

THE NOVELISTIC DOCUMENTARY

A STUDY OF THE NON-FICTION NOVEL

Thesis

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## PREFACE

By now there can be few literate people in the English-speaking world who are unaware of the phenomenon of the "non-fiction novel." Statements have been made, accusations hurled, positions taken up, lines for and against sharply drawn. Yet surprisingly little of what has been said or written manages in the end to come to terms with the type, manages, that is, to isolate the defining features of the non-fiction novel in such a way that its generic identity is laid bare for all to see. The failure to "identify" the non-fiction novel (or, as it will be called in this study, the novelistic documentary) can be attributed in part to the inadequacy — even at this late date — of the available poetics of the novel. It would seem too much to expect that the variant will be identified when the central form, the novel itself, has defied, or seemed to defy, systematic analysis. On the other hand, critics and reviewers who have commented on the novelistic documentary have generally shown insufficient familiarity with or mastery of such poetics of the novel as exists. It is part of the purpose of this study to demonstrate that the confusion expressed by critics and reviewers could have been avoided, that existing theory and criticism of the novel can in fact enable one to arrive at a clear conception of the generic identity of the novelistic documentary.

The concern with generic identity apparent in the foregoing paragraph points to the aim and method of this study, for the study is in essence an expanded literary definition. Throughout its course, the implicit — and often explicit — questions are: What is the

novelistic documentary? What makes it what it is? which is to ask at the same time, What makes it different from other literary types such as the novel or the orthodox factual report? In seeking to answer these questions, the study draws on the principles and criteria of generic and structuralist criticism. Underlying this procedure is the belief that generic and structuralist approaches to literature are mutually interdependent: genre is determined ultimately by a particular combination of particular structural features, and, in turn, the examination of these features leads, or should lead, to a clear conception of generic identity. It is not part of the intention of this study to suggest that a generic-structuralist approach is somehow superior to other critical approaches. Neither, on the other hand, does it seem necessary to defend the approach. Given the central problem to be dealt with — What is the novelistic documentary? — the approach was self-evident.

In keeping with the priority given to generic identity, the study devotes very little attention to critical evaluation. Preferences will, of course, emerge, and parts of the discussion are inevitably couched in terms which imply value judgements. Nevertheless, there has been a conscious attempt to play down evaluation; all judgements that have been made are intended to be tentative and suggestive — nothing more.

The works which form the central corpus of primary materials for this study are Truman Capote's In Cold Blood: A True Account of a Multiple Murder and Its Consequences (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1966); Norman Mailer, The Armies of the Night: History as a Novel — The Novel as History (New York: New American Library, 1968); Anatoly Kuznetsov [A. Anatoli], Babi Yar: A Document in the Form of a Novel (1966; rpt. London: Jonathan Cape, 1970); and Oscar

Lewis, The Children of Sánchez: Autobiography of a Mexican Family (1961; rpt. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1964). These works will be cited in footnotes as In Cold Blood, Armies, Babi Yar, and Children respectively.

I should like to thank the many people who have helped in the writing of this study. I owe a special debt to Dr. Horst Ruthrof, who was my supervisor. His advice and encouragement, and more importantly his willingness to share with me his knowledge of literary theory and particularly the theory of the novel, have made my task far easier than it might otherwise have been. Dr. A.R.W. de Villiers very generously took an interest in my work and, in addition to giving me valuable guidance in the literature of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, undertook the onerous task of proofreading the typescript.

I should also like to thank the following people: Professor Guy Butler, for the interest he has shown in the progress of my work and for giving me a reduced teaching load during the time I was engaged in writing this study; Professor Philip Mayer, who provided me with an anthropologist's views on the work of Oscar Lewis; John and Cassandra Perry, for allowing me to read the typescript of their as yet unpublished book A Chief is a Chief by the People; Dr. C.A. Giffard, for providing me with information on "new journalism"; Mr. Ruben Musiker and Mrs. A.T. Henry, who helped me to locate secondary materials and to obtain books and articles from libraries in South Africa and overseas; and finally, I would like to acknowledge an inestimable debt to my wife, Marjorie Visser, who not only had to live with this study over a very long period but did all the typing as well.

PART I

THEORETICAL PROBLEMS AND DEFINITIONS

## CHAPTER 1

### THE NOVEL: TOWARDS A WORKING DEFINITION

#### 1.1 The Problem of Definition

A work which sets out to examine novelistic structures should probably make the definition of the novel from which it proceeds explicit and, as far as possible, precise. Only a working definition is required since the core of this study focuses on a narrative form which is closely related to, but not identical with, the novel. A working definition will make it possible to identify those features in the corpus which characterize the works as novelistic, to distinguish those aspects of the work which are specifically documentary, and to isolate those features which are peculiar to the amalgam of novelistic and documentary premises. The fact that only a working definition is required does not permit formal discriminations which are in any way more haphazard or less carefully conceived than would be the case if the novel proper were the subject of the study; however, problems of direct relevance and balance of emphasis set limitations on the amount of space which can be devoted to formulating a definition of the novel, which in turn necessarily limits any claims for the exhaustiveness of the definition. So while the definition reached may be able to stand on its own, its purpose is more limited; it seeks to provide defining criteria relevant to the study of the corpus.

Attempting even a working definition of the novel is complicated by the fact that the traditions of British and American criticism — British in particular — have generally resisted formalist or structuralist approaches to literary phenomena. "Empty formalism," a frequent charge, assumes that a formalist approach is necessarily, even inherently, "empty"; and behind the charge is the belief, often implicit, that critical formalism will somehow falsify the literary work, stunt artistic creativity, and reduce literature to an impersonal, rigid, mechanical endeavor for both writer and critic. Such fears usually rest on a confusion of terms; a formalist approach to literary criticism does not imply the belief or desire on the part of the critic that the creation of literary works become formalistic. Critical formalism, as it is here understood, proceeds from an intention to define, describe, discriminate, not to legislate; its proper sphere is what has been done rather than what will or should be done.

Formalism, like other critical approaches, has been abused, has been used for normative or prescriptive purposes; it has also on occasion provided inadequate definitions and critical methodologies, but the fault lies in the individual misapplication of the approach, not in the approach itself.

The predominately "empirical" approach in British and American criticism of the novel has not, obviously, altogether done away with attempts at defining the form. However, perhaps because of the very antipathy with which formalism is regarded, definitions of the novel in English have tended to be either so general that they are of little assistance to the serious student of the form or so limiting that they fail to embrace works which are widely assumed to be novels. In the first group one meets such formulations as: "the novel is not so much a literary form as a whole literature in itself,"<sup>1</sup> "the novel is a judgement on experience expressed in terms of character,"<sup>2</sup> "any fictitious prose work over 50,000

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<sup>1</sup>Raymond Williams, "Realism and the Contemporary Novel," Partisan Review, XXVI (1959), 202.

<sup>2</sup>Douglas Grant, "The Novel and its Critical Terms," Essays in Criticism, I (1951), 423.

words will be a novel; "<sup>1</sup> "definition of the novel — the comment on society as a whole."<sup>2</sup> The list could be expanded indefinitely, but that would not be to the point. Definitions such as these, although they provide interesting insights into certain aspects of the novel, fail to satisfy the central criterion of a literary definition — that the reader be able to recognize a novel from the definition provided, and that he be able to distinguish in the novel the distinctive features set forth in the definition. As these definitions stand, he can neither test a variety of works in accordance with the definition and separate novels from non-novels nor isolate the distinguishing features in any particular novel.

The other group of definitions identifies the novel with the realistic novel. These definitions, by far the most common in the British and American traditions,<sup>3</sup> are, because of the inherently limiting criteria which they apply to the form, forced into a variety of precarious positions. Usually they necessitate such a far-reaching expansion of the definition of the term realism that it can no longer function as a reasonably precise and unambiguous critical concept. And since these definitions of the novel rest on the definition of realism the problem of definition is transferred rather than resolved. Yet if the concept of literary realism is not broadened, the identification of novel with realistic novel will fail to account for works accepted by the critic as novels. Another strategy encouraged by the identification of novel with realistic novel — a strategy with a long tradition in English criticism — is the introduction of a related, often casually defined category — the romance. This strategy can be useful and informative; too often, however,

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<sup>1</sup>E.M. Forster, Aspects of the Novel (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1962), pp. 13-14.

<sup>2</sup>John Gibbins, "Some Thoughts on the State of the Novel," Quarterly Review, CCCI (1963), 52.

<sup>3</sup>The identification of novel with realistic novel is so prevalent as to make specific citation pointless. Some of the more important formulations can be found in works cited in the Bibliography for: Arnold Kettle, Richard Chase, Lionel Trilling, Ian Watt, and Northrop Frye.

the strategy provides a critical category for novels on one side, and on the other an amorphous hodgepodge for whatever works are left over.

It is worthwhile going behind the strategy in the attempt to discover its rationale. Critics naturally feel that a tradition which includes such works as Emma and Middlemarch cannot easily accommodate, say, Wuthering Heights. The problem is seemingly solved by classifying Wuthering Heights as a Romance. The consequence of this solution is that the attempt to deal with the apparent differences between Emma and Wuthering Heights has resulted in classifying the latter with the prose Lancelot. Clearly this solution is unsatisfactory and some means of dealing with prose fiction which will avoid the vagaries of the first group of definitions noted and, as well, avoid the dangers of a realistic norm must be found.

Any attempt to bring order to the present chaos of critical definitions of the novel must provide for greater precision and flexibility and must at the same time be sufficiently orthodox to preclude radical departures from empirical intuitions of the novel's form. The following two sections are devoted to the attempt to arrive at a definition of the novel through an examination of certain aspects of the literary-historical processes which issued in the form and through a synchronic examination of certain of its structural characteristics.

## 1.2 An Historical Approach to Definition

Historical approaches to the novel ordinarily tend either to begin with those works which the critic believes are the earliest instances of the form or to examine one or more of the narrative forms — travel accounts, character writings, criminal biographies — which are thought to constitute specific and immediate influences on the development of the

novel. Neither of these approaches, however theoretically sound and informative they may be, can deal with the broader narrative patterns and literary-historical forces which gave rise to the novel and at the same time conditioned its characteristic structure. Robert Scholes and Robert Kellogg have attempted, as they put it, "to view the nature of narrative and the Western narrative tradition whole, seeing the novel as only one of a number of narrative possibilities,"<sup>1</sup> and the following account follows, with a number of substantial modifications (including changes in terminology), the precise yet flexible model or schema which they have fashioned for the analysis of narrative structures.

Scholes and Kellogg characterize the oral epic of both the classical and vernacular periods as a synthetic form which combined such divergent narrative types and impulses as sacred myth, quasi-historical legend, factual history and genealogy, and folktale. Such an amalgam is necessarily an unstable compound, and consequently the epic synthesis underwent a process — completed in classical times and repeated in the vernacular literatures — of separating into its various constituents. In the process of separation from the epic synthesis, narrative literature developed in two antithetical directions which can be termed empirical and conventional. The empirical mode can be further subdivided into those narrative types which stress adherence to fact and those which stress fidelity to experience; these may be labelled factual and mimetic respectively. Factual narratives include those impulses and potentialities in the epic synthesis which have issued in history, chronicles, biography, memoirs, autobiography. Mimetic narratives, those which stress truth to experience rather than truth to fact, give rise to the fictionalized biography, character writings, and, eventually, the novel.

The conventional branch of narrative literature divides into an heroic component which includes the lai, verse romance, prose romance, poetic Edda, and chansons de geste; and a didactic component

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<sup>1</sup>Robert Scholes and Robert Kellogg, The Nature of Narrative (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 3.

which includes the fable, the apologue, and hagiography.

Among the criteria used for distinguishing empirical from conventional narrative types, the most important involves their varying relation to the traditional compositional elements of narrative literature. Conventional narrative types maintain a curious allegiance to the characteristics of oral epic which Milman Parry and Albert B. Lord have termed "formulaic."<sup>1</sup> Parry and Lord in their studies of the Homeric and of contemporary South Slavic oral narrative discovered that these works were largely constructed from a finite set of verbal-syntactic formulas ("traditional epithets and locutions [used] in the same metrical and semantic situation"),<sup>2</sup> formulaic expressions (lines or half-lines "constructed on the pattern of formulas"),<sup>3</sup> and "themes" ("repeated incidents and descriptive passages").<sup>4</sup> Conventional written narratives are not in themselves formulaic; rather they transform the traditional formulas and formulaic expressions into rhetorical devices — anaphora, chiasmus, asyndeton, etc. — and exploit them for artistic purposes. These rhetorical devices, and the traditional themes which are preserved more or less unchanged, are the recurring, pervasive components of conventional narrative, which, because they have been sanctioned by usage, take on a normative value. Conventional narratives both form and measure themselves against the devices and standards exemplified in earlier narratives with the necessary result that the conventional branch of narrative literature tends to resist radical change. Even new subject matter, when it does become available, is subsumed to the established formal patterns sanctioned by tradition.

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<sup>1</sup>The discoveries of Parry and Lord and their significance are analyzed in Albert B. Lord, The Singer of Tales (New York: Atheneum, 1965), pp. 3-98, and in Scholes and Kellogg, The Nature of Narrative, pp. 20-26.

<sup>2</sup>Scholes and Kellogg, The Nature of Narrative, p. 20.

<sup>3</sup>Lord, The Singer of Tales, p. 4.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

In contrast to conventional narrative types, the empirical branch, as its name suggests, is forced, because of its attempt to deal with man's experience in and of the extant world, to develop increasingly subtle and sophisticated means for typifying and rendering that experience; consequently the empirical impulse forces an expansion of the limited stock of motifs and other structural devices contained within the literary tradition. And having as it does a standard external to literary tradition, empirical narrative readily adopts whatever new means for dealing with man's experience of his world that are invented whether the new means are Lockean psychology or the Freudian variety. Such rapid assimilations of unsanctioned techniques could not occur in conventional narrative types.

During the first half of the eighteenth century, for complex social and literary-historical reasons which are perhaps ultimately undiscoverable, one type of the mimetic branch of the empirical narrative tradition, namely the novel, absorbed so much artistic endeavour and proved to accommodate itself so readily to new and diverse means of depicting and analyzing man's capacity for experiencing that it became, as the oral epic had once been, a new narrative synthesis. The process which had led to a splitting up of narrative types now reversed itself so that many of the various types either became effectively moribund or converged and were revitalized in the novel. While it is difficult, even perhaps impossible, to ascertain how the new novel synthesis came about, it is possible, and necessary, to comprehend the major effect of its occurrence. First, being an amalgam of narrative types and potentialities, the novel can borrow any one or a mixture of the various narrative structures; that is to say, the novel can appear in the typical guise of the biography, autobiography, chronicle, romance, apologue, and so on. In addition, the non-factual of these types (and even on occasion, factual types<sup>1</sup>) when they occur after the onset of

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<sup>1</sup>See below, Part I, Chapter 2, Section 2.3, which deals with novelizing tendencies in factual narrative types.

synthesis occur in novel, or novelized, form. So a form which, because of its mimetic impulse, developed technical means for dealing with human experience and gained ascendancy perhaps because of those very techniques now began to apply those techniques to narrative types and subject matter originally beyond the scope of mimetic rendering. This fact explains and at the same time resolves the problem, referred to above, of works such as Wuthering Heights or The Scarlet Letter: these works, which exploit certain features of the traditional romance, have had these features filtered through the novel synthesis with the result that the works are thoroughly novelistic. Of course countless combinations of narrative types had occurred prior to the novel synthesis, but never before had any one type taken on the dominating position whereby it became the generative force of a post-epic synthesis.

The so-called romance — properly, the romance novel — is not the only literary sport which can be adequately explained by the novel synthesis. Johnson combined elements of exotic travel literature and the apologue, and these, having undergone a novelizing process, issued in Rasselas (1759). Swift's Gulliver's Travels (1726) appeared too early for it to have felt the full force of the novel synthesis, yet even here the tendency to novelize can be observed. Generally speaking, all narrative types of all branches with the exception of the factual have been, since the mid-eighteenth century, drawn into the novel synthesis with the result that their products are, according to formal criteria, sub-types of novel such as the romance novel, the apologetic novel, and so on. The novelistic documentary represents a new and closer assimilation of factual narrative into the novel synthesis, indicating that the synthesizing process is continuing at the present time.

While the recent emergence of the novelistic documentary indicates the extent to which the novel synthesis continues to make its influence felt, it nevertheless remains true that the novel synthesis, like the epic synthesis before it, is however dynamic, an unstable compound

which may already be in the process of separating into a variety of narrative types. It is impossible perhaps to conceive what the post-novel fictional prose narrative would be like, but it is worth remembering that the incessant apocalyptic predictions of the death of the novel may indicate nothing more than that we are entering a period of an increasing variety of narrative possibilities of which the novel as we know it may be, if not absolutely a memory, at least only one of a multiplicity of such possibilities — a prospect which should delight rather than depress the literary critic.

One final point about terminology needs to be stated. While the novel existed as a narrative type prior to the novel synthesis (examples in English would be Gascogne's The Adventures of Master F.J. (1575) and Deloney's The Gentle Craft (1597-1598)), it took on its characteristic modern form in the process of synthesis. The term "novel" as it shall be used throughout this study will refer, unless otherwise specified, to the post-synthesis or modern novel; therefore the synchronic definition of the novel in the following section will actually be a definition of the modern novel.

### 1.3 A Synchronic Approach to Definition

Having arrived historically at a conception of the modern novel as a synthesizing narrative type, it now becomes practicable to make an attempt at isolating those features which characterize the novel and thereby enable the reader to recognize novels when he confronts them and to distinguish novels from other narrative types. There are always risks involved in proffering definitions of the novel (appearing arrogant being one of them), but there are advantages to be had in stating straightforwardly the formulation and then examining its several parts in detail.

The working definition of the novel which will be used is as follows: the novel is a written, developmental, fictional prose narrative which 1) projects a largely or wholly invented world wherein characters — some or all of whom are endowed with interiority — act in minutely discriminated time and space, and 2) places one or more of its structural elements in double or multiple perspective.

The inclusion of "written" as a criterion of the definition may at first seem little more than reiteration of the obvious; however, it was the fact that the novel participated in a written rather than an oral tradition, coupled with the empirical nature of its tradition, that made other defining features of the novel possible, particularly the feature of double or multiple perspective which will be dealt with below. In order to grasp the essentiality of writing in the composition of novels it will be necessary to summarize some of the more important implications of the discoveries of Parry and Lord in the field of traditional epic poetry. Parry and Lord were able to demonstrate that oral-formulaic poems such as Beowulf or the Iliad were composed orally in performance, and that such composition was made possible through the use of repeated verbal-syntactic formulas, formulaic expressions, and "themes." Among the ramifications of the Parry-Lord thesis, several are of importance to the proper understanding of the novel. For example, the oral-formulaic narrative precludes such concepts as the definitive or copy text; these might be difficult to establish in the case of certain novels, but the concept is valid. Since the oral poet re-composes a narrative each time he performs it, no such fixed text can be conceived of. Novels, consequently, have a uniqueness, a singularity, and a "lastingness" which do not inhere in the oral-formulaic narrative. In addition, the very relationship between "author" and "work" is different for the oral poet from what it is for the novelist. As Scholes and Kellogg make clear, orally composed narratives "are the manifestations of a tradition rather than the inventions of an individual,"<sup>1</sup> which gives added meaning to the idea of the novelist as

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<sup>1</sup>Scholes and Kellogg, The Nature of Narrative, p. 22.

an inventive or creative artist.

Probably the most significant difference between oral and written composition involves the time factor in composition. Freed from the special demands of oral composition before an audience, the writer is able to move back and forth in his text altering and revising at the same time he is composing. This freedom enables him to experiment with the traditional rhetorical devices and themes, changing them for artistic purposes, disguising them, even dropping them altogether and inventing or adapting other structural devices to suit his particular purposes. Parry and Lord are certain that all written literature<sup>1</sup> will have significantly fewer formulas and formulaic expressions than oral narratives<sup>2</sup> — which is to say oral and written compositions can always be differentiated on internal criteria alone; nevertheless conventional narratives will be marked by their efforts to conserve as much of the traditional apparatus as it is possible for written works to do whereas works in an empirical mode will more readily resort to non-traditional techniques and devices. This readiness, potential in the very nature of written composition where a text can be manipulated at leisure, and reinforced by an empirical impulse, makes possible the subtle spatial and temporal discriminations and double or multiple perspectives characteristic of the novel form; these features could not occur in oral narrative.

"Developmental"<sup>3</sup> is a term devised in the attempt to cope with and at the same time offset slightly the question of length in the novel. Length is a necessary yet not entirely adequate criterion for distinguishing novels from short narrative forms such as the short story. There are occasions when great length will immediately mark the work as a novel rather than a short story just as there are occasions when extreme

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<sup>1</sup>The phrase "written literature" seems tautological, but since we lack a more inclusive term "literature" must cover both written and oral verbal art. Compare René Wellek and Austin Warren, Theory of Literature (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1963), p. 22.

