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Partial Minds: The Strategic Underrepresentation of Consciousness in Postwar American Novels

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PARTIAL MINDS: THE STRATEGIC UNDERREPRESENTATION OF
CONSCIOUSNESS IN POSTWAR AMERICAN NOVELS

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DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

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CONSCIOUSNESS IN POSTWAR AMERICAN NOVELS

Partial Minds argues that contemporary American novels strategically break conventionally-defined norms for the representation of fictional minds to highlight unusual character thoughts. Certain states of mind—including traumatic experiences, conflicting feelings, some memories, and the simultaneous possession of multiple identities—are more difficult to represent than others, and so some authors or narrators reject conventional cognitive representations, such as naming feelings, if they seem poor tools for effectively communicating that character's exceptional quality to the reader. For example, the trauma of Marianne in Joyce Carol Oates's *We Were the Mulvaneys* is represented by the narrator, her brother Judd. But in attempting to represent the state of Marianne's mind on the night she was raped, Judd finds that simply turning to a verbalized account of her thoughts, such as "*I felt terrible*," or a seeming-omniscient gloss of her mental state, such as "She suffered incredible mental turmoil," is insufficient and incommensurate with the traumatic and painful mental state she must have endured. In cases like these, authors and narrators reject conventional models of representation and turn to partial minds to effectively articulate to the reader the mental state that the character experiences. These more effective representations are pivotal in communicating to the reader a more adequate—whether from a mimetic, synthetic, or thematic perspective—understanding of characters' experiences. Partial minds are often the very required conditions for readers to empathize with a character. By looking at several different instantiations of partial minds in recent American novels, I show how this technique both heightens the value of cognitive narrative criticism and revises the way we read many of literature's most interesting characters.

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CONSCIOUSNESS IN POSTWAR AMERICAN NOVELS

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DEDICATION

to Manda—
You are my mind and my heart.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Introduction: A Theory of Partial Minds

"It is, however, an essential aspect of fictional narrative that it can place the reader inside a foreign center of consciousness and enable him to watch in an unmediated fashion the dynamics of a fictional individual's self."
> ~ Uri Margolin, "The What, the When, and the How of
> Being a Character in Literary Narrative," 3.2

"The study of narrative demands a concept of the self richer than the nearly ubiquitous binary division of the self and the other, or the subject and the object."
> ~ Matthew Clark, *Narrative Structures and the Language of the Self*, 179

David Brin's 2002 science fiction novel *Kiln People* imagines a future in which humans can copy their minds onto temporary clay versions of themselves. Each clay "ditto" has but a shade of the original's mind, never able to become a complete copy of the entire mind, or in the novel's language, the soul. Some dittos emphasize the original's intellectual abilities, while others are "dumbed down" for more menial duties—all this while the host self enjoys life's most pleasurable activities. Brin's world allows for different degrees of the same mind; some duplications are more faithful to the original and some are barely recognizable as copies at all.

What Brin poses in a counterfactual world, other authors have implicitly dramatized in works of realist fiction through methods of mental underrepresentation. These narratives employ certain textual techniques of representing consciousness to limit the expected completeness of characters' thoughts in order to produce more effective representations of mental states that are challenging to express—for example, trauma. In this introduction, I identify mental underrepresentation in three novels, describe its purpose and composition more specifically, show its relevance to several fields, and conclude by outlining the chapters of this dissertation.

I continue this prolegomenon by posing three excerpts that in different ways

dramatize the abstract possibility of underrepresented minds. First comes Toni

Morrison's short story "Recitatif," followed by Joyce Carol Oates's novel *We Were the*

Mulvaneys, and ending with Alice LaPlante's recent novel *Turn of Mind*. These are

followed by a series of explications that identify each example as containing what I am

calling a partial mind.

1.

> It didn't start out that way. The minute I walked in and the Big Bozo
> introduced us, I got sick to my stomach. It was one thing to be taken out of your
> own bed early in the morning—it was something else to be stuck in a strange
> place with a girl from a whole other race. . . .
> So for the moment it didn't matter that we looked like salt and pepper
> standing there and that's what the other kids called us sometimes. (Morrison,
> "Recitatif" 243-4)

2.

ous night, soaking in Trisha LaPorte's bathtub. Numbed, dazed. Her thoughts flying rapidly and fluidly and without weight or seeming significance. *Jesus help me. Jesus help me.* Like scenes glimpsed from the window of a speeding vehicle, lacking depth and color. Like those strange fleeting faces, strangers' faces, some of them distorted and grotesque, we see as we sink exhausted into sleep. So, amid the steaming water, above a limp-floating naked girl's body, a body at which Marianne did not look, *The Pilgrim* rose, took shape. It hovered suspended until finally it faded into numbness and oblivion, a gouged-out hole in the very space of consciousness.

So much to talk about! So many interruptions! Laughter, and Judd scolded by Dad for passing sausage-bits to Little Boots beneath the

Figure 1: (Oates, *We Were the Mulvaneys* 81)

3.

> Three women in a room. One, the young one, deeply distressed. She has taken her hands away from her face and is clasping them tightly in her lap. Wringing them. Wringing her hands. A rough motion, this grasping and twisting of the metacarpal phalangeal joints, as if trying to extract the ligaments and tendons from under the skin.
>
> Another woman, older, is thinking hard. She is looking at the young woman, but she is not seeing her. She is seeing images play out in her mind, images that are telling her some sort of story.
>
> And the third woman, oldest of all, is dreaming. Not really present. Although she knows she is wearing clothes, sitting on a hard chair, that material is pressed against her skin, she cannot feel any of it. Her body is weightless. The atmosphere has thickened. It is difficult to breathe. And time has slowed. An entire life could be lived between heartbeats. She is drowning in air. Soon, scenes will begin appearing before her eyes. (LaPlante 284)

Let me discuss how each example exhibits a partial mind. In Morrison's "Recitatif," all we know is that one of the girls is black and one is white, but we do not know which is which. This ambiguity lets Morrison exaggerate stereotypes of both races, such as who eats fried chicken or who likes Jimi Hendrix. Morrison calls the story "an experiment in the removal of all racial codes from a narrative about two characters of different races for whom racial identity is crucial" (*Playing in the Dark* xi). Race is a formative component of characters' mental makeup—part of what readers imagine to be in characters' minds. After all, critic Ralf Schneider, asking to what extent readers project their habits of social cognition onto character reception, affirms that "perception will necessarily include automatic category assignment according to such visible parameters as age, sex, race and so forth" (14). When Morrison denies Twyla and Roberta a definite race, she produces a strategic underrepresentation of their social cognition.

James Phelan ties questions of racial identity in "Recitatif" to those of source tracking, or metarepresentation, which is our mental ability to tag information to its

source ("Rhetorical Theory, Cognitive Theory, and Morrison's 'Recitatif'" 10). The implied author[1] uses the character narrator[2] to interfere with our metarepresentation by hiding the characters' race when making racially-charged statements. The reader's ability to accurately tag these characters with the markers of normal mental representation—which includes racial identity and which I develop at length later—is forestalled by Morrison's ambiguity. Because the reader cannot know who is white and who is black, she must read these characters as underrepresented.

The difference between *story*, the reconstructed sequence of narrative events, and *discourse*, the way the story is told, sheds light on this manner of underrepresentation. In the representational level of *discourse*, the implied author uses the narrator to omit the girls' race, but this level of omission does not entail that the omission affects the characters' minds in the *story*.[3] So, Twyla knows Roberta's race and Roberta knows Twyla's race, but the reader can know neither Twyla's nor Roberta's race. Rather than consider the unreliability of Morrison's narrator, a question of accurate knowledge, this narrative construction suggests underrepresentation, a question of amount of knowledge. And ironically, this focus on reader's knowledge of the characters' race—itself an absentee—leads to the narrative's gender amnesia. As David Goldstein-Shirley points out, all of Morrison's novels thematize conflict between males and females, but this short story does not (99). A story that should, ostensibly, highlight race and gender instead makes race ambiguous and gender contextually underplayed. Both race, which is denied metarepresentationally in the *discourse,* and gender, which is denied thematically to the reader, here foreclose a full representation of the characters' minds, leaving them underrepresented.

The excerpt from Joyce Carol Oates's *We Were the Mulvaneys* offers a different style of partial mind. Early in the novel, the Mulvaneys' daughter Marianne is raped during her high school prom. Afterwards, her thoughts take the narrative foreground as her brother Judd, the novel's narrator, focalizes on her. The passage reproduced above appears during these post-traumatic reflections when Marianne has been thinking about a painting of her mother's called *The Pilgrim*. She seeks identification with the character in the painting who is looking to Jesus for self-denying comfort, but Marianne does not appear to find solace in this attempt. As seen in the figure above, a black mark across the page breaks the novel's prose. Focalized thoughts face a rift, a metatextual intrusion that blocks the reader's otherwise direct experience of her mind. As an attempt by Judd to represent Marianne's traumatized thoughts, the mark placeholds the partial absence of her mind. Caught up in remembering *The Pilgrim*, her thoughts dissolve into what Judd can only capture as a visual of nothingness. Marianne's mind as she experiences it cannot adequately be represented through verbal descriptions of pain or other sensations, so a graphic is used to attempt to depict the state of her mind after her trauma, showing the profound emotional suffering the rape caused. As her brother retells it, Marianne's mind is no longer complete because it cannot make sense of her trauma.

Her mental absence is indicated further by the jump into the family dinner scene after the black mark. In these lines, Marianne's family talks about everything but what has happened to her, while her own thoughts keep returning to something being wrong, even as she herself is unable to think about it directly (Oates 81). The scene goes on to include the voices of all the family members mixed together in an extreme example of Mikhail Bakhtin's dialogism. Many voices make up a narrative, but in this case, there are

so many people talking and thoughts being channeled at once that none have a dominant presence. As if to emphasize Marianne's subordination due to her trauma, her own thoughts are suddenly marginalized by the text. Moreover, in the lines that follow the quote reproduced above, words spoken by Marianne's rapist on her prom night recur throughout the frenetic family dinner-table. Her rapist's lines plague Marianne's mind and stand as another example of Judd's understanding and portrayal of the mental effects of rape on Marianne. To represent Marianne's psychological trauma, Oates has Judd experiment with Marianne's cognitive representation, using methods that underrepresent her mind.

In the third excerpt, a passage from LaPlante's story *Turn of Mind* about Alzheimer's patient Jennifer White, a different style of partial mind occurs. Although the story relies on third-person narration, the particular form of *free indirect discourse* used takes on not only Jennifer's language (seen in the anatomically technical descriptions of the hands; Jennifer is an orthopedic doctor who specialized in hands), but also her epistemological perspective. None of the women in the room are named but are described in bare-boned language, as though stressing the narrator's outsider perspective. But it is the reversal of this impression that is so striking: the guise of outside narration is actually Jennifer's inside perspective as affected by Alzheimer's. She can only detect the appearances of those around her: their contextual relation to her is absent. So, although this passage is told from the third-person narrator's point of view, were it not for the pronoun "she" instead of "I," this passage could be read as Jennifer's own internal monologue. Alzheimer's has made Jennifer appear like an outsider to her own thoughts.

This conflation of epistemological perspectives does more than merely give a sense of Jennifer's perspective; it forces the reader to experience *with* Jennifer. The reader would get only an outsider's perspective if the narrator had said plainly, "Jennifer could not identify the lady next to her," or, with what Alan Palmer terms *direct thought*,[4] "*I could not tell who the young woman was.*" Instead, the reader herself is forced into Jennifer's shoes by not being given the identities of the women, having to remember based on the plot and context who these characters might be—and which one, hauntingly, is Jennifer herself. The reader thereby, in a limited way, co-experiences Alzheimer's with Jennifer, having to do a similar kind of guesswork in the *discourse* as Jennifer has to do in the *story*. Awareness is a key theme of the novel, and its effects—about which *New York Times* book reviewer Zoë Slutzky rightfully calls a "mental hall of mirrors" (par. 6)—go beyond a plot-based account of Jennifer's life to a representational narrative that interpellates the reader into its design and thematics. Jennifer's mental disability becomes more than just an object that the reader learns about and more than just a partial mind that the reader interprets in the *discourse*; Jennifer's partial mind becomes a catalyst for the reader's own thought process.

It is the practice of some narratives to strategically underrepresent characters' minds in order to isolate exceptional cognitive experiences. Certain states of mind—including trauma, conflicting feelings, memories, and the simultaneous possession of multiple identities—are more difficult to represent than others. As a result, some authors or narrators reject conventional cognitive representations, such as naming feelings, if they seem poor tools for effectively communicating that character's exceptional quality to the

reader. Moreover, the examples above indicate that these cases in which minds are represented as marginalized and minimized or as having certain parts of them left out are underrepresented for *discursive* reasons. That is to say, partial minds indicate the attempt to overcome a problem with representing a mental state, not a problem with that mental state itself. Elaborating a theory of partial minds helps identify and explain the rhetorical strategies of authors when they employ these kinds of minds. Consequently, laying out the technical makeup of partial minds broadens our knowledge of the construction of literary characters even while it expands the more narratological descriptions and explanations of textual form. Furthermore, since many examples of partial minds relate to characters who have undergone trauma, this study of representational techniques upholds claims such as those made by Joshua Pederson in his call for updated theories of the representation of literary trauma: "[I]f *only* literature can access trauma," he explains, "then perhaps *only* literature can deliver reality in its truest form" (349, emphases original). Trauma leads to exceptional mental states, and these are represented through the unconventional techniques of partial minds.

This technique may at first blush seem offensive. "All people have the same degree of cognition," some might object, "since there is no qualitatively articulable difference." Yes, I agree. But we are talking about fictional minds. What I mean is that in order to represent certain minds, it is sometimes not enough for authors to resort to the standard "She thought X" or "He thought Y," or even more sophisticated techniques such as *free indirect discourse*. Sometimes, authors need to get across the ravages of an experience, and that means shortchanging the relatively expected thoughts that a character has. Although narrative theorists such as Uri Margolin have gone so far as to

suggest that there is "a preference of much literature for nonstandard forms of cognitive functioning, be they rare or marginal, deviant, or involving a failure, breakdown, or lack of standard patterns" (qtd. in Semino and Culpepper 287), scholars have yet to put together a theory which analyzes these types. This dissertation aims to provide that theory.

Partial minds, in arguing against the binary assumption that a mind is either represented or it isn't, allow for degrees of mindedness that are developed in relation to relatively stable norms for cognitive representation. Because they have this graduated, rather than Manichean, quality, they say something new about representation: that it may be specifically analyzed in terms of a greater or lesser meeting of the expected cognitive norm. While work has been done on underrepresentation and on narrative density—two ideas that fold into mine—my argument places these in the context of standard norms developed across works and genres. Other scholars who do not deal with cognition specifically, then, may find a useful methodology amidst the technical layers of linguistic techniques that go into composing partial minds. Additionally, besides narrative theorists concerned with these details, trauma theorists will gain a new terminology for discussing both representations of trauma and its recurrence through Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), as these two are common precipitants of represented partial minds. Although I am not making a historical argument about trauma or the use of partial minds more broadly, I do generally limit my study's major interpretations of novels to mid-to-late twentieth and early twenty-first-century American novels. Scholars concerned with periodizing this timeframe may develop a more detailed analysis by accounting for the inclusion of partial minds over this span. Finally, apart from narrow fields, the

representation of consciousness is a phenomenon that intervenes in the very techniques that both fictional and nonfictional authors use. As such, partial minds may potentially extend to any representation of mind.

This dissertation begins in Chapter 1 by looking at the theoretical composition of partial minds. The subsequent chapters, each a case study of a particular kind of partial mind, are organized according to the representational function of the partial mind, whether mimetic, synthetic, or thematic. Chapter 2 uses a synthetic representation to look at the unrepresentability of trauma due to rape, while Chapter 3 uses an unconventional mimetic representation to express the trauma of murdering and impersonation. As a result, Chapter 3 both reflects and distorts the kind of representational logic developed in Chapter 2. Chapter 4, by contrast, widens the scope by looking at representations of war-caused trauma, especially PTSD, and so takes a thematic function of representation. In all these, partial minds are the textual means that the authors use to represent trauma and which allow for the potency of their effects on the reader, and in none of these is the representational function a simple case. To close this introduction, here is a brief synopsis of each chapter:

Chapter 1, "The Theoretical Principles of Partial Minds," introduces the methodology and critical context of partial minds. Outlining key discourses that develop this representational technique, including cognitive narrative theory and poststructuralism, I show the gap of underrepresentation that the concept of partial minds fills. I also point out the rhetorical dimension of partial minds; as a strategic communicative technique, they often make the reader participate in their underrepresentation. This involvement leads to the reader's own thought process helping

to determine the partial mind. Next, I explain at length the main criteria that delimit, rather than define, partial minds. These include the ontology of character consciousness, mind styles, norms of mental representation, genre, and narrative agents. Characterized by technical distinctions, each of these accounts for a different element composing a particular profile of partial minds, such as incomplete, inconsistent, inaccessible, and erased minds. After discussing these and offering the ethical importance of them, this chapter concludes with a taxonomy and table that present examples of these profiles of partial minds.

Chapter 2, "Narrating Partial Minds: Trauma as Underrepresentation in Joyce Carol Oates's *We Were the Mulvaneys*," dives into a rich example of partial minds by focusing on the Mulvaney daughter Marianne. As mentioned, Marianne's thoughts are represented graphically in the novel as a black smudge. Presented among a polyphony of different voices, this synthetic smudge follows an ekphrasis of a painting and a moment of attempted religious self-definition by Marianne. Trying to make sense of her trauma of being sexually assaulted, the "unnatural" narrator and youngest-Mulvaney Judd uses the smudge both to represent what cannot otherwise adequately be represented through description (e.g., "She was in pain.") and to help himself understand the way Marianne's mental distress affects his own. Depending on Alan Palmer's social minds and George Butte's deep intersubjectivity among other cognitive models, I analyze how the heteroglossia and layering of represented consciousnesses in the novel suggest the social interdependence of minds. I continue this train of logic by showing the effect of Marianne's partial mind on the temporality of the novel. Underrepresentation deepens the spread of trauma across the Mulvaney family and across the attempt at narrating it.

In the next chapter, I examine Patricia Highsmith's *The Talented Mr. Ripley*. Chapter 3, "An (Im)Perfect Forgery: Tom Ripley's Protean and Partial Mind," more definitely articulates the ethical and rhetorical quadrants of partial minds by asking what it means for a reader to identify with a partial mind. The two dimensions intersect in *Ripley* when Tom's escape from punishment at the end directly bears on the reader's choices about how to regard him. Tom takes mindreading to the extreme as he imagines complex eventualities and conversations in order to successfully take over his friend Dickie's mind. This masterful mindreading lets him essentially become Dickie and so, in terms of mimetic textual representation, enact the contradiction of having both two minds at once and no mind at all. His mindreading leads to strategic methods of empathy by the reader, outlined by Suzanne Keen and drawing on Rae Greiner, Nancy Eisenberg and Janet Strayer, as it finds a parallel in the reader's own mindreading of Tom even as he mindreads others. The dilemma of how to relate to a criminal like Tom comes to a head when the reader finds herself empathizing with his thoughts. I also account for his "evilness" and roleplaying traits when integrating Highsmith scholarship by Michael Trask, Darryl Koehn, and Fiona Peters, among others, into my cognitive analyses. Employing a formalist approach to Highsmith's own brand of *free indirect discourse*, this dissertation chapter closes by identifying questions of empathy and textual immersion à la Marie-Laure Ryan as they relate to the double-mind of Tom as he becomes Dickie.

Chapter 4, "Thinking About Nothing: Traumatic *Dissociation* as the Partial Mind in Three War Narratives," looks at works by Tim O'Brien, Ben Fountain, and Phil Klay to tie together similarities in the way war-caused mental trauma confers similar partial-mindedness on their characters. This chapter focuses on norms and how the different

worlds of war front and domestic reassimilation turn characters' minds into sites for nonnormal thematic representation. Specifically, O'Brien shows the recursive nature of thought in his work as a whole by the repetition and permutation of stories, and, in *The Things They Carried*, his metanarration develops multiple versions of Tim O'Brien. These both fracture the unity of his fictional mind and turn his questioning of fact and fiction into implications for the reader in her commitments to stable representation and assumptions about verisimilitude. In the next example, I look at Phil Klay's recent short story collection *Redeployment* as a reversal of veteran stereotypes. By using partial minds as the agents for creating a thematic, rather than mimetic or synthetic, representation of war, Klay upholds the need for experimental representations in order to effectively express trauma. Finally, using pop culture as a mediating quality of minds, *Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk* by Ben Fountain figures the Iraq War through the inability of Billy to have a stable mind. His thoughts during his victory tour before returning to Iraq use minimal language, white space, and verbal disruption of thought to represent his cognitive dissonance resulting from combat-caused trauma. The tendency of war novels to use the technique of partial minds indicates a rereading of war literature in light of cognitive perspectives. In all these chapters, I maintain a focus on the techniques that fictional narratives use to underrepresent their characters' minds. This aim expands conceptions of fictional minds, and in doing so, says something about the way people think.

Chapter Two

The Theoretical Principles of Partial Minds

"Tony: 'The whole thing happened in his mind.'
Aoife: 'Where else do things happen?'"

~ John Patrick Shanely, *Outside Mullingar*, 16

"What we mean by consciousness is actually the entire area of mental attention, which includes the gradations leading to unconsciousness as well as the state of complete awareness."

~ Melvin Friedman, *Stream of Conscious-
ness: A Study in Literary Method*, 3

Partial Minds argues that contemporary American novels strategically break conventionally-defined cognitive norms that govern the representation of fictional minds in order to highlight unusual thoughts of characters. Certain states of mind, such as the simultaneous possession of multiple identities, are more difficult to represent than others, and so some authors or narrators reject conventional cognitive representations if they seem poor tools for effectively communicating that character's exceptional quality to the reader. For example, Patricia Highsmith's Tom Ripley murders and impersonates his friend Dickie in the first novel of the *Ripley* series. To be an effective impersonator, Tom must imagine Dickie's thoughts in intricate detail. But the narrator, trying to represent both Tom's thoughts and Tom-thinking-Dickie's thoughts, runs into the problem of how to model two cognitions at once. In solving this problem, the narrator subordinates Tom's "own" thoughts in order to show the obsessiveness and skill with which Tom impersonates Dickie by thinking his thoughts. Rather than resort to conventional approaches to this kind of dual-layered thinking, such as "Tom thought X, while Tom imagined Dickie thought Y," the narrator leaves out Tom's thoughts altogether, underrepresenting his mind. In cases like these, authors and narrators reject conventional models of representation and turn to partial minds to effectively articulate to the reader

the mental state that the character experiences. Studying partial minds both heightens the value of cognitive narrative criticism and revises the way we read many of literature's most interesting characters.

Several sections and subsections (noted by headings) organize this chapter into the major theoretical principles that form partial minds. These subdivisions provide the foundation for the close readings of specific texts that later chapters of this dissertation pursue. First, I define this theory of partial minds by distinguishing it from other theories of fictional minds and underrepresentation. I rely on the novel *Billy Lynn's Long Half-time Walk* by Ben Fountain to demonstrate key differences of my theory and to transition into two narratological concepts that are mainstays in the explications of texts I later take up: *story* and *discourse* (section I). Following this discussion, the next section situates partial minds in the context of theories of representation and posits that partial minds exemplify some poststructuralist critiques. That argument is succeeded by my stance on theories of the representation of consciousness, which I show are best seen as matters of the reader's consciousness being co-created with the text (II). I then preview of the next five subsections: five criteria for limiting partial minds (III). The first of these articulates how our definition of characters' ontology determines the prioritization of mimetic, synthetic, and thematic functions of characters, and as a result, their minds. By applying typologies from Uri Margolin and Baruch Hochman, I analyze the character ontology of minds in Richard Wright's *Native Son* and John Steinbeck's *East of Eden* (III.i). Second, an examination of linguistic *mind styles* offers a concrete method for isolating patterns of characters' consciousnesses. I looks at the metaphorical mind of Chief Bromden in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* as an example of a partial mind that becomes more

complete as its *mind style* changes (III.ii). Third, I argue that there must be normed

expectations for readers' conceptions of minds and that those are strategically broken by

certain narratives using partial minds to emphasize those works' rhetorical aims. After

comparing narratives by Raymond Carver and Carson McCullers, I look at the cognitive

representational norms broken by Janice in John Updike's *Rabbit, Run* (III.iii). Fourth, I

push that same argument of relative expectations into genre conventions, discussing how

science fiction, detective fiction, and a more general realism all employ conventions that

may be strategically breached by use of a partial mind (III.iv). Fifth and finally, I specify

partial minds as conferred by one of three narrative agents: character narrators, third-

person narrators, or implied authors. A close reading of Henry James' *What Maisie Knew*

concludes this section, taking into account all five criteria (III.v). Following those five

subsections, I return to a new section that discusses the rhetorical implications of strategic

misrepresentation through partial minds. Here, I touch on the ethical effects of this

technique (IV). Afterwards, I lay out four profiles of partial minds (V.i), followed by a

taxonomy of works of American literature which use them (V.ii). Concluding this survey

of the relevant theoretical principles is a final paragraph that reiterates the malleability of

this theory.

I. The Critical Gap, Parameters, and Methodology of a Theory of Partial Minds

"My study relates to the sorts of fictional minds that are contained in all kinds of
narratives. Exceptional consciousnesses could perhaps be the subject of a further study."
~ Alan Palmer, *Fictional
Minds*, 201

"Quality of mind (as expressed in the language of characterization, motivation,
description, and commentary) not plot, is the soul of narrative."
~ Robert Scholes and Robert Kellogg, *The
Nature of Narrative*, 239

Following Wolfgang Iser's work on the reader's role in narrative, Elaine Auyoung recently reconceptualized textual density by arguing that mental representations are few and far between in most works and require huge cognitive leaps by the reader to fill in the gaps. The required descriptions of characters for effective reading comprehension are less than we might expect. Auyoung even points out that "the necessity of making do with incomplete representation has translated into a cognitive capacity to get *away* with only partial representation" (65-6, emphasis original). All we need, she argues, are a few basic components of minds to find them believable and transform them into full-blooded characters in our own minds, even while she later balances her argument by noting that too few "cues" can easily misrepresent a reality (73). We might apply her analogy to popular cartoons, including Mickey Mouse and Charlie Brown, tying the reason for their popularity to the spareness of their construction (65). In cognitive terms, a spare mental representation could be a serious offense of underrepresentation to the point of misrepresentation in some works. Insufficiency of mental details may in some cases be normal spareness of style (as I take up in III.iii), but in other cases it may be an intentional strategy of partial representation.

The density of narrative mental representation also equates to Marshal McLuhen's division between hot and cold media. Hot fill the sense, while cold require gaps that the mind must fill (Ryan, *Narrative as Virtual Reality* 348).[5] Written literary narrative is a cold medium. But sometimes, the gaps of a cold medium are not the kind that are easily filled. What if that simple cartoon were missing a leg or one of its Mickey-ears? We would not simply fill-in such basic components of a character's body. And yet this same

kind of omission occurs in the mental representations of characters in narrative all the time. What Auyoung calls "insufficient" (73), I call intentionally left out. Though difficult to see because of the vagueness of the mind, partial minds are a specific strategy used to single out characters through the underrepresentation of their minds.

Other efforts have been made to identify nonstandard minds, but none argue based on the degree and kind, the quantity and quality, of representation of cognition in narrative. Porter Abbott persuasively argues for a style of mindreading called reading the unreadable mind. Seeking minds that resist all efforts to understand them, he points to Bartleby the Scrivener who possesses a mind to which no mental state can be logically attributed (450). This view of Bartleby, valid within the terms Abbott outlines, could be understood from a different vantage as less about reading the unreadable and more about the ethical implications for Melville's underrepresentation of Bartleby as mentally unrelatable. As an example of an underrepresented mind, Bartleby's continued refusal in his narrative differentiates him from others and indicates a motivation that violates mental norms. The challenge of criticism to explain his motivation underscores how different his mind is from reader's expectations of a normal mind. As represented, Bartleby possesses only a partial mind, signifying a consciousness untranslatable to other characters' consciousnesses.

Similar to Abbott's approach, Jan Alber and Brian Richardson study *unnatural narratives*, narratives without the presumption of narrators (which I take up more fully in Chapter 2, Section II). Alber and Richardson point to limit cases of narrative reporting, such as the lack of a single narrator and unifying mind in *The Sound and the Fury*, and unnaturalizable minds, such as Kafka's Gregor. Such cognitions are suggestive of partial

minds, even while they take the argument in a different direction as they focus on the nature of narration. On the other hand, George Butte sees consciousness enmeshed in an intersubjective network of minds, interdependent. Reading one mind can mean looking at a whole web of characters who project each others' minds. His phenomenological angle views the mind as neither totally cut off from others, nor completely determined by others (*I Know* 5). These theories provide useful tools for plumbing the range of occurrences and kinds of effects that partial minds evoke, while not making arguments about mental underrepresentation itself. Both, abbreviated here, are crucial to my argument in Chapter 2.

Likewise, Susan Lanser's work on women's voices in literature stresses the important place that underrepresentations hold. She outlines alternative methods—including "private voice" (13) and self-reference (15)—that women have employed in order to counter the male representational dominant. Similarly, Ruth Page's *Literary and Linguistic Approaches to Feminist Narratology* points out the hegemony of the male plot of desire, as represented in Peter Brooks's plot of ambition. These accounts of underrepresentation point to a social inequality founded in narrative form, rather than a use of underrepresentation to emphasize certain cognitive traits that are challenging to represent through conventional methods. Indeed, many studies of underrepresentation are explained as critiques of the discourse of criticism rather than the actual holdings of primary texts, especially considering that both Lanser and Page attempt to recoup women's standing in literature by reading previous works in ways that emphasize feminine traits rather than male ones. As a result, these studies of underrepresentation valiantly attempt to right the wrong done to women through the ethical misuse of

underrepresentation. At the same time, these operate very differently from my own use of the concept, since while underrepresentation as I employ it does have serious ethical consequences, they are due not to the marginalization of a social group but to the reader's interpretation of underrepresented minds.

My study differs from other theories of underrepresentation in literature, even those not grounded in the cognitive paradigm. On a very basic level of narratological shorthand, we might think of partial minds within the longstanding division between flat and round characters. Certainly, flat characters receive marginal mental representation, often having just one dominant cognitive trait, but this limitation is due to their role as placeholders, not because they are supposed to represent the lack of a lifelike psychology. According to Uri Margolin, round characters display many mental qualities and often overtly possess cognitive tensions and conflicts ("The What" 3.1). But those tensions may be expressed as lacks or unrecognizable oddities. So, it is otherwise round characters who in fact have partial minds even though they exhibit the underrepresented minds associated with flat characters. This case returns later when I discuss Janice in Updike's *Rabbit, Run* (III.iii).

These other theories of underrepresentation developed by Abbott, Alber and Richardson, Butte, Lanser and Page, and Chatman all share a kinship with partial minds through one common quality. They all focus on characters who are singled out as requiring representation through non-standard techniques. This designating many occur through different strategies: plot-based interactions, minimal accounts of a character's mind, explicit commentary from the narrator, or work-specific methods such as multiple narrations. A host of examples is at hand: Faulkner's Benjy, Kesey's Chief Bromden,

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Haddon's Christopher. Partial minds depend on the need to single out characters because of the seeming inadequacy of typical representations. But to reiterate, I differ from this broad domain by looking exclusively at characters represented with less representationally-developed minds than others. That is my scope. To reiterate, my argument is that some contemporary American novels strategically break norms for the representation of fictional minds to highlight representationally-challenging mental states. This trend is the technique of partial minds.

Because they are used to account for an experience that normal methods of representation are inadequate to depict, partial minds give readers access to a particular style of mental representation that intentionally distorts or shortchanges characters from the normal set of mental expectations. That access produces certain effects on the reader. Central to this theory, then, lies the primacy of the reader's epistemology in experiencing and understanding a narrative, not in the sense of reader-response or reception studies, but in the sense of how the textual construction affects the reader in ways that more conventional methods of representation do not. For example, recalling LaPlante's Jennifer (which opened my Introduction), whose underrepresentation mimics her Alzheimer's, we see that she is underrepresented in a way that makes the reader partially co-experience the confusion of Alzheimer's with her. In this way, the novel describes her mental experience through methods at once more complex than conventional ways of reporting her mental state (e.g., "She was confused.") and less represented than readers' expectations (i.e., our access to her mind is limited due to her Alzheimer's, but in this case we would typically expect to know what she would not know). By making the reader feel or experience how a character is represented with less mental qualities than a

conventional use of *direct thought* or *thought report* allows, partial minds grant the reader greater access to these unusual minds than standard techniques of mental representation can attain.

Ben Fountain's novel *Billy Lynn's Long Half-time Walk* highlights that role of the reader in the textual interplay and draws out a final set of methodological concerns. The novel takes place during an Iraq War victory tour in the course of which Billy's mind is represented through ten specially-formatted sections that use extra space to separate words, merge them with Billy's thoughts, and distort standard spellings by replacing them with phonetic spellings (for example, "9/11" is written as "nina leven" [38, *passim*; see Appendix 1, Figure 1]). These are a non-conventional representations; a conventional option would have been to use *thought report* to explain how dizzy and jumbled his mind was feeling or even to use *free indirect discourse* to depict the world from his perspective as the events around him went on. Such a representational choice leads to a key narratological distinction, only briefly defined above, that this theory depends on: the difference between *story* and *discourse*. Although there are no set criteria for what defines a partial mind (more on this in section III below), these two terms orient plot and narration so that they more clearly express the operation of partial minds.

Story and *discourse* (often, *fabula* and *sjužet* or *histoire* and *discours*) divide narrative into two levels: *story* is what is told, but *discourse* is how it is told (Shen, "Story-Discourse Distinction" 566-7). *Story* is therefore an abstracted assumption about the events that "actually" took place in the narrative, while *discourse* is the form that readers receive. So, as applied to *Billy Lynn*, ten sections of nonstandard representation drive home what we extrapolate to be the actual *story*. These nonstandard representations

of Billy's mind stand for the experience he undergoes, influenced by trauma among other powerful emotions. Billy's mind, transcribed into a verbal form that readers can understand, requires a representational language to mimetically depict the phenomenology of his jarred and traumatized mind, a state which we readers translate back into his experience in the process of textual comprehension. His experience originally occurred in the *story*, and so readers have mediated access to his mind in the *story* through his partial mind in the *discourse*. It follows, then, that partial minds tend to be techniques identified in the *discourse* rather than in the *story*.

Narrative theorists disagree about the purviews of *story* and *discourse* and even their very existence in the first place. Dan Shen's 2002 article in *Narrative* compiles and examines the critiques leveled at *story/discourse* and argues that they can be refuted by recourse to James Phelan's synthetic, thematic, and mimetic functions of narrative, which are central tools for my other chapters. Each of Phelan's divisions, as I understand them, focuses on a separate purpose of narrative construction. But unlike *story/discourse*, the foregrounding of one implies the subordination of the others. For example, a metafictional (synthetic) aside by a character might disrupt the realistic (mimetic) mode and action by prioritizing the thematic need of the reader having that metafictional information over it being told in a realistic way. These categories allow us to place what might otherwise be problems with *discourse* into matters prioritizing either thematic, mimetic, or synthetic ends over one another. For instance, the particular problem with the *discourse* that it does not relate every moment of the *story* (it may summarize or use conventions to pass over moments when events happened) makes sense when seeing the

discourse as the prioritization of the synthetic over the mimetic (Shen, "Defense and Challenge" 223).

Shen goes on to reveal, somewhat circularly, that the *story/discourse* distinction can be made only when showing a difference between what was told and what happened. The implication is that only stories that do not attempt to be mimetic (*Finnegans Wake* is one of her examples) defy use of the *story/discourse* distinction, since in them there is no assumed "what really happened" (229). However, I would expand the exceptions to include *parts* of texts in which the telling is not meant to be different from the told—that is, when speculation into the circumstances of relating the narrative becomes a violation of reading into the text. Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Dred*, for example, focuses heavily on the action of the narrative, even while its narratorial commentary biases the reader in the *discourse* toward seeing Dred as, for example, beastly (354, *passim*). But sections that are purely dialogue need not posit a separate *discourse* but might be seen as direct access to the *story*. At one point Stowe prefaces a conversation between two characters, Russel and Clayton, with, "But we linger too long in description. We had better let the reader hear the *dramatis personae*, and judge for himself" (44, emphasis original). Then follows a commentary-free drama. The *way* that scene is told does not offer any insight into *what* is told; *story* seems equivalent to *discourse*. I am not saying that we cannot distinguish between *story* and *discourse* in novels like these, but that in some sections, making the distinction offers no practical payoff.[6] Instead, the distinction ought to be made when the style of representation offers insight into the original narrative. The validity of a strong difference between *story* and *discourse* is needed to access partial minds, which as techniques of representation, are thus in the purview of *discourse*.

Despite this variance between Shen's view and mine, I agree with her that differences between *story* and *discourse* distort what happened. Shen shows, for example, that summarizing a character's speech takes it from the *story* to the *discourse* and can bring about many effects, such as making speech appear as a mental process ("Defense and Challenge" 231). The *story/discourse* distinction affects the narrator's presentation of a character's mind. Shen explains it this way: "When a character's 'diegetic consciousness' is adopted by the narrator in rendering the story, it will unavoidably take on a dual nature, constituting at once part of what is narrated and a means of presentation" (237). Characters' consciousnesses are part of both the *story* and, via focalization, the *discourse* (since focalization involves a narrator, which suggests a mediated construction of the narrative, not an attempt at direct relation). This dual track that consciousnesses occupy elevates them into particular notice for my study, since the two layers are in tension as the narrator tells what was, ostensibly, originally unwritten mental experience. Such modification of the mind by the narration in the *discourse* may constitute underrepresentation, or a partial mind, in the *story*.

Related to the *story/discourse* distinction lies the difference between linguistic techniques and textual techniques. The *discourse* may employ any number of linguistic techniques to achieve rhetorical effects, so that there is not necessarily a one-to-one correspondence between linguistic technique and rhetorical effect. Instead, between the two stands a more general category of textual techniques. For example, linguistically-defined *free indirect discourse* may sometimes (but not always) produce a sense of the narrator coopting the character's words. Consequently, it is the contextual usage of the linguistic device that constitutes a textual technique, not the mere use of the device in the

first place. So there is no single way this kind of textual formation must occur—i.e., with certain grammatical or syntactic form (although, as I describe in the section on mind styles [III.ii], partial minds are aided by linguistic identifications). Instead, underrepresentation of this kind can occur through the larger textual design that is built up, whether through ekphrasis or omission or aggregation of details or some other form of textual construction. It is predominantly a feature for the reader, not for the other characters, as in how the removal of race in "Recitatif" applies only to the reader's epistemology, not Twyla's and Roberta's.

As a result, while there are contextually-relative norms that determine a partial mind from instance to instance, there is no single set of criteria for constructing a partial mind. This is appropriate, since if we essentialize textual qualities of mind and assume that there must be criteria that we can formulaically plug-in, then we limit characters and their potential real-world correspondents by assuming they will conform to our preconceived categories. Instead, determining a partial mind is an adaptive process that conforms differently to the parameters of each text. Normal is always contextual and responds to the too-neat expectations of essentialism. For example, a minimalist work like Raymond Carver's "Cathedral" only shallowly peers into its characters' minds, so the partial-mindedness of a character is not a result of the same textual techniques as, say, a psychologically-heavy modernist work like Carson McCullers' *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter*. (I take up these two in greater specificity below in III.iii.) A partial mind is therefore necessarily liminal between the fullest possible representation of the mind and the implied author's need to couch the mind in understandable ways that are appropriate for its set of mental and generic norms. Underrepresentation occurs according to what the

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text establishes as full and partial minds. So, the criteria vary, just like the norms do. However, we still need a comparative metric to meet the demands and individuality of each text. That metric is found in the five main factors that delimit partial minds: character ontology, mind styles, mental norms, genre, and narrative agents. After a section contextualizing cognitive narrative theories, I devote a subsection to each of these five, employing five close readings of novels to, in Roman Ingarden's language, "concretize" what I mean. Following those, I elaborate the significance of partial minds in terms of rhetorical effects and ethics. As mentioned, I end this introduction with a partial taxonomy of partial minds.

Finally, a note on terminology: to avoid non-intuitive terminological formulations, I avoid using keywords in overly specialized senses. It seems clear that an idea as broad as mind, intervening in countless fields, must be recognized as carrying with it conflicting connotations of methodology and even core assumptions about substance (monism, dualism) and metaphysics that lie outside my discussion. I choose the word *consciousness* in line with leading narratives theorists Marie-Laure Ryan's and Monika Fludernik's uses in their works and in contrast to Alan Palmer's terminological view. Since Palmer believes that *consciousness* and *thought* imply a focus on inner speech, he prefers the more clinical *mind* (*Fictional Minds* 19). In my mind, *consciousness* emphasizes the awareness and volition of agents, while *mind* emphasizes the neural circuitry of cognition. That said, since *consciousness*, *mind*, *cognition*, *mentality*, *thought*, and other related words offer shades on the same idea, I employ them based on their associations and contextual appropriateness. Additionally, my favoring of the term *partial* over *underrepresented* in this study should invoke both its primary

meanings: the minds I discuss are less complete than other minds, and this partialness

implies a partiality, a bias, on behalf of the author, narrator, implied author, and/or the

reader.

II. A Theory of Mental Representation and a Theory of Mind

"Only in narrative does the representation of levels of consciousness become possible. In any case, the medium of representation is something other than what is represented."
~ Ann Banfield, *Unspeakable Sentences*, 211

"[I]f philosophers and psychologists claim that our self and our mind are fundamentally the product of narrativization, it would follow that a discipline with decades of expertise in the theory and interpretation of narrative can contribute to the understanding of narrative self-construction."
~ Lars Bernaerts et al., Introduction to *Stories and Minds*,10

This argument that minds may be underrepresented presupposes a theory of

representation, which I lay out in this section. This discussion fits into the lineage of

scholarship that questions language's representational abilities, by following those who

continue to maintain a strong view of the fidelity of representation in light of

poststructural concerns. Although many have argued we are in a post-theory age (e.g.,

Vincent Leitch, "Theory Ends"), questions about language's ability to represent the world

with any kind of faithful correspondence remain hanging without clear consensus.

For example, using what Samuel Cohen calls "argument by parallelism" (99),

Walter Benn Michaels's continued movement against interpretation in *The Shape of the*

Signifier ought to be taken seriously. Michaels's very critique is premised on the effects

his prevalent homologies in this work have on the reader—that they sound true and

convincing because of their form, even while their meaning does not suggest such clarity.

This is a brilliant interpretive move. One of these homologies occurs in his first chapter,

which concludes this way (note his syntactic form): "But even if it is true that no one any

longer thinks that capitalism is wrong, it is not true that no one thinks that anything is wrong, and it is certainly not true that anyone—except, perhaps, in theory—thinks that there are no more misinterpretations. Which is just to say that, if history has ended, it has only ended in theory. Theory is already over in history" (81). His elliptical syntax uses the form of parallel constructions to suggest a logical resemblance between the two arguments, even while the meaning is not so apparent or strictly logical.

As Michaels marshals these homologies to deconstruct history, their self-evident validity in the effect they have on readers might also be seen as furthering evidence in line with the field of rhetorical narrative theory. That connection occurs in this way: the construction of rhetoric and narrative attempts to position certain intended effects in ways that readers cannot help but notice are much like Benn Michaels's stylistic 'truths.' As fictional narrative on the one hand and political and social history on the other hand are both open to interpretation, so are their effects always a matter of possibility and probability and never guaranteed. Benn Michaels's very method indiates that effects are traceable and predictable, and so in considering the practical uses of language and representation, my theory, dependent on the rhetorical effects of narrative, fits into this same admission of the impact of language on readers.

But partial minds also have a place in the debate about the representational faithfulness of language. Many narrative critics have found a medial position between the total skepticism some see deconstruction issuing and a complete rejection of it (e.g., Phelan, "The Implied Author" 123). In that spirit, other narrative theorists have incorporated the instability of representation and interpretation into their models of narrative, since, as Mark Currie rehearses, "a deconstructionist reads a narrative for

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contradictions and aims to sustain them, not to reduce the narrative to a stable, single structure or meaning" (40). In such a multiplicity of meanings, though, still lies a path of tracing narrative techniques to their possible rhetorical effects on the reader. In this vein, Homi Bhabha reminds us, "The subject is graspable only in the passage between telling/told, between 'here' and 'somewhere else,' and in this double scene the very condition of cultural knowledge is the alienation of the subject" (301). He thus underscores both that subjects are constructed in the process of telling the narrative and that such a dispossessed subject, contextually made meaningful via cultural knowledge, in its rejection becomes the very focus of narrative. As poststructural concerns with the difficulty of faithful representation in their very critique point toward the subject, so does this study—while admitting that representation is ambiguous but still reflects knowable meaning—take its cue from poststructuralism and makes as its subject that slippage which is the (partial) mind of subjectivities represented in narrative.

Somewhat more figuratively, partial minds dramatize language's instability in representing a signified through a signifier. Language's inability to covey presence, one might assert, *always* entails partial minds being the natural result of any attempt at representing them. However, bracketing such totalizing arguments about language's fidelity, there is a sense in which language sometimes conveys meaning and experience *better* than at other times, indicating degrees of representation. Indeed, although my argument contrasts "full minds" with "partial minds," both these terms ought to be taken in scare quotes. A mind in the real world is a moving, unstable thing, and so much more nebulous are the minds coded in fictional worlds. Partial-mindedness, then, dramatizes the very instability of language, suggesting its often-feeble, but—still, pragmatically—

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effective ability to represent, to transfer meaning. In this context, partial minds are a specifically *literary* problem, dealing with attempts at representing minds in linguistic narratives.

Other theorists have noted how this problem of weak representation occurs in literary characters' minds. Ann Banfield situates her argument that some language in narratives has no real-world counterpart by explaining that

> the problems which contemporary criticism [i.e., poststructuralism] raises are specifically those of the language of narrative: the importance of the representation of consciousness and the complex "shifting of point of view" possible only in narrative style, with the concomitant withdrawal of the author as a voice in the text and the resultant creation of the autonomous text. All this comes down to the fact that in narrative, subjectivity or the expressive function of language emerges free of communication and confronts its other in the form of a sentence empty of all subjectivity. (10)

What are these consciousnesses that have no intentional voice behind them? If Banfield is correct, then we find the clash of representing subjectivity in a form that often has no subjective voice. This convergence eventuates in many kinds of subjectivity and many varieties of the representation of minds, some of which are partial, others full. When representation becomes words on a page with no clear, if any, reference to real-world subjectivity, characters with only a meager amount of mind represented are a perfectly consistent result.

Another interlocutor who has picked up on the loss of self is Richard Poirier. Following an Emersonian trajectory through American literature, he identifies a trend he calls "writing off the self," a "call for self-erasure" leaving only a textual, linguistic presence (185). Self, while overlapping with uses of mind and consciousness, suggests a reflexive and even modern notion of identity, while my discussion concerns itself more with the progression of thoughts rather than the unity of them. As Poirier postulates the

circularity and paradoxicality of obliterating humanity through writing, he highlights the predominance of many influential novelists who do not represent people as "full" characters, such as Pynchon's population in *Slow Learner* (204). How are the minds of these characters to be understood? They are not all flat characters, but their thoughts are distorted beyond mimetic recognition. More than a theory of representation, in order to account for the loss of subjectivity, a theory of cognitive representation is needed.

Cognitive narrative theory[7] has taken up the call of analyzing fictional minds. It applies cognitive psychology to the study of fiction. One aims of cognitive narrative theory offers models to explain how minds are represented in narratives. To that end, my look at partial minds allows us to identify and follow a particular strain of represented minds. Now, while my category certainly has implications for real-world psychological conditions (such as schizophrenia or autism), the level at which I identify it, the level of representation (often called diegesis, *discourse*, or narration), means that it is only a designation for fictional constructs, a technique for representing mind rather than an actual state of mind.

One relevant question that has plagued cognitive narrative theory asks, "What are narrative minds?" I have alluded to different ways scholars have answered this question in this section so far, but a view that privileges the reader's role, espoused by Marco Caracciolo, divides the views on the representation of consciousness in text. Though he uses loaded language, Caracciolo distinguishes between Dorrit Cohn's "naïve representationalism," which holds that consciousnesses are things themselves in the text, and his view, "cognitive representationalism," which depends on readers' interaction with the text to produce mental representations (44). Indeed, Caracciolo takes the strong

position that "fictional consciousnesses cannot be represented (neither in the text nor in the reader's mind), since consciousness and subject experience seem to be largely impervious to representationalism," and he cites Daniel Hutto and other cognitive theorists who substantiate this view ("Fictional Consciousness" 46). His argument for the inability of fictional consciousnesses to be represented is complex and nuanced,[8] but his main point is that consciousness is solipsistic and unable to be successfully carried by language. I agree with Caracciolo theoretically, but his point of view somewhat misses the point of attempting that 'impossible' representation in the first place: representation of fictional minds may be unachievable, but the very attempt itself implies the importance of that attempt. In cognitive narrative theory, this juncture is where partial minds lie: they are the unrepresentable representations. Short of a faithful representation of the mind in words through narrative, partial minds overtly display the failure and recuperative attempt at representation.

For example, following Ruth Ronen and Manfred Jahn, Caracciolo looks at the opening lines of Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*, a passage that narrates the experience of Benjy watching the golfers from the fence: "Through the fence, between the curling flower spaces, I could see them hitting. They were coming toward where the flag was and I went along the fence. Luster was hunting in the grass by the flower tree. They took the flag out, and they were hitting" (Faulkner 3). About this passage, Caracciolo claims,

> [If] consciousness and experience cannot be represented[, then] narrative texts will always fall short of representing what it is like for a character to undergo an experience—in my Faulkner example, what it was like for Benjy to watch the golfers through a fence. They may represent . . . Benjy watching the golfers through a fence, but they will always miss the felt, subjective quality . . . of his watching. ("Fictional Consciousness" 54)

It is only through our awareness of our bodies in conjunction with our own phenomenal experience, he concludes, that the passage comes to having meaning for us (54). The possibility of representing a character's mind depends heavily on the reader to draw that set of words into a subjective experience.

Hence, Caracciolo's "cognitive representationalism" means that readers *enact* narrative consciousnesses ("Fictional Consciousness" 51). Caracciolo raises the importance of the reader's conscious experience into the formation and possibility of textual consciousnesses. As a reader experiences the text, she fills the language shell of minds, as a hand fills a glove. This formulation does not merely reword what we already know. Instead, Caracciolo's point means that a reader's consciousness is produced as a quotient of her interaction with the text, turning the text from object into part of her subjectivity. A character's mind means the joint mental state of character and reader, since the linguistic character catalyzes the phenomenological experiential development of the reader's mental state. As I demonstrate in each chapter, underrepresentation is not an isolated textual event that the reader may look on from a distance as Benjy does with the golfers, but rather one that invades her own mind and brings to the foreground of thought the mental exercises and aims of the narrative, as we do with Benjy. We cannot reach the effects of narrative without having some kind of experience with the text. I explain these effects more fully below in the section on strategic misrepresentation (IV).

III. Five Criteria of Partial Minds

As alluded to above, I now move into five domains that situate partial minds. Each of these criteria does not so much define a partial mind as set its boundaries among

different essential qualities of narrative. As I demonstrate, these factors aggregate so that

the application of all five projects a series of profiles of a certain type of partial minds.

After discussing these criteria, I look at the rhetorical and ethical effects of partial minds

(section IV), followed by a taxonomy which lays out the profiles of partial minds based

on these five factors (V).

III.i. The Ontology of Characters, in Brief

"Ultimately, due to the fact that it exists in language, a description of a character is only a metaphor; to translate the metaphor, or to appreciate it as metaphor, which implies having a dialectical understanding of the use of language in a text, is to approach the detached state of the civilized self, the self which exists in relation to other selves."

> ~ Thomas Docherty, *Reading (Absent) Character: Towards a Theory of Characterization in Fiction*, 23-4

Part of the payoff for studying partial minds comes from the light it sheds on the

debate concerning how to view literary characters, which I overview in this section.

Because a theory of partial minds deals in the degree of how much, or which parts, of a

character's mind the text represents or fails to represent, that theory suggests an

expansion and gradation of the extant categories for explaining the ontology of literary

characters themselves. Conversely, ontology of character representation ultimately, as I

will show, sheds light on partial representation. A theory of character ontology,

moreover, rests on the assumptions readers bring to the text. Such assumptions imply a

set of norms—no matter how variant or broad—that mental representations entail, which

I examine in detail shortly (III.iii).

What narrative consciousnesses are is best understood as a question of access. I

take the metaphor of access from Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan who explains that "its

connotations are double-edged. This term's duality epitomizes an argument that both

incorporates the problematization of representation and subjectivity and reestablishes them in spite of doubt" (*A Glace Beyond Doubt* 19, emphasis hers). So, my primary research question asks how the reader's access to these minds that exist in the *story* is determined by fictional representations of characters' thoughts and feelings in the *discourse*. The initial answer is that the cognitive representational techniques that the narrative uses to compose the *discourse* establish the basis for that readerly access. The tension lies in the ability of language to transcribe thought and, consequently, the mimetic fidelity of that attempt.

So, what are the cognitive representational techniques that we use to access narrative minds? Although I am arriving at her theory belatedly, Dorrit Cohn's classifications of representations of narrative minds inevitably begin discussions of narrative minds. Those classifications are *psycho-narration*, *quoted monologue*, and *narrated monologue*. Her categorization of textual techniques for representing minds should not be divorced from her underlying assumptions about minds, namely and in reference to the title of her landmark *Transparent Minds*, her belief that fiction's representations of minds allow access to fictional minds that we do not have in real life to any mind (8). The possible exception is our own minds.[9] Even then, these techniques in numerous respects differ from that "direct" mental access. In other words, they deploy symbolic means to represent minds, just as we in real life know others' thoughts only through methods of representation (facial expressions, actions, speech, etc.). In that sense, then, fictional minds are more akin to our knowledge of others' minds than to our own. Fictional minds are caught between these two divisions of knowledge about minds, since they both offer more knowledge than we could have about others and less

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knowledge than we could have about ourselves (c.f., Fludernik, *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology* 27). My goal is not to be wedded to these specific techniques as the only tools for judging mental representation; nonetheless, their definiteness grounded in formal properties of text provides a useful notation for identifying more global seams of partial minds.

Cohn's belief in the transparency of fictional minds—a metaphor of no set valence—suggests that the classifications she formalizes denote different degrees in our access to minds. They supply qualitative differences in our access to minds, since *quoted monologue* (updated by Palmer to *direct thought*) implies a strongly linguistic nature to thought, *psycho-narration* (Palmer's *thought report*) impersonally offers mental states, and *narrated monologue* (Palmer's *free indirect thought*) messily merges narrator with character. While these techniques supply formal methods for understanding fictional minds, the reader's tendencies in turning these verbal segments into concepts that resemble her knowledge of thoughts remains questionable in the fidelity of its attempt. That is to ask, back to the beginning, how transparent are techniques for representing the mind? I agree with Banfield's dissenting opinion that "[r]epresented consciousness is not a 'realistic reproduction' of the mind at work; it does not create 'transparent minds.' Rather, its contents are hypothetically reconstructed and represented in a language sensitive to its various modes" (211). While pure transparency seems a tall order for Cohn to defend, its questioning brings up a major division when interrogating the status of narrative minds.

Following this inquiry, Marie-Laure Ryan and Jennifer Harding suggest that determining the relevance of fictional minds means questioning to what degree we

assume that real minds are the source of characters' minds. The prevailing alternative is that character minds are textual constructs strictly limited to their status as representations. To figure out whether we should view literary characters, in terms of their mental representations, primarily as constructs or primarily as lifelike imitations, we must examine not just the method of mental representation—Cohn's triad—but the broader functions of the textual status of characters.

Uri Margolin, publishing a series of neglected but landmark pieces in the late 1980s and early 1990s, proposes four perspectives to organize the ontology of fictional characters. Inclusive of the two main views just mentioned, they are (1) the grammatical designation of an entity; (2) a designed, synthetic construct; (3) a thematic element; and/or (4) a hypothetical person (adapted from Margolin "The What" 1.2). Rather than seeing these four views as mutually exclusive, Margolin hinges them as relative to the research interests at hand; however to be fair, as he goes on to qualify, these four will not be proportionately taken up for every text, and so how we gauge them depends on that text's particular construction. Furthermore and key, the last three may be paired with Phelan's synthetic, thematic, and mimetic functions discussed above, tying Margolin's own concern with character ontology to Phelan's concern with communicative purpose (1.4).

Practically an answer in itself to the question of character ontology, Margolin focuses almost completely on the mimetic function. He extends this move by claiming, "[t]he general question, 'what is character?' reduces accordingly to the more specific one, 'what is character as an image of a possible person?'" (2.1). Not all narrative theorists agree with his reduction, as Maria Mäkelä has recently argued against this cognitive

mimesis, explaining that "by reducing fictional minds to exempla of actual human cognition we miss the essential dynamics between verbal art and real-life experientiality. . . . [I]f we assume that reading literary fiction requires the use of *exactly the same cognitive frames* we use when coping with our everyday lives, we will suffer serious literary-theoretical losses" (130, emphasis hers). The trouble with formulating partial minds through the mimetic lens is that it leads to the exclusion of the synthetic lens, i.e., characters as artificial constructs. Margolin explains that a synthetic angle on character requires "a means of fulfilling some rhetorical or organizational ends, of creating an aesthetic effect of one sort or another" (1.2). Clearly, we cannot neglect the synthetic for the mimetic, and indeed, Margolin's question above has no easy answers.[10]

Part of the trouble is that, as we know, readers' expectations about literary characters—shaped by genre, period, and individual perspectives—conflict when interpreting characters. But, reciting one of the perineal difficulties in narrative theory, Margolin cautions, "Since the human imagination is free, there is no guarantee that all invented individuals will conform to any pattern of regularity, coherence or consistency specified by logic or science. As a result, the individuality, uniqueness and continuity over time of nonactual individuals is not assured prima facie and depends entirely on the structure of the narrative world they inhabit" (2.2.1). We may not be able to find any consistent patterns in characters' ontology. And yet, frustratingly, Margolin seems to find no better reason to claim a character is strongly mimetic other than "our intuitive experience as readers" (2.2.1)[11]—granted, a trusty starting point, but unsatisfying as evidence.

Instead of this dead-end, as promised above I want to show that partial minds can shed light on our approach to the synthetic and mimetic natures of characters, even while those categories help define the nature of partial minds. As strategic attempts by an author, implied author, or narrator to reduce the mind of a character, partial minds depend on a deliberate curtailment of readerly expectations about minds. That is, to have a partial mind in a text, there has already been an assumption of both synthetic and mimetic functions of representations of character minds, as there are in most texts, and which must always be seen as co-operative. In order to recognize a mind as partial, readers realize the coded nature of textual minds both in their fidelity to (and deviation from) minds in the real world (their own and others') and the necessarily artificial stylization that those representations must sometimes take in order to highlight certain aspects of the mind.

The trouble, then, with Margolin's divisions of ways to look at characters and with a readers' ability to successfully identify and understand a partial mind is that concerning representations of the mind, it may be hard to distinguish when a mimetic end is being fronted over a synthetic end. For example, consider this passage from Richard Wright's *Native Son* when Bigger muses on the atrocities of Hitler and Mussolini:

> He was not concerned with whether these acts were right or wrong; they simply appealed to him as possible avenues of escape. He felt that some day there would be a black man who would whip the black people into a tight band and together they would act and end fear and shame. *He never thought of this in precise mental images; he felt it*; he would feel it for a while and then forget. But hope was always waiting somewhere deep down in him. (115, emphasis added)

Is the passage mimetic, synthetic, or thematic in regards to Bigger's thoughts? In the sense of whether it accurately represents a possible mind's workings and lived thinking-experience, it is hard to deny the insight of Wright's prose. But the passage itself

explicitly admits its synthetic structure when it lifts out its own representational design ("He never thought of this in precise mental images"). He did *not* mimetically experience these images, it claims; Wright has to give them to us to get at the gestalt of Bigger's thoughts, their underlying, unrepresentable nature that must defer mimetic method to synthetic method in order to be as realistic—i.e., as accurate to what Wright imagines are Bigger's actual thoughts—as possible. Representations of minds are often caught up in this tug-of-war between an accurate representation, within the means available, of the thought itself and an artificial construction attempting to imitate what that thought expressed. The former is the level of its experienced form—e.g., the long-held goal of stream-of-consciousness—but the latter is at the level of its significance to the thinker, perhaps not attainable in language except, as with Bigger, through non-mimetic language.

Representational functions conform to the parameters and goals of the narrative. A representation of a mind may function synthetically to the point of violating mimetic functions, and that violation may become less than or different than what the authorial audience would expect. While highly challenging due to ambiguity, parsing these cases depends on the larger thematic ends that the narrative is trying to achieve, as well as the conventions established by that work itself, further inflected by periodic and generic historical factors. The task is not impossible, but it does have many conditions to account for. Bigger, for example, is not underrepresented, even though the narrator defers to synthetic representations to express his thoughts. Indeed, the representations synthetically expressed do not diminish his mind but rather enlarge it: the vividness of his imaginations about Hitler and Mussolini gives the audience a richer sense of his mind, even while it fails to give them a more accurate transcription of his thoughts. *Native Son* works

thematically against the potentially biased readerly expectations about a black man's mind. Instead of producing a partial mind or merely a mimetic flow of thought, *Native Son* produces a full mind that claims it is even more complex than can be put to words. Synthetic aids thematic and reels against readerly mimetic bias in constructing Bigger's mind.

These representational functions are further inflected by other factors. As mentioned before, partial minds are a matter of degrees, so one angle to grading out minds is to apply to minds character categories that already possess this scalar quality. Such categories come from Baruch Hochman's mostly forgotten 1985 taxonomy of characters. Hochman avoids Margolin's heavily-drawn division between synthetic and mimetic by offering a sliding scale for each of his criteria. Two of these are useful for identifying partial minds: stylization and wholeness. On the one hand, there is minimal stylization, the default, which views characters "in terms of the way we naturally might perceive them if they really existed" (93). More than just mimetic or not mimetic, on or off, stylization sets up a continuum of mimetically-faithful representations. A character like Gertrude Stein's Melanctha seems maximally stylized in that her characterization does not aim to copy a real-life woman of her time and position, but, using repetitive phrasing, aims to enact the recursive nature of thought and action in structure. On the other hand, a minimally stylized character like John Dos Passos's Charley Anderson has a believable characterization in that he could very well express the transcribed language of someone from the early twentieth century. To this point, Dos Passos claimed about his USA trilogy, "[It] is the speech of the people" (vii).

Hochman's study, like many concerning character from the 1980s and early 1990s, does not discuss the representation of *minds* in detail. Applying minimal and maximal stylization to representations of consciousness, then, implies having a strong conception of what fiction that mimics the thought processes of real minds means—and perhaps even more uncertainly, what a figural or stylized representation of a real mind might look like in fiction. This character ontology relies not so much on mindreading—in short, thinking about what others are thinking—but on how those thoughts are represented. Not what, but how. In the example from *Native Son* above, Wright's representation of Bigger's thoughts seems vitally realistic. On the other side, to give a self-referential example that more obviously makes this point, David Lodge's novel *Thinks . . .* includes a moment when Ralph is recording his thoughts and thinks, "Ah, a blank, a definite blank, for an instant, not more than a second or two, I didn't have a reportable thought or sense impression, my mind as they say went blank, I thought of nothing, I just ammed . . ." (4). Throughout the novel, in Ralph's thought recordings Lodge uses the eponymous ellipsis (*Thinks . . .*) to omit momentary disruptions or gaps in Ralph's thinking. Certainly, there is a sense in which Lodge's style of representation mimics a first-person experience of thinking, but it does so in a maximally stylized, syrupy way. To reroute Phelan's terms, Lodge uses a synthetic means to achieve a mimetic and thematic end.

Also worth salvaging and reinvigorating from Hochman's taxonomy is the category of wholeness. A character may be represented more wholly or more partially. Hochman explains, "At the other end of the whole-part scale are the characters who are perceived as partial constructs. They may be—they often are—highly coherent and they

may even be minimally stylized, but they are on the whole felt to be a function of the action in which they are found and not beings who can be envisioned by themselves in their wholeness" (107-8). Hochman's analysis, like Margolin's, rests on our ability to envision characters, to intuitively know if they are lifelike. The easy example for whole/part is the use of synecdoche to represent a character, a mainstay in Hemingway's literary modernism in which a few choice details are enough for readers to color-in the whole character (112). If this conception is applied to mental representation, we arrive again at my thesis, this time from theory up: only parts of the whole of some characters' thoughts are represented. When that partial representation of a character's mind is not used synecdotally, but metaphorically—that is, when the partial representation of the mind does not suggest a larger whole but suggests a lesser consciousness—then the technique moves from conventional usage to rhetorically effective usage.

The way a partial mind derives from the combination of Margolin's model, Phelan's functions, and Hochman's categories depends on either the absence or the paucity of an expected trait. These shortchanges may occur through a breach in expected stylization or wholeness, or a crosscoding of synthetic, mimetic, and thematic purposes. For example, in Brin's science fictional world alluded to in my Introduction's opening paragraph, some of the clay dittoes, lesser versions of real people, do not have intellectual abilities; therefore, they are underrepresented by the paucity of a trait that we would otherwise expect to be whole. However, in my upcoming example, Cathy from *East of Eden* is represented with a paucity of mental moral codes; therefore, she is underrepresented by infringing too far on the mimetic for the sake of the thematic. While an exhaustive register of mental traits exceeds the scope of most research projects, any

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given reader's experience with narratives and possible mental representations provides

her with the full number of traits available to be underrepresented (since after all, readers

activate textual meaning). And as we shall see in the other chapters of this dissertation

ahead and in my table taxonomy below, the traits chosen for underrepresentation tend to

cluster around the same core few.

One more application should suffice to explain character ontology in relation to

partial minds. Mimetic and synthetic work together to uphold the thematic through a lack

of wholeness in the minimally stylized character of Cathy/Kate in Steinbeck's *East of

Eden*. She stands out as a character who is by all definitions evil. This is clear from her

actions, since the list of her cold-blooded deeds is excessive: sleeping with Charles while

pretending to love innocent Adam; shooting Adam point-blank; murdering the brothel's

Madam, Faye; and manipulating her sons. Making no allowances for her behavior,

Steinbeck even heavy-handedly claims that "Kate is a total representative of Satan" (qtd.

in Wyatt ix).

