行政院國家科學委員會專題研究計畫　成果報告

《符號帝國》：重讀東方／異文化（II-II）

計畫類別：個別型計畫
計畫編號：NSC92-2411-H-002-109-
執行期間：92 年 08 月 01 日至 93 年 07 月 31 日
執行單位：國立臺灣大學外國語文學系暨研究所

計畫主持人：蔡秀枝

報告類型：完整報告

處理方式：本計畫可公開查詢

中　華　民　國 93 年 11 月 3 日

行政院國家科學委員會補助專題研究計畫成果報告

《符號帝國》：重讀東方／異文化 (II-II)

計畫類別：個別型計畫
計畫編號：NSC 92－2411－H－002－109 (II-II)
執行期間：92 年 8 月 1 日至 93 年 7 月 31 日

計畫主持人：蔡秀枝

成果報告類型（依經費核定清單規定繳交）：完整報告

本成果報告包括以下應繳交之附件：

□赴國外出差或研習心得報告一份
□赴大陸地區出差或研習心得報告一份
□出席國際學術會議心得報告及發表之論文各一份
□國際合作研究計畫國外研究報告書一份

執行單位：國立台灣大學外國語文學系

中　華　民　國　93　年　7　月　31　日

摘　要

本計畫「《符號帝國》：重讀東方/異文化」是以異文化的想像與文化、文學文本互涉這兩個面向來重新閱讀、想像與重繪法國文學與文化批評家羅蘭・巴特（Roland Barthes）在書寫《符號帝國》（*Empire of Signs*）（1970）這本書時，對他所指稱的「符號帝國」——日本所做的異文化閱讀，以及日本這個異文化的他者，如何被巴特建構成一個符號帝國文本的閱讀與誤讀的過程。

《符號帝國》一書是巴特旅行日本（1966）之後所成就的作品。巴特以一個符號學家與文化批評家的身份，在《符號帝國》的書寫中，不僅時時流露他對日本文化的深刻感受，也在此書中將他的旅行經驗轉化為寫作，強調書寫的歡愉，並且更進一步地將他所體驗到的日本文化轉化作一個書寫經驗：一個巴特眼中流動、延異、空靈的符號帝國文本。而《符號帝國》一書除了巴特個人色彩濃厚的東方經驗/驚艷外，更是處於巴特由敘事結構的傳道者轉為後結構主義符號延異概念的宣揚者的一個重要轉變時期，所以《符號帝國》的寫作與出版也與巴特創作與批評思考的轉變時期有極大的關聯性。此外，《符號帝國》一書不僅呈現巴特對東方文化的解讀與誤讀，以及運用想像的東方他者來對西方文化與符號系統做反思與評判，也同時是巴特有關寫作的愉悅此一概念的一個重要起源。所以本計畫將嘗試就巴特《符號帝國》中，（一）對東方/異文化的閱讀與誤讀，以及（二）對東方/異文化的想像與挪用，這兩個面向來重讀與重繪巴特對日本這個符號帝國的觀看、閱讀與書寫和轉寫，並探討巴特在這樣的虛構符號系統和美學觀點中，如何因為強調符號的虛構性與東方文化相對於西方文化的異質性，而使得這個日本的圖像中的歷史、政治與意識形態的問題反而因為文本與美學式的符號學概念而被稀釋淡化。

關鍵詞：羅蘭・巴特，《符號帝國》，日本，文本互涉，符號系統，現代主義。

Abstract

This project "*Empire of Signs*: Re-reading Barthes' Reading of Japan" tries to re-read and reconfigure the construction of Japan as an empire of signs in Roland Barthes' *Empire of Signs*(1970) with the following two theoretical approaches: the imagination of the oriental other and the intertextuality between culture and literary text. *Empire of Signs* is written after Roland Barthes' visit to Japan in 1966. This project explores Barthes' reading and misreading of Japanese culture, and his appropriation of the imagination of this oriental other in *Empire of Signs*.

This project focuses on the analysis of Barthes' "reading" of Japan in the following two aspects: (1) how Barthes as a gazing subject dealt with his travel experience and his confrontation with Japanese culture, and (2) how Barthes appropriated this "reading" in *Empire of Signs* and made it into a critique of the concept of the West and its logocentrism. The focus of this study is on the analysis of how this imagined Japan as an empire of signs, as an utopian imagination of the oriental other (the imagined sign system "Japan" as the representative of the oriental other), becomes the tool that Barthes used to reflect and criticize the West and the Western culture—the logocentric and the ideological thinking behind the signification of the Western formulation and interpretation of the sign system. And it is because of these very attitudes and premises of the modernist aesthetics and semiotics, Barthes' textualization of Japan becomes not just an empty sign system, but an empire without its historical, political, and ideological background.

Keywords: Roland Barthes, *Empire of Signs*, Japan, intertextuality, sign system, modernism

目　錄

一、前言

本計畫為兩年期計畫。第一年研究巴特在《符號帝國》一書中所呈現的巴特個人對日本這個東方異文化的閱讀與想像，探索這種閱讀如何在論述中，將日本與其文化加以轉述，以及旅行書寫的主體巴特如何觀看、處理、閱讀他與異文化他者接觸的經驗，以及這樣的閱讀與書寫經驗如何促成，並啟發巴特對西方文化與符號系統的反思。第二年則主要探討巴特如何輾轉參考、運用當時法國現代主義美學（尤其是 Tel Quel 學派）對東方（以中國與日本為代表）文字與文化的嚮往與詮釋，放入他對日本的旅行印象與文化觀點之中，進而將日本與東方文化（以日本做代表）虛級化成為一個純粹的符號王國，並且用這樣虛空化的符號國度（一個沒有西方符號系統的意義衍生，也不具有理性、缺乏邏輯推演的，純粹符號王國）來反思西方整個以意識型態與理性邏輯為主體所衍生的文字、文化、美學觀點、以及意義詮釋的符號系統。這部分的研究將嘗試由法國現代主義美學的歷史與文化背景為出發，重新探討巴特所嚮往的，作為西方的他者的東方日本，與巴特在《符號帝國》中塑造、描繪的想像國度「日本」這兩者間的分離與貼近的關係。並試圖在分析解釋巴特書寫東方/異文化時所作的閱讀、誤讀與挪用，並且檢視巴特如何將閱讀實踐經由符號系統的變換，轉化為書寫/改寫（日本與東方（日本）文化）的實踐，因而達到他所謂的寫作的愉悅。但是也因為這樣強烈地動機，所以虛構的符號帝國日本也因此被美學化與符號化，失去歷史與政治架構，形成標準的虛空符號帝國。

二、研究目的

《符號帝國》(*Empire of Signs*)這本書在巴特的作品中佔有一個很特殊的位置。這本書的出現將巴特帶離結構主義，朝向後結構主義，主張符號的延異與空無。首先,《符號帝國》是他旅行日本之後，將他個人對東、西方文化差異的感受，與他在日本時觀察到的日常生活中的符號與倫理含義連結，並轉化為批判文字的一個成果。巴特以一個符號學家與文化批評家的身份，在日本遊歷時對這個東方國家與其符號化文化產生相當程度的熱愛，但是也因為東、西方文化間的差異而受到認知與觀念上的衝擊。因此在此書中巴特將他旅行中的經驗與文化認知上的差距轉化為思考差距，並運用寫作將此差異轉化為符號系統的差異經驗，於是日本與日本文化在書寫論述中被符號化與抽象化，並轉而成為巴特用以反思西方文化與意義詮釋的符號系統的一個例子。本研究目的不僅將這樣的東方異化空間，作為理解巴特符號結構態度轉變的楔子，也將探討巴特在這樣的（後）結構符號學與現代美學的交雜中所形塑出的日本符號帝國的虛無性與去畛域性。因為巴特這個空無的符號系統的完美創作，表現出的他眼中東方的虛無境界，卻也在這樣的符號化與美學化中失焦，褪卻了帝國侵吞與政治污糟的實體，轉化為美學醒思的淨化與自戀。

三、文獻探討

有關巴特《符號帝國》一書的評論，歷來因為此書主要均被批評家視為是巴特的遊歷之作，而遊歷之作在過去旅遊書寫與旅行文學尚未被真正重視，而旅行書寫做為一種文類，甚至有關旅行書寫中所蘊含的帝國、政治態度、意識形態、與他者/異者的觀念也未獲得批評家注意時，巴特的《符號帝國》又因為其輕薄短小的閱讀份量，經常被貶抑為偶書或隨筆等雜文，所以《符號帝國》一書在西方的評論界並未真正引起太多的評判或震撼。所以一般的評論都趨向將這本小書當做是巴特的符號學演練。也因為基本上西方對於東方的文化認識或瞭解並非深刻，再加上巴特此書根本也並非是對日本或其文化的一種遊歷介紹，所以《符號帝國》的定位基本上是十分模糊的。例如 Rey Chow's "Roland Barthes: Empire of Signs"就是將巴特此書放在符號學的介紹與脈絡中來閱讀的。Rolf J. Goebael's "Japan as Western Text: Roland Barthes, Richard Gordon Smith, and Lafcadio Heran" 則是將這樣的跨文化書寫當作是巴特後結構主義的傾向的表明，做為一種文本與文本性的語言特性的表徵。Craig Jonathan Saper 則是將《符號帝國》放在旅遊的書寫或者是旅遊的文類中來閱讀，所以他認為跨文化間的觀念，還有社會歷史的情境，將可以在旅遊書寫中來重現。但是做為 tourist 的巴特，恐怕也僅是《符號帝國》其中的一個面向，而不是全部。所以本計畫希望藉由開闢這些文獻資料之外的空間、文本與文化的觀念，重讀《符號帝國》來探討地方/空間的跳躍對巴特這個符號學者、現代美學主義者、與文化評論家造成何種衝擊，更希望經由對《符號帝國》的重讀，做為探討巴特重塑東方虛構日本的用意與在歷史與東方異己/東方渴望的下所衍生的，去畛域、去政治、美學化的符號帝國。

四、研究方法

本計畫的研究目的是希望能經由文本研究來重繪與重述此一意象與符號化的想像日本。由文化差異與文化間互相衝擊與影響的角度，探究日本這個被敘述建構的東方異質文化主體，如何在文本論述的語言文字間被符號化，如何成為被延異的符號，流動且空無，以及這樣的異質文化被巴特收納後，對巴特的《符號帝國》的完成，以及巴特符號延異的概念與異文化他者想像的啟發。因為《符號帝國》一書除了是巴特旅遊書寫的成果，充滿巴特色彩濃厚的個人東方經驗/驚艷外，更是處於巴特由敘事結構的傳道者轉為後結構主義符號延異概念的宣揚者的一個轉介時期，而這其中日本既是一個東方的經驗、一個異質文化的代表，所以不可避免地在巴特的經驗中扮演著一個相當重要的角色。

經過巴特符號化後的日本書寫是值得重新由文化與文本的面向出發來探討。因為在巴特的想像與運用中，日本已經被虛擬成為一個西方文化的他者。這個他者並不是一個西方偏狹觀點下的異類、異文化，而是一個完全相異於西方理性邏輯與意識型態概念的文化他者。巴特藉由虛擬的日本符號帝國作為西方所代表的詮釋學式的符號意義系統，處處鎖定這個「虛無」的帝國與西方的相異處，探討這些符號背後的東方空無的、流動的、符號演繹與虛無，反思並批判西方探源式詮釋的意義系統後面所代表的理體中心論。而巴特這樣的批評觀點，其實與當時法國現代主義派的美學觀點與論述有相當的關聯。法國現代主義美學（尤其是 Tel Quel 學派中，Julia Kristeva 和 Phillipe Sollers 等人所提倡的，對東方的文化與文字美學的重新認知與探索）

與劇場經驗（Bertolt Brecht）影響著巴特的創作與批評概念，使巴特在面對日本這個相異於西方的文化主體時，採取東西文化差異的比較方式，將日本變成西方的一個對照體。日本的虛無化，使這個符號帝國的觀摩更加具有批判性的觀點。

五、結果與討論

巴特《符號帝國》的問題其實不僅是符號學的系統建立的課題，也包含了巴特所代表的法國 Tel Quel 學派現代美學的概念，更是一個旅行書寫的差異性範本，它圖現了空間與地方性在文化交錯時所可能產生的差異與吸引渴望，也同時顯現出文本化、符號化、甚至美學化後所可能衍生的政治消去性的、去畛域哦問題。

巴特藉由《符號帝國》一書所引導書來的，不僅是符號學系統的建立，東方文化作為西方的異者的一種體現，或是現代美學的一種東方描繪與體驗，而是一個虛構的日本圖像與被熱烈追求的東方異者的物象化與去實體化。它的政治性不再是一種社會生活的現象，其背後的意識型態也不再是一種可被閱讀的動機或動作背後的根本的目的，戰爭甚至也只是照片中的一種美學的演出。

然而這個虛無化的日本，卻在符號學與美學的雙重虛化與抽象化之後，不僅現出了符號指涉的虛空與流動特性，更進一步地，進行了本質與目的的虛化與美化。於是，一切的現象與實體，都在轉瞬間被虛化，然後空洞化——身體於是乎成了沒有/空無的代名詞，這個身體不具任何內容，沒有情感、也沒有意義，它不複製任何東西，它是書寫的範例（這身體於是便成了書寫的符指）。然而就在這種符號的指涉過程的空無化過程中，實體消融，在美學化的過程中，目的也因之脫離現實，失卻意識形態的政治權力勾結，從而進入淨化的符號空間場域，以差異的結構關係，取代粗糙的權力肉搏與晦暗的政治侵吞。於是，死亡僅是一種符號，因為死僅僅只是一種空無的狀態，彷彿書寫

意義的取消，死的意義就再於它的沒有意義。於是，日本將軍與其妻子在死亡前一日所拍攝的照片，就僅只是死亡作為意義符號的空無指涉，這死亡所欲表達的政治與意識形態——為天皇誓死效忠，完全的符號意義指涉——「誓死」效忠，永隨天皇，以死為誓，也在符號的意義虛空虛無化中，盡然消解，只剩死亡的空無，而無政治或意識形態的指涉。這樣的淨化結果，完全符合了符號美學的嚴苛標準，它不再具有實體，也脫離現實權力與政治紛爭。在戰爭中執行殺人任務的將軍，沒有了殺戮戰場，死亡竟是全然的空寂虛無，純然淨化了的美學空間。學生群體的暴動，在這樣漠然的符號差異化與空無化中，形成了符號書寫，被解除了暴力、憤慨與意志的表現。符號閱讀與書寫系統將空間的實體虛級化與美學化後，不僅自我衍生為指涉的差異空間，也解除了現實的鏈結。書寫的現代美學不只是純淨的要求自我的淨化與不斷地內在省視，也排除它極度厭惡的非美學元素，不論是社會的、政治的或意識形態的，都將被當作外在的、干擾自醒美學的異質，可以在符號的演繹中被排除與消音。現代美學轉而變成符號帝國最偉大神奇的政治化妝師，其功在促進符號帝國的政治角力與帝國侵吞的終極虛化，無關乎政治、沒有帝國，只有符號與符號帝國。

巴特在《符號帝國》一書中的虛級化寫作與這樣的偏離視角，也因此可以將實質的東方日本，擴大到一個異化、空化的虛無系統。巴特也因此可以不斷在文化符號中演變，讓帝國的政治與權力消失無蹤。而經由歷史的探源，將巴特的觀點放在當時法國現代主義美學對東方文化與文字系統的憧憬與想像的歷史情境中，不但有助我們釐清巴特《符號帝國》中對日本的「閱讀」與其「書寫」策略，也可以因此就其背後的歷史與文化淵源做重新的檢視與重讀。

參考文獻

Barthes, Roland. *Empire of Signs*. Trans. Richard Howard. New York: Hill and Wang, 1982.

Behdad, Ali. *Belated Travelers: Orientalism in the Age of Colonial Dissolution*. Durham: Duke UP, 1994.

Chow, Rey. “roland Barthes: Empire of Signs.” *Constructions* (1986).17-23.

French, Patrick and Roland-Francois Lack, eds. *The Tel Quel Reader*. London: Routledge, 1998.

Goebel, Rolf J. “Japan as western Text: Roland Barthes, Richard Gordon Smith, and Lafcadio Hearn.” *Comparative Literature Studies* 30.2 (1993). 188-205.

Gregory, Derek. *Geographical Imaginations*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1994.

Keith, Michael, and Steve Pile, eds. *Place and the Politics of Identity*. London: Routledge, 1993.

Murphy, Richard. *Theorizing the avant-garde : Modernism, Expressionism, and the Problem of Postmodernity.* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999.

Pile, Steve. *The Body and the City: Psychoanalysis, Space and Subjectivity*. London: Routledge, 1996.

Pratt, Mary Louise. *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*. Routledge: London, 1992.

Saper, Craig Jonathan. “Learning From Being Lost: Invention-Tourism in Barthes’ Empire of Signs.” *Journal of Urban and Cultural Studies* 1:2 (1990). 67-86.

Spurr, David. *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*. Durham: Duke UP, 1993.

Young, Robert. *White Mythologies: Writing History and the West*. New York: Routledge, 1990.

---. *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race*. New York: Routledge, 1995.

計畫成果自評

本計畫之所以能在預定期間內完成主要是得力於大學部的幾位同學協助資料的查詢與蒐集，校內外先進與同事的討論以及寶貴意見的提供，課堂上同學的各種問題與討論，以及圖書館館員們的辛苦幫忙，在此先感謝他們的協助。

計畫在執行期間就巴特文本化的日本符號空間，以及日本生活與符號意象中各種權力的交涉、互動、利益糾葛進行探討，而得力最多的，應該是當初兩位匿名計畫書審查人的寶貴建議。非常感謝計畫書審查人於計畫審查時給予我的多項建議與指正，讓我能在計畫進行時就針對原計畫書中的缺失有所修正，並且使我在後來進行研讀與討論時，因而得以較多面向的思考與批判角度去考察巴特在此書中的文本與符號概念，使我受益匪淺，也因此能得以完成這項計畫的研讀與探討。我謹在此，向兩位匿名的計畫書審查人致謝。

此外，也因為計畫執行期間對巴特與巴特的符號學的系統的討論與文獻資料閱讀，對巴特將符號學的視角揉紮入文化研究的面向因之深感興趣。所以也試圖將這樣的研究所得加入巴特其他文學文本與歐康諾的文學文本的研究與分析（已發表於學術期刊，原稿參見附錄一~三），以及放入探討其他形式的文化文本（視覺媒體與都市研究）的研究（已於 2004 IASS 研討會宣讀，論文集編纂中）當中，並且也得以將獲得的討論分析的成果在研討會上以及於期刊上發表。這也是執行本計畫在文獻閱讀與研究探討計畫課題時的另外一個很大的收穫。

附　錄

附錄一

蔡秀枝，巴特《S/Z》中的轉向與閱讀策略，《中外文學》，第 31 卷，第 9 期，頁 33-66，2003 年。（原稿）

附錄二

Hsiu-chih Tsai, Violence as the Road to Transformation: O'Connor's "A Good Man Is Hard to Find", NTU Studies in Languages and Literatures 13, 2004, 59-97.（原稿）

附錄三

Hsiu-chih Tsai, Disrupted Narratives: O'Connor's Feminine Grotesque, Concentric 30.2, 2004, 35-54.（原稿）

附錄一

巴特《S/Z》中的轉向與閱讀策略[1]

蔡秀枝

一、前言

羅蘭巴特（Roland Barthes），這個法國符號學者、結構主義大將，不但作品風格多變，在文學寫作、理論與批評等場域中，亦是常有驚人之舉。研究巴特的學者們則大多同意，巴特的作品在 1960 年代末期出現一個很大的轉變（Moriarty，Rylance，Wasserman）。正當巴特六〇年代的幾個著作如《符號學原理》（*Elements of Semiology*）（1964）、〈敘事的結構分析導論〉（"Structural Analysis of Narrative"）（1966）與《流行體系》（*The Fashion System*）（1967）將他推上結構主義的代言人之際，巴特在 1970 年出版的《S/Z》一書裡，卻在立場上突然一反他之前大力提倡的符號學與結構主義敘事分析，開始對結構主義符號學的語言觀與意義生產感到懷疑。在這樣的時間點上出版的《S/Z》一書，見證了他對結構主義與符號學原則的看法已經有所改變。這樣的轉變，不僅是巴特個人對文本作品的批評看法的轉變，也暗示了現今所謂後結構主義與結構主義間的區分（Rylance 66）。雖然結構主義與後結構主義間的劃分未必十分截然[2]，但是在理論上這兩者之間確實是

---

[1] 本文初稿發表於 2002 年 5 月 18 日第 26 屆全國比較文學會議。首先，感謝兩位匿名的會議論文摘要審查教授所提供的寶貴審查意見，本文初稿得以順利提出。並且感謝會議場上張漢良教授與朱崇儀教授的提問，以及論文講評人許綺玲教授的指正。此外，更要特別感謝《中外文學》兩位匿名審查教授詳細指出本篇論文原稿的疏漏與錯誤，並且提供寶貴的修正意見與思考方向，作者謹此致謝。

[2] 結構主義與後結構主義的分野雖然可以經由一個簡單的條件——對語言的「忠誠」度——來判斷，但是瑞倫斯也指出，在英國，結構主義的內容——「結構主義」究竟爲何——就引起許多困惑，所以當法國人早已丟棄結構主義進入後結構的論戰時，英國人仍然困在「結構主義」的詞彙間打轉。瑞倫斯指出，《S/Z》一書在英國更是被廣泛地認爲是一本屬於結構主義的書，因爲原本就很難分辨出究竟這兩者間的區別在哪裡，而且《S/Z》的「開頭數頁也是新舊兩種計畫複雜的概要陳述」（Rylance 73）。但是即使真如瑞倫斯所言，巴特的新、舊計畫間似乎不易釐清關係，而且結構與後結構主義間的區別也許依然要有些許模糊地帶，即使《S/Z》對瑞倫斯而言是一種新、舊計畫夾雜的概要陳述（其實正確地來說，《S/Z》並不算是「新、舊計畫夾雜的概要陳述」，而是一個因爲巴特態度轉向的問題而導致巴特必須提出一種新的文本閱讀策略，以因應隨之而來的符號指涉關係的改變。只不過在巴特開始轉向的同時，舊的結構主義符號指涉關係仍未全然被拋開斷絕。），巴特在《S/Z》中所提出的符號差異論與重讀策略就具足了由結構主義轉向的條件，因爲對語言符號的結構式指涉系統的質疑，與開放意義建構的互涉網絡的概念正是各家學者脫離結構式建構的初發。只是巴特在《S/Z》中提出新的閱讀策略與語言符號分析理論時，仍然時而套用結構主義敘事分析的術語，但是在行文中又不曾加以仔細辯駁相同術語在新、舊觀念中的差異（在某些狀況之下，這些差異其實並不十分具體），所以才會令人懷疑其有回返舊路的嫌疑。

存在著一個基本的差異：後結構主義者雖然仍秉持結構主義者的宗旨，以語言做爲分析的主導，但是基本上卻對結構主義以語言符號系統做爲其他表意系統的量尺與標竿的做法產生懷疑。這樣的懷疑根本上是一種對語言做爲溝通傳達工具的科學性的懷疑。如果說結構主義者對語言的符號意義指涉是有著相當的信任，並且在義意指涉的推演過程中將之建立爲一種結構式的常態，使之可以在一般情形運作下將這樣的型態模組化並賦予它客觀性與科學性的精神；那麼在後結構主義者的眼裡，這樣經由語言分析所主導的意義常態化、模組化、普遍共通性與科學性就是他們認爲最值得懷疑的地方。在後結構主義的思維中，語言做爲溝通工具的純度遭到懷疑，而經由語言所產生的意義符號指涉與結構符號系統的模組建立也因之面臨挑戰。雖然在後結構主義概念下逕自發展各項學說的學者們彼此之間所發展出來的理論分析與方法論間其實也存在著相當大的差異，而且各家的理論模式與看法也各有不同的著重點，但是對語言做爲分析所有表意系統準繩的懷疑與反省則是一致的。所以瑞倫斯（Rylance）在研究巴特的轉變並且對後結構主義與現象做闡述時，就認爲巴特對作品與文本的區分，以及巴特有關文本與符號概念的轉向，其實是因爲巴特所處的時代使然，所以應該算是這時代所面臨的種種轉變中的必然結果。再者，巴特因爲身逢其時，也自然會成爲推動這符號概念轉變的一個因子。瑞倫斯認爲，就整體而言，在整個現代知識論的歷史發展中，後結構主義者對結構主義者所抱持的看法——所謂以客觀的角度對作品語言的信賴與分析評量——提出挑戰與質疑，並且在面對結構化意義建構系統時在態度上有所轉變亦是必然之舉（Rylance 66）。

在這樣的時代風潮與理論轉變中，巴特對語言作爲其他符號系統的量尺的態度由早先極力推介語言符號系統的科學客觀轉向懷疑意義與現實的絕對相關性，而在其他《如是》（*Tel Quel*）雜誌成員（Sollers，Kristeva，Derrida等）[3]的影響下，巴特《S/Z》中有關符號差異、開放性可寫文本（le texte scriptible）與文本互涉（intertext）的看法也因此逐漸成形。但是巴特對結構主義與符號學的鍾愛似乎並未因爲他在態度上與理論上有所轉變而截然放棄。如果說巴特的符號差異論述與文本觀念在《S/Z》中得到闡明與實踐，那麼結構主義敘事分析中的某些概念其實也同樣盤繞在《S/Z》的某些角落之中，並未完全離開巴特的視界。如果語言的符號分析與結構（某種存在於敘事中的文法架構）的探索並不足以形成一種客觀的工具，放諸四海揭準，同時也無法足以擔任其他符號系統的中介，那麼語言符號在文本的閱讀中將佔據何種位置？這也許是暗含在巴特《S/Z》的寫作操演中的一個假設性問題，也可能是巴特由客觀的符號敘事分析走向主觀的符號延宕概念的一個前提與誘因（但是即使證之以《S/Z》中獨特的寫作與批評範例，巴特仍然是在這兩者間擺盪）。本文將以巴特在《S/Z》中所提出的閱讀策略爲例，並擬仿巴特在《S/Z》中所提出的閱讀分析方法做演練，嘗試探討巴特在敘事的結構分析之

---

[3] 本文中所要討論的這幾個轉變點與這些《如是》雜誌的成員有著極大的關聯。例如：巴特所欲處理的語言系統符號間差異性的問題就與Derrida的符號延異概念有關，而文本互涉的概念則不是巴特所創，而是來自於J. Kristeva論文所談到的文本互涉概念的轉化（文本互涉的概念初始是由M. M. Bakhtin所提出）。在Stephen Heath做的一篇訪談（“Interview: A Conversation with Roland Barthes”, *Signs of the Times*, 1971）中，巴特也談到他相信S/Z的確造成某種改變[巴特此處指的是理論上的改變，因爲《S/Z》書中那種一步一步分析小說文句的方法與批判運作的思維方式及書寫，是和他之前的批評寫作的方式有著截然的不同]，而且巴特將這樣的轉變歸功於他週遭的理論家們對他思維的影響與開啓：「改變則總是因他人而導致」。這些人包括Derrida, Sollers, Kristeva。巴特並坦承：「他們教導我、說服我、打開我的眼界。」（*The Grain of the Voice* 135）

