The Dialectics of Paranoid Form

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By letting themselves be swept into the experience of fiction, readers figuratively put themselves into it. This is an important distinction. They do not gather a novel, story, or play into their minds so much as project themselves into its context. Of course both projection and introjection can best be understood as different manifestations of the same process, but Simon Lesser's notion that readers "analogize" by drawing comparisons between fiction and their own lives seems a good deal more useful in explaining what happens when readers turn to fiction to share in its accomplishment. True, it is possible, and even useful, to assume that readers temporarily incorporate it into their personalities as an experiential sub-system they can enjoy, as Holland has proposed, but the felt experience is essentially projective, not introjective.[1] As Lesser indicates, readers do not absorb stories--they become absorbed by them. Their purpose in doing this, I claim, is to participate in fiction's guaranteed transition from dissatisfaction to satisfaction as it advances from problems of one sort or another to their solution.

This pursuit of fictive achievement may be observed, for example, when we turn on a television program in the middle of an episode. Our eagerness to be swept into its forward mmentum becomes evident as we seek out those clues and fragments that expose the essential conflict and the prospects of acceptable resolution. With whom can we identify? Who are the bad guys? What are the problems to be solved? What virtues assure eventual success? These are the questions that draw us into the unfolding story. The same search behavior occurs when we start reading a novel or poem in the middle. At every level of sophistication, a suitable outcome is sought, and its appeal depends on promised improvements that are flattering to our sense of personal worth. The benign traits we think we possess we can project upon heroes and heroines, while those we cannot acknowledge offer almost as much satisfaction once projected upon villains to be defeated, or, at perhaps a greater level of abstraction, upon discordant relationships to be harmoniously resolved. As a general rule, we take pleasure in literary experience as long as the virtues we can identify with seem likely to prevail at the expense of our weaknesses projected in villains and wayward individuals. By analogizing in this fashion, we improve our attitude toward ourselves, and without necessarily recognizing that we have been trying to do.

1.

Of all the psychological disorders that have been explored to help clarify the projective dimension of literary experience, paranoia is probably the most relevant, since it features the projection of unacceptable tendencies on others identified as enemies. A superficial resemblance between fiction and paranoia has often been noted, and, in fact, both depend on the same basic psychological displacements that Freud emphasized in his original definition of paranoia.[2] Like fiction, Freud's model of paranoid consciousness features self-deception which combines the

projection and denial displacements, but in a reversed sequence--one that both begins and culminates in denial. With paranoia, projection occurs as hostility against others perceived to be enemies; similarly, with fiction individuals project themselves into a story to share in the pursuit of acceptable alternatives--if without necessarily encountering enemies. Moreover, as explained by Freud, the paranoid individual harbors delusions of persecution in order to cope with latent homosexual tendencies too threatening to acknowledge. He disavows these tendencies first by denying his attraction ("I am not drawn to this man, in fact I hate him.") and then by projecting his homophobic revulsion ("It's not that I hate him--rather, he hates me"). Subsequently he dedicates himself to the gathering of evidence to confirm his suspicion, thereby reinforcing his hostility rooted in his suppression of his own feelings. Freudian doctrine traces the paranoid tendency in women to either homosexual or heterosexual ambivalence, in the latter instance with this particular sequence: "I do not want to submit to this man, in fact I hate him," followed by, "but I'm not unjustified in hating him, since his sexual designs are repulsive and basically hostile." Needless to say, both the heterosexual and homosexual versions of paranoia are often justified--partly because paranoid individuals seek out hostile relationships in the first place, but also partly because their relentless vigilance against potential enemies even further aggravates these relationships through the dynamics of prophecy fulfillment--the imposition upon others of the role one expects them to play.

Although recent research shows that many instances of paranoia do not stem from sexual repression, the syndrome may be broadly defined as the use of a double displacement combining denial and projection to reject the possibility of masochistic acquiescence to others in a dominant or potentially dominant position. As earlier indicated, its tandem sequence combines denial ("I do not want to be submissive to them; in fact I resist their authority") and projection ("It's not that I'm unjustified, since they are plotting to conquer and destroy me"). This second displacement necessarily obliges proof that a conspiracy has transpired, so potentially delusional intellectual shortcuts become useful in buttressing the necessary supportive evidence. And once again prophecy fulfillment becomes useful, since anybody may be steered into playing out his role as a despicable antagonist. Fortunately, this degenerative pattern of hatred is to a large extent eliminated from fiction, where delusion tapers off into the eagerness for an appropriate narrative outcome, and problems can be resolved rather than obsessively cultivated with an emphasis upon personal victimization.

Comparable to Freud's transactional model of paranoia is the homeostatic sequence proposed by David Swanson et al. in their psychiatric reference The Paranoid.[3] Here paranoia is explained as a useful but dangerous coping mechanism for reducing unmanageable anxiety levels by means of a six-stage progression from anxiety to the homeostatic relief provided by paranoid delusion. In its simplest outline, this advancement begins with a rejection of any personal responsibility, followed by bewilderment and scanning for an external cause (the acute phase), and finally tension reduction through projecting responsibility onto others (the chronic phase). The parallel features of Freud and Swanson's models may be diagrammed as follows:

Parallel Features of Models of Paranoia

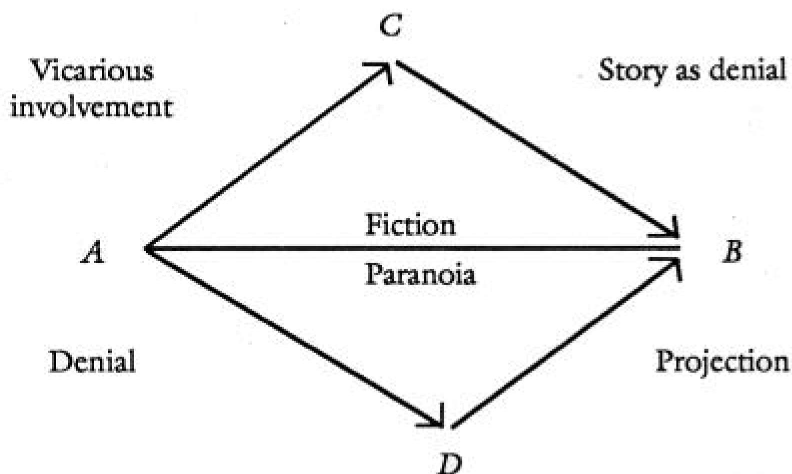
	Swanson's Cognitive Model	Freud's Economic Model	Transactional Synthesis
1.	Perception of pronounced change or threatening feeling.	Disequilibrium	Something is wrong.
2.	Unexplainable based on previous experience. Found intolerable.	Denial	It's not me.
3.	Psychological disequilibrium experienced as bewilderment.		
4.	Scanning for explanation (tendency to use projection)	Scanning	Then what is it? (combines 3 and 4)
5.	Identifying an external cause	Projection	It's them!
6.	Psychological equilibrium	Paranoid stability	So I'm O.K. if only they would treat me right

Stages 1-4 loosely represent the "acute" phase of paranoia and stages 5-6 its "chronic" phase. At first glance this overall sequence might seem different from Freud's model, but its six stages may be more inclusively grouped as a double displacement of denial (stages 2-4) and projection (stages 5-6). Swanson's model is more elaborate than Freud's, and it excludes any connection to sexual resentment. Otherwise, essentially the same process is described.