<sup>2</sup>See Lord, The Singer of Tales, pp. 129 ff.

<sup>3</sup>The term "developmental" is adapted from Henry James, The Art of the Novel (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934), pp. 232-35.

brevity will do the reverse. On the other hand there are countless works which, on the criterion of length alone, fall awkwardly in between, and while it might be possible to establish lower limits on novel length and upper limits on short story length, there will inevitably be an overlap.

In the range where the short novel intersects with the long short story the features which clearly differentiate the typical novel from the typical short story lose precision and begin to meld into each other. These typifying features can be divided into thematic, typical, and compositional categories. The typical novel exploits expansive themes and motifs: the journey, social change, educational (in the sense of the Bildungsroman) and generational themes. It also borrows or synthesises narrative types which ordinarily consume large quantities of narrated and narrating time: the biography, the autobiography, and so on. In terms of compositional features, the typical novel can be episodic, doubly or multiply plotted; it can specify a wide range of characters and events, and it is spatially uninhibited. The orthodox short story reverses these patterns: it presents restrictive themes and limited situations, it presents moments and fragments of the depicted lives, it is confined spatially as well as in its range of characters and action. Occasionally the presence of these typical features can clarify the generic nature of a work which, by the criterion of length alone, would be ambiguous. For example, one of the earliest African prose fiction narratives in a European language, R.R.R. Dhlomo's An African Tragedy,<sup>1</sup> is under eight thousand words in length, yet it is arguably a novel, and this is so quite apart from the fact that the writer (or possibly the publisher — it is not clear which) calls it a novel.<sup>2</sup> The work's markedly episodic structure, its multiplicity of situations and events,

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<sup>1</sup>R.R.R. Dhlomo, An African Tragedy (Lovedale, South Africa: Lovedale Institution Press, [1928]).

<sup>2</sup>On the cover and on the title-page, below the title and the author's name, the following parenthesis appears: "(A Novel in English by a Zulu Writer)." A publisher's note prefaced to the work calls it "one of the first attempts by a Bantu writer to pen an English novel."

its spatial and temporal expansiveness all unambiguously identify it as a novel.

The problem of classification ordinarily becomes acute only, as one would expect, in the case of untypical works. Samuel Beckett's novels, for example, eschew many of the characteristics of the typical novel; space is curtailed, the external world of action and episode is all but annihilated; and yet they are novels and not long short stories. What distinguishes them from short stories is the fact that, in their detailed explorations of human consciousness in extreme situations, they render mental process or development as it takes place. Development, whether mental or otherwise, is assumed as having taken place or very nearly so in the short story. In the novel it is narrated or enacted. Careful examination reveals that most of the typical features of the novel are related to each other by the extent to which they are associated with developmental process of one kind or another; they provide a scaffolding which makes the rendering of process — ordinarily in terms of external change — possible.

When works fall within the range where lengths overlap, or dispense with the traditional typifying features, or effect mixtures or other compromises of these features, then only a criterion such as developmental can enable one to determine whether the work at hand is a short novel or a long short story. For example, the presence of an expansive theme is not enough to establish a work as a novel if certain aspects of it have been compressed rather than developed. Likewise, compressed report and commentary can provide a character's biographical details as a prelude to the main action of a short story, thus exploiting and at the same time compressing a narrative type ordinarily thought suited to novelistic rendering. Here again the absence of development points to the shorter form. What holds true for thematic and typical features also holds true for most of the compositional features. While it is true that few if any short stories are episodic or multiply plotted, they can depict a large number of characters and be expansive of time and space,

provided again that all but a few of the characters and most of the movement in time and space are not developed.

The nature of the short story places limits on the number of its features which can be developed. It is forced to isolate one or two features for development and submit the rest to its numerous strategies and devices for compressing material. As a rule, any work of median length which is developmental in several of its features will be a novel. #

Because of the unusual nature of the corpus works the complex question of fictionality is of peculiar import and will have to be given a separate section. The matter will be taken up after the attempt has been made to define the nature of the corpus.<sup>1</sup> The next two criteria which appear in the definition of the novel, "prose" and "narrative," can be dealt with relatively briefly.

Although there can be little doubt that the long tradition of verse narrative exerted a strong influence on the emergence and development of the novel form,<sup>2</sup> the practice of dealing with selected verse narratives as though they were novels, and the delight which critics have shown in fixing on a particular verse narrative and calling it a novel, or even the first novel, can only falsify the teleology of both verse narrative and novel. Such practices derive, it appears, from the identification of the novel with the realistic novel; once realism becomes the defining criterion, realistic details in verse narratives will lead the critic to pronounce the given verse narrative a novel. It should not be difficult to isolate those features of, for instance, Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde which are pertinent to the nature and development of the novel without losing sight of the essential differences which distinguish it from the novel proper.<sup>3</sup>

Whatever else the differences between them might be, verse and prose impose different kinds of organization on language, and these

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<sup>1</sup>See below, Part I, Chapter 2, Section 2.2.

<sup>2</sup>This influence is traced in great detail in: Margaret Schlauch, Antecedents of the English Novel: 1400-1600 (Warsaw: P.W.N.— Polish Scientific Publishers, 1963).

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Scholes and Kellogg, The Nature of Narrative, pp. 5-9.

differences in organization have a direct influence on both texture and structure. Given the empirical-mimetic tradition of the pre-synthesis novel, it is not surprising that it cast its efforts to present a structure of meaning which sought fidelity to human experience in the potentially more referential linguistic medium of prose — particularly prose of what is usually termed the plain or common style. The range and adaptability of the post-synthesis novel would seem to allow for freedom in linguistic medium as well, and certainly the novel has allowed for experimentation in this direction. One need only mention David Jones's In Parenthesis or Nabokov's Pale Fire — works in which significant portions of the narrative are rendered in verse. Nevertheless, such experimentation with verse concerns parts of novels rather than wholes, and it remains experimentation. On the whole, prose has been so much the dominant linguistic medium that it must be recognized as a defining, though doubtless surface, characteristic of the novel.

Scholes and Kellogg provide a very short and, with some qualifications, very useful definition of narrative. "By narrative," they write, "we mean all those literary works which are distinguished by two characteristics: the presence of a story and a story teller."<sup>1</sup> It should be pointed out that in narratives which exploit the device of central intelligence or which, like some of Hemingway's short stories, are presented scenically and dramatically, the presence of the narrator will not be strongly specified, though his existence remains implicit in the very act of narrating. And "story" must be even more carefully qualified since it is a term with misleading connotations attached to it. Because there is a tendency to equate story with the narration of external events, narratives which substitute the inner life of man for the rendering of his external actions and environment will appear to lack "story" to a reader whose concept of story is based on the criterion of external events; to him, nothing will seem to "happen." Provided that story is

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid. p. 4.

taken to mean a rendering of internal or external events and situations — a rendering which presents the unfolding of process and change rather than merely the results of process and change — the definition of narrative advanced by Scholes and Kellogg is sufficiently precise for critical purposes.

Up to this point no criteria have emerged from the definition which would differentiate the modern novel from the pre-synthesis or pre-modern novel. Where the two diverge is marked initially by the radical differences in the nature of the fictional worlds which they project and in the spatio-temporal character of that world taken as a field of human activity. The separate constituents of the world projected by a novel are the co-ordinates of space and time, and characters in action. These isolable features, operating in conjunction, establish a fictional world of a particular nature which will, in turn, be able to support only certain kinds of characters and events.

Time treatment in the pre-modern novel tends to be perfunctory; time is serial, chronology is rigid — one thing is stated as having taken place and then a subsequent act is stated. Little attention is given to the amount of time required for the first or the amount of time elapsed between the first and second. Emphasis is placed on things as having occurred, not on their occurring; little is presented other than the order of events. Much the same can be said of the treatment of space in the pre-modern novel; space is seldom rendered, only locales indicated. Ordinarily, the pre-modern novel presents locales or places at which events occur rather than enveloping spatial contexts within which events occur. In contrast to the attenuated nature of time and space in the pre-synthesis novel, the modern novel presents carefully specified and discriminated time and space which together constitute a dense, expansively rendered dimensional medium which both envelops character's and their actions and relates meaningfully to them. Even in those novels in which spatial and temporal details are internalized and are presented only when and as they impinge on

the consciousness or memory of the characters, space and time exhibit the characteristics of comparatively minute discriminations and meaningful relation to character.

Perhaps the major difference between the presented worlds in pre-synthesis and modern novels is the divergence in conception of character and the relation of character to the other aspects of the presented world. The character of a pre-synthesis novel is a perpetrator and recipient of action; the character of the modern novel is consciously these, and so the modern novel is marked by its emphasis on motivations and feelings as well as intellectual, moral, and emotional responses to events, situations, and other characters. The pre-modern novel projects characters and events and narrates these as occurrences; characters do one thing and then do another. In the modern novel the emphasis is on the process of experiencing events and relationships; central characters in modern novels are usually examined in terms of their experiencing at varying levels of consciousness. Consequently time and space in the modern novel are not merely posited as co-ordinates of deeds and events; instead they are experienced by the characters.

Georg Lukács isolates the essential attribute of character in the modern novel in the term "interiority." The novel, according to Lukács, endows one or more characters with an "autonomous life of interiority."<sup>1</sup> And he goes on to say that "the novel tells of the adventure of interiority."<sup>2</sup> Characters in the pre-modern novel lack interiority; for them there is no duality of reflexive self and world.

The final criterion of the definition of the novel — which again distinguishes the modern from the pre-modern novel — concerns the relationships which are established between the reader, the narrator, and the various constituents of the presented world. In order to grasp the significance of double and multiple perspective in the modern novel

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<sup>1</sup>Georg Lukács, The Theory of the Novel, trans. by Anna Bostock (London: Merlin Press, 1971), p. 66.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid. p. 89. Lukács examines the effects of interiority on the rendering of time and space on pp. 120-31.

it is necessary to be cognizant of certain typical features of the pre-synthesis novel.<sup>1</sup> For the most part, the only aspect of the pre-synthesis novel which could be treated problematically was the course of action to be taken by the central character. Typically, the hero is confronted with some kind of barrier or set of barriers which he must somehow overcome or circumvent. The curve of action is segmented by the problems encountered and his surmounting of them; the final outcome is seldom very much in doubt. All other features of the pre-synthesis novel were non-problematical in nature. The narrator never doubts his competence or his understanding of what he presents; there is a strict congruence between what we are told about a character and what is revealed about that character through his behavior; time and space are taken for granted as non-problematical entities; language is capable of communicating that which it is desirable to communicate; the reader is never given cause to doubt his capacity for comprehending what is being presented.

In the modern novel, these dicta no longer hold; one or more elements are made ambiguous or problematic so that the network of their interrelations becomes kaleidoscopic, thereby altering the system of perspectives through which the elements are communicated by the narrators and viewed by the reader. Instead of having a single perspective in which all features are constants, we now have a double or multiple perspective in which, while some elements might remain constants, others will be variables and so will appear differently according to which constant or set of constants is used in attempting to establish their nature and meaning. The evolution of the modern novel has been, to a very large degree, shaped by the development of techniques which enable an author to put ever more and different

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<sup>1</sup>The concept of double or multiple perspective as well as some of the differentia of the pre-synthesis novel are adapted from Wolfgang Kayser, Entstehung und Krise des modernen Romans (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzlersche, 1963), pp. 7-13. (I am grateful to Dr. Horst Ruthrof for translating sections of Kayser's work for me.)

features into problematic relationship with one another. It might even be possible to establish a hierarchy of such techniques moving from, for example, the unwillingness of the narrator to reveal certain things, through the inability of the narrator to know certain things, to, finally, the possibility that nothing can ever really be known. Whether or not such a hierarchy can be discovered, it would be practicable to establish a catalogue of structural devices which precipitate double or multiple prospectives. The establishing of such a catalogue would be a valuable area for future research.

The emergence, traced by Kayser,<sup>1</sup> of the "personal narrator" — a third-person narrator who projects a discoverable personality — makes it possible for narrators to engage in playing a variety of "games" with the reader. A personal narrator can speak ironically or ambiguously; he can withhold or conceal. In first-person narration, the narrator can become partially or wholly unreliable — a liar or an ignoramus, and the introduction of a multiplicity of narrators further increases the potential for multiple perspectives. Endowing character with interiority automatically makes available a further means of effecting double or multiple perspective. Interiority indicates a gap between deed and doer, between the external environment and the subjective apprehension of that environment, and this inherently dialectic relationship between interiority and the experienced world invites problematic treatment. In consequence, a reader will frequently be forced to interpret and evaluate a character according to the norms projected by his milieu and to interpret and evaluate his milieu according to the norms of the character. When both are treated as problematic variables, the reader's task is exceedingly complex. He is no longer expected or, indeed, permitted to be the passive recipient of an entertaining narrative as he was in the case of the pre-synthesis novel.

There are any number of strategies that can be and have been used in effecting double or multiple perspective — strategies that compel

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid. pp. 13-23.

the reader to become aware of the intricacy and subtlety which so often inhere in one or more features of a modern novel. The point here, however, is not to examine all of the possible strategies, but only to note their presence. Having accomplished this, one caveat must be stated. While the modern novel, as defined here, has been one of the paramount literary modes since the middle of the eighteenth century, there is nothing that precludes the composition of novels which take the form of the pre-synthesis novel. To take an early example in support of this contention, Smollett's novels retain the characteristics of the pre-synthesis novel in spite of the example set by Richardson and Fielding. Contemporary works which exhaust their meaning in sheer action and adventure (most crime, mystery, and science-fiction novels) tend to follow the patterns established in the novel prior to the onset of synthesis. This tendency has been taken by some critics to be an artistic flaw — as indeed it might be; however, the interest here is in the differences in form rather than in merit; that is to say, such works forsake the structural possibilities which became available to the novel as a consequence of the process of synthesis.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE NOVELISTIC DOCUMENTARY

#### 2.1 Defining the Novelistic Documentary

In order to make clear what is intended by the term, "novelistic documentary," it will again be necessary to postpone for the moment the complex problems of logic raised by the term "fiction." Once the characteristics of the novelistic documentary have been outlined, it should be clear both how the issue of fiction is raised by the novelistic documentary and why it needs to be resolved. For the moment, it is necessary simply to beg the questions raised by "fiction" and "non-fiction" with the assurance that the questions will be taken up in the next section.

The term which has come to be applied to the works of the central corpus is one advanced by Truman Capote: the non-fiction novel. However, the term has occasioned some dissatisfaction. Some critics have argued that a number of earlier works are as deserving (or undeserving) of the term as Capote's In Cold Blood. Others have questioned the validity of the term itself. Wim Toebosch has called it "conceited and inadequate" ("verwaande en onvoldoende"),<sup>1</sup> and Nancy Sullivan, reviewing Oscar Lewis's La Vida in the journal Novel, called it "unimaginative."<sup>2</sup> Both types of complaint are to some extent legitimate; nevertheless, the

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<sup>1</sup>Wim Toebosch, "Recente Amerikaanse literatuur: Truman Capote en Oscar Lewis," De Vlaamse Gids, L(1966), 403. I am grateful to Karen de Jager for making available to me her unpublished translation of this article.

<sup>2</sup>Nancy Sullivan, Review of La Vida by Oscar Lewis, Novel, I (1967), 91.

real problem lies in the fact — also pointed out by Miss Sullivan<sup>1</sup> — that the label fails to identify the form of the works to which it is applied. This failure can be attributed to the fact that the term "non-fiction novel" attempts to distinguish these works from the orthodox novel solely on the grounds that they are accurate, detailed renderings of events in the real world.

Though many, perhaps even all, works of prose fiction are rooted in characters and events adapted by the author from the real world, it remains true that very few have been — so far as scholars have been able to ascertain — entirely lifted, even in their details, from the real world. An interesting example of a work which does claim to be the detailed, accurate report of real experience is "The Black Beach" by Archie Carr.<sup>2</sup> Carr is a biologist and The Windward Road, of which "The Black Beach" is one chapter, is an account of his search for turtles on the seacoast of Costa Rica. "The Black Beach" was published separately in a magazine prior to the publication of the book, and won an O. Henry short-story prize in 1956. The editors of an American college text book in which the work appears say of it: "although 'The Black Beach' is a report of real experience, the carefully controlled unfolding of events and the development of character . . . justify calling it a short story."<sup>3</sup> The implications of this comment go further than the editors might have foreseen, for in isolation "The Black Beach" does not appear to be anything other than an orthodox short story. There is nothing within the structure of the work itself which indicates that the work could be anything else, nothing which suggests that it is a report of real experience. In other words, without such remarks as the editors have prefaced to it, the reader would necessarily experience the work as an entirely orthodox short story, with the result that its peculiar status would remain undiscovered and, in the absence of information extrinsic to the work, undiscoverable.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Archie Carr, "The Black Beach," in The Windward Road (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956). Reprinted in Alton C. Morris, et al., eds., College English (4th ed.; New York: Harcourt, Brace, & World, 1964), pp. 333-339.

<sup>3</sup>Morris, et al., eds., College English, p. 333.

While Carr's work is in form a short story, the issues involved could as readily pertain to a work in novel form; it would not be difficult to conceive of a work which would be in fact a report of real experience and yet, on intrinsic criteria alone, would not be distinguishable from an orthodox novel. Yet what has attracted attention to the works in the corpus is largely that, while novelistic in structure, their peculiar status as works of non-fiction in novel form is immediately recognizable on internal criteria alone; they are not just incidentally non-fictional, but explicitly so, and their special nature is due not to the mere fact that they happen to be non-fiction but to the fact that their non-fictionality is communicated through and asserted by particular structural features of the works. It would seem worth proposing that the term "non-fiction novel," since it does not pertain to any significant formal features of the works which it seeks to identify, be discarded and that it be replaced by "novelistic documentary." "Non-fiction novel" is simply too imprecise to warrant preservation.

The term "novelistic documentary" appears to be a particularly appropriate description of the corpus works in the light of the unusual set of features which they share. For one thing, all of the works exploit techniques usually considered peculiar to the novel. However, unlike orthodox novels, these works are entirely factual. It was, in part, their factuality which suggested the word, documentary, for they are in several ways analogous to the documentary film. Like the documentary film, the novelistic documentary precludes fictionalization; the claim for both is that they are true — not just in the sense of "truth to life" or of probability, but literally, factually true in detail. Should the works in the corpus prove to have been invented in whole or in part, the assurances which they give that they are factual accounts will not be taken as attempts to create the traditional literary illusion but rather as either attempts to deceive or failures to discover and record events accurately. Vivienne Mylne in a discussion of the nature of the traditional literary illusion makes a point which is relevant to the novelistic

documentary: "Imagine the public reaction if The Diary of Anne Frank, for instance, were shown to be a work of fiction."<sup>1</sup> The same reaction, though perhaps more muted since most of these works are less well known, would occur in the event of novelistic documentaries being exposed as fictional works.

It is the property of appearing both novelistic and non-fictional that generates the special features of the novelistic documentary. What it is about these features that makes them so special can be elucidated by a concept which might be termed work premise. Most, if not indeed all, written works, by the use of certain characteristic methods, by the inclusion of certain kinds of structural units, or by the kinds of description and narration they can employ, signal the premise on which they are based. It is because such a premise is signalled that a reader can determine, for instance, whether a work he is reading is the biography of a person who is entirely unknown to him or a novel written in the third person about a fictional character. Of course it does sometimes happen that the premise is unclear, or, more likely, that the reader is too unskilled to interpret the premise properly, but ordinarily, even when the author includes a disclaimer which ostensibly rejects the premise, there is no confusion; the reader experiences the work according to the premise signalled. Novelistic documentaries face special difficulty in signalling their premises because they function according to two different sets of formal norms. On the one hand they function as novelistic structures; on the other, each of the works strongly asserts a premise which is ordinarily foreign to the novel — that what it relates actually happened and, more significantly, can be proved to have happened. This premise is largely signalled not by traditional disclaimers (though some of the works do use them) but by incorporating documentation and related devices.

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<sup>1</sup>Vivienne Mylne, "Illusion and the Novel," British Journal of Aesthetics, VI (1966), 143.

The criterion of documentation as a central feature of the novelistic documentary is not simply a quibble set up to protect a nice symmetry of documentary and documentation, though the presence of authentic documentation was one of the features which initially suggested the term, novelistic documentary. Documentation is a fundamental structural criterion. It affirms the relation between what is presented in a novelistic documentary and actual events and conditions in the world external to the work; it is a device for making emphatic the non-fictionality, the historicity of the presented people and events, for reminding the reader that what he is reading "is no mere story." Whereas a narrative like Carr's, or a novel length work in the same vein, neglects to assert its factual nature, the novelistic documentary, mainly though not solely through the incorporation of authentic documentation, makes clear its dual premise.