後，如何經由對文本進行批判性的「書寫閱讀」過程，傳達他於此時期中對符號指涉關係與閱讀理論概念在態度上的轉變。

二、從結構到差異

「有此一說：佛教徒的苦修使他們能在一粒豆子中看到全世界。這正是最早的敘事分析者嘗試做的事：在單一的結構中看到全世界的故事。」（*S/Z* 3）羅蘭巴特在《S/Z》一書的首頁，借用東方陌生佛教徒的異質性與奇特的禁欲修行觀點，帶出奇幻般寓意博大但卻結構儉約的原則：在一顆簡單純淨的豆子中投射出一個嚴肅淨簡的世界架構。對巴特而言，他曾經也如是相信，這樣高深全括的境界也同樣可以在西方的實證世界中尋獲——因爲這樣的境界也是敘事結構分析者的天堂：敘事結構分析者戮力以赴地在眾多的故事中粹取出它們的精華，寄望能於其中再次千錘百鍊出一個偉大的敘事結構，一個屬於敘事的原型/雛形架構，因爲它將適用於眾多故事——這是佛教徒苦行修鍊者的終極目標，也是敘事結構分析者（早先的巴特亦屬其一）的夢泉。然而這個被遍尋與欲求的目標與理想卻在《S/Z》的起始面臨了挑戰：「這個使人精疲力竭的工作其實根本是不必要的，因爲文本會因此失去其差異（difference）。」（*S/Z* 3）在結構主義敘事分析的主導羅蘭巴特這番寓言式地撤退與強而有力地呼籲下，嚴整的敘事結構分析於是由原型的尋找轉而進入差異認證的時代。差異於是成爲後結構時期文本突顯其存在的形式，差異（而不是原型）才是每個故事的回返。但是值得注意的是：這差異並非是文本中無法削減的異質性或獨特性，差異並不是那用以彰顯每個文本的獨特性的本質。因爲這樣的本質說將會使差異成爲每個文本的獨特質素，因而使每個文本都成爲唯一僅有。巴特在此處所謂的「差異」是指閱讀過程中的一種生產，它使每個文本在某個基準點上具有**共同**的特性。因爲這個差異的生產正是每個文本的符號意義指涉的共相。所以每個文本經由閱讀過程，由於語言符號的開放式多重解讀而形塑的（差異性）存在，都是差異的回返；也因此文本意義在差異間遊走，不再存有一限定式的文本解讀或是將某一文本解讀視爲唯一僅有的閱讀指導教本。每個差異性文本意義的存在都足以證明其自身存在所具有的正統性。在後結構主義的文本閱讀裡，差異不斷地隨著敘事的語言轉換著意義的跑道：「這差異並不會停歇，它被文本、語言與系統敘說著：每個故事都是差異的回返。」（*S/Z* 3）[4]正是這個不止息的、運動中的差異支撐著巴特《S/Z》中的閱讀理論，確保了文本重讀（re-reading）的可能。

由此，巴特將文本敘事分析的大旗一轉，進入了文本乃多元多音、差異恆存、差異遍在的世界。這樣的文本世界是自身差異的顯現，而非與眾不同的差異。然而在結構主義與後結構主義間徘徊的我們要問的問題是：這樣的差異觀對文本的閱讀產生什麼樣的變化？文學文本的語言在這觀念的轉換間扮演著什麼樣的角色？巴特《S/Z》中的重讀說也許可以部分地解答這個疑問。首先巴特將文本閱讀區分爲消費性與創造性兩種閱讀。消費性閱讀以文本爲消費品，閱讀的完畢代表著消費的結束，而文本做爲一個產品的功用也於是完成。相反地，創造性閱讀則著重閱讀的生產過程，閱讀的結束只是暫時生產關係的停頓，並非真正勞動關係的終結。在創造性/生產性閱讀的概念下，文本做爲閱讀的物質性的基礎仍保留著

[4] Barbara Johnson在《The Critical Difference》中替巴特這段話作了明確的解釋：「文本的差異不在於它的獨特性，它的特殊身分。它是文本自身差異的方式。這差異只能在重讀的行動中察覺。它呈現的是文本表意的力量經由重複過程，套句佛洛伊德的講法，被解放的方式，它不是同一而是差異的回返。換句話說，差異並非在於區分兩種身分。它不是兩者間的差異（a difference between）（或者，至少不是在兩個獨立體間）。它是一個內在的差異（a difference within）。」（p. 4）

可被開發運用的資源並且隨時可以經由再次閱讀、不斷重讀而展開另一個生產的關係。這兩種閱讀的行爲與巴特對結構與符號觀點的轉變有密切地關聯。巴特因此將提供消費性閱讀的文本歸類爲可讀型文本（le lisible，the readerly），而促進創造性閱讀的文本則被稱爲可寫型文本（le scriptible，the writerly）。例如：經典文學作品就是可讀型文本。而現代作品則多爲可寫型文本。經典文本之可讀在於閱讀的過程中詮釋的力量是趨於統一的，所有的閱讀力量與目的均是以追尋終極意義與解謎爲依歸。而可寫型文本則因爲語言符號指涉的差異性解讀形成意義的干擾與逃逸，而造成多元甚至互相衝突的意義詮釋與分歧，於是詮釋的力量受到阻礙，解謎的工作在閱讀過程中因目標喪失而失去意義。

巴特認爲消費性閱讀之所以可能，並終能成爲一種經驗是因爲傳統文學作品在敘事的過程中，大都預設這樣的解謎、解密的閱讀目標。所以巴特粗略地以傳統的寫實小說當作這樣的可讀文本的代表。這類寫實小說（可讀文本）所形塑的解謎似的敘述將文本變成消費品，所以一旦故事的謎底揭曉，它的目的與結構意義也就算達成，敘事的功能與文本的意義也因消費性閱讀的完成而終結。但是這種消費性閱讀卻限制了讀者，他只能接受或拒絕這個意義解讀，此外別無選擇。身處結構主義符號學熱潮中的巴特曾致力於尋求這樣的超越架構/文法，以做爲一般敘事分析的基礎。但是此時的巴特已不再迷戀信賴這樣結構主義符號學式的意義限定與涵義（connotation）的解讀，也不再斷言這一超越敘事架構的功能。再者，這樣的解讀方式對此時的巴特而言，還另外顯示透露著某種體制性的壓抑與權力的傾軋。相對於這樣限定式的消費性閱讀與可讀型文本，巴特希望藉《S/Z》的出現來描繪、證明創作式閱讀與可寫性文本存在的可能。

文本之所以可寫，在於讀者的角色由被動的尋找線索，探求答案，轉而成爲主動的進入意義的缺口，尋找開啓多元的閱讀路徑，進行對文本的一種書寫式的閱讀。讀者的閱讀是對文本的一種書寫經驗，一種勞動的生產。這樣的閱讀/書寫經驗是相當專斷的，它僅能成爲讀者自己的文本，雖然它是讀者自己的創作生產，但是在原始文本之外，並不存在這樣的文本。所以巴特界定可寫文本爲一生產的、開放的、多元的文本，但是你不可能在書店中尋找到它，它不是一種商品，它是閱讀與寫作經驗的結晶，讀者的生產與版權所有。雖然巴特在《S/Z》中用相當武斷的方式，將「寫實主義小說」冠上「可讀型文本」的名號[5]，將兩者等同看之，並且標明巴爾札克（Honore de Balzac）的〈薩拉辛〉（“Sarrasine”）就是這樣一個經典寫實主義大師的寫實主義小說（可讀型文本）範本。但是巴爾札克的〈薩拉辛〉卻在這樣的標記下，經由巴特《S/Z》的閱讀與轉寫，由可讀型文本轉而成爲可寫型文本。《S/Z》中這樣的演練明白地昭告著可寫文本的可能性。〈薩拉辛〉由可讀文本變爲可寫文本的轉變其實也顯示著可讀文本與可寫文本的區別並非在於文本自身物質上的、語言上的區別，而是在於語言做爲符號系統是如何成爲閱讀過程的生產工具。可寫文本的可貴處正在於它開放了結構敘事分析的詮釋結構，將文本當成一個符號的網絡系統，可以在閱讀的過程中因爲符號解讀產生的意義差異，而擁有重新連結的可能；也正因爲閱讀的差異生產創造重新連結的可能，而賦予文本一個新的結構，複雜化文本的指涉關係系統。

但是在敘事結構分析的世界裡，文本的閱讀與語言符號關係就單純多了。因爲在那裡語言的傳達性與現實的關係是被信賴的，語言符號的能指（signifier）與所指（signified）的關係也是穩定的，所以文本意義可以經由對語言符號的分析而

[5] 這與《如是》雜誌的成員們對avant-guard的堅持和他們對現代藝術與美學的態度是相關聯的。因爲藉由對寫實主義小說的嘲諷與批判，現代主義式的美學與語言概念才找得到恰當的著力點得以伸張。

掌握，每個故事的結構也都可以經由對敘事的分析而得到。結構主義時期的巴特經由李維史特勞斯（Levi-Strauss），格萊瑪（Greimas），進入索緒爾（de Saussure）的語言學，將二維的語言學概念轉化爲敘事結構的經緯，於是敘事在符號學原則的解析下逐漸形成意義結構。在《敘事的結構分析導論》和《流行體系》中，巴特將縱向的系統（system）與橫向的聯結並行（syntagm）兩原則轉化爲隱喻（metaphor）和轉喻（metonymy）的對立組合。經由系統與聯結的架構所規範出的語言敘事綱要與故事的結構層次於焉形成。而語言符號的意義系統則有賴於索緒爾式的能指與所指的關係與符號意義的鏈結來補足。符號系統的關聯性與指涉性構成了意義的脈絡，而葉爾姆斯列夫（Hjelmslev）的論點[6]則將符號意義系統的意義鏈結推向意義的蘊含的擴編。這樣的結構化的意義探尋雖然使閱讀與分析詮釋在有系統的經營下擴編成形，自成一完整體系，也使巴特成爲敘事結構分析的健將，但是巴特卻在此時開始對符號指涉關係的穩定性與絕對性產生懷疑，因而由結構主義轉入後結構主義的開拓。

巴特努力嘗試的敘事結構分析使閱讀進入系統與科學，但是《S/Z》的出現又

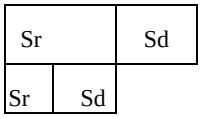
---

[6]葉耳姆斯列夫（哥本哈根學派）將索緒爾的語言符號指涉中能指與所指的關係轉化爲符號的表意與內容的關係。葉耳姆斯列夫並且對表意與內容這兩個關係層面進行敘述，認爲表意與內容層均分別由形式（form）、實質（substance）與要旨（purport）三要素所構成。（*Prolegomena to a Theory of Language, 1969*）葉耳姆斯列夫的符號學概念複雜化索緒爾的符號論，他的符號模型將符號的本源、指涉關係、功能與結構作細分，也使得表意與內容這兩個層面可以各自進一步發展成另一個符號系統的符號。這樣的發展使語言與非語言系統間的符號意義指涉與轉換變的可能。巴特在《符號學要義》中就援引並簡單化葉耳姆斯列夫的符號模型與涵義符號學（connotative semiotics）的概念，指出任何一個意義系統皆包含表意（E）（expression）與內容（C）（content）兩個層面，而意義的構成則是由這兩個層面的連結（R）（relation）產生。巴特在《符號學要義》中所提出的二層符號指涉系統基本上可以分爲兩類：

(1)

2 E R C

1 ERC

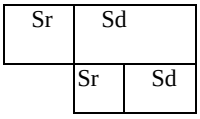


Connotation

(2)

2 E R C

ERC



Metalanguage

第一類是將原本第一層的【（表意 E）—連結 R—（內容 C）】的部分當作第二層符號指涉系統的表意部分，然後推演出第二層系統（ERC）的符號意義內容，此種方式是葉耳姆斯列夫所謂的涵義符號學。第一層系統是原意層（denotation），第二層系統是涵義層（connotation）。第二類則是將原本第一層的【（表意 E）—連結 R—（內容 C）】的部分當作是第二層符號指涉系統的內容部分，而後設語言的發展就是基於這樣的符號指涉關係。因爲後涉語言正是建立於另一個符號意義系統之上的符號學。在這個層次分明的架構中，原意與涵義間有著緊密的連結。（*Elements of Semiology* 89-90）

使這樣的閱讀轉向。其實巴特在這裡想要鬆動的並不是結構，而是文本閱讀的方式。巴特想要探討的，也不是結構的瓦解，而是符號指涉意義的逃脫。而這樣有關意義與符號的叛離概念也並非由巴特所始創，是德希達的散種理論與能指符號的延異哲學開啓了能指流動的先河；但是巴特則將符號與意義斷裂的概念引入敘事結構，因之開啓了意義架構的後延與開放。此後，結構轉化爲網路，意義詮釋變成爲路徑的選擇。閱讀者的閱讀轉變成書寫模式。閱讀的路徑不再唯一，而文學文本的世界也不再經由偉大敘事結構的原型來鏈結，一個故事/文學文本就是文學，因爲它的意義經由網絡聯結，無限擴大、吸納，形成互聯的網路、文本互涉的系統，它就是文學本身。

於此符號學結構式的意義指涉架構被巴特轉向爲多向多元的連結。能指符號不再與所指符號綁在一起。能指與所指的關係不再是索引系統般的固定。指涉符號間的身分不再固定。敘事結構分析援用的符號學意義指涉系統讓位給指涉符號的鏈結關係，也因此開放可讀的敘事爲可寫的，可讀文本也因之轉爲可寫文本。所以歸根究底，所謂可讀的或是可寫的文本的區分，並不在於外在的身份的認定。這無關文本身份的認定，因爲符號指涉系統是在閱讀的過程中運作。文本符號自身的差異（在閱讀過程中所產生）才是文本多元的可能。結構式的符號指涉關係將有可能導致封閉性的意義詮釋，可讀文本的意義與定位即在此。散逸、連結式的符號指涉關係，將原初的意義留白不論，使文本閱讀有更多元的脈絡可尋，導致可寫的文本閱讀。這個生產的過程（production）是可寫型文本的根據。可讀或可寫文本的認定與區分在於差異，此差異並非來自外在的比較認定，而是來自自身。文本自身的差異經由閱讀的過程生產，所以巴特說「可寫的文本不是一樣東西，我們將很難在書店中找尋到它。」（S/Z 5）經由符號的指涉關係脈絡來閱讀文本，使文本在閱讀的過程中顯露出可能的路徑是差異演變的方式，它的多元性使重讀具有意義。每一次文本的回返，都顯現出差異。可寫的文本不是消費而是生產。對巴特而言，文本的差異性存在於自身，而文學則是最終文學文本符號的差異意義網絡的所在：

> 單一文本之所以能代表所有文學文本，並不是這個文本能代表它們（是它們的抽象化身並且也與之同等），而是文學就只是這樣的一個單一文本：這個文本不是進入一個模型（Model）的（歸納的）入口，而是進入一個具有上千個入口的網路（network）的入口；選擇這個入口最終並不是要意圖一個屬於規範與離去的合法結構，一個敘事或詩的律法（Law），而是意圖一個（片斷的，來自其他文本的聲音的，其他符碼的）觀點（perspective）；而它的[透視法的]消失點則被無盡的後延，被神秘的開啓：每個（單一的）文本都是有關這消逝的理論（而不僅只是它的一個例子），是有關這不斷回返，不肯屈服的差異的理論。（*S/Z* 12）

三、S 與 Z 的故事

S與Z的故事是有關「愛」與「連結」的故事。愛的方式有許多種，連結亦然。《S/Z》是巴特運用語言符號的差異原則與文本的可寫性做標的，對巴爾札克一則在當時尚且不甚有名的短篇小說〈薩拉辛〉（1830）的故事所進行的閱讀與理論演練。巴特之所以選擇這個〈薩拉辛〉的故事，和巴爾札克之所以寫這個故事一樣，都有個有趣的源頭由來。最早，是巴爾札克從別處閱讀了一個有關追求去勢女高音的故事[7]，然後轉而將之寫成他的故事〈薩拉辛〉。巴特也是由閱讀別人對〈薩拉

[7] Per Nykrog 指出，根據Pierre Citron 在巴爾札克《La Comedie humaine》（Paris: Gallimard, 1976）一書的導讀所稱，巴爾札克的〈薩拉辛〉故事藍本可能是來自Giovanni Giacomo Casanova

辛〉故事的評論，起而對〈薩拉辛〉故事感到興趣並寫成《S/Z》一書。而這個〈薩拉辛〉的故事本身也一如巴特和巴爾札克的閱讀寫作經驗般輾轉回繞，同樣有著一個源頭來由在時間與空間的場域中等待著被發現。

巴爾札克這個〈薩拉辛〉的故事是以敘述者追求情慾對象作爲起點來引入雕刻家薩拉辛的故事。由於〈薩拉辛〉故事的敘述者渴望的女子（柔許菲德夫人）深深爲巴黎蘭地家族起居間中一幅阿多尼斯（Adonis，希臘故事中的美男子）的肖像所吸引，對他的勤獻殷勤視若無睹，讓他備感挫折與嫉忌。於是〈薩拉辛〉的敘述者便現媚地向柔許菲德夫人表示他知道這畫像中人物的真實身分。他運用敘述技巧重溯這幅阿多尼斯畫作的淵源，講述一個有關宴會中被柔許菲德夫人視若鬼魅的百希老人與她極力讚賞的畫作中美男子阿多尼斯肖像的關係（此即爲法國雕刻家薩拉辛和義大利歌劇院名伶冉碧芮拉（Zambinella）之間愛情追求的敘事情節）。敘述者希望藉此故事親近心儀的柔許菲德夫人，以故事的敘述作爲與佳人風流一夜的替換。而敘述者的故事中薩拉辛雕刻刀下美麗的女性冉碧芮拉肖像後來則成了維安（Vien）畫筆下俊美的男子阿多尼斯，而這個阿多尼斯畫像之後又成爲吉荷德（Girodet）畫筆下月之女神愛戀的英俊牧羊人安迪米恩（Endymion）。這是屬於〈薩拉辛〉故事中的音樂、雕刻、繪畫、敘述藝術以及男/女性美麗外表與身體間的時空纏繞糾葛。再來是有關羅蘭巴特的故事，他從別人[8]那裡讀到了有關巴爾札克〈薩拉辛〉的故事的評論，於是接著這樣綿延糾纏的故事敘述、愛情連結與音樂/雕刻/繪畫/書寫的延續，巴特寫下了他對這個愛情故事的細膩解讀與充滿獨特分析並交雜評論的《S/Z》一書。

S 與 Z：連結不是連結，而是分割。愛情不是愛情，是擁有與死亡。S 是薩拉辛，是巴特，是敘述者，是畫作阿多尼斯；Z 是冉碧芮拉，是巴爾札克，是柔許菲

（1725-1798，義大利歷險家和作家，以大膽和放蕩不拘的生活聞名）的《回憶錄》（*Memoirs*）。故事中原先被Casanova追求的義大利歌劇院女高音（原先Casanova以爲「她」，正如義大利歌劇院女高音的傳統，是個男人）後來「她」則被證實是一個真正的、如假包換的年輕女子。而巴爾札克在寫〈薩拉辛〉的故事時，則將《Memoirs》中的人物身分做了反轉，以達到更大的戲劇效果。所以薩拉辛追求的義大利歌劇院女高音冉碧芮拉真的是個（去勢的）男人，〈薩拉辛〉這樣的劇情不但符合巴爾札克寫實小說的訴求，也與寫實小說背後所指涉的整個意義建構的社會價值觀與意識型態更加貼近。

[8]巴特之所以會選擇巴爾札克的〈薩拉辛〉，起因是由於他讀到Jean Reboul寫的一篇有關〈薩拉辛〉的評論（Jean Reboul, “Sarrasine ou la castration personnifiee,” Cahiers pour l’Analyse, March-April, 1967），而根據巴特的說法，Reboul之所以寫這一篇評論則是導因於閱讀了Georges Bataille的另一篇文章的引述的啓發（*S/Z* 16）。所以巴特寫作《S/Z》一書的原委，套句巴特的話，可以算是在眾多的源頭中、在不斷地溯源與相互指涉的過程中，顯現文本符號外延的指涉功能與可能因之而來的本源的喪失。而在這不斷地指涉與援引中浮現與失落的，則不僅只是本源與義意間的指涉關係，還有意義的增生與衝突。其實按照巴特在另一篇訪談（Raymond Bellour, “On S/Z and Empire of Signs”, *Les Lettres francaises*, 1970）中的說法，他原本的寫作計畫是要討論克萊斯特（Heinrich von Kleist）的「O 侯爵夫人」（*The Marquise of O*），而他其實也曾經考慮過採用艾倫坡（Edgar Allan Poe）的短篇故事，或者福樓拜（Gustave Flaubert）的〈單純的心〉（“Un Coeur simple”）。但是最後巴特選擇了巴爾札克的〈薩拉辛〉。巴特自己並不諱言這之中也許有潛意識的運作痕跡，因爲〈薩拉辛〉的故事裡有去勢的情節，但是基本上〈薩拉辛〉的故事本身較其他故事具有更豐富的象徵意義應是巴特選擇時的考量（*Grain* 70）

德夫人，是百希老人。愛的追求以慾望爲趨力，以言語敘述、雕刻、繪畫爲方法去逼近，最後終結於欲求物的完美與其不能被欲求的性質。連結本身既是相似、相連，也是拒絕與割離。愛與連結的陰影裡是死亡與斷離。但是一如 S 與 Z 的關係在於映照的雷同，鏡面的角度影響到鏡像的反影，所以光亮與陰影的關係也在於映照形象的雷同與差異，而光源的角度影響的則是陰影的顯現與樣態。閱讀與觀看的視角影響文本呈現的印象。結構的二元連結也終將因爲解構的刀鋒犀利的剖析而開展出缺口。

巴黎社交圈內新貴蘭地家族的宴會中，〈薩拉辛〉的故事敘述者心儀著一位丰姿錯約的女仕柔許菲德夫人。但是柔許菲德夫人卻因為好奇心使然，動手觸摸了坐在她身旁，蘭地家族中充滿神秘、鬼魅般謎樣色彩但卻形容枯槁的百希老人。這突如其來的近身接觸引來老人細而尖銳的叫聲，驚動了蘭地夫人和她的子女，也同時驚嚇了這位年輕的女仕。倉皇間敘述者與她兩人躲入一橢圓形的起居間，瞥見維安所畫的阿多尼斯肖像。柔許菲德夫人頓時看之入神，讚嘆這希臘美男子的完美形象。因熱情不被青睞，又再度受挫於畫像中男子的俊美形貌，故事中的敘述者想到了報復與獲得情愛的絕佳方式，於是法國雕刻家薩拉辛與冉碧芮拉的故事便在傍晚的浪漫裡在柔許菲德夫人的小會客廳中被娓娓道來。

I. 《S/Z》：書寫閱讀經驗 在開始對〈薩拉辛〉的故事進行仔細分析之前，巴特首先提出了一個不同於敘事結構分析的閱讀方法論。巴特在《S/Z》中的分析是完全依照〈薩拉辛〉小說中敘事文句先後出現的順序，按部就班（step by step）的進行「閱讀」與分析。雖然巴特早前的敘事結構分析方法也著重細讀，但是在《S/Z》裡，巴特則在閱讀的經驗裡另外又開闢一個全新的討論批判空間。這個空間是經由閱讀的切割而產生，運用閱讀時對文本進行分割，以閱讀中斷的方式，將小說敘事文本的組織結構做一種任意的、便利性的裁切，以便於在文本組織的脈絡中開創出許多獨立卻又相關的空間，做爲語言與意義建構的分析與批判場所。巴特稱這樣被區隔出來的切割文本爲一個「語段」（lexia）。每一個被獨立出來的語段，就是一個經由數個語意營造出來的意義建構的空間。爲了要追溯可能的意義建構過程，巴特提出了在語段中尋找「暗碼」（code）的策略。巴特希望藉由分析每個語段中可能出現的暗碼與因之而來的意義堆疊建構，來重新解開這個文本最終意義的追尋與建構的社會神話，開啓新的意義流動的可能：「按部就班的評論有其必要是因爲它將重新開啓文本的多重入口，它不會將文本過度地結構化，它不會賦予文本一種由論文論證而來的額外的結構，因而使文本封閉：它給文本打上星號（“it stars the text”）[9]，而不是將文本加以組合（assembling）」（*S/Z* 13）。藉著書寫

[9] 巴特在《S/Z》中的閱讀策略是將文本依據數個暗碼（大約不超過三到四個）的長度裁割成一個語段，然後再在每個語段中出現的暗碼上依據其各自出現的順序打上星號（★）。例如：第一個出現的暗碼就給一個星號（★），第二個出現的暗碼則給兩個星號（★★），其餘則依此類推。所以星號在每個針對文本裁割語段的評論中出現的功能首先就是要標明語段中出現的暗碼，以及顯示這些暗碼在這個語段中的出現順序。而巴特此處說明的用字遣詞（“c’est etoiler le texte au lieu de le ramasser.” 在這裡“etoiler”除開「打星號」之外，也可以做「打散、粉碎」來解。所以將文本打上星號在另一個層次上而言，亦可以說是將文本給片段/片斷化了。）則另外強調了這個打星號的策略的第二的功能：這些星號（標示暗碼）的出現的一個重要的目的就是要顯示一個完整的文本組織肌理，是如何在片斷、逐個的暗碼中運作連結以成就意義的完整，但是藉由打星號找暗碼的策略巴

對〈薩拉辛〉故事的閱讀與分析，巴特在《S/Z》裡建立了一種非常個人化的閱讀與書寫經驗。

I-1. 語段 爲了重開啓文本的多重入口，也爲了將敘事文本做更仔細精確的閱讀，不要喪失任何一個可能的暗碼與意義，巴特將〈薩拉辛〉的故事切分爲 561 個語段，每個語段則依據其出現於敘事文本的先後順序標上阿拉伯數字以爲區別。語段的出現使敘事語言的流暢性受到干擾，片斷破碎的切割使得敘事文本的故事性與意義結構分散斷裂，使原本平滑的閱讀表面頓時有如經歷一場「小型地震」，因而得以將原本語言接續的縫隙重新開啓。而語段的劃分既然是爲了打破語言意義的自然性，就不可能有任何結構或規則可循。所以巴特說：「語段是閱讀的單位。而語段的切割則是極端地任意性的；它不暗示任何方法學上的責任，因爲這樣將使它必須依賴符號能指而決定，然而此處[語段]的分析則是僅僅依據符號所指而訂定」（*S/Z* 13），所以並沒有一定的原則可循。巴特強調：語段的分割沒有方法學責任的暗示，因爲若果如此，又必然將一個任意性的分割回歸到規則與結構，亦即，重新回返到語言符號的結構性意義指涉系統，而這樣的意義建構過程是必然要以符號能指與所指的密切連結爲依歸的。巴特對語段切割的唯一要求是：一個語段最好不要有超過三到四個以上的暗碼，以避免意義太過混雜（*S/Z* 13）。因爲語段是觀察意義的最佳處所，所以唯有將符號能指的意義系統暫時打散、不連接，才能避免意義的壟斷。巴特有關語段的發明與其切割文本的方式使他對〈薩拉辛〉的敘事分析能做到涓滴不漏，一網打進所有敘事語句，不漏掉任何一個可能的暗碼與指涉關係。

I-2. 暗碼 巴特在《S/Z》中提出差異重讀做爲解讀文學文本的另一種可能。他認爲文學文本的閱讀不該只是侷限在消費的觀念中。傳統（尤其是寫實主義的）詮釋與解謎式的閱讀只會讓文本的意義封閉，所以閱讀的經驗一旦完成，閱讀的工作也必然停止。消費式的閱讀既然已經達成，文本的意義與價值也就蓋棺論定，沒有重返閱讀的可能。巴特認爲這樣的消費性閱讀使文本原來多重的可能性被抹煞，也是工具性語言意義建構完全後所產生的弊端。解救文本的方式很多，重點是要如何去開放原本被封閉了的文本？巴特認爲文本必然有其多元的可能性潛藏其中，而經由語言符號所固定下來的意義詮釋，也必然要經由語言符號的功能來開解。巴特解開封閉式閱讀與意義詮釋的方法是重新開放符號的意義指涉。巴特於是提出閱讀時可供採用的五種暗碼的運作原則。暗碼是文本中符號指涉意義的指標。暗碼的運用將有助於解開文本的封閉場域，顯現它可能存在的多重多元性。

巴特所提出的這五個指標性的暗碼分別爲(1)詮釋的（hermeneutic）暗碼（它的功能在於以各種方式敘說一個問題或答案，它可以用來建立問題或延後解答，所以與謎語的建立、懸疑和揭曉有關），(2)意素的（seme）暗碼（它是所指的符號，在文本的各處出現，它是流動的元素，能與其他類似的元素合併以創造角色、氣氛、型式、和象徵），(3)象徵的（symbolic）暗碼（這暗碼與一個廣大的象徵結構有關，在文本中它以許多不同的形式或替換的方式出現，它構成文本的基礎型態），(4)行動的（proairetic）[10]暗碼（人類行爲的選擇、邏輯），和(5)文化的（cultural，