As defined by both Freud and Swanson's models, paranoia's denial-projective displacement strategy bears a close similarity to the dynamics of literary response if and when readers bring their deepest anxieties under control by projecting them into a fictive context that serves to deny them. Something akin to a paranoid strategy emerges in the reading experience whenever conflict-dominated fantasies are evoked to relieve anxiety. As in the case of paranoia, the quest for tension reduction justifies a substitution of projective fantasies for a more direct approach to problem solving that might lead to further complications. In both instances, there is a dependency on illusion to obtain gratification without confronting one's real feelings.

The relative harmlessness of fiction at least partly results, I suspect, from its reversed sequence in combining the denial and projective displacements. In the case of paranoia, denial initiates evasiveness as an internal rejection of masochistic tendencies, after which the projective displacement dominates in the effort to translate guilt and inhibition into a righteous sense of persecution. In the case of fiction, the effective use of the denial displacement is both postponed and harnessed through plot's linear advancement from one state of affairs to its opposite. As a result, the reader's role can be relatively passive, since fiction itself incorporates denial into its

momentum toward closure. Readers need only to project themselves into a story in order to benefit from its achievement as an act of denial supposedly independent of their real-life circumstances. The substitution that occurs in these final two stages of displacement may be diagrammed as follows:



If the horizonal advancement AB represents a direct homeostatic reduction of anxiety typical of normal problem solving, ADB represents its reduction through paranoid delusion and ACB its reduction through literary experience. Both depend on the mixture of denial and projection, but fiction's inverted arrangement seems more flexible, since a greater variety of projected feelings can be brought under control by narrative form as the second stage of displacement. Usually, in fact, the reader's normal vicarious involvement lets him make his own choice what is to be denied, a freedom exceeding the relatively narrow spectrum of anxieties tied in with paranoid defensiveness.

It is important to recognize here that for fiction as well as paranoia the projective displacement necessarily originates in denial, as maintained by Robert Waelder, but that the paranoid denial-projective sequence is enlarged by fiction both to begin and end with denial.[4] The initial rejection of anxiety is obtained by focussing upon the relatively harmless aim of identifying with fictional characters, whereupon narrative form intervenes as the culminating agent of denial. Sandwiched between the reader's personal choice to obtain denial and the text's function as an agent of narrative denial, the projective displacement mediates the experience of fiction as the vehicle of denial--in effect, its agent, the catalyst that makes it happen (mimesis as praxis, as opposed to the praxis it imitates). In other words, readers first deny their circumstances by projecting themselves into fiction, and then fiction completes the denial displacement by its affirmative resolution. With paranoia the rigid and simplistic quest for victory over enemies justifies one's delusions of crisis and relentless struggle; with fiction a more inclusive narrative momentum literally "plots" denial once readers can involve themselves in its linear advancement from search behavior to accomplishment. More or less fixed in its locus as the initial

displacement of paranoia, the denial displacement becomes the final and crowning achievement of fiction by organizing the unity of action defined by Aristotle. As a result, the experience of fiction remains flexible and relatively healthy as compared to paranoia itself.

It is also to be emphasized that the paranoid dynamics of fiction offer little appeal to victims in the advanced stages of paranoid decompensation. These individuals are frequently too wrapped up in their own difficulties to be able to identify with literary characters. On the other hand, literary illusion seems altogether accessible to readers who are relatively free of paranoid tendencies, able to relax and share in narrative experience without granting it total credibility. They may experience considerable anxiety in their personal lives, but they recognize the destructiveness of projective strategies that have not been packaged and appropriately labeled by narrative form. Instead of cultivating hostile relationships, they turn to fiction whose temporary demands let them escape delusional extravagance that might be harmful to their relationship with others. While the paranoid individual incessantly broods over his victimization, fiction embraces relatively benign anxieties and dissatisfactions that can be eliminated by a conventional sense of an ending. As opposed to the obsessive recapitulation of grievances typical of paranoid delusion, fiction focusses and discharges tensions on a voluntary basis and with much greater variation from text to text. Fiction appeals to readers because it affords provisional gratification that is unlikely to overwhelm them in their own rationalizations. Its sedative effect may be compared with aspirin rather than an opiate or major surgery.

However, as earlier indicated, there are many resemblances between fiction and the paranoid syndrome that cannot entirely be ignored. Just as delusions of persecution work as a coping mechanism to minimize anxieties, the suspension of disbelief puts most readers in a better-managed world of fantasy that successfully distracts them from their chronic everyday problems. Just as the victim of paranoia resorts to an elaborate reconstruction of experience to gain control over his emotional crisis, readers turn to fiction so as to share in its better and more exciting reconstruction of experience. For both fiction and paranoia, an unrealistic conflict is intensified and elaborated in order to deal with genuine anxieties that may otherwise be difficult to suppress. In each instance fantasy becomes a coping mechanism to reduce anxieties without disclosing their source in personal inadequacy.

As perhaps to be expected, a variety of widely accepted literary conventions suggest the paranoid syndrome. The tendency may be recognized whenever a story, novel, play, or poem depends on a heightened sense of conflict and intense motivation to bring this conflict to its resolution. Also paranoid is fiction's subordination of personality to a relatively simplistic question of intentions. As recommended by Aristotle, character is reduced to the agency of action, thus sacrificing individuation to the use of recognizable stereotypes and archetypes. As Northrop Frye has suggested, these stereotypes and archetypes relieve us from the strain of trying to be fair-minded. Also paranoid is fiction's mixed insensitivity and "hyperalertness" to the hidden implications of human conduct. Remarkable discoveries and sudden insights are featured at the expense of a balanced perceptiveness typical of normal social adjustment. Likewise paranoid are fiction's simplistic ethical distinctions between good and evil, between friends and enemies, and between moral deficiency and just restitution. Whenever ethics is invoked to project guilt rather than acknowledging it, a surplusage of paranoia may be assumed additional to the paranoid organization of experience harnessed by literary form.

Other literary conventions may be listed here to illustrate fiction's remarkable affinity to paranoia:

1. Like paranoia, fiction resolves personal conflict by fixing the blame on villains and adverse circumstances. Extro-punitive motivation focuses and diverts the reader's attention from non-specific anxieties to concrete problems that can be effectively resolved.