But a recitation of her evil deeds is well-known and not my point. I am interested

in Steinbeck's representation of this moral-less character, since that representation

reveals her mind as not having something that people in real life seem to have: a moral

dimension to thoughts. Cathy's actions are nearly the only insight into her mind that

relate to morality, while with other characters in the novel, we get an in-depth sense of

their minds in terms of morality. For example, consider the shielded and minimal-if-any

access to her thoughts we have after her father whips her and in the lead-up to the arson

she commits, burning her parents to death:

> She started to knit an afghan for her mother. . . . For her father Cathy kept a ready
> smile. . . . Even in school she was changed. Always she had been a good student,

but now she began to make plans for the future. She talked to the principal about examinations for her teaching certificate, perhaps a year early. . . . Cathy mended all of her clothes and put her things in order. . . . Cathy walked lightly, almost dancingly around the house and into the street. The trees were breaking into leaf and a few early dandelions were in yellow flower on the lawns. Cathy walked gaily toward the center of the town where the bank was. And she was so fresh and pretty that people walking turned and looked after her when she had passed. (84-6)

The chapter quietly concludes, "Cathy left a scent of sweetness behind her" (89).

Underrepresentation, as seen from these descriptions of her actions but not her thoughts, is a tool which highlights her amorality. These physical descriptions leave no room for direct presentation of her crafty thoughts. The interest in Cathy is not only her evil nature, but that her evilness is related only in terms of plot actions, not of mental representation. (As an opposing example, consider Tom Ripley in Patricia Highsmith's series. His mind is represented constantly, giving us a detailed psychological profile of his intentions.) Hence, she is strategically denied not only morality but representation of her lack of morality, her "Satanic" nature. The mental traces are only to be found in seeing through her deceptive actions. The polar opposite of the representation of Cathy, *East of Eden*'s Cal is constantly represented with his thoughts (e.g., "Out of revenge Cal extracted a fluid of power, and out of power, joy. It was the strongest, purest emotion he knew" [349]; and "From his first memory, Cal had craved warmth and affection, just as everyone does" [444]). So, lack of represented morality is the textual norm that outs Cathy as a partial mind.

Cathy is not, however, represented solely as evil, giving her a more rounded, believable, even mimetic characterization. For example, look at her moment of insight right before she shoots Adam: "'Dear,' she said softly, 'I didn't know you would take it so. I'm sorry, Adam'" (202). The rare expression of remorse still indicates her

predominantly cold-blooded mindset, but this dimension to her mind opens up the possibility of redemption found in her final act of willing her fortune to Aron (553). This moral choice suggests that she has come to see the problem of her evil actions, but by the time she realizes this, it is too late for her to change. What's more, Steinbeck's use of alcohol to turn her honest (235, *passim*), even when that honesty usually leads to more destruction (sleeping with Charles, murdering Faye) offers the ironic antithesis of the good that morality can do for her—what good is honesty if it leads to pain? Perhaps the most summative line about Cathy's mind emphasizes how the norms of the morality of others in the novel foreground her own problematic mental state: "It is possible to some people, and it was possible for Kate, to hold two opposing thoughts at the same time" (474). For much of *East of Eden*, Cathy is represented with less of a moral mind than any of the other round characters. It is through the filling of that partialness, balancing of her representation, and paradoxically, her ability to think conflicting thoughts, that Steinbeck brings home his complex views of ethics and human nature.

III.ii. Mind Styles

"[T]he first mimesis of consciousness is the mimesis of other minds."
~ Dorrit Cohn, *Transparent Minds*, 8

Having located partial minds at the intersection of the mimetic, synthetic, and thematic functions of cognitive representation, I now move to a more concrete style of analysis to pinpoint them. Represented minds are at root linguistic constructions, which means that their grammatical makeup can tell us something about their content. According to Roger Fowler in *Linguistics and the Novel*, the narrator's focalization of the Neanderthal man Lok from William Golding's *The Inheritors* avoids transitive clauses

that have humans as the subject; humans as subject tend to be intransitive (105-6). Taking

this linguistic pattern, we can make inferences about Lok's view of humans and even the

quality of his mental states—an entrance into partial minds. Not just *what* his mind

represents, but *how* his mind represents humans indicates his thoughts about the agency

of humans. This kind of study, coined by Fowler, identifies a mind style,[12] or

> any distinctive linguistic presentation of an individual mental self. A mind-style
> may analyse a character's mental life more or less radically; may be concerned
> with relatively superficial or relatively fundamental aspects of the mind; may seek
> to dramatize the order and structure of conscious thoughts, or just present the
> topics on which the character reflects or displace preoccupations, prejudices,
> perspectives and values which strongly bias a character's world-view but of
> which she may be quite unaware. (*Linguistics and the Novel* 103)

This method provides no set qualities that the mind style might cover, but it helps narrow

our approach by grounding generalizations about a mind in the specific linguistic

representations that become patterned. Although Fowler's list of mental qualities does not

include how narration inflects mind style, this method of identifying mind styles helps

identify partial minds.

Cognitive stylistics expands on Fowler's work and bridges linguistic approaches

to textual analysis and literary applications of cognitive science. This subfield employs

the application of a linguistic analysis of a text to cognitive models (Semino, "A

Cognitive Stylistic Approach" 98). For example, as Fowler points out, if a character does

not have the words to describe something, s/he may be "underlexicalized," meaning that

the character is limited in his/her words used to express that thing (*Linguistic Criticism*

152). Semino, however, would push this underlexicalization into the character's

knowledge in terms of his/her thoughts. Recall LaPlante's Jennifer from my third

opening example in the Introduction. Due to Alzheimer's, she has forgotten the identities

of the people around her, so her mind contains indefinite knowledge about those people.

But this information is available to us because of her lack of words through which she

can be focalized via *free indirect discourse*. As the narrator takes up her insufficient

language, we readers also experience the state of her mind. Jennifer's mind style prevents

contextualized cognition of others, so LaPlante uses that representational technique

strategically.

Mind styles help not just describe but isolate partial minds. Take for example,

Ken Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest.* Using cognitive stylistics, Semino and

Kate Swindlehurst convincingly argue that metaphors of machines are the dominant

characteristic of Chief Bromden's mind style, citing mechanical descriptions such as

Miss Ratched and the whole institutional system as the Combine. But the predominance

of mechanical diction goes beyond metaphor: "machinery images represent more than

just a cognitive habit, or Bromden's favorite way of making sense of and describing the

world. . . .[T]he language of the novel suggests that the distinction in Bromden's mind

between source and target domains tends to break down so that he seems to believe that

people, for example, really are machines" (Semino and Swindlehurst 152). Bromden

literalizes what readers take metaphorically. He does not have a normal mental capacity

for metaphor, which makes him a partial mind.

Furthermore, Semino and Swindlehurst count the instances of machinery

metaphors, noting that they occur more than three times less frequently after Bromden's

raising-of-his-hand scene, a turning point for his agential development (163). Semino and

Swindlehurst pick up on the scent of "the impression of a mind that works oddly"—and

then as if to clarify but really to repeat, they continue, "that tends to perceive things in an

unusual way" (150). But they do not push this impression further into saying that Bromden's mind, due to his literalization of metaphor, is underrepresented in the first half of the novel, only reaching a level that approaches normal mental representation as he becomes a person who can exert his will. So, identifying a mind style, especially when paired with a cognitive focus (here, with metaphor), can isolate the textual techniques used to fashion a partial mind.

But locating a mind style that seems out of place and calling it a partial mind is only a small segment of the kind of identification of minds that I aim to do. Because mind styles are linguistic patterns, they leave out other representational qualities. As Semino and Swindlehurst admit, their view of the mind presumes that language is inseperable from thinking (144). In the sense of minds embedded in linguistic narratives, yes this is the case, but in the sense of the debatably nonlinguistic nature of mind itself, which later gets recorded as words, the debate continues, since many theorists do not see thoughts as completely linguistic. Cognitive stylistics can only work to a certain, linguistically-limited point. A character's lack of recognizable mental motivation like Bartleby the Scrivener's or the familiar and narrational reasons a narrator like Oates's Judd might represent his sister's trauma with a black mark on the page—these combine a larger reading of the narrative with close linguistic analysis. So cognitive stylistics alone cannot provide all the answers. While Semino identifies vocabulary, grammar, speech representation, metaphor, and conversational behavior as patterns that can identify unusual minds and which usefully find and describe the instantiation of a partial mind, they provide little in the way of showing its meaning ("Deixis and Fictional Minds" 420). My taxonomy, below, offers a way for understanding these minds as cognitive kinds of

incompletion and underrepresentation that have particular strategic narrative effects. We

need the ability not just to identify mind styles linguistically but to show how they differ

across works in American literature, to show that these types of underrepresentation and

unusual representation have strategic rhetorical goals, and to demonstrate how

underrepresentation interpellates the mind of the reader. Achieving this level of

explanation requires recourse to other comparative metrics.

III.iii. Cognitive Norms of Mental Representation

"No matter how absurd, tangled, or unreal a text may be, readers will tend to regard what
they consider 'normal' as a criterion by which they can give meaning to the text."
<div align="right">~ Mieke Bal, Narratology: Introduction to
the Theory of Narrative, 12</div>

I have argued that partial minds differ, depending on whether a text emphasizes

the synthetic or mimetic functions of characters' mental representations. In mimetically

imitating real minds, partial minds deviate from cognitive norms which readers and

authors co-produce by giving less of a character's mind than those norms would indicate.

Synthetically-produced partial minds, by contrast, depend on the character's function in

the narrative and the mental stylization of that character, either of which can be made to

underrepresent a character's mind. Though both functions are co-operative, each work

has its own baseline of emphasizing one over the other. Realizing both functions,

Steinbeck synthetically withholds from Cathy a moral mental representation, and since

she in other respects appears lifelike (a mimetic attempt), this omission strikes us as

falling short of a normal set of mental traits. However, there is no master list of all

potentially representable qualities of mind, and so readers are faced with judging this

work, as all works, and its use of partial minds based on more contextual factors.

Many theorists touch on the possibility that there are standards for mental representation, and yet, they tend to skirt the issue, always leaving it unelaborated. Mieke Bal argues that readers bring their own sense of normality to a text (12). Likewise, in a cognitive study of character Ralf Schneider deduces that readers assume a "default" projection of a character until they build up information to distinguish the character from a preset amalgamation of assumptions (16). Such explanations logically fall back on Ryan's oft-cited Principle of Minimal Departure, which proposes that in narrative, unless otherwise noted, the ontological qualities of characters and worlds conform to our own world's standards and expectations (*Possible Worlds* 51). These accounts can be expanded by looking at patterns across texts. But how specifically do we build a set of mental norms to regulate different styles of mental representation?

One route is through Hochman's categories of stylization and wholeness already introduced, which propose that readers bring a standard to the text about how lifelike or how synthetically inflated they expect a character to be. As Hochman elaborates, "After all, when we say that something is stylized, we mean that we can define the original, or the raw material, or the norm that is deformed or reformed in the course of its creation. That something must be *there* before it can be shaped to a greater or lesser degree in its re-presentation" (90, emphasis original). In other words, narratives use representation to either enhance or diminish our readerly assumptions about minds. In doing so, they follow a set of implicit cognitive norms, and in breaking those norms of mental representation, they produce partial minds.

These cognitive norms, of course, vary across readers, interpretive communities, genres, and time periods. So by comparing works' methods of accessing the mind and

seeing corollaries among them, we can contextualize the norms of mental representation. Cognitive norms may operate one of two ways: either across works by establishing patterns of mental representation that distinguish works from each other, or within works to set one character apart from the others.

To begin with, what are these cognitive norms? Margolin suggests five criteria for a mimetic character,[13] and the second quality calls for characters to establish "individuation" by meeting certain "intensional" mental traits, indicating that there is a particular set of mental traits that could provide the standard bases for mindedness in narratives (2.2.2). And yet, the synthetic is always infringing on the mimetic so that even if there were an exhaustive list of mental traits, such a list could be represented in many different ways by the synthetic construction of the text. Thus, the range of these traits is nearly innumerable, as seen in the extreme example of an alien mind like Vonnegut's Tralfamadorians from *Slaughterhouse-Five*, who see all of time at once. Representing their minds is possible and even suggestive of certain qualities of the temporal limitations of our own minds, but no list of mental traits or fictional mental norms is likely to deductively include their mental abilities in it.

Of course, many disciplines offer tentative congregations of mental traits. Analytic philosopher John Searle sets down twelve normal traits of the mind in his work *The Rediscovery of the Mind.*[14] Cognitive scientists like Antonio Damasio have expanded the traditional boundaries of cognition into emotions and dispositions, and narrative theorists like Patrick Colm Hogan have developed emotional universals of the human mind in stories. Psychologists classify normal mentality in the DSM, while some sociologists examine patterns of emotions and their cause and effect of one another.

Phenomenologists look at the flow of experience and the mind's relation to the physical world. This is all to say that there is no consensus for how to look at *all* the qualities of mind that might be considered normal (not to mention, representable); consequently, in trying to lay out the qualities of a partial mind, its deviation from mental standards of representation must deductively rest on something besides a catalogue of real or theorized mental traits that fictional minds reflect.

So, instead, I aim to show how the norms of fictional consciousness can be analyzed relative to each work, a process inflected by genre, time period, and audience. To expand on an earlier example, let me compare two works: Raymond Carver's minimalist short story "Cathedral" does not probe very deeply into the minds of all its characters, so the lack of mental representation, or the partial-mindedness, of a character is not a result of the same textual techniques as Carson McCullers' psychologically penetrating modernist novel *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter.* The narrator of "Cathedral" is deprived of the minded quality of empathy until the end of the story. Besides his brutish behavior, the short sentences, limited descriptions, and focus on action and sensory description clue us in to the narrator's concerted lack of empathy. There is simply not much information in a minimalist story like this one to develop his mind, so these other factors that might be commonplaces in a longer or denser work serve through their very inclusion to highlight how late his empathy with the blind man arrives. The style of the work thus compounds his lack of empathy, his dominant mind style, by making it even more noticeable.

McCullers, however, in *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter* contrasts many minds to show that one is partial. McCullers pinpoints Mr. Singer's partial-mindedness not as a

function of his deafness, but instead his deafness is the physical manifestation that ironically contrasts with his more profound lack: his inability to understand others. His obsession with his friend Antonapoulos—and total dependence on him to the point of suicide, compounded by his inability to see that Antonapoulos has no particular care for him—stands out to readers as a serious question. Reading Mr. Singer's mind as incomplete reveals a breach in the cognitive norms of this world, which are, admittedly, not normal to begin with (Biff's borderline pedophilia, Dr. Copeland's emotional shortness, Mick's reveries into music, Antonapoulos's nonresponsiveness to communication). George Butte's argument that minds are often caught up in thinking about each other in an intersubjective network applies cogently to this story, since mental interdependence pervades: Mr. Singer depends on Antonapoulos while the other main characters all depend on him for their mental vitality. In supporting the others' minds, Mr. Singer's own mind loses its independence and requires Antonapoulos for its only source of (unrequited) empathy. So even while aberrant empathy marks both the narrator of "Cathedral" and Mr. Singer as partial minds, due to the mental representations' different constructions, we cannot directly compare the construction of characters' minds in these two works in order to fully determine the partial mind, since they have their own sets of standards. We certainly may see some scale of partial minds by contrasting the two works, but for a fuller picture, we must resort to the internal norms of the works themselves to make sense of how mental underrepresentation occurs.

Though different from work to work, cognitive norms do have some similarities in their mutual dependence on the interaction between audience and author. The norms established by the text come through what Peter Rabinowitz calls the *authorial audience*,

a hypothetical audience for whom the author writes, making assumptions about their beliefs (21). We read by being aware of this audience and the author writes by assuming its interpretative norms; only then do deviations from it make sense and stress certain aspects of the text (31). So those cognitive norms that the author assumes are in tension with the actual norms the reader brings to the text, themselves established by cultural and critical reading practices, but the specifics of which fall outside the scope of my study.

I should reiterate, though, that mental norms, different from other character norms, develop through the reader's own phenomenological progression. In my understanding of consciousness in narratives, the mind represented exists not in the text but is a product of the interaction between the linguistic text and the reader. As mentioned before, Caracciolo explains that fictional consciousnesses result from an experiential process that allows for readers to *enact* characters' consciousnesses ("Fictional Consciousness" 57). Mind does not have the ease of being the same for everyone, so text and reader play greater roles in its fictional formation than they do for, say, assumptions about the layout of New York City, which while experienced differently, can be checked with agreed-upon knowledge.[15]

A slightly less abstract way to solve the problem of cognitive norms involves the isolation not of *what* norms are, but of *how* norms of represented consciousnesses are broken. That is to ask, what methods of mental representation are modified in order to create more-or-less stylized or more-or-less whole characters? It would be shortsighted to see Cohn's textual techniques—although I primarily use Palmer's updated terms—of *direct thought*, *thought report*, and *free indirect discourse* as always having the same effects. As mind styles are in the end a product of linguistic patterns, so too are cognitive

norms in the end instituted through the representations of minds in the text. Thus, the execution of mental representation, not just its content, alters the way the reader perceives the character's mind.

For example, cognitive norms established within a work can come from the neglect of one method of mental representation and the proliferation of others. In *Rabbit, Run* John Updike establishes a mental norm of using *free indirect discourse* to present his characters' thoughts, though mainly just Rabbit's. Updike breaks this mental norm in the long scene from Rabbit's wife Janice's point of view that narrates her getting drunk and drowning their daughter (207-20). Readers do not take Janice as a complex character until her mind becomes the subject of focalization in that scene. But it is that very forward progression of the narrative stalling by representing Rabbit's mind up to that point that makes the switch to Janice's point of view turn her from a simple character to a complex character who is underrepresented. The very moment that reveals her thoughts is what changes the way we view the novel's attempt to represent her (that is, at this point we come to think, "She is a complex character too."). But the paucity of representation simultaneously reminds us how little her mind is represented and that the only important scene in which we get her thoughts is a scene of drunkenness (mental distortion) and child neglect (breach of ethics). We can thereby see the larger narrative's arrangement of the *discourse* so as to confer on her only a partial mental representation.

Norms of characters' consciousnesses are shaped within a work over time, as we must come across many different representations of characters' minds to see the mind styles that are normal to that work and that are broken to signal underrepresentation. Caracciolo points out that a major problem in the criticism dealing with the

representations of minds is that it tends to look at isolated passages rather than the build-up of minds that occurs across a work ("Fictional Consciousness" 57). Although some of my examples admittedly only cite a few passages, the perspective of partial minds evaluates the cognitive norms throughout the work, seeing what methods of mental representation are employed, what mind styles are activated, and what criteria of mimetic or synthetic characters are met and to what degree. Hence, the other chapters of my dissertation take as comprehensive as possible looks at novels in arguing for the partials minds within them.

Two more areas, genre and narrative agents, offer further ways of specifying how a partial mind might occur in a narrative. After completing my analysis of this set of limiting factors of partial minds, I go on to explain their textual and rhetorical effects.

III.iv. Genre

"As soon as the word 'genre' is sounded, as soon as it is heard, as soon as one attempts to conceive it, a limit is drawn. And when a limit is established, norms and interdictions are not far behind: 'Do,' 'Do not' says 'genre.'"

~ Jacques Derrida, "The Law of Genre," 56

"In all of these instances, minimal and maximal stylization of character involves manipulation of conventional norms for characterization. The norms include a considerable range of possibilities, many of which are related to genre."

~ Baruch Hochman, *Character in Literature*, 95

Let me summarize how my categories have situated partial minds so far. The ontology of fictional characters decides to what degree partial minds are mimetic or synthetic; mind styles and their cousin techniques of mental representation provide specific textual methods for identifying characters' thoughts as underrepresented; and cognitive norms—or the breaking of norms—account for the relative variance in how

those specific linguistic techniques produce different mental configurations across works. Similar to norms, genre adds a new layer to these by projecting not only the likelihood of finding a partial mind in a particular work but the fashion in which that work will represent a mind.

As I have argued, the promotion or subordination of Dorrit Cohn's division of *free indirect discourse*, *direct thought*, and *thought report* act within works to call attention to some minds as lesser representations than others. Now, so-called experimental forms of mental representation, such as the use of images to represent the mind in *We Were the Mulvaneys*, the use of epistles to capture mind in *Herzog*, or the use of science fictional thought-transcribing devices in *Thinks. . .* are also common signals of deviations from mental norms that do not easily fit into Cohn's three categories. However, more to their point and purpose, these often involve the intentional breach of a genre's standards for mental representation. Thus, while norms as a general category shape how to read degrees of mental representation, within specific genres those norms become tighter and their breach becomes more easily identifiable. My aim here is not to lay out a thorough history of generic characterizations of mind but to offer a few insights into the ways a particular pair of example genres, science fiction and crime fiction, specify their use of representations of consciousness and, finally, to tease out how the process of identifying partial minds can be developed from any potential genre.

Critics N. Katherine Hayles and David Lodge demonstrate the increasing prevalence of cognitive ideas being dramatized in science fiction and futuristic genres. Hayles' repeated citations of William Gibson and Neal Stephenson emphasize how different kinds of cognitive characterization are developed by these genres. The

completely bodiless, digital characters of Dixie and Wintermute in *Neuromancer* easily fit the bill of mental underrepresentation, having no physical correlates with which to experience the world (much like the artificial intelligence in Richard Powers' *Galatea 2.2*). Hayles also opens the door to partial minds through her discussion of distributed consciousness, which is the addition of environment to thoughts, in order to highlight how information processing depends on more than just the immediately accessible knowledge in the brain.[16] If a character's thoughts are transferred to the environment, depending on the method of representation, that action could result in the case of a partial mind. In Stephenson's *Snow Crash*, for example, a work which explicitly and metafictionally foregrounds the mind/body debate, protagonist Hiro Protagonist, who spends most of his time in the Metaverse (an early Matrix or immersive internet), transfers the production of his thoughts to computers. The generic use of partial minds through computer software becomes a conventional trend in science fiction.

Indeed, both Gibson and Stephenson fit into what Francisco Ortega and Fernando Vidal circumscribe as the genre of neuronovels, defined by the explicit and thematic foregrounding of neuroscientific terminology. However, while we might at first blush think that these novels are the source of partial minds, perhaps the perfect genre in which to experiment with alternative degrees of mind, Ortega and Vidal rightly admit in their wide-ranging survey of works that "neuronovels do not radically neurologize the crucial features of personhood but blend a neurobiological vocabulary with introspective or phenomenological descriptions" (346). Through neurological insights, neuronovels may conventionally include partial minds as part of their inevitable divisions of the traditionally-viewed unified self. However, their focus is not with the modification of the

self in terms of degrees of consciousness as indicators of strategic underrepresentation. Neurolit's generic use concerns the physical brain, less the representation of grades of phenomenally-experience consciousness. In Phelan's lingo, thematic function trumps mimetic.

In *Strange Concepts and the Stories They Make Possible*, Lisa Zunshine ties the interest in many science fiction novels to our cognitive capacity for making untenable categories. When novels, such as those dealing with cyborgs, break the assumptions we bring to new categories, authors subvert the boundaries of those categories to pique our interest (53, *passim*). Along similar lines, Darko Suvin has described science fiction as at its core forcing readers into the cognitively unfamiliar (26). But both neuronovels and science fiction more broadly are not the only genres that dabble in new divisions of mind. They appear in many recent works of more realistic styles. I am interested not only in the rather obvious conventional adoption of partial minds in science fiction as a ploy of the technological creation of cyborgs or parasitic aliens, but instead in the technique's occurrence in realist genres.

Quite simply, meeting or breaking generic conventions may lead to the production of a character without the cognitive qualities that genre considers to be full mental representation. We can see how this layer of partial mind delimitation plays out in further narrowing and identifying Marianne's mind. *We Were the Mulvaneys* involves a realist mode in a lightly gothic context, but the novel turns away from strictly realist conventions. These suggest something unusual is happening: graphics, breaking narrative time, polyphonic and impossible narration, and what Rick Altman calls multiple-focus narration all indicate the partial-mindedness of the Mulvaney daughter Marianne, as

projected by Judd. The vague mind style that Judd uses to represent her mind, inflected with a series of repeated semi-flashbacks of her rape, sets up the possibility of a partial mind. The cognitive norms within *We Were the Mulvaneys*, since they exclude anyone else from such mind styles, further isolate Marianne's representation. Judd's status as what I argue is a quasi-narrator adds a complication, since Judd's own telling in the *discourse* is reflected in the original *story* that took place. Finally, the expectations of realist gothic fiction help interpret the meaning of the partial mind in the novel: its intended effect does not aim to set up Marianne as another type of consciousness but to add a representational method for showing—from a perspective that gives access to her interior thoughts—the severity of her suffering. Appropriate to the genre, the use of partial minds has an almost grotesque touch, using the black image reproduced in my Introduction to be the mark of the inability to represent Marianne's trauma, the representational tool of a partial mind. The effect on the reader is the prevention of a direct or adequate representation of her pain, even while the reader is faced directly with its absence.

To complicate matters, genre also bifurcates this idea of "intended effects." While this subsection's epigraph from Derrida emphasizes the interpellation of genre on subjects with the result of erecting rules, Rabinowitz points out that readers may misapply rules or apply the wrong rules when making interpreting generic conventions (175). Such misjudgments can distort or even ruin the intended effects of the author. Rabinowitz, discussing Raymond Chandler's *The Big Sleep*, points to Chandler's deliberate violation of the three main conventions of classical detective fiction developed by S. S. Van Dine and others.[17] As a result of this nonobservance, the initial reviewers

completely missed the novel's irresolute ending (200). This kind of misapprehension easily applies to mental representational deviations in genres. Cognitive generic norms—meaning, the typical methods for representing consciousness in a certain genre—tend to be more implicit than codified generic conventions like Van Dine's mandated plot criteria. Consequently, they are less ingrained through discursive practices, less explicated, and more fluid across genres. Breaking a mental generic convention, in fact, requires more aid from criticism in order to identify these multitudinous and difficult-to-see conventional breaks. So, a key task in identifying partial minds is finding the generic conventions related to representations of consciousness and showing how their being upset results in a lesser representation of mind.

For example, because of the genre of Patricia Highsmith's Ripley series (suspense or crime fiction), Tom Ripley has a different set of mental norms than other works and an increased importance of his thoughts. To this end, Highsmith points out, "The suspense writer often deals much more closely with the criminal mind, because the criminal is usually known throughout the book, and the writer has to describe what is going on in his head" (*Plotting and Writing Suspense Fiction* 56). Not easily separable genres, suspense, detective, and crime fiction[18] specialize in characters' thoughts, motives, and psychological gameplay. Due to these, strategic underrepresentation has the added function of tricking the reader by, as Zunshine contends, proffering or withholding key information at certain times (*Why We Read Fiction* 141). A character's thoughts may be underrepresented because she is the murderer, for example, as occurs in Agatha Christie's *After the Funeral* in which the murderer's thoughts are given, but their thinker's identity is cleverly withheld. The obscuration, deliberate omission, or weaker presentation of

thoughts are all characteristic subtypes of partial minds in detective and crime fiction. Genre not only heightens their effectiveness, but in its subversion of their conventional usage, it manifests an important and fundamentally generic quality of partial minds.

III.v. Narrative Agents

"[N]o literal representation of the human mind *as experienced* is possible."
> ~ Michael S. Kearns, *Metaphors of Mind in Fiction*, 16, emphasis original

Despite Kearns' claim, many narrative agents—be it narrator, character, or implied author—try to represent the lived experience of characters' thoughts. So besides turning to character ontology, mind styles, mental norms, and genres as indicators of a partial mind, narrative agents offer a final set of limits on partial minds. We might alternatively call this category rhetorical agents, emphasizing the communicative structure that governs the transmission of narrative. This design often involves multiple agents representing at once. For example, there is a point in *We Were the Mulvaneys* when the middle son, Patrick, focalized through his brother Judd, imagines what his father is thinking of the objectified Marianne. In cases like this, the rhetorical roles of implied author, narrator (Judd), focalized character (Patrick), and second degree focalized character (father) all aid in conferring a partial mind on the objectified character (Marianne). Nested levels of consciousness offer different configurations of partial minds.

So, a partial mind need not be partial because of the production of a mind in a certain way by a third-person narrator alone. It could be that, because of their functional role in the narrative, a character narrator, the implied author(s), or combinations of these

agents convey partial-mindedness. The key question to ask about narrative agents is, "Who confers partial representation on a mind?" Deciding whether it is a character narrator, a third-person narrator, an implied author, or two or three of these in conjunction further narrows the process of isolating partial minds and further determines to what degree the reader participates in the co-creation of partial-minded consciousnesses.[19]

Sometimes, it is a character narrator. These instances may be either explicit or implicit, a quality of partial minds that also applies to third-person narrators, but not to implied authors, which always employ implicit partial-mindedness (see Chapter 4). Throughout John Barth's *The End of the Road*, character narrator Jake Horner claims that his mind is no longer there, since for a time he "ceased to exist" (33), was "a complete blank" (54), "wasn't anything before" (58), and "ran out of motives" (79). He actively removes from himself and his friend's wife Rennie any traces of normal minds in terms of having motives and continuous thoughts. This explicit omission is compounded by his implicit incompleteness: Horner is pathologically ambivalent to the extent that his doctor makes him employ random methods, such as alphabetizing his actions, to make decisions. He as character narrator confers on himself the blankness of mental activity and will.

This method of partial mindedness, both explicitly and implicitly conferred by a character narrator on him/herself, only weakly delivers partial minds, because the attribution occurs only in the *story* and not in the *discourse*. Dialogue is thought by many narrative theorists to be a live, one-to-one correspondence between the *story* and the *discourse* (c.f., Genette 109), and since this kind of partial mind attribution usually occurs

through dialogue, there is little depth to its significance to the narrative beyond the views of a few characters. Besides that, character narrators who confer partial minds on themselves often prevent intersubjective creation of mental representation, which adds dimension and ethical import to their inclusion.

The way the character narrator provides information and judgments also shapes the way a partial mind comes across. Phelan offers three axes for the kinds of information that the narrator provides: reporting, perceiving/interpreting, and evaluating/ethicizing (*Living to Tell About It* 50). Because everything a narrator tells might fall under one of these, they constitute the ways that partial minds can be transmitted. For example, in Chang-Rae Lee's *Native Speaker*, when character narrator Henry Park describes his auntie with, "She doesn't seem like she's anything. . . . nothing in her face" (68), we can see his *ethical* misconstrual of her identity, his projecting his own insecurities onto her cognitive make-up even while he seems to *report* his own thoughts correctly as well as *perceive* the world (auntie's face) correctly. Like narratorial (un)reliability, narratorial partial minds may only come through one of these three communicative axes. Character narrator partial minds should not be confused, however, with when the character narrator him/herself is a partial mind but not by his/her own attribution. For when a partial mind is leveled at a character narrator, it is not the narrator who enacts the partial mind, but the implied author, as in Jennifer in *Turn of Mind* who tells what she sees but what she sees is through the foggy memory of Alzheimer's, the representation of which is ultimately in the hands of the implied author.

Although as Seymour Chatman perceptively notes, technically there is no such thing as third-person narration since any speaker is ostensibly an "I" (209). Non-

character, "third-person" narrators make up a second group of agents who may deliver the partial mind. Third-person narrators' conferring of partial mindedness to a character means the odd combination of grammatical distance and authoritative presence: they are not the main character's mind as in first-person, but neither are they so distant, since they compose the story, that they have no voice, like the implied author. This duality couples with a representational—which in this case also implies rhetorical—reason for underrepresenting the mind, even when the narrator often has no obvious relational stake in producing the underrepresented character in that way. As teller of someone else's tale, third-person narrators often care more about the virtuosity of their telling than the content of their story, the ideal location for testing out representational anomalies, such as partial minds. Third-person narrators employ partial minds to deepen their intended representational effects.

In the case of Saul Bellow's *Herzog*, the third-person narrator's use of partial mind appears to be surface-level: Herzog oscillates between sanity and insanity, so representational distortions of his mind, such as the letters he composes throughout the novel and standard use of *thought report*, express that tension. Yet such a clinical designation of "sane" or "insane" is skirted by the narrator's emphasis on providing, through Herzog's letters, a qualitative distinction of his thoughts that seems to preclude an easy answer of sane or insane. The partial mind occurs through the contested actions of his letter writing, which serve as pseudo-physical carriers of his thoughts (not to mention as a non-science fictional use of Hayles' distributed consciousness). His letters, like *free indirect discourse*, do not exist to his world in a meaningful, objective way in that they do not actually get sent and are only private epistles he writes when no one is

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around—much like thoughts—and so for all practical purposes they are not real things. But neither are they pure expressions of his mind, since they take on that physical and linguistic form, which is very different from the phenomenological experience of consciousness. Rather, they remain in an indeterminate status, between thought and physicality. Their advantage in the *discourse* is that they do express Herzog's thoughts to the reader in a different kind of way: yes, as fragmented, but also as qualitatively stalwart reifications of his otherwise vague thoughts. This materiality circumvents the reader's inclination to write-off his thoughts as insane, the obvious consequence of the fragmented modern world. As the letters both allege his agency and subvert that very allegation, they do so in the realm of consciousness, depleting Herzog of his expected docket of thoughts while circumventing that expectation with their ambiguous status.

The needed objectification of Herzog's thoughts is aided by use of third-person narrator, rather than first-person, since the letters' material fictional status have the same authority as everything else in the work. Readers do not doubt the letters' reality as they might if a first-person Herzog, his sanity in jeopardy, told us about them—much as readers question Humbert Humbert in *Lolita*. Readers are much less mere observers or judges of Herzog's insanity, since the dual perceptions of Herzog's thoughts prevent any kind of Manichean designations. Herzog's mind resists full representation, making him too slippery to pin down. As Irving Howe eloquently puts it, "We are made captive in the world of Herzog . . . the consciousness of the character forms the enclosing medium of the novel" (184)—thanks to partial minds.

Implied authors, abstract in their very ontology, require more extrapolation than character narrators or third-person narrators as conferrers of partial minds. Chatman

clarifies their difference in role when he compares how "the narrator's rhetorical effort is to prove that his version of the story is 'true'; the implied author's rhetorical effort, on the other hand, is to make the whole package, story and discourse, including the narrator's performance, interesting, acceptable, self-consistent, and artful" (227). But in practice, it is not always so clear when an implied author rather than a narrator commands the most textual influence. As a result, the implied author is often the default agent which confers a partial mind.

For example, in Henry James' *What Maisie Knew*, Maisie is not mentally impaired, but her ability to represent full, adult thoughts is highly limited, even while it is something that improves over the course of the novel. This very change in her developmental psychology holds the interest and inflects how she understands the martial and extramarital tensions among Maisie's relations. Meir Sternberg explains that as "sometimes the very interests of realism dictate the recourse to nondirect modes," so does Maisie not possess any "direct thought-quotation" in order to accomplish that roundabout representation ("Proteus in Quotation-Land" 120). In attempting to be realistic through indirect means, *What Maisie Knew* exemplifies the need for a partial mind. Were not this novel shaped by the generic conventions of the Bildungsroman—gaps in Maisie's knowledge of adult life are attendant on her juvenile position, while the discourse of the adults seeps through the focalization of Maisie to the reader—were not these aspects that help develop her mental norms in a mimetic way present, the reader would not have the means for isolating that it is Maisie's changing knowledge that sets her apart as the partial mind. James' style, using centers of consciousness in third person without developing a narrator who takes on the "I" of explicit narration, means that omissions in

cognition make the most sense when attributed to an implied author who organizes all the

information to represent Maisie's growing awareness.

To demonstrate this point, I argue that the following passage must use a partial

mind to attain its intended design:

> They dealt, the governess and her pupil, in "subjects," but there were many the
> governess put off from week to week and that they never got to at all: she only
> used to say "We'll take that in its proper order." Her order was a circle as vast as
> the untravelled globe. . . . She knew swarms of stories, mostly those of the novels
> she had read; relating them with a memory that never faltered and a wealth of
> detail that was Maisie's delight. They were all about love and beauty and
> countesses and wickedness. Her conversation was practically an endless narrative,
> a great garden of romance, with sudden vistas into her own life and gushing
> fountains of homeliness. These were the parts where they most lingered; she made
> the child take with her again every step of her long, lame course and think it
> beyond magic or monsters. Her pupil acquired a vivid vision of every one who
> had ever, in her phrase, knocked against her—some of them oh so hard!—every
> one literally but Mr Wix, her husband, as to whom nothing was mentioned save
> that he had been dead for ages. He had been rather remarkably absent from his
> wife's career, and Maisie was never taken to see his grave. (28-9)

Monika Fludernik performs a superior analysis of this passage that I want to lead into

another interpretation. She points out that large portions of this paragraph come from

Maisie's perspective in the form of *thought report*, that is, narration relating Maisie's

feelings and opinions. But this perspective is neither all the narrator speaking what

Maisie sees (i.e., focalization) nor all *free indirect discourse*, since Maisie's language

sometimes infiltrates the narrator's point of view but not to the full extent of *free indirect*

discourse. The narrator is still the speaker and presence, using only a phrase here or there

that Maisie might. About this mixed style, Fludernik concludes, "by *omitting to say . . .*

that Mrs Wix broke her contract in not teaching Maisie anything at all, the narrative

reflects Maisie's groping realization that Mrs Wix is not teaching her as she should, yet

manages to convey at the same time that Maisie has become irresistibly enchanted by

Mrs Wix's narrative proclivity" (216, emphasis original). The passage thus summarizes

Maisie's point of view and thoughts while allowing for a voice that ironizes Mrs. Wix,

rather than Maisie. This is true both because Maisie's voice in the passage has picked up

Mrs. Wix's "'homely' storytelling" style and because Maisie realizes, very implicitly,

that Mrs. Wix is spending more time teaching her fiction than other subjects (Fludernik,

Towards a 'Natural' Narratology 214). The result of this complex merging shows that

Maisie's ignorance and idiom come through while the implied author's use of the

narrator's arrangement and clarity of expression allow us to see beyond Maisie's

vocabulary to the critique of Mrs. Wix.

What then, is the status of Maisie's mind in the passage? In the very complexity

of allowing for multiple perspectives and agents to ferment the dense prose and

heteroglossia of this passage, James occludes giving us his protagonist's full mind—

something that in fact, he must do, for in order to show experientially, ironically, and

empathetically that Maisie is still learning, he must let enough information seep through

the cracks of her thoughts that we realize what she does not. This design is the

paradigmatic smoke-and-mirrors role of implied authors: always present, never visible. In

this way, Maisie's mind is only partially represented by the narrator. So while she may

still be his "center of consciousness," she is necessarily less than the full representation of

a mind, as a character in, say, George Eliot, might be or as the passage above suggests

there very well could be (since Mrs. Wix invades the mental space as well). Her mind is

only shown with glimpses of representation, a partial mind style—other voices crowd the

rest of the linear textual space.

Since the narrator's role here is presenting the irony, we attribute the design of Maisie's mind to the implied author, subverting the narrator's pure irony by the practical design of the narrative: Maisie's whole mind *cannot* be there, and so the irony folds in on itself. This attribution allows the irony of the narrator to remain, albeit partially deflated through its very means, while giving the implied author credit for the narrator's need to design it that way—partially-minded for the sake of the Bildungsroman—in terms of the larger story. In other words, reading Maisie's partial mind as sourced in the implied author's decision and not the narrator's relieves the irony in the narration from contaminating the reasons, larger generic and structural ones, for her partial mind.

Recalling our discussion of character ontology, Maisie's mind, in order to be mimetic, must use some synthetic means. As authority on textual comprehension Catherine Emmott observes, "The problem in writing such texts"—she means ones in which the mind style "is merely 'gestured at' rather than coherently represented"—"is that in giving the reader enough information to make intelligent guesses about what is going on, the representation becomes a rather *unrealistic* fusion of interpreted and uninterpreted information" (*Narrative Comprehension* 30, emphasis mine). To handle partial minds in a way that is true to all functions of representation (mimetic, synthetic, and thematic) demands recourse to multiple agents, which actually becomes what we might call unconventionally mimetic. In making some parts lifelike, others become artificial. There are so many aspects of mind at once, a linear text cannot display them all in a moment, as *What Maisie Knew* demonstrates.[20] Partial minds may originate textually with only one narrative agent, but it often takes many agents and many means to explain their unravelled effects.[21]

Despite the due diligence of narrative theorists to mark out the categories of narrative agents, these roles intermix so much that narrative agents do not have the final word in delimiting a partial mind. Rhetorical goals often override deductive categories. For example, in *East of Eden* while "Steinbeck" narrates, he toes the line between character narration and third-person narration, telling things he could not know and only rarely interjecting his own perspective or story. The best way to resolve such inconsistencies—and these very questions come up in Chapter 2 of this dissertation with the Mulvaneys' narrator Judd—is to return to the prioritization of narrative functions that Phelan prescribes, locating such inconsistencies as a product of thematic importance over mimetic precision. So as this section has added narrative agents to the list of character ontology, mind styles, cognitive norms, and genre, so must we take all these factors, as I did in the Maisie example, into account in positing a partial mind. An exhaustive account of any one narrative element seems destined to require a recursive and an exhaustive account of all narrative elements. So, through the identification and selective application of these five criteria for partial minds, I have attempted to not be exhaustive but to give the tools needed to compose a rigorous explication of any partial mind.

IV. Strategic Misrepresentation

"As text and reader thus merge into a single situation, the division between subject and object no longer applies, and it therefore follows that meaning is no longer an object to be defined, but is an effect to be experienced."

~ Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading*, 9-10

Finally, but of critical importance, after determining whether and how a partial mind is represented in a narrative, we must see how this textual technique serves the larger ends of the novel. Their primary value is their effect on the reader. Some of these

goals and effects reflect the arc of my dissertation chapters. Is the novel attempting to represent a character's trauma? If so, how does the partial mind emphasize the narration of that trauma (Chapter 2)? Is a character a case study for the mind of a murderer? If so, how does his partial mind give insight into his psychology (Chapter 3)? Has war overturned the normalcy of minds in veterans? If so, how does the technique of partial minds dramatize and reify it (Chapter 4)? Partial minds are a technique in their own right, but they also support other readings.

In one sense, partial minds formalize the everyday language we use to talk about minds being more or less active. Typically, these uses are mundane, without serious consequences. Someone caught up in a project might be said to be in "flow," while a caffeine addict might feel hazy-minded after a morning without coffee. Philosophers of mind debate what happens to a truck driver when after ten minutes on the road, he realizes he has been driving accurately but not been aware of it. Likewise, terms such as "absent-minded" or "mindfulness" denote different states of awareness. The point of partial minds, though, as a representational technique is not merely to identify in literature such commonalities, but to isolate cases with ethical implications. Underrepresentation implies an ethical choice of favoring and disfavoring, going to the very root of narrative. Adam Zachary Newton points out that the imitation attempted by mimesis is itself an ethical, as well as paradigmatic, part of narrative (5). That ethical risk increases when authors represent some minds more complexly and more completely than others. But, as Newton emphasizes, the case is not so simple. The ethical valence of underrepresentation depends on the intended effect, what he calls *hermeneutic ethics*, since the narrator's ethical risk in correctly representing real people as characters is

compounded by how reader-interpreters might understand that representation (18). The best understanding of partial minds locates their potential effects in terms of ethical valences, which is the subject of this final, briefer theoretical section.

Rhetorical effects ranging from "catharsis, laughter, suspense, empathy, self-knowledge, discovery, purification, or even therapy" may affect the reader through different methods (Ryan 248). As argued earlier, the reader's mind becomes part of the process of consciousness-making, which narratives that offer windows into characters' minds engage in. However, co-creation of a mind is no guarantee that a reader will experience certain effects, and so other methods are often recruited to increase the chances of a reader's reception of certain textual effects. This method of criticism is what Susan Rubin Suleiman calls phenomenological reading (22). Phelan explains it in terms of the rhetorical situations available: "Communication occurs along at least two tracks: narrator-narratee track and the narrator-authorial audience track" (*Living to Tell About It* 12). To drive home the significance of a partial mind, narrative representation often occurs along these conduits.

For example, Sternberg's forceful *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, which is more a treatise on narrative construction and effect than on biblical exegesis, depends on different lines of narrative communication. His *modus operandi* sees the biblical narrator as strategically hiding and revealing knowledge from the reader so as to position rhetorical effects most strongly. This intentionality of the narrator works especially well given the didactic nature of certain biblical passages, since we can know from the genre that the intention is persuasion. Sternberg points to The Binding of Isaac in Genesis 22 (a passage which Dan Cottom analyzes as having some of the greatest cultural influence of

any biblical story [117]) as a narrative that limits our knowledge of Abraham's and Isaac's minds in order to build tension. The reader is positioned to want to know Abraham's thoughts as he takes his long-promised son to be slaughtered, but the minimal dialogue and opaque representation of thoughts prevent anything but an unsatisfied readerly expectation. This style leads the reader, with Abraham, to make sense of God's seemingly ridiculous command to sacrifice his son without any aid from the often didactic biblical commentary of the narrator (Sternberg 187). What Michel Foucault has pointed to as being the linear structure of storytelling[22] sets the possibility of this logic of hiding and revealing knowledge to/from the reader in order to force her into certain emotional and cognitive positions. As Sternberg sees the narrator hiding and revealing in order to reorder the reader's knowledge, so are partial minds portrayed to the reader with only certain parts surfacing at certain times in order that their presentation may reveal the underrepresented characteristics of their minds

In this way, partial minds are a part of the design of the *discourse* to produce an intended effect on the reader. The ability of the order of the narrative events to set up a reader's understanding of a character as lacking full cognitive abilities is central to one of my key claims about partial minds. That claim is that in many cases, partial minds are not meant to represent physical or even psychological mental disorders or disabilities but are instead a technique that emphasizes the social or psychological experiences that characters are undergoing by representing them with shortchanged consciousnesses. In the case of Billy Lynn, as I argue in Chapter 4 of the dissertation, he is represented as a partial mind because of how the social situation interferes with and precipitates new psychological conditions, and the partial mind aids in representing that psychological

combination. As there are no set conditions for forming a partial mind, so are there no set effects, but they adapt and emerge from the rhetorical goals of the text at hand.

V.i. A Partial Taxonomy

"Taxonomies, by their very nature, are purely descriptive tools and therefore 'shallower,' theoretically speaking, than a discussion of a domain in terms of mechanisms, operations or functional interrelations. They are among the less interesting or challenging kinds of models any discipline can provide."
> ~ Uri Margolin, "The What, the When, and the How of Being a Character in Literary Narrative," 3.1

As Margolin suggests, taxonomies are too constricting to adequately cover an idea. But they have the benefit of being clear. I here lay out several configurations of mental underrepresentation and character qualities that together suggest profiles for partial minds. Each category combines norms of mental representation with the ontological purpose of characters with some broad intended effects of partial minds to make certain formations of mind that readers recognize. In the chart that follows, I identify each instance of partial mind with two modes (explicit and implicit), three conveyors (character narrator, third-person narrator, and implied author), and four profiles (incomplete minds, inconsistent minds, inaccessible minds, and erased minds). With only rough and suggestive boundaries, each profile poses a different type of partial mind that denotes its representational construction and generally intended effect.

Incomplete minds. These are the most straightforward brand of partial-mindedness. Going back to the idea of cognitive norms, incomplete minds are not sufficiently represented in one or more of their mental norms. They are Mickey Mice without ears. Henry James's Maisie is seriously lacking in certain kinds of social knowledge,

knowledge which her parents and guardians are painfully aware of and which allows them to make sense of the relationships and divorces that buffet Maisie's home. Maisie's lack does not represent a pathological mind and, from a developmental psychological standpoint, is exactly what we would expect. Incomplete minds, then, need not show an incorrect deficiency, but need only to represent or dramatize that known lack of knowledge.

Inconsistent minds. These are minds represented in incompatible ways within a narrative, suggesting a presentation of mentality that does not conform to cognitive representational norms, one of which is consistent representation (Margolin, "The What" 2.2.2). Omri Moses points out that this push against consistency was a moral effort by many modernists to prevent the pigeonholing of people's personalities (2), so it is connected with historically-driven arguments as well. These minds may be mimetic in that they dramatize our sense of people having conflicting thoughts and desires, or they may be synthetic ways of polarizing a character's cognitive representation. This category includes unreliable characters when it is specifically their cognition that is unreliable. Again, we draw on the qualities of cognitive norms that must be broken for this category to be attained, but rather than evincing a lack in one or more of them, these minds show inconsistent representation of those qualities. Messier, this category requires a judgment call by the reader on the root lifelikeness of the minds of the character.[23]

Inaccessible minds. Other minds suggest unavailable thoughts. This category differs from incomplete minds in that the reader knows that certain aspects of incomplete minds are

omitted, while inaccessible minds denote blocking the reader's access rather than having accessible but nonexistent representation. Inaccessible minds exclusively appear in the *discourse.* As Wolfgang Iser admits, when we think thoughts of another person, those thoughts "must to a greater or lesser degree represent an unfamiliar experience, containing elements which at any one moment must be partially inaccessible to us" (126). So this category expands on that quality of inaccessibility that applies to all mental representations by indicating minds that do not have that quality of being ultimately inaccessible just in all their content, but inaccessible in expected portions of their content.

Erased Minds. Finally, we have minds that are pointedly eliminated by other characters or even by the narrator or implied author herself. We might see this category as an alternative of what Brian McHale has termed *sous rature,* or "under erasure," best seen in Thomas Pynchon's contradictory narration, "Of course it happened. Of course it didn't happen" (qtd. in McHale 99-100). Applied to minds, this profile deliberately calls out a mind as nonexistent. Many metafictional pieces employ this technique to deliberately highlight representational imperfections.

V.ii. Table Taxonomy

The following table overviews several key characteristics of partial minds in relation to a sample of works. It includes the profiles just discussed of incomplete, inconsistent, inaccessible, erased minds. Each of these may be in one of two modes: explicit (E) or implicit (I). The partial mind may be conferred by these narrative agents: character narrator (CN), third-person narrator (3N), and/or implied author (IA). 3N/IA suggests that the agent depends on how influential a reader sees the implied author in

relation to the narrator, while CN+IA indicates the character narrator's words and actions form part of the partial mind but that the implied author is also responsible for its transmission, typically through irony. Finally, each partial mind is governed by one of Phelan's three narrative functions: When mimetic (M), the writing tries to imitate the character's mind realistically. When synthetic (S), the writing goes beyond realism to (usually) experimental methods in order to show something about the character's mind. When thematic (T), the writing expressly attempts to use the mind to represent a theme, rather than the mind's processes transcribed to written language or rather than a stylized written expression that emphasizes part of the character's thinking.

Work	Who	Profile	Mode	Narrative Agent	Function	Brief Explanation
What Maisie Knew	Maisie	Incomplete	I	IA	M	Learning to be an adult, young Maisie's thoughts are ironically underrepresented to show her mental development.
Melanctha	Melanctha	Incomplete	I	3N	M	Stein mimics recursive thought processes by the repetitive representation of Melanctha's mind, reducing it to only those recursive processes.
East of Eden	Cathy/Kate	Incomplete	I	CN+IA	S/T	She lacks a generically balanced moral sense in relation to character mental norms.
Neuromancer	Wintermute & Dixie	Incomplete	E	3N	M	Digitized partial minds lack embodiment and so lack thoughts related to the body that is expected of embodied minds.
One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest	Chief Bromden	Incomplete	I	CN	S	He lacks the ability to take metaphors metaphorically (he literalizes them) which stands for his mental haze which he eventually overcomes.
Turn of Mind	Jennifer	Incomplete	I	CN+IA	M	She cannot identify people and does not have the kind of access to her memory that we associate with normal minds.
Kiln People	The dittoes	Incomplete	E	3N	M	Each ditto holds only a portion of the original host's mind.
The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter	Mr. Singer	Incomplete	I	3N	M	He is unable to understand others, part of a mental dependence that leads to his suicide, indicative of an incomplete aspect of his mind, as compared with others.
Billy Lynn	Billy	Incomplete	I	3N	S/T	His mind is struck by PTSD, his thoughts and experience of the world distorted.
The Sound and the Fury	Benjy	Incomplete	I	3N/IA	M	He does not understand what others are thinking, rendering his own thoughts, from the perspective of cognitive norms, incomplete.
Catch-22	Yossarian	Inconsistent	I	3N/IA	S	He has moments when he thinks thoughts that seem to directly contradict a unified mindset or mind style.

Figure 1: Taxonomy of partial minds

Work	Who	Profile	Mode	Narrative Agent	Function	Brief Explanation
Herzog	Herzog	Inconsistent	I	3N/IA	S	He is neither sane nor insane, and the transference of his mind to letters shows how the representations of his mind prevent him from falling clearly into either category.
The Talented Mr. Ripley	Tom	Inconsistent	I	IA	M	In merging his mind with Dickie's (as he must in order to impersonate Dickie), Tom's own thoughts are represented in inconsistent ways.
"Recitatif"	Twyla and Roberta	Inaccessible	I	IA	S	The reader is denied access to Twyla's and Roberta's races, so in the *discourse*, parts of their minds are inaccessible.
We Were The Mulvaneys	Marianne	Inaccessible	I	CN+IA	S/T	In order for her trauma to be most emphatically represented, the narrator Judd attempts different forms of access to her mind, each of which ultimately lands the reader at inaccessibility.
Pale Fire	Kinbote	Inaccessible	I	IA	S	Readers cannot be certain of his mind, who he is, because of the multiple ways the story may be interpreted with different base ontologies.
Bartleby the Scrivener	Bartleby	Inaccessible	I	IA	S/T	His refusal stands so contrary to normal psychology that we see it as a synthetic representation of his will. As a result, the *discourse* shows his mind to be singular, one-dimensional, but his thoughts ultimately veiled.
Native Speaker	Auntie	Erased	E	CN	T	Henry Park deliberately prevents her mind from having any kind of realistic representation.
The End of the Road	Jake	Erased	E	CN	T	The narrator and Rennie are both described as lacking full feelings, motivation, reasons.
Harry Potter series	Voldemort	Erased	E	3N	T	His mind is divided into horcruxes, which are separable parts of his mind.

Figure 1 (continued): Taxonomy of partial minds

Conclusion

Pragmatism is the American philosophy that, to closely paraphrase Cornel West, evades epistemic philosophies in order to be a tool of cultural criticism, which is itself one of the founding tenets of education (5). Partial minds, whether we see them in the literary tradition of pragmatism or not, follow that same anti-logic: they are tools which evade a central epistemological standpoint, resist unchanging formulations, and aim to critique through their unequal representations of characters' minds. There are reams of implications from the study of this technique to which I have not attended: the racial and gendered use of partial minds, their historical development through American and world literatures, their co-lineage with changes in the histories of philosophies. But to take a phenomenological angle, David Porush reminds us that cognition is always a metaphor, for the brain doesn't perceive the world so much as create it (Hayles 275). Fraught with many brands of social critique, partial minds are at heart attempts to continually offer a stronger transfer of experience onto text, as the mind does with experience. And likewise, as Omri Moses contextualizes a thought by Jonathan Levin into cognitive theory, pragmatism is less concerned with the inherent moral virtue of a thought than its effects on experience (66). Pragmatically, partial minds eschew one moral in favor of organizing how we access narrative morals themselves. As a result, while partial minds leave traces in the text, their ultimate end is to mark the reader into seeing characters as given greater or lesser degrees of cognitive representation, and if successful, in the process both affect and effect their minds.

Chapter Three

Narrating Partial Minds: Trauma as Underrepresentation in Joyce Carol

Oates's *We Were the Mulvaneys*

"[R]epresenting the impossible is the most crucial difference between the world of fiction
and other modes of discourse. It is only in fictional worlds that we can experience and
ponder unnatural manifestations such as physically or logically impossible narrators,
characters, temporalities, settings, and events, and that we can gain access to the thoughts
and feelings of 'others.'"
<div align="center">~ Jan Alber, "Unnatural Spaces and Narrative Worlds," 62</div>

"The novel *is* its own experience and its subject is always the evolving of consciousness .
. . that of the reader, the author, the characters."[24]
<div align="right">~ Joyce Carol Oates, qtd. in Gavin Cologne-
Brookes, *Dark Eyes on America: The Novels
of Joyce Carol Oates*, 1</div>

How is trauma represented in fiction? This question infiltrates many of Joyce

Carol Oates's works, especially in her novels that thematize the exploitation of women's

sexuality. Typically, an Oates plot with this focus builds to a key traumatic event, and it

is the dramatization of that event which most emphatically represents trauma in that

work. But not all Oates works suggest that this degree and style of representation are

adequate to express the fidelity to trauma experienced by real people. Oates's novels that

have only a traumatic plot, rather than other traumatic representational elements, fall

short. Different from these, *We Were the Mulvaneys*, a work that Oates says "specifically

focus[es] on women as 'victims/survivors'" (qtd. in Cologne-Brookes 175), employs

alternative methods of mental representation—and as I will argue, underrepresentation—

to aid the narration and focalization[25] in accounting for the severity of sexual trauma.

Trauma directly affects the novel's narration. *We Were the Mulvaneys* contains

several ambiguities in its narration that result from the narrative's obsession with trauma.

Ostensibly, the narrator is the family's youngest son, Judd, and yet his narration does not

consistently express his point of view either epistemologically or grammatically. The ambiguity of who narrates—a question I take up in detail—leads to a second key question the novel evokes: How does the narrator represent the rape of the Mulvaney daughter Marianne and the trauma she experiences afterwards? Although plot is a useful mimetic tool at the narrator's disposal, the narrator also develops Marianne with what appears to be an underrepresented consciousness, a partial mind. In turn, the narrator, too, is affected by her trauma and becomes a partial mind himself. Both "Who narrates?" and "How does the narrator represent trauma?" are interdependent questions answered by partial minds, since as Judd represents what happened to Marianne—especially in mental and emotional terms—he is affected in his role as narrator by the problems that Marianne's rape has on the stability and understandability of the narrative itself. By clearly identifying both Marianne and Judd as partial minds, we have a more concrete sense of the impact of her trauma: it is so severe that there is no way to give a full account of it, neither in the representations of Marianne's mind nor in the narrator's own self-representations.

I begin this chapter by looking closely at the aftermath of Marianne's sexual encounter with Zachary Lundt, highlighting the ambiguities and experimental techniques employed in the related passages (section I). I open by arguing that as a sexual injury that at first cannot be discussed directly or healed, Marianne's rape is initially presented to the reader ambiguously (I.i). Decoding evidence from Oates's manuscript archives, this interrogation of the novel's experimental representation of rape also involves determining how models of trauma aid in interpreting Marianne's experience (I.ii) and how the images and descriptions of images in the text confirm and complicate those models by portraying Marianne with a partial mind (I.iii). Next, I overlay those points with the

narrator's unusual status as a partial mind (II). I first present passages that complicate Judd's intermittent narration (II.i). Whether or not we see him as the agent behind the words in the pivotal chapter "Strawberries & Cream" determines both his activity or passivity as narrator and how strongly and from what perspective we read the methods of representing Marianne's trauma and mind (II.ii). Explaining this technical nature of Judd's narrative agency, I see him both as an "unnatural narrator" (II.iii) and as a part of a larger social narration in which the whole family's cognition is drawn from in order to form the novel's the complex narration (II.iv). I then suggest the broader implications of the close reading centered around the telling of Marianne's rape by looking at narrative time (III). I begin this section by arguing that Marianne's rape changes the vector of the narrative's temporality (III.i). Moreover, causation of narrative events does not necessarily work chronologically, as I add on next (III.ii). This structure affects the reader's diachronic understanding of the plot, suggested by the dual temporalities of Paul Ricoeur's *narrative time*. In the same way that Judd's telling of the narrative forces the reader to anticipate and, in time, understand the emotions of Marianne's trauma and the family's later demise, so does Judd participate in the discourse of traumatic recurrences as his narration repeats the event, even as it changes its representation (III.iii). Applying both interviews with Oates and the genre of therapeutic narration to my reading of partial minds in *We Were the Mulvaneys*, I conclude by showing what this interpretation accomplishes that other readings cannot—tying into some of the central claims of my dissertation on underrepresented minds—and so suggest how this chapter defuses some of the harsher criticism leveled against the style of Joyce Carol Oates.

I. Narrating Trauma through Ambiguities and Partial Minds

I.i. Marianne's Rape

"*We Were the Mulvaneys* . . . shows that maturity depends upon recognizing that one's own mind is integral to shaping and creating the emotional and in some ways the physical facts of one's existence."

> ~ Gavin Cologne-Brookes, *Dark Eyes on America: The Novels of Joyce Carol Oates*, 202-3

Most persuasive readings of *We Were the Mulvaneys* account for the rape of Marianne, the key event that leaves first her and then her whole family in a network of deteriorating relationships. The consequences of her rape turn from psychological to sociological as her parents and brothers become affected by it: her father Mike Sr. forces her to leave the house when he cannot handle the emotional costs of the rape, and he eventually dies a failed businessman and an alcoholic; her mother Corinne chooses a failing marriage over a relationship with her daughter; her eldest brother Mike Jr. quits his father's business and recklessly joins the Marines; her brother Patrick, even while trying to become an intellectual, goes on a quest for revenge that ultimately fails; and her youngest brother Judd struggles to find his adolescent identity by telling his sister's story. The trauma of rape repeats its damage over and over. As I will demonstrate in this section, two representations of trauma express Judd's narration.[26] First, representations of Marianne's mind—especially two key images—follow this recursive process as they mimic trauma's tendency to rearticulate itself. Second, Marianne's trauma causes Judd to tell her story by employing a partial mind, a consciousness lacking normal mental constitution. Both this partial mind and the repetition of Marianne's trauma through two images channel the reader into experiencing a reading comprehension process that

parallels the severity of Marianne's trauma. This whole representational formation suggests that trauma like Marianne's can never fully be represented in narrative.

Not once expressed in a section directly or even with an attempt at neutrality, Marianne's sexual encounter with Zachary Lundt evokes a pernicious valence in its ambiguity. The novel circles around the rape, telling it obliquely; it is only later that some characters feel the freedom even to call it "rape"—a point which aligns with Christine Atkins's argument that a discourse which names people victims of rape prolongs and propounds their entanglement with it (434). Because it is a date rape happening on the night of Marianne's prom, there are indications that she feels as though the rape is partially her fault, since it was she who felt sorry for Lundt, she who agreed to go with him, she who let herself be put in a dangerous position (89-90, *passim*). In fact, the first line from Lundt that Marianne remembers—just a clip in the middle of another story—is "*You know you want to, Marianne—why'd you come with me if you don't?*" (68). The rapist's well-known manipulative justification casts a shadow of ambiguity about who Marianne believes was at fault.

The rape is further cordoned off from direct narration by irony. The following narrational circumlocution appears in Marianne's response to her friend Trisha when asked what happened after the party, the hour when Lundt coerced and raped her. In response, Marianne "smiled her brightest Button-smile and shook her head as if it was all too complicated, too confused to remember"—and then the narration immediately opens a new paragraph that closes the section: "And so it was, in fact: Marianne did not remember" (74). The irony here lies in that Marianne has already been remembering snippets from what happened even while, in a very real way, the rape has already been

traumatically made inaccessible to her mind. Many readers are uncertain what happened, how much Marianne is covering up, and even how much the narration is omitting to hide the truth. As a sexual injury that at first cannot be discussed directly or healed, Marianne's rape is initially presented to the reader ambiguously.[27]

I.ii. Underrepresenting the Unrepresentable: Narrating Trauma

"But this is the problem that Oates shares with every American writer today—how to bring order to the violent extremity and complexity of American life without mitigating that extremity."
            ~ Walter Clemons, "Joyce Carol Oates: Love and Violence," 33

Marianne's rape and the psychological effect it has on her were central to Oates's designs from the very conception of this novel. This priority is clear from Oates's early notes about the novel. On a decorative small page from a note pad, she wrote: "---. Marianne. [She is raped & beaten by a {jealous drunken classmate, her date for the prom… a boy she'd trusted; Budd___, son of ____'s, well-to-do S. Lebanon businessman.] She tries to hide her condition out of shame, but Corliss discovers her…." (Box 13, Worksheet I, brackets original). One of the first of the extant notes from Oates connects Marianne to sexual trauma. Later, a character sketch about Marianne (previously called both Ellen and Jo Beth in Oates's notes) reveals the importance of shame and inner turmoil to the core of Marianne's character: "~~Ellen~~ is "in hiding" / silent / anorexic" (Box 13, Worksheet I; see Appendix 2, Figure I). These notes imply that the plan was always to make the rape central to the novel and leave it shrouded in uncertainty and ambiguity.

As the pivotal point in the novel, Marianne's rape is represented through expressions of her consciousness by Judd that employ ambiguity beyond the rape's role in the novel's plot. Instead, part of the account of her rape centers on the complex

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representation of Marianne's consciousness in the chapter titled "Strawberries & Cream."

The title references the dress Marianne sewed for her prom night and with its maudlin

color denotes Marianne's naiveté. Although as early as the chapter "St. Valentine's

1976," we gets hints that something bad happened, "Strawberries & Cream" recounts part

of Marianne's prom night told through italicized clips of dialogue between her and Lundt.

These intersperse between parts of the story of Marianne hiding her soiled garments after

the rape. "Strawberries & Cream" also includes some other vignettes on the other

Mulvaneys that distract and, through contrast, emphasize the gravity of the shorter

sections. This stylistic technique indicates that Marianne's humiliation must be hidden in

the *discourse*, not just in the *story*, as though the narrator is secreting it among large

swaths of unrelated text.

Most indicative for my argument that Judd confers a part mind on Marianne,

twice among these threads of story about the rape, her mind is represented by a black

mark, or smudge, in the text, reproduced below (81). The boxy smudge is placed between

paragraphs in its first inclusion and, I contend, is used intentionally by the narrator as a

means to show her as a partial mind, a technique which emphasizes the severity of her

sexual trauma.

ous night, soaking in Trisha LaPorte's bathtub. Numbed, dazed. Her thoughts flying rapidly and fluidly and without weight or seeming significance. *Jesus help me. Jesus help me.* Like scenes glimpsed from the window of a speeding vehicle, lacking depth and color. Like those strange fleeting faces, strangers' faces, some of them distorted and grotesque, we see as we sink exhausted into sleep. So, amid the steaming water, above a limp-floating naked girl's body, a body at which Marianne did not look, *The Pilgrim* rose, took shape. It hovered suspended until finally it faded into numbness and oblivion, a gouged-out hole in the very space of consciousness.

