing!
>
> But just as she starts crooking those sectioned arms around the black boys and they go to ripping at her underside with the mop handles, all the patients start coming out of the dorms to check on what's the hullabaloo, and she has to change back before she's caught in the shape of her hideous real self. (*CN*, p.10)

There are several reasons for reading this passage as a hallucination, the most notable being that the metaphor's source ceases to be coherently related to its target – in a word, becoming inapt. The conceit of Nurse Ratched's increase in size reflecting her increase in anger is extended in ways which are only contiguous with the source domain, and which do not correspond to anything in the target domain. According to Sam Glucksberg, metaphor comprehension involves the 'active inhibition of irrelevant, literal meanings' (Glucksberg 2008, p.74), and so in understanding 'as big as a tractor' the reader must suppress all information about tractors unrelated to their size, which is the sole point of comparison. The reference to the smell of straining machinery thus deliberately thwarts this suppression, and so prioritises source domain over target domain. This prioritisation can be seen as occurring, at least in part, as a result of the Barthesian *effet de réel*, whereby irrelevant details included in descriptions of the storyworld serve to create the illusion of the real by virtue of their irrelevance and apparent lack of symbolic function (see Chapter 2, Section 1). Therefore, anything which does not serve to represent the nurse's anger – the smell of machinery, the sectioning arms – comes instead to represent itself, and so is lent an ontological weight equivalent to the things described as being present in the 'real' storyworld.

The metaphor is further realised as a result of the ontological confusion between the two domains.[156] According to Benjamin Hrushovski, 'the principle of metaphor requires two

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[156] Semino and Swindlehurst, with reference to Samuel R. Levin and Umberto Eco, also note that 'it is often claimed that a literal interpretation of metaphors results in the construction of an impossible world, one that clashes

frames related like parallel lines that never meet; the two "realities" are not continuous with each other in the fictional world' (Hrushovski 1984, p.26). Realisation occurs when the lines do meet, and, as Hrushovski observes, the 'placing [of] metaphoric referents in the "real" world of poetic fiction is a central device of Modernist poetry' (Hrushovski 1984, p.26). In this instance, however, it is rather the referents which belong in the 'real' storyworld (such as the aides' 'mop handles' with which they attack Nurse Ratched), which are placed in the metaphorical realm. That such placement is deviant can be best illustrated if we consider the standard relationship between source and target domains in some more prosaic metaphors:

(1) She attacked his theory.

(2) His position seemed indefensible, but then he brought out the big guns.

(3) He responded with a barrage of counterarguments.

All of these metaphors are grounded in the same conceptual metaphor, ARGUMENT IS WAR, with examples (2) and (3) extending the source domain.[157] Importantly, if we imagine the metaphors as taking place in a separate ontological realm, we can note certain consistencies. First, things which are contiguous with the target domain are permitted in the metaphor world (such as the participants themselves, the 'theory', and the 'counterarguments'), since they are necessary components of the argument. Second, things which are contiguous with the metaphorical realm are also permitted (such as 'position' and 'big guns'), so long as there is something relevant in the target domain to which they correspond (in this case, theories). What is not allowed into the metaphorical realm, however, is anything from the same ontological realm as the target which is not actually involved in the argument itself, and so the following is clearly deviant:

(4) *She counterattacked with a stapler.

Even if (4) were primed to be understood metaphorically by appearing after (1) – (3), it would still appear to be literal since it imports an object into the metaphorical realm which is not 'involved' (the stapler). Likewise, in 'they go to ripping her underside with the mop handles', the metaphorical realm is contaminated by objects which do not belong (the mops), even if the 'ripping' action of the aides is conventional enough to be understood as metaphorical (as in

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with what we regard as the "real world"', and that Bromden seems to 'oscillate between a figurative and a literal use of machinery images' (Semino and Swindlehurst 1996, p.153).

[157] 'Extension' essentially refers to the use of what are normally the 'unused' parts of a conceptual metaphor (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, p.53). For instance, in (2) the source domain WAR is extended to include the material objects used in warfare.

'ripping someone apart'). As a result, the distinction between the two separate realms collapses, and the reader must find a way of naturalising the aberration. In this case, combined with the uninhibited, irrelevant aspects of the metaphor, and with Bromden's strikingly unusual reference to olfactory perception, it appears that the metaphorical image has come to exist in the same ontological realm as the 'real' storyworld – and since that storyworld is presented to the reader through Bromden's consciousness, it would appear to be a hallucination.

In considering how such realised metaphors are potentially 'concretised' by the reader, it is also possible to suggest why Kesey chose to represent hallucinatory experience in this fashion. According to what Martin Davies terms 'image theories' of metaphor, the comprehension of metaphor involves imagining a world in which the metaphor is literally true as opposed to directly inferring the metaphor's 'propositional content' (Davies 1982-83, p.77).[158] In a similar vein, Robyn Carston has suggested that 'images are not only non-propositional *effects* of metaphor comprehension, but also, at least in some instances, *vehicles* used in the recovery of propositional effects' (Carston 2010, p.300).[159] Complex and novel metaphors call for 'further, more deliberate, pragmatic processing', which would most likely entail 'a more attentive focus on the accompanying imagery than would standardly be given to ordinary literal language use' (Carston 2010, p.314). In such cases, the metaphor is comprehended literally but is 'metarepresented', or understood 'within the mental equivalent of scare-quotes' (Carston 2010, p.307).[160] In other words, the reader shifts attentional focus into a sort of pocket dimension, ontologically separate from the primary reality of the storyworld, in which the metaphor can be fully imagined. In some cases, this involves imagining 'a somewhat surreal world', from which, 'taken as a whole, we derive implications that can plausibly apply' to the primary reality of the storyworld (Carston 2010, p.308).

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[158] The 'image theory' to which Davies is primarily referring is Donald Davidson's (1978), although Davies also draws on Levin's (1979) 'world-based' approach to metaphor.

[159] Where Carston slightly disagrees with Davies is in suggesting that there are essentially two routes of metaphor comprehension. The first involves the on-the-fly construction of ad hoc concepts which briefly alter the meaning of the metaphor source so that it can be understood in relation to the target. For example, in understanding 'My lawyer is a shark', we construct an ad hoc concept SHARK* which contains only certain relevant elements of the entire 'encyclopaedic' concept SHARK – the dangerousness, the ruthlessness, etc. The second route involves the imaginative construction of the scenario described by the metaphor, from which the relevant implicatures are then derived. Davies, however, suggests that the comprehension of metaphor *always* involves such imaginings: 'to the extent that the proposition theory is correct it seems to be a special case of the image theory' (Davies 1982-83, p.82). Ultimately, however, both Davies and Carston are in agreement that the comprehension of (at least some) metaphors involves imagining the metaphorical scenario described.

[160] It is worth noting here that Carston admits that she is using 'metarepresentation' in a very loose sense: 'All I mean here by "metarepresenting" the conceptual representation which comprises the literal meaning is that it is neither taken as descriptive/factual in itself nor adjusted into another descriptive representation, but is held for a further process – of inspection, as it were, of its conceptual properties' (Carston 2010, p.307).

Essentially, what the 'image theories' suggest is that metaphors – primarily complex or novel metaphors, in Carston's formulation – prompt a modal shift of the reader's deictic centre. For example, in Thomas Pynchon's *The Crying of Lot 49* (1966) the reader is not presented with an account of the relationship between Oedipa Maas and Pierce Inverarity, but rather with a long and complex metaphor:

> [She] had also gently conned herself into the curious, Rapunzel-like role of a pensive girl […] looking for somebody to say hey, let down your hair. When it turned out to be Pierce she'd happily pulled out the pins and curlers and down it tumbled in its whispering, dainty avalanche, only when Pierce had got maybe halfway up, her lovely hair turned, through some sinister sorcery, into a great unanchored wig, and down he fell, on his ass… (*The Crying of Lot 49*, pp.12-13)

Instead of being cued to enact events which took place in the primary storyworld, the reader is prompted to simulate the experience of a fairy-tale world in which Oedipa is a trapped and forlorn princess and Pierce her persistent rescuer. Having imagined the situation as a whole, the reader returns to the primary storyworld with an impression of how Pierce's courtship of Oedipa took place. How exactly the 'relevant implications' (Carston 2010, p.318) are derived, or how the target is 'seen as' (Davies 1982-83, p.76) the source, is not at issue here – what matters is that the reader, however briefly, imaginatively enters a separate ontological domain that is nonetheless relevant to the reality of the storyworld.

In Kesey's realised metaphors, however, the hierarchical relationship between storyworld and metaphor-world is subverted, and the images from the metaphor-world thus assume a new reality status. Indeed, there is even a sense in which these images are *more* real, since Bromden – and by extension, the reader – does not 'see' what happens in the veridical storyworld.[161] By thus destabilising the reader's reality sense, Kesey effectively defamiliarises the processes involved in the comprehension of metaphor and, by extension, the activity of mental imaging, imbuing these images with a strange, surreal quality. Moreover, the images which shift from metaphor-world to storyworld are likely to possess an added sense of vividness, since the comprehension of extended metaphor involves 'a more attentive focus on the accompanying imagery than would standardly be given to ordinary literal language use' (Carston 2010, p.314) – i.e. descriptions of the veridical storyworld. Of course, this all occurs in the moment of comprehension, after which the oddity can be reflectively naturalised by

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[161] Of course, subsequently derived implicatures do give the reader a sense of having perceived what has happened. Even so, there is some room for doubt. The description of the aides 'ripping' at Nurse Ratched's underside implies that they responded with equal hostility, yet this does not easily correspond with their submissive attitude towards her throughout the rest of the novel.

assuming that Bromden is mentally unstable (indeed, it is likely that the realised metaphor quoted above marks a turning point in this regard).

The phenomenal states that Kesey attempts to induce in the reader through the realisation of metaphor would appear to be isomorphic to several phenomenological aspects of hallucinatory experience. As we saw in Chapter 1, Section 1, first-person and psychopathological accounts seem to suggest that for at least some people who experience hallucinatory and delusional states, such experiences are phenomenologically different from sensory perceptions of the real world. Even so, they possess a kind of reality that is clearly difficult to describe, as is suggested by evident contradictions (e.g. '"It is not really real. But yet it is real"' (Scharfetter 1980 [1976], p.153)), and references to alternate realities accessed through non-standard forms of perception. The linguistic representation of such hallucinatory experiences is therefore understandably problematic, since, on the one hand, the author must use language to signify a kind of experience for which many people do not have an experiential referent, while on the other the reader experiences both the contents of the real storyworld and the contents of the hallucination in the same medium – a medium, no less, which is also 'like' sensory experience but which is nonetheless clearly different from it.

In grappling with these problems of reference and medium, Kesey, like Spark, initially represents hallucinatory experience through the breaking of a discourse convention in a manner that destabilises an ontological boundary within the text.[162] Indeed, one could consider the realisation of metaphor to be metaleptic in a broad sense, in that elements move between discourse worlds that are hierarchically related yet ontologically separate (or, at least, which are 'supposed' to be so). In this way, Kesey manages to imbue the contents of some of Bromden's hallucinations with a sense of being simultaneously real and unreal, while also cueing the reader to have what is a noticeably distinct (and possibly more vivid) visual imagery experience. Moreover, this experience is accompanied by a disconcerting sense of ontological

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[162] Certainly not all of what appear to be Bromden's hallucinations are represented through realised metaphors. However, the majority of those which are not occur prior to the action of the novel (i.e. before the arrival of McMurphy), and are thus more clearly memories of previous hallucinations. Whether these are memories that Bromden recalls during the action of the novel or afterwards as a narrator is unclear (as I discuss in the following section). If the former, however, the difference could be naturalised in several ways. First, it is possible that, in reconstructing his memories in a delusional state of mind, Bromden lends his remembered hallucinations a greater sense of reality. Second, Kesey could simply be attesting to the phenomenological difference between hallucinatory experience *as it happens* and the memory of such experience. Third, as I have suggested, the first realised metaphor is likely to be the point at which the reader decides that Bromden is psychotic, and therefore provides an experiential model for hallucinatory experiences which is only occasionally repeated to avoid stylistic monotony.

slippage, even if, as with the voice in *The Comforters*, the reader might not be consciously aware of why this slippage has occurred.

Yet since Kesey experiments with a different novelistic convention in order to convey the experientiality of hallucinations, his novel displays a self-reflexive focus on a different aspect of the experience of reading itself. Just as Spark uses Caroline's experience to explore agency dynamics in the relationship between text and reader, Kesey uses his representation of hallucinations to investigate various aspects of metaphor, imagination and mental imagery. In this respect, *Cuckoo's Nest* is perhaps more akin to *Pincher Martin* (which similarly realises metaphors and plays with forms of 'seeing-as'), although Kesey's novel is more overtly focused on the ways in which metaphor relates to our experience of the world.

As already observed, a number of critics have pointed to the 'truth' reflected in Bromden's delusions and hallucinations, and indeed, McMurphy himself is able to find meaning in Bromden's 'crazy' talk (*CN*, p.172). Yet it appears that *Cuckoo's Nest* is also concerned with *how* the world becomes transformed in Bromden's mind, as much as with *what* his delusions and hallucinations can be taken to signify. In this regard, metaphor is more than just something to be seen 'through', as it were, but is also considered self-reflexively in terms of how it affects Bromden's lived-world. When, for instance, Harding expounds his theory of 'rabbithood' to McMurphy, Bromden sees the world change as a result of the extension of the metaphor:

> 'Mr Bibbit, hop around for McMurphy here. Mr Cheswick, show him how *furry* you are.'

> Billy Bibbit and Cheswick change into hunched-over white rabbits, right before my eyes, but they are too ashamed to do any of the things Harding told them to do. (*CN*, p.55)

This transformation appears to be literally true for Bromden, since the sentence's final clause implies that Billy and Cheswick *could* obey Harding's imperative but choose not to (as opposed to being unable to comply by virtue of the fact that they are not actually rabbits). Moreover, when Billy finally speaks at a later point and Bromden observes that he 'has changed back from a rabbit' (*CN*, p.58), there is again a reference to Bromden's visual perception ('I see') which, if the utterance were figurative, would be completely unnecessary. This reference to perception, like other 'hallucinatory visions introduced by the phrase "He saw…"' conforms to 'the "*Voir*-device" Anna Hatcher has identified as a standard technique used by Realist novelists to present the external reality perceived by a fictional character' (Cohn 1978, p.50). In effect, it serves to connect the image with Bromden's experience of the 'real' storyworld by tagging it as a 'perceptual', rather than a 'mental', event.

What is significant about this hallucinatory transformation is that it occurs in the context of a conversation that explicitly foregrounds several important aspects of metaphor. To begin with, McMurphy introduces the analogy of frenzied chickens in a 'pecking party' in an attempt to make sense of the sudden vindictiveness of the patients in the group therapy session (*CN*, p.49). Harding, with whom he is arguing, first attempts to ridicule this comparison by refusing to allow for metaphor at all: '"Miss Ratched may be a strict middle-aged lady, but she's not some kind of giant monster of the poultry clan, bent on sadistically pecking out our eyes. You can't believe that of her, can you?"' (*CN*, p.51). Here, Harding is displaying a view of metaphor akin to that of logical positivism; he describes Nurse Ratched in strictly verifiable terms, and then questions McMurphy's commitment to a statement which is apparently made meaningless by the contrast. McMurphy changes tack and begins to use progressively more conventional metaphors (first, CASTRATION IS DISEMPOWERMENT, and second, describing Nurse Ratched as a bitch – a metaphor so entrenched that it is more a case of polysemy). Harding's response is to deliberately misunderstand McMurphy by alluding to the incompatibility of his various metaphorical frames of reference: '"A bitch? But a moment ago she was a ball-cutter, then a buzzard – or was it a chicken? Your metaphors are bumping into each other, my friend"' (*CN*, p.52). Quite apart from explicitly bringing metaphor into the discussion, Harding's conversational gambit is to take a metalinguistic stance to mitigate the effect (and, indeed, the affect) of McMurphy's metaphors by viewing them purely *as* linguistic phenomena. In this regard, he attempts to move in what might be considered the opposite direction to Bromden: as far away from the ontological contamination of metaphor as possible.

Yet Harding ultimately fails to keep himself from being affected by McMurphy's discourse, and his pretence of cool detachment gives way to hysterics and finally acceptance. Thereafter, instead of arguing with the expediency of using metaphor at all, Harding disagrees over *which* metaphor ought to be used. McMurphy's metaphor of the pecking party, on the one hand, implies that the inmates momentarily took leave of their senses, responding immediately to a stimulus without pausing for reflection. His castration metaphor, on the other hand, suggests that Nurse Ratched is able to dominate the inmates because she actively *makes* them too weak to defy her by suppressing those qualities in them that are culturally associated with manliness. Harding, however, responds with a metaphor which appears to be more complete in that it allows for more mappings between the two domains:

> 'This world… belongs to the strong, my friend! The ritual of our existence is based on the strong getting stronger by devouring the weak. We must face up to this. No more than right that is should be this way. We must learn to accept it as a law of the natural world. The rabbits accept their role in the ritual and

recognize the wolf as the strong. In defence, the rabbit becomes sly and frightened and elusive as he digs holes and hides when the wolf is about. And he endures, he goes on. He knows his place. He most certainly doesn't challenge the wolf to combat. Now, would that be wise? Would it?' (*CN*, pp.54-55)

While McMurphy's metaphor corresponds to (and attempts to explain) only single people or situations, Harding's refers to the human condition in general and thus subsumes McMurphy's metaphors by explaining them: Nurse Ratched and the inmates act in the way they do because of the hierarchical laws of the animal kingdom. His metaphor is thus more productive: it comprises a whole system of relations which Harding then uses for further analogical reasoning, bringing the metaphor-world further into the domain of the real.

At first, McMurphy appears to misunderstand Harding's metaphor in that he interprets it – like his own metaphors – as a process rather than a system: '"You mean to tell me that you're gonna sit back and let some old blue-haired woman *talk you into* being a rabbit?"' (*CN*, p.55 [my italics]). When Harding disabuses him of this impression, McMurphy's next move is simply to deny that Harding's metaphor has any validity ('"You're no damned rabbit!"' (*CN*, p.55)). In effect, McMurphy is here attempting to bring off the same move that Harding tried at the beginning of the conversation, stepping out of the metaphorical and back into the literal. Harding, however, responds in a very different way now that he is in McMurphy's earlier position: rather than referring to a commonly understood *meaning*, he instead activates the inhibited parts of the metaphor in a feigned attempt to move it closer to literal truth: '"See the ears? the wiggly nose? the cute little button tail?"' (*CN*, p.55). Understandably, McMurphy's response – '"You're talking like a crazy ma[n]"' (*CN*, p.55) – points to the fact that Harding's conversation has become absurd, given that it has ceased to be metaphorical but instead attempts to assert patent falsehoods. Of course, Harding's reply – '"Like a crazy man? How astute"' (*CN*, p.55) – attests to how objective reality is not what is at issue here. It does not matter whether Harding actually has a rabbit's ears and tail; what matters is whether the inmates can be shaken in their *belief* that the rabbit metaphor is structurally true.

Yet for Bromden the ears and tail *are* there, at least when he looks at Cheswick and Billy Bibbit; for him, the metaphor ceases to be a case of 'seeing-as' and becomes instead a case of literal seeing. Even so, until Harding begins to 'realise' this metaphor Bromden does not appear to be affected by either his or McMurphy's language, and it is only when Harding pretends to draw attention to what is obviously fictional that some kind of tipping point is reached which triggers the hallucination. In this way, Kesey uses the preceding conversation to produce something of a spectrum of metaphoric understanding, verging from its outright

dismissal as non-literal and therefore meaningless language to the fully literal transformation which occurs, for Bromden, as a perceptible event.

Taken as a whole, this scene appears to be suggesting that metaphor cannot be entirely separated from the real. If Bromden's literal vision *is* the extreme end of the spectrum, then there are other points along it in which metaphor and reality are inextricably interlinked. Harding, for instance, does not need to literally see himself as a rabbit for his metaphor to structure how he thinks about life on the ward. Indeed, his metaphor is clearly one which he 'live[s] by' (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, p.145), in that it serves as a guide to action – or, as in his case, to inaction. Again, Bromden's delusion of the Combine and its various machines serves as a more extreme example of this kind of thinking: as Semino and Swindlehurst observe, the 'the machine metaphors provide a world view in which Bromden has no free agency, and, consequently, no responsibility: by seeing himself always as a victim of some mechanical whim, he has no will to fight' (Semino and Swindlehurst 1996, pp.162-163). The difference is that since, for Bromden, metaphors sometimes become literal, the mapping between domains ceases to be partial, thus leading to delusions and hallucinations.

As Lakoff and Johnson suggest, 'metaphor plays a very significant role in determining what is real for us' (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, p.146). Although their theory of conceptual metaphor was to appear nearly twenty years after the publication of *Cuckoo's Nest*, it seems that the novel is also advocating a form of ontological relativism that is dependent upon metaphoric thought.[163] Indeed, while Semino and Swindlehurst have shown how the framework of conceptual metaphor theory allows for a comprehensive analysis of how Bromden's view of reality is represented to the reader, it is also possible to use such a framework as a stepping stone to further interpretation. As the metaphor scene implies, much of what is unusual about Bromden's beliefs and perceptions – what brings them into the domain of delusions and hallucinations – is that they are, at least in part, instances of normal processes taken to extremes. In this regard, Kesey seems to be using Bromden as a limit case for investigating the role of metaphor in the interaction between mind and world.

Yet Harding's realised metaphor can also be construed in another way: as an invitation to imagine, or more specifically, as an imperative to experience. Considered in this light, Bromden's subsequent hallucination has an interesting parallel with his later experience of a picture hanging in the ward:

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[163] Elizabeth Black has similarly suggested that Golding's *The Inheritors* 'anticipates some recent findings of scholars on the nature and function of metaphor' (Black 1993, p.37).

I push my broom up face to face with a big picture Public Relation brought in one time when it was fogged so thick I didn't see him. The picture is a guy fly-fishing somewhere in the mountains, looks like the Ochocos near Paineville—snow on the peaks showing over the pines, long white aspen trunks lining the stream, sheep sorrel growing in sour green patches. The guy is flicking his fly in a pool behind a rock. It's no place for a fly, it's a place for a single egg on a number-six hook— he'd do better to drift the fly over those riffles downstream.

There's a path running down through the aspen, and I push my broom down the path a ways and sit down on a rock and look back out through the frame at that visiting doctor talking with the residents [….] I can't hear what he says because of the crash of the cold, frothy stream coming down out of the rocks. I can smell the snow in the wind where it blows down off the peaks. (*CN*, pp.101-102)

This description of Bromden's experience of the world depicted by the picture makes up one of the five or so brief 'vignettes' that occur in parts one and two, all of which are sectioned off from the rest of the narrative by line breaks and none of which appear to have any bearing on the narrative itself. In this particular vignette, there does not seem to be any kind of outside cause or trigger prompting Bromden's hallucinatory 'entry' into the picture; it seems, instead, to occur purely as a result of his interaction with the picture itself. What is interesting is that at first Bromden can designate the picture *as a picture* – that is, he is aware of it as a representational object among other objects *and* as a representation of another object. He can thus stand 'face to face' with it, aware of it as a surface which displays a different space. As he contemplates the picture, however, imaginatively engaging with the scene it depicts, it ceases to be a picture at all since he begins to experience it with his other senses, thus making it instead a part of his world. Again, Bromden seems to hallucinate because he crosses an imaginative threshold, a crossing which in this case is paralleled by the literal crossing of the picture's 'frame', after which the world of the picture becomes more fully realised.

Scally suggests that this 'entry' into the picture occurs because Bromden is unable 'to distinguish the factual from the imaginary'; therefore, 'to the Chief's mind the space of art is continuous with the space of ordinary experience [….] (i.e. he does not judge the reality of his perceptual field)' (Scally 1982, pp.362-363). Coincidentally, Kesey's representation of Bromden's hallucinations is closely paralleled in this respect by Harold Searles' description of the schizophrenic mind, published in the same year as *Cuckoo's Nest* (1962):

I had worked with schizophrenic patients for several years before I came to realize that the deeply schizophrenic individual has, subjectively, no imagination. The moment that something which *we* would call a new concoction of fantasy, a new product of his imagination, enters his awareness, *he* perceives this as being an actual and undisguised attribute of the world around him. He cannot yet experience a realm of the imagination, differentiated as such, demarcated from the realm of perception of real events round about. Similarly, memories of past events are experienced by him not as such, but rather as literal re-enactments of those events by the persons around him. (Searles 1962, p.37)

When it comes to metaphor, therefore, the schizophrenic patient experiences as real what would otherwise be metaphorical or symbolic. Searles cites patients who are not only 'unable to deal with any comments […] couched in figurative terms', but whose 'incredibly "crazy" talk' contains 'nuclei of figurative truth' even though such meaning is clearly unintended or even flatly denied (Searles 1962, pp.26, 31).[164] Importantly, Searles stresses that this '*lack of differentiation between* the concrete and the metaphorical', between the real and the imaginary, 'is not limited simply to the realm of *thought* alone', since for 'the deeply dedifferentiated schizophrenic patient, the *perceptual experience itself* is grossly distorted' (Searles 1962, pp.23, 44).