2. Like paranoia, fiction exaggerates cause and effect relationships among people. As a result, heroes are seen to be more virtuous than usual, and villains more villainous.

3. Like paranoia, fiction is obsessed with justifiable causes, with victims and their saviors. It flourishes in its role as an "injustice collector" pitted against crime, sin, vulgarity, etc.

4. Like paranoia, fiction thrives on crisis. Though each work of fiction resolves its crises, but literary tradition as a whole returns time and again to the same problems and the same formulaic coping mechanisms for dealing with them.

5. Like paranoia, fiction tends to dispense with compromise. Tradeoffs might seem possible in the early stages of a story, but they are usually eliminated through narrative closure. Instead of concessions, a clear-cut victory is both sought and gained.

6. Like paranoia, fiction tends to dispose of confusion. If and when there is ambivalence or complexity, it is preliminary to the attainment of new and greater clarification.

7. Like paranoia, fiction puts intricacy in the service of desirable conclusions. Nothing is purely accidental. Everything is deciphered relative to a necessary final reckoning.

8. Like paranoia, fiction is capable of homicide--both by characters and by authors able to do as they please with their characters. Death is much more frequent in fiction than in our daily lives, inflicted by both heroes and villains. When dying is supposedly natural, the author alone becomes the agent of homicide in his decision whether to let characters live or die.

9. Like paranoia, fiction often puts the individual at the mercy of cosmic forces beyond his control--religious, political, extraterrestrial, etc.

10. Like paranoia, fiction thrives on bizarre theories of apocalypse and divine intervention. Its often pathological religious tendencies have been amply documented by sympathetic exegetical interpretations of Dante, Milton, Blake, and a host of other authors.

11. Like paranoia, fiction gives "centrality" to a hero who is nearly always at stage center where important things can be expected to happen. This central role is equally important for poets who depend on their personal experience to draw universal implications.

12. Like paranoia, fiction pits a pseudocommunity of enemies against the hero. It also creates

a pseudocommunity of friends whose interests both protect and are protected by the hero.[5]

13. Like paranoia, fiction exaggerates stereotypical role differences between the sexes. The masculine paranoid imagination divides women into devouring temptresses and/or paragons of virtue who accept their subservient virginity. The feminine version reduces masculine behavior to a comparable spectrum of stereotypes from rapist-aggressors to tame and harmless brother or father figures.

14. Like paranoia, fiction resorts to convincing but simplistic "real truths" and clues to these real truths (epiphanies, revelations, etc.) that mask the more fundamental deception involved.

15. Like paranoia, fiction expresses an ambivalent authoritarianism. There is fierce commitment to personal freedom, yet narrative form imposes its own rigid and conventional standards of behavior.

16. Like paranoia, fiction engages in elaborate self-justification. This is obvious in its meticulous documentation of behavior to rationalize its dispensation of rewards and punishment. It takes great pains to clarify why everybody deserves what he gets.

17. Like paranoia, fiction parades its integrity through overabundant documentation. There is an obsessive use of concrete detail to justify its biased vision of human behavior.

18. Like paranoia, fiction depends upon the *folie à deux* (or, more accurately, the *folie collective*), a delusional system fabricated by the author to be shared with his sympathetic readers.

19. Like paranoia, fiction imposes an inflexible context of meaning, the "text" as meticulously organized by its author--exactly identical, word for word, every time we return to it.

20. Finally, like paranoia, fiction offers an "unshakable delusional system," a complete story that is credible and coherent, and that effectively obliges the suspension of disbelief among its sympathetic readers.

As earlier indicated, the resemblances between fiction and paranoia are manifold, especially in the movies and pulp fiction that appeal to large audiences. As seems obvious today, the more paranoid the organization of a story, the more likely its appeal. Those who find satisfaction in it are not necessarily paranoid themselves, but they can latch onto its experience and benefit from its denial-projective organization of fantasy content with obvious resemblances to paranoid delusion.

2.

The central role of denial that I am proposing here as the central displacement of both paranoia and literary form reverses the dialectic function of art as explained by Keats's notion of negative capability and by aesthetic theories associated with the Frankfurt School that define negativity as a radical expressiveness that transcends orthodox social constraints.[6] Quite the opposite, I am suggesting that fiction subordinates this presumably negative expressiveness to the more basic function of denial (or negation) as an avoidance strategy typical of conventional authoritarianism. As Freud explained, "Negation [or denial] is, at a higher level, a substitute for repression," for it "is a way of taking account of what is repressed; indeed, it is actually a removal of the repression, though not, of course, an acceptance of what is repressed."7 In fiction denial predominates by acting out the elimination of unacceptable experience. Since expressiveness plays a relatively fugitive role in eluding (or denying) this objective, a dialectic interplay may be expected between these complementary alternatives of experience as explained by Engels's concept of *Negationsnegierung*. Fiction's presumably negative creativity, i.e. its spontaneity and freedom of expression, can be tolerated because these are ultimately denied by means of narrative closure. Certain passages might suggest Keats's negative capability, as exemplified by bizarre images and strikingly unconventional standards, but narrative momentum brings these under control through an acceptable sense of ending. Particular figures and metaphors might deny orthodox social expectations, but these in turn are denied by conventional form. Whatever Keats' version of negative expressiveness entails is itself negated by the stronger and more inclusive process of denial, since local contexts are absorbed and reversed by narrative closure.

Also complicated by the model I am proposing is Norman Holland's explanation of form as a defense against unconscious fantasy content. As explained by Holland, literary experience appeals to readers because of its compromise formation between fantasy and fantasy management, the latter as structured by form.[8] Fantasies are treated as the problem rather than needs and anxieties, even though needs and anxieties are usually the cause of fantasies. In effect, we entertain fantasies to cope with our needs and anxieties. In contrast, the paranoid model of literary form that I am proposing integrates form and fantasy by explaining form as the organization of fantasy content in order to reduce anxieties. Specifically, it is anxiety, not fantasy ,that provokes denial, and fantasy itself is actually structured, or "plotted," by form as a more sophisticated use of denial to bring anxiety under control. One side of the equation comprises the anxiety that needs to be diminished, and the other comprises fantasy as organized by form to bring this about. As in the case of paranoia, form organizes fantasy as a version of events whose outcome affords self-justification, thereby reducing anxiety levels.