It might be useful at this point to return to the objection raised by critics that the form which Capote declared to be new — whatever it might be called — is not actually new at all. George Garrett poses and then answers the question concerning the purported newness of the form: "What about the 'new' form? There is nothing whatever new about the use of the devices of fiction for 'non-fiction.' A very long list could be made of such works and it would include some very distinguished books, past and present."<sup>1</sup> Few would argue with Garrett's conclusions; however, there is only the most specious connection between Garrett's question and the sentences which follow. While there can be no doubt that very many non-fiction works have exploited "devices of fiction," this does not in any way preclude the emergence of a new narrative type which amalgamates aspects of the novel and of non-fictional rendering in a radically new and different way. This point can be demonstrated by referring to two modern works which

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<sup>1</sup>George Garrett, "Crime and Punishment in Kansas: Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood*," *The Hollins Critic*, III (1966), 12.

figure prominently in most of the lists, of the kind suggested by Garrett, that have been assembled to date.

John Hersey's Hiroshima (1946) is one obvious and frequently cited candidate for the form which Capote claimed to be new. Nevertheless, the work does not qualify as a novelistic documentary, for while it does exploit devices common to the novel — particularly in its careful control and manipulation of point of view<sup>1</sup> — Hiroshima does not satisfy the criteria of the novel as set out in the definition arrived at in the last chapter. And for a work to qualify as a novelistic documentary it must be both fully novelistic (excepting, of course, the criterion of fictionality) and non-fictional. Hersey, although he accomplishes a certain complexity of perspective by following six different people through the ordeal of Hiroshima's devastation by atomic bomb, does not seek to penetrate into the consciousness of his presented figures in the attempt to establish their interiority. Indeed, his handling of character proceeds according to the manner of reportage rather than that of the novel, as is shown by the following passage:

A year after the bomb was dropped, Miss Sasaki was a cripple; Mrs Nakamura was destitute; Father Kleinsorge was back in the hospital; Dr Sasaki was not capable of the work he once could do; Dr Fujii had lost the thirty-room hospital it took him many years to acquire, and had no prospects of rebuilding it; Mr Tanimoto's church had been ruined and he no longer had his exceptional vitality. The lives of these six people, who were among the luckiest in Hiroshima, would never be the same. What they thought of their experiences and the use of the atomic bomb was, of course, not unanimous. One feeling they did seem to share, however, was a curious kind of elated community spirit, something like that of the Londoners after their blitz — a pride in the way they and their fellow-survivors had stood up to a dreadful ordeal.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>William Wiegand ("The 'Non-fiction' Novel," New Mexico Quarterly, XXXVII (1967), 245.) points out that "point of view [in Hiroshima] is exploited in a way that was unknown before certain developments in the technique of the novel took place."

<sup>2</sup>John Hersey, Hiroshima (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1946), pp. 122-23.

The example of Hiroshima reveals that the mere exploitation of devices ordinarily confined to novels and short stories does not identify a work as a novelistic documentary. The process which results in the novelistic documentary is if anything the reverse of what Hersey has done. In the novelistic documentary, "devices of fiction" are not taken over by a work of non-fiction; rather real people and events are absorbed into a thoroughly novelistic structure.<sup>1</sup>

The second prominent candidate for novelistic documentary, Hemingway's Green Hills of Africa (1935), satisfies the defining criteria of the novel and so comes closer than Hiroshima — or for that matter most of the other works listed by critics — to qualifying as a novelistic documentary.

In the preface to the first American edition of the work, Hemingway states: "the writer has attempted to write an absolutely true book to see whether the shape of a country and the pattern of a month's action can, if truly presented, compete with a work of the imagination."<sup>2</sup> Hemingway's wide experience in both journalism and the writing of short stories and novels provided him with a clear conception of the borderlines between reportage and narrative prose fiction as well as the ability to blur the borderlines when it suited him. That he was entirely serious in his intention to stick to the truth in this instance and at the same time write in the form of a novel is confirmed by his biographer Carlos Baker. According to Baker, Hemingway

determined to write the 'true story' of [his] recent safari, not as a travelogue but rather as a narrative using all the familiar techniques of fiction: description, characterization, dialogue, action sequences, internal monologues, and even that special highland-lowland landscape device which he had discovered in The Sun Also Rises and developed in A Farewell to Arms. He wanted also to begin in medias res with the episode of the clanking truck which spooked all the game near the

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<sup>1</sup>Again, excepting fictionality. This qualification will be taken for granted from this point on.

<sup>2</sup>Ernest Hemingway, Preface to Green Hills of Africa (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935), p. vii. British editions substitute a "letter" to Mr. J.P. (Jackson Phillips) the figure in the work who was in real life the white hunter Philip Percival. The letter is less explicit concerning the work's generic intentions.

salt-lick on Valentine's Day, 1934. He would then build to the climax of the kudu hunt by the use of structural devices such as flashbacks and the compression or extension of narrative time.<sup>1</sup>

However in his attempt to amalgamate non-fictional substance into the framework of a novel, Hemingway ran into technical difficulties of the sort described by Melville in Chapter Twenty-Eight of Billy Budd. Melville writes that "the symmetry of form attainable in pure fiction cannot so readily be achieved in a narration essentially having less to do with fable than with fact." The lack of symmetry, of structural cohesion, which critics have attributed to Green Hills of Africa may reflect Hemingway's unsuccessful attempt to discover a formal principle which would unambiguously convey the non-fictional nature of the work without disrupting its novelistic structure. In this regard William Wiegand refers to the "absence of any felt connection between the structure of the book and its [stated] intention."<sup>2</sup> Despite the fact that Hemingway refers to himself by name in Green Hills of Africa — a factor which contributes to the impression of reportorial veracity — there is little that reinforces the non-fiction aspects of the work. The novelistic documentary, through its incorporation of documentation and related devices, ensures that the non-fiction aspects of the work are not swallowed up by the novelistic framework.

Another factor which helps undermine the structural integrity of Green Hills of Africa involves point of view. One advantage of the first person point of view is that it makes provision for the authority which can be adduced from a work; that is to say, it establishes the origin of a narrative by specifying the teller and including him within the frame of the narrative. As a witness to or experiencer of the narrated matter, the first-person narrator provides an apparent means

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<sup>1</sup>Carlos Baker, Ernest Hemingway: A Life Story (London: Collins, 1969), p. 316.

<sup>2</sup>William Wiegand, "The 'Non-fiction' Novel," p. 253.

of verifying that narrated matter.

However, a problem arises when first person point of view is applied to non-fiction materials in novelistic form, a problem which can easily undercut the very authority for which first person narration is noted. It is accepted as a convention in a fictional narrative that the almost innumerable details presented are credited unquestioningly despite the fact that retention of such detail would be beyond the capacities of ordinary human memory. This convention permits the first person narrator to present lengthy stretches of dialogue and to be specific and detailed about the order of such minor occurrences as movements, gestures, or even expressions. Such a convention cannot operate in novelistic works which seriously purport to be completely accurate and detailed accounts of verifiable experience. A work of such a nature necessarily precludes everything which cannot be shown to be within the narrator's grasp. In the very first chapter of Green Hills of Africa, Hemingway presents over a dozen pages of uninterrupted dialogue ranging over a variety of topics from tropical climate to the American novel; some of the comments, particularly those of Hemingway himself, run for over two hundred words. It goes without saying that this section could not have been reproduced accurately by the unaided memory, and in the absence of any presented indication of note-taking or other means of recording the proceedings, the section, because it lacks any sense of authority, inevitably strikes the reader as a fictionalized approximation of what actually took place — hence the "absence of any felt connection" between the work itself and Hemingway's statement in the preface concerning what the work is to be. And however closely Green Hills of Africa adheres to real, lived experience, it remains a fictional work, a novel in very much the traditional sense of the word. Both Hiroshima and Green Hills of Africa, the two works cited by critics as the likeliest recent precedents to the novelistic documentary, are, as it turns out, significantly different from the corpus works. They are not novelistic documentaries for

the reasons that the first does not conform to the structural criteria of the novel while the second fails to adhere to the requirements and limitations generated by non-fictional materials.

That critics should incorrectly equate the forms of Hiroshima and of Green Hills of Africa with the form manifested by Capote's In Cold Blood can probably be attributed to the fact that they tended to seize on the inadequate term suggested by Capote and supposed that in locating works which appropriated some techniques ordinarily associated with novels and applied them to non-fictional materials they were identifying works which were generically identical with Capote's. Those who did not fall into the trap of selecting works which were not fully novelistic nevertheless assumed that there was no set of structural features which gave Capote's work an unusual form which "non-fiction novel" failed to identify. What is harder to explain is that, given the tradition of amalgamating features of fictional and non-fictional narrative, the formula for the novelistic documentary did not emerge much earlier, for the employment of documentation to increase verisimilitude is a device of long standing in the novel. Moll Flanders uses letters, hospital bills, and other invented documents in order, as Dorothy Van Ghent points out, "to increase the illusion of verifiable fact,"<sup>1</sup> and the epistolary novel achieves the same effect through its even more thoroughgoing use of pseudo documents. Factual narrative types have traditionally relied even more strongly on the use of documents; for example, the biography at least since Boswell has placed documentation at the very core of its narrative method. The employment of documentation in novelistic works to assert verifiable adherence to fact seems, in retrospect, an inevitable device.

Until a novelistic documentary written before 1960 comes to light — and thus far none has — the form which the corpus works exhibit will continue to seem new, though it slightly predates Capote's

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<sup>1</sup>Dorothy Van Ghent, The English Novel: Form and Function (New York: Harper & Row, 1953), p. 33.

contribution and so his claim to have invented the form must fall away. However, the interesting feature of the form is not its newness but the combination of its distinguishing features, its proximity to the form of the orthodox novel, and its relationships with other narrative types. An examination of the novelistic documentary yields a multiplicity of insights into the structural complexities both of the novel and of related factual narrative types.

## 2.2 The Concept of Fiction

The widespread practice of using the term fiction as a category designation for novels and short stories has further confused an already complex concept. In the belief that this practice is best avoided, particularly in a context in which occur terms such as non-fiction novel, "fiction" in this study will be used to refer not to literary forms or types but to the nature of a particular mode of discourse. Thus the issue to be examined involves fiction in the sense of fictionality.

An examination of the etymological heritage of "fiction" can uncover some of the causes of the confusion occasioned by the word. Eric Partridge, in the entry for fiction in his Origins: A Short Etymological Dictionary of Modern English, writes that the base of the word is the Latin ingere, which meant originally to model in clay. Then it came to mean to fashion or form generally, and eventually to imagine or invent — even pretend. From the principal part fictiō we get "a moulding or fashioning" — a fiction being a made thing. It is possible to distinguish three major interpretations of "fiction" which have developed from the etymological base: fiction as lie, fiction as the product of aesthetic shaping ("moulding or fashioning"), and fiction as that which is devised or invented — made up.

The first of these interpretations — fiction as lie — has a long and eminent tradition behind it. At least since Plato, attacks have been made on fictional works on the grounds that they seek to mislead. Even critics who had no desire to attack often took it for granted that fiction was a species of lying. Perhaps the most concise and cogent refutation of the theory of fiction as lie is Sidney's remark in An Apology for Poetry: "Now, for the poet, he nothing affirmeth, and therefore never lieth."

The implications of Sidney's remark become clear when we examine the kind of sentence or statement which so frequently occurs in novels and short stories. Laurent Stern poses the problem in the following manner: "Suppose that we read in a novel the sentence 'Emma Bovary was a beautiful woman.' It would be pointless to object that this is false because Emma Bovary did not exist or because Emma Bovary was ugly."<sup>1</sup> To put it another way, if such a statement is a lie, an attempt to deceive, in which portion of the statement does the lie inhere? As Stern points out, it certainly cannot be in the fact that Emma Bovary was actually ugly, for the reader has no way of ascertaining such a thing. This being the case, the lie must then inhere in the assumption of Emma's existence. Yet in what way is that existence being assumed? What indication is there that the writer is postulating the existence of Emma somewhere in the actual world? And finally, is it possible to conceive of a person who is both capable of reading Madam Bovary and of believing that Emma had any existence outside Flaubert's novel? Northrop Frye points out the danger of equating

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<sup>1</sup>Laurent Stern, "Fictional Characters, Places, and Events," Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, XXVI (1965), 204. Other discussions of fictionality which have been particularly helpful in formulating the argument in this section are: J.M. Cameron, "Poetry and Dialectic," in The Night Battle (London: Burns and Oates, 1962), Margaret MacDonald, "The Language of Fiction," Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplement XXVIII (1954), rpt. in Perspectives on Fiction, ed. by James L. Calderwood and Harold E. Toliver (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), and the discussion of Cameron's ideas in David Lodge, Language of Fiction (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), pp. 33-38.

fiction with lie when he notes that, according to such a tenet, "an autobiography coming into a library would be classified as non-fiction if the librarian believed the author, and as fiction if she thought he was lying."<sup>1</sup> While it is possible for Frank Harris to lie in his autobiography, or for a biographer to lie about his subject, the criteria used to establish these as lies do not obtain when examining the work of a novelist or short-story writer.

The theory of fiction as lie is no longer current, but the second theory — that of fiction as the product of aesthetic shaping — continues to make its influence felt. Fictional works, according to this theory, acquire their fictionality through the presence of aesthetic form. Novelistic documentaries would in this sense be fictional since the form they assume, that of the novel, is generally taken to be one recurring type of aesthetic structure. However, this use of the word fiction requires that aesthetic structures be distinguishable from non-aesthetic structures. It is not enough to state that fictional works possess form or structure; so do economics text-books and computer programs. There do exist criteria which would seem adequately to distinguish aesthetic structures from non-aesthetic structures — criteria such as "autonomy," or Kant's "purposiveness without purpose," or "framing" are often cited. But these concepts are themselves extremely subtle and in many cases they are difficult to apply. For example, it is not easy to apply them in such a way that they could distinguish aesthetic form from the form extant in, say, a well written as well as accurate biography or autobiography, and yet very few would be prepared to call a biography or autobiography — whatever shaping it might reveal — a fictional work.

Fiction can most easily and usefully function as a viable critical concept if the third major interpretation of the word — the notion of inventedness — is given primacy. Taking this usage,

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<sup>1</sup>Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), p. 303.

novelistic documentaries no longer qualify as fiction; they are verifiable reports of situations and events in the actual world, not invented situations and events in an invented world. J.M. Cameron, among others, has attempted to clarify the concept of fictionality by fixing on the kinds of sentences which occur in fictional contexts. Fictional sentences — sentences like "Emma Bovary was a beautiful woman" — differ from normal discourse in that "the adequacy of what is said in the form of . . . fiction is not . . . governed by any state of affairs prior to and independent of what is said."<sup>1</sup> Fictional sentences, in other words, do not have reference to an alternate reality external to their immediate context against which their content can be checked. That a sentence is a lie can only be ascertained if its referent exists outside the sentence so that it can be checked against what is predicated about it in the sentence; hence the inadequacy of a theory of fiction as lie. The novelistic documentary has the verifiability which fictional discourse lacks. In the novelistic documentary the veracity or otherwise of the presented events and situations can be established, so a statement in a novelistic documentary similar in form to Stern's "Emma Bovary was a beautiful woman" can be true or false in a way that would not obtain in Flaubert's novel. For Flaubert's novel there is no alternative external source of information from which the reader can determine the accuracy of Flaubert's description, and so no possibility that the description can be conceived of as a lie.

There are, of course, non-fictional sentences in nearly all fictional works, and this somewhat confuses the issue. Among the more prominent types of such sentences, we can distinguish, for example, the verifiably true statement made about an historical person who figures as a character in an historical novel. Indeed, historical novels characteristically mix verifiable statements about an historical figure (made in the effort to establish faithfulness to the historical record) with fictional statements used to depict

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<sup>1</sup>Cameron, "Poetry and Dialectic," p. 137.

those aspects of the figure's experience which are beyond the historian but necessary to the novelist. Further types of non-fictional sentences which frequently occur in fictional context are logical truths and empirical generalizations. Stern says of these, "that '7 is a prime number' and that 'All men are mortal' is true even if 'uttered' by a character in a novel."<sup>1</sup>

A fictional work establishes a context wherein both fictional and non-fictional sentences occur; however, the essence of this context is determined by its availability to fictional sentences, for while a fictional work can interpose non-fictional sentences, a work which seriously purports to be non-fictional must, if it is to realize its intentions, eschew fictional sentences. And while a novelistic documentary fulfils all other conditions established in the definition for the novel, it necessarily lacks fictional sentences because they would vitiate its adherence to a dual work premise.

René Wellek and Austin Warren in their Theory of Literature use fictionality, in the sense of that which is invented or imagined, as the criterion which distinguishes literature proper from other areas of study.<sup>2</sup> They do, however, recognize the existence of peripheral or "transitional"<sup>3</sup> forms which, because they possess certain artistic features, are of interest to the student of literature even though they possess other features which are, according to Wellek and Warren, non-literary. Novelistic documentaries are "transitional" and therefore of interest to the student of literature in a way that few other forms could ever be. In borrowing the structure peculiar to one literary form, the novel, they move very close to literature proper, yet in emphatically maintaining their non-fictional nature, their actuality or

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<sup>1</sup>Stern, "Fictional Characters," p. 213.

<sup>2</sup>Wellek and Warren, Theory of Literature, p. 26.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid, p. 25.

historicity, they remain outside the realm of literature as it is defined by Wellek and Warren. As Scholes and Kellogg point out, transitional narrative types "deserve our attention and our . . . understanding, both in their own right and because of what they can reveal to us about the nature of the novel itself."<sup>1</sup>

### 2.3 Related Narrative Types

The novelistic documentary is not the only narrative type which is "transitional" in the sense that Wellek and Warren cite, nor is it the only form in which occur mixtures of factual materials and novelizing elements. A brief examination of several other narrative types might help to define by comparison the nature of the novelistic documentary and might in addition make apparent the efficaciousness of the strategies which the novelistic documentary exploits in asserting and maintaining its dual work premise. Transitional forms and mixtures of fact, fiction, and novelizing tendencies are equally areas worthy of more critical attention than they have received to date; however, since the main concern of this study lies specifically in the novelistic documentary, the following comments must be restricted in scope to considerations which are directly pertinent to and revelatory of the characteristics which it exhibits.

History, by which in the present context is meant historical narrative, is one narrative type which is potentially transitional. One critic has defined history (or historical narrative) as "that species of narrative in which we try to describe something that happened according to discoverable testimony about it and by means of certifiable techniques

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<sup>1</sup>Scholes and Kellogg, The Nature of Narrative, p. 214.

for gathering and identifying such testimony; "<sup>1</sup> however, this definition is not sufficiently limiting since it embraces most if not all factual narrative types and even the novelistic documentary itself. To it one might add the observation that history in its most characteristic form deals with the origins and interplay of large-scale social forces in their political, military, and economic aspects. Emphasis is ordinarily given to individuals only insofar as they become causes of or leaders of social forces and particularly when they assume the status of Hegelian "world-historical individuals."

Ordinarily the adherence to an unambiguous work premise is so rigid in an historical narrative that there is little question of novelizing tendencies, and it is only with the historical novel that questions of mixed factual and fictional materials present themselves. One might conceive of historical novels as distributed between two poles; at the one pole would be the costume novel or the costume-historical novel, in which the interest lies in costume, pageantry, and stirring adventure carried out in a romantic-exotic setting.<sup>2</sup> At the other pole would be the serious, detailed reconstruction of the chosen period. Obviously, only those works which approach the second type are important in the present context. The historical novel proper, in contrast to the costume-historical novel, controls the reader's expectations in such a way that he is led to suppose that

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<sup>1</sup>Warner Berthoff, "Fiction, History, Myth: Notes toward the Discrimination of Narrative forms," in The Interpretation of Narrative: Theory and Practice, ed. by Morton W. Bloomfield (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), p. 270.

<sup>2</sup>The origins of the costume-historical novel are examined in J.M.S. Tompkins, The Popular Novel in England: 1770-1800 (1932; rpt. London: Methuen, 1961), pp. 206-42. The revealing comments of a modern practitioner can be found in Frank Yerby, "How and Why I Write the Costume Novel," in Writing in America, ed. by John Fischer and Robert B. Silvers (New York: Pyramid Books, 1962), pp. 115-26. See also Georg Lukács, The Historical Novel, trans. by Hannah and Stanley Mitchell (1937; rpt. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969), pp. 15-16, 29-42, et passim.

meticulous adherence to verifiable historical facts underlies and supports the presented fictional materials. Such fictionalizing as occurs in the case of genuine historical figures takes effect only in the intervals between known historical events. More freedom of invention is available in the case of fictional characters, but even here the underpinnings of verifiable historical materials limit and condition the range of invention, and the reader is still invited to accept presented historical date as authentic. In contrast to the novelistic documentary, the historical novel communicates a mixed work premise but not a dual work premise. That is, the predominant portion of its work premise as it communicates itself to the reader is that the work is novelistic (including the criterion of fictional); the factual or historical portion of the work premise, though important and even to a degree determinative, is subordinated to the requirements generated by the predominating novelistic aspects of the premise. This disparity in work premises indicates one of the fundamental differences between the historical novel and the novelistic documentary: the novelistic documentary requires a more thoroughgoing adherence to fact than does the historical novel, for while the historical novel adheres to known facts of major importance and is relatively free in its handling of incidentals, the novelistic documentary is bound both to factual essentials and to incidentals.