特將可以同時反其道而行，在指出語言符號的意義指涉與連結功能的同時，也可以將這個完整的、「自然化」的語言義意建構神話給重新分化、零散化，還原其意義組裝過程中的接合、裂縫、矛盾與衝突，而非連結、組合，甚至組織化、結構化這樣的建構神話的自然性。

[10] 此處巴特採用亞里斯多德在《詩學》中用來分析戲劇行動的術語來標示行動的暗碼，並指出「它[行動]主要的根據是經驗的而不是理性的，而想要將它理出一個法定的次序的嘗試也是無用的；它

referential）（亦即指涉的）暗碼（基於傳統人類經驗，以集體或匿名的方式呈現，提供論述一種科學或道德的權威性）（*S/Z* 5-8）。經由暗碼的辨認，意義的微光在文本敘事中浮現。「這五個碼形成一個網路，一個讓文本通過的場域（或者可以說，在通過它時，文本於焉形成）。」（*S/Z* 20）經由這五個暗碼，巴特將巴爾札克的〈薩拉辛〉當作多元閱讀的教本，進行編碼與重讀的工作。只是這樣精心地拆解分析〈薩拉辛〉的故事並不是要去彰顯這個文本的結構，而是要產生一種結構性。所以意義與分析的零散與空隙只是要突顯文本的片斷性。如果文本有一個形式（form）的話，這個形式也不是單一的、具組織的或有限的（*S/Z* 20）。這文本中五個暗碼所組成的網路將不再是一個嚴密的組織結構，而是一個疏漏的篩子，當文本的能指在其中穿越時，就形成零碎的片段。

II. 片段/片斷的閱讀與書寫[11]：

（1） 薩拉辛。（1）

巴特：(1)★(HER[12])薩拉辛究竟是什麼？名詞？名字？東西？男人？女人？

唯一的邏輯就是它『已經被完成』 或『已經被閱讀』…所以我們不該嘗試要將它們[行動]理出次序。」(*S/Z* 19)巴特在此處的強調主要是在釐清《S/Z》閱讀策略中的行動暗碼與結構符號學式的敘事結構分析中所強調的格萊瑪（Greimas）式的「行動」功能（這樣的行動功能是由敘事文本中的行動角色（acatants）所行使的，所以與行動角色acatants是有著密切地符號學意義的關聯）是不同的。（"Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives," p. 260）

[11] 在以下的這個部分裡，我借用/挪用了巴特在《S/Z》書中對巴爾札克〈薩拉辛〉故事的「書寫閱讀」方式的演練，以擬仿的方式，在巴特每個分析的片段/片斷後面，綴接上我自己對〈薩拉辛〉—《S/Z》的「書寫閱讀」經驗。這補綴是平面的，是一種接連在後的續接與綴補/贅補，僅以印刷字體的不同來表示（巴爾札克的〈薩拉辛〉故事片段的引用文句是以楷書字體表示，巴特的語段分析是以斜體字來呈現，而我的補綴/補贅則以論文本文的字型出現）。此處每一個由〈薩拉辛〉文本中截取的語段的前面都有一個阿拉伯數字，用以標示這些語段在本論文中出現的次序，而非巴特在《S/Z》書中對〈薩拉辛〉故事 561 個語段所標示的語段順序。有關《S/Z》書中巴特所標示的語段順序，都另外標示在每個〈薩拉辛〉原文語段的後面，以及巴特的暗碼分析的前面。

由於語段的切割是任意性的，所以我在論文中所補綴/補贅的語段操演，也沒有完全依據巴特在《S/Z》書中的語段劃分來進行。因此論文中爲了評論分析的方便起見，有些語段（例如第三和第五）就要比巴特《S/Z》書中的劃分還要來的長些。我希望用這樣的補綴來展示文本/織物（texture）所原具有的不平順、接合的缺口、或文本原存的縫隙的本質，並且也同時將文本間互相指涉、互文性（intertextuality）的可能以綴接/贅接的方式來呈現。我的補綴/補贅（巴爾札克—巴特—我）乃旨在將不同時段中的書寫、閱讀和「書寫閱讀」間的文本互涉當做是一種「文本/織物的連綴與縫補的呈現」。這樣的補綴/補贅是要將不同時段中，不同來源的可能閱讀、書寫和「書寫閱讀」的活動相串聯，以現實當下中論文閱讀所造成的視覺時間的延後，擬仿各文本間互涉的活動，以閱讀的視覺時間的延後來表現不同文本間可能的時間的差異，也進而將文本互涉間的不平、接縫、衝突和差異藉由將幾種不同文本綴接合成的、充滿「視覺的美學障礙」的文本來展現。因爲在綴補/贅補的過程中，這因之而來的文本互涉不但會使不同文本有接軌的可能，也同時能在接續與互補間流露出錯遲與延異。

[12] 以下擬仿巴特《S/Z》書寫的部分，將援用巴特分析書寫閱讀時的五個暗碼簡寫：（1）代表詮釋的暗碼：HER，（2）代表意素的暗碼：SEM，（3）代表象徵的暗碼：SYM，（4）代表行動的

★★（*SEM*）*女性特質。(S/Z 17)*

★（HER）薩拉辛究竟是什麼？巴特在他的分析的第一個語段裡，就開宗明義地指出「薩拉辛」做爲一篇小說的名稱，已經點出了問題的中心，直接帶出了整篇小說的謎語。在傳統的寫實小說架構中，這樣的書名可謂名符其實，因爲巴爾札克〈薩拉辛〉的故事正是環繞著這樣的一個謎語而產生，而解謎的工作就更是與寫實小說背後的社會意識型態的建構與社會意義的確認和再宣揚有著密切的關係。★★（SEM）女性特質。「法語中詞結尾的 e 帶著陰性特質。」(*S/Z* 17）巴特對「薩拉辛」(“Sarrasine”）這個名詞的陰性特質的猜測引導著接續的解謎的工作。

（2） 這位年輕高雅的舞者，巴黎社交圈中最令人銷魂的女性成員中的一位，模樣精
巧，有著孩童般粉嫩的臉龐，白裡透紅，它是如此脆弱與透明彷彿男人的一瞥就能像太陽的光線穿透冰塊般地將它穿透。(60)

巴特：(60)★*（SYM）身體複製。*★★*（SYM）小孩般女人。(S/Z 50）*

★（SEM）切割。在這裡女性的身體被男性敘述者精巧地切割著，一如他小心翼翼地
營造著敘事的美感，能指的語言符號在分割的狀態下一一帶出獨立的女體身塊。★★（SEM）連結。文本敘述以語言符號串接著現象與動作，呈現著文本組織的綿密連結與所指涉女體的統一與美。被分割爲眾多部分的女體在語言能指的聯結中，在單純地有如獨立事件般清澈的部分身體的描述中，展現出部分的女體，指涉著某個部分的美感。在文本織物的網眼中浮現的，在浮光乍現的片刻中隱約突現的，是碎片般的身體符號。在語意指涉的探尋中，這些語言碎片卻又宛如具有強大的黏著恢復力，呈現的是具體、統一、完整的身形。★★★（REF）美的標準。★★★★（REF）外貌與欲望的連結。

III. 破碎片段的文本 語段與五個暗碼所組成的結構性連結不同於結構敘事分析，不再侷限於以句子作爲分析的最小結構單位。巴特解開結構主義式的敘事分析的方式是將文本作任意性的截斷。文本的分析將不再以句子的結構單位爲分析敘事的原則，而是以暗碼與可能意義的出現爲原則，所以巴特重讀〈薩拉辛〉的結果，是在《S/Z》一書中將〈薩拉辛〉分割爲 561 個語段。這樣的分段方式本身就是任意性的配置，雖然巴特給它一個較理想的說法：語段的分割原則是以語意的不滿載爲準，因爲語段是語意體的包裝。經過切割的語段因此提供巴特一個與整個〈薩拉辛〉敘事文本暫時的隔離空間，可以對這個語意體的意義承載進行暗碼的尋找與意義指涉的拆解。

（3） 她（冉碧芮拉）的嘴唇充滿表情，她的眼睛流露出愛意，她的膚質是令人眼花
般的白皙。(223) 伴隨著這些令繪畫家著迷 (224) 的細節，是她那散放出希臘雕刻家鑿刀下所欲表現、讚嘆、與景仰的維納斯女神般種種令人驚嘆的形象。(225)

巴特：(223)(SYM）破碎身體的重組。(224)(REF）藝術編碼：繪畫。(225)(REF）藝術編碼：古典雕像。(S/Z 113）

★(SEM&REF)雕刻藝術中的解剖學與分析。★★(REF)美的標準。★★★(REF&HER)希臘神話：美的女神維納斯。敘事文本是展現的空間，能指活躍的空間。被拆解

暗碼：ACT，以及（5）代表文化的暗碼：REF。

的女性身體、神話中美的女神與雕刻家的銳利眼光在希臘神話與雕刻美學的交織中展現。在層層細膩的分解中，身體的各個部分在符號的引介中散發出符號的初級意義：美的現象與表徵。這些符號是意義的指引，也是刻畫、引導情感的指標。在結構的符號關係中，它們是第二層意義的創造者，涵義的指涉者。在後結構的意義網絡中，它們是互相指涉與後延的工具，它們的連結形成意義的外延與擴散，它們的功用不在於意義的顯現而是揭示一個沒有真實存在的、虛假的意義的存在。

IV. 書寫空間 這些暗碼的作用不在於組織而在於連結：「暗碼是過往曾經的痕跡。所指涉的是那已經被書寫的，亦即，（文化的、生命的、生命如文化的）聖典。」（*S/Z* 20-1）連結不同於組織。連結造成延異、流動，匯聚了眾多可能性的能指與所指在文本的空間中遊蕩；在這些主動浮現的暗碼間，在他們交織的音聲間，敘事的話語失去了源頭。「這些音聲（暗碼）的聚合成爲書寫，這是五個暗碼，五種音聲，交錯的立體書寫空間（a stereographic space）。」（*S/Z* 21）相對於結構的平面二軸性，這樣的立體書寫空間將閱讀的語言線性轉爲三度的空間場域，而五種暗碼的功能則變成文本脈絡的編織動力。巴特將這些暗碼比喻爲結構的海市蜃樓，各個語段均奔向文本之外，無法被再次建構：因爲在所有的編碼與行進間意義與訊息重疊了、消融了、喪失了。這些暗碼融聚成交織的音聲，失去了源頭。

在巴特所提出的五個暗碼中，主要構成文本敘事的持續進行的是詮釋與行動的暗碼，相對地，語素的、文化的、與象徵的暗碼則型塑出文本的立體空間，這些暗碼的指涉與連結塑造了人物與場景的張力。巴特甚至將〈薩拉辛〉故事的前十三個語段的暗碼排列編織成樂譜上的音符（*S/Z* 29），於是這些暗碼不再單純地僅是一個文本敘述空間的架構，它們同時也是音聲的架構，是眾多音聲編織的樂章：「可讀文本是一個音調的文本（a tonal text），它音調的一統基本上是依賴兩個次序性暗碼：事實的顯現與行動的調和…就是這樣的約束限制了古典文本的多元性。」（*S/Z* 30）語段中五個暗碼所排列出的結構性正是巴特的閱讀理論中所強調的：不是要建立一個敘事的文法結構，而是要於閱讀文本、開放文本敘事的多元性時，生產一種屬於閱讀文本的結構性。而開放文本文法結構，生產結構性而非結構的方法則端賴閱讀過程中各個暗碼所指涉的意義的連結方式與順序。暗碼的組合連結一如音符的排列組合，經由音符連結方式的改變，不同的樂章因而成形。巴特將文本的結構性比擬成一種抽象結構的、非僅視覺的音樂性這樣的比喻使文本敘事的二維結構轉化爲立體的視聽空間。在這個立體的空間中，巴特開放符號能指於流動中，多元的指涉與連結使文本互涉的空間也成爲可能。

（4） 這位藝術家決不會厭倦讚美這樣無可比擬的優雅：手臂與身軀的接連，頸部豐

潤的完美弧線，眉線，鼻子和完美的蛋形臉頰所刻繪出的和諧，生動輪廓的純

淨，與那濃密捲曲的睫毛所裝扮出的，她性感的眼瞼。（226）

巴特：（226）★（SEM）女性特質（濃密捲曲的睫毛，性感的眼瞼）。★★（SYM）*身體片段，重組。（S/Z 113）*

（5） 在這枯槁的人形旁邊，是位年輕女子（89），她的頸項、豐胸、和手臂光滑潔白，她的身形正展露著她花般綻放的美麗，她的秀髮從她雪花般的前額流瀉而下，激發人們的情愛，她的眼睛並不接收而是散發光芒。（90）

巴特：（89）★（SYM）對照。（90）★（SEM）對照。★★（SEM）植物性。★

★★（SYM）（皇后般女人）（S/Z 63）

★（REF）美的結構與標準。破碎片段化的身體符號聯結組合成女體美的形象。時間斷代裡有關女性美的結構與標準在敘述中傳達。藉由語言符號傳遞、形塑的外在身體形象，是片段結構的組織聯結，是女體美感意識與觀念的表達與強化，是〈薩拉辛〉故事的敘述者對女體與美的界定。這「美」的定義經由人物薩拉辛的想法所轉接。女性特質被轉而以女性的身體與女性的外在行爲表現取代。女性特質在薩拉辛眼中、敘述者的口中、巴特的閱讀中成爲片段身體符號的必然所指。性別與性在零碎片段中喪失界線，被「美」、「藝術」的抽象概念統合、隱藏。

（6） 冉碧芮拉向他呈現出一種結合、生動、與細緻。這正是他熱烈渴求的精巧的女性形體，於此，一個雕刻家同時就是這些體態最嚴苛與最熱情的法官。（222）

巴特：★（SYM）重組的身體。★★（REF）藝術心理學。（S/Z 113）

★（SYM）對立的連結。細部與結合。觀察與審判。雕刻家的審美觀宛如法官般嚴苛但卻洋溢著追求美的物體的熱情。雕刻家被賦予批判與審查的身分，在對美的事物的熱情下，對女體進行嚴苛的檢核。被肢解的身體透露出各個細部的精緻與組合時的完美。雕刻家的眼睛、他的審美觀正審判著這被解剖的肢體，嚴苛地以抽象藝術的指標檢驗這組合後的完美與生動靈活。身體一如雕刻的物件，在每一個細節都必須要注意它的靈巧與最後整體的配合度。女性身體（以及那必然要藏匿在身體能指符號背後的，被指涉的涵義：女性與女性特質）再一次喪失在故事敘述者的口中，喪失在薩拉辛眼中與想像中的美與藝術境界裡。身體的源頭由人間世轉向抽象界。女人身體，藝術的符號。完美的軀體與藝術的關係在此被連結、強化與抽象化。★★（REF）美的結構與標準。★★★（SEM）女性特質。冉碧芮拉令人驚異的吸引最先是由聲音開始的。而這也應該是她之所以被義大利歌劇院「製造」出來的原因。但是當薩拉辛將注意力由聽覺的部分轉移到視覺，由抽象的音色轉而爲實像的女體，當他作爲雕刻家的職業眼光一旦盤據他的眼睛，成爲他注意力的焦點時，音樂的魔力就不再被他提及。音樂作爲藝術、作爲美的推崇、美的吸引的部份就已經消失。於是聲音退場而形象出場。歌劇院的女高音變成雕刻家眼中絕美的模特兒。在這一刻間，美的領域在藝術的境界中偷偷轉換。然後，抽象的美的提昇變成肉體的欲望。此時此刻薩拉辛這個藝術雕刻家想要在人世間尋找的是最精緻的女體，而冉碧芮拉所代表的正是這樣的完美女性軀體。過去雕刻家薩拉辛在不同女人身上所找尋到的部分完美，現在全在冉碧芮拉身上尋到。然而，在雕刻家薩拉辛（或是〈薩拉辛〉故事的敘述者）的眼裡，美與女人之間究竟存在著什麼樣的連結？美的觀點與女人的身體或女性特質的關聯性又在哪裡？女人與女性特質（一個文化判定的女性的特質）間的必然關係在哪裡？巴爾札克的故事讓性別與性成爲面紗，若有似無，既中介也間隔開男與女，美的特質與美的形式。

（7） 被她所愛，或吾寧死。（240）

巴特：★（ACT）決定。★★（ACT）愛的意志。★★★（ACT）死的意志。（S/Z 117）

★（ACT）決定：愛/死。得不到的愛情令人心碎但是更令人期待與渴望。薩拉辛在

愛的漩渦中自得其樂並引以爲傲。他的愛是不可能的。不可能的任務是更能突顯愛的真諦。這不可能是來自於愛的受阻——完美的女性軀體顯露著美的不可逼視與不可親近，它的形式向人顯示著美的不可獨占性。而這正是薩拉辛更加要想要將之擄獲，據爲己有的致命的吸引力來源。薩拉辛的悲劇身亡顯示著美的勝利與獨占的可鄙。因爲美是無法被全然顯現，也不可被侵占。所以死亡總是在美的陰暗面潛伏。這把銳利的刀總是蓄勢待發，準備迎面斬去任何一個可能的奪取、強暴、與佔有。薩拉辛被砍斷的不是他的雄性的陽具、他的生殖力，而是他做爲雕刻家的生產力，他的藝術能力。他所毀滅的，是他的最後的作品（女性冉碧芮拉的雕像），因爲這雕刻已經失去它的生產的要素，失去它所依附的存在意義。同樣地，〈薩拉辛〉故事中的敘述者也一樣面臨著去勢的威脅。〈薩拉辛〉故事的敘述者同樣渴求著年輕貌美的女體（柔許菲德夫人），要用他的藝術創造力（他敘事的生產力）來換取一夜的溫存。但是故事敘述完畢後，他的創造力（生殖力）也面臨被欄腰斬斷的危機。他的能力的枯竭並非是來自他本身的無能，而是美的力量的展現與殺傷。敘事的美無法用其他形式來替代補償，他的創造構成他的軟弱。而經由〈薩拉辛〉的故事，他也同時將敘事的美的力量傳達給他的聽眾。敘事的美一如藝術的其他形式，不但指向自身的完美，也同時拉開現實現象與抽象表達的距離。分割與暴力是陰影，以自身的晦暗強化光明，如影隨形。美的概念與表現是與威脅、斷離的力量同在。所以柔許菲德夫人在聆聽故事後所得到的啓發，是來自藝術的、美的昇華——敘事、音樂（歌劇）、雕刻與繪畫。薩拉辛故事對她所造成的美的挫敗與隨之而來的退卻質疑——她對自己的美的形式與表現、女性特質與行爲，以及審美標準與能力等等的質疑，則是藝術之美這把銳利的劍所造成的傷口。言語敘述的美不亞於歌劇或雕刻藝術，都削減創造力與愛的能力。所以最終敘述者也面臨了和薩拉辛同樣的命運。即使在故事的開始（巴黎的宴會場景），故事的敘述者似乎是處在力量蓄積的場所，躲立於冷與熱、靜與動、死與生的邊緣，中介著兩個極端，彷彿有著不爲所動但是又能充分掌握局勢的能力，但是最終他依舊因爲愛/性的慾望以及擁有敘事/藝術的力量而被捲入渾沌擴散的亂流中，跨越界線，無法逃脫他自己敘事/藝術的美的力量的深淵。

這兩位沉迷於愛/慾的男性應該重讀的，也許不是他們追求的女性，而是他們自身。薩拉辛將冉碧芮拉當作藝術的美的具型化本身，不僅忽略冉碧芮拉做爲女性的本質，將她的身體等同於她的本質，而且也將藝術與美的境地由原本抽象的境界下拉到實像本體的世界[13]。相同地，故事的敘述者將柔許菲德夫人當作他的欲求對象，但是卻錯估了敘事的力量，同時在整個故事敘述事件的前後也都未曾真正閱讀她的本質，只停留在她外在的形象，將她表現在外的一些慣例性的女性矜持行爲解釋爲女性的特質，而不曾多加考察她內心的變化，這樣逗留於形體實像界的思想方式使敘述者最終仍無法達成心願，鎩羽而歸。

四、複製或分割？

我們總是不斷的面臨複製與分割。冉碧芮拉的形象被複製成雕像和畫作，「她」

[13] 柏拉圖的二元論哲學概念也許可以在這裡重新顯現它的力量。首先套用柏拉圖的二元論的觀點來看，薩拉辛一反藝術家應該在抽象界中追尋理想原型的來源，反而以他對女體與美的錯誤認知，在現象界中尋求抽象界的美與藝術的「體現」（冉碧芮拉的身體）。或者，從時空差異的角度來看，薩拉辛是在他鄉異國（文化陌生的義大利），以他的文化無知（法國並未如義大利般用「閹人」擔任歌劇女高音），尋找一個不可能的「她」的存在。他跨越了界線，模糊了兩極。這是無知的跨越，但是依舊導致了他的敗亡。

的故事被（層層的）敘事者複述。冉碧芮拉、柔許菲德夫人的身體被分割，〈薩拉辛〉的故事被巴特分割。所有的複製都出自於本源但是又與之不同。所有的分割都想要將本源的真相、它的美的質素現出，但是都無法重現美的實體，都造成缺憾。藝術的追求與達成由缺憾產生，藝術家的複製、重述也由缺憾起始，分析、批評、閱讀與寫作也起因於美的追求與缺憾，而且也都在某種程度上形成分割。愛情亦然，在這樣的語言符號催化下進行。愛必須以完美爲最高指導原則。雕刻家做爲美的使者、推崇者與中介者，他對美的審查是挑剔與嚴苛的。他的努力與批判的標準來自於他的專業素養、他的審美觀、他的學術訓練與他的工作倫理和操守。薩拉辛的完美渴求與熱情後面是他無可取代的美學代言人的學術訓練與歷史傳承。但是跨文化與跨學科的界線是他的問題。這個障礙是他無法跨越的。法國與義大利的文化差異，以及義大利的歌劇文化歷史與背景，是這位天才藝術雕刻家所不曾熟悉的領域。美的國度竟然也有國界，美的追求也有學科的差異與界線。薩拉辛的失敗顯示著文化疆域的隔閡與美學國度的學科訓練與歷史傳承中因文化與學術領域的差異而產生的地域分明。

美的形式或美的本質是無法描述的。文學中的美以明喻或轉喻來指稱。巴特則宣稱：「美指涉無限的符碼。」而美的呈現也終究只能透過符碼來傳達，間接的傳達。所以若要終止符碼的無限制指涉，使之歸於一，則也將同時結束這有關於美的複製與傳播：「只有一種方式可以結束美的複製：隱藏它，置之沉默，置之於無言，置之失語。」（*S/Z* 34）美與藝術的抽象性使這兩個詞語作爲符號的意義指涉源頭隱而不得見。作爲能指符號它們的能指都朝向空無。人們只能用比喻或代替性的物件來指稱。「美（不像醜陋）無法真正被解釋：美在身體的每個部分裡顯露，重複它自身，但是它不描述它自己。美就像一個神祇（與美同樣空泛），它只能說：我就是我。言說只能聲明每個細節的完美並將『剩餘的』指向那個暗藏於所有美的領域內的符碼：藝術。換句話說，美只能用引證（citation）的形式來聲明自身。」（*S/Z* 33）因此故事的敘述者只能將年輕貌美的女人與形容枯槁的閹人並置在一起，用生命的燦爛與死的呼喚，生與死的並置來襯托美的可能形式，並因而以對死的抗拒來轉換成對被閹割之人的抗拒的表達。敘述者雖然本身具有中介的身分，但是在對於男女陣營的截然劃分卻是相當的堅持。敘述者一直用他的想法在故事的敘述中引導，嘗試判斷是什麼樣的想法與做法或姿態才是女人的樣態。〈薩拉辛〉的故事在界線中徘徊：男與女的界線或分際在哪裡？在那銳利的一刀？在那一個向下斜切的無情橫槓？在生殖與不孕之間？不能生育就不能成爲女人？是生育的能力成就了女人[14]？抑或是外在嬌矜的行爲與姿態？敘述者認爲女性特質是可以經由其他物件來裝飾完成的。所以他在描寫年老的冉碧芮拉時，說

[14] 《神話學》中巴特對《她》（*Elle*）雜誌封面的女作家們與她們子女的合照所做的分析與批判於是再度返回了舞台：是生育界定了女人，而不是她的寫作；做爲女性作家的她們的寫作能力其實只不過是她們可憐的、小小的、侷限的自由。所以巴特分析道，《她》雜誌其實是以這個封面向女人們明白地昭告著：「妳的自由是一項奢侈品，而這自由之所以能成爲可能，條件是：首先妳要認清妳天性的義務。妳如果想寫作，那就寫吧，我們女人將會引以爲傲；但是同時也不要忘記要生孩子，因爲這就是妳的命。」（"Novels and Children," *Mythologies*, 51-2）因此，《她》再一次成功地運用假借的手法，將在寫作事業上成功的女人，重新安置回傳統女性的榮耀光圈（生育上的成功）之中。女人無時不刻都被提醒著：女性之所以爲女性，是來自於她的生產力——生兒育女的能力。她們的寫作生產，終歸僅是一種點綴，一種生命中的偶然，甚至是意外，因爲她們真正的成就是來自於她們欣喜驕傲的兒女；因爲女人之所以能自傲於男人的，終歸仍然是以她的生育能力做爲依靠；因爲這個生理上的差異正是分割開男性與女性最佳的，甚至是最終的分界。

這個枯槁的老人的女性的質素可以由「他」身上的配件顯現出來（*S/Z* 230）。此外，他也認爲女性特質是可以由外表的行爲來判定的，所以敘述者女伴的女性特質是可以由她對宴會中百希老人乾癟枯萎的模樣的好奇與害怕，她的想要探知蘭地家族與百希老人的秘密的作爲來被這位男性敘述者所推斷與感受得知。他不斷地分析：認爲他的女伴的這樣的姿態、那樣的動作或某些談話正是「女人的做法」等等。而最終這些女人都必須是「女人」：擁有年輕精緻的身體與貌美嬌豔的神態，並且擁有生殖的能力。薩拉辛也有著同樣的問題。他們各自以某一個模式或樣態來界定女人，女性必須如是，否則不然。這也是他們的盲點。他們失敗的地方。這樣的觀念與作爲正是執行割離與斷絕的力量的化身，而他們則是跨越了界線，超越了世間男女的界線，成爲切割的來源。

五、差異重讀：巴特的轉向

在《S/Z》的背後，巴特想要藉資訊時代的資料鏈結概念開啓的，是文學中形式（Form）與內容（Content）的二元分類。文本因爲符號差異，不只有一個形式，而有許多形式，或者，一個文本即擁有許多形式，是多形式的文本。巴特企圖開放文本閱讀的概念雖然打破了結構敘事解析文本的方式，但是在《S/Z》中仍然留有結構主義與敘事結構分析的影子。首先，S 與 Z、薩拉辛與冉碧芮拉的對立、文本中象徵符碼（對立）的運用都不斷顯示著二元的分立是巴特文本閱讀的主要基調。在他分析對立的象徵符碼時，巴特做了這樣的闡述：「對立是一個沒有入口的牆。要跳過這道牆就成了僭越（transgression）。」（*S/Z* 65）在這個對立中，故事的敘述者並不容許有跨越的狀態發生。跨越代表一種錯誤，這個錯誤的代價是死亡。所以柔許菲德夫人伸手觸摸年老枯乾的冉碧芮拉，是界線的踰越。所以巴特說：「女人與被閹割者、有活力的與無生氣的，這兩個完全獨立分開的個體的身體接觸，形成災難。」一旦界線被跨越，就只剩災難：「當意義的奧秘被顛覆時，當典範中兩極的神秘獨立被撤除時，當隔離的屏障——所有『適切性』的基礎——被移除時」，「有如嘔吐般，所有深度都被掏空。」（*S/Z* 65）沒有中介，沒有可能的潛入狀況，這個二元的對立的跨越在〈薩拉辛〉的故事中是一種死的宣判。跨越界線的人都受到了懲罰。巴特將古典作品中對意義所建立的追求與意義本身具有的分類功能看做是一種宣判：「意義是生或死的問題」。被閹割者跨越了性別的區隔，扮演著性別區隔下彼端的身分，「她」踰越構詞、語法和論述。而因爲意義（和分類）的廢除，薩拉辛必須要以死作爲代價。在這樣的區分中，結構主義中二元對立的力量趨導著，那銳利的刀鋒所引至的是兩個截然不同的類別。於是巴特《S/Z》中對〈薩拉辛〉故事裡人物的分析就順理成章地分成了兩個陣營：去勢者與被去勢者。蘭地夫人，樞機主教契戈那拉，柔許菲德夫人都是屬於那氣勢凌人、刀口銳利得去勢者；薩拉辛，故事的敘述者則是那被閹割的人。