So much to talk about! So many interruptions! Laughter, and Judd scolded by Dad for passing sausage-bits to Little Boots beneath the table, and Mom scolded by Dad *Honeylove will you for God's sake stop jumping up every five minutes?*—and the discovery, midmeal, that the oven was still set at four hundred degrees and the Mexican chicken-shrimp-sausage casserole was beginning to burn. Marianne had helped Mom prepare supper as usual as if nothing were wrong, so perhaps nothing was wrong. In addition to the super-casserole there was grilled Parmesan-dill bread, baked butternut squash sprinkled with brown sugar, a giant tossed salad with Mom's special oil-and-vinegar dressing, homemade apple-cinnamon cobbler with vanilla ice cream.

Figure 2: Marianne's partial mind

As my argument depends heavily on the presence and interpretation of this image, I have included copies of earlier instantiations of it from Oates's archived drafts. The first reproduction indicates Oates's sketched version of the smudge (Appendix 2, Figure 2). The second, though appearing later in the archives, is debatably an earlier version, perhaps the very first, indicated by the revision of the word "rose" preceding the image

and by the red marker drawing attention to the smudge (Appendix 2, Figure 3). The last two reproductions of the smudge from Oates's archives denote her intention to keep the smudge and not use it as a section header so much as a representation of Marianne's mind (Appendix 2, Figures 4 and 5). The development of the image implies its ongoing value to this particular chapter of the novel and, as a result, to the definition of Marianne's character and mind. From the hand-drawn image, too, we can infer about the writing process of Oates—that she came to a point in which words failed not only her narrator, but her as author. In expressing the overwhelming emotion of sexual trauma, the smudge also expresses the ineffability of Oates's own thoughts and the endpoint of her vast and articulate linguistic repertoire.

The immediate context of the black smudge is also important. Before it occurs, Marianne reflects on a painting of her mother's, a key moment to which I will return shortly. After those thoughts, she has a thought that Judd as narrator prefaces with a short introductory ekphrasis: "[it] hovered suspended until finally it faded into numbness and oblivion, a gouged-out hole in the very space of consciousness" (81).[28] The smudge then breaks the novel's prose as a visual trace that Judd employs to placehold the partial absence of Marianne's mind. The smudge is central to understanding the narration in *We Were the Mulvaneys* because it shows the failure of the narrator's language to adequately represent the trauma Marianne experiences. And that extent that Judd goes to—that the narration is willing to defer to images in attempting to represent what language cannot—suggests the kind of narration that will resort to other means to show the severity of trauma. As I will discuss later, this process is a result of the emotional impact of Marianne's rape on Judd.

However, for the moment, we should simply see the smudge as an attempt at representing the pain Marianne experienced, one that indicates that words cannot express the root suffering undergone in her thoughts and emotions. According to Cathy Caruth and Shoshana Felman, one of trauma's main qualities is its resistance to being expressed in words (Stark 446). Although I explore differing models of trauma in Chapter 4, such a conclusion that trauma is unrepresentable validates what Oates in an early draft penned as Marianne's view of her rape: "It was the unnameable" (Box 13, Worksheet IV, p240). And so the narrational decision to use a dark shape draws attention to the inadequacy of linguistic narration. Marianne's mind is being focalized here, so while we can attribute the representation to her mind, we must also realize the narration that is presenting her mind in this specific way, partially and graphically, on purpose.

That purpose requires decoding. The smudge might stand for a number of things and inject many different emotions into the minds at play here. The mark resembles the silhouette of a Band-aid, suggesting the cover-up of a wound. Or we might interpret its rounded edges as denoting the fuzzy confusion of Marianne's emotional state, not having clear delineations. It could even be the blackened view of a burial plot, looked at from above. In some respects, it is suggestive of the abstract idea of absence, which would work well with the short ekphrasis that introduces it. All of these images and resonances are potentially evoked by the image, but as I will argue, based on the context and narration, the black smudge is best seen as the failure to fully represent trauma.

I.iii. Narrating Ekphrases: The Pilgrim and the Smudge

"You do really feel a need, in a big novel . . . to get out from under the demands of realistic fiction, to say sharply and even bluntly what you are doing. This can be solved, of course, by going into a character's head and creating a kind of poetic-prose, using images rather than regular syntactical statements, which I do all the time."

~ Joyce Carol Oates,
"Transformation of Self," 50

Several other contexts, including another image, shape how we read the smudge and further indicate the need for alternative styles of representation and underrepresentation to express Marianne's trauma. All these contexts specify how Marianne's mind is represented leading up to the smudge and involve the style of focalized prose Oates suggests in this subsection's epigraph. First, the text leading up to the smudge's interruption involves Marianne's musing on a painting her mother had found called *The Pilgrim*. One of two pictures that the characters use to channel their thoughts and feelings into narrative form (*The Hunter* later represents Patrick's mindset), *The Pilgrim* and Marianne's recollection of seeing it rise before her mind as she washes herself in the bathtub at her friend's house after her Lundt raped her. However, this scene houses an ambiguity in its construction: the pages leading up to the sudden revelation that she hadn't seen *The Pilgrim* in years seemed to be taking place immediately after the rape. That is, it looked like she was looking in the barn at *The Pilgrim* only hours after the rape. And yet we are told afterwards, "She hadn't actually seen *The Pilgrim* in a long time and had more or less forgotten it. Yet, evidently, she'd been thinking of it the previous night, soaking in Trisha LaPorte's bathtub" (81), indicating that she was only recalling that memory. So the narration performs a sleight-of-hand when it possibly, but not definitely, changes when the scene occurred. It turns a scene from what the reader experienced as right after her rape to what the narration indicates is a distant memory that

is recalled as she tried to wash herself clean. Ambiguity houses the representation of Marianne's mind at this critical juncture.

Marianne imagines *The Pilgrim* in a tableau, as though time slows while she remembers the painting, what Gérard Genette calls a Pause, or description without movement through time (94). These recollections articulate her mind's attempts to understand her trauma. First, she tries to identify with the character in the painting, then she tries to rely on her mother for comfort, and finally she tries to find reassurance in narrative order, all three of which to varying degrees fail. These contexts give a narrative reason for the smudge to occur and so underscore its use as an alternative underrepresentation of Marianne's mind. Let me discuss them in detail.

Marianne's attempted identification with the character in the painting comes in the form of a description that constitutes an ekphrasis. The ekphrasis not only *represents* the painting, but also *narrativizes* it. Focalized through Marianne, the ekphrasis traces a narrative path as she gazes at it:

> *The Pilgrim*: a romantically twilit vista of mountains, a woodland lake, light radiating from a likeness of Jesus' face in the sky falling upon a robed figure kneeling in a meadow of grazing sheep and lambs beside the glistening water. The figure was barefoot and seeming to have made her way across a rocky terrain; her profile was partly obscured by a plait of faded gold hair and a shawl modestly covering her head. Beneath the title was the caption, which Marianne found thrilling: *He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.* (80)

The transcription of the image into words turns it into a linear progression, suggesting that Marianne is reading her own story and point of view into the non-linearity of the painting. The actual painting is replaced with her personal interpretation of it. She is only being focalized at this moment—as opposed to more direct techniques of mental representation such as *direct thought*[29]—which we know because her thoughts on the

painting occur in a linear way that interprets the painting. Nevertheless, her mind clearly

becomes the *de facto* agent of narrating the painting. This manner of narrating agent is

called a reflector, which in Franz Stanzel's sense denotes a figure who is the source of the

narration, rather than an outspoken narrator (*Narrative Situations* 21). The ekphrasis's

placement in the middle of this chapter that narrates Marianne's emotions after her rape

further embeds her reflector narration within a narration already going on. As we shall

see, even as she uses the painting to make sense of the rape, her ultimate dependence on

narration clarifies her mental state at this point.

    As kitsch as the pastoral scene narrated appears,[30] Marianne's reflection on it

gives it new value. Its insertion into this central moment in Marianne's mental aftermath

of sexual assault uses the suspect value of kitsch to contrast and reinforce the intensity of

Marianne's trauma. For example, we might be expected to ask, "How can she be looking

at this kind of art when she has just been coerced and assaulted?" But the metaphoric

narrative significance it takes on through its similarity to Marianne's situation transforms

The Pilgrim from a work of impersonal kitsch to an object with personal meaning aiding

her self-definition. She identifies directly with the figure in the painting, which is why

she finds it "fascinating" (80). All the images in the painting resonate precisely with what

Marianne is unable to think about: the "romantic" setting of the painting painfully recalls

the romantic drama of her prom; the "woodland lake" suggests the mystery and isolation

of her rape; the form of Jesus' face and the pastoral meadow with animals indicate the

religious beliefs Marianne still holds onto; the impersonal figure represents Marianne,

partially obscured because of her shame. As the narrator focalizes on her, it appears her

mind is trying desperately to make sense of what happened to her. But she cannot think

about what happened directly, and so *The Pilgrim* provides a mediated way for her to fixate on and perhaps begin to alleviate the shock of her trauma.

Marianne goes on in her thoughts to explicitly connect the painting's caption with her circumstances. She thinks, "the caption wasn't accurate, exactly: it should have been *She that loseth her life for my sake shall find it*" (81, underline added).[31] This thought precipitates "a surge of happiness sharp as pain in her heart" (81), which uses paradox (happiness as pain) to once again through the *discourse* highlight her understated pain. In re-gendering the traditionally masculine biblical quotation, Marianne repurposes its meaning to her own plight, trying to conceive how her injury could, through what she sees as a theological paradox, be vital for her. Visual art and its interpretation here become an indirect way for Marianne to attempt to process her identity after having been raped, so as she looks over *The Pilgrim*, she integrates its synchronic meaning into the diachronic story of her trauma.

The visual nature of *The Pilgrim* and the narrator's choice to graphically represent Marianne's mind through the black smudge both point to the need for more striking and more emphatic ways of representing thought here. That is, the narrator apparently believes that a "normal" account of how much Marianne is suffering is inadequate to the task of representing the intensity of her emotions—otherwise, why include all these alternative representational methods? Marianne has experienced a traumatic event, one that Oates will allow to drive the Mulvaney family's dispersion through the rest of the plot. Therefore, descriptive words or even techniques of thought reporting insufficiently signify the numbness, confusion, shock, and aporia of Marianne's psyche. Two graphic coordinates are thus given, *The Pilgrim* (although, never shown in the text as an image[32])

and the smudge, each with an ekphrasis framing it. As these representational methods are used to express Marianne's mental state, we must surmise that they indicate the narrator's belief that her mind has been "damaged"[33] in ways beyond words. I mean "beyond words" in both senses: that Marianne cannot express her injury in words and that the narrator cannot express how bad her injury is in words alone. Judd's narration tells us that Marianne's healthy mind has been replaced by a mind which is overcome and imprinted by what appears to be chaotic images that result from her trauma.

Although I have spelled out possible ways she identifies with the painting,[34] Marianne's thoughts here do not suggest that she is intentionally trying to deal with the rape. Rather, the narration structures the progression of her mental states in order to represent the processes of trauma. It uses these images of the black smudge and *The Pilgrim* to develop that mental process because both offer potentially direct figurative descriptions of her mental state—i.e., "Marianne's mind is like a black mark signifying emptiness," or "Marianne is the faceless pilgrim." But as Judd frustrates such direct interpretations, both images signify that such trauma as Marianne has experienced can never fully be represented in narrative. What's more, in resorting to multiple methods to communicate Marianne's mental state, Judd ends up underrepresenting that state. Since no single account or representation—black smudge, ekphrasis, or linguistic descriptions—of Marianne's mind suffices for Judd's narration, each ends up showing its inadequacy through its deferral to the others. No representation of Marianne's mind can handle the severity of her mind, as Judd sees it. As a result, he represents her with only a partial mind.

Another context situates the two images and heightens the quality of their underrepresentation. The section on *The Pilgrim* opens a connection to Marianne's memories and her relationship with her mother. The described memories that follow the ekphrasis of *The Pilgrim* relate to her mother, directly associating her with Marianne's trauma: "Many times she'd asked Corinne who was the pilgrim, and where had she come from? She was alone—why? She seemed quite young, only a girl" (80). Although a psychoanalytic approach may give one productive angle into the familial complications here,[35] I want to focus on how looking at this section in narrative terms can also make sense of Marianne's recollection of the painting. As we find out, her mother did not know the answer to Marianne's remembered questions just quoted—i.e., did not know the story of the pilgrim any better than Marianne, getting the idea from no certain source that it came from a German fairytale (80). This debate about origins indicates that the central focus of Marianne's reflections is the attempt to put the painting into a coherent narrative form, one grounded in a stable beginning. But the uncertainty of Corinne's knowledge about *The Pilgrim* implies that this story is unreliable, and so her mother's failed attempt to give a solid context of origins mirrors Marianne's own failed search for a way to make sense of what happened to her. Furthermore, since Corinne's narratives are all curtailed—she cannot sell the painting, bringing that narrative to closure, nor can she provide a grounded explanation for its origin—Marianne's mind as focalized through these reflections suggests how strongly the rape has affected her; she cannot think in completed stories. That those curtailed stories come from Marianne's mother compounds the emotional distress: one of Marianne's anchors of emotional support can no longer rescue her. Of course, we cannot attribute that intention (this design of failed closure) to

Marianne, and so while her attempt at narrativization and identification might be provisionally attributed to her searching psyche, the failure of narrative should be attributed to Judd or the implied author—but more on this later.

In the narrator's relation of her thoughts, Marianne also uses narrative to turn *The Pilgrim* into a story that frames her own. Refining work on narratological naturalization from Jonathan Culler, Monika Fludernik's model of narrativization insists that the process of turning something into a narrative is to make it natural, conventional—and that we do this with our experience all the time. Specifically Fludernik argues that "[e]vents or actantial and motivational parameters in and of themselves constitute only a zero degree of narrativity, a minimal frame for the production of experientiality" (*Towards a 'Natural' Narratology* 311). Marianne's motivations are manifest as she reflects on the painting in explicit roleplaying terms that she can identify with: "Was she about to die, and that was why Jesus smiled down upon her from the clouds? . . . [I]n her very posture of humility . . . there was a suggestion of pride. Clearly the pilgrim was praying to Jesus" (80). These lines make her reflections on the painting into a narrative that harnesses a familiar and reassuring storyline she can readily understand and hold onto. If she is the pilgrim, then the pilgrim will eventually reach Jesus, so vigilant and present in the painting, the one who will provide solace. By narrativizing, she naturalizes, and by naturalizing, she employs a means already available to her to understand her rape. But both narrativizing and thinking of her mother as a means to narrativizing are forestalled by the narration, which blocks any resolution they might provide.

This explanation of failed resolution provides needed context as to why the black smudge occurs next and so how her mind is underrepresented. If her identification with

the character in the painting were successful in that it gave her a way of coming to terms with her trauma, resolving it, then the smudge would be unnecessary and overplayed, interrupting from nowhere, with no precipitating cause[36] in Marianne's mind. But the further focalization of her mind into the origins of the painting—her recollection of asking her mother about where it came from—indicates that while she identifies with the figure of the pilgrim, she is neither satisfied nor put at ease by that identification. In other words, when we follow her mind into wondering who the pilgrim in the painting is ("Many times she'd asked Corinne who was the pilgrim, and where had she come from?" [80]), we surmise that she notices the correlations between herself and the pilgrim, but wants to know more to see if this figure can be a source of comfort or healing. The resulting failure of these queries to her mother amplifies the despair she is feeling: when her mother cannot answer her successfully in her recollections, the pilgrim loses its tincture of hope and switches into a figure of lostness, paving the way for the smudge that gestures toward this loss of control. Furthermore, her mother's failure is specifically a failure to close narratives, an inability which poses a structural correlation between Marianne's desire for closure to the open wound of her traumatic narrative and her mother's inability to accurately complete the story of the pilgrim. Therefore, the inclusion of *The Pilgrim* right before the smudge makes sense as a new graphic attempt to deal with trauma right after the rise of hopeful identification and its immediate dispersion—all this in Marianne's mind. Though in different categories—the painting a symbol but the smudge a failed representation of her thoughts—both images try to account for what the narrator sees as Marianne's post-rape trauma.

Moreover, the seeming caprice with which the memory of the painting enters Marianne's mind mirrors the lack of control that now characterizes her mind. Caruth describes trauma as the reoccurrence of a painful event that results in people not thinking about the event, both as it incubates in the mind and as a way the mind protects itself (61). Trauma, then, would seem to register a lack of mental control, a loss of will to direct the attention of the mind. Although reasons of synthetic narrative design partially explain why the smudge occurs after this series of focalizations through Marianne's thoughts, the mimetic[37] reason lies in the narration's attempt to place trauma's effect on her mind at a textual location that believably ruptures the flow of thought, driving home the impact of trauma on mind. I quote the paragraphs following the smudge later, and as we shall see, these are a key turn in the novel's style of focalization after the smudge.

But as trauma, according to Caruth, is subject to repetition (11), so too does the smudge recur in an attempt to mimic it. The smudge returns at the end of the chapter, this time prefaced with the appellation "that perfect void." It is compared in a simile to the dissolved picture of a TV screen, which is, of course, another medium that invokes graphics, heightening the narration's focus on non-linguistic representations (90). Oates rarely uses graphics in her novels which makes this particular inclusion outstanding.[38] We see the implicit hand of Judd narrating this second representation. As the smudge has come to mean not just the failure to represent trauma but also the result of a failure to close narratives—the smudge itself forecloses the narrative of Marianne trying to make sense of her problems by narrativizing—its position at the end of the chapter stands either as a sign of open-endedness or as a sign of narrational control. If it suggests open-endedness, it becomes a paratextual indicator that the chapter is not actually closed and

likewise that Marianne's trauma cannot actually be closed and so must continue on through the following chapters. But if the closing smudge is a sign of narrational control—a stronger reading—then Judd intentionally puts this symbol of failed closure at the end of the chapter to try to retrofit the story with more control than it could have had as its referential experience. In other words, Marianne's trauma is so painful and leads to such a breakdown of narrative that Judd uses the smudge as a mark(er) of stability, thinking that if he can make sense of Marianne's partial mind by regarding it as a black smudge, he can end his narration of the chapter with the sense of having, at least in part, resolved, named, or more literally, given shape to her pain. He thereby tries to defuse the symbol by ironically situating it paratextually where it will have the least power, unstructured next to structure. This design may seem heavy-handed in that we have no other reason to suspect Judd's, or any specific narrator's, influence here, and yet, I argue that he has a recurring need for stability, closure, and structure throughout the novel. This stance privileges the needs of narrative minds to affect the telling of the story and leads to the following closer look at who actually narrates.

II. Partial Minds in the Narration

II.i. Ambiguous Narration: Judd's Role

"(Yet this world is sometimes so real in the imagination that its construction, in terms of formal art, seems rather like a re-creation, a re-construction.)"

<div align="right">~ Joyce Carol Oates, (Woman)
Writer, 369</div>

Judd's portrayal of Marianne's mind after her rape employs numerous narrative techniques to express what he sees as the severity of her trauma. But the partial mind

produced by those techniques is emphasized and modified by the non-conventional construction of the narrator. Part of that construction depends on who has what knowledge and, as a result, who can narrate certain passages. We can see this focus in the chapter introducing Marianne's prom date-rape, which begins with this significant line: "No one would be able to name what happened, not even Marianne Mulvaney, to whom it happened" (26). The rest of the chapter is roughly focalized through Corinne, leaving the intentionality of the statement open to interpretation by the reader. There are several ironic ways of taking this statement: in saying what can't be named, the narrator is here, ironically, naming it; or, since Marianne is the one to whom "it" happened, she need not name it in her own mind because she *experienced* it; or others *do* name it later, hinting that this statement could be looked back on as an ironic overstatement. But the most telling irony comes if we emphasize the word *one*. Of course, "no one" acts as a single term in our language (we never say, "no two" or "no many")—and yet, it is precisely the one-ness of the narration that is (ironically) not the case. Seen from the shared knowledge that the narration presents, coupled with the explicit claim by Judd to be the narrator, no single agent narrates Marianne's rape or the whole of *We Were the Mulvaneys*. Instead, many agents, voices, and minds work together to present what happened. Who narrates and how we identify them are the foci of this section. I begin by introducing some theories of narration, and then I apply those to specific passages from *We Were the Mulvaneys*. I then present Judd as an "unnatural narrator" and part of a social narrating mind. In this story containing many perspectives from the minds of the Mulvaney family members that seem to narrate or at least influence the narration, Judd often—but not always—acts as an editor who puts these voices together.

Some of the narration seems like it must come from Marianne's head. Work on trauma by clinical psychologists Edna Foa, Chris Molnar, and Laurie Cashman points out that retellings of a traumatic experience and especially rape become "more organized and less fragmented" over time (677). As a result, we might expect any focalized narration through Marianne to be highly disorganized in the first thoughts about what happened to her. It should then become increasingly organized. In their experiment, Foa, Molnar, and Cashman's treatment for rape trauma required those traumatized to repeatedly recount the traumatic event. By the end, the narratives "contain[ed] a greater percentage of 'internal events' such as thoughts and feelings, particularly thoughts reflecting attempts to comprehend the trauma" (677). The focalization on Marianne across several chapters and mentioning bits of the rape night over and over fits this clinical model of increasing organization and increasing internal language used to describe the trauma. Furthermore, it is compounded by other voices who contribute to the representation of her mind. So on one level, the narration of Marianne's thoughts and feelings ought to be taken as hers and as a legitimate account of her agency and internal pain. But she does not narrate her own story alone. The other voices that Oates uses to convey her thoughts and feelings are also responsible for inflecting the organization and increased focus on thoughts that Foa, Molnar, and Cashman's clinical study suggests. These voices channel Marianne's voice, and as they do so, even more than her own focalization, they engage her in this kind of multiple recountings of what happened to her.

Before I focus on this polyvocal mode of narration, I want to introduce a way of following characters more generally which offers a helpful framework even though it does not address narration or minds exclusively. As I have argued before,[39] Rick

Altman's work on *multiple-focus narration* deserves more attention both from the narrative community and from literary critics conceived broadly. Altman responds to the heuristic of protagonist or main character as the conventional terminology for discussing who a novel is about with a new idea. He shifts the discussion from categories like hero or bildungsroman that emphasize a sole character and the changes s/he goes through to the structural process of focus, or who holds the implied author's attention. He calls this attention over time *following*, which can occur in three patterns of narration: single-focus, dual-focus, and multiple-focus. Rather than only provide a means of grouping the number of main characters, he argues that each of these *following-patterns* develops a style of literature. For example, single-focus narration emphasizes unity or individualism (115), but dual-focus narration divides its space between two characters (much like Matthew Clark's study of dyadic selves[40]), and so it structurally foregrounds conflict (135). However, as I will lay out in the following subsection, multiple-focus narration best applies to *We Were the Mulvaneys.* As such, the novel ought to conform to the structural features of multiple-focus narration that Altman lays out. These include following multiple characters and so having multiple plots (241), the construction of a hole at the center of the narration (no dominant mind) (202), a progression of action based on discontinuity (243), and the author or narrator styled as an editor (252). An implication of this *following-pattern* is a critique of single-focus narration, since multiple-focus narration tends to deal with the nature of causality in that it offers a variety of possible causes, rather than a straight-forward motivation from a single character that sets events in motion (278). Though apparently narrated by a single voice, *We Were the Mulvaneys* rarely stays with Judd's mind, language, or knowledge. Instead, its multiple-focus

narration means a discontinuous relation of the story through the focalization of multiple

minds, each with his/her own backstory entering the interplay of voices. As I go on to

demonstrate in the final section of this chapter, such polyphonic narration, fitting in with

Altman's characterization, affects readers' conventional assumption of an oversimplified,

linear notion of narrative causal logic.

II.ii. Spokesperson Judd

"Back in his apartment Patrick. . . . thought of Judd, a casualty too of Zachary Lundt's
rape of Marianne. The poor kid stuck at High Point Farm in its waning, disintegrating
day."
      ~ Joyce Carol Oates, *We Were the Mulvaneys*, 284

"The need to refer to a narrator where no first person appears arises from the lack of any
framework in which to conceptualize the text as either a unified whole or an intentional
object."
      ~ Ann Banfield, *Unspeakable Sentences*, 184

Judd is the novel's narrator—at least part of the time. Nearly all reviews and

criticism of *We Were the Mulvaneys* call or assume Judd is the narrator. Reading Judd as

the narrator, of course, provides certain advantages. For instance, it lets us project him

into the places where he is less intrusive, circumscribing a coherent narrational frame in

which to read the novel as a whole. Notes from Oates's manuscript archive substantiate

this point, since Oates wrote in one of the early typed and marked-up versions of the

novel, "I'm Judson—Judd. The youngest Mulvaney. [/] The Chronicler of what happened

to us. Because only I know—really know" (Box 32, Worksheet I). This line more clearly

than any of the initial comments in the novel suggests Judd's conventional narratorial

omniscience. As part of a draft, though, its revision indicates a move away from such

straightforward narration.

Indeed, if we follow the route of Judd's omniscience too far, serious complications crop up, such as when interpreting the italicized phrases in "Strawberries & Cream." These lines, if considered to be Marianne's recollection of Lundt's dialogue, become problematically represented when considering Judd's construction of them as narrator. We might have to read them as either some kind of suppositional omniscient focalization on Marianne or even the transposition of Marianne's recollection of Lundt into Judd's narrating mind as he tells this scene. That is, could the italicized lines also be Judd's thoughts in verbalized form? If so, this has further implications for the influence of Marianne's trauma into the novel's structure, but at the same time seems like overly complicating the rhetorical effect of these lines. If Judd has not merely taken on Marianne's language and knowledge of her mind as *psycho-narration*—a form of mental representation noted for its distance[41]—but has begun to think her traumatic thoughts and remembrances himself, then to what extent, practically, does his own mind differ from Marianne's? Such readings seem improbable and overly contrived. At some points, reading Judd into every scene cannot be maintained.

One possible solution is reflector narration. Indeed, part of the difficulty in assigning a clear narrational category to *We Were the Mulvaneys* is because its narration hovers between two categories that Franz K. Stanzel, throughout his work *A Theory of Narrative*, originally called "teller mode" and "reflector narration." Teller mode is the traditional narrator telling a story, while reflector narration involves the narrator as a silent agent, although some critics like Gerald Prince see even reflector narratives as having a narrator as the mediating agent (58). Judd's off-and-on presence as narrator in this story prevents us from labeling the narrative as either teller mode or reflector

narration since he has qualities of both. The text seems to be heavily mediated (e.g., who used the black smudge to represent Marianne's mind?), and yet an outspoken narrator is not always at hand.

Even so, we should keep in mind Oates's deliberate construction of Judd as authority, as we can see in this quote from her manuscripts:

> This memoir <u>We Were the Mulvaneys</u> is being composed in October 1991 by a person I'd like to think of as invisible and bodiless—the more authority, to present Truth. In fact it is an album of facts, conjectures, and "invented" interludes based on conversations with the principals about things I, Judd, haven't experienced first-hand, nor could possibly know except in the way of the heart. To reveal the truth, to present it convincingly, you must be patient and painstaking and maybe just a bit demented, to put so much of your spirit into an effort that may be futile. (Box 32, Worksheet I)

Note that while Judd seems to be considered omniscient by this passage, Oates, well-versed in literary terminology, does not use that metaphor. In fact, Oates's own rejection of first-hand experience in the quote above implies the indefinite quality of Judd's ontology. As a whole, the impression of the novel's narration is not a strategy by Oates, cleverly devised, so much as the result of her broader aim and a result of the writing process. As she revised, certain conventions of narration, including many first-person references like the one quoted above, were eliminated for brevity or to give a more direct relation of a scene. Oates uses a first-person narrator, a third-person narrator, and first-person plural focalizations. Hence, we get fractured references in Judd's role as narrator. Initial questions about Judd's identity, whether he's needed in the family, are reflected again in the style of narration that the novel takes: he is critically needed because he narrates, and yet he only marginally narrates, reflecting his marginal position.

Judd's on-and-off narration starts at the very beginning of the novel. He begins his tale of a picture-perfect family in the first book section, titled "Family Pictures," and

its first chapter, idyllically titled "Storybook House," with these words: "We were the

Mulvaneys, remember us? [/] You may have thought our family was larger . . . but in fact

there were only six of us: my dad who was Michael John Mulvaney, Sr., my mom

Corinne, my brothers Mike Jr. and Patrick and my sister Marianne, and me—Judd" (3).

This opening initiates several conventions and expectations that identify Judd as one of

many narrating minds.

One expectation concerns fictional genre, one of the five criteria I identified in my

first chapter as delimiting partial minds. Fictional character narration often derives from

nonfictional forms, such as memoir, confession, or family history. In an interview with

Stig Björkman about *We Were the Mulvaneys*, Oates reiterates what is found in this

opening, that "[m]any people in families feel themselves the repositories of the family

narrative—as Judd says, he is assembling a kind of family album, not writing a

'confession'" (Johnson 196). The narration in *We Were the Mulvaneys* from the start,

then, takes a less common route than the typical modes of nonfiction that fiction imitates.

The prominent use of "Storybook" indicates a fictional, even fairytale backdrop to Judd's

account, which means he uses the guise of fiction, rather than nonfiction, to be his

implicit template or genre. He even confronts this question head-on in a rare moment of

speaking to the narratee: "A storybook house, you're thinking, yes? Must be, storybook

people live there" (12). About this line, Oates critic Gavin Cologne-Brookes notes, "Such

a concept is itself a fiction since nothing remains one thing, but is constantly subject to

time and perception" (198). The ideal opening then—and as we shall see later, the overly

idealistic ending—belies its own construction and suggests instead that from the

beginning, nothing is as good as it appears. Judd cannot even base his work on a

nonfictional genre; he imports the storybook frame to fictionalize the implicitly-nonfictional story he is telling,[42] which is really a fiction.

His narration is also prefaced before he even speaks by the book section title "Family Pictures,"[43] connoting a visual picture album as another genre from which the story derives. This genre allows for many characters' perspectives to be represented in the novel. A picture album narrative sets us up to expect the kind of character sketches and vignettes that populate the novel, indicative of memories frozen in time—usually, happy—and at least individually, not subject to the casual logic of diachronic narration. Picture albums tend to be less focused on a particular person or plot, even while representing a larger arc of progression. But like the storybook genre, family pictures as a genre, too, imply a mode surpassing itself even as it is a model for the story. Narrative cannot imitate the synchronic-only dimension of photographs, so while there is a suggestion of how that genre might inflect the novel, from the outset it is doomed to be only figural or metaphoric, rather than a close structural model. However, the story remains like picture albums in that, just as family picture albums do not have a single protagonist or necessarily even a single "narrator," so too does this story not have a single narrator. Through its genres, *We Were the Mulvaneys* tells the story from multiple perspectives. The lack of a single perspective prevents a unifying frame to account for Marianne's trauma. That is to say, the ambiguity and enormity of her experience would have been belittled by Oates's recourse to a single perspective or a single genre. Such trauma, the novel suggests, requires many people to tell it. In allowing various characters' views to advance and recede through the family album, the narrative construction reinforces the untellability of Marianne's trauma. Consequently, though, telling from

many points of view also means that none presents a complete picture of Marianne's mind, producing a partial mind.

In relation to the other family members who end up helping in the narration, Judd does seem to be the main voice at the beginning, and his narration has a taste for honest truth-telling. On the first page, he claims, "But I believe in uttering the truth, even if it hurts. Particularly if it hurts" (3). He maintains a minimal care for representing his own stories unless they say something true about another family member. In this sense, he is more of a spokesperson than a narrator, an "I" that reflects the others. He even poignantly claims, "What is family, after all, but memories?" (4). His awareness as narrator that he is presenting memories and not a live, unrevisable narration is important because it positions him, whether intentionally or not, as unreliable in that he is subject to all the errors that occur with memories. Far from the provisional accuracy of family photos in capturing a verisimilitudinous reality—if only for a moment, and with their own set of inaccuracies—this story will be the story that Judd remembers, in contradistinction from the one that occurred.

But this self-aware narrator with his first-person perspective fades into the background. By the chapter "Dirty Girl," impersonal third-person narration takes over, as seen in this short paragraph: "Judd who was eight years old kept his thoughts to himself. He hoped to join the Air Force as soon as he was old enough, and be a bomber pilot" (52). Because others have already spoken about Judd in the third person (c.f. 44), this construction seems only somewhat odd. Still, the movement away from standard first-person narration develops further. The exemplifying passage that I here quote at length is notable because it is characteristic of Oates's complex style in this novel—willing to

juxtapose truncated dialogue, *free indirect discourse*, parenthetical asides, and italicized

analepses. As I will show how the complex narration gives us a new angle on reading the

black smudge I discussed in the section above, this passage—which I am labeling the

Distracted Dinner-table Scene for ease of reference—is most appropriate because it

immediately follows the first smudge:

> So much to talk about! So many interruptions! Laughter, and Judd scolded
> by Dad for passing sausage-bits to Little Boots beneath the table, and Mom
> scolded by Dad *Honeylove will you for God's sake stop jumping up every five
> minutes?*—and the discovery, midmeal, that the oven was still set at four hundred
> degrees and the Mexican chicken-shrimp-sausage casserole was beginning to
> burn. Marianne had helped Mom prepare supper as usual as if nothing were
> wrong, so perhaps nothing was wrong. In addition to the super-casserole there
> was grilled Parmesan-dill bread, baked butternut squash sprinkled with brown
> sugar, a giant tossed salad with Mom's special oil-and-vinegar dressing,
> homemade apple-cinnamon cobbler with vanilla ice cream. How many suppers,
> how many meals, here in the big cozy country kitchen at High Point Farm: you
> might bear the memory into eternity, yet each occasion was unique, mysterious.
>   In a haze of smiling, nodding, chewing, swallowing Marianne navigated
> the hour-long meal. Not quite so talkative, smiling, happy as usual but maybe no
> one noticed? (Except Mom?) Mikey-Junior was away with his girl Trudi
> Hendrick (*Are* those two getting serious? Mom's worried, wondering) but all the
> other Mulvaneys were in their usual seats. And all hungry.
>   *You know you want to, why'd you come with me if you don't?*
>   *Nobody's gonna hurt you for Christ's sake get cool.*
>   Talk swirled around Marianne's head like confetti. She was listening, yet
> seemed not to hear. Did they glance at her oddly?—or not notice a thing? There
> was a buzzing in her ears remote as wasps, in summer, under the eaves. That ache
> like weeping in her loins. (Don't think: *va-gin-a*. Ugly words like *ut-er-us*, *clit-or-
> is*.) Marianne leapt up to save Mom a trip, carrying the heated casserole back to
> the table; passed the newly replenished bread basket back to Dad, the salt-free
> margarine, the hefty gleaming "Swedish" salad bowl. Mom was telling them
> excitedly of the candidate she and church friends intended to campaign for, in the
> upcoming Presidential election, Jimmy Carter—"A true Christian, and an
> intelligent, forceful man." Dad murmured in an undertone, with a wink for the
> kids, "Rare combo, eh?" but Mom chose to ignore the remark; tried never to argue
> at mealtimes, on principle. Next was talk of the icy roads, Monday morning's
> predicted weather (snow flurries, wind-chill temperatures as low as minus
> twenty). Talk of upcoming dental appointments (Patrick, Judd—both groaned), a
> vet appointment (for poor Silky, whose teeth were getting bad). Dad brought up
> the subject of the bid Mulvaney Roofing had made last Monday to the contractor
> for the St. Matthew's Hospital addition, one of seven bids from local roofers, so

far as he knew; a decision was due soon, maybe this week. With a shrug of his burly shoulder meant to disguise the hope and anxiety he felt, Dad said, grinning, "Well, as the fella says, 'No news is good news.' Right?" Mom interjected in her way of thrusting her head forward, gawky-girl style, with her neighing laugh, " 'No noose is good noose'—as the condemned man said on the scaffold." (81-2)

The narrator is gone. Replacing him are, most dramatically, many voices in dialogue. But there are other minds represented in this passage too. For example, who speaks the second half of this sentence: "Marianne had helped Mom prepare supper as usual as if nothing were wrong, so perhaps nothing was wrong?" (81)? The comment is speculative on the surface, indicating that someone in this scene might legitimately believe that nothing is wrong (e.g., Corinne, Mike Sr., and Mike Jr.), even while a more knowledgeable perspective realizes the irony of what's happening, realizes how wrong things really are with Marianne. Is this Marianne trying to convince herself that nothing is wrong if no one else thinks there's something wrong? Or is it Judd looking back knowingly to show the irony of everything that was wrong and no one seemed to notice, even himself? No single perspective accounts for the question. So as I will explain momentarily, this is the family as a whole thinking, even though the individual members are still generally distinct.

The second paragraph of the Distracted Dinner-table Scene focalizes more closely on Marianne, seen from "but maybe no one noticed? (Except Mom?)." Yet the continual distractions from her perspective disallow any kind of consistent focalization on her, since the topic of the family's conversation is on Mike Jr.'s absence. Then the italicized dialogue lines from Lundt intrude a new voice into the family dinner, distracting both reader and Marianne from what the others are saying. The final paragraph of the Distracted Dinner-table Scene, as if taking a cue from the interrupting dialogue from

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Lundt, begins with a close focalization on Marianne's thoughts, sensations, and what she's trying to avoid: "(Don't think: *va-gin-a*. Ugly words like *ut-er-us*, *clit-or-is*.)" (82). Just as suddenly, her thoughts are gone, replaced with the polyvocal dinner conversation with plenty of parenthetical side commentary to add to the flurry.

How is the reader to explain the crowd of voices that both develop the scene and stray from its seeming center of Marianne's pain? Decentered multiple-focus narration à la Altman leaves no room for the full account of the individual, which is exactly the kind of breaching of the unified self that trauma can cause. The scene thus in its construction mimics the way trauma affects the mind. Nevertheless, the Distracted Dinner-table Scene offers further insight into the multiple-focus narration of the novel, insight that adds another layer to reading the section on Marianne's trauma by identifying who actually narrates.

As this passage demonstrates, Judd sometimes fades so far into the background that it is unclear if readers are to assume his presence as teller of the tale. Oates has left the traditional narrator's realistic stance of narration for the purpose of showing how minds are not stable in the novel, to the point that traditional forms of narration are only imitated and not used in their original unity. James Phelan recognizes such intermittent narration[44] in his work *Living to Tell About It* and attributes its cause to a communicative hierarchy. Phelan believes that at times, the importance of maintaining a consistent narrator in terms of the limitation or redundancy of his/her knowledge is subordinate to the exigency of providing the reader with the information needed to make sense of a scene at a particular moment. This prioritized narration occurs all the time in literature.[45] Phelan's example comes from *The Great Gatsby* when Nick as character narrator[46]

focalizes on a scene at which he was not present and furthermore, offers Michaelis's

thoughts (Phelan 4). So in other words, from Phelan's point of view, we need not assume

that every bit of information comes from Judd, but the novel lets his voice drop out of the

narration in order to present events—such as Marianne's suffering—more directly. This

narrative configuration does not mean that it is unimportant who narrates; in fact, it is

more urgent than ever to determine who narrates when we realize the narrator may be

breaking the limits of his/her possible knowledge or letting others' perspectives add to

the narration.

In response to this configuration, we must ask "Why?" Learning who is narrating

and how they are narrating gives us a means to determine the priorities of the narration,

which explains what we need to know as readers about how and why the story is

meaningful. Or applied to *We Were the Mulvaneys*, when we learn *if* Judd is narrating

and *how* he is breaking the knowledge that we would expect him to have in order to do

that narrating, then we can also learn *why* he is narrating that way, which will tell us what

the narrative gains by employing these methods. Judd's inconsistent narration, as we shall

see, leads to a more complex and rich perspective than current interpretations of the novel

have realized. It also pinpoints him as a partial mind, since his perspective is not

consistently forwarded as we expect narration to be.

Let me offer some more cases from the novel that show how Judd is only an

intermittent narrator and a particular kind of one. After discussing those, this section

makes sense of his inconsistent narration by importing the framework of unnatural

narratives.

One of the strongest cases for not being able to assume Judd is always the narrator comes from his ability to know what he should not be able to know, even given that he tells the story retrospectively. His epistemology determines our narratology. For example, Corinne's thoughts in the chapter "St. Valentine's 1976" go beyond mere speculation on a narrator's behalf as in this passage, mostly of *free indirect discourse*, about Corinne working on her antiques store in the barn:

> *How people misuse beautiful things!* was Corinne's frequent lament. The antique barn was crowded with such things, most of them awaiting restoration, or some measure of simple attention. Corinne felt she'd rescued them but hadn't a clear sense of what to do with them—it seemed wrong, just to put a price tag on them and sell them again. . . . On a bright winter day, cold sun glaring through the cobwebbed, uninsulated windows, the interior of the antique barn was like the vast universe stretching on, on and on where you didn't want to follow, nor even think of; except God was at the center, somehow, a great undying sun—wasn't He?
> These were Corinne's *alone-thoughts.* Thoughts she was only susceptible to when alone." (26-7)

It would hardly be fair to assume that Judd is speculating what Corinne is thinking while in the barn, so in passages such as these it is much more practical to assume that another kind of narrator takes over, even though there is no formal or explicit division of roles among the narrators, as in, for example, Charles Dickens's *Bleak House*. One might naturally turn toward the vague possibility of an omniscient narrator here, since who could know "Corinne's *alone-thoughts*" but Corinne or someone with access to her mind? But arguing for an impersonal omniscient narrator does not add anything to the story. It just makes the narrative more convoluted and does not explain Judd's narration. Even Meir Sternberg, in an article that upholds the need for reconsideration of the value of omniscience, admits, "In disentangling the perspectival montage built into reported discourse, we often find questions like 'Whose (mis)information?' and 'Whose

(mis)judgment?' hard to settle in immediate context, if ever. Experimental writing radicalizes such enigmas" ("Omniscience" 698). Certain characters may be omniscient, but that metaphor adds little to this story's collection of photo albums with many different limited perspectives crossing and being presented to the reader without a unifying narrator. Both limited and unlimited perspectives, unless clearly marked, contradict readings based on the story's narration. So, if we think of Corinne as narrating this passage in third person, we more directly sense the intentionality in the word choice of these lines and the value of the passage to express Corinne's perspective, rather than a disinterested omniscient narrator's. The passage further has the feel of a picture in a photo album, a portrait of Corinne that has value in which she lets it say about her character, even while arranged by an implied author.[47]

Furthermore, this narration is problematized in other ways which develop Judd's own story even as they determine the narration that develops the family's story. This tension is suggested by the broken self-reference he makes, an odd use of pronouns. He almost splits his own identity by referring to himself in the third person and then taking on the rightful first-person pronouns, as in this passage opening the chapter "Hard Reckoning": "How Judd, too, went away—left my mom when she needed me. Thinking *I want my own life. I'm not just a Mulvaney. I'm Judd*" (355). In a parody of *free indirect discourse*, Judd as both narrator and character dithers in how to refer to himself, a narrational choice mirrored in his vacant identity in the family. Neither third- nor first-person pronouns adequately express the marginal identity he attempts to deal with in light of the social familial identity he has been given. As Stanzel comments, "Where, finally, the mere change of the pronoun from the first to the third person will turn the first-person

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novel into a figural novel[, a novel without a narrator]—at this point the sector of the first-person novel borders on the sector of the figural novel" (164). This explanation of narratorial divisions suggests that Judd's inconsistent reference blurs our traditional categories of narrator and character. His manner of narration, then, is not just about a communicative hierarchy à la Phelan, but about his position within the family and how that interpellates his identity into the way he tells the story.

His narrational compromises are further apparent in the irresolution of his identity at the end, while the rest of the family eventually recovers from the dissolution precipitated by Marianne's rape. Patrick finds a partner who suits him and seems to exhaust his intellectual restlessness. Mike Sr. passes away. Mike Jr. becomes a Marine. Corinne opens a new antiques store. Marianne finds love (somewhat unbelievably) and is able to move on from the trauma that had caused so much damage. But Judd's ending does not so clearly resolve, despite the almost fairy-tale reunion at the end. Judd has become the editor of a newspaper—just like he has become the multiple-focus editor of this story—yet he says, "[I did not] give much thought to my professional accomplishments, such as they were. But I'd built a damned sturdy personality for myself, damned if I was going to dismantle it" (452). He says these lines as if he's still trying to convince himself that he has become the person he wanted. His remaining tension is even more apparent later on that page, when talking with Patrick: "I realized I was fearful of Patrick asking me questions that must be asked, yet not now. I would talk to him tomorrow, the next day—all the days to come!" (452). Judd has much more to tell his brother, but he cannot tell it by the end of the story he is recounting, making us wonder whether he will actually ever be able to resolve the past.

The final lines of the novel, too, while all too easily read as a maudlin gesture of full circle completion by referring back to the beginning, when taken in light of Judd's unresolved tensions, suggest instead an ironic stance on his own familial place:

> and there was Patrick smiling happily, squatting in his nylon tent showing his kid brother a pocket-sized weather radio that was in fact a miracle of technology, what relief in having access to detailed weather facts twenty-four hours a day 365 days a year, you have only to switch on a tiny button to hear so solemn an incantatory a recitation of simple unassailable facts beyond all human subjectivity, will, yearning. I laughed, poking Patrick in the arm, had to laugh at that expression in his face he'd had when we were boys, when we were the Mulvaneys. (454)

Judd's only way of resolving the trauma that remains in him from Marianne's trauma is to return to the past, the storybook narrative, to poke his brother in the arm like he would if he were still a kid, to try to relive his past boyhood, to recall the title and initial line of his story as if to contain his identity within the family, and to recite the power of will and subjectivity. *We Were the Mulvaneys* is a failed bildungsroman. Judd has not come of age, but is still pulled back into the past, because the past is where his trauma also lies.

Indeed, Marianne is not the only character in the novel who is represented as lacking a full, robust mentality. His mind highlighted by innovative phrases such as "counterthought" (115), "had retreated from full consciousness" (201), and "To give *a thought*—to *take thought*" (230), Judd as narrator ultimately lays himself out as a partial mind, one incapable of full range of thoughts. As he muses, "You can't exercise memory until you've removed yourself from memory's source" (230). Memory's source in the context of narration is the *story* as opposed to the *discourse*, the original set of experienced events that the narrator selects from and relates in his or her own way. But when the source itself, not to mention the narrator, is unclear or unreachable, other methods must intervene to explain both the reconstruction of the original, lost story and

to cope with that loss. Near the end, Judd confesses, "When I say this is a hard reckoning I mean it's been like squeezing thick drops of blood from my veins. Just to set down what requires saying in some semblance of chronological order. For every statement of historical fact . . . strikes my ear like a lie, reverberating like tin. What actually happened was so much more complicated" (355-6). Mimetic realism is not his goal, but rather getting at the complication, although he must use factual statements to tell a story. As he departs from mimetic realism, so too does he only become one part of the narration. Judd cannot be a traditionally truthful narrator despite his claims to it ("But I believe in uttering the truth, even if it hurts. Particularly if it hurts" [3]), since questions of truth are displaced by the difficulties of memory to represent what actually occurred. In Judd's act of retelling Marianne's experience, he belies his own feelings and beliefs, showing his trauma through hers. If Judd does not narrate the whole story, and if he is a character in that story who is left unresolved, he sets himself up for underrepresenting his own mind both as narrator and as character.

II.iii. Unnatural Narration

"Judd Mulvaney is only 30 years old and is speaking of events that happened to himself and his mother, father and siblings. As if even his position in the family had been blotted out by circumstance and reputation."

> ~ Beverly Lowry, "Home Is Where the Heart Breaks," par. 2

"[N]ot all lyrical or narrative texts enable, require or warrant the extrapolation of a narrator figure. It is therefore an optional category for a theory of character, unlike that of narrative agent. If we choose to proceed with this endeavor, we must remember that the narrator is by definition nothing but a locutionary agent, so the only source of information about him is his current speech activity or narrative act."

> ~ Uri Margolin, "The What," 2.1.1

The elisions in Judd's narration, the double-personned ways he refers to himself, the knowledge expressed that he could not have—these beg the question already

anticipated, "If not Judd, then who narrates?" To answer, let me prompt the discussion

with a narratological insight from Uri Margolin, followed by the application of the

framework of unnatural narratives.

Speaking of the narrator, Margolin explains,

[I]f this voice remains covert, if there is no textually indicated situation of
enunciation, and if one cannot recuperate from the text an image of a specific
speech situation and of an individuated teller with whom the current reporting
activity originates, it is difficult to speak meaningfully of any individuated
cognitive mental functioning as distinct from general logical factors. Once such
an image begins to emerge, though, we may treat the what and the how, the matter
and the manner of the narrator's discourse, as indicators of his or her cognitive
mental functioning. ("Cognitive Science" 278-9)

The assumption that a mind must always be present telling the story is upset by

Margolin's reasoning that "general logical factors" may be indistinguishable from an

individual mind. Now, the implied author's arranging can be seen even in logical

decisions that inflect narration; however, a specific narrating mind may not display

enough evidence of its presence to be posited. The alternatives to assuming a narrating

mind fall under the study of unnatural narratives.

Brian Richardson explains unnatural narratives as "anti-mimetic texts that move

beyond the conventions of natural narratives" by violating the expectations of oral or

nonfictional narratives that are implicit in fiction ("Introduction" 3, 34).[48] Jan Alber

specifies further in claiming that unnatural narratives include events that are impossible

either physically or logically (Richardson, "Introduction" 4). A simple case includes

narrators who know what they should not be able to know or are left silent when a reader

would expect them to be speaking. Indeed, in making sense of the inconsistency of

entering the minds of characters in some narratives—a category larger than what I am

discussing, since I am dealing specifically with a narrator whose mind is sometimes a mediating mind—unnatural narratives widen the spectrum of possible narrations.

Applied to *We Were the Mulvaney*'s intermittent narrator, Alber's formulation indicates that Judd need not always be a realistic narrator in the sense that we imagine him telling a narratee his story, but that the way he begins the story and interrupts it provides enough of his mind that we implicitly think of his point of view, impute moments of non-neutral narration to him, and can link to him to ideological beliefs expressed by the narrative—all without his direct intrusions. An earlier and more watertight example of this is Janie in *Their Eyes Were Watching God* when, early in the story, her narration changes from dialect and dialogue to dialect-free expositional narration, even as, ostensibly, she continues to speak to Phoebe.

But there is more to the story of Judd's unnatural narration. In an important derivation from Richardson's basic definition of unnatural narration and his belief that "[t]he unnatural should be thought of as a variable quality, like a light control that can modify the degree of illumination, or the volume knob on a radio" (37), Stephan Iversen poses degrees of experientiality as the metric for measuring unnatural consciousness ("Unnatural Minds" 93). He observes that "some experiences may go beyond the scope of narrative comprehension while some narratives may present experiences that resist being recognized as parts of what we would typically refer to as a human mind" (93). If Judd is not speaking as a typical narrator, but if his mind mediates others' focalization, then we readers are experiencing a mind that is not typical of the human mind in terms of either our own personal, volitional experience, nor in terms of mindreading others, which are always suppositions. Alber explains: "The unnatural . . . sheds new light on the

distinctiveness of fiction. . . . It is only in fictional worlds that we can experience and

ponder . . . physically or logically impossible narrators, characters, temporalities, settings,

and events, and that we can gain access to the thoughts and feelings of 'others'"

("Unnatural Spaces and Narrative Worlds" 62). Judd's kind of narrator differs from real

world minds to which we have experiential access.

Iverson sees two kinds of divergence between experientiality and consciousness,

one of which applies to Judd's narration. It is called *unmediated experientiality*. For this

form "the mediating consciousness is unable to capture or grasp the recounted event"

(102). This inability is precisely the problem of representation I have been discussing in

relation to Marianne's trauma. Marianne has experienced an injury that has shocked her,

and Judd's knowledge of that event channels her shock in his effort, but ultimate failure,

to represent her mental experience, an attempt which produces an underrepresented mind.

Judd does a fine job—to a point. He tells us in comprehensible narration what happens to

Marianne, leaving doubt only as to exactly how bad her rape actually was. But when Judd

and his deferring voice to the other narratorial perspectives give an account of the event

of her posttraumatic pain, narration fails. Raw, lived experience is gestured to by several

representations discussed above: *The Pilgrim* and the smudge, the subsequent textual

heteroglossia in the Distracted Dinner-table Scene, and the abrupt closure at the end of

the chapter. Judd certainly *tries* to represent Marianne's pain, but he is unable. His failure

is a product of his experience as a mediating contributor to the text. The mind that stands

as part of his narration and attempts to provide a faithful copy in language of the

subjective experience of Marianne's mind—this is the mind that fails to give the needed

representation and whose experience is unmediated, or better, unmediateable. In failing to

"capture or grasp the recounted event," he too becomes a product of the unmediated experientiality of the text: Judd is a partial mind. And as a result, he imputes to Marianne a partial mind. Both attempt to recoup and express Marianne's pain, but neither can convey her experienced mental state. Both even implicitly admit their failure, Judd through the smudge and alternative representations, Marianne through her avoidance and denial of the problem.

There is a real danger at this point in my argument of over-psychologizing both these characters, of minimizing their pain by simply dismissing the representations attempted.[49] This is not my aim at all—just the opposite. I am endeavoring to emphasize how intense that subjective suffering was—so intense that several methods, some experimental in their innovation, were employed—and that it is precisely its intensity that prevents words or images from capturing it. In even attempting to capture it, Judd shows his own mind to be only a spotty conveyor of what happened.

The frames of unnatural narration, specified as I have in terms of narrating minds that are inconsistently voiced and so admit flickering experience by using *unmediated experientiality* to tell the tale, make sense of the narrational problems in *We Were the Mulvaneys* without minimizing them. Deprived of these conceptions, we might be reduced to saying that the narration is ambiguous, and that the representation of Marianne's pain is shown but never fully represented. With them and by directing them toward minds, we can say that the subjective experience of Marianne exhausts available means (*free indirect discourse*, *psycho-narration*, images discussed above), doubles the experiential impact of her injury when we consider Judd's intermittent narration with additional family perspectives, and duplicates the injury from the *story* to the *discourse*,

from what happened to the way it's told, from the narrated to the narrating, from

Marianne to Judd. Trauma crosses from mimesis to diegesis. This gives the power of

trauma weight not only for Marianne but for Judd as well. Oates herself has claimed that

she cares "[n]ot *what* is being said, but *how*. For *what* is frequently given to us, what is

inevitable: it is the *how* that makes, or has the possibility of making, the text sacred"

(*(Woman) Writer* 41-2). In the *discourse* of *We Were the Mulvaneys* the mentally

underrepresented narrators uphold the weight of narrating Marianne's rape.

II.iv. Social Minds: We *Were the Mulvaneys*

"Oates' criticism endorses a paradigm shift from the competitive 'I' to the collective and cooperative 'we.'"
> ~ Marilyn C. Wesley, *Refusal and Transgression in Joyce Carol Oates'
> Fiction*, 143

"We believe we exist in terms of other people, our surroundings, our activities, or our environment. If these are altered or denied us—what then?"
> ~ Joyce Carol Oates, "An
> Interview," 102

Having established that Judd is a prominent mind in character narration, but one

who does not narrate all the time, I now return to the question, "Who narrates?" Alan

Palmer's work on social minds fits particularly well for describing the complex

interweaving of voices and thoughts as part of a single family unit. An expansion of

"Bakhtinian dialogicality" (*Social Minds* 40), social minds are important for

understanding novels because, Palmer claims, all thinking does not fall into the internalist

perspective, the purview of individual thought (42). Laden in his view of a social mind is

his belief that the social whole is more than the sum of its individual parts (43). This

emphasis emerges in his definition of social minds as including "those aspects of the

whole mind that are revealed through the externalist perspective" and which "stress . . .

those aspects that are outer, active, public, social, behavioral, evident, embodied, and engaged" (39). So rather than just take each character's thoughts as presented and discuss them all, we can look at the moments when thoughts have corporate agents.

Among Palmer's examples, *Middlemarch* resonates the most, especially when we consider how the eponymous town itself gossips, gives opinions, and in a belated sense, has thoughts. Palmer's point is particularly evident when he points out how many characters have conceptions of who Lydgate is, as found in the first mention of him in *Middlemarch* by Mrs. Cadwallader and Lady Chettam. By posing their conversation about Lydgate in mental terms, Palmer suggests that we get a variety of "Lydgates" throughout the novel, based on which minds are thinking about him—some even before we meet him. To Palmer, when two (or more) come together, they can create social thoughts that are unattributable to one person alone.

Palmer thereby situates his work at the intersection of individual thought and social thought—at the complex formations that occur when competing mental conceptions of a character mix. The traditional, Cartesian view of thought denotes an individual's consciousness, while social thinking denotes the aggregation of those individual thoughts into a larger unit of meaning: collective thinking. Although the primary sense of "thought" refers to a single person, the term also expresses that intuition that groups perform a kind of "thinking" at times (c.f., OED, "thought," definitions I.1. b-d; 2.a.). Such an overlap between uses of the word "thought" also highlights the difference between the two: that individual thoughts appear to be known only to the thinker, while group thoughts must be surmised from actions. Notwithstanding that group thought is based on actions, at least in real life, in fiction this relationship is not the case,

since in allowing for certain forms of access that do not exist in real life, such as access to thoughts (albeit in verbalized or graphic transcriptions of those thoughts), fiction may give direct access to a group's thoughts through the same methods it uses to relate individual thoughts (e.g., *direct thought*, *though report*, and *free indirect discourse*). Fiction thus bypasses the tension between individual thoughts and group thoughts found in real-life. By employing both levels of thought relation, *We Were the Mulvaneys* suggests that while neither can provide a complete perspective on the situation alone, their combination offers a fuller expression of reality—in this case, Marianne's trauma— even as it stresses the isolation of Marianne's trauma in contrast to the social thoughts of her family.

So it is this very divide between what constitutes individual thought and what constitutes social thought that *We Were the Mulvaneys* attempts to navigate through its complex narration. The novel certainly prioritizes some characters over others for their functional narrative roles—Judd is more of a narrator than Corinne, Marianne is more integral to the plot than Mike Jr.—but the multiple-focus narration and scene construction not by a single narrator but by the aggregation of perspectives indicates the extent to which the Mulvaney family as a whole is the central mind. Even though the novel does not present the family through simplified social thought language, saying neither, "The Mulvaneys loved the farm," nor, "The Mulvaneys collectively ignored Marianne's raped," it implicitly represents the family's perspective by narrating passages from several views at once and by commentary that only makes sense as seen from the point of view of the collective family mind. The whole is more than the sum of its parts. And those parts reside in complex configurations within the novel's social thought.

For example, if we consider what the Mulvaneys think about Marianne's rape in the chapter "Strawberries & Cream," although no coherent voice speaks, readers are let into a variegated social mind that provides a spectrum of views from the Mulvaneys and so a polyphonic but collective voice: Marianne is traumatized by the rape, Patrick has only an inkling that it's happened, Corinne may have an idea that something is wrong but that is uncertain, the Mikes are completely clueless, and Judd the character might know something, while Judd the narrator knows everything. Such a variety of perspectives in the social thought, therefore, problematizes simple formulations of group thought but like Palmer's conflicting "Lydgates," reflects a larger sense of the family's mind. The tags of individual thoughts within this larger group thought are still essential, since they show difference within a larger whole. As a result, this array of characters' thoughts expresses a larger mindset that suggests an unsettled questioning of what's happened to Marianne. The complex interactions among the minds offer a sense of a larger identity, one that is not simple or uniform, but knit together with these moments of ignorance, tension, disagreement, miscommunication, and individual ambition. And that is the very point— that the individual thoughts, even as they form group thoughts, indicate the isolation of Marianne's unknown trauma in contrast to the shared group knowledge of the family. No one besides Marianne and the narrator knows her trauma, and in learning this larger lack of awareness from the group mind of the family, Marianne's trauma and suffering stands alone. As Palmer is trying to make sense of a larger group mind on the theoretical level, so is this novel trying to do the same, and consequently, his very formulation of group minds as a separate category from individual minds complements Oates's intuitive use of them in her novel.

We are left at this point with a novel that focalizes on different characters and even narrates through different voices, as it ultimately tries to record the perspectives and voices of the Mulvaney family in both their corporate and individualized natures. Ignoring the tension between those two levels means missing out on what Oates is trying to do: not simply giving a social mind or individual mind perspective, but showing what happens when both individuals and groups are represented together. This point of view means that we should speak of the Mulvaney family as the consciousness at stake in the novel's perspectives, while realizing the disharmonious undertones within it.

Two more theories nuance the social minds in *We Were the Mulvaneys*. Akin to Palmer's work stands Elizabeth Deeds Ermarth's theory on the collective voice of the narrator. Concerned with nineteenth-century realist fiction, she explains, "Realistic novels demonstrate the power of narrative consciousness to occupy one mind after another; and in so doing, they confirm the potential continuity of consciousness between minds and even implicitly extend that continuity beyond the arbitrary limits of the text to include the reader" (67). Texts that employ realist frameworks broadly but are written in the postmodern period tend to invert this relation among narrators, characters, and readers. Rather than confirm, they attempt to discredit the continuity of consciousnesses in order to show that the differences among minds are impossible to fully overcome, even while resolution is something sought after. Oates has made a number of statements about the genres and mode of her fiction, but in an interview from the early 1990s, she claimed to be writing in a "realist mode, from what might be called a tragic and humanistic viewpoint" (Sjoberg 106). She has on other occasions admitted to attempting highly experimental works. Seeing Oates broadly as a postmodern realist, then, we might apply

Ermath's point this way: *We Were the Mulvaneys* tries to develop continuity among minds in the novel while realizing the limits of shared thought. The narrators realize that understanding Marianne's trauma is precisely what other minds cannot do, but through the remediation of fiction, the novel attempts to let readers, but not other characters to whose minds we have access, become insiders on her suffering.

Also reflecting social minds but in a different way from Palmer's work is George Butte's theory of representation called deep intersubjectivity. He develops the term this way:

> Deep intersubjectivity extends the narrative of consciousness of consciousness to the all-important third—and exponentially different—orbit in this solar system of subjectivities. In this third orbit one perceives, or believes one perceives, in the other's body or language a trace of one's own previous and now appropriated gesture, redirected to oneself for further embodiment or revision. These perceptions of appropriation, and of appropriation of appropriation, extend down the long corridor of attending consciousnesses which, however indolent or perhaps malevolent, perceive and misperceive embodiments in each other. "Deep intersubjectivity" names this string of perceptions in a series of nested narrations represented as inside or beside other consciousnesses. ("Henry James and Deep Intersubjectivity" 130-31)

This take on social thinking emphasizes the interdependence that each unit in the group has on all the others. It also draws out what *We Were the Mulvaneys* dramatizes: group thinking does not occur in neat categories but exists in recursive networks. Butte interrogates how others' thoughts are channeled through focalized minds in an intersubjective network, leading at times to "limitations of complexity," such as "generic consciousnesses" (*I Know* 47). These networks mean that subjectivity arises from encounters with and thoughts of others, much as Lydgate becomes a character even before he is dramatized. Butte's phenomenological angle views the mind as neither completely cut off from others, nor completely determined by others (*Social Minds* 5). So

in addition to seeing people as thinking together in a kind of polyvocal merged mind, following Butte projects a grand network of individuals thinking about each other and, when those thoughts are represented, as constructing the textual subjectivity of the other through thoughts about one another.

So, by looking at moments when one character's narration, focalization, or speech initiates or includes a mental state of another character's—whether an accurate representation or not—there is an intersubjective formation in Butte's tradition. The Mulvaney family is the mind that accounts for the narration, yet it is not a singular mind but a plural one through which each moment of narration is determined contextually by the characters and their interactions and (mis)mindreading. So Butte's theory rounds out the way we look at social narration in *We Were the Mulvaneys* by acknowledging the Mulvaney family's mind as a network in which not all the members know the same things or have the same opinions, even as their network of minds still forms a coherent perspective. Family is really the mind focalized because otherwise we are trying desperately to pin it to a person, which is in the end futile, since no individual alone accounts for the sum of the parts. So taking the family as the novel's primary focus of mental representation, with moments in which characters are focalized or when Judd is the present spokesperson—this argument allows us to make sense of who is saying what.

For example, later in the story Marianne visits Patrick at his college apartment, and in a layered narrational scene typical of the novel and Butte's method, Patrick's thoughts imagine other characters in relation to him while being ambiguously focalized through Judd:

> Would he die for Marianne, yes he believed he would.
> Yet: had he ever confronted Zachary Lundt, or any of the pack of guys who were Zachary's friends and who, it was rumored, would "stand up for Zach"[50] if the police investigated?—no, he had not.
> That wasn't Patrick's way. That wasn't Pinch's way.
> Aloof and furious and deeply unspeakably hurt.
> Nor had he confronted his father, with whom, since February 1976 [the month of Marianne's rape], he'd scarcely spoken. *You go your way and I go mine.* His father seemed to him mad: it was pointless to talk to him, still less argue. He'd banished Marianne from the household and from his life so that he could banish her from his thoughts. (225)

Almost every family member is involved in this narration. Such an expansive representation of the family's intersubjective network underscores my larger point that to represent Marianne's rape, even indirectly, demands not a single perspective but many in tension with one another. Such a complexity of perspectives lets the novel show the severity of Marianne's trauma in ways that a single-voiced narration could not accomplish on its own, due to the limitation of Judd's singular perspective.

In this passage just quoted, as the family's perspectives are combined, so do we get an aggregate sense that the network has its own voice, even while the individuals have conflicting thoughts within it. The passage uses *free indirect discourse* to mimic Patrick's interior monologue. Whether we attribute the narrator's voice that helps compose the *free indirect discourse* here as Judd's or as the wider family's is a readerly choice, given that there are no definitive signs either way. Next, the paragraph "That wasn't Patrick's way. That wasn't Pinch's way" employs Patrick's family nickname, which suggests the brotherly perspective of Judd coming through and also takes a brief departure from the *free indirect discourse* of Patrick debating his own bravery. Marianne is also involved, as she so often is, as an object of someone else's reflections: here, Patrick's. But then she also becomes the object of her father's thoughts through Patrick

who imagines the justification for why Mike Sr. banished Marianne—the final sentence quoted. Clearly, Judd's intention as narrator or editor is to tell us something about what Patrick was thinking here, but Patrick's intention is to tell us something about his father, while his father's intention (as presented by both of them) is to tell us something about how he was affected by Marianne's rape. Corinne is discussed in the section that follows the one I quoted, but I believe by this point the layered narrational configuration is clear: saying that Judd narrates oversimplifies who speaks and who thinks.

Indicated by this case, identifying whose mind in the family is being channeled gives us insight into their character, but there is one more layer that we need to account for in order to make sense of who is directing and coordinating these voices and minds so that they are in concert—or, alternatively, so that irony can be leveled at the narrating agent. Because of the competing voices and minds who attempt to narrate *We Were the Mulvaneys*, no single agent adequately stands for the narrator. However, the notion of the implied author, originally developed in reaction to fears of committing the intentional fallacy, accounts for the apparently intentional, constructed design of narratives. Wayne Booth christened this idea, while James Phelan's 2005 defense baptized it, even though it is still debated by dissenting voices, such as Ansgar Nünning's structuralist defense and Maria Stefanescu's redundancy argument.[51] The implied author, unlike the narrator, cannot speak in the narrative; he or she is not an actual presence but rather a director behind-the-scenes, a puppeteer. When irony comes through the characters' words or actions, we may attribute that larger design to the intentions of the implied author.