It is worth noting that Louis Sass takes issue with Searles' claims, arguing that Searles 'might himself be accused of taking his psychotic informants rather too literally' (Sass 1994, p.19). However, the two accounts can potentially be reconciled insofar as both suggest a destabilisation of the ontological hierarchy, as a result of which the schizophrenic patient sometimes experiences literally or in a 'quasi-ontic' fashion (Sass 1992, pp.294-295) what would otherwise be a species of metaphorical thought. Perhaps the primary difference between the two views is that Searles seems to be suggesting that, for the schizophrenic patient, everything is experienced as real, whereas Sass stresses that the schizophrenic patient experiences everything as *un*real. In living something akin to 'a truly solipsistic position, where all phenomena were felt to depend on his consciousness, then, to him, the reified objects of solitary self-contemplation would be as real as anything could possibly be' (Sass 1992, p.291). The distinction between these two positions is important, for the former (Searles') implies that hallucinatory experience is *simply* perceptual error or distortion, whereas the latter (Sass') suggests that hallucinations do not just slot in amongst real objects, but rather that real objects are no longer experienced as constituting primary reality (see Chapter 1, Section 1 for more details). As I discuss further in section 2 of this chapter, certain aspects of *Cuckoo's Nest* do seem to tally with Sass' position, although they are not necessarily predominant.

In the painting vignette, however, *Cuckoo's Nest* seems to be suggesting something similar to the relationship between imagination and hallucination in schizophrenia which Searles describes. In entering into the picture, and particularly in looking back out through the frame, Bromden seems to confuse the ontology of imaginative and perceptual experience. Yet

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[164] What makes the coincidence of the simultaneous publication of *Cuckoo's Nest* and Searles' paper far more striking is the similarity between Bromden's hallucinations and some of those of the patients Searles describes. One patient, for instance, showed 'the persistent conviction that people can quite literally be turned into trees or animals or buildings or rocks', while another had a 'perception' of someone 'being "torn apart," physically dismembered' (Searles 1962, pp.31, 45).

what is perhaps most significant about this episode is that it invites a comparison between hallucination and the kind of imaginative engagement that takes place during the experiencing of fictional worlds. Again, in this respect, Bromden's hallucinations can be understood as more extreme instances of normal processes, a limit case for investigating how such experience occurs. On the one hand, it would appear that imagination is conceived of as being simulative, since Bromden is *prompted* by the features or 'signs' present in the picture to experience additional relevant sensations (smells, sounds, etc.), just as his hallucination of the rabbits is prompted by Harding's pretended realisation of the metaphor. Engaging in a fictional world is thus figured as being an enactment of physical sensation, rather than, say, the extraction of propositional contents solely restricted to a particular medium. Seeing-as, just like the imagined seeing-of, does indeed involve a form of literal seeing which is nonetheless normally felt to be non-present in some way or other.

On the other hand, the way in which Bromden becomes immersed in the world of the painting points to how the sense of presence, and the sense of reality, are bound up with the way in which the individual feels himself or herself to be engaged with the environment. As suggested in Chapter 2, Section 2, there would appear to be different degrees to which this interaction is *felt* to be interactive, and to which an experience can feel more like *doing* or *undergoing*. Perceptual experience, for instance, usually feels as if it lacks agency, because the forms of imaginative experience with which it is contrasted are usually felt to be more effortful. This increased effort involved in free imagining can be accounted for insofar as it is an activity which involves little to no aspect of 'undergoing', since there is nothing with which the imagining subject is interacting. Aesthetic experiences, being only partial in their worldly offerings, fall somewhere in between the two states: there is something to undergo, but as a whole the experience also seems to involve some 'doing'. In other words, because the aesthetic object prompts a simulative experience of *something else*, and because both the simulation and the prompt are considered to be part of the same 'experience', the whole appears to fall somewhere between perception and imagination on the spectrum of felt agency. This is perhaps why the experience of a fictional world is so difficult to describe, since although the experience clearly possesses a simulative aspect, the aesthetic object simultaneously presents a degree of presence or 'resistance' which adds to the illusion of the imaginary world's actuality.[165]

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[165] In the same way, perhaps, memory is felt to be distinct from pure fantasy in that it involves the simulative re-experiencing of events according to a particular experiential pattern, a pattern which likewise provides a form of resistance.

In a sense, Bromden's literal entry into the painting thus serves to demonstrate how our ordinary (i.e. non-hallucinatory) aesthetic experiences involve at least some felt awareness of our own agency in producing them, which is at least one of the reasons why we do not experience the full, hallucinatory immersion that Bromden does. Of course, 'the inherently interactive nature of the reading experience has been obscured by the reader's proficiency in performing the necessary world-building operations' (Ryan 2001, p.17), but since immersion is not usually hallucination, the reader must somehow still have a sense of their own agency in this regard. The true immersion of hallucination is therefore 'a state of forgetting language and losing oneself in the textual world' (Ryan 2001, p.199), and of quite literally losing *oneself* in becoming unaware of one's own agency in producing the textual world. However, this does not mean that we can separate the *feeling* of agency from the metacognitive *awareness* of one's own agency, since the two are necessarily interconnected.[166] The feeling of agency (like vividness and presence) only emerges against a background or 'horizon' of other experiences against which it can be measured.[167] Yet there is not some kind of 'measuring' or 'judgement' that takes place independently of the experience, as Merleau-Ponty argues – for otherwise 'Where will be the difference between "seeing" and "thinking one sees"?' (Merleau-Ponty 2002, p.40). Therefore, as we saw in Chapter 3, Section 2, and as I shall discuss in Section 2 of this chapter, how we make sense of an experience can influence the nature of the experience, and vice versa. Indeed, since the conceptualisation of metaphor suggested by *Cuckoo's Nest* presents a prime example of how our experiences and our interpretive heuristics interact with and alter one another, it would appear that the novel is to a large extent focused on exploring the nature of this interaction in its various guises.

If Bromden's entry into the picture is thus understood as being caused by the 'loss' of his imaginative self-awareness, it can also be regarded as metonymic of his particular relationship with the world (or rather, worlds) he experiences. In effect, he has little to no conception of himself as a part of the experiential equation, as 'both an object within [the world] and an experiencer of it' (Russell 1996, p.72), and is therefore lacking one of the basic, prereflective heuristics that structure ordinary experience. The next section therefore explores

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[166] Maurice Merleau-Ponty similarly suggests that we cannot separate experience into atomic qualia and intellectual judgement: 'the data of the problem are not prior to its solution, and perception is just that act which creates at a stroke, along with the cluster of data, the meaning which unites them—indeed which not only discovers the meaning *which they have*, but moreover sees to it *that they have a meaning*' (Merleau-Ponty, 2002 [1945] p.42; see also pp.60-61).

[167] This is essentially William James' point when he reflects on the imaginary candle – unless perceptual experience falls within the horizon of possible experience, then the imaginary candle will be as real as anything can be (James 1901 [1890], pp.288-289).

how Bromden's reacquisition of the concept of self-world dualism is shown to be intrinsically linked to his gradual recovery, and how Kesey uses Bromden's experience in this regard to expound a form of ontological pluralism.

Section 2: A World with Others

Although there is some critical contention regarding the degree to which Bromden regains his 'sanity', he does indeed seem to perceive events differently as the novel progresses.[168] On the one hand, his hallucinations appear to cease altogether in the latter half of the novel (from the beginning of part three), apart from the brief periods directly before and after his electro-shock therapy. Although some of his thoughts still appear delusional – and these are noticeably less frequent – the contamination of ontologically separate worlds does not take place in the way that it does in the first two parts. Instead, as Huffman points out, Bromden becomes able 'to differentiate fantasy from external reality' (Huffman 2008, p.35), in one instance explicitly identifying an event as taking place solely in his imagination: 'I imagined I could feel my feet getting wet as the dock sank with shame into the bay' (*CN*, p.189). Such a description provides a notable contrast with an earlier description of the fog in part one, which Bromden experiences as 'oozing across the floor so thick my pants legs are wet' (*CN*, p.105). The reacquisition of this ability to differentiate between experiential modalities is also concomitant with Bromden's increasing sense of actively recalling his memories, as opposed to having them either thrust upon him ('There's nothing you can do about a happening out of the past like that' (*CN*, p.109)), or broken by the 'fear close at hand [that] seeps in through the memory' (*CN*, p.11). At the beginning of part three, for instance, Bromden makes a conscious effort to remember an event from his childhood, and finds himself 'fascinated' to discover that he can 'still do it' (*CN*, p.167).

The climax of 'the drama of Bromden's consciousness' (Hicks 2008, p.73), however, occurs as he struggles to emerge from the hallucinatory daze occasioned by the EST he undergoes towards the end of the novel. Among the stream of barely connected images, voices,

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[168] For instance, Fred Madden (2008 [1986]) argues that Bromden 'gains his sanity' (p.211); Bernaerts (2010) suggests that the novel leaves open 'the possibility that Bromden's unreliability as a narrator is due to strong mental confusion' (p.296); Sherwood (1971) holds that Bromden never leaves the hospital at all (pp.108-109); and Huffman (2008) suggests that 'the very telling of [the tale] is part of his therapy' (pp.35-36).

memories and fantasies, Bromden gives a brief description of what might be his physical surroundings:

> I see a dice.
>
> I see it from the inside, me at the bottom. I'm the weight, loading the dice to throw that number one up there above me. They got the dice loaded to throw a snake eyes, and I'm the load, six lumps around me like white pillows is the other side of the dice, the number six that will always be down when he throws. (*CN*, p.225)

The image of the loaded dice reoccurs several times before Bromden succeeds in making 'the machine-induced hallucination figuratively coherent' (Kunz 1992, p.94):

> They're out there. Black boys in white suits peeing under the door on me, come in later and accuse me of soaking all six these pillows I'm lying on! Number six. I thought the room was a dice. The number one, the snake eye up there, the circle, the white *light* in the ceiling… is what I've been seeing… in this little square room… (*CN*, p.226)

In effect, Bromden is able to recentre himself in the primary real by interpreting his own experience, explaining the basis for what he has 'been seeing' by noting the structural correspondences between die and room which have made the metaphorical mapping possible. In so doing, he recognises the role his own mind has played in producing his perceptual experience ('I *thought*'), rather than explaining the change according to some other framework. The repetition here of the novel's opening sentence not only marks this moment of realisation as a kind of new beginning, but also explicitly invites a comparison with Bromden's earlier incapacity for such interpretative acts, when he is unable to question the reality status of his perceptual experiences. On experiencing what appears to be a nightmare, for instance, in which the ward drops into 'a big machine room down in the bowels of a dam' (*CN*, p.74), he reasons that it would be pointless to tell anyone else since they would tell him that the experience was indeed a nightmare. His rhetorical reply, however – 'But if they don't exist, how can a man see them?' (*CN*, p.74) – suggests his absolute faith in immediate perceptual experience, a commitment to naïve realism which excludes the activity of his own mind in making the world. This commitment is further demonstrated by the question's deliberate avoidance of the first person in favour of the impersonal 'a man', which simultaneously suggests that anyone *might* see the machine room while also disconnecting Bromden personally from the experience.

As he begins to recover, however, Bromden not only begins to distinguish between the real and the imaginary, but also to doubt the appearance of the world he perceives. Just before the fishing trip, he observes the 'little brown birds occasionally on the fence; when a puff of leaves would hit the fence the birds would fly off with the wind. It looked *at first* like the leaves

were hitting the fence and turning into birds and flying away' (*CN*, p.182 [my italics]). Here Bromden's first impression subscribes to the delusional logic of metamorphosis that had previously governed his thinking, according to which logic such transformations are completely possible. As Scally points out, earlier in the novel Bromden's account 'is strictly phenomenal […] its sense unmeasured by any standard other than appearance' (Scally 1982, p.358). This thinking, however, is entirely rational if the subject has absolutely no concept of himself as being part of the perceptual equation. Since, by this point in the novel, Bromden has begun to become aware of himself as a perceiving object, the sequence of perceptual events is reversed, with his first impression coming after the more accurate description of events. For the reader and therefore (we can assume) for Bromden himself, the real world is thus given ontological primacy.

Yet Bromden's acquisition of the ability to make such 'secondary reality judgements' (Scharfetter 1980, p.79), while certainly an important factor in his movement towards recovery, cannot in itself be the cause of that recovery. Even if his new ontological understanding is taken to be based purely on his adoption of a different heuristic or 'folk theory', there must still be some cause behind the adoption of that heuristic. To frame the same point in slightly different terms, Bromden's reorganisation of his experiences into an ontological hierarchy requires some form of experiential motivation in order to kick-start the process. Indeed, it appears that the change in Bromden's understanding co-occurs with a change the phenomenology of his experience. Almost exactly halfway through the novel Bromden observes that he is 'seeing lots of things different' (*CN*, p.127). Just as, in *Pincher Martin*, objects begin to appear like cardboard stage scenery, in the first half of *Cuckoo's Nest* Bromden's world seems 'Like a cartoon world, where the figures are flat and outlined in black, jerking through some kind of goofy story' (*CN*, p.31). As Bromden comes to engage with his world, however, he notes that 'For the first time in years I was seeing people with none of that black outline they used to have' (*CN*, p.127), and goes on to describe an experience of the real world as being suddenly present to him in a new way:

> I felt the tile with my feet and wondered how many times, how many thousand times, had I run a mop over this same tile floor and never felt it at all. That mopping seemed like a dream to me, like I couldn't exactly believe all those years of it had really happened. Only that cold linoleum under my feet was real right then, only that moment. (*CN*, p.127)

Yet this regained sense of the real – which, arguably, does not become persistent until the beginning of part three – is again a change that appears to demand a causal explanation. This demand is perhaps due as much to the desire for narrative coherence as anything else, given

that narrative artefacts are structured according to contingency and relevance. To allow the change in the phenomenology of Bromden's perception to be a purely necessary event without an apparent cause would therefore be unsatisfactory. Following the narrative logic of *post hoc, ergo propter hoc*, we can at least look for an implicit cause behind his newly acquired sense of reality.

For the first part of the novel, Bromden is almost entirely passive and non-communicative, watching the world but making no attempt to engage with it. In many respects he is as much a heterodiegetic as homodiegetic narrator, in a sense writing himself out of existence (this perhaps accounts for much of the critical debate as to whether the 'story' is properly his or McMurphy's). He is not entirely without agency, but until he raises his hand to vote at the end of part one he deliberately avoids performing any action that can have an effect on the world (tellingly, the two main actions he has performed up until this point have been sweeping and hiding – brushing over the surface of the world and retreating from it).[169] Indeed, as he raises his hand his first assumption is that 'McMurphy did something to it that first day, put some kind of hex on it with his hand so it won't act like I order it' (*CN*, p.112), an assumption which simultaneously suggests an aversion to and an incapacity for agentive action. Moreover, as Semino and Swindlehurst observe, the 'machine model' at the root of many of Bromden's metaphors also accounts for his 'sense that he lacks control over his actions and thoughts, his feeling that he is being controlled by intangible forces' (Semino and Swindlehurst 1996, p.155). Yet suddenly something changes:

> McMurphy's got hidden wires hooked to it, lifting it slow just to get me out of the fog and into the open where I'm fair game. He's doing it, wires…
>
> No. That's not the truth. I lifted it myself. (*CN*, pp.112-113)

In the very act of raising his hand, Bromden appears to feel the agency of his own actions and at the same time becomes aware of himself as an agent. As a result, he not only acknowledges his own capacity for agency but also makes himself a part of the story to which he has previously just been a witness, the story of McMurphy's struggle against Nurse Ratched. By

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[169] Kunz has framed the voting episode in explicitly existentialist terms, suggesting that Bromden's change is the result of his 'perception of the possibilities of a meaningful existence' (Kunz 1992, pp.93-94). Similarly, William J. Handy argues that since 'for the existentialist the meaning of life resides in the living of it', it is only when Bromden finds his capacity to be 'an individual-existing-self […] open to the world apart from the self' that he can begin to 'live' and therefore find meaning (Handy 1980, p.78). Their readings are certainly not incompatible with my own, for in raising his hand to vote Bromden does indeed perform, for the first time in the novel, a 'meaningful' act. However, it is perhaps more important that the act is seen by Bromden to produce an effect on the world (in the reactions of the other patients), even though Nurse Ratched attempts to minimise its impact by declaring that the vote has come too late.

interacting with the world, he essentially puts himself back into it, both literally (as a more homodiegetic narrator) and figuratively. In this respect, he becomes both an object within the world and an experiencer of it, and can begin to move towards self-world dualism by seeing that he can indeed perform actions that have an effect on the world.

As the reader later discovers, Bromden's first experience of dissociation from the primary real is occasioned by the inverse of this experience, since it occurs directly after the complete lack of response to his communicative act. When, as a child, he addresses the three land developers who arrive at his village, they all act as if they have not heard him at all. At this point, 'everything stops and hangs this way for a minute', and the sun 'is turned up brighter than before on the three of them [….] way the hell brighter than usual' (*CN*, p.165). The child Bromden can suddenly 'see the… *seams* where they're put together. And, almost, see the apparatus inside them', which a moment later is characterised as 'machinery' (*CN*, pp.165-166). Yet the three developers remain 'stock still while this goes on. Even the swing's stopped, nailed out at a slant by the sun, with the fat man petrified in it like a rubber doll' (*CN*, p.166). Interestingly, the recurrent references to the sun's peculiar brightness and the sudden apprehension of time are also found in Renee's description of the onset of her psychosis:

> For me, madness was definitely not a condition of illness; I did not believe that I was ill. It was rather a country, opposed to Reality, where reigned an implacable light, blinding, leaving no place for shadow; an immense space without boundary, limitless, flat; a mineral, lunar country, cold as the wastes of the North Pole. In this stretching emptiness, all is unchangeable, immobile, congealed, crystallized. (Sechehaye 1951, p.24)

For Bromden, this sense of derealisation is intimately connected with how others respond – or rather, fail to respond – to his communicative acts. The ensuing drama of part two, and the threat of relapse, is therefore occasioned by his fear that his more recent action will ultimately have no effect; and when it seems that McMurphy is going to 'act cagey' after all, Bromden has what appears to be another hallucination.[170] However, after McMurphy's second significant act of defiance at the end of part two Bromden engages with the real world more fully, entering into conversation with McMurphy and joining the fishing trip.

According to Sass, the loss of the primary real is intimately bound up with a loss of 'the usual social and pragmatic world, the sense of living in a shared horizon of practical activity'

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[170] The hallucination in question is, again, a realised metaphor: after Sefelt has an epileptic fit, he 'melts limp all over the floor in a grey puddle' (*CN*, p.137). Although at first this appears to be a non-deviant use of figurative language, the metaphor is eventually extended in ways that involve the contamination of the two worlds ('*what's left of him* oozing out of the cuffs of his pants and shirt' [my italics]; '[she] steps back a step out of the way of him spreading towards her white shoes' (*CN*, p.137)). Admittedly, this is perhaps a less noticeably realised metaphor than those which appear in part one, but it does flout the conventions of figurative language in the same way.

(Sass 1992, p.291). Merleau-Ponty similarly suggests that, ordinarily, our perceptual experience of the world involves a *shared* horizon ('Paul and I "together" see this landscape, we are jointly present in it, it is the same for both of us' (Merleau-Ponty 2002, p.472)) – essentially a kind of 'publicness' which is bound up with the sense of the world's presence. However, in suspending his or her 'fundamental commitment' to this shared, objective world, the schizophrenic patient can end up according it very little ontological importance, which 'accounts for the schizophrenic patient's tendency to take his delusional objects so seriously, and to accord them such ontological weight' (Sass 1992, p.291). In this sense, Sass argues, the schizophrenic patient comes to live out a kind of radical solipsism, placing an 'ultimate faith in his own immediate experience, and in particular in the experiences he has while in a passive, detached, and isolated position' (Sass 1992, p.291). Paradoxically, this 'solipsistic universe' can come to be 'devoid of any sense of subjectivity' (Sass 1992, p.304), since the self has nothing else against which to measure itself. In certain respects, Sass' account of schizophrenia fits rather well with the course of Bromden's psychosis, especially since it is Bromden's discursive *expulsion* from the shared world of social engagement which leads to that world's derealisation. Yet *Cuckoo's Nest* also foregrounds the way in which the individual's engagement with the social world depends upon a sense of agency, which is itself bound up with the self-world dualism heuristic (as discussed in Chapter 3, Section 2). It is through observing his own agency in effecting change within the social world that Bromden can once again share that world with others, while at the same time regaining the conceptual separation between self and world which agency both reinforces and relies upon. Indeed, as he emerges from his post-EST daze Bromden acknowledges a conscious effort to remain anchored in the primary real – 'I worked at it. I'd never worked at coming out of it before' (*CN*, p.226) – thus explicitly connecting his relationship to reality with his sense of agency.

The changes in Bromden's psyche are also paralleled by changes in the narrative's temporal index. The shifts in tense, both locally and over the course of the whole novel, are often indicative of Bromden's mental state: the present is used when he is frightened, confused, and passive (and when he hallucinates), while the past is used when he has greater control over his own mental functioning. The overall shift from the present tense (which is used predominantly in the first two parts of the novel) into the past thus serves as a sign of Bromden's gradual recovery. Indeed, when Bromden is about to be given the punitive dose of EST in part four, the tense shifts back into the present in a way that clearly associates the present tense with a more disordered state of mind (*CN*, p.220). Likewise, as Bromden fights his way out of the subsequent hallucinatory daze, the narration shifts back into the past: 'I

stand, stood up slowly' (*CN*, p.226). The unnecessary repetition of the verb makes the change in tense even more apparent, and even more significant, occurring as it does just before Bromden's realisation that 'this time I had them beat' (*CN*, p.226).

That Kesey should have chosen to use the two tenses to reflect Bromden's differing mental state is unsurprising. The past, in being conventionally associated with the telling of narrative, is thus also associated with the structure and organisation which are a part of the construction of narrative. The present, by contrast, bears connotations of unexpectedness and contingency, of 'being swept by the flux of life' (Ryan 2001, p.137) – ultimately, of a lack of control. Yet the use of the present tense is also conventionally linked to what Dorrit Cohn terms 'simultaneous narration', in which 'the temporal hiatus between the narrating and experiencing self […] is literally reduced to zero: the moment of narration *is* the moment of experience, the narrating self *is* the experiencing self' (Cohn 1999, p.107). In this regard simultaneous narration 'may be said to attain, within the first-person domain, analogous aims to those notoriously attained by figural narration in the third-person domain' (Cohn 1999, p.107). Both forms of narration (simultaneous and figural) attempt to give the impression that the reader is being placed directly in the consciousness of the experiencing character during the period of narrative action, without the mediating presence of the narrator. In other words, both attempt to create the illusion that there is only one world – the storyworld – by directing attention away from the discourse world in which the telling of the story, the diegetic *act*, takes place.

Yet the conventions of simultaneous narration are at odds with Bromden's explicit references to the discourse world, which appear at the end of the novel's opening scene: 'I been silent so long now it's gonna roar out of me like floodwaters and you think the guy telling this is ranting and raving my *God*' (*CN*, pp.12-13). Even so, Kesey changed the first draft of the novel in order to allow for the opening to be read as simultaneous narration. In the original, Bromden announces his presence in the discourse world in the very first paragraph:

> I think it way time to let somebody in on it, if they can stand it. I think I can. You must read about it in those advances those sheets you get every morning which have what they desire you to know. […] I think it way time one of us tried to tell you and let you see what truely *[sic]* happened. ('Early Draft', p.333)

Hicks suggests that 'because the drama of Bromden's consciousness is Kesey's main interest, he reshapes his narrator into a less obviously mediating character' (Hicks 2008, p.73). Not only is Bromden's allusion to the discourse world shifted to a later position, but Kesey also suppresses, to some degree, 'the oral qualities of his [Bromden's] tale', including the 'semiliterate qualities of Bromden's speech' (Hicks 2008, p.72). The phrase which opens the novel in the final version – 'They're out there' – thus establishes 'the major emphasis on

Bromden as pure receiver […] he can only receive the world and have [it] impinge upon his consciousness' (Hicks 2008, p.73).

