2

Narrative improper

(*Joseph Andrews*)

I Narrative proper

Straight plot

Compared to the narrative imbroglio of *Tristram Shandy*, *Joseph Andrews* appears to be a manifestly *straight* narrative. As its full title suggests – *The History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews . . .* – it depicts the actions, adventures, misadventures, trials, tribulations, and victories of Joseph, as well as of Adams and Fanny, that occur for the most part strung along the arc of his journey. The narrative is straight not only content-wise, in ascribing novelistic events like the dog fight or the various comic scenes of seduction, but in several interrelated ways. Temporally, the plot of Joseph's adventures is readily decipherable and orderly, generally adhering to a consistent, progressive historical chronology. Spatially or geographically, the plot follows a natural novelistic form, from an initial remove from ''home,'' through a series of wanderings, finally culminating in the plot correction of a return.

Further, the plot records a social success story, whereby Joseph goes from footboy to propertied gentleman, invoking the standard narrative trajectory of ''making it,'' of attaining wealth and social position. This is also inscribed as a return of sorts – Joseph claiming his birthright – but the plot line is a straight one, the vertical teleology of a social climb. In other words, the plot is straight both formally and thematically. This social ascent overlaps with a relatively straight plot of discovery of identity; Joseph discovers his true name, thus enabling the plot machinations of his social ascent, his garnering social position and wealth. Calling the novel *Joseph Andrews* is a kind of interpretive trojan horse, to set up the surprise and the reversal of the ending, the discovery of

his name functioning as a naturalized *deus ex machina* to induce closure of the novel. This plot of naming, duplicated peripherally for Fanny and the same device as used in *Tom Jones*, parallels the classic plot crux of *Oedipus Rex*, and emblematizes the development of character – the telos of finding one's correct name and therefore full identity – that presumably provides an accomplished plot, replete with not only a dramatic reversal but anagoresis or recognition. Whether or not Joseph's character actually changes – a question I will address shortly – the changing of his name metonymically stands as a signal of the teleological progress of character.

These trajectories also interweave with the classic novelistic topos of a journey, literally and metaphorically, to marriage. Reductively, *Joseph Andrews* draws out the familiar plot of poor boy makes good and gets the girl, an archetypal species of comedy, in classical terms, whereby everything turns out well in the end – not only for the particular characters, but social order is reaffirmed under the auspices of the normative disciplining of sexuality and desire. This resoundingly straight marriage plot – straight not just in terms of its attribution of heterosexuality, which, as the novel shows us, is anything but regularized or singular, but of the prescription of a legitimate (socially, morally, and legally) heterosexuality in a presumably fertile male–female partnership[1] – taps a common motif from Shakespeare's comedies and before through Jane Austen and the nineteenth-century bourgeois novel, up to Horatio Alger and Hollywood. This narrative topos unapologetically confirms the ideological lesson of the virtue of the intersection of secure wealth and secured sexuality.

Finally, amidst this cluster of standard plot motifs, the narrator's discourse, while ''intrusive'' upon the erstwhile ''events'' of the novel, proceeds in a manifestly straight and regular pattern. Each book opens punctually with the narrator's prelude to the

1 I make this qualification since heterosexuality is frequently seen as the polar opposite of homosexuality; it seems to me a significant insight of Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, notably in ''Tales of the Avunculate: The Importance of Being Earnest'' (*Tendencies* [Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993], pp. 52–72), that heterosexuality is not a stable and definitive category, but variable and floating. In ''A Certain Absence: *Joseph Andrews* as Affirmation of Heterosexuality,'' Carl Kropf argues that the novel celebrates heterosexuality in contrast to homosexuality (*Studies in the Novel* 20.1 [1988], 20). While Kropf is persuasive, his notion of heterosexuality remains a distinctly univocal one.

action, and the narratorial comments seem subservient to the narrative, akin to a reporter's note-taking, prompting the plot and metering its pacing – unlike *Tristram Shandy*, where the narrator's comments and interjections not only obscure the plot but raise explicit questions of the status of narrative and its normative temporal progress. The narrator's comments do not seem to tamper with the narrative, but work as polite and helpful rhetorical comments to usher ''our'' characters on their paths.

In the most basic of narratological terms, Tzvetan Todorov describes plot on the linguistic model of a proposition. As Todorov puts it in ''The Grammar of Narrative,'' ''To study the structure of a narrative's plot, we must first present this plot in the form of a summary, in which each distinct action of the story has a corresponding proposition.''[2] Thus, one can decipher the condensed form of a narrative in terms of the dynamic of subject and predicate or agent and action. Todorov finds that the minimal unit of action ''consists in the passage from one equilibrium to another,''[3] making more precise the traditional Aristotelian definition of plot as a change in position. The general sequence of most narratives goes like this: a start in equilibrium or a stable state (this he defines as an adjective), a movement to disequilibrium (taking the syntactic function of a verb), and a resolution in a restored equilibrium. (In essence, this presents a technical refinement of the Aristotelian prescription of beginning, middle, and end.) Equilibrium can be re-established in two ways: a return to the initial equilibrium after the testing of the plot, whereby the initial order of things is confirmed; and the establishment of a new equilibrium, whereby the test of the plot causes the order of things to be renegotiated.[4] To illustrate this distinction Todorov uses the example of Peronella, an unfaithful wife, in the *Decameron*; Peronella evades punishment, which might at first seem to indicate the maintenance of the initial equilibrium. However, Todorov points out that her punish-

2 Tzvetan Todorov, ''The Grammar of Narrative,'' in *The Poetics of Prose*, trans. Richard Howard (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977), p. 110. On the centrality of plot, see ''Structural Analysis of Narrative,'' trans. Arnold Weinstein, *Novel* 3.1 (1969), 72. See also *Introduction to Poetics*, trans. Richard Howard (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1981), pp. 48–53.

3 Todorov, ''Grammar of Narrative,'' p. 111. See also *Introduction*, p. 51.

4 This sequential scheme is not a hard-and-fast law; it can be truncated, for instance in plots that end in disequilibrium, or conversely in plots that begin *in media res*, in the midst of disequilibrium. See Todorov, ''Grammar of Narrative,'' p. 118.

ment would function to return to and repeat the initial order, whereas her evading punishment renegotiates that order such that she can operate according to a new law. Conversion likewise offers a plot form that changes an initial state of affairs.

By these terms, one could define the course – the narrative proposition – of *Joseph Andrews* as one from equilibrium (Joseph – in the syntactical place of predicate of the narrative – begins as a virtuous, promising, and favored young man in the Booby household, intended to Fanny), to disequilibrium (the crisis[es] – the predicate – when Joseph is cast out and makes a difficult and trouble-filled journey through a not always generous countryside, and nearly loses Fanny), finally to the equilibrium of the denouement (when Joseph and Fanny return and discover the facts about their births and are about to be married). While the positions of Joseph and Fanny change precipitously, this new equilibrium reconfirms the social order via the discipline of marriage. Further, since Joseph and Fanny recover their birthrights, the plot performs and is coded as a restoration rather than a conversion. In other words, the plot works to uncover an equilibrium that had been there all along, so in a sense it is an intensely conservative trajectory.

Blocked plot

Locally, the plot seems to proceed according to a steady if not occasionally frantic stream of activity, periodic crises incited by class tension, sex and near-scandal, money troubles, attempted rapes, hunting, fights – all the elements of an action movie or a television show like *Melrose Place*, one would have thought. The plot thus appears to be overwhelmingly active (in Todorov's grammatical taxonomy shunning the static state of an adjective), constantly propelled into disequilibrium (the propositional place of a verb). However, rather than advancing the plot or participating in a dramatic arc, the structure of these actions is iterative and redundant. The narrative is defined and driven by a *deferral* of Joseph's and Fanny's joining and generally by a constant deferral of equilibrium, not a propulsive movement from one state to another. Not to put too fine a point on it, the story would be much shorter and have direct dramatic force if Joseph could have married Fanny immediately, if Adams had been more amenable, if

Booby had behaved more as a benefactor, or if Joseph had been awake during Wilson's story. In Aristotelian terms, the plot is taken up in episodic and unnecessary acts that delay closure. In short, the plot is driven by an iterative series of *obstacles*, not of disequilibrium, but preventing or putting off equilibrium.

There are basically three types of obstacle that occur thoughout. First, the majority of the obstacles are predicated on what I could call tests of virtue, for both Joseph and Fanny. These are gender-coded: Joseph generally undergoes tests of seduction, whereas Fanny is subjected to tests of attack. The range of Joseph's actions centers for the most part on these tests and thus exhibits a relatively simple drawing of his character; the case is much different in *Tom Jones*, where Tom is tested not only by women but by money, sibling rivalry, and a generally more complex set of temptations. Book I of *Joseph Andrews* is primarily structured by tests of Joseph. After the summary movement – as Gérard Genette defines them, those intermediary moments in a narrative that are largely expository, mediating the pacing between events, scenes, or dialogue[5] – of the opening chapters (2–4), which give us background information about Joseph, Adams, their characters (establishing Joseph's virtue) and their world, Joseph goes through a series of tests. Joseph seemingly cannot get away from and inadvertently walks into them. First, Lady Booby tries to seduce him twice (I, 5 and I, 8) (to which he almost succumbs as he writes to his sister Pamela, in I, 10, "for I had once almost forgotten every word Parson Adams had ever said to me"[6]); next, Slipslop corners him (I, 6); and again, Betty is enamored of him (I, 18).

After that, in Book II the plot shifts to a focus on Fanny, although Fanny's position is frequently reduced to that of a plot device to spur Joseph and Adams to action. Joseph and Adams come across her as she has been dragged into the bushes and ravished (II, 9), and Book III pivots on the Squire's plan to kidnap her, the kidnapping (III, 9), and the rescue. Later, Fanny is again detained by a gentleman and then attacked by his servant (IV, 7) and she is fondled by Didapper (IV, 11). She is not an active

5 Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980), pp. 94ff.

6 Henry Fielding, *Joseph Andrews, with Shamela and Related Writings*, ed. Homer Goldberg (New York: Norton, 1987), p. 37. Hereafter all references will be placed parenthetically in the text and identified by the abbreviation JA. General references will be cited by noting book and chapter numbers (e. g., I, 6).

character, but a narrative register of the responses of male characters; in a manner of speaking, she is the token or catalyst of the narratively inscribed economy of men, and part of the action is propelled by their traffic and exchange of her.[7]

The second type of obstacle I would distinguish is that of comic misunderstanding and misintention, which for the most part circulate around Adams. Through their journey in Books II and IIII, Adams, Joseph, and Fanny end up in difficult situations frequently through Adams' comic misadventures – talking and annoying Trulliber (II, 14), forgetting his horse in distraction (II, 7), not having money (II, 15), and so on. They are usually extricated from these misadventures by accident, by a *deus ex machina* plot device, such as a stranger appearing, finding money, and so forth. These events, interspersed throughout the novel, provide obvious segments of comic relief from its otherwise quasi-moral tenor, as well as elongating the plateau of delay impeding their return.

The third set of obstacles encompasses those of societal norms and expectations, largely dominating Book IV. While the intersecting arcs of Joseph's and Fanny's journeys come together, at least geographically, and thus signal an expectation of resolution, and the obstacles that prevent them from returning to Booby Hall and environs end, this section presents a further plot plateau blocking closure. The obstacles here differ from the previous tests of seduction and earlier machinations of the journey-plot, which seem more individual and circumstantial, and are structured around the social machinations that prevent Fanny and Joseph's marriage (Booby coercing Adams, Adams' wife's antagonism, Pamela's and Sir Booby's reservations, and finally the fortuitous revelation of Fanny's birth). In terms of the consistency of the plot, Book IV seems to diverge from the adventures of a road novel, since the characters stay put in a relatively static tableau; it portrays the force of societal normativity and the articulation of Joseph and Fanny within the social totality. In a certain sense, Book IV draws a fuller characterization of Joseph and Fanny, since we see them tested and respond together, as a united couple, their virtue

7 The standard discussion of the economy in women is Gayle Rubin's "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex," in *Toward an Anthropology of Women*, ed. Rayna R. Reiter (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975), pp. 157–210. See also Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985).

underscored by a willingness to live together platonically after the revelation of Fanny's birth (IV, 12). However, these obstacles affirm not only virtuousness but "acceptable" social relations; this section functions to dispel the threat to social stasis by reining in desire and sexuality – thinking particularly of the scenes of bed-swapping and sexual confusion in chapter 14, which culminates the depiction of the unruliness of sexuality that runs through the novel – by incorporating it in "legitimate" bounds and therefore naturalizing an otherwise artificial and arbitrary law. Further, this book represents a profoundly ideological resolution in its remediation of class relations, and the threat of class transgression, through the conscription and governance of sexuality not only in marriage, but in stipulating a "suitable" marriage.[8]

Passive plot

The plot of *Joseph Andrews* is surprisingly passive, in the sense that Joseph and Fanny are more often acted upon, at the behest of circumstance, than active. Joseph is a remarkably inactive character in that obstacles are encountered by and surround him, impeding his course; the action is not Joseph's imposing his will on the world, but the reverse. One might say that circumstance is the active element in the plot of the novel, not the characters' actions. Rather than taking the form of a movement from equilibrium to disequilibrium and back again, the plot is distributed along an iterative sequence of impediments to equilibrium that essentially repeat one basic structure: an obstacle to overcome. The events constantly vary, but they do not proceed according to a necessary progression toward a telos, as would befit a more correctly formed Aristotelian plot; they are arbitrary, episodic, and in a sense interminable – one could add (or subtract) further scenes and episodes of misadventure without changing the shape of the plot.[9]

8 As Brian McCrea puts it, sexual and class conventions are "rehabilitated" ("'Had Joseph Not Withheld Him': The Portrayal of the Social Elite in *Joseph Andrews*," in *Man, God, and Nature in the Enlightenment*, ed. Mell, Braun, and Palmer [East Lansing: Colleagues Press, 1988], pp. 123–8).