We Were the Mulvaneys is a perfect example of the need for supposing the implied author's existence. Voiceless, Oates's implied author arranges the voices who

speak, and mindless, her implied author presents minds in just the right order to get across her intended effects. Those effects are potentially myriad, but ones I show in this chapter that lead to expressing how the family members react to Marianne's trauma, further emphasizing her isolation, suffering, and unrepresentable mental state via the partial mind. Accounting for the implied author as an agent working behind the passage quoted above means that we can attribute intentionality to the order and mental representations (e.g., focalization, *free indirect discourse*, etc.) used to construct this passage. It also highlights the subordination of all the narrating voices, especially Judd's, pointing out the underrepresentation of his mind even as the implied author through Judd expresses Marianne's mind as partial.

Upon closer investigation through the design of the implied author, then, the passage quoted above reveals a tone that begins with a mental debate in Patrick's mind which seems to have resolved, but which is then interrupted in its certainty by the intentional intrusion of others' mental states, ones that reveal his own mental uncertainty. The mental debate includes the lines mentioned that are *free indirect discourse* from Patrick's point of view in the first two paragraphs quoted. Notice how his internal debate is constructed with grammatical markers: there is no question mark in the first sentence, suggesting the question is not merely rhetorical but rather one that is usurped by Patrick's overly brash certainty of belief that he would die for Marianne (a point later underscored by his failure to hurt Lundt when he abducts him). Additionally, the quick colon after the initial "Yet" pivots his mind away from thinking about Marianne and into his plans for revenge. And then Judd's voice begins to take over with the rationalization that perhaps Patrick couldn't hurt Lundt because of the colloquial "That wasn't his way," which

sounds like a solid foundation while actually belying an avoidance of the problem (i.e.,

he doesn't say, "because he wasn't brave enough," or "because his morals wouldn't allow

him"), leaving the ambiguity about Patrick's resolve still unresolved. The one sentence

paragraph that follows interrupts this somewhat coherent line of thought with a vague and

enigmatic line, "Aloof and furious and deeply unspeakably hurt." The anaphora here

suggests the kind of chain of thoughts that is associated with stream-of-consciousness,

but is it Patrick to whom the line refers? Isn't Marianne the one "unspeakably hurt"? Or

is it Judd, who if focalizing here is very "aloof"? We assume Patrick, but the

unspecificity of the line indicates just how much the mental processes of Patrick are here

deteriorating into social thought as he struggles through these challenges to his identity.

The very ambiguity, key to the narrational strategies of this novel, presents the story as a

collection of subtlely merged voices, only which in their aggregation can present a

complex account of Marianne's trauma and their own stories resultant from it. An

implied author carefully plays the minds here with such design that a social, family mind

comes through, even while sequestering Marianne's unrepresented thoughts.

  Next, Patrick's unwillingness to confront Lundt is associatively linked with his

unwillingness to resolve the tension between himself and his father that Marianne's rape

had led to. And the passage concludes with the irony of Mike Sr.'s thoughts as channeled

through Patrick: Mike Sr.'s very attempt to rid Marianne from his thoughts has led to her

flooding Patrick's thoughts and to the *de facto* banishment of Patrick as well as

Marianne. Following Butte's theory of deep intersubjectivity which emphasizes that

understanding one perspective entails understanding others, any attempt to push an idea

out of one person's thoughts in this passage means doing just the opposite: trying to

move too quickly through what the certainty of Patrick's love for Marianne means ends up with that same doubt resurfacing in another context (here, his inability to confront his father). As this passage is tightly woven with its order allowing for irony and its coordination of several minds channeled through each other, so we ought to attribute that design not merely to Oates who writes the physical artifact of the novel but to her implied author who in the level of abstract narrative—*story* and *discourse*—conducts the voices and minds in a coordinated concert in order to produce those effects.

At this point in the chapter, let me recapitulate what the critical framework has helped us learn about *We Were the Mulvaneys*. Marianne's trauma from Lundt raping her is represented by the narrative through alternative narrational means, such as an ekphrasis and a black smudge, techniques which highlight the how much the trauma has affected her. These representations, though, cannot be fully attributed to the self-proclaimed narrator Judd because his voice cannot be supposed in every moment of narration without making wild accounts of how he knows what he says. He engages in the *unmediated experientiality* of an unnatural narrator, which still leaves open the question of which agent is telling us the parts that he does not. Rather than assuming that there is some kind of impersonal omniscient narrator who runs the narration, the thematic focus of this novel is on the family, and so by constantly keeping in mind that the Mulvaneys do not speak with a single voice, we can look at their polyvocal perspective as the source of narration. Behind them, we must assume there is an implied author arranging sections and deciding who is focalized and who narrates in order to best tell the story. The result of this narrational formation is that Judd is an underrepresented narrating mind, and he and the

other Mulvaneys underrepresent Marianne's mind as they isolate it in the realm of

representation and narration, delivering a powerful expression of the extent of her trauma.

III. Narrative Time Forms the Partial Mind

III.i. The Telling Is Not the Told

"Memory blurs, that's the point. If memory didn't blur you wouldn't have the fool's
courage to do things again, again, again that tear you apart."

> ~ Joyce Carol Oates, *We Were the
> Mulvaneys*,106

Immediately after an opening that hints at Marianne's rape, the pivotal chapter

"Strawberries & Cream" switches directions to Marianne's thoughts on capital-T Time.

At first, Time is a matter of clocks: "[I]t was not Time at High Point Farm but *times*. As

many *times* as there were clocks, distinct and confusing and combative . . . the hand-

painted 1850s 'banjo' clock . . . the 1889 'Reformed Gothic' grandfather clock" (65). But

then, these physical clocks become representatives for trauma's reconfiguration of

Marianne's phenomenological sense of being. Thinking about broken clocks in the house,

Marianne supposes, "*You would think that Time 'stands still.' But you'd be wrong*" (66).

Time takes on the inexorable progression of diachronic narrative, even while it feels to

her like time ought to be standing still. Marianne's mode of perceiving the world has

fundamentally changed because of the rape—a point reinforced by traumatic

recursions—and this incurs a conflict in how Marianne perceives time. In this section, I

argue that *We Were the Mulvaneys* strategically subverts chronological time in order to

mimetically represent the nonlinear experience of Marianne's rape. The novel thereby

expresses through a temporal method that Judd and the family narrators perceive her as a

partial mind. As evidence, I first further develop her conception of time based on her own views expressed in the text. Next, I look at causation in *We Were the Mulvaneys* as a *post hoc; ergo, propter hoc* plot that matches Marianne's conception of time, since the plot does not work only chronologically. I close this final section on temporality by importing Paul Ricoeur's *narrative time* to show that the reader herself, at least partly, experiences Marianne's partial mind, emphasizing its representational effect of isolation and suffering.

In fact, Marianne's reflections after her comment about time standing still go on to connect time directly to trauma. While on the one hand clocks represent the differences among the members of the Mulvaney family—a point I have been highlighting in the different context of their narration—the clocks focus into a more precise metaphor on the following page in which Marianne thinks about "her watch, her beautiful watch, a white-gold battery-run Seiko with tiny blue numerals; a gift from Mom and Dad for Marianne's sixteenth birthday. She'd taken it off immediately when she'd come home. She hadn't examined it closely, knowing, or guessing, that the crystal was cracked" (67). "Sweet sixteen" being a key year of sexual maturity for a teenager, the image of the watch, and by metonymy Time, enters into the novel laden with associations of Marianne's changing identity as a woman. In the context of what we later learn is her rape, these remarks, and especially the crack in the watchface, indicate that the trauma she has experienced feels like time has stopped even while it pushes on. Her trauma has upset her mental sense of temporality.

Abruptly—but as we shall see, relatedly—Marianne next begins to think about how she doesn't normally engage in "*plotting*." She mulls over this term: "The concept of

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plotting an action that might be broken down into discrete, cautious steps, which Patrick would have found challenging, was confusing to Marianne. A kind of static intervened" (67). Marianne's ability to plot, to be an agent in a plot who has will and power, has been cut off. Now, there is only static when she tries to think by using that most basic narrative component, plot. And plot is connected in her thoughts to time. She goes on to wonder where in her small town she could take the watch to be repaired without her parents finding out about it. And then, the direct connection to her rape begins to surface, echoing a line found later in the Distracted Dinner-table Scene: "Maybe it was wisest to continue wearing the watch as if nothing were wrong, for unless she examined it closely nothing *was* wrong. [/] Patrick would guess, unless Patrick had already guessed. He frightened her with his talent for seeing what wasn't there to be seen" (67). Following these reflections, Marianne recalls more clearly what Patrick "must" have known when he picked her up that morning, that she had been raped by Lundt.

The watch as an obvious, but carefully-integrated, metaphor for her sexuality, and its/her "damage" by Lundt may at first glow seem like a heavy-handed way of initiating the dramatization of Marianne's rape. And yet, as I go on in this section to elaborate, neither time nor trauma is left alone by the novel. Trauma's temporal process in fact falls in line with how Time is imagined by remarks like Marianne's just discussed. Caruth gives trauma this definition: "trauma describes an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena" (11). As it often gets misused, trauma is less the immediate suffering of an injury and more the *post facto* reoccurrence of the injurious event. But Caruth takes the definition a step

further in tying it not only to when it occurs but to how it *recurs*, a question of reference: "I would propose that it is here, in the equally widespread and bewildering encounter with trauma—both in its occurrence and in the attempt to understand it—that we can begin to recognize the possibility of a history that is no longer straightforwardly referential (that is, no longer based on simple models of experience and reference)" (11). Trauma defies the typical methods of reference and time that we use and internalize to make sense of other life events. As the narration attempts to offer different representational modes for referencing Marianne's trauma, discussed above, so does Oates's causal logic in this story resist a simple beginning-to-end causation model in order to demonstrate trauma's relation to time. The novel's temporal logic realigns time and reference—in fiction, representation—to evoke the same kind of emotional *non-sequiturs* that trauma evokes in its victims.

Amy Hungerford, however, disputes Caruth's overly-abstracted conceptions of trauma. Hungerford explains: "By making trauma—that experience which cannot be fully understood or known because of its violence—inhere in the very structure of language as such and by asserting trauma's centrality to literary language in this way, Caruth in the end insulates her analysis from the more concrete notions of trauma" (112). But, from a philosophical angle, Hungerford's account need not be the case. After all, the abstraction of language in *fiction* is the very root of representing concrete experience. Thus, as Marianne's trauma must be represented in language to be concrete, so must narrative time and language be distorted from their normal models in order to achieve or attain that traumatic representation. Because Judd and the social narrating mind of the Mulvaney family perceive Marianne's trauma as needing a more robust representation than simply a

linear account of her rape and experiences afterwards, they write that same nonlinearity

into the temporal organization of the novel. This kind of subversion of chronological time

prevents the kind of aggregated knowledge readers are used to getting about a character's

mind, leaving the representation of Marianne's consciousness as partial, rather than the

expected developed representation of her mind. Such a partiality underscores the family's

perception of the severity of her trauma.

III.ii. Causation and a *Post Hoc; Ergo, Propter Hoc* Plot

"To qualify for art, chronology needs to undergo such deformation in the telling as to be only gradually reformed or reconstructed in the reading, trial-and-error fashion, with appropriate delays and twists and surprises en route, if not pockets of darkness and ambiguity to the end."

~ Meir Sternberg, "Telling Time 1," 903-4

This attempt to adjust the linear flow of the narrative occurs through the reversal

of the causal order of the novel's plot, a restructuring that is precipitated by Marianne's

rape. While that event affects the rest of her immediate family through a decay of the

viability of their familial ties in a straightforward causal logic, it also affects the

narrator's telling of the story, thereby working anti-chronologically as the reader

experiences it. Consequently, causation works forwards and backwards here, trauma as a

cause of fallen-apart family, and trauma as its own source in the telling. For example, in

the parenthetical lines from the Distracted Dinner-table Scene, the juxtaposition of Judd's

comment, "(Except Mom?)" and Corinne's supposed question, "(*Are* those two getting

serious?)" about Mike Jr. quickly catalogs several members of the family and their affairs

which are unrelated to Marianne's injury at a climactic moment of the text's

representation of her injury. But these are not mere distractions from her emotions, but

emblems of the interrelated causal structure of this family. Thus, this passage

microcosmically and metaphorically functions as a *mise-en-abyme* of the novel's process as a whole: Marianne's trauma stretches both forward and backward in time, residing as the causal locus for the dissolution of the family (Judd later pithily laments "One by one, we went away" (189)) after the rape and residing as the decentered event which defines the exigency of the telling of the story in the first place. Marianne's rape precipitates the narration.

But in the last paragraph of the Distracted Dinner-table Scene, the family's narration is also a displaced center, continually crowded and covered up by other voices, narratives (i.e., the roofing bid), and images (i.e., the hospital, the food). Marianne's centrality—and metonymic of her, her trauma as central to her mind—is an absent one in which the scene's progress shows all the markers of her presence without giving substance or representation to her actual presence. Likewise, her mind becomes offset and replaced by attempts to depict it, whether through descriptions or images. The result is a partial mind, a minimal and painfully inadequate mimesis of her consciousness. What's more, only a narration which has a sense of the whole family and each member's internal perspective but which also has a voice that is invested totally in them can represent the whole family in this way. Marianne's trauma in the *story* leads to her family's dissolution, but Marianne's trauma affecting the *discourse* leads to the very need to tell the story of the Mulvaneys in the first place. Such dual trajectories emphasize Marianne's trauma and its intentional underrepresentation by the narration.

In accounting for her trauma, the representation of Marianne's mind as central to the novel's plot opens several problems. Roland Barthes famously pointed out that the *post hoc; ergo, propter hoc* fallacy applies to narrative structure ("An Introduction" 248).

Just because one thing follows another does not constitute causal relation, suggesting that novels need not operate only linearly. Even more commonly invoked in narrative criticism is E. M. Forster's formulation that a narrative is not "The king died. The queen died" but "The king died. The queen died of grief" (86). Once again, the implication of motivation and the second action having an effect that ties it through cause-effect logic remains important to the broad schematization of narratives.[52]

However, the logic in *We Were the Mulvaneys* depends on combining the causal-temporal structure with the thematic, or design, structure, as articulated by the early structural narratologist Tzvetan Todorov. He argues concerning these two[53] that "one opposition matters more than any other: do the minimal units of causality enter into an immediate relation with each other, or do they do so only by the intermediary of a general law of which they happen to be the illustrations?" (43). In other words, while Todorov is aware that causation happens on a small scale within scenes, he suggests that there may be a larger design order to the narrative that holds together the events of a novel as a whole. *We Were the Mulvaneys* makes both logics—cause-effect and thematic causation—work in sync: Marianne's rape causes her family to fall apart, but that falling apart is what motivates Judd to start telling the story in the first place. Though Atkins argues that when trauma is placed at the beginning of a novel, "such texts suggest that rape is a necessary milestone to pass in order to achieve maturity" (435), Oates is able to reverse the inevitability and polarity of this outcome. I explore this point further in the next subsection on *narrative time*.

III.iii. The Telling and the Told: *Narrative Time* Is Telling Time Backward

"By reading the end in the beginning and the beginning in the end, we learn also to read time itself backward, as the recapitulating of the initial conditions of a course of action in its terminal consequences."

~ Paul Ricoeur, "Narrative Time," 180

As indicated by Todorov, both local moments and longer trajectories of temporality construct narrative time. This tension means that the construction of Marianne's mind by the narrators at a local, scenic moment of representing her trauma, when it signals the partial representation of her thoughts, may simultaneously further that underrepresentation as it destabilizes the linearity of time in the narrative as a whole. Specifically, it disrupts the narration *qua discourse*—not *story*—which, told in past tense, indicates prior knowledge of what happens before it is told. (And while Judd is an unnatural narrator, he still indicates that he is telling the story retrospectively.) How Marianne's mind is represented indexes what the narrators care about. When they resort to alternative narrative methods, they signal an exigent reason for doing so.

Paul Ricoeur's term *narrative time* helps decode this temporal narrating tension. Ricoeur sees a tension between the telling—which is the diegesis, the narrator's time and chronological position relative to the story's events—and the told—which is the reader's time of diachronically progressing toward the traditional narrator's time of telling. The correspondence between these two allows for a particular mode of time that is neither clocktime nor phenomenal (meaning experiential) time. In the following passage William C. Dowling cogently demystifies Ricoeur's *narrative time*:

> '[O]bjective' time is the time of a universe that does not know we exist. This is when the paradox of time—that irresolvable gap between a time of the world and a time of the soul—becomes the gap between an instinctive sense that the world is meaningful and an ineradicable anxiety that it is not. In all human communities, Ricoeur will argue, the way that gap is closed is through a 'third time' of narrative

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in which consciousness discovers the alternative possibility of an external reality that belongs to the mind or soul alone. (35)

Different from either scientific time or the subjective "time of the soul," *narrative time* is distinguished by its tension between the time of the telling and the time of the told, and its inevitable movement forward from the former to the latter (Dowling 46). Ricoeur argues that this tension found in *narrative time* is what allows for what Henry James called the moral imagination, and what Aristotle called *anagnorisis*, the moment of recognition. Dowling interprets that this version of time, then, is what in *Pride and Prejudice* allows the reader to come to experience Darcy and Elizabeth's realization of their mutual love *with* them,[54] rather than merely learning that *about* them. Such a co-experience occurs because the realization of the approaching conclusion of the story stages the mental frame for their progression toward that moment (51). The reader experiences a temporal framework, and as Roman Ingarden would say, a continuing "concretization" through places of indeterminacy,[55] that puts her in relation to the progressing events of the story. Only by positing an ending from which the narrator speaks can we adequately imagine and make sense of the text's present (74). The narrational frame of *We Were the Mulvaneys* depends on this site of telling as the moments when the told is being told. As Sternberg puts it, "The signifier (the order of telling, the quotation) must either formally diverge from the signified (the order of happening, the original utterance) or merge into the signified to the vanishing point" ("Telling Time I" 920-1). Embedded in the very idea of narration is two times, telling and told, which are always in relation to one another. *Narrative time* carries the reader from the end of the story when it begins to be told to the end of that telling.

Trauma narratives in many ways play out the paradigm of Ricoeur's *narrative time*. Following the Heideggerian logic of the conclusion or outcome being the pole to which the narrative tends, Ricoeur's narrative time offers "an alternative to the representation of time as moving from the past forward into the future, according to the well-known metaphor of the arrow of time" ("Narrative Time" 180). *Narrative time* always stretches toward the conclusion, the point of telling, when the narrator is recounting what has already happened, emphatically situating repetition at the center of narrative telling. The repetition of trauma, though (as opposed to the intentional recollection and thus representation from memory of the narrative's events), occurs unwilled, belatedly, and unprotected—that is, with the inability to prevent repeating the emotions of the traumatic event. Just as trauma repeats, so does *narrative time* repeat the originally experienced events in such a way that the reader anticipates their resolution because she knows it is a told story.

As a result, in *We Were the Mulvaneys* Judd, aided by the social mind of the Mulvaney family, intentionally tells the history of his family. But there is a more forceful logic undergirding his telling. This logic makes the reader a partial participant in the underrepresentation of Marianne's mind through the way the temporality of the story affects the reader's own processing of the narrative. Such a temporal logical works like this: the reader co-experiences the nonlinearity of Marianne's mind since the chapters on Marianne's trauma phenomenologically repeat what happened to her. They *repeat* Lundt's dialogue in a belated way, after the fact; *repeat* the black smudge that stands for the failure to represent her traumatized mind; *repeat* the cacophony of voices that shout over her suffering at the Distracted Dinner-table Scene; *repeat* her story of pain by

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dragging it through the first hundred pages of the novel; *repeat* the detrimental effects on the rest of the family (Mike Sr. dies a failed businessman and alcoholic, Corinne chooses a failing marriage over her daughter, Mike Jr. quits his father's business and recklessly joins the Marines, Patrick goes on a doomed quest for revenge); *repeat* the diffusion of narration from Judd to the others; *repeat* the other family members' own quests for meaning (Patrick's for scientific and philosophical truth, Corinne's for a stable family, Judd's for identity, and of course Marianne's for relief from the trauma of her rape); and *repeat* Marianne's complex patterns of emotions caused by rape. And that repetition is channeled through Judd and the narrators back to the reader as she comprehends each of these events multiple times in the novel, making the reader experience Marianne's partial mind through the recursions of her trauma.

The reader, like the narrator, knows that an ending will approach but must endure the duration of the book as its effects repeat. The ultimate cause of the novel's trauma as represented is not aspects of the *story* but representational ways of making the reader experience the *story* through the method of *discourse*. The reader's unique position in *narrative time* makes her subject to the effects of repetition in the narration, and so as Marianne's trauma is expressed through these representational means, the reader not only learns *of* her trauma, but experiences *with* her the duration and repetition of the trauma's recurrence. This method shows how *narrative time* is crucial to understanding not just what happened but how it happened, both of which are built-in parts of the reading experience. Narration spills over into reality as the story uses the actual time of reading to allow repetition to make the reader go through the same structure, even though not the same pain, of trauma. Now, I am not trying to use trauma as some kind of formula in

which to plug in novel events and arrive at a sum that merely restates the addends. Rather, trauma's precisely unformulaic nature—its ability to strike anytime and inability to be stopped—is taken on by Oates and allowed to be the designing factor of the story as it plays out through the retrospective telling of her narrators who themselves have been affected strongly by it.

Judd tells and, at moments, other family members tell what happened to the Mulvaneys as anticipations and consequences of Marianne's rape. Much to Atkins's point mentioned above about the power of naming rape to produce victimhood, so are these family members caught up in the web of victimhood that surrounds Marianne. Their telling of the story is therefore also affected as they must remember and reenact their lives as well as hers in wake of the rape. How can we then read the story otherwise than as affected by that event? When Marianne's mind is represented as a black smudge, when Lundt's dialogue is distributed throughout the chapter that focalizes on her after the rape, when Marianne's voice is lost in the polyvocal discussion at the dinner-table—these are not mere formal devices for narrative representation, but are choices of how to narrate, choices which are determined by the trauma that has affected the whole family. The telling thus affects the told just as the told affects the telling. Trauma expands through fictional retrospective narration to be a force that modifies events before it through the *post facto* narration. The ultimate end of this process demonstrates the power of trauma to affect not only the victim but those close to the victim; it demonstrates the quality of trauma to force its victims into other modes of temporality; it demonstrates that narrating the severity of trauma means employing alternative methods of representation. Those alternatives, in offering a more complex representation of Marianne's mind, also

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highlight the problematized view of her mental state as seen from the perspective of the

novel's narrators. As time highlights the isolation of Marianne's mind and the

underrepresentation the narrators employ to express it, so does it also emphasize the

importance of Marianne's trauma to the very telling and existence of the narrative in the

first place.

Conclusion: Partial Minds Signify Trauma

"The ultimate purpose of therapeutic conversation is not solely the referential depiction
of past events nor the development of hypothetical solutions, but something between —
something like functional plausibility [in order] to gain insight."
<div style="text-align:right">~ William Frawley, John T. Murray, and Raoul N.
Smith, "Semantics and Narrative in Therapeutic
Discourse," 88</div>

"The kind of writing I'm most interested in is the James Joycean approach: intensely
examining a shred of memory—what the light looked like in Dublin at a certain hour on a
certain day—and then filtering it through the prism of a character's consciousness, so it
takes on the coloration of that mind."
<div style="text-align:right">~ Joyce Carol Oates, "The Columnists," 68</div>

Kitty Klein argues that telling stories about traumatic events can lead to the

alleviation of traumatic pain (56). She cites clinical research which insists that some

symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder can diminish through telling "a coherent

narrative about the precipitating event" (57). While we certainly cannot see *We Were the*

Mulvaneys as a cohesive narrative—that is, as unified and without loose ends—we can

see it as a coherent one. When Judd and the other family members narrate Marianne's

trauma coherently, they sound like someone going through therapy. The collection of

minds that tells *We Were the Mulvaneys* reinforces their own status as underrepresented

when they mimic therapeutic discourse, since therapy cares about the telling of the

narrative and its effect on the teller—the person undergoing therapy—in the same way

that partials minds in the end say just as much about the tellers' perspective—the

<div style="text-align:center">150</div>

narrators—as the told's. Because of this metadiscourse of therapy that draws attention to the narration, the distinctiveness of *We Were the Mulvaney*s' narration stands out more prominently as being a collection of partial minds telling the story of what they perceive to be a partial mind. As I discuss in this final section, that metadiscourse also vindicates the quality of Oates's style.

There are a number of likely correlations between the Mulvaneys's narrative and therapeutic narratives, defined through Frawley, Murray, and Smith's understanding. We might think that a person has to tell a therapeutic narrative in a personal, confessional tone for it to be therapeutic, but these authors explain that "changes in narrative voicing are typical of therapeutic discourse, where the narrative as a whole emerges out of a blending of the rhetorical participants" (87). This alternation, or blending, of speaker is exactly the case in *We Were the Mulvaneys* in which many voices involved in the rhetorical, communicative structure contribute to the telling. Moreover, *We Were the Mulvaneys* fits this model not only in technique, but also in rhetorical purpose. Both Judd's explicit claim mentioned earlier that his narrative is not a confession and the way the narrative breaks typical realist modes indicate that the novel rhetorically aims neither to depict what happened in the manner of a documentary nor as a way of escaping trauma. Instead, *We Were the Mulvaneys* works as an experiential way of understanding what happened to Marianne and the other Mulvaneys. Finally, like fiction, therapeutic narratives are reflexive: "[T]herapeutic narrative has further reflexivity that bears on our concerns here. The goal of the narrative in therapy *is the narrative*" (Frawley, Murray, and Smith 90, emphasis original). The circular way that Judd leads the narrative to a close by drawing his thoughts back to the beginning ("I laughed, poking Patrick in the

arm, had to laugh at that expression in his face he'd had when we were boys, when we were the Mulvaneys." [454]) gives us the almost solipsistic sense that the story's point does not lie outside it, but is contained within its very status as traumatic narrative.

Contrary to the theories of some trauma scholars,[56] *We Were the Mulvaneys* affirms that trauma can be represented in narrative, at least partially. Achieving representation does not mean that the story is told in a conventional, quasi-historical manner. In this novel, representing trauma means showing its effects on the minds of all the family members, as well as displaying its pervasive extent, severity of infliction, and defiance of normal representational modes. The fact that key narrative fixtures of narrator, linear time, and mental representation are all reconfigured in order to account for Marianne's trauma alleges that, while possible, representation of trauma in fiction must go beyond standard narrational techniques.

One of trauma's most pernicious effects is the seemingly irrational way it repeatedly inflicts suffering. The traumatic experience delays and repeats—but by what causal logic, what rationality, and when? *We Were the Mulvaneys* takes those questions and qualities and applies them to a key question of fiction: how do we represent characters' minds? Marianne is strategically underrepresented as a partial mind by the complex narrators—her family—in order to show what they believe is the severe mental damage done to her. They allow this damage to run through the entire narration, not just on the level of representing Marianne's trauma, but on the level of narration's causal logic as well. As I have demonstrated with the temporality in *We Were the Mulvaneys*, so the very collection of agents used to narrate the story itself receives the impact of the damage done to Marianne, as it is also a set of partial minds, working together to tell the

story of their sister's partial mind. Representing trauma paradoxically requires underrepresenting minds.

However, we need not see partial minds as a bizarre, highly experimental strategy.[57] Instead, it is a technique that fits in naturally with Oates's style and literary goals. Cologne-Brookes points out how closely aligned Oates is with pragmatism, in that she uses the means available to get done what needs to be done, not just, as he calls it, "kowtow[ing]" to previously developed philosophers and systems (4). In this case, representing trauma pragmatically means using ekphrasis, alternative causal logic, and partial minds, rather than relying on more traditional realist techniques. Furthermore, since one of the main points of the complexity of representing Marianne's trauma through the mediation of many different minds is to develop a stronger sense of trauma in the reader's experience of the text, it is not surprising that developing the author-reader track of communication[58] was clearly one of Oates's intents. She admitted this aim early in her career, as this response from a 1973 interview demonstrates:

> What I would like to do, always, in my writing is an obvious and yet perhaps audacious feat: I would like to create the psychological and emotional equivalent of an experience, so completely and in such exhaustive detail, that anyone who reads it sympathetically will have experienced that event in his mind (which is where we live anyway). Much of our mental life is, of course, memory. (Oates, *Conversations* 49)

As readers, experiencing an event in our minds is what happens in *We Were the Mulvaneys* when time is distorted and Marianne's mind is partially represented—both of these with the aim of fixing in the reader's mind a shadow of the effects of trauma. Oates turns telling to showing, describing into enacting, and relating into re-experiencing. So rather than being overly experimental, using partial minds follows the conventional and rhetorical attempt to affect the mind of the reader.

My effort to draw out the complexity of *We Were the Mulvaneys* also aids an effort to prevent continued stigmatization of the actually quite wide-ranging styles of Joyce Carol Oates and to elevate her as an author worth reading for more than the views of extant and somewhat limited Oatesian criticism. For example, Atkins reprimands Oates's short story "Naked" for its "fail[ure] . . . to critique those cultural rape scripts that suggest women are always already victims or that they deserve rape or violence" (444). Moreover, Atkins's argument depends on the belief that rape stories tend to make women victims, which furthers the ideology of male sexual oppression. She goes on to explain what stories about rape ought to do to avoid this: "the critical challenge for women writers is to write about sexual violence in ways that do not simply reinforce such violence as an inevitable occurrence, nor fall prey to fictions about women that equate them with a masochistic sexuality that desires rape" (436). Having been sexually assaulted at an early age,[59] Oates is hardly a fair target for Atkins's demand. One possible defense against Atkins's charge is that rape is a pervasive crime against women and that this fact is merely identified and explored by Oates—how much more can we really expect from a single author? In addition to that, however, where Atkins articulately argues that Oates's so-called "naturalization of violent, sexual initiations fails to seriously challenge such violence" (436), I suggest that the repetition of sexualized violence is something that is thematized and explored by Oates as a way of working through a set of masculine and feminine roles and relationships in culture. Underlying her work is a drive toward exposing the naturalized myths of femininity and masculinity that fuel a culture of violence.

Atkins is not alone in her feminist assessment. When she argues that Oates "fails ultimately to critique those cultural rape scripts that suggest women are always already victims" (444), she is joining a long list of critics, including Jay Woodruff and David Gates, who have taken issue with the apparent submissiveness of Oates's heroines in the face of violence. For example, Oates is a troubling figure for "normative feminists," as Gates puts it bluntly, because "it is not her ambition to add to our supply of positive role models"; instead she "insists on exploring the structure of female masochism" (5). The issue, then, is not as clear as escalating or diminishing damaging representations. Instead, it is a matter of both representing and challenging cultural scripts and putting them in a dramatized narrative together. Certainly, Oates depends on her own experience as a background to *We Were the Mulvaneys*, and while rape does seem to be inevitable and product of "masochistic sexuality," Oates's transcendence of the dangerous reinscription of rape as an accepted cultural norm occurs through her complex and polyvalent representation of minds. By giving many perspectives through many representational means, Oates avoids any simple recitation of victimhood.

Finally, this chapter thus contributes to my thesis on partial minds in that it shows how partial-mindedness may have ethically recuperative effects. And these effects may occur in conventional genres like the realist novel *We Were the Mulvaneys*, rather than in only experimental genres. In my first chapter, I pointed out a number of figures of partial minds in speculative fiction, such as the less-than-fully-minded "dittos" in David Brin's *Kiln People* or even the notion of horcruxes in J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series. But in a story about a family in New York, partial-mindedness more quietly infiltrates the techniques of realist fiction. The Mulvaney narrators portray Marianne as a partial mind

by using a black smudge to represent what they see as her emotional inability to think about how Lundt raped her. They further striate the focalization on her thoughts in the day after the rape to the extent that they fractures the linear movement of the novel. Through these techniques, the narrators underrepresent Marianne's mind to show that they cannot fully express it, that trauma is too severe to adequately be represented through narration, and thereby defer to alternative methods of underrepresentation in hopes that these will stand in for the kind of representation that ultimately cannot be fully attained. In underscoring the extent of the kind of suffering that rape incurs, *We Were the Mulvaneys* attains a valuable ethical dimension.

But in doing so, in attempting to using representation to placehold, rather than mimetically confer, the full brunt of Marianne's trauma, the Mulvaney narrators also underrepresent themselves. Judd stands out as bookending the story with a prominent narratorial presence. But through shifts in grammatical person and through his own lack of closure, he indicates that Marianne's trauma has affected him too as a narrator. Instead, the wider aims of Oates's implied author, realizing the failure of any single perspective to portray the depth at which the Mulvaney family was affected by the rape of Marianne and its consequences, employ implicit narrators that cannot be Judd but instead represent the conflicting and complex intersubjectivity of the whole family. By clearly identifying both Marianne and Judd as partial minds, we have a more concrete sense of the impact of her trauma: it is so severe that there is no way to give a full account of it, neither in the representations of Marianne's mind nor in the narrator's own self-representations.

Chapter Four

An (Im)Perfect Forgery: Tom Ripley's Protean and Partial Mind

Partial minds strategically represent literary characters' consciousnesses to point out experiences that are unusual or difficult to represent in conventional ways. The need for this technique implies that some quality about these characters makes expected representational practices inadequate, in the author's or narrator's eyes, to the task of capturing that exceptional quality. Certain states of mind—including traumatic experiences, conflicting feelings, some memories, and the simultaneous possession of multiple identities—are more difficult to represent than others, and so some authors or narrators reject conventional cognitive representations, such as naming feelings, if they seem poor tools for effectively communicating that character's exceptional quality to the reader. For example, in my last chapter, I took up Marianne from *We Were the Mulvaneys* as a character whom the narrator, her brother Judd, was trying to represent. But in attempting to represent the state of Marianne's mind on the night she was raped, Judd found that simply turning to a verbalized account of her thoughts, such as "*I felt terrible*," or a seeming-omniscient gloss of her mental state, such as "She suffered incredible mental turmoil," was insufficient and incommensurate with the traumatic and painful mental state she must have endured. In cases like these, authors and narrators reject conventional models of representation and turn to partial minds to effectively articulate to the reader the mental state that the character experiences.

Tom Ripley, the protagonist of Patricia Highsmith's *Ripley* series, is a character with these kinds of mental states that normal methods of representation cannot satisfactorily express. His exceptional cognitive status emerges when he rejects his own

self and identity in favor of impersonating his friend Dickie, whom he murders just before the impersonation. When Tom poses as Dickie, Tom cannot help but spend all his time in thinking about what Dickie would have done in the situations in which the impostor Tom now finds himself. Highsmith's task—or to be more accurate, her implied author's task, a point I develop later—is to represent, simultaneously, Tom's thoughts and Tom-pretending-to-be-Dickie's thoughts. For *The Talented Mr. Ripley*, this challenge means that representing Tom's mind encounters the problem of how to distinguish his own thoughts from those he thinks while imagining Dickie's thoughts. This double-booking of space in the linguistic representation of Tom's mind often leads to the implied author's rejection of conventional or simplistic methods ("Tom thought that Dickie would think X") and the adoption of the technique of partial minds, in which Tom's own mind becomes selectively underrepresented as he becomes consumed with and lost in thinking Dickie's thoughts.

My argument about Tom's partial mind in *The Talented Mr. Ripley* follows this line of inquiry further by examining partial minds as a technique valuable not only for representing unusual states of consciousness in fictional characters, but also for manipulating the reader's consciousness to align with Tom's. I contend that the representation of Tom's mind, forced into a partial representation because of the extent to which Tom takes on Dickie's thoughts as his own, channels the reader into a similar subject position as Tom. Several factors promote this imbrication with the reader, including both Tom's desire to be understood by others and the manner of cognitive representation in which the reader mindreads[60] Tom's thoughts even while he is mindreading Dickie's thoughts. The additional factors of irony, empathy, immersion, and

Tom's Protean mind style—effects of this novel that I develop in the pages ahead—aid the reader in her co-creation of Tom's consciousness. In mindreading and being primed for empathizing with Tom's thoughts, the reader is confronted with her own complicity in co-creating an ethically questionable character. This final point both furthers and complicates the current discussion in literary studies of whether or not fictional narratives transform readers' minds.

To develop the above arguments, I organize this chapter into three majors sections. In the first section (I), I perform close readings of several sections from *Ripley* that exhibit both Tom's status as an exceptional mindreader and the reader's high level of access to Tom's thoughts. I begin this section by evaluating the criticism on *Ripley* and linking it to the types of cognitive representation in the novel and to a few key assumptions I make about consciousness and representation (I.i). Next, taking a formalist approach to several passages from *Ripley*, I follow the kinds of representation of Tom's mind, which are not homogenous but provide many different expressions of Tom's consciousness (I.ii). I close the first major section by arguing that Tom is a skilled, accurate, and extensive mindreader, seen not just through the act of impersonation but through the cognitive representations employed to dramatize Tom's mind becoming like Dickie's (I.iii).

In the second major section (II), I argue that Tom's consciousness is represented as a partial mind by employing five subsections that apply the five criteria developed in this dissertation's opening theoretical chapter. The first subsection focuses on the narrative agent who attributes the partial mind to Tom, in this case the implied author (II.i). Next, I maintain that the norms of cognitive representation in the novel, inflected

by its genre, allow for Highsmith's departure from those expectations in order to heighten the clarity of Tom's partial mind (II.ii). Third, I look at the linguistic *mind style* of Tom and explain that it is characterized by the profiles of Proteus and forger—the perfect shapeshifter and imitator. As I develop these points through a technical analysis, I show that these characteristics entail the technique of partial minds (II.iii). They also lead to my answer of why Tom's mind routinely imitates Dickie's; in doing so, the previous mind of Tom, while still surfacing at moments, mostly withdraws. This supposed disappearance is because the reader has limited access to Tom's mind (II.iv). The fifth subsection is the crux of my theoretical argument concerning the ontology of Tom as a character. More than other characters' minds to which readers have nearly transparent access, Tom is exceptional because he crafts cognitive forgeries. Tom's forgery of Dickie's mind means that the text must represent him as a partial mind, less than what we have come to expect (II.v).

Based on the evidence about mindreading in the first section (I) and the argument for a partial mind in the second section (II), the third section of this chapter argues that *Ripley* is designed to make the reader participate in forming the mind of Tom Ripley (III). I open this argument by positing that the technique of partial mind in *Ripley* is not merely a ploy by the implied author to try to represent two minds at once, but it is rather a metatextual move that confronts the reader's own processing and co-forming of Tom's thoughts (III.i). Next, I offer further perspectives by looking at how the irony in the novel presents different potential readings of Tom's partial mind to the reader (III.ii). I follow that argument with a subsection that looks particularly at Tom's imitation of Dickie's mind and Highsmith's own textual use of forgery. Tom's mindreading, which forges a

model of Dickie's mind in order to pass off the perfect imitation, parallels the forged qualities of the reader's mindreading of Tom and the implied author, emphasizing these effects (III.iii). The last two subsections develop the argument that the reader is highly engaged in the novel because Tom desires from other characters what the implied author desires from the reader: understanding. These subsections assert first that *Ripley* is specifically designed to encourage immersion in the novel (III.iv) and then that the reader has a choice and even a likelihood of empathizing with the criminal Tom, a questionable and uncomfortable position. This last point asks to what extent a reader is ethically culpable for thinking the thoughts of a manipulator and murderer (III.v). I conclude the chapter by drawing out a few final implications of Tom as a forger.

This chapter contributes to my dissertation's argument that the partial mind is a technique used not only to represent unusual states of consciousness in characters, but also to shape the consciousness of readers. However, my study of Tom's mind is not confined to this dissertation or criticism on *Ripley* but contributes to several specific but related fields. Those literary critics interested in the mimetic, synthetic, and thematic functions of text developed by James Phelan stand to gain from the analysis of the implied author's attempt to represent Tom's mind as Dickie's mind—two minds at once—an impossibility which ultimately results in deferral of one for the other. Those concerned with reception theory, too, will see its focus on audience comprehension advance through my recovery of the term *phenomenological reading*, a process by which I explain both immersion and empathy as possible effects on the reader. Those two effects are areas of critical inquiry in their own right that have stakes for literature's beneficial or detrimental impact on reader's minds. In potentially achieving immersion

and empathy, *Ripley* employs irony, a textual effect with longstanding importance to literary interpretation and which I approach from a new angle by posing it in terms of mindreading and *phenomenological reading*. Finally, as I discuss next, this study adds to ongoing discussions about the historical and sociological implications of *Ripley*, and while I do not extend those interpretations directly, I construct an alternative platform from which they might be recast.

I. Mindreading Tom and Tom the Mindreader

"It's often said that in order to understand a work of art we need to know the historical context in which it was made. The lesson of Highsmith, however, is not only that too much historical context can prevent you from making proper contact with her work but that, in her case, it isn't the context that explains the work but the work that enables us properly to understand the context. The task in reading Highsmith is not to understand her novels in the light of her biography, but to explain by reference to her books how she was able to survive in her 'real' life."

> ~ Slavoj Žižek, "Not a Desire to Have Him, But to Be Like Him," 13

"Highsmith's novels are, however, narrative works, not sociological studies. Her protagonists do not merely rehearse their perceptions, but rather strive to interface with the world, seeking to actively engage with their environment while anxiously protecting their own psychic space."

> ~ John Dale, "Crossing the Road to Avoid Your Friends," 408

The literary payoff we expect to get from a work does not necessarily have to be an either/or binary. But in the epigraphs, Žižek and Dale imply the correctness of one critical standpoint over another. Žižek sees Highsmith's biography as influenced by her long-term commitment to Tom Ripley more than the other way around, her works influenced by her personal life. Dale's view, by contrast, is that Highsmith's works are not normative cases from which a literary critic can extract generalizations about Highsmith's life. Žižek argues for the dangers of over-historicizing, but Dale's move, which might be construed as over-explicating, warns of just as much disruption. It seems

that without having another prior assumption for emphasizing one view over the other, studies of Patricia Highsmith's works are left at the root of critical preference.

But rather than siding with one view over another, we should consider the possibility of advancing multiple critical approaches at once. Assuming one standpoint should not necessarily negate other inquiries. At the impasse of critical preference, then, I want to reorient the study of Tom Ripley into a frame of reference on which both sociological and narrative standpoints depend: the direct effects of the text on the reader. One reader does not have to interpret *Ripley* the same way as other readers. But there are basic effects that the construction of *Ripley* produces on most readers, even while the design of these effects leads to varying outcomes that depend on the individual reader. By isolating the strategies this novel uses to influence the reading process, we will be in a better metacritical position from which to pursue other studies, such as historical, sociological, and narratological, and cognitive interpretations. For example, understanding *Ripley*'s design and a reader's accompanying responses offers historical and sociological approaches a range of competing textual interactions from which to draw, provides narratological approaches grounding in how textual construction has effects beyond the fictional world, and gives cognitive approaches the explanation of how linguistic representations of minds are themselves internalized and reacted to by the minds of readers. Starting with the effects of reading establishes a range of emotions and beliefs from which other interpretations can develop further through their own critical lens.

I.i. Preliminary Considerations: From Identity to Mind

"[No one can] turn off their mindreading skills even if they want to."

~ Jesse Bering, "The
Existential Theory of Mind,"
12

"[I]f philosophers and psychologists claim that our self and our mind are fundamentally the product of narrativization, it would follow that a discipline with decades of expertise in the theory and interpretation of narrative can contribute to the understanding of narrative self-construction."

~ Lars Bernaerts et al., *Stories and Minds:*
Cognitive Approaches to Literary Narrative, 10

The majority of criticism on Tom Ripley the literary character (as opposed to his film counterpart) analyzes his shifting identity. Alex Tuss looks at Tom's succession in the Horatio Alger rags-to-riches tale as a reconfiguration of the twentieth-century American Dream's changing cultural expectations of masculinity's quest for respect (97). Instead of meeting a set of narrative criteria, however, Anthony Hilfer poses Tom's identity as the subversion of interiority. Hilfer's study of Tom's performance of Dickie indicates that "[a]ppearance takes priority over reality" in order to shape midcentury views of "class, moral, and national identity" (364). Kelly Wagers, also examining group identity in the novels, more specifically claims that Tom portrays commercial identity: "Tom Ripley exists as a symptom of corporate culture's ultimate failure to open new understandings of individual subjectivity within society or to make possible the exercise of new forms of agency in public life" (264-5). These critics consider Tom's identity as indicative of larger cultural problems. Michael Trask, who does not attempt to force Highsmith into the canon of gay and lesbian literature, stands out among a string of critics interested in tying Tom's identification as gay to Highsmith's (585). Instead, Trask realizes a more complex relationship when he connects Tom's "indifference to

authenticity" to Highsmith's own "intractab[ility] to a gay and lesbian criticism" (594-5).[61] Tom resists prefabricated categories and stereotypical attributions. His identity has been read as furthering and in conflict with many different standpoints and values, but it remains a central concern when studying *Ripley*, no matter which aspect of it takes focus.

In addition to these social aspects, identity might be viewed through the lens of thoughts and cognition. While I have already offered my purpose as pushing this work toward enlightening *phenomenological reading*, mimetic and synthetic views of representation, and partial minds, this chapter also suggests that these provocative critical studies of *Ripley* might gain new dimension by adding to questions of national, corporate, or individual identity questions of conscious experience. From this perspective of mind, at stake is not whether Tom's identity is fixed or unfixed, but rather the quality of Tom's subjective phenomenological experience at certain moments.

At this point, a potential hazard in my study involves the possibility of interchanging *mind* with either *self* or *identity* without demonstrating the added value that my use of *mind* has over longstanding critical discussions of *self*. One recent analysis of self, Matthew Clark's treatment of *Ripley* in his work *Narrative Structures and the Language of the Self*, differentiates between a traditionally-understood Cartesian self and a multiply-subjective dyadic self. The Cartesian self has a single core identity while the dyadic self has two core identities. With this vocabulary, Clark argues that "[t]he circumstances of Tom Ripley's own life have given him nothing that he can admire, and so he lives the lives of other people" (35). Looking at Tom's dyadic identity, Clark surveys the same territory as my own study, but he uses *self* and I use *mind* and *consciousness*. What advantage does *mind* provide?

The answer is that the self encompasses more than just mental representation. The self is a matter of being; the mind is a matter of thoughts. The self is about identity over time; the mind is about what's going through someone's head at a particular moment.[62] The self may be determined by social designations; the mind is determined by specific techniques that represent conscious experience. This relative narrowness of representations of mind allows for a more precise isolation of the means a text uses to construct that representation, while what kind of textual representation counts toward characterizations of the self is less limited. By looking primarily at Tom's thoughts, we can, for instance, develop the linguistic *mind style* of those thoughts. This method, containing strict parameters, can then be used to augment studies of the *self*. In this sense, even though *self* would have been the historically contemporary term to describe Tom's character, study of the mind, as a part within a whole, ought to precede study of the complete self. James Phelan suggests that cognitive theory "sharpen[s]" the focus of other critical discussions both in their content and their explanations (Zunshine, *Strange Concepts* 115). So, a more precise explication of Tom's mind provides definite textual moments and a technical vocabulary for describing *self* and *identity* more broadly.

I further contend that my emphasis on Tom's mind is valuable to the criticism on *Ripley* because this approach, which begins by looking at the ubiquitous representations of Tom's thoughts, shows how the patterns of those representations incur both analytical problems—how to represent two minds at once—and ethical problems—how a reader internalizes a criminal character whom she is continuously mindreading. In the end, my goal is not to undercut these other critics but to show how the pairing of *mind* with both *identity* and *self* can improve our understanding of the enigmatic character Tom Ripley.

For example, through the complex and multiple levels of mindreading, a cognitive look at *Ripley* reveals more complex techniques of psychological representation for Tom than for the average protagonist. Tom's thoughts are more deeply layered than most protagonists' thoughts because he often thinks about what others might be thinking about him when his mind is represented. In some cases his mindreading piles up several levels of nesting, so that he is not just imagining one person's thoughts about him, but also imagining his response and how it would affect the other person. These recursive levels of mindreading emphasize the value of a cognitive approach to Tom and set Tom apart from protagonists who only think at fewer levels about others' thoughts.

As I take a more detailed look at the representations of Tom's thoughts in the next two subsections, I discuss readers' access to Tom's thoughts, sketching out a variety of techniques for representing his thoughts in general. Merged with that discussion is the argument that Tom's act of thinking others' thoughts is preceded by his strong tendency to cognitively self-monitor. I then argue that the way he thinks about others' thoughts constitutes what I am calling *fluent mindreading*. While laying out this frontline of evidence to support my initial point that *Ripley* is a novel which employs levels of minds in order to effectively and deeply engage the reader, I track both the implied author's role in arranging the text and the reader's role, reacting to the text's design, in being likely to read the novel in certain ways, since both of these subject positions will be important to the discussion that follows. The rest of this section therefore sets up the analysis of Tom's mind as a partial mind in section II.

I.ii. Tom's Mind: Access and Assessment
"He was himself and yet not himself."
~ Patricia Highsmith, *The Talented Mr. Ripley*, 137

Readers receive access to Tom's thoughts by a variety of textual techniques distributed throughout the novel. Several of these involve Tom's self-objectification. They also demonstrate the reader's high level of access to his mind. One instance occurs when he is questioned about the missing boat from San Remo harbor, the one he sinks to hide Dickie's body: "But Tom made a tremendous effort to behave in the proper way. He saw himself as if he were standing apart from himself and watching the scene" (170). At a key moment in his deception, Tom's willpower is tested, and this is the moment when the reader receives access to the way in which Tom thinks of himself. Here, that way is through his self-objectification.

Another example shows the novel's use of both *direct thought*[63] and *free indirect discourse* to represent Tom's mind. Following a conversation early in the story at the Greenleafs' house, Tom has agreed to help Mr. Greenleaf by traveling to Italy to convince the Greenleafs' son Dickie to return home. Tom imagines and objectifies the very scene that he is experiencing as Mr. Greenleaf reenters to the room: "It's like a movie, Tom thought. In a minute, Mr. Greenleaf or somebody else's voice would say, 'Okay, *cut!*' and he would relax again and find himself back in Raoul's [bar] with the gin and tonic in front of him" (20). This representation of Tom's thoughts moves from *direct thought*, indicated by the "Tom thought" tag on the opening clause, to *free indirect discourse*, indicated by the restoration of third-person narration (but with Tom's inflection) in the second sentence of the quote. This scene's particular verbalization of Tom's thoughts is important because, by giving the precise words that represent his

thoughts, it shows that Tom objectifies his interactions with others and that he self-monitors that objectification. That knowledge is available to the reader not just through *direct thought* but through the semi-objective *free indirect discourse*. His self-understanding, which is both impressionistic (subjective) and detailed (objective), is paralleled in the passage's technical construction which pairs the subjective *direct thought* with the third-person semi-objectivity of *free indirect discourse*. Tom sees himself as an actor on a scene, as though his conversation with the Greenleafs were staged and something he can watch from the comfort of his own "impenetrable thoughts," thoughts which the reader can penetrate. Access to Tom's thoughts often reveals more than just *what* he's thinking, but also *how* he's thinking it and *how* the implied author is providing that access. Furthermore, what Tom thinks often relates to his perception of himself and others, while how he thinks establishes the reader's access to Tom's mind.

But the content of Tom's thoughts is not always so clear. Just before these lines, Tom has been left alone by the Greenleafs during which he reflects on his actions that night with them: "When he had said to Mrs. Greenleaf just now, *I'll do everything I can . . .* well, he meant it. He wasn't trying to fool anybody" (19).[64] These sentences force the reader to assess Tom's intentions, which means assessing whether or not the implied author is giving accurate information about Tom's thoughts. Are his thoughts here genuine? By saying that Tom wasn't trying to fool anyone and using Tom's mind as the transmitter of that information, could the implied author really be trying to fool the reader into trusting Tom's thoughts?[65] Let us hold that question in abeyance while we consider more of this passage's context.

The following page reveals another connected question. Tom thinks that what he had said about his aunt "had been the only time tonight when he had felt uncomfortable, unreal, the way he might have felt if had been lying, yet it had been practically the only thing he had said that *was* true: *My parents died when I was very small. I was raised by my aunt in Boston*" (20). If this italicized phrase is his only "true" assertion, then how truthful was the assertion that he "meant" to Mrs. Greenleaf above ("*I'll do everything I can*")? Only one of these two statements, it seems, can be true.

Tom's thoughts, saturated in emotions of guilt, loneliness, and self-doubt, are known only to himself and the reader, but they are themselves a potential source of irony and deception by the implied author. In this case, the implied author is dramatizing how lies affect Tom. So, let me summarize the cognitive progression of this section I have been following: Tom thinks about his lies and truths, begins to sweat and then tries to relax (19), recalls how well he felt earlier, and then contradicts what he thinks he said that was true (20). This directing by the implied author indicates to the reader the inner trouble that deception is causing Tom. But, more to my point, it also makes the reader think in nested levels about what Tom is thinking (about what others are thinking) and about what the implied author wants the reader to think. Highsmith critic Noel Mawer characterizes this style: "[I]t is often difficult to tell whether Ripley's comments are to be taken as reflecting ironically on his character, or as statements of a credo we're supposed to consider in its own right" (24). The irony of Tom's clashing inner turmoil and self-deception that the reader has access to in his mind provokes her into developing a complex model of his mind. Both mindreading and assessing whether or not Tom is honest lead the reader into a more ambiguous, but also more intricate, relationship with

Tom's mind than with protagonists who think in single levels about others' thoughts. So, to answer my earlier question left in suspension, no—the implied author is not trying to fool the reader; on the contrary, the implied author, in order to represent the complex cognition of a character who lies and creates forgeries, often must let Tom appear to be contradicting earlier assertions. This style of backtracking and recursion makes the reader follow Tom's mind through a variety of techniques.

Tom's tendency to imagine others' thoughts stems from his obsession with thinking about himself. His self-objectification referred to earlier often begins with moments of self-aware thinking. For example, early in the novel, removing his jacket he thinks, "Astonishing how much straighter he was standing now, what a different look there was in his face. It was one of the few times in his life that he felt pleased with himself" (10). Tom's ability to objectify and monitor himself in simple scenes like this one contributes to his ability to trick others, a key point I take up later (II.iii). Additionally, many critics have noted Tom's focus on material objects and appearances, and since he becomes a forger of both identities and material artifacts, self-awareness and physical objects go together in Tom's thoughts. He seems to always be cognizant of what he wears, what he looks like, how he perceives that appearance, and how that appearance is likely to affect others.

As a result of Tom's focus on his appearance's effect on others, there are few scenes in the story when his actions are not precipitated by what he believes to be, often correctly, the thoughts and intentions of others. Engaged in self-monitoring, he imagines others' thoughts to the extent that he maintains a vivid mental dialogue with them. Social researchers In-Sue Oh et al. explain self-monitoring as the degree of awareness about

how one's own behavior affects others (95). They argue that in public settings, high self-

monitors want to increase their social status, so they become more agreeable and

engaging, while they tend to be unpleasant in more neutral conditions (92). Tom follows

this behavioral pattern when, as he is interrogated about Dickie, he thinks, "He could lead

them on indefinitely . . . Marge would back it up, just by the emotional way she would

react to questions about Dickie, and the Italian police could never get to the bottom of

Signor Greenleaf's emotional involvement" (207). As he imagines what others think, he

plans to adapt his own responses, with no thought to the welfare of others, to manipulate

them to get his way. This self-monitoring pattern of behavior is the *modus operandi* for

Tom, and it is premised on mindreading others, of which the reader has nearly transparent

access.

I.iii Tom's Mind: Fluent Mindreading
"The fictional presentation of cognitive mechanisms in action, especially of their
breakdown or failure[,] is itself a powerful cognitive tool which may make us aware of
actual cognitive mechanisms, and, more specifically, of our own mental functioning."
                                        ~ Uri Margolin, "Cognitive Science," 278 (c.f.
                                        Zunshine, *Why We Read Fiction* 169, note 6)

Besides having a highly accessible mind, Tom also attains what I am calling

fluent mindreading. This kind of mindreading quickly runs through the first two levels of

cognitive embedment in order to focus on the reflexive third level, in the same way a

fluent speaker thinks beyond morphological and syntactic concerns to manipulate

semantic factors. Leading authority on mindreading Lisa Zunshine gestures to this

complexity when she discusses passages from *Mrs. Dalloway* that are "serially

embedded" or contain "multiple levels of intentionality" ("Theory of Mind and

Experimental Representations of Fictional Consciousness" 194, 204). Reliant on these

formulations, Tom's *fluent mindreading* marks his tendency to spend his thoughts

considering how others might be thinking about his thoughts, rather than his own non-

relational thoughts or others' thoughts about him more generally. Consider this passage

that closes chapter six, focalizing on Tom while aboard the transatlantic ship:

> His aloofness, he knew, was causing a little comment among the passengers. He
> had not danced with either of the silly girls who kept looking at him hopefully and
> giggling during the after-dinner dancing every night. He imagined the
> speculations of the passengers: Is he an American! I *think* so, but he doesn't act
> like an American, does he? Most Americans are so *noisy.* He's terribly serious,
> isn't he, and he can't be more than twenty-three. He must have something very
> important on his mind.
> Yes, he had. The present and the future of Tom Ripley. (40)

A megalomaniac in his imaginations, Tom assumes that the other passengers are both

thinking about him and, even more specifically, wondering about what he is thinking.

Apart from the narrative's base level of mindreading—i.e, the narrator's presentation of

Tom's thoughts—three levels of mindreading occur (using the method that Zunshine

outlines): (1) Tom thinks about the silly girls (2) who are thinking about Tom as someone

who (3) thinks like an American (c.f. Zunshine, *Why We Read Fiction* 28-9). As a *fluent*

mindreader, his mindreading is reflexive because he thinks about his own thoughts

through the girls' imagined thoughts. Brilliantly composed, this mindreading then moves,

in the new paragraph quoted above, to the actual account of Tom's thoughts, turning

speculation into reality.

This mentality not only emphasizes the cognitive focus of the novel, but confirms

Tom as a *fluent mindreader.* Based on this evidence, we can conclude that he is skilled at

and obsessed with considering others' thoughts in deeply nested levels. Now, most

people's conjectures about others' thoughts constantly misperceive the actual thoughts,

and so we might expect that the term *fluent mindreading* applied to Tom is being used

ironically. Although the passage above is more speculative, Tom is exceptional and near-clairvoyant in that he is usually correct about his surmises of others' thoughts and intentions. Two brief examples will demonstrate this point: At one point, Tom is talking with Dickie, and Dickie tells him that he's going to go talk to Marge. He leaves, and Tom is left to reflect. He imagines Dickie kissing Marge, and then in the next paragraph, we find out that that is exactly the case (77). Similarly, in *Ripley Under Ground,* Tom becomes almost supernatural in his ability to read minds in that his hunches that are based on little evidence turn out to be true, such as his guess that Bernard has gone to Salzburg. He is nearly telepathic. Moreover, his mindreading stands out not so much due to its pervasiveness—how much it occurs in *Ripley*—as its depth, suggesting complexity rather than ubiquity. Tom's ability to accurately imagine the conversations of others at multiple levels and adapt his own imagined voice to fit into their responses is one of his defining traits, the one that allows him to successfully, though not without trouble, steal Dickie's identity and ultimately escape scot-free at the end of the story.

It is important to keep in mind that Tom's *fluent mindreading* is not a purely analytical, intellectual process. Although he at times appears to be the calculating manipulator, Highsmith avoids pigeonholing him in this role. Instead, as he recites the thought-processes of others, he feels the attendant emotions as well. This emotional replication questions his otherwise selfish morality and opens the reader to feeling these same emotions (a point I take up in greater depth in the section on empathy below [III.v]). The delicate balance between calculation and emotional impact occurs throughout his assumption of Dickie's identity. In preparing himself for a cover-up, "[h]e imagined the exact words, so that he could quote them to Marge, if he had to, and he even

made himself feel the slight surprise he would have felt at Dickie's change of mind"
(115). The phrasing might suggest that Tom conjures the feeling of surprise *ex nihilo* to
trick others, but while his surprise is certainly a forgery minted by his will, it is also the
natural consequence of his life-like representation of Dickie's thoughts—so life-like that
it reproduces not only the causal thought-patterns of Dickie, but the emotions as well.[66]
What's more, since the emotion is surprise, it would be even harder to replicate, because
surprise entails learning something not known before. The emotion of surprise cannot be
faked and so bridges rational knowledge and emotional reaction. Tom must have become
fully immersed in Dickie's mind to feel this emotion. The narrator later—after recounting
Tom's exhausting, but imagined, murdering of Marge—confirms this point: "His stories
were good because he imagined them intensely, so intensely that he came to believe
them" (256). Like the narrative itself, Tom's stories often become the case when he
thinks them up, turning into their own source of validity based on his supposition of
others' thoughts.[67] His ability to develop not only correct thoughts but correct emotions
indicates that the novel has a heavily cognitive focus and that Tom's *fluent mindreading*
is a rich inner reality for him.

This layered, dramatic style of *fluent mindreading* reaches extremes. A turning
point in the novel comes when Tom dresses up in Dickie's clothes and pretends to talk to
an imaginary Marge. Dickie walks in on him, and there is a sea change in trust as Dickie
confronts Tom (80). Although George E. Haggerty points out that this scene "somehow
expresses the love he feels for his friend" (170), Trask pushes the interpretation further:
"Such total accession to the Dickie persona, full of 'negligence and unconcern' [183],
leads Tom to cede his own instrumental self-consciousness" (604). In desiring to become

Dickie, Tom's mindreading leads to his fate, elevating its importance in the plot and interpretation of the novel. As a *fluent mindreader*, Tom draws the novel into being one that continually projects actual and imagined thoughts.

I have to this point traced the reader's knowledge of Tom's thoughts from those presented through basic access via *direct thought* and *free indirect discourse*, to Tom's mindreading of others that often occurs in highly developed imagined scenarios. I add to these a couple more. First, the novel is designed so that the reader is also likely to mindread Tom, even when not explicitly given his thoughts or his supposition of others' thoughts. For instance, the progression of thoughts in the following passage during Tom's first meeting with Mr. Greenleaf demonstrates the gap the reader must fill to explain Tom's thoughts: "Neither said anything for a minute. Mr. Greenleaf's eyes were fixed on him with a pathetic, hungry expression. What on earth could he say? Tom was sorry he had accepted the drink. 'How old is Dickie now, by the way?' he asked. 'Twenty-five.' So am I, Tom thought" (5-6). This otherwise unremarkable passage opens with a straightforward statement of narrative action by the narrator, then moves to a more biased and personal view of Greenleaf, even while presenting him in fairly neutral, descriptive terms. But we know we are following Tom's mind in the next sentence of *free indirect discourse* ("What in earth could he say?"), which leads to Tom's mental state of being upset. But this emotion is followed with the line of dialogue, presenting an ambiguity for understanding Tom's uncertainty about what to say, since he does, in fact, find something to say. That jump to dialogue leaves his thoughts about the meeting unresolved. Here is a gap that the reader must fill, one of Wolfgang Iser's famous *blanks*. The reader makes sense of Tom's question by attributing to him a reason for why he moved out of not

having something to say and being upset with the interview. That reason is that Tom is still interested in letting the dialogue continue, in spite of his upset feelings, perhaps looking for an advantage by which he can manipulate Mr. Greenleaf. As this passage suggests, the reader intuitively follows Tom's thoughts even when they are absent.

Finally, one more kind of access to Tom's mind is worth describing as it anticipates his partial mind that I develop in the section ahead. The opposite of an absent mind, in certain moments Tom possesses two minds at once. For instance, in considering who could suspect him of the murders of Dickie and Freddie Miles, Tom's thoughts run this way: "After all, would anyone, *anyone,* believe that such a character had ever done a murder? And the only murder he could possibly be suspected of was Dickie's in San Remo, and they didn't seem to be getting very far on that. Being Tom Ripley had one compensation, at least: it relieved his mind of guilt for the stupid, unnecessary murder of Freddie Miles" (194). Here, Tom has clearly developed the two personae so fully that he switches from one to the other without allowing their coexistence in his mind to interfere with each other. He murdered Dickie, he believes, as Tom Ripley, but he murdered Freddie Miles, he believes, as Dickie Greenleaf. As critic Darryl Koehn remarks, "When we feel alienated from ourselves, we implicitly divide our lives in two. There exists, on the one hand, the supposedly real and fascinatingly talented self (Dickie Greenleaf) and, on the other, the fake nobody (Tom Ripley) from whom we desperately wish to escape" (78). This double-mindedness is essential to Tom's ability to trick others by being both himself and Dickie, but it causes serious problems in realizing what he as a single agent has done, especially form the view of textual representation. To see himself both as two people and as one is an impossible imbalance to hold onto.

II. Tom the Partial Mind

"Even though we can approach the self with regard to its implications in narratives, the web of narratives that constitute ourselves is traversed by nonnarratable aspects such as experiences and desires that cannot ever be fully narrativized and hence remain at odds with any narrative rendition that we might give of ourselves."

~ Annika Thiem, *Unbecoming Subjects*, 149-50

So far, I have argued that readers have a high level of access to Tom's mind and that Tom is a *fluent mindreader*. This focus on cognition, in emphasizing that Tom is represented with a detailed mind and is a door to other characters' minds—certainly, a distorted door that channels others through his own views and standards—sets up the next two sections of this chapter (II and III). In this one, I make a move which may seem to backtrack: Tom is a partial mind. The short of this argument is that Tom's absent thoughts which the reader fills in, together with the subordination of his "own" thoughts as Tom when he impersonates Dickie, reduces the norm, or cognitive baseline determined by a variety of textual factors discussed below, for representing his mind, making it partial. Because of how central the representation of thoughts is to this novel, the threshold at which readers recognize a partial mind is lower and has a stronger influence in *Ripley* than in works which have only a minimal level of represented minds to begin with, such as many Hemingway or Raymond Carver characters. As I discuss momentarily, a partial mind is not determined by amount of time spent on Tom, even while that amount shapes the construction of the partial mind. Instead, the qualitative articulation of Tom's mind through specific techniques establish a range of effects on the reader. I discuss those rhetorical effects in the final section (III), in which I argue that the emphasis on cognition in the novel as a whole, when combined with the partial mind of Tom, contributes in exceptional ways to the reader's own absorption of the novel.