Yet by keeping Bromden as the ostensible narrator of *Cuckoo's Nest*, Kesey introduced a tension into the novel which results from a disagreement between the conventions surrounding the two temporal forms of first-person narration. On the one hand, simultaneous narration assumes that the first-person narrator is not actually producing the narrative as a discourse. On the other hand, first-person narrators who refer to themselves as being present in the discourse world (i.e. temporally separate from themselves as characters) are naturally assumed to be engaged in the act of narrative production. Moreover, even if it is assumed that the present tense is sometimes adopted by Bromden-as-a-narrator (intentionally or otherwise), the idea that he is hypothetically producing the novel in some form is still problematic with regard to other significant textual features. For one thing, Kesey presents Bromden in a way that suggests he is not a highly literate character – despite the changes to the first draft, the narration is still littered with grammatical errors and nonstandard contractions. Therefore, any other cases of linguistic or semantic deviance are unlikely to signify changes in Bromden-as-a-character's mental state – for that would entail attributing to Bromden a degree of control over language which he does not appear to possess – but rather changes in the mental state of Bromden-as-a-narrator in the discourse world, in a different time and place.

Such a reading could potentially try to account for the correspondences between the style of the narration and the mental states of Bromden-as-a-character by subscribing to one of (or perhaps a combination of) the following interpretations: 1) Bromden-as-a-narrator happens on what appears to be conscious stylistic artifice by chance; 2) Bromden-as-a-narrator's development occurs in tandem with his development during the time-course of the story itself; 3) Bromden-as-a-narrator is experiencing his memories with such vividness that he *is*, as it were, re-experiencing the same events in a quasi-hallucinatory state even as he narrates them. The first two hypotheses are somewhat unlikely, while the third does not adequately account for Bromden's reacquisition of the ability to judge and interpret his own experiences. Moreover, all three face problems when dealing with the passage which Kesey would sometimes read 'aloud as if it were broken into lines of verse' (Pratt 1977, p.ix):

> We'd drove back inland instead of the coast
> to go through the town McMurphy'd lived in the most
> he'd ever lived in one place.
> Down the face
> of the Cascade hill,
> thinking we were lost till…
> we came to a town
> covered a space

about twice the size of the hospital ground. […]
He parked in some reeds
and pointed across the road.
'There. That's the one. Looks like it's propped up outa the weeds –
my misspent youth's humble abode.' (*CN*, quoted in Pratt 1977, p.ix)

The prose continues to be interwoven with subtle rhymes for another six-hundred words or so. But 'whose rhymed verse is this? McMurphy's? Kesey's? Bromden's?' (Pratt 1977, p.x). For, as Pratt points out, it appears directly after Bromden's observation that 'I was feeling better than I'd remembered feeling since I was a kid, when everything was good and the land was singing kid's poetry to me' (*CN*, p.199). The use of such conscious stylistic artifice to reflect Bromden's experientiality does not sit well with the kind of narrator Kesey has constructed.[171] It does, however, accord with a view of the text as designed to prompt readerly experiences that are isomorphic to Bromden's experiences as a character.[172]

By keeping Bromden as a self-confessed narrator, however, Kesey uses the diegetic framework of the novel itself to represent the dynamics of Bromden's struggle towards agency and self-world dualism. At times Bromden-as-a-narrator stands between the reader and the narrative, an independent *presence* appearing in the midst of the interaction between reader and text. At others, he is the consciousness which the reader inhabits, a *medium* rather than a mediator. The relationship is essentially symbolic: as a medium, he is only the mute consciousness experiencing the storyworld without any sense of control over the diegesis; as a conscious mediator, however, he is engaging in discourse and quite literally shaping the storyworld as an agent. In this way, Kesey invokes the conventions of first-person narration to parallel Bromden's growing recognition of himself as both an object in the world and an experiencer of it, since the underlying logic of a first-person narrator telling the story of his or her own past is that of a self attempting to both inhabit and reflect on itself simultaneously.

It is important to remember that the diegetic tension in *Cuckoo's Nest* arises solely because the novel invokes two established conventions of first-person narration. As Monika Fludernik points out, 'that readers are led by the illusionism of the narrative to impose a communicational framework on the text […] does not necessitate the stipulation of a narrator persona on the theoretical level at all' (Fludernik 2001, pp.622-623). Henrik Skov Nielsen takes

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[171] Although Kesey attested that some of this section was 'truly inspired', in that he himself was not consciously aware of the rhymes when he first wrote them, he did also admit that they were 'made much more explicit in revision' (Pratt 1977, p.ix).

[172] Scally attempts to naturalise the incongruity by suggesting that Bromden-as-a-narrator somehow re-enters the consciousness of Bromden-as-a-character, which is itself 'a mimesis of the disappearance of Kesey's voice into that of the Chief' (Scally 1982, p.365). The interpretation I offer here, however, naturalises the discrepancy through a genetic and thematic framework, rather than a naturalistic one.

Fludernik's observation a step further by suggesting that it applies equally well to first-person narrators, given that 'one does not have to search for very long before the idea of the "narrating-I," as the enunciating subject in first-person narrative, encounters difficulties' (Skov Nielsen 2004, p.135). To avoid such difficulties, Skov Nielsen proposes 'the concept of the impersonal voice of the narrative', which allows him to assert that 'there need not always be an existential indexical continuity between the character referred to in the first person and the referring voice in first-person narrative fiction' (Skov Nielsen 2004, p.139). Furthermore, since the world of fiction is 'a world that arises through its enunciation', the same is true of the first-person narrator him- or herself – and 'it only becomes this complicated because we go along with the illusion and make the "I" the producer of the sentence' (Skov Nielsen 2004, p.146, 145).

It certainly appears that Kesey intended to play with diegetic conventions when he began writing *Cuckoo's Nest*. In a letter to Ken Babbs, for instance, he describes his vague conception of a narrative technique '"that will be extremely difficult to pull off, and to my knowledge, has never been tried before – the narrator is going to be a character. He will not take part in the action or ever speak as I, but he will be a character to be influenced by the events that take place, he will have a position and a personality"' (Kesey, quoted in McGurl 2009, p.207). Although Bromden does 'speak as I', the remainder of Kesey's description fits well with the passive, almost heterodiegetic position that Bromden occupies for the first two parts of the novel. It is even possible that Kesey was thinking along similar lines to Skov Nielsen, for at the end of his letter he adds '"Think of this: I, me ken kesey [*sic*], is stepped back another step and am writing about a third person auther [*sic*] writing about something. Fair makes the mind real, don't it?"' (Kesey, quoted in McGurl 2009, p.207). Given that errors are not uncommon in Kesey's letters, it is impossible to know whether he was deliberately punning on the homophone 'reel/real' in order to allude to the fact that the mind of this nebulous 'third person auther' will also be created in the act of his or her own narration.

The novel as a whole, however, does indeed attempt to raise questions about how reality is 'made real', in a manner that is intrinsically linked to the use of Bromden's perspective. On the one hand, there is his reacquisition of the sense of the primary real. Although his hallucinations are sometimes presented as being phenomenologically different from his actual perceptions, he nonetheless experiences everything with ontological equivalency until he discovers his own agency and can begin to move towards self-world dualism. Yet on the other hand, there is still the sense that the 'reality' Bromden experiences is only one of many, inevitably shaped by language, by narrative, and by the tacit agreement of a community. As Kesey observes in a letter to Kirk Douglas,

Bromden's point-of-view is necessary to make the characters *big enough* to be equal to their job. McMurphy, as viewed from the low-angle point of view of the Chief, is a giant, a god, he's every movie show cowboy that ever walked down a main street toward the OK corral, he's every patriot that ever died for his countrymen on a scaffold in history books. […] Of course, McMurphy and the Nurse are also people, in a human situation, but in the distorted world inside the Indian's mind these people are exalted into a kind of immortality. (Kesey, quoted in Tanner 1983, p.23)

In one sense, therefore, McMurphy only becomes the novel's hero because Bromden understands his struggle with Nurse Ratched through a framework provided by other narratives. Reflecting on the aftermath of the ward party, Bromden lends the final confrontation between the two antagonists an air of inevitability: 'it was bound to be and would have happened in one way or another, at this time or that', since McMurphy 'Would have *had* to come back' even if he had escaped as planned (*CN*, p.243). In this way he attempts to account for the puzzle of why McMurphy does *not* escape, despite his numerous opportunities for doing so.

The further implication is that McMurphy has also come to view himself through a similar framework, that he cannot help taking on the role and function of the hero because this is what Bromden and the other patients believe him to be. As McMurphy rises from his chair to attack Nurse Ratched, Bromden comes to the realisation that 'we couldn't stop him because we were the ones making him do it. […] We made him stand and hitch up his black shorts like they were horsehide chaps, and push back his black cap with one finger like it was a ten-gallon Stetson, slow, mechanical gestures' (*CN*, p.250). Since throughout the novel the mechanistic has frequently served as a signifier of Bromden's delusions and hallucinations, the description here possesses an interesting ambiguity. On the one hand, it reminds the reader of Bromden's distorted worldview, and thus calls into question how accurately his narrative is presenting 'reality'. On the other hand, it implies that Bromden and the patients have, like the Combine, succeeded in shaping reality according to their wishes, creating an automaton that will obey the 'orders beamed at him from forty masters' (*CN*, p.250). McMurphy must act like the hero of the Western, must ultimately confront and destroy Nurse Ratched's power, because both he and the patients see the situation on the ward as a struggle between freedom and tyranny, between good and evil.

Yet although this is a reading which goes with the grain of the text, and one that Kesey himself appears to have endorsed – stating in his letter to Douglas, for instance, that Nurse Ratched 'is seen more clearly by the Chief than by anyone else, as that age-old ogre of tyranny and fear' (Kesey, quoted in Tanner 1983, p.23) – the novel also creates the potential for a completely different reading. It is 'only at the last', as the doctors pull McMurphy away from Nurse Ratched, 'prying those heavy red fingers out of the white flesh of her throat as if they

were her neck bones', that Bromden sees McMurphy 'show any sign that he might be anything other than a sane, wilful, dogged man performing a hard duty that finally just had to be done, like it or not' (*CN*, p.250). This is, significantly, the only time Bromden himself refers either to sanity or insanity, the only time any such reference appears in the whole novel (aside from in dialogue and in one instance of indirect speech (*CN*, p.43)). It appears that at this crucial moment Bromden acknowledges the possibility that McMurphy possesses those 'psychopathic' traits ascribed to him by the ward doctors and Nurse Ratched, that he 'might' be something other than what Bromden and the patients have taken him to be. Here Bromden catches a glimpse of another reality, the reality of the psychiatrists in which the words 'sane' and 'insane' have referents and in which McMurphy is not a hero but a dangerous lunatic. In this respect, Bromden's sense of ontological certainty is undermined a second time – if only for a moment – as he encounters the possibility that reality 'might be anything other' than what he knows it to be.

Bromden's moment of doubt allows for a completely different reading of *Cuckoo's Nest* – one that appears to go against the overall grain of the text – precisely because the novel as a whole attempts to call into question any attempt to determine reality absolutely. The world of the psychiatrists and Nurse Ratched, containing as it does categories such as 'sane' and 'insane', is one which is designed to foreclose the possibility of ontological relativism by establishing a single and authoritative 'real', rendering any other reality 'unreal'. Yet Kesey is anxious not to simply replace one reality with another, as he suggests in answer to Robert Faggen's question regarding the 'contemporary evils' for which 'the writer has to account':

> In Kurt Vonnegut's book *Cat's Cradle*, the worst thing that ever happens to a marine is mud, and there is a thing called ice-nine that you can add to mud to solidify it. But then all the mud around the world starts to go solid. We have to try to fight anything that is going to create solid mud worldwide. (Kesey, in Faggen 1994)

In this regard, Kesey's novel opposes the idea of an authoritative and exclusory reality through both its form and its content. Through demonstrating how metaphor already shapes and 'mythologises' our lived-world, *Cuckoo's Nest* points to how our experience of reality is intrinsically bound up with the ways in which we make sense of that reality, and that there is no purely 'objective' fact of the matter. At the same time, however, the novel recognises that the ontological chaos of Bromden's psychosis is not an answer to positivist conceptions of reality. Instead, the course of Bromden's recovery demonstrates that we need some kind of ontological hierarchy to structure our experience, and that it is through social engagement and interaction that one reality comes to be primary. The ambiguous statement 'it's the truth even

if it didn't happen' (*CN*, p.13) points to how this form of ontology does not render other realities meaningless – for these realities do 'exist', and we are constantly engaged in negotiating and structuring them.

Conclusion

As several critics have suggested, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* is a novel which is about meaning-making. Yet the techniques which Kesey uses to convey the experientiality of Bromden's hallucinations and psychosis also show how the novel focuses on the ways in which our conceptual heuristics influence our immediate experience of reality. In this regard, *Cuckoo's Nest* not only uses the metaleptic realisation of metaphor for mimetic purposes, but also uses Bromden's psychosis as a way of foregrounding how (and exploring why), in our ordinary experience of both real and fictional worlds, we are able to flit between various ontological realms without difficulty. Indeed, Bromden's experiences are shown to be not so much different in kind as in degree, since we are often already engaged in a form of 'seeing-as' in our apparently straightforward apprehension of the world. What is strikingly different about Bromden, however, is that he lacks a sense of himself as a social agent, and ultimately as any kind of agent at all. As in *The Comforters*, the lack of the sense of agency is intrinsically bound up with the dissolution of the boundary between mind and world, and the impossibility of ordering experience into a meaningful ontological hierarchy.

Cuckoo's Nest is thus a novel which is concerned with how we experience reality, and how reality comes to be 'real'. This understanding of how Kesey's novel engages with phenomenological issues fits with both symbolist and existentialist readings of *Cuckoo's Nest*, while also potentially providing a way of reconciling the apparent contradiction between 'independence and inter-dependence' (Knapp 2008, p.49). On the one hand, recognising that reality *is* flexible allows for the possibility of change – but on the other hand, the chaotic freedom of ontological relativism is tempered by the recognition that our sense of reality depends on social engagement.

Chapter 5 – Explanation, Expectation, and Meaning in *Briefing for a Descent into Hell*

Doris Lessing, like William Golding, is a novelist who appears to have been fascinated by unusual and atypical forms of experience. Hallucinatory and psychotic experiences appear frequently in her early fiction, and her first novel, *The Grass is Singing* (1950), explicitly focuses on the breakdown of a farmer's wife living in South Africa. During the sixties and seventies her fiction became more conspicuously experimental as she attempted to convey the phenomenology of her characters' experiences, and both *The Golden Notebook* (1962) and *The Four-Gated City* (1969) engage in forms of metafictional play as her protagonists become dissociated from the worlds they inhabit. In this regard, *Briefing for a Descent into Hell* (1971) represents something of a completion (and exhaustion) of both technique and subject, especially since the novels which followed it (*The Summer Before the Dark* (1973), and *Memoirs of a Survivor* (1974)) adopt a different formal strategy. Therefore, although *Briefing* was published later than the other three novels I have taken as case studies, it provides a useful point of comparison – not least because it suggests some of the ways in which the representation of psychosis in fiction, which continued to be a subject of interest throughout the sixties, began to change.[173] Moreover, since *Briefing* appears to constitute a further development of ideas and techniques first used by Lessing in *The Golden Notebook*, it can be understood as being of a piece with her earlier fiction, while providing rather more to say with regards to the interpretive framework I adopt in this study.[174]

Lessing herself also had psychotic and hallucinatory experiences that were not unlike those experienced by some of her characters. At one point she 'sent [her]self crazed on purpose' by neglecting to eat or sleep, and noted that 'some of the hallucinations [she] was experiencing were common in all accounts of breakdowns' (Lessing, in Tyrrell 1993). She also experimented with mescaline, and, according to R. D. Laing, was given LSD during her sessions with him

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[173] See the Conclusion, Section 2, for a list of some of the other significant novels published during this period.

[174] In her 1971 Preface to *The Golden Notebook*, Lessing explicitly states that she was concerned with 'The theme of "breakdown"', and complains that 'nobody so much as noticed this central theme' because of the way in which her novel was understood 'as being about the sex war' (*Golden Notebook*, p.8). Another important theme, which Lessing discusses at length, is the form and function of the novel itself, and the importance of engaging with subjectivity and the individual consciousness (in opposition to what she saw as an anti-subjective trend in fiction of the period (*Golden Notebook*, pp.12-14)).

(Newquist 1964, p.423; Klein 2000, p.197).[175] Furthermore, as she told Jonah Raskin, she spent approximately twenty years being 'closely involved with psychiatrists and mentally ill people' (Lessing, in Raskin 1974 [1970], p.69), most notably Clancy Sigal and Jenny Diski. During the mid-sixties, however, she became particularly interested in the Sufism of Idries Shah, and 'the "other world" from which ordinary humanity is cut off' (Shah 1977 [1963], p.173).

Much of the critical debate around *Briefing* is taken up with trying to chart Lessing's 'influences' as a way of making sense of this novel's bizarreness and complexity. Given Lessing's relationship with Laing and Laing's patient, Clancy Sigal, antipsychiatry has often provided one of the frameworks through which this novel is interpreted, with its central premise being understood as either the meaningfulness and value of 'psychotic' experience, or (in its more extreme formulation), that 'it is not only the sane who are mad […] but the mad who are sane' (Sukenick 1973, p.530).[176] Similarly, *Briefing* has frequently been understood in terms of Sufi mysticism, which Lessing became attracted to in the mid-sixties. In this regard, the novel is considered to be a form of the enigmatic 'Sufi teaching story', deigning 'not to tell the truth directly (for this is held to be impossible)', but attempting to bring the reader 'into a state of alertness and receptivity to that truth' (Draine 1983, p.94). The two approaches are not incommensurable, since both can be understood as attaching great importance to the non-rational, the intuited, and the archetypal.[177] Indeed, critics using either (or both) framework(s) have noted an anti-positivist strain in Lessing's fiction of the sixties and early seventies, which often manifests as a valorisation of ontological pluralism and the 'reality' that exists beyond the mundane physical world.[178] At the same time, several critics have also observed that much of Lessing's work is preoccupied with the problem of expressing the conscious experience of these alternative forms of existence.[179] It is therefore perhaps unsurprising that, of the four novels considered in this study, Lessing's has most frequently been approached in terms of

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[175] Lessing's relationship with Laing and his theories appears to have been rather complex. Although in her interview with Joyce Carol Oates she said that she was sympathetic to Laing's work, Lessing also appears to have resented the idea that he was her 'guru' (see Klein 2000, p.212, and Rubenstein 1979, pp.196-197). Indeed, according to Clancy Sigal, Lessing advised him to be '"extremely careful"' during his treatment under Laing (Sigal, quoted in Klein 2000, p.198).

[176] See, for example, Carol Klein 2000, p.203; Ruth Whittaker 1988, pp.76-77; David Waterman 2006, pp.xx, 9; Roberta Rubenstein 1979, p.195; Marion Vlastos 1976, p.253; Lars Bernaerts 2014, p.189; and Thomas Szasz 2009, pp.61-65.

[177] See Klein 2000, p.219; Draine 1983, p.93; Whittaker 1988, p.14; Rubenstein 1979, p.180; and Shadia S. Fahim 1994, p.88.

[178] See Rubenstein 1979, pp.9, 11, 175-177, 183; Draine, pp.90-93, 105-106; Whittaker 1988, p.76; Waterman 2006, p.13; Fishburn 1988, pp.55-56; Bernaerts 2014, pp.197, 203; Fahim 1994, p.85; and Guido Kums 1981, pp.204-205.

[179] See Rubenstein 1979, pp.11, 191; Whittaker 1988, p.76; Bernaerts 2014, p.202; Kums 1981, p.207; Lynn Sukenick 1973, p.553; Nick Bentley 2009, pp.50-56; and Sydney Janet Kaplan 1973, p.540.

reader-response theory, with a view to understanding how the text is structured in a way that is designed to have an effect on the reader.[180]

My own approach to Lessing's novel – which builds on the framework established in the previous chapters – certainly has elements in common with previous criticism.[181] However, the reading I offer here is less concerned with the spiritual, esoteric, or political dimensions of *Briefing* than with the novel's phenomenological implications: the way in which Lessing uses the framework of psychotic and hallucinatory experience to explore *why* we become attached to a primary reality. In this respect, I understand *Briefing* as a novel which attempts to explore phenomenological issues, but which does so by engaging in a form of metafictional play in order to allow the reader to experience – and thus understand – how reality comes to be 'real'.

The first section examines how the formal structure of *Briefing* prompts the reader to enact a species of psychotic experience through the destabilisation of the storyworld's primary reality. In effect, Lessing's novel presents the reader with a direct conflict between ontological domains – the world of the hospital, and the world of the 'delusion' – in a manner that appears to be isomorphic to psychotic experience in certain respects.[182] Drawing on reader-response theory, social constructionism, and cognitive narratology, I examine the various strategies employed to convince the reader of the reality of these worlds. On the one hand, the different discourse types used to present the two worlds invoke conventional associations of the fictional (regarding the delusional world) and the non-fictional (regarding the hospital world), which initially affords the hospital world ontological superiority. Having invoked these conventions, however, *Briefing* gradually works to undermine them, thus foregrounding the fictionality of *both* worlds. At the same time, the world of the delusion comes to offer a competing framework according to which the novel's ontology might be structured, while also being presented in a more immersive fashion in order to counteract the reader's familiarity with (and acceptance of) the framework offered by the world of the hospital.

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[180] For instance, Rubenstein, Draine, Bernaerts, and Kums all adopt a methodology that either overtly or covertly draws on reader-response theory.

[181] Indeed, Rubenstein notes that 'the common denominator in Lessing's fictional world is the mind […] discovering, interpreting, and ultimately shaping its own reality' (Rubenstein 1979, p.7), while Bernaerts points out that 'madness in fiction not only results [in] sense-making conflicts for the reader, it is also *about* sense-making' (Bernaerts 2014, p.193) – both of which comments accord with the phenomenologically based interpretation I put forward in this chapter.

[182] Of course, whether Charles' experiences have ontological validity is one of the central questions of the novel. However, as I explore further in Section 1 of this chapter, his experience is certainly akin to certain forms of psychotic experience (and it is necessary that it should be so in order for Lessing's novel to be making any kind of 'point' about the significance of psychotic experience).

In the second section, I suggest that *Briefing*'s formal manipulation of the ontology of its two worlds is part of the novel's exploration of how expectations and context shape our experience of reality (a point that is stressed thematically as well as formally). Moreover, I examine how language is shown to play an essential role in the structuring of experience, and how the constrictions of language necessarily distort the subject's understanding of experiences which fall outside of the norm. In this regard, Lessing's novel suggests that the significance of psychotic experience potentially becomes lost as the individual tries to comprehend it through language, thus foregrounding the ways in which the figurative becomes reified as the literal in both ordinary and atypical forms of experience.

Section 1: Discourses (and Realities) in Competition

The two worlds of *Briefing* are almost immediately juxtaposed from the opening of the novel. On the one hand, there is the world of the hospital, which is (for the first half of the novel) presented exclusively through the reports of the hospital staff and the conversations between the staff and the patient, rendered as scripted dialogue. On the other hand, there is the world hallucinated by the patient (the world of the delusion, as I shall term it), presented for the most part as the patient's first-person narrative. At first, the reader oscillates between these two worlds, shifting back and forth between dialogues, notes, and the patient's narrative. As the sedatives administered to the patient begin to take effect, however, the documents of the hospital world almost completely cease to intrude upon the narrative of the delusional world. The change in the patient's physical state in the hospital world also correlates with several changes in the world of the delusion: not only does the narrator reach dry land (having been previously lost at sea), but the narration shifts into the past tense and becomes more directly referential, losing much of its poetic opacity (I explore this distinction in more detail shortly).

The narrative goes on to deal primarily with the narrator's exploration of a mysterious island, full of unfamiliar animals that haunt the ruins of a city atop a plateau. The narrator spends a month on this island, waiting for the descent of the flying Crystal which took his friends and left him behind during his sea voyage. During this period a war breaks out among the animals, which the narrator watches with horrified fascination. Finally, the Crystal does return, and it absorbs the narrator into its substance and gives him a new body with different senses, allowing him to experience another dimension. As he begins to perceive

cosmologically, on a greater scale of time and space, he sees how Earth is affected by the whole of the solar system, and how shifts in the balance of the planets affect human history and development.

As the narrator continues in his account of the hierarchy of the solar system, the planets become increasingly personified, and the narrator begins to merge his new '"knowings"' with various theologies (*Briefing* [*B*], p.91). The planets become bickering gods, intimately concerned with the fate of humankind and preparing to intervene in its affairs. Suddenly the narrator self-reflexively dismisses this story as 'whimsical' and switches to what he terms 'the contemporary mode' (*B*, p.115), which appears to be more akin to science-fiction. The planets are still anthropomorphised, but now they are holding a conference regarding an impending catastrophe on Earth. A crew is prepared to descend to Earth and spread the message of universal harmony, their mission made all the more difficult by the fact that they will apparently not remember their mission until they 'wake up' – at which point they may be unable to accept what they remember. The crew descends, its members separated into individuals to be born in human bodies. At this point the narrator – who had entirely absented himself during the conference narrative – returns in the first-person to experience his own birth and infancy, now using the present tense. The course of his life flashes past as a struggle between sleep and wakefulness, and the narrative again begins to incorporate what appear to be the discussions of the hospital staff. At last, the narrator wakes and his narrative ends, almost exactly half-way through the novel.