9 Robert Alter argues that the novel exhibits a balanced, architectonic pattern, despite some of the actions being episodic (*Fielding and the Nature of the Novel* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968], pp. 133–7). While the return structure suggests a balance, I believe that the iterative obstacle structure governs the plot; if there is a progression, I would argue, it is in the plot of character of the narrator.

This plot structure differs from that of *Tristram Shandy*, where the time of the events is what seems to shift unrelentingly, amidst a fairly steady stock of events. In *Joseph Andrews*, time is relatively stable and constant, but the events oscillate (albeit in a regular pattern).

Although his circumstances change constantly, Joseph's character does not discernibly change through the course of the novel. In fact, the redundant obstacle structure that forms the plot is predicated precisely on Joseph's virtue not giving way, on his steadfastness or, in a less morally charged register, his inflexibility. At the beginning of the novel, it is crucially established that Joseph is virtuous (for example, when he goes to London and is exposed to the vices of the City, Joseph is so pristine that he does not game, swear or drink [II, 4] – a portrait that differs strikingly from that of Tom Jones), to build the expectation that he will resist later temptations. A substantial line of the critical conversation on Fielding – say, Battestin's *The Moral Basis of Fielding's Art* or Sacks' *Fiction and the Shape of Belief* – has stressed the moral theme in the novels,[10] but the morality implied in *Joseph Andrews* is one of negation and thoughtless denial – just saying no – not affirmation. Joseph exhibits little choice, but functions as a passive moral machine, responding by rote to forces around him. In this respect, *Joseph Andrews* differs markedly from *Tom Jones*, since Tom does succumb to temptation (sleeping with Molly and Lady Bellaston), causing him almost to lose Sophia, so that Tom actively prompts his course of action.

In his well-known essay, ''The Concept of Plot and the Plot of *Tom Jones*,'' R. S. Crane revises and expands Aristotle's dicta for plot and distinguishes three basic types that occur in the novel: plots of action (Aristotle's focus, exemplified by *Oedipus* and *The Brothers Karamazov*), plots of character (James' *Portrait of a Lady*), and plots of thought (*Marius the Epicurean*, and one might add

10 Martin C. Battestin, *The Moral Basis of Fielding's Art: A Study of Joseph Andrews* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1959); Sheldon Sacks, *Fiction and the Shape of Belief: A Study of Henry Fielding with Glances at Swift, Johnson, and Richardson* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964). See also Morris Golden, *Fielding's Moral Psychology* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1966). This moral trend continues up to the present, in Laura F. Hodges, ''Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics and Tom Jones,'' *Philological Quarterly* 63 (1984), 223–38, and James J. Lynch, ''Moral Sense and the Narrator of Tom Jones,'' *Studies in English Literature* 25 (1985), 599–614.

Borges' stories).[11] In the second section of his essay, Crane carefully and cogently analyzes the plot of *Tom Jones*, finding it to be an exemplary plot of action. For Crane, ''It is in nothing short of [its] total system of actions, moving by probable or necessary connections from beginning, through middle, to end, that the unity of the plot of *Tom Jones* is to be found.''[12] However, as Michael Sprinker shows in ''What Is Living and What Is Dead in Chicago Criticism,'' Crane's analysis contradicts his conclusion when he reasons that ''The most important of these in the long run is the moral change produced by his recent experiences in Tom himself, as manifested by his break with Lady Bellaston and by his rejection of the honorable advances of Mrs. Hunt and the dishonorable advances of Mrs. Fitzpatrick.''[13] That Tom undergoes this moral change fits Crane's definition of a plot of character rather than action.[14]

To apply these distinctions to *Joseph Andrews*, Joseph shows no significant change in character; his character is fixed from the beginning and unchanged throughout his adventures. As I have mentioned, the narrative makes a decided effort to establish Joseph's character early on, depicting him not only as moral but as preternaturally graced, as naturally pure, handsome (I, 10),

11 R. S. Crane, ''The Concept of Plot and the Plot of Tom Jones,'' in *Critics and Criticism: Essays in Method*, abr. ed., ed. R. S. Crane (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 66. 12 *Ibid.*, p. 77.

13 *Ibid.*, p. 75; see Michael Sprinker, ''What Is Living and What Is Dead in Chicago Criticism,'' *boundary 2* 13.2–3 (1985), 185–212. Sprinker goes on to note Crane's divergence from a strictly formal account of plot in his reliance on affectivity (''the form of a plot is an affection experienced by the audience'' [198]). For Sprinker, this demonstrates a symptomatic flaw in the Chicago position – of which Crane is a prime expositor – in its avoidance of rhetoric and finally history.

14 To extend this, if catharsis is the formal end of a plot and one subscribes to the common assumption that the audience undergoes a cathartic change, then all plots are plots of character *of the audience*. However, Kenneth Telford offers a corrective to this common view of *catharsis*, arguing that ''[pity and fear] are not defined by reference to audience reactions . . . they are instead defined as objective qualities of the dramatic incidents'' (''Analysis,'' *Aristotle's Poetics*, trans. Kenneth A. Telford [Lanham: University Press of America, 1985], p. 103). Telford follows Richard McKeon's locating affectivity in the domain of rhetoric, not poetics; see McKeon, ''Rhetoric and Poetic in the Philosophy of Aristotle,'' in *Aristotle's ''Poetics'' and English Literature: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Elder Olson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), pp. 201–36. For a recent, nuanced account of *catharsis*, see Alexander Nehamas, ''Pity and Fear in the Rhetoric and the Poetics,'' in *Aristotle's Rhetoric: Philosophical Essays*, ed. David J. Furley and Alexander Nehamas (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 269–75.

pleasant-voiced (1, 2), etc. His actions, then, simply play out the essential property of his nature, which draws on the cultural mythology of the inherent and manifest characteristics of refinement of aristocratic lineage. In contrast, Tom Jones is a more interesting and vital character precisely because he changes and has lessons to learn. Through the middle books of *Joseph Andrews*, Adams seems a more active character, at least as an inadvertent catalyst. In this sense, perhaps he is ''the real hero of the novel,'' as Wolfgang Iser claims.[15] Adams plays out a narratively productive tension between his beliefs and his impulses. His portrait obviously parodies the artificial and abstract imposition of pedantic moral values – an early portrait of the absent-minded professor – whereas Joseph represents a kind of passive register of natural nobility.

On this reading, then, *Joseph Andrews* does not yield a plot of action or a plot of character, as one might ordinarily expect. To take account of its defining action, I would extend Crane's typology to include a fourth type: *a plot of circumstance*. The unity of action is not one of agency of the characters but predicated on the ''world'' in which Joseph, Fanny, *et al.* travel, the social expectations and forces therein, and the economy of sexuality it governs.

Beyond this discussion of the straight plot, there is a significant – and symptomatic, as I have discussed in previous chapters – elision in Crane's otherwise systematic account. Through his careful explication, Crane barely mentions the narrator of *Tom Jones*. He takes the plot of Tom's story univocally and unquestioningly as the plot of the novel. Seen in an alternative light, in terms of the explicit depiction of narratorial activity, a salient and in fact temporally primary plot of the novel encompasses the development of the narrator's character, his activities, his relation with the other characters whom he interviews, and finally with his ''reader.'' Thus one could say that the novel exhibits a *plot of character of the narrator*. According to Crane's distinctions, there is also a way in which the text ultimately enacts a plot of thought, since the question of narration is reflexively highlighted via the figuration of narrative agency and action, and that question calls attention to the epistemological status of narrative. In this sense,

15 Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), p. 214.

the novel is inherently theoretical – without being heavy-handed, a plot of theory.

II Narrative improper i

Narrative of narrative

Wayne Booth provides a useful counterpoint in the discussion of plot, specifically about the place of the ''author,'' in ''The Self-Conscious Narrator in Comic Fiction before *Tristram Shandy*'' and in *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, especially in the section, '''Fielding' in *Tom Jones*.''[16] Booth's drawing of the concept of the ''the implied author'' of *Tom Jones* and his stress on the rhetorical situation of narrative mark a signal shift from Crane's neo-Aristotelian formalistic delineations.[17] In ''The Self-Conscious Narrator,'' Booth argues that the commentary and ''even the long introductory chapters . . . contribute to the real form'' of *Tom Jones*. Their function is not ornamental, but to ''contribute to the characterization of the narrator and the intimate comic relationship between him and the reader.''[18] He goes on to make the rather remarkable claim that, ''leaving out the story of Tom, we discover a running account of growing intimacy between the narrator and the reader, an account with a kind of plot of its own and a separate denouement,''[19] noting that the last preface in *Tom Jones* gives the narrator's almost poignant parting from the reader. In short, Booth assigns a plot of character to the narrator, although he equivocates and seems to apologize for the implications of this claim, saying that ''It may be extravagant to use the term 'subplot' for the story of our relationship with this nar-

16 Wayne C. Booth, ''The Self-Conscious Narrator in Comic Fiction before Tristram Shandy,'' *PMLA* 67 (1952), 163–85; and *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, 2nd. ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), pp. 215–18.

17 It would be hard not to see Booth's shift in focus as a direct response to Crane, since Booth represents the second generation of the ''Chicago School,'' of which Crane, McKeon, and a host of others were the forebears. For this genealogy, see Wayne C. Booth, ''Between Two Generations: The Heritage of the Chicago School,'' *Profession 82* (1982), 19–26.

18 Booth, ''The Self-Conscious Narrator,'' p. 179.

19 Booth, Rhetoric, p. 215; see also ''The Self-Conscious Narrator,'' p. 180. Howard Anderson, in ''Answers to the Author of *Clarissa*: Theme and Narrative Technique in *Tom Jones* and *Tristram Shandy*,'' makes a similar point: ''in *Tom Jones* and *Tristram Shandy* we develop a thorough familiarity with the narrator; in both novels he is by far the most fully realized character'' (*Philological Quarterly* 51 [1972], 860).

rator.''[20] In this equivocation and labeling the narrator's story a ''subplot,'' Booth still subscribes to the residual bias of most formal analysis of narrative, exemplified by Crane and the predominant line of contemporary narrative theory, that excludes or externalizes a narrator's discourse in accounting for the plot, whether as subplot, meta- or extra-diegesis, ''signs of the narrating,'' or metafiction.

In ''From Imitation to Rhetoric,'' John Ross Baker relevantly compares Crane's and Booth's models of narrative, attributing Crane's failure to account for the narrator of *Tom Jones* to his mimetic bias, whereas Booth focuses on the narrator in keeping with his didactic bias.[21] Baker notes that Crane takes the novel to mime Tom's actions, although, as I have argued, alternatively one might say that what is ''represented,'' very literally and in terms of the most immediate ''predicate,'' is the plot of narratorial action. To take the Platonic rather than Aristotelian sense of mimesis, it represents discourse rather than action.[22] Baker, as well as Crane, misses this sense of mimesis and assumes the ''action'' of the novel is that of Tom's doings. In my view, Baker more accurately observes that Booth's *telos* is didactic, that is, that authors imply moral aims in novels. For Booth, the narrator's comments are not as ornamental or distracting as the negatively charged appellation, ''authorial intrusion,'' usually implies, but they are crucial to giving an interpretive gloss and carrying proper moral values to the reader. As was the case in *Tristram Shandy* criticism, they become literalized, coded as interpretive keys to the right reading of the novel.