Similar to the model I am proposing is Kenneth Burke's explanation of form as "an arousement and fulfillment of desires . . . the creation of an appetite in the mind of the auditor, and the adequate satisfying of that appetite." As explained by Burke, this satisfaction "involves a temporary set of frustrations, but in the end these frustrations prove to be simply a more involved kind of satisfaction and furthermore serve to make the satisfaction of fulfillment more intense."[9] I agree with Burke's explanation, but with the caveat that his "involved kind of satisfaction" results from self-deception resulting from the paranoid double displacement that combines denial and projection. Burke also describes linear advancement as literary form, though it seems more useful

to limit this forward momentum to plot, reserving to literary form the overarching dialectic interaction between plot's motion and countervailing metaphoric expressiveness. In the most inclusive sense, metaphor discloses frustrations, plot diminishes them, and form articulates and gives definition to the dialectic interaction between the two. Form's final importance depends on integrating the input/output dynamics at work between these two basic vectors of literary experience.

As earlier indicated, plot denies by mediating the transition from free-floating anxieties to a relatively simplistic resolution. The reader's multiple uncertainties can be focused on a one-dimensional advancement from problem to solution, from non-specific conative alertness to a gratifying sense of an ending. As earlier indicated, such a transition is almost painfully obvious in pot-boiler novels and movies which generate apprehension to be dispelled through victory against stereotypical villains. But the same transition also occurs in high art, for example in romantic odes in which uncertainty is resolved by means of insight and spiritual rejuvenation, and in Shakespearean sonnets in which the octave's romantic despair is effectively answered by the sestet's counterstatement of stoic acceptance. Here, too, plot consists of linear motion from the acknowledgement of problems to a renewed sense of adequacy. Explained in Aristotelian terms, plot brings a unity of action by making its transition from beginning to end as clarified by Gerald Else's notion of advancement from *hamartia* (or flaw) to *anagnorisis* (or discovery) and as clarified by Hegel's equivalent notion of advancement from abstraction (partial truth) to absolute knowledge (the whole truth).[10] However, contrary to Else's model, the pattern applies to all fiction, not merely tragedy, and, contrary to both Else and Hegel's models, it features deception instead of the truth. If anything, it progresses from potential accessibility to the whole truth to those partial truths that help to drive the most offensive aspects of the whole truth further from consciousness.

Sometimes plot's negative advancement is difficult to recognize, but it plays a decisive role in determining the shape and control of virtually all fiction. An apparent exception that illustrates plot's importance as denial is Gertrude Stein's "a rose is a rose is a rose is a rose," discussed in my article, “Levels of Deception.” Another is Ezra Pound's equally famous haiku, "In a Station of the Metro":

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

How can there be any "plot" to these fourteen words? Close examination, however, reveals two noun phrases, the second of which acknowledges the misanthropy implicit in the first. Pound himself claimed that he tried to express in his poem his sense of wonder when he had seen some beautiful faces one day at a subway entrance.[11] However, his appreciation of these faces seems obviously counterbalanced by the potentially ominous image of a "wet, black bough," which in and of itself conveys both attraction and physical aversion (as becomes too obvious with the substitution of "bowel movement" for the final noun). This impression is reinforced by a triple spondee in the final three words, wet, black, and bough, stressing the terminal importance of the image as well as suggesting Japanese art. In a complicated reversal, the funneled darkness of the subway is turned inside out by the glistening bark of a wet branch. The subway's dark interior from which the crowd is flowing has been inverted to become the image of a bough that brings life

to the flowers growing on it. Like flower petals, the human faces seem blank, delicate, and harmless, but they are obviously nourished and interconnected by biological and potentially disgusting forces bigger than themselves. The frail, misguided individualism implied by the petals is only possible because of shared nourishment from the bough, which is also attractive but for different reasons as implied by its aesthetic contrast. Wonderment with commuters spilling from a subway entrance thus puts the crowd in its place--ephemeral, yet organic--no less victimized by its anonymity than the "crowd," or social horde described, for example, in Gustav LeBon's book, The Crowd, which was popular at the time Pound wrote his poem. How, then, does such a vision distort the truth? One need only take into account the humanist perspective of Pound's contemporaries such as Shaw, H. G. Wells, and Sidney and Beatrice Webb. Just as a rose is more than a rose, faces in a crowd are more than petals on a wet black bough. In both instances, the personification of flowers aestheticizes to simplify the human condition.

In those rare examples of poetry in which less narrative transition is detectable, such as concrete poetry, there is at least negative movement from the context of language to the silence following it. I offer this:

words words words → the rest is silence

This has virtually the same after-effect as the image of a haiku which resists being forgotten in the moments that follow. The transition that occurs is important, albeit subtle and hardly detectable. In his popular text How Does a Poem Mean? John Ciardi argues that every poem has a major "fulcrum" which divides its statement from its counter-statement.[12] The transition from one side of this fulcrum to the other constitutes plot, since there is advancement from one plateau to another. A linear and one-dimensional progress takes place from expectation to closure, from A to not A, culminating in a resolution that denies and thereby designifies preliminary uncertainties.

3.

As already explained, plot's movement toward gratification may be strenuously resisted by a variety of truths that defy simplistic resolution. Whenever confusion arises, or ambivalence, or the concession to exceptions, the progressive momentum of plot expressive of the denial displacement is impeded, and the resulting complexity appeals to serious readers. As maintained by Robert Penn Warren: ". . . a poem, to be good, must earn itself. It is a motion toward a point of rest, but if it is not a resisted motion, it is a motion of no consequence."[13] Northrop Frye concurs: "What corresponds to content is the sense of otherness, the resistance of the material, the feeling that there is something to be overcome, or at least struggled with."[14] J. Hillis Miller mentions fiction's "nagging loose ends" that keep the narrative from reaching "final clarity."[15] And Roland Barthes explains this interaction as a linguistic strategy:

> . . . whereas the sentences quicken the story's 'unfolding' and cannot help but move the story along, the hermeneutic code performs an opposite action: it must set up delays (obstacles, stoppages, deviations) in the flow of the discourse; its structure is essentially reactive, since it opposes the ineluctable advance of language with an organized set of stoppages.[16]

All serious fiction, in fact, seems to be dominated by the negative tension between motion and countermotion, i.e., between demands for acceptable closure and a nagging awareness of its impediments. The author must justify closure by overcoming these impediments. Rivals, enemies, hostile prospective fathers-in-law, etc. must be defeated, but, even more important, the constantly varying blend of latent implications that challenges plot's forward momentum must be brought to the surface in order to be denied. The more powerful the obstructive features, the more likely forward momentum must be exaggerated to dispose of them. This struggle finally ends, as with the example of Hamlet, in silence, the psychic space that follows successful closure, but only because of plot's conditional victory as guaranteed by the conventional dynamics of fiction.