The reader is presented with the hospital's discovery of the patient's identity almost as soon as he wakes: he is Charles Watkins, a professor of Classics. However, Charles appears completely unable to remember his past life, and the remainder of the novel is almost exclusively made up of dialogue, letters, and written accounts, as the hospital staff try to trace the course of Charles' breakdown and convince him of his identity. Although it is largely unclear what Charles remembers of the delusional world, he seems to be certain that there is some message of vital importance which he has forgotten, and at times he appears convinced that his experience of the delusional world was real. Towards the end of the novel a third-person narrator begins to describe the hospital world in the mode of the realist narrative, as Charles discusses with another patient whether he should undergo electroshock therapy in the hope that it will enable him to recall his 'message'. When he does undergo the therapy however, it appears to completely restore him to his old identity – so much so that he apologises to his friends for being 'such a bore' (*B*, p.249).

As Rubenstein, Vlastos, and Whittaker have all observed, *Briefing*'s narrative of Charles' experience displays several marked similarities with one of Laing's case transcripts, published in *The Politics of Experience* (1967). Laing's subject, Jesse Watkins, describes a ten-day psychotic experience during which he '"seemed to be wandering in a kind of […] desert landscape"', '"was moving and living in […] another time dimension"', and '"had a feeling at times of an enormous journey in front […] a fantastic journey"' (Laing 1967, pp.123, 128, 126). Much like Charles' 'journey', Jesse's included experiences of his own physical transmutation, of understanding the truth of abstract concepts such as good and evil, and a '"feeling of […] gods, not only God but gods as it were, of beings which are far above us"' (Laing 1967, p.129). Moreover, like Charles, Jesse was aware of the 'real' world at the same time, although in Jesse's case this awareness was apparently continuous.[183]

Despite these similarities, Lessing emphatically denied having based her novel on Laing's case study. In a letter to Rubenstein, she states:

> 'I had not taken Laing as my starting point. I had not read the piece in question by him, or the book *Politics of Experience*.
>
> 'My book was written out of my own thoughts, not other people's.
>
> '… It seems to me almost impossible for people to grasp that people can write from their own experience.
>
> 'As for the name Watkins, being used: I took the name out of the telephone book, which is my usual practice [….] I always use the commonest name I can find.' (Lessing, quoted in Rubenstein 1979, p.197)

I do not think it is particularly important whether Lessing used Laing's case study or not – my intention here is merely to show that an experience like Charles' appears in at least one first-person account of a psychotic break.

Indeed, if we are looking for a psychiatric diagnosis that corresponds with Charles' (and Jesse's) condition, then the condition sometimes referred to as 'delirious mania (mania with psychosis)' 'oneiroid syndrome', or 'oneiroid state' appears to present most of the same symptoms.[184] 'The outstanding feature of a delirious mania is a nightmarish, dreamlike, derealization within an altered sensorium', and patients with this condition tend to 'sleep

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[183] Cf. '"I was perfectly well aware of myself and aware of the surroundings"' (Laing 1967, p.125), and 'I knew all the time that I was living out another life, but on land, very far from the life of a seaman' (*B*, p.61).

[184] The state is also sometimes referred to as 'Bell's mania', 'oneirophrenia' or 'excited catatonia' – see Max Fink and Michael Alan Taylor 2003. p.64, and Rudolf N. Cardinal and Edward T. Bullmore 2011 , p.148, for lists of the various diagnostic terms used in different psychiatric traditions. Given the difficulty of determining whether Charles is dreaming or hallucinating, those terms which classify the experience as 'oneiroid' (i.e. dream-like) appear to be particularly appropriate – however, Fink and Taylor (and Cardinal and Bullmore) suggest that all these terms are ultimately referring to the same phenomenon.

poorly, are unable to recall their recent experiences […] and are disoriented. They confabulate, often with fantastic stories. The onset develops rapidly, within a few hours or a few days' (Fink and Taylor 2003, p.51). Other similarities with Charles' condition (at least with regard to 'delirious mania') include 'Garrulousness, flights of ideas, and rambling speech', and 'Stereotypy' (Fink and Taylor 2003, p.51) – all symptoms which Charles appears to exhibit, according to the hospital reports and the dialogue sections. It is also (again as in Charles' case) 'highly responsive to ECT' (Fink 2009, p.64). Most importantly, 'The striking feature of delirious mania is the lack of awareness of the environment, the patient appearing "as if in a dense fog"' (Fink 2009, p.64). Descriptions of the 'oneiroid state' similarly refer to 'a dream-like state in which patients may be deeply perplexed and not fully oriented in time and place. The term oneiroid schizophrenic has been used for patients who are engaged in hallucinatory experiences to the exclusion of involvement in the real world' (Sadock and Sadock 2007, p.479). At the same time, however, some patients can exhibit 'double orientation and double book-keeping phenomena' (Mendhekar 2007, p.86).

An awareness of such real cases is potentially useful – for, taken as a whole, Charles' experience does not appear to fit readily into any of the usual experiential categories. He starts out 'hallucinated' (at least according to the doctors' reports (*B*, p.10)), and after the onset of narcosis his loss of consciousness technically means that he begins 'dreaming'. However, in terms of Charles' own narrative this distinction is less meaningful. Certainly, his loss of consciousness in the hospital world correlates with the change in his narrative style (which is also marked by a paragraph break), yet both the world of the delusion and his own intentions and memories within it (i.e. his 'character') retain their continuity across the pre- and post-narcosis divide. He is still a sailor 'left behind' by the Crystal, and he appears to remember his friends and the voyage they were taking prior to their ascension. Furthermore, his experience of the delusional world after the onset of his narcosis is certainly not presented in a manner that is stereotypically 'dreamlike', displaying instead an increased sense of clarity and spatiotemporal consistency.[185]

The issue is complicated still further by the fact that Charles describes himself as experiencing dreams *within* the world which includes the Crystal, the rat-dogs, and the city. His descriptions of these dreams are little more than brief summaries of their contents, but they

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[185] Admittedly, this increase in clarity and consistency is not *in itself* enough to suggest that Charles is not dreaming. On the one hand, we could presuppose a break with experiential isomorphism, while on the other we could question the extent to which it is our dreams or our *memories* of our dreams that appear to us as confusing and spatiotemporally disjointed. However, the change in the form of Charles' experience is only one of several factors which supports the interpretation I am offering here.

are afforded different kinds of significance and reality status. After his dream of conversing with his shipmates, Conchita, and Nancy, he wakes with a sense of their presence 'all about' him and is convinced that they have told him what he needs to do, since 'it was after my dream of them that I had known it' (*B*, p.54). His dream of the rat-dogs taking him prisoner, on the other hand, not only lacks significance but is explicitly dismissed as counterfactual (*B*, p.71). Finally, he not only dreams of 'that other life in a damp sunless country where my life was a weight of labour every hour', but even considers *returning* there, for it is 'where from time to time I seemed to live' (*B*, pp.66, 71). This awareness (on Charles' part) of having an existence within a second reality might suggest that his experience is a kind of 'lucid dream', although again it is difficult to see to what extent one might draw a clear boundary between this state and hallucinatory experience.[186] Indeed, the novel suggests that in Charles' case the difference is primarily determined by the extent to which Charles is immersed in the world of the delusion, since the way in which Charles naturalises his experience of the hospital world in relation to the delusional world is the inverse of the experiences ascribed to him by the doctors. During his narcosis he interprets his occasional experiences of the hospital world as dreams, although he also seems to be aware that they relate to another continuous world which he might inhabit. Prior to his narcosis, however, he experiences the hospital world as a hallucination, and denies its reality. For instance, when in conversation with Doctor Y., he states: 'I don't know who you are. A delusion, I expect. After so long on this raft and without real food and no sleep at all, I'm bound to be deluded. Voices. Visions' (*B*, p.16). Yet his reasons for doubting the reality of Doctor Y.'s 'good solid hand' seem not to be based on the perceptual qualities of the hand itself, but because of the unreliability and impermanence of *all* perceptual data: 'Things aren't what they seem. Hands have come up from the dark before and slid away again. Why not yours?' (*B*, p.16).

In this regard, hallucinatory experience is presented as a transitional phase in which multiple worlds vie for presence, all being experienced as equally real and unreal. The

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[186] According to Jennifer Michelle Windt and Thomas Metzinger, 'the lucid dreamer is fully aware of the fact that the phenomenal world he is currently experiencing is not identical with external physical reality [….] At the same time, he is also freed from many of the other cognitive deficiencies that characterize nonlucid dreams' (Windt and Metzinger 2007, p.211). However, they also suggest that 'Rather than entertaining the delusional belief in the reality of dream events, he is perfectly aware of the misrepresentational character of his ongoing state of consciousness [….] The lucid dreamer does not simply *know*, on an abstract level, that he is currently dreaming, but is also able to *experience* this very fact' (Windt and Metzinger 2007, p.211). Charles, however, *does* 'believe' in the 'reality' of his experience, and it is *only* on the abstract level that he knows he has another existence (except when he is actually interacting with the hospital world, where he seems to doubt the reality of the hospital rather than the dream). Perhaps the main (or one of the main) difference(s) between dreams and hallucinations is that the latter involves a direct – i.e. sensory or quasi-sensory – experience of ontological conflict, which, as I suggest later in this section, certainly appears to be characteristic of Charles' early experiences.

difference between this 'hallucinatory' state and the subsequent 'dream' state of narcosis thus appears to be attributable to the extent to which Charles feels ontologically 'anchored' in one world or another. Indeed, while in the hallucinatory phase Charles not only doubts the reality of the hospital world but also appears to experience the delusional world as possessing fluctuating and transient presence. At times the narration threatens to dislocate itself from the particular landscape in which Charles' 'voyage' is taking place, so that the world is in danger of losing its spatiotemporal continuity:

> A salt, salt sea, the brine coming flecked off the horses' jaws to mine. [….] I can taste salt from the sea. From the desert. The deserted sea. Sea horses. Dunes. The wind flicks sand from the crest of dunes, spins off the curl of waves. Sand moves and sways and masses itself into waves, but slower. Slow. The eye that would measure the pace of sand horses, as I watch the rolling gallop of sea horses would be an eye indeed. Aye Aye. I. I could catch a horse, perhaps and ride it, but for me a sea horse, no horse of sand, since my time is man-time and it is God for deserts. (*B*, p.10)

Here the two landscapes are imagistically fused together, and for a moment we have *in nuce* the same kind of transition from one world to another, encapsulated in metaphor. The pun on 'desert' produces a juxtaposition of images, the dunes and the waves, but the sentence in which both appear lacks a conjunction to coordinate their relationship. In other words, the two images are presented without any explicit indication of ontological primacy, and this moment of destabilisation allows for the 'desert-world' to briefly attain dominance. In the following sentence the 'waves' become metaphorical, and until the comparative 'slower' the whole 'sea' frame of reference becomes a source-domain for the target-domain of the desert landscape. The comparative, however, reintroduces a sense of ontological competition (since the desert is being compared *to* something), and finally the narrator re-establishes which world he is in by referring to his own perceptions of the seascape. Of course, the context of this imagistic fusion (or confusion) is the seascape, and therefore, for the reader at least, that world retains its ontological superiority to the desert world. However, such moments of ontological instability provide the impression that the narrator is not entirely anchored in the world of the seascape, since other worlds – or at least other places within the same world – are able to briefly usurp its presence.[187]

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[187] To be more precise, the reader's imaginative enactment of the experiences of these two worlds – without the appropriate linguistic markers of ontological organisation – cues the attribution of a certain mental state to the narrator. At the same time, the prior information about the narrator/character's mental state (provided by the hospital reports) primes the reader to engage with the text – and enact the experiences it presents – in a certain way. I believe this is part of what Marco Caracciolo means when he refers to there being a 'tension' between consciousness-attribution and consciousness-enactment (Caracciolo 2014a, p.49), since the two activities are bound to influence one another in this way.

Even though the world of the delusion quickly becomes more stable and continuous (inasmuch as obtrusions from other delusional environments become less frequent), prior to his narcosis both Charles and the reader are caught between the delusional world and the hospital world and shift back and forth between them. It therefore appears that the narcosis serves to stabilise Charles' experience of the delusional world, since by severing the link between Charles' consciousness and his bodily perceptions in the hospital world the narcosis reduces the obtrusions of the hospital world almost completely. Essentially, the confusion which had resulted from being caught between worlds is now mitigated, since Charles' awareness of the hospital world becomes merely a conceptual awareness of another possible world rather than an experience of its presence. On those rare occasions when the hospital world *does* become present, he is able to account for the experience as a dream and thus partially avoid the ontological confusion which he felt during the transitional phase. However, this 'other' dream-world (the hospital world) is still, for Charles, recognised *as* a complete world, where he lives 'that other life in a damp sunless country' (*B*, p.66). He therefore acknowledges that his sleep (within the delusional world) is 'not the sleep of an ordinary man' because it involves 'living in a different place or country' (*B*, p.61) – yet by this point, is seems that his experiences of these two worlds has become separate enough for him to regard the hospital world as accessible only during sleep.

For the reader, however, there is initially no sense of ontological confusion, or even ontological doubt. Although we shift between worlds, it is clear which world is the 'real' storyworld and which is a 'subworld' existing only in the mind of one of the characters. Unlike *The Comforters* and *Pincher Martin* (and even, to an extent, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*), we are immediately presented with what is clearly a hallucinatory experience, and it is presented in a way that does not appear to pose any kind of 'threat' to the primary reality of the storyworld.[188] This lack of threat is essentially due to the way in which *Briefing* takes pains to keep the world of the hospital and the world of the delusion separate, thus preventing the 'contamination' (and thus breakdown) of reality which results from the crossing of ontological boundaries (although as we have seen, such boundary-crossing does occur *within* the delusional world before it becomes more stable). Yet over the course of the novel as a whole the reader is prompted to doubt the reality of the hospital world, or at least to question the ontological

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[188] Although in *Cuckoo's Nest* we are presented with Bromden's hallucinations early in the novel, these *do* pose something of a threat to the primary reality of the storyworld since they are included as part of the presentation of the 'real' world. There is thus a moment of ontological confusion as the reader tries to comprehend the sudden intrusion of elements from the 'metaphor-world' into the storyworld.

hierarchy in which that world is the primary reality. The text thus attempts to produce a response that is in some ways isomorphic to delusional experience, inasmuch as experiences which are clearly demarcated as 'non-real' in relation to the primary reality of the storyworld (i.e. hallucinations and/or dreams) come to be experienced as real (again, in relation to the 'reality' of the storyworld). Of course, the responses of actual readers are bound to be variable – but then, according to Karl Jaspers, so is delusional experience, since 'Belief in reality can range through all degrees, from a mere play with possibilities via a double reality – the empirical and the delusional – to unequivocal attitudes in which the delusional content reigns as the sole and absolute reality' (Jaspers 1997 [1963], v.1, p.106).

Where *Briefing* differs from the novels examined so far is that although it aims at experiential isomorphism, it does not necessarily tie this isomorphism to a particular hallucinatory experience. In this regard, there are potentially fewer specific instances of 'overlap' between the experiences of the character and the reader (at least as far as the sense of reality is concerned). Indeed, for much of the novel the reader's 'existential feeling' – that is, the 'background which comprises the very sense of "being" or "reality" that attaches to world experience' (Ratcliffe 2005, p.46) – is temporally out of sync with Charles' own. The significance of this separation between isomorphism and overlap I shall return to in the conclusion of this chapter – for now, I shall examine the strategies which *Briefing* uses to manipulate the reader's sense of the reality of the two worlds.

In the first half of the novel, the separation between the world of the hospital and Charles' delusional world is due not only to their content but also to their formal presentation. On the one hand, the world of the hospital is presented as a compilation of documents, with the inclusion of dates, times, and speaker labels creating the impression that these are hospital records, memos and transcripts. These 'documents' contain little to no experientiality – that is, they do not register 'what it's like' (Herman 2009, p.138) for a human or human-like consciousness to experience this world – and indeed it is partly their lack of experientiality which prompts the reader to think of them *as* documents. Technically speaking, therefore, the majority of these documents are not (or are barely) 'narrative', at least according to any definition of the term which requires that narrative contains some degree of experientiality. As David Herman puts it, 'a strictly behaviorist narrative would arguably be a contradiction in terms' (Herman 2009, p.142), since

> to the extent that a representation embodies the elements of **situatedness**, **event sequencing**, and **worldmaking/world disruption** but backgrounds or suppresses **what it's like**, that representation will be pushed closer to the edge than the center of the category space of 'narrative,' where forms such as

'chronicle' or 'report' verge on the fuzzy border separating narratives from descriptions. (Herman 2009, p.138)

At the same time, however, the overall context in which these documents appear – the novel itself – prompts the reader to engage with them *as* narrative, thus adopting one of many other possible intentional stances. To experience something as a narrative, I would argue, necessarily involves attempting to imaginatively experience the world which it describes, and so to attempt some degree of immersion in the storyworld. Therefore, although the perspective of an experiencing mind is not necessarily encoded within the text itself, the reader is still likely to construct such a perspective from the available material, even if such a perspective is not attached to any particular character. In other words, the reader 'worlds' the story (to borrow Herman's term (Herman 2013, p.122)) by imaginatively experiencing its events as unfolding within a certain space which has a certain ontological status. In the transcript sections, for instance, there are numerous indications that one of the participants has performed some action or other (apart from the action of speech itself), which implies a fairly specific spatial configuration of the discourse participants and reinforces the impression that they are embodied individuals occupying particular positions in space and time (for example, when Doctor Y. offers Charles his hand). Despite the absence of any narration of events taking place, or any description of the environment in which they take place (aside from the broader environment of 'the hospital'), I would maintain that in most cases readers use their schematic knowledge of hospital environments, doctor-patient interactions, etc. to imaginatively experience this world and immerse themselves within it.

The world of the delusion, on the other hand, is presented as narrative prose, with the first-person present-tense narration clearly encoding the perspective of an experiencing consciousness. However, the reader may or may not initially engage with this section as narrative since its style violates diegetic norms in a way that is not easily naturalisable according to any conventional narrative framework. While the novel has readily incorporated other kinds of document (real or fictional) into its discourse almost since its inception (consider, for instance, the bill for lying-in in Daniel Defoe's *Moll Flanders* (1722), or Crusoe's diary in *Robinson Crusoe* (1719)), the implication is always that the narrator him- or herself has selected these materials to supplement his or her narrative.[189] In the opening pages of *Briefing* there is no such implication, since the first-person narrator clearly refers to a world which is spatiotemporally (and ontologically) distinct from the world which contains the documents,

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[189] Indeed, authors such as Defoe and Samuel Richardson presented their early novels as 'found' documents in their entirety, thus pretending to attest to the reality of the whole narrative.

and therefore is an unlikely candidate for the novel's 'organiser'. Moreover, as with Bromden's narration in *Cuckoo's Nest*, the convention of 'simultaneous narration' evoked by the use of the first-person present suggests that 'the moment of narration *is* the moment of experience, [and] the narrating self *is* the experiencing self' (Cohn 1999, p.107). The juxtaposition of documents and first-person narrative thus presents the reader with a violation of diegetic convention. The first-person narrative cannot incorporate the documents since the narrator is both unaware of the world in which those documents exist and is also apparently not in the role of fictional author, and therefore lacks the powers of organisation and assembly implied by that role. At the same time, the diegetic mode invoked by the documentary format is also ill-equipped to incorporate the first-person narrative, since it is a mode which can only admit recorded discourse. In this regard, the two discourses are formally irreconcilable, given that there is no natural (i.e. real-world) diegetic situation in which they could exist side by side.

There is, however, one way in which the reader might at first attempt to naturalise the first-person narrative according to the norms of documentary presentation. Since the hospital staff's reports describe Charles as 'talking loudly' (to the extent that he disturbs the other patients) (*B*, p.9), it is possible that the first-person narrative is indeed the record of a simultaneous narrative being orally produced by Charles within the world of the hospital. Indeed, early on in the novel Doctor Y. explicitly offers Charles a tape recorder, and the implication is that the recorder has been left with him (*B*, p.17). Charles' narrative also displays the characteristics commented on by the staff ('Rambling, Confused' (*B*, p.9)), and in the dialogue sections his speech is both stylistically similar to his narrative and also refers to the same images and motifs. In particular, Charles' narrative displays a degree of linguistic self-referentiality that foregrounds its status as discourse. As Bernaerts puts it, Charles 'amplifies the semantic density of his narrative by using poetic features such as extended metaphor, apostrophe, chiasmus, alliteration, [and] assonance' (Bernaerts 2014, p.201). Yet it is not just that the narrator 'uses' these techniques – rather, when they appear it seems that the flow of his discourse is *dictated* by them, inasmuch as the text sometimes progresses according to phonetic similarity (e.g. alliteration) or semantic variability (e.g. double entendre). The reader is thus continuously forced to direct attention towards the 'linguistic strata', and away from the stratum of 'portrayed objects' (Ingarden 1973b [1968], p.91), in a fashion which insistently reminds him or her of the linguistic mediation of Charles' narrative. At the same time, such linguistic self-reference frustrates immersion and narrative world-building, although not to the extent that a continuous world cannot be constructed (for reasons which I discuss shortly). The overall effect is to make the reader hesitate between intentional stances when approaching

Charles' narrative. On the one hand, these segments contain the embodied and experiential elements that are conspicuously lacking in the hospital documents, thus drawing on the reader's habitual tendency to engage with such texts as narrative. On the other hand, the pressures of naturalisation and the density of the linguistic strata cue these segments to be cognised as discourse produced within the world of the hospital, as 'content' rather than 'code'.[190]

As the novel progresses, however, it becomes increasingly difficult to cognise Charles' narrative primarily as speech produced within the world of the hospital. This is partly due to its duration, since the text comes to be dominated by Charles' narrative and the hospital world drops below the threshold of current awareness (as occurs with any 'frame narrative' after a certain point). As Richard Walsh puts it, 'in *Frankenstein* we attend to the monster's narration in its own right, not as Walton's written record of Victor's oral relation of that narration' (Walsh 2010, p.44). Prior narrative levels are still 'latent contexts of the current narrative situation', and we can still 'cross-reference between the monster's narration [in *Frankenstein*] and information gleaned from our attention to these framing narrative acts when they are current' (Walsh 2010, pp.43, 44). Yet other factors also contribute to the reader's shift in intentional stance, if any such shift is needed (for it is of course possible that the reader immediately cognises Charles' narrative as narrative). For one thing, the style decreases in opacity as the language becomes less self-referential. The world of the delusion becomes more fully realised as a result, especially since the narrator contextualises his situation by giving an account of preceding events. Finally, upon arriving on land Charles' narrative becomes more firmly anchored in a continuous time and place and it shifts into the past tense. As with Bromden's narrative in *Cuckoo's Nest*, this shift into the past tense seems partly designed to convey a change in the character's mental state, given that the past tense is conventionally associated with the post-hoc organisation of experience into a narrative (while the present tense implies unexpectedness and a lack of such narratorial control). However, the past tense is also (understandably) more conventionally associated with narrative as a discourse type than the present tense, and in this regard Charles' narrative becomes more prototypically narrative-*like*, thus more strongly affording a narrative approach. There is therefore bound to be some point at which the reader comes to experience enactively the storyworld of Charles' narrative, as opposed to experiencing it primarily as language produced within the world of the hospital. In other words, even if Charles' narrative is still considered to be concerned with a subworld

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[190] See Chapter 3, Section 1, for more on this distinction.

encompassed by the world of the hospital, it will eventually come to be cognised primarily as code rather than content.

Even though Charles' delusional world comes to be enacted by the reader, it is still ontologically inferior to the world of the hospital. In initially being presented exclusively through non-narrative documents, the hospital world asserts its reality because it subsequently invokes certain conventional associations. For one thing, non-narrative documents are associated with the non-fictional, given that they are usually the means by which (historical) reality is affirmed. In this regard, the non-narrative and the non-fictional are cut from the same cloth, since in excluding experientiality the non-narrative implies objectivity and thus stakes an even greater claim to reality in being 'true' for multiple individuals. Even when subjectivity and/or experientiality comes into play, however, the document still serves as proof of the reality in which it is situated. Not only can we assume a *producer* of the document, but the document itself serves as material proof of the world in which it performs a function. Indeed, even in 'documents' which do fall into the category of narrative, the implication is that they fulfil or have fulfilled a primary function which is unrelated to (and thus unaware of) the novelistic context in which they appear. The 'epistolary novel' is a case in point, since it is comprised of documents which fulfil many or all narrative criteria (depending on which definition is being used), yet which remain recognisable *as* documents because they create the illusion of having been created to perform a non-novelistic communicative function.[191] The conventional associations which pertain to the document (as opposed to the novel) are suggestive of the ontological function it is usually designed to perform within the novel: to dissolve the boundary between the fictional world and the world of the reader. Through its status as a material textual artefact, the document succeeds in being 'real' in both worlds – and since the easiest way to explain this 'double existence' is to assume that the two worlds are one and the same, the document thus attempts to effect the incorporation of the storyworld into the reader's 'real' world, hence imbuing the storyworld with an air of 'reality'. At least, this is the illusion which the novel often attempts to create through the document, which is to say that it is not necessarily intended or expected to convince completely (at least not since the Eighteenth Century).