再者，除了二元分割對立的不可跨越，巴特五個符碼的配置與選擇，也遺留著結構主義的痕跡。行動與詮釋性的暗碼與敘事結構分析中的橫向連結有關。意素、象徵與指涉性暗碼則與縱向連結有關。如果詮釋的與行動的暗碼限制了文本在閱讀時呈現的反轉，那麼另外三個暗碼則擔負著提供變異的可能，以促使古典讀者型可讀文本成爲有限度開放的空間，重現可讀古典文本的多元性質。但是若說這五個暗碼的出現以及它們的分類或編派都僅只是一種功能性的考慮，而沒有意識型態上的因素，那是令人難以置信的。因爲這五個暗碼的出現使人聯想到早先巴特在〈敘事的結構分析導論〉中提到的有關敘事符號系統的縱向與橫向二維的原則，以及敘事結構的敘事層、行動層和功能層的連結。而追根究底來說，文本功能性的考慮原本亦是敘事結構分析中的基調。

雖然巴特的暗碼分析與結構主義敘事分析仍有密切關聯，但是巴特《S/Z》一

書在符號能指的意義探尋上則有了與結構時期作品明顯的差異與變化。結構時期的巴特強調著索緒爾語言系統中的橫向與縱向連結，在能指符號的意義間探尋分析結構，將文學敘事由隱喻與換喻系統間的語言結構關係化作功能性的敘事分析；而後結構時期的巴特則受到德希達的影響，轉而注意到語言系統能指符號自身的差異性。也因此將結構時期所提出的符號學意義指涉關係作相當大的修正。首先，結構時期巴特將文學的敘事做結構性的分析處理，強調要在其中探尋出科學的、規則的敘事架構與意義衍生邏輯。在〈敘事結構分析導論〉裡，巴特將敘事的結構分爲三層：功能、行動與敘事。敘事的功能單位因此可以再細分爲兩類：分布與整合。在橫向的組合裡，單純的功能運作產生轉喻的關聯，它與動作的功能性有關。而索引則在縱向的聚合、隱喻的範疇中相關聯，它們是敘事核心的外延，與存在的功能性相關。在這樣的敘事結構中，「有多少種功能運作，就有多少種交互關聯（correlations），但是這並不能改變以下這個事實——敘事決不是由功能之外的任何東西所形成：在不同的程度上，敘事中的每樣事物都有所指涉。這無關乎藝術（就敘事者這方面而言），而是結構。」（*Barthes Reader* 261）總括而言，意義的擷取與獲得並非來自敘事者或其敘事藝術的造詣，而是結構與敘事邏輯。敘事所呈現的「『真實』並非因爲形成它的行動具有『自然的』連續性，而是在於它們所顯露、冒險、與履行的邏輯。」（“Structural Analysis” 294）但是後結構時期的巴特則將這樣的結構性打散了。他對〈薩拉辛〉故事所做的文本分析已不再依據功能、行動與敘事這三個層次來建構，也不再將轉喻或隱喻、功能或索引當作敘事架構的橫向或縱向座標。文本分析的最小分析單位不再是功能單位，而是由三、四個意義群組所構成的，任意性的語段。而語段中的符號意義功能則不再依據邏輯或結構性原則以建立某種意義的推演，而是在每個語段中尋求五個暗碼出現的痕跡並零散的紀錄能指意義的出現。

此外，結構時期的巴特顯然旨在彰顯出敘事中的符號指涉系統並建立符號意義間的層次關係。巴特的做法是將葉耳姆斯列夫的符號學概念運用到他的《符號學原理》中能指的意義指涉的二層結構中，將涵義（connotation）的形成架構於第一層指涉的原意（denotation）之上。葉耳姆斯列夫的涵義符號學因此在巴特的基本二層符號指涉指涉系統中就定位。而最終巴特得到一個結論：任何一個真實系統都可以由語言這個後設語言所指涉，而這後設語言在它的第一層指涉意義層面上，又將再度形成更高一層的涵義系統，也就是說，語言在修辭的功能上，所指涉的內容將是這語言背後的意識型態（*Elements of Semiology 92-3*）。在這個層次分明的符號指涉架構中，原指涉意義（原意）與涵義間有著緊密的關聯。如果說在結構敘事分析時期的巴特著重於敘事文本的意義的統一性，所以在他所討論的有關敘事語言、功能、行爲和敘事的功用等面向裡都存在著一個中心主題的話，那這個中心就是文本意義的統一性和規則性。這是在敘事分析的過程中不斷釐清出來的，運用有關敘事語言的結構分析所得到的意義確認。但是在《S/Z》的文本敘事分析中，巴特已不再執迷於原意與涵義間的層級關係，並且進一步對結構式的符號指涉層級與涵義的功能提出質疑。這樣的質疑並不意味著巴特的文本分析與早先的結構敘事分析有了截然的切割與斷離。正如在索緒爾的語言符號結構關係與指涉系統中，符號的統一性、規則性與與其分離性和差異性是同時存在的，統一或分離，規則或差異其實是共存的，這之間的不同不是源自於兩種不同的規則或系統。所以，結構敘事分析時期的巴特是由結構主義的觀點與面向去理解索緒爾的語言系統和葉爾姆斯列夫的語言符號功能運作，強調在語言的架構下，文學文本意義的追尋是可以達成某一種結構化了的規則，而這個規則應是可以很科學性的被援引到其他的文學文本之中，對文本進行語言分析與敘事意義的追索與確認。

但是在巴特《S/Z》一書的閱讀裡，這樣的層級關係被鬆動了。巴特開始藉著德希達式的能指符號的延異觀念，將符號的能指與所指關係作後延與差異的處理。於是能指的指涉功能擴大爲一種符號的散種行動。能指的指涉行動現在已脫離了符號指涉的原意層與涵義層的階層架構，符號指涉成爲一種意義延宕的活動範圍。在能指的浮動中結構符號學的層級被無深度化了，因爲原意與涵義的存在並不一定意味著層級的區別。涵義雖然是「將古典文本變成多意（polysemy）、朝向古典文本所立基的有限度的多元（limited plural）的方式」（*S/Z* 8），而其實這也是巴特對〈薩拉辛〉故事文本作文句分割與細緻分析的方式。巴特想藉文意的多元與多意性的揭露來造成指涉符號與指涉意義的流動、不固定，達到開放文本的目的。但是巴特卻在《S/Z》的開始就指出，最終，原意與涵義這兩個不同的系統都將使文本的運作如遊戲般提供古典文本某種無邪清白；文本總是回到自身，顯示自身的存在。文本的存在立基於原意層，「雖然原意絕非第一個意義，它只是假裝如此；在這樣的錯覺中，它最終就是最後的涵義，文本經由這個超級神話假裝回返語言的自然性，回到語言就是自然的狀態。」（*S/Z* 9）後結構時期的巴特並未脫離或稍減他早期對語言的自然性的攻擊，並且將這樣的概念結合到文本符號指涉系統的開放中。原意與涵義層次的瓦解正是這個開放的、流動的符號指涉關係的結果。在意義的探尋中，差異的存在由層次的不同轉而向意義的差異與後延前進。

巴特對〈薩拉辛〉這個故事所做的敘事分析在《S/Z》中是以兩種文本不斷交雜、穿插的方式來進行的。《S/Z》的文本演練不僅是文本敘事意義的片段/片斷化與多向化（這一個層面文本符號與意義指涉關係的分析是用語段來切割，並且用阿拉伯數字來標明各個語段在敘事文本中的先後時間順序），並且當巴特在運用語段切割、解剖〈薩拉辛〉，用五個暗碼來分析〈薩拉辛〉敘事的意義（或者，將意義做更多的後延、倒轉與跳接）的同時，他其實已再度引入另一個分析的系統——巴特個人對某個意義、符號連結或暗碼的想像與解讀，而這個評論式的分析文本則是用羅馬數字來加以排列，不斷穿插在〈薩拉辛〉的文本敘事分析中。這樣的安排不但使原本被切斷的〈薩拉辛〉故事敘述更加無法保有傳統可讀文本對讀者閱讀習慣所造成的操控導引，使可讀文本故事的詮釋性閱讀與閱讀時追蹤可能的解謎關鍵的樂趣受到中斷、後延、反轉，甚至是預先透露、告知、解密，使詮釋與解謎不再是閱讀的首要，甚至唯一目的，因而將可讀文本在閱讀的過程中轉化爲一種意義播散與分析評論的過程，一種如寫作般創構符號指涉的過程，於是可讀文本在閱讀的過程中轉化爲可寫文本。可寫文本是不能外求的，因爲它其實正存在於閱讀之中。

如果巴特的演練只留下打星號的文本語段和暗碼分析，則《S/Z》所缺少、漏失的，將不只是一個呈現巴特個人存在意義的自我書寫，而是失去一個寫作文本，一個可寫的文本的產生。意義的開放，不論是文學的文本或是繪畫的文本，都不僅僅只是一種符號關係的中斷或延異、開放，巴特在《S/Z》中所表演的，是一種個人閱讀的意義生產過程。正是因爲意義不再侷限於原意的理解與涵義的追尋，而是將原意、涵義與推斷、批評作多向與多元的連結，因此成爲扁平化、無深度化文本的符號意義結構系統，因而另創一個解釋性文本，一個可寫文本，雖然這個因閱讀/書寫過程而產生的文本的「可讀性」與「有效性」的期限僅止於當下。這是符指意義開放後多元多向閱讀/書寫過程的生產原則。所有的閱讀都是書寫過程，所有的閱讀/書寫過程都是「一次性」的，都是最初也是最終的文本生產。

巴特的《S/Z》開放的是意義的探尋，而不是結構的拆解。在二元的對立與相互映照間，巴特對二元對立象徵暗碼的倚重與對切割刀口的強調顯示著衝突的存在。這樣的女男性別劃分、去勢者與被去勢者的劃分雖然再度落入結構氛圍，但

是反覆重提鋒利的切痕、不斷揭開去勢閹割的動作與結果卻反而在在提醒著那切割的力量的存在。這切割的力量作爲一個符指，也在巴特的閱讀與書寫中轉換著跑道，在所指意義的差異中漂流散逸。切割是力量的展現，是懲罰的界線，是死亡的暗示，也是意義、規則、律法、自然性、藝術與美的中介處。它是刀口、是牆、是邊緣、是臨界點。所以巴特的去勢論述並非如芭芭拉強森所言，是個封閉了出口的二元分割閱讀[15]（*The Critical Difference*），它只是指出一種可能，一種連結的方式，一種書寫閱讀。在意義的組合或聚合中，能指符號不斷地變衍，在系統的架構與文本敘事的串聯中，每個語言符號的指涉與意義都在進行漫遊。意義的光線在語言空間場域中顯現，意義的陰影也在中介的光源運作下浮動。文本的空間並非因此擴大，語言的場域並沒有改變，只是語言符號間的連結有了更多的可能。線性的推理與詮釋被多向性的網路概念給置換，場域沒有擴大，只是產生更多意義的可能鏈結與更多的閱讀路徑：「閱讀必須是多元的，亦即，沒有進入的次序：『第一次』的閱讀版本將必須是它最後的版本。」（*S/Z* 15）因爲沒有第二次相同的路徑可尋，所以第一次也是最後一次。「因爲閱讀是暗碼行經的路徑，沒有任何東西能阻止這樣的旅程」（*S/Z* 71），而這也正是巴特式的閱讀書寫的生產過程。

參考書目

[15]芭芭拉強森指出巴爾札克在處理去勢的主題時，採用巴特所謂「隱藏」、「沉默」、「失語」的技巧，以空白、刪節號或主角人物的無詞以對、無語形容來達到暗示的效果，而這正是代表著〈薩拉辛〉文本本身已經包容了差異的可能，所以〈薩拉辛〉早已是一個巴特所謂的可寫文本。但是芭芭拉認爲巴特明白道出去勢這個字眼反而將〈薩拉辛〉做限定式閱讀。因爲去勢的主題一旦被揭露、被說明，勢必會將敘事中所有的人物切割成不同的陣營。在這樣的閱讀中人物將會被去勢與否的標籤給限定。而一旦人物代表或暗含的意義被鎖死固定，符號的差異指涉關係也將終止，文本的符號意義連結也會因此斷裂。芭芭拉認爲解構式的，或者差異的閱讀方式既然是來自於自身的差異，而非向外尋求標的物以爲比較對象，那麼〈薩拉辛〉的意義就並非來自傳統去勢的論點。所以芭芭拉認爲，薩拉辛之所以死亡，還有〈薩拉辛〉故事中的敘述者之所以無法達成欲望，都是源自於他們無法進行巴特所謂的重讀策略。他們將女性的定義定型，也將她們的軀體定型，所以他們無法重新認識他們的欲望對象，重讀她們，不論是精神上或軀體上的差異。所以柔許菲德夫人要對故事的敘述者說：「你依據你自己的品味來塑造我。你渴望的不是我自己」（*S/Z* 233）。芭芭拉因此指出，薩拉辛真正的失敗並非如巴特所言是敗於界線的跨越，而是在於他本身的自戀，在於一種無法發現差異、沒有差異回返的自身閱讀。他不能愛別人，他愛的是他自己的影像，去勢後的冉碧芮拉。但是我想指出的是，首先，將薩拉辛的失敗固定在自戀一種原因上一樣是將可寫文本閱讀成可讀文本（因爲可讀型文本的閱讀的目的就是在於追尋謎語的解答，而且僅止於尋找一個單一的解答）。再者，外在形體的差異（有無陽具或去勢與否）其實也是一種符號，一種指涉關係的呈現。如果將這個形體符號當作固定有所指（一如傳統讀法），那麼去勢主題的點明必然會如芭芭拉所言的引起人物的定型。這正是芭芭拉對巴特的攻擊。但是我的論點是：如果不將身體符號看做爲一固定符號指涉系統中的能指，而代之以浮動的能指觀之，則去勢的符號所流竄引導出的意義亦可以是流動的、不固定的。巴特的去勢論點所帶出來的，亦可以是具有跨越界線可能與潛能的兩組人馬，或是那執行分割的、那銳利的刀的黑暗力量。我認爲：標示出界線並非意在分割，同時，界線亦非恆定不動，雖然它標示出界線，阻止跨越，但是跨越的可能與事實其實依然存在。

Allen, Graham. *Intertextuality*. London: Routledge, 2000.
Bakhtin, M. M. *The Dialogic Imagination*. Trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: U of Texas P, 1990.
Barthes, Roland. *Elements of Semiology*. Trans. Annette Lavers and Colin Smith. New York: Hill and Wang, 1964.
---. *The Grain of the Voice*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1985.
---. *Mythologies*. Trans. Annette Lavers. New York: Hill and Wang, 2000.
---. "Structural Analysis of Narrative." A Roland Barthes Reader. Ed. Susan Sontag, New York: Vintage, 1993, 251-95.
---. *S/Z*. Trans. Richard Miller. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990.
---. *S/Z*. Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1970.
---. "Theory of the Text," *Untying the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader*. Ed. Robert Young. Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981. 31-47.
Borowitz, Helen O. "Balzac's Sarrasine: The Sculptor as Narcissus." *Nineteenth-Century French Studies* 5 (1977): 171-185.
Brown, Andrew. *Roland Barthes: The Figures of Writing*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992.
Culler, Jonathan. *Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics, and the Study of Literature*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1988.
Derrida, Jacques. *Dissemination*. Trans. Barbara Johnson. Chicago: The U of Chicago, 1981.
Eco, Umberto. *A Theory of Semiotics*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1979.
---. *Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language*. London: Macmillan, 1911.
ffrench, Patrick, and Roland-Francois Lack, eds. *The Tel Quel Reader*. London: Routledge, 1998.
Greimas, Algirdas Julien. *On Meaning: Selected Writings in Semiotic Theory*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1987.
Greethan, D. C. *Theories of the Text*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999.
Harland, Richard. *Beyond Superstructuralism*. London: Routledge, 1993.
Hjelmslev, Louis. *Prolegomena to a Theory of Language*. Trans. Francis J. Whitfield. Madison: The U of Wisconsin P, 1969.
Jameson, Fredric. *The Prison-House of Language*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1972.
Johnson, Barbara. *The Critical Difference: Essays in the Contemporary Rhetoric of Reading*. Baltimore: the Johns Hopkins UP, 1982.
Kermode, Frank. *Essays on Fiction*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983.
Kevelson, Roberta. " 'Figures' and Semiotic Relations: A Rhetoric of Syntax in Balzac's Sarrasine." *Semiotica: Journal of the International Association for Semiotic Studies* 24 (1978): 113-147.
Kristeva, Julia. *Desire in Language：A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*. Trans. Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine, and Leon S. Roudiez. Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ld., 1987.
Moriarty, Michael. *Roland Barthes*. Oxford: Polity Press, 1991.
Nykrog, Per. "On Seeing and Nothingness: Balzac's Sarrasine". Romanic Review. 83.4 (1992): 437-444.

Rylance, Rick. *Roland Barthes*. New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1994.
Sarup, Madan. *An Introductory Guide to Post-Structuralism and Postmodernism*. New York:
Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993.
Saussure, Ferdinand de. *Course in General Linguistics*. Trans. Roy Harris. La Salle: Open
Court, 1991.
Scheiber, Andrew. J. “Sign, Seme, and the Psychological Character: Some Thoughts on Roland Barthes’ S/Z and the Realistic Novel.” *The Journal of Narrative Technique* 21.3
(1991): 262-273.
Stafford, Andy. *Roland Barthes, Phenomenon and Myth: An Intellectual Biography*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1998.
Ungar, Steven, and Betty R. McGraw, eds. *Signs in Culture：Roland Barthes Today*. Iowa
City: U of Iowa P, 1989.
Wasserman, George R. *Roland Barthes*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1981.
李幼蒸。《理論符號學導論》。北京：社會科學文獻出版社，1999。
蔡淑玲。〈聽，那萬流匯聚的『中界』——從克莉絲蒂娃的『宮籟』探主體的異化與論的侷限〉。《中外文學》30 卷 8 期（2002.1）：158-82。

附錄二

Violence as the Road to Transformation: O'Connor's "A Good Man Is Hard to Find"

Hsiu-chih Tsai
National Taiwan University

Abstract

This paper attempts to explicate the function of violence and its relation to the possible epiphany and transformation trajectory in Flannery O'Connor's short story "A Good Man Is Hard to Find." I would first remodel the Greimassian semiotic method to analyze the expressions and functions of violence in the narrative, especially, in the concepts, behaviors and responses of the two main characters—the grandmother and The Misfit. I would argue that, in this story, the function of violence helps build up a discrete trajectory of passion modes and delineate a possible mental transformation of the two main characters. Secondly, the grandmother's possible transformation process after the car accident and the following violent massacre of the Bailey family will be discussed. Finally, I would take the violent performance in O'Connor's story as a strategic application, which O'Connor adopts to help reveal the grandmother's and the Misfit's concepts constructed loosely upon a layer of culturally set religious and secular beliefs. This culturally embedded reality (which mistakes manners as morals and faith) incurs the very destruction of its groundwork, dilutes the violence resulted from social maladjustment, and furthermore, diminishes the shock behind the downfall of a family.

Keywords: Flannery O'Connor, "A Good Man Is Hard to Find," A. J. Greimas, semiotics, narrative, transformation trajectory, violence

摘要

本文將探討歐康諾短篇小說「好人難尋」中，暴力的功能與暴力和故事最終可能發生的突然醒悟的關係。本文將透過對葛萊瑪符號學模組的改寫，對歐康諾故事中的敘事結構進行分析，探討歐康諾敘事裡的種種暴力行爲、語言表現、以及其功能運用，特別是故事中兩位主要人物——祖母和「不適者」——對於暴力的觀念、行爲與回應態度。其次，本文將探討祖母在車禍後與全家遭滅門殺害時，可能面臨的認知與情感態度的轉換。最後，將指出歐康諾運用暴力的出現做爲突顯祖母和「不適者」這兩位主要人物背後所呈現的現實，並探討宗教與文化如何形塑出人物的認知，以及在敘事中，歐康諾如何藉由人物的行爲與觀點堆疊出暴力結果，但是也同時在暴力殺戮終顯時，因而削減暴力敘事的驚駭。

關鍵字：歐康諾，「好人難尋」，葛萊瑪，符號學，敘事，轉換歷程，暴力

Violence as the Road to Transformation: O'Connor's "A Good Man Is Hard to Find"

Hsiu-chih Tsai
National Taiwan University

I. Introduction: The Controversy over the Religious Signification

American Southern woman writer Flannery O'Connor (1925~1964) is famous for her direct comment on her own writings. A native of Georgia, she writes short stories and novels situated on the Southern landscape. She pictures her characters vividly and frankly in great resemblance to those living around her in the "Christ-haunted" world of manners and morals.[16] O'Connor was frequently asked to delineate and comment on her own works. Most of the times, she would illuminate her readers by highlighting the religious implications, which she believed to be the very force and stimulant of her writing. She was always eager in pointing out to her reader the hidden meaning and the religious message of a salvation in the devastated South where, both in her opinions and as depicted in her works, the faith in religion wore out gradually. Therefore, O'Connor always believed that she had to fight her way out among the noises of non-believers in a direct or indirect response to the critiques that picked out the "wrong" side of her stories. She would make a clearance of those disquiets and looked at them with a strict and stern face that accepted no stray interpretations of religious significance. And all the responses, explanations, and comments she made in her lectures are mostly pivoted upon the question of whether God's grace is received by her characters at the end of the stories.

This strong attitude to direct the interpretation of her works is typically what O'Connor would like to preserve. This is part of the reason why many critics find her too "dominating." She is always well prepared to fight for her belief and tries every

---

[16] When talking about the inspiration and the primal setting for her stories, O'Connor frankly pointed out, "Somewhere is better than anywhere," (O'Connor, "The Catholic Novelist in the Protestant South," *Mystery and Manners*, p. 200) and of course, this somewhere was always the South. She wrote, "The fiction writer finds in time, if not at once, that he cannot proceed at all if he cuts himself off from the sights and sounds that have developed a life of their own in his senses. The novelist is concerned with the mystery of personality, and you cannot say much that is significant about this mystery unless the characters you create exist with the marks of a believable society about them." (*Mystery and Manners*, p.198)

In 1951, when she was only twenty-six, O'Connor was diagnosed with lupus erythematosus, a disease that had taken her father's life in 1941, and the disease left her an invalid in her thirties. Her illness took away her health gradually and confined her to living with her mother at the small Milledgeville farm in Georgia, and "For the rest of her life, the next thirteen years, O'Connor lived with her mother at Andalusia, their farm home, a few miles outside Milledgeville on the road to Eatonton." (Whitt, *Understanding Flannery O'Connor*, p. 7) However, the local materials finally turn out to be the very supply of her writing resources. She called the South a "Christ-haunted" world and this world becomes the fountain home of most of her unique but sometimes grotesque characters.

possible method to force her way out of an "unfriendly circumstances." Both the depiction of her grotesque stories and her interpretations and comments on the possible religious implications her stories might incur demonstrate such a persuading yet unrelenting persistence and approach to the reader. Certainly, Flannery O'Connor could always demonstrate that there is God everywhere in her works and that His grace is flashed behind every scene in most of her stories; however, what troubles most critics who sympathize with O'Connor's standpoints might not be the same as that questions those who disbelieve in her talk of religion and belief. Because it is the process and the violence that is being questioned, not the grace of God or the revelation of it

The controversy over the violence and religious belief[17] presented in O'Connor's fictions has a long history since the publication of the stories. "A Good Man Is Hard to Find," O'Connor's title story[18] of her 1955 collection, is such a text that accumulates critical ambiguities. This widely anthologized story is significant especially in its representation of O'Connor's grotesque penchant in the narrative and in the textual delineation of religious elements. The violence in this story raises hot debates among critics on issues of grace and violence, and the intertwining threads of spiritual grace and physical violence keep bouncing incessantly within various minds: This ["A Good Man Is Hard to Find"] is perhaps O'Connor's most famous story, …the most violent, the most psychologically harrowing to read, the most apparently godless, and, I would add, the most unremitting in its insistence on the reality of bodily grace (Thornton 128).

The violence is there inviting the possible reader's attention to the wrestling question of the existence of God's grace, and the responses vary. Debra Lynn Thornton is positive in her affirmation of O'Connor's use of violence as the revelation and invitation of God's grace, however, not all critics are so sympathetic towards O'Connor's writing strategy. Stephen C. Bandy, on the contrary, after closely studying this short story, points out: "No wishful search for evidence of grace or for epiphanies of salvation, by author or reader, can soften the harsh truth of "A Good Man Is Hard To Find." Its message is profoundly pessimistic and in fact subversive to the doctrines of grace and charity, despite heroic efforts to disguise that fact" (Bandy 107).

It seems that O'Connor has set a gadget there in her story, and it intrigues two different understandings and interpretations. And it is always a matter of belief, just as Bandy would assure us: "None of "O'Connor's stories has been more energetically theologized" than this one, and "for the true believer there can be no further discussion"

---

[17] Unlike most authors, Flannery O'Connor usually took a strong stance in defending her own work and kept reminding her reader the religious implication and designation behind her writing. And she simply told her reader how they should interpret her work. She wrote, "One of the most disheartening circumstances that the Catholic novelist has to contend with is that he has no large audience he can count on to understand his work. The general intelligent reader today is not a believer." ("Catholic Novelists and Their Readers," *Mystery and Manners*, p. 181) Moreover, her correspondences with her friends, her lectures, and her remarks are more than often recited by her critics to support this religious zealous. But there are still some critics who would not succumb to this woman writer's preach of religious interpretation and use her own works to challenge her interpretation: "Criticism of Flannery O'Connor's fiction, under the spell of the writer's occasional comments, has been unusually susceptible to interpretations based on Christian dogma." (Stephen C. Bandy, " 'One of My Babies': The Misfit and the Grandmother," p. 107)

[18] This title story was previously published in *Modern Writing I* in 1953. (Whitt, *Understanding Flannery O'Connor*, p. 43)

(Bandy 107). The dilemma is: if the reader would like to prescribe his/her position as a true believer, there is really no space for him/her to argue, nor can he/she question the signification revealed within the narrative. Nevertheless, if the reader would detain his or her religious belief, and contemplate the possibility between violence and grace, will there be a contradictory answer waiting to be revealed?

While reading O'Connor's stories, the critics as well as the readers usually find themselves in such an ambiguous situation of tormenting between the two forces: the pursuit of the meaning through textual interpretation and the drag towards the author's interpretation. Usually the second choice wins, because finding supporting evidences for O'Connor's quick and sharp snap for her story's ending seems to be a safe and satisfactory route for the reading quest. This is the reason why the critics' controversy can never settle down. Actually, for a long time, D. H. Laurence's advice—"trust the art, but not the artist"—is the most referred sentence as the excuse[19] and justification when the critics of the opposite camp would like to resist O'Connor's "authentic voice." In a sense, O'Connor's strong stance and her voice does reach the ears of her reader and believers. But it also hampers the possibility of allowing her work to be read in another light. However, the initiation that Roland Barthes proposed in textual reading—"the author is dead"—might offer us a new chance to re-read O'Connor's story in spite of the piled-up authentic, religious and psychological interpretations.

When studying "A Good Man Is Hard to Find," critics like to interpret the moment that the grandmother reaches out her hand towards The Misfit as a moment of grace, and thus conclude that this gesture will become an epiphany that leads The Misfit upward to God's grace. But others would argue that the grandmother does not show any sign of repent, nor does her last gesture a touch of God's grace. However, I believe, with a semiotic analysis of the narrative, the questions could be approached and interpreted from a different perspective. In this paper, I would first analyze the textual narrative of this story, and furthermore, figure out a special set of semiotic modulations to offer an alternative interpretation of the fictional arrangement of violence and massacre.