Here, I would assert the full implication of the thesis that Booth tentatively suggests, apropos *Tom Jones*, for *Joseph Andrews*: the novel details the plot of a narrator developing a relationship with a putative ''reader,'' telling how he gets his story, taking his ''reader'' on a ''journey'' of narrative, as well as recounting other events of narratorial activity. This plot is the first-order predicate

20 Booth, *Rhetoric*, p. 216.

21 See ''From Imitation to Rhetoric: The Chicago Critics, Wayne Booth, and *Tom Jones*,'' in *Towards a Poetics of Fiction: Essays from Novel: A Forum on Fiction, 1967–1976*, ed. Mark Spilka [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977], pp. 136–56.

22 For a lucid discrimination of the Platonic and Aristotelian uses of mimesis, see Don Bialostosky, ''Narrative Diction in Wordsworth's Poetics of Speech,'' *Comparative Literature* 34 (1982), 305–32.

of the narrative, positing an increasing familiarity and intimacy between the figures of author and reader. In contrast to Booth, I would stress the modal reflexivity of this relation – its textual operation and linguistic relation – rather than the anthropomorphic scene of instruction to which Booth subscribes, of the author directing the actual reader. These are not real people, but operative figures within the economy and relation of the narrative. This is not to deny that there are real readers, but that function stands in metonymical relation to the textual representation of narrators and narratees.

Interwoven with the plot of the narrator's telling Joseph's story to the nominative reader, *Joseph Andrews* also recounts an inconspicuous plot of the narrator's information-gathering, documenting how he obtains his material and verifying the narrative by the explicit attribution of *narrative sources*. This actually forms a temporally distinct and prior plot from the narrator's present-tense telling. To schematize it, with N marking the narrator's action, N_n the narrator's telling the story, N_g the narrator's information gathering and investigating, and J the events of Joseph's story, the temporal relation of the narrative might be drawn thus: N_n (N_g (J)). Typically, in the case of an omniscient narrator or most third person or heterodiegetic narrators,[23] the way in which the narrator comes to take possession of the story – the story of investigation or authentification – is not recounted. Or, rather, the narrator is figured as having occult or magical powers that grant him or her access to the story, which asserts verification in a different way than the attribution of source. Although occasionally obscured, the narrator of *Joseph Andrews* identifies a variety of sources, such as Joseph and Fanny, Wilson, or servants, who might have witnessed the scene and events in question, and in a variety of different forms, such as his own witness, direct account, letters, or hearsay. He makes this explicit by periodically slipping in comments that designate direct testimony, such as: ''This was all of Mr. Joseph Andrews' Speech which I could get him to recollect,'' or ''had it not been for the Information which we received from a Servant of the Family,'' or ''Mr. Wilson informs me in his last letter'' (JA 183, 192, 269). There are also a number of other innocuous references that signal indirect testimony, for instance

23 Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, pp. 244–5.

when the narrator cites vague, unnamed sources regarding the Constable's integrity after the prisoner escapes (I, 16) – "I am sufficiently convinced of his Innocence; having been assured of it by those who received their Information from his own Mouth" (JA 57) – or when Squire Booby arrives and speaks to the justice in Book IV – "the Conversation between these two Gentleman, which rolled, as I have been informed, entirely on the subject of Horse-racing" (JA 228). An omniscient narrator would of course not need to add "having been assured" or "as I have been informed."

In a certain sense, this layer of the narratorial plot takes the form of reporting testimony to confirm the case of Joseph and Fanny, so, while it does not purport to be definitive, it lends a sense of credibility to and rhetorically legitimates what is told. As John Bender notes, "In many respects the narrator of *Tom Jones* [or, in this case, *Joseph Andrews*] is an idealized version of the kind of trial judge" extant in Fielding's day.[24] The function of this attribution of source works to authenticate narrative, as it does juridically with witness testimony. In contrast to juridical testimony, though, narrative sources are frequently predicated on a structure of remove – receiving the story from x, who perhaps heard it from y, who had firsthand experience – which verifies the narrative chimerically, by a chain of recession and metonymical displacement. In other words, narrative posits a verifying source that is by definition inaccessible (in legal terms, hearsay), thus verifying the narrative without being, in the terms of the philosophy of science, subject to falsification.[25] This catachrestic structure of narrative

24 John Bender, *Imagining the Penitentiary: Fiction and Architecture of Mind in Eighteenth-Century England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), p. 178. On the political and ideological context, see John Richetti, "The Old Order and the New Novel of the Mid-Eighteenth Century: Narrative Authority in Fielding and Smollett," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 2.3 (1990), 183–96. For the relation to historical writing, see Leland E. Warren, "History-as-Literature and the Narrative Stance of Henry Fielding," *Clio* 9.1 (1979), 89–109, and Michael McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel, 1600–1740* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), pp. 405–9.

25 See Imre Lakatos, "Falsification and the Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes," in *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge*, ed. Imre Lakatos and Alan Musgrave (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), pp. 91–196. Cf. Paul de Man on the logic of verification of reading: "all readings are in error because they assume their own readability. Everything written has to be read and every reading is susceptible of logical verification, but the logic that establishes the need for verification is itself unverifiable and therefore unfounded in its claim to truth" (*Allegories of Reading: Figural Language in*

testimony is typical in folklore; as Jan Brunvand remarks, urban legends characteristically are reported as having come from a ''friend of a friend,'' ascribing a tangible source, which at the same time is unavailable, to verify otherwise fantastic or ridiculous events.[26]

Overall, then, a significant strand of the plot of *Joseph Andrews* is the course of narratorial decipherment. Rather than drawing on an omniscient narrator, this takes the form of first-person homodiegetic narration, the narrative limited by the narrator's purview. The novel also indicates not only the plot of the narrator's knowing, but the more immediate or temporally prior plot of the characters' telling him and of his acting as a reporter or investigator. While he has a great deal of access to what has gone on and sometimes seems to exceed knowledge of normal testimony – for instance, he knows what Lady Booby thinks and feels when rebuffed by Joseph (I, 7) – the narrator also tells of his limited and ultimately uncertain access. There is a gap in how much he knows, despite how complete the story seems. When Joseph is recuperating at Tow-wouse's Inn, the narrator states: ''He accordingly eat either a Rabbit or a Fowl, I never could with any tolerable Certainty discover which'' (JA 54). Later on, after the banns are published, he says, ''Whether this had any Effect on Lady Booby or no . . . I could never discover'' (JA 220). And along the way he notes that he cannot prise all he wants to know from Joseph or Fanny, as when he tries to find out the details of the ''delightful Conversation'' the young lovers have at the Inn: ''But as I never could prevail on either to relate it, so I cannot communicate it to the Reader'' (JA 132). While this effects a certain indeterminacy, that indeterminacy is largely token and does not impede the unfolding of the plot, but conversely functions as an instrument of credibility in ascribing a kind of humility to the narrator. The rhetorical posture of a humble narrator is more persuasive and plausible than an obnoxiously omniscient one.

In the narrator's narrative of his sources and his inability to ascertain a complete record from them, *Joseph Andrews* is surprisingly similar to a novel like *Lord Jim*, and in a sense ''modern.'' I do

Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke, and Proust [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979], p. 202).

26 Jan Harold Brunvand, *The Vanishing Hitchhiker: American Urban Legends and Their Meanings* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1981), p. 4.

not mean this gratuitously or to induct *Joseph Andrews* into the modern experimental canon or postmodern canon of metafiction, making it postmodern *avant la lettre*; rather, I mean this in the sense that the modern is not a startlingly new invention of early twentieth-century avant-garde artists – Joyce, Pound, *et al.* – but part of a larger epistemic shift, as Foucault has it, and as recent work in eighteenth-century studies and other fields has argued.[27] On the level of the narrative of sources, *Joseph Andrews* thematizes the problematic of narrative validation, the epistemological difficulty of collating various individual perspectives and perceptions, and the inherent impossibility of attaining a totalizing account.

To return to the question of the narrator's position, the narrator cannot be independent of or autonomous from the presumed ''story,'' but figures the displacement among temporal levels of the narrative, among the ''action,'' the account of witness testimony, and the work of magnanimous reporter/judge. Thus the narrator does not offer a privileged authoritative level – as Booth's ''implied author'' projects and as most narrative criticism tacitly assumes – but the system of narrative is self-circulating and self-validating, the narrator presenting the validation of sources, and the sources in turn grounding the ''factuality'' of the narrative and the authority of the narrator. In other words, the narrative of narrative does not take the place of a signifier or what Gerald Prince calls ''signs of the narrating''[28] that stands separate from and delivers a signified or a group of ''narrated'' events, events which reference an external reality, but indicates the imbrication of narrating – of the mode and rhetoric of narrative representation – with the narrated, in a receding metonymical chain of narratorial relations that feigns but displaces a referential ground, or rather constitutes its own referential ground.

Narrative metaphorics

Throughout the course of the novel, the narrator of *Joseph Andrews* takes his ''reader'' on a ''journey'' of narrative. Although he spins

27 See, for instance, Timothy Reiss, *The Discourse of Modernism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1982).

28 See Gerald Prince, *Narratology: The Form and Functioning of Narrative* (Berlin: Mouton, 1982), pp. 7–16, as well as my discussion of Prince in the previous chapter.

off other figures for narrative – notably as a feast – this is the governing figure for the act of the narrative, here as well as in many other novels.[29] As the narrator elaborates in his preface to Book II, the chapter breaks

> may be looked upon as an Inn or Resting-Place, where he may stop and take a Glass, or any other Refreshment, as it pleases him. Nay, our fine Readers will, perhaps, be scarce able to travel farther than through one of them in a Day. As to those vacant Pages which are placed between our Books, they are to be regarded as those Stages, where, in long Journeys, the Traveller stays some time to repose himself, and consider of what he hath seen in the Parts he hath already past through . . . (JA 70–1)

This figural model also recurs throughout *Tom Jones*, notably articulated in the famous ''Farewell to the Reader'' opening the last book, Book XVIII (''We are now, reader, arrived at the last stage of our long journey. As we have, therefore, travelled together through so many pages. . .'').[30]

In addition to the overarching analogy of the conceptual span of narrative to the spatial span of a journey (both over time), *Joseph Andrews* also frequently subscribes to this figural network by invoking otherwise innocuous figures of leaving and returning, as when he says, ''As we cannot therefore at present get Mr. Joseph out of the Inn, we shall leave him in it. . .'' (JA 75), or ''Before we proceed any farther in this Tragedy, we shall leave Mr. Joseph and Mr. Adams to themselves. . .'' (JA 203). During the tumult at Tow-wouse's Inn, the narrator again puns on the reader's travel, ''returning'' him to a previous scene: ''To return therefore to the kitchin, where a great variety of Company were now assembled . . .'' (JA 51). One could cull many other such examples. The humor here plays on crossing literal and figural meaning, since the

29 Walter Benjamin draws a kind of anthropological link between travel and storytelling (''When someone goes on a trip, he has something to tell about,' goes the German saying, and people imagine the storyteller as someone who has come from afar''), speculating that one type of stories originate from journeymen. See ''The Storyteller: Reflections of the Works of Nikolai Leskov,'' *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken, 1969), pp. 84–5. See also J. Paul Hunter, ''The Conquest of Space: Motion and Pause in *Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones*,'' chapter 7 of *Occasional Form: Henry Fielding and the Chains of Circumstance* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975). On the motif of narrative as food, see Timothy O'Brien, ''The Hungry Narrator and Narrative Performance in *Tom Jones*,'' *Studies in English Literature* 25.3 (1985), 615–36.

30 Henry Fielding, *The History of Tom Jones, A Foundling*, ed. Fredson Bowers (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press), p. 913.

reader obviously is not physically leaving Joseph at the Inn, whereas the topic of discourse figuratively ''leaves'' Joseph. A further twist of the pun is that Joseph is literally and inconveniently left behind at the Inn. Similarly with the question of the narrative's ''returning'': the reader is not physically returning to the kitchen, but the topic of the discourse ''returns'' to events there.

Similarly, the narrator announces changes in his discourse in seemingly flat comments such as ''we return to honest Joseph. . . '' (JA 39) or ''But to return to our History'' (JA 124). The narrative is figured as ''carrying'' the reader (''carry our reader on after Parson Adams'' [JA 75]), the reader proceeds with baggage (''Reader, taking these Hints along with you, proceed. . .'' [JA 149]), and the reader is promised surprises at the next station (''waits for the reader in the next chapter'' [JA 214]). While these figures are relatively typical and unexceptional in the colloquial lexicon, it is precisely their typicality, as well as their cumulative excess, that makes them significant, and their relevance and applicability seem to go without saying: as ground is covered in time in a journey, narrative events (increments, pages) are covered in time (turning pages, reading). Thus it seems an indubitable and natural metaphor for what is actually the metonymic comparison of their ratio, for there is no necessary connection between the epistemological decipherment of words on a page and traversing ground under foot. In a sense, this lexical code presents a *topography* of narrative, figuring a spatial model for the movement of narrative.