I have laid out the criteria and definition of a partial mind in an earlier part of this dissertation. To refresh and contextualize, those factors that contribute to forming a partial mind include the narrative agent who conveys, or confers, the partial mind (discussed in subsection III.i); the norms of mental representation and generic cognitive expectations (III.ii); the *mind style* (III.iii); the cognitive profile (III.iv); and the ontology of the character's mind (III.v). While no single configuration of these criteria promises a partial mind, their co-development primes the reader to view a character as having an underrepresented mind. Following these delimiting, rather than defining, criteria just rehearsed, the upcoming argument runs this way: the norms and generic conventions of *Ripley* set up the alignment of Tom's *mind style* with one of his talents, a maker of forgeries. This combination leads to the implied author's conferral of the partial mind on Tom, which presents problems both for the depths of accessing Tom's thoughts (when considering them technically) and for his very ontology. As Tom's attempt at forging another's mind is the very act that defers him into a partial mind, this push for textual space in representing minds has implications for how scholars view the theoretical basis of the representation of thoughts more generally.

II.i. Implications of an Implied Author

"The need to refer to a narrator where no first person appears arises from the lack of any framework in which to conceptualize the text as either a unified whole or an intentional object."

> ~ Ann Banfield, *Unspeakable Sentences: Narration and Representation in the Language of Fiction*, 184

Partial minds must have an agent who confers them on the character in question. That narrative agent directs the kind of access readers have to the character's mind, and

studying that agent can unlock probable causes for why the character is represented as partial. *Ripley* makes the most sense when we attribute its design to the implied author. Although some might claim that *Ripley* contains a *de facto* third-person narrator, I agree with Ann Banfield in the epigraph above by seeing no value or evidence for such an assertion. Recent work on unnatural narratives by Jan Alber, Brian Richardson, and others depends on amplifying Banfield's recognition, since they note that not all narratives need to be read with a narrator telling the story, as discussed in Chapter 2 of this dissertation (124). Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* is such a case, because the four narrative parts imply no harmonious unity by a single, non-authorial voice. In other words, there is no need and no evidence for positing a single narrator. So, when *Ripley* can be said to have a narrator at all, it is a very minimal one, one who never refers to him or herself or the situation of writing.

Since we still need a shorthand for referring to the design of the narrative that is linked to but not overridden by the flesh-and-blood author, we turn to the implied author. Unlike the narrator, the implied author cannot speak in the narrative; s/he is not an actual presence but rather a director behind the scenes, a puppeteer. When irony emerges through the characters' words or actions, we may attribute that larger design to the intentions of the implied author. The implied author, rather than the narrator, helps explain Tom's partial mind. This attribution frees me from either over-attributing causal influence to Highsmith's biography (Žižek's caution discussed above) or supposing that the complex design of the narrative comes from a narrator who never speaks with the personal "I." Rather, my references to the narrator indicate s/he articulates non-focalized

sections of exposition only and that design and intention come from the Boothian version of the implied author, Highsmith's particularized extension of herself.

Among implied authors, *Ripley*'s is exceptional in how it affects the reader. To apply an argument from my earlier section, Highsmith's implied author fosters *fluent mindreading* by her portrayal of Tom's thoughts in two ways: access to his thoughts and his enhanced ability to mindread, traits that characterize him as both telepathic in his accuracy and sociopathic in his self-aggrandizement. The implied author's choice to position Tom in a relationship to the audience so that they guess his periodically absent thoughts increases the narrative's complexity of mindreading. But the complexity doubles over, since the implied author may be supposing the reader's thoughts (guessing at their effect), and *that* mindreading is something about which the reader, in turn, may guess. When the reader guesses the implied author's purposes, she is really guessing in intentional terms why the story is designed as it is and how it will turn out based on its internal logic. Implied authors of this kind, those which construct a narrative in which their intentions may be objects of supposition, have this added dimension that readers must consider and so advance the number of levels at which mindreading occurs.

My argument in the theoretical chapter of this dissertation suggests that in *What Maisie Knew*, James' implied author has little choice but to underrepresent Maisie's mind through the technique of partial minds because of a condensing of textual space. There is simply not enough room in some complex narratives for all minds to be expressed in their fullness. This problem occurs in *Ripley* and raises issues I approach shortly (especially when the implied author's allotment of representation to Tom's thoughts is shaped by the prioritization of mimetic, synthetic, and thematic textual functions). And yet, the implied

author's particular challenge in representing Tom's mind falls under its effect on the reader. Because we do not think of narrators as being aware of the potential effects that the story (as a material object) might have on the reader—rather, we think of narrators writing to a specific audience and being embedded in a specific context or frame, as Ishmael or Scheherazade—implied authors assume more responsibility for how the narrator presents information by creating a larger narrative that includes the narration as part of the rhetorical effort. The implied author thereby directs the reader's thoughts through deliberate structuring and allowance of certain techniques of Tom's cognitive representation. The development of cognitive norms is the mechanism through which Tom becomes a partial mind.

II.ii *Ripley*'s Norms and Genre

"Narratives, because they serve as expressive of the attitudes and feelings of their authors, create in our minds the image of a persona with those attitudes and feelings, we thereby come to adapt the framework canonical for that work."

~ Gregory Currie, "Framing Narratives," 29

Constructing Tom as a partial mind through the five criteria for delimiting a partial mind ultimately helps explain how readers perceive him through the process of textual comprehension. *Ripley*'s cognitive norms, the second criterion, are in part established by the preceding evidence for the novel's preoccupation with thoughts. But cognitive norms are constructed relatively. Partial minds stand out when norms within a work are broken in order to spotlight a certain quality of the character's consciousness. This rupture often means depriving that mind of an expected characteristic. For example, Janice in Updike's *Rabbit, Run* is only minimally focalized until the scene in which she drowns her daughter, reversing the polarity of her cognitive representations. In her

transformation from flat character to round, readers retroactively perceive at once the limited, partial way in which her mind was represented before that key scene. Accordingly, cognitive norms must account for a character's mental representation throughout the whole work and across the diachronic process of reading.

Although he breaks the novel's cognitive norms, Tom is not a partial mind in the same way as Janice. Hers occurs by withholding access to her thoughts and then suddenly providing access; Tom's occurs by the *kind* of access to his mind. As mentioned, Tom's thoughts often involve thinking other people's thoughts, and as such, his mind cannot be completely isolated from theirs in the same way that George Butte has seen characters' minds as caught up in a mutually interdependent web of representation (*I Know* 5). No mind is an island. Tom's mind so often and so strongly represents others' minds that his thoughts of others can even equate to mediated access to theirs—not just his perception of theirs. In other words, the implied author may use this nested method of Tom's *fluent mindreading* to convey other characters' actual thoughts to the reader or mislead the reader about their thoughts. Of course, sometimes the implied author does attempt to mislead the reader, and so the ambiguity of Tom's perception of others' thoughts increases the cognitive complexity of the novel. Tom's obsession with mindreading implies that his thoughts are incomplete on their own because he must rely on what he perceives to be others' thoughts in order to populate his own mind. I am not saying that he does not have his own thoughts represented, as he considers many of his own plans and makes many observations. Yet there is a clear dependence of his own mind on the minds of others, especially in terms of the direct amount of textual space that is allocated to Tom's thoughts of others instead Tom's thoughts about himself alone.

This last point will no doubt be contested by the argument that if he is so adept at and obsessed with imagining others' thoughts, then his own mind is actually full, not partial—or, to recall Baruch Hochman's terminology from my first chapter, "whole" in the sense of "an exhaustive account of the imagined person that this particular character is meant to be" (95). Clearly, no text can be exhaustive, so each must set its own limits for what counts as a whole mind according to its norms. Let me explain wholeness, or fullness, in *Ripley* by making two responses to this objection that Tom's mindreading others prevents him from being a partial mind.

(1) Partial minds are a textual technique rather than an interpretive lens. This distinction emphasizes the actual content on the page rather than our inferences of its representational nature. If Tom's thoughts are often about others, then we have less content about his own mind except in the form of it being about others, making his mind less whole. So yes, his thoughts themselves are not partially represented, but his thoughts that are not imagining others' thoughts—these are the ones that are more scarce and less developed. That breach of norm in *Ripley* is an anomalous representation of mind. Granted, the implications of Tom's identity imply a larger personhood than just a mindreader of others, but since partial minds are a textual technique, we should take them first at the level of accounting for whose mind the representation populates. And yet, a question still remains: *Ripley* grants access only to Tom's mind, so how do we know that his thinking of others' thoughts is not the norm for him? My second response to the objection that Tom's thoughts of others prevent him from being a partial mind answers that question as well.

(2) The norms of mental representation in *Ripley* are not uniform throughout the narrative. This response depends on looking at those sections of the novel after Tom has murdered and impersonated Dickie. At this point, the representation of Tom changes. No longer is he attempting to represent himself, but when he is with others, he is attempting to represent Dickie. Or in contradistinction, he is intentionally trying *not* to represent Tom and so to not even think about himself as Tom. To address the objection, then, in Tom's mind the difference between Tom and Dickie goes through a shift: to Tom, thinking about Dickie cannot mean thinking about himself because that would intrude on the effectiveness of his impersonation. As a result, he often neglects his own identity and mindset as Tom in favor of his mindset as Dickie, a move which—to partially concede with the objection—increases the amount he thinks about himself as an agent as a whole, but divides what it means for him to have a self. When the norms in *Ripley* shift, the different ways Tom's mind is represented constitute his partial mind.

Two problems arise at this point in the analysis of why Tom is a partial mind by way of his norm-breaking. On the one side, our interpretive decisions here about how metaphysically to take Tom's impersonation of Dickie (i.e., does the text suggest that Tom *becomes* Dickie?) could override the more technical analysis I have been performing in relation to how much space his actual thoughts take up from a linguistic, or if pushed, quantitative, perspective. If there is any inkling in our interpretation of Tom that he has done more than merely impersonate Dickie—that he has in fact given up or lost his own self and become Dickie—then that attribution makes any statements about whose mind is "doing" the thinking moot. It would be a new Tom that appears as Dickie, rather than an old Tom who pretends to be Dickie. In this way, the novel categorically

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assigns Tom to being a partial mind, since thoughts may no longer be tied to a contextually normal mental world of his own.

Indeed, many critics have proposed that Tom is erased in favor of a new—to use their language—*identity* as Dickie. A few that offer varying degrees of this belief include Ilana Shiloh, who easily claims that for Tom "performance is reality" (66), upholding her belief that Tom returns to himself in the end after becoming Dickie for a time (65). Mawer adds to and nuances this argument by explaining how "this capacity for creating reality has become . . . not merely a habit of mind, but a habit of living what he imagines" (17). Mental reality becomes the lived reality for Tom. Kelley Wagers takes a more Hegelian view in arguing that "Tom effaces the line between himself and Dickie until he becomes a man remade, and much 'improved,' by their synthesis" (232). In this view, Tom is more of a combination of Dickie and Tom. However, perhaps the most complex view comes from a 2000 article published in *The Threepenny Review* by Neil Gordon. He upends this debate in arguing that Tom has a "singular ability" which allows for "the coexistence of two perfectly contradictory truths, without their ever disturbing his placid conscience. Nor is this, Highsmith will show, a pathology. It is, rather, the height of normalcy" (19). Instead of seeing Tom sacrifice one reality for another, Gordon sees both existing at once in order to suggest the conflicting nature of thoughts.[68]

So, if we side with critics like Gordon, we see Tom's thoughts as emblematic, but not in any way transcriptive or verisimilitudinous, of the tension some believe exists in our own thoughts. If we side with Mawer and Wagers, we concede that for all intents and purposes, Tom's impersonation of Dickie constitutes a new reality, a different mind. The use of partial minds as a technique for developing and breaking the norms of a text—the

core concern of this subsection—admits that both views are tenable together. This position is true because each implicitly argues based on a different function of the text, which are not necessarily mutually exclusive. The question turns on whether the function of Tom's mental representations is synthetic or mimetic. This problem is taken up and applied towards another point later when I more fully address the implication of not just the norms of the text, but the ontological orientation of Tom's thoughts as well (II.v).

The second problem that arises in explaining why Tom is a partial mind in relation to the cognitive norms of the novel is the ambiguity of a divided mind. Other examples in literature model the norm of a split mind or split self in *Ripley*. For instance, Catherine Emmott has carefully investigated readers' comprehension of split selves. Not referencing Tom Ripley, she correctly deduces that readers may often view characters as split even while those characters have no sense of being split ("Split Selves" 171). To add to Emmott's list, Saul Bellow's Wilhelm in *Seize the Day* has two selves described this way: "He had never, however, succeeded in feeling like Tommy, and in his soul had always remained Wilky" (25). Even while Wilhelm feels the conflict, it is the precise and careful Bellow narrator who lets us into the conflict in his head without allowing the explicitness of that internal division to spill over into Wilhelm's direct awareness. This kind of model that Emmott develops depends on George Lakoff's view that people, as she quotes him, have "not one form of consciousness but many" (Emmott, "Split Selves" 161). Tom, like Wilhelm, certainly seems to have many forms of consciousness, evidenced by my upcoming discussion of his *mind style* as Protean. More than other partial minds such as Marianne in *We Were the Mulvaneys*, Cathy/Kate in *East of Eden*, or Janice in *Rabbit, Run*, Tom Ripley fits Emmott's conception of the split self because

the division depends on his thoughts being divided between his or Dickie's, even while he seems to be both. However, Emmott sees the extent to which the split self is "inherent in the narrative form," premised on first-person narrators who have a reporting self and a reported self ("Split Selves" 153-4).The less standard use of split self in third-person narration admits that the norms of mental representation in *Ripley* differ from standard, first-person uses of split selves. This intervention in the norms across works indicates the additional need to specify *Ripley* in its generic context in order to complete this analysis of his contextually-generated partial mind.

But setting *Ripley* in a genre is not as simple as it may sound. Despite the claims of some critics, such as the in-depth work of Fiona Peters, that distinguishing genre in Highsmith's works is unhelpful (1), due to the claim that they are "impossible to categorize" (2), the facts remain both that critics have gone ahead and generically classified Highsmith's work and that such difficulties of classification add to rather than detract from Highsmith's interest. Russell Harrison makes the somewhat unusual but pragmatic choice to follow 1980s bookstores which labeled her genre as simply "literature" and did not "attempt to situate her work in either the detective or suspense fiction categories," which became the default genres for her work (ix). While genre is important to the material history of Highsmith's rise to literary fame and while the classificatory quality of it so often inflects readers' interpretations of her works, *Ripley* tends to have qualities found in multiple genres. As Edward Shannon colorfully puts it, "If we mix a cross-dressed James Cain *femme fatale*, a Raymond Chandler single-minded hero, and an Edgar Allan Poe psychotic, we might just come up with Tom Ripley" (18). Tom, as the figure on whom *Ripley*'s genre depends, seems to resist a generalization that

can pigeon-hole him in a single role. Harrison has further proposed that because Highsmith's characters often lack a well-defined personality, "they are, in one sense, anti-*bildungsromans*" (22). And yes, to this classification we might concede partially, but not totally. After all, Tom does change, becomes a new man, and has a new life in front of him by the end of the first *Ripley* novel, following the general arc of the *bildungsroman*.

We are left with placing *Ripley* in the baldly populist category of crime fiction based on the crimes committed in the novel. Crime fiction suggests that characters will be guessing about the criminal's motives, and so it generically demands deception and expects the reader to guess about the intentions of its characters. As a result, strategic underrepresentation has the added function of often tricking the reader by, as Zunshine contends, proffering or withholding key information at certain moments (*Why We Read Fiction* 141). In *Ripley*, though, we know the criminal and his motives, so the generic question flips within crime fiction from being a "whodunnit" to a "what-will-happen-to-whodunnit." Instead of the authorities thinking about the criminal's mind, the criminal thinks about everyone else's mind. As a member of the crime fiction genre, then, *Ripley* maintains the focus on imagining intentions, even while reversing the expected emphasis and perspective of those guesses. Its genre thereby places a heavy emphasis and influence on the norms which determine the representation and underrepresentation of Tom's mind.

II.iii. *Ripley***'s Mind Style: The Protean Forger**
"The ability of the human mind to reflect on possible alternative selves is particularly important in narrative texts since these 'imagined selves' can motivate action, add to suspense and encourage strong empathy."
<div align="right">~ Catherine Emmott, "'Split Selves' in Fiction," 167</div>

Mind styles are linguistically-derived characterizations of fictional minds. Achieved through many techniques—such as analyzing mental content, cognitive representational methods, and syntactic styles—they involve isolating patterns in the representations of characters' minds and showing how those patterns develop a particular qualitative perspective. William James' Maisie, for example, has a mind style that demonstrates her limited knowledge of adult affairs. Certain mind styles, like Maisie's, imply a partial mind. As I detail in this subsection, Tom combines two interdependent mind styles: the forger and the Protean thinker. Because Tom spends much of his mental energy thinking the thoughts of others, his mind has the curious Protean ability to resemble the minds of others as he imagines them, which is a direct effect of his ability to craft mental forgeries that result from his accuracy in *fluent mindreading*.

The common example of a mind style is the character Lok from William Golding's *The Inheritors*, whose lack of transitive clauses with humans as the subject defamiliarizes the anthropocentric perspective (Fowler, *Linguistics* 105-6). That regularity of pattern is underscored by Jean Boase-Beier's definition of a mind style as "a consistent stylistic pattern in the text as evidence of a particular cognitive state" (263-4). Consistency can operate at different levels of generalization, from an inflexible characterization to an overly abstract one. In the case of Tom, consistency should not mean that his mind style cannot change in terms of the function of cognitive representation (mimetic or synthetic), but rather that a larger governing principle *consistently* determines his mental configuration. That principle is Tom's ability to adapt and change his mind based on others, leading to both his Protean and forger mind styles. Thus, he gives the appearance of different mind styles, even while the larger determinant

suggests traceable coherence. After I discuss the linguistic techniques *Ripley* uses to form

Tom's forgery mind style, I go on to talk of his Protean tendencies.

Elena Semino takes deixis as one of her main tools for selecting the kind of

language that forms a mind style. Etymologically, deixis means "pointing," and so refers

to words that are directly relative to "a particular subject position" ("Deixis and Fictional

Minds" 421). Pronouns are one example of deictic markers; patterns of these deictic

markers indicate a certain mind style. Semino ties deixis to minds: "The mental

representations of situations that we form as we read a narrative tend to be defined

primarily in deictic terms" (423). Deixis signals the orientation of fictional

consciousness. Tom's deixis goes through a marked shift as he changes from being the

sole deictic center to letting Dickie overwhelm his deictic center. In other words, the

syntactic terms used to reference Tom change to ones that seem to reference Dickie when

Tom is pretending to be Dickie. This shift identifies Tom as having a mind style that

forges other minds, since Dickie's deictic markers become Tom's own.

We see that shift, for one, in his deictic pronoun references. One example occurs

when he is impersonating Dickie and writing deceptive letters to Marge from Dickie's

perspective. He treats himself as Tom as a third person: "On the tenth of January Tom

wrote Marge that he was back in Rome after three weeks in Paris alone, that Tom had left

Rome a month ago, saying he was going up to Paris, and from there to America though

he hadn't run into Tom in Paris" (131). Highsmith's deft style here moves from objective

narration of Tom (first use of "Tom") to what may be called epistolary *free indirect*

discourse. (Since verbatim letters between Tom and Marge appear on the previous pages,

this discourse takes on their cadence and genre.) The second and third uses of Tom in the

quote are part of Tom-as-Dickie's epistolary language to Marge, which means that in that single sentence, Tom's name is used, at first, as the narration of Tom from the narrator and, in the next two uses, as the narration of Tom-as-Dickie's account to Marge of what Tom was supposedly doing. In other words, *Tom* is both the narrator's name for the main character and that character's own way of objectifying himself as another person while he plays Dickie. In the rest of the lines that present this paraphrased letter from Tom-as-Dickie to Marge, the pronoun used, "he," further takes on these dual references: it is both Tom as the doer of narrative action and Tom as the persona of Dickie: "He thanked her extravagantly for the Christmas package . . . . He asked if she had received a package from him? He has mailed it . . . . He apologized" (132). In all these cases, pronouns and even proper nouns are inadequate to the task of one-to-one deictic reference. They could ambivalently mean either Tom-as-Tom or Tom-as-Dickie.

In the letters surrounding this passage of epistolary *free indirect discourse*, Tom refers to himself speaking as Dickie as "me" and to himself objectified from the imagined perspective of Dickie as "Tom." Thus, the intervening paragraph's pull away from direct reference in the letters emphasizes the ambiguity of deictic reference, which is more clear in the letters themselves. The passage suggests the extent to which Dickie's persona has become who Tom really is now, or at the very least, that Tom is partially both the imagined Dickie and the old Tom. The implied author uses this cloaked language to draw out the ambiguity of Tom's identity by breaking from the more straightforward pronouns in the letters. Indeed, why not, otherwise, quote the letter directly here, like the excerpt reproduced on the following page? *Free indirect discourse* provides the perfect screen for Highsmith's implied author to arrange the voice to sound like Tom but to let the

ambiguity of antecedents linguistically stress the extent to which he continuously acts as both Tom and Tom-as-Dickie. *Free indirect discourse* thereby moves the representations from sent letters from the narrator's objective point of view to perceived letters from Tom's point of view, changing the representation from the replication of a document to the figuration of a mind. Forging a persona is one thing, but this passage suggests that Tom's ability to forge minds carries with it the partial inability to distinguish which mind is imitated and which is original. This mind style in part establishes Tom as a partial mind, as reference to his own mind becomes lost in the ambiguity of deictic reference. His mental representation breaks the conventional ways of expressing thoughts and so points to his underrepresented status.

This kind of deictic analysis of Tom's mind style as a forger grounds the argument of Anthony Hilfer, one of the earliest critics on Highsmith, when he calls Tom a "protean man" (362), for in forging others' minds, Tom is able to possess many different minds. Hilfer employs the term more to characterize Tom's ability to perform his identity in multiple ways, among them his gay identity and "schizophrenia" (368). Tom clearly has the ability to play different roles, and part of his intrigue as a character is his success in doing so. But *Protean* for Tom means not only having multiple identities, but also having multiple represented minds. So here, I want to connect Hilfer's analysis of Tom as the Protean man to a longstanding principle in narrative theory: the Proteus Principle. Meir Sternberg coined the eponym to describe the tendency of one technique to have a variety of effects ("Proteus in Quotation-Land" 147, c.f. 144). More than just sharing similar names, Hilfer's characterization of Tom and Sternberg's principle drive at the same core concept of doppelgänger textual patterns which hold many different,

seemingly exclusive properties together at once. *Ripley* characterizes Tom in accordance with both the Proteus Principle and as a Protean character at two different levels. (1) His mind's ability to impersonate others allows that one technique to have many different effects. I have demonstrated this point in the analysis above on uses of "Tom" and "he." (2) His mind's flexibility in terms of its representation—that is, its ability to look like others' minds in a closely textual, even linguistic sense, even while readers believe the represented mind to be his own—gives him the Protean quality of being both a closely mimetic, lifelike representation and a highly constructed, synthetic mind. This last point I take up at length later (II.v).

If Tom is indeed the Protean man from a cognitive, deictic standpoint, and from the standpoint of textual techniques, then questions concerning who is Tom Ripley and who is the impersonated Dickie Greenleaf are moot because of his partial mind. Tom is a changing force, a mind that is never set or fixed, that never fills a complete expectation. This flexible mind style confirms Wagers' intuition that Highsmith "crafts an American character that belies the concept of an essential, authentic, or original person that precedes the one he fabricates from an ever-possible 'clean slate'" (255). Tom's only fixed characteristic is his tendency to be unfixed. And indeed, we do not have the ability to verify whether the novel presents Tom-as-Dickie as having fixed characteristics. All we have are his forgeries of Dickie (which may be his own thoughts or may be his thoughts as thinking Dickie's thoughts), while with his own thoughts, we have the actual representations of those. And they show him to be quite changeable.

Tom even claims to be the Protean man, short of saying so in those exact words. While aboard the transatlantic ship, *free indirect discourse* relates his sublime thoughts:

"He was *versatile*, and the world was wide! He swore to himself he would stick to a job once he got it. Patience and perseverance! Upward and onward!" (35, emphasis mine). This line highlights Tom's unfixed nature, and appropriately, the line immediately precedes the oft-mentioned moment in the novel when Tom asks the ship's officer if there is a copy of *The Ambassadors*[69] on board. When Tom hears a negative response, the novel seems to reject the connection to James' Strether, despite critics' attempts to show otherwise.[70] Tom cannot learn about this literary person who prefigures him. In failing to find *The Ambassadors*, Tom both prevents himself from fitting a mold—a rejection of patterns which is essential for a Protean man—and at the same time fits more securely into this role of Protean man, paradoxically fitting a mold. He thus embodies the contradiction of role-fitting, being at once flexible enough to not be Strether and inflexible enough nevertheless to fit the role of Proteus.[71]

Being Protean makes Tom a partial mind. This claim is based in how much Tom actually changes over the course of the novel. Indeed, I both differ from and depend on critics who push the discussion further in favor of Tom becoming a completely different person, as opposed to just temporarily imitating Dickie. Abigail Cheever, for example, in distinguishing Tom from the "phony" character type that Holden Caufield in *The Catcher in the Rye* "condemn[s]," explains that through "murdering Dickie, Ripley neither reveals nor betrays his true self and is shown as neither authentic nor inauthentic. Instead, he becomes a different person" (123).[72] Cheever, though, adds to the discussion by her formulation of Tom as "*representing* as opposed to *being* someone else" (264, note 17, emphasis original). Indeed, as the failed ambassador of Mr. Greenleaf, he is a failed representation, and in trying to attain Dickie's mirrored mind and self, Tom as a fixed

character becomes an underrepresentation, a partial mind. In shifting the question from being to representing, Cheever helps resituate Tom's mind as one that moves from who he is to how he is perceived. And that perception always leaves him as less than expected. Less than expected means violating the norm of cognitive representation, making Tom a partial mind. As I shall argue ahead, Tom being a partial mind affects the reader's co-creation of his mind, which leads to ethical consequences.

Tom's mind style, as I have explained, is governed by two types, each with qualities that depend on and modify each another: forger and Proteus figure. As forger, Tom is able to craft a flexible mental identity pieced together from the cognitive habits and dispositions of others. However, as Protean, he is not fixed in other respects, seen in how he forgets even how to be Tom. "[I]t was strangely easy to forget the exact timbre of Tom Ripley's voice," he thinks soon after taking over Dickie's identity, and then he thinks, "But mostly he was Dickie, discoursing in a low tone" (122). Even as Dickie, though, he is the forger, which suggests problems with Wagers' belief that Highsmith crafts a complete rejection of "an essential, authentic, or original person" (255). After all, the rejection does not appear to be total. Tom as forger, though, confirms Wagers' later argument that "[i]n art as in life, Tom devalues original, consistent identities in favor of false identities that are open to change and relocation" (259), since change and appropriation are central to his mind. To be fair, this kind of mind-style-as-fixed-identity is not the same as the traditional hero in American literature.[73] Each of his mind styles leads to, and yet conflicts with, the other.

Sternberg's Proteus Principle lies at the crux of this novel's emphasis on mind. The novel's tension and vacillation between Tom as Protean and Tom as fixed identity is

the same tension that is faced by the reader: should she necessarily follow Tom's thoughts and be contaminated by his ethics, or can the reader look on safely? I take up this question in the final section (III). Furthermore, Tom's plastic mind style affirms ties made by *Ripley*'s critics to 1950s social theories. Trask, for example, shows that many tensions, disagreements, and complexities existed within sociological and theatrical discourses that were committed to differing standings of authenticity and performance (592; c.f. 595).[74] Tom's ability not just to perform identity in multiple, seemingly conflicting and exclusive ways but his ability to think across such divides invites Trask's evidence of the midcentury discourses as influential on Highsmith's development of his character. As alluded to in my introduction, Tom's mind style fosters and buffers other methodologies for interpreting him, and so historically-grounded studies of him are further secured by the textual evidence of his multiform mind style.

II.iv. Inaccessible Minds

"Pat is committed to the principle that nothing is as it seems to be."

> ~ Joan Schenkar, *The Talented Miss Highsmith: The Secret Life and Serious Art of Patricia Highsmith*, 38

Even though classifying minds has often been an unmanageable task for scholars, because of the need for a more descriptive terminology, I have developed a basic set of profiles for partial minds that congregate qualities into sets of commonly found characterizations. I stated in my first chapter that Tom fits the profile of an *inconsistent mind*. As noted there, minds matching this profile may be mimetic by dramatizing the sense of having conflicting thoughts and desires, or they may be synthetic by polarizing a character's cognitive representation into accessible thoughts which exaggerate different

parts of thinking.[75] Based on Tom's mind style as Protean and a forger, he does not easily fit a single profile and so does not depend exclusively on mimetic or synthetic functions. As the choice of *inconsistent minds* is between either an expression of tensions among thoughts or an artificial representation that reflects (rather than enacts) thoughts, *inconsistent minds* encourage other possible, but appropriate, profiles. In other words, *inconsistent minds*, because they are set to a single principle but are also not consistent, suggest a deferral to and inclusion of other profiles. That same vacillation of ambiguity and duality is mirrored in Tom's two mind styles. *Inconsistent minds* need other profiles to complete them.

One of those profiles that reinforces *inconsistent minds* is *inaccessible minds*. In this profile, portions of Tom's mind are made inaccessible in the *discourse* (the reconstructed narrative that readers have access to), even while we might extrapolate that they are part of the *story* (the supposedly original events as they took place). This kind of logic, however, reduces textual complexity by leaving an either/or dichotomy between *story* and *discourse*, one that does not allow for the constraints of linear textual space to arbitrate what from the *story* becomes represented in the *discourse*. For instance, during any given moment in a narrative, any number of expositional statements may be written, and one of the disadvantages of fiction over film is that not all those things can be represented at once (e.g., describing a room could go on indefinitely). Now, certainly, a moment could pause in Genette's sense, and description could go on *ad infinitum*; and yet, while linear texts have this ability to describe without time progressing, even then a diachronic quality emerges through the progressive nature of description (Genette 102). We cannot help but impose time on language. If all parts of Tom's mind were fully

represented, they might disrupt other, time-dependent elements of the text. As a result, in conventional fiction the author must decide what gets represented and what gets omitted, and then in between, what gets implied by what gets represented.[76]

Inaccessibility of thoughts occurs when that implication does not cover all that the reader expects it to cover—and this is precisely the problem in *Ripley* when Tom-as-Dickie's thoughts confuse how clearly we read Tom's thoughts. As Wagers explains it, Highsmith is willing "to sacrifice the ideal of 'a genuine and integrated personality' to the notion of subjectivity as a fictional act" (251), indicating the forced move toward synthetic representation. This imbalance is due to the representation of two styles of thought in his mind, his own and his as Dickie's. We see the trade-off when Tom is reflexively considering his forgery: "He might play up Tom a little more, he thought. He could stoop a little more, he could be shyer than ever, he could even wear horn-rimmed glasses and hold his mouth in an even sadder, droopier manner to contrast with Dickie's tenseness" (198). He has objectified Tom into a set of ornaments and gestures. The mind of this forger has come so far to the fore that the reader wonders if the old, insecure Tom still remains beneath. Reading from the end of the novel, we can look back on passages like this one and consider how Tom, while not completely changed by the end, reverts more into his original self. The *inaccessible* partial mind in *Ripley* works as the ambiguous blockade of the reader's inferences about whether or not—or if so then how much—Tom-as-Tom is actually there. Whatever is supposed or expected to be there is *inaccessible*.

Another possibility considers Tom less an *inconsistent* or *inaccessible mind*, but an *incomplete mind*. This profile presents the problem of Tom's cognitive representation

in a less technical but clearer light. *Incomplete minds*, like Henry James' Maisie, do not stand for pathological minds, but are techniques for managing the constraints of linear fiction. While *incomplete minds* present the implication of unknowable knowledge, *incomplete minds* leave out key expected parts of characters' minds and so suggest something about their bearer's curtailed social knowledge or identity. Maisie's mind does not hold knowledge of adult affairs. Without using these cognitive profiles explicitly but with similar goals of narrowing Tom's character, much of the criticism on *Ripley* interrogates Tom's identity, especially regarding his social status vis-à-vis institutions, materialism, or art. Such analyses are also premised on explaining his antisocial attitudes or marginal status. And these characteristics are certainly the case: Tom's partial mind— in the limited sense found in *incomplete minds* of there simply not being enough space for him to think his own thoughts and Dickie's thoughts—acts to mirror his partial social success, or rather, his social failure.

And yet, the focus on how much knowledge about Tom is available for the reader may stand prior to interpretations of Tom's social alienation. *Incomplete minds* only ask what is strange about the character socially or psychologically to make him or her incompletely represented and *inconsistent minds* only enact that tension between fixed characteristics and pure mutability. In contradistinction from these two, *inaccessible minds* ask why a full mind is deliberately veiled, suggesting that the focus is on the reader and interpretive choices. As a result, the implied author strategically intervenes in those, rather than on a set of knowable qualities of the character. Tom may be read as *incomplete*, *inconsistent*, and *inaccessible*, and while these three options conflict in that they make mutually exclusive claims about why Tom is a partial mind, they work

together as well to support a larger view of the novel that sees both Tom and Highsmith as expert forgers, a point discussed shortly (III.iii). All these concerns carry over to my argument that partial minds alter the reader's textual comprehension of *Ripley*.

II.v. The Ontology of Tom's Consciousness

"[T]he mental world of her protagonists does not resemble that of literary realism. While no literary world truly exists, no matter how many 'realistic' and 'right' details it exhibits, the rhetoric of the realist writer aims at establishing between the narrator and the reader the fiction that the author is attempting to describe a real world. Highsmith's narrator does not do this. . . . Psychological realism, however, plays a minor role. More significant is her ability to create in readers states of extreme psychological tension unlike anything produced by her contemporaries."

~ Russell Harrison, *Patricia Highsmith*, ix

Tom is a partial mind due to the conditions outlined above describing his represented thoughts that do not easily conform to categories. In a very basic sense, readers' expectations about his mind are forestalled at each quality of mind, and this develops both his interest and readerly absorption at the same time that it corners his mental representation into underrepresentation. That designation has value for the interpretation of the novel and for the status of ethical representation.

However, *Ripley* not only employs the technique of partial minds but dramatizes problems concerning the degree to which characters are mimetic or synthetic (thematic is less notable in allocating textual space). This problem was initially brought up in my first chapter as applying these terms, James Phelan's textual functions, to the interpretation of characters' thoughts: are they supposed to be lifelike (i.e., mimetic), or should do their linguistic constraints make them artificial (i.e., synthetic)? Sternberg reveals the core of the problem: "In no form of quotation, therefore, not even in the direct style, may we

identify the representation of the original act of speech or thought with that act itself" ("Proteus in Quotation-Land" 108). Sternberg sees all quotation (part of what he calls the Perspectival Montage, those nested levels of reference that others call embedment) and representation as different from the original. Or to pose it another way, no part of *discourse* directly equates to any part of *story*. As I see it, all texts fall between the ideal conception of either of these categories; no text is so lifelike that it is not at least slightly constructed, and no construct so distant from real people that we can mark a zero degree of resemblance. As this subsection argues, this continuum is both enacted and subverted by *Ripley*. Through his mind style as a forger, Tom successfully shows that his mind is represented like other people's in real life when he intensely mindreads others; however, in Tom's forging of Dickie's identity, the implied author must employ a strongly synthetic view of Tom's mind, one that does not resemble actual minds closely.

Tom's partial mind is to blame. The selective underrepresentation of Tom's mind furthers the novel's subtle move toward heightening the mindreading of criminality, or what some might see as evilness,[77] in both Tom's and the reader's minds. Since Highsmith, to put it analytically, shifts the functions of character ontology on us in the middle of the novel by taking the mimetic "realism" and replacing it with a synthetic forgery at the turning point of Tom's assumption of Dickie's identity and mind, the reader is more easily taken unawares. In other words, what we at first perceive as a fair imitation of a real mind, Tom's mind seeming like a real person's, becomes strategically and artificially refashioned during his impersonation. As a result, readers may easily miss Highsmith's change. No longer do we have a character who is a realistic portrayal of real people, as established by generic norms of fictional techniques for mental representation.

Instead, we have a caricature, or rather, an "under-cature," of a character whose mind is unlike a real one. Because slippage occurs across all kinds of representation, there is no way to prove that one representation is uncontrovertibly lifelike and another uncontrovertibly contrived, but evidence from the text supports this assertion.

Tom himself seems to perceive this frustration between simultaneously being himself and Dickie, seen in his subsequent attempts to express himself as either. In effect, Tom is troubled by the same problems that the novel implies about whether to view representations of the mind synthetically, mimetically, or both. Such a challenge to Tom's own expression is evident even before he kills Dickie. During one of Tom's disputes with Dickie, we find out that his "sense of frustration and inarticulateness was agony to Tom" (88). But this frustration appears later as well, such as when he is trying to lie to Mr. Greenleaf (ironically one of the few characters in the novel who is able at times to see through Tom's deceptions): "His agony in trying to express himself was genuine" (242). It wears on Tom emotionally to be two people at once, even when one is dead. This problem of desiring articulation provokes the same problem the text poses to the reader through the synthetic and mimetic functions of representation. Accurate and full expression is impossible when there are two minds to deal with: Tom's own, which he perceives with high fidelity, and Dickie's, which he must construct synthetically. So in the same way that that Tom's impersonation demands both mimetic and synthetic representations, so is Tom emotionally aware of the lapses that occur when he is set into the dilemma of accessing and synthesizing his own thoughts with his vivid but constructed imagination of Dickie's. He is a split subject not just psychologically, but

representationally. That representational problem, then, is the same one the reader must adjudicate in interpreting Tom's mind.

I am arguing that this technique of the split subject, emphasized in Tom's emotional trials of articulation and following a synthetic function of textual representation, uses the technique of a partial mind to get its point across. Tom's mind is split, and when he is Dickie, the text does not allow him to also be Tom as determined by his cognitive representation.[78] The text shows only the surface, one mind at a time. While Tom likely lurks, from a metaphysical standpoint, behind the thoughts that are Tom-as-Dickie, the text's design precludes such a clear picture of Tom as puppeteer manipulator of the text and also somehow safe behind Tom-as-Dickie's thoughts. Tom is what his words and thoughts are, and in imitating Dickie to the nth degree, he effaces his own, original mind.

Ironically, this imitation is exactly what the reader mirrors. In animating Tom's consciousness (and via Tom as proxy, Dickie's) by reading the words on the text and letting them become part of her conscious experience, she goes through that same process that Tom goes through in animating the words and gestures of Dickie. Tom's problems of imitation are thus the reader's problems of interpretation. And even prior to active interpretation, they are problems of textual comprehension. If Tom at times seems to become Dickie for all intents and purposes (plot action of the moment, textual space), then what differences really matter concerning how Tom can be distinguished from Dickie? The reader must face the same dilemma: if she is thinking Tom's thoughts, she must ask, then what room is left for her own? Fortunately, the reader's problem is different, a matter of real mind and not just text, and so a place in which the crowding

limitations of linguistic density do not necessarily carry over to her mind. And yet as

Ripley uses the text to its full effect, taking advantage of its linearity which is its last

limitation, it makes its point which transfers from the world of words to the world of

minds: only one mind may exist in a moment. The reader is faced with extricating herself

from the mind of Tom and then Tom-as-Dickie, for in reading them, she mindreads them,

and in mindreading, the reader becomes part of the consciousnesses of the story.

III. A Phenomenological Reading of *Ripley*

"Something resembling an ontological blankness lies at the heart of Patricia Highsmith's
writing: a vacancy, a nothing, underpins her tantalising and convoluted plots and
characterisations. . . . [She dismisses] guilt, culpability, justice and retribution . . . as both
pointless and empty concepts. This . . . is where the void, or blankness, becomes most
destabilising for the reader."

> ~ Fiona Peters, *Anxiety and Evil in the Writings of Patricia
> Highsmith*, 17

Theories of reading often begin with semiotician Roland Barthes. In *S/Z*, Barthes

reads Balzac's *Sarrasine* as a polysemous text that was also analyzable into different

codes of interpretation. His method was formative for many poststructural theories of

reading that followed him. Like the British "s" instead of "z" in the epigraph from Fiona

Peters, Barthes saw the use of "s" in Sarrasine rather than the phonologically expected

"z" as one of his "lexia" in which meaning was disputed. In turning from the expected

representation, Balzac centers his text around a letter that is "the letter of deviation" (*S/Z*

106). However, later in his life, Barthes departed from this kind of analysis in works like

Camera Lucida and, posthumously, *The Neutral*. *Camera Lucida* interprets photography

with the "punctum," a felt response to a photograph that strikes the viewer in a way that

does not fit analytical categories. Barthes describes it this way: "By giving me the

absolute past of the pose . . . the photograph tells me death in the future. What *pricks* me

is the discovery of this equivalence" (96, emphasis his). Still concerned about correspondence between text and reality, Barthes shifted to seeing the representational index (in Charles Sanders Peirce's sense) of photography as a comment on his own response. He moved to a phenomenological angle which earlier he had been careful to avoid (c.f., *S/Z* 16). Part of that change in Barthes' own hermeneutic code included seeing how text in any form affected him. I want to propose a theory of reading stemming from Barthes' later hermeneutic shift and arising from an interpretation of *Ripley* that focuses on his mind. By taking up Tom's partial mind through this phenomenological angle, I tie underrepresentation to reading and so offer a key payoff for the conception of partial minds.

Having looked at the implications of Tom's mind for partial minds and the nature of cognitive representation, my argument now moves more centrally to the reader so that I can propose *Ripley*'s effects on her. Specifically, I turn to how the reader co-creates and co-experiences a narrative. Tom's talent allowing him to impersonate Dickie manifests itself in the *discourse* as mindreading. That mindreading, though, is exactly what the reader does when she reads the representations of Tom's mind in the novel. Thus, there is a dual structure that invites the reader into the text: to know what Tom is thinking, the reader must engage in mindreading Tom (who is mindreading Dickie), and the implications for Tom's possession of Dickie's mind parallel the reader's co-creation of Tom's mind. Because of these two—the act of mindreading that the reader must perform and the thematic focus on mindreading that Tom's method of impersonation requires— the reader is implicated in Tom's thoughts, no mere observer. This need not mean she agrees with them or accepts them, but more than texts that merely describe an criminal

character's actions, this one puts the reader in the subject position of having to think the criminal character's thoughts in order to read the text. As the technique of partial mind is the textual mechanism used to achieve that effect, the reader too is affected by Tom's partial mind, since it changes the way she views Tom.

The next five subsections develop this argument. A gatekeeper of the reader's decision of how to view Tom is the irony of *Ripley*. Due to irony's ability to turn an assertion on its head, catching, missing, or over-reading irony may lead to conflicting readings of a novel. Rather than posit a single reading of *Ripley*, then, my goal is to offer the implications of different mutually exclusive, but equally valid, encounters with Tom's mind. Such readings are paired with different effects that a reader might—and as I argue, is likely to—experience. Determinants of these textual effects on reading include how readers fill interpretative gaps, how readers interpret the function of representations of Tom's mind, and how readers react to those conditions.[79] Section III begins by exploring this interpretation, *phenomenological reading* (III.i). Next, it surveys the design and effects of irony (III.ii), followed by a look at competing interpretations of forgery not only by Tom but by Highsmith herself (III.iii). These turnstiles to interpretation set up the determination of readerly immersion in *Ripley* (III.iv) and the likelihood of empathizing with Tom (III.v). All these effects show how Tom's partial mind develops the textual comprehension of *Ripley*.

III.i A Theory of Phenomenological Reading

"*Ripley* won an award from the Mystery Writers of America, and the Grand Prix de Littérature Policière in France. . . . In Positano, the framed and glassed-in document became slightly mildewed, and when I removed the glass to clean and dry it, I lettered 'Mr. Ripley and' before my own name, since I think Ripley himself should have received the award."

~ Patricia Highsmith, *Plotting and Writing Suspense Fiction*, 75

Phenomenological reading[80] stems from the problem of where meaning comes from in interpretation. Those familiar with the problem in literary criticism of locating meaning will be aware that a long line of scholars argues for meaning residing in the text, opposed by those who see it as produced by the reader. Proponents of both sides rarely fall into such simple formulations of their view and almost always take a medial position. Rather than unearth this debate or form some new watertight hypothetical reader, I aim to establish a branch of reading in touch with both sides. But my view entails a different focus by suggesting that dissimilar readerships may react to and be affected by works in disparate ways through their experiences of a text. Concerned less with agential interpretation or development of information, this theory looks to the experience of reading and how some texts direct certain manners of experience through their design. As a characterization of an audience, though, phenomenological reading is similar to but ultimately different from Peter Rabinowitz's narrative audience, the non-dramatized but generic and knowledgeable recipient of the narrative (95). Unlike Rabinowitz or most critics of reading practices, I am not concerned with the knowledge of the reader, but with the rhetorical impact a work may have on her.

Sidelined by the dominance of that debate just referenced about where meaning resides is the related question of how much agency the reader herself possesses in making

meaning from the text. Few reasonable scholars would say either that the reader has no

choice in making meaning, since many believe that choice comes in the act of

interpretation. Updating Monroe Beardsley's theory, Peter Lamarque draws up what

appears to be a classical method of reading. He first suggests readers must go through

explication, in which they translate words into contextual meaning. This step is followed

by *elucidation*, in which readers surmise character motivation and other absent but

implied ideas. Finally, readers engage in *interpretation*, in which they infer themes and

relevance of a work based on its contextual meanings and based on the world of the

narrative itself (291; c.f., Caracciolo "On the Experientiality" 203). Lamarque's schema,

like many who preceded and followed him, ranges from the definite meaning in the text

to the more subjective level. Indeed, few scholars claim that the reader in most texts

completely determines meaning-making, since the text by its particular construction leads

the reader along certain paths and opens a domain of available meanings depending on

the individual tendencies and cultural background of the reader. However, that position

does not impute unlimited meanings, for as Zunshine notes, "*infinite* in the case of

emotional reactions does not mean *arbitrary*" (*Strange Concepts* 69, emphasis hers).

While emotions may never have a true double, works provide guides for which emotions

are felt, so that such traceable emotions are never completely arbitrary.

　　This tension between meaning that is limited by both the text's construction and

the reader's choice within that design paves the way for what Susan R. Suleiman has

called phenomenological audience-oriented criticism, which I abbreviate as

phenomenological reading (6). This method in narrative theory, one that neither accounts

for the particularities of real audiences nor precludes variations in interpretation, heralds

from the interaction between text and reader's mind. That is to say, phenomenological

reading values and privileges the experience of the reader that is developed by what the

words in the text make her think. Gregory Currie, from a scientific angle of textual

interpretation, admits that "fictions put us into distinctive and highly salient mental states

which, even if they are not genuinely emotional states, may be phenomenologically

indistinguishable from such states as warm-hearted approval, anger and loathing" (34).

Reading develops a particular frame of mind in the reader, and the emotional valences of

those mental states may be tracked for their strategic development by the text. Although

critics tend to have their own nuanced definitions for the manner of critical reading they

perform, I see phenomenological reading followed by a line of narrative scholars

including Wolfgang Iser, Monika Fludernik, and Marco Caracciolo.

Now, instead of providing an annotated bibliography of phenomenology's ties

with theories of reading, I am tracing a mode of reading in order to provide a theoretical

framework to explain how the heavily-cognitive *Ripley* affects the reader. Still, it would

be remiss not to discuss Roman Ingarden's view of the matter. His levels of meaning in

the process of textual comprehension are not completely unmappable onto Lamarque's,

although they are all constantly affecting one another and running along different

temporalities (34). Like Iser, though, Ingarden stresses the blanks—what he calls "places

of indeterminacy" (50)—in which the reader forms not just epistemological meaning but

emotional meaning as well. He calls this process *concretization* (53). Explicitly in

contrast to a psychological reading of text (xvii), Ingarden's view suggests a necessary

phenomenology, true to the discipline's philosophical roots, that is basic to any

interaction with a text, rather than an aesthetics dependent on temperament or other

cognitive proclivities. In the very fundamental act of reading, then, a reader must fill in not just the gaps of what happens, but must realize that in animating the text, she fills out its skeletal structure by experiencing the emotions and realizations that complete it.

To be clear, this is not the kind of interpretation that occurs in Barthes' well-known division of readerly and writerly texts nor in the open text of Umberto Eco. As Eco explains, a text, in calling for the reader's respect of its authority, "wants this reader to make a series of interpretive choices which even though not infinite are, however, more than one" (4). Or as he later suggests, some texts may be read in "a naïve way" and others in "a critical way" (10). Barthes' and Eco's divisions aid arguments for the plurality of meanings in texts, while phenomenological reading approaches a very different goal in pinpointing the effects of a text on a reader by her experience of it, rather than just her comprehension of it.

This kind of experience that the reader undergoes while reading Tom's thoughts is explained in kind by Marco Caracciolo's discussion of experientiality. Caracciolo works through critics' overgeneralizations in the study of experientiality by suggesting that the experience of reading is a matter of restructuring background knowledge. What makes literary narrative so powerful is its ability to tap into the stores of contextual knowledge that allow us to comprehend situations, narratives, and references and then to modify the way we make sense of that background knowledge. Drawing on the notion of background developed by John Searle, Caracciolo sees this kind of meaning-making in narrative as at its core about the new way a consciousness experiences background ("Notes" 187). As I have tended to read narratives in this dissertation, those narratives that exceed the mere telling of someone else's story and can make the reader experience something too (be it

empathy, trauma, or criminal thoughts) have a stronger impact and are rhetorically more

dimensional. I rely on these effects when I go on in this section to tie phenomenological

reading to a form of forgery, a process dependent on whether or not the reader has the

perceptiveness to see that there is forgery going on or not. Forgery allows for multiple

paths of reading and makes the reader either see through it or be fooled by it. Next,

however, I follow how irony in *Ripley* guides the reader toward potentially being

immersed in the story and potentially coming to empathize with Tom. These are key

moves in a phenomenological reading of *Ripley*.

III.ii Tom the Ironic or Tom the Ironized?

"The irony results from the focalization of the narrative through the consciousness of a
sociopath, who is congenitally incapable of not distorting the truth. Tom's distorting
faculty is both passive and active: his perception and interpretation of events are skewed
because of his self-centeredness and paranoia, but he also produces a skewed reality."

<div align="right">

~ Ilana Shiloh, *The Double, the*
Labyrinth and the Locked Room, 75

</div>

"Tom is so self-congratulatory that he is beyond the reach of irony."

<div align="right">

~ Darryl Koehn, *The Nature of Evil*, 80

</div>

Ripley surges with irony. But what kind? Wayne Booth has cautioned against the

flimsy use of irony to mean "understated," among a company of other less accurate uses

(*A Rhetoric of Irony* 9). Instead, irony should be seen as the implied, but intentional,

reversal of meaning. *Ripley* employs it in two ways: the irony Tom levels against the

other characters, established through our access to his thoughts in light of his words; and

the irony leveled by the implied author against Tom, established through the other

characters' treatment of Tom in light of his actions and thoughts. As the rest of this

chapter lays out, irony works in tandem with Tom's mind styles to establish lines of

textual reading that position the reader to be easily immersed in the story and possibly to empathize with Tom. In the latter case she must face the dissonance of her own empathizing with and co-creating the thoughts of an unethical character. Irony precipitates which of these effects the reader aligns with, as a reader's ability or choice in reading different levels of irony may affect her phenomenological perception of the text and, as a result, the degree to which the reader aligns her mind with Tom's. As Booth has rightly called irony a "protean" concept (*A Rhetoric of Irony* ix), so does it follow Sternberg's Proteus Principle with *Ripley*'s concentrated mindreading to adapt to a variety of possible effects on the reader.

The first way the novel establishes irony emerges from readers' privileged access to Tom's thoughts in contrast to his words. Although irony involves meaning the opposite of what is said, it should not be thought of as total antagonism. Rather, as a rhetorical mechanism, it entails an attempt at genuine communication beneath the ironic jab, as in its production of satire. But the actual communication is directed toward the reader, while the attack is directed at a character. So when irony is leveled against the other characters, we trust Tom's focalized mind to be the accepted position, the norm with which we are intended to agree. For example, the subtext to the excerpt from the following letter, written by Tom-as-Dickie to Marge after Dickie has supposedly moved to Rome, teems with ironies: "As to us, it can't harm anything and possibly may improve everything if we don't see each other for a while. I had a terrible feeling I was boring you, though you weren't boring *me*, and please don't think I am running away from anything" (119). The ironies, of course, lie in that Tom will, in fact, be very much improved if he doesn't have to see Marge and that he *is* running away from the situation. These ironies between the

reader's knowledge of Tom's thoughts in contrast to his words tend to align the reader more closely with Tom's perspective.

Not all irony in *Ripley*, though, is so straightforward. When Tom is—or, better, might be—the subject of the narrative's irony, the reader must trust the implied author. This trust is not so much a moral ideal as a baseline for narrative comprehension. To doubt the implied author would be to misread the narrative by removing any stable grounding for communication. As we shall see, this foundational trust could be a reason that the reader might empathize with Tom, despite the irony and despite Tom's ethics. The implied author's production of irony occurs throughout the novel, but one outstanding example occurs when Tom is impersonating Dickie shortly after Tom kills Freddie Miles. Tom sinks into a dream or reverie in which he vividly imagines Dickie talking to him. The narrator describes this imagined Dickie: "The timbre of the voice was deeper, richer, *better* than Tom had ever been able to make it in his imitations" (166). Tom later thinks he has been drugged, but concludes that it was just his overactive imagination that was "out of control" (167). The irony lies in how Tom tries hard to imitate Dickie, but only in his dream thoughts, over which he has no control, can the imitation of Dickie reach perfection. Tom attains his goal, but in the unreal world of dreams. The implied author constructs situations in which Tom's talents, so integral to his success, in their imperfection are on the reverse face his failings, ironizing Tom.

Another example of Tom's subjection to the implied author's irony comes when he is speaking with McCarron, the private investigator Mr. Greenleaf hires to find out what's happened to Dickie. They go down to have coffee, and Tom is certain he is about to be asked a pointed question:

McCarron looked at him. His small mouth smiled on one side. Tom imagined three or four different beginnings: 'You killed Richard, didn't you? The rings are just too much, aren't they?' Or 'Tell me about the San Remo boat, Mr. Ripley, in detail.' Or simply, leading up quietly, 'Where were you on February fifteenth, when Richard landed in . . . Naples? All right, but where were you living then? Where were you living in January, for instance? . . . Can you prove it?' (267-8)

The irony arrives in the letdown that follows: it is not the fiery answer Tom had expected from the Irish detective, nor is it the perfect anticlimax. Tom's thoughts continue to muddle the rest of the scene as he goes on to preemptively ask McCarron a question, and then McCarron responds by asking him a few questions about Dickie. A washout of tension, the questions do not build to what Tom fears, nor are they so meaningless that they quickly and easily relieve the scene of conflict. Rather, the narrative completely defies Tom's expectations and the reader's by employing the ironic answer to the built-up anxiety: an unremarkable series of questions that do not crown in a moment of crisis, for Tom, or narrative climax, for the reader. In this way, irony emerges from Tom's imaginations which lead the reader's expectations for the scene. In subverting both, the irony turns from purely on the protagonist to the reader herself. Irony becomes a matter of reversed narrative expectation. *Ripley* moves from local instances of irony to a potentially larger ironic narrative structure in which the reader, depending on her tendencies of phenomenological reading, may or may not be caught as well.

Barthes, looking at the multivalence of linguistic meaning, suggests somewhat hyperbolically that texts cannot be ironic because one meaning can always subvert the irony of another (*S/Z* 44-5). The contradiction posed by the conflicting views of irony in the epigraphs to this subsection is a case in point. Likewise, as Booth adds, the value of irony is not about the statement made but the understanding of the statement (*A Rhetoric of Irony* 35). Irony's chief concern relies more on its interpreter—the final arbiter of

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meaning—than on a character or topic. This view has the potential to reverse the polarity of irony from the character to the reader. Irony's intervention lies precisely in its tortuous way of arriving at meaning than at the content of the meaning itself, for in not stating the meaning directly ("X is Y"), it reflexively draws attention to the fact that forcing the reader to do the work is the very point of its circumlocution ("X is Z," but it's really Y). To put it more concretely, irony challenges the face value of statements, so instead of simply saying the meaning, it everts it. Therefore, the interest is in the reversal, not the thing reversed. As a textual technique, irony's very ontology thus underscores the reader's role in participating in the meaning-making of a text.

Booth goes even further. He suggests that in moving from the statement to its ironic interpretation, "such a choice can be then undermined with further ironies, intended by the reader who now becomes an intending ironist in his own right" (*A Rhetoric of Irony* 37). Once the reader becomes the focus of irony, she can begin to see irony in almost any textual moment. Such a destabilizing effect of irony must be checked. In *Ripley*, while Tom's Protean mind style cannot be that check since it only furthers the ambiguities at play, it is the epistemology of forgery that prevents the avalanche of ironies from overwhelming the novel.

III.iii. Imperfect Forgeries

"'Where *were* you this winter?'
"'Well, not with Tom. I mean, not with Dickie,' [Tom] said laughing, flustered at his slip of the tongue."
~ Patricia Highsmith, *The Talented Mr. Ripley*, 226

"But they were such damned good forgeries, Tom knew."
~ Patricia Highsmith, *The Talented Mr. Ripley*, 188

Barthes pursued meaning in what he saw as the seams of texts—those rifts or junctions where change occurs and perceptions do not align. In his slippery style, he explains, "As textual theory has it: the language is redistributed. Now, *such redistribution is always achieved by cutting.* Two edges are created: an obedient, conformist, plagiarizing edge . . . and *another edge*, mobile, blank (ready to assume any contours), which is never anything but the site of its effect" (*The Pleasure of the Text* 6). Fissures of meaning that stand at the boundary between the known technique and the felt effect locate further subjects of analysis within *Ripley*. As a forger, Tom is obsessed with representation: representing others' minds in his head; representing Dickie's clothes, hair, and affectations; and representing others' paintings in the sequel, *Ripley Under Ground*. But like any forgery, the counterfeit is not the original, since it always possesses some difference, even if undetectable.

Clearly, Tom's imitations are imperfect. In replicating a letter Dickie might have written to his parents, "Tom read it over, decided there were probably too many commas, and retyped it patiently and signed it" (124). He realizes the imperfections of his imitations, even while the "probably" suggests the range of the epistemologically unknown or irrelevant. Later, he hubristically admits to not being concerned about making his physical appearance exactly likely Dickie's, since "[t]he main thing about impersonation, Tom thought, was to maintain the mood and temperament of the person one was impersonating, and to assume the facial expressions that went with them. The rest fell into place" (131). Such an attitude toward forgery suggests that effect is all that matters, not the verisimilitudinous replication of the original, or even the technique that crafts the effect. Like mindreading, guessing the exact details is irrelevant, so long as the

gist or essential criteria is correct, as Tom often is, even while he distorts others' thoughts in his own mind to benefit his point of view. Tom's mental forgery ability of *fluent mindreading* presupposes this capturing of the essential criteria, rather than the particularities, a mix of perfection and imperfection. This section sets out how imperfect forgeries prepare the reader to be immersed in the novel.

Part of the irony of Tom's imperfections of imitation is that they implicate Highsmith's imitations. Similar to A.S. Byatt's facsimiles of canonical poetry in *Possession*, Highsmith's ability to make us believe not just that Tom is a good forger, but that he is a slightly imperfect forger requires an exceptional level of skill, especially considering that she reproduces a number of letters in the novel. Indeed, part of the challenge and accomplishment of the novel is its representational fidelity on several levels. And yet, we can also draw the implication from Highsmith's portrayal of Ripley's forgeries that hers, too, must have flaws.

But is it possible for Highsmith to imperfectly represent a character when she is the author of that character? Isn't, rather, a character *eo ipso* the correct representation of itself? Synthetically, we would think yes, but this question drives back to the tenuous tie between the text's imitation and the real world. To complicate matters, in the real world Highsmith was a forger, as detailed by one of her biographers, Joan Schenkar. Even in Highsmith's journals, which she called her *cahiers*, Highsmith forged entries by writing fake dates and concealing what actually happened, as though these mistakes might make the journals more realistic (37-8). Flaws—whether intentionally added in, as these were, or whether mistakes unintentionally made as part of a forgery—were integral to

Highsmith's conception of reality. Therefore, any "mistakes" in Highsmith's novels might also be seen as signs of what we might ironically call mimetic fidelity.

So how do we judge the status of forgery in *Ripley*? One way is to see the effect of Tom's mind on the reader. Tom's mind style of forger invites the reader into thinking his thoughts, encouraging immersion. The same relationship was true between Highsmith and Tom. Highsmith's claim that "I often had the feeling that Ripley was writing it and I was merely typing" (made after her remark from my epigraph to section III.i above about Tom's ownership of her award) indicates how his persona takes over the novel and those who read it (*Plotting* 75). Fiona Peters disagrees with the accuracy of Highsmith's claim, calling it "disingenuous" that "she was merely a cipher" for Tom (186). However, Highsmith's friend Charles Latimer said after her death that "actually she was Ripley, or should I say, she would have liked to have been him" (qtd. in Wilson 194). After five books of imagining the mind of a such a strong and absorbing personality as Tom's, it is no surprise she became more like him. Even if we take Highsmith's claim cautiously, though, it is still an excellent figurative expression for the immersion of the novel and its crossover into reality. Highsmith's mind is taken over by Tom in the kind of merging or fusing of consciousness Rae Greiner associates with empathy, an effect I shall discuss shortly (158). But if Highsmith was "disingenuous" in her statement, doesn't that reinforce the pattern of forgery associated with both Highsmith and Tom, thereby suggesting that disingenuous identification propounds the similarities it purports to deny? *Ripley* is full of such recursive homologies which themselves invite the reader to experience deeply the mind of the novel's protagonist.

Imperfect forgeries, though, should be seen as *relatively* imperfect. If none can see the imperfection, then the forgery is, practically, as good as the original. Consider *Ripley*'s ending. One of the reasons Tom is able to escape at the end is that his fingerprints found on the luggage he stored and which were discovered by the police were also found in his apartment in Rome. In both cases, the police assumed that the fingerprints were Dickie's, and so in corroborating each other, the fingerprints give the police no reason to suspect Tom (292). Such a pair of mistakes ought to have doubled the chances of catching Tom, but instead provide the mistaken evidence that prevented the police from suspecting him. His forgery in the earlier case substantiated his forgery in the later case.

Similarly, Mr. Greenleaf accedes to the forged will that Tom makes in order to inherit Dickie's money. Earlier, in order to avoid creating undue suspicion that he was playing Dickie, Tom had kept Dickie's letters to his father free of any high compliments of Tom. But as Mr. Greenleaf admits in his final letter to Tom, "We [My wife and I] were both aware that Richard was very fond of you, in spite of the fact he never went out of his way to tell us this in any of his letters" (294). Tom's over-caution that could have been suspicious and that, as a forgery, was certainly not cutting the perfect balance of saying how close Dickie and Tom were supposed to have been—this mistake ends up being an effective forgery, since Dickie's parents completely buy in to the way it resonates with what they believe is Dickie's character. The point of these examples is that forgeries may not be perfect, but that does not prevent them from working. Essentially, forgeries in *Ripley* have the serendipitous quality of heightening their effectiveness, not exposing their deception.

In another similarity between Highsmith and Tom, her own imperfections of representation might be seen as a trail to be followed rather than a sign of inconsistency. After all, Rabinowitz reminds us, "in elite art, we demand—and seek out—greater and more elaborate forms of coherence. We are, for instance, more apt to look at apparent inconsistencies as examples of irony or undercutting, whereas in popular novels, we are apt to ignore them or treat them as flaws" (188). Such an ambiguity seated at the juncture of the cultural status of a text and its interpretation once again elevates the reader's role in picking out what meaning from the work she will. But it also suggests that flaws and incongruities might both be legitimate parts of the fictional world. That is, whether or not we conceive of Highsmith's mistakes as problems in the novel indicates our perception of the quality of her work: If its inconsistencies may be attributed to it as literary value—and Highsmith's reflexive understanding and dramatization of imperfect forgeries suggests that this is a valid interpretation—then our high judgment of the text is further reinforced by any problems with its coherence.

Likewise, to return to Highsmith's claim about Tom typing instead of her, Trask points out that Highsmith's suggestion "that she is Tom's surrogate further confirms the suspicion that Highsmith believed performance and facsimile more than adequate proxies for reality" (594). When the reader admits that forgeries are valid paths to reality—and what fictional narrative is not, at root, a synthetic forgery of a mimetic ideal?—then she has crossed into buying into Highsmith's constructed view of fiction. Tom and Highsmith, as skilled forgers, through the clever use of imperfect forgeries draw the reader into their positions.

<u>**III.iv. Immersion as Co-Experiencing**</u>
"Highsmith's novel presents us finally with a conflict not between truth and imposture but between two distinct yet overlapping modes of performance: the 'honest' impersonation that Tom practices and the habit of concealment that Dickie embodies."
~ Michael Trask, "Patricia
Highsmith's Method," 603-4

I now move from the imperfect forgeries shared by Tom and Highsmith to two effects that such alignment of representational style, compounded by the techniques I have been discussing of access to thoughts and irony, precipitates in the reader. These effects are immersion and empathy, each discussed in a subsection that follows. Immersion both encourages and challenges the bond between reader and implied author by increasing the likelihood of readerly empathy which carries with it ethical dangers of empathizing with a criminal. As I have argued, Tom possesses a mind to which the reader has unusually high access and which goes through the motions of mindreading other characters, especially Dickie. Guessing at the fidelity of forgeries to their originals promotes another way the reader is caught up in the novel's mental game. This cognitive climate of the novel may lead to the absorptive effect of immersion and/or the felt tie of empathy.

One reason among many that *Ripley* encourages immersion is that Tom wants the same thing from other characters that the implied author wants from the reader: to experience what someone else experiences. During one dispute with Dickie, Tom is unable to express what he means. He "wanted to explain it, wanted to break through to Dickie so he would understand and they would feel the same way" (88). One of Tom's desires—one seldom described by critics—drives him more than becoming affluent or sexual desire. Tom pursues a mutual understanding with others, or at least with Dickie, hoping for his epistemology to match theirs. This central aim radiates outward from the

novel and affects not just Tom's relationship with Dickie and others but with the reader herself. As Peter Brooks' influential understanding of narrative sees plot and desire as coinciding in the formation of a narrative's developmental logic, so can we see Tom's desires as shaping not just the events that occur in the *discourse* but the representational design that the narrative as a whole incurs. More than influencing plot points, desire precipitates the strategies that Highsmith employs to convey that desire. Such a design aligns Tom's desire for mutual understanding with the novel's encouragement of the reader's immersion in it.