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[191] The issue is somewhat complicated when narrative 'documents' appear alongside 'novelistic' third-person narrative, especially when the two accounts contradict each other. At first it might seem that convention of the omniscient narrator grants the novelistic discourse ontological primacy: such a narrator is usually assumed to be infallible, whereas the narrative 'document' implies a producer and his or her necessarily limited subjectivity. However, this ontological arrangement already presupposes the fictionality of both narratives. As I explain further in this chapter, the introduction of conspicuously novelistic elements (such as an omniscient narrator) breaks the illusion which the documentational mode tries to maintain, which is an illusion regarding the ontological relationship between the reader's world and the storyworld.

In *Briefing*, however, there are two reference worlds – the world of the hospital and the world of the delusion – and therefore there is an extent to which the hospital world relies upon the document's 'ontological cachet' in order to attain its ontological primacy. Moreover, those documents which appear to perform a non-narrative communicative function further strengthen the hospital world's reality, in part because such discourse *already* implies a basic ontological commitment. In communicating about things within the world, the world itself is implied and thus taken – and presented – *as given*. As Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann point out,

> the greater part of reality-maintenance in conversation is implicit, not explicit. Most conversation does not in so many words define the nature of the world. Rather, it takes place against the background of a world that is silently taken for granted [….] By virtue of this implication the exchange confirms the subjective reality of this world. (Berger and Luckmann 1991 [1966], p.172)

Narrative, as a discourse-type, appears to be conspicuously creative by comparison, since it often presupposes that the world to which it refers is in some regard inaccessible. That world belongs to a different time, or a different reality, or both together, and it is the *function* of narrative to generate the presence of that world and so to provide a form of 'access'. Since we are concerned here with conventional associations, it is sufficient to state that these rules hold in general, even if there are narratives and non-narratives which fulfil the criteria of their categories and yet which violate the norms outlined here. Indeed, conventional associations and general rules are useful precisely because they suggest how and why a reader might organise a certain ontological hierarchy when more than one world presents itself. All other things being equal, a form or mode which seems to aim at the construction of a world is likely to cede ontological primacy to a mode which appears to take its world for granted, since the activity of creation calls ontology itself into question. To expend discursive resources purely in asserting the existence of some object or property assumes that the existence of that object or property was not already part of the reality taken for granted by the discourse recipient (or that there was at least room for doubt).

We can thus, perhaps, understand *why* the presence of the other non-narrative documents initially prompts the reader to naturalise Charles' narrative as yet another document within the world of the hospital, instead of simply foregoing naturalisation completely and accepting the fictionality of the whole storyworld. Because one of the two worlds, by virtue of its presentation, is already encoded as ontologically inferior to the other, the impossibility of there being two equal yet contradictory realities does not arise, and the text can therefore maintain the illusion of non-fictionality. Indeed, naturalising Charles' narrative as a document further de-realises its reference world through a kind of feedback loop. If Charles is actually

producing his (verbal) narrative within the hospital world and is at the same time experiencing the delusional world in the present (as suggested by the simultaneous narration), the diegetic situation (or discourse world) of his narrative *already* contradicts and thus undermines the world to which it refers. Moreover, as a document Charles' narrative appears as one document among many – and not only does it disagree with the consensus established by the other documents, but its status as narrative also marks it as conspicuously creative and thus imbues its reference world with an air of fictionality (by comparison).

At the same time, the very existence of Charles' narrative and its 'unreal' world further strengthens the reality of the hospital world. On the one hand, considered as a document, this narrative also calls to mind its producer and his diegetic situation (to a greater degree than, say, a third-person novelistic narrative). In the real world, a narrative document that is riddled with falsehoods still affirms the existence of its producer in a way that a document *about* that producer does not. Therefore, for as long as Charles' narrative is thought of as being produced within the hospital world, that world is affirmed as real even though the narrative itself denies that reality. On the other hand, as Tzvetan Todorov points out, 'If certain events of a book's universe explicitly account for themselves as imaginary, they thereby contest the imaginary nature of the rest of the book. If a certain apparition is only the fault of an overexcited imagination, then everything around it is real' (Todorov 1973, p.168). In one sense, Todorov's claim might be accounted for by the simple juxtaposition of realities: the appearance of the 'non-real' makes the real seem still more real by contrast. However, we can take our analysis further by considering the issue in terms of Berger and Luckmann's assertions regarding 'the most acute threat to taken-for-granted, routinized existence in society' which is posed by 'the realities of marginal situations', the '"surrealistic" metamorphoses of dreams and fantasies' (Berger and Luckmann 1991, p.118). As they put it,

> Just because the 'night side' has its own reality, often enough of a sinister kind, it is a constant threat to the taken-for-granted, matter-of-fact, 'sane' reality of life in society. The thought keeps suggesting itself (the 'insane' thought *par excellence*) that, perhaps, the bright reality of everyday life is but an illusion, to be swallowed up at any moment by the howling nightmares of the other, the night-side reality. Such thoughts of madness and terror are contained by ordering all conceivable realities within the same symbolic universe that encompasses the reality of everyday life – to wit, ordering them in such a way that the latter reality retains its paramount, definitive (if one wishes, its 'most real') quality. (Berger and Luckmann 1991, p.116)

If we extrapolate this insight to the realm of fiction, we could further justify Todorov's claim by suggesting that when one reality subordinates other realities by integrating them 'within a meaningful totality that "explains", [and] perhaps also justifies them' (Berger and Luckmann

1991, p.114), it effectively demonstrates its claim to ontological primacy by actively overcoming a threat posed to it. Therefore, the very presence of Charles' delusional world further affirms the reality of the hospital world for so long as the hospital world can meaningfully explain and thus incorporate it. Moreover, the diegetic framework of the hospital world can initially explain and incorporate the diegesis of Charles' narrative, and indeed takes pains to do so, with Doctor Y. explicitly telling Charles that the staff are listening to his continuous talk and ultimately offering him a tape recorder.

Yet the reader's strategy for naturalising the tension between the two incompatible diegetic frameworks begins to become untenable. Above all, after Charles' narcosis begins he 'sleeps almost continuously' (*B*, p.60), which raises the question of how his narrative can possibly be recorded in the world of the hospital. Moreover, at one point Charles suggests that he is producing his narrative while actually situated on the plateau which holds the city. After completing his climb with the two leopard-like creatures, he states 'I did not see them again, though sometimes, when I stand on the very edge of the rock-fringed plateau […] I fancy I see a blaze of yellow move in the yellow-splashed dark' (*B*, p.48). Clearly, Charles is *still* on the plateau as he narrates his story – as implied by the conditional present – and is also aware of there being a separation in time between his experiencing self and his narrating self. It would therefore appear that he is not producing his narrative within the hospital world, either as a continuous stream of talk (since he is supposed to be asleep) or as a remembered account of his psychotic episode (since his narrating self is located within the world of the delusion).

Strictly speaking, by negating the possibility that Charles' narrative is a document within the hospital world, the novel demonstrates the fictionality of all of its documents, since the illusion of non-fictionality cannot tolerate impossible diegesis. Of course, it is, entirely possible that the reader might not cross-reference between the different narratives (or might simply miss the cues of impossible diegesis), and so might still consider Charles' narrative as naturalisable within the documentational framework of the hospital world. However, after Charles' return to the hospital world this framework itself also begins to disintegrate. Although events on the ward are still exclusively presented through dialogue, the speaker labels are inexplicably dropped (aside from in one short segment in which Doctor Y. asks Charles to write down his memories of the war). Considered in terms of conventional associations, the change is part of a transition from the documentational to the novelistic, which is finally completed with the appearance of a third-person narrative voice in the closing sections. The fictionality of the hospital world is thus made unquestionably apparent, as this new narrator goes far beyond the confines of objectively observable 'fact' in relaying the characters' mental

states (i.e. displays 'omniscience'). Ultimately, 'the fictional' (or 'the novelistic') proves to be the only framework capable of uniting disparate and essentially incompatible forms of discourse, thus rendering all attempts at naturalising the diegesis obsolete. For to appeal to the fictional/novelistic *as* a framework according to which one might naturalise diegetic oddities is not to naturalise at all – rather, it is to accept the impossibility of naturalisation, to admit that there is no form of 'real-world' discourse which serves as an adequate diegetic model.

The breakdown of the illusion (or rather, the pretence) of non-fictionality serves to undermine the hospital world's ontological primacy, since such a breakdown essentially foregrounds the fictionality of the entire novel. Indeed, if the illusion of non-fictionality had never been formally attempted in the first place, the similarity of the hospital world to the real world would likely have been enough to assure it ontological primacy throughout. In damaging the air of ontological authority which the hospital world had attempted to invoke, *Briefing* grants its two reference worlds ontological equivalence since both worlds are explicitly shown to be fictional constructs. The narrator even provides an analogue to the novel's illusion-breaking design in describing Francisco Goya's early paintings, in which

> there is something that disturbs, but you don't know what it is. Not at first. It is because of any group of those people, the charming, the formal, the pastoral, the essentially civilized, there is always one that looks straight out of the group, out of the canvas, into the eyes of the person who is looking at the picture. This person who refuses to conform to the conventions of the picture the artist has set him in, questions and in fact destroys the convention. […] the young heroes, the civilization, all these dissolve away because of that long straight gaze from the one who looks back out of the canvas and says silently that he or she knows it is all a load of old socks. He is there to tell you that he thinks so. (*B*, pp.228-229)

Until this point, the inconsistencies and contradictions in the novel's diegetic framework may have passed largely unnoticed, as the unknown 'something' that disturbs the ontology of the storyworld. In a sense, therefore, this passage *is* the long straight gaze looking out of the canvas, since it foregrounds the way in which the appearance of the narrating voice demonstrates that the hospital world is just as much a fiction as the world of the delusion. In undermining the reader's faith in the form through which the world is mediated, the novel thus cues the reader to cast about for other means of determining which world is the 'real' storyworld, or at the very least, to admit of other possibilities.[192]

It is worth stressing that the familiarity of the hospital world to the reader's real world is still likely to constitute a powerful ontological claim. Of course, foregrounding the fictionality of the storyworld as a whole *should* mean that content alone is no longer sufficient

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[192] Of course, this is only a *hypothetical* reader's response based on the novel's form. It is entirely possible that an actual reader might not respond to these cues – however, as I go on to show, *Briefing* also undermines the reader's faith in the hospital world in other ways.

to determine which world is the 'real' storyworld – after all, anything can happen in fiction, and this evidently *is* a fiction. According to Wolfgang Iser, however, since reading involves thinking 'the thoughts of another person [….] they must to a greater or lesser degree represent an unfamiliar experience, containing elements which at any one moment must be partially inaccessible to us' (Iser 1978 [1976], p.126). Therefore, when selecting from 'the network of possible connections' presented by the text in order to form gestalts, 'our selections tend first to be guided by those parts of the experience that still seem to be familiar. They will influence the gestalt we form, and so we will tend to leave out of account a number of other possibilities which our selective decisions have helped to formulate but have left on the fringes' (Iser 1978, p.126).[193] Given the experimental data on the effects of priming on the perception of ambiguous figures, we might say that the reader is equally 'primed' by his or her everyday experience to experience texts according to similar gestalts.[194]

However, Iser states that what is excluded by such selections does not disappear. Instead, by making certain selections we produce 'an overflow of possibilities that remain virtual as opposed to actual', and from whose virtual presence 'arise the "alien associations" which begin to accumulate and so bombard the formulated gestalten' (Iser 1978, p.126). Moreover, 'as the excluded possibilities become more and more obtrusive, so they may come more and more to take on the status of alternatives rather than fringe influences', thus prompting the reader to 'dispute his own gestalten' (Iser 1978, pp.129, 131). To illustrate this point, we might consider the distinction between, say, seeing a cloud as a camel versus seeing a fully ambiguous figure (such as Joseph Jastrow's duck-rabbit illusion). The former is predominantly a cloud, although its particular shape also affords the possibility of seeing it as a camel. It never becomes a camel, but it might become to us a 'camel-shaped cloud'. An ambiguous figure, however, *is* both of its objects, and always retains the possibility of actually *being* the image of that which it is currently not being the image of once both possibilities have been apprehended.

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[193] Indeed, when encountering those texts in which the ontological hierarchy is completely collapsed (such as William Burroughs' *Naked Lunch* (1959), or Paul Ableman's *I Hear Voices* (1958)), the reader is likely to search for those elements which are not only familiar in the real world but which also become familiar over the course of the text through repetition. Such elements serve as a kind of ontological anchor, a starting-point from which to structure an ontological hierarchy and to thus naturalise the remainder as hallucination.

[194] For example, B. R. Bugelski and D. A. Alampay (1961) demonstrate that prior exposure to pictures of relevant objects influences the interpretation of an ambiguous figure; Emily Balcetis and Rick Dale (2007) demonstrate that it is primarily the conceptual (rather than the perceptual) aspect of the prime which biases object identification in ambiguous figures; and Paula Goolkasian and Courtney Woodberry (2010) similarly suggest that it is the semantic content of the prime which biases object identification, but add that 'Diverting the participants' attention to the physical characteristics of the stimuli during encoding eliminated the prime's influence on complex object perception' (Goolkasian and Woodberry 2010, p.175).

In terms of its ontological structure, *Briefing* comes to present just such an ambiguous figure through the process which Iser describes. For the majority of Charles' narrative, the reader excludes the possibility of an alternative ontological arrangement, even though such an arrangement presents itself as possible through the strain placed on the 'non-fictional' diegetic framework. Moreover, the hospital world does not present *completely* realistic content. The names of the doctors, Doctor X., Doctor Y., and later even Doctor Z., might at first be naturalised – according to documentational norms – as pseudonyms used to protect their identity (much like the unnamed 'Night Nurse' of the Admittance Sheet). However, this interpretation is undermined early in the novel with the naming of Charles' nurse (Alice Kincaid), which shows that not all of the characters are protected by the same convention of anonymity. If this were not enough, Charles himself appears to pun on Doctor Y.'s surname in one of the dialogues: 'I'm called… what? Who calls me? What? Why? You are Doctor Why, and I am called Why – that's it, it was the good ship Why that foundered' (*B*, p.28). Of course, it is still *possible* that Charles lights on the name 'Doctor Why' purely by accident, given his progression through the different interrogatives, and the novel is careful to preserve this ambiguity. It is even *possible* (though unlikely in the extreme) that there should be two doctors working at a hospital whose surnames are genuinely consecutive letters of the alphabet. While the reader is likely to push these non-realistic elements to the fringes in order to maintain the ontological primacy of the hospital world, they still 'cast their shadow over the gestalt that has relegated them' (Iser 1978, p.126), and contribute to the mounting strain on the overall storyworld's ontological hierarchy.

The 'figure' becomes fully ambiguous, however, when Charles' delusional world offers a way of explaining and incorporating aspects of the hospital world. Merk Ury's preamble during 'The Conference' (which he claims is not the actual 'Briefing' promised) stresses that in remembering their mission the descent team will come to themselves '"with only a vague feeling of recognition, and probably dissociated, disoriented, ill, discouraged, and unable to believe"' (*B*, p.124). Moreover, when (or if) the messengers are finally '"aroused to [their] real condition"', they will be in the position '"of a rescuer of a drowning person, or a doctor in a city that has an epidemic of madness"' (*B*, p.124). In effect, the team is to expect a period of insanity, and after coming through it they will find the world around them hostile and unwilling to believe them. Not only does this framework offer a means of explaining the course of Charles' 'insanity' and the responses of the doctors in labelling him as insane, but it also potentially 'explains' much of what we subsequently learn from Rosemary Baines' letter. The overwhelming effect which Charles' lecture apparently has on Rosemary, and the 'parallel

[….] crazy stream' of words and ideas which Frederick Larson finds welling up within him (*B*, pp.160-161), can both be viewed as the consequences of their returning 'memory' of their purpose as part of the descent team. (Frederick's use of the neologism '"brainprinting"' when discussing indoctrination is particularly noticeable in this regard, given that it is the term used by Merk to describe the means by which the team will remember their mission (*B*, pp.158, 125).) Above all, this framework accounts for *why* Charles' breakdown occurs in the first place, why Rosemary's letter should have such an effect on *him*, and why he travels to see Rosemary and Frederick directly after the onset of his psychosis.

The resultant figure is ambiguous precisely because it opens up the kind of 'chicken-or-egg' problem of infinite regression. On the one hand, the framework of the delusional world can always claim that it is because Charles and Rosemary are part of the descent team that Rosemary's letter affected Charles in the way that it did, since it provided him with a reminder of his purpose on Earth and so 'triggered' his re-awakening. On the other hand, the framework of the hospital world can always respond by claiming that the letter contributed to the onset of Charles' psychosis, and that certain of its elements have subsequently been woven into Charles' delusion. In much the same way, Charles' narrative justifies its 'truths' by suggesting that they are the common stock from which the world's religions have emerged, while the psychiatric framework explains Charles' delusional apprehension of 'truths' as emerging from his previous occupation as a professor of Classics. In terms of cause and effect the two frameworks are direct inversions of each other, taking as prior causal 'truth' that which the other framework explains as a subsequent effect. Moreover, by presenting the world of the delusion before Rosemary's letter, the novel attempts to increase the appeal of the former's explanatory framework through the narrative logic of *post hoc, ergo propter hoc*. Accessing the causal framework of the hospital world thus takes slightly more effort, given that it requires an active reordering of the time-course of the *sjužet* so as to reproduce the event structure of the fabula. In this way, the novel attempts to introduce some measure of balance to the two frameworks by rhetorically tipping the scales in favour of the delusional world (since as has been observed, the reader is already primed to accept the framework of the hospital world).

To this rhetorical 'weight' of the *sjužet* we might also add the various strategies which *Briefing* uses to immerse the reader in the world of the delusion. In terms of the time devoted to its representation, the first half of the novel is dominated by the narrative of the delusional world, thus monopolising attentional resources in an attempt to make the reader forget (at least occasionally) the 'frame' world of the hospital. In terms of (pseudo-)presence, Charles' narrative certainly offers more cues for the enactive experience of the existents and events of

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its reference world.[195] As has been noted, the parts of the novel concerned with the hospital world contain little to no representation of experientiality until the intrusion of the third-person narrator in the final quarter. Indeed, the sudden introduction of this diegetic form foregrounds the extent to which readers' previous imaginings of the hospital world were reliant on their own schemata rather than what was presented by the text itself (the significance of which I discuss in Section 2 of this chapter).[196] Charles' narrative, on the other hand, for the most part offers substantial experiential material to facilitate the reader's 'embodied exploration of a non-existent environment' (Caracciolo 2014a, p.95). In encoding a particular perspective on the world presented, Charles' narrative cues the reader to situate his or her 'virtual body' (Caracciolo 2014a, pp.159-161) in a more definite relationship to the non-existent environment (more definite, that is, than the hospital documents, which rarely offer any such cues).

Furthermore, in terms of affect and interest, Charles' narrative presents situations which are far more likely to produce emotionally charged responses. Such responses are in part due to the content of the narrative, which often courts the horrific (at least before Charles' ascent): the orgy of the blood-drenched women, the dead baby festering on a pile of meat, the rat-dogs engaged in senseless murder and rape (sometimes simultaneously), all seem designed to compel the reader's attention through their excessive grotesqueness. However, this dimension of heightened affect is partly due to the bodily relationships encoded by the narrative form itself. During his involvement in the orgy, Charles' narrative contains a wealth of sensory detail: 'Felicity pushed a piece of meat that had been singed a little, but was still raw and bloody, into my mouth – and I fell on the meat with the rest, pulling gobbets of it off a bloody hunk that was propped over the fire' (*B*, pp.62-63). Moreover, even though Charles often merely watches what happens in the city, the detail of his descriptions suggest that he is physically close to what is happening: 'Puppies tumbled out of her scarlet slit in a spout of blood and tissue, while she fought for her life [....] Her sharp muzzle had hairy flesh hanging from her teeth, and […] she snapped and bit at the two tall staggering males who menaced her'

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[195] Bernaerts similarly suggests that 'This alternative possible world becomes the center of the textual universe not just because it is a more eventful world and because it dominates the first half of the novel in terms of pages, but also because of the rhetoric and style of the narrative' (Bernaerts 2014, p.201). However, the 'rhetoric and style' to which he is referring are the 'poetic features' of Charles' narrative, such as metaphor, apostrophe, chiasmus, alliteration, etc. (Bernaerts 2014, p.201), rather than the cues for world-enactment and embodiment that I am considering here.

[196] Again, although the text cues such responses this does not *necessarily* mean that a real reader will experience the text in this way. It is perfectly possible, for instance, that a real reader might experience the world of the hospital as more 'present' than the world of the delusion. However, as I am attempting to demonstrate, *Briefing* tries to bring its two worlds into a state of ontological equivalence through a number of different strategies, thus strengthening the possibility that the reader will be affected by their accumulation, or at least respond sufficiently to any one of them, and so come to experience the consequences of this ontological equivalence.

(*B*, p.84). As an example of how such bodily relationships produce (or at least contribute to) affective responses, we might cite Caracciolo's 'spider' thought-experiment:

> I may ask you to imagine a spider crawling up a wall. Or I may ask you to imagine a spider crawling up your arm. Finally, I may ask you to imagine the hairy legs of a large spider softly padding up your arm. In itself, the difference in the represented objects (a wall or your arm, just 'a spider' or a large spider with hairy legs) does not explain the difference in your responses [....] The point is that in imagining a spider crawling up a wall we may keep a safe distance from the object of our imaginings; our experiential background – in this case, our fear of spiders – is activated only to a limited extent. But as the spider draws closer to us, and as our imaginings take on more detail, our imaginative experience – that is to say, our *response* to the representations – becomes stronger. (Caracciolo 2014a, pp.37-38)

As in Kendall L. Walton's 'spelunking' thought-experiment (Walton 1997, p.39), the reader's affective response is bound up with the way in which the text instructs the reader to imagine a particular relationship between his or her body and another imaginary element. This is not to say that affective response is *always* or *necessarily* a product of such explicitly embodied imaginings, but it is telling that both Caracciolo and Walton use such examples to make their points efficiently and in the hopes of appealing to a wide audience. Yet affective response, according to William James, is also one of the vitally important factors in contributing to the sense of reality, *especially* when such a response is strongly embodied: 'The reason of the belief is undoubtedly the bodily commotion which the exciting idea sets up. "Nothing which I can feel like *that* can be false"' (James 1901 [1890], p.308). Therefore, while on the one hand we might assume that (pseudo-)presence has a greater chance of generating affective responses, on the other hand affective responses can contribute to the sense of the reality of whatever generated them. While affect is only one of several factors which determine reality (as James acknowledges), in *Briefing* it serves as another tributary to the increasing sense of the reality of the world of the delusion.

The explanatory framework offered by the 'conference' episode is potentially attractive because it opens up a way for the reader to resolve the tension between the *felt* reality of the world of the delusion and the unreality ascribed to it by the world of the hospital. Within this 'delusional' framework, the world of the hospital can still exist, but Charles' experiences are now more than dreams or hallucinations – or at the very least, they are more than *mere* dreams or hallucinations. In other words, the sea voyage, the island war, and the ascent in the Crystal are still understood to have taken place in a different kind of world to the hospital world, but these experiences are now granted a greater ontological validity than being simply the entirely subjective products of a disordered mind. The rules according to which the hospital world sustains its ontological primacy require it to deny Charles' experiences any such validity:

'DOCTOR Y: Well, whatever you do, remember this: you aren't on a raft on the Atlantic. You did not lose your friends into the arms of a flying saucer. You were never a sailor' (*B*, p.28). However, as far as Charles is concerned, both worlds can be equally real: 'Your dreams or your life. But it is not *or*, that is the point. It is *and*. Everything is. Your dreams *and* your life' (*B*, p.141). This is not to say that the explanatory framework offered by the hospital world is dismissed – far from it – but rather that the two frameworks come closer to being equally viable, in tandem with their respective worlds moving towards ontological equivalence.