From a semiotic viewpoint of textual analysis, the use of violence in a story is never a pure literary, accidental event. "A Good Man Is Hard to Find," the title story of O'Connor's collection of stories bearing the same name, exemplifies how unruly violence could play in a world where people of no great faults die without any decent reasons. There are seven people who died in this collection and the title story contains six of them. The violence that O'Connor considers to be well equipped with religious meaning sends a whole family, three adults, two children, and a baby, into death without any delay in the narrative. Death is easy and weightless as depicted distantly by an unemotional narrator and the play of violence becomes a suggestion of the ending of a farce that life is to bear. Literally, the violence that causes so many deaths signifies the brutality embedded in man, but as signifiers drift, meanings disseminate and the mystery behind glitters through the interstices. At the cultural and symbolic level, this violence ceases to be a mere vicious act, and through the process of virtualization, the actants, those who enact actions, are allowed a chance of realization.

While setting up the epistemological framework of the semiotic modulations of the narrative, Greimas and Fontanille analyze the state of the subject of the narrative in terms of modalities. Through the interactions and transformations of these modalities, the subject might obtain a certain kind of cognition. Moreover, the linguistic and cultural relativity within the narrative can also be revealed through the analysis of the various modalities. According to Greimas and Fontanille, the main function of a textual

---

[19] As many of his predecessors, Stephen C. Bandy also uses this maxim to start the proceeding of his analysis in " 'One of my Babies': The Misfit and the Grandmother." (107)

narrative is to delineate a world of existential simulacra where the flow of actions signifies and constructs a higher level of cultural and symbolic signification. Hence Greimas and Fontanille conclude that only when the subject of the narrative can take on actions, that is, when the subject is an actant, can he gain a certain sense of cognition of the existential world of textual simulacra. Moreover, this actant has to go through a process of thymic "sensitization" (an existential transformation trajectory) to really feel, sense, or touch things through the body, and then there is the possibility for this actant to reach the stage of existential development. Till then, "the universe of cognitive forms" might arise before him (Greimas and Fontanille xxi).

In the following discussion, I will focus my analysis and interpretation on the existential trajectories that the two main characters in "A Good Man Is Hard to Find"—the grandmother and The Misfit—go through, especially on the transforming stages they experience during the very critical moment. First, I will take the family trip to Florida as a transformation trajectory for the grandmother, and thus divide the whole narrative into four different existential phases as the major transition stages that the grandmother experiences throughout the narrative. Second, I will focus on the analysis and interpretation of the two types[20] of violence in the narrative—the physical violence of the massacre of the Bailey Family and the verbal violence that constructs the framework and creates the tension of the narrative. Third, I would interpret and analyze the characters' existential procedures so as to see whether the debatable transformation of the main characters is possible and could be justified.

II. The Journey Downward: From Blindness into Death—A Process of Semiotic Existence

According to Greimas and Fontanille, the development of an emotional state and existence can always be represented through a semiotic square of actions and, therefore, be precisely analyzed. Greimas and Fontanille's model of passions is adopted from the famous Greimassian semiotic square which aims in modifying and providing interpretations to the possible activities of human beings. This Greimassian semiotic model is composed of two types of binary opposition: the contradiction and contrariety.[21] In the modeling process, the narrative will thus be analyzed through these

---

[20] Violence as an expression and demonstration of force and status can be found in various forms—visible or invisible. In this paper, I would only discuss two kinds of violence—verbal and physical. The actual physical violence presented in the Bailey family's massacre is often discussed. However, the verbal violence in the narrative, whether it is expressed in bad words, with malicious intention, or in the form of direct rebuttal, silent rejection, even intended negligence, deserves our careful and critical observation and discussion in the textual interpretation in respect of narratological analysis. In this paper, other forms and contents of violence, such as those resulted from the social, cultural, political, ideological, or economical, will only appear as hidden causes of the verbal and the physical expressions.

[21] Usually the Greimassian semiotic model can be applied to much more complicated situations and therefore, develop into a series of squares, and there are three generations of categorical terms and thus three types of diagrams which possess a little variation to each other. The following diagram is the very basic presentation of the semiotic square. The elementary structure of signification in the following diagram is defined firstly as a relation between at least two oppositions:

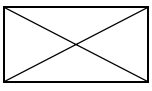
S1 S2

pairs of binary axiological structures. When the narrative text is put under this semiotic analysis, the significance behind the narrative, which is always latent in the text, will have a chance to emerge. In this approach, the content of the signifier will receive the most observation and analysis. As Paul J. Perron points out in his introduction to the Greimassian square, "The main object of the theory of the semiotic square is to articulate the substance of the content (in Hjelmslev's terms) and therein constitute the form of content" (Greimas and Courtés xxviii). The study of the content that the text implies builds upon a close relation of the referring literary language and the referred natural and ideological world, and hence would help interpret the worldview and value judgments that the text contrives to reveal, since "[t]he role of actantial syntax is therefore to convert into a narrative doing the fundamental semantics that constitute the message of narrative and determine its anthropological function." This syntax enables one to grasp, through the simulacrum of a 'scene' that dramatizes them, the unconscious crystallizing processes of subjectivity" (Greimas and Courtés xxviii).

This "unconscious crystallizing process of subjectivity" is fabricated through the fictional scenes. In respect of this process, the narrative delineation that deals with actions and incidents will be the focal point of textual scrutiny. In the Greimassian square, this subjectivity, performed and represented through the actant, will always be procured through the actantial questing and wrestling with two existential structures—the being-able-to-do and the having-to-do modal structures.[22] In making an explanation and demonstration of how the relation of the natural phenomena and the literal narrative can conjoin together in a semiotic square, Greimas defines the relation between the literal narrative and the natural world as two semiotic systems which correlate and overdetermine each other in the signification. Hence, through the double binary pairs of contrast and contradiction, Greimassian model deals not only with the world of emotion and action, but also with the world of competence and performance. The trajectory of a narrative actant can thus be transformed into a process of value questing and of desire fulfillment. And furthermore, the seemingly discontinuous transformation of passions, desires and actions of the actants will all form into a process of existence.

When confronted with a major or sudden event in life, most people will not conduct themselves as they usually do. However, sudden events often accelerate the germination of their realization.[23] According to Greimas and Fontanille, the

---



$\overline{S2}$ $\overline{S1}$

[22] Being-able-to-do and having-to-do are two basic modal structures that an actant will go through in his quest of the different existential stages. These two structures in its complementary process relate to the realization and actualization functions and transformations. In the following sections, I will draw a few remodeled Greimassian semiotic diagrams (with certain changes and differences in the structure of the diagram, the sequence of the developmental process and the interpretation) to demonstrate the two modal structures and functions, and try to illuminate the actantial acquisition of the subjectivity. With the help of these remodeled diagrams and the overdetermination of the modal structures, I will also offer an alternative interpretation of O'Connor's "A Good Man Is Hard to Find."

[23] Believing in this kind of revelation at the fatal moment, O'Connor reached her conclusion that it was necessary for her storyteller, the narrator, to usually adopt a certain outside force to fulfill the violent stroke that threatens her characters.

subject-actant will go through four different existential stages in his/her transformational trajectory in the narrative. These four stages are: the potentialization, the virtualization, the actualization and the realization. Before reaching the realization stage, the subject-actant should undergo the actualization stage so as to gain a further understanding about him/herself and complete the existential trajectory with a different realization. The potential phase, therefore, contains the critical moment that helps make the subject-actant's transformation possible. The potential state in the Greimassian model is the state of the subject-actant's conscious or unconscious understanding of the world, namely, the cognitive mapping that the subject-actant preserves before he begins his existential trajectory. The potential state thus occupies the preliminary stage of the subject's existential development. I would like to point out that the position of this stage is of great importance, for it can be revisited by the subject-actant after the actualization stage. This revisit will give new light to the subject-actant's interpretation of the cognitive mapping and therefore, brings forth the subject-actant's possible final state of realization. The potential stage, situated between the states of actualization and realization in the Greimassian model, contains an imploding force that helps the subject move towards his transformation and realization. However, I could not agree with Greimas and Fontanille's interpretation on the sequence of transformation trajectory.

Greimas and Fontanille believe that the most common series of roles of the subject-actant is limited to three roles, and the developmental process is: first, the virtualized, then, the actualized and finally, the realized. Since the potential phase is the original state of the subject-actant, I suggest we take it as the fundamental, the primary situation from which the subject-actant begins his/her existential journey in the narrative. However, I disagree with Greimas and Fontanille on their fixed interpretation of the developmental process. The concept that any subject-actant's developmental process is universally the same should be challenged because of its limitations when applied to various narratives. I would like to point out here that the developmental process of the subject-actant provided by Greimas and Fontanille cannot, and should not be taken as the only process a subject-actant should go through in any narrative, as Greimas and Fontanille demonstrate in *The Semiotics of Passions*. I firmly believe that the subject-actant's transformation trajectory should not be confined within a fixed sequencing, since every subject-actant's existential experiences will differ according to his/her own characteristic traits and the various narrative fabrications and structuralization of textual events that he/she encounters in the narrative.

In this paper, I divide the grandmother's transition phases according to the four Greimassian transformation simulacra, because the strengths of Greimas and Fontanille's model lie in its clarification, structuralization and interpretation of the existential trajectory of the subject-actant in the narrative; however, I am also demonstrating in this paper a different developmental process of the subject-actant with several remodeled illustrations of the grandmother's transition and transformation in the narrative. Therefore, the settings, the developmental process and the several diagrams of the four transition phases in this paper are not a "pure" application of Greimas and Fontanille's model, but a "variation," a "remodeling," a "transformation" of it.

O'Connor's "A Good Man Is Hard to Find" is a story about a family trip. It begins with the paternal proposal of a trip to Florida, and ends with the family massacre out of the main road, not even half way to their destination. The family members—a married couple with two kids, a baby and the grandmother—set out to enjoy a trip of materiality and entertainment but encounter their mortality before they even have a chance to recognize it. The nameless characters[24] bear close relation to ordinary figures in

[24] This is not common in O'Connor's stories. She always gives her fictional characters proper names that match well to their roles and identities. In this story, the two Bailey children and The Misfit's henchmen

everyday life. The mother is depicted as a woman with innocent cabbage face who has no time to dress up but roughly circles a green handkerchief around her head. The grandmother is a domineering matriarch who keeps offering suggestions, raising issues and making conversation most of the time in the narrative. The father is only given a nickname "Bailey Boy," as his mother calls him. The function of this naming strategy, in respect of the semiotic signifying process, emphasizes the symbolic level of significance and at the same time implies the possible ignorance, misunderstanding and misjudgment of the characters as their names, the signifiers of their identities, are missing.

"The grandmother didn't want to go to Florida," the story begins, "She wanted to visit some of her connections in east Tennessee and she was seizing at every chance to change Bailey's mind."[25] "Here this fellow that calls himself The Misfit is aloose from the Federal Pen and headed toward Florida and you read here what it says he did to these people. Just you you read it. I wouldn't take my children in any direction with a criminal like that aloose in it. I couldn't answer to my conscience if I did" (352). The grandmother's protest is a ruse. It undergoes as a reminder of the possible danger that a trip to Florida might incur, but in fact the grandmother merely appeals to danger and conscience at the face value. While trying to dissuade her son from taking the same direction, the grandmother suggests that they take a trip to Tennessee instead. But since no one in the family takes her advice, they begin their trip to Florida the next day with the grandmother well dressed and ready in the car in the early morning. On their way South, the grandmother persuades Bailey Boy to detour, so that they could see an old mansion on the road. The moment the grandmother remembers that the mansion is not in Georgia, but in Tennessee, an accident occurs. No one is really injured, but the first to come to their aid is the car driven by The Misfit. The Misfit has all the Bailey family (Baily Boy, his wife, his daughter June Star, his son John Wesley, and a baby) except the grandmother killed by his henchmen. In the meantime, the grandmother tries her wit out to win The Misfit's compassion and pity. But when at last the grandmother believes that her ruse works and reaches out her hand trying to touch The Misfit's shoulder, he shoots her dead.

A happy family trip to the south finally turns out to be a journey to death. How Bailey family meets with The Misfit is the kernel of the narrative, because through the narrative process the main characters' development in each of the modes of existence will be revealed. I will divide the narrative of "A Good Man Is Hard to Find" into four different sections of existential phases so as to construct a Greimassian model of existential simulacra: the realization, the potentialization, the virtualization and the actualization.

The semiotic diagram contains the following four different states of existence: (1) the initial stage of realization: the grandmother's noticing of The Misfit's heading towards Florida. Although this is merely the grandmother's ruse to divert her son's plan to Florida, the grandmother does actually reveal a menacing possibility to the future danger, (2) the potentialization phase: the ante-bellum values of lineage and gentility, the vanishing system of beliefs inherited from the Southern culture and religious concepts that are cherished by the grandmother belong to this group. As a data base of the past experience and heritage, this phase offers several implications of the social and cultural elements that make up the stature of the grandmother and thus can serve to

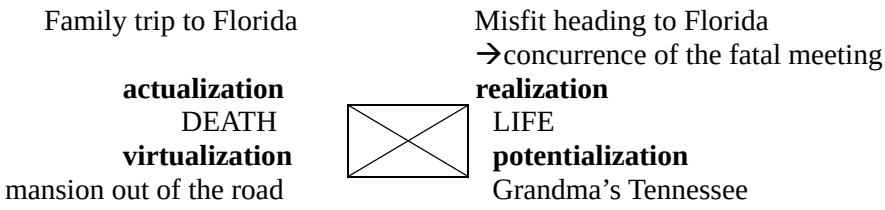
---

have their names and even the grandmother's cat, which accidentally clutches to Bailey Boy's back and causes the car accident, has a name "Pitty Sing."

[25] Flannery O'Connor's "A Good Man Is Hard to Find," *An Introduction to Fiction*. Kennedy and Gioia, eds. New York, 1999. P.352. Hereafter, only page numbers will be given to the quotations from this text.

explain the grandmother's real temperance, traits and character, (3) the phase of virtualization: at this phase, the potential competence of the characters will be projected unto other vicarious objects so that the mere awareness or even non-awareness of one's socially and culturally constructed cognition and concept of the world will be demonstrated through vicarious experience, (4) the phase of actualization: this is the final stage of the existential taxonomy. The main characters have to face the last stroke of fate, and thus to be initiated into a quite different stage of understanding. After the potential stage and the virtual stage of development, the subjects would now reach towards the phase of realization and transformation, no matter whether they do accept or realize it.

The following diagram can thus represent the blocked event of the Bailey family's trip to Florida:



In the very beginning of the story the grandmother's warning words foreshadow the interlocking forces of Death and Life. This semi-realization of the danger will keep lurking in the narrative. The grandmother has her private and personal reason for visiting Tennessee her hometown. But she skillfully avoids naming her target, and only manages to reach her goal by warning the family the possible danger of the trip to Florida. As the narrative shows, the grandmother's strange association of The Misfit and his crime with the Bailey family's security and her conscience proves to be correct. Whether consciously or unconsciously the grandmother has already predicted the possible meeting with The Misfit. However, her potential destination is situated on the other direction. She aims to visit Tennessee, her hometown, with a certain intention to pick up the memory of the old days. She never has the chance to do this. But ironically she fulfills the process of the homecoming ritual by arousing her grandchildren's desire to find the hidden treasure in the non-existent off-the-road plantation mansion and finally meets with the actualization of her journey to death—the eternal home.

The third stage of the existential modulation functions to provide the subject with the need for a change in direction. Therefore, this potentialization phase of the glories, gentility and the vanishing value system that the grandmother's hometown stands for can have a chance to find its outlet. This is what the grandmother would like to "show" to and "educate" the grandchildren. This is the phase that contains something different from what the grandchildren are imbued with by the modern commercialized cultural and value system. The old plantation mansion in the grandmother's broken memory will be the best demonstration that a grandmother can show to her grandchildren. This mansion is the very incarnation of her beliefs and the fountain of her self-respect and righteousness. She even makes a little lie on the hidden treasure, so as to entice her two grandchildren's curiosity. However, this detour really completes a homecoming journey. The search for a non-existent mansion brings forth their meeting with The Misfit and his henchmen. The virtualization stage of the grandmother's superficial beliefs in lineage, gentility, and the antebellum Southern value system now confronts a challenge. The religious non-believer Misfit, keeping the Southern gentility in appearance, challenges and denies the real substance of the religious miracle and faith.

The narrative gives the grandmother a complete development in the different

phases as far as the semiotic models of conjunction and disjunction are concerned. Viewed from the hindsight gained through the Greimassian model and the semiotic signification analysis, the Bailey family's journey to Florida is thus menaced with the shadow of death from the beginning. However, the narrative also promises a hidden lesson of existential awareness combined with the bitter sting of conceptual transformation.

III. The Flowing of Significance: Verbal Violence

The massacre in "A Good Man Is Hard to Find" is usually the focus of the critical debate as the violence of grace is concerned. However, I would like to point out here a very specific feature often neglected by the critics: except the physical violence, the very violent stroke of death, the narrative of "A Good Man Is Hard to Find" is full of verbal violence. As violent acts are important in respect to the possible revelation of grace, verbal violence should also be taken seriously, for verbal expression is the very constructive texture of a narrative. If only the violent event (the family massacre) is taken into consideration, this kind of narrative analysis, without doubt, would be seriously flawed, since the major part of the textual significance would thus be left out as the narrative style and the characters' conversations are neglected.

People not only communicate with language, but also use language to demonstrate their power over others and fulfill their personal wish. Language, therefore, can be a tool of communication and a weapon of destruction. It can be used to hurt the feelings and to discourage the wishes and ambitions of others. It can express distress, resentment and even hatred. The language that hurts demonstrates the power of verbal violence. In the Bailey family, language usually fails to serve as a tool to communicate but turns out to be a sign[26] of further implications: a second level signifier. It represents the speaker's present state of mood and refers to the second level—his/her inner feelings and unconscious desire, and leaves the third level meta-linguistic system of signification to the understanding of the probing reader of the narrative. In the Bailey family, one sends out a message but receives no immediate response, or instead, has retorts and obnoxious value judgments in return. Though failing to fulfill the first level function in the daily

---

[26] With respect to the semiotics of sign systems derived from Saussure, Hjelmslev and Barthes, the signifying function of language as a sign system consists of two elementary parts: the expression part and the content part. The signification of a sign system is obtained through the related function of the expression part and the content part. Adopting the layered semiotic model of the signifying system established by Roland Barthes in *Elements of Semiology*, I would categorize the signifying process of a language sign into three different levels. This three-level model of the language signifying process consists of three signifying systems: the first level signification belongs to the function of the reality, the second level signification is the function of denotation and the third level signification refers to the domain of the social and cultural space of connotation. In the first level sign system, the language sign as a signifier is related to the signified content-meaning which belongs to the signifying function in reality. In the second level signifying system, the previous expression and content-meaning of the language sign will get transformed into a new signifier and develops into a second signifying system where denotation functions. The second sign system will further develop into a third level system of signification where the connotation functions. This new sign system is an extension of the previous denotative sign system of the individual and refers to a broaden content-meaning (connotation) which belongs to the realm of the social, cultural and ideological. See Roland Barthes, *Elements of Semiology*.

communication, the verbal message still has its referentiality in the second and third level function of signification.

The language usage and function adopted by the Bailey family indicate a discord within the family members and further reveal their inner world of discontent. For instance, the grandmother's utterance always degenerates into a kind of cacophony and receives no attention from the family members, and sometimes it is totally ignored so that the grandmother will receive no response at all. Before the Bailey family encounters their lethal terminators in the car accident, the existential stage of virtual verbal violence is repeatedly acted out at home, on the road, and in the Red Sammy Butts's small barbeque store. The frequent flow of discontent and dissatisfaction emerges freely from the family conversation, as if this kind of verbal violence is but a rehearsal of their daily activities.

In the very beginning, the grandmother's advice of not going to Florida, though demonstrated with her demanding gesture and raising sound, is ignored by her son, who buries his head over the orange sports section of the Journal. He gives her no response, and has no intention to attend to her underlying tone that demands a change of destinations. While the grandmother tries to turn to her daughter-in-law for help and protests that visiting some more different places might be of better education for the children, her daughter-in-law takes no notice of her words, either.

Although the grandmother tires hard to persuade and reason with her son and her daughter-in-law respectively, there is no sign of any communication. Silence is the only answer. But the children's responses are different. The eight-year-old boy, John Wesley, says to her, "If you don't want to go to Florida, why dontcha stay at home?" And the little girl, June Star, responds to John Wesley's remark and makes her comment without even directly facing and talking to the grandmother: "'She wouldn't stay at home to be queen for a day. She wouldn't stay at home for a million bucks,' June Star said, 'Afraid She'd miss something. She has to go everywhere we go'" (352). The children stand by their parents' determination to go to Florida and in a childish directness dissuading her to go with them and laughing at her not being able to act on her own but depending on them.

In fact, John Wesley's and June Star's remarks reveal more of the modern commercial culture than of a clear consciousness and word choice of their own. John Wesley's remark is a direct response to the grandmother's not wishing to go to Florida; however, June Star's is a copy from a popular radio program[27] that she might have heard with her mother. Nevertheless, the conversation the grandmother has with her grandchildren, when compared to the silent response she obtains from the children's parents, is full of sound and sarcasm. Since Bailey Boy and his wife say nothing to stop or reproach the children's bluntness, it seems that the children's words are more or less

---

[27] June Star's remarks were from a popular broadcasting program of the time. Margaret Earley Whitt pointed out, "O'Connor provides June Star with a popular radio show for an allusion: "She wouldn't stay home to be queen for a day" nor "for a million bucks" (*Understanding Flannery O'Connor* 137). Whitt suggests, "Although the overemotional television show "Queen for a Day" premiered in 1956, a radio show with the same format began in 1945…. June Star knows her radio, but she seems ignorant of the tales and stereotypes of her region" (44-5). In a sense, June Star's familiarity with the radio show is a proof of the prevalence of the modern commercial value system in the younger generations. The value system of the traditional South, which the grandmother believes, would be quite different. However, the grandmother's teachings and preachments cannot match the influence of the radio programs over the younger generations.

consented by their parents, or at least, the manners and style of expressions are of no great concern to their parents. As the parents are tired of arguing with the grandmother, the children take turns to fulfill the duty for their parents.

On their way to Florida, the Bailey family stops at the Red Sam's to have a light lunch. While waiting for their order, the mother plays "The Tennessee Waltz" on the nickelodeon. The grandmother says that tune always makes her want to dance and asks Bailey if he would like to dance, "but he only glared at her" (355). This is the second time in the story that Bailey Boy with the same silent mode rejects his mother's suggestion. Red Sam's wife, watching June Star's tap, tries to have some little talk with this little girl: "Would you like to come be my little girl?" "No I certainly wouldn't," June Star said. "I wouldn't live in a broken-down place like this for a million bucks!" (355) Seeing all this, the grandmother reproaches the little girl for being rude. It seems that the grandmother is the only one who emphasizes manners and gentility in the Bailey family.

The actualization of physical violence terminates life; however, the virtual verbal violence humiliates and curtails the possibilities of human communication and expression of love and sympathy. The verbal violence among the family members foreshadows the lack of communication, passion, goodwill and understanding. This virtual violence of discontent will finally clutter up to lurk behind the actualization of the chaotic massacre as a demonstration of the lack of family and companion love.

The Bailey children's habitual retorts and their parents' reluctance to respond to the grandmother's words grow out of control in June Star's rejection of the proprietress's polite, inviting words at Red Sam's, and at last develop into Bailey Boy's curse to his mother when she recognizes and points out the escaped convict—The Misfit. In contrast to the actualization stage of the real world disorder and malignancy represented by the Misfit and his henchmen, this phase of verbal violence virtualization illustrates the mutilating force of language. The Bailey family's verbal violence, which mimics the commercial language and the modern value systems, serves in the narrative syntax as a virtual miniature of the devouring force of blind malice in the real modern world.

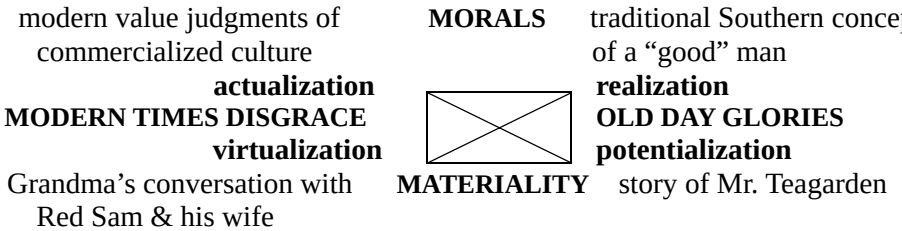
What Bailey Boy exclaims desperately while stepping on his road to death might best define this mal-communication stage of the modern world: "'Listen,' Bailey began, 'we're in a terrible predicament! Nobody realizes what this is,' and his voice cracked" (359). This is really a terrible predicament to which people in the modern world are confined, and it is true that nobody really wants to **listen** to others. The Misfit only talks to the grandmother, but he does not listen to her advice. The Misfit keeps talking about his doubts and disbeliefs in humanity and religion, but determines to accept nobody's words or advices except his own reasoning. The grandmother talks and demands, but no family members really listen to her needs. The Bailey children talks and retorts, but no one, except the grandmother, listens to them and give them directions. Bailey Boy refuses to answer any of his mother's words, whether they are questions, protests or suggestions, and when he finally tries to "talk," no one listens to him and his voice "cracked"—it fails to reach out and communicate. And in the whole narrative, Bailey's wife has no words at all. Red Sam's wife talks, but her husband twice stops her and asks her to leave and hurry up with the lunch order. "Nobody realizes what it is," as Bailey Boy ironically points out in the end, because people, isolated within their own world, fail to communicate. The first level pragmatic function that language provides as communicating meanings in the everyday life is hampered. People keep talking to others, but only themselves are the targets and the receivers of their words. The pragmatic dimension of language signs thus is often put into oblivion and fails to reach their receivers in their speech acts.

June Star's repetition of the "one million bucks" is also an important signifier. It refers to the modern "grids" that popular culture formulates throughout the widespread

broadcasting media. This explains the reason why only the grandmother stands to hiss the girl and warns her of her bad manners, but June Star's parents take no notice of her rudeness as usual. It is obvious that Bailey Boy and his wife belong to the new generation that happily forsake the old teachings and embrace the new capitalist world. However, Red Sam's wife's disapproval of June Star's language would rank her with the same group of the old grandmother's camp, who still cling a little bit to the old days' glory and manners. The old good days were gone and the good manners and gentility could no longer be found in the Bailey family. Nor could the merits of a "good" man be found in the family life. If June Star should feel ashamed of her slashing honesty, her parents, who keep allowing her to repeat what she has learned from a radio program without reminding her of its aggressive inferences, should also feel ashamed. However, Bailey Boy and his wife see this happened time and again but make no sign of chastising or discipling their young girl. These two situations plainly reveal the kind of verbal violence that happens in the Bailey family, and the different cultural and value judgments that the old and young generations embrace. These narrative incidents serve well as the virtual counterpart of the final actual violence, the physical violence executed by The Misfit. With no extended feelings and compassion towards the others, both verbal violence and physical violence, whether virtual or actual in the semiotic modulations, generate disgraceful manners and vicious results.

With respect to the semiotic analysis of the model existence, June Star's retorts further emit a great significance of the popular worldview. It is not merely a practice of language game or a form of communication that is worth noting, but the universal element that behind the enunciation that counts. What lingering behind the child's materialistic and snobbish contempt of poverty and underdevelopment is the popular culture that is fast changing. The worship of materiality and money behind the words of June Star would then become clear, when viewed from the perspective of a material oriented culture. The old conventions of the grandmother's time would then become out of date tirades and therefore, receive no attention. The economic values of the society have already incorporated into June Star's concept of human life and behavior, although her worldview expressed through her words might not represent her independent individual values. On the contrary, the grandmother, Red Sam and his wife belong to the "transgressions," but only when where manners and morals are concerned. For the sake of conversation and memory of the traditional South, they all share their high respect of gentility without really reflecting upon the genuine meaning of a "good" man. The good old days are remembered, as in their talk, because they would like to apply it to their benefits. The grandmother's judgment of her previous suitor Mr. Teagarden is a good example: this Mr. Teagarden "was a very good looking man and a gentleman," and "had bought Coca-Cola stock when it first came out and that he had died only a few years ago, a very wealthy man" (354). The grandmother's comments on Mr. Teagarden remind us of her concept of a "good" man—good looking and wealthy. She does not forget to mention the economic values that a probable marriage to Mr. Teagarden might bring forth. Missing a marriage with a "good" gentleman might mean the missing of all the possible financial benefits.