Metaphor epitomizes the resistance to plot's linear organization of experience, since it can project a full spectrum of personal feelings relatively unfettered by conscious restraint, as demonstrated by the texts of Coleridge, Shakespeare, and Frost discussed in my article, “Mending Wall.” Through positive feedback metaphor's projective capacity disrupts expectations by suggesting open-system relationships at odds with narrative closure. Like dream symbolism, metaphor's image (or vehicle) conveys latent implications that express an ambivalence and complex motivation to be harnessed and eventually denied by the momentum toward a suitable resolution. This is usually not true of words alone, though, according to Umberto Eco, any sign [including words] substitutes [i.e., makes a substitution], therefore potentially lies.[17] Metaphor, I would argue, intensifies the possibility, but with the added function that it can also challenge more inclusive lies. As signification, metaphor necessarily distorts the truth but it also helps to convey the truth, since it doubles signification, its image (or "vehicle") intervening between the signified and signifiers of words. As opposed to the "sign situation" of a simple word--an idea represented by metaphor expands to include three members: (a) an idea expressed by (b) an image represented by (c) a sign. The full eidetic spectrum of possibilities implicit in the image compounded by the necessary additional step in the dynamics of representation gives metaphor an expressive freedom that increases the possibility of exposing, or "leaking," the truth in its fullest and most dangerous implications. On one hand, metaphor's conscious tenor helps to convey experience obviously supportive of the "plotted" chain of events dominated by wish fulfillment, but on the other its latent suggestiveness, the feelings it inadvertently confesses, at least temporarily undermine this linear advancement. Thus the intense dialectic between metaphor and plot in some of the best poetry. If metaphor confesses anxiety, plot denies it; if metaphor implies unacceptable feelings, plot, like paranoia, represses these by diverting the reader's attention to a conflict that can be brought to its satisfactory resolution. The more unacceptable the feelings to be denied, the more aggressive the use of plot for this purpose.

When the dialectic between plot and metaphor becomes particularly intense, plot actually takes on the role of metonymy that “designifies” metaphor, since its deferment of signification until closure lets it deny the existence of its antecedent (after = not before). Partial signification has already occurred through metaphor, but through narrative praxis as deferred metaphor (results signifying their preliminary circumstances), plot both revises signification and slows it down to the time plot takes to complete itself. In effect, plot's narrative resolution “re-signifies” metaphor, and, by resignifying it, it very likely “designifies” it, denying or somehow diminishing its fullest implications. It absorbs the cumulative meaning of earlier figurative representations by substituting its latest representation, the "end" by which everybody receives what he deserves,

each after his own fashion.

This function of plot in compounding metaphor to purify it of its objectionable signification is suggestive of the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan's treatment of metonymy as "a signifier of desire" whose deferred representation endlessly reappears in other guises.[18] As Lacan suggests, a basic "signifying game" occurs between plot as a "horizontal signifying chain" and metaphor as its "vertical dependencies in the signified," but one must disagree with his characterization of metonymy--in fiction, at least--as an "eternally stretching forth towards the desire for something else" (167). Instead, Lacan's principle of metonymy as words signifying words may be extended to apply to a new and more inclusive level, of narrative portions signifying narrative portions, or, more specifically, of terminal word combinations that signify earlier word combinations, for example of Aristotle's end signifying (or designifying) its beginning. In this instance, which is literary, closure becomes essential to the dynamics by which metonymy at least temporarily prevails over metaphor, contrary to Lacan's null-Aristotelian assumption that competition between the two goes on indefinitely in fiction--"until the match it called, there where I [Lacan] am not, because I cannot situate myself there." With even the most restrictive definition of metonymy, of words signified by other words, a before and an after become necessary, and, if literary form occurs, closure is obtained by any after that fully signifies or designifies its before. For most readers, metonymy resembles both signification and metaphor since it depends upon a capping experience, a plateau effect--perhaps momentary, perhaps longer--that occurs when a signifier asserts itself as an adequate substitute for what it signifies. "Ah yes," the reader fleetingly tells himself in the case of metaphor, "the rose indeed represents the first blush of youth"; but in the case of metonymy, as represented, for example, by the final impression of Gertrude Stein's brief poem already interpreted, "Ah yes," the reader concludes, with pause tantamount to belief, "a rose is, in the final analysis, nothing more than a rose." The second instance imposes closure, a metonymic denial of metaphor--in Gertrude Stein's poem, the denial of a single metaphor, but in most instances, for example both Hamlet and Pound's "In a Station of the Metro," the denial of a cumulative impact of metaphors. In effect, literary form is an organization of experience by which metonymy (a linear seeking of closure) both caps and designifies metaphor's expressive simultaneity. As Emerson explained, "That which proceeds in succession might be remembered, but that which is coexistent knows not its own tendency."[19]As a useful corollary, that which proceeds in succession helps to prevent that whose signified and signifier are coexistent from knowing itself. Hence the final importance of narrative form.

Here metaphor obviously takes on a status more inclusive than its ordinary use, since it embraces any signification whose eidetic value in doubling the sign situation encourages confessional primary process displacements that need to be excluded from the reader's purview. Other literary devices may accordingly be described as being metaphoric whenever they expose an undercurrent of countervailing motives at odds with narrative closure. What might seem simple imagery often bears metaphoric implications, for example, when the obsessive depiction of violence (guns, reckless driving, broken windows, etc.) expresses aggressiveness disproportionate to the final happy ending imposed by narrative closure. Ambiguity can also be metaphoric if alternative meanings undermine the appeal of narrative closure, as can poetic texture if tension arises between the forward momentum of ordinary usage and stylistic deviations which express disruptive associations. Irony likewise falls into the same category if connotations and declared meaning divide along lines relative to the process of denial carried out by plot. This division can

occur between what is told and implied, between what is told and seen, or between what is told and remembered from personal experience. Characterization, too, can be metaphoric, if torn between "progressive" stereotyping (in the sense that it justifies plot's momentum toward acceptable closure) and occasional interludes that concede the exceptions and modifications typical of human complexity. Literary caricatures deserve their fate--real people do not exactly. The same is true of story, as opposed to plot, if it meanders into episodes that hinder its momentum toward resolution. Sometimes these narrative byways seem to be temporary distractions from the issues and feelings resolved by plot, and sometimes on a grand scale, as for example in Victor Hugo's major novels. Often, however, they contribute to a countervailing pattern of signification that obstructs plot's impetus towards closure. The more effectively they resist closure, the greater the felt need for closure. At best, literary form focuses and dramatizes this dialectic opposition by imposing a resolution that at least suggests the possibility of genuine synthesis.

4.