As studied by reception and narrative theorists, immersion, the absorptive experience of reading a story that makes the reader forget that she is reading, is never guaranteed by a text. So, it fits well with phenomenological reading, as it presents certain possible and even likely effects a text might have on a reader. To some extent, then, immersion is an individual tendency. All the while, certain factors encourage its likelihood of adoption more generally. One precipitant of immersion, reading a character's thoughts, is not enough alone to guarantee narrative immersion. What can foster immersion are the combined efforts of mindreading a character who mindreads others and the extension of Caracciolo's argument that we co-create a character's mind in the process of reading. Immersion, though not a formula, remains contingent on the complete domain of narratological characteristics that make up a particular work.

Many broad methods have been submitted as entries into immersion. Marie-Laure Ryan offers several formal means by which a text immerses at some moments more than others: scene instead of summary, internal focalization and dialogue, *free indirect discourse*, prospective first person, and present tense (133-4). These offer a starting point

for determining a text's likelihood of being immersive, but they must find specific applications to each text. In *Ripley*, increased mindreading in conjunction with the multiple levels and targets of irony, opens up routes of reading through which the reader is likely to experience immersion.

Marco Caracciolo develops a more specific theory that leads to immersion. The effect of narrative fiction on the reader has been a trend in Caracciolo's work over the last five years and often depends on a cognitive framework. He maintains that recent work in cognitive science suggests that readers' imaginative sense of their bodies in a fictional work relies on many of the same neural systems that process data in relation to real bodies ("Narrative Space and its Reconstruction" 119). If readers have "cues" that drive them to take on a virtual body, they may become increasingly immersed in a text (122). For example, a deputy focalizer—a fictional character not in the story whom the author uses to be the subject of an experience that can be conveyed to the reader—heightens readers' sense of experiencing a text (124). The criticism on narrative immersion suggests that certain combinations of narrative techniques like the deputy focalizer, rather than a set formula, foster readers' phenomenological engagement in a narrative.

In *Ripley*, framed from this same perspective of the relay between readers' imagined bodies and real bodies, immersion relies on a set of textual coordinates that encourage the reader to follow Tom's position. Caracciolo identifies four perspectival points that correlate between a reader and a character to foster immersion: "perceptual (the character's bodily sensations and acts of perception), emotional (his or her emotional responses to situations), axiological (the character's values and motives), and epistemic

(what he or she believes about the world)" ("Phenomenological Metaphors" 72). If all

four are active in a passage, perspectival immersion in the story is likely.

One passage that illustrates the focalized Tom meeting all four of these criteria

involves a curious property of Tom's mindreading in which what he imagines often turns

out to be the case, implicit in my term *fluent mindreading*. Trask calls this tendency

Tom's "virtually clairvoyant ability to anticipate what other persons will do based on his

inferences about their 'conditions'" (599). In a scene in which Tom tries to cover up his

tax fraud, he correctly imagines that Mr. Reddington will not ask Tom about the records

in question, as proves to be the case just thereafter (14-15). Here is the passage, opening

in Tom's head:

> Mr. Reddington wasn't going to ask anything about records because he probably
> didn't know what to begin asking. But if Mr. Reddington were to ask him to
> explain what it was all about, Tom had a lot of hash about net versus accrued
> income, balance due versus computation. . . . So far, no one had insisted in
> coming in person to hear more of that. Mr. Reddington was backing down, too.
> Tom could hear it in the silence.
> "All right," Mr. Reddington said in a tone of collapse. "I'll read the notice
> when I get it tomorrow."
> "All right, Mr. Reddington," he said, and hung up.
> Tom sat there for a moment, giggling, the palms of his thin hands pressed
> together between his knees. Then he jumped up, put Bob's typewriter away again,
> combed his light-brown hair neatly in front of the mirror, and set off for Radio
> City. (14-15)

Notably, the focalization on Tom does not pause the time of the story, but as indicated by

the line relating the conversation's moment of tense silence, Tom's thoughts fill in the

fraught quiet of the conversation. In this passage, readers are privilege to all four

perspectival criteria. Tom's movement at the end which relates his *physical perception—*

connecting to his cognition by being an example of what Zunshine calls "embodied

transparency," or characters' bodily movements and expressions which "spontaneously

reveal their true feelings" ("Theory of Mind and Fictions of Embodied Transparency" 72)—matches the "acts of perception" from Caracciolo's perceptual criteria. Tom's *emotional involvement*, the second criterion, is met by the thrill he feels at the end of this passage and also by his measured deduction of Reddington's thoughts, which build his and the reader's anticipation. Fulfilling the last of the perceptual criteria, Tom's thoughts about Reddington's thoughts align the reader's *epistemic perspective* with Tom's, since we follow his judgment of Reddington. Following Tom's train of thoughts and his jubilation at the end of the passage lets us know Tom's values and motives, meeting the *axiological perceptual criterion*. In his preparation for deceiving Reddington further, the reader gains insight into Tom's goals, at least to those relevant to this encounter. Tom meets all four perceptual criteria. This fulfillment indicates that the reader is likely to be immersed in sections like this one, further following criminal mind. In light of Tom being a partial mind, as well, such a close observation becomes a co-creation of Tom's thoughts. The reader's own thought process when mindreading Tom must face the potential ethical questions of being so closely aligned with a criminal's mind.

As we can see, it is Tom's mindreading, and in particular his correct anticipation of what someone else will think and do, that immerses the reader so deeply into the story and Tom's mind. In setting up an expectation for what will happen, leading the reader through the thoughts that build toward fulfillment of that expectation, and including physical and emotional valences, Tom's whole fictional ontology is available and experienced temporally by the reader.[81] Such tightly woven passages are common in *Ripley* and contribute to the immersion of the novel.

However, Caracciolo's venture into the felt virtual body of the reader, useful as a way to think about a reader's projected physical sense of self into the text, can be heightened with an even richer style of readerly immersion. That style is creating homologies between the reader's mental work in experiencing the text and a character's own trial or experience. For example, in a mystery, the reader will often lack the same knowledge that an detective lacks, making them both guess and deduce the criminal's identity. This phenomenological coordination heightens immersion more than the debatably present virtual body because the reader must actually go through the process rather than simply be invited to imagine it. *Ripley*'s ability to make the reader mindread Tom as he mindreads others and to judge the quality of his forgeries as he himself looks at them critically makes the reader experience what Tom does, amplifying the novel's immersion.

Several factors particular to *Ripley*'s underrepresentation allow this kind of parallel epistemological immersion to succeed. For one, Tom's partial mind—what I outlined earlier as the either-or representation of his own thoughts or Dickie's thoughts in the absence of "Tom"'s own—may lead the reader to recognize Tom's dual identity as an exaggeration of her own experiences in having conflicting thoughts. This realization justifies Koehn's suspicion that "*Ripley* succeeds only to the extent that we at least partially identify with the young Ripley. . . . As readers, we want to be taken out of ourselves for the time it takes us to read and appreciate Tom's tale. In this respect, the reader is akin to Tom. We, too, want to leave our life and become someone else" (84). Mindreading Tom and receiving knowledge about him from multiple perceptual points direct the reader's own thoughts toward alignment with Tom's, letting the reader forget

herself and become immersed. Furthermore, Tom's own *fluent mindreading* makes the reader engage more intensely in thinking others' thoughts, compounding the levels at which mindreading occurs and immersion becomes more likely. Finally, the irony established by the text, depending to what extent the reader sees Tom as receiving the brunt of the novel's irony (the main point I made in section III.ii) may forge an us-them division between Tom and the other characters, further locating the reader's sympathies with Tom's own values.

One of the biggest hindrances to becoming immersed in a story is the feeling of being manipulated by the text, realizing that its artifice is trying too hard to incite immersion (Ryan 327). Kimberly Nance seeks to identify how narratives break down readerly resistance to narrative rhetorical appeals, since these counterstrikes may pose either hindrances or entries to immersion and empathy. For example, readers often find that the explicit naming of their defenses by a text deflates those defenses (Nance 71). A similar move happens in *Ripley* through its use of irony. Because of Tom's unreliability and the intense focalization on his perspective and because of the genre of crime fiction and its tendency to foreclose simple predictability, the reader is likely to feel that the same strategies of irony being foisted against the Greenleafs, Marge, and Dickie's friends might very well be drawing the wool over her own eyes. That is to say, readers may accept the text or they may be suspicious of it because of its strategies of irony. However, as the root of irony is that it contradicts what appears to be said, irony is less a tool of ambiguity as of reversal. Tom's elaborate cloak-and-dagger routine serves to trick other characters, while letting the reader in on his actual motives—this is the whole point of his mindreading others and our multi-layered access to and reading of his mind. Seeing

Tom's deception via irony towards the other characters as a baseline of narrative communication means that readers have grounded expectations about how he will act, and these expectations carry over to the level of the implied author's construction of the story. Readers need not trust every thought or account of Tom's motives, but realizing that this irony channeled through Tom's perspective, not against it, is the *modus operandi* of the genre lets the reader maintain immersion. Another way of thinking about this is that we have accepted the rules of the game when we realize Tom's deceptions, and so we take no umbrage if we are to be deceived ourselves. Through Tom's manipulation of others, immersion is likely to override the irony of *Ripley* when that irony is directed against the reader. In fact, it is a way of the implied author leveraging the reader into co-experiencing Tom's subject position. Admitting a strong readerly immersion in the mind of *Ripley*'s protagonist revises the objectivity with which we can judge Tom's criminal actions, since readers themselves are participants in forming the mind that chooses those actions. As I shall explain shortly, though, the partial mind helps protect the reader.

Additionally, Tom's roleplaying fosters *immersion* by setting up Tom as a performer for the *reader*, rather than just for other characters. We might see this aim through Trask's identification of the connection between Tom and sociological studies on the self in the 1950s, such as Erving Goffman's account of the self emerging from the dramatic or rhetorical situation of audience interaction (Trask 588). This kind of role-playing characterizes all of Tom's actions, from his deceiving the Greenleafs, to his own thoughts representing his experience as a dramatic film ("It's like a movie, Tom thought. In a minute, Mr. Greenleaf or somebody else's voice would say, 'Okay, *cut!*'" [20]), to his takeover of Dickie's identity. Dramatic roleplaying, though, means having an

audience, which is somewhat problematic in light of the psychological style of the novel. Trask, quoting Tom's claim that he deliberately avoided learning the Italian subjective in order to sound more like Dickie, points out that there is no logical group in the narrative whom this deception would fool—that neither those who know Dickie would find Tom's misuse of the subjunctive convincing enough, nor those who don't know Dickie would realize that he would not know Italian well enough that he would misuse the subjunctive. Trask instead sees Tom's choice as one maintaining the mood of performing Dickie (597-8).

We might take the intended audience of Tom's act of imitative deception as the reader. The very account of Tom imitating Dickie down to the tittle of subjunctive misuse convinces the reader of his effective impersonation, even if the narrative act of misusing the grammar does not. Such an audience furthers the novel's orientation toward a reader, since even non-psychologically represented actions in the physical world might be viewed as insights into Tom's mind designed specifically for the reader to notice and continue a running account of Tom's mental states. If my supposition is correct that the audience for the subjunctive is primarily the reader, then this decision of the implied author is the prioritization of the synthetic rather than the mimetic function of text. If Tom's use of the subjunctive does not matter to anyone but the reader, then he cannot be acting mimetically. Instead, his display is the artificial manufacturing of the outward projection of an interior state: his obsessive impersonation of Dickie, which is core to the novel's emphasis on his changing identity and mind. Indeed, his swapped textual functions here develop another irony in doing the exact opposite of what Tom intends: in attempting to be more lifelike to others and perfect his forgery of Dickie, he ends up

becoming more synthetic to the reader. Such a constructed move by Tom dovetails with

the novel's style of immersion by once again letting the reader's expectations be fulfilled

in Tom's thoughts and actions.

III.v. Empathizing with Evil

"Novels can provide safe spaces within which to see through the eyes of the psychopath,
to occupy the subject position of the oppressive racist, to share the brutalizing past of the
condemned outcast."

> ~ Suzanne Keen, *Empathy and the Novel*, 131

"While we may not be murders, we are sufficiently alienated to empathize with Tom's
anxiety and his desire to be respected and loved by his peers."

> ~ Darryl Koehn, *The Nature
> of Evil*, 84

I have been arguing that *Ripley* as a whole—through numerous bricks of its

construction including heightened mindreading, partial minds, a Protean and forger mind

style, and irony—leads to the likelihood of the reader being engaged with the text in

multiple ways and thereby feeling immersed in the storyworld. Even objections, such as

the proposition in which irony against Tom leads to a metaleptic awareness that the

reader may be the ironic target, as I have pointed out, are deflected by the implied

author's attempt to let the reader co-experience the mind of its protagonist. I argue that

Ripley goes a step beyond immersion: the novel encourages empathy with Tom.

Preceding this account of empathy, though, lies what Gregory Currie calls our

"standard mode of engagement with narrative," which is the framework through which a

character becomes developed to readers. The standard mode of engagement helps us

comprehend the narrative and provides "the sense of sharing with the author a way of

experiencing and responding to those events" (29). Looking back over the elements of

mindreading, partial mind, mind style, irony, and immersion, we find the components of the kind of framework Currie suggests. These components do not just analyze Tom's mind through their own lens; they structure the gamut of possible interactions between narrative and reader. The final task, then, following Currie's prompt for this rhetorical study of the effects of Tom's mind on the reader, examines the reader's experience of and response to Tom. I offer in this subsection the final link in the chain from techniques to effects developed by *Ripley*: mind style leads to empathy. Tom's mind style—a Proteus consciousness that also detours into becoming a partial mind—opens up gaps in Tom's mind that the reader is likely to complete with her own thoughts; she sees his mind as flexible enough that it can relate to her own but not so fixed that it sets up a barrier to feeling what he feels. Tom engenders empathy in the reader through the implied author's partial and Protean construction of his mind.

Many authorities on empathy[82] might reject the claim that a reader could—or even, as I propose, is likely to—empathize with Tom. Scientific studies gauging a correlation between mindreading and empathy by Mikkel Wallentin, Arndis Simonsen, and Andreas Højlund Nielsen raise skepticism against my claim: "It was also found, that the parts of the story, judged to be most intense by the rating group were parts that contained little or no reference to the mental life of the story characters" (140, c.f.147). Seemingly antagonistic to my concern with the importance of fictional minds, this theory meshes well with my own argument concerning Tom's *partial* mind. While involvement through immersion in the narrative is a condition for empathizing, Tom's lack of a full mind suggests that those moments when the reader is not engaged in guessing Tom's thoughts may be the moments when she is filling in the blanks of the story and his mind.

Alan Palmer maintains that we engage in a "continuing consciousness frame" which holds that a character's mind is continually present, even when thoughts are not directly given (*Fictional Minds* 175). As such, the novel as a whole, not simply isolated moments of *fluent mindreading*, contributes to the reader's broad likelihood to empathize with Tom's partial mind.

Another contingent of objectors say readerly reactions to Tom only go as far as sympathy. Take Alex Tuss who connects Harold Bloom's "terrified sympathy" with our "fascination" with Tom (101). I skirt this problem by employing a distinction between sympathy and empathy developed by social behaviorists Nancy Eisenberg and Janet Strayer. They explain that while sympathy implies only "feeling for another," empathy attains "feeling with another" (3-4). Even if the reader does not care *for* Tom,[83] she is less likely to avoid experiencing *with* him. In fact, this dissonance between caring and experiencing contributes to Tom's interest as a character.

After all, the reader's empathizing with Tom need not mean that she believe Tom's lies—whether in his thoughts or words—but when the lies become the source of truth for Tom, the reader must see his delusion as the ontological norm, the ground level of reality on which the narrative stands. Still, critics might object that many readers are too careful or too self-aware to empathize with a character like Tom. However, I contend that empathy is a process that begins with a reaction to a character's emotions and circumstances and then later becomes a more cognitive, self-aware act. Tom's murder of Dickie does not occur until a good ways into the novel, so the reader has plenty of time, on a first reading, to tentatively trust Tom before realizing his murderous capabilities. Once the reader has begun to co-experience with him, she engages in what cognitive

scientists call *cognitive empathy*. Its focus is the representation of others' mental states (27), a mirroring ability which suggests that "[w]hen two individuals feel similar emotions they are better able to understand each other, to take each other's perspective, and thus are more likely to accurately perceive each other's perceptions, intentions, and motivations" (Anderson and Keltner 21).[84] For *Ripley*, empathy is the emotional response of the reader in which she understands, identifies with, thinks with, or co-experiences Tom's emotional and mental states. As *Ripley* spends much of its space in Tom's mind, so does the reader's form of empathy reflect a shared emotional understanding of his thoughts.

Arguing that we empathize with a murderer, con artist protagonist is a tall order.[85] And of course, with empathy, there are no guarantees. However, perhaps a protagonist with questionable morals is the perfect agent, since empathy here is not a function of his morals but of his emotions and thoughts and so of the reader's ability or likelihood to feel and think them with him. And caution should be our method, as leading narrative empathy scholar Suzanne Keen has appropriately pointed to the dangers of identifying with villains just as much as the benefits of identifying with heroes (134). *Ripley* critic Peters, though, notes the extent of Tom's lack of conscience, becoming a "radical evil" (146). Peters even goes on to claim that "[t]he contrast between Highsmith's 'suffering' heroes and *Ripley's total lack of empathy*, or inter-subjective identification, with others . . . . . shatters easy assumptions about good or bad, evil or moral codes of behavior, negating the need for a conventional 'moral' hero" (171, emphasis mine). Peters and others who read Tom as unable to empathize because of his murders, manipulations, and pathological lying too quickly assume ties between empathy and ethics. Empathy does not necessarily

entail altruism or ethical virtuousness, as Keen and others have been careful to point out but which my analysis emphasizes (65). Tom *does* empathize with other characters,[86] but this empathy does not lead him toward a moral good.

In his broad study of evil, Daryl Koehn even takes up Tom as a prime example of evil characters who are empathetic. Koehn asserts that "it would be a mistake to think that narcissistic individuals are completely lacking in empathy. Tom Ripley is adept at intuiting what others are thinking and at manipulating them by telling them what they already believe or want to hear. If empathy consists of being able to see the world from another's perspective, the Tom Ripleys of this world are empathetic in the extreme" (73-4). Tom's consideration of others' perspectives (a point detailed throughout section I above) makes him highly empathetic. Because the reader mindreads Tom even as he mindreads others, there is a causal chain grounded in textual comprehension in the reader's empathizing with Tom.

Classifying narrative empathy, Keen develops three categories: *bounded strategic empathy* attempts to share feeling with an insider, and *ambassadorial strategic empathy* tries to reconcile disagreements across groups (142). But Keen argues that the most universal kind of empathy, *broadcast strategic empathy*, is in the end characterized "by emphasizing our common vulnerabilities and hopes" (142, italics partially removed). For a variety of reasons, Tom's empathy with the reader is best characterized by *broadcast strategic empathy*.[87] Keen's characterizations of this term ("vulnerabilities and hopes") are not trite sentimentalities but definite goals of this strategy. Tom's vulnerabilities are eminently present in the novel, his self-doubt eclipsed only by his ability to push through it. But the flip side of vulnerability is also true: in having access to Tom's mind and being

seated in a position in which she must think his thoughts in order to read the story, the reader becomes vulnerable herself to the novel's development of minds, including her own.

Keen's other term, hopes, likewise counterbalances the risk of both Tom and reader to the narrative's design on their cognition. Near the end, when Tom seems to be returning to valuing his own identity as Tom Ripley, upon reading a write-up in the newspaper, "Tom was gratified to find himself described as 'a loyal friend' of the missing Dickie Greenleaf." The paper describes him favorably, and "[t]hat pleased Tom most of all. He cut out that write-up" (215). In following his thoughts and actions, it is hard not to have some attendant feeling of support or hope for Tom's goals, to share his delight, even when, more cerebrally, we may have ethical qualms.

We might also think of the passage quoted in section II.iii above in which Tom's thoughts are reported through epistolary *free indirect discourse*. Our knowledge of Marge in that passage comes directly through the indirect account of Tom's thoughts. The access readers have to his mind that allows for seeing both into his emotional thoughts and through them to the possibilities of others' thoughts provides a wide range of emotions and perspectives with which readers may identify. In other words, the mindreading and immersion strategies developed by *Ripley* activate the same rhetorical narrative goals that empathy does and so suggest a likelihood of the reader experiencing narrative empathy.

Empathy may also work in tandem with irony. Ann Banfield has appropriately pointed out that the main two roles of the narrator for representing the mind "involve either the notion of the narrator's 'empathy' with the character or his function as ironic commentator" (215). In *Ripley* these two come together in a rhetorical package that at

once through irony destabilizes the security of the reader's certainty about Tom and turns the reader's emotional sensibilities toward him. None of the qualities of irony, mindreading, immersion, or unethical character alone fosters *broadcast strategic empathy* in a novel, but their combination and co-development of the rhetorical strategies together provide the likelihood of making the reader, as Patrick Horn puts it, "primed to empathize."

Another counter to the objection that Tom's moral reprehensibility invalidates readerly attempts at empathy warrants that admitting readerly empathy does not mean that the reader condones Tom's morally questionable actions. Instead, the feelings he experiences as a result of those actions are widely relatable and strategically offered as ones to be experienced with him in the narrative, but not carried over into the real world. Keen observes that novels are protected spaces in which readers may empathize, since they need not feel a call to action (xii, 106). But this safety net does not imply that a reader can come to understand what an ostensibly evil person thinks with complete invulnerability, since such ventures into criminal, or evil, minds do not always let the reader walk away unscathed. Empathizing with Tom surfaces some ethical questions that the novel plays out. Part of the safety of empathy that Keen describes depends on a certain measure of distance from the character empathized with. In *Ripley*, the degree to which the reader mindreads Tom, in addition to the novel's susceptibility to immersion, decreases the kind of distance Keen refers to. As a result, reading Tom's mind may not have that kind of protection that some literature does. After all, if the reader is to any degree letting her thoughts be shaped by the words representing the mind of a man who

murders when it's convenient, manipulates others to an extreme, and rarely has an altruistic thought, then the implications of thinking with evil may spill over to reality.

But if readers reject the choice to empathize with evil, they may in fact be torn, since most readers will cheer for a likeable protagonist, even one who makes unethical decisions. As Horn has pointed out in the context of reading Nabokov's *Lolita*, the hardest empathetic situation for the reader to occupy is taking on a character's subject position without taking on the ethics. To that point, the corollary of Rebecca N. Mitchell's recent argument that unlikable characters are often difficult to empathize with because they foreclose ethical mindreading suggests that likeable characters encourage a reader's empathizing (122). Tom's status as both ethically unappealing and yet in other ways highly intriguing and likeable puts the reader in a difficult position of feeling both inhibited and inclined to empathize with him. And in letting Tom into her confidences, the reader may condone his thoughts and actions. As Amy Hungerford has claimed in the context of listening to testimony about the Holocaust, "The text is not only like a life, then, but it can become the actual experience of another life, an experience that then becomes ours" (104). Even if that other is fictional, a lifelike experience such as Tom's ought to be taken seriously and cautiously by the reader. If literature has the power to change people's cognitions, then it has a strong ethical element in determining what kind of cognition it develops.

Rather than pursue a moralistic didacticism that points to *Ripley* as a "dangerous" text, I want to pivot this ethical questionability of reading *Ripley* back to the nature of partial minds and phenomenological reading. Certainly, because reading is a variable process, some readers risk reading the other-as-object style of Tom's thoughts and

becoming more like it, just as reading the thoughts of a great thinker might let someone gain insight into an intelligent cognitive process. However, Tom's partial mind mitigates against such complete absorption in his unethical thinking.[88] Like this quip from Highsmith's friend Kate Kingsley Scattebol, "Highsmith was amoral but only vicariously" (qtd. in Peters 151), so is the reader's relationship with Tom based on such leaps from self to other, from personally experienced to vicariously experienced, from phenomenological to constructed. Because Tom's mind is partial, a forgery of what we would expect a real mind to be, the reader is caught up in thinking synthetic, not mimetic thoughts—and these are not nearly so easily integrated into her own mind.[89] The reader has access to his mind, can become immersed in the story through its various stylistic draws, and can even empathize with Tom as a representation of a person with vulnerabilities and hopes. But if the reader is in danger of co-creating a manipulative character's thoughts, then she is only in danger of doing so with a forgery. Whether or not such a gambit works, and whether Tom's forged mind is a good enough one to get by the reader's ethical guards—these are questions still open to interpretation and further critical inquiry.

Conclusion
"Ms. Ripley's [*sic*] early life was marred by marital discord between her mother and stepfather."
    ~ Randy Kennedy, *The New York Times* B8, Obituary for Patricia Highsmith

Tom Ripley's story, like our own, is never single, following the perfect arc to resolution. Yes, he "wins" at the end, eluding the police, but, as Terry Castle captures it, "even such psychopathic triumph is conditional" (32). A structural, plot-oriented reading of success or failure, win or loss, is subverted by another that looks at the multiple minds

of Tom. And if Tom has multiple minds, in some ways, he must also have multiple stories. After all, concluding the chapter of his graphic murder of Dickie stand these lines: "[H]e began to plan his return to the hotel, and his story, and his next moves: leaving San Remo before nightfall, getting back to Mongibello. And the story there" (109). In a moment in which style mirrors content, Highsmith drives home the fractured and Protean nature of Tom's mind with that sentence fragment concluding the chapter. She further implies that Tom must reenter into another narrative, one that he left and that will require a different mind, a mind that takes over Dickie's and leaves his own hanging off the cliff of another story.

Narrative critics often suggest that all stories are manufactured superimpositions on the raw experience of reality. *Ripley* affirms such a view, accepting that the synthetic construction of reality is part of the technical make-up of representing an ultimately partial mind by one mind thinking the thoughts of another. As the story itself is a forgery about forgeries, it is an imitation of a world that demands recourse to artificial lenses to understand it, and even to experience it. In that sense, there is no protest in *Ripley* against its artificiality, but rather a call to a closer regard of it. The end of the novel affirms this move toward stasis instead of reaction: "When the boat approached the mainland of Greece Tom was standing at the rail with Mrs. Cartwright. . . . Tom was not interested in all the changes. It existed, that was all that mattered to him" (290). In what many could easily argue is Tom's manufactured escape by the implied author at the end, the prose points to the simple inertia of existence alone. Not all forgeries need to be unmasked, but all narratives need forgery to represent.

Chapter Five
Thinking About Nothing: Traumatic *Dissociation* as the Partial Mind in Three War Narratives

"It is as though subjective life in the form of consciousness consisted in being itself losing itself and finding itself again so as to possess itself by showing itself, proposing itself as a theme, exposing itself in truth."

> ~ Emmanuel Levinas, *Otherwise Than Being or Beyond Essence*, 99

Ben Fountain packs his celebrated war novel, *Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk*, with vivid images. On a victory tour after a mission in Iraq, soldier Billy Lynn visits the Dallas Cowboys' flashy stadium, glows under the limelight of the press, witnesses the football game pomp, and even kisses one of the Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders. Throughout his experiences—which are strong enough to vie with the sensory overload of the war he has just left—Billy's mind reels as he adjusts to a gushing reality that provokes him into a dissonant transition between warfront and homeland. As he experiences these events, the representations of Billy's mind, portrayed through an array of techniques—some experimental—are intense and diverse.

Even so, the novel concludes with these lines about Billy's mind that seem to withdraw that richness: "And yet he knows, at least he thinks he knows, he feels it seeded in the purest certainty of his grief as he finds his seat belt and snaps it shut, that *snick* like the final lock of a vast and complex system. He's in. Bound for the war. Good-bye, good-bye, good night, I love you all. He sits back, closes his eyes, and tries to think about nothing as the limo takes them away" (307). In spite of the novel's devoted attention to Billy's thoughts, his final concluding desire is to empty his mind of thoughts. Through contrast, the narration registers the discontinuity between Billy's desire for an empty, blank mind and the narration's *eo ipso* need to provide the reader with details of his

mind. This problem, that Billy desires not to have thoughts and the narrator desires to report his thoughts, drives to the core of the novel's representations. *Billy Lynn* thereby stretches the tension between thinking and the representation of thinking, both as expressed in the negative—lack of thinking. In other words, Billy Lynn's story is a reaction against thinking, and as a result, the representations of his mind must employ alternatives to conventional methods in order to provide the discontinuity that characterizes his thoughts. To do that, *Billy Lynn* thematizes the tension between thinking and not thinking through its primary alternative method of representation: a partial mind.

Based on this example and others, I argue that recent war narratives thematically employ partial minds to represent the contradiction that accounts of combat are commonly experienced as *not thinking*, a specific form of partial minds expressed through psychological *dissociation*.[90] This argument entails three main claims: (1) War narratives often feature accounts of *dissociation* when representing combat experiences as losing control of normal thinking. (2) War narratives adopt partial minds in order to represent that *dissociation*. (3) This representational strategy often integrates the partial mind thematically, rather than mimetically or synthetically. By thematic, I mean James Phelan's sense of the representational function of text—discussed shortly—and by *dissociation*, I mean what psychologists call the pathological version of *faculty dissociation*, or "a disruption in the normal integration of psychological faculties or functioning of a given consciousness" (Dell and O'Neil xx). This term denotes a confused way of thinking in addition to a partial absence of thought, both of which reflect the intensity and stress on combatants' minds as moments when they could not hold

normal thoughts.[91] Fear, pain, aggression, and confusion all transform into expressions of *dissociation* when soldiers recount their combat experience.

Heller's *Catch-22*, for instance, might be seen as the paradigmatic novel that deals with *dissociation*, shown by the characters' ubiquitous self-contradictions. Their catch-22s indicate that the logic and thought process of war—and combat specifically—overturn the workings of what readers are guided to see as otherwise normal minds. The mindset of war pairs thinking and doing as incompatible, since rational thought, the logic goes, cannot yield the absurd deeds of war. Hence, the characters' thoughts express their incongruent actions through the catch-22s that typify the novel's plot. There is no single expression for this stylistic pattern in war narratives, but in those narratives studied in this chapter, the representations of *dissociation* are striking in their repeated similarity of construction. In striving to represent the psychological desire soldiers have to *not think* or to think *dissociative* thoughts during combat, authors of these works find the underrepresentation of a character's mind as the best expression to match those mental states. For war authors Tim O'Brien, Paul Klay, and Ben Fountain, describing combatants' trauma as loss of mind—which often occurs through the retroactive memory of combat—means representing soldiers' failure to think, which in turn means employing partial cognitive representations.[92]

This tendency of war authors to manipulate the style of representation away from conventional practices in an attempt to stimulate their audiences to think and feel combat experience, a task with no single solution, is not new. Pearl James points out, for example, that early twentieth-century populist writers such as Alexander McClintock abandoned realism in literary style and turned to modernist techniques to represent the

new scale of death emerging from World War I (5). This New Death influenced many modernist plots in which trauma eventuated in recurring violence that was not "represent[ed] directly" (10). Not the last instance of death's force in shifting literary techniques in order to explain something that was ostensibly, as James would have it, "unspeakable" (5), the experience of violence and death in combat has led later generations of war authors to innovate literary techniques to attempt to represent these encounters. In departing from literary realism, these authors also implicitly reject connected technical decisions of narrative construction that determine the correspondence between text and real world.[93] For instance and toward my third key claim mentioned above, they prioritize the thematic function of narrative over the mimetic or synthetic ones when their concern stands with representing the experiences of war. Hence, in following this lineage, I extend the study of experimental representations of traumatic experiences in war to late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century novelists who reject realism (broadly conceived[94]) as inadequate for cognitive expression, and so employ the technique of partial minds.

To make this case, I stand by several methodological assumptions. For one, I side with students of the literary representations of war, such as Mary Catherine McLoughlin, who claims to be working "within the (renewed) formalist tendency in literary analysis" (9). Her leaning aligns well with narratological concepts that have been the theoretical backbone of this dissertation, since they add precision to such textually-grounded approaches. McLoughlin's focus on close reading, though, implies the need to address other related categorical concerns that shape formalist readings of literary war representations, including the importance of genre in framing war literature. Margot

Norris calls current war writing "postgeneric," by which she means, "fit only to problematize the very concept of genre, to question the representational and ethical fitness of all genres" (23). Indeed, in complicating genre, war narratives illuminate the difficulties of representation and its fidelity to lived experience, a question I take up shortly. However, just because war literature is generically unsettled does not mean that critics cannot—and indeed, must—still make generic delineations. Deciding whether a work like *Billy Lynn* counts as a war narrative illustrates this problem, since there is very little scenic depiction of war in it. As I delimit war narratives, they encompass those works in which war and the trauma of combat strongly influence the represented (as opposed to implied) experiences of characters. In doing this, albeit with a cognitive focus, I am imitating scholars such as James who see novels like *The Great Gatsby* as drawing out the influence of war, even though they are not primarily composed of direct mimetic representations of warfront combat.[95]

Before developing close analyses of war narratives, I begin by addressing three key theoretical issues: the most influential models of literary trauma (I.i), the challenge of representing combat experience (I.ii), and the prioritization of a thematic, rather than mimetic or synthetic, representational function (I.iii). As I track leading scholarship on these topics, I identify differences that my cognitive focus reveals in each. These points set up the close readings that comprise the rest of the chapter, in which I show how *dissociation* is incorporated thematically as a partial mind in three war narratives. Tim O'Brien's *The Things They Carried* opens this approach as a case study for the inadequacy of the mimetic and synthetic representational functions as viable representational modes in war narratives. In this section, I first describe the partial mind

of O'Brien's narrator (II.i). I then take up generic and stylistic problems that coincide with the narrative's metafiction (II.ii). I close O'Brien's section by showing how the thematic is the dominant representational function due to the composite construction of *The Things They Carried* (II.iii). Next, building on war stories' thematic prioritization and use of partial minds to represent combat *dissociation*, I investigate Phil Klay's recent short story collection *Redeployment*. First, I examine Klay's overall thematic approach, which contextualizes *Redeployment*'s use of war clichés to highlight the thematic use of partial minds (III.i). Next, I explain how Klay's partial minds develop through *dissociative* descriptions of combat trauma that foreground the body specifically. This focus underrepresents his characters' minds as they must leave their minds blank in order to be soldiers who act without hesitation (III.ii). Finally, *Redeployment*'s metafiction, like O'Brien's, emphasizes the narrative's partial minds through its fragmentation of narrative frames, the narrator divided from the narrated (III.iii). Having set the baseline for understanding my three key claims, the argument then moves into the primary analysis of this chapter with a detailed close reading of *Billy Lynn*. This section amplifies the arguments made in the previous two about *dissociation*, partial minds, and the thematic function of representation by analyzing them in a novel that explicitly refers to the mind and experiments with its cognitive representation. After laying out the basic construction and extent of Billy's trauma (IV.i), I inspect three kinds of representation in the novel: First, so-called *cognitive washes* act as an experimental and mediated representation of Billy's post-combat mind, since they merge his thoughts with others' words (IV.ii). Second, *Billy Lynn* employs explicit and self-reflective representations of Billy's mind to heighten the effects of combat on it (IV.iii). Last, descriptions of physical and mental

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realities together (much like the use of body to underrepresent mind in Klay's work) suggest the *dissociation* between the sensory world and Billy's subjective—and to everyone but the reader, inaccessible—experience of it (IV.iv). Each narrative offers a similar expression of war consciousnesses in that it constructs a partial mind, prioritizes the thematic function of narrative over mimetic and synthetic functions, and represents minds through *dissociation*. Even so, each modifies the formulations of the previous ones, characterizing from several different angles war narrative's representations of partial minds.

I. Theoretical Concerns

"Indeed, if the characters in literature are like people at all, in the ordinary sense, they are like dead people. The characters in literature, once they are 'written,' are finished like the dead."
> ~ Baruch Hochman, *Character in Literature*, 60

I.i. Trauma and Literature

"To suggest . . . that 'violence is X' or 'violence is not X' is to miss the extent to which the figure or the very idea of violence in discourse or language, before any physical act, is normalised, naturalised, and has passed into an unthought framework within which our subjectivity is constructed."
> ~ Julian Wolfreys, *Readings: Acts of Close Reading in Literary Theory*, 138

Perhaps not all trauma begins with violence, but in war narratives, physical violence often produces psychological repercussions. As the epigraph from Wolfreys suggests, though, such violence is not always represented directly, and neither is its depiction always the point of war narratives.[96] Many theories of trauma hold, however, that just because the initial violent event is not represented does not mean recursions of it will not be included in the war narrative. For example, as I noted in my chapter on *We Were the Mulvaneys*, Cathy Caruth gives trauma this telling definition: "[T]rauma

describes an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena" (11). And in Oates's novel, narrator Judd is unable to resist the repeated and seemingly uncontrolled representation of his sister's trauma. While having powerful application to Oates's novel, Caruth's influential model of reading literary trauma is not the only option.

In fact, this use of trauma equated to repeated psychological intrusions of violence may be too flexible to be accurate in every case. To repurpose a trope I developed in the previous chapter, trauma has that same Protean quality that Tom Ripley's mind has: it is definite enough that we can understand and imagine its application, yet it is so flexible that it might easily be misused. To that point, extra care is needed when applying trauma scholarship like the historical-ethical work of Dominick LaCapra or Caruth, whose methods require that they make broad statements about the tendencies of trauma. They propose that it returns when least expected, or it makes its sufferers act out in uncontrollable ways, or it leads to hallucinations. The trouble with these kinds of descriptions is not that they are untrue but that they may easily be connected by critics to almost any moment in which traumatic actions or memories are *not* being actualized or represented. Consequently, nearly any passage may be available to be called an instance of trauma or its *sub rosa* presence, just under the surface. The boundaries of what counts as trauma appear too indefinite in such formulations.

Hypothetically, by applying the following account of trauma from LaCapra to *Billy Lynn*, we might take almost any passage of Fountain's narration and say that it represents what Billy, as LaCapra puts it, "cannot feel":

> Trauma brings about a dissociation of affect and representation: one disorientingly feels what one cannot represent; one numbingly represents what one cannot feel. Working through trauma involves the effort to articulate or rearticulate affect and representation in a manner that may never transcend, but may to some viable extent counteract, a reenactment, or acting out of that disabling association. (42)

No fault of LaCapra's, it is hard to imagine what couldn't count as "a dissociation of affect and representation" or a "reenactment." Each of Billy's actions in the novel, because of the war context, relates to his previous actions and so might naturally be associated with the trauma of war. In making this critique, of course, I am opening up my own upcoming reading of Billy Lynn through the lenses of trauma and cognitive theory to these very problems. Such is my goal: as I fear the slippery use of abstract concepts when they are used too flexibly, so do I aim to ground this study more securely in passages that deal with the mind—some in an incontrovertibly thematic sense and others in what is clearly a representationally experimental way. Explicit references to the mind cannot easily be misused if they are connected to certain patterns of characters' thoughts. Those passages that employ techniques for representing the mind that are unusual (as defined from the perspective of generic conventions) similarly avoid misapplication to justify any thesis, since their form marks a clear move from standard modes of cognitive representation (*direct thought*, *thought report* and *free indirect discourse*[97]). Granted, the conclusion of a formalist examination of these kinds of passages *does* depend on making generalizations, as all critical studies do, but it is my aim to ground passages with theories that directly call for a cognitive focus in order to warrant such extrapolations.

To be clear, I am not saying that Caruth's or LaCapra's theories cannot be used to interpret literary works but rather that abstractions should not be used to support any claim that might coincidentally resemble them. Neither is it my goal to tear down other

critics for what might be a stretching of theoretical concepts that are meant to be flexible. Indeed, I agree with critics such as Kirby Farrell, who points out that the challenges of writing about literary trauma must "bring some order to this array of symptoms" and so "theories of trauma have had to be elastic" (6). Within this elasticity, I am calling for more strict parameters on which analyses modeled on trauma theory may be performed in literary readings.

Other critics extend this standpoint. In a 2014 article in the journal *Narrative*, Joshua Pederson reorients literary trauma criticism by posing the clinical and comprehensive psychological work of Richard McNally as a corrective to Caruth's longstanding dominance in trauma studies. Pederson sums up the core of McNally's perspective: "traumatic amnesia is a myth, and while victims may *choose* not to speak of their traumas, there is little evidence that they *cannot*" (334, emphasis original).[98] Pederson goes beyond my critique when he develops this train of McNally's thesis to argue that any textual gap can serve Caruth's focus on amnesia. He sees the emotional intensity of many traumatic experiences leading to a better recollection of the event, rather than a total loss of it in memory. This changed view means, according to Pederson, that current literary critics interested in trauma's textual effects should admit "the possibility that victims may construct reliable accounts of [traumatic memories]" (338). I see continuing validity in Caruth's circumscription of traumatic amnesia, but the pendulum shift to McNally's call to isolate "extreme dissociative alterations of consciousness" offers a fresh perspective on the literary study of trauma (182). It also offer a timely reason to look at *dissociation* as a representation of combat experience, as this chapter does. More than seeing an obvious correctness of one model over another,

the choice between these two important theories depends on the nature of the traumatic

experiences themselves and the differences among those who endure trauma. One size

theory does not fit all experiences.

So for this study of war stories, I turn primarily to Pederson's charge that we

develop new readings of war trauma through McNally's revision. Towards this aim,

Pederson looks for depictions of traumatic moments in which textual representations

include "instances of experiential distortion" rather than relapses of forgotten memories

(340). Partial minds in war literature are a particular method for representing these

distorted consciousnesses of remembered traumatic events. As such, they uphold the task

of studying this new foray into a trauma theory that itself emphasizes how consciousness

at the time of that original violent or traumatic event becomes, in retellings, subject to

nonstandard methods of mental representation. As my close readings of *The Things They*

Carried, *Redeployment*, and *Billy Lynn* argue, when the authors of these works try to

depict the *dissociation* of combatant minds, they turn to distorted consciousnesses of

partial minds as placeholders for what in the experience of combat ultimately cannot be

represented.

I.ii. Representation in War Literature

"Indeed, one often has the feeling that all war novels (and war films) are pretty much the
same and have few enough surprises for us, even though their situations may vary. In
practice, we can enumerate some seven or eight situations, which more or less exhaust
the genre. . . . But perhaps such possibilities . . . may be reduced and simplified by the
rather different consideration cutting across all of them—namely, the suspicion that war
is ultimately unrepresentable—and by an attention to the various forms the impossible
attempt to represent it may have taken."

~ Frederic Jameson, "War and Representation," 1533

Undeniably, war is unrepresentable. As Jameson well knows, this phraseology is

as trite as it is profound in the discourse of war literature. These kinds of statements about

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war that call it unrepresentable are ubiquitous: "Words cannot describe what it was like out there . . ."; "The shock was ineffable . . ."; "Nothing I say can ever tell you how painful it was . . . ."[99] From both first-hand witnesses and secondhand accounts, this same moral hails. Paradoxically, some theorists take war representations to the exact opposite pole; they view accounts of combat experience as actually allowing transference of that experience itself. Amy Hungerford even claims that listening to testimony "can become the actual experience of another life" (104). The assumption rooted in both arguments—either that war experience is unrepresentable or that accounts of it recreate or transfer the original experience—is that while some representations *do* capture experience, others can never hope to do so. But is this belief an implication of something about the experience or something about the representation?

On the one hand, representation can never perfectly capture every nuance, every influence and peculiarity of a subjective experience. But theorists have as a matter of course set this problem aside and accepted some representations as effective. Or, in other words, no representation has perfect fidelity to the original experience, but some are adequate, others inadequate. And so, for those unrepresentable experiences—the horrors of combat—there are, apparently, untold numbers of inadequate representations (all those experiences referred to only as "unrepresentable"); they are, to paraphrase Robert Browning, reaches that attempt to exceed a grasp. To be fair, the term *unrepresentable* does not always denote an inadequacy but may, as in Holocaust studies, be the very expression for representing atrocities, as though dubbing an act unrepresentable is itself a form of representation rather than a characterization of it. But if we see unrepresentable representations as inadequate representations, then we may frame them as still trying to

refer to a particular lived experience. And that failure to do so bears investigation, especially in terms of the minds of those who underwent those experiences. Based on this narrowing of the domain of the unrepresentable, I can now specify my argument about partial minds: they are the recuperative attempt to represent the mental state of experiences which in war novels have been dubbed "unrepresentable."

Moreover, my chapter's value to war narrative criticism stands in line with critics, such as McLoughlin, who are concerned with specific avenues of representation. In arguing that "[t]he reasons that make war's representation imperative are as multitudinous as those which make it impossible" (7),[100] she attempts to draw out many of the representational techniques that war literature employs to represent the unrepresentable. Norris numbers among these techniques graphic description (24), metafiction (25), and synecdotal vignettes that stand for much larger sections of war experience (26).[101] These apply, in my view, not just to war's representation in general, but to the trauma experienced during war combat. For, according to Shoshana Felman, one of trauma's formative qualities is its resistance to linguistic expression (Stark 446). Certainly, trauma experienced in war requires continual innovation to capture that ineffable mindset. As a result, discussing representation in war narratives entails the realization that particular techniques for referring to characters' minds emphasize the experience of war trauma in different ways. Specifically, these techniques, while imperfect, attempt to express the intuition that war experience is often felt as psychological *dissociation*.

War literature's genre also suggests the need to turn away from dead-end discussions of the unrepresentability of combat to specific accounts of how the

experience of combat is represented. Real-life testimony is one of the nonfictional

generic predecessors to war literature, and its primary context of speaking and hearing,

the rhetorical frame that governs representational choices, drives home the importance of

representing, however inadequate that may be. (As my discussion of Klay's story

"Psychological Operations" later explains, this need to speak and to hear cuts to the

diegetic heart of representations in war narrative.) Real testimony demands the emotional

interaction that values the speaker's language for describing his or her experience.

Some see attempts to represent the unrepresentable as too erroneous to be

considered. Clinical evidence attests that giving words to non-linguistic ideas leads to

increased inaccuracy when describing the experience. Social psychologist Daniel Gilbert

interprets a study done by cognitive psychologists in which two groups were given a

swatch of color that they had five seconds to study and then were asked to pick out the

same color swatch from a row of six swatches thirty seconds later. However, one group

was told to describe the swatch while the other was not. It turns out that the group which

did not describe the swatch did nearly fifty percent better at picking out the color swatch

(43-4, c.f. Schooler and Engstler-Schooler). This study suggests that representing

experience in linguistic terms actually depletes the knowledge of that original experience

and replaces it with a more constructed and even less accurate representation. In arguing

that representations of characters' experience of traumatic events in combat often employ

partial minds to describe their thinking in *dissociative* terms, I am emphasizing the

intuition of these psychologists that putting words to mimetic attempts to represent that

experience only distorts the recollected experience. If veterans do desire to relate their

experience accurately, their best recourse is not to represent through conventional

accounts of thoughts but to represent through thematic accounts of *dissociative* thoughts, those very experiences about which over-verbalizing can make less reliable or accurate. These representations that avoid the direct relation and even eschew conventional linguistic expressions require the technique of partial minds to explain them.

I.iii. Thematic Trumps Mimetic and Synthetic in the Genre of War Narratives

"In realistic fiction the mimetic aspect prevails, in postmodern fiction the synthetic component is most important, whereas in fiction with a thesis thematic characters are more common."

~ Willem G. Weststeijn, "Towards a Cognitive Theory of Character," 60

I have argued in previous chapters that partial minds are a textual technique often employed by authors to achieve certain ends, whether an ambiguity or polyvocality of voice in the narration, an effect of empathy or immersion, or a projection of trauma onto a level of representation which the reader must co-experience. To accomplish those aims, partial minds assume particular forms, and so their use is not easily or commonly replicated by other works due to the high number of contextual factors which individualize each work. Hence, I have limited the kinds of generalizations made about partial minds and avoided pinning them to a single representational method.[102] However, not all partial minds demand such particularity. In some genres,[103] partial minds tend to operate in similar ways with similar effects. While not revoking my earlier arguments that, in the end, each work uses the technique in its own way, I submit that we can generalize more broadly about partial minds in some war narratives. In these, partial minds tend to express the *theme* of combat trauma through thinking and in particular, through qualitatively absent or disrupted thought experienced during trauma.

The implementation of partial minds in war narratives tends to favor the thematic function of representation. Recalling James Phelan's functions of representation that have been integral to my previous chapters, thematic stands in contrast to synthetic and mimetic by its cumulative expression of the world through representation.[104] At any moment the author's choice of representation hovers among these three: a verisimilitudinous depiction that aims for a literal account within established conventions (mimetic), an artificial rendition that skews the literal in favor of highlighting the constructed nature of experience and text (synthetic), and a representation that emphasizes the content, point, moral, or thesis of a work (thematic). Despite my previous chapters' minimal discussion of the thematic function, it connects more easily to ethical and social concerns and so at times more completely subordinates the other two. Phelan explains thematic as differing in its implementation from synthetic or mimetic because "the representative quality of the traits or ideas will usually be explicitly revealed in the action or the narrative discourse" (*Reading People* 13). Thematic, while unavoidably incorporating aspects of mimetic and synthetic, prioritizes a view of reality that is not locatable to a single instance but instead attempts to draw a larger view of reality across a series of otherwise independent moments in order to present a driving message or image. The thematic function of narrative stands apart from mimetic and synthetic functions because it does not aim for a particular instance to be "real" or "artificial" but rather depends on the configuration and aggregation of textual events, descriptions, dialogue, and the representation of thought. The thematic reality spans time and space to accumulate a moral that cannot be reduced to the limited instance. As such, it expands on the common use of "thematic" in literary textbooks as meaning a leitmotif by developing

it to be at core a matter of collected moments that, while different, circumscribe a wider point.

War narratives understood broadly privilege this kind of thematic standpoint because of their genre. Wars are composed of isolated moments, but they cannot be reduced to any one of these, since many different moments can have weighty impact on soldiers. War stories, too, often depend not just on the lead-up and climax of battle, but on the painful aftermath, the return. Phil Klay's short story collection sums up this lingering reintegration as "redeployment," the always ironic homecoming. It, like O'Brien's *The Things They Carried*, assumes through its very form a composite of moments, rather than a cohesive storyline. The genre of war narratives, in deriving from its nonfictional predecessor of testimony, is already tuned to producing a moral or thesis. As such, its design privileges a thematic orientation. Now, not all war narratives have these characteristics, as genres are not absolute categories. Rather, the thematic appears to be a typical function of representations of combat in literary war narratives.

By taking these three textual functions as the theoretical framework in which I am understanding traumatic representation, I should note that I differ from other studies of trauma, which, although in different contexts, deal with a similar decision. Michael Rothberg, for example, in his study of Holocaust representations, intervenes directly in the question of how trauma becomes represented. His account revolves around the historico-aesthetic divisions of realism and antirealism (modernism, and postmodernism) (9). Although certain similarities surface between his framework and my own (e.g., realism roughly maps onto the mimetic function), because my claims are neither

historically nor culturally focused, I have chosen a framework that more directly denotes representational qualities and techniques.

Trauma, too, as both a concept and a psychological state suggests the need for a thematic reading. It expands diachronically across moments rather than lies in singular ones. Even mild cases of trauma take time to process. Length of time may be one of the few stable qualities of trauma. As a result, novels which use it as both their source of representation and as something represented in them cannot be contingent on lone moments of either seemingly-lifelike or seemingly-artificial representation; instead, they must look across moments to the thematic build-up of a traumatic consciousness. In the same way that Farrell identifies her method as "emphasiz[ing] post-traumatic *themes*" (7 italics hers), so does a tendency that depends on a broadly thematic standpoint cut across trauma theory. McNally posits that both duration and frequency are the "objective metrics" for measuring trauma (81). Such a view highlights the thematic repetition of experience in the study of trauma.

Furthermore, thematic coherence, rather than lifelikeness or constructedness, aligns with the therapeutic use of narrative to reduce the symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in combatants. Karen J. Burnell, Nigel Hunt, and Peter G. Coleman argue the following about the kinds of narrative needed to alleviate PTSD: "[C]oherence provides structure, continuation of identity, and integration of events into the story using a uniting theme" (95), even while some themes can be "negative and maladaptive" (98). Narratives with a thematic point are critical to recovery from trauma. This emphasis does not mean that all war narratives must be coherent, since incoherence is certainly a representational technique for expressing the experiences of combat. But if

literary war narratives are retellings of traumatic events, then the themes that emerge from them suggest the ability to identify those traumatic experiences in the most coherent way. As themes grounds veteran's therapeutic stories, so should their relevance to fictional works that recount veteran experiences be validated and emphasized.

Having outlined several methods that war narratives employ to represent trauma, I now move more concretely into the application of those methods into specific works. Taken up next, Tim O'Brien's *The Things They Carried* stands as a war narrative that rejects both mimetic and synthetic functions in order to express the trauma of combat thematically. It requires the technique of partial minds in order to accomplish that style of representation. Following that discussion, I argue that the war narrative of *Redeployment* breaks the expectations readers have of its characters' thoughts by upturning war clichés. Finally, *Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk* takes new strides into trauma representations as it uses not only experimental representations of partial minds but uses partial minds themselves thematically. By analyzing the underrepresentations in each of these war narratives, we can come to have a better understanding of the minds of combatants.

II. The Failure of Mimetic and Synthetic Functions in Tim O'Brien's *The Things They Carried*

"Whatever verisimilitude a work may have always operates within a larger artifice."
> ~ Wayne Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, 59

II.i. O'Brien's Partial Mind

"[T]hroughout the story, O'Brien emphasizes the way individual consciousness—quite apart from cultural narrative—shapes events and the memories of events and helps us define what we come to regard as truth."
> ~ Michael Tavel Clarke, "'I Feel Close to Myself': Solipsism and US Imperialism in Tim O'Brien's *The Things They Carried*," 134

Representations in war narratives often stand firmly grounded in real experiences.[105] This dependence on first-hand accounts and veteran testimony ties the genre of war narrative to an expectation for authenticity, one that must be subverted by the simultaneous mimetic, synthetic, and thematic functions of fictional narrative. John Powers attests to this desire for authenticity when he notes that *Redeployment* "was written by Phil Klay who *does* know because he *was* there" (par. 2). Personal experience, it seems, corroborates fictional war narrative. As McLoughlin precisely describes it, "accounts of war are *always* authored, in the sense that the gap between the experience and the representation of conflict can be narrowed but never completely eliminated. This is *not* the same as claiming that war is somehow not real or actually happening, nor does it necessarily imply fault on the part of those telling the stories" (20). A representation, especially when it is expected to be lifelike, is bound to disappoint since it can never *be* the real or perfectly capture it, even if the author has experiential credibility. *Discourse* can never equal *story*. Yet that conditioned response to war narrative can be exploited by texts which recognize its value: the need to be authentic may be deliberately manipulated to heighten the representational effectiveness of a work, despite the fact that the work cannot meet the idealized expectation that a war narrative *is* reality.

Seeing problems with the correspondence of text to reality, Michael Rothberg's identification of "a demand for reflection on the formal limits of representation" in the context of Holocaust representations carries over into any study of representations of trauma (7). One of many war narratives that struggles with the limits of representation and in doing so, reinvents them, is Tim O'Brien's *The Things They Carried*. I begin studying this work by arguing that it employs partial minds to represent its narration.

Specifically, I look at the form of O'Brien's fictionalized mind and the methods of access to it, rather than the content of his thoughts themselves (II.i). I then extend O'Brien's underrepresentation by untangling the metanarration from his aim in the novel to represent war experiences (II.ii). Last, I drive home my argument that O'Brien's narrative prioritizes the thematic function of representation over its prevalent mimetic and synthetic functions, a point complicated but not invalidated by the text's signature metanarration. These readings offer a detailed example of *dissociation* expressing a partial mind in war narratives, a trend I go on to develop in Klay's and Fountain's war narratives that follow.

The Things They Carried implements the technique of partial mind in its formation of the narrative agents that dramatize O'Brien himself. Three narrative agents together project O'Brien in different capacities: he is ostensibly the narrator, he is one of the main characters, and he is a scribe. A seemingly nonfictional version of O'Brien himself, the scribe, as Wayne Booth defines it, is the author's "second self," the persona s/he projects into the text that is both part of the author and a selected version of him/her (*The Rhetoric of Fiction* 71). So when referring to O'Brien as author in *The Things They Carried*, we can call that verbalized version of him the scribe. Moreover, although we have no guarantee that O'Brien is the narrator in all the stories, the consistency of style and lack of evidence to the contrary suggest he is at least the figural narrator, especially in the stories in which he is also the main character. By dividing O'Brien into three narrative agents, the narrative fails to express O'Brien's mind in a full, or unified way. Consequently, the implied author projects him as a partial mind, and specifically, this instance fits the profile of an *incomplete mind*, as O'Brien's narrator and character

attempts to balance the continuing representation of mind of one character through all three textual agents. But in representing one of these, the others are marginalized, or incomplete, in terms of the amount of textual space devoted to them. Even though simply having three different fictionalized personas that signify the real O'Brien does not necessarily mean those instantiations of his mind are underrepresented, these fragmented personas *do* denote a partial mind when posed in conjunction with two exceptional cases: (1) the subverted expectations of the genre of memoir and (2) the use of composite novel strategies.

First, O'Brien's character narrator directly subverts the genre of memoir, as many critics have mentioned,[106] by doing more than just filling in details of imperfect memory, the tendency of autobiography. Instead, by fictionalizing O'Brien's real war story, the implied author modifies the role of the character narrator in this genre. He is not one who recounts true deeds but is that fictionalized agent that stands for, even as he expresses, the loss of mind in war. So if true war memoirs depend on the actual soldier and his or her unity as teller and subject of that telling, and if O'Brien fictionalizes war events and subdivides his character into three narratives agents, then that fragmentation of subjectivity suggests in its very act of dividing not just its three resultant parts, but the *dissociation* that occurs as part of the trauma of combat. O'Brien's three fictionalized partial minds enact the cognitive experience of fighting in Vietnam.

Next, the partial minds implied by O'Brien's divided narrative roles also develop from and contribute to the narrative understood as a composite story. Farrell O'Gorman applies Maggie Dunn's and Ann Morris's conception of the composite story to *The Things They Carried* by noting how it is much more connected than a short story

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collection, which typically contains completely different characters and circumstances. Still containing the differences among the individual stories, the composite story avoids becoming a novel but remains more "coherent" than a short story cycle due to its interrelated plots and shared characters (294). The partial mind in *The Things They Carried* emerges through the disconnection of chapters, which can be seen simply by overviewing some of the novel's chapters. For example, O'Brien's narrator tells the story of his former self who fled the war by going to Canada in "On the Rainy River." But other stories focus more on the metanarrational comments, such as "How to Tell a True War Story" or "Style." Chapters like "Notes," however, are about O'Brien as author mulling over the previous stories he has written. Many other chapters deal with none of O'Brien's agents directly, even while they are told through his narrator's fairly consistent voice. In all these different versions of O'Brien, the composite nature of the collection as a whole produces several different minds of O'Brien that readers access, none of which presents a whole or full representation of his mind, especially since some are fictionalized projections (more on this point ahead) while others are reliable accounts of him. Each case imputes the other cases as *incomplete* representations.

But why bother to employ a partial mind at all? This incompletion of O'Brien's mind is not just a form used for the sake of ease of style but is itself a representation of the kind of thinking that war entails. O'Brien's narrator proposes this possibility: "By telling stories, you objectify your own experience. You separate it from yourself. You pin down certain truths" (158). Objectification entails splitting himself, an act that Catherine Emmott claims is "inherent in the narrative form" for first-person narrators, since they always differ from that previous self about which they narrate ("Split Selves" 153). How

better to show the kind of *dissociation* of thoughts than by dividing the narrator from the narrated? After all, O'Brien's sentiments about the representability of war entail a belief that there is no ideal representation, for as he says, "In war you lose your sense of the definite, hence your sense of truth itself, and therefore it's safe to say that in a true war story nothing is ever absolutely true" (82). The experiences of war do not allow for a single truth, and so in representation do not allow for a single, unified mind. O'Brien's incomplete mind on the level of narrative construction mimics the *dissociation* that real combatants face.

The kind of access we have to the O'Brien's mind, his partial mind, can tell us just as much about the experience of war as do the content of the very stories which populate *The Things They Carried.* If in the end, as Martin Fitzpatrick argues, "O'Brien's project in *The Things They Carried* is to capture his actual experience of combat in Vietnam through narrative" (255), then that experience need not be captured only through the stories themselves but through the minds that channel those stories. Fiction has the unique quality of letting readers inside someone's head, and that signature mode often deserves as much, if not more, critical attention that the plot it relates. So, seeing into O'Brien's mind as character, narrator, and scribe forms a multi-perspectival perception of the narrative. O'Brien's representation of himself in *The Things They Carried* is a starting point, at least from the angle of narrative form, for understanding his inflection of combatants' experience of the Vietnam War. While partial minds in this composite are suggestive of my larger argument that war experience is often represented as *dissociation*, they alone do not fully substantiate this point. I now turn toward the self-conscious nature of *The Things They Carried* to complete this argument.

II.ii. Metanarration, Not Metafiction

"[S]tories can save us."

~ Tim O'Brien, *The Things They Carried*, 225

Critics often call attention to the commentary in *The Things They Carried* in which O'Brien as narrator questions whether nonfiction or fiction is the proper mode for composing war stories. For instance, Michael Tavel Clarke argues that "the book's persistent investigation of the dynamics of truth-making and its relation to culturally informed individual perspective helps explain its equally persistent solipsism." (134). And yet, that solipsism, the narrative's explicit foregrounding of literary ideas, grants it a superlative place among war narratives which, contradictorily, pushes its interpretation beyond itself. Solipsism that requires reference outside the thing itself cannot be solipsism. The commentary in *The Things They Carried* also lends itself to reconsidering the narrative's use of representations of war. Looking at O'Brien's metatextual questions in the chapter "How to Tell a True War Story," McLoughlin calls O'Brien's move "a *surrender* in the face of representing war" (5, emphasis original). She sees the commentary as the complication of fiction and nonfiction that breaches the rhetorical bond between writer and reader (6). Rather than concede complete victory to the unrepresentability of war—because *The Things They Carried* does, in fact, resonate as getting something right about the representation of war—I want to turn the discussion of O'Brien's commentary in a different direction. O'Brien bypasses and confounds the question of whether or not war narratives ought to be composed of stories that actually happened by taking up a more fundamental question to his craft: What is the best way to represent war? As I follow this question by calling O'Brien's commentary *metanarration* rather than *metafiction*, I see the answer as obviating the true/fictional binary in order to

pursue the thematic representational mode. Metanarration has a recuperative, rather than disruptive, effect, which allows O'Brien to convey war experience better than he could have done without it.

In an overview of narratology, Monika Fludernik analyzes the differences between metafiction and metanarration. She notes that although the terms are often conflated in nontechnical usage, the difference lies in metafiction's function to disrupt the harmony of the novel, but metanarration's function to unify the novel (*An Introduction to Narratology* 61). In a similar vein, Ansgar Nünning rejects the common belief that "metanarrative comments" negate "the illusion of the narrated world" (305). While both terms use the same techniques, they have different rhetorical ends. As a result, the choice between metafiction's tendency to break narrative coherence and metanarration's tendency to unify it in *The Things They Carried* is an interpretative choice. So, rather than concede to Clarke's claim for the text's "equally persistent solipsism" (134), I argue that *The Things They Carried* exemplifies metanarration, rather than metafiction, leading to effective communication rather than solipsism.[107] Since O'Brien ultimately desires to pass on the realities of war, so does metanarration aid, rather than hinder, that project.[108]

First, let's look at the elements of the text that provoke awareness or self-reflexivity.[109] Metanarrational elements include the following:

(1) O'Brien appears to be author, narrator, scribe, and one of the characters.
(2) The chapter "How to Tell a True War Story" lays out a theory of war fiction.
(3) The narrator claims that an event is not true after he has already described it (179).
(4) There is confusion about whether a real or fictional person has performed certain actions, such as the O'Brien-narrator's desertion towards Canada in "On the Rainy River" or the murder of the Vietnamese soldier with the star-like hole in his eye in "The Man I Killed."
(5) The paratext implies an ambiguity by including true events, even personal ones, in a book marked clearly as fiction.

So why do these self-conscious elements not disrupt the illusion of the narrative world? Critic Robin Silbergleid at first admits that the collection "acknowledges the epistemological problem of postmodernity—the loss of certain knowledge" by the balance between the unreliability of and the reader's dependence on the narrator (132). However, the narrative's composition does not end with an hesitant questioning of fiction and nonfiction. It goes beyond that, as Silbergleid later describes: "Despite such self-consciousness about its narrative situation, however, O'Brien's text is not merely a playful piece of metafiction along the lines of John Barth's classic *Lost in the Funhouse*" (138). Silbergleid supports this argument by attending to *The Things They Carried*'s status as autobiographical metafiction, which I am calling *autobiographical metanarration* to account for the distinction outlined above. The historical corroboration that Tim O'Brien went to war in Vietnam defuses any problems with his self-conscious admissions that parts of the narrative are false. While drawing facts into question, the element of memoir in O'Brien's narrative forges a valid, honest ethos through the explicit metanarrational acknowledgement that some parts of the story may not be true (139). Silbergleid concludes, "The narratives and experiences of the Vietnam War, like the postmodern condition, are uncertain, ambiguous, multiple. In *The Things They Carried,* the author is not dead but resurrected over the course of the fiction" (148). Metanarration does not leave the story incoherent, but rather lets the author's experience in the war validate his fictional derivations of that experience through his narration. While some might argue that the metacommentary still detracts from the flow of the story, it does so to serve the larger thematic end of substantiating O'Brien's experiences.

Catherine Calloway employs the same trope as Silbergleid, but in pointing out that "fiction is used as a means of resurrecting the deceased," she describes the main point of *The Things They Carried*, rather than reacts to Roland Barthes' bannerhead "death of the author" (255). Metanarration prevents the kind of disruption of narrative frames that have been the commonly reduced characterization of postmodernist metafiction. Autobiographical metanarration depends on the context discussed above of the expectations of war novels to be grounded in real experience, even if they are not mimetic reproductions of that experience. O'Brien's metanarration reminds the reader that the truth of war paradoxically is and is not about the facts themselves. By questioning the nature of fiction, O'Brien arrives not at the angst of postmodernism but at a more secure understanding that reality is about the story itself and that fiction can give meaning to the trauma of war. This belief can be true, since his themes derive from his own autobiographical experience, even if he bypasses autobiographical detail in order to represent that experience. In doing so, he not only avoids the separation of text and reality in resurrecting the author, as Calloway says, but drives the goal of war stories to resurrecting the memories of those who have fallen and so become memorialized through O'Brien's fiction.