Despite the fact that historical narratives and historical novels are ordinarily so radically and obviously different in the working out of their work premises that a reader is only very rarely confused about generic intentions, there are works in which distinctions are blurred. James C. Simmons has traced an almost complete merging of historical narrative and historical novel in the period between, roughly, 1835 and 1870.<sup>1</sup> Simmons notes that historical novelists,

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<sup>1</sup>James C. Simmons, "The Novelist as Historian: an Unexplored Tract of Victorian Historiography," *Victorian Studies*, XIV (1971), 293-305. Simmons is somewhat imprecise concerning the dates of the period.

beginning early in the period, made use of "prefaces, footnotes, and appendices to defend their own interpretations, trace details back to sources, and attack historians."<sup>1</sup> To these novelists, "the artist's responsibility became one of close factual fidelity to the historical material."<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, despite their adaption of the presentational apparatus of the historian, and for all their fidelity to historical material, these writers retained their freedom to invent characters and situations not provided for in the records.<sup>3</sup> They remained, that is, true to the demands of their generic intentions, and consequently their works are mistaken for genuine historical narrative only, if at all, by the naive reader.

The thesis which Simmons develops is that at the same time as the authors of these historical novels — among whom Edward Bulwer Lytton and Charles Macfarlane are perhaps the best known today — attempted to move in the direction of historical narrative, professional historians, particularly Macaulay, Carlyle, and Froude, moved in the direction of the historical novel, with the result that "the distinction, hitherto clearly defined, between historical fiction and formal history broke down completely at this period."<sup>4</sup> Simmons's main interest lies in the movement from historical novel towards historical narrative, particularly in relation to the theory and practice of Bulwer Lytton. Of more immediate interest in the present context is the opposite movement: the novelizing of a factual narrative type. Novelizing tendencies in Macaulay's History of England from the Accession of James II have been traced in some detail by George Levine in his work, The Boundaries of Fiction.<sup>5</sup> Macaulay's work, with its emphasis on narrative elements

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid. p. 295.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid. p. 297.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid. p. 303.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid. p. 299.

<sup>5</sup>George Levine, The Boundaries of Fiction: Carlyle, Macaulay, Newman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), pp. 79-163. See particularly pp. 109-17.

rather than analysis, and its related stress on individual "character" and suspenseful event, exhibits those qualities which lead Robert Scholes and Robert Kellogg to draw a distinction between "artistic history" and "scientific history."<sup>1</sup> But the artistic or novelizing impulse in Macaulay's work goes well beyond a simple overriding interest in narrative elements. "A truly great historian," he writes, "would reclaim those materials which the novelist has appropriated."<sup>2</sup>

The extent of Macaulay's "reclamation" is manifested in the following passage from the History quoted by Levine.

On the open moor, not far from Chedzoy, were encamped several battalions of regular infantry. Monmouth looked gloomily on them. He could not but remember how, a few years before, he had, at the head of a column composed of some of those very men, driven before him in confusion the fierce enthusiasts who defended Bothwell Bridge. He could distinguish among the hostile ranks that gallant band which was then called from the name of its Colonel, Dumbarton's regiment, but which has long been known as the first of the line, and which, in all four quarters of the world, has nobly supported its early reputation. "I know these men," said Monmouth; "they will fight. If I had but them, all would go well."

Levine says of this passage:

If Macaulay's History were intended only as a record of indisputable historical facts, much of this paragraph would be irrelevant or worse. But it is in fact perfectly characteristic of Macaulay's whole method in the History. . . . The paragraph helps demonstrate what Macaulay meant when he argued that history should not be a mere record of events. Although it includes some hidden speculation (Monmouth "looked gloomily"; he "could not but remember") there is no falsification. The speculations are obviously based on the recorded fact of Monmouth's quoted statement.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Scholes and Kellogg, The Nature of Narrative, pp. 212-13.

<sup>2</sup>Cited by Levine, Boundaries, p. 112.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid. pp. 133-34.

Levine is probably correct in claiming that no actual falsification takes place; nevertheless his remarks do not go far enough. That Macaulay had some basis for his "hidden speculations" does not alter the fact that he renders his speculations as if they were facts. There are no signals to indicate to the reader that he is speculating, no "perhaps . . ." or "he might well have thought . . ." to make it clear that the statements are hypotheses and not facts. Consequently the statements, because they are presented as if they were facts and because there is no pre-existing reality against which they can be checked for verification, function as fictional statements.

An important point emerges from Macaulay's method: in the effort to novelize his historical narrative he novelizes completely; that is, he incorporates into his narrative fictional sentences. In general, as will be seen further on in this section, novelizing tendencies in factual narrative types do not stop short of actually fictionalizing elements of the presented account. There does not seem to have been, prior to the novelistic documentary, a method which enabled a writer to novelize a factual narrative without unbalancing the narrative in the direction of fictionality, a method which provided for the complete and harmonious synthesis of verifiable fact and novelistic rendering.

Critics are far from unanimous concerning the nature and generic status of the autobiography. Some, working from the stated or implied beliefs that fiction is the product of aesthetic shaping and that memory inevitably distorts reality, view the autobiography as something other than a factual narrative type. Scholes and Kellogg, for these reasons, classify the autobiography, along with the novel, as a mimetic type, while they place the biography with factual (their term is "historical") narrative types.<sup>1</sup> While the arguments they advance (and the arguments advanced by those who see the autobiography in the same light) are persuasive, they minimize or altogether overlook at least one of the central features of the autobiography.

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<sup>1</sup>Scholes and Kellogg, The Nature of Narrative, p. 13.

John Barrett Mandel, in attempting to define the autobiography, isolates this feature: "Autobiography is a retrospective account of a man's whole life (or a significant part of a life) written as avowed truth and for a specific purpose by the man who lived the life."<sup>1</sup> It is true that autobiographers often accidentally or even willfully distort the facts they deal with, but such distortion does not in itself alter the work's generic status. It remains a factual narrative type because, as Roy Pascal points out, the autobiography "tells of events whose truth may be tested from other sources."<sup>2</sup> There remains, in short, a prior, external set of circumstances and events against which the presented account can be tested for accuracy.

Among fully novelistic works, the analogue of the autobiography would be the autobiographical novel; however, in the autobiographical novel the presence of fictional sentences and the consequent controlling context of fictionality are unambiguous. Of more direct pertinence to the novelistic documentary is the presence of novelizing tendencies in genuine autobiographies. Pascal has traced the exploitation of "novelistic techniques" in a number of autobiographies.<sup>3</sup> He points out, for example, how Sean O'Casey's use of third person narration "allows him to slip repeatedly beyond what the child could have known about himself or others, beyond what was available to later enquiry too. He tells us what was going on in other people's minds, for instance the 'inner monologue' of his sister Ella on her wedding day."<sup>4</sup> Here again, the presence of things "beyond enquiry," the stating of speculation as fact, indicate the extent to which factual narratives, once they begin to novelize their material, move beyond purely factual statements into fictional sentences. The bonds which firmly link them to a prior, external

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<sup>1</sup>Barrett John Mandel, "The Autobiographer's Art," Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, XXVII (1968), 217. Italics added.

<sup>2</sup>Roy Pascal, Design and Truth in Autobiography (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960), p. 188.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid. pp. 151-52, 164-66.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid. p. 151.

set of circumstances and events are severed, and they become, if only momentarily, fictional accounts.

Nearly all these comments on autobiography apply equally to its variants, the memoir and the reminiscence,<sup>1</sup> and the case of the biography is very much the same. The fictionalized biography of an actual person is one of the most thoroughgoing amalgams of factual materials and novelistic techniques, yet, like the historical novel to which it is so closely related, the unambiguous presence of a controlling fictional context sets it apart from the novelistic documentary as a work both wholly factual and thoroughly novelistic. Here again, of more immediate interest than the fictionalized biography is the presence of novelistic devices in a factual narrative type — in this instance, genuine biographies.

André Maurois' Ariel,<sup>2</sup> a biographical narrative of the life of Shelley, is one of the most extreme attempts to combine the restrictions which issue from the very teleology of the biography with the structural characteristics of the novel. In his preface, Maurois announces his somewhat confusing generic intention:

The aim in this book has been to produce a novelist's work rather than a historian's or critic's. Of course, the facts are true and not a phrase or thought has been attributed to Shelley which are not to be found in the memoirs of his friends, in his letters and in his poems; but we have tried to order these true elements so as to give the impression of progressive discovery, natural growth, which seems to be the proper sphere of the novel.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>"It is now generally agreed that the memoir centers its attention on the historical setting in which the writer finds himself; the reminiscence is interested in the famous or engaging people with whom the author has some into contact." Mandel, "The Autobiographer's Art," p. 226, n.

<sup>2</sup>André Maurois, Ariel: A Shelley Romance, trans. by Ella D'Arcy (1923; rpt. London: John Lane The Bodley Head, [1932]).

<sup>3</sup>Cited by Lukács, The Historical Novel, p. 303. The preface does not appear in the edition cited above.

Georg Lukács has assailed Maurois for what he calls "this pot-pourri of novel and history which objectively is neither novel nor history."<sup>1</sup> And Maurois has since disavowed his method. Writing nearly twenty years after the publication of Ariel, he says :

In Ariel, I took the liberty . . . to turn into dialogue conversations that we possessed, in indirect form, in his [Shelley's] own letters. I have never done it since, nor do I approve of that method. It undermines the confidence of the reader, and also there is always a risk . . . of mutilating or deforming a thought. . . . [N]ever indulge in imagination. Once you cross the line between biography and fiction, you will never be able to retrace your steps.<sup>2</sup>

Maurois' comments in his original preface suggest, and the narrative itself makes it altogether clear, that his method is the result of aspiring to establish in his central figure that interiority which is one of the defining criteria of the novel. The same aspiration doubtless accounts for Macaulay's speculations concerning Monmouth's frame of mind at Chedzoy, and indeed for most of the attempts to novelize factual narrative types. Interiority usually lies beyond the capacities of biographical narrative since, as one critic points out, "the subject of a biography has no private thoughts or feelings. He consists solely of what he has done, said, written, and of the impressions and judgments formed by those who knew him."<sup>3</sup>

It is the effort to establish interiority which leads to speculation on mental processes and the rendering of these speculations as if they were verifiable facts. And in turn, lacking as they do any "as-if" or "perhaps" signals, the speculations inevitably strike the reader as fictional passages. Moreover, such speculations are not

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Maurois, "The Ethics of Biography," English Institute Annual, 1942 (1943), rpt. in Biography as an Art: Selected Criticism 1560-1960, ed. by James L. Clifford (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 168.

<sup>3</sup>E.K. Brown, Rhythm in the Novel (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1950), p. 33.

in the same category as actual distortions of fact. The first changes the status of the passage to fiction; the second retains the status of factual rendering even though the facts are reported inaccurately. This distinction between speculation rendered as fact and appearing fictional on the one hand and distortion of fact on the other illustrates the radical difference between fiction and lie and underlines the inadequacy of any theory which identifies the one with the other.

John A. Garraty neatly illuminates the difference between distortion of fact and speculation as fact by juxtaposing a passage from Lytton Strachey's biographical sketch of Florence Nightingale with a passage from Benjamin P. Thomas's Abraham Lincoln. Strachey's account proves to be made up of "distortions and outright perversions of the facts,"<sup>1</sup> yet it remains entirely reportorial in mode. It is avowedly factual and its "facts" can be checked for accuracy. Thomas's account is rather different:

The lonely man in the White House had time for meditation while he waited for news night after night. With his strong sense of fatalism, he felt a Power beyond himself shaping the nation's destiny, and in an hour of anxiety he solemnly penned his thoughts.<sup>2</sup>

Thomas had described how he arrived at his reconstruction of Lincoln's private thoughts and feelings,<sup>3</sup> and Garraty, using the description, is able to show how extremely plausible Thomas's speculations are. Yet Thomas's account, even though it is very probably closer to the historical truth than Strachey's, is fictional rather than factual in its mode of rendering. It is not difficult to grasp the general inference which can be derived from this apparent contradiction: the distinction between factual and mimetic narrative types lies not solely in closeness to or variance from historical truth, but in the kinds of rendering available to them.

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<sup>1</sup>John A. Garraty, The Nature of Biography (London: Jonathan Cape, 1958), p. 31.

<sup>2</sup>Excerpted in Garraty, p. 31.

<sup>3</sup>The description is quoted by Garraty, p. 32.

To the writer of a factual narrative, the impulse to establish interiority in central figures must very often be a strong one, but if submission to the impulse leads to the employment of fictional sentences, the result will generally be a work so confused and confusing in its generic intentions that the belief which a factual narrative must instill in its reader will be seriously compromised. For the writer of a novelistic documentary there is no element of choice in the matter; for him the evocation of interiority in one or more of his figures is a fundamental requirement. Yet, like the writer of any other factual narrative, he must avoid the kind of speculation that issues in fictional sentences. It is perhaps for this reason that the rendering of interiority in the corpus works is so often accomplished through the incorporation of authentic documentation — which is not the same thing as the "liberty" with which Maurois used his documents. The incorporation of documents as documents ensures that the links with a pre-existing, external state of affairs remain intact.

Among mimetic types there are a number of narrative subtypes which, because they exploit factual material, might further help to define by contrast the special nature of the novelistic documentary, and which might even, at first glance, be confused with the novelistic documentary. Of these, the historical novel, the autobiographical novel, and the fictionalized biography of an actual person have already been mentioned. One additional example worth touching on is the roman à clef. In actual fact, there should be little difficulty in distinguishing the two types. The unambiguous fictionality of the one and the emphatic factuality of the other should preclude confusion. They are both, admittedly, bound to persons and circumstances in the extant world, but they are bound in very different ways. The novelistic documentary adheres completely to data derived from the external world whereas the roman à clef ordinarily has only the one tie — the "key" — to the external world. Much though certainly not all of the pleasure derived from a novelistic documentary is derived from the knowledge that the presented

account is entirely factual, but the reader need not have any prior knowledge of the persons and events presented. In the roman à clef, on the other hand, the pleasure derived from the work is almost entirely dependent on the reader's prior knowledge of the presented persons and perhaps the presented events as well, for without this "key" the reader is denied access to one of the work's main areas of meaning.

This last difference lays open a further point concerning the nature of the novelistic documentary: for a narrative type so strictly bound to the external world it is a remarkably self-contained, self-sufficient form. Its rootedness in the real world is signalled by details within its structure; no externally derived information is required for the reader's comprehension of either meaning or generic status.

## CHAPTER 3

### INTRODUCTION TO THE CENTRAL CORPUS

#### 3.1 Critical Reception

There are several compelling reasons for providing at this point some introductory remarks and background information on the four works of the central corpus. All four works have been published comparatively recently — the earliest dating back only to 1961 — and so they have not passed into that established literary canon of works with which one can safely assume a high degree of familiarity. Moreover, theoretical considerations have so far prevented any sustained, close attention to the individual works. This retarding process has not been accidental: it has been a working assumption that the works can best be examined in a larger theoretical framework which enables one to establish their particular generic status and their relationship to the literary types which they resemble in one way or another. Finally, some of the works have occasioned such controversy that it is difficult to approach them with the requisite critical objectivity. It has become necessary to peel away the enveloping layers of not always illuminating controversy in order to grasp the works as individual entities, for the controversy has tended to obscure rather than elucidate their formal properties.

Among the controversies raised by the works, none has been as prolonged and as public as that precipitated by the publication of Capote's In Cold Blood. From June, 1962, when Mark Schorer announced Capote's intention to publish a "re-creation of a brutal Kansas murder and its consequences,"<sup>1</sup> the literary world looked forward to the book with an anticipation that came to be fed by one of the most elaborate publicity campaigns ever to attend the publication of a literary work. In the wake of the campaign, and no doubt as an inevitable consequence of it, there followed a determined, at times almost savage, reaction against In Cold Blood. Much of the controversy was touched off by a legitimate though not always cogently formulated objection to the term non-fiction novel, and by the belief that Capote had either failed to invent a new form or had failed to achieve his stated generic intention of writing a work both wholly non-fictional and thoroughly novelistic. The attempt was made in the first section of the preceding chapter to demonstrate that most of these objections fail either because of an inadequate perception of the form of Capote's work or because of a failure to recognize fully the implications of his stated intention. Despite their failings, however, these arguments are legitimate in so far as the critics concerned have made genuine attempts to come to terms with the work itself. Other attacks launched by critics and reviewers have less claim to legitimacy.

To take only one of the less legitimate attacks, Kenneth Tynan has chosen to malign Capote personally, suggesting that Capote was callous towards the fate of the two murderers and possibly even happy to see them hang since their hanging provided a suitable climax to the work.<sup>2</sup> It is difficult to see what insinuations such as these

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<sup>1</sup>Mark Schorer, Introduction to Truman Capote, Selected Writings (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1963), p. xii.

<sup>2</sup>Tynan's attack and Capote's rebuttal are summarized in "Cold-Blooded Crossfire," Time, April 15, 1966, pp. 63-64.

have to do with the work Tynan purports to be reviewing; rather than examine the work itself, he prefers to vilify the writer, and his vilification is based on mere speculation — unsupported by factual evidence of any kind — about Capote's presumed motivations. Tynan's attack is indicative of the extent and intensity of the controversy precipitated by In Cold Blood. While the controversy reveals a great deal about the conditions and mechanisms of contemporary commercial publishing and reviewing, it is irrelevant to considerations of the work's form, and probably to considerations of its value as well. If one is to achieve an adequate perception of the work's form and its literary historical significance, one must disengage the work in its integrity from the uproar which it occasioned.

The controversy which has surrounded Babi Yar has been less public and sustained than the one occasioned by In Cold Blood, but it has potentially a more direct bearing on the authenticity of the author's claims for the work. Babi Yar was published in Russia in 1966, first in the journal Yunost and then in book form. Translated into English and a number of other languages, it became in the following year an international best seller. Then in July of 1969, Kuznetsov defected to England where he immediately repudiated all of his earlier writing and changed his name to A. Anatoli. According to the story Kuznetsov told after his defection,<sup>1</sup> he smuggled out of Russia films of a manuscript of Babi Yar which included long passages — over a quarter of the work's original length — that had been excised by Soviet censors, as well as new material which had been written between the original publication and his defection. There is an immediate problem then of deciding which version of the work to use, and even a problem as to what to call the work's author. The solution taken

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<sup>1</sup>The story is recounted in the Preface to the 1970 edition of Babi Yar.



for the second problem has been to retain the name Kuznetsov. It is the name under which the work was originally published and it appears, though in parenthesis, on both the cover and title page of the 1970 version.<sup>1</sup> As to the former problem, it has been accepted that, despite the controversy which it precipitated, the 1970 edition must be assumed to contain the author's final intentions. However, it has been convenient to consult both versions<sup>2</sup> since, owing to the vagaries of translation, one occasionally provides clearly formulated points that are less well formulated in the other. All references, unless otherwise stated, are to the 1970 edition.

The problems of which edition and which of the author's names are to be used are minor issues, but other problems raised by the revised version and the covering story provided by Kuznetsov are potentially far more crucial, and, if the objections advanced by critics are credited, far more damaging. Herbert R. Mayes has summarized the main objections and has come to the conclusion that Kuznetsov's covering story is pure fabrication.<sup>3</sup> Mayes speaks, for instance, of the improbability of Kuznetsov's claim that he had smuggled past Soviet customs authorities microfilms of thousands of pages of manuscript all concealed in the lining of a single coat. He scoffs at Kuznetsov's description of an earlier plan to escape from Russia by swimming underwater across the Black Sea to Turkey. And he points out that Kuznetsov is a self-confessed liar who admits to having "fabricated a story about his colleagues, some of them his

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<sup>1</sup>The central figure of the revised edition is also called Anatoli Kuznetsov. See p. 279.

<sup>2</sup>The editions used in this study are: Babi Yar, London: Sphere Books, 1969 — a paperback reprint of the first British edition, London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1967, translated by Jacob Gural sky; and, Babi Yar, London: Jonathan Cape, 1970, an "uncensored and expanded version," translated by David Floyd.