If literary form's struggle between progressive and obstructive components (respectively, plot and metaphor as described in my analysis here) is instead explained according to Roman Jakobson's dichotomy between the metonymic and metaphoric dimensions of language, plot once again becomes metonymic, since it is organized forward in time and depends upon the cumulative advancement of words and episodes from beginning to end.[20] On the other hand, the metaphoric dimension represents the dynamics of signification, including metaphor and all obstructive features whose referential associations compound signification, thereby slowing down metonymic advancement. In general, metaphor tends to expand the range of experience signified, as opposed to metonymic linkages that impose a second order of reference more likely to diminish or constrict the range of experience signified. Each word or word combination expresses both tendencies, on one hand drawing the reader's attention to the signified experience, on the other helping to organize this experience in a sequence that emphasizes a desire for something else at the expense of the status quo.. Each both clarifies and obscures, both helps and resists the forward momentum that leads to narrative closure. All literary devices--irony, ambiguity, tone, characterization, and so on--may be interpreted based on this relatively simple metaphor/metonymic distinction, whose ultimate source resides in a denial-projective double displacement comparable to Freud's model of paranoid consciousness. Syntax is involved, since each word's referential content (metaphoric) offsets the syntactic role it plays (metonymic). Even sound pattern is involved, since pauses, stresses, and resemblances (rhyme, alliteration, etc.) emphasize particular words, thus drawing attention to their symbolic function at the expense of the narrative dynamics by which the attention is drawn forward lured by the expectations of closure. Usually, but not always, metaphor provides the medium for personal expressiveness, while metonymy absorbs and designifies this expressiveness by means of conventional expectations. Metaphoric representation is projective because it unleashes experiential reserves peripheral to language, while metonymic representation carries out the function of denial by redefining these reserves based on the linear demands of literary form.

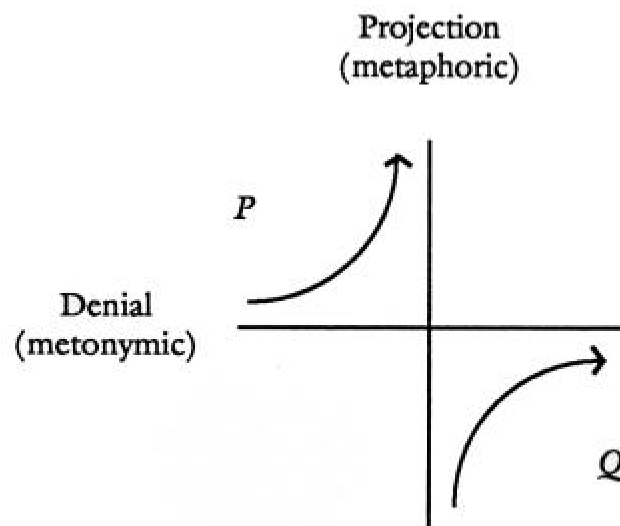
The basic distinction between plot and metaphor which I am suggesting here replicates the distinction between the projective and denial displacements of paranoia as well as the distinctions

emphasized in previous chapters between truth and misrepresentation, positive and negative feedback, and creativity and literary convention--all of which may be categorized by the perhaps more inclusive distinction between expression and constraint:

Expression	Constraint
Metaphor	Plot
Projection	Denial
Positive Feedback	Negative Feedback
Truth	Misrepresentation
Creativity	Literary Convention

Metaphor lets us project unrecognized feelings and inclinations in our experience of a text, thus affording creativity by expressing truths with obvious positive feedback. In contrast, plot denies these projected feelings by drawing upon literary convention that produces negative feedback experienced as pleasure.

Both poles are important to fiction, and a before and an after are almost inevitably needed to integrate their antipodal relationship. In the parallelogram model already presented at the beginning of this article, the linear (or metonymic) forward momentum that represents plot as an agent of denial takes place on the horizontal vector (CB), while the vertical vector (AC) is metaphoric since it represents the full range of feelings projected into a text in order to be denied. AC is metaphoric in representing these feelings, while CB is metonymic in representing a sequence that ultimately leads to their elimination. AC brings feelings to the surface, but only to be reorganized and therefore selectively denied by CB. At this stage in my argument, the orthogonal relationship between these two displacements isperhaps better represented by coordinate axes:



Curve "P" in quadrant II represents the paranoid sequence ADB (denial flowing into the projection of denied feelings), while curve "Q" in quadrant IV represents the literary sequence ACB

(vicarious projection rewarded with denial through closure). This paradigm also depicts the interplay between Saussure's vertical axis of simultaneities and horizontal axis of successions, as well as synchrony and diachrony, langue and parole, signification and syntagma, selection and combination, and illocutionary and perlocutionary effects. Likewise expressed are the distinctions between animus and anima, Apollonian and Dionysian consciousness, Allen Tate's extension and intension, John Crowe Ransom's structure and texture, and J. Hillis Miller's performative and narrative dimensions of narrative form. Also implied would be the Adlerian distinction between masculine protest and inferiority feelings and Christopher Caudwell's distinction between the natural and social roles that compose one's inclusive identity, with the vertical dimension representing biological need and the horizontal dimension its sublimation based on social and literary convention. For each of the binarisms listed here, the horizontal dimension designateslinear momentum toward an acceptable outcome while the vertical dimension--without which literary experience remains one-dimensional--expresses the total range of experience to be both expressed and denied by imposing such an outcome.

The vertical dimension also designates positive feedback and an "open-system" accountability to everything we must cope with in life; in contrast, the horizontal dimension traces the denial displacement as closed-system behavior with a "plotted" transition from X to not X, even when not X extends indefinitely as in the case of Stein's “a rose is a rose” and the endless signification of Jacques Lacan's mode of discourse, both of which reduce language itself to authoritarian denial. For there is no room for any other voice. Similarly, our conscious and unconscious ability to identify with characters as signified by the vertical axis is counterbalanced by the horizontal capacity for imposing denial on a sequential basis. One dimension represents primary-process leakage, and the other its secondary-process denial by means of approved closure. Moreover, he orthogonal integration of these two capacities clarifies an even larger variety of literary distinctions. The dialectic may pose a conflict as simple as the tension between site and violence, for example when lush description of a jungle setting expresses anima on a vertical axis as counterbalanced by animus which expresses struggle and victory on the horizontal axis. Caves, mounds, mansions, and bodies of water--even the conventional vision of hell--similarly evoke the threat of polymorphous susceptibility which is denied in paranoid fashion by the conflict among aggressive men who traverse this threatening landscape armed with guns, swords, and other such instruments of phallic aggressiveness. Such a relationship likewise occurs between the sea and a voyager's determination in both The Odyssey and Moby Dick, between underground passageways and the quest for secret answers in gothic tales and science fiction.[21] In each instance environmental topology expresses a metaphoric breadth of experience (vertical) which must be harnessed by means of linear achievement (horizontal). With final closure, unacceptable projective implications measured on the vertical axis of simultaneities are denied by compensatory paranoid victory "plotted" on the horizontal axis of contiguity.