While *Briefing* might cause the reader to 'hesitate' between naturalistic and non-naturalistic frames, it is important to note that what is at stake is not so much whether events *can* be explained naturalistically.[197] There is nothing in terms of events or existents within the hospital world which subverts natural laws. Although the diegesis of Charles' narrative poses a problem for the documentational framework, the introduction of the omniscient third-person narrator technically resolves that problem by abandoning the hospital world's commitment to that framework (at the cost of the illusion of non-fictionality). With regard to the novel's 'content', therefore, it is not that something inexplicable needs to be explained, but rather that the reader is offered an alternative way of arranging the novel's ontological system. Whether that alternative is taken, or even considered, is down to the extent to which the world of the delusion has come to seem as real as the world of the hospital (or the world of the hospital has come to seem as *un*real as the world of the delusion). Indeed, if we accept that ontological subordination is effected through the 'explanation' of other realities, then the two processes should mutually reinforce one another: a framework is chosen because of the felt reality of the world from which it originates, and that world in turn comes to feel more real because the framework explains and subordinates other worlds (and their respective frameworks). However, other factors are likely to prevent a complete resolution of the ontological conflict. As Iser points out, a gestalt is more unstable in proportion to the number of alternative possibilities that have been excluded in the process of its formation. Moreover, since 'The appearance of an alternative symbolic universe poses a threat because its very existence demonstrates empirically that one's own universe is less than inevitable' (Berger and Luckmann 1991, p.126), it is reasonable to suppose that the storyworld of *Briefing* remains ontologically unstable.

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[197] In this respect, *Briefing* does not entirely fit within Todorov's conception of the 'fantastic' (Todorov 1973, p.33). The reader's response might be similar, insofar as it involves the hesitation between explanatory frameworks, but the cause of that hesitation is not the apparent subversion of some natural law. Moreover, Todorov's requirement that a character should (usually) also experience this hesitation does not seem to be met in *Briefing*, since Charles accepts the reality of the delusional world.

Yet for the reader who does not respond to any of the novel's other cues, or who is still unwilling to deconstruct the storyworld's ontological hierarchy, the abrupt ending serves to affirm the reality of the delusional world even as it is explicitly denied. The second half of the novel, in taking 'the shape of an epistolary detective novel' (Bernaerts 2014, p.197), invites the reader to assume that Charles' narrative in the first half will be significant in relation to his eventual 'cure'. Such an assumption is rooted in the epistemologically oriented forms of both detective fiction and psychoanalysis: the 'truth' shall set the world to rights by ordering all disparate elements into a previously unguessed-at narrative. Both genres thus invite a reading-strategy which is essentially 'results-based', in that they configure the narrative as a 'problem' which has the potential to be solved through interpretative activity. However, *Briefing*'s ending refuses to deliver the promised *denouement*. Instead, the efficacy of the electroshock therapy appears as a kind of *deus ex machina*, and the 'solution' of the cure is brought about in a manner completely unrelated to the preceding narrative. The ending thus negates any sense of the value of any such epistemological reading, which only assigns relevance and significance to the content of Charles' hallucinations and delusions in relation to a potential cure. Since no such relation holds, this reading strategy is made to seem unattractive because it renders so much of the novel irrelevant, leaving far too much out of the selection which forms the gestalt of the work as a whole. Moreover, such a reading potentially introduces an element of cognitive dissonance in that it forces readers to acknowledge that they have essentially wasted their time and effort (why bother with psychoanalysis when electroshock will do?). To ameliorate such dissonance, and to find a less unstable gestalt, readers are likely to cast about for a different way of making the narrative meaningful, even if that requires abandoning the naturalistic framework and the ontological hierarchy that goes with it.

Essentially, *Briefing* attempts to manipulate the reader's existential feelings by employing, and then subverting, the ontological values tied to certain formal and generic conventions. Lessing uses a similar strategy in *The Golden Notebook* during Anna's breakdown, when Saul instructs Anna to write a novel and gives her the opening sentence – the very same sentence which opens the third-person narrative which 'frames' Anna's diaries. At first the significance of this revelation appears to be predominantly epistemological: rather than providing an authoritative account of the storyworld, the 'Free Women' narrative appears to have no greater (and perhaps even less) claim to reliability than Anna's 'subjective' diaries. However, the closing 'Free Women' section provides an account of Anna's breakdown which clearly contradicts the account given in the diary sections, completely changing actants and events within its reference world. The reader thus experiences an upheaval of the novel's

ontological hierarchy, being prompted to doubt certain aspects of the reality of the storyworld (with some critics even going so far as the doubt the 'reality' of Saul altogether).[198] Again, the novel invites the reader to construct an ontological and epistemological hierarchy through the sense of reality and reliability conventionally associated with certain forms. It then undermines this hierarchy and, in doing so, cues the reader to experience a shift in the sense of reality at a point which roughly corresponds to the character's psychotic break (although unlike *Pincher Martin*, *The Comforters*, and *Cuckoo's Nest* the cause of this overlap is not tied to the same experiential event). Therefore, as in *Briefing*, ontological upheaval performs a phenomenological function, in that it prompts an experiential response from the reader that is in some respects isomorphic to the character's experience of psychosis.

The strategies used in *The Four-Gated City* follow essentially the same principles but are used to accomplish slightly different goals. Martha's experience of her self-induced 'breakdown' is also presented as a document, with the third-person narrator self-reflexively absenting him-/her-/itself in order that Martha's experience might be recounted 'in her own words' (*Four-Gated City*, p.587). The fictionality of the third-person narrative frame thus makes itself apparent at the same moment that the document appears. Similarly, the narrator abandons the narrative in the final section of the novel, so that the 'future' of the storyworld (after the catastrophe at Porton Down) is also presented through documents (such as newspaper reports and letters). In this novel the conventional association between the document and 'reality' is thus not used in order to be undermined but instead works to realise those elements of the storyworld which are not a part of the reader's actual reality. This formal strategy reflects the novel's theme of schizophrenic experience being a misunderstood product of telepathic ability. Just as the explicitly fictional elements (i.e. those which do not correspond to real-world events) are formally 'made real', so experiences which are explicitly 'non-real' (i.e. the voices and visions of hallucination) are shown to be real within the storyworld.

Memoirs of a Survivor, however, completely abandons the strategic use of formal conventions to influence the reader's sense of the reality of the storyworld. At the same time, it more fully realises the 'two worlds' motif, with multiple characters crossing between the 'realistic' world of the collapsing city and the strange, mystical world 'beyond the wall'. The framework of psychosis, although not entirely invalidated, is nevertheless not *invited* as an explanatory framework, whereas in *The Golden Notebook*, *The Four-Gated City*, and *Briefing*

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[198] See Rubenstein 1979, pp.104-105; Linda S. Kauffman 1992, pp.145-146; and Evelyn J. Hinz and John J. Teunissen 1973, p.458.

this explanation is explicitly offered by the text (although in *The Four-Gated City* it also comes to be explicitly undermined). If we therefore understand these novels as displaying a trajectory in Lessing's attempts to explore the nature of reality, it would appear that *Briefing* represents something of an exhaustion (or completion) of certain ideas regarding the experience of reality.

Section 2: Expectation and Sense-Making

The strategies used to make the two worlds of *Briefing* seem real fall into two groups. On the one hand, the world of the delusion is afforded a sense of reality through predominantly experiential means: affect, presence, embodiment, duration, etc. In other words, it is made to seem real as a result of the ways in which the reader enacts the narrative, and the experiential dimension of the activity of reading itself. On the other hand, the strategies used to make the world of the hospital seem real – formal convention, group consensus, the subordination of other worlds through explanation, the 'priming' effects of real-world similarity – appear to be largely contextual; that is, they are always dependent upon some sort of relationship *between* worlds in order to be effective. Even the 'group consensus' of the hospital staff might be said to fall into this category, given that such consensus is a relationship between subjective realities which is established through discourse. The 'contextual' in this sense often goes hand in hand with the 'conceptual', since it is precisely in terms of the relationship between elements that the recognition of 'contradiction' and the activity of 'judgement' come into play.

    In certain respects, these groupings can be understood as part of an attempt to construct the novel in a manner that is experientially isomorphic to the hallucinatory state. According to Jaspers,

> With every hallucination proper, a need is experienced to regard the hallucinated object as real. The need remains even when the false judgment of reality has been corrected in the light of the total context of perception and subsequent knowledge. But should the patient, although such a correction is feasible, retain his false judgment of reality in spite of the known objections, in spite of reflection and with absolute certainty – overcoming indeed any initial doubts he may have had – then we are dealing with delusion proper: such a belief is no longer understandable in terms of hallucination alone. (Jaspers 1997, v.1, p.96)

Hallucination is thus precisely one of those cases where subjective experience comes into conflict with context and conceptual knowledge. Reflective delusional belief in the reality of the hallucination would therefore appear to be a case of the experiential triumphing over the contextual. James seems to suggest something similar when he speaks of 'a *sense of reality, a*

feeling of objective presence, a perception of what we may call "*something there*," more deep and more general than any of the special and particular "senses"', which can pervade hallucinatory and mystical experience (James 1985 [1902], p.58). When such feelings are present, 'they are, as a rule, much more convincing than results established by mere logic ever are', and indeed override logical objections that may contradict them (James 1985, p.72). It therefore seems that James also considers delusional experience – which he views as the 'other half' of mysticism (James 1985, p.426) – as an instance of 'sense' or 'feeling' (i.e. the experiential) triumphing over 'logical contradiction' (i.e. the conceptual, and by implication, the contextual).[199]

Briefing exhibits essentially the same structure, in that its formal organisation pits the experiential against the contextual and the conceptual. However, the way in which the novel makes use of this structure is also meaningful in terms of the way it models the experience of reality. To begin with, the world of the hospital – the world that the reader takes to be the 'real' world – is constructed entirely out of non-narrative discourse between actants within the storyworld. As I have suggested, it is partly *because* it is constructed out of such discourse that the hospital world convinces us of its reality. The novel thus actively demonstrates that

> language *realizes* a world, in the double sense of apprehending and producing it. Conversation is the actualizing of this realizing efficacy of language in the face-to-face situations of individual existence. In conversation the objectifications of language become objects of individual consciousness. (Berger and Luckmann 1991, p.173)

However, the introduction of the third-person narrator towards the end of the novel makes the reader aware of how sketchy and vague his or her imaginings of the hospital world were when produced only by non-narrative discourse. The contrast foregrounds how this world can essentially expunge the experiential and yet still be experienced by the reader as the primary reality of the storyworld. Therefore, factors such as presence and affect can potentially be ignored if they do not fit within the consensus that is established through discourse.

In effect, *Briefing* demonstrates that the sense of reality is, for the most part, dependent upon the frameworks and schemata which structure our experience, rather than on the actual qualities of the experience itself. The novel even makes this point explicitly, and in doing so

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[199] Indeed, James attempts to separate the 'two halves' of mysticism on the basis of whether the experience can 'run the gauntlet of confrontation with the total context of experience, just like what comes from the outer world of sense' (James 1985 [1902], pp.426-427). However, it must be remembered that here James is talking about exceptional experiences. In *The Principles of Psychology* (1890), where he refers to the usual experience of reality, he states that 'no mere disconnected rarity […] ever displaces vivid things or permanent things from our belief [….] A rare phenomenon, to displace frequent ones, must belong with others more frequent still' (James 1901, p.301). In most cases, therefore, a phenomenon must fit with the overall context of experience in order to be believed in as real.

explains how it is that the primary real maintains its place at the top of the ontological hierarchy:

> the expectation of a thing must meet with that thing—or at least, that is the form in which it must be seen by you. If you have shaped in your mind an eight-legged monster with saucer eyes, then if there is such a creature in that sea you will not see anything less, or more—that is what you are set to see. Armies of angels could appear out of the waves, but if you are waiting for a one-eyed giant, you could sail right through them and not feel more than a freshening of the air. (*B*, p.20)

Indeed, this phenomenological point is important enough to be made a second time within the novel, when Charles first sees the ruined city:

> I had not seen anything yesterday but a grassy savannah with some rocks scattered about among low trees. Now the ruinous foundation was unmistakable. It was as if the knowledge of what I would see caused me to see what otherwise I could not—for I already half believed that my seeing had created what I saw. (*B*, p.49)

The principle is essentially the same as that which Iser draws on regarding gestalt formation: that we perceive, for the most part, that which we are already 'primed' to perceive. We can thus be blind to phenomena which fall outside of our preordained selections, and 'fill in' that which is not actually given.[200]

However, what is peculiar to Charles' experience here is the conscious awareness of this process as a part of his experience, his sense that his 'seeing had created' what was seen.[201] According to Louis Sass, such an awareness is particular to schizophrenic experience, which in this respect is 'reminiscent […] of philosophical idealism or solipsism' (Sass 1992, p.278). Thus 'the objects of schizophrenic perception *are* often felt to have subjectivized status', as in Daniel Paul Schreber's experiences of '"miracled-up insects" or the "fleeting-improvised-men"' (Sass 1992, p.277). Here we have yet another instance of a normal function of perception being taken to an extreme, and of a conceptual awareness becoming reified as lived experience – the result in this case being an abnormal experience of the world as formed by perception rather than pre-existing the act of perception.[202]

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[200] Of course, we do not need to understand this as a literal 'filling in' of the visual field (an idea which enactivism rejects), but rather as a case of being blind to experiential gaps (just as we often do not know that we do not see what we do not see), and having a sense of the presence (i.e. accessibility) of what is not actually perceived (see Chapter 1, Section 2, and Chapter 2, Section 2, for further details).

[201] As discussed in Chapter 1, Section 2, there is a sense in which this idea is not entirely inaccurate, since perceptual experience is schema-guided. Again, we might refer to Maurice Merleau-Ponty's assertion that 'perception is just that act which creates at a stroke, along with the cluster of data, the meaning which unites them' (Merleau-Ponty 2002 [1945], p.42).

[202] See Chapter 1, Section 1, for Sass' explanation of how this occurs; and see Chapter 2, Section 3, Chapter 3, Section 2, and Chapter 4, Section 2, for other examples of the same basic principle.

Indeed, here we might also identify another parallel between the schizophrenic and the metafictional, in that metafiction draws attention to 'the *creation/description* paradox which defines the status of *all* fiction' (Waugh 2001 [1984], p.88). Essentially, fictional narrative creates what it pretends to describe, and metafiction explicitly acknowledges that the world of the fiction does not pre-exist its description. As I observed in Section 1 of this chapter, in *Briefing* narrative is shown to be a conspicuously *creative* mode in comparison with the other text-types which make up the novel, further contributing to the isomorphism between the experience of psychosis and the novel's form of metafictional play. In this regard, the narrator's dismissal of the 'whimsy' of the gods episode, and his subsequent acknowledgement that he intends to use 'the contemporary mode' for the conference section (*B*, p.115), can be understood as of a piece with Charles' sense of producing what he experiences.

Yet the narrator's acknowledgement of the fictionality of his narrative – especially since it occurs in relation to these two sections – also functions to undermine the explanatory power of the delusional framework. The rather *kitsch* science-fiction story ('"brainprints, of course"' (*B*, p.125)) is thus no more 'real' than any of the other parts of Charles' narrative, and he is no more part of a 'descent team' with a mission to spread universal harmony than he is a marooned sailor hunting down a crystal spaceship. At the same time, however, this acknowledgement of fictionality suggests that the narrator is deliberately narrativising an experience which is otherwise potentially inexpressible. As Kums puts it, the 'facetious tone' of the episode serves as 'an ironic comment on the impossibility of expressing the absolute in words' (Kums 1981, p.207) – hence the multiple repetitions of the quotation from T. S. Eliot's *Sweeney Agonistes* (1932), 'I gotta use words when I talk to you' (*B*, pp.105, 136). Rubenstein similarly considers these sections of the novel to be 'stylistically awkward', but argues that they 'are nonetheless consistent with the larger design: the creation of verbal equivalents for various kinds of perception and communication', some of which are 'deeply interior and nearly inarticulable' (Rubenstein 1979, p.185-186). Indeed, in the long 'cosmic' section preceding these episodes the narrator frequently shows signs of struggling to express his experience, with his narration becoming littered with qualifications and contradictions: 'another, different, *but* in some places matching, pattern, of stronger rarer light (*or* sound) […] a feeding channel, between the outer (*or* inner, according to how one looked at it) web of thought *or* feeling'; 'I could feel, *or* sense, *or* recognize, a pulse of individuality'; 'They were manipulated from above (*or* below) by physical forces' (*B*, pp.95, 96, 98-99 [my italics]). These qualifications are often related to the sensory and the spatial, since in entering this 'new dimension, or level' Charles has abandoned his 'habitual pattern of substance' and possesses a 'new spritely shape' (*B*, pp.88-89). In this

radically different form of embodiment, and possessing a radically different sense of time, new experiences are available to him that he cannot fully express in ordinary language.

As noted in the introduction to this chapter, several critics have argued that a central theme in Lessing's work, from *The Golden Notebook* onwards, is the inadequacy of language (or narrative) to express reality (or the experience of reality). Lessing herself stated that she 'recognized the limitations of language for the first time when [she] was searching for the words to depict Anna's dreams in *The Golden Notebook*' (Lessing, in Schwarzkopf 1996 [1981], p.106). In acknowledging the failure of language to encompass reality, Lessing thus inhabits that 'pole' of metafiction 'that finally accepts a substantial real world whose significance is not entirely composed of relationships within language' (Waugh 2001, p.53). Since language is 'pre-eminently the instrument which maintains the everyday' (Waugh 2001, p.53), it necessarily fails when attempting to articulate that which falls outside of the norm. Understandably, therefore, the inadequacy of language certainly pertains to schizophrenic experience, especially in relation to atypical states of embodiment (or disembodiment). Even in reality disturbances of a 'relatively mild form', such as the initial unreality of the delusional atmosphere, 'Description always proceeds by metaphor as it is impossible to express the experiences directly' (Jaspers, 1997, v.1, p.62). Indeed, during her breakdown Anna acknowledges that 'the real experience can't be described [….] a row of asterisks, like an old-fashioned novel, might be better. Or a symbol of some kind, perhaps, or a square. Anything at all, but not words' (*Golden Notebook*, p.609). Similarly, Charles can remember that 'Harmony' is the propositional content of the 'Message' which the gods or planetary representatives wish to impart (*B*, pp.113, 133), but he cannot recall the state of being in which that harmony was experienced within the make-up of the universe. In this way, *Briefing* demonstrates that certain kinds of knowledge cannot be expressed propositionally (tellingly, 'philosophical' is one of the words which makes no sense to Charles after he awakes from his narcosis (*B*, p.178)). As Lessing explicitly states in the novel's afterword: 'one has to be particularly trained to believe that to put a label on a feeling, a state of mind, a thing; to find a set of words or a phrase; in short, to describe it; is the same as understanding and experiencing it' (*B*, p.250). The sentiment is almost identical to that which Ludwig Wittgenstein expresses when he observes that a 'difficulty arises from our imagining the experience (the pain, for instance) as a thing, for which of course we have a name and whose concept is therefore quite easy to grasp' (Wittgenstein 1992, v.2, p.43e).

Yet *Briefing* not only points to the inadequacy of language in the *communication* of experiential 'knowledge', but also suggests that such inadequacy leads to the individual's own

eventual misunderstanding of it. The failure of language to encompass or contain Charles' transcendental '"knowings"' (*B*, p.91) is thus only half of the process, for he also concretises and distorts his experiences in attempting to make sense of them through language. Indeed, the features of his narrative which we have considered so far suggest that he is his own narratee. His logorrhoea at the start of the novel, for instance, is clearly not produced for an interlocutor within the hospital world (much like the logorrhoea of real-life patients such as Jesse Watkins). Equally, after the onset of his narcosis his narrative is precluded from having existence within the hospital world at all. As noted in Section 1 of this chapter, the diegesis of the island narrative is explicitly marked as taking place on the island, thereby suggesting that Charles is also not producing the narrative after awakening. Moreover, the shift back to simultaneous narration after the 'descent' suggests that Charles once again loses his self-awareness as a narrating consciousness upon re-entering the world of the hospital, and even begins to incorporate the conversation of the hospital staff into his narrative directly before awakening. Such a conspicuous loss of narrative control would appear to contradict the assumption that he is consciously producing the narrative after the event. Yet there is also no narratee on the island or in the cosmic ether. At the same time, the reader serves as a poor choice for the narrative's *implied* recipient, since at least some of Charles' narrative *is* produced within the hospital world, and some of the later simultaneous narration appears to lack an implied narratee altogether. Instead, a more consistent (and potentially less problematic) narratee is Charles himself, with the passages of simultaneous narration being his 'thought stream' (Draine 1983, p.96) which he sometimes outwardly verbalises, and the more coherent and self-aware passages being his attempts to narrativise his experiences and thus make sense of them. As *The Comforters* makes apparent, the nature of inner speech already presupposes that the subject is both the speaker and the listener, a duality which is itself indicative of how one's own use of language can shape reality (both apprehending and producing it) even without an interlocutor present.

Charles' increasing self-awareness as a narrator is thus bound up with his recognition of the failure of his own language to fully articulate his 'knowings' to himself, so that the widening gap between the 'experiencing-I' and the 'narrating-I' reflects a similar gap between experience and understanding. Ultimately, he resorts to metaphor and narrative allegory to attempt to make the experience meaningful (much as Lok, in *The Inheritors* (1955), discovers that metaphor and simile enable him to make sense of his unfamiliar experiences of the 'New People' (*The Inheritors*, p.194)). However, the separation between the reality of the experience and the language used to make sense of it is not sustained, for the narrating-I once more

becomes the experiencing-I and Charles seems to become one of the members of the descent team. When Charles returns to the world of the hospital, therefore, it seems that what he remembers particularly are events and existents which were a part of the narrative, *including those which at the time he explicitly acknowledged to be allegorical*. For instance, he not only remembers the river 'full of corpses', the rat-dogs who 'fought' and 'ate each other', and the coming of the Crystal, but he also recalls 'The Emanence [….] The light' and 'The azure-eyed. The flashing-eyed' (a stock epithet for Athena/Minerva in Classical literature, and one which Charles himself uses during his narrative) (*B*, pp.135, 143, 135, 138, 112). Most importantly, he asks Doctor Y. if he was 'At the lecture? At the briefing?' (*B*, p.135), which suggests that he now understands the conference episode to have actually taken place.

The allegorical narratives which Charles constructs to try to make sense of his experience thus appear to become concretised, shifting in his own mind from figurative representations to literal truths. This shift is most strongly suggested by the reappearance of the 'experiencing-I' as the team descends to Earth, since it appears that the narrator has *become* a character in a narrative which he originally had no part in and which he himself took to be allegorical. Charles' delusions, and ultimately his 'hallucinations', are thus shaped by his own attempts to make sense of his abnormal experiences. Such shaping is inevitable, since 'I "distort" the reality' of uncommon experiences 'as soon as I begin to use the common language in interpreting them' (Berger and Luckmann 1991, p.40). Indeed, Jaspers similarly observes that in psychosis 'It is difficult to separate the actual sense experience from the delusion-like interpretation and in the latter case to clarify the underlying sensory events', since 'Vital sensations, experience of symbolic meanings, neurological disturbances, all merge into each other' (Jaspers 1997, v.1, p.91). Essentially, what Charles ends up remembering – and what thus comes to form the basis of his delusion – are the ways in which he tried to make his 'knowings' meaningful *to himself* through language, rather than the experiential state in which these 'knowings' were apprehended as self-evident.

Yet as *Briefing* demonstrates, we cannot simply avoid 'interpreting' or 'making sense of' experience, for this would leave us in the ontological no-man's land of the 'hallucinatory phase' which Charles occupies at the beginning of the novel. Without some kind of ontological organisation, all experiences are equally important and unimportant, equally real *and* unreal, which precludes the possibility of being able to live in any world at all. Since 'the word bears the meaning, and, by imposing it on the object, I am conscious of reaching that object' (Merleau-Ponty 2002, p.206), language thus functions to mark 'the coordinates of my life in society and fills that life with meaningful objects' (Berger and Luckmann 1991, p.36). In this

respect, language appears to guide attention, since it allows for the predetermination of that which is meaningful, and the excision of that which is meaningless, from our experience. However, it is clearly possible that something might grab our attention, and be apprehended as full of meaning, without our being able to 'reach' it through language; indeed, circumlocutions, hesitations, and original metaphors are all the products of such failures of language. Charles himself is at first able to make his experiences meaningful through figurative language, but such an attempt is successful only for as long as he remembers that such language is figurative. Ultimately, however, language gets the better of him – for humanity, as Mercury points out, has a tendency towards being '"literal-minded"' (*B*, p.112) – and the reality of the delusional world becomes predominantly determined by the language used to reach the experience of it rather than the experience determining the language.