<sup>3</sup>Herbert R. Mayes, "The Emerging A. Kuznetsov," Saturday Review, December 12, 1970, pp. 4-6.

close friends, saying they were plotting publication of an underground magazine that was to attack the Establishment."<sup>1</sup> Mayes wonders if the word of a man who could tell such potentially damaging lies about his friends can be trusted under any circumstances. In closing his article, Mayes, speaking both of the revised work and of Kuznetsov's covering story asks: "Could anybody believe any of this? Will anybody?"<sup>2</sup>

Mayes's accusations cast serious doubt on the authority which can be claimed for Babi Yar, and authority is something which the novelistic documentary, by definition, must maintain if it is to realize its generic intentions. The attempt to resolve the difficulty must be reserved for the discussion of authority in relation to all the corpus works which appears in Part Three, Chapter One below. For the moment it is enough to note that Mayes's attack attempts to cast doubt on the work by impugning the author. However, the authority of the one does not necessarily rest on the reliability of the other. The question is not whether Kuznetsov is known on occasion to have distorted the truth, but whether he distorts the truth in Babi Yar.

The critical reception of Mailer's The Armies of the Night has been conditioned by a factor which has had exaggerated effect on the reception of all of his literary work since the publication of The Naked and the Dead in 1948 — Mailer's public reputation. Barry H. Leeds, the author of the first full-length critical study of Mailer's work, writes of

the flamboyant public image which . . . served to spotlight Mailer's career, and which tended (and still does) to obscure rather than elucidate the literary

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

value and intentions of his work. Perhaps no writer since Hemingway has had a public image so attractive or repulsive to so many people, and so unfortunately influential in the critical reception of his [work].<sup>1</sup>

Leeds makes it clear that the controversy raised by Mailer's public image has not been uninvited; "Mailer lived and wrote in such a manner as to create a public personality characterized by excesses."<sup>2</sup> The Armies of the Night is not a work calculated to offset the public image and the divergent reactions to it, for at the center of the work is Mailer himself: Mailer as author, Mailer as narrator, and Mailer as central character. The problem for the critic becomes one of distinguishing Mailer's literary re-creation of himself from Mailer the public personality, as well as attempting to approach the work without being influenced by the antipathy or liking which he might feel towards Mailer. Neither of these is an easy task, yet that critics were able to escape at least their antipathy is reflected in the fact that The Armies of the Night received both the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award for 1968.

The controversies raised by Oscar Lewis's The Children of Sánchez are not of immediate concern to literary critics. They are confined mainly to the political repercussions of the work in Mexican government circles following its publication there in Spanish and to arguments about the theoretical validity of Lewis's concept of the "culture of poverty" which the work was written in

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<sup>1</sup>Barry H. Leeds, The Structured Vision of Norman Mailer (New York: New York University Press, 1969), p. 224.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid. p. 225.

part to illustrate.<sup>1</sup> Little of the political controversy has been noticed outside Mexico, and the technical discussion of the culture of poverty, while of vital concern to social scientists, is not relevant to literary criticism. On the other hand, several anthropologists have expressed a reservation concerning The Children of Sánchez which is directly pertinent to this study. Rodolfo Stavenhagen, among others, argues that the work is too much of a novel and too little an orthodox anthropological enquiry.<sup>2</sup> Another anthropologist, making the same point, argues that "if social science is to get anywhere near justifying the second part of its name, there must be abstractions, conceptual schemes, theoretical systems."<sup>3</sup> These arguments are diametrically opposed to Lewis's belief that it is necessary to "see individuals as they live and work together rather than as the averages and stereotypes implicit in reports on culture patterns"<sup>4</sup> and to his objection that "even in our best anthropological

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<sup>1</sup>The arguments for and against the concept of the culture of poverty can be found in Charles A. Valentine, Culture and Poverty: Critique and Counter-Proposals (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), pp. 48-77 and 113-135; and Oscar Lewis, "The Children of Sánchez, Pedro Martínez, and La Vida," A "CA Review," Current Anthropology, VIII (1967), *passim*. In a "CA Review," a specialist is asked to write on the field of his research. His article is sent to a number of colleagues who submit article-length replies. The original writer then writes a further article-length analysis and defense. The result in the case of this particular review is eighteen article-length studies (two by Lewis plus sixteen other contributions) published as a unit.

<sup>2</sup>Rodolfo Stavenhagen, writing in Lewis, "The Children of Sánchez, Pedro Martínez, and La Vida," p. 489.

<sup>3</sup>Peter Willmott, in Lewis, "The Children of Sánchez, Pedro Martínez and La Vida," p. 490.

<sup>4</sup>Lewis, Five Families: Mexican Case Studies in the Culture of Poverty (New York: Basic Books, 1959), p. 3.

monographs people have a way of getting lost in culture patterns, structures, roles, and other abstract concepts."<sup>1</sup> It is interesting that anthropologists have objected to The Children of Sánchez on the very grounds that cause its inclusion in this study, but more importantly, their objections indicate the extent to which Lewis has made a revolutionary departure from conventional social-science methods in the direction of novelistic rendering.

None of the controversies mentioned here is entirely lacking in interest for the student of literature. The conditions of contemporary publishing and reviewing, the continuing dialectic between author and work, the social and political impact of a literary work — all these are entirely legitimate areas of investigation; however, the present study seeks to grasp more fully each individual work as a formal entity, and so it is necessary to separate each work from whatever imbroglio it might have occasioned in order to make possible an objective, analytic approach to its formal properties.

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<sup>1</sup>Lewis, "The Children of Sánchez, Pedro Martínez, and La Vida," p. 480.

### 3.2 The Works as Novelistic Documentaries

Among the more interesting features of the corpus works are the extent to which they proclaim their generic intentions — that is, the extent to which they explicitly assert their status as novelistic documentaries — and the way in which some of them appear to be natural derivations from their authors' earlier works. The intentionality involved in the first feature is not a matter of intended meaning, nor does it refer to the tenet that the aesthetic value of a work is determined by whether or not the author has achieved his intentions. Rather, it involves a stated intention to produce a work of a particular generic type. And the emphasis given by the authors of the corpus works to the statement of generic intentions can probably be attributed to the fact that they felt themselves to be writing works with few generic equivalents. All of them were evidently conscious of writing in what they took to be a new, hybrid literary mode, and newness required an unusual degree of explicitness.

Although Truman Capote is known primarily as a writer of novels and short-stories, In Cold Blood is not his first venture into non-fictional writing. As early as 1950, only two years after the release of his first novel, he collected a number of previously published travel sketches in Local Color. In 1956 he published The Muses are Heard, a devastating account of the Russian tour made by the American production company of Porgy and Bess, and in the following year he published The Duke in His Domain, an interview with Marlon Brando in which Capote consciously set out to raise the journalistic interview to the level of art.<sup>1</sup> Mark Schorer says of the interview that "it is

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<sup>1</sup>Craig M. Goad, "Daylight and Darkness, Dream and Delusion: The Works of Truman Capote," Emporia State Research Studies, XVI (1967), 14.

one of the most brilliant pieces of reporting in our time."<sup>1</sup> Critics have been quick to notice the parallel development of Capote's fictional and non-fictional work; Schorer points out that "the reportage, like the fiction, has moved . . . from places to people in places, from the poetic to the social."<sup>2</sup> Other critics have commented on the similarities in characterization, narrative stance, and theme.<sup>3</sup> Given these similarities, it is not surprising that In Cold Blood reveals as close a relationship to Capote's fictional as to his non-fictional works. There is the same concern with dream and phantasy, with individuals loveless or unloved, with the recovery of childhood experience, with the search for identity.<sup>4</sup> Capote's expressed interest in reportage<sup>5</sup> and his gradual development of ways of combining journalistic and novelistic methods and devices make In Cold Blood a seemingly inevitable synthesis of his previous interests, for, viewed retrospectively, his search for possible links between journalism and the writing of short stories and novels leads naturally to the form of the novelistic documentary.

Capote signals his generic intentions in the sub-title of the work: "A True Account of a Multiple Murder and Its Consequences," and goes on in a section of acknowledgements to state that "all the

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<sup>1</sup>Mark Schorer, "MacCullers and Capote: Basic Patterns," in The Creative Present: Notes on Contemporary American Fiction, ed. by Nona Balakian and Charles Simmons (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1963), p. 106.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid. pp. 106-107.

<sup>3</sup>For Example, Garrett, "Crime and Punishment in Kansas," and Goad, "Daylight and Darkness."

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Goad, "Daylight and Darkness," pp. 7 and 45 ff.

<sup>5</sup>Interview with Truman Capote. Pati Hill, Writers at Work: The "Paris Review" Interviews (London: Secker and Warburg, 1958), pp. 259-60.

material in this book not derived from my own observations is either taken from official records or is the result of interviews with the persons directly concerned, more often than not numerous interviews conducted over a considerable period of time." Capote makes no other explicit attempt to persuade the reader that what he is reading is factual; in keeping with his decision to avoid the overt presence of the authorial narrator, he has another person attest the veracity of the account. Larry Hendricks, a young English teacher and would-be writer (who, significantly, gets his ideas for stories from newspapers) narrates in his own words the discovery of the murdered Clutter family. In closing he says, "'They were dead. A whole family. Gentle, kindly people, people I knew — murdered. You had to believe it, because it was really true.'"<sup>1</sup>

Capote's sub-title and his comments in the Acknowledgements are not very different from the conventional claims for veracity found in numerous orthodox novels. There is, however, the difference that Capote's statements are not contradicted by patently fictional passages; they are in fact reinforced by a variety of devices — notably the incorporation in unaltered form of authentic documentation — which support the claim to factuality. His statements are not conventional attempts to establish an aura of authenticity but rather proclamations that he is setting out to record lived experiences, and even lacking awareness of the widely heralded term "non-fiction novel," the reader of In Cold Blood would be forced to recognize the duality of its compositional premise, be forced, that is, to be aware at once of its novelistic and its factual nature.

Too little of Kuznetsov's work is available in the West to make an examination of the relationship of Babi Yar to his earlier writing feasible; however, the explicitness of generic intention obtaining in Babi Yar is, if anything, even greater than in the case of In Cold Blood.

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<sup>1</sup>In Cold Blood, p. 54. Italics in original.

In the first version of the work, the sub-title was translated as "A Documentary Novel." In the newer version the translation is even more telling: "A Document in the Form of a Novel." In the introductory chapter to the work entitled, in the new version, "Ashes," Kuznetsov states, "This book contains nothing but the truth,"<sup>1</sup> and goes on to write that "the word 'Document' which appears in the sub-title of this novel means that I have included in it only facts and documents, and that it contains not the slightest element of literary invention — of what 'might have been' or what 'ought to have been.'"<sup>2</sup> Throughout the work, particularly in chapters bearing the common title, "A Word From the Author," Kuznetsov makes comments such as "what I am offering you is after all not an ordinary novel. It is a document, an exact picture of what happened."<sup>3</sup> Kuznetsov is insistent even to the point of stridency that he is writing a novel, but not an "ordinary" novel, and he takes great pains to signal his generic intentions by supplying a wealth of documentation complete with footnotes giving the sources of his documents. However, Babi Yar has a double focus; there is the narrative which concerns the fate of Nazi-occupied Kiev — and particularly the fate of the persecuted Jewish community of Kiev, many of whom died in the Babi Yar ravine; and there is the narrative of the younger Kuznetsov who witnessed the occupation and came of age under its harsh conditions. The first is recoverable in documents; the second is considerably less so. For it, we must rely on the largely unaided memory of a man writing long after his narrated experience. This fact has far more bearing on the reliability and authenticity which can be attributed to Babi Yar than does the suspicion cast on Kuznetsov's

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<sup>1</sup>Babi Yar, p. 13.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid. p. 17.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid. p. 65

veracity by Mayes, for the problem here lies in the specific authenticity of the work rather than in the more general reliability of the man responsible for it. Even absolute proof that the man has indeed lied can only suggest and never actually demonstrate that the veracity of the work is questionable.

Unlike Capote, Norman Mailer had already developed before the publication of The Armies of the Night a considerable reputation for his non-fictional writing, even to the point of being frequently called the greatest journalist writing today,<sup>1</sup> a compliment which only serves to embarrass Mailer since he prefers to think of himself as a novelist, and a major one, rather than a journalist. The pattern of the parallel development of Capote's fictional and non-fictional writing repeats itself with Mailer; all of his writing, fictional and non-fictional, is replete with Mailer's characteristic concerns: among them war, physical courage under duress, the therapeutic value of the good orgasm, his theories of freedom, violence, and totalitarianism, and the state of contemporary American society. Moreover, Barry H. Leeds makes much the same point about The Armies of the Night that Garrett and Goad make about In Cold Blood. "The Armies of the Night," he writes, "is as much an outgrowth of Mailer's fiction as of his journalism".<sup>2</sup>

Like Babi Yar, The Armies of the Night has a double focus: on the one hand the narrative of four days of the October, 1967 anti-war demonstrations in Washington D.C. involving, according to the estimate Mailer prefers,<sup>3</sup> nearly 90,000 protestors; on the other, the individual experience of the narrator-participant during the preparations,

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<sup>1</sup>This even occurs in Armies when Robert Lowell calls Mailer "the first journalist in America" (p.21). Mailer counters with the remark that he often thinks of himself as "the best writer in America" (p. 22).

<sup>2</sup>Leeds, The Structured Vision, p. 248.

<sup>3</sup>Armies, p. 245.

demonstrations, and aftermath. However, because Mailer is a public figure, and because he was one of the more visible participants in the demonstrations, many of his actions can be verified by documents; his involvement was a significant part of what was recorded by the various public media. One factor which differentiates Mailer's treatment of documentation from that of both Capote and Kuznetsov is that while Capote and Kuznetsov ordinarily accept documentation as it stands and use it without question or comment, Mailer treats documentation as a problematic entity.<sup>1</sup> He opens his account by disputing a Time magazine report concerning his behaviour during a preliminary rally, and on several occasions raises doubts as to the very possibility of journalistic accuracy:

The papers distorted one's actions, and that was painful enough, but they wrenched and garbled and twisted and broke one's words and sentences until a good author always sounded like an incoherent overcharged idiot in newsprint.<sup>2</sup>

One effect of this problematic treatment of documentation is that the documents attest the rootedness of Mailer's narrative in the actual world, while revealing at the same time the difficulty of recovering that actuality in its original form. Mailer achieves recovery by balancing the documents against his own memory and against each other. At all points the reader retains recourse to documents when Mailer's opinions seem questionable, and of course the documents only conflict in their handling of the lesser aspects of the demonstrations; in their account of the larger pattern of events they are

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<sup>1</sup>Kuznetsov does present German documents which are transparent lies, but for him the point is that it can readily be established whether they are true or false. Ascertaining the truth is never treated as a problem in Babi Yar.

<sup>2</sup>Armies, p. 65.

substantially in agreement. Thus Mailer gains the advantage of being able to challenge his documents and rely on them at the same time.

Critics have remarked that Capote has for the most part eschewed technical experimentation.<sup>1</sup> Mailer, on the other hand, has made a constant if, according to some, not always successful effort to expand his technical resources. Therefore it is not surprising that The Armies of the Night is more self-consciously engaged with the problems involved in fashioning a novelistic documentary than is Capote's In Cold Blood or even Kuznetsov's Babi Yar. Capote and Kuznetsov give the appearance of having resolved their formal problems in advance, so they do not appear as problems in their narratives. In contrast, much of Armies is devoted to explicating Mailer's generic intentions. The problematic handling of the novelistic documentary (which is related to the problematic treatment of documentation) is initiated by Mailer's sub-title: "History as a Novel — The Novel as History." These terms become the titles of the two parts of The Armies of the Night, and in several key passages Mailer discusses their complex implications.<sup>2</sup> One effect of Mailer's problematic handling of the novelistic documentary is to highlight his generic intentions; in treating the form as a problem he emphasises his intention to write within it.

Oscar Lewis's The Children of Sánchez is the earliest of the works in the corpus, and in the surface aspects of its structure it bears considerably less resemblance to the other works in the corpus than they do to each other. Also, the line of development in Lewis's work leading to the writing of a novelistic documentary is even more pronounced than with the others. In 1951 he published Life in a Mexican

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<sup>1</sup>For example, Garrett, "Crime and Punishment in Kansas," p. 3, and Wiegand, "The 'Non-fiction' Novel," p. 246.

<sup>2</sup>For example, Armies, p. 52.

Village: Tepoztlán Restudied, a work largely orthodox in approach which was widely acclaimed by anthropologists. In 1959 he expressed dissatisfaction with orthodox methods and wished instead to describe "individuals as they live and work together rather than as the averages and stereotypes implicit in reports on culture patterns."<sup>1</sup> In the effort to "get beyond form and structure to the realities of human life,"<sup>2</sup> Lewis began experimenting with various novelistic devices. In his 1959 work, Five Families, he narrates the activities of five different families over the period of a single day. Lewis considers this a deviation from standard anthropological practice in the direction of novelistic rendering,<sup>3</sup> and in the Introduction to the work he describes the problems of "selection and arrangement" brought about by his method as well as the use of the flashback "to give more depth and meaning to the studies."<sup>4</sup> The overall intention is made clear by Lewis's statement: "the study of days presented here attempts to give some of the immediacy and wholeness of life which is portrayed by the novelist."<sup>5</sup>

When he came to write The Children of Sánchez, "some" was no longer enough. In a lengthy introduction to the work, Lewis describes how both anthropologists and contemporary novelists "have lost touch with the problems of poverty and the realities of a changing world."<sup>6</sup> In the effort to compensate for this loss of touch, Lewis projects "a new kind of literature of social realism" which can compete with "traditional literary forms."<sup>7</sup> Lewis's belief that The Children of

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<sup>1</sup>Lewis, Five Families, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid. p. 3.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid. p. 7.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid. p. 6.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid. p. 5.

<sup>6</sup>Children, p. xxiv.

<sup>7</sup>Children, p. xii.

Sánchez contains "something of both art and life"<sup>1</sup> is confirmed by George Steiner. "Oscar Lewis's The Children of Sánchez is, no doubt, an honest selection of tape-recordings; but as grouped and, in a real sense, 'heard' by the particular listener, the rawness of life takes on the cumulative order of a novel."<sup>2</sup>

The Children of Sánchez departs from the other corpus works in its use of documentation, for Lewis's work, in a sense, is a document whereas the others incorporate documents. Documentation occurs in the other three works as parts of wholes, wholes which are comprised in part of materials other than documents; and the kinds of documents they incorporate are much the same — newspaper and magazine extracts, radio announcements, letters, journal entries, identification documents, and recorded statements. The Children of Sánchez is composed entirely of tape-recorded statements.<sup>3</sup> Lewis provides for verifiability by offering access to the original tapes,<sup>4</sup> but the problem is more subtle than that. One is made aware of the special status of documentation in the other corpus works because it is set apart; the context of documentation mixed with other materials calls attention to the presence of documents when they occur. Lewis's work lacks such a context, and so it has to rely on other means for establishing the reader's awareness that he is dealing with documentation. The most frequently used device for bringing about such awareness is the inclusion of statements and questions obviously directed to the original interviewer, phrases such as "you know?" and "as you can see." These phrases, because they signal the presence of the interviewer, call attention to the documentary status of the materials.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>George Steiner, Language and Silence (London: Faber and Faber, 1962), p. 106.

<sup>3</sup>However, it is not certain whether Lewis includes any of the written material supplied by one of his informants. See Children, p. xxii.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid. p. xxi.

It is evident from their statements of intention that the authors of the four corpus works determined to write "novels" of a special and unusual kind. This determination, however, does not alter the fact that one or more of the authors might have failed to achieve his generic intentions, and so the question remains as to whether or not the works are — barring the criterion of fictionality — fully novelistic. Capote's In Cold Blood has so far attracted more critical interest than the other works, and a number of critics have not hesitated to proffer judgments on whether it is or is not novelistic. However, their judgements reveal an interesting pattern; in general, those critics who deny the work the status of "novel" make no secret of their dislike for the work and often for Capote as well; while those critics who are inclined to grant it "novel" status profess to like the work.<sup>1</sup> The obvious danger suggested by this pattern is that "novel" tends to become an honorific term instead of a descriptive one, thereby blurring certain essential distinctions. An advantage of the working definitions outlined in the first chapter is that it provides descriptive criteria for ascertaining whether a given work is a novel, and, with the sole exception of the criterion of fictionality, the works conform to the definition; they are, at least, in terms of the definition, novelistic structures.

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<sup>1</sup> Among those in the first group are: Louis D. Rubin, Jr. "The Curious Death of the Novel," Kenyon Review, XXVIII (1966), 305-25, and Alfred Kazin, "The World as Novel: From Capote to Mailer," New York Review of Books, April 8, 1971, pp. 26-30. In the second group are: Garrett, "Crime and Punishment in Kansas," Goad, "Daylight and Darkness," and Wiegand, "The 'Non-fiction' Novel."