If the classic Freudian symptoms of homophobic repression aggravate paranoid tendencies, the dialectic tension between metaphor and plot can be particularly dramatic. This happens, for example, when Shakespeare's persistent use of misogynistic innuendoes is finally both resolved and denied by means of tragic self-sacrifice. Hamlet is obviously a case in point. A slightly different version occurs in the popular media, for example "buddy" movies and TV detective programs in which male bonding between two heroes (intensely "metaphoric" in its visual immediacy) is both denied and consummated by means of their shared victory at the expense of

dangerous criminals. They indirectly fulfill their relationship by acts of justified violence against acceptable scapegoats, sometimes shooting down what seems an almost infinite number of enemies. This formula first occurred in Gilgamesh almost five thousand years ago, when Gilgamesh and his sidekick Enkidu killed both Humbaba and the Bull of Heaven, then insulted and rejected the goddess Ishtar's marriage proposal to Gilgamesh in order to continue their buddy relationship--strictly Boy Scout stuff preceding conjugal matrimony. .The same formula thrives today as one of the staples of American culture. As explained by Nietzsche's theory of tragedy, Apollonian success (a masculine accomplishment) transcends Dionysian polymorphousness once the temptation of latent homosexuality can be displaced and denied through justified acts of violence. "We're not in love with each other," insist the teenie-blippers, some as late as their twenties and thirties, "We just like being with each other when we beat up on others." By drawing upon Allen Tate's theory of tension, it can also be proposed that plot's intension that documents the struggle for inflicting "justice" on others effectively counterbalances an extension of unacceptable latent homosexual innuendoes. The resulting formal "tension" that combines the two is resolved by shared victory in defense of orthodox values.[22] Hurrah flag, God bless us all. Finally, if the linguistic terms of Roman Jakobson are extended to narrative form, the metonymic inertia of plot counterbalances its metaphoric spectrum of androgynous significations that produce anxiety and the compensatory rage for order.[23] Plot co-opts anxiety through self-signification, the advancement from deficiency to sufficiency, i.e., from felt inadequacy to the destruction of enemies as a self-defined intra-referential success.

In popular fiction plot predominates; in high fiction it is challenged and at times seemingly blocked. Nevertheless, there is always at least a modest sense of an ending. This is true of Thomas Pynchon's novels, for example, in which the rejection of conventional narrative structure is balanced against an ingenious and obsessive use of paranoid thematic content. The denial displacement reemerges as paranoid expectations based on evidence of an insane international conspiracy. Paranoid form is abandoned, but the story expresses a paranoid vision, so it continues to interest readers, if on a slightly different plane. There is no coherent organization of events, but at least an elaborate "plot" is exposed which more or less brings the novel to its conclusion. Other postmodernist fiction (for example of Katz, Sukenick, and Federman) escapes paranoia by eliminating form, sequence, and closure, and without salvaging paranoia in its thematic content. However, as earlier indicated, this fiction's total freedom from the denial displacement serves as an exception to prove the rule, since it draws but the tiniest audience with the patience to appreciate its merits as aesthetic accomplishment. Most readers are bored with postmodernism's disembodied verbal evocations. Instead, they seek out authors unashamedly willing to invoke metonymy at the expense of metaphor, masculine protest at the expense of inferiority feelings, and paranoid shape at the expense of formless accuracy. In fact, as already indicated at least once, there seems to be a rather high correlation: the more paranoid the vision of experience, the more likely its widespread success. The pathological righteousness of Jaws, Star Wars, the Rambo and Schwarzenegger films, and all the spinoffs that now fill our movie theaters during summers is obviously exaggerated, however staid it might seem compared to moronic video games. However, a comparable dependence on paranoid form can also be found--if more effectively modulated--in the works of Shakespeare, Dickens, and most of the authors who dominate our literary tradition. We should not forget that the bloodthirsty potboiler Titus Andronicus was Shakespeare's most popular play during his lifetime--more popular, even, than Hamlet.

Footnotes

1. Simon Lesser, Fiction and the Unconscious (New York: Vintage Books, 1962), pp. 148, 201-204, 242. The denial-projective model I am proposing here more closely approximates Lesser's argument that fiction features projective mechanisms (p. 61) than Norman Holland's essentially passive construction that fiction is introjected by the reader. See also Holland's The Dynamics of Literary Response (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 86-87.
2. Sigmund Freud, Psycho-analytic Notes on an Autobiographical Account of a Case of Paranoia (Dementia Paranoides), in The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, vol. XII (ed. by J. Strachey, London: Hogarth Press, 1958), esp. Chapt. 3 "On the Mechanism of Paranoia," pp. 59-79. The subsequent development of the concept of paranoia in psychoanalytic theory is traced by Otto Fenichel in The Psychoanalytic Theory of Neurosis (New York: W.W. Norton, 1945), pp. 427-36.

3. David Swanson, Philip Bohnert, and Jackson Smith, The Paranoid (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1970), pp. 275-77. Research is summarized pertinent to the question of homosexual repression as the source of paranoia on pp. 255-57 and 261-65. Despite high positive correlations established by many of the cited experiments (cf. those of Gardner, Page and Warkentin, Klaf and Davis, Moore and Selzer, etc.), Swanson expresses the cautious judgment that "some association" exists between homosexual repression and paranoid disorder, but that a cause and effect relationship has not yet been established. Interestingly, however, his own model incorporates the two displacements proposed by Freud, and virtually all the theories of paranoia cited by him feature the projective displacement with at least the implications of denial. In itself this displacement mechanism might not offer a cause and effect relationship between paranoia and homosexual repression, but it does help explain the prevalence of latent homosexual jealousies among the paranoid cases discussed throughout the Swanson text.

4. Robert Waelder, "The Structure of Paranoid Ideas: A Critical Survey of Various Theories," Int. J. Psychoanal., 32 (1951): 167-77. Waelder supports the theory of double displacement by demonstrating that projection can only occur as an outgrowth of denial. In effect, the denial mechanism initiates the process of displacement, and then projection gives it aim in the substitution of more acceptable feelings.

5. Norbert Cameron, "The Paranoid Pseudo-Community," Am. J. Sociol., 49 (1943): 32; and "The Paranoid Pseudo-Community, Revisited," Am. J. Sociol., 64 (1959): 52.

6. John Keats, "Letter to George and Thomas Keats," (Dec. 21, 1817), The Poetical Works and Other Writings of John Keats, ed. by H. Buxton Forman, vol. 6 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1939). p. 104. For Keats, negative capability embraced the willingness to accept "uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact & reason." By implication, logic and empirical justification may be ignored, and in fact are best eliminated from the poet's use of his materials. As explained by Herbert Marcuse in One Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964), this freedom may paradoxically occur within an otherwise repressive matrix of experience: "Transcendence beyond the established conditions (of thought and action) presupposes transcendence within these conditions. This negative freedom--i.e. freedom from the

oppressive and ideological power of given facts--is the a priori of the historical dialectic; it is the element of choice and decision in and against historical determination" (223). Literary denial is thus beneficial because it challenges established conditions by exposing readers to a better world of possibilities at odds with the inhibitive constraints otherwise dominant in our lives.