The grandmother's concept of a "good" man can thus be categorized as the following diagram:



However, it will take the grandmother her life to realize what a “good” man really means.

IV. The Search for Trust and Faith—the Potential and Virtual Phases

The grandmother’s vague understanding of an escaped convict heading towards Florida and the Bailey family’s small, trivial fights in language make up the pre-realization and the virtual stages of the narrative existential simulacra. The narrative that delineates the Bailey family on the road—from leaving home till the car accident—contains the clues and fragments needed to patch up the grandmother’s (and also part of the other Bailey family members’) cognitive mapping. In this phase, the old South encounters the new South. The little black boy in the roadside shack, which the grandmother happily points out as if finding an extraordinary object on the road, brings back the old South—the tradition of manners and the values of lineage and gentility:

> “Oh look at the cute little pickaninny!” she said and pointed to a Negro child standing in the door of a shack. “Wouldn’t that make a picture, now?” She asked and they all turned and looked at the little Negro out of the back window. He waved. “He didn’t have any britches on,” June Star said. “He probably didn’t have any,” the grandmother explained. “Little niggers in the country don’t have things like we do. If I could paint, I’d paint that picture,” she said. The children exchanged comic books. (353)

The appearance of the black boy reflects to the grandmother the ante-bellum glories and manners that keep her a self-respect lady. She is proud of her lineage, manners and gentility, and would assume without doubt the role to pass the tradition to her grandchildren. June Star immediately admits her surprise to notice that the black boy has no pants on. This remark proves to the grandmother that she has the right to take chance educating her grandchildren, “Little niggers in the country don’t have things like we do.”

Although a child, June Star is a product of the new South. She is not familiar with the traditional Southern concept of class and race. If June Star’s surprise and alarm represent the direct value judgment of the commercial world, the grandmother’s teaching and self-complacency, the old South. It is not merely the poverty of the blacks that attracts her eyes, it is the collected memory of the white supremacy over those Negroes that makes her feel content and would like to keep this spectacle in mind. What lies behind the “cute little pickaninny with no britches on” is the hidden self-complacency that she is of good lineage and that she does own something, or even many things, that the poor, lower Negroes, do not have. The grandmother’s complacency leads us back to the old South where colors and classes are more important than the financial status one enjoys. And not just a moment ago before her pointing out the little black boy, she comments on John Wesley’s disdainful remarks on the poor states of her hometown Tennessee and his Georgia:

> “Tennessee is just a hillbilly dumping ground,” John Wesley said, “and Georgia is a lousy state too.”
> “You said it,” June Star said.
> “In my time, children were more respectful of their native states and their parents and everything else. People did right then.” (353)

The grandmother’s reasoning actually goes with the social and ideological value judgment of her times, which is quite different from what June Star and her brother John Wesley represent. So neither of them pays any attention to the grandmother’s exclamation that if she could paint, she’d paint that picture of the little boy. To the younger materiality-oriented generation, poverty is not a spectacle but a stain. For them, a state, which promises no economic prosperity, is worthless, and similarly, the painting

of a poor little black boy is certainly of not much value. Such a painting might reveal some hidden glories of the past to the grandmother; however, it loses its charm with the grandchildren.

The grandmother, as a representative of the old South, assumes the responsibility in passing down the heritage. She plays a geography teacher and admires the view of their hometown. She plays a history teacher commenting on the financial and class status of the Negroes and patiently pointing to the children the roadside family burying ground belonged to the plantation. She even acts as anecdote orator, relating her past romance with the moral and cultural lessons to the children. All these role-plays patch up the grandmother's memories. It was a time that she deserved to be treated as a lady and that as a white she enjoyed the privilege that the Negroes were deprived of: "Little niggers in the country don't have things like we do." She is a lady, and she would always remind others that she is one. Therefore, she must dress up for the trip. With her white gloves, navy blue straw sailor hat, a navy blue dress, a purple spray of cloth violets containing a sachet pinned on her dress neckline, she secretly enjoys the thought that "In case of an accident, anyone seeing her dead on the highway would know at once that she was a lady" (353).

The anecdote of her suitor Mr. Teagarden crowns the old day memories with the traditional Southern courtship of a lady; however, the mixture of a hue of materiality and modern value judgment in the tradition-embedded anecdote raises a certain conflict. June Star says that she would never marry any gentleman who only brings her a watermelon as a gift every Saturday. Her comments bring forth the grandmother's further lament: Mr. Teagarden was not only a gentleman but also wealthy! This lament tints the simple representation of courting with modern value judgment—it is a sigh more for the loss of the fortune than for the loss of a gentleman suitor. This sigh indicates a departure from what she proclaims the very founding stone of her upbringing and the principles that she stick to, and thus becomes a germination that implies her secret clinging and coping to the new modern social norms and value judgment.

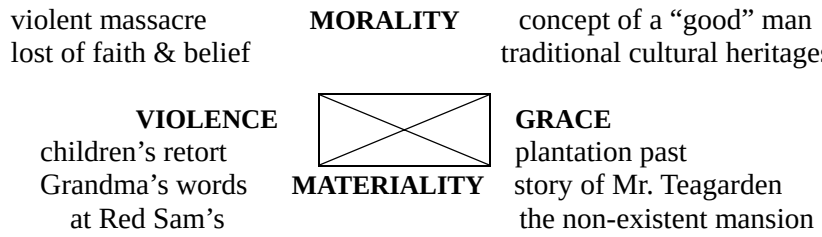
This inclination is again emphasized as the grandmother tries to entice her grandchildren to visit the old plantation. She visited the old plantation when she was a young lady. She remembers the magnificent house: "The house had six white columns across the front and that there was an avenue of oaks leading up to it and two little wooden trellis arbors on either side in front where you sat down with your suitor after a stroll in the garden" (356). The grandiosity the grandmother added to the old plantation mansion and the romantic courting atmosphere mesmerize no one but herself. However, the more she recalls the house and the old days, the more she desires to pay a visit to it. "She knew that Bailey would not be willing to lose any time looking at an old house," so she craftily tells a lie about the hidden treasure within the old mansion. This strategy works. The children begin yelling, screaming and kicking while the grandmother murmurs, "It would be very educational for them" (356). The father at last gives up to this turmoil and for the first time the grandmother has her will.

In this phase, the grandmother's memories and nostalgia towards the past culture and old hometown occupy the main stage of the potentialization. The grandmother's cognitive mapping of the world is totally based upon the ante-bellum South. Her understanding of the circumstances around her reflects the traditional Southern culture. Nevertheless, the old Southern culture background is already at risk while confronted with the monetary system of the modern world. Although the grandmother keeps reminding her son's family and everyone the glorious past, she is now like a history. The bygone days and her memory about it can no longer attract any attention. June Star and Wesley belong to the new generation that know nothing much about the past, and her son and daughter-in-law could not care less about her advice and beliefs. Her son always keeps silent and rejects any conversation with her, and her daughter-in-law is

never a lady in her eyes because even when they were out for a trip, “The children’s mother still had on slacks and still had her hair tied up in a green kerchief” as usual. The grandmother’s memory and judgment is not suitable even at Red Sam’s broken store.

Ironically, the past history has to concede to the monetary system so as to bring itself back to the “eyes” of its viewers. The old mansion is not worthy of a visit except that hidden treasure. The old mansion, standing behind the grandmother representing a grand and magnificent historical past, is worthy of a visit because its hidden treasure is valuable in the modern world. But actually, for the grandmother, she’d rather believe that its grandeur—the representation and symbol of the prestige and power of the plantation days—would not fail her to her son’s family, when they arrive at it, view it and find out the truth. However, the value of the mansion depends upon what the eyes could see—whether it is judged from the grandmother’s or the younger generations’ eyes.

The existential phases of the grandmother’s potentialization and virtualization as delineated in the narrative can be illustrated in the following diagram:



V. The Violence Actualized—A Process towards Transformation

As the Bailey family’s car finally turns to the dirt road, climbing up and down into the hilly ground in search of the grand mansion, the grandmother suddenly remembers that “the house she had remembered so vividly was not in Georgia but in Tennessee” (357). This shocking fact brings forth the bad luck to the whole family. The instant the grandmother realizes her mistake, her feet jumps up and kicks over the valise where the family cat Pitty Sing is hidden, and the cat springs onto Bailey’s shoulder and causes the car to turn over. Everyone is shocked but not injured, and the children are yelling and screaming in a frenzy of delight: “We’ve had an ACCIDENT!” (357) The Misfit and his henchmen are the first to arrive at the scene after the car accident. The grandmother recognizes The Misfit immediately. While The Misfit orders his henchmen to execute Bailey, John Wesley, the mother, June Star and the baby, the grandmother keeps her unsuccessful conversation with The Misfit and tries every chance to ask for an escape from death. The Misfit, at the mean time, wrestles with his own personal question of God and belief, keeping the grandmother as the only confidant that he can let out his secrets and vengeance.

In this scene, the previous virtual verbal violence turns to be the actualized violent stroke of death. The verbal discord of the Bailey children though heard at the beginning is soon settled down because The Misfit demands the mother to take care of and discipline her children: “Lady, would you mind calling them children to sit down by you? Children make me nervous” (358). As an outside force, the Misfit redirects the paternal rights of instructing and educating their youngsters to the mother. For the first time in the story, the demand of order and obedience is observed. The grandmother now recovers from the shock of the car accident and recognizes The Misfit. However, this great mistake incurs not The Misfit’s rage but her son’s: “Bailey turned his head sharply and said something to his mother that shocked even the children. The old lady began to cry and The Misfit redden[ed]. ‘Lady,’ he said, ‘don’t you get upset. Sometimes a man says things he do[es]n’t mean. I don’t reckon he meant to talk to you that way’” (359).

The Misfit once again takes a hand in the Bailey family chores and resolves the

mother-son discord by appealing to the norms of the old cultural tradition. This gesture makes the grandmother believe that he might treat her differently because he knows the Southern cultural norms and she is a lady. The grandmother mistakes The Misfit's gentleness towards an old woman as a sign of his recognition of the social and cultural norms. She quickly makes every effort to tell The Misfit that he is a "good" man and that he has no common blood. She parallels good manners and nobility in blood to the standard qualification of a "good" man. However, her appeal to the norms does not work, because The Misfit cares about manners but not morals.

In the grandmother's superficial understanding, the appearance and manners no wonder are the best representation for these traits, hence the judgment can be made at the first sight. The grandmother not only clings to the banal worldview without a bit of self-consciousness but also claims her supremacy over others in making judgments. For the grandmother, the virtual appearance and the potential acknowledgment of the cultural and social norms equal to the realization and actualization of the much deeper religious, class, and ideological beliefs and concepts of the Southern tradition. In the grandmother's world, the axis of the reality and the axis of the cognitive become one. In the grandmother's system of value judgment, only appearance counts. What can be seen is to be believed. That is the reason why she has to dress up for the car trip to Florida, for "In case of an accident, anyone seeing her on the highway would know at once that she was a lady" (353). For her, appearance is the only thing that counts, living or dead.

Though the grandmother tries hard to save her life, her talent can never match The Misfits. Nor does her understanding of Christianity more precise or deeper than an ordinary person. She is no match for The Misfit in metaphysical thoughts. Therefore, she never gets a chance to coax him out of his religious nihilism, nor can she use any words or conversation to persuade him not to kill her. She trusts no one, just like The Misfit. She believes in appearance and The Misfit also has the same penchant for believing what he sees.

However, trust in God is never a task of seeing, and in religion, trust does not come from appearance, but spiritual understanding and faith. Faith has no root in the grandmother's and The Misfit's layer of reality. Judging from appearance, the grandmother takes everything in face value. She tells The Misfit that he is not an evil person because she can "see" by her eyes. She believes that she can "see" the difference and distinguish a "good" man from a "bad" one. She has no idea that the judgment she forms and cherishes is just a borrowed yet shallow concept of the social and cultural norms. Her old traditional Southern discipline and common sense tell her that good manners and polite language towards a lady, especially an old one, show a man's good education and excellent breed that qualify him to be a "good" man. As Miles Orvell points out, "The Misfit evinces a distinguishing gentility of manner, which the old lady, with her desperate equation of manners and morals, mistakes for goodness" (Orvell 119).

Foreseeing what strategy his mother is resorting to, Bailey intends to cut in and, for the first time, wants to take control of the situation. But it is too late. His fate is doomed, and with this understanding of his approaching death and his responsibility to his mother, Bailey finally gives his mother an impassioned message: "I'll be back in a minute, Mamma, wait on me!" (360) Facing her son's death, the grandmother keeps coaxing the Misfit:

> "I just know you're a good man," she said desperately. "You're not a bit common!"
>
> "Nome, I ain't a good man." (360)

Since the grandmother is confined within the superficial judgment on appearance and manners, she can get no further except appeal to what she is familiar with. However, The Misfit knows himself better and would not concede to abide by the norms. The

grandmother has no idea that The Misfit believes himself a sacrifice to the social and political rules and for such an escaped convict, there is no social justice—he would rather set up his own rules. He trusts no one and is gratified with taking no help:

> "If you would pray," the old lady said, "Jesus would help you."
> "That's right," The Misfit said.
> "Well then, why don't you pray?" she asked trembling with delight suddenly.
> "I don't want no help," he said. "I'm doing all right by myself." (361)

When The Misfit condescends to her advice on praying, the grandmother fancies that this is the chance. If the social norms cannot work, at least, religion may stand a chance to convert such a man as The Misfit. As all the other family members are dead now, the grandmother sees this as the only hope she can count on and she would keep reminding him the good that praying might bring forth. However, just as the grandmother is taking religion as the final salvation to this convict and also as the last hope of her escape from death, The Misfit tells her that he needs no help. Religion is no quick salvation to The Misfit because he sees no points in praying for help. The life in the penitentiary has taught him the lesson:

> Jesus [threw] everything off balance. It was the same case with Him as with me except He hadn't committed any crime and they could prove I had committed one because they had the papers on me….I call myself The Misfit because I can't make what all I done wrong fit what all I gone through in punishment. (362)

He believes in nothing unless he himself bears witness to it. The Misfit has his own philosophy of independence and free will. He questions the miracle of Jesus' raising of Lazarus. Total submission to an almighty God without "seeing" the miracle is ridiculous to him. Living in a world full of "injustice" that threatens to set him up and pen him in, The Misfit learns his lesson: seeing is believing.

For The Misfit, there are only two roads open in front of him: "If He did what He said, then it's nothing for you to do but [throw] away everything and follow Him," (362) because you believe in Him, and "if He didn't, then it's nothing for you to do but enjoy the few minutes you got left the best way you can—by killing somebody or burning down his house or doing some other meanness to him" (362). And the latter is the case with The Misfit. He would believe no miracles and his solution is: you have no one else but yourself to trust in and turn to, so you squander everything there in life, for there's no salvation nor hope on earth. Nevertheless, The Misfit sinks again into his own pondering and raises the doubt himself:

> "I wasn't there so I can't say He didn't," The Misfit said. "I wisht I had of been there," he said, hitting the ground with his fist. "It ain't right I wasn't there because if I had been there I would [have] known. Listen Lady," he said in a high voice, "if I had of been there I would [have] known and I wouldn't be like I am now." His voice seemed about to crack and the grandmother's head cleared for an instant. (362)

What The Misfit reveals is not just his doubt in religion but the very trait in his personality—he just cannot submit to God and God's grace without proving its true existence himself. As a child, The Misfit is never a pliant sheep that abides by the social rules without questioning the reason and justification of them first. He tells the grandmother, "My daddy said I was a different breed of dog from my brothers and sisters. 'You know,' Daddy said, 'it's some that can live their whole life out without asking about it and it's others has to know why it is, and this boy is one of the latters. He's going to be into everything!" (360) The Misfit's father knows him and he knows this, too. If what The Misfit abhors is the lack of proof in believing, the complete submission to God and the total oblivion of one's own control and determination towards life without probing first into the reason of it is the very root of his

disobedience. The Misfit has his own lament and his own puzzle to solve. His lack of chance to witness the existence of God's miracle holds the critical clue to his non-believing.

Underneath the apparent nihilism and open denial of Christ's miracle in his raising of the dead, The Misfit might still have a secret yearning for believing in God. This is what the grandmother "sees" at the last moment of her life. Even when The Misfit denies God's miracle, and blames God for driving the world out of balance, he has not totally denied and abandoned the yearning. If he really disbelieves, there is no need for him to curse God for making the world a mass, nor is it necessary to protest that he would have believed in Him if he were there on the spot to witness the miracle. There is the perplexed mind dangling between the mysterious truth and the fact based on appearance. The Misfit does, in a certain sense, share with the grandmother something in common: they both judge by appearance. They both believe in what they "see." They believe in what their eyes can see rather than what their minds' eyes can perceive. The Misfit, at the symbolical level, is the child of the grandmother. The grandmother, in a certain sense, unknowingly but correctly reveals the same characteristic in cajoling The Misfit: "Listen, you shouldn't call yourself The Misfit because I know you're a good man at heart. I can just look at you and tell" (359). Although the grandmother is just using this lip service to coax The Misfit out so as to save her own life, she ironically parallels herself with The Misfit as she emphasizes how she uses her "eyes" to see, to look at The Misfit and tell what kind of person he is.

But as if in a magic instance, the grandmother finally has the sudden insight to see through The Misfit's rumbling monologue and her head "cleared for an instant." For a moment, she is in an empathy and understands his troubled life and his will to vengeance: "She saw the man's face twisted close to her own as if he were going to cry and she murmured, 'Why you're one of my babies. You're one of my children!" (362) Forsaking her previous superficial social norms and categories of a good man, the grandmother jumps to another phase of understanding. She is no longer the shallow selfish old woman that demands the obedience and acceptance of the family members and others. She understands for a moment the doubts The Misfit is trying to release. The transformation of her existential development from the potential and virtual stages is shown in this trembling moment. The grandmother, therefore, extends her momentous realization to The Misfit. She actualizes this understanding of the human predicament by including The Misfit as "one of her children," and stretching out her hand to touch The Misfit on the shoulder. However, without any understanding of this miracle in action, The Misfit rejects the grandmother's sharing gesture of the concomitant recognition of humanity and love. He shoots her three times through the chest. This ends the grandmother's life and her function as a revelation of the transformation process to The Misfit.

VI. Violence as the Initiation of Transformation

The grandmother's final gesture of a graceful touch bears the seed of transformation. The Misfit is offered a chance to share the initial but final communion with the grandmother through this gesture of acknowledgement. No one is perfect, and imperfection does not exclude one from receiving redemption. The Misfit says that the grandmother would be a good woman if there were someone who shoots her every minute all her life. He shoots her, and he makes her dying a "good" woman. As Gary Sloan points out: "The Misfit forces the grandmother to think. After momentary skepticism—'Maybe He didn't raise the dead'—she is primed for her moment of grace, connects with The Misfit, and dies redeemed. Treated as a catalyst for the grandmother's epiphany, The Misfit is a fruitful device" (Sloan 119-20). The Misfit triggers off the death machine and forces the grandmother to admit her imperfection and

her resemblance with him: she is no better than he is. But at the last minute she broadens her mind to embrace this convict and his malignancy. She is offered the chance to "see" at the crucial moment that human beings are not perfect and even evil doings might be forgiven and redeemed while the act of compassion presents itself.

The imminent death, the sting of violence, forces and elevates her to see things beyond their appearance and looks into the spiritual. Although her benignant gesture brings forth her death, the significance of this gesture does not stop on the spot. The Misfit knows the grandmother: she is a domineering old woman who clings to clichés and social norms without any sense of self-consciousness. He believes that the approaching death forces her to face her true self—the dark side of her character: "She would [have] been a good woman, if it had been somebody there to shoot her every minute of her life" (363). And this practical understanding of the apparent and the physical is what The Misfit counts on. However, the textual narration permits more than what the significant moment presents. There is a chance of transformation for The Misfit.

The Misfit this time really attends the crucial moment in person. He is forced to take action while the grandmother stretches out her hand and calls him "one of her babies" (362). It is her final touch of compassion that shocks The Misfit. Her reach towards The Misfit is a gesture acknowledging that they are of the same breed. But The Misfit never reckons himself as one of those ordinary people with doubtful faith and superficial judgments. So he spontaneously shoots her dead to avoid the touch and the contamination. The grandmother is not a true believer, and The Misfit knows this. He would not believe in God, because he was not there to witness the miracle; however, this time he can bear witness to the grandmother's ceremonial gesture of compassion. Will it make any difference to him? The narrative leaves much space for The Misfit and the reader to meditate.[28] While analyzing the possible flow of the narrative significance in the existential phases and semiotic modulations, Greimas and Fontanille point out: "It is by means of the perceiving body that the world is transformed into meaning (into language), that the exteroceptive figures are internalized, and that figurativity can be envisaged as the subject's mode of thinking" (Greimas and Fontanille xxi). What the grandmother perceives as the fatal moment approaching is this kind of thinking that might get perceived and transformed into her own cognitive mapping. Through the grandmother's stretching hand, The Misfit is also given a chance of initiation. However, only when he can internalize this message and reach his transformation stage, can he really enjoy the moment of enlightenment.

Some critics assume that the grandmother's reach towards The Misfit shows no sign of her repent. This kind of premise has its ground because the grandmother's selfishness and superficiality is well demonstrated in the narrative. But since this gesture happens after the grandmother's seeing The Misfit's distorted face and has temporarily imagined that she sees the tears that are going to fall from his eyes, then, her reaching out of her hand to him might bear a sense of pity and sympathy. The grandmother is selfish and bossy, but she is not a woman who pays no attention to others' feelings. Just like The Misfit, who tries to save her face and comfort her feelings by persuading her that the bad words Bailey said to her do not show his true feelings, the grandmother, too, possesses that sense of compassion that really sees into the

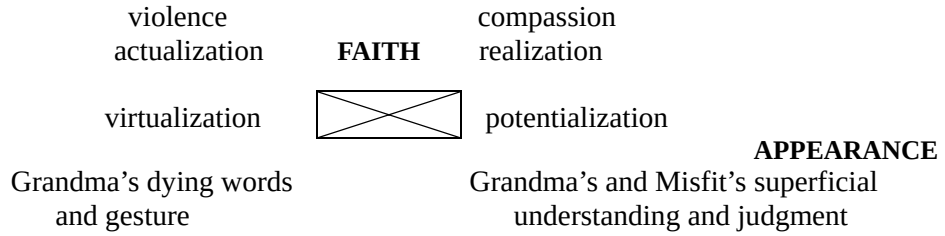
---

[28] O'Connor's comment on her own story was: "I don't want to equate the Misfit with the devil. I prefer to think that, however unlikely this may seem, the old lady's gesture, like the mustard-seed, will grow to be a great crow-filled tree in the Misfit's heart, and will be enough of a pain to him there to turn him into the prophet he was meant to become. But that's another story." ("On Her Own Work," *Mystery and Manners* p. 112-3)

troubled condition other people are in. So previously in the Red Sam's, she would not be hesitate to reprimand June Star for her rude reply to Red Sam's wife. The grandmother's final gesture, however, is far from innocent, nor purely originated from a selfish thought.

The Misfit, unlike the grandmother who never really thinks about God and her faith in Him, ponders on such questions frequently. In fact, this is the very kernel of his problem. If the grandmother never in her life really knows how to be a "good" woman until facing her own fatal moment, The Misfit, on the contrary, always gives his thought on it. For The Misfit, the belief in Christ is a matter of life and death, as Miles Orvell notes: "It is a violent logic, and it draws so sharp a line between the total commitment of faith and the total commitment of disbelief that there is no middle course" (Orvell 133). This makes the grandmother's death full of significance in the end of this violent story. The death appearance of the grandmother may not accord with her own imagination as dying like a lady, but she gives out her hand to embrace The Misfit with compassion. What the grandmother's death brings forth will now become a hint for The Misfit and a chance for him to "see" beyond the appearance and fact. It is The Misfit, not the grandmother, who is allowed the chance to transform after the narrative ends. At this critical moment, it is not the grandmother's words that carry the light of grace, but her gesture that throws open her heart to accept The Misfit, as if he were her son, her baby. In appearance, The Misfit wearing her son's sports shirt may "look" like her son, and in reality, they both believe in appearance.

The grandmother's existential trajectory and the possible following transformation phase of The Misfit can thus be illustrated as the following:



There is always a chance in the flowing of the significance as Greimas emphasizes in his analysis of the semiotic square of passions. In the Greimassian model, the potential stage can sometimes on the very transit moment be situated between the actualization and the realization stage (Greimas and Fontanille 25-6). Thus, the potentialization stage, I would like to point out, preserves the power of transformation. Since the subject-actant could make a detour by returning to the potentialization stage instead of moving forward directly from the virtualization to the actualization, I suggest that we take the potentialization stage as an ambiguous stage. Hence, by virtue of its pivotal position, it preserves the opportunities to develop into different forms, according to the subject-actant's trajectory. Transformations, consequently, could be viewed as the results of different understandings that the subject-actant obtains at the potentialization stage.

While The Misfit shoots the grandmother to death, he is working towards his new recognition of the world. It is his vicious action that helps make the grandmother's transformation and realization possible. Without any self-consciousness of their roles in the Bailey family car accident, The Misfit and his henchmen become the unwilling instruments of the narrative and help make the existential transformation possible to the self-centered grandmother. However, the violent act brings forth not violence, nor revenge, but a signifying gesture, which keeps flowing in the network of meaning and significance.

In a certain sense, the germination phase of The Misfit's realization converges with

the stroke of the grandmother's death.[29] He sees clearly the grandmother's drawbacks, and he reveals his viewpoint bitterly yet truly by saying sarcastically after the grandmother's death: "She would [have] been a good woman, if it had been somebody there to shoot her every minute of her life" (363). The grandmother has no great moral defects, however, as The Misfit clearly sees, and she only needs someone to keep reminding her to abandon her superficial concepts of manners and religion. A threatening violence might be the way to transformation: it forces the grandmother to forget momentarily her banal beliefs of clichés, her selfishness and her domineering attitudes. But since she has no chance to die over and over again as The Misfit sarcastically comments, the grandmother obtains no self-knowledge at the end of her life. Although in The Misfit's sudden twisted face, she sees a flash of possibility that a miracle might take time to work out.

The grandmother never obtains a complete understanding of herself, even at the moment of her death. She has no talent for the philosophical thinking of religion, and nor does she have the gift of seeing her own selfishness behind her behaviors. Religious faith and belief, if not empty terms, are just pertaining to their surface values in her shallow understanding. The Misfit, on the contrary, reaches his disbelief by a much more complicated reasoning of mental rejection. However, the grandmother's words and gesture might gradually turn to become a certain transcendental force that elevates his mental maturity beyond the superficial understanding and reasoning of faith and belief. The germination of this transformation is hidden within the ending conversation between The Misfit and Bobby Lee:

"Some fun!" Bobby Lee said.

"Shut up, Bobby Lee,' The Misfit said. "It's no real pleasure in life." (363)

The Misfit tells the grandmother that his fun and pleasure in life is gained through his misdeeds and violence towards others. But now the anti-social behavior can no longer bring forth the fun that he previously confirmed. The violence done to the grandmother becomes a stain of sarcasm. He chastises the social injustice and adopts anti-social behaviors as his method of challenge and protest, but the death of the old grandmother repeats once more what he distains—the social injustice done to a person who claims to do nothing seriously wrong. And ironically the grandmother dies because she intends to include The Misfit as one of her breed and her outstretching hand expresses a gesture of compassion.