Why travel is such a seemingly natural figure for narrative is that it presents a spatio-temporal correspondence for the act of narrating and thus for the phenomenological experience of the act of reading. This ratio of space over time is what impels Genette's narratological project and in fact what enables him to clarify the narrative pacing and order of *Remembrance of Things Past*. Transposing this ratio to rudimentary terms of physics, I would call it a *narrative velocity*. In *Joseph Andrews*, the order of Joseph's story is not only fairly regular and chronological – differing signally from the plot of Tristram's story in *Tristram Shandy* – but the velocity of the narrative is generally constant. The prospect of a straight narrative is that its velocity is roughly proportionate to chronological time, although not equal to it. An exception would be a novel like *Ulysses*, whereby its recounting twenty or so hours

takes about that long to read. Usually, though, there is no direct correlation between reading time and narrative time; otherwise, a novel spanning twenty years would require a rather extraordinary commitment to get through.

To break down the pacing of *Joseph Andrews*, the earlier chapters truncate Joseph's youth and give summary depictions of Joseph, Adams, *et al.*, while the middle books take a more temporally proportionate velocity analogous to Joseph's travels, and the closing book slows to set the stage for the ensemble discussions and revelations about Joseph and Fanny. *Tom Jones* takes a similar form, since the earlier books cover a large part of Tom's life quickly, whereas the later books cover much less event time – usually not more than a few days. (One has only to look at the chapter headings of *Tom Jones* to see the slope of the plot over time. Book III covers ''Tommy Jones Arrived at the Age of Fourteen Till He Attained the Age of Nineteen,'' IV is down to a year, V ''Somewhat Longer Than Half a Year,'' VI three weeks, VII three days, IX twelve hours, after which the slope levels off, most chapters ranging from twelve hours to a few days.) Thus, in terms of velocity, one might say that both narratives decelerate. This negative curve of the slope of the plot functions to build more immediacy and dramatic impact in its concentration of ''action'' at the end. In short, there is a certain usefulness in the adequation of spatial distance and narrative distance, albeit with the caveat of their metonymical relation.

Joseph Andrews also spins out other figures for narrative: as a stage, as food, as a dance, as entertainment, as instruction, and so on. This process of metaphoresis, whereby narrative almost compulsively inscribes figures for itself, commonly occurs through the history of fictional narrative. For instance, in the *Decameron*, narrative is figured as an afternoon's entertainment, a kind of pleasant tonic taken in the shade of midday heat, but underneath that it is figured as a way to bide time, as a respite from not only the plague that grips their city but from mourning for all those that they have lost. Narrative, in this sense, is a kind of crucial social bond, a social solace and forgetting if not cure – at its limit, of the brutality of disease and its claims on mortality, as well as of the weight of surviving. In the contemporary movie, *The Princess Bride*, narrative is also figured as a respite from illness, although more humorously as a way for a boy to pass the day in bed with fever,

entertained by his grandfather. To take up a different figural strand, in Henry James, particularly in the prefaces, the overwhelming figure is of economic exchange, of readers getting their money's worth and of narrative being paid to them.[31] And as I have mentioned in the previous chapter, *Tristram Shandy* exhibits a kind of narrative metaphorrhea, in a Shandyesque way an almost uncontrolled, Tourette's-like spinning of metaphors for narrative – as debt, machine, travel, attack, motion, and probably the major figure, as line or thread, which presents another common and seemingly natural governing metaphor for narrative, correlate to narrative as journey in its representation of movement over distance, space over time.[32]

Cumulatively, the pervasiveness and representational excess of these figures encode an allegory of narrative reflexivity, not only on the level of the depiction of the narrator's performance and the complex of narratorial relations entailed thereby, but linguistically, in this tropism toward self-naming or figuring. In the manner of medieval allegories in which characters receive thematic names – Purity, Chastity, Sloth, and so on – these figures serve as allegorical registers signaling the reflexive story of narrative and narrative processes, whereby narrative names and characterizes its operation and modal form. In this sense, they indicate what Paul de Man distinguishes as a tropological narrative – an allegory of metaphor rather than an allegory of reading – which tells the story of denomination and ultimately the failure of denomination, the failure of metaphor to define a necessary connection between tenor and vehicle.[33] These figures cascade out in a metonymical chain for the act of narrative, figuring it by analogy to actions like travel or processes like weaving, building a lexicon

31 See, for instance, the preface to *The Golden Bowl*: ''All of which but means of course that the reader is, in common phrase, 'sold' – even when, poor passive spirit, systematically bewildered and bamboozled on the article of his dues, he may be but dimly aware of it'' (*The Art of the Novel: Critical Prefaces* [Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1984], p. 346). See also Roland Barthes, ''Contract-Narratives,'' *S/Z*, trans. Richard Miller (New York: Hill and Wang, 1974), pp. 88–9; and Marie Maclean, *Narrative as Performance: The Baudelairean Experiment* (London: Routledge, 1988), pp. 76–86. On the general question of the intersection of economic exchange and discourse, see Marc Shell, *Money, Language, and Thought: Literary and Philosophic Economies from the Medieval to the Modern Era* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982).

32 Hillis Miller takes up the question of the ''line'' of narrative in *Ariadne's Thread: Story Lines* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

33 See *Allegories of Reading*, p. 205.

of narrative rather than representing ''real actions.'' Or rather, they signal an allegorical economy of representation, whereby narrative represents its modal formulation, in a manner of speaking, on its own terms.

Narratorial strata

What I mean by narrative reflexivity here is not then a simple focus on what Genette calls narration or the depiction of a narrative persona, but the figuring of a range of discursive and linguistic strata. The paradigm of the narrative of narrative is not constituted simply by an inobvious level, one level up from the putative events of the normal plot – a surplus zone of events (''signs of the narrating'') beyond the action proper. In the previous chapter, I paid particular attention to the explicit depiction of Tristram composing his narrative, since that zone of action has been obscured in the history of reception of *Tristram Shandy*, and obfuscated by the temporal disorder of the plot. That storyline – of a narrator constructing a narrative – suggests a liminal way in which the narrative reflexively signals its allegorical self-inscription and representation. However, my point here – in a narrative where the representation of narratorial activity is not obscured but relatively explicit – is to show how complicated even such a seemingly straight representation turns out to be.

In *Joseph Andrews*, the emplotment of narratorial action occurs in several different nodes of figuration.[34] To distinguish among them, first, there is the relatively straightforward plot of the narrator constructing a narrative, the present-tense, first-person plot of what the narrator is doing as he narrates, as a sort of tour guide leading the ''reader'' through Joseph's story. For instance, the narrator gives specific descriptions of his telling, performative utterances of his enacting a narrative, such as ''I will dismiss this

34 I would distinguish these from types of discourse, say, as given by Bakhtin (see Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, ed. and trans. Caryl Emerson [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984], p. 199). Distinctions of the narrator's discourse assume the hierarchy of representational levels I have been critiquing; for instance, the narrator's discourse here demonstrates both direct, unmediated discourse (the narrator telling) and objectified discourse (discourse of the represented figure – the narrator as character). For an alternative typology of the narrator's discourse, see Richard Bevis, ''Fielding's Normative Authors: *Tom Jones* and the Rehearsal Play,'' *Philological Quarterly* 69.1 (1990), 65–7.

chapter'' or ''I will endeavor to indulge the reader'' (72) or the like. Second, in conjunction with these performative directives ushering the narrative, there is also a present-tense plot of characterization of the narrator. These take the form of specific present-tense descriptions of what the narrator is doing, perhaps best exemplified by the offhand comment of the narrator of *Tom Jones*, when he remarks ''the little parlour in which I sit at this instant'' (XIII, i), as well as Tristram's continual monitoring of his state of mind, dress, and the weather in *Tristram Shandy*. In *Joseph Andrews*, we find out a lot about the narrator, his likes and dislikes, what he has read, the foods he prefers, his views on education and drinking, who he talks to, and so forth. As Booth remarks of the narrator's almost poignant closing of *Tom Jones*, the narrator's frequent interjections similarly constitute a plot of intimacy with the purported reader in *Joseph Andrews*. Third, the narrative also constructs the prior narrative of his interviewing sources, as discussed above.

Fourth, the narrator offers comments of general wisdom (''It is an observation sometimes made . . .''), as well as observations of human nature (''O Love, what monstrous Tricks dost thou play . . . Thou puttest out our Eyes, stoppest up our Ears . . . Thou can'st make Cowardice brave, Avarice generous, Pride humble and Cruelty tender-hearted . . .'' [JA 29–30]). This layer differs from the more singular depiction of the narrator as character, but still invokes a narratorial overlay, constituting a kind of supra-literary, quasi-philosophical frame. In other words, it represents not the ''real world'' or the world of the characters (Joseph *et al.*), but the literary realm of received wisdom, accepted belief, and tradition, tapping into what Roland Barthes calls in *S/Z* the cultural code.[35] Fifth, the narrator comments explicitly on craft, schematically in the introductory chapters as well as sporadically throughout the novel, arguing for the proper mode of imitation, for appropriate literary forms, for the best design of a novel, and so on. The narrator also carries on a running critical commentary about other authors – Homer or Cibber, especially – and about literature in general. This dialogue with the literary tradition also occurs implicitly in the use of mythic apparatus (fighting off the hounds [III, 6] to note one well-known example) and other literary references that striate the book. This zone again invokes the code of litera-

35 See *S/Z*, p. 20.

ture, and discursively situates the action of the narrative in that context. Joseph's adventures occur on this literary topography, by the codes, expectations, and parameters of literary narrative, and the narrator acts within the dimensions of this world, rather than on the topography of a ''real'' world. In a sense, then, this discursive context constitutes the referential ground of the narrative, the world to which it reflexively refers. Sixth, related to the literary self-encoding of narrative is its pervasive metaphorics, as discussed in the previous section, the linguistic action of spinning out figures for its process, which reinforce the representational network of a narrative world.

Seventh, *Joseph Andrews* also depicts a narrative of an imagined reception. This zone occurs as a series of instructional comments in a suggestive if not coercive dialogue with the ''reader,'' providing a guide for, as well as projecting, a future reading. In a sense, this level constitutes a virtual narrative, the proleptic narrative of actualization by a reader. I take this concept of virtuality from Wolfgang Iser, who points out that a reading of a text is not determined solely by the formal criteria of a text, nor entirely by the phenomenological process of reading, but by the interaction of both to create a virtual text.[36] However, I would amend Iser's definition of a virtual text regarding *Joseph Andrews*, since Iser conflates the narrator's projection of a reader with the actual reader and reading experience, similar in kind to what Genette does regarding *Tristram Shandy* when he misattributes Tristram's beseeching his ''dear reader'' as an actual address to us, rather than as a rhetorical construction proffered within the narrative. In *Joseph Andrews*, the ''reader'' and the reading projected thereby are determined precisely within the representational economy of the narrative, in the narrator's dialogue with and characterization of a reader, not in terms of the phenomenology of an actual, live reader. In other words, *Joseph Andrews* poses a relatively complete and self-enclosed model of the system of narratorial relations, depicting not only the act of storytelling but its rhetorical economy, including its sources and reception, its production and consumption.

36 See Wolfgang Iser, *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), p. 42. See also *The Act of Reading*, pp. 20–1.

To get a sense of the multiple layering of the narratorial plot, one could schematize it as follows: $N_{virtual}$ ($N_{reader's\ instructions}$ ($N_{literature}$ ($N_{character}$ ($N_{narrating}$ ($N_{sources}$ (Joseph's adventures)))))). While this scheme separates the elements of the rhetorical dynamic of narratorial interaction, it shows that Joseph's tale is not only grammatically subordinate and temporally prior, but a heterogeneous range of discursive and represented actions embed it and striate it. The larger implication of this is that the role of the narrator is not as a straight relay transmitting the story, nor a marginal gloss on its themes, nor does it simply provide a lens that filters and inflects the details given in the normal plot. In other words, the construction of the narrator does not simply indicate point of view, focalization, or perspective – the usual prospect of the narrator's discourse in most narrative theory. Rather, the permutations and cumulative effect of the narrator's discourse foreground the action and processes of narrative construction, in a sense upstaging Joseph's story. To reverse the poles of normal expectation, one might even see the events of Joseph's story as the occasion for narrative exchange, as arbitrary attributes to fulfill the terms of the act of narration. More modestly, the dynamic of narratorial relations signals a salient plot, not only of familiarity with the narrator, but encoding the allegorical ''world'' of narrative representation, its semes, tropes, and transactions.