Conclusion

Briefing for a Descent into Hell can be understood as a novel which is primarily concerned with how and why we organise experience into an ontological hierarchy. In particular, it both formally and thematically emphasises the ways in which we make use of predictive heuristics in making sense of what is available to us, and how our experience of reality is to a certain extent predetermined by our expectations. The novel's overall structure essentially tests the various reasons for which we take a reality as primary, setting the claims of presence and affect against the claims of convention and familiarity. Through its destabilisation of the ontological superiority of the hospital world, *Briefing* demonstrates that any kind of ontological shift requires the derealisation of the primary reality, which will otherwise retain its massive force by naturalising – and thus subordinating – experiences which fall outside of the norm. As a result, Lessing's novel focuses on how language realises a world, and *Briefing* thus attempts to demonstrate how and why language comes to shape reality: it provides a way of making experience meaningful to us, and so structures and shapes the context within which future experiences occur. However, as Charles observes, the expectations generated by such a context shape what we experience, and we therefore excise or dismiss other possible experiences and other possible worlds. In this regard, *Briefing* prompts us to attend to how we allow our experience to be shaped by our expectations, and how language serves to shape those expectations by predetermining what is meaningful to us. By playing with the reader's sense

of the reality of its different worlds, the novel attempts to generate an experience which is isomorphic to the experience of psychosis, in order to show how a reality establishes and maintains its ontological primacy.

Yet in comparison to the other three novels I have considered here, the isomorphism between the experiences of the reader and the character is temporally disjointed. Rather than aligning the breakdown of the storyworld's ontological hierarchy with the experience of the protagonist, *Briefing* causes the reader to enter into a state of ontological uncertainty long after Charles has already passed through it to a state of fully-fledged delusional certainty. To a certain extent, this difference can be explained as a result of Lessing's tendency to experiment primarily with larger units of narrative structure (and for this reason the overlap between the reader's and Anna's experience in *The Golden Notebook* is also not exact). Equally, when understood within the context of both antipsychiatry and Sufi mysticism, it is imperative that the reader initially considers Charles' experience to be 'mere' psychosis, without ontological validity, before being brought through the stages of breakdown and 'breakthrough'. Yet in decoupling of the reader's and character's experiences by starting the novel with an already psychotic protagonist (as opposed to fitting them together more closely by following the course of the character's breakdown, as in *The Golden Notebook*), *Briefing* also represents a stage in the movement away from the mimesis of psychotic and hallucinatory experience which is perhaps symptomatic of the movement into postmodernism proper. As I examine further in Section 2 of the Conclusion, critics have characterised postmodernism as foregrounding ontological questions and backgrounding epistemological questions, which in its more extreme instances translates into forms of world-play without any obvious mimetic grounding. Indeed, although Brian McHale suggests that 'postmodernist fiction turns out to be mimetic after all', because 'the object of its mimesis […] is the pluralistic and anarchistic ontological landscape of advanced industrial cities' (McHale 1987, p.38), this is a far more abstract kind of mimesis than that which I have been considering in this study. For even if 'reality, now more than ever before, is plural' (McHale 1987, p.39), it is still not *experienced* as plural by the non-psychotic individual.[203] Again, we need to be wise to the distinction between an idea assented to propositionally and the lived-world that emerges if that idea were a basic, prereflective heuristic which actually shaped our experience. Yet McHale's comments nonetheless provide

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[203] It is for this reason that I do not entirely agree with the trend in postmodernist cultural theory to equate schizophrenic consciousness with postmodern subjectivity (as in the works of Fredric Jameson (1991) and Jean Baudrillard (1988)). For a more in-depth critique of the use of schizophrenia within cultural theory see Angela Woods 2011, pp.185-202.

a means of understanding why *Briefing* is less concerned than its predecessors to facilitate a direct overlap between the experiences of reader and character, since it is potentially part of a movement away from subjectivity which no longer had any use for the framework of actual psychotic experience. Of course, *Briefing* by no means fully instantiates this shift – for as I have suggested, it is a novel which is as much concerned with phenomenology as ontology – but its strategy of placing two worlds in direct competition, rather than the subtler forms of ontological contamination and boundary-breaking that I have examined in the previous chapters, is perhaps symptomatic of a broader shift in literature that occurred towards the end of the mid-Twentieth Century.

Conclusion: Towards a Phenomenological Dominant

Section 1: Why Fiction?

'"Why should I struggle through hundreds of pages of fabrication to reach half a dozen very little truths?"' (*The Magus*, p.96)

Readers of John Fowles' *The Magus* (1965) quickly learn not to take anything said by Maurice Conchis, the titular 'magus', at face value – and Conchis' dismissal of fiction as a kind of unnecessary packaging for a few 'little truths' is no exception. Quite apart from the fact that such a criticism of fiction within a fiction must presumably be either ironic or hypocritical, Fowles' narrator Nicholas Urfe helpfully points out Conchis' 'breathtaking impudence' when he compares this criticism with the elaborate 'masques' that Conchis orchestrates at Bourani (*The Magus* [*TM*], p.141). Yet even so, Conchis' question seems reasonable: for if the aim of fiction, and novels in particular, is to communicate little truths (or big truths, for that matter), then the whole enterprise seems to be rather a waste of time. At best, perhaps, it would appear to be a kind of watered-down philosophy, made palatable for the masses. A form of literary criticism which attempts to reduce a novel to a philosophical 'message' (including a political or an ethical message), is, according to this view, a species of decoding which is either unnecessary (since the message is already apparent) or which marks the novel as a failure (since the message is only accessible to literary critics). Moreover, such criticism is itself unlikely to inform any debate except for the critical debate, since philosophers have already communicated the same message more concisely and without the unnecessary artifice of plot and character. What I consider in this section, therefore, is why we might be able to gain insight into hallucinations, psychosis, and the ordinary experience of reality through textual narrative and its critical interpretation.

First, *The Magus* itself demonstrates that novels do not simply 'encode' messages. Indeed, Conchis himself is a kind of novelist who not only tells Nicholas stories but also constructs the masques, games, and object lessons which allow Nicholas to *experience those stories for himself*. When Nicholas charges Conchis with the hypocrisy of his anti-fictional stance, Conchis replies that he does not object to '"the principles of fiction. Simply that in print,

in books, they remain mere principles'" (*TM*, p.231). Of course, in one sense Conchis is right: *in* the book, *on* the printed page, the principles of fiction remain 'mere principles'. It is only when the reader interacts with the text and enacts the narrative that the fiction becomes an experience. Likewise, Conchis is only right in his dismissal of fiction if we accept the grounds of his dismissal: that the *purpose* of fiction is the communication of truth(s). As Fowles' novel demonstrates throughout, 'truth', like life, is not 'something that [can] be deduced, hunted, and arrested' (*TM*, p.552), for it is only constructed through the interaction between subject and world.

What, then, are novels doing, if not encoding truths? Drawing on Stanley Cavell's distinction between 'knowing' and 'acknowledging', John Gibson points out that '"knowing" does not exhaust the range of possible cognitive experience' (Gibson 2007, p.112). For instance, I might know *that* you are suffering, but if I do not feel that your suffering makes any kind of 'claim' on me then there is a sense in which I would be 'capable only of the "identification *of* pain, not *with* it"' (Gibson 2007, p.105).[204] The former kind of identification relates to the knowledge of something within shared reality, whereas the latter relates to the '*role*' which that knowledge plays in a shared 'form of life' (Wittgenstein, cited in Gibson 2007, p.107). Moreover, there is a difference between knowing *that* someone feels a certain way and knowing *how* they feel, since the latter necessarily involves an experiential dimension which the former does not.

Yet the relationship between knowledge, experience, and the individual's lived-world is still more complex than this recourse to sympathy and empathy suggests, especially when we turn to the folk theories considered in Chapter 1, Section 2. We can 'believe', for instance, that God does (or does not) exist, that the mind is not a 'thing' and is not 'in the head', that we are not in complete control of our actions, that the self is not unitary, that 'reality' is a social construction, that we will never receive concrete proof of the existence of other minds, that we are going to die, and so on. At least, we can *say* that we believe these things, and we can say to ourselves that we believe these things, and that there is sufficient proof for these things to be counted as 'knowledge' in some domain or other.[205] Yet as all of the novels examined here as

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[204] As Gibson acknowledges, this formulation is also Cavell's: 'my identification of you as a human being is not an identification of you but *with* you' (Cavell 1979, p.421).

[205] I am aware that here I am blurring the distinction between knowledge and belief, but from both the phenomenological point of view (which holds that we cannot appeal to the third-person 'view from nowhere' to determine whether a belief is justified or accurate), and the relativistic point of view (which holds that there is no 'objective' truth against which to measure beliefs in the first place), there are no grounds for differentiating belief and knowledge *except* in terms of their phenomenology. It is precisely this kind of experiential distinction I am considering here, but since 'knowledge' and 'belief' are already such loaded terms it would be more confusing than helpful to use them as differentiating labels.

case studies demonstrate, there is a difference between propositional knowledge and the kind of prereflective certainty (or rather, absence of doubt), which structures experience itself. The psychotic and hallucinatory experiences of Pincher Martin, Caroline Rose, Chief Bromden, and Charles Watkins all seem to provide instances of what may be conceptually accurate 'truths' becoming reified as part of lived experience, producing significant experiential distortions. In effect, these novels suggest that there are different ways in which things can be 'known' and 'believed', and different ways in which knowledge and belief can interact with the lived-world experienced by the individual subject. To refer back to Maurice Merleau-Ponty's example, knowing or believing that the sun is not actually 'rising' does not stop us from *experiencing* the sun *as rising* (Merleau-Ponty 2002 [1945], p.401). Essentially, a concept can be accepted as propositionally 'true' – thus constituting an item of 'knowledge' or 'belief' – without necessarily changing how we make sense of experience and interact with the world. Likewise, a concept can be rejected as 'false' but can nonetheless *continue* to structure our experience and worldly interactions.[206]

If there are different ways in which knowledge can interact with the individual's lived-world, it would make sense that different kinds of communication and discourse are more or less effective at appealing to different aspects of the relationship between subject and world. As William James suggests,

> the philosophy which is so important in each of us is not a technical matter; it is our more or less dumb sense of what life honestly and deeply means. It is only partly got from books; it is our individual way of just seeing and feeling the total push and pressure of the cosmos… (James 1975 [1907], p.9)

According to Matthew Ratcliffe, James is here criticising the view that philosophy is 'just a matter of trading arguments or aligning one's position with reason and evidence' (Ratcliffe 2005, p.57). In this sense, 'James suggests that philosophy is sometimes a forgetting of existential feeling', since instead the philosopher 'hides in a realm of abstractions […] divorced from the world of actual experience' (Ratcliffe 2005, p.58). This does not mean, however, that we should adopt a kind of radical anti-rationalism, giving give no credence to logic and evidence and the kinds of discourse which are based on them. Rather, it implies that logic and evidence can only take us so far in our understanding of reality and the human subject, since the 'truth' reached through evidence and logical argument does not immediately or inevitably impact on our lived-world. As James puts it, 'in the metaphysical and religious sphere,

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[206] Just because I have suggested that these things – knowledge/belief, experience, and worldly interactions – do not necessarily line up neatly, this does not mean that there is an 'all-or-nothing' separation between them. I think it is reasonable to suggest that they are permeable, and open to mutual influence, which is essentially *why* all three are open to change.

articulate reasons are cogent for us only when our inarticulate feelings of reality have already been impressed in favour of the same conclusion' (James 1985 [1902], p.74) – and the same might be said of any sphere outside of science and analytical philosophy.

To return to *The Magus*, we can thus respond to Conchis' question by saying that its terms misconstrue the function of literature. Producing and engaging with literary fiction is not a matter of encoding and extracting 'truths', of parcelling up and then unwrapping propositions about the world in plots and characters. Indeed, Gibson suggests that in fact we already know the concepts which literature presents to us, and it therefore cannot add to our stock of knowledge (Gibson 2007, p.112).[207] What literature does instead is consider these concepts in terms of 'concrete forms of human engagement', thus presenting our world to us 'not as a conceptual object but as a living world' (Gibson 2007, pp.115-116). In effect, literature brings philosophical ideas into a lived experiential context.

As Fowles' novel demonstrates, the way that fictions situate concepts within a lived-world allows for them to have a particular kind of effect on the reader. This effect is demonstrated through the effect of the Godgame on Nicholas, since his transformation and education come about through *experiencing* the narratives which Conchis weaves around him. Most importantly, when Nicholas comes to face the ultimate existential choice at his 'trial', he experiences it *as* an existential choice because he interprets it in terms of Conchis' own story. Because Nicholas has enacted Conchis' stories (to varying degrees), they have added to his stock of 'experiential knowledge' (to use Caracciolo's term (Caracciolo 2016a, p.51)), in that they have given him experience of making sense of the world in a particular way. He has had experience of 'being' Conchis, insofar as he has had experience of living Conchis' reality as a younger man, and thus when the choice comes he responds in the same way: 'I was standing as he had stood before the guerrilla, unable to beat his brains out' (*TM*, p.518). In effect, the Godgame demonstrates how fiction can alter those 'inarticulate feelings of reality' to which James refers, without requiring us to go through the rather costly business of living out those experiences in reality.[208] As Gibson puts it, literature thus takes 'what is dull, wooden, or tenuous in our understanding of how our words and our concept [*sic*] unite us with our world and inject it with this vitality of understanding' (Gibson 2007, pp.115-116). It is partly because

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[207] In a similar vein, Marco Caracciolo suggests that literature and literary interpretation cannot 'straightforwardly advance' cognitive-scientific research, since 'the close reading of literary texts cannot advance our scientific understanding of the human mind *as is*' (Caracciolo 2016b, p.196).

[208] Indeed, for both Doris Lessing and Muriel Spark, the experiences on which they based their novels were 'costly' and dangerous, since these authors either intentionally or unintentionally courted a full psychotic breakdown.

narratives involve the enactment of a lived-world that they are 'especially suited for dealing with, and creating, experiential knowledge' (Caracciolo 2016a, p.51), since it is through the 'temporal and perspectival configuration' which structures the reader's simulation that narratives can 'emulate […] the what-it's-like dimension of conscious awareness itself' (Herman 2009, p.157).[209]

However, the situating of philosophical concepts within a lived-world is not merely a rhetorical move which allows for their dissemination to the public. Quite apart from anything else, there is nothing 'mere' about bringing a concept out of the realm of philosophical abstraction and into reality as experienced, for it is only through this movement that reality can change. James' point about inarticulate feelings is, in this regard, in agreement with hermeneutic problems of 'prejudice' and 'pre-understanding', which ultimately relate back to the old sophistic argument that 'learning is impossible because either you knew it already and hence cannot learn it or it is so foreign to you that you would not recognize it if ever you encountered it' (Flynn 2006, p.119).[210] Giving experiential knowledge a role in this process – and recognising that the possession of knowledge does not automatically and necessarily affect experience – potentially gives us a way out of this paradox, since instead we can understand how our concepts, experiences, and behaviour all interact in mutually reinforcing feedback loops. Literary texts, which involve the enactment of worlds, are thus patterns of behaviour and experience which have the potential to influence our conceptual understanding (and our future behaviour and experience). In this regard, understanding the experientiality of narrative through critical interpretation allows us to understand how stories both tap into and 'have a feedback effect on interpreters' experiential background[s]', in a manner that invites them 'to revise – in a more or less self-conscious way – their views and outlook on the world' (Caracciolo 2014a, p.67).

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[209] There is, of course, an ethical dimension to all this, at least when we consider psychotic experience. Although there is a chance that these writers are completely or partially 'wrong' in their representation of psychosis, the fact that they are even attempting to convey what it is like to experience psychosis has ethical value. Whether or not Karl Jaspers' view that psychosis is 'ununderstandable' and closed to empathy is widely held, the fact that it is a possible viewpoint opens up the further possibility of the dehumanisation of the psychotic patient. The attempt to prompt the reader to enact psychotic and hallucinatory experience in these novels thus suggests that there *are* ways in which we might be able to empathise with psychotic experience, which brings it back into the domain of the human. At the same time, recognising that there are important differences between ordinary and psychotic experience retains the complexity of the original issue, and the 'felt' difference remarked by Jaspers and Eugen Bleuler – the 'praecox' feeling – which potentially reduces the likelihood that such fictions will just be regarded as mere fictions which do not reflect the reality of psychosis. Equally the recognition of difference reduces the likelihood that such fictions will be regarded as applicable only to 'some' of the more comprehensible patients (which would otherwise just involve shifting the boundary between human and non-human a little further outwards).

[210] Merleau-Ponty uses much the same paradox to challenge both empiricist and intellectualist theories of attention (Merleau-Ponty 2002, p.33).

Moreover, as Caracciolo suggests, literature can function as what Daniel Dennett terms an 'intuition pump' (in much the same way as thought experiments do), prompting us to 'experience cognitive realities by way of imaginative engagements' (Dennett, cited in Caracciolo 2016b, p.197). Indeed, it is because some texts prompt us 'to *perform* or *discover* some aspects of our cognitive apparatus through hands-on experience' that they can be said to enable the reader 'to put their finger on cognitive realities in more immediate ways than through philosophical arguments or scientific experimentation' (Caracciolo 2016b, pp.197, 198). Yet there are also problems which only appear when we try to bring concepts to bear on lived experience, or when we try to present them as 'concrete forms of human engagement' (Gibson 2007, p.116). Again, all four of my case studies demonstrate that 'truths' about the mind and about experience do not neatly line up with experience itself, at least not with what we consider to be 'ordinary' experience. Indeed, this is perhaps why these novels display an element of hesitation towards ontological relativism, and explore, rather than simply expound, forms of ontological pluralism, since as lived experiences full-blown relativism or pluralism would seem to be almost identical to psychosis.[211] In a sense, we might say that these fictions are engaged in 'stress-testing' philosophical concepts, which essentially amounts to a continuation of philosophy by other means. Caracciolo suggests something similar when he states that 'Literary interpretation alerts us to this fallibility – and ongoingness – of cognitive science by projecting it against a background of more or less stable metacognitive questions', questions which 'seem to stubbornly resist definitive answers' (Caracciolo 2016b, pp.201, 199).[212] Both texts and their interpretation can thus stimulate (or problematise) research in other fields (again, as thought experiments do), even if they cannot themselves be taken *as* the kind of evidence or argument which such fields consider valid.

Finally, literature and its interpretations afford us another starting-point for psychological and philosophical enquiry through the consideration of the *medium* of textual narrative itself. Literary texts 'represent our struggle to find ever more adequate ways of

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[211] Louis Sass makes a similar point when he addresses the philosophy of Jacques Derrida: 'if one *were* to take this hypermodernist philosophy literally, imagining an actual living out of its claims, the existence one would arrive at might well resemble the schizophrenic condition I have been describing' (Sass 1992, p.348). Sass' patient Robert, for instance, complained of being 'unable to "exert his will-power" because […] he had to deal with too many "echelons of reality"' (Sass 1992, p.144) – an experience that certainly would seem to be a form of 'living out' ontological relativism and ontological pluralism (plural because of multiple realities, and relative because of the lack of any self-evident hierarchy).

[212] Caracciolo's examples of such 'metacognitive questions' are: 'What is the self? Can it exist autonomously from intersubjective interaction? What is consciousness? How reliable is our knowledge of the world, and what role do emotions play in shaping it?' (Caracciolo 2016b, p.199). As we shall see shortly, this set of questions is remarkably similar to both Dick Higgins' and Brian McHale's sets of questions.

rendering explicit what we take our worlds to be', and thus serve to 'expand the boundaries of what we can say about our world and our particular ways of finding ourselves in it' (Gibson 2007, pp.143-144). This struggle for articulation is, as we have seen, especially pertinent to hallucinations and psychosis, since these are experiences which seem to frustrate our capacity for linguistic representation (and it is no surprise that first-person accounts are often full of hesitations, equivocations, and contradictions). In a broader sense, our language is not particularly well suited to talking about 'existential feelings' (Ratcliffe 2008, p.3) and experiential modalities (which is perhaps why classical phenomenology is full of neologisms and idiosyncrasies). Textual narratives – at least, those narratives of the kind I am examining here – experiment with ways of attempting to circumvent this problem of expression, and thus either implicitly or explicitly draw our attention to the models on which our linguistic and conceptual understanding of experience is based.

In the four novels I have examined here, the attempt to convey the experientiality of hallucinatory and psychotic experience appears to offer a model of hallucinatory experience which differs from the epistemological and scientific one. Rather than understanding hallucinations as 'seeing or hearing what is not there', these texts present hallucinatory experience through forms of ontological intrusion, contamination, and competition, which occur in relation to various aspects of textual representation. The metafictional implications of these forms of world-play – the ways in which they foreground the reader's engagement with the text – can thus also be understood as having implications for the subject's engagement with the world, since the use of metafictional devices to perform a mimetic function both presupposes and feeds back into a correlation between textual experience and worldly experience. To put this point another way: because the dynamics of immersion and expulsion which are at work in the reader's engagement with the storyworld are shown to be isomorphic to the varying 'reality-sense' of the character, the text demonstrates how the reader's interaction with and immersion in the storyworld reflects a subject's (the character's) interaction with and immersion in a world (the storyworld). As a result of the kinds of models used to prompt the enactment of hallucinatory experience, these novels can be read as using fiction as a site to explore a form of ontological pluralism, one which understands the experience of 'reality' as involving the negotiation and construction of an ontological hierarchy. In being presented with an experience which differs in its phenomenological structure, both character and reader are prompted to reconsider how this hierarchy is negotiated, i.e. what it is about the ordinary experience of 'reality' that makes it real. Furthermore, they demonstrate (with differing emphases) how the ontological hierarchy is produced and

maintained by a nexus of interconnected elements, such as expectation, language, society, embodiment, agency, meaning, and affect. It is precisely because these elements are interconnected that the breakdown of any one element can lead to the breakdown of another, which essentially means that a collapse of the network at any point can lead to a loss of the sense of reality as the other parts of the network fall like dominoes. For each of the four protagonists, their hallucinations, and their sense of the unreality of the world, in themselves constitute further 'breaks' in the network which feed into and exacerbate the original break, so that their psychosis develops in a kind of self-reinforcing feedback loop.[213] Essentially, what these novels suggest is that a significant part of why hallucinations have the potential to be so disturbing is down to the way the individual makes sense of them, and the extent to which they destabilise those basic folk heuristics that shape the world in a manner that we take for granted.

In a broader sense, therefore, what is demonstrated is how and why reality is intrinsically bound up with the way in which the individual subject structures and makes sense of experience, at both a reflective and prereflective level. To put the same point otherwise, these are novels which foreground the nature of experience as a mutually affective interaction between reader and text, and between subject and world. Of course, phenomenology arrives at many of the same conclusions (or else takes some of these ideas as its starting point), and this should not be surprising; for phenomenology, psychosis, and metafiction potentially share something in common, in that they involve a suspension of the 'natural attitude'. As Merleau-Ponty points out, 'Our relation to the world is so profound and so intimate that the only way for us to notice it is to suspend its movement, to refuse it our complicity […] or to render it inoperative' (Merleau-Ponty 2002, p.64). Phenomenological reflection thus 'distends the intentional ties which bind us to the world in order to make them appear. It alone is consciousness of the world because it reveals it as strange and paradoxical' (Merleau-Ponty 2002, p.64). Similarly, because a metafictional text 'self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artefact [….thus] providing a critique of [its] own methods of construction' (Waugh 2001 [1984], p.2), it necessarily prompts the reader's de-immersion or expulsion from the storyworld. As Marie-Laure Ryan points out, 'We can no more observe the stages of our own immersion than we can watch ourselves falling asleep [….] Immersion cannot be reflected upon from within immersion – this would amount to destroying it' (Ryan 2001, pp.170-171). Of course, being expelled from one storyworld does not mean we are

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[213] Likewise, for those protagonists who gradually recover (such as Bromden and Caroline), such recovery involves something of a reverse process.

automatically kicked back into the real world, since storyworlds can be embedded within storyworlds in a way that allows immersion to be 'lived as well as allegorized' (Ryan 2001, p.171). Finally, psychosis (and particularly schizophrenia) also seems to involve a form of de-immersion, a loss of those prereflective certainties and basic heuristics which structure ordinary experience (which is perhaps why psychotic patients sometimes display a keen insight into the flaws in our common folk heuristics). It is precisely for this reason that both my case studies and phenomenology (classical and contemporary) use hallucination and psychosis as 'limit-cases' to illuminate the givens of experience. Indeed, as Jaspers points out, it is only because the experience or sense of reality can be 'disturbed pathologically' that our attention is drawn to it and we can 'appreciate that it exists' (Jaspers 1997 [1963], v.1, p.94).