Starting from a family plan of a vacation in Florida, "A Good Man Is Hard to Find" ends when the family is extinguished. The "supposed to be fun" detour from the highway turns out to be the road to death. None of the family would suspect that listening to the grandmother's suggestion would come to such an end, though actually the grandmother's words are seldom worthy of listening. The verbal violence occurred repeatedly but received no prohibition within the family mimics the physical violence of the real world that The Misfit and his henchmen resort to. Violence, in its various forms, can be found everywhere in the narrative and can only stop while its power emerges and its damage painfully acknowledged. The violence of words could only portray vaguely the virtual territory of human beings' vicious thoughts towards each other; however, the

---

[29] I would like to emphasize that in this story, the realization stage of the grandmother is not the same as that of the narrator's. The narrator could bear the grace of God in mind while making the narrative full of religious signification, and adding colors to the aura of the violent scene. However, an escape from the family massacre might be the very practical idea the old grandmother preserves. As to The Misfit, this mass killing does not bring him much joy but complex and contradictory feelings towards life and faith. His understanding is also different from that of the narrator's and that of the grandmother's.

violence of action claims the harvest of the hatred that has long been heading nowhere. The extinction of the Bailey family does not prove they are sinners, for they are merely in a bad luck to have the car accident and then, it happens that The Misfit and his men are the first to find them. Even the grandmother is not so much responsible for the death of the Bailey family. The setting of this plot foils the violence and transcends the vindictive malice into a certain kind of transformational process. Violence happens, but does not necessarily have a reason, and sometimes, violence does not incur more violence. The transformation moment occurs while a person can finally start out from breaking the mode of virtual existence, to enter his realization stage of existence.

Works Consulted

Austin, J. L. *How to Do Things with Words*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1962.
Bandy, Stephen C. " 'One of My Babies': The Misfit and the Grandmother." Studies in Short Fiction 33 (1996): 107-17.
Barthes, Roland. *Elements of Semiology*. Trans.Annette Lavers and Colin Smith. New York: Hill and Wang, 1979.
Clark, Michael. "Flannery O'Connor's 'A Good Man Is Hard To Find': The Moment of Grace." English Language Notes 29.2 (1991): 66-9.
Greimas, Algirdas Julien and J. Courtés. *Semiotics and Language: An Analytical Dictionary*. Trans. Larry Crist, Daniel Patte, James Lee, Edward McMahon II, Gary Phillips and Michael Rengstorf. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1982.
---. and Jacques Fontanille. *The Semiotics of Passions: From States of Affairs to States of Feelings*. Trans. Paul Perron and Frank Collins. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1993.
Hurley, Jennifer A., ed. *Readings on Flannery O'Connor*. Greenhaven Press, Inc.: San Diego, 2001.
O'Connor, Flannery. "A Good Man Is Hard to Find." *An Introduction to Fiction*. 7th edition. X. J. Kennedy and Dana Gioia, eds. Longman: New York, 1999. 352-63.
---. *The Habit of Being: Letters*. Ed. Sally Fitzgerald. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1979.
---. *Mystery and Manners*. Eds. Sally Fitzgerald and Robert Fitzgerald. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1969.
Orvell, Miles. "A Critical Study of 'A Good Man Is Hard to Find'." *Readings on Flannery O'Connor*. Ed. Jennifer A. Hurley. Greenhaven Press, Inc.: San Diego, 2001.117-22.
---. *Flannery O'Connor: An Introduction*. Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 1991.
Paulson, Suzanne Morrow. *Flannery O'Connor: A Study of the Short Fiction*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1988.
Searle, John R. *Speech Acts*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1970.
Shaw, Mary Neff. "Responses to God's Grace: Varying Degrees of Doubt in Flannery O'Connor's Character Types." CLA Journal 44.4 (2001): 471-9.
Sloan, Gary. "O'Connor's A Good Man Is Hard to Find." Explicator 57.2 (1999): 118-20.
Thornton, Debra Lynn. *The Incarnational Art of Flannery O'Connor: Grace and the Body in "A Good Man Is Hard to Find"*. UMI: 2000.
Whitt, Margaret Earley. *Understanding Flannery O'Connor*. South Carolina: the U of South Carolina P, 1995.

About the Author

Hsiu-chih Tsai is Assistant Professor at the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, National Taiwan University. Her research interests include semiotics, narratology, urban studies and topics related to textualization, intertextuality and spaciality.
E-mail: tsaihc@ntu.edu.tw

蔡秀枝 台大外文系助理教授。主要研究興趣爲符號學，敘事學，都市研究，以及與文本化、互文性和空間性相關的課題。

附錄三

Disrupted Narratives: O'Connor's Feminine Grotesque

Hsiu-chih Tsai
National Taiwan University

Abstract

Flannery O'Connor's stories are well known for narrative conflicts between the narrators' interpretation of events, and the characters' recognition of the final violent stroke of life. Critics frequently refer to this kind of conflict as damaging to O'Connor's narratives. This paper aims to provide an alternative reading by taking the narrative conflict as a sign of O'Connor's narrative strategy. The argument is that through the narrative function of the grotesque, O'Connor creates in her narratives the comic effects generated from narrative contradictions and incongruities. Through the usage of contradictory value judgments, O'Connor implies rebellious laughter as a challenge to dominant cultural codes and the narrative tradition. Combined with the comic function of the grotesque, O'Connor's narrative conflict inspires in its reader various shades of laughter.

Keywords

Flannery O'Connor, grotesque, narrative conflict, narrator, laughter, incongruity, patriarchy, freakishness, comic.

> The form of tension we have been exploring—between comic perception and melodramatic plotting, ironic voice and violent action, the release of laughter and the constraint of fear—seems to return us inescapably to that center of the incongruous, the grotesque.
>
> —Frederick Asals

I. "Sweet" Nothings

In a letter of 2 December 1955 to her editor, Flannery O'Connor related briefly an event that annoyed her during her lecture tour of a Southern town. She was greeted by several older Southern women after a talk. One of these women congratulated her, saying, "That was such a nice dispensation you gave us, honey." Another woman soon followed, asking, "What's wrong with your leg, sugar?"[30] Judging from the tone and the style of the letter, we can surmise that O'Connor was not in the mood to answer these women's questions. However, she concluded the story by making fun of herself in a twisted way: "I'll be real glad when I get too old for them to sugar me" (*Letters* 120).

In fact, it was not these women's curiosity about her leg, but the way they

[30] O'Connor was forced to leave her intellectual friends in Connecticut (the Robert Fitzgerald family) to go back home to Georgia for good and live with her mother on an isolated farm, because she was seriously ill with disseminated lupus erythematosus, a disease which took her father's life. Though under strict medical and chemical treatments, her illness consumed her health fast, and she had to rely on crutches to walk in public places.

addressed her that brings forth the comic side of the story. It is the strangeness and the "freakish" style of her crippled leg, as an exhibit rather than as a part of a human body, that attracted attention. However, what truly incurred O'Connor's displeasure and stimulated her sense of humor in this narrative was the common hailing that Southern people use for women: "honey" and "sugar." As O'Connor diverted her reader's attention from the women's curiosity about her leg, first, to the ludicrousness and the absurdity of the hailing, and then, to her discontent at being hailed like that, she successfully attained her goal with a sense of humor. She adroitly pointed out the source of her annoyance, namely that she too was part of the South and its social and cultural milieu. Moreover, she countered the social "sugaring" by sneakily entering its inner space and attacking it from within. And she did so gracefully, shrugging off the episode with a comic remark.

The situation that trapped O'Connor is ironic. As the women used sugaring words to express their authority in addressing O'Connor, they had no idea that this hailing also plays a secret function in belittling the identity and maturity of a woman (in this case, both the female message receiver and givers are women). These women, who likely intended to show their concern to O'Connor, instead unwittingly offered support to the cultural code that makes all women objects of love and protection. The "freakish" leg that crippled O'Connor physically became, ironically, contagious. Symbolically everyone is trapped: use of the "sugaring" hailing "cripples" both O'Connor and the ladies. In speaking to O'Connor after her speech, the women demonstrated their concern about her health; however, what O'Connor perceived from this incident was another layer of meaning. Through the gendered hailing, O'Connor sensed the sexist tradition behind the words. The women, who were likely unaware of this implication, used such hailing naturally, not hesitating to use "honey" and "sugar" in addressing the writer. O'Connor caught the irony of the situation, however, and transformed the whole scene into a comic joke that points to the "freakishness" of this gendered hailing and the women's lack of awareness of the language they use, along with its power to usurp a woman's identity. O'Connor did not mention whether she answered the women; however, she did express her frustration in a comic way by looking at the issue from another perspective. In spite of the possibility of a painful confrontation of her illness, O'Connor was able to laugh at the scene—and at her cultural situation—in a comic remark in her letter.

When dealing with questions about the "freakishness" of her narrative plots, style and strategies, O'Connor applied the same narrative tactic as she did in narrating the "sugaring" event in her letter. She always provided a possible answer by probing into the question and attacking it with a sense of humor. Actually, what troubled O'Connor might not be questions concerning her narrative strategies but the issue of being constantly perceived by her reader as a woman and a writer of the South. Once again, we are reminded of her encounter with the women at her speech. The uncomfortable situation of being petted, infantilized, not being allowed to be a "grown-up," is an important issue for O'Connor in her work, one that demands investigation. O'Connor's resolution was usually graceful and dexterous: a tactful, feminine reading that circumvents and undermines a situation with a sense of humor as its self-protective mask. In her work, O'Connor slyly complained about and retorted wittily to the concept of "Southern lady"—a heritage which had been preserved for too long by most Southerners.

O'Connor's response is strong not because of the concern aimed at her own disability, but because of the socio-cultural restrictions on women that the hailing represents and helps secure. The everyday hailing that situates women as "sweet," helpless children and "recruits" the subjects in them, as Louis Althusser reminded us in

his description of how ideology functions,[31] is the very demon of the conversation that triggered O'Connor's resentment. However, instead of directly stating her dislike, O'Connor made a joke on herself and had a sarcastic laugh. Through her humorous rejoinder, O'Connor showed her resentment of being treated like a "child," of being confined and restrained by Southern expectations of female propriety. This is the kind of sarcastic humor that O'Connor presented in her letters, lectures, writings, and fictions.

It is this same kind of "hailing" that the narrator in the grotesque garden scene in "Greenleaf" tries to reinforce in the reader. Mrs. May at last receives the precious gift of "love" from the Greenleaf bull, the representative of the patriarchal god, in the form of a punishment. According to the narrator, Mrs. May, i.e., a woman, should not and cannot reject the hailing of patriarchal expectations, nor the hailing of love. Nevertheless, O'Connor the writer/trickster humorously but bitterly hid within her secret taunting a negation of the narrator's directive, hence creating a narrative conflict.

In O'Connor's stories, indeed, the "sugaring" scenes usually imply such a rebellious intent that questions and laughs at the domineering power and its fear of woman's independence. But instead of directly addressing the issue and challenging the dominant power, O'Connor chose to hide rebellious thoughts behind the willful characters. She arranged another kind of laughter behind that of the cruel narrator, who punishes the defiant (female) protagonist mercilessly and justifies himself with the righteousness of patriarchal rules.

Critics often associated this incongruence or conflict between what the narrator represents and what the narrative actually reveals to the reader in O'Connor's stories with the grotesque narrative strategy that O'Connor adopted to depict her fictional world. The characteristic "freakishness" of the grotesque narrative thus becomes merely a stylistic feature that contributes to O'Connor's reputation as a Southern grotesque writer. Such a conclusion yet ignores the possible roles the writer might play. As a trickster, O'Connor complicated and enriched her narrative with a voice that frequently questions and mocks. This present paper re-examines this kind of O'Connorian narrative conflict. To me, this kind of narrative conflict indicates O'Connor's dexterous application of the traditional narrative grotesque. I will prove that through this narrative technique, O'Connor stealthily brought into her narratives a forbidden feminine voice, while at the same time adding a grain of wry and/or bitter humor to the text.

II. Patriarchal Sugaring

Everyday hailing, as part of a greeting language system, is full of cultural significance and ideological implication. Through hailing, ideology "recruits" individuals into an identity formation process. With this understanding, the "sugaring" words in O'Connor's stories should not be treated merely as hailing. Rather, they bear a mocking tone which O'Connor as the writer and the trickster secretly emphasizes.

[31] According to Althusser, ideology functions not by teaching but through a certain kind of hailing:

> I shall then suggest that ideology "acts" or "functions" in such a way that it "recruits" subjects among the individuals (it recruits them all), or "transforms" the individuals into subjects (it transforms them all) by that very precise operation which I have called interpellation or hailing, and which can be imagined along the lines of the most commonplace everyday police (or other) hailing: "Hey, you there!" (48)

For Althusser, it is always in the hailing that the individual becomes a subject and this kind of recognition is done and completed with the hailed individual "believing/suspecting/knowing that it is for him, i.e., recognizing that 'it really is he' who is meant by the hailing"; briefly, "[t]he existence of ideology and the hailing or interpellation of individuals as subjects are one and the same thing" (49).

These words can reveal significant meanings when incongruities and conflicts in the narratives and the "freakish" style of the characters' performance are under scrutiny. By re-examining these "sugaring" scenes, the hidden voices may eventually emerge to challenge the explicit voice of narrators.

In "Greenleaf," a "sugaring" scene occurs when Mrs. May's son Wesley expresses his hatred toward his mother for her dominance over the household and his life. He lashes out at her: "You ought to start praying, Sweetheart" (319). Having nowhere to vent his frustration, Wesley uses this "sugaring" to reclaim his status and dignity in a family controlled by his mother, the matriarch of the family. Yet instead of giving in to taunts or teasing, Mrs. May keeps reminding her two sons of the sufferings and hardship she has been through, thus keeping the sons in a subordinate place subordinate to hers:

> "I am the only *adult* on this place," she said [...]. "Do you see how it's going to be when I die and you boys have to handle him [Mr. Greenleaf]?" she began. "Do you see why he didn't know whose bull that was? Because it was theirs. Do you see what I have to put up with? Do you see that if I hadn't kept my foot on his neck all these years, you boys might be milking cows every morning at four o'clock?" (320-21)

Her insistence on the importance of herself challenges the narrator's and her two sons' understanding of the social codes; she does not change anything, though. What she receives in return is repeated "sugaring" from her two adult sons, who try to recruit her into the Southern female community—"You ought to start praying, Sweetheart." The narrator also reminds us that "justice" will be done eventually, as Mrs. May finally succumbs to the hailing of the patriarchal and thus "returns" to the "embrace" of the Greenleaf bull at the end of the story.

While laughing together with O'Connor at the concept of the "sweet," "sugaring" things that are in fact the constructing elements of her real-life experiences and her narrative, we witness the concurrence of two pairs of incongruities: the first between the freakish and the reality, and the second between the "sugaring" of someone and the violent power of "hailing." Through the depiction of the freakish iron hand of Mrs. May alongside the cartoon-like comparison of her "dangling blue-veined little hand" to the head of a broken lily, we experience anxiety and suspense. Because of her love for the grotesque and for mocking humor, O'Connor left her reader a great abundance of grotesque narratives full of comic incongruities[32]—"the hallmark of O'Connor's work."[33] However, although critics credit O'Connor with unique narrative power in

---

[32] In *An Anatomy of Humor*, while analyzing why people laugh, Arthur Asa Berger points out that compared to other explanations, the most important and widely accepted explanation of humor is probably "the *incongruity* theory of humor." According to Berger,

> all humor involves some kind of a difference between what one expects and what one gets. The term "incongruity" has many different meanings—inconsistent, not harmonious, lacking propriety and not conforming, so there are a number of possibilities hidden in the term. Incongruity theories involve the intellect, though they may not seem to at first sight—for we have to recognize an incongruity before we can laugh at one (though this recognition process takes place very quickly and is probably done subconsciously). (3)

[33] When surveying and evaluating the possible different critical approaches to O'Connor's narratives in the literary tradition, Ragen concludes with a lament that critical approaches do not pay much attention to how the sense of humor, as a major narrative characteristic, functions in O'Connor's works:

> The great body of criticism that has appeared since O'Connor's death affirms the variety of lights in which her works must be viewed [...]. Her works demand philosophical, theological, and psychological analysis, as well as purely literary study. They require this level of critical response [...] because a great mind has carefully ordered the disparate elements in her work for the reader to find. Finally, and unfortunately, her critics find little to say about the comedy in O'Connor's works. Humor is even harder to write about than

writing grotesque scenes, most leave no space for the feminine laughter, the rebellious sign by which O'Connor differentiates herself from the narrators in her stories.

Those critics unable to detect O'Connor's trickery and the possible intention behind it might attribute the reservation and sense of humor in her narrative incongruities and freakish grotesquery to her religious background.[34] O'Connor has long been understood as a religious enthusiast in the guise of a writer. Critics might further justify their interpretation by referring back to O'Connor's "authentic" explanation about the very significance of her narratives with respect to the religious "moments of grace" (see, for example, Johansen, Asals, and Holman[35]). However, I would like to point out that this sense of humor that lingers everywhere in O'Connor's works is never a pure product of religious beliefs.

O'Connor's sense of humor, which is traditionally taken as characteristic of grotesque writing, is an indication of the feminine[36] ruse, a trick that O'Connor the

---

> are the motions of grace, but humor, as much as the anagogical dimension, is the hallmark of O'Connor's work. (397)

[34] O'Connor interpreted her works with respect to her religious beliefs, in particular pointing out "moments of grace" as the critical turning point for her characters in suffering (*Mystery and Manners* 112). Her remarks are frequently alluded to by critics in their affirmation of the religious significance of O'Connor's grotesque narratives. For instance, Asals observes:

> The form of tension we have been exploring—between comic perception and melodramatic plotting, ironic voice and violent action, the release of laughter and the constraint of fear—seems to return us inescapably to that center of the incongruous, the grotesque. It is little wonder that O'Connor happily accepted that term as descriptive of her fiction, for the grotesque is precisely that mode that achieves its effect not by reconciling conflicting forms and responses, but by holding them in insoluble suspension: its very nature is to be not simply comic or frightening, but both simultaneously, at once ludicrous and terrifying. (140-41)

As Ragen correctly points out, Asals, just like some critics, "sees the idea of tension at the core of the religious dimension of O'Connor's work, as well" (388).

[35] From various perspectives, critics endeavor to solve the mysteries underlying O'Connor's grotesque narratives. C. Hugh Holman interprets the distanced narrator and the cruel deprivations of the characters as the representation of O'Connor's religious disposition: "She was a Catholic writer in a Protestant world, and she saw the writing of fiction as a Christian vocation," and therefore, "What gives distance and comic perspective to her view of the world is fundamentally a religious distancing, resulting from her confidence of her own salvation in a world of those futilely seeking surety." (Holman 98) Frederick Asals in *Flannery O'Connor: The Imagination of Extremity*, following Eric Bentley's interpretation, believes that the laughter of the narrator and the devastating drama of the action, which belongs to the destructive force of "scornful comedy," account for O'Connor's "pervasive use of that highly ironic narrative voice" (Asals 134). Ruthann Knechel Johansen in *The Narrative Secret of Flannery O'Connor: The Trickster as Interpreter* notes that O'Connor's narrative secret lies in, as O'Connor explains, the embodiment of "mystery through manners": "Throughout O'Connor's narratives, we note that the language of the trickster, both in word and gesture, is irony." (152) Frederick Asals emphasizes the ironic tones of the narrative; however, unlike Johansen, he does not include O'Connor's stance into his analysis of the conflict between the understanding of the character and that of the narrator.

[36] The grotesque narrative thus serves as a space for O'Connor to perform her writer/trickster's practice of resistance. Just as the Certeaurian tactic operates in the space of the other, the "feminine" poaching of the writer/trickster is taking place in the narrative—the narrator's place—occasionally and opportunely when the grotesque makes its appearance. I am here appropriating Julia Kriesteva's concept about the semiotic

writer/trickster plays with her narrator. O'Connor's resistance to "sugaring," the "hailing" of the patriarchal, disguised as sarcastic humor in the narrative, is an example. It refers to a predicament that O'Connor, as a writer and Southern woman whose poor health prevented her from traveling far from home, might have faced. The very experience of being a woman confined physically and spiritually in the patriarchal South inspired O'Connor to depict the grotesque, and gave her mocking, feminine laughter the force that empowers most of her stories. The grotesqueries O'Connor attached to her female characters and their trapped situations finally become a channel that connects the incongruities and serves as a sign of the influence of patriarchal repression and of the strong rebellious female volition.

The mocking laughter typical of O'Connor's stories is the sign of the writer/trickster's critique of patriarchy. What is unspoken and unnamable is now insidiously recorded within the grotesque scenes. It is now described in disguise; it is secretly inscribed as the mystic code in the narrative. Instead of dabbing sparsely the traces of her feminine inquiries, O'Connor lavishly wove her demanding questions into the narrative plot—so her female characters pursue their interests and act out their wills. But when the time comes, they gradually step down the road of punishment and the raging narrator assures us of their inescapable downfall. While the raging, relentless narrator punishes and the willful female characters suffer, the writer/trickster hides her mocking laughter, waiting for an appropriate chance of revelation to the reader.

While all these implicit layers of significance lie hidden in the subversive comic traits of the grotesque, O'Connor's craftiness gradually reveals its power. By creating narrative conflict between the female characters' protest at the fatal stroke of life, and the narrator's merciless interpretation of a justification fulfilled through the intervention of God Almighty, the writer/trickster reminds the reader of the sly, evasive strategy necessary in this situation. Like a member of a racial or ethnic minority group, she employs subversive methods to imply different messages while pretending to obey (in the writer/trickster's case—to "witness") the dominant, patriarchal viewpoint of the narrator. The narrator is contented with the final judgment and punishment of the defiant women/daughters; however, the writer/trickster's laughter is never on the same level. The writer/trickster might seem to stand together with the narrator. Through the narrative conflict, the seed of discontent and subversion is nonetheless insidiously cultivated in the text. The writer/trickster reaps bitter laughter at the misleading interpretation of the dominant, powerful narrator, while at the same time mourning for the suffering of the female characters. This feminine laughter becomes the indicator of internal rebellion. The unnamable, which can neither be fully expressed nor completely exhausted of its implications, is now given a new form, and so are the mystic codes. This "something" beyond verbal expression, this concept without form, now can be traced in the form of feminine laughter hidden behind the grotesque and the narrative conflict. This is how the grotesque as a strategy functions in O'Connor's narratives—they are signifiers referring to the incomplete and the unexhausted, the ever-churning volition of the restless inquiries that mocks and rebels against the slashing voice of the narrator. Where language stops, the grotesque moves on:

---

sign flow, and her distinction between the feminine sign flow and the space of masculine regulation. According to Julia Kristeva, the semiotic sign flow belongs to the category of the feminine, while the symbolic, the rigid regulations of a place or a society, is the domain of the masculine. By intruding into the area of regulation and narrative conventions, this tactical strategy, this wandering and flowing power of the feminine, brings in ambiguity, challenges the role of the narrator, and insinuates the possibility of laughter derived from a quite contradictory understanding of the narrative.

> Grotesques have no consistent properties other than their own grotesqueness, and that they do not manifest predicable behavior. The word designates a condition of being just out of focus, just beyond the reach of language. It accommodates the things left over when the categories of language are exhausted; it is a defense against silence when other words have failed. (Harpham 3-4)

What is not said cannot be said directly, for it is beyond language, so it disguises itself under the veil of the laughter that mocks at itself. Using the grotesque as a shield, O'Connor laughs at the unspoken and brings in the humor. She even provides comic scenes in stories full of violence. Besides laughing at the behavior and concepts of her characters, she embarks upon a second layer of laugher—the laughter of her reader throughout the narrative. Her laughter demands the reader's attention and participation. Consequently, O'Connor finds the best form of expression for her narrative in the grotesque. In the following section, I will argue that O'Connor uses the narrative technique of the grotesque to offer a feminine reading/critique of the broader socio-cultural context that interferes in and/or threatens the willful female characters' success.

III. Grotesque and Conflict in O'Connor's Narrative

O'Connor's narratives are widely known for the juxtaposition of contradictions—the vibrant tension of the characters and the relentless judgment of the narrator—with a sudden stroke of grotesque violence at the end of the story. The incongruities revealed in O'Connor's grotesque narratives are indicators of the discrepancies of the various categories of social relations and, therefore, of the hidden signs of the socio-norms which govern the characters, the narrators, the writer/trickster, and even the reader. By putting incongruous parts adjacent to each other, O'Connor dexterously posited various conflicting stances in her grotesque narrative, allowing the creation of meaning in various shades. This use of the narrative space, as a place of hide-and-seek where conflicting stances meet and dwell, stitches together incongruities in the narrative textuality. It is a "poaching" into the other's place, the narrator's place. Narratologically speaking, the writer/trickster is presenting a certain kind of resistance through the narrative conflict and grotesque incongruities. She takes advantage of the narrative space to question the narrator's authority within the narrator's territory. The narrative conflict thus serves as a space for O'Connor to perform her writer/trickster's practice of resistance. Just as the tactic operates in the space of the other, the "feminine" [37] poaching of the writer/trickster is taking place in the narrative

[37] By defining O'Connor's strategy as feminine, I want to bestow on it the significance of the possible tactical usages of the feminine space where the flow of the feminine power is emphasized. As a secret, hidden power flow, textual femininity can never be pinned down, and this is how it obtains power while generating ambiguity and incongruity and therefore, creating a space of its own—a feminine space. By appropriating the place of the masculine/law (the textual space where traditional ideologies and codes prevail), by intruding into the area of regulation and narrative conventions, this tactical strategy, this wandering and flowing power of the feminine, brings in ambiguity, challenges the role of the narrator, and insinuates the possibility of a good, contented laugh derived from a quite contradictory understanding of the narrative. The practice of the invisible, the appropriation of other's space, and the tactical use of every available opportunity in search of a play with the foundations of the controlling power together generate the ruses and rhetoric of this feminine flow. This is what I would define as the place of the feminine, the unnamable, or even the subversive.

occasionally and opportunely when the grotesque makes its appearance.

My argument is that there are two kinds of laughter arising from the narrative conflict in O'Connor's work: one is hidden and woven in the grotesque narrative, and the other emerges from the reading process as the narrative conflict appears. The grotesque incongruities and narrative conflict are narrative techniques based upon poaching in the other's space, an exhibition of the power of the feminine. Through this feminine power, the writer/trickster poaches in the masculine space of the narrator by diversifying the narrative significance.

Most of the time, the grotesque effect is created through various layers of contradictory juxtapositions. In "Greenleaf," every time Mrs. May boasts of her "iron hand" in running the farm successfully, her hand is grabbed by Scofield, who yells, "Look at Mamma's iron hand!" He holds it up so as to exhibit her proud "iron hand" as nothing more than a "delicate blue-veined little hand [...] dangl[ing] from her wrist like the head of a broken lily" (322). But Mrs. May manages her farm with this "iron hand" and she is proud of it. A widow from the city with two young kids, she knows too well that in "go[ing], practically penniless and with no experience, out to a rundown farm and mak[ing] a success of it," she has to suffer all possible obstacles in the face of adversity: "Everything is against you [...] the weather is against you and the dirt is against you and the help is against you. They're all in league against you. There's nothing for it but an iron hand!" (321)[38]

Nevertheless, although they acknowledge her sacrifices, her adult sons tease and mock her "iron hand." Mrs. May uses an "iron hand" to control her sons, as well as everything on the farm, in a way quite contrary to the traditional Southern concept and expectations of a lady. Although in their late thirties, Wesley and Scofield are still treated like small children by their mother. Every morning, Mrs. May sits at the morning table with them "to see that they had what they wanted" (314), and that Wesley had his salt-free diet. Mrs. May wants a hand even in their future marriages, even after she is dead:

> And at this Scofield would yodel and say, "Why Mamma, I'm not going to marry until you're dead and gone and then I'm going to marry me some nice fat farm girl that can take over this place!" [...] Finally she had whispered, "I work and slave, I struggle and sweat to keep this place for them and soon as I'm dead, they'll marry trash and bring it in here and ruin everything [...]." She had made up her mind at that moment to change her will. The next day she had gone to her lawyer and had had the property entailed so that if they married, they could not leave it to their wives. (315)

Only by laughing at the freakishness of her "tool" and "method" of management and control, can Wesley and Scofield try to get even with her. No matter how hard she tries to stand on her own feet and take care of the farm and household, she is mocked by her sons—not because she cannot handle her responsibilities well, but because she has already assumed more power than should belong to a woman:

---

[38] Louise Westling refers to Bertram Wyatt-Brown's study of the historical reality behind O'Connor's female characters:

> Southern legal traditions made it difficult for women to control property in the nineteenth century, and widows who attempted to manage their own affairs were regarded as arrogant. The carnage of the Civil War produced many widows who had to support their families alone through the terrible decades of Reconstruction. Although most succeeded, they did so in a hostile masculine business and legal environment where 'the widow had to struggle keenly against the presumption that she would be the loser in any sort of transaction. (Westling 145-46)

> "They didn't come because I'm a woman," she said. "You can get away with anything when you're dealing with a woman. If there were a man running this place [...]"
>
> Quick as a snake striking Mr. Greenleaf said, "You got two boys. They know you got two men on the place." (329)

The comic effect of this scene not only lays bare the weakness and fragility of this "controlling" hand, but also reassures us of the power of the patriarchal culture in the two brothers' questioning and teasing. There lurks the narrative conflict that bears witness to the writer/trickster's deriding of the characters, the narrator, and their situations.