7. Here I combine passages from two papers by Sigmund Freud, "The Unconscious," Collected Papers, trans. by Joan Riviere, vol. 4 (New York: Basic Books, 1959), p. 119; and "Negation," vol. 5, p. 182. Probably the best explanation of this negative mechanism outside of psychoanalysis may be found in Henri Bergson's Creative Evolution (New York: Random House, 1944), pp. 297-324: ". . . we seek a thing only because we feel a lack of it. Our action thus proceeds from 'nothing' to 'something,' and its very essence is to embroider 'something' on the canvas of 'nothing'" (323). Apropos of the narrative model I am proposing, closure's affirmative messages embroiders "something" on the denial displacement's rejection of deficiencies. The "something" that is created gains its appeal from having reduced a "something" elsewhere to "nothing."

8. Holland, Dynamics of Literary Response, p. 104 ff.

9. Kenneth Burke, Counter-Statement (Los Altos: Hermes, 1953), pp. 31, 124. There is no difficulty in subsuming Burke's six categories of literary form in his "Lexicon Rhetoricae" to the negative model I am proposing here. Plot contains traits of both conventional form (the form which specifically appeals as form) and syllogistic progression (the form dominated by premises which force conclusions), since both form and plot make their appeal only because their premises force the necessary conclusions. Anything conventional is thereby syllogistic; vice versa, anything syllogistic is potentially conventional. This interaction also subsumes both qualitative progression (the presence of one quality preparing us for the introduction of another) and repetitive form (the restatement of the same thing in different ways) to the dominant conventional-syllogistic pattern explained above, since both of these primarily heighten suspense in anticipation of an acceptable resolution. Burke's sixth category, of minor or incidental forms, which includes metaphor, paradox, disclosure, etc., may be divided into plotted devices which contribute to the forward momentum of a text and metaphoric resistances which impede this momentum but make it all the more necessary. For example, the overt tenor-vehicle interaction of metaphor is often congruent with plot, but its latent implications might be countervailing, hence "metaphoric."

10. Gerald Else, Aristotle's Poetics (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967), pp. 378-85; and G. W. F. Hegel, "On Art" (a translation of his Vorlesungen uber die Aesthetik), in G. W. F. Hegel: On Art, Religion, Philosophy, ed. by J. G. Gray (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), pp. 22-127. It is also possible to treat plot as an "action chain" which brings about an anticipated result and as the transition from initial "discrepant awareness" (the reader's knowledge of the characters' relative ignorance) to its resolution by a process of discovery which restores the characters' level of knowledge to that of the reader. Both of these models are likewise Aristotelian in their linear explanations of literature.

11. Ezra Pound, Fortnightly Review (Sept. 1, 1914): 465, 467--quoted by K. K. Ruthven in A

Guide to Ezra Pound's Personae (1926) (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), pp. 152- 53.

12. John Ciardi, How Does a Poem Mean? (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1959), pp. 994-1007. Many fulcrums can of course be found, even for example in the relationship between an attributive adjective and the noun it modifies, but in general I would define plot as consisting of the single basic transition to which all other transitions are subordinated unless there is a fundamental violation of the principle of unity.

13. Robert Penn Warren, "Pure and Impure Poetry," in Selected Essays (New York: Random House, 1951), p. 27.

14. Northrop Frye, The Secular Scripture (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1976), p. 35.

15. J. Hillis Miller, "Narrative," in Critical Terms for Literary Study, ed. by Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), p. 74.

16. Roland Barthes, S/Z, trans. by Richard Miller (New York: Hill & Wang, 1974), p. 75.

17. Umberto Eco, A Theory of Semiotics (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976), p. 7. Quoted at greater length, Eco's remark supports my thesis in the Introduction that truth and deception are necessarily interdependent in the explication of fiction: "Semiotics is concerned with everything that can be taken as a sign. A sign is everything that can be taken as significantly substituting for something else. This something else does not necessarily have to exist or to actually be somewhere at the moment in which a sign stands in for it. Thus semiotics is in principle a discipline studying everything which can be used in order to lie. If something cannot be used to tell a lie, conversely it cannot be used to tell the truth: it cannot be used 'to tell' at all.' (italics in the original)

18. Jacques Lacan, "Agency of the Letter in the Unconscious," Ecrits: A Selection, trans. by Alan Sheridan (New York: W. W. Norton, 1977), pp. 146-78, esp. pp. 164, 166-167. This aspect of Lacanian theory is also explained by Francoise Meltzer in his paper, "Unconscious," Critical Terms, op. cit., pp. 159-61.

19. Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Experience," in Essays and Lectures (New York: Library of America, 1983), p. 484.

20. Roman Jakobson, "Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances," in Fundamentals of Language, by Roman Jakobson and Morris Halle (The Hague: Mouton, 1956), pp. 55-82.

21. See "The Name of Odysseus," by George E. Dimock, The Hudson Review, 9 (Spring, 1956): 52-70, ingeniously supports this model of coordinate interaction. Throughout The Odyssey there is persistent tension between odyssasthai (to cause pain and be willing to do so) and Kalypsamenos (to be covered, suggestive of engulfment by the sea, feminine blandishments,

etc.). Only because of odyssasthai (horizontal struggle) can Odysseus prevail against Kalypsamenos, which is vertical in signifying vulnerability to feminine entrapment as represented by Circe, Calypso, Nausicaa, Scylla and Charybdis, etc. The same distinction is more or less applicable to Moby Dick explained by Leslie Fiedler in Love and Death in the American Novel (New York: Stein & Day, 1966), pp. 369-88, in which Ishmael's homosexual tendencies offset Ahab's heterosexual mission. In both epics, of Homer and Melville, struggle is metonymically plotted as a horizontal quest with enough momentum to avoid vertical surrender. In one instance the threat is heterosexual, in the other homosexual.

22. Allen Tate's categories are cited from his article, "Tension in Poetry," Essays of Four Decades (Chicago: Swallow Press, 1968), pp. 56-71. Most of the rest of the New Critical nomenclature as applied to practical criticism, for example irony, paradox, ambiguity, wonder, tone, etc. can be reduced, like metaphor to a doubling of experience offset by plot and theme according to the dialectic approach I am proposing here.

23. Roman Jakobson argues that "the poetic function projects the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection to the axis of combination," in "Linguistics and Poetics," Style in Language, ed. by Thomas Sebeok (Cambridge, Mass: Technology Press of M.I.T., 1960), p. 358. But it should also be obvious that the ultimate (and perhaps impossible) act of denial would be to dispense with the axis of selection by making a text strictly intra-referential in plotting its own denial as a one-dimensional commitment to silence.

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