PART II

SOME ANTECEDENTS TO THE NOVELISTIC DOCUMENTARY

## CHAPTER 1

### SOME EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ANALOGUES

#### 1.1 Fictionality in Eighteenth-Century Prose Narrative

When In Cold Blood was published in 1965 and billed by the publishers as the first "non-fiction novel," critics and reviewers took great delight in pointing out what they took to be far earlier as well as more recent instances of the genre. The lists of analogues varied in content — as well as in genuine relevance — but the point was well taken. And since questions concerning non-fictional elements in novelistic structures are very definitely not confined to the recent vogue of the novelistic documentary, it is worthwhile examining the phenomenon in a few of its earlier manifestations. It is not, however, the purpose of this chapter to make a pretence of exhausting the numerous potential analogues of the corpus works in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but to examine certain narrative trends and impulses and representative individual works in order to discover their formal relation to the novelistic documentary.

Even to a reader familiar with the convention of the authorial disclaimer — the prefatory denial that the fictional narrative one is about to read is fictional — some of the claims to factuality which appear in early prose narratives must seem surprising. Ordinarily,

at least since Defoe, the disclaimer either signals in advance that few departures will be made from an artistic semblance of reality, or, alternatively, it provides a transparently ironic claim for the veracity of manifestly untruthful material. However, by the time Defoe came to write, the convention already had a long tradition behind it, and before he initiated the process which eventually established the convention as simply a convention, it had (or might have had) very different implications.

According to Arthur Jerrold Tieje, who has carried out a detailed examination of the authorial disclaimer and similar devices in prose fiction prior to Richardson, "From the very dawn of fiction . . . there has become observable a determined attempt on the part of writers to gain the implicit credence of the reader."<sup>1</sup> There is nothing tentative or ambiguous in Tieje's position: he believes that authorial disclaimers in fictional prose narratives prior to Richardson (and similar devices as well) "are lies,"<sup>2</sup> and he is certain that their chief function was to persuade the reader that he was reading an entirely factual work. Disagreeing with Tieje's analysis requires a touch of hubris. His article reveals him to be a man of immense erudition with vast and intimate knowledge of fictional prose narrative in Greek, Latin, Spanish, French, German, and English. Nevertheless, his comments seem to gloss over a number of important factors. For instance, it is readily apparent from many of the statements cited by Tieje that authors only rarely believed other authors' disclaimers. If authorial disclaimers were really intended to "gain the implicit credence of the reader," why were they so often unsuccessful?

Presumably, any work which seeks the reader's credence

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<sup>1</sup> Arthur Jerrold Tieje, "A Peculiar Phase of the Theory of Realism in Pre-Richardsonian Fiction," PMLA, XXVII (1913), 251.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid. p. 220.

must make at least a minimal attempt to project a believable set of events and circumstances in a believable presented world. A work entirely lacking in even a rudimentary form of verisimilitude might gull the very naïve reader, but never, as the comments by authors which Tieje cites indicate, a sophisticated one. (Tieje does not distinguish among types of readers; for him, what is involved is the credence of any reader.) Little accommodation is made for consistent verisimilitude in, to take just one example, Aphra Behn's Oroonoko (ca. 1678), but her prefatory remarks make what on the surface appears to be a strong assertion of absolute historicity. She maintains that she was "an eye-witness to the greater part" of the events narrated, and that she heard of the rest "from the mouth of the chief actor in this history."<sup>1</sup> Given the nature of the work to which it is prefaced, it is unlikely that this disclaimer is seriously intended to gain the credence of the sophisticated reader. And if this example seems too much a borderline case, one can substitute the preface to Gulliver's Travels; for surely Tieje is wrong in assuming that Swift's disclaimer is meant to be (or ever was) taken at face value. On the other hand, Tieje is obviously correct in assuming that, in the case of works in which verisimilitude is maintained, the presence of an authorial disclaimer might have sought and even gained the reader's belief. Though it cannot be established with any certainty exactly what contemporary readers took to be true and what they took to be fictional, it is certain that fictional works have in the past been successfully passed off as authentic narratives.

If Tieje's analysis is in error, then the error lies in his assumption that all authorial disclaimers had the same function. For

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<sup>1</sup>Aphra Behn, Oroonoko, or the Royal Slave, in The English Novel before the Nineteenth Century, ed. by Annette Brown Hopkins and Helen Sard Hughes (Boston: Ginn, 1915), p. 160.

while some disclaimers doubtless did seek to gain the reader's credence, others appear to have had a very different purpose. One way of discovering this purpose is to undertake an examination of the terms in which disclaimers were couched. A close reading of the critical and theoretical statements of the eighteenth century regarding prose narrative reveals that certain key generic terms — the meanings of which are firmly fixed today — were then considerably more flexible in their application.<sup>1</sup> The most important of these terms is "history" which, according to the O.E.D., could, at the time, refer to a relation of past incidents either true or imaginary. This ambiguity in the term is reflected in the Cyclopoedia of Ephraim Chambers published in 1728 in which he refers to the early verse romances as "Histories of amorous Adventures, and Feats of Knight-Errantry."<sup>2</sup> Nathan Bailey's Dictionarium Britannicum (1730) lists separate entries for "History" and "Simple History." The latter is defined as "one delivered without any Art or foreign Ornament; being only a just and bare relation of Matters just in the manner and order wherein they were transacted."<sup>3</sup> The entry for "History" on the other hand, allows for art and foreign ornament; in other words there is simple history, which is bound to actual fact, and another kind of history which can be entirely fictional or can at least incorporate fictional elements.

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<sup>1</sup>This flexibility is discussed from a slightly different viewpoint in Keith Stewart, "History, Poetry, and the Terms of Fiction in the Eighteenth Century," Modern Philology, LXVI (1958), 110-120.

<sup>2</sup>Excerpted in Walter F. Greiner, English Theories of the Novel: Eighteenth Century (Tubingen: Max Niemeyer, 1970), p. 38.

<sup>3</sup>Excerpted in Greiner, English Theories of the Novel, p. 40. "Simple" is italicized in the original.

The preface to Mary de la Rivière Manley's chronique scandaleuse, The Secret History of Queen Zarah (1705), makes several distinctions which both indicate the ambiguity in the term "history" and suggest reasons for the application of the term to certain kinds of prose narrative. The author distinguishes "True History," which remains entirely authentic, from "History to his [the writer's] Fancy," in which the author writes a narrative wholly or at least partially fictional, and she contrasts her "little Histories" to the earlier prose romances, her little histories being less involved with the marvellous and the strongly improbable.<sup>1</sup> The latter distinction, which is repeated in various forms throughout the first half of the century, suggests that the "truth" asserted in what Tiejé invariably takes to be assertions of historicity is not so much faithfulness to actual fact as truth to contemporary theories of probability and truth, in the typically neoclassical sense, to life.<sup>2</sup> Here, perhaps, is an important function which Tiejé fails to recognize. Other generic terms such as biography, autobiography, and memoir, possibly by a process of analogy, bore the same ambiguity with the same neoclassical implications, so that while the forms could be exploited for effects of pretended verisimilitude, the words themselves contained no necessary promise of factual authenticity.<sup>3</sup> The problem for the modern reader becomes one of distinguishing between genuine attempts to deceive, patently ironical disclaimers, and attempts on the part of the author to make a theoretical distinction between his narrative and earlier

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<sup>1</sup>Excerpted in Greiner, English Theories of the Novel, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup>A similar argument is advanced by Sidney J. Black, "Eighteenth Century 'Histories' as a Fictional Mode," Boston University Studies in English, I (1955), 38-44.

<sup>3</sup>For example, an anonymous essay entitled "An Essay on the New Species of Writing" (1751) refers to Fielding's "new kind of Biography." Excerpted in Greiner, English Theories of the Novel, p. 77.

prose romances, a distinction for which he lacked a precise, unambiguous terminology.

In addition to narratives which attempt to derive subtle theoretical distinctions, there are of course numerous works which, although fictional, were successfully passed off as authentic accounts. The use (or misuse of authorial disclaimers was not the sole reason for the confusion, for authors frequently went on to present their narratives with an elaborate array of documentary and pseudo-documentary devices. As the use of such (then) ambiguous generic terms as history, biography, memoir, and autobiography indicates, many of the narratives purported to be documents. Others incorporated real or invented documents in the attempt to establish an aura of unquestionable verisimilitude, and many, of course, did both. The result is very nearly an inversion of the formula for the novelistic documentary; whereas these early prose narratives were frequently fictional works attempting to pass themselves off as fact, novelistic documentaries are factual works which take on a form usually reserved for fictional rendering.

## 1.2 Defoe and the Novelistic Documentary

For the modern reader, Defoe is undoubtedly the best known of the early eighteenth-century writers whose fictional works have been taken to be authentic factual narratives. Indeed, even in spite of the immense amount of work spent in the effort,<sup>1</sup> it is doubtful

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<sup>1</sup>See particularly A.W. Secord, "Studies in the Narrative Method of Defoe," University of Illinois Studies in Language and Literature, IX (1924).

that scholars will ever be able to separate fact from fiction in many of Defoe's works, so subtly and inextricably are they bound together. A Journal of the Plague Year (1722) is one of the most famous instances of a near inversion of the formula for the novelistic documentary; of it one can say (echoing dozens of critics) little more than that everything in it is true except for the whole. It exploits scores of authentic documents which, along with the extensive circumstantiality of the Saddler's narrative, account for its success in persuading unwary readers of its historicity. However, for all its local adherence to facts, in its entirety it remains a fictitious work, full of what Robert Gorham Davis has called "Defoe's mingling of history, journalism, and fiction."<sup>1</sup>

Defoe was, if anything, even more successful in misleading both his contemporaries and later readers with his Memoirs of Captain Carleton, also known as Memoirs of an English Officer (1728).<sup>2</sup> According to Ernest Baker,<sup>3</sup> the work was accepted as an authentic factual narrative by such critics and scholars as Johnson, Sir Walter

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<sup>1</sup>Robert Gorham Davis, "The Sense of the Real in English Fiction," Comparative Literature, III (1951), 202.

<sup>2</sup>According to Secord ("Studies in the Narrative Method of Defoe," p. 203) the work is Defoe's (Swift has also been suggested) and has no connection with a Captain Carleton who actually served in some of the military operations recounted in the work. Recently, a view directly opposed to Secord's has been put forward by Rodney M. Baine, "Daniel Defoe and Captain Carleton's Memoirs of an English Officer," Texas Studies in Literature and Language, XIII (1972), 613-627. Baine argues that the work, far from being a fictional account written by Defoe, was ghost-written for the real Carleton by an unidentified writer, who was definitely not Defoe. Baine offers very little in the way of evidence for his position, and since Secord remains the acknowledged authority on Defoe, the comments in this section follow his analysis.

<sup>3</sup>Ernest A. Baker, The Later Romances and the Establishment of Realism, Vol. III of The History of the English Novel (London: H. F. and G. Witherby, 1929), pp. 221-222.

Scott (who reprinted it in 1808<sup>1</sup>), Lord Stanhope (who wrote a history of the period covered in Captain Carleton), and various critics of the later nineteenth century including Leslie Stephen. That the work was so unusually successful in convincing readers of its veracity can be attributed to the fact that, unlike most of Defoe's narrative works in a similar vein, it dispenses with the conventional subterfuge of an editor publishing an account — often anonymous — the manuscript of which had been given him by the author or had been obtained in a more indirect way. The fictitious Carleton signs his own name to the memoirs and simply ignores the usual practice of providing fabricated details of his origins and early life. The very straightforwardness of this manner of presentation and the lack of details which can be checked for verification make it unlikely that the reader's suspicions will be aroused and at the same time make it difficult for the scholar to establish the work's authenticity or fictionality.

Although the passing off of unalloyed fiction or of skilful mixtures of fiction and fact as authentic history or autobiography was not by any means confined to Defoe, it is fitting that Defoe, who was one of the more prolific authors of such works, should have had a factual work thought of as being fictional. Leslie Stephen, who seems to have been particularly unlucky when it came to Defoe, was one of many nineteenth-century critics who pronounced Defoe's A True Relation of the Apparition of one Mrs. Veal (1706) an instance of a fictional work passed off in the guise of a true narrative.<sup>2</sup> This time the events

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<sup>1</sup>Scott's preface, which includes an extract from Boswell's Life of Johnson giving Johnson's opinion of the work, is printed in Volume II of The Novels and Miscellaneous Works of Daniel De Foe (London: George Bell and Sons, 1894).

<sup>2</sup>James Sutherland records this mistake by Stephen in "The Relation of Defoe's Fiction to his Non-fictional Writings," in Imagined Worlds, ed. by Maynard Mack and Ian Gregor (London: Methuen, 1968), p. 45. Sutherland also gives a detailed argument for the authenticity of Defoe's account. See also Baker, Later Romances, p. 138.

narrated were entirely true and the work is not an inversion of the formula for novelistic documentaries but rather something of an analogue in that mode.

The reasons for Stephen's disbelief are not hard to discover; the work has all the surface features of typical pseudo-documentary narrative: no author's name appears on the title page, the account purports to be the work of an un-named "justice of peace at Maidstone, in Kent" who sent it to the anonymous "editor" of the work.<sup>1</sup> The use of this traditional presentational apparatus which embeds the narrative in a fictional frame, and the absence of incorporated documentation, work counter to the structural principles of the novelistic documentary in that there is no overt attempt to reinforce the verifiable historicity of the account.<sup>2</sup> Therefore it is not surprising that as the narrated events receded from memory with the passing of time the work ceased to be accorded its due veracity. It was left to modern scholarship to establish that the work is the product of careful research and reporting on Defoe's part. That there was a Mrs. Veal, that she claimed to have been visited by one Mrs. Bargrave twenty-four hours after Mrs. Bargrave had died not far away, that Mrs. Veal provided accounts of the incident to other people which do not differ in substance from the one published by Defoe — all this modern scholarship can attest. So much of what once was thought sheer invention has been shown to be factually correct that, for all its detailed circumstantiality,

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<sup>1</sup>Defoe, Preface to A True Relation, in The Earlier Life and Chief Works of Daniel Defoe, ed. by Henry Morley (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1889), p. 436.

<sup>2</sup>Here it is, ironically, the authorial disclaimer itself — the very device which Tiejé cites as an attempt to gain the reader's credence — that leads the reader to believe the work is fictional. Tiejé even cites the Preface to A True Relation as evidence for his argument ("Realism in Pre-Richardsonian Fiction," p. 228).

it would be hazardous to challenge any of what Defoe has written, for the challenge, as Sutherland puts it, "may only be shown to be unjustified by the discovery of still more contemporary evidence."<sup>1</sup>

Leaving aside Defoe's Preface, A True Relation is similar in method and effect to Archie Carr's "The Black Beach" which was referred to earlier. In each case there is nothing within the work itself which unmistakably signals that it is a genuine report of lived experience, nothing which asserts its verifiably true connection with the world external to the work.

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<sup>1</sup>Sutherland, "The Relation of Defoe's Fiction to his Non-fictional Writings," pp. 45-46.

## CHAPTER 2

### SOME NINETEENTH-CENTURY ANALOGUES

#### 2.1 Charles Reade and the "Research Novel"

During the nineteenth century a method began to be exploited in the writing of novels which has some bearing on the techniques used in the novelistic documentary, although the works in question are not themselves instances of the type. A passage from the Journal de Goncourts describes the method:

The novel since Balzac has nothing left in common with what our fathers understood by the novel. The actual novel is made with documents, related from life; or heightened; just as history is made with written documents.<sup>1</sup>

The word "heightened" immediately betrays the absence of any strong assertion of verifiable historicity in the works described. Heightening allows for — indeed implies — the inclusion of fictional elements in the novels, a feature necessarily absent in the novelistic documentary.

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<sup>1</sup>Journal de Goncourts, 24 October 1864. Quoted in Robert Liddell, Some Principles of Fiction (London: Jonathan Cape, 1953), p. 99. Italics in original.

Even the nature and use of the documentation are uncertain. Once fictionality is allowed for, incorporated documents lose the function they have in the novelistic documentary; they no longer signal absolute veracity. Also it seems likely from the statement that the works alluded to are indirectly based on documents. That is, they draw information from documents without either incorporating the documents or purporting to be documents themselves.

The kind of novel identified by the Goncourts might be described as a documentary novel or a research novel<sup>1</sup> in that it goes beyond the ordinary borrowings from the writer's lived experience and general knowledge, and the ordinary notebooks and journals which novelists often use to record ideas, perceptions, landscapes, and fragments of overheard conversation. In the case of a research novel, exhaustive research is carried out in some particular area, whether it be an institution, a place, a social group, or a contemporary issue or problem.<sup>2</sup> The findings are then incorporated into a prose narrative which examines, usually in great detail, certain aspects of the area covered in research. That this description sounds like a formula for a novel in the manner of Zola is not surprising, for Zola's novels, particularly his earlier ones, constitute the very type of the novel which the Goncourts refer. One of Zola's statements on method outlines in some detail just how research for a particular novel might be carried out:

A naturalistic novelist wants to write a novel about the world of the theatre. He starts out with this general idea without possessing a single fact or character. His first task will be to take notes on what he can learn about the world he wants to describe.

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<sup>1</sup>"Documentary novel" is the more familiar term. "Research novel" is used here to avoid confusion with the term "novelistic documentary."

<sup>2</sup>Its general rootedness in the society contemporary with, or nearly contemporary with, its author distinguishes the research novel from the serious historical novel which is also thoroughly researched. See above, pp. 38-43.

He has known this actor, attended that performance . . . . Then he will speak with the people who are best informed about this material, he will collect opinions, anecdotes, character portraits. That is not all. He will read documents. Finally he will visit the locale itself and spend some days in the theatre to become familiar with the minutest details; he will spend his evenings in the dressing room of an actress and will absorb the atmosphere as much as possible. And once this documentation is complete, the novel will write itself. The novelist must only arrange the facts logically.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, however detailed and thoroughly researched the bases for his novels might be, Zola was writing something very different from the novelistic documentary, for while the research novel like the novelistic documentary makes use of documents, the documented facts provide only local details as well as the background set of conditions and circumstances within which fictional events are enacted.

Perhaps the most famous nineteenth-century practitioner of the research novel in English was Charles Reade (1814-1884). Reade thought of his work as the continuation of the Dickensian pleas for reform, and he tended in his work to expose unsatisfactory conditions in contemporary institutions.<sup>2</sup> Like Zola, Reade amassed great quantities of data until even the indexes of the notebooks had to be indexed in a separate ledger.<sup>3</sup> The preface to Reade's best known work, Hard Cash (1863), which examines the abuses in contemporary insane-asylums, provides a

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<sup>1</sup>Cited in Georg Lukács, Writer and Critic, trans. by Arthur Kahn (London: Merlin Press, 1970), p. 120.

<sup>2</sup>Reade's conception of the novel's function is analysed in Richard Stang, The Theory of the Novel in England: 1850-1870 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1959), pp. 28-29.

<sup>3</sup>This is attested by Norman Collins in The Facts of Fiction (London: n.p., 1932), p. 192, but is not certain that his source is anything more than a passage in Reade's A Terrible Temptation (1871).

description of Reade's practice that is applicable to the research novel generally. Hard Cash is, according to Reade

a fiction built on truths; and these truths have been gathered by long, severe, systematic labour, from a multitude of volumes, pamphlets, journals, reports, blue-books, manuscript narratives, letters, and living people, whom I have sought out, examined, and cross examined.<sup>1</sup>

It is surprising that, with all their "systematic labour," Reade's novels make little attempt at sustaining anything approximating verisimilitude. His novels are packed with exciting and often highly improbable incidents as well as stock villains and heroes. In fact, despite Reade's professed interest in abuses and reforms, the works usually exhaust their meanings in external action.<sup>2</sup> It appears that Reade found it impossible to reconcile his dual conception of the novel — the novel as an instrument of reform and the novel as exciting entertainment. The novels tend to break in two, with the reform material devoted to the world outside the projected one on one side and the fictional events wholly subsumed in the projected world on the other.<sup>3</sup> The form of the novelistic documentary makes it possible to present a unified narrative

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<sup>1</sup>Charles Reade, Preface to Hard Cash (London: Collins, 1868), p. 5.

<sup>2</sup>It is revealing that Reade calls the writer Rolfe, a character in A Terrible Temptation obviously modeled on himself, "the writer of romances founded on facts." A Terrible Temptation (London: Chatto and Windus, 1913), p. 163.

<sup>3</sup>This tendency did not go unremarked by contemporary reviewers. See. C.H. Muller's analysis of the critical reaction to Reade's "documentary method" in his "Charles Reade's Hard Cash: 'False Art' and 'Pure Fiction.'" Unisa [University of South Africa] English Studies, IX (1971), 7-20.

which issues from a different though similar dual conception. In the novelistic documentary the projected world remains intact while simultaneously asserting its direct relationship with the world outside the work. That Reade could not effect such a synthesis does not point up a fault inherent in the research novel — one need only think of Zola or, for a more recent practitioner, Upton Sinclair — but Reade did lack an adequate formal principle for his dual conception of the novel.