Unlike Mrs. May, who fights hard to preserve her success and self-esteem despite her own physical fragility and the weakness which cultural forces impose on her, Hulga-Joy, another freakish character in "Good Country People," acts and reacts in a quite different way. She shows her resentment toward the socio-cultural context by taking every chance to demonstrate her "ugliness"—a performance that flies in the face of the assumed behavior of a Southern lady. Thirty-two-year-old Hulga-Joy has only one leg (the other was shot off in a hunting accident when she was ten) and wears "a six-year-old skirt with a faded cowboy on a horse embossed on it" (276). She has a Ph.D. degree in philosophy and she believes in nothing. Further, she stands against anything her mother believes in. The first step she takes to "uglify" herself is to change her name from Joy to Hulga—the ugliest name that she could think of. Every time Mrs. Hopewell thinks of the name, "she thought of the broad blank hull of a battleship" (274).

Hulga-Joy's freakish rebellion develops throughout the story into a combination of grotesqueries. She becomes "bloated, rude, and squint-eyed." When she tells her mother that if it were not for her bad health, she would be in a university lecturing to people, Mrs. Hopewell soon gets the picture: Hulga-Joy, "look[ing] like a scarecrow and lectur[ing] to more of the same" (276). The narrator laughs with Mrs. Hopewell at such a comic vision of her daughter's classroom. However, Hulga-Joy's laughter would be of a different kind. Becoming ugly now turns out to be performance art through Hulga-Joy's "mean-spirited perversity." By emphasizing and acting out the ugliness, Hulga-Joy expresses her resistance to the Southern expectations for a lady, making her performance of ugliness an exercise of the debunking power.[39]

In "Good Country People," as the title suggests, the laughter comes mainly from two related sources: first, the common-sense sayings of the country people, and second, an ironic rebellion against these common-sense sayings. Mrs. Hopewell and her

---

[39] Will there be any painless narrative on "the ugly"? The traditional understanding of the comic emphasizes the distance that the author preserves from getting involved in emotional events. Peter L. Berger in *Redeeming Laughter*, questions this concept by targeting Aristotle's remarks on comedy in *Poetics*. While speaking about comedy, Aristotle points out that the Ridiculous, as "a species of the Ugly," is an element of comedy, for it is "a mistake or deformity not productive of pain or harm to others; the mask, for instance, that excites laughter, is something ugly and distorted without causing pain" (Berger 18). Berger challenges this concept and points out: "'The Ugly', 'mistake', 'deformity'—all these terms refer to a basic discrepancy, a rupture in the fabric of reality. The comic representation discloses the discrepancy" (Berger 18). According to Berger, this discrepancy cannot be realized without any pain, for there is no comic catharsis to purge our fear of the discrepancy. The function of the grotesque is to indicate the existence of such a discrepancy. By juxtaposing "the ridiculous," "the ugly," "the freakish" with" the normal," "the mundane," or "the ordinary," the grotesque, therefore, generates out of the discrepancy both the feelings of pain and the sense of the comic. The comic sense in O'Connor's works is well known; however, the long and heated critical controversy over the feelings of pain that lurk behind the laughter is not yet settled.

confidante and helper, Mrs. Freeman, frequently express themselves in common-sense sayings—"Nothing is perfect," "Everybody is different," and "It takes all kinds to make the world." These sayings, though understood by Mrs. Hopewell and Mrs. Freeman as a demonstration of their worldly sophistication, are in a sense the deteriorated, deformed counterparts of the "hailing" of the social norms. Hulga-Joy, of course, despises these commonplaces as she does much else about her mother's world. However, the narrator accuses Hulga-Joy of pride in her rejection of her mother's sayings:

> Nothing is perfect. This was one of Mrs. Hopewell's favorite sayings. Another was: that is life! And still another, the most important, was: well, other people have their opinions too. She would make these statements, usually at the table, in a tone of gentle insistence as if no one held them but her, and the large hulking Joy, whose constant outrage had obliterated every expression from her face, would stare just a little to the side of her, her eyes icy blue, with the look of someone who has achieved blindness by an act of will and means to keep it. (273)

The comic sense is generated from the ironic surrender of Hulga-Joy's "freakishness" (both her artificial leg and her self-pride in being committed to nothing) to the Bible salesman Manley Pointer, a fraud and a sadist. By leaving Hulga-Joy abused high up in the barn, the narrator tries to draw a moral lesson to warn the reader of the punishment of female self-pride. In fact, the other female characters in this story, Mrs. Hopewell and Mrs. Freeman, both have a different kind of self-pride, but do not receive any punishment or fierce comments from the narrator. This is because fundamentally they do not defy the socio-cultural norms. They quite contentedly accept the norms preached through commonplaces and through "hailing." The fake Bible salesman, Manly Pointer, who is so proud of his shrewd cunning and trickery, gets away with abuse easily because he pretends to obey and follow the conventions of Southern society. Pointer even becomes the tool of the narrator to teach a lesson to the proud Hulga-Joy. It seems, to the narrator, that even Pointer's fake benevolent intentions and hypocritical behavior are closer to the "hailing" than Hulga-Joy's self-made philosophy of ugliness. Therefore, in the whole story, only the rebellious Hulga-Joy is punished because of her apparent resistance to the "normal," self-negating norms of Southern womanhood. Consequently, we discover the narrative conflict that shows O'Connor the writer/trickster's bitter laugh. The laugh sympathizes with the abused Hulga-Joy, whose resentment and anger linger on the textual space, demanding a response.

Mrs. Hopewell is confident in her own ability to always come up with a good saying, one that she believes will solve any problem or answer any question. But her oversimplification of reality results in doubletalk, and her commonplaces mask an indulgence in social norms. When Manly Pointer suggests that she won't do any business with him just because he is a country boy, Mrs. Hopewell immediately assures him that "good country people are the salt of the earth! Besides, we all have different ways of doing, it takes all kinds to make the world go 'round. That's life!" However, Pointer sees through the doubletalk: "You said a mouthful" (279).

In O'Connor's stories, the mocking laugher of the narrator is usually revealed in the interrelationships of the characters and the observations and remarks they make to each other. Nevertheless, the narrator's direct attacks on Hulga-Joy can be quite mutilating. With her bulking figure and blank face, Hulga-Joy constantly shows her resentment of her mother's platitudinous mindset. But the narrator has his laugh when the revelation comes. When Hulga-Joy is finally seduced by the Bible salesman, she falls back into the traps that she has criticized most severely. She finds out too late that this seemingly "good country person" carries with him a pack of smutty playing cards, a

pocket flask of whiskey, and a package of contraceptives taken from a hollowed-out Bible. She lashes out at him: "You're a fine Christian! You're just like them all—say one thing and do another. You're a perfect Christian, you're [...]" (290). Pointer voices the narrator's point of view: "You just a while ago said you didn't believe in nothing. I thought you [were] some girl! I hope you don't think that I believe in that crap! I may sell Bibles but I know which end is up and I wasn't born yesterday and I know where I'm going!" (290). Hulga-Joy has her comeuppance because she is too confident of her opinion that Manly Pointer is one of those "good country people." Wanting a disciple, Hulga-Joy dreams of seducing Pointer so as to free him of errors of the common country people.

The scene of disillusionment is full of irony and grotesqueries, particularly the moment in which Pointer persuades Hulga-Joy to show him her wooden leg:

> The artificial limb, in a white sock and brown flat shoe, was bound in a heavy material like canvas and ended in an ugly jointure where it was attached to the stump. The boy's face and his voice were entirely reverent as he uncovered it and said, "Now show me how to take it off and on." (289)

Thus, the ugliness and the freakishness of the wooden leg are combined with the joy of discovery. After playing with Hulga-Joy's wooden leg by taking it off and putting it on several times, he takes it as a souvenir: "I've gotten a lot of interesting things. One time I got a woman's glass eye this way. And you needn't to think you'll catch me because Pointer ain't really my name." When Hulga-Joy is left sitting on the straw in the barn without her leg, Pointer fires a final shot: "Hulga, you ain't so smart. I been believing in nothing ever since I was born!" (291).

In "Good Country People" and "Greenleaf," O'Connor's use of the grotesque reveals comic effects while at the same time putting the seriousness and propriety of Southern country wisdom, misconceptions (both religious and intellectual) and Southern ladyhood on trial. Hence, besides revealing O'Connor's sense of humor, the narrative evokes sense of ambiguities in the reader.

While O'Connor the writer/trickster is sarcastic yet sympathetic, her narrators are fierce. They always reaffirm their value judgments by giving their rebellious female characters a hard lesson. The narrator in "Good Country People" proves his righteousness by leaving Hulga-Joy raped high up in the far away barn, her wooden leg stolen. The narrator in "Greenleaf," meanwhile, mocks Mrs. May before he has her gored to death by a stray bull. In the beginning, the bull is described as a lover that comes under the window in the deep of the night to woo his love. The bull appears under Mrs. May's bedroom window, "chewing steadily, with a hedge-wreath that he had ripped loose for himself caught in the tips of his horns" (311). However, the bull is not a gentle lover, nor is the lady a young belle. His song of devouring wakes up Mrs. May from her beauty sleep: "Green rubber curlers sprouted neatly over her forehead and her face beneath them was smooth as concrete with an egg-white paste that drew the wrinkles out while she slept" (311). When they meet again, the grotesque garden scene becomes the site of violent passion:

> The bull, his head lowered, was racing toward her. She remained perfectly still, not in fright, but in a freezing unbelief. She stared at the violent black streak bounding toward her as if she had no sense of distance, as if she could not decide at once what his intention was, and the bull had buried his head in her lap, like a wild tormented lover, before her expression changed. One of his horns sank until it pierced her heart and the other curved around

her side and held her in an unbreakable grip. (333)

The self-sufficient Mrs. May finally dies a freakish death that combines violence and resignation, shock and the uncanny. Coming from a similar experience, as a widow struggling in an uncaring society to raise her son, Mrs. Chestny in "Everything That Rises Must Converge" receives no better treatment at her death. While trying to give a little black boy a penny, she is attacked by the boy's mother. This huge black woman, wearing the same kind of "hideous" hat as Mrs. Chestny does, "seemed to explode like a piece of machinery that had been given one ounce of pressure too much," swinging out her fist with a red pocketbook at Mrs. Chestny's head (418). Fearing attack by blacks, Mrs. Chestny does not want to go to town alone at night, and so it is ironic that she finally dies under a black woman's stroke. Although her son Julian is at her side at her death, he is no better than Mrs. May's two ungrateful sons. Throughout the story he expresses disrespect toward his mother, and lack of appreciation for her sacrifice: "He could not forgive her that she had enjoyed the struggle and that she thought *she* had won […]. Her teeth had gone unfilled so that his could be straightened" (411). As with Mrs. May's two sons, Julian hates his mother's tough control over him and her nagging about her sacrifices for him: "He could not forgive her that she had enjoyed the struggle and that she thought *she* had won" (411). The hailing of "Darling, sweetheart" to his mother at the last minute is his acknowledging Mrs. Chestny as a mother. However, although it is a hailing that claims the mother-son relation, it is also a hailing that sends back "home" both the mother and the son to the secure place where patriarchal authority rules. It turns out that the freakish, controlling women in O'Connor's narratives are in a sense quite fragile physically and often unable to protect themselves from the outside threat, although they believe they can conquer the actual socio-cultural opposition.

In explaining the narrative conflicts and incongruities between the stance of the narrator and that of the characters (which arise from the socio-cultural situation that confines the female characters), critics often provide religious interpretations for why O'Connor's narrators are so fierce and relentless towards the characters. For instance, John G. Parks, following the traditional critical interpretation, comments that "O'Connor's enemy is the Prometheanism of the modern world—the arrogance of the intellect, the pride of self-sufficiency, its vaunted unbelief, the numbness of respectability" (121). However, Parks makes an error in confusing the narrator's fierce stance with O'Connor's own. He misses the questioning power of the unspoken and the unnamable hidden behind the various kinds of laughter in her work, failing to see the symbolic meaning behind the grotesque presentation of pride and self-sufficiency. O'Connor's narrators judge female characters relentlessly, but her grotesque scenes arouse more than just laughter at these women's pride and culpability. Pride, the very element that O'Connor's fierce narrator would like to eliminate from female characters is nevertheless a sign of a self-made woman bears when surviving through the hardship and sacrifice in a male-dominant world.

O'Connor's "freakish" characters and the grotesque description of their lives were unbearable to some Southern readers.[40] However, O'Connor merciless exposure of the foibles of her characters seems necessary to bring to the force the restricted situations of

[40] O'Connor's mother is a case in point. O'Connor wrote in a letter of her mother's response to her work:

> The other day she asked me why I didn't try to write something that people like instead of the kind of thing I do write. Do you think, she said, that you are really using the talent God gave you when you don't write something that a lot, a LOT, of people like? This always leaves me shaking and speechless, raises my blood pressure 140 degrees, etc. All I can ever say is, if you have to ask, you'll never know. (*Letters* 326)

Mrs. O'Connor's judgment and her treatment of her daughter as a "child," not as a "grown-up," made O'Connor angry but she refused to give any answer to her mother's question.

these “freaks.” But this revelation is presented in disguise. The female characters have to suffer the hard stroke of reality and the narrator’s vindictive judgment first and then receive, as one hope, the reader’s sympathy and even respect—hence the unbalanced value judgment, the narrative conflict, and the two kinds of laughter: the narrator’s sardonic laughter and the sophisticated reader’s ambiguous response. In O’Connor’s stories, the comic effect that arouses laughter in the reading process is never as simple as a snapshot, nor is it merely a reaction to a moment. It is the result of cunning verbal puns, sarcastic expressions, or incongruities in understanding. Only in a subtle reading and interpretation of the textual narrative does the laughter of understanding have a chance to emerge.

In O’Connor’s narratives, we encounter the fierce, grotesque narrative, the character’s painful and deadly experience, and the ambiguous conflict. In fact, the ugly and the freakish that help form most of O’Connor’s narrative contradictions and create the comic sense deserve further analysis. As O’Connor would plainly show her rejection of the interpellation of the Southern tradition through the narrative in her letter to Carver, the contradictions in her narrative might thus be worthy of a “re-view” in this respect. From another perspective, the feminine style, which is disguised under the powerful, fierce narrating voice, might reveal its genuine light. What lies behind the writing of the freakish stories and the resentment of being “sugared” or “sweetied” can thus be understood from the aspect of the feminine style of narrative and humor.

IV. Power of the Grotesque

The grotesque, as Geoffrey Galt Harpham points out, stands between two categories, and communicates between two realms separate from each other in the human understanding: “They [grotesqueries] stand at a margin of consciousness between the known and the unknown, the perceived and the unperceived, calling into question the adequacy of our ways of organizing the world, of dividing the continuum of experience into knowable particles” (3). It is this ambiguous power of the grotesque, the special mix of contradictions, that preserves the uprooting power of O’Connor’s narrative. The uniqueness of O’Connor’s grotesqueries lies in the subversive power that moves beyond ordinary incongruities. Besides juxtaposing contradictions and incongruities[41] in the grotesque scene and thus creating a comic effect, O’Connor laughs at what the grotesque reveals, and proceeds secretly to further laugh at the narrator’s final judgment and interpretation of the pseudo-romantic garden scene. O’Connor’s grotesqueries reveal more than just two obviously inconsistent properties, object matters, or situations. Her work goes beyond the real objects and situations of the narrative. The narrative text subverts the dominant concept and laughs at the narrator.

Emphasizing “a co-presence of the ludicrous with the monstrous, the disgusting or the horrifying,”[42]Wolfgang Kayser, in *The Grotesque in Art and Literature*, summarizes

[41] See note 3 for an analysis of the incongruity theory of humor.

[42] Philip Thomson points out in that “[d]espite some notable, but isolated, attempts in the nineteenth century to define the nature of the grotesque,” Kayser’s work on grotesque as the object of aesthetic analysis is the first book of its kind: “it was not until the appearance in 1957 of the book by the late German critic Wolfgang Kayser, *The Grotesque in Art and Literature*, that the grotesque became the object of considerable aesthetic analysis and critical evaluation” (11). According to Thomson, Kayser’s concept of the grotesque as the juxtaposition of heterogeneous elements and as the explosive force of the paradoxical are partly derived from Friedrich Schlegel’s *Athenäum*, where the German novelist Jean Paul (Friedrich Richter)’s idea of a “type of humor which is painful, awesome, which knows of evil and the abyss” was included (11).

the functions of the grotesque by referring to Friedrich Schlegel's concept in *Athenäum*: "Grotesqueness is constituted by a clashing contrast between form and content, the unstable mixture of heterogeneous elements, the explosive force of the paradoxical, which is both ridiculous and terrifying" (Thomson 16). In fact, the grotesque that brings forth the characteristic concomitance of horror and the comic in O'Connor's stories obtains its striking effects by juxtaposing the unthinkable with the thinkable while always leaving some uncertain space for further reflection. And this special space should be approached with a perspective other than the traditional, author-oriented, or religious viewpoints. Juxtaposition, as the elementary feature of the grotesque that O'Connor adopts as her main narrative strategy, creates an "other" space, an "other" aspect and an alternative interpretation for the unnoticed, the hidden and the unnamable. As a woman and a writer of the South, O'Connor's grotesque narrative secretly preserves this "other" space that resists the all-encompassing power of a strictly patriarchal society.

It is through this specific function of the grotesque that O'Connor's narratives produce humor; however, it is also because of the undermining subversive tone of the narrative that a reading of O'Connor's works becomes controversial. When pursuing the possible signification of O'Connor's narrative in respect to the comic function of the grotesque, it is necessary to take into account another issue—the effect that O'Connor's identity as a Southern woman writer might have on the narrative's signifying process. To understand better O'Connor's use of the comic in her stories, we need to put her writing style and her use of the grotesque under closer examination. The grotesque, as the literary mode best suited to presenting the laughable and the formidable, the comic and the frightening simultaneously, helps construct O'Connor's freakish and violent world. Behind the narrative conflicts, the bitter laughter crouches: it might be an accusation of the exploitation of the female in the South, a protest against Southern standards of decorum and etiquette that hinder women from becoming self-sufficient; it might be the sardonic defiance of a woman writer against the male dominance of her field. This is the maze created by the feminine ruses that O'Connor adopted in the narrative. This is the narrative conflict between the stance of O'Connor the writer and that of the narrator. Defending the norms and etiquette of the South, O'Connor's narrator wields the power of judgment. In their resistance to this dominance, O'Connor's characters keep demanding their rights and questioning the authority directly and openly. O'Connor the writer, on the contrary, implies her sly trickster's critique of the narrator's stance in the contradictories and grotesqueries in the narrative, through the resistance of the suffering female characters. When examined from a perspective concerned with the narrative conflict and its complicated relationship with the grotesqueries, and the hidden implications of the various layers of laughter (of the narrator, or the characters, or the writer/trickster, or the reader), the feminine laughter in O'Connor's narratives reveals unexpected tactics.

V. Debunking Laughter

O'Connor's narrators never sympathize with the female characters in their narratives. Sarah Gordon believes the fierce narrator is a reflection of O'Connor's own writing situation: "It is her way of allying herself with patriarchal authority and power [...] we must remember that she writes out of a closed system, a closed worldview, whether we like that fact or not" (45). Here, Gordon provides an explanation for O'Connor's harsh vision in the narrative in view of the restraints of her social situation. However, the fierce narrator needs not be taken as the mouthpiece of O'Connor the

writer. Indeed, the creation of such a narrator was not merely due to Connor's strong Roman Catholic faith, or marked her supposed submission to patriarchal norms. On the contrary, O'Connor raises doubts about the narrator's authority through the narrative conflict prevalent in her stories. By means of the trickster's tactics, the hidden power of subversion and rejection, under pressure from the "hailing" of the fierce narrator, finds an occasional outlet in the narrative. Moreover, when this narrative strategy starts a chain reaction in the network of the reading process, the comic effects and conflicting stances begin to multiply.

The relentless narrator and the narrative conflict are part of the narrative strategy O'Connor deployed to help build up incongruities. However, O'Connor remained the one who had the last laugh. With the power to make fun of her characters, narrators, fictional settings, and social cultural norms, she openly laughed at and punished the "proud," "disobedient" female characters in the narrative through the narrator,[43] and then stood back to laugh at the patriarchal socio-cultural norms. If she could not freely make fun of the "monologic" narrator, as some critics have noted (Brinkmeyer 1989), she was nevertheless successful in arranging the narrative conflict to provide chances for rebellious Southern women to question and bitterly laugh at the "hailing" of the patriarchy.

Gordon notes that O'Connor's characters "reflect their author's subversion of the ideal of the docile, submissive 'Lady,'" and "[m]oreover, in countering the ideal of the pretty, sweet, docile female, O'Connor is in a significant way freeing herself, perhaps in the only way her situation allowed" (13-14). If O'Connor allied her narrators with the male tradition and patriarchal norms, and caused her female characters to rebel against those norms so as to subvert the idealized image of the docile, submissive "lady," then, without doubt, her stories would seldom be short of narrative subversive power.

Finally, the narrative conflict brings forth a sense of uncertainty in the reading process. No matter whom the reader laughs at or what she laughs at, the reader is forced to face contradictory judgments and ambiguous feelings towards the grotesqueries. This is because even when O'Connor laughs at her characters, there is still some irritation churning in the flow of the narrative. The ridiculed women, Mrs. May with her iron hand, Mrs. Chestny with the "hideous" hat, the ugly Hulga-Joy with her wooden leg, all suffer in their own special circumstances. Their self-pride, as many critics would explain, can never be the sole factor for their being punished by a final stroke of violence, ordained by the narrator. The violent stroke of fate, as the narrator would have us believe, is in a sense the event that brings forth the conflict and turns the freakish little characters into victims of their situation in the patriarchal South. This is the laughter of understanding—the revelation of the binding power of the Southern social and cultural system that keeps the fictional characters captive. In O'Connor's stories, laughter is the recognition of the causes of what happens, a proof of the discovery of both the socio-cultural confinement in reality and the intended hidden declaration of O'Connor's challenge and repudiation of the "hailing" that recruits Southern women to return to a state where they are protected like helpless children.

If the comic's "social usefulness lies in its debunking power" (Berger 24), then, in O'Connor, the comic brings forth the laughter that challenges the social norms and exposes the mutilating power of the fierce narrator, who tries hard in ordaining exact

[43] Gordon notes that "O'Connor's embrace of the power and authority of the patriarchal tradition" (47) can be part of the reason that her narrator is so fierce and relentless towards the woman characters that strongly demonstrate their sense of self-independence. Gordon believes that these woman characters "must derive in some measure from O'Connor's rebellion against southern expectations of female propriety" (47). However, the traditional religious interpretation always emphasizes that these female characters deserve fierce punishment because self-pride is the first and most severe sin that human beings could ever commit.

"arrangement" for those "unfaithful" daughters of the South. As Parks points out, O'Connor's powerless characters have a chance of playing a joke on their own lives. "This is a kind of 'heroic powerlessness,'" Parks says, "O'Connor's modern men and women must lose their self-reliance before they can gain true self-knowledge [...]. These are great comic moments which seek to scour the reader's sensibilities with a redemptive laughter" (121). But Parks is not justified in saying that O'Connor's female characters are heroic, as they are not given the chance to gain "true" self-knowledge. They are forced to die an improper death (or semi-death).

Like her female characters, O'Connor the writer/trickster keeps challenging and questioning the dominant opinions in the narrative. O'Connor and her characters both use "the only force" (the power of words[44]) that the powerless can resort to, to resist and deconstruct the interpellation of the cultural codes and the narrative. O'Connor's narrative conflict indicates more than the theological emphasis on the loyalty and obedience of women and the patriarchal punishment of their self-sufficiency and pride. Behind the narrative conflict, O'Connor highlights the sense of humor with every possible grotesque scene, and from this crippled laughter shines forth a profound understanding. This is the laughter that discovers the discrepancies between reality and belief, that sneaks beneath the patriarchal narrating voice and male dominance of the social norms, and that leaves its trace by laughing first at the "disobedient" women and then, at the patriarchal concepts lurking behind the narrator's interpretation. This is the laughter that both exhilarates and slashes.

Works Cited

Althusser, Louis. *Essays on Ideology*. London: Verso, 1993.

Asals, Frederick. *Flannery O'Connor: The Imagination of Extremity*. Athens: U of Georgia P, 1986.

Berger, Arthur Asa. *An Anatomy of Humor*. New Brunswick, State: Transaction Publishers, 1993.

Berger, Peter L. *Redeeming Laughter: The Comic Dimension of Human Experience*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1997.

Brinkmeyer, Robert H. *The Art and Vision of Flannery O'Connor.* Baton Rouge: Louisiana State UP, 1989.

Certeau, Michel de. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1988.

Gordon, Sarah. *Flannery O'Connor: The Obedient Imagination.* Athens: The U of Georgia P, 2000.

Harpham, Geoffrey Galt. *On the Grotesque: Strategies of Contradiction in Art and*

[44] Following Saul Bellow's comment (from his review of a book by Shalom Aleichem) that "powerlessness appears to force people to have recourse to words," John G. Parks observes that words are usually used and celebrated to demonstrate the power of the powerless. This is the "heroic powerlessness" that the weak and the powerless adopt to question the arrangement of God-almighty and demand justification. Parks refers to the story of Job to illustrate the tactical use of this verbal power by the weak and powerless:

> This is a comedy in the tradition of Job, who, daring cosmic iconoclasm, refusing pat and pious answers, demands of God an answer to the question of gratuitous suffering. In his poverty, weakness, and solitude, all Job has left is words and the courage to put the universe on trial. This is a kind of "heroic powlerlessness" that is celebrated in a number of novels published since the Second World War. (118-9)

Literature. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1982.
Holman, C. Hugh. “Detached Laughter in the South.” *Comic Relief: Humor in Contemporary American Literature*. Ed. Sarah Blacher Cohen. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1979. 87-104.
Johansen, Ruthann Knechel. *The Narrative Secret of Flannery O’Connor: The Trickster as Interpreter.* Tuscaloosa: The U of Alabama P, 1994.
Kristeva, Julia. *Revolution in Poetic Language.* Trans. Margaret Waller. New York: Columbia UP, 1984.
O’Connor, Flannery. *The Complete Stories*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001.
——. *Letters of Flannery O’Connor: The Habit of Being*. Ed. Sally Fitzgerald. New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1979.
——. *Mystery and Manners.* Ed. Sally and Robert Fitzgerald. New York: Farrar, 1969.
Parks, John G. “The Comedy of Powerlessness: The One Modern Joke.” *The Midwest Quarterly* 41.2 (2000): 117-28.
Ragen, Brian Abel. “Grace and Grotesques: Recent Books on Flannery O’Connor.” *Papers on Language and Literature* 27.3 (1991): 386-98.
Thomson, Philip. *The Grotesque*. London: Methuen, 1972.
Westling, Louise. *Sacred Groves and Ravaged Gardens: The Fiction of Eudora Welty, Carson McCullers, and Flannery O’Connor.* Athens: The U of Georgia P, 1985.

About the Author

Hsiu-chih Tsai is Assistant Professor at the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, National Taiwan University. Her research interests include semiotics, narratology, urban studies and topics related to textualization, intertextuality and spatiality. Her most recent article is “Violence as the Road to Transformation: O’Connor’s ‘A Good Man Is Hard to Find,’” *NTU Studies in Language and Literature* (2004).

[Received 20 March 2004;
accepted: 3 June 2004;
revised: 29 June 2004]