Literalizing the narrator

To call attention to the narrator and narratorial dynamic in Fielding's novels is not entirely surprising, since the narrator's discourse in them has long been accorded a recognized if equivocal status, first remarked in the critical history by Walter Scott as long ago as 1821.[37] In general, the prominence of the narrator and his commentary is taken as a central flaw that detracts from Joseph's or Tom's story. For example, in *The Rise of the Novel*, Ian

37 ''Those critical introductions, which rather interrupt the course of the story, and the flow of the interest at the first perusal, are found, on a second or third, the most entertaining chapters of the whole work.'' Sir Walter Scott, ''Henry Fielding (1821),'' in *The English Novel: Background Readings*, ed. Lynn C. Bartlett and William R. Sherwood (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1967), p. 32.

Watt inducts Fielding into the hall of fame of the early English novel – along with Defoe and Richardson – but only grudgingly so, since the narrator's intrusions ''break the spell of the imaginary world represented in the novel'' and ''interfere with any sense of narrative illusion,'' detracting from the realism that is Watt's arbiter of value.[38] Wayne Booth's *Rhetoric of Fiction* stands as a formidable counter to this negative bias against ''authorial intrusion'' and indirectly against the modernist bias toward ''shown,'' ''realist'' narratives, which absent the author or supernarrator, effecting a presumably direct representation of the actions of the characters. That the representation of the narrator's actions could be seen as a similar ''showing'' rather than a literal telling is a constitutive blindness of realist criticism. Booth works to recuperate the maligned ''author'' by attributing an ethical overlay to the narrator's discourse, and his fellow Chicagoan, Sheldon Sacks, similarly talks about the way this level ''shapes belief'' and imparts an ethical cast to the novel.[39] Thus, even the criticism that seems more disposed to the role of the narrator takes the narrator's discourse as a vehicle for the voice of the author, separate from the ''matter'' of Joseph's or Tom's story. The tendency of this vein of thinking is to link the narrator's discourse thematically – separating it as literal commentary rather than as part of the narrative economy, similar to the way in which most critics have read *Tristram Shandy* – which thereby gives a privileged interpretive key to the intended meaning of the novel. Wolfgang Iser goes so far as to call the narrator's comments ''essays,'' thus generically reconstituting them and excising them from the narrative proper.[40] The narrator's discourse becomes a marginal gloss, taking a structural position similar to that of medieval commentaries.

To review briefly the criticism that attends to the role of and claims a special status for Fielding's narrators – criticism that one might expect to focus on the reflexive problematic of these narratives – Homer Goldberg perceptively distinguishes the narrator from the author in *Joseph Andrews*, noting that the preface presents an image of an author significantly different from the portrait

38 Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957), pp. 285, 286.
39 See Sacks, *Fiction and the Shape of Belief*.
40 *The Implied Reader*, pp. 39–40.

of the narrator in the first chapter. However, Goldberg shies from the implication of this observation and makes the narrator a surrogate author, supplying the reader with norms and guides throughout the novel via an ''implied authorship.''[41] Goldberg speaks of the ''author's overt manner'' and poses – as naive, a moralist, overprecise, and so on – and in fact draws a convincing portrait of a complex (albeit caricatured) character, not a controlling authorial presence. Fred Kaplan, in ''Fielding's Novel about Novels,'' promisingly claims that ''the 'prefaces' are an integral part of the novel'' and that their sequence forms a plot, of a developing series of ideas.[42] However, he goes on to show that they are thematically related to the action and offer Fielding's commentary on it, so he is therefore not talking about another novelistic plot – as his title implies – but, again, an intruding authorial gloss or thematic frame. Thomas Lockwood, in ''Matter and Reflection in *Tom Jones*,'' argues that Fielding's talk in the novel is not intrusive, but instead gives a morally reflective, essayistic filter to the ''matter'' of Tom's actions.[43] In other words, the narrator's discourse merely provides an interpretive lens to the legitimate focus of the narrative, Tom's story.

Generally, the aim of this branch of criticism is recuperative, to justify the value of the narrator's discourse against charges that it is interruptive, and thus indirectly to raise the value of Fielding's novels in the novel canon as formally and artistically accomplished. It performs a kind of critical apologetics, smoothing over what otherwise might be perceived as a flaw. However, despite its preliminary attention to the question of the narratorial plot, it participates in its effacement by expropriating that plot as an authorial guide or thematic reflection on the purported events rather than seeing it as integrated in the overall economy of the narrative, not to mention as indicating an alterior plot of narrative allegoresis.

Booth, on the other hand, although tentatively recognizing the narratorial plot, does not see its relation to the rest of the events of the story. He stresses that the narrator's story in *Tom Jones*

41 Homer Goldberg, The *Art of Joseph Andrews* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), pp. 262–86.

42 Fred Kaplan, ''Fielding's Novel about Novels: The 'Prefaces' and the 'Plot' of *Tom Jones*,'' *Studies in English Literature* 13 (1973), 535–6.

43 Thomas Lockwood, ''Matter and Reflection in Tom Jones,'' *ELH* 45 (1978), 226–35.

shows ''no similarity to the story of Tom'' and thus carries only a kind of ''autonomous interest.''[44] In other words, he tries to have it both ways: he marks the recurrence of the narratorial action, but relegates it to a marginal status, as a sideshow to the plot proper, leaving that plot and critical readings based on that plot intact. As I have argued regarding *Joseph Andrews*, while the narrator is not a character *per se* in Joseph's story, the novel depicts the narrator as the central character in the collection and collation of the accounts of the incipient story and in general fulfilling the network of storytelling – replete in a communicative model with a ''reader.'' The narrator's explicit visibility foregrounds that network and the overall emplotment of narratorial production (gathering, telling). Booth, ultimately resorting to an implied author, transposes the narrator's discourse to an authorial relation, hence autonomous from the complex of narrated actions. This move posits an extra-referential authority that is belied by the economy of narrative representation. The text reflexively draws the terms of its economy – the narrator verifies the narrative (by the attribution of sources, etc.) and is in turn verified by the narrative (the information given – sources, etc. – testifies to the place and authority of the narrator). The category of the author, therefore, only occurs textually, as a rhetorical construction.

In the narrator telling Joseph's story to a reader – or more exactly what Gerald Prince calls a ''narratee'' – as well as in the many interpolated and embedded tales, such as the well-bred Lady's recounting the History of Leonora to Adams and company, *Joseph Andrews* thematizes the system of narratorial relations. These pervasive scenes repeatedly foreground the production and exchange of narrative, ascribing an addresser and also an addressee, establishing a setting or locale for narrative (e.g., a stagecoach ride), projecting a ready narrative channel, and providing a message, saturating the linguistic model of communication that Roman Jakobson defines in ''Linguistics and Poetics.''[45] In other words, the schematic attribution and depiction of these narratorial relations – in a seemingly complete circuit – anthro-

44 *Rhetoric*, p. 216; ''The Self-Conscious Narrator,'' p. 180.

45 See Roman Jakobson, ''Linguistics and Poetics,'' in *The Structuralists: From Marx to Lévi-Strauss*, ed. Richard and Ferdnande DeGeorge (Doubleday: Anchor Books, 1972), p. 89.

pomorphizes their textual relation as human communication. In a sense, that figural transposition explains why the attribution of an author or an authorial presence occurs so frequently and so seemingly naturally, since the models of narrative transaction and human communication are metonymically analogous. But the coding of narrative works like a holograph; the system of narratorial relations can only stand in catachrestic relation to the world and to actual authorial relations, and its reference occurs by virtue of its reflexive economy. (The supernarrator ''Fielding'' cannot be eligible for a royalty check, but Fielding's heirs might.) In short, the narrative is validated within and its terms are drawn by its self-circulating and validating economy, not by reference to a real author, real world events, or a real reader, as is apparent in science fiction or tales with animals as characters.

To make a relevant qualification here, it is crucial to distinguish the textual figure of a narratee – a persona of a reader – from the actual reader of a text, just as one would distinguish a narrator from an actual author. In ''Introduction to the Study of the Narratee,'' Gerald Prince astutely marks this much neglected figure, observing that ''[a]ll narration . . . presupposes not only (at least) one narrator but also (at least) one narratee, the narratee being someone whom the narrator addresses.''[46] As I have noted, many otherwise careful critics confuse the ''reader'' that the narrator addresses in *Joseph Andrews* with an actual reader, taking the narrator's comments as direct (illocutionary) address or instruction from the author. In fact, Fielding has attracted a substantial amount of attention from reader-response critics, I would speculate, largely because of the naming of a ''reader.'' Even as theoretically sophisticated and rhetorically attuned a critic as Wolfgang Iser misses this subtle distinction, taking the general address to a ''reader'' as literal, noting how the ''author'' governs and prescribes the act of reading: ''The author explicitly instructs his readers . . .'' ''Fielding actually informs his readers . . .'' ''The reader, then, must apply the author's remarks to his novel . . .''[47]

46 Gerald Prince, ''Introduction to the Study of the Narratee,'' in *Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism*, ed. Jane P. Tompkins (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), p. 7. See also Prince, *Narratology*, pp. 16–26.

47 Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading*, pp. 142, 218; *The Implied Reader*, p. 35. See also Jeffrey M. Perl, ''Anagogic Surfaces: How to Read *Joseph Andrews*,'' *The Eighteenth Century* 22.3 (1981), 249–70, which elaborates on Iser. Raymond

To see this characterization as the literal ''reader'' not only ignores the fact that it is a projection of a reader, but that these addresses are so frequently ironic. Not only is a textual figure anthropomorphized and consigned to the position of a reader in an actual communicative act, but this symptomatic slip evades the thoroughgoing rhetorical construction of the narrative.

The problem with authors

In an early work of narrative theory, *Narrative Situations in the Novel*, Franz Stanzel outlines a poetics of the novel based on the role of the narrator.[48] He finds three primary types: ''the authorial novel,'' which is narrated in the third person, and in which ''the author himself seems to enter as narrator,'' distinct from the fictional world he is narrating; the ''first-person novel,'' in which the narrator plays a role in the fictive action, whether centrally or as an observer; and the ''figural novel,'' in which the narration is mediated or focalized through one of the characters. One could refine these distinctions, and in fact Stanzel notes that there are hybrids between types, as in *Henry Esmond* when the narrative moves from first-person to authorial narration.[49] There is a certain commonsense utility to these distinctions, and I bring them up because I would surmise that they articulate the common view of the role of the narrator and the apposition of the author.

Stanzel takes *Tom Jones* as the exemplar of the authorial novel, noting that the entrance of the author ''forms a bridge from the authorial realm to the fictional world, but as a rule these two realms never come so close together that the action taking place in

Stephanson, in ''The Education of the Reader in Fielding's *Joseph Andrews*'' (*Philological Quarterly* 61 [1982], 243–58), claims that the narrator deflates the hypocrisy of the ''reader,'' but fails to note that the ''reader'' is a persona, not an actual person. For a relevant emendation of Iser that distinguishes between an ''addressed reader'' and the ''implied reader,'' see Nicolas Hudson, ''Fielding's Hierarchy of Dialogue: 'Meta-Response' and the Reader of *Tom Jones*,'' *Philological Quarterly* 68.2 (1989), 177–94.

48 See Franz Stanzel, *Narrative Situations in the Novel*: *Tom Jones, Moby Dick, The Ambassadors, Ulysses*, trans. James P. Pusack (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1971).

49 For a relevant discussion of Stanzel, see Dorrit Cohn, ''The Encirclement of Narrative: On Franz Stanzel's *Theorie des Erzählens*,'' *Poetics Today* 2.2 (1981), 157–82. Cohn complicates Stanzel's scheme, but retains the axis of first-person and third-person narratives. My point is how that axis, however useful, is permeable and finally incoherent.

the fictional world could encroach on the authorial realm.''[50] While Stanzel remarks transgressions of the separation between the two realms, such as Parson Adams informing the ''author'' in *Joseph Andrews*, this definition of two realms succinctly underscores the problem with the attribution of an author. It is not just that the ''author'' is covertly implicated in the action – for instance, in the source plot – and thus complicates the relation of the two realms, but the ''authorial'' level comprises a fictional realm, even if topically different and separate from other levels. While there might be a difference in the linguistic attributes of an ''author'' and a grammatical subordination of those of the characters, there is no ontological or finally epistemological difference. Without belaboring the conceptual point, the narrator ''Fielding'' is no closer to material existence than the character ''Joseph'' and we know him no more assuredly. Further, in *Tom Jones* and *Joseph Andrews*, the narrator takes all of the roles that Stanzel schematizes: ''he'' narrates the story of Joseph and Fanny as an ''author'' or authoritative narrator, he carries out a first-person narrative of the collection and dispensing of narrative, and he is the central mediating character of the account of his narrating. In other words, there is a profound confusion among these roles, and among the tropological levels of naming fiction and reality, a confusion that the enlisting of an author and of an extra-narratorial reality purports to straighten.