Interpreting *The Things They Carried* as metanarration instead of metafiction, then, does not eliminate the self-conscious elements of the text listed above. Instead, it reframes those as establishing a coherent text rather than a tangled one. If authority is questioned in the self-conscious comments, then O'Brien's true autobiographical detail of having gone to Vietnam means that direct reference to him as author foregrounds that historical fact and so enhances the validity of his story rather than detracts from it.

Ironically, his move in fiction—creating false details to substantiate his aim of expressing

the experience of being a combatant—is exactly the opposite of what researchers into

false memories are prescribed to do. They are ethically bound not to create false

traumatic memories in the laboratory, even while doing so could accomplish the same

goal that O'Brien has, relating war experience, if those tests could show that veterans do

not fabricate details about combat (McNally 76). While I grant that these metanarrational

moments disrupt the immersion of fiction, they underscore the story's authority and

validity.

II.iii. Thematic as the Prioritized Function of O'Brien's Representation

"But if I could ever get the story right, how the sun seemed to gather around him and pick
him up and lift him high into a tree, if I could somehow re-create the fatal whiteness of
that light, the quick glare, the obvious cause and effect, then you would believe the last
thing Curt Lemon believed, which for him must've been the final truth."

~ Tim O'Brien, *The Things They
Carried*, 84

The Vietnam War's historical occurrence, O'Brien's personal experience of it,

and its distillation into *The Things They Carried* as autobiographical metanarration may

indicate that this narrative privileges the mimetic function of narrative over the synthetic

and thematic. But as I aim to show in this subsection, the realism and direct

correspondence between the "real world" and the narrative representation of it miss the

central design of *The Things They Carried*. Rather, generically, it is less concerned with

real or made-up events as with relating a genuine war experience, no matter the method.

After all, Fredric Jameson explains genres as mental frameworks that help construct a

way of reading a text but then may be discarded (*Political Unconscious* 145). Applied to

The Things They Carried, mimetic and synthetic as genre markers are both used when

needed but end up counteracting each other. Their cross-cancellation disqualifies them as

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the best modes of transmitting combat experience. Instead, O'Brien elevates the thematic.[110] This reading depends on O'Brien's implementation of partial minds in his generic aim to tell a true war story.

O'Gorman's discussion of *The Things They Carried* as a composite novel indicates the need for a thematic reading, in addition to the presence of partial minds as discussed above (II.i). In this model, the composite novel gains those very characteristics that redact mimetic tightness in favor of thematic ties. According to O'Gorman, place becomes an abstraction rather than a definite point (296), time and location shift without a chronological or an obvious geographical direction (297), and the narrator becomes an "emerging protagonist" who appears to be like the author but is mostly made up (299). These criteria indicate that the goal of the text is not to represent the war through a strict imitation of the genre of nonfictional memoir. Instead, by channeling O'Brien's autobiographical authority in a composite—rather than unified—way, the novel can pursue themes that better emerge with the defamiliarizing moves away from conventional narrative techniques like definite setting, chronological time, and ontologically-grounded (i.e., either fictional or nonfictional) character narrator. By rejecting generic conventions, O'Brien can represent, for example, the moment of killing someone in combat without carrying the baggage of some generic expectations, such as the required heroism of the good guy (the narrator's story in the chapter "The Man I Killed") or the ethical purity of soldiers (Rat Kiley's mutilation of the water buffalo in "How to Tell a True War Story"). O'Brien's most consistent care in this composite novel is representing in the best possible way his experience of war, especially combat. Other concerns, such as his discussion of

true and untrue stories, while evocative, are less forceful than the core theme of getting the reader to understand what combat experience is like.

A repercussion of this argument means reading metanarration not just as recuperative—a necessary step for establishing a thematic priority, established in the previous subsection—but as a deprioritization of the question of realism with which the narrative otherwise seems so preoccupied. That turn to alternative methods provides a more compatible style for O'Brien's inclusion of the partial mind. This change in emphasis appears in the narrative's most important metanarrational moment, found in these twin paragraphs that tell two conflicting accounts of the core of O'Brien's experience as a soldier:

> Here is the happening-truth. I was once a soldier. There were many bodies, real bodies with real faces, but I was young then and I was afraid to look. And now, twenty years later, I'm left with faceless responsibility and faceless grief.
> Here is the story-truth. He was a slim, dead, almost dainty young man of about twenty. He lay in the center of a red clay trail near the village of My Khe. His jaw was in his throat. His one eye was shut, the other eye was a star-shaped hole. I killed him. (180)

The O'Brien narrator has already denied that the second story, developed at length in the earlier chapter "The Man I Killed," was a historical event that happened to him (179). However, the second story strikes the reader as detailed, lifelike, and even plausible. O'Brien therefore rejects the mimetic quality of the second story by denying that it actually happened, even while he depends on its realism to be a synthetic model that accounts for the reality of what happened in his experience of the war. Why else would he include it, if it didn't *seem* like the kind of thing that happens? In his rejection of the second story, he defers the referent of validity and attempts to make the first story, the "happening-truth," more believable. The mimetic, the one that sounds "real," is false, and

so we assume the first is true. Now, I am imposing a true/false binary on these passages, one not necessarily covering fiction's ability to blend these two together. However, O'Brien's own metanarrational admission that some of the stories are false suggests that this is the framework from which we can fairly judge these stories. This framework favoring thematic rather than mimetic or synthetic provides a more plausible context for the use of O'Brien's partial mind discussed above.

Logically, the gambit is the same with the first story. If the second story is one that looks and sounds true, is not literally true, and is true only as a synthetic representation, then there is no reason that those same judgments shouldn't apply to the first story. Or in other words, O'Brien calls the second story *fiction* in order to make the first story sound like the real story that undergirds the fiction—but there is no reason that this should be the case. The only reason that it might be the case is the reader's trust of the O'Brien narrator, a trust already broken when he deceives the reader by denying the second story. The first story, the reader ought to assume, is just as untrue as the second. In this deeper layer of fictionalization, then, the synthetic nature of both stories comes to the fore and is rejected because of the unreliable narrator. To be clear, I am not talking about how the failure of literal occurrence invalidates these stories but about how the appearance of lifelikeness of the second, its mimetic function which O'Brien dubs *synthetic* through his denial of its "actual occurrence," must be a sham just as much for the first as for the second.

Through this double subversion, O'Brien bypasses both mimetic and synthetic functions of narration and leaves the reader with a collection of stories that only seem like they actually occurred. "Seemingness," in fact—a term O'Brien uses throughout the

narrative—is part of the description O'Brien's partially-minded narrator imparts to the stories, as he explains in this passage from "How to Tell a True War Story": "In any war story, but especially a true one, it's difficult to separate what happened from what seemed to happen. What seems to happen becomes its own happening and has to be told that way." He continues by pinpointing the difference between experiencing a story and telling it: "And then afterward, when you go to tell about it, there is always that surreal seemingness, which makes the story seem untrue, but which in fact represents the hard and exact truth as it *seemed*" (71). These lines admit that the narration is always different from the experience and is in fact its own story that does not directly mimic the original experience but that is, nevertheless, true. Hence, a "full" mind is impossible in a context like this one in which perfectly recreating the original experience is impossible. In this light, O'Brien's use of "realism" follows Rothberg's traumatic realism, which "seeks both to construct access to a previously unknowable object and to instruct an audience in how to approach that object" (103). As O'Brien's metacommentary here directs readers' perceptions of his stories, so do those stories change in their way of representing reality, as they become an attempt not to represent what happened literally but what happened experientially. It thereby changes its original happening to a story that evokes that experience while being different from it, or as O'Brien says "become . . . its own happening" (71). Rothberg summarizes this kind of shift: the difference is "*pointing to the real instead of claiming to be the real*" (104, emphasis original). The trauma of O'Brien's real experience in the war transforms in the process of narration; in doing so, only O'Brien's themes can be seen as the part that is faithful to his original experience, since neither the original experience, which O'Brien explicitly denies in the passage

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above, nor the artificial recreation, which I argued above cannot be trusted, points to the real itself.

When *The Things They Carried* underplays mimetic and synthetic functions, it shifts the point of metanarration as well. Instead of the assumption of it as obviously synthetic, a construction that interrupts the baseline of the story, it is part of the thematic fabric of the work. Moreover, the content of O'Brien's metanarration is of a piece with the theme of the experience of war. Such a reading coincides with O'Brien's own admission about the narrative: "I am experimenting not for the joy of experimenting, but rather to explore meaning and themes. . . . I don't like reading books merely for their artifice" (*Anything Can Happen* 269). If synthetic artificiality is involved, it is to further thematic ends. Awareness of O'Brien's narrator as narrator does not surface in all or even most of the instances when he narrates. O'Brien's metanarration also seems genuine, believable, or the word O'Brien cannot get away from, "true." Rather it is those moments, such as his confession that most of the stories are made up, in which the composite narrative's synthetic mix of nonfiction and fiction serves to emphasize the thematic by its explicit rescinding of the validity of the mimetic (179). And so the thematic becomes the dominant representational function in *The Things They Carried*.

As the epigraph to this subsection suggests (even while we know it is not "true"), the "final truth" is the original experience and the meaning inherent it. But since that experience is ultimately unrepresentable, O'Brien's thematic representations, partial mind, and metanarration all aim to reflect that originally experienced reality. Reading *The Things They Carried* through a thematic lens lets the reader engage with the fictional experiences of O'Brien's characters without being concerned that their "falseness"

invalidates them or that their mimicry of actual war events is what grants them value. Instead, the thematic suggests that war is not a unified experience, does not have a clear moral, does not imply a full or undivided mind, and does not fit clean representational categories. It is a composite of experiences and representational techniques, and the attempt at recreating its value is what matters. This same composite approach drives Phil Klay's *Redeployment*, which I take up next. Similar in its use of metanarration, thematic prioritization, and inclusion of partial minds, it builds on the techniques I have identified in *The Things They Carried* by subverting war narrative conventions and clichés of cognitive representation.

III. Rethinking Conventional Representations of War in Phil Klay's *Redeployment*

"Totalization—bringing the layers of war narrative together into a coherent whole—may be not only an impossibility but perhaps also, in some respects, an undesirability."

~ Margot Norris, *Writing War in the Twentieth Century*, 23

III.i. Clichés of War, Clichés of Mind

"Returning veterans appear to be in the second stage of identity development—liminality—and caught between who they knew themselves to be in the military and who they are now that they are in the civilian world."

~ Anne Demers, "When Veterans Return: The Role of Community in Reintegration," 174

Following a plural approach to representation, Phil Klay's short story cycle *Redeployment* reinforces the arguments I have been making that partial minds in war narratives are often represented through psychological *dissociation*. Featuring a different veteran as protagonist in each story, *Redeployment* undertakes the shotgun-style tactic of representation: write many different vignettes briefly rather than one storyline deeply. Such a premise, grounded in the cycle's form of having a design that unifies the different stories, draws readers to thematic rather than mimetic or synthetic functions of narrative.

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That is, because we cannot follow a narrator or character across the pages, we follow themes as the plural logic that holds the cycle together. The content of that thematic focus bears investigation.

As form mirrors function, so does *Redeployment* use the thematic pattern across its different parts to express the *dissociation* of combat. No single unified story, the cycle suggests, can portray war, just as no single or unified mind accurately conveys the experience of soldiers' thoughts. This aim materializes in John Powers's review of *Redeployment*'s style, which sums up the popular view that "[w]ar stories these days tend to be fractured and self-conscious, as if a grand overview would be false" (par. 6). Such a claim about war narratives also confirms Anne Whitehead's argument in her study of trauma fiction that, in addition to "the intensification of conventional narrative modes and methods," trauma narratives employ "a dispersed or fragmented narrative voice" (84). I argue that *Redeployment* depends on the thematic function of representation and the textual technique of partial minds to highlight both the challenge of representing combat mindsets—a problem about which its very engagement affirms its importance and difficulty—and the vague and indefinite *dissociation* of combat mindsets themselves.

Redeployment accomplishes these aims by reacting against stereotypes and clichés about veterans.[111] In reframing the unfair characterizations veterans face, Klay implicitly criticizes synthetic and mimetic approaches to war representation. The synthetic is expressed as the stereotype that over-generalizes from a few valid war experiences, and as we might expect, it is implicitly rejected as a construction which values a simulated representation over an original one. Further discounting a synthetic function, one of Klay's narrators even claims "I'd told everything straight, pretty much,

with a minimum of artifice" (200). On the flip side, however, and less intuitively, devaluing an overly constructed story does not mean that realism is the goal either. The mimetic is expressed as those original experiences themselves, the "unrepresentable" moments, but these fail to carry with them the profound pain and gravity of war when expressed through the standard narrative conventions of realism—recall my discussion of inadequate representations above. Too lifelike to be representative of many instances, mimetic representations are unable to capture war experience. Instead, Klay's method paints a broader stroke that attempts not just to tell narratives but to intervene in a discourse about war by problematizing certain clichés, which I demonstrate shortly. As a result of critiquing both synthetic and mimetic representations, Klay uses a thematic representation of combat experience to disrupt the stereotypes and show their cumulative rejection, not just point out isolated problems. The very rejection of stereotypes or their "true" counterparts is a thematic aim and one which better surveys veterans' actual experiences. This move avoids either over-constructing through stereotypes synthetically or simply mimetically replacing stereotypes with realistic depictions of war experiences. Instead, the thematic function aggregates experiences to represent through a collective effect how the clichés of war may be accurate in some but not all cases.

Representing war experience thematically also develops through Klay's use of partial minds. They often work as an expression of cognitive injuries, especially when the maimed person experiences a mental state less than a full or normal set of thoughts, a state of *dissociation*. One such injury occurs in "War Stories" when the narration brushes against a common cliché of veteran narratives: the account of an injury by the veteran to someone who plans to use that story to "help others." This story takes place in a bar, and

the character narrator's friend Jenks is set up with a pretty woman who is going to interview him about the disfiguring injury he received. Jenks recounts to her the moment an explosion hit him: "Then yeah. Black hitting you, like a knockout punch to the head, no gloves, but the knuckle is bigger than you are, it hits your whole body all at once, and it's on fire. It killed the two other guys in the vehicle . . . And then there are scraps of memories" (226). Jenks's account is about as mimetic as possible, describing the physical sensations and partial mental state of his memory using sensory rather than abstract metaphors, as is typical for conventional representations of the mind. As such, Jenks's narrative employs a standard use of partial minds to describe an experience in which he did not have a normal, continuous flow of thoughts.[112] Although the narration here features standard forms of representation to convey the mental experience of trauma and its aftermath, it also resists the content of stereotypical experiences. The partial mind, those accounts of Jenks' mind during and after his injury, serves the narrative's goal of avoiding predigested, cliché views of PTSD minds.

Redeployment also depends on partial minds to problematize its reaction to other normalized and popularized conceptions of war experience. These often develop the trope of *dissociation*. One of his narrators accounts for his experience of combat this way:

> Somebody said that combat is 99 percent sheer boredom and 1 percent pure terror. . . . the 1 percent pure terror, when your heart rate skyrockets and your vision closes in and your hands are white and your body is humming. You can't think. You're just an animal, doing what you've been trained to do. And then you go back to normal terror, and you go back to being a human, and you go back to thinking. (43)

Thinking is central to the soldier's duty and operations, even while the kind of thinking that soldiers do may make the most sense when articulated here as *not* thinking, a form of *dissociation* and partial mind.[113] Klay's version of war experience is the dialectic of

thinking and *dissociation*, of pure conditioning through automatic responses and the emotions that overwhelm thought. To act without hesitation, soldiers must inhibit some emotions and thoughts, leaving their minds in an altered mental state. The partial mind suggests the challenges of thinking during combat and, as a result, transmit Klay's representation of war to avoid stereotypes.

III.ii. What It's Like: The Body or the Mind

"Theirs is not to reason why,
Theirs is but to do and die."

~ Alfred Lord Tennyson, "The Charge of the Light Brigade," 254

Redeployment confronts the challenge of how to represent body when describing a veteran's experience of war. I argue that this foregrounding of bodies draws out the speech-act of telling itself and the value of witnessing of a story. As a correlate of representing bodily experience through witnessing, the collection questions how to represent the mind. The passages taken up in this subsection answer different problems that combat brings up in relation to the body, such as what it means to shoot a living body or watch it die. As we shall see, that bodily depiction of a range of war experiences often leads to the underrepresentation of the character's mind. *Redeployment* uses the same pattern which I later show is true of representations of Billy Lynn.

The story "After Action Report" positions violence in relation to the body. Ozzie, one of Klay's narrators who is a combatant in Iraq, takes the blame (or credit) for his partner Timhead of shooting a child who fired at them. In the following passage, he struggles to find the right words as he tries to help Timhead process the emotions of shooting the child:

> [Timhead] hardly said anything until we got it off, and then he said, "I shot that kid."

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"Yeah," I said. "You did."

"Ozzie," he said, "you think people are gonna ask me about it?"

"Probably," I said. "You're the first guy in MP platoon to . . ." I stumbled. I was gonna say "kill somebody," but the way Timhead was talking let me know that was wrong. So I said, "To do that. They'll want to know what it's like." (33)

Direct relation of what Timhead did through the words "kill somebody"—while a more accurate account of his kill—is deferred by the narrator to the euphemism "what it's like." Since Ozzie doesn't want to make Timhead feel worse, he cannot confront Timhead with his deed, but the implication is also that there is a problem with talking about killing directly. "What it's like" is how some philosophers describe qualia, the sensory perception of the world. As philosopher Frank Jackson extends the notion, qualia are what people experience yet no amount of physical description can relate (127). When the narrator considers saying "kill somebody" to Timhead, he realizes that the reduction of killing to simply relating the deed itself is completely inadequate to meet the reality of what that felt experience is like. The straightforward phrase "I shot that kid" might express as mimetically as possible the rational thought that Timhead had, but any expression of qualia will fall short of accuracy from a synthetic angle. Moreover, no such expression is given by Timhead, causing the narration to elude a full representation of Timhead's mental state and so indicating his partial mind.

As a result, this story's simple dialogue reveals the difficulty of figuring out how to represent experience when no angle, neither mimetic nor synthetic, seems adequate. The passage thereby underscores *Redeployment*'s rejection of mimetic and synthetic modes of representation. In this underrepresentation of Timhead's mind—we are explicitly prevented from accessing his experience—the narration uses a roundabout account that lets the reader project what Timhead's experience must have been like,

without providing it discursively. A thematic, albeit implied, account relates Timhead's experience of killing the child. This representational style endorses John Powers's weighty assertion that "Klay makes you feel the physical and psychic cost demanded of our soldiers in Iraq" (par. 8). In underrepresenting Timhead's mental state when he killed the child and when he later reflects on it, the narration shows the inadequacy of representation to capture the meaningfulness of that action. Even the thematic approach and inclusion of partial mind only gesture to the qualia of killing in combat.

This theme of owning a kill comes up later in the story "Ten Klicks South." At the beginning, a gun crew has taken out their first target that morning, and they are discussing the attack over lunch. A meek soldier named Jewett, a member of the ammo team, begins to ask the team about the moral implications and subjective importance of their kill. He says, "'But I don't *feel* like I killed anybody. I think I'd know if I killed somebody.' 'Naw,' says Sergeant Deetz, 'you wouldn't know. Not until you'd seen the bodies'" (273 emphasis original). Jewett expects his experience of killing to feel a particular way and to have an intuitive certainty about it. Deetz's response, however, intimates that mind, the seat of cognitive knowledge, is not enough alone. This statement implies that the mind will be partial unless connected to bodies. Jewett will have to see his victim's body in order for the experience to take on certainty, or even for him to have the capacity to know what certainty of killing is like. In making this case, *Redeployment* argues that there are not full minds without bodies, and that on the warfront both are essential for either to make sense. As a result, this story situates the norms of mental representation in the collection as including bodily as well as mental representation.

But bodily representation complicates mental underrepresentation when *Redeployment* uses the trope of *dissociation*. This interference is seen in the most graphically sexual story in *Redeployment*, "In Vietnam They Had Whores," when the character narrator recounts the time he masturbated on the roof of his troop's compound. The story builds sexual tension to that moment as it first reveals that one of the other platoons got herpes by sharing a "pocket pussy," followed by the relation of mortar shelling on the narrator's own platoon, and then the narrator's account of the virility of his erection (122-3). Next, the narrator describes his mental state using a partial mind: "At first I put some tits in my brain and the idea of me fucking someone, anyone, but toward the end *my mind was blank*, just me scratching an itch, and I hear small-arms fire off in another section of the city and I kept jerking, faster and faster, almost coming with the thought floating in, as it always did when I heard gunfire, that maybe somebody I knew was dying" (123, italics added). The narrator's representation of his mind as a blank suggests, for one, that in the moment he was left without a normal or full mental state, that he experienced *dissociation* as lack of thoughts.

But beyond this basic use of a partial mind, the language he uses complicates this straightforward attribution by exhibiting the contradiction of presence and absence peculiar to partial minds. That kind of tension depends on the view that orgasms are objectless, which I support by drawing on Roland Barthes and John Searle. In *The Pleasure of the Text* Barthes structures the relation between *jouissance* and *texte* when he asserts, "The text of bliss is absolutely intransitive" (52). Objectless, the moment of bliss lacks the thing which it is about, its desired target. This formulation coincides with a very different approach, Searle's view that while some thoughts have intentionality, meaning

they have objects which "they are directed at or about," many emotions lack this

intentionality (1). Both Barthes' and Searle's logics consider the mental state of orgasm

as a thought without its requisite object—that bliss consumes the fullness of the mind,

which is otherwise *about* something. The narrator's lack of intentionality during the

orgasm, indicated by his attribution of his mind as "blank," is problematized by the

language he uses to express his thoughts. He claims that the gunfire nearby entered his

mind, which led to the thought that someone might be dying as a result of it. So an

intentional object comes into his thoughts and seems to contradict his claim of a blank,

objectless mind. His mind is thereby represented by him in contradictory ways, both with

intentionality and without it. Such a paradoxical representation *qua* paradoxical

representation indicates a partial mind at the more fundamental level of the *dissociation*

of war preventing even the ability to express his mind in a consistent way.

　　Furthermore, gunfire and others dying, the intentional objects which occupy the

narrator's mind, tie traumatic violence to sexuality. The contradictory representations of

the narrator's mind here associate with violence and suffering, demonstrating through

that association that traumatic combat experiences cannot be expressed through a single

representational function. This use of contradictory representations, as Rothberg might

describe it, forestalls having a referent with one-to-one correspondence from fictional to

real worlds, the attempt of realism (101). Instead, the representational configuration here

opens up several non-compatible ways the scene might be interpreted, suggesting from

each angle a different reduction of mind.

III.iii. Klay's Metanarration as Underrepresentation

"[Traumatic realism] seeks to present the real by representing the fictionality of the realist contract; and it recognizes realist discourse's production of the real as an accidental effect of representation."

> ~ Michael Rothberg, *Traumatic Realism: The Demands of Holocaust Representation*, 105

Like O'Brien's narrative, Klay's employs metanarration to forestall simple expressions of war experience through surface-level uses of mimetic or synthetic functions. Returning to the story "After Action Report," we see Ozzie's understanding of the value of telling stories as he considers his fabrication about taking credit for Timhead's shooting the child, even as Ozzie realizes the story's incorrectness:

> Timhead nodded along. It was bullshit, but every time I told the story, it felt better. Like I owned it a little more. When I told the story, everything was clear. I made diagrams. Explained the angles of bullet trajectories. Even saying it was dark and dusty and fucking scary made it less dark and dusty and fucking scary. So when I thought back on it, there were the memories I had, and the stories I told, and they sort of sat together in my mind, the stories becoming stronger every time I retold them, feeling more and more true. (35)

The stories the narrator references here suggest a complication: he has lied about shooting the child to cover for Timhead, but he is also narrating the ostensibly true account of his own story. The narrator's equation in this metanarration that the true story and the contrived one "sat together in my mind" implies their equal validity. After all, if the repeated narration of a story is able to reduce the fear the narrator feels, a tried and true method of PTSD therapy,[114] then historically true or not, the story has effectual meaning for the narrator. And that rhetorical value appears to be the point, even if the object of the rhetorical gesture is the narrator himself. In saying this, I mean that what matters is neither the mimetic truth—for this story, the fact that Timhead, instead of the narrator, killed the child—nor the synthetic truth—the narrator's claim that he killed the child. Both the mimetic and the synthetic are deprioritized. Instead, what matters is how

the narrator feels when he tells the war story. As a thematic function of narrative in terms of a point or moral which circulates through a narrative, the narration becomes tied up with the experience the narrator has while narrating. As the narrator through metanarration admits that the value of telling the war story is to alleviate his own anxiety, so does that value, its recuperative thematic moral, provide a grounded reason for his rhetorical act of narration.

Metanarration also connects the embodied situation of telling and hearing a narrative to mental underrepresentation. In the story "Psychological Operations," the belligerent veteran character narrator tells Zara, a fellow student at Amherst College with whom he has been arguing, about the time he watched an insurgent die through a thermal scope. He took this action so that the Marine who shot the man didn't have to. Zara interrupts the story:

> "Why'd you look?" Zara asked.
> "Who wouldn't look?" I said.
> "You wanted to see." Her voice was hard, accusing. "Why'd you look?"
> "Why are you here, listening to this story?"
> "You asked me to come here," she said. "You wanted me to hear." (187)

By moving into the frame narrative, the narration breaks away from the moment of killing and death in the story that the character narrator is telling. Klay thereby pries open and draws out the reader's anticipation by frustrating readerly desire for the quick ease and finality of battle and death. The emotional resonance of this moment flares as the interruption of the frame narrative both takes the narration away from the narrator's thoughts at the moment he watched the insurgent die and transfers the narration back to his retrospective self. The narrator's account of his own thoughts while watching the insurgent die is curtailed, making it a partial representation of his mind.

In this scene, the mimetic, synthetic, and thematic functions of narrative interplay into a more complex and perhaps more accurate account of killing and death. The narrator's confrontation by Zara's question both heightens and reinterprets the experience he had of watching the insurgent die. As the embedded narrative is bracketed in favor of the frame, the narrator's thoughts as he experienced them are omitted. Instead, the narration defers to a question related through dialogue—and notably, dialogue is the type of narration in which *story* and *discourse* are closest, most mimetic, because it is the direct relation of words, as in a scene (c.f., Genette 95). Zara's interrupting dialogue is thereby a mimetic function which synthetically replaces the account of the narrator's thoughts that the narrator had been providing of him watching the insurgent die. What's more, the move from representation of the original experience by the narrator to the his later interpretation of the event elides the initial thoughts he had—i.e., "What was it like to watch your enemy die?"—and forces him to account for it in the interpersonal interpellation of the question.[115] Representation of mind in the original is partial and cut off, only to be filled with the narrator's interpretation, thereby using synthetic (frame narrative) to break mimetic (original account) but also using mimetic (dialogue) to break synthetic (retrospective retelling). As this takes place, the dialogue's content forestalls an interpretation of the original event by either narrated thoughts of his narrated self or the narrator's own interpretation of it to Zara; instead, simply hearing the story becomes the implicit point.

Such a referential, metanarrational idea easily slips to implications that the reader herself is observing this story, what might be called (for all intents and purposes) listening and hearing it. Fittingly, Ansgar Nünning points out that metanarration works as

both "authenticating" and "empathy-inducing" (305). The reader, witness to Klay's testimony through his narrator, becomes aware that reading this narrative is the act of emotionally comprehending this work's aggregation of stories that represent the war. And that very aggregation is the basis for their authenticity. Mimetic or synthetic, real or made-up, seems beside the point. The recognition of that key and simple point—that all these stories try to represent the war experience—is the thematic and representational point itself. "You wanted me to hear," Zara says. Like Zara, the reader is not invited into the key moment of the narrator's thoughts as he watched his enemy die, leaving them underrepresented, but rather is invited just to hear the story as witness. The partial mind points away from its own representation. In this way, Klay's narrator uses partial minds as part of his rhetorical strategy which, in ushering the reader into the interpretation simply to listen, forestalls other interpretations of his characters and their minds.

Up to this point, I have argued that both *The Things They Carried* and *Redeployment* present partial minds thematically through metanarration and the form of their collections, among other specific moments of cognitive underrepresentation. These techniques specifically highlight the way combatants describe their experience in *dissociative* terms. Keeping the thread of thematic use of *dissociation*, I now turn to *Billy Lynn*, which develops this kind of partial mind through multiple strategies of narration, including explicit accounts of Billy's mind, experimental cognitive washes, and contrastive pairings of physical and mental realities to express his cognition as a aftereffect of his combat experience. As *Billy Lynn* emphasizes the challenging representations of combatants' and veterans' minds, it adds to all these works' ability to underscore and ramify the mental conflict of veterans' experience of reintegration.

IV. The Trauma of Victory: Billy Lynn's Experimental Partial Mind

"There's a blank moment, then Billy is opening his mouth, he knows what's coming an instant before his mind forms the thought."

> ~ Ben Fountain, *Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk*, 301

IV.i. Representing the Mind of Billy Lynn

"Expressing the inexpressible and symbolizing nothingness are difficult charges for the artist in any medium."

> ~ Pearl James, *The New Death: American Modernism and World War I*, 160

Dubbed as the Iraq War's *Catch-22*,[116] Ben Fountain's novel *Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk* follows war-hero Billy Lynn during a single day at the Dallas Cowboys Stadium. It occurs at the end of a two-week victory tour across the United States, after Billy has taken part in a dangerous and important mission in Operation Iraqi Freedom. Bracketed between his deployment and redeployment, the novel offers an advantageous setting for developing its central question: how does the war mark Billy? Posing in a genre, war narrative, which almost always attempts to represent the experience of war combat, the novel demands a fallout that affects Billy after his dangerous mission.

But Billy's marking does not come through the expected avenues that war narratives typically use to show veterans' trouble with reentry.[117] Instead, it comes through the representations of Billy's mind. This interpretation may not be the obvious one, as Fountain claims that literature, and presumably his own attempts, is about "the sweat and worry and blood and guts and sex and pain and pleasure of it, the down-in-the-dirt human tumble that we're all going through at one time or another" ("Soldiers on the Fault Line" 11). This visceral kind of experience is the subject of *Billy Lynn*, and as such, it is not the kind of work that most would call cerebral or cognitive. Nonetheless, the novel's representation of Billy's mind is very developed. In fact, *Billy Lynn* uses this

"down-in-the-dirt human tumble" to portray war's effects on soldiers by making Billy's experience about cognitive *dissociation*. To convey that unsettled mental state, *Billy Lynn* employs the technique of partial minds. Having engaged in combat, Billy has changed, and part of the twist on the bildungsroman of this novel is that this change occurred before the novel began. So *Billy Lynn* is more about Billy's recognizing, expressing, and acting on that mental change than its introduction. In constructing a narrative that strategically underrepresents Billy's mind in order to better express the trauma of combat, *Billy Lynn* thematizes problems with representing the Iraq War.

Three types of cognitive representation serve my purpose of analyzing the thematic representation of Billy's mind across the novel in order to show that *Billy Lynn* suggests that war trauma challenges conventional representations of mind. All three of these, concerned less with Billy's mind experiencing flashbacks or unbearable memories, are techniques of representing his thoughts which in their form and style convey war's imbrication on Billy's mind as *dissociation*. The first way of representing Billy's mind is through passages when his thoughts are explicitly characterized with unusual or exceptional mental states, ones which breach the norms of representing characters' minds (IV.ii). The second is through non-conventional[118] sections with expanded formats that merge what he hears with what he thinks (IV.iii). The third is through the development of tension between physical and mental worlds, in which the physical dominates Billy's experience and leads to the subordination of his mind into a partial representation (IV.iv). All three of these kinds of representation indicate that Billy's mind is partial and contribute to the larger theme of war's disruption of thought.

Before addressing those kinds of representation, I want to avoid the hasty move of diagnosing Billy with PTSD, while still allowing that he has been affected by traumatic events in war combat.[119] Indeed, labeling veterans and checking boxes next to a list of symptoms runs counter to my larger argument that cognitive representations are more than just mimetic, one-to-one correspondences between the real and fictional worlds. Over-diagnosing also runs counter to the frustration articulated by veterans in many war novels from being stereotyped by the media. Let me briefly show how the DSM-5's four "clusters" of symptoms for PTSD do not align with Billy's condition; they include "re-experiencing, avoidance, negative cognitions and mood, and arousal" ("Posttraumatic Stress Disorder" 1). First, while Billy certainly remembers key moments from his tour in Iraq during his time at the Cowboys stadium, he does not seem to have "spontaneous" recollections but rather associative ones which can hardly be called "flashbacks," except in a technical narratological sense of analepses, a condition of the *discourse* rather than Billy's actual mind in the *story*. As such, he does not strongly fit the first criterion of re-experiencing. The second criterion of avoidance, too, fails to characterize Billy. Admittedly, he doesn't dwell on Bravo's "heroic" deeds, but that neglect is not obsessive. The third criterion depends on blaming others or becoming uninterested in his work, but Billy's breakneck day at the Cowboys stadium gives him no opportunity to be accusatory or bored. Finally, because the fourth criterion of arousal suggests "self-destructive behavior" ("Posttraumatic Stress Disorder" 1), Billy could be counted as meeting this one, considering his encounter with Faison and the fight with rowdies at the end of the novel. But really, the novel does not have enough examples of this behavior to come to a sure diagnosis. Billy hardly fits the profile of someone with PTSD.

My point here is that while most soldiers who engage in combat are likely to experience challenging emotional situations and even varying degrees of trauma, not all experience PTSD. Coady B. Lapierre, Andria F. Schwegler, and Bill J. LaBauve concede that only 15-17% of Iraq War veterans experience PTSD (933). Besides, PTSD is determined by its symptoms more than its precipitating event (a point reiterated by McNally [10]), so while Billy might have experienced an event in combat that would have been strong enough to cause PTSD, without evidence of his symptoms, in the realm of fiction there is not always enough information to propose such a diagnosis. As I work through this analysis of Billy's partial mind, I show that Billy stands as a combatant returned from the war who does not have PTSD but still thematically evinces the trope of *dissociation* as the standard for representing battlefield trauma.

IV.ii. Fountain's Experiment in Cognitive Representation: A Thematic Form of Partial Minds

"What we mean by consciousness is actually the entire area of mental attention, which includes the gradations leading to unconsciousness as well as the state of complete awareness."
> ~ Melvin Friedman, *Stream of Consciousness: A Study in Literary Method*, 3

"[T]he more experimental forms emerging out of postmodernist and postcolonial fiction offer the contemporary novelist a promising vehicle for communicating the unreality of trauma, while still remaining faithful to the facts of history."
> ~ Anne Whitehead, *Trauma Fiction*, 87

One key way *Billy Lynn* draws attention to its protagonist's mind is through several unusually formatted sections of the novel in which Billy's thoughts are represented through an experimental use of *direct thought* (see Appendix 3 for reproductions). Usually less than a whole page and evocatively visual, these sections depict Billy's mind as experiencing psychological *dissociation*, indicative of his time in

combat. *Dissociation* denotes the disrupted functioning of mind which, as it appears in these cognitive representations, implies both that his mind is simply void of thoughts and that it maintains a nonnormal and barely conscious mental state. For ease of reference, I am calling these sections *cognitive washes*, since they operate like a watercolorist's wash to establish a basic background of Billy's mental state, even while they are vague enough that they do not entail a one-to-one linguistic transcription of Billy's mind. In this indeterminate status, they combine words heard by Billy using partial *thought report* (they present only fragments of sentences) and *direct thought* (all the words are not Billy's linguistic thoughts). This complexity not only offers an experimental technique for representing consciousness, but it delivers the baseline of Billy's cognitive norms in the novel as he naturalizes the trauma of war into the distractions of the football game. These norms rest on a higher degree of verbalization of thought than many other novels use. And yet, as we shall see, Billy's thoughts do not always reduce to verbal transcriptions. Cognitive washes as a baseline of mental representation construct a frame from which we can judge that Billy's mind is partial.

Reviews of *Billy Lynn* by and large undervalue the cognitive washes but note their focus on mind. Perryman calls the first cognitive wash "a babel of emotions and random thoughts" (239). Or as Geoff Dyer permits, they "mime Billy's dispersed attention" but "to little purpose" (par. 3). A close consideration of the cognitive washes, however, reveals them to be a reservoir of assumptions about the effect of war on the mind. Particularly, they emphasize Ernest Hartmann's theory that for some veterans the boundaries which separate emotions, memories, and personality traits in the mind are more fluid after traumatic experiences (125). This boundary-crossing is exactly the

impression of Billy's mind expressed by the cognitive washes. But rather than mimetically representing Billy's thought process, the cognitive washes avoid the representational functions of both verisimilitudinous cognition and excessive artificiality. Following *The Things They Carried* and *Redeployment*, this shift in function lets them instead thematically indicate the *dissociation* with reality that Billy's encounter in Iraq effected in his mind. There are ten cognitive washes, and their fairly even spread throughout the novel highligts their thematic and intentional use.[120] In this subsection, I close read several of the cognitive washes, noting how the they are the *discursive* attempt to naturalize Billy's remembered experience of combat into his experience in the *story*. I then analyze the sections as a group for their influence and development of Billy's partial mind. This interpretation proposes that the story of the novel itself is the narrative of Billy's changing mind, and only to a lesser extent the fate of the Bravos.

The first cognitive wash fills half of the second page of the novel, identifying it early-on as a thematic trope (see Appendix 3, Figure 1). It occurs while Billy listens to "a pale, spongy Twinkie of a human being" ramble about the military. After Billy "let the words whirl and tumble around his brain" (1), the first cognitive wash immediately follows. As if to explain the odd formatting, emphasized by the odd spellings such as "currj" (2), the narrative reveals that Billy is patently drunk, having had five jack-and-cokes, which have left him in what the narrator kindly dubs "a gnarled, secret funk" (2). It may be easy to write-off this first wash as a result of inebriation; nevertheless, the repetition of cognitive washes in the novel as a whole demands a second look at their implications for his mind. It could be that Billy's drunken state makes the unusual format

of the initial cognitive wash more palatable to the unsuspecting reader and that another

meaning stems from their aggregation.

In fact, the first cognitive wash fixes Billy with a partial mind. The increased

spacing and merging of sounds into a mental dialect that goes beyond just representing

speech slurs, such as the repeated reference to 9/11 as "nina leven" (2), do more than

expand typographical space. They force the reader to notice the long gaps between

words—such as the space seen between "Bush" and "values" (2)—as if the monologue

that Billy is listening to, occurring in the *story*, were inaccessible to the reader in the

discourse. That is, we expect to get all the words of a speaker in dialogue, so the

sparseness of words suggests that readers are prevented from accessing the whole speech.

Left out is the (ostensibly, irrelevant) dialogue from the "Twinkie man." More than a

grand ellipsis, what remains is a linguistically-altered peek into Billy's dizzy mind,

containing the most relevant words that surface to conscious awareness: "nina leven"

occurs the most often (2). The places in which words do not appear, "white space," may

be an attempt to synthetically represent Billy's mind as partial. He is not fully aware, and

so in suggesting his inattention or daze, they stand for lapses in linguistically-

representable thought, space without words in which whatever content fills his mind is

not clear enough to be put to words.[121] In this sense, the first wash presents only a partial

representation of Billy's mind.

Let me briefly pause to make a narratological point that will help clarify this

passage. These cognitive washes make the most sense as *discourse*'s attempt to

recuperate the *story*. Since the *story* is the original experience, it is not initially

represented by text alone. All experience—what David Herman identifies as

phenomenological experience, or what-it's-like, as one of the four basic elements of narrative (9)—is found in the *discourse*. In my reading of narrative, that attempt to represent lived experience can be modeled as the recuperative attempt of the *discourse* to express the subjectively experienced *story*. The *discourse* tries to represent the phenomenology of the *story*, and it thereby employs the mimetic, synthetic, and thematic functions of narrative in order to accomplish that representation. While standard conventions for representing the physical world arguably differ little when a narrator attempts to be objective (e.g., a red couch can be described only in so many ways until the narrator is really trying to describe not the couch but a certain perception of that couch), ways of representing the mind have numerous similar and sometimes overlapping, but still different, techniques for relating subjective experience. So, putting it all together, how do these techniques for representing the mind express in the *discourse* what Billy experienced in the *story*?

They represent Billy's experience as a partial mind which does not completely recuperate the phenomenology of the *story*. My argument about partial minds has explained that when authors do not provide the full expectation of a character's thoughts in the *discourse*, they are conferring on their characters' minds an underrepresented degree of cognition in order to explain some root experience from the *story*. Most of the time, meeting unstated assumptions, characters' minds are represented fully, but sometimes certain clues in those variations of mental representation imply a lesser representation. This is the case with Billy's mind in the cognitive washes: rather than providing the standard, objective account of the Twinkie man's monologue and then Billy's reaction to it in *direct thought*, *thought report*, or *free indirect discourse*, the

narrator erases most of the monologue, distorts some of the words typographically, modulates the words to reflect Billy's perspective, and blankets it all with white space to try to bridge *story* and *discourse*. But the attempt emphasizes the divide between *story* and *discourse* through Billy's partial mind, because this array of techniques exhibits the very problem of putting the experience of Billy's mind—not being able to think fully or clearly—to words. This occurs through the thematic function of representation.

That problem, by implication, suggests the failure of mimetic representation to convey the literal experience, since a literal expression would completely represent the experience. Turning Billy's experience to words also indicates the failure of synthetic representation to convey a stylized version of that experience. In giving up these, the theme at stake—the disrupted state of Billy's mind—is the goal of this style of representation. Cognitive washes in *Billy Lynn*, as repeated incursions of a mental state that suggests psychological *dissociation*, are employed through the technique of partial minds.

The second cognitive wash, containing patriotic language and contrasting sharply with the events going on around it, conveys Billy's attempt to understand his experience in combat (see Appendix 3, Figure 2). This incursion is inserted right after the crowd cheers as the names of Bravo Company, Billy's comrades, have burst onto the Dallas Cowboys' Jumbotron. Billy's realization that the Cowboys fans are treating him like a hero, not a "baby-killer," frames the words included in this wash (38). On a basic level, the wash functions to develop Billy's character through the irony between his skeptical thoughts and the public accolades he is receiving.[122] But rather than merely repeat the form of the first wash, this one indicates more than Billy's linguistically-distorted

thoughts of what someone else is saying (as, for example, "*soooh-preeeeme* sacrifice" [38]). Certainly, some of the words are ones we would expect to hear from the announcer as he congratulates the Bravos—such as "hero," "sacrifice," and "values"—but others seem to be Billy's own association—such as "Eye-rack," "Bush," and "Osama" (38). Repeating words from the first wash like "terrRr" and "nina leven," the second wash also repeats the unusual representation of words. But in taking on phonetic pronunciations that turn the war-charged language into other innocuous words (for example, "Eye-rack" and "Eaaaar-*rock*" [38]), the second wash produces signs of increased mental confusion and *dissociation*. These transformations express how Billy's mind is pushing away from the language attendant to war and is trying to naturalize his experience of the location abroad where his trauma took place into his present location at the Dallas Cowboys stadium. The stadium itself resembles a faux war zone, adding to the associations at play. Partial minds in the first cognitive wash stood for Billy's dazed sense of zoning out, but in addition to that meaning, in the second wash they stand for how Billy's mind is only partially allowing thoughts of his time in combat to filter through to his consciousness.

Furthermore, this particular wash evidences Billy's trouble handling the emotions of others. Quantitative studies by political scientists Morten Brænder and Lotte Bøgh Andersen demonstrate that going to war, on average, makes people less compassionate, arguing that "seeing suffering does not make it easier to identify with those who suffer. Actually, distancing oneself emotionally makes it easier to cope with the suffering" (473). Note, however, that this point is not the third criterion of PTSD, which I discounted above as a diagnosis of Billy. Rather, this cognitive wash poses Billy's mind not only as represented less fully than expected, but also as represented with fewer

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empathetic emotions like compassion. This omission is apparent immediately after this cognitive wash, as "Billy finds these encounters weird and frightening all the same. There's something harsh in his fellow Americans, avid, ecstatic, a burning that comes of the deepest need. That's his sense of it, they all need something from him" (38). His thoughts continue to ferment, building to a sardonic tone: "His ordeal becomes theirs and vice versa, some sort of mystical transference takes place and it's just too much for most of them" (39). The inclusion of others' words into Billy's own thoughts in the cognitive washes, coupled with his waning compassion for those civilians whom he recognizes need compassion from him, hint that the format of the cognitive wash emphasizes how little compassion Billy actually shows others. It is as though we readers are privilege to just how little he is paying attention at the same time that we gain access to the muddled confused tenor of his thoughts.[123]

Following this focus on access to the fifth cognitive wash concerning Billy's encounter with Faison, we see again the questioning of how mimetic readers are to take the novel's events (see Appendix 3, Figure 3). War narratives often involve a close correspondence to believable plots in order to add to their rhetorical buy-in by appearing to directly represent historical war events. But representing Billy's fantastic relationship with Faison, the cheerleader with whom Billy falls in love, entails synthetic, stylized elements. The fifth and sixth washes demonstrate this constructedness. They appear in an early conversation with Faison and are even introduced with a mood of unreality: "At the moment she's telling him how much his comments at the press conference meant to her, but he barely hears, so absorbed is he in the beautiful shapes her mouth makes as it forms the words" (148). Her body becomes dissociated from her words, which in turn become

both dissociated from and merged with Billy's thoughts. In the fifth wash, Billy is so entranced by Faison, he doesn't even register her expressions of gratitude for his sacrifice (e.g., "*acks* of *sack*-rih-*fice*" [148]).

The sixth wash occurs just two pages later, part of the same conversation, this time relating Faison's Christian message to Billy (151-2). Her words—including "*God-ly*" (151), "goodness and light," and "died for us" (152)—merge into Billy's mind in the cognitive wash, which appears to exclusively concern her Christian faith, with the possible sexual double entendre with the last three disconnected words, "Oh my Lord" (152). This wash occurs at a pivotal threshold in the story, a gateway into the dream-world scene when Billy and Faison embrace behind the backdrop.[124] Despite Billy's mental incredulity while they are kissing—in *direct thought*, he thinks, "*Holy shit! I'm making out with a Dallas Cowboys cheerleader!* (154)—the whole storyline with Faison connotes an implausible, heterosexual male fantasy, built up by the subjects of cheerleaders, patriotic soldiers, and "America's team," nickname of the Cowboys. Perryman, for one, discounts Billy's encounter with Faison as "an improbably orchestrated scene" (240). Or as Janet Maslin says about unlikely parts of the novel more broadly: "some aspects of that game day are clearly fictitious" (par. 12). How are readers to interpret these unbelievable sections between Billy and Faison, especially in a genre that depends strongly on believability, if not historical actuality?

Rather than see this storyline as a synthetic, contrived representation, we might see Billy's encounter with Faison as a thematic rejection of the typical physical injuries that are considered conditions of being a war combatant. In line with Klay's rejection of clichés discussed above, the subversion of this stereotype showcases Billy's mental,

rather than physical, trauma, since it makes obvious that he is injured neither physically nor sexually, but mentally. Though he has trouble being compassionate as I have noted, as a veteran he is so normal and successful from the perspective of civilians that he gives a speech that impresses one of the Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders enough that she fulfills his fantasy (149). But this fantasy does not draw attention to Billy's synthetic status, notwithstanding Phelan's caution that the synthetic function "though always present, may be more or less foregrounded" (*Reading People* 3). Rather, it avoids being overly synthetic because in using the genre of heterosexual male fantasy, Billy's constructed status is normalized by fitting into the conventions of that genre. Or in other words, though unlikely, the fantasy of Billy hooking up with a Dallas Cowboys Cheerleader is easily accepted by the audience because it is a known plot in the popular imagination. Furthermore, it suggests that Billy is pushed into a new normal because of the war. The seemingly fantastic and synthetic aspects of his day at the Cowboys stadium are naturalized into the thematic norms of the novel, aided in part by the change in Billy's consciousness connoted by the cognitive washes.

So, to reach a conclusion about the fifth and sixth washes, I reiterate the key question of this novel: how does the war mark Billy? Only his mind has been affected, an assertion which this section of the novel verifies by discounting other reasons. In that sense, it should not be taken mimetically—i.e., Billy's fulfilled fantasy with Faison imitates an actual occurrence that we might think is likely to literally happen to a veteran. Neither should it be taken synthetically—i.e., in Phelan's original sense, that this moment draws attention to the narrative's constructed artificial nature (2). Rather, Billy's fantasy ought to be understood thematically—its purpose from the point of view of isolating the

novel's main point is to show that Billy is fine, except for the confusion and *dissociation* of his personal thoughts, marks which no one but the reader can see.

Continuing the trend of representing Billy for the reader alone, the eighth wash[125] spans five pages and, interrupted several times by Billy's thoughts represented in *thought report*, expresses Billy's mind as partial (203-7) (see Appendix 3, Figure 4). This whole wash is the typographically-distorted transcription of the singing of "The Star-Spangled Banner" opening the football game. Although during the song Billy begins by "mak[ing] it a point to think about Shroom and Lake and the hot red blur of that terrible day," he quickly regresses to watching Faison, telling himself, "*Dude, she was into you*" (204 emphasis original). Billy's mind continues to lose focus as the lyrics, represented through his cognitive wash, become less standard (e.g., "Bah-ha-neeerrrrrrrrr yeh-het waaaa-eh-eh- aaaaaaavvve" for "banner yet wave" [206]). This regression finally reaches the point in which Billy admits that "being a soldier is accepting that your body does not belong to you" (206). Billy's sense of cognitive self-estrangement during the anthem concludes, as his mind loses clarity, with the revelation that his physical self is not his own. Building on that physical rejection, the unusual end of the cognitive wash cuts off the full representation of Billy's mind. The anthem, channeled through Billy's mind in the cognitive wash, remains unfinished in the *discourse*, as if Billy's own thoughts have been intentionally left out of the narrative.[126] As Nevine El Nossery and Amy L. Hubbell, supporting McNally's viewpoint, allege about those who suffer trauma, "While some victims incessantly repeat their traumatic experience, others emphasize the silence that has overwhelmed them" (9). If the cognitive washes are linguistic expressions of other people's speech as channeled by Billy's dazed mind, then the omission of the final word

of the song in this longest and most developed wash is another instance of Billy's mind being less than fully represented, a partial mind that does not include the expected closure.

Billy's mind and the problem of how to express his traumatic combat experience are central to *Billy Lynn*'s narrative and themes, evidenced by the considerable page-space filled by cognitive washes and their fairly even distribution throughout the novel. That is, that the story of the novel is itself the narrative of Billy's changing mind, and only to a lesser extent the fate of the Bravos. When these sections distort the normal conventions for dialogue, they become the Billy's focalized perception of that dialogue. They stand out, since Fountain could have instead used a more conventional approach of relating Billy's thoughts while including excerpts in a normal format for these speeches. The rhetorical choice to distort characters' words through Billy's mind highlights the mentality of Billy—the phenomenological experience of being his mind with its attendant thoughts, feelings, and dispositions. It further indicates that Billy's experience is at root about the quality of his thoughts and that those thoughts are evidence for a partial mind. Billy's partial mind emphasizes how his traumatic combat experience has not struck his brain with PTSD but has changed his experience of the world so that all his thoughts are not in the moment, fully-minded, but return to the hazy attempt of making sense of his experience in combat, an experience which itself overwhelmed his mind. While anyone with consciousness might at times not be "fully minded," Billy's representations specifically suggest not just that he is a partial mind at one particular moment, but that the trauma of combat has thematically depicted his mind as partial across the events of *Billy Lynn*.

IV.iii. Billy's Explicit and Implicit Representations of *Dissociation*

"Mr. Fountain makes Billy naïve enough to be surprised by this but smart enough to know that his only reality that matters is the kind raging inside his head."

~ Janet Maslin *New York Times* Book Review, par. 7

"In works where the artificiality or the synthetic nature of characters is more overt, thematic dimensions get developed into functions somewhat differently: the representative quality of the traits or ideas will usually be explicitly revealed in the action or the narrative discourse."

~ James Phelan, *Reading People, Reading Plots: Character, Progression, and the Interpretation of Narrative*, 13

Accounts of Billy's mind often lead to self-aware reflections on thinking. Billy reviews his time at war several times, and the focalization of those thoughts often represents the recollected Billy's mind in moments of combat as a partial mind. These self-reflections tend to relate Billy's traumatic war experience as some kind of *dissociation*.

Billy Lynn explicitly foregrounds the trope of *dissociation* in order to represent the mental experience of war combat. This type of partial mind fleshes out what I alluded to in Chapter 1 as the explicit mode of representing the partial mind, containing cases in which the terms used to characterize the mind overtly suggest an incomplete or altered mental state. I now turn to a contingent of these outright descriptions of Billy's mind which develop and nuance that partial mind and the theme of *dissociation.* Although some might see *Billy Lynn* as not particularly cognitive or cerebral, as this subsection argues, there are numerous accounts of Billy's mind which thematically present it as an object that Billy considers and that improvise representations of the trope of *dissociation*. I begin, after a quick example of explicit representation, by explaining *dissociation* in more detail, followed by the identification of several times when the novel is explicit in the representation of *dissociation* of Billy's mind, some of which operate at key turning

points in the novel. Finally, I consider key moments when both explicit and implicit

methods of representation are employed together in characterizing Billy with a partial

mind.

Although expressions for psychological *dissociation* are common among English

idioms for inattention or carelessness (e.g., "I'm sorry, I wasn't thinking"), *Billy Lynn*

headlines many of these expressions of absentmindedness as suggestive not of Billy's

carelessness but of trauma's effect on the mind.[127] For example, early in the novel Billy

replies to a question from a reporter about his experience at Al-Ansakar Canal when his

friend Shroom died: "'I'm not sure,' he answered. 'Mainly it was just this sort of road

rage feeling. Everything was blowing up and they were shooting our guys and I just went

for it, I really wasn't thinking at all'" (3). Billy claims that during one of the most

riveting experiences of his life, he experienced a *dissociation* of his mind in which he

couldn't think, only act. The name of his friend Shroom, too, coincidentally suggests a

mind-altering drug, furthering the novel's subtle but definite cognitive focus. Moreover,

Billy's memories of Shroom are central to the development of his character, as I shall

highlight later. In this example, *Billy Lynn* uses an expression of absentmindedness to

describe trauma he faced in the warzone.

At this point, the form of partial mind which I have called *dissociation* requires

further explanation. It involves both a certain way of thinking and a perceived degree of

mental content. Combat often requires soldiers *not* to think reflexively, which is not to

say that their brains stop processing in intelligent ways but that they must intuitively learn

when to intentionally not think beyond behavioral responses. Clinical tests by Michael

Anderson and Collin Green suggest, as McNally interprets them, that when subjects are

asked *not* to think of an emotional word and an unrelated associate one, they "found it harder to recall this associate when told to do so" (McNally 150).[128] Intentionally avoiding thinking implies the ability of the mind to marshal its resources toward protecting itself by forgetting and partitioning the mind. Soldiers need focus for their actions to be unimpeded by doubt, for protection against the horrors they behold, for becoming part of the hive mind of an operating unit. Embedded in this need, though, lies the critique that this absence of thought carries past the combat zone into the later reality of reintegration into society, where the failure to think becomes a liability rather than an asset. Billy's claim that he could not think in the warzone, a tribute to his skill and success and which he confesses to the reporters several times, highlights how avoiding thought—which in narratological terms is having only a partial mind—might be a needed safeguard of both experiencing and thinking about the trauma of combat. *Dissociation* often demands the evasion of certain thoughts.

For example, when a different reporter asks Billy what "inspired" Bravo's courageous mission, Billy's spoken answer explicitly describes his combat experience as not having thoughts, a form of *dissociation*. In his response, full of stumbles and hedges, Billy concludes to the reporter, "[I]t was pretty clear we had to do something. We all know what they do with their prisoners, you can go into any street market over there and buy these videos of what they do. So I guess that was on my mind, *in the back of my mind, not like I clearly had a conscious thought about it.* There wasn't much time to think about anything, really. I guess my training just kicked in" (136, italics added). Billy's answer to what caused Bravo to perform their heroic mission reduces his agency to behavioral response—training and conditioning. But most important in Billy's answer is

that these behaviors were done without thinking about them, as the italicized clause

indicates. Billy reflects on his experience in battle as a series of actions without will, with

no executive consciousness setting his body in motion. McNally strongly argues in favor

of the clinical evidence claiming that conditioned responses which recall traumatic events

are almost always conscious, self-aware processes, rather than nonconscious ones (32).

Billy is both conscious and self-aware as he narrates his own story to the reporter, but

when representing his agency during combat, he finds no other way to describe his

mental state than as a void. This act is Billy's mimetic representation of himself as a

partial mind. Billy is aware enough to realize that normal thinking must be discarded in

order to tell his war story. But the interpretation stretches deeper. As I have established

that Billy is represented by the novel as a partial mind, his self-reflective narration here of

himself as a partial mind doubles that characterization. As a result of combat, Billy is a

partial mind as he talks to the reporters in the Cowboys' stadium, but he also represents

himself in partial terms. This doubling emphasizes the extent to which war narratives go

in order to account for the nearly unrepresentable experience of trauma in combat.

Passages explicitly about the mind often show Billy's developing understanding

of his ethical self-doubts as a soldier. For example, *thought report* communicates Billy's

fears: "I'm a good soldier, he tells himself, aren't I a good soldier? So what does it mean

when a good soldier feels this bad? . . . what exactly does it mean to be scared out of your

mind" (114, no question mark concluding the original). A good soldier possesses an

implicit mental profile, he believes, one that does not allow for breakdowns. But Billy's

actual combat experience, in conflict with this belief of the good soldier's mindset,

indicates warzone behavior entails moments when control and composure are breached

by emotions like fear. *Dissociation*, once again, does not mean he has no thoughts while in battle but that he forestalls meeting the expectations he has been taught about how a soldier is supposed to think. He *does* think, but those thoughts are the disruption of normal thoughts, of controlled thoughts, implicit in the idiom "scared out of your mind."

A number of scenes further express, from Billy's perspective, the aware mind as suppressed during combat. One focalized association of Billy's thoughts illustrates his views about the war: "That's how the war feels now, it is at most a presence or pressure on his mind, awareness without content, an experiential doughnut hole" (71). Immediately following this rumination, his mind leaps back to whether or not he and the Bravos will be meeting the group Destiny's Child at the halftime show, curtailing the mental representation and suggesting his inability to mull further on the absent mentality of war. In another example of explicit description of the voided war mind, when Billy meets with the Cowboys' players, one of them asks him, "So what it do, you know, yo' M4. When you pop somebody.' Billy laughs, not that it's funny. It's not anything, in fact. He wonders if nothing's an actual feeling or just nothing" (177). These explicit instances of *dissociation* when he seems to not think or feel are more than just idioms for good focus on the battlefield; there are too many of them used to describe Billy's thinking when he was in combat. Instead, as an explicit form of partial mind, they express combat as moments when Billy did not think normally due to trauma.

Often, overt references to the mind transition from analepses back into the novel's present, locating them at thematic turning points. Billy recalls the time he talked with Mr. Whaley, an oil tycoon, while spending time with his family. After that scene is recorded, the narrator focalizes on Billy's reflections:

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> Billy had been trying to avoid a certain thought, a realization born of his recent immersion in the swirl of limos, luxury hotels, fawning VIPs; he knew intuitively the thought would bring him down and so it did, mushrooming into awareness despite all best efforts. Mr. Whaley was small-time. He wasn't rich, he wasn't particularly successful or smart, he even exuded a sad sort of desperate shabbiness. Mr. Whaley will return to the forefront of Billy's mind on Thanksgiving Day as he hobs and nobs at the Cowboys game with some of Texas's wealthiest citizens. (90-1)

Direct reference to thought at these transitional junctures—what Rick Altman calls "modulations," or the narrative mechanism that creates a shift in perspective (23)—shows that thoughts are thematic to *Billy Lynn*'s plot. But not just any thoughts. Billy's intentional avoidance of the thought in this passage (which readers, like Billy, do not have access to) suggests his mind's push away from accepting his thoughts as they come, almost a rebellion within his own mind. And yet, that very rejection is the mechanism which drives the novel forward, the analepsis at a turning point.

Not all references to Billy's mind are completely explicit, since some employ an array of representational techniques to convey *dissociation*. The best of these implicit examples resides at the emotional crux of the novel: Billy's attempt to accept Shroom's death. When he discusses the incident with Pastor Rick, the religious token in the novel whose text messages Billy continually dismisses, he dramatizes the turbulent path of working through his feelings about watching Shroom die. They are given a developed expression here that ultimately relies on partial representation. Shroom was Billy's comrade and mentor, the man who gave him books to read and shared his enjoyment of knowledge, someone who expanded Billy's mind. The passage is framed analeptically by Billy's paraphrased account of Shroom's death to Pastor Rick. Billy then tells Rick,

> "When he died, it's like I wanted to die too." But this wasn't quite right. "When he died, I felt like I'd died too." But that wasn't it either. "In a way it was like the whole world died." Even harder was describing his sense that Shroom's death

might have ruined him for anything else, because when he died? when I felt his
soul pass through me? I loved him so much right then, I don't think I can ever
have that kind of love for anybody again. (218)

Several textual techniques are notable here. Billy's tripartite starting-and-stopping

attempt to explain his thoughts relates both the deep emotional impact Shroom's death

had on him and his inability to exactly describe how he felt at the time and why it

matters. According to Billy's statements and thoughts in the passage, Shroom's death in

Billy's mind connects to his own death and to the death of value itself. Everything else

after that moment became less important. Billy's emotions concerning Shroom's death

express the rupturing of his faith in his system of values.

The progression and choice of techniques for representing this emotional

realization says something not just about the content of Billy's feelings, but about the

state of Billy's mind. That progression begins as the narration moves from paraphrase in

the paragraph preceding the one quoted to the three direct quotations in the passage itself.

Those three direct quotations indicate the incremental progression of Billy's realization,

showing the instability and unresolved thread of his thoughts. He is working out what he

thinks, but the narration employs other techniques to pry open the process of his

uncertainty becoming certainty. *Free indirect discourse* or *psycho-narration* (the line

may be taken either way due to its ambiguous construction) is used to express the first

line of Billy's thoughts that follow the last direct quotation of his three attempts to put his

thoughts in definite words. Either of these two ways of reading that line ("Even harder

was describing his sense that Shroom's death might have ruined him for anything else,

because when he died?") involves recourse to the third person, which contrasts with the

rest of that run-on sentence. But *thought report*, representing his feelings in first person

(reminiscent of the tripartite first-person quotation just explained) governs the rest of the quotation ("when I felt his soul pass through me? I loved him so much right then, I don't think I can ever have that kind of love for anybody again"). The movement between the last two techniques for representing Billy's mind (*free indirect discourse* and *thought report*) involves a mid-sentence shift by the narration at this key moment of emotional revelation. Completing the emotional development, which began with Billy's dialogue in the previous sentence, by employing first the narrator's gloss of his thoughts followed by Billy's first-person thoughts, suggests that Billy's mental voice was necessary to complete the narrator's revelation of Billy's feelings about Shroom's death. This implies that Billy's mind is partial, pieced together from the narrator's construction and paraphrase.

This textual progression of techniques for representing Billy's thoughts indicates the need for many methods to represent Billy's mind, since no single one appears to be adequate—the same strategy used by *The Things They Carried* and *Redeployment*. As the dialogue's confessional tone mirrors the first-person *thought report* to which the narrator finally turns, so does the broad range of techniques, contained in the tightly-knitted composition of this passage, show that no single method on its own can represent how Billy's experience of Shroom's death is re-interpreted in this moment. His thoughts at the time of Shroom's death are critical to making sense of his current situation, but they are represented in a variety of ways that ultimately avoid full representation. As a result, Billy's partial mind relies not just on explicit accounts of how he describes his thoughts but on the very inadequacy of textual techniques for expressing his thoughts, whether remembered or worked-through in the present. Furthermore, the inadequacy of his

memory is also a likely reason for resorting to a spectrum of techniques. This passage

exemplifies McNally's summation about memory recall accuracy: the main idea is

remembered, but the details are forgotten (57). Partial minds are a necessary part of

representing memory, especially traumatic memories. In the absence of what we would

expect lie the conditions for his partial mind. The narrator's wide-ranging attempts to

represent his mind in faithful ways, using the textual techniques available for attempting

to get a more genuine representation, cannot overcome the fact that representing Billy's

mind entails showing how it is only partial, how sense-making has been curtailed. Rather

than the narrator's attempts to recover Billy's mind working, then, they only serve to

emphasize his partial-mindedness.

IV.iv. Physical Reality Versus Mental Reality

"Abstraction versus sense-datum: these are the two poles of a dialectic of war,
incomprehensible in their mutual isolation, which dictate dilemmas of representation
navigable only by formal innovation, as we have seen, and not by any stable narrative
convention."
     ~ Frederic Jameson, "War and Representation," 1547

From start to finish, *Billy Lynn* maintains a focus on Billy's mind by the explicit

descriptions of his mind and the cognitive washes. This emphasis suggests that Billy's

mind is a key factor in relating his experience. But the physical world competes with the

mind for the novel's most influential representation. Numerous sensory descriptions in

the novel initiate this challenge: the gargantuan stadium, the pheromonal sexual

encounter with Faison, the emphasis on the football players' athletic bodies, the pomp of

interviews and speeches with the press, the vastness of the Cowboys' equipment room,

the overwhelming stimulation of the pregame "Star-Spangled Banner" and halftime

performance by Destiny's Child, and more distantly, Billy's recall of combat in Iraq. This

excess of sensory details seems to overshadow the interior development of Billy's mind. And favoring the physical world appears to have been Fountain's goal, as described in an interview: "*Billy Lynn* seemed to call for an in-your-face sort of overloading of image and pace and rhythm" (Lawrence 93). With so many sensory forces affecting Billy, the novel's representation of Billy's experience vacillates between the description of physical events and Billy's interior experience of them. As *Billy Lynn* develops this tension between physical and mental worlds, the physical dominates Billy's experience, marginalizing his mind into a partial representation. As a result, this tension projects that representations of veterans' minds often become represented only partially due to the overwhelming force with which the sensory world intervenes in the mental world.