To a certain extent, we can therefore understand these novels as carrying out a mode of phenomenological inquiry, but a mode which has at its disposal a range of expressive devices which include more than just either straightforward or figurative linguistic reference. By playing games with, and thus reflecting on, narrative immersion – both thematically and stylistically – these novels raise questions about how and why we come to be anchored in a primary reality in the first place. Again, *The Magus* makes this fairly explicit: one of the possible explanations for the Godgame offered by the novel is that '"Psychiatry is getting more and more interested in the other side of the coin – why sane people are sane, why they won't accept delusions and fantasies as real"' (*TM*, p.477). Nicholas is initially presented with a number of experiences of what might be termed 'anomalous content' – the vision of Robert Foulkes, his first sight of Julia/Lily's twin, the jackal-headed man, and so on – but he is always aware that he is never actually hallucinating. On the one hand, the experience *feels the same* as perception, exhibiting exactly the same experiential structure, and thus does not trouble his sense of reality. On the other hand, he always finds himself able to provide a 'rational' explanation for his experience (which he can accept *because* the experience is of the same kind as perception).[214]

Fowles' novel thus provides another example – albeit one that explores the issue 'negatively' – of this group of texts which examines the dynamics of narrative immersion in order to consider the individual's relationship to reality. As I have tried to demonstrate throughout this study, it is because the reader uses many of the same folk-ontological heuristics

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[214] Interestingly, I have yet to find a critic who suggests that Nicholas ever hallucinates anything (apart, perhaps, from the vision he has while hypnotised, and possibly drugged, by Conchis (*TM*, pp.237-240)). Such a reading would perhaps be rather costly, and there does not seem to be a great deal of evidence for it – but that does not mean it is impossible, merely unlikely.

for making sense of the fictional world and the real world that textual narrative provides an ideal site for the synthesis, exploration, and problematisation of important phenomenological issues.

Section 2: Why Hallucinatory (and Psychotic) Experience?

The first section of this conclusion considered how and why we might use fiction to understand conscious experience – hallucinatory, psychotic, and ordinary – and how my case studies provide prime examples of the kinds of insight we can gain from fiction in this regard. In this section, however, I reverse the direction of traffic to reflect on how we might potentially use the understanding of the mimesis of hallucinatory and psychotic experience developed in this study to enrich our understanding of modernism and postmodernism.

Literature of the mid-Twentieth Century is rarely considered to be the 'high' point of anything. It is usually either 'late', 'early,' or 'regressive', depending on which group of texts are taken as prototypical, which features are considered to be definitive of 'modernism' and 'postmodernism', and when the shift from modernism to postmodernism is thought to occur. Whether the period is recognised at all is partly dependent on the narrative being told about literary history: whether the 'myth of the postmodernist breakthrough' (McHale 1992, p.24) is conceived of as a kind of violent eruption or reaction (as in the accounts of John Barth (1967) and Higgins (1978)), or whether a need is felt for a kind of transitional space within which modernism morphed into postmodernism (as in the accounts of Alan Wilde (1981) and McHale (1987)).[215] Rarely, however, is mid-twentieth-century literature 'confirmed as dynamic, outward looking and experimental in its own right, and on its own terms', appearing instead as 'definitively non-epochal' (Waugh 2016, p.196).

A part of the problem is that the texts I have considered – which are by no means representative of the whole of mid-twentieth-century fiction – seem to share distinctive features of both modernism and postmodernism. They all, for instance, appear to be concerned with the nature of conscious experience, which would seem to fit with the 'inward turn' of modernism (i.e. the attempt to develop 'new means to probe psychological depths' (Herman 2011,

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[215] As McHale acknowledges, the phrase '"myth of the postmodern breakthrough"' is originally Gerald Graff's (Graff, quoted in McHale 1992, p.22).

p.249)).[216] Moreover, this attempt to probe psychological depths is intrinsically bound up with formal experiment. Yet the kinds of experiment – the metafictional games and ontological world-play – which are used in these novels seem more typical of postmodernism.[217] In one sense, therefore, these texts could be viewed as carrying modernism into relatively new territory: the modernists having already 'licked the plate clean' (Green, in Southern 1992 [1958], p.247), these texts take as their subject not 'an ordinary mind on an ordinary day' (Woolf 1929 [1925], p.189), but a 'non-ordinary mind', usually on a 'non-ordinary day'. However, a significant difference between these novels and postmodernism proper is that there *is* a character whose consciousness the reader is apparently enacting in engaging with the destabilised storyworld, and this character *is* in a state which is marked as differing from ordinary consciousness. Metafictional experimentation is thus not carried out for its own sake but is bound up with the mimesis of a particular kind of lived experience.

Since there are far too many theories of modernism and postmodernism for me to be able to consider them all, it will be more practical (and more useful), to choose one which seems flexible enough to accommodate these texts and then consider how it might be altered by their inclusion. McHale's theory of a shift of 'dominant' is ideally suited for this purpose, given that 1) he is, as I am, focused primarily on the 'poetics' of modernism and postmodernism; 2) his theory recognises that the reader/critic plays some role in constructing the text and the '-ism' into which the text is incorporated; 3) he acknowledges that *something* happens in mid-century literature; and 4) he acknowledges that literary histories are necessarily *constructions* and not reconstructions (a point he borrows from S. J. Schmidt (1985)). Although I shall thus primarily be using McHale's model, there are certainly areas of overlap between his and others' theories, which will potentially allow for this critique to be further-reaching once it has been more clearly defined.

For McHale, the difference between modernism and postmodernism is down to a difference in 'dominant' – a term which he borrows from Roman Jakobson (1971) – meaning the '"focusing component of a work of art"' (Jakobson, quoted in McHale 1989, p.6).[218] The

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[216] David Herman rejects this 'critical commonplace' (Herman 2011, p.249), for reasons which I will return to shortly.

[217] Ontological destabilisation is not only the defining characteristic of postmodernism in McHale's theory, but is also implied in other approaches which view postmodernism as rejecting the idea of a hidden 'truth' or 'depth' beneath the surface. Thus Chris Snipp-Walmsley suggests that 'For [Ihab] Hassan, postmodernism was an impulse to decentre, to create ontological and epistemological doubts as we accepted, and became intimate with, chaos', while for William Spanos postmodernism 'exposed and explored uncertainties in the nature of things (ontology)' (Snipp-Walmsley 2006, pp.407, 406).

[218] In this regard, the dominant seems to bear some similarities with Wolfgang Iser's notion of the 'Gestalt' of the work (Iser 1978 [1976], *passim*). Given what follows, gestalt would probably be a more appropriate term than

dominant 'rules, determines, and transforms the remaining components', and 'guarantees the integrity of the structure' (Jakobson 1971, p.82). However, there is a degree of flexibility here which McHale acknowledges, since 'one and the same text will, we can infer, yield different dominants depending upon what aspect of it we are analyzing' (McHale 1987, p.6). In other words, 'different dominants emerge depending upon which questions we ask of the text, and the position from which we interrogate it' (McHale 1987, p.6). The dominant is thus not entirely a 'thing' in the text, and nor is it entirely 'imposed' by the reader; instead, it emerges through the interaction between reader and text. For McHale, the dominant is determined by which set of questions appears to be more '*urgent*' (McHale 1987, p.11) – yet it would be equally plausible for his theory to be framed in terms of which set of questions appears to yield a more *productive* reading of the text. Indeed, McHale's *Constructing Postmodernism* (1992) – which expands upon the theory laid out in *Postmodernist Fiction* (1987) – stresses the importance of productivity as the goal of theory-building, the capacity 'to keep the discursive ball rolling' (McHale 1992, p.26). In this regard, the purpose of a theory or model is not to be a true description of a 'thing' in the world, but to function as an interpretive heuristic, a way of expanding 'the horizons of expectation' (Jauss 1970, p.12) which the reader brings to the text. The dominant of a text can thus be said to be whatever heuristic proves to be particularly productive with regard to that text, but not to others – and at the same time, a text may have more than one 'dominant' if it yields equally productive readings when approached using different heuristics.

There is an extent to which McHale needs the dominant to have this flexibility precisely because of the ambivalent nature of mid-twentieth-century literature. On the one hand, the dominant of modernism appears to be epistemological, foregrounding 'problems of *knowing*' (McHale 1987, p.10).[219] The kinds of problems or questions which modernism foregrounds are thus:

> How can I interpret this world of which I am a part? And what am I in it? What is there to be known?; Who knows it?; How do they know it, and with what degree of certainty?; How is knowledge transmitted from one knower to another, and with what degree of reliability?; How does the object of knowledge

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dominant, since the latter implies that what we are referring to is somehow 'in' the text rather than something that emerges through the reader's interaction with it. However, I shall continue to use McHale's term to avoid unnecessary confusion.

[219] McHale (1986) also cites several other theorists who arrive at a similar conclusion (e.g. Higgins (1984), Wladimir Krysinski (1981), Alan Wilde (1981), and Douwe Fokkema and Elrud Ibsch (1984)).

change as it passes from knower to knower?; What are the limits of the knowable? And so on. (McHale 1987, p.9)[220]

These concerns are reflected in the formal features of modernism (i.e. its 'poetics'), in devices such as 'parallax' (the juxtaposition of 'two or more characters' different constructions of the same world, or same part of a world'), and 'mobile consciousness' (which includes techniques like direct interior monologue and free indirect discourse) (McHale 1992, pp.46, 44). In effect, such techniques require a 'stable world' (McHale 1992, pp.44-45) against which differences between consciousnesses can be measured, either in terms of the differences between individuals or between the same individual at different points in time.

Postmodernism, on the other hand, backgrounds epistemological problems to focus on 'problems of *modes of being*' (McHale 1987, p.10) – its dominant therefore being ontological.[221] The questions foregrounded by texts with an ontological dominant are thus:

> Which world is this? What is to be done in it? Which of my selves is to do it? What is a world?; What kinds of world are there, how are they constituted, and how do they differ?; What happens when different kinds of world are placed in confrontation, or when boundaries between worlds are violated?; What is the mode of existence of a text, and what is the mode of existence of the world (or worlds) it projects?; How is a projected world structured? And so on. (McHale 1989, p.10)

The poetics of the ontological dominant centre on the destabilisation, deconstruction, or collision of worlds. In postmodernist texts we are thus presented with the interpenetration of different storyworlds (including real-world history); endings which are 'impossible' by being multiple or circular; the breaking of boundaries between discourse levels (i.e. metalepsis); contradiction and excluded middles; and linguistic and material self-consciousness. So in postmodernism it is the *world* which is mobile and/or plural, rather than consciousness.

Both the epistemological and the ontological dominant are also apparent in more 'popular' forms of narrative fiction. The detective story is thus 'the epistemological genre *par excellence*' (McHale 1987, p.9), in that it takes as its structuring principle the quest for knowledge and truth and is driven by the anxiety caused by the lack of such knowledge. Meanwhile, science fiction provides us with the 'ontological genre *par excellence*' (McHale 1987, p.16), concerned as it is with alternative realities and journeys to other worlds or planets. However, there is no sharp distinction between 'popular' and 'literary' forms in this regard,

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[220] This set of questions (and the set of questions applicable to postmodernism) are, as McHale acknowledges, an extension of sets of questions which Higgins (1984) suggests are being asked by 'cognitive' (modernist) and 'post-cognitive' (postmodernist) literature.

[221] Again, McHale acknowledges that other critics have proposed a similar view of postmodernist fiction, including Wilde (1981), Linda Hutcheon (1980), and Christine Brooke-Rose (1981).

since modernist novels sometimes rely upon a central mystery to drive the narrative action, and postmodernist texts sometimes involve alternative realities and journeys to other worlds.

Significantly, both dominants (and the kinds of questions which they entail) are occasioned by *uncertainty* or *anxiety*. Indeed, it is partly because of this uncertainty that they are best expressed *as* questions, which may or may not be provided with an answer. Yet as McHale acknowledges, radical epistemological uncertainty can always tip over into ontological uncertainty if pushed far enough, and vice versa (McHale 1987, p.11). Some texts – particularly, for McHale, those novels of the mid-Twentieth Century which he defines as 'limit-modernist' (McHale 1987, p.13) – are thus uneasily poised between the two dominants, in some cases even foregrounding the shift from one dominant to another. Much like the ambiguous figures discussed in Chapter 5, Section 1 (e.g. Joseph Jastrow's 'duck-rabbit'), such texts seem to be ambivalent in terms of their dominant, being equally (or almost equally) understandable in terms of epistemological or ontological anxiety. Usually McHale appears to decide which dominant applies depending on whether there is a fictional character available to whom the reader can attribute the ontological slippage, which would thus shift 'the problem into an epistemological key' (McHale 1987, p.137).[222] Therefore, even if a text is 'ontologically oriented', the presence of a suitable 'mind as a refracting medium "tames" ontological improvisation to a characteristically modernist epistemological structure' (McHale 1987, p.71).

The four texts I have considered appear to fit within McHale's category of 'limit-modernism', as do a number of other novels which also attempt the mimesis of hallucinatory and psychotic experience (e.g. Samuel Beckett's *Watt* (1953), Patrick White's *Voss* (1957), Anthony Burgess' *The Doctor is Sick* (1960), Philip K. Dick's *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch* (1965), Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966), Thomas Pynchon's *The Crying of Lot 49* (1966), Malcolm Lowry's *Lunar Caustic* (1963), B. S. Johnson's *House Mother Normal* (1971), J. G. Ballard's *Crash* (1973), and numerous other novels by the four authors whose novels I have taken as case studies). Indeed, given that hallucination and psychosis involve an uncertainty about what is 'real', it is unsurprising that the mimesis of these experiences should involve a shifting of focus from epistemology to ontology. So here is one 'little narrative' we could construct, as a sort of spin-off from McHale's: *at least one* of the ways in which modernism morphed into postmodernism was through some writers taking the modernist,

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[222] See, for example, McHale's readings of Samuel Beckett's *Molloy* (1955 [1951]) and *Malone Dies* (1956 [1951]), Alain Robbe-Grillet's *Dans le labyrinth* (1959), Carlos Fuentes' *Cambio de piel* (1967), Vladimir Nabokov's *Pale Fire* (1962), and Thomas Pynchon's *The Crying of Lot 49* (1966) (McHale 1987, pp.12-25).

'epistemological' approach to regions of experience beyond the norm, which in turn led to the use of ontological poetics as appropriate to the mimesis of these forms of experience.

This narrative appears to fit, on the one hand, with Patricia Waugh's observations regarding the fiction of the late thirties, forties, and fifties: in these texts 'There is a sense of being enveloped in something that might be described as a delusional *atmosphere* […] that disturbs the normally tacit assumption of being safely anchored in a primary reality' (Waugh 2016, p.198). Moreover, it is noticeably during the fifties that 'actual delusion and madness as an individual condition becomes more apparent' (Waugh 2016, p.205). On the other hand, this narrative also accords with the way in which postmodernism evolved after the mid-Twentieth Century. Indeed, the term 'schizophrenia' haunts postmodernist discourse, from Jean Baudrillard (1988) to Frederic Jameson (1991) and beyond. As James Peterson puts it, schizophrenia has effectively 'become a master trope for both postmodern culture and the consciousness appropriate to it' (Peterson 1997, p.148). Moreover, it is possible to naturalise a number of bizarre postmodern texts – particularly 'cut-up' and 'slipstream' novels like Paul Ableman's *I Hear Voices* (1958), William Burroughs' *Naked Lunch* (1959), Anna Kavan's *Ice* (1967), and Ann Quin's *Passages* (1969) – as imitating the first-person experience of psychosis, insofar as they prompt readers to enact a radically unstable world but deny them the comfort of being able to naturalise the experience by definitively attributing it to a particular character. Such a strategy is neither offered nor refuted in these novels, for rather than presenting the destabilisation of a primary reality (through ontological contamination or competition) they present instead complete ontological collapse. The reader has little to no chance of becoming anchored in any one reality, and thus there is little to no experience of ontological breakdown. Instead, we are dropped into the psychosis *in medias res*, as it were, desperately looking for something solid to cling to.

Yet quite apart from the issue of whether or not such a reading is entirely justified, this naturalising strategy is problematic in that it threatens to incorporate far too much of the postmodernist corpus into the modernist corpus, eliding the distinctions between them. Equally, McHale's decision to determine a text's dominant based on whether such a move is possible requires 'the epistemological' to cover a much larger field, in order to be able to incorporate ontological poetics the moment psychosis or hallucination becomes a viable explanation. Indeed, McHale himself demonstrates that this is not entirely the consequence he wants: for instance, he refuses to naturalise Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow* (1973) in this fashion *despite* the opportunity to do so presented by the text (and which other critics have taken up), since 'our satisfaction will have been purchased at the price of too much of the text's interest'

(McHale 1992, p.73). The possibility of naturalisation is thus not enough to determine a text's dominant by itself – but then where does that leave those ambivalent mid-century texts which clearly do raise ontological questions while also using 'the mind as a refracting medium' (McHale 1987, p.71)?

There is, perhaps, a way out of this dilemma, through the introduction of a third dominant. As I have demonstrated, some mid-twentieth-century texts yield highly productive interpretations when they are considered in relation to phenomenological philosophy. Indeed, both these texts and phenomenological discourse in general tend to problematise the dualistic separation of mind and world, of the subjective and the objective, of the 'in here' and the 'out there', which is presupposed by epistemology (see Chapter 1, Section 1). Therefore, just as the epistemological dominant requires a conceptual separation of mind and world (as in 'mobile consciousness, stable world'), and the ontological dominant assumes a multiplicity of worlds (or a 'mobile world'), so a phenomenological dominant would assume that a mind is *already implicated* in a world, and vice versa. As Waugh points out, the use of 'mood or atmosphere to undermine the Cartesian distinction between the objective and subjective, or inside and outside', is characteristic of the 'neo-expressionism' which makes up a significant part of the fiction of this period. (Waugh 2016, p.203).

Of course, as we saw in Chapter 1, Section 2, there is an extent to which engaging with narrative in general already points towards the eradication of the boundary between mind and world. As David Herman suggests,

> Stories, thanks to the way they are anchored in a particular vantage-point on the storyworlds that they evoke, and thanks to their essentially durative or temporally extended profile, do not merely convey semantic content but furthermore *encode in their very structure a way of experiencing events…* (Herman 2009, p.157 [my italics])

At the same time, a character's consciousness is not a 'thing' in the text, but the reader's enactment of a storyworld which is then attributed to a character (Caracciolo 2012a, p.51). At the very least, this 'dialectical interplay between experiencers and […] environments' is also apparent in modernist narratives (Herman 2011, p.263), as demonstrated through techniques of focalisation.[223] Yet what is distinctive about texts with a phenomenological dominant is that they *foreground* this relationship or interplay, drawing attention to the ways in which the presentation of the storyworld is experientially isomorphic. We are thus made to be aware of

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[223] It is for this reason that Herman rejects the idea that modernist techniques were primarily 'centered on, or geared toward, an inner, mental domain' (Herman 2011, p.264), even if the modernist themselves established this view through their own critical writing.

the storyworld as *designed* to streamline the enactment of a character's consciousness. Usually this self-reflexivity necessarily involves some form of narrative deviance, in order to make us aware of a process that is otherwise habitual and unnoticed. Therefore, the phenomenological dominant goes hand in hand with texts which deal with abnormal states of mind, because the mimesis of these states provides ample opportunity for this kind of experientially motivated narrative deviance.

In this regard, 'mind style' is a prime example of phenomenological poetics, since it involves presenting the storyworld in a certain way in order to present a particular character's worldview – a linguistic realisation of the individual's lived-world. As Geoffrey Leech and Michael Short point out, although all texts could be said to have a particular mind style insofar as 'there is no kind of writing that can be regarded as perfectly neutral and objective', it is usually only noticeable *as* mind style when it involves a style which appears unnatural and contrived (Leech and Short 2007 [1981], pp.151, 162). Likewise, metafictional devices such as 'reader-character overlap' (e.g. Caroline hearing the novel as it is read; Pincher holding the 'book') serve to draw our attention to the tension between consciousness-enactment and consciousness-attribution, to how we both are and are not the character as we read the text. Finally, through the breaking of ontological boundaries metalepsis destabilises the structure of the storyworld in order that we might be able to attend to the phenomenon of our own immersion, to how we have become anchored in the storyworld, as preparatory to exploring the dynamics of the reader-text interaction. However, what is perhaps most important is not the presence or absence of a certain set of stylistics, but the mimetic context which prompts the use of such stylistics – for in these texts there is often either an explicit or implicit sense of frustration as the referential use of language fails to capture the phenomenological quality of lived experience.

Given the kinds of issues I have covered in the previous chapters, we might set out the 'questions' of the phenomenological dominant as follows:

> What is experience like? And how can fiction provide a mimesis of that experience? How is a projected world experienced? What is it like to read a fiction/have a hallucination/have a veridical experience, and how can we differentiate between these states? What are the pre-reflective 'givens' of experience and how are they cued and mediated by fiction? What is the feeling of the primary real? What is the relationship between self and world? To what extent do our theories accord with and affect lived experience? And so on.

Of course, it is not as if these questions and concerns are absent from modernism or postmodernism, or as if epistemological and ontological questions are absent from the texts I am looking at. This is not an attempt to avoid those cases of uncertain dominance – which

McHale places at the 'limit', as in 'limit-modernism' – but rather to increase their number, to even out the field by showing how there are many texts that could be considered as being poised between two (or even three) dominants. In this light, we can view much of twentieth-century literature as being 'in flux' or approaching a limit, rather than there being just one period of transition which falls in the middle. For since the 'dominant', as both McHale and I use the term, is down to the extent to which the text can be read productively and meaningfully according to a certain approach, there is absolutely no reason why rich and complex texts should not present more than one dominant (indeed, it is perhaps *because* some texts present more than one dominant that they are regarded as rich and complex).[224] In this regard, much of modernism might also be understandable in phenomenological terms, as reflecting on how we shape and are shaped by the experience of our environment. Likewise, some of the typical 'poetics' of modernism – focalisation, stream-of-consciousness – can be viewed as attempting a form of experiential isomorphism, thus prompting the reader to enact the character's lived-world.

Yet mid-twentieth-century fiction (at least of the type I am concerned with here) tends to display a self-reflexive awareness of the text as engaging the reader in the enactment of a world. For instance, Iris Murdoch, writing in 1952, suggested that the philosophical interest in '*le monde vécu*, the lived world, what is actually experienced, and carrying its own truth criteria with it [....] brings the activity of the philosopher in some ways closer to that of the novelist. The novelist is *par excellence* the unprejudiced describer of *le monde vécu*' (Murdoch 1999c [1952], p.131). Therefore, rather than conceiving of the representation of consciousness as a turn inwards, Murdoch suggests that narrative fiction already represents consciousness through the presentation of a world. Again, as Herman points out, there are modernist novels which do 'focus on worlds-as-experienced', even though the modernist authors producing these novels characterised their project as a movement into an 'interior space separated from external, material reality' in their critical writing (Herman 2011, p.250). What is thus, perhaps, distinctive about some novels of the mid-Twentieth Century is the way in which there is a foregrounded textual recognition of the way in which the novel is presenting a lived-world, a world inseparable from the subject who experiences it.[225] If modernity is, as Martin Heidegger famously put it in 1938, the 'age of the world picture' (Heidegger 1977 [1938], p.130), then

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[224] McHale's own reading of James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922) would appear to support this view, given that McHale suggests that the novel has both an epistemological and an ontological dominant (McHale 1992, p.44).

[225] Indeed, Murdoch's own conception of "'the phenomenological novel'" is of one that 'does most of the things that other novels do', yet which has 'a very special flavour which is due to a definite theory held by the novelist' (Murdoch 1999a [1950], p.101).

the mid-Twentieth Century might be characterised as the age which *already recognised* that modernity was the age of the world picture.

As we have seen, the self-reflexive awareness of narrative fiction presenting minds *as* worlds rather than minds *in* worlds often also brought with it a metafictional reflection on the reader's own immersion in the text. To a certain extent, such a metafictional turn is an inevitable consequence of an intensification of phenomenological concerns, as writers became more interested in how experience emerges through a dynamic interaction between intending subject and intentional object. In this regard, hallucinatory and psychotic experiences provide an optimal way of exploring these issues, given that the phenomenological difference of such forms of experience allow for the focusing of attention on those aspects of the reader-text/subject-world interaction which are usually taken for granted. Of course, the individual biographies of the writers I have considered here demonstrate that this connection between phenomenology, metafiction, and hallucinatory and psychotic experience also flows in the opposite direction. Through the struggle to articulate atypical forms of experience, certain authors became more directly aware of the ways in which experience is linguistically mediated, and the ways in which our discourses around (and thus our conceptions of) experience suffer from limitations and blind spots.

Understanding these texts as attempting the mimesis of hallucinatory and psychotic experience in order to explore phenomenological and metafictional issues thus provides us with a framework for understanding how the fiction of the mid-Twentieth Century relates to the modernist literature which preceded it. Not only does this framework allow us to view these fictions in a different light, but it also has the potential to reflect back on and enrich our understanding of modernism. The 'fractious modernist monster' (Miller 1999, p.11) may well present us with more than one face, and more than one dominant, if we consider it in terms of a different teleological end-point other than postmodernism. Of course, this is not to say that there is a 'correct' way of looking at twentieth-century literary history – rather, it is an attempt to offer another heuristic fiction to open further avenues of exploration, as a way of keeping the conversational ball rolling.

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