## 2.2 Hazlitt's "Liber Amoris"

Liber Amoris: or The New Pygmalion was published anonymously in early May of 1823 and passed almost immediately into that literary twilight ordinarily reserved for the occult and the pornographic. The work records in great detail the awkward relationship between Hazlitt and a young girl named Sarah Walker during the period when Hazlitt's marriage was foundering.<sup>1</sup>

The work, prefaced by an Advertisement, is divided into three parts. The first consists primarily of a play-like presentation of seven conversations between Hazlitt, who appears simply as H, and Sarah Walker, who is given the initials S.L., and two letters which Hazlitt sent to Sarah when he was en route to Scotland in 1822 to obtain his divorce. Part Two is composed mainly of letters to C.P., who was in reality Peter George Patmore, father of Coventry Patmore. There is also one letter from Patmore to Hazlitt, a letter to Sarah, and several passages which describe the narrator's mood and thoughts at the time

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<sup>1</sup>A detailed account of the circumstances behind the work is given by Herschel Baker, William Hazlitt (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1962), pp. 410-28, et passim.

of the events. The final part consists of a long, three-part letter to J.S.K. (James Sheridan Knowles) which describes the unhappy outcome of the relationship.

Much of the interest in Liber Amoris as a possible early analogue to the corpus lies in the extent to which the materials incorporated into the account are authentic. The conversations in Part One are, obviously, reconstructions; however, there is some evidence that Hazlitt attempted to make the reconstructions as accurate as possible. Hazlitt's close friend Benjamin Haydon informed Mary Russell Mitford that Hazlitt had "written down all the conversations without colour, literal as they happened."<sup>1</sup> Haydon, though not, obviously, a witness to the conversations, was convinced that Hazlitt had made no effort to "heighten" or stylize the conversations. The letters furnish further insight into the conception of form which Hazlitt had of the work. There is no evidence that the final three-part letter to Knowles was ever actually sent,<sup>2</sup> but the correspondence between Hazlitt and Patmore still exists. Richard Le Gallienne produced an edition of Liber Amoris in 1893 which includes an appendix containing a number of the letters that were used in Liber Amoris as well as some that do not appear in the work.<sup>3</sup> A comparison of the originals with the corresponding version in the work makes it clear that Hazlitt allowed himself considerable licence with the letters. Many of the details which were not directly pertinent to the account were excised,

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<sup>1</sup>Quoted by Baker, William Hazlitt, p. 417.

<sup>2</sup>See Baker, William Hazlitt, p. 410, and P.P. Howe, ed. Vol. IX of The Complete Works of William Hazlitt (London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1930-1934), p. 266.

<sup>3</sup>Richard Le Gallienne, Appendix to the editor's Introduction to Liber Amoris (London: Elkin Matthews and John Lane, 1893), pp. ixv-xciii.

passages were added, and much of what remained from the original was polished. Still, the originals were very close models for what finally appeared in the work itself.

At least two questions arise from Hazlitt's use of the letters: the extent to which altering them fictionalizes the narrative, and the extent to which private letters can provide a documentary basis in a work like Liber Amoris. If the letters addressed to J.S.K. were never in fact sent to Knowles, then they are at best pseudo-documents. Altering documents for artistic purposes is likewise a fictionalizing procedure; the letters cease to conform to letters in the actual world. It is more difficult to determine whether an author's private letters, even if unchanged, can, when unsupported by other kinds of documents, assume in a work about himself the same function carried out by documents in the novelistic documentary. A central function of documentation in the novelistic documentary is the provision for verifiability; it establishes a reality outside the work against which the work can be checked. While readers today might have access to Hazlitt's private correspondence, his contemporary readers did not. For them Liber Amoris lacked the verifiability we associate with the novelistic documentary.

A further problem is raised by the Advertisement prefaced to Liber Amoris. The Advertisement states the work to be the unaltered autobiographical account of an un-named "native of North Britain, who left his country early in life."<sup>1</sup> This somewhat belated use of what is on the surface a conventional authorial disclaimer creates the same paradoxical situation already seen in Defoe's A True Relation: an essentially true account is passed off as the true account of another person with the result that, to a reader familiar with the customary implications of the authorial disclaimer, the work will appear to be

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<sup>1</sup>Hazlitt, Advertisement to Liber Amoris, in Vol. IX of Complete Works, p. 97.

fictional.<sup>1</sup> Here once again the effect of the disclaimer is exactly the opposite of the one which Tiejé associates with the device. Unfortunately it is difficult to ascertain just how the work was received by its contemporary audience. The Examiner, reviewing the work on the eleventh of May,<sup>2</sup> seemed to accept the remarks about the anonymous "nature of North Britain" at face value. However, as Le Gallienne notes,<sup>3</sup> the review continually refers to him in such a way that readers might easily have suspected the reviewer was being ironical. If a reader were to have thought that, he would no doubt have concluded that the native of North Britain did not exist and the work was fictional. The reviewer might indeed have been treating the disclaimer ironically, but if he was his reason is likely to have been something other than the belief that the work was fictional. The publisher of the Examiner was John Hunt, the brother of Hazlitt's close friend, Leigh Hunt, and Hunt was also the publisher of Liber Amoris. In short, the reviewer would very likely have known the origin of Liber Amoris. His irony would have stemmed not from a suspicion that the work was fictional but from the knowledge that the so called native of North Britain was really Hazlitt.

An additional obstacle to ascertaining how Liber Amoris was received by the reading public is that its protective covering of anonymity was quickly shattered. On June ninth John Bull exposed Hazlitt and shortly thereafter published a scathing attack complete with one of Hazlitt's letters to Sarah Walker.<sup>4</sup> Coming as it did less

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<sup>1</sup>It is possible that Hazlitt wished the work to be read as a fictional narrative and used the disclaimer for just that purpose.

<sup>2</sup>"Literary Notices: Liber Amoris; or, the New Pygmalion," The Examiner, 11 May 1823, pp. 313-14.

<sup>3</sup>Le Gallienne, Introduction to Liber Amoris, p. xxxix.

<sup>4</sup>Howe, Vol. IX of Complete Works, p. 262.

than a month after the Examiner review and less than six weeks after the first publication of the work itself, the article in John Bull left too little time for a public response to be formulated in any recoverable manner. What readers took it to be — a fictional narrative, a true account — can only be guessed at. Blackwood's, Hazlitt's inveterate enemy, called the work "not a novel, but a history . . . a veritable transcript of the feelings and doings of an individual."<sup>1</sup> But Blackwood's was more interested in attacking Hazlitt than in determining the work's form. The veracity which Blackwood's alleges was only ammunition to be used in making Hazlitt look as culpable as possible. In fact, as we have seen, the narrative is not a "veritable" transcript. Its identifiable departures from strict veracity distinguish it not only from the novelistic documentary but from factual narrative generally. Its eccentric nature is perhaps best described by P.P. Howe's phrase, "semi-fictional narrative."<sup>2</sup>

### 2.3 Poe's "The Mystery of Marie Roget"

In November of 1842 Edgar Allan Poe published a short narrative which he sub-titled "A Sequel to 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue.'" This story, "The Mystery of Marie Roget," was a barely disguised account of a widely publicized crime which took place in New York a year and a half earlier. Names were changed — Marie Roget was in real life Mary Rogers — and the scene of the incident was shifted to Paris, but Poe was so little concerned with disguising his narrative

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<sup>1</sup>Quoted in Le Gallienne, Introduction to Liber Amoris, p. xxxvii. Italics in original.

<sup>2</sup>Howe, Vol. IX of Complete Works, p. 261.

that for a later edition he provided explanatory footnotes identifying the people and places for readers who might have forgotten the incident.

Several features of the work would seem to preclude its being a short-form equivalent to the novelistic documentary. There is, for instance, the changing of names, but that in itself could not disqualify the work. Names are changed in Lewis's The Children of Sánchez, albeit for different reasons. Two more crucial issues are the manner in which the narrative is presented and the status and use of the incorporated documentation.

Poe had obviously studied the published reports of the mysterious disappearance of Mary Rogers very carefully,<sup>1</sup> and his attempt to solve the mystery depended on a detailed analysis and careful interpretation of newspaper accounts. However, the lengthy excerpts which form the incorporated documentation of the narrative are only more or less closely based on articles which appeared in New York papers. The changes introduced by Poe are enough to falsify the documents. While they are public documents to an extent that Hazlitt's letters are not, so that at least on that count the work moves closer to the kind of work included in the corpus, once changed they can no longer provide a fixed external reality against which Poe's narrative can be checked and proved accurate. Moreover, the presentational method of "Marie Roget" generates an even more thoroughgoing fictional framework than that of Liber Amoris with its Advertisement. "Marie Roget" re-introduces M. Dupin, the fictional detective-hero of "The Murders in the Rue Morgue." It is Dupin who conducts the examination of the newspaper accounts and "solves" the mystery, which in reality went unsolved. Poe's short story then, while it adheres to a large degree to events and circumstances

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<sup>1</sup>See Samuel Copp Worthen, "Poe and the Beautiful Cigar Girl," American Literature, XX (1948), 305-12, and Richard D. Altick, The Scholar Adventurers (1950); rpt. New York: The Free Press, 1966), pp. 99-102.

taken from the external world, does not exhibit the distinguishing features of the novelistic documentary. Instead of being a short-form equivalent to the novelistic documentary, "Marie Roget" is a typical instance of a work "based on" real events; though unlike many such works, it actually adapts and incorporates the documents on which it is based.<sup>1</sup>

#### 2.4 De Quincey's "On Murder Considered as one of the Fine Arts"

Because of certain striking similarities to Capote's In Cold Blood, De Quincey's On Murder Considered as one of the Fine Arts seems initially to be a more exact analogue to the novelistic documentary than any of the other works examined in this chapter. Nevertheless, for all the similarities in subject matter and even in treatment, On Murder reveals eccentricities of form which go well beyond those of the novelistic documentary, and lacks certain structural features which are defining characteristics of the novelistic documentary.

Some of the peculiarities of form in De Quincey's work can be explained by reference to the history of its composition. The first of its three parts was published in Blackwood's in February, 1827. The second did not appear until November, 1839 -- also in Blackwood's. The two pieces were then reprinted in slightly altered form in the 1854 Collected Works together with a lengthy, previously unpublished Postscript. And to the composite work De Quincey gave the title by which

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<sup>1</sup>Melville's Benito Cereno is an even more famous nineteenth-century example of a work "based on" both real events and genuine documents. Melville's treatment of the original documents is examined in Harold H. Scudder, "Melville's Benito Cereno and Captain Delano's Voyages," PMLA, XLIII (1928), 502-532.

it is now known. The most pressing formal problem which emerges from the history of the work's composition is the degree to which its three parts are syncretized into one work.

The first part, which originally appeared in the guise of an anonymous letter to the editor of Blackwood's, purports to be a lecture delivered to the Society of Connoisseurs of Murder. The anonymous correspondent appends an introductory paragraph to the lecture, the original manuscript of which had in some unexplained way come into his hands. Part Two is presented as a continuation of Part One in spite of the fact that it appeared some dozen years later. In addition, the second part dispenses with the device of a found manuscript; the "editor" has disappeared and the narrator who delivered the original lecture now writes in his own person throughout. In the third section a still greater change in the position and authority of the narrator occurs; all overt masks or roles are dropped and the narrator is made identical to the implied author himself. The lecture of the first section presents an ironically rendered history of the "art" of murder. Like the second part, which provides a description and narrative of the invented Society of Connoisseurs, its mode is one of Swiftian irony in which various forms of murder are presented with mock erudition and hyperbolic seriousness.

The ironic tone of the first two sections serves as a unifying device, but their relation — aside from cross references and links in subject matter — with the third section is more problematical. In the Postscript the ironic gap between implied author and narrator collapses, and, after a brief statement of the Swiftian intentions of the first two sections, the narrative moves into a detailed presentation of the Williams and McKean murder cases. It is really only the third section that significantly relates to the novelistic documentary generally and to In Cold Blood in particular, and this is the case whether On Murder is taken as one work or, as David Masson describes it, a "series."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>David Masson, ed., The Collected Writings of Thomas De Quincey, XIII (London: A. and C. Black, 1897), 9.

De Quincey appears to have had a continuing interest in crimes of violence. During his brief tenure as editor of The Westmorland Gazette (July, 1818 to November, 1819) he devoted an unusual amount of space to reporting criminal court cases, assize reports, and murder trials.<sup>1</sup> In the Postscript he was able to indulge this interest at length and, as he put it, "make the reader acquainted circumstantially with . . . three memorable cases of murder."<sup>2</sup> It is, in part, the circumstantiality of his reconstruction that reminds one of Capote's work, and further resemblances can be seen in their very similar evocation of atmosphere and handling of suspense. De Quincey even creates suspense by breaking off the narrative of the first Williams murder at the very moment before the act, in much the way that Capote breaks off in In Cold Blood, and with much the same technical effect. Action is not narrated when there is no witness to it; only when characters within the narrative are able to reconstruct the events does the narrator make them available to the reader. De Quincey, unlike Capote, is explicit about what he is doing:

Let us . . . in vision, attach ourselves to Mary [a servant who is absent when the crime is committed]; and, when all is over, let us come back with her, again raise the curtain, and read the dreadful record of all that has passed in her absence.<sup>3</sup>

For all its similarities to In Cold Blood, however, On Murder is not a novelistic documentary. De Quincey's reconstruction works largely by logical inference — much like that of Poe's M. Dupin —

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<sup>1</sup>Horace Ainsworth Eaton, Thomas De Quincey (London: Oxford University Press, 1936), pp. 226-45, provides an account of De Quincey's connection with The Westmorland Gazette.

<sup>2</sup>De Quincey, On Murder Considered as one of the Fine Arts in Vol. XIII of The Complete Writings, ed. by Masson, pp. 73-74.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid. p. 85

rather than through direct interviews and research.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, he records characters' thoughts when no record of them would have been available to the researcher, a device which has the effect of fictionalizing the narrative. And although he discusses written accounts, public testimony and recollections, and press reports, he never directly incorporates them. Instead he refers to unidentified sources: "a lady who saw him [John Williams] under examination," "my informant," and "the concurrent testimony of many witnesses."<sup>2</sup> The status of On Murder is in one respect similar to that of Defoe's A True Relation of the Apparition of one Mrs. Veal; as the events presented lose whatever notoriety they might have achieved, the work might easily cease to be accorded its rightful veracity. In the absence of editorial footnotes and explanations, the reader has no evidence that what he is reading is factual, and this is particularly true when De Quincey introduces fictionalizing devices into the narrative. Nothing in the work constitutes an overt assertion of its verifiability, and so the Postscript is, whatever its similarities to works in the corpus, something other than a novelistic documentary. That is not to say the work is in any way at fault; nothing requires that De Quincey write a novelistic documentary. On the other hand, one of the advantages of the structural properties of the novelistic documentary is that they direct a writer into using true events as something more than subject matter for an exciting but generically ambiguous narrative. In a novelistic documentary the generic premise is clear — the reader can identify the work for what it is and deal with it on that basis. De Quincey's Postscript, on the other hand, lacks such generic indentifiability, which, though it may not alter the work's artistic value, places it more at the whim of posterity than it need have been.

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<sup>1</sup>He was of course reconstructing events which occurred many years before the publication of the Postscript. The Williams murders occurred in 1811, the McKean in 1826.

<sup>2</sup>De Quincey, On Murder, p. 77.

PART III

STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF THE CORPUS WORKS

## CHAPTER 1

### NARRATIVE SITUATION

#### 1.1 Point of View

The sections of this chapter and the one that follows it will be devoted to the analysis of certain major structural features of the corpus works. Although much of the analysis will be concerned simply with the laying bare of structural features and their implications in terms of the meanings of the works, the main objective will be to explore the interrelation of the treatment of structural details and generic status. Because of the special nature of the novelistic documentary, certain of its structural features take on forms which are typical neither of factual narrative types nor of orthodox novels. These altered forms in turn point to (as well as shape) the special generic status of the novelistic documentary.

Unfortunately, a choice has to be made at this point between an exhaustive examination of one or two aspects of structure and a necessarily more hurried and comparatively superficial examination of a wider range of structural features. Because so little critical work has been devoted to the novelistic documentary, the less deep but more comprehensive examination of a variety of structural features is preferable. Therefore the approach to be taken in these chapters

is an examination of selected structural details of the corpus works in terms of the various concepts — time, point of view, and so on — listed in the table of contents. This approach has been chosen because it provides a convenient schema for the comparison of generically similar works. Before such an approach can be undertaken, however, it is necessary to anticipate and counteract several misunderstandings which might arise with regard to the implications of the schema that has been constructed. In the first place, the schema must not be understood as an attempt to erect a theoretical model for the study of the novel. The construction of a valid theoretical model and the argumentation necessary to support such a model constitute an undertaking of considerable magnitude and could not be attempted in a study of a particular narrative type. Instead, the present study will borrow, adapt, and order such conceptual categories as have been established in existing criticism of the novel. The second caveat is the obvious but necessary point that the application of the schema does not pretend to exhaust the corpus works. No approach can expect to exhaust works of any complexity. The final point is that the concepts, while useful, are only apparently separate things. In actual fact they overlap and intertwine in any number of ways. Henry James raises this issue with regard to one or two concepts in his famous questions, "What is character but the determination of incident? What is incident but the illustration of character?"<sup>1</sup> One can abstract structural concepts for purposes of analysis, but the further any of the concepts is pursued

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<sup>1</sup>Henry James, "The Art of Fiction," in Henry James: Selected Literary Criticism, ed. by Morris Shapira (1963; rpt. Harmondsworth; Penguin, 1968), p. 88. Arnold Kettle makes a similar point in his observation that "one aspect of a book is always closely connected, if not interwoven with another. You cannot really separate, say, 'character' from 'plot,' 'narrative' from 'background.'" (An Introduction to the English Novel, Vol. I, p. 11.)

the more it merges into the other categories. Far from being a drawback, however, this feature of the approach is positively beneficial since it draws attention from isolated components of a work back to an awareness of the work's wholeness and integrity. In a sense then, the approach is circular; for just as closer perception of form reveals the relation among its structural elements, so the examination of structure leads back to awareness of the seamless whole of form. The hope is, of course, that along the way something of importance will have been learned about the work.

Since the critical work of James and the distillation of many of his theories in Percy Lubbock's The Craft of Fiction (1921), analysis of point of view has been of central concern in criticism of the novel. In recent years some critics, Wayne C. Booth in particular, have found it necessary to direct attention to the inadequacy of many statements about point of view.<sup>1</sup> What is probably the chief inadequacy of much criticism devoted to the analysis of point of view is the failure, only partially corrected by Booth, to recognize that point of view is only one aspect of a larger critical category. Following the terminology of Franz Stanzel, this larger critical category will be called the narrative situation.<sup>2</sup> Narrative situation comprises all aspects of the mediative process which is a central feature of narrative art; it is concerned with all the relationships established among the reader, the author, the narrator, the presented world, and the interiority of characters within the presented world. According to Stanzel, "the

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<sup>1</sup>Wayne C. Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), pp. 8-9 et passim. Cf. Scholes and Kellogg, The Nature of Narrative, p. 265.

<sup>2</sup>Franz Stanzel, Narrative Situations in the Novel, trans. by James P. Puskas (1955; rpt. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1971). Stanzel defines the narrative situation on p. 6.

narrative situation can reveal the angle, the bias, and the other kinds of references and relationships through which the narrated material is presented to the reader."<sup>1</sup>

The most familiar major component of the narrative situation is, of course, point of view. Norman Friedman attempts to define point of view by posing four questions, the answers to which are intended to establish the distinctions embraced by the term. His questions are:

- 1) Who talks to the reader? (author in third or first person, character in first, or ostensibly no one);
- 2) From what position (angle) regarding the story does he tell it? (above, periphery, center, front, or shifting);
- 3) What channels of information does the narrator use . . . ;
- and 4) At what distance does he place the reader from the story? (near, far, or shifting).<sup>2</sup>

Questions two and four reveal the extent to which point of view is a spatial analogy ("angle," "above," "periphery," "near," "far"). These quasi-spatial aspects of point of view are balanced by the temporal implications of a second major component of the narrative situation, which, lacking an established term, will be called in this study the temporal vantage point. There are a number of other components of the narrative situation; however, these two cover many of the significant distinctions which the narrative situation comprises. The only other aspect of the narrative situation that will be examined in any detail in this chapter — the problem of authority — has been included because it is of particular importance in the novelistic documentary.

The ordering of the structural concepts examined in these chapters is not purely arbitrary. Some attempt has been made to

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid. p. 29.