The physical world, often expressed through pop culture and in tension with cognitive representations, develops the theme of *dissociation* as a descriptor of combat experience. Juxtaposing both representations, David Lawrence sums up *Billy Lynn* as "a critique of America's unthinking consumer culture" (91). Pop culture in *Billy Lynn* draws out the sex, noises, visual oddities, excitement, big names, limelight, friends, and tours of the physical world, which flood Billy's mind. A homology between the intensity of sensory stimuli at the Dallas Cowboys stadium and the Iraqi warzone is unavoidable. If *Billy Lynn* indicates that pop culture, as Lawrence maintains, is about an unthinking culture, then the development of overwhelming physical representations of the sensory world reiterates and ironizes *dissociation* in the war zone. In other words, if the war is about *dissociation* because it is so dangerous and emotionally overwhelming, then the Dallas Cowboys football experience is overwhelming just because it is big and loud, even while there is no danger. The pervasive consumerist descriptions in *Billy Lynn* not only

suggest their own mindless need and performance of stimulation, but ironically suggest that the combatant's experience of the war possesses that same mindset of *dissociation*.

As physical stimulation rules Billy's experience, so is the partial mind the perfect vehicle for showing the mind's own subjugation to the physical world, even as it still allows for a representation of that mind. This is why, from the standpoint of textual density, the novel contains so many statements that downplay Billy's mind. For example, reflecting on an idyllic time spent with his nephew, Billy realizes the need to avoid thinking, lest the physical world overwhelm him: "[W]hen he came home for good he'd have to meditate on [these reflections about God and children], but for now it was best to *compartmentalize*, as they said, or even better not to mentalize at all" (83). The weight of his combat experience pushes Billy towards *dissociation*, toward not thinking at all. Riding the morphological pun available between *compartmentalize* and *mentalize*, the exposition poses either sectioning off parts of Billy's mind or choosing not to think at all as ways to cope with the overstimulation. When Billy's mind is effaced by the representations of it in the novel as they contrast with the force of the physical world, so does that figuration of partial presence thematically call attention to the contradiction between thinking and *dissociation* of war combatants and veterans.

Sometimes Billy's mind is expressed as the merging of physical and mental in order to subordinate the mental. In a description of Billy's first visit to the massive Dallas Cowboys stadium, the construction of this sentence poses the tension between physical and mental worlds:

> Years and years of carefully posted TV shots have imbued [the Cowboys stadium] with intimations of mystery and romance, dollops of state and national pride, hints of pharaonic afterlife such as always inhere in large-scale public architecture, all of which render the stadium of Billy's mind as the conduit or portal, a direct tap-

in, to a ready-made species of mass transcendence, and so the real-life shabbiness
is a nasty comedown. (10)

Rather than describe the stadium *in* Billy's mind, the exposition calls it the stadium *of*

Billy's mind, as though his mind *is* the stadium, not just containing an imagined

projection of it. If Billy's consciousness has been widened by the grave reality of war,

then it has become a stadium, not for the simulated war of football but for holding his

memories of the Iraq War. The novel's figuration of Billy's mind as a place reinforces the

dominance of the physical over his thoughts. The description resists any simple

representation of the stadium in terms of its immensity and so must use the very item it

attempts to show contrast against, Billy's mind, as the item compared. In other words, the

description exceeds simple comparison here between the stadium and Billy's mind (e.g.,

"The stadium overwhelmed Billy's mind" or "The stadium was much more immense than

Billy's mind") by imparting to his mind the quality of being stadium-like. This shows

that the idea of stadium so shocks Billy's perception of it that the account of that

perception attributes to Billy characteristics of it. Fountain elevates, for a moment, the

"real-life shabbiness" of the football stadium by letting it metaphorically conduct Billy's

thoughts.

Moreover, in another example the physical world reiterates Billy's overwhelming

sensory experience by driving Billy's thoughts into vertiginous confusion. Upon looking

at the gaudy Cowboys fans and drinking a beer, "Billy aims his gaze firmly on the aisle

steps and away from all that nullity clawing at his face. It freaks him, the monstrous void

of it dangling there, the vast empty center creates a vacuum of sorts and all the gravity

seems to flow in a reverse-flush action toward that huge gaping blowhole at the top" (23).

Fountain's prose suggests Billy's vague mental turmoil, an abstract representation that

makes more sense of Billy's thoughts about the pettiness of consumer culture—Cowboys

fans—than the actual description of them. His disgust returns at the end of the page, once

again invoking the stadium: "The stadium is huge. It is deformed. It is a deformation of

the human mind" (23). In fact, it is Billy's mind that is deformed, in such disarray that

only fragments of words with vast gaps around them can represent it. Like the vastness of

the stadium (c.f.,10), Billy is lost and altered by the symbolic value of the consumer

culture that the stadium represents, compounded by its physical enormity. Part of the

underrepresentation of Billy's mind is the physical world's projection into his mind as a

breakdown of the normal, controlled flow of thoughts.

The complexity of Billy's partial mind comes to a head through a self-aware

moment near the end of the novel that positions the physical world to sideline the mental

one. Billy's self-reflexive thoughts are precipitated by watching his new girlfriend, Dallas

Cowboys Cheerleader Faison, on the Jumbotron while hearing her voicemail recording

on his phone:

> It makes for an odd sensation, watching her real-time person in the middle
> distance while holding her disembodied voice to his ear. It puts a frame around
> the situation, gives it focus, perspective. It makes him aware of himself being
> aware of himself, and here is a mystery that seems worth thinking about, why this
> stacking of awareness should even matter. At the moment all he knows is that
> there's a structure in it, a pleasing sense of poise or mental ordering. . . . Then
> comes the *beep*, and he has to talk. The funny little message he leaves for her—
> two second after clicking off, he can't remember what he said. (249)

This passage captures Billy's whole mental problem through this otherwise negligible

event and so identifies how the entire novel uses the physical to subordinate the mental.

He's doing something simple, leaving a voicemail. But representationally, it is a moment

of synesthetic harmony—seeing his girlfriend on the screen and hearing her voice on the

phone. But as the passage progresses, Billy's mind becomes detached from his senses so

that all that remains are his thoughts, which themselves are pushed to the margins. It is unclear exactly what causes this crossover of thinking of Faison through both aural and visual senses to push Billy to the abstract, or gives him a frame, as he says, in which to place his own thoughts. Billy enters a key moment in his mental life through this media-channeled, sensory evocation of his fantasy. Rather than feeling the mental confusion and disruption that have trademarked Billy's thoughts before, he has hit on something "worth thinking about." But this thought that has value is a recognition of the structure of his mind as a recursive process—thinking about thinking ("It makes him aware of himself being aware of himself, and here is a mystery that seems worth thinking about, why this stacking of awareness should even matter"). Through the senses, Billy remediates his own mental trauma, the struggle to understand combat's contrast with homecoming, by reaching a recognition of what thinking is, that it allows him to look at himself and put in order his emotional disruption.

The end of the passage completes this idea. Rather than allowing his return into the present awareness of his voicemail as an exit from the design of Billy's mentality here, the final clause of the chapter ("he can't remember what he said") finishes the picture of Billy's continued trauma. That trauma is symbolized here by forgetting what he just said into the phone, psychological *dissociation* about what is significant. This mental omission prevents him from being restored by this minor epiphany he has just thought. Furthermore, although the reason for concealing the actual words of the message from the reader is due to the fairly consistent focalization of Billy's point of view throughout the narrative, its effects on the reader also force her into the same position as Billy, a technique of identity and empathy. That is, if the reader does not know what Billy just

said, just as he has also forgotten it, then she comes as close as possible through reading

to co-experiencing this forgetfulness with Billy. At the height of self-actualization—self-

awareness—Billy joins the reader in retreating back into the dark of ignorance. And this

push is precipitated by Billy's listening to Faison's voice through his cellphone while

watching her on the Jumbotron, suggesting that using a disembodied and sexualized

woman, the physical world of pop culture's role is to direct Billy and now the reader into

Billy's absence of thought. Not all knowledge in the mind is available, and the reader

must process this inaccessibility as *dissociation* with Billy.

Conclusion

"Those traumatized by extreme events, as well as those empathizing with them, may
resist working through because of what might almost be termed a fidelity to trauma, a
feeling that one must somehow keep faith with it."

> ~ Dominick LaCapra, *Writing History,*
> *Writing Trauma*, 22

Like *The Talented Mr. Ripley*, *Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk* ends with

comedic victory rather than tragic defeat. But also like *Ripley*, the hero's success is

premised on what may be ethical qualms for the reader. While twice murderer Tom

Ripley escapes to kill another day, Billy Lynn escapes from his victory tour only to return

to war. For the veteran, the novel seems to darkly suggest, war is the safety zone.

Likewise, as *Redeployment* turns its eponymous term on its head by suggesting that

reassimilation into society is the next front for the soldier, so do both these war narratives

forestall easily settled resolutions or suggestions for the best way to solve a soldier's and

veteran's difficulties. And as *The Things They Carried* denies that telling a "true" war

story is necessary or possible, it likewise suggests that the veteran's life at home remains

caught up in the desire for authentic representation.

At the same time that these novels critique the war or highlight important qualities of veterans' lives, they also inevitably represent the minds of those veterans. As I have argued that they employ the technique of partial minds to express veterans' description of the experience of combat as *dissociation*, so have I extended the arguments of a line of scholars concerned with the formal and nonconventional techniques of representation used to account for trauma experienced during war. LaCapra's point in the epigraph above that we tend to align our stance with trauma when interacting emotionally with it stands true also for those who study its myriad instantiations in art. In describing the partial mind as a tool of authors of war narratives, so have I extended the discussion of the recuperation of trauma, which as a side effect also extends the life of those traumatic experiences and their accessible form as memories. Like the metanarration of O'Brien or Klay, I find that while self-awareness of a subject may heighten its reality and deepen its wound, it can also do much to alleviate the perniciousness of that trauma.

Chapter Six

Afterword: (Mis)representing Real Minds

"Art is a human activity consisting in this, that one man consciously, by means of certain external signs, hands on to others feelings he has lived through, and that others are infected by those feelings and also experience them."

~ Leo Tolstoy, *What Is Art?*, 43

Like any absence, partial minds suggest a larger presence. In their description of fictional characters' minds that have been strategically underrepresented in order to isolate and better develop a particular quality of those minds—be it trauma, ethical culpability, or sociopathy—partial minds allow for more complex and more emphatic representations of characters. By leaving out key mental characteristics, partial minds are a technique of absence, but the presence they suggest is a richer representation of those mental states—significations unachievable through conventional means. The compatibility of partial minds with trauma, as I have found, is particularly effective in articulating those terrible, painful mental states that are often only given the descriptor "unrepresentable." When trauma suggests a more profound mental reality and more isolating suffering than everyday thoughts, partial minds serve as the contrastive method to underscore that state of consciousness. Protean in their ability to apply to a wide range of narratives and minds, partial minds link goals with their home discipline of narrative studies in that both attempt to aid other readings by providing a more precise set of tools from which to interpret fictional narratives.

This dissertation has limited its claims to representational techniques for expressing different kinds of consciousness in literary narratives, but it has been my hope to say something about real minds as well. After all, if a correspondence between literary and actual worlds exists, then partial minds are not just matters of linguistic configuration

but matters of lived phenomenological states. I do not believe I have so much added to psychological divisions as concretized an intuition that not all mental states are the same qualitatively—that we all feel lucid at times but at other times feel, to a far lesser degree, the dissociation of the veteran, the dual mental states of the impersonator, or even the stunned confusion of thoughts of the rape victim. Certainly, such fictional accounts impose an imagined view of what those experiences must be like, but even when misrepresentation occurs, the gains for altruistic empathy are worth the cost. One might argue that all mental states are phenomenologically different, but by characterizing the representations of those cognitions in fictional works, I have attempted to offer a richer account of them.

Conflicting with my theory, some philosophers propose theories that other minds are completely unknowable. While such positions seem extreme from my standpoint, it is reasonable to suppose that if others' minds in our own are only models, then our conceptions of others' thoughts, unable to meet or exceed the limitation of being a subset within our own minds, must always be missing or reducing the complete cognition of others. Due to that incongruence of others' thoughts in our own, there is always a potential for misrepresenting the other in ways that lead to serious practical consequences. An extreme example is the bigotry that comes from misrepresenting others through stereotypes. Immanuel Levinas claims that "the face speaks to me and thereby invites me to a relation incommensurate with a power exercised, be it enjoyment or knowledge" (*Totality and Infinity* 198). As a result of that incommensurate relationship, a strong ethical exigency governs the representation of others' minds. It has been my aim to reduce that ethical danger by more precisely articulating examples of underrepresented

minds, hoping that by analyzing those representations, we can come to a better

understanding of them and even to a firmer belief about our own minds—the hope that all

our thoughts are more than just solipsisms.

terrRr

Eye-rack,

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Sod'm

freedoms

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nina leven

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sacrifice,

soooh-preeeeme sacrifice

Bush

Osama

values

dih-mock-cruh-see

No one spits, no one calls him baby-killer. On the contrary, people could not be more supportive or kindlier disposed, yet Billy finds these encounters weird and frightening all the same. There's something harsh in his fellow Americans, avid, ecstatic, a burning that comes of the deepest need. That's his sense of it, they all need something from him, this pack of half-rich lawyers, dentists, soccer moms, and corporate VPs, they're all gnashing for a piece of a barely
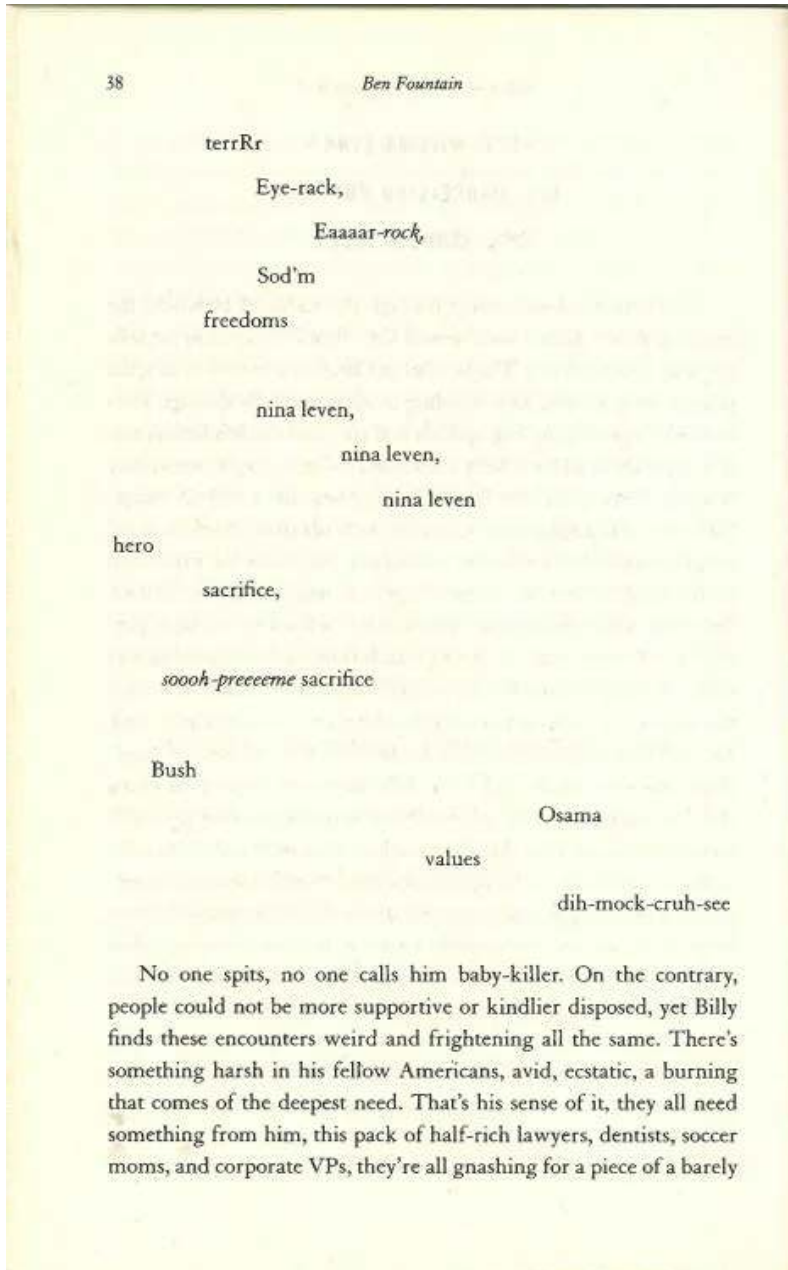
Figure 1: Billy Lynn's mind represented through an experimental technique.

Appendix 2
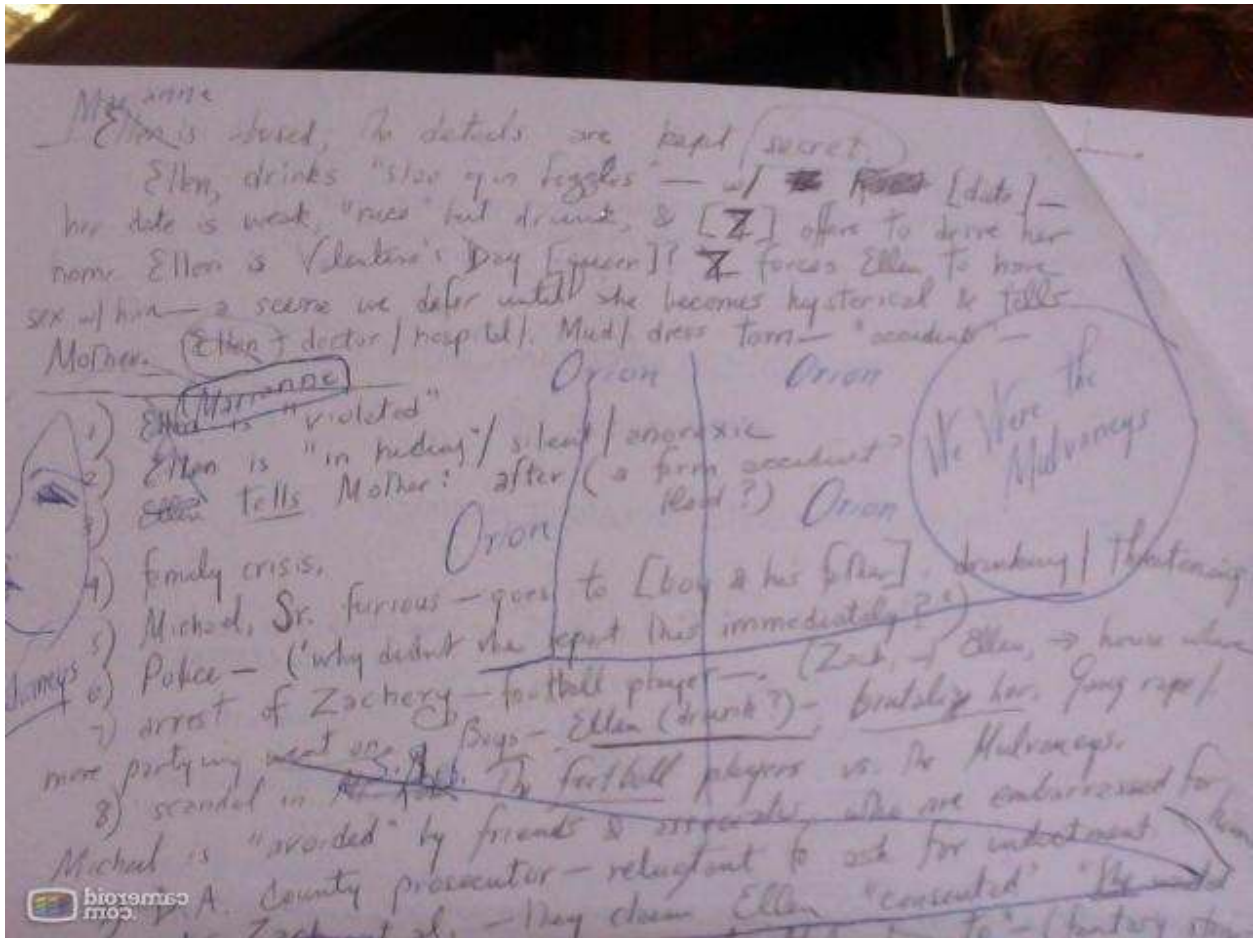
Figure 1: Here are notes from an early character sketch of *We Were the Mulvaneys* (Box 32, Worksheets I, unmarked sheet of paper).

Figure 3: Here is a later version of black mark from archives (Box 32, Folder IX, p114).

from the window of a speeding vehicle lacking depth and color. Like
those strange fleeting faces, strangers' faces, some of them distorted
and grotesque, we see as we sink exhausted into sleep. So, amid the
steaming water, above a limp-floating naked girl's body, a body at
which Marianne did not look, The Pilgrim rose, took shape. It hovered
suspended until finally it faded into numbness and oblivion, a gouged-
out hole in the very space of consciousness.

(retain block
as is)

    *   *   *

So much to talk about! So many interruptions! Laughter, and
Judd scolded by Dad for passing sausage-bits to Little Boots beneath
the table, and Mom scolded by Dad Honeylove will you for God's sake
stop jumping up every five minutes?--and the discovery, mid-meal, that
the oven was still set at 400° F. and the Mexican chicken-shrimp-sausage
casserole was beginning to burn. Marianne had helped Mom prepare supper

Figure 4: Oates's editorial comment says to "retain block as is" (Box 33, Folder I Ribbon Copy).

significance. Jesus help me. ~~_____ _____~~ lacking depth and color. Like
from the window of a speeding vehicle, lacking depth and color. Like
those strange fleeting faces, strangers' faces, some of them distorted
and grotesque, we see as we sink exhausted into sleep. So, amid the
steaming water, above a limp-floating naked girl's body, a body at
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suspended until finally it faded into numbness and oblivion, a gouged-
out hole in the very space of consciousness.

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Judd scolded by Dad for passing sausage-bits to Little Boots beneath
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the oven was still set at 400° and the Mexican chicken-shrimp-sausage
casserole was beginning to burn. Marianne had helped Mom prepare supper

Figure 5: Deleting of asterisks indicate that the block is not related to a section header but is part of the representation of Marianne's mind in the text (Box 33, Folder II Setting Copy).

327

terrRr

Eye-rack,

Eaaaar-*rock,*

Sod'm

freedoms

nina leven,

nina leven,

nina leven

hero

sacrifice,

soooh-preeeeme sacrifice

Bush

Osama

values

dih-mock-cruh-see

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Figure 1: Cognitive Wash 1

terrRr

Eye-rack,

Eaaaar-*rock*,

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Figure 2: Cognitive Wash 2

And with his vast experience in beauty pageants, Billy eagerly nods. For the moment people are leaving them alone.

"Not much you could call a big deal about Stovall these days."

"That's what I hear. Haven't been since I was a kid, but when I saw one of the Bravos was from Stovall, I was like, Hey, Stovall! I felt like I kind of knew you in a way, I mean, *Stovall,* come on, out of all the places a person could be from? It just seemed funny."

She grew up in Flower Mound, she tells him, and works part-time as a law firm receptionist while paying her own way through UNT, a mere six credits to go before she earns her degree in broadcast journalism. He guesses she's twenty-two, twenty-three, a compact, curvy package with a pert, inquiring nose, green eyes strewn with flecks of amber and gold, and the kind of cleavage that makes men weep. At the moment she's telling him how much his comments at the press conference meant to her, but he barely hears, so absorbed is he in the beautiful shapes her mouth makes as it forms the words

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                                        bearing

                                    witness

            yr

                words

                    deeds

            acks

                                        acks of *sack*-rih-*fice*

                    free-dom

Figure 3: Cognitive Wash 5

that she is the latest American Idol, and like all the American Idols pint-sized or not she is blessed with a huge barrel vault of a mouth.

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PRRRRRROOOOUUUUUDDDDLLLLLYYYYY

Billy holds his salute. He makes it a point to think about Shroom and Lake and the hot red blur of that terrible day, but he's also, because he's young and still hopeful for his life, scanning the sideline far below for Faison. He systematically ticks his gaze from one cheerleader to the next, no, no, no, no, a dozen no's then *yes* and his head spins like a car on ice, an airy *whoosh* into sideways acceleration with all the nausea, the panic, the full butthole pucker, it is a roller-coaster ride to oblivion. Then his eyes snap back to their sockets and aim straight for Faison, sturdy little Koosh ball of female plenitude with that slash of amber hair like a lava spill, her right-hand pom-pom held to her heart. She is singing, even from here he can see her mouth moving, and so powerful is the bond between them that he leans several inches in her direction. *Dude, she was into you.* The singing triggers a soft detonation at his core, molten parts of him are flying everywhere and his ears ring to the tune of blast harmonics that only he can hear, but what is "The Star-Spangled Banner" if not a love song?

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He has to remember to breathe. He feels calm and agitated all at once, self-awareness teased to such a screaming pitch that his skull might split at any moment, and he moans, it is just too much to hold in. The realtress glances his way and answers with a sympathy moan. The next moment she steps over and puts her arm around his waist, and they stand so joined, Billy saluting, sweating, standing ramrod straight, the realtress singing with her right hand held to her heart and her left clamped to Billy's hip.

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Figure 4: Part of Cognitive Wash 8

Endnotes

[1] The implied author is a narrative agent which, unlike the narrator, cannot speak in the narrative; he or she is not an actual presence but rather a director behind-the-scenes, a puppeteer.

[2] A character narrator in James Phelan's terminology more precisely expresses what we mean when we say either "first person narrator" or the more clunky "homodiegetic narrator" because of its inclusion of character, someone important to the story, being the narrator (*Living to Tell About It* xi).

[3] As I discuss in the first chapter, Phelan critiques this model in many of his works. As Dan Shen notes, his model of mimetic, synthetic, and thematic functions of narratives offers an alternative way of dividing narrative ("Story-Discourse Distinction" 566). This model is central to my claims in later chapters, and I explain it more fully there. Phelan also critiques Seymour Chatman's model of *story/discourse* when arguing through the example of Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita* that "story and discourse overlap," a point which "suggests that the story/discourse distinction has heuristic, not absolute value" (*Living to Tell About It* 118-9).

[4] I use Dorrit Cohn's categories for mental representation, updating them with Alan Palmer's terminological clarity.

[5] As narrative theorists from Wolfgang Iser on have paid special attention to the gaps readers must fill, the incompletion of narrative details and the pivotal role of the reader in completing the narrative are well-discussed.

[6] Also, certain unnatural narratives, which I explain more in Chapter 2, are included in this exclusion from *story* and *discourse*.

[7] Lars Bernaerts et al. identify two waves of "the cognitive turn," the first applying cognitive science to literature and the second applying narrative to theory of mind (8). My argument sees continuity between these two waves and makes use of both their critical payoffs. The cognitive turn reads narrative as, briefly, the presupposed textual ubiquity of minds (Alan Palmer), narrative agents attributing actions to mental states (Lisa Zunshine), and cognitive norms grounding meaning-making in the text (David Herman). Even more recent work, "second wave cognitive narrative theory," considers—among many other inquiries—empathy's effects on cognition (Suzanne Keen), the phenomenological unity of subject and object (George Butte), and the effect of disabilities on mind (Ralph Savarese). Benefits from this field include new readings of literary works in which fiction dramatizes psychological processes, interdisciplinary collaboration in which narrative theories enhance and correct social science's use of narrative, and the development of theoretical armature needed to take into account subjectivity in fields which otherwise assume that only the quantifiable may be studied. Analyses of methods for representing fictional minds produce, revise, and extend the very language and imagery we use to discuss minds. For instance, Palmer, drawing on Antonio Damasio, includes more than just thoughts in his look at embedded minds, taking into account memory, disposition, emotions, and social thinking.

[8] Part of his argument depends on this line of reasoning: "[W]e should not forget that the boundary line is porous: just as we do not attribute consciousness to real people on reasoned grounds (because there is, simply enough, no way to demonstrate that the person sitting next to me has conscious experience), so we do not attribute consciousness to fictional characters on reasoned grounds. In both cases, our attributions are based on our first-person understanding of what having a consciousness or subjective experience involves" ("Fictional Consciousness" 47). Towing a line between first-person phenomenology and solipsism, Caracciolo uses philosophy of mind theory about the existence of others' minds as an analog to how we see characters' minds.

[9] Note that I am not trying to argue that we have unlimited or unimpeded access to everything that happens in our mind.

[10] I here elide a large critical discussion, briefly mentioned by Mäkelä, about the validity of positing real cognition as the model of fictional cognition. I do this because my goal is not to arrive at an answer to this question but to see how the very perspectives at hand here shape the norms we bring to the co-creation of literary characters when reading a text.

[11] He later even says "we feel that" as his method for justifying his claim (2.2.2). He has elsewhere explained it this way: "Pretheoretical cultural intuition . . . serves as a point of departure for most theoretical endeavors in the study of culture" ("Individuals in Narrative Worlds" 843).

[12] Jean Boase-Beier, perhaps more in touch with the times, calls *mind style* a *cognitive state* (254), which to her reflects the non-permanent qualities of the mind, as opposed to the sedimented nature of worldview (253). Although I appreciate that updating, minds set into literature are permanent and so still fit well with Fowler's original conceptualization.

[13] Here are the five criteria:

> 1. Existence: The membership of a textually identified individual in the narrative domain or any of its subdomains should be established uniquely, stably and unequivocally.
>
> 2. Individuation: At any state of affairs, any textually named individual should possess a set of traits, attributes or individuating features, be they extensional (spatio-temporal location, coagents) or intensional (physical and mental properties and relations).
>
> 3. Uniqueness or singularity: For each individual and each state of affairs, there ought to be at least one definite description satisfied uniquely by this individual at this state, thereby distinguishing it from all other coexisting individuals.
>
> 4. Paradigmatic or simultaneous unity: A narrative individual's properties in each state of affairs should be amenable to ordering in terms of a general pattern of some kind, thereby defining the sort, type or category to which the individual belongs.
>
> 5. Syntagmatic or temporal unity: The various temporal stages of a narrative individual should allow the possibility of linking them into one transtemporal pattern. (2.2.2)

[14] Searle's inventory claims "to describe gross structural features of normal, everyday consciousness" (128). The twelve features are 1. Finite Modalities, 2. Unity, 3. Intentionality, 4. Subjective Feeling, 5. The Connection between Consciousness and Intentionality, 6. The Figure-Ground, Gestalt Structure of Conscious Experience, 7. The Aspect of Familiarity, 8. Overflow, 9. The Center and the Periphery, 10. Boundary Conditions, 11. Mood, 12. The Pleasure/Unpleasure Dimension (128-41).

[15] The possibility of the reader enacting narrative minds suggests narrative immersion, a subject that I take up in more depth in my third chapter of the dissertation in a discussion of mindreading. However, Marie-Laure Ryan's forms of immersion, "spatial immersion, the response to setting; temporal immersion, the response to plot; and emotional immersion, the response to character" (121), offer three levels at which readerly enactment of consciousness can pair with textual mental norms. To this list we should add cognitive immersion, the response to thoughts, which while similar to emotional immersion, includes more than just emotions. I am not trying to sidebar emotions here. In fact, emotions are central to thoughts, but they are not the totality of thoughts. As Richard Walsh points out, "emotional response should be understood not as an effect of illusion, but as a corollary of the fundamental processes of textual comprehension" (157). We cannot fully understand a text without engaging with its emotional draws.

[16] For example, my use of Zotero notetaking software while I compose this dissertation is an instance of distributed consciousness.

[17] Rabinowitz lists them as having a single culprit who can be logically deduced from the evidence left by a personal quirk in that culprit and who is brought to justice (196).

[18] For one view on detective fiction's distinctiveness, look at Howard Haycraft's work *Murder for Pleasure: The Life and Times of the Detective Story* (5).

[19] Maria Mäkelä corrects any notion we might have of perfectly divisible narrative agents when she explains that "the minds of narrating or experiencing fictional agents always merge the representation with the represented: the mind is simultaneously both the performer and the arena of performance" (148). Rarely in fiction do we find minds neatly divided up so that we know that one section is only the narrator and another only the character. Typically, roles and agents blur, and it is both the ambiguity of this blurring and the ability to sometimes tease out speakers and minds that opens the door to the value of cognitive narrative theory.

[20] The push and pull between representing a mind in linear words and trying to account for all of the mind at once may be explained by what Porter Abbott calls quantum narrativity, an Occam's Razor approach to narrative in which there could always be more to the story hidden in the inherently minimal and incomplete nature of the text. See "How Do We Read What Isn't." Narratives like these are not about creating an unbelievable character, but about seeing the representation of mind as emphasizing something believable about the character through an unbelievable means, something only fiction can do.

[21] Ann Banfield would disagree, arguing that "James wants to represent what Maisie *knew,* which is not necessarily what she thought" (212, emphasis original). However, Banfield's own assumptions about what constitutes mental representation are overly narrow. In mental representation, knowledge signifies mimetic

thoughts, and in the attempt to represent a child's developing knowledge, James must necessarily invoke only a partial representation of her thoughts.

[22] He claims, "What distinguishes language from all other things and enables it to play a decisive role in representation is . . . that it analyses representation according to a necessarily successive order: the sounds, in fact, can be articulated only one by one; language cannot represent thought, instantly, in its totality; it is bound to arrange it, part by part, in a linear order" (82-3).

[23] Margolin explores this tension in "The What" (3.2).

[24] Unless otherwise noted, please assume that all italics are original to Oates.

[25] Focalization is one of narratology's most useful contributions to the study of literature. As a result, its exact formulation is widely debated. James Phelan, following Gérard Genette, helpfully distinguishes between "Who speaks?" and "Who perceives?" The first question is answered by the narrator or character, while the second is answered by whomever is the subject of focalization (Phelan, *Living to Tell About It* 215). Focalization—in this sense, sometimes called internal focalization—along with other methods of mental representation such as *free indirect discourse* and *direct thought*, is central to Oates's techniques for exploring many of the characters' minds in *We Were the Mulvaneys*. Despite the dearth of criticism on focalization in the last decade, other theorists have found an endpoint in equating it with perception as, most recently, Uri Margolin does in "Focalization: Where Do We Go From Here."

[26] My second major section argues that Judd is not the only mind contributing to the narration, a point which requires a longer explanation that would fit here, since so many technical and global elements go into the production of narration here. Uses of Judd as narrator, here, should be taken provisionally.

[27] This question of literary criticism which concerns knowledge presented by the narrative at earlier moments as opposed to knowledge revealed in the end of a story is one I find commonly unrecognized by critics, except in obvious situations. For example, no one would try to say that the reader knows definitively who the murderer is in an Agatha Christie novel at the beginning, but critics often assume inferences actually picked up later in a story when they discuss an earlier part. Many critics of *We Were the Mulvaneys* do not recognize that the term "rape," and the definitiveness of that act does not come until later in the story. As I deal with this section and its representational effects, we need to keep in mind the reader's uncertain knowledge.

[28] An alternative introduction to the black mark is found in Oates's archives on a handwritten scrap of paper: "Her thoughts came rapidly & fluidly & w/ out wgt. Or seeming significance. Like scenes glimpsed from the windows of a speeding train lacking depth & e'n color. Like those strange fleet images, faces, we see as we sink→sleep. The Pilgrim rose, took shape…then faded→numbness" (Box 13, Worksheet II). This portrayal intensifies the focus on Marianne's confused and dissociative mental state.

[29] I use the term *direct thought* in Alan Palmer's sense, meaning "the narrative convention that allows the narrator to present a verbal transcription that passes as the reproduction of the actual thoughts of a character (for example, 'She thought, Where am I?')" (*Fictional Minds* 54).

[30] Indeed, Corinne's inability to sell the painting in her backwoods store and the comment Patrick recalls in the next paragraph, "*What cornball stuff, Mom!*" together confirm that kitsch is the implied author's intended view for the reader (80).

[31] Debatably, this passage could be focalized through Corinne rather than Marianne since the paragraph opens with her opinion of *The Pilgrim*. I believe it is Marianne, however, since she is the main mind being focalized in this section, and is it she who is thinking when we get the original biblical line that captions *The Pilgrim*.

[32] There is even a sense here in which the absence of a textual reproduction of *The Pilgrim* mirrors the implicit absence of adequately representing Marianne's mind. It is as though giving standard representations of these would not accurately copy them.

[33] I am using this term in reference to the chapter "Damaged Girl." This chapter connects with Marianne's religious devotion. Because her failure to be mentally unaffected is paralleled in her religious devotion, self-denial exaggerates into self-eradication, as later in the story at the Co-op Marianne faces the complete denial of her identity.

[34] On a technical note, although italics render the caption quoted above, they look no different from the italicized lines that are transcriptions of the recollected conversations between Marianne and Lundt interwoven into the chapter. These lines, a mode of representing Marianne's rape which denies a linear and unbroken account, support claims made about real-life trauma. One of these is Caruth's forecast that trauma comes haunting back because traumatic events aren't experienced in time to begin with; they are missed

(62). Ambiguity heightens this representational nonlinearity by these lines typographically appearing the same as the caption lines. That the same form is used for both these meanings indicates that Marianne's mind is always present in the focalization of this chapter. That is, if there is a similar method of representation of italicized snippets for both Marianne's memories and the biblical quotation, then they all appear as the same in their typographical form, while their content and context determine which meaning they take on. Oates is here most likely simply using the conventions at hand for both allusion and *direct thought*; however, their similar typography suggests the possibility intentionally of cross-reading their conventions. And in each, there is a suggestion of Marianne's mind being focalized.

[35] I do not mean to be dismissive of psychoanalytic approaches, for indeed, the broadly-conceived psychological study of trauma seems dominated by these. See for example *Understanding Trauma: A Psychoanalytic Approach* by Caroline Garland, or for an Oedipal reading of *We Were the Mulvaneys,* see Ellen G. Friedman's "Feminism, masculinity, and nation in Joyce Carol Oates' fiction" (especially 487). My focus here is instead on narrative and how its formal elements and thematics are also integral to the mental causation of the story.

[36] As should be clear by this point, I do not mean a linear cause, but any kind of psychological or narrational cause, whether belated or directly precipitated. The smudge could appear from nowhere, as the impact of trauma may occur at any time, but the narrative design gives the reader expectations for being able to follow Marianne's mental processes.

[37] I subscribe to Phelan's three ways in which characters are represented: mimetic, thematic, and synthetic discussed throughout this dissertation. Here, mimetic suggests the psychological correspondence of Marianne's mind to real minds as we progress through her thoughts.

[38] While Oates's use of graphics is uncommon, found in only three of her novels, in many recent works (such as Kathy Acker's *Blood and Guts in High School* or Teresa Hak Kyung Cha's *Dictée*), the pain of feminine trauma expressed through graphics forms a textual rupture of some kind that the narrator cannot express in words but still must try to express.

[39] See my Master's thesis *The Narrative Forms of* Dungeons & Dragons (26).

[40] Altman's configuration is similar to Matthew Clark's use of the self as a model for narrative in which "[t]he previous models of the self all assume that the self is single: the ideal Cartesian self is a single point, in which the two I's of the cogito are identical; the self as described by William Hames distinguishes the I from the me, but both are aspects of a single identity, a single person. . . . Dyadic plots, however, require two selves, two distinct points of subjectivity" (44). See my next chapter for an application of this theory.

[41] Of course, the case is not quite this simple. Dorrit Cohn distinguishes between dissonant and consonant psycho-narration, the former entails a narrator who "remains emphatically distanced from the consciousness he narrates" while the latter "readily fuses with the consciousness he narrates" (26). So the real difference we might imagine in Judd's perspective here is, if he is the one mediating Marianne's mind, whether he is dissonant or consonant. If dissonant, we lose the intimacy of Marianne's thoughts, and if consonant, why bother postulating him there in the first place?

[42] I assume that because he's narrator and not implied author, he doesn't know he's narrating in a novel by Joyce Carol Oates.

[43] In addition to emphasizing the ekphrastic focus on visuality discussed in section I, the use of photos often seems a strategic choice in narrative. The middle section of Greg Johnson's edition of Oates's journals reprieves us from her thoughts with a series of photos spanning much of her life. While such interludes are common, Johnson likely saw the importance of visuality to personal memory. In a like case, Roland Barthes in *Camera Lucida* discusses an image of his mother that is supposed to be the ultimate *punctum*, the most striking of photos. And yet, though the work is filled with images, that particular photo is never reproduced, implying that it may not exist at all. My point is that the inclusion and placement of photos is often not just an ancillary visual to support a written point, but that photos are paratextual markers that may imply the importance of visuality—or its regretted absence—to a work as a whole.

[44] *Living to Tell About It* is full of specific styles of narration, such as suppressed narration (the leaving out of relevant information [218]), serial narration (in which characters take turns telling the story [218]), and double-voicing (in which both the implied author and the narrator speak through the same lines [215]), none of which quite identify the configuration of narration in *We Were the Mulvaneys*. His definition of paralepsis, "a device in which a narrator's discourse reflects a greater knowledge than he or she could presumably have" (216), offers a way of thinking of Judd's narration; however, as I go on to argue, rather

than assuming that Judd is always present and knowing more than he should, it makes more sense to read *We Were the Mulvaneys* as having several narrators.

[45] Scholarship, too, has many times recognized this phenomenon. See, for example, *Expositional Modes and Temporal Ordering in Fiction* by Sternberg (255).

[46] I applaud and so employ Phelan's use of the term *character narrator* over excessively-technical terms developed previously in narratology, such as *homodiegetic*. Phelan defines character narration as "Narration in fiction or nonfiction by a participant in the story events" (*Living to Tell About It* 214).

[47] I discuss the implied author in more detail in the section on social minds.

[48] See, for example, Fludernik's *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology* (11). Questions of how fiction comes to tell, at least generically, has a direct impact on deciding who narrates.

[49] Indeed, Iverson, in an article called "Unnatural Minds" cautions: "[O]ne major limitation inherent in a full-blown cognitive approach to narrative, with an insistence on fully renaturalizing or recognizing the haunting and wondrous otherworldly visions of minds, events, and scenarios that some narratives manage to capture, is that it runs the risk of reducing the affective power and resonance of such narratives" (96).

[50] In an earlier draft, the phrase "stand up for Zach" is underlined instead of in quotes, indicating that it is less a questionable descriptor and more an emphatic one. Likewise, the paragraph from that quote that begins "Aloof," is not in a separate paragraph in that earlier draft, indicating the continuation of Patrick's mind (Box 13, Worksheet IV, p281).

[51] See Dan Shen's May 2013 article "Implied Author, Authorial Audience, and Context: Form and History in Neo-Aristotelian Rhetorical Theory" in *Narrative* for a more complete discussion of the implied author. For other perspectives, look at *Style*, Spring 2011, for an issue full of debate on the implied author.

[52] As nearly every structural narratologist references these formulations, it would add little to mention them all here.

[53] Notably, Todorov's discussion of these logics comes right after mentioning the point by Barthes quoted above.

[54] Interesting about this example from Dowling is that readers never get the moment of anagnorisis in *Pride and Prejudice* as the proposal scene is not dramatized.

[55] Ingarden explains more fully that "[w]e can state . . . that as we slowly progress from beginning to end of a work in reading, we apprehend the concretized work from a constantly new temporal point of view but always under a temporal aspect which corresponds both to the standpoint and the attitude assumed by the reader and to the part of the work we are presently reading" (142).

[56] While Dominick LaCapra sees trauma as a force that can never be truly represented (42), Nossery and Hubbell admit that "[t]raumatic experience may be unspeakable, but it is not necessarily unrepresentable" (1). I give these theories a more complete hearing in my final chapter.

[57] *Zombie*, the novel—nearly a novella—immediately preceding *We Were the Mulvaneys* in Oates's oeuvre, has some striking similarities in the techniques used despite the vastly different subject matter. The story of a serial killer who tries to perform lobotomies on his victims in order to make them automatons, *Zombie* employs both graphics and third person reference by a first-person character narrator. The narrator Quentin sometimes calls himself Q__ P__ and other times "I" (c.f. 57), usually in reference to others talking about him or to him. This technique is similar to Judd's self-reference in both first and third persons. Once, Quentin notes that one of his instructors "is a young guy who looks right through me like there's a blank space where I am" (73). His probation officer looks at him "like talking to a mental defective" (128). Also, one of his serial murdered victims, "SQUIRREL," many different times looks at him but doesn't see him. All these instances suggest that Quentin, too, is a partial mind.

　　Furthermore, Oates's works only very rarely employ any kind of images or graphics, and *Zombie* is full of images that are supposed to be drawings of different items by the narrator. These many similarities in techniques between the two novels cast a darker look on *We Were the Mulvaneys*, since *Zombie*'s graphic material might imply that Oates drew on that model when writing *We Were the Mulvaneys*. It further suggests that her experimentation with these representational techniques was refined (in addition, of course, to being adapted) in the next novel. Although I do not have space here to trace these techniques and their permutations across all of Oates's works, I think it is fair to say that *We Were the Mulvaneys* marks a subtler use of experimental narrative techniques even while it attempts to integrate more points of view into a larger picture of representation and underrepresentation.

[58] I am here referring to Phelan's configuration of the narrative as communicating on different lines, especially the author-reader line and the narrator-narratee line.

[59] Indeed, about the sexual assault she suffered, Oates explained in an interview, "There was no consciousness then. Molested, batter children were in a category that was like limbo. There were no world, no language" ("Joyce Carol Oates" 158). Sexual assault left Oates thinking of it as an event that disrupts and effaces consciousness, a mental mode which she conveys to Marianne.

[60] My introductory chapter develops the term *mindreading* more. As a reminder, it may be thought of as the assumption by one person about the thoughts of another person based on the other person's behavior.

[61] Trask lays out the two main positions of criticism in regards to Highsmith: "as either symptomatic of the fifties repression of sexual nonconformity or as queer *avant la letter*" (585).

[62] I later qualify this point by arguing that the mind must be looked at in its totality across a narrative, not merely at isolated moments.

[63] As a reminder, I use the term *direct thought* in Alan Palmer's sense, meaning "the narrative convention that allows the narrator to present a verbal transcription that passes as the reproduction of the actual thoughts of a character (for example, 'She thought, Where am I?')" (54). I use the term *free indirect discourse* in the French-derived sense that Dorrit Cohn calls *narrated monologue*, leaving the thoughts in third person, but having the character's inflection.

[64] All italics are original unless otherwise noted.

[65] On unreliable implied authors, see Booth, Wayne C. *The Rhetoric of Fiction*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1961; Phelan, James. "The Implied Author, Deficient Narration, and Nonfiction Narrative: Or, What's Off-Kilter in The Year of Magical Thinking and The Diving Bell and the Butterfly?" *Style* 45.1 (2012): 119-37.

[66] Another excellent example of this uncontrolled emotional contagion from Tom occurs when he pretends to be drunk and then cannot stop pretending (153).

[67] As we shall see later, his thoughts often precipitate the reality in relation to others as well.

[68] This kind of belief is also suggested by Steinbeck in *East of Eden* when he reports this about Cathy/Kate: "It is possible to some people, and it was possible for Kate, to hold two opposing thoughts at the same time" (474).

[69] The text actually reads "*The Ambassador*," leaving off the 's' and highlighting Tom's solitary status.

[70] See, for example, Abigail Cheever's connection between the two characters based on their selfhood (264) or George E. Haggerty's chapter that compares the two novels (chapter 8). While there are certainly similarities between the works, my point is more that Tom himself rejects the comparison, which suggests that any similarities Highsmith might have included are meant to be taken cautiously in terms of extrapolating further parallels between Tom and Strether.

[71] Another example of Tom's self-admission of this role comes when he tells Dickie, "Oh, I can do a number of things—valeting, baby-sitting, accounting. . . . I can forge a signature, fly a helicopter, handle dice, impersonate practically anybody, cook—and do a one-man show in a nightclub in case the regular entertainer's sick. Shall I go on?" (58).

[72] Cheever later goes on to argue that this person is Dickie's mirror image, constituted by his actions in imitating Dickie (126).

[73] It is, however, akin to the Trickster figure in Native American literature. Further research might connect mind styles to such characters. Hilfer has pointed to this possibility, but with little elaboration (370).

[74] Trask explains, "The novel's attitude toward performance is rather ambivalent, and this ambivalence is tractable to the crosscurrents generated by competing versions of performance in the moment of its composition" (595).

[75] Deferred once more, the mimetic and synthetic functions of Tom's thoughts are taken up in the next subsection.

[76] Note that I am not here trying to argue that an author makes these decisions of implication for us, since instead, they arise from the dialogic process of reading.

[77] As a relevant side note, I realize that the term "evil" is heavily loaded, but Tom certainly violates many codes of ethics. John Dale describes it this way: "Tom's immorality results from periodic displacement of moral norms from the center of his consciousness to allow for the pursuit of egotistical goals" (419). On the level of genre, though, evil is a part of the parlance of crime, and so its use in this paper is intended to reflect the reader's possible perception and mental description of Tom, rather than a metaphysical notion.

[78] As a further example, consider this reverie: "He could have signed another remittance from the American bank, and gone on forever as Dickie Greenleaf, if he hadn't let his imaginary fears get the better of him. Tom set his jaw. He was still listening with a fraction of his brain" (247-8). His mental energy is tied up, just like the technical space of the novel.

[79] In seeing the complementation and incongruity of these, I not only offer the range of phenomenological reading in *Ripley*, but I affirm my methodological approach asserted earlier in this chapter (the opening of section I). That approach argued that although competing readings may seem to invalidate each other, they may actually foster mutually beneficial, rather than mutually exclusive, outcomes.

[80] There is a long history between literary criticism and phenomenology which I do not have space to attend to here. (And where would one begin? Theodore Lipps? Franz Brentano?) However, many critics have attempted to draw such ties, including Monroe C. Beardsley who explains that "[p]henomenological investigation can yield intersubjectively valid results" (367), after which he goes on to detail the many ways in which phenomenology can inform literary criticism.

[81] These anticipatory forays are often used by authors to secure the reader's interest in fulfilling a plot's expectation. For example, Jose Saramago's novel *All the Names* involves frequent discussions between the main character and his bedroom ceiling in which he imagines terrible failures of his plans.

[82] Empathy intervenes in many fields, and so goes outside the narrow cognitive narrative theory scope I have established. However, further study of empathy might take readers to Megan Boler on the risks of empathy, Richard Gerrig on empathy as a psychological process, and Martha Nussbaum on a philosophical view of empathy.

[83] This point is itself debatable, as Keen makes the attractive hypothesis that "empathetic responses to fictional characters and situations occur more readily for negative feeling states, whether or not a match in details of experience exists" (72).

[84] For a longer treatment of this point, see my essay "Irony as Empathy in Cognitive Narrative Studies."

[85] Peters suggests this problem when she sums up the published responses to the novel: "There is a clear consensus running through the few critical studies of Highsmith, and also in Andrew Wilson's biography, that the construction of a 'hero' who lacks conventional feelings of guilt—and, indeed, conscience—is the central defining feature of the novels, and one that might explain the difficulty some readers have in empathising with Ripley" (150).

[86] I am not trying to argue that Tom *always* empathizes with everyone. In the sequel, *Ripley Under Ground*, for example, the narrator notes, "As usual, another person's nervousness was making Tom feel calm" (30), which would seem to be a reaction opposite to empathy. But depending on his goals at the time, Tom's consideration of others' mental states lets him take on their thoughts and emotions as his own.

[87] The reader's own investments in the text are tied up with Tom's thinking about others' thoughts, since the reader, as demonstrated in the point above on mental access, is aware of Tom's thoughts and so is, by implication, reading his thoughts as he reads others'. The dissonance and irony between Tom and the other characters that are part of his deception, the difference between what he says and what he thinks, pushes Tom away from the other characters, but toward the reader because the reader feels closer to Tom—i.e., on his side—as a result of the us-them division forged by his deception. Irony on the level of character interaction, then, becomes the vehicle for *bounded empathy* on the relation between the protagonist and the reader, excluding those who are not privy to Tom's thoughts. This point is not to say that the reader is obliged or unable to refuse empathizing with Tom, per Keen's caution. And yet, the reader cannot always trust Tom's thoughts without qualification, which opens the door for irony between what Tom thinks and what the reader guesses are his true thoughts. As a result, the *bounded empathy* of *Ripley* moves to *broadcast empathy* because the reader follows Tom's thoughts even when they are untrustworthy, since they foreground, on a rhetorical level of passing from character concerns to readerly concerns, our common vulnerabilities and hopes.

[88] In the attempted doubling of his mind to think both his own thoughts and Dickie's, as discussed above, he falls short: linear representation cannot handle both mimetic representations of his thoughts at the same time that it synthetically indicates how he is trying to think Dickie's thoughts.

[89] Further experimental studies ought to be done to see if there is a difference in internalizing synthetic instead of mimetic representations.

[90] I am italicizing *dissociation* to clarify its status as a term.

[91] The term *normal* carries the potential for misinterpretation if we take it as privileging some groups over others. That is not the intent. As I develop the term later in this chapter, it means contextually and conventionally defined normality, standards that are based in common methods of representation, rather than on social distinction.

[92] Note that I am not making a historical argument so much as a stylistic one.

[93] My use of "real world" indicates the shared, historical reality we all experience and is employed throughout this chapter to contrast with fictional worlds.

[94] While the discussion of realism in American literature from William Dean Howells's definition onward has a rich history in criticism, I am not here concerned with adding to the discussion or defending a particular stance. Rather, my looser use of *realism* implies the intuitive correspondence to the real world which, while conventionally inflected, is used by much popular general fiction.

[95] Due to my focus on the genre of war narratives, my methodology in this chapter differs from the preceding chapters in which I focused on a single work. This chapter looks at multiple works and their shared genre, analyzes the choice of the thematic function as the driving one over the mimetic and synthetic, and emphasizes the concepts of trauma and *dissociation* to read war narratives. Rather than only looking at singular moments of cognitive representation, this chapter overviews the spectrum of mental representation at a higher level of generalization. The theme, rather than the isolated passage, is the unit of measure here, a methodology which becomes more definite in the readings below.

[96] Because, as all college sophomores who learn about Horace's *in medias res* know, literary narratives need not begin at the beginning, so the original violent moment which led to the whole plot may not be depicted. Likewise, in the epigraph, Julian Wolfreys points out that violence is less a physical act or happening than it is a social construct. By residing in "an unthought framework," violence shapes the available ideas within cognition which precede physical acts of violence. Both narrative selectivity about representation and Wolfreys' poststructuralist argument, then, open up a similar gap: the violence which leads to trauma may not be represented. In the case of war narratives, this omission means representing instead the effects of trauma, the by-product of violence, that the absent violence has caused. Such trauma requires theoretical models to explain it.

[97] I define these terms in Chapter 1 (III.i). *Direct thought* implies a strongly linguistic nature to thought, *thought report* impersonally offers mental states, and *free indirect discourse* messily merges narrator with character.

[98] Note that I am not by any means throwing out the value of Caruth's work. Chapter 2 of this dissertation employs Caruth's framework to analyze *We Were the Mulvaneys*. The matter is an issue of shifting trends and one model, McNally's, becoming more dominant than another, Caruth's.

[99] I have contrived these examples for brevity, but any survey of accounts of war includes similar statements.

[100] The rest of McLoughlin's sentence, while eloquent, is so long that it might take away from the flow of my argument. But her post-colonic stack of issues, helpful in imagining the array of interventions representations of war might make, follows: "to impose discursive order on the chaos of conflict and so to render it more comprehensible; to keep the record for the self and others (those who were there and can no longer speak for themselves and those who were not there and need to be told); to give some meaning to mass death; to memorialise; to inform civilians of the nature of battle so as to facilitate the reintegration of veterans into peacetime society; to provide cathartic relief; to warn; and even, through the warning, to promote peace." Hence, she suggests the effects of representing war as "multitudinous" (7).

[101] Evelyn Cobley compiles a list of these techniques in regards to the First World War in *Representing War*. See also, Pearl James (25).

[102] As a reminder, these representational methods are *free indirect discourse*, *direct thought*, and *thought report*.

[103] As what Amy Devitt argues is "an essential player in the making of meaning" (575), genre should be seen not merely as a form for which meeting certain criteria allows inclusion, but rather as a system of meaning-making which, *mutatis mutandis*, never remains stable. As a result, locating any features common to a majority of works in a particular genre necessarily holds only a temporary authority in helping to categorize the genre. My argument that war narratives employ partial minds thematically may therefore be taken not just as an argument about partial minds, but within my limited sample of works, as an argument about the use of partial minds as conventions within the genre itself. As first-year composition students often fall into rhetorical blunders when they do not correctly identify the genre in which they are writing, so should we be careful to avoid neglecting the perhaps too-obvious importance of genre in reading a war novel.

[104] Phelan sees none of these as exclusive to any moment, but instead some passages "may be more or less developed" or "more or less foregrounded" (*Reading People* 3). In my last chapter, representation of Tom Ripley's thoughts was unable to be achieved mimetically, since the purpose of Highsmith's implied author

was to represent his experience of impersonating Dickie as a character with two minds at once, which is a literal impossibility. But from the perspective of representation and its limits, posing a lifelike expression of Tom's thoughts when he was thinking Dickie's thoughts needed to drop the conventions of lifelikeness that we are used to—in this case, the either/or of Tom's mind or Dickie's—and employ a merging of minds which was neither one or the other but a synthetic representation that stood for both at once. Synthetic took priority over mimetic.

[105] Perhaps the most notable exception to this rule is Barry Hannah's realistic but fictional accounts of the Vietnam War.

[106] See, for example, Marilyn Wesley's comparison of memoir in *If I Die in a Combat Zone* and fictionalized stories in *The Things They Carried* ("Truth and Fiction" 3).

[107] Critics debate what generic category this book falls into, given its tensions between unity and disunity, fiction and nonfiction. Catherine Calloway synthesizes the major viewpoints on this by suggesting that the primary stance of reviewers is that the work is a collection of short stories. However, Calloway quotes Gene Lyons who notes that the disparate genres of "short stories, essays, anecdotes, narrative fragments, jokes, fables, biographical and autobiographical sketches, and philosophical asides" are all present. Calloway goes on to say how other critics have taken sides about the book's unity, since while it has recurring characters, there is no binding feature of time or other sequential means through which all the stories can line up (250). It is notable that as early as one year after its publication, *The Things They Carried* was described as metafictional, suggesting its early signs as experimental (Lewis 301).

[108] Parts of this section are adapted from a paper I wrote in my Master's Program at the University of Oklahoma.

[109] My goal here is not to offer an exhaustive list but to outline several different elements that might contribute to either metafictional or metanarration awareness.

[110] To be clear, emphasizing the thematic does not mean that the story has a giftwrapped moral. O'Brien's narrator echoes: "Often in a true war story there is not even a point" (82). Thematic is still a way of transferring experience, a function of representing, but that does not mean it has to resolve cleanly.

[111] *Redeployment* depends on the thematic function of representation through its antagonism toward clichés, especially those of war and war veterans. These are represented with the priority of repetition and point, rather than verisimilitude or constructedness. Each of Klay's stories is about a veteran who had a different position in the armed forces, avoiding the expectation that anyone written about in relation to the war must have been a combatant. Other clichés are rejected on a more local textual level, including jokes and received beliefs about trauma. Klay's narrators even mock such clichés, such as in the story "Psychological Operations" when his psych-ops veteran narrator says,

> There's an old joke, "How many Vietnam vets does it take to screw in a lightbulb?" "You wouldn't know, you weren't there." Everyone assumed I'd had some soul-scarring encounter with the Real: the harsh, unvarnished, violent world-as-it-actually-is, outside the bubble of American and academia, a sojourn to the Heart of Darkness that either destroys you or leaves you sadder and wiser.
>
> It's bullshit, of course. (170)

Klay's narrator takes up one of the most common bromides of war experience—that you can't know it unless you were there—and undermines it not with an argument that others can know his experience but that the mythical aura connoted in that cliché makes a Beast of the Jungle out of the variety and even normalcy that war experience took on for him.

[112] Ironically, this follows an account of Jenks's PTSD as activated by sound, but again *contra* the cliché, explicitly not by fireworks (227).

[113] This point is supported later when a narrator explains, "Marines learn to want more than pure, unthinking aggression. Unthinking aggression can get Marines killed" (131).

[114] Work on trauma by clinical psychological Edna Foa, Chris Molnar, and Laurie Cashman points out that retellings of a traumatic experience and especially rape, become "more organized and less fragmented" over time (677).

[115] This is a fair usage, since the narrator alludes to Althusser in this story (170).

[116] This attribution comes from Karl Marlantes' cover blurb. David Lawrence, in contrast to reviewers like John Perryman who calls *Billy* "satire at its finest" (239), speaks my own position when he argues that while the novel is certainly a critique of contemporary American society, it is not satire. He cites lines from his interview with Fountain as evidence (90). Plenty of catch-22s riddle the novel. Reviewer Geoff Dyer

points out one: "investors won't commit to a film of Bravo's exploits until a star comes on board, and no star will commit until investors do" (par. 3).

[117] The novel rejects many of the norms for how veterans react after combat. For instance, Anne Demers reports that Afghanistan and Iraq war veterans "described three key challenges to returning home: lack of respect from civilians, holding themselves to a higher standard than civilians, and not fitting into the civilian world" (170). None of these is a strong enough problem in Billy's experience, at least not during the novel, since Billy is respected by almost everyone he encounters (at most he is not understood as John Perryman contends [242]), is comfortable with rejecting a higher standard by continually joining in the raunchy joking with his fellow Bravos, and is accepted by people who talk to him (including Faison and the man who teaches him about the economics, among others). Billy seems to be a veteran in a war novel with none of the marks of the veteran.

[118] The conventional option would have been to use *thought report* to explain how dizzy and jumbled his mind was feeling or even to use *free indirect discourse* to depict the world from his perspective as the events around him went on.

[119] In this paragraph, I am following scholars who avoid over-reading a text by diagnosing a character without obvious signs of a conditions. For example, Pearl James explains that for her reading of Nick in *The Great Gatsby*, "Crucially, the word 'shell-shock' never appears in *Gatsby*. Nick's narrative cannot be reduced to a diagnosis" (80). Furthermore, I admit that in *not* diagnosing Billy with PTSD, I am in a sense still performing a diagnosis. Besides which, scholarship is of several minds in deciding what even counts as trauma beyond the experiencing of a life-threatening or serious injury-threatening event (McNally 79).

[120] They occur on pages 2, 38, 45, 120, 148-9, 151-2, 191, 203-7, 229-31, and 290. However, some of the passages might be considered two or even three washes, depending on whether or not we allow a break of prose to count as part of the wash.

[121] Such a representation of empty mental space is not singular in recent fiction. In David Lodge's novel *Thinks . . .* and Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's *Dictée*, typographical conventions stand in for these seams between identifiable thoughts.

[122] Still, he "finds these encounters weird and frightening all the same" (38).

[123] Rather than elongate this analysis of the cognitive washes unnecessarily, let me briefly note the exceptional qualities of some of the other washes that my primary analysis does not have space for. The third cognitive wash (45) stands out by being introduced in the normal paragraphing with interruptions of the onomatopoeia "szszszsz" that break into the paraphrase of the mother and daughter who are talking to Billy. The wash itself notably suggests a partial mind by opening with "the lady keeps leaning into Billy and tapping his arm, which induces a low-grade somatic trance, thus he's feeling comfortably numb when the lid of his skull retracts and his brain floats free into the freezing air" (44). The fourth instance occurs when a businessman is explaining to Billy some basic economic ideas about the football industry. Sometimes italics is used and at one point, a gothic font is used. Other miscellaneous typographical symbols less common in prose are occasionally included as well, including a percentage sign, slashes, and a greater-than sign (120). The words in this cognitive wash do not have any associations with the war.

[124] The text suggests that Faison experiences an orgasm while they engage in foreplay. This is indicated both by her responses (154) and by Billy's later thoughts: "He made Faison tremble, he made her *come*" (206, emphasis original) and "She *got off* on him" (291, emphasis original).

[125] The seventh wash glosses the speech from Norm Oglseby—fictional counterpart of Dallas Cowboys owner and playboy Jerry Jones—while the Bravos are drinking (191). This one stands out for having a nearly complete sentence in the middle of it, rather than the disjunctive constellation of words in earlier cognitive washes, with the other nouns and verbs floating about like stairsteps. Otherwise, this one in particular does not add to my core arguments.

[126] This omission may be due to a variety of other reasons: Billy's thoughts may be overriding the transcription of the song, the noise of the crowd at the end of the song may be overcoming its audibility, or Fountain may be critiquing foreign policy by leaving "brave" off the end of the song.

[127] For those less familiar with the novel's use of mind, here are a selection of other lines that deal with the mind: At the fight at the end, "Sykes shouts Hell yes we're out of our motherfucking *minds!*" (297 emphasis original). One of the subplots is the movie deal that the Bravos are trying to close on about their incredible story of bravery. Their agent gets actress Hilary Swank interested, and the idea is that she will play a merging of two of the Bravos, including Billy. This never sits well with Billy. Using terms related to mentality, Billy thinks, "now Swank has totally screwed up his thinking here. . . . Maybe in the movie they

will all just have to lose their minds" (68). At the big press talk: "He is said to be a marketing genius, is Norm, and sitting there amid the flaming hairball of media lights Billy has the weirdest feeling that none of them exists except in Norman Oglesby's mind" (128). Numerous expressions draw attention to minds.

[128] McNally does go on to admit that such attempts have been difficult to replicate (150-1).

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    2006. Print.

Curriculum Vitae

EDUCATION

MA, English – University of Oklahoma. Chair: Vincent Leitch. 2011.

BA, English, *Summa Cum Laude* – Harding University. 2008.

ACADEMIC POSITIONS

Composition Director. Oklahoma Christian University. 2014-2015.

Instructor, Tenure-Track Line, Oklahoma Christian University. 2014-15.

Composition I. 2014-2015.

Composition II. 2014-2015.

Assistant Editor. *Victorians Institute Journal.* University of Kentucky. 2013.

Ellen Rosenman, Editor

Instructor, University of Kentucky

The Bible as Literature. 2013.

Composition and Communication II. 2012.

Composition and Communication I. 2011-2012.

Peer Supervisor. University of Kentucky. 2012-13.

Division of Writing, Rhetoric, and Digital Media

Instructor, University of Oklahoma

Principles of English Composition II, Honors. 2011.

Principles of English Composition II. 2008-2011.

Principles of English Composition I. 2008-2010.

HONORS & AWARDS

Dissertation Enhancement Fellowship. University of Kentucky. Summer 2014.

Provost's Outstanding Teaching Award: Teaching Assistant. University of Kentucky. 2014.

Best Graduate Student Paper, International Society for the Study of Narrative. 2013-14.

Daniel R. Reedy Quality Achievement Award, $3000 annually, University of Kentucky. 2011-14.

Graduate Research Fund, $2000 annually, English Department, University of
        Kentucky. 2011-14.

Sponsored composition student who won the Goldia Cooksey Memorial Award
        given by University of Oklahoma English Department. 2011.

BA, *Summa Cum Laude*, graduated with the highest honors given by the Honors
        College. Harding University. 2008.

Outstanding English Major Award, given to one English senior each year.
        Harding University. 2008.

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

"Productive Violence and Poststructural Play in the *Dungeons and Dragons*
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