My point in bringing this up is not to show that Stanzel holds to a primitive or outmoded scheme – again, his distinctions pose one useful if preliminary way to sort subgenres of the novel – or to reiterate the complications of narratorial relations, but to look at why the attachment to an author is so entrenched and what this systematic translation of narratorial relations to an authorial relation delivers. The attribution of an author, of direct human presence, enacts an anthropomorphic substitution for what is a textual or figural relation and specifically an effect of the textual operation of characterization. This substitution has its benefits, since it presumably proffers the author's intention and therefore gives a key to interpretation; it would indeed make interpretation fairly easy if one could glean the author's intention directly, and if an author could determinately control language to mean what s/he

50 Stanzel, *Narrative Situations*, p. 38.

intends. As Roland Barthes puts it, ''The *explanation* of a work is always sought in the man or woman who produced it, as if it were always in the end, through the more or less transparent allegory of the fiction, the voice of a single person, the author 'confiding' in us.''[51]

In general theoretical terms, the appeal to an authorial presence invokes what Derrida, in a by now well-known critique elaborated in *Of Grammatology* and elsewhere, calls the metaphysics of presence, transacting the devaluation of the (written) narrative as incomplete, and projecting the wholeness of the narrative in a chimerical (single-voiced) origin called the author. The spoken presence of the ''author'' yields the full meaning that the written record of the narrative lacks, metaphysically posing an extra-textual origin and reference. As shown in the foregoing reading of *Joseph Andrews*, though, the authority of the narrator does not derive from an extra-textual ground, from an authorial presence beyond the text, but is generated by the economy of the narrative itself: the ''authorial'' narrator derives the story from or in relation to the characters therein – and therefore has as much referential value as the characters (one cannot speak to a character unless one is a character) – as well as in relation to various narrative codes (the invocation of narrative wisdom and so on), and takes authority by virtue of the rhetorical construction of that position. This seems counter-intuitive – in part because of the intractable figural model of human communication for the technological operation of narrative – but in the most literal of terms the depiction of the characters' actions and testimony and the other features of narrative representation might be said to constitute the field of reference, if not ground, of narrative.

The tendency toward naming an author underwrites the commonplace critical postulation of ''authorial intrusion.'' Fielding's novels are usually taken as prime examples of authorial intrusion, as implied by Stanzel's category of the ''authorial novel'' and as defended in Booth's *Rhetoric of Fiction*. But, as should be clear from my argument thus far, the label of ''authorial intrusion'' is a kind of *non sequitur*, based on projecting the mystified category of the author as the literal, ontological ground of the configuration of narrative, above and beyond the text, and in turn tacitly claiming

51 Roland Barthes, ''The Death of the Author,'' *Image–Music–Text*, trans. and ed. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), p. 143.

definitive status for a normal plot, for a narrative proper into which the author intrudes and over which he presides. Taking up this second implication of the phrase ''authorial intrusion,'' in addition to the metaphysical grounding of an authorial presence, the benefit of externalizing the narrator is to simplify the plot of a novel and lend it a more readily circumscribable form. One can easily enumerate a coherent chronological plot of Joseph's travels. The aspersion of intrusiveness functions to straighten and streamline the narrative, pushing aside any other features or relations that may be difficult to decipher or that do not readily fit, such as the narrator's discourse. It reduces narrative to a single thread generated by a single voice, rather than by the intersection of its typical codes, tropography, and rhetorical economy. In this way, it works as what Paul de Man calls ''paraphrase,'' to ''hide discontinuities and disruptions in the homogeneity'' of a straight plot, offering ''the sequential coherence we associate with a . . . particularly compelling narrative'' and the comfort of ''the teleology of controlled meaning.''[52] In other words, there is a colloquial interpretive imperative to cull a tangible, readily definable plot from a narrative text that trades its fidelity for an illusory coherence. As should be clear, this prospect of a stable and definitive plot, yielding a stable and readily defined meaning, is illusory in the actual reading of even a relatively uncomplicated text like *Joseph Andrews*.

III Narrative improper ii

Narrative substrata

Thus far, I have focused on the macro-narrative, the so-called authorial plot that is usually projected at a level higher than the normal plot of Joseph's travels, and in a cursory way I have taken this zone of action to exemplify the paradigm of a narrative of narrative. However, I would also stress that the reflexive problematic of narratorial relations striates the text not only in the apposition of the supernarrator but in the pervasive depiction of the characters' narrating, telling and listening to stories, most prominently in the cases of the much-discussed ''interpolated

52 Paul de Man, *Critical Writings, 1953–1978*, ed. Lindsay Waters (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), pp. 220, 222, 221.

tales,'' as well as in a range of other moments. This strata represents a kind of inversion of the externalizing position of the supernarrator, presenting an echoing chain of internalized or embedded narratorial relations, projected at a level lower than the plot proper – a narratorial substrata, one might say. As such, this zone of action is similarly considered, in the critical conversation, as interruptive or diversionary, as a glitch or impediment in the narrative flow. As the narrator's plot is cast as intrusive and ancillary to the normative version of the plot, this substrata is depicted as digressive and extrusive from it.

In particular, ''The History of Leonora, or the Unfortunate Jilt'' and ''The History of Two Friends'' have been singled out and function in the critical reception as nodal points of attack and justification. Much of the early criticism spies them as flaws and votes to dismiss them from the flow of the otherwise continuous travel narrative. Sir Walter Scott expresses the tenor of the early reception, commenting in 1821 that the reader normally ''glides down the narrative like a boat on the surface of some broad navigable river . . . [but] one exception to this praise . . . [is that] Fielding has thrust into the midst of his narrative . . . the history of Leonora, unnecessarily and inartificially . . . ''[53] This view continues in modern-day criticism, articulated by Irving Ehrepreis, that the tales are ''dull and repetitious'' and an obvious flaw, and, I would speculate, in ordinary reading and teaching, since they disrupt the plot of Joseph's adventures, therefore extending Ian Watt's complaint about Fielding's interruptions, ''break[ing] the spell of the imaginary world represented in the novel.''[54] In the face of the consensus that they are dull, poorly realized, and irrelevant, and only interfere with or weigh down Joseph's story, a significant strand of more recent criticism works to recuperate them as crafted and integrated components in the narrative. This line poses a variety of rationales: they are thematically unified with the purport of the rest of the plot, underscoring the ethical

53 ''Henry Fielding,'' p. 29.

54 See Irving Ehrenpreis, ''Fielding's Use of Fiction: The Autonomy of *Joseph Andrews*,'' in *Twelve Original Essays: On Great English Novels*, ed. Charles Shapiro (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1960), pp. 23–42; and Watt, *Rise of the Novel*, p. 285. F. Homes Dudden, in his standard *Henry Fielding: His Life, Works, and Times* (vol. 1 [Oxford: Clarendon, 1952], pp. 351–2), also attests to this view, seeing the ''two independent stories'' as a chief weakness of *Joseph Andrews*.

thrust of the novel;[55] they work as comic and skillful literary parody, pace Cervantes;[56] they provide analogues to or contrasts with the main characters and their situations;[57] they contribute to the narrative pacing by effecting a dramatic pause or contrast;[58] or they highlight the theme of reading and interpretation that recurs throughout the novel.[59]

This recent course of criticism thus performs a kind of revisionary apologetics, making otherwise discordant features cohere according to the critical expectation of a unified plot, justifying them to affirm that the narrative is whole and artfully accomplished. The general suasion of contemporary formalist criticism pre-

55 The defense of the tales begins in 1956, with I. B. Cauthen, Jr. (''Fielding's Digressions in *Joseph Andrews*,'' *College English* 17 [1956], 379–82), who argues that they are instructive, exposing affectation, vanity, and hypocrisy. Sheldon Sacks claims they give relevant ''ethical comment on the actions of the important characters'' (*Fiction and the Shape of Belief*, p. 213).

56 Initiating a different line of justification, Homer Goldberg recoups them as skillful parodies of the literary tradition (after Cervantes), claiming that they ''disclose an unsuspected dimension of Fielding's comic invention'' (''The Interpolated Stories in *Joseph Andrews* or 'The History of the World in General' Satirically Revised,'' *Modern Philology* 63 [1966], 295–310).

57 Irving Ehrenpreis, ''Fielding's Use of Fiction,'' while observing the inferior quality of the tales, remarks that they provide ''negative analogues'' to the main characters. Douglas Brooks, in ''The Interpolated Tales in *Joseph Andrews* Again'' (*Modern Philology* 65 [1968], 208–13), notes the parallels between characters in the novel and within the tales (i.e., Leonora vs. Fanny). Leon V. Driskell (''Interpolated Tales in *Joseph Andrews*,'' *South Atlantic Bulletin* 33 [1968], 5–8) underscores how the tales apply to their particular auditors. In ''Chastity and Interpolation: Two Aspects of *Joseph Andrews*'' (*Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 69 [1970], 14–31), Howard D. Weinbrot points out the contrast of the ''benevolent God'' of ''Fielding'' to the ''foolish'' narrators of the tales.

58 Robert Alter (*Fielding and the Nature of the Novel*, pp. 108–13) reads the tales as ''an integral part of the artistic scheme of the novel,'' their contrast providing ''texture'' to the narrative. J. Paul Hunter (*Occasional Form*, pp. 151–61) claims that they contribute to the pacing as ''pauses'' in the ''motion'' of the plot. More recently, Hunter notes that such tales are a typical and common feature of eighteenth-century narrative (*Before Novels: The Cultural Contexts of Eighteenth Century English Fiction* [New York: Norton, 1990], pp. 47–8).

59 In ''The Interpolated Narrative in the Fiction of Fielding and Smollett: An Epistemological View'' (*Studies in the Novel* 5 [1973], 271–82), John M. Warner argues that the tales foreshadow a Romantic concern with ''epistemological uncertainty'' by juxtaposing different perspectives. Joseph Bartolomeo (''Interpolated Tales as Allegories of Reading: *Joseph Andrews*,'' *Studies in the Novel* 23.4 [1991], 401–15) claims that they present allegorical scenarios for reading (drawing on Iser rather than de Man, as his title otherwise suggests). Finally, Raymond Stephanson (''Silenc'd by Authority' in *Joseph Andrews*: Power, Submission, and Mutuality in 'The History of Two Friends,''' *Studies in the Novel* 24.1 [1992], 1–12) looks at the reader's response to narrative authority in the latter tale.

scribes that unity, projecting skillful attributes on the tales such as irony or parody.[60] In Paul de Man's formulation, this branch of criticism functions rather patently as paraphrase, smoothing over discontinuities and disruptions. Further, I would add that this move toward paraphrase has larger implication and consequence, beyond the more narrowly defined interpretive problematic de Man identifies, and speaks to the socio-institutional economy of criticism. Under the auspices of the extant critical institution, this mode of apologetics works to revalue *Joseph Andrews* as fit for inclusion in the canon of ''classic'' novels, which are defined *a priori* as formally accomplished and artfully constructed.

Against this general tendency to integrate the interpolated tales into the formal or thematic texture of Joseph's history and to recuperate them as aesthetically assured, I would remark instead their excess precisely as *inept* narratives. In my view, they are blatantly stilted and laborious – they do not carry the interest or comedic value of Joseph's, Fanny's, and Adams' adventures – and are told badly, haughtily by the well-bred Lady and stutteringly by Dick. Formally, they are incongruous, distending an otherwise relatively coherent plot, depicting incidents that are hardly necessary to its progress. As a point of comparison, Wilson's tale, while a digression from the ''road'' narrative, bears directly on the plot of Joseph's recovery of his name and birthright, and the incidents Wilson tells carry a decided interest (sex, drinking, gambling, licentiousness) and a relevant but not tedious moral plot (corruption to wisdom). What I find remarkable about them, though, is not the ''action'' or content of the tales themselves, but their explicit representation of storytelling scenarios, of the characters engaged in and enthralled by storytelling – however ill-executed.[61]

By this, I do not mean to claim a refinement in the line of readings that notes the tales offer a contrast, a change of pace in the narrative tempo. There are many such changes in *Joseph Andrews*, from the mock-heroic action of the dog-fight, to the ''pauses'' when the narrator fills in background information,

60 J. Paul Hunter point out the embarrassment of these features to formalist criticism (*Before Novels*, p. 48).

61 Sacks observes that ''the major characters' total participation in many episodes consists of listening to and commenting upon the tale of a newly introduced character,'' but sees their relevance in terms of ethical value (*Fiction and the Shape of Belief*, pp. 211ff.).

which function effectively to further the progress of the plot and vary its tempo. To claim that the interpolated tales are contrastive is a relatively empty claim, since any inserted segment, no matter how irrelevant or poorly drawn, might be said to offer a contrast or pause. Such a segment might indeed constitute a formal variation, but that hardly qualifies as an aesthetic justification. Rather, I would argue that the interpolated tales disrupt the code of normal novelistic expectation and readability, and their residue, the remainder in excess of that failed representation, is their depiction of scenes of narrative exchange. Their formal dissonance signals the tension between encoding of the major plot of Joseph's history and the otherwise subsumed allegorical plot of narrative performance. This dissonance is not a question of contrast but finally of incoherence.

To recall Todorov's rudimentary definition of a narrative proposition, the primary act that the interpolated tales recount is the act of narrative. As he puts it in ''Narrative-Men'' – by which he means those characters whose foremost function or predicated action is to tell stories (such as Scheherazade in *One Thousand and One Nights*), and to extend this one might more accurately add Narrative Women (such as the well-bred Lady or Scheherazade) and Narrative Children (Dick) – the primary act of an embedding narrative is by definition the narrative of narrative.[62] Further, beyond the overt act of the narrator, the vignettes of the interpolated tales foreground the act of receiving narrative, explicitly casting the other characters as narratees, as engaged listeners and participants in the narrative scenario. Significantly, the text depicts a wide range of characters as implicated in the exchange of narrative – across class lines, from the well-bred Lady to Slipslop, across gender lines, from Mrs. Grave-Airs to Adams, and across age lines, from Lady Booby to Dick. These scenarios thus project the act of and urge for narrative as universal, indiscriminate, and natural, as an indubitable ''human'' attribute that goes without saying and effects a tacit social bond.

The scenario that features the ''History of Leonora and the Unfortunate Jilt'' aptly illustrates this. After passing the ''great House which stood at some distance from the Road,'' the Lady

62 See Tzvetan Todorov, ''Narrative-Men,'' in *The Poetics of Prose*, pp. 66–79.

remarks that the unfortunate Leonora lives there, which is ''sufficient to awaken the Curiosity of Mr. Adams, as indeed it did that of the whole Company, who jointly solicited the Lady to acquaint them with Leonora's History'' (JA 80). The company in the coach includes the ''well-bred Lady'' who tells the story, Mrs. Grave-airs (who has refused Joseph's being let into the coach since he is dressed in livery), Adams, and Slipslop, and they each indicate their uniform attention by various interjections regularly through the course of the narrating scene. The story itself consists, for the most part, of the exchange of letters between Horatio and Leonora, in over-inflated Augustan rhetoric,[63] and long, overdrawn scenes involving Horatio, Leonora, and Bellarmine, the false seducer, but within the dramatistic scenario the characters are depicted as thoroughly engaged, carrying on a running dialogue about the story, at points about proper conduct, sympathy for Leonora, castigating Leonora, and so forth.

This social bridge or levelling induced by narrative – which encodes the cross-class bond of narrative, or rather effaces the effect of class – is especially striking given the exchange between Slipslop and Mrs. Grave-airs at the Inn when they stop for dinner, at which point Mrs. Grave-airs cattily snipes, putting Slipslop in her place, as that saying goes: '''Some Folks might sometimes give their Tongues a liberty; to some people that were their Betters, which did not become them: for her part, she was not used to converse with Servants''' (JA 97). In other words, the narrative scene depicts a space that transcends the protocols and expectations of normal and ordinary social relations – a kind of utopic storyworld, the characters joined by a common and seemingly natural and innate interest in storytelling to form a *narrative circle*, or, as the text declares, *company* – despite the fact that it otherwise confirms and asserts the hierarchy of those social relations. This manifest contradiction indicates the way in which the narrative is hyperbolically charged; what appears to be a realistic scene of the telling of a story is overcoded with the self-valorization of narrative – not only in the depiction of the urge for narrative, but in its bonding power – tapping into what Barthes would call the literary code or what I might call the reflexive code

63 See Jeffrey Plank, ''The Narrative Forms of *Joseph Andrews*,'' *Papers on Language and Literature* 24.2 (1988), 142–58.

of narrative.[64] The narrative code (equality in the narrative space) here overrides the normative cultural code (class hierarchy).

The stagecoach scene taps into the code of narrative self-representation in several other ways. First, it metonymically measures the story of Leonora against a stagecoach trip, invoking the pervasive narrative *topos* of a journey, presenting in microcosm a version of the general spatial–temporal correlative for the plot proper. Further, the coach ride serves to establish the figure of a propitious *locus* and occasion for the act of narrative, when and where it seems narrative naturally must occur, since characters are gathered at close quarters, biding time, the carriage of a coach presumably prompting intimacy. (One might also think of Twain's humorous twisting of this narrative trope in *Roughing It*, with the portrait of the ''non-stop talking lady'' on the stagecoach, who talks for twenty-four hours straight until she gets off.) Finally, the story is prompted by passing the ''great House which stood at some distance from the Road,'' which functions as a *narrative prop*, an arbitrary and accidental figure that spurs the narration, which seems inevitably to issue from it. In short, this projection of a narrative scenario – its staging the performance of narrative, as well as its invocation of this set of literary or narrative motifs – demonstrates by its rhetorical excess the reflexive self-inscription and valorization of narrative. It projects an entry into a narrative space, a narrative time, and a narrative society, in which all of the characters are joined by their desire for and absorption in narrative.

Moreover, the story of Leonora in itself projects a complex of narratorial relations, and one might say her situation is governed by discourse-exchange. She writes letters, and in fact her letter to her father impels the denouement, since her father will give her no money, as Bellarmine discovers in his interview. The action is driven not by characters doing things to each other, but by characters telling things to each other; what they ''do'' is to tell. And, to extend this, a predominant action of the novel is the characters telling and listening to stories – their frequent casting as Narrative People. Wilson tells his story, and Adams listens breathlessly, as do Joseph and Fanny at points. Dick reads the story of Leonard

64 See Roland Barthes' distinction of the real and the operable in *S/Z*, pp. 80–1; and ''The Reality Effect,'' *The Rustle of Language*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1986), pp. 141–8.

and Paul, and Lady Booby tells Adams not to interrupt. Along the journey Adams periodically tells his story – about his trip to London to sell his sermons, about Joseph and Fanny – and much of the action, or what impels their moving on, is motivated by Adams talking if not arguing with other characters (with Trulliber, Barnabas, the gentleman hunting, Joseph on education, and his wife). At points, Joseph relays his story: in letters to his sister, Pamela, to the Tow-wouses at the Inn, to the justice, to the salesman who generously gives them money. And Adams and Joseph receive stories from many of the other characters they encounter at the various stopping-points along the way.

Bryan Burns, in ''The Story-telling in *Joseph Andrews*,'' likewise points out this predominance of storytelling, noting that ''*Joseph Andrews* is almost entirely composed of stories formally or informally arising as the travellers move on their way.''[65] For Burns, this tendency works to give a fuller sense of the characters and their motives, to reinforce the moral lessons of the surface story by shifting perspectives, and to intone picaresque elements. In other words, while Burns highlights this strata of the novel, he still sees it as subservient to the normal plot, integrating it as a didactic support, in large part following earlier critics like Sheldon Sacks. Rather than seeing it as a support, I would argue that the invocation of the topoi of narrative performance codes this strata allegorically, in effect superceding the normal plot and its representational code, the characters functioning less as actants in or supports to Joseph's story than as prosopoetic figures for narrative – as (Narrative) Curiosity, Desire, Attentiveness, Anxiety, etc. Susan McNamara also remarks of the storytelling – in *Tom Jones*, but which might be applied to *Joseph Andrews* – ''Storytelling and fiction-making are endemic to the entire world of the novel.''[66] For McNamara, this vein of fiction-making points to a critique of realism, in that the novel reflexively calls attention to the bound between fiction and a putative reality, so that the fiction is self-referential and validated within a ''closed system.''[67] While I

65 Bryan Burns, ''The Story-telling in *Joseph Andrews*,'' in *Henry Fielding: Justice Observed*, ed. K. G. Simpson (Totowa, NJ: Barnes & Noble, 1985), p. 126. While perceptive, Burns fails to take account of Sacks' or McNamara's earlier and one would assume germane arguments.

66 Susan McNamara, ''Mirrors of Fiction within *Tom Jones* : The Paradox of Self-Reference,'' *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 12 (1978–9), 374.

67 *Ibid.*, 388.

would agree with the general import of McNamara's argument, her conclusion is finally tautological; whereas one might differentiate rhetorical positions, all levels of fiction are fictional and determined in relation to that fictive economy (the narrator has a superior rhetorical position, but receives his information from the various characters along the way, and thus his information is not any more ontologically assured – or fictional – than that of the well-bred Lady). Here, I would stress instead the way in which ''storytelling'' or the subscription to standard figures and motifs of the performance of narrative overcode the representation, signaling the tropological status of the narrative of narrative, beyond the simple exposure of the ''illusion'' of fiction.

In a sense, the episodic obstacle structure that motivates the normal plot of *Joseph Andrews* functions to facilitate and provide the occasion for these repeated storytelling scenes. The pseudo-realistic travel narrative provides a series of tableaux for the generation and exchange of narrative, in that its reiterative holding pattern sets the stage for what these characters seem naturally to do while waiting, or while coming upon new characters: tell and receive stories. In other words, while travel constitutes a standard motif against which to stage action and adventure, it also forms an allegorical topography for the narrative of narrative, replete with the action of Narrative Figures, of characters personifying the transaction of and desire for narrative.

Insatiable narrative

These iterative and ingrained storytelling scenarios figure not only the act of narrative but the economy of narrative and its valuation by virtue of the characters' functioning not simply as passive receivers but as desiring and avid consumers of narrative. To take the example of the History of Leonora, the various riders in the coach enthusiastically prompt the narrative; the simple mention of her ''Calamity'' is ''*abundantly* sufficient to awaken the Curiosity . . . of the whole Company'' (my emphasis; JA 80), and they each interject their comments along the way, at points quieting Adams when he interrupts their attention by his repeated sighs. Even after the break in the story and the ''uneasiness'' at the Inn – and in part to quell that uneasiness, narrative as a salve to assuage social insult and injustice – the characters immediately

''desired the Lady to conclude the Story'' (JA 98), and Slipslop reinforces the request, '''I beg your Ladyship to give us that Story you *commencated* in the Morning''' (emphasis in text; JA 98). These prompts are not simply mechanical set-ups of the story, but excessively encode narrative desire – the audience is ''abundantly'' curious, and none of the characters abstain but the ''whole Company'' is implicated in the economy of narrative desire.[68]

In particular, Adams hyperbolically and comically figures the desire for narrative throughout the text. Again, the mere mention of Leonora's unfortunate circumstance goads his curiosity; he signals his interest through the tale by constant interjections – asking how Bellarmine is dressed, correcting a point of fact about the Court, his ''deep Groans'' (which at first ''frighted the Ladies''), and so on – and he is not merely disappointed in the delay in the story when they stop at the Inn, but his desire for narrative is depicted in excessive if not salacious terms: ''The Lady was proceeding in her Story, when the Coach drove Mr. Adams, whose Ears were the most hungry Part about him; he being, as the Reader may perhaps guess, of an insatiable Curiosity, and heartily desirous of hearing the End of this Amour. . .'' (JA 92).

This excessive characterization of Adams as narratee occurs throughout the text, in the various narrative interludes on the way, such as when he ''discourses'' with Barnabas, the gentleman who is hunting, Trulliber, the sailor, Joseph, or in reading his Aeschylus, as well as in the scenes of the interpolated tales. It receives the most sustained elaboration in the context of Wilson's History, which is prompted by Adams' dire curiosity:

> for his [the host's] extraordinary Goodness, as well as that Fund of Literature he was Master of, which he [Adams] did not expect to find under such a Roof, had raised in him more Curiosity than he had ever known. ''Therefore,'' said he, ''if it be not too troublesome, Sir, your History, if you please.'' (JA 157)

Through the course of the story, Adams indicates his enthrallment by emitting more ''deep Groans'' and various cries, commenting ''with some Vehemence'' (160), or ''snap[ping] his Fingers at these Words in an Ecstasy of Joy'' (171). When Wilson offers to pass over some remarks he had made, Adams beseeches him to re-

68 Cf. Peter Brooks, ''Narrative Desire,'' *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative* (New York: Vintage, 1985), pp. 37–61.

count them (167), and later Adams is so immersed that at one point he starts from his chair (171). In a certain sense, these various interjections offer *narrative adverts* or *spurs*, as functional devices to effect the continuation of the narrative, but their cumulative excess builds to valorize the act of and desire for narrative, marking Adams as a prosopoetic figure for a kind of Narrative Lust. Contrary to his being a moral register for the events of the plot, or an example of the disparity between pedantic knowledge and experience, his dominant characterization in this regard is as an *obsessive* – or as the text puts it, *insatiable – narratee*. In fact, the text stresses that he is a poor storyteller – as the section preceding Wilson's History puts it, he is a ''circumstantial Teller of a Story'' (156), and barely stays to the point – thus reinforcing his casting as inveterate narratee.

This depiction comes to a crescendo at the end of the tale when, after telling about his questionable affairs, Wilson apologizes that his account has taken so long: ''But I ask pardon. I fear I have detained you too long in relating the Particulars of the former Interview. 'So far otherwise,' said Adams, licking his Lips, 'that I could willingly hear it over again''' (JA 174). This is of course humorous, since Adams' interest seems almost prurient, although he frequently censures any immorality; Adams' interest in hearing stories, in receiving narrative, is figured in terms of innate appetite, fusing the appetites of hunger (his ''Ears were the most Hungry part about him,'' licking his lips) and sex (licking his lips, his insatiability, his desire to hear it over again), and transposing them to a kind of irrepressible and socially countenanced lust for narrative.

In general, this appetite for narrative is summarized under the figure of Curiosity, which constantly impels Adams (and the other characters) to consume stories. As mentioned, the History of Leonora is prompted by the curiosity of Adams and the company in the coach, and Wilson's History incites ''more Curiosity than he [Adams] had ever known.'' Curiosity is defined not as a trivial or inconsequential response, but as a human ''Affection'' that calls for gratification, and that all the characters and also the projected ''Reader'' are subject to, as the text repeatedly intones. Before Adams tells his story, when he and Wilson are sitting around the fire-side at night, relaxing with a ''replenished Pipe'' and a ''Bottle of excellent Beer'' – obviously encoding a *narrative locus*, an atmosphere of comfort in which narrative might inevitably issue –

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Adams' brief account of Joseph "began to work on the Gentleman's Affections, and raised in him a Curiosity to know the Singularity which Adams had mentioned in his History. This Curiosity Adams was no sooner informed of, than with Joseph's Consent, he agreed to gratify it . . ." (156).

This postulation of curiosity as the prime category that motivates narrative is especially distinctive in that it encodes narrative in terms of affect, of a consuming appetite, rather than in terms of (a fulfillment of a desire for) mimetic representation. This bears significantly on the presumed mimetic basis of narrative, from Aristotle down. If one recalls Aristotle's *Poetics*, the primary motivation of art – tragedy, epic, and so on, but that might also be applied to our category of narrative – is mimesis, and Aristotle goes so far as to project an anthopological foundation for this urge:

> For imitating is innate in men from childhood. Men differ from other animals in that they are the most imitative, and their first learning is produced through imitation. Again, all men delight in imitations . . . For we delight in contemplating the most exact likenesses of things which are in themselves painful to see, e.g. the shapes of the most dishonored beasts and corpses . . . For men delight in seeing likenesses because in contemplating them it happens that they are learning and reasoning out what each thing is . . .[69]

As a counterpoint to this normative prescription of mimesis as the basis of the poetic impulse, Edmund Burke's *Enquiry*, roughly contemporaneous with *Joseph Andrews*, begins with the highlighting of Curiosity and its ensuing mandate for Novelty:

> The first and simplest emotion which we discover in the human mind, is Curiosity. By curiosity, I mean whatever desire we have for, or whatever pleasure we take in novelty. We see children perpetually running from place to place to hunt out something new . . . But as those things which engage us merely by their novelty, cannot attach us for any length of time, curiosity is the most superficial of all the affections . . . it has an appetite which is very sharp, but very easily satisfied . . . Curiosity from its nature is a very active principle . . . Some degree of novelty must be one of the materials in every instrument which works upon the mind; and curiosity blends itself more or less with all our passions.[70]

69 *Aristotle's Poetics*, pp. 6–7.

70 Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origins of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, ed. J. T. Boulton (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1968), p. 31.

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While Curiosity has a decidedly transient quality, Burke figures it as central and fundamental to cognitive activity, and he grounds the impulse toward novelty anthropologically, its innateness demonstrated by the presumably primitive state of childhood, which parallels Aristotle's claiming imitation as a primary human impulse. Burke goes on to single out imitation (respectfully citing Aristotle) as a social passion, which forms a social link through the imitation of manners, opinions, and conduct, but the impulse toward novelty still takes priority: ''But when the object of the painting or poem is such as we should run to see if real, let it affect us with what odd sort of sense it will, we may rely upon it, that the power of the poem or picture is more owing to the nature of the thing itself than to the mere effect of imitation, or to a consideration of the skill of the imitator however excellent.''[71] For Aristotle, artistic pleasure derives from imitation, and the value of a poetic object from its mimetic skill. For Burke, novelty and its affective power – that which makes us run to see it (such as a fatal accident or a public execution, as he notes, rather than a well-done play) – supplant the interest in and take priority over sheer imitation.

Burke's *Enquiry* stands as one of the inaugural texts in the eighteenth-century discourse on aesthetics, of which Hume's ''Of the Standard of Taste,'' Kant's *Critique of Judgement*, and Schiller's *Letters* also stand as prominent examples. In very broad terms, they demonstrate a shift from mimesis as the salient or determining category of considerations of art – essentially a formalist concern with the properties of the art object – to an aesthetic basis – for the most part a concern with the affective power of the object, its spurring interest and impelling judgments of taste.[72] This discursive field marks a different prospect by which to assess the novel, in contrast to the tacit conventions of Aristotelian poetics, whereby affective categories such as novelty and curiosity supercede the protocols of realistic representation.

To return to the specific case of *Joseph Andrews*, the textual assertion of Curiosity does not necessarily dispense with mimesis, but reorients the categorical priority of narrative to an affective or aesthetic basis. In other words, what is at stake is not only the

71 *Ibid.*, pp. 49–50.

72 For a discussion of the history of the aesthetic, see Terry Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990).

realistic representation *per se* of the characters engaged in actions and activities – as given by the dictates of formal narrative theory – but the encoding of the affective power of curiosity, novelty, and finally, self-reflexively, of narrative itself, as the pervasive storytelling and narratorial scenarios attest. In *Joseph Andrews*, the positing of an ''insatiable'' *appetite* for narrative exceeds the parameters of poetic description and functions as a blatantly ideological register that testifies to and reinforces the affective power of literary narrative and constitutes the desire for it as the most primary and indubitable of human affections. In other words, the allegory of narrative does not just effect a theoretical valorization of narrative as an abstract mode, but encodes the allegory of desire for and power of an historically specific instantiation of literature – novelistic and other extant forms of literary practice. In this sense, it is thoroughly ideological (rather than, say, metaphysical), asserting not simply its technical mode but its historical production and consumption, as abstract human appetites, beyond history. To put this another way, curiosity, reiteratively fulfilled by an appetite for novelty, presents the recoding of desire from appetites such as sex and hunger to a desire for the new, for new stories, books, sermons, and so forth – engendered by and satisfied under the aegis of capitalist modes of production, particularly the material production of the thing advertised, sold, and consumed as literature. The transposition of desire from presumably natural appetites such as sex and hunger is most familiar in advertising, and one might say that narrative, in these depictions, advertises itself.

The rhetoricity of narrative

By the dictates of the criterion of mimesis, novels give us the world as if in a ''mirror,'' as it is typically put, albeit as mediated through various novelistic modes or forms (showing vs. telling, the first-person novel vs. the authorial novel), and the goal of such a criterion is verisimilitude. However, as Christine van Boheemen argues, using the example of *Tom Jones* in ''The Semiotics of Plot,'' despite the ''slow mediation between [its] opposed categories [Allworthy and Tom], and an achievement of a state of synthetic equilibrium at the end,'' the novel actually ''work[s] out irreconcilable contradictions by means of rhetorical strategies which can

only function or exist when embedded in a narrative process, in language.''[73] In other words, the plot is predicated on its exercise of narrative and linguistic protocols, rather than on its imitation of a plausible series of events. Because of the various rhetorical strategies the novel invokes, van Boheemen concludes that ''the still predominant habit of evaluating fictions on the basis of their 'truth,' often understood as the verisimilitude of the narrative, becomes extremely problematic. Verisimilitude is only the indication of a more artificial displacement of the rhetoricity of plot.''[74] This comes very close to Roland Barthes' analysis of ''realism'' in the novel, whereby those details that seem to invoke the effect of the real are in fact the moments when narrative resorts to the most literary means, to the typical codes and topoi of literature.

This recasting of plot in terms of rhetoricity, in terms of rhetorical strategies and literary codes, presents a significant revision of narrative poetics. While van Boheemen suggests the import of this revision, her analysis still focuses on the essentially structural – following Greimas – oppositions semantically invoked by the characters and maintains the normal scheming of the ''action'' of the first-order characters in the narrative proper. Drawing on the case presented by *Joseph Andrews*, I would focus instead on the inherently rhetorical situation of narrative throughout the text, as demonstrated by the narratives improper, the many and pervasive appositions of narratorial relations throughout the narrative: in the construction of an ''authorial'' narrator issuing the adventures; in the less obvious depiction of the collection and collation of narrative sources; in the scenario of intimacy between the (super)narrator and the reader; and in the multiple substrata of narrative scenarios in which most of the characters participate; and in the allegorical encoding of Narrative Characters. Further, the allegorical overwriting of names for narrative – narrative as travel, as hunger, and so forth – and the attribution of narrative appetite contribute to the rhetorical charge of the narrative. To return to my previous discussion of the plot of the novel, the novel does not demonstrate a straight plot line that its title (*History of the Adventures* . . .) and the protocols of novelistic expectation suggest, but striates that straight representation with a network of rhetorical invocations of the performance of narrative, indicating, to

73 Christine van Boheemen, ''The Semiotics of Plot: Toward a Typology of Fictions,'' *Poetics Today* 3.4 (1982), 93–94. 74 *Ibid.*, 94.

appropriate van Boheemen's formulation, the constitutive rhetoricity of narrative.

The various storytelling scenarios discussed in this chapter further play out the paradigmatic action of the narrative of narrative, of the rhetorical apposition of narratorial relations, and the thematizing of the modes of narrative production and circulation. To give some sense of the repetition of the problematic of narratorial relations, one might represent it in the following formula, based on the anachronic recession of the narrative: $N_{virtual}$ ($N_{reader's\ instructions}$ ($N_{literature}$ ($N_{character}$ ($N_{narration}$ ($N_{sources}$ ($A_{characters}$ ($N_{interpolated\ tales}$ ($N_{within\ tales}$)))))))). This schematically illustrates the layers of embedding of the narrative, which, again, yields anything but a simple, one-dimensional narratorial structure, of a narrator delivering Joseph's history. However, the grammar of the plot – the temporal demarcation of narrative levels – collapses rhetorically, in that each level takes the same status, repeating the rhetorical construction of narrative authority. (After all, the supernarrator constitutes the same rhetorical relation as the Lady in the coach.) Rather than deriving from a pseudo-ontological ground of originary authorial presence, deferred but promised by the line of descent of the narration, the narrative thus postulates a tropological fiction, of the iterative rhetorical ascription of narrative authority.

The attribution of levels on the order of sentential syntax, according to tense and person, poses a grammatization of the constitutive rhetorical configuration of narrative. As Paul de Man puts it in ''Semiology and Rhetoric:''

> But even if we . . . reduce the narrator to the status of a mere grammatical pronoun . . . this subject remains endowed with a function that is not grammatical but rhetorical, in that it gives voice, so to speak, to a grammatical syntagm. The term voice, even when used in a grammatical terminology as when we speak of the passive or interrogative voice, is, of course, a metaphor inferring by analogy the intent of the subject from the structure of the predicate.[75]

Thus the poetic category of voice, which establishes the ordinal authority of a narrator, constitutes an anthropomorphic trope for the rhetoricity of narrative. In this way, standard poetics performs the grammatization of rhetoric, the inverse of what de Man takes

75 *Allegories of Reading*, p. 18.

as the paradigm of the deconstructive allegory of reading, the rhetorization of grammar. In a familiar example in *Allegories of Reading*, de Man demonstrates how the reading of the last line of Yeats' ''Among Schoolchildren,'' which is grammatically unambiguous, yields two coherent but incommensurate readings, by virtue of the undecidability of its rhetoric (''How can we tell the dancer from the dance?,'' usually read as a rhetorical question, might also be read as a serious if not desperate question). For de Man, the incommensurability of these readings indicates not the polysemy of language but its inherent deconstruction.

Here, the paradigm is not one of the allegory of reading, of the rhetorization of grammar; rather, it signals a tropological allegory, perhaps the cardinal move of fiction, which projects the order of grammar – what we commonly call plot – on the rhetorical economy of modes of narrative figuration. The grammatization of rhetoric performed by the formal scheming of narrative attempts to displace the inherently tropological functioning of narrative, in effect to literalize its figural operation by substituting the stable structure of metaphor, of tenor and vehicle, so that the process of narrative becomes the transparent medium that carries – mimes – the tenor, the putative events. Instead, I would say that mimesis is a code engendered by the rhetoricity of narrative, the ''real'' that narrative presumably represents an effect of its reflexive operation.