<sup>2</sup>Norman Friedman, "Point of View in Fiction: The Development of a Critical Concept," PMLA, LXX (1955), rpt. in The Theory of the Novel, ed. by Philip Stevick (New York: The Free Press, 1967), p. 118.

arrange them in a logical sequence; the unifying ideas generated by a work, for instance, having a more generalized significance, should not be tackled before the more particular structural elements such as point of view and arcs of tension have been carefully examined, though there is no necessary reason for examining, say, time before space. In addition, the order in which the works are examined in terms of each particular concept is not entirely arbitrary. In different works different structural elements will appear to be determinative, will seem, in other words, to be main meaning-bearing elements. In keeping with this fact, each of the corpus works will be particularly fruitful when approached through one concept and less so when approached through another. For example, Mailer's The Armies of the Night manipulates point of view in a radical and unfamiliar manner. Capote, on the other hand, is more traditional (though no less sophisticated) in his handling of point of view. In this section, then, Mailer's work must take precedence. Not everyone will agree with the priorities established in the separate sections, and no doubt different sequences of works might be valid in some or even all of them. Nevertheless, the sequences which appear have been established only after careful consideration of the varying degrees with which the individual works call attention to their handling of the different structural elements.

One of the most striking features of The Armies of the Night is Mailer's practice of referring to himself throughout in the third person. The central figure, Mailer himself, is referred to either by name or by one of a number of titles: the Novelist, the Historian, the Participant. Mailer establishes this peculiar treatment of point of view at the beginning of his narrative. His first sentence is: "From the outset, let us bring you news of your protagonist."<sup>1</sup> Initially there

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<sup>1</sup> Armies, p. 3.

is nothing unusual about this since the reader does not know yet that the protagonist is Mailer. However, the news to which he refers is contained in an article from Time magazine about Mailer's activities before and during the March on the Pentagon in October of 1967. The article and the previous reference to the "protagonist" prepare the way for the full revelation of point of view in the first sentence of the following section :

On a day somewhat early in September, the year of the first March on the Pentagon, 1967, the phone rang one morning and Norman Mailer, operating on his own principle of war games and random play, picked it up.<sup>1</sup>

The point of view thus established is a peculiar conflation of elements characteristic of very different narrative situations. But before these can be discussed, the terminology which is to be used in this chapter must be clarified. There have been several attempts made at establishing typologies of point of view. This chapter follows the one suggested by Stanzel in which he distinguishes three major narrative situations — the authorial, the first-person, and the figural, each with its characteristic point of view. The authorial narrative situation is characterized by the spatial and temporal separation of the authorial narrator's world and the presented world. A typical example, examined by Stanzel, is Tom Jones. In the first-person narrative situation, the narrator is a figure within the presented world. The figural narrative situation is distinguished by the use of the central intelligence as a reflecting medium rendered in the third person. The example used by Stanzel is James's The Ambassadors. As Stanzel points out, these are not eternally fixed, separate types. "They represent, rather, the typical forms of the endlessly variable

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid, p. 4.

narrative situation of the novel,"<sup>1</sup> and a potentially infinite number of transitional or intermediate forms is possible.

Mailer's The Armies of the Night is an instance of one such intermediate form, bearing as it does elements of the points of view characteristic of both first-person and authorial narrative situations. The reader is confronted with two facts which are unusual only in their combination. There is Mailer, the author of the book. And there is Mailer the figure within the work rendered in the third person. On the one hand, then, the fact that the author of a novelistic work narrates in the third person obliges the reader to make the requisite distinction between author and implied author or authorial narrator. However, the additional fact that the author and a figure within the work are the same person makes this difficult. How does one interpose an authorial narrator between author and figure when these are nominally identical? And so one accepts that the narrator exists within the presented world even though this ordinarily requires the use of the first person.

As unusual as Mailer's treatment of point of view is, there are precedents; not many, but they do exist. One of the precedents, Thackeray's The History of Henry Esmond, Esq., Written by Himself, is cited by Stanzel as a combination of authorial and first-person points of view.<sup>2</sup> In Henry Esmond the narrator narrates about himself mainly in the third person, reverting on occasion to first-person references. The work exhibits, in consequence, the potential for the Olympian detachment of narrator from presented figure which is characteristic of the authorial narrative situation, as well as the

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<sup>1</sup>Stanzel, Narrative Situations, p. 164. It should be pointed out that Stanzel's original title was Die typischen Erzählsituationens im Roman, literally, The Typical Narrative Situations in the Novel.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 42-3 et passim.

potential for breaking such detachment by stressing the identity of narrator and presented figure which is characteristic of the first-person narrative situation. To a degree this is similar to the effects achieved by the treatment of point of view in The Armies of the Night; however, The Armies of the Night contains an additional significant factor. In Thackeray's work both narrator and presented figure are invented. The author hands over the responsibility for narrating to the invented Esmond who then narrates about himself. In The Armies of the Night, author, narrator, and presented figure are all identified as Mailer. The author, Mailer, is not in theory identical in all respects with the narrator, Mailer; and both are clearly differentiated in the narrative from the presented figure, Mailer. But the distinctions are blurred by the nominal identity of the three. There is not the overt and explicit separation of author and narrator which obtains in Henry Esmond.

Among factual narrative types there is an even closer precedent to The Armies of the Night — The Education of Henry Adams.<sup>1</sup> Here the author, Henry Adams, is nominally identical with the presented figure, Henry Adams, who is referred to in the third person throughout. However, in keeping with Adams's avowed intention to efface the ego,<sup>2</sup> only the authorial aspects of the chosen point of view are exploited. The Olympian position is never dropped in order to exploit the kind of intimate revelation of self made possible by the identity of narrator and presented figure. Although there is a danger

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<sup>1</sup>Henry Adams, The Education of Henry Adams: An Autobiography (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1918). The similarities between The Education of Henry Adams and The Armies of the Night are so striking as to make one consider the possibility of the one being something in the way of a source for the other. In addition to similarities in narrative situation, there is the attempt to penetrate and anatomize American society (which can, of course, be mere coincidence) and, what is much more suggestive, a similar use of "titles" for the presented figures. Adams uses such titles as "the editor," "the historian," "the private secretary," and, on one occasion, "the Titan of Unity" (p. 455) — the only capitalized title.

<sup>2</sup>Adams, Preface to The Education of Henry Adams, p. x.

of overstating the point, there is a sense in which The Armies of the Night amalgamates the features of Henry Esmond and The Education of Henry Adams. As a novelistic documentary it synthesizes aspects of factual narrative (Henry Adams) and of the novel (Henry Esmond). Narrator and presented figure are nominally identical (Henry Esmond), and author and presented figure are nominally identical (Henry Adams). The result is something which neither a conventional factual narrative nor an orthodox novel could ordinarily achieve.

Although narrator and presented figure in The Armies of the Night are nominally the same, their rôles are very different, and since the different rôles conform for the most part to the distinctions made between narrator and figure in the first-person narrative situation, the terminology applied for first-person narration will be used here. A distinction will therefore be made between narrating self and experiencing self.<sup>1</sup> It is to this separation of rôles that Henry James refers when he describes the first person narrator as "hero and historian."<sup>2</sup> James's terms have seldom been so precisely accurate as they are in the case of The Armies of the Night, for the Mailer who broods over the difficulties of constructing a reliable history of the March on the Pentagon is also his own existential hero: absurd, grand, at times foolish, and at times, in his own view at least, magnificent. Mailer as narrator is very self-conscious about the narrative stance he has chosen. In one long passage he gives the reasons for selecting himself as the central figure of the work. "To write an intimate history of an event which places its focus on a central figure who is not central to the event, is to inspire immediate questions about the competence

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<sup>1</sup>The terms are Stanzel's.

<sup>2</sup>James, The Art of the Novel, p. 320.

of the historian. Or, indeed, his honourable motive."<sup>1</sup> For Mailer the March is an ambiguous event, and its ambiguity cannot be resolved by focussing the narrative on any of the people directly involved with its planning and execution. "For that, an eyewitness who is a participant but not a vested partisan is required, further he must be not only involved, but ambiguous in his own proportions."<sup>2</sup> What we get then is an experiencing self who is the central figure of the work but not, in his own estimation, a central figure in the events narrated. In actual fact, as the Time article suggests, Mailer was as far as the public was concerned very much a central figure in those events. His position is not the same as Kuznetsov's position in Babi Yar, since Kuznetsov is very definitely not a central figure in the broader range of events narrated in the work. When Mailer, in Book Two of The Armies of the Night, moves from an eyewitness account to a broader historical rendering of the March, Mailer as experiencing self falls away and only his narrating self remains active.

In an early passage Mailer provides an analogy for the unusual narrative situation of the work. He writes, "tonight he would be both speaker and master of ceremonies. The two would conflict, but interestingly."<sup>3</sup> Throughout The Armies of the Night Mailer, both as figure and as narrator, shifts from one rôle or method to another in order to gain the maximum effect from his unorthodox stance. These shifts are particularly noticeable in the methods used for rendering unspoken thought. Ordinarily in a first-person narrative situation consciousness is rendered according to one or both of two methods:

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<sup>1</sup>Armies, p. 53.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 29.

thought report and interior monologue,<sup>1</sup> the first clearly mediated through the narrating self ("I thought I would never see her again."), the second apparently unmediated. Mailer does in fact use straightforward thought report for many of the thoughts of the experiencing self. And when he speculates on the thoughts of others he puts the results of his speculations in the form of thought report as well. On one occasion the reported thoughts of the experiencing self are put in quotation marks: "'Yes, we have to get arrested today,' Mailer thought, 'no alternative for it.'"<sup>2</sup> However, Mailer's chosen narrative situation is only partly first person, and the decision to apply to it the terminology appropriate to first-person narration must not be permitted to obscure certain features which do not conform to orthodox first-person narration.

In fact, the most frequently used means for rendering consciousness in The Armies of the Night is neither straightforward thought report nor interior monologue. Instead, it is style indirect libre, a device most often associated with the use of the central intelligence. The following examples illustrate Mailer's use of the device:

. . . no chance to do more than pick up later — later!  
after de Grazia and Goodman had finished dead-assing  
the crowd. Traitor de Grazia! Sicilian de Grazia!<sup>3</sup>

He would not stand a chance with this Marshal — there  
seemed no place to hit him where he'd be vulnerable;  
stone larynx, leather testicles, ice cubes for eyes.  
And he had his Marshal's club in his hand as well.  
Brother! Bring back the Nazi!<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Stanzel, Narrative Situations, the chapter entitled "Excursus: The Rendering of Consciousness," p. 145-57.

<sup>2</sup>Armies, p. 97.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 144.

It is obvious that the exclamations are the unspoken thoughts of the experiencing self, but only on closer inspection does it become clear that all the quoted material is unspoken thought, which is rendered neither as thought report nor as interior monologue with a shift to the first person. Instead it is represented thought which retains the third-person and past tense frame of the surrounding narration. This kind of rendering, in which thoughts are presented in at most only slightly mediated form, is available to Mailer because his presented figure is himself (he is, as it were, his own central intelligence), and the presentation of himself in the third person enables him to substitute style indirect libre for interior monologue, which is the more conventional form of rendered thought in first-person narrative situations.

As if his method were not confusing enough without further elaboration, Mailer employs yet another device which alters the status of the passages presented in style indirect libre. Style indirect libre has the effect of effacing the gap between narrator and presented figure. Mailer, throughout Book One of The Armies of the Night, constantly opens and closes the gap between his narrating self and his experiencing self. One way he accomplishes this is to end almost all of the long analytical passages presented in style indirect libre with a direct attribution of the presented thought to the experiencing self. The form which those attributions take can be seen in the following excerpts:

These Leviathan ruminations and meditations on the nature of the March coming up, and the reasons for their participation without much discussion now completed, ch-ch-ch-click! in the touch of the tea cup on Mailer 's lip, let us move on.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid. p. 88.

and after another lengthy passage :

It was not a happy meditation.<sup>1</sup>

In these excerpts the gap between narrator and figure is re-established, and the passages of style indirect libre are retrospectively treated as something approximating conventional thought report.

One final device further reveals the range of effects which Mailer's unusual point of view makes available to him. At several points in the work, Mailer exploits his third person presentation for fully authorial effects; that is, he opens the gap between narrator and presented figure to its maximum and employs, if only momentarily, an authorial mode of presentation. The authorial point of view is noted for, and often condemned for, its capacity for the extreme authorial intrusion — the explicit revelation of the rôle of the authorial narrator as creator or at least manipulator. Mailer, in exploiting as many of the potentialities of his chosen point of view as possible, does not overlook this one. Showing how he does this requires quoting at some length, but the self-consciousness of technique revealed by the passage justifies the lengthiness.

One of the oldest devices of the novelist — some would call it a vice — is to bring his narrative (after many an excursion) to a pitch of excitement where the reader no matter how cultivated is reduced to a beast who can pant no faster than to ask, "And then what? Then what happens?" At which point the novelist, consummate cruel lover, introduces a digression, aware that delay at this point helps to deepen the addiction of his audience.

This, of course, was Victorian practice. Modern audiences, accustomed to superhighways, put aside their reading at the first annoyance and turn to the television set. So a modern novelist must apologize, even apologize profusely, for daring to leave his narrative, he must in fact absolve himself of the charge of employing a device, he must plead necessity.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 154.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 133.

The treatment of point of view in The Armies of the Night represents something of a victory for Mailer. In his Advertisements for Myself, Mailer admits to a long and, to him, unsuccessful struggle to master the intricate technical devices involved in the handling of point of view, which, he writes, is "the most powerful leverage in fiction."<sup>1</sup>

Oscar Lewis describes the point of view established in The Children of Sánchez in the phrase, the "method of multiple autobiographies."<sup>2</sup> In the work, five of the Sánchezes, Jesús the father and four of his children, Manuel, Roberto, Consuelo, and Marta, present accounts of their experiences as individuals and as members of the family. The effect is similar to the intricate relativism of the film, Rashomon, in which events are rendered according to viewpoints and experiences of several participants.<sup>3</sup> One narrator presents an account of an event or sequence of events, and in a later narrative a different narrator gives a substantially altered account. Wim Toebosch has cited Laurence Durrell's The Alexandria Quartet as an analogous treatment of point of view<sup>4</sup>, which, though only to a limited extent, it is. The four novels of The Alexandria Quartet, particularly the first three, present differing accounts of the same events and situations. However, the various narrators stand in a relation to each other which often provides for correction of knowledge. A narrator having given

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<sup>1</sup>Mailer, Advertisements for Myself (1961; rpt. London: Panther, 1968), p. 204. Cf. Leeds, The Structural Vision, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup>Children, p. xi.

<sup>3</sup>In the Preface to Five Families Lewis refers to "the Rashomon-like technique of seeing the family through the eyes of each of its members" (p. 4).

<sup>4</sup>Toebosch, "Recente Amerikaanse literatuur," p. 404.

his account can be directly corrected by another. The narrators of The Children of Sánchez, in contrast, do not have access to each other's accounts, and so no corrections in their knowledge can occur. Because of this difference in the relationships of the narratives, The Children of Sánchez foregoes one of the major features of The Alexandria Quartet — the gradual development of Darley from limited insight to fuller realization, a development which is made possible through Darley's access to the knowledge of other narrator-participants such as Balthazar and Pursewarden. A closer analogue than the one suggested by Toebosch would be Faulkner's As I Lay Dying with its exploitation of multiple point of view. Here, as in Lewis's work, the accounts of the fifteen narrator-participants are independent of each other in the sense that no narrator has access to the account of any other narrator. In both works, only the reader has the ability to collate accounts and learn from one what is missing from another.

Both Booth and Richard Chase have argued that Faulkner's use of multiple point of view necessarily implies the presence of an omniscient authorial narrator who "knows everything about each of [the narrators'] minds."<sup>1</sup> The point is debatable, but it certainly becomes true the moment the reader tries, whether by intention or accident, to concretize the act of narrating. In the case of a fictional narrative the reader might accept multiple point of view as a convention and overlook the problems involved in concretizing the act of narrating; in a work which claims factual authenticity, however, convention can not so easily gain acceptance. Whether or not one establishes the presence of an authorial narrator in The Children of Sánchez depends largely on what relation the Introduction is assumed to have with the

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<sup>1</sup>Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction, p. 161. Also, Richard Chase, The American Novel and its Tradition (Garden City, N.Y. : Doubleday Anchor, 1957), p. 207.

body of the work. With novels this relation varies. The Preface to Moll Flanders is an integral part of the work, but the prefaces of Conrad and James are addenda; they are not structurally integrated into the works they are appended to. The Introduction to The Children of Sánchez would seem to occupy an intermediate position. It is not part of the structured fabric of the narratives, yet its presence is necessary in order to identify for the reader the nature of the work and the manner in which it was composed. In so doing, the Introduction specifies what is not exactly an authorial narrator but an editor or compiler who is responsible for the processes of selection and arrangement to which the materials have been submitted and whose presence in the narratives themselves assumes the position of an incorporated audience signalled by instances of direct address such as "as you can see" and "don't you think?"

Perhaps the most important function of the point of view established by "multiple autobiographies" is the revelation of the multifaceted effects of urban poverty on the personalities and perceptions of the different narrators. The reader perceives the same basic set of experiences and environmental circumstances as it is mirrored in the perceptions of five very different people. At a superficial level the differences are revealed in divergent memories of events. These are too numerous to examine in detail, and they vary in significance. At times the divergent accounts of an event are so detailed and circumstantial that their divergence is particularly striking. For example, in her second narrative Consuelo gives an account of a fight involving herself, Manuel, and Marta.<sup>1</sup> In the following narrative, Marta describes the same fight,<sup>2</sup> though one recognizes that it is

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<sup>1</sup>Children, p. 266.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid. p. 303.

the same fight only because the descriptions of its cause coincide. Otherwise the accounts are so different that it is difficult to grasp that they record the same event.

At a higher level of significance, the multiple points of view reveal different interpretations and evaluations of events and situations. Ordinarily the authorial narrator or narrating self supplies interpretations and valuations which characters or experiencing selves are incapable of making. In this way the reader is put in a position superior to characters and experiencing selves because their inadequacies of knowledge, understanding, and value are corrected through signals which operate outside their sphere of activity and so lie beyond their ken. In The Children of Sánchez, however, a strict relativism is observed; each narrator presents his own valuations and interpretations, and their validity is left ambiguous. Inconsistencies whether of fact or of interpretation and value are left uncorrected so that the reader's understanding of the narrators, their separate narratives, and the work as a whole develops through a frequently obstructed and entangled cumulative process which in the end requires him to accept the multifariousness of the narrators' experiences, perceptions, interpretation, and evaluations as one of the meaningful elements of the presented world.

The double focus of Babi Yar has an effect on the treatment of point of view which can be elucidated by a distinction which Norman Friedman makes in his typology of points of view. Friedman divides first-person point of view into two categories: "I" as Witness and "I" as Protagonist.<sup>1</sup> Within those portions of Babi Yar which concentrate on the experiences and maturation of the experiencing self,

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<sup>1</sup>Friedman, "Point of View in Fiction," pp. 123-27.

"I" as Protagonist predominates. "I" as Witness predominates in those portions of the work having to do with the Nazi occupation of Kiev and the atrocities of the Babi Yar ravine. However, there are limits to what an adolescent boy, particularly one who survived the occupation, could witness himself.

It was pointed out in the analysis of point of view in The Children of Sánchez that first-person point of view often exploits gaps of knowledge between the experiencing self and the narrating self. Seldom, however, are these gaps as large and as numerous as they are in Babi Yar. Kuznetsov's desire, suggested in the very title of his work, to write something other than a purely autobiographical account of his own adolescent experiences forces him to compensate for the inadequate knowledge of his experiencing self — inadequate, that is, for the depiction and analysis of large-scale social forces. The experiencing self, after all, is limited in the number of events to which he can be an eye-witness, and this is particularly the case when not only the suffering of nearly the entire population of a large city is involved but also when much of that suffering takes place behind locked doors or within carefully guarded barbed wire enclosures such as the Babi Yar ravine. His detailed filling in of the knowledge lacking in the experiencing self causes Kuznetsov to place the narrating self for much of the work in the narrating position which Robert Scholes and Robert Kellogg have called the "histor." The histor, according to Scholes and Kellogg, "is not a recorder or recounter but an investigator. He examines the past with an eye toward separating out actuality from myth."<sup>1</sup> That the narrating self in Babi Yar frequently expands into an histor is evidenced by the interviews with witnesses and participants referred to in the work, the critical examination of both official and

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<sup>1</sup>Scholes and Kellogg, The Nature of Narrative, p. 242.

popular accounts of events, and the marshalling of numerous contemporary documents to which entire chapters are devoted. These, then, are the primary points of view used in Babi Yar: "I" as Protagonist and histor, and each is characteristic of one aspect of the double focus of the work.

One curious anomaly occurs in the treatment of point of view in Babi Yar. During the time he was writing the work, Kuznetsov interviewed a woman who was one of the few people who managed to escape from Babi Yar, Dina Mironovna Pronicheva. At the end of the chapter, "The Order," in Part One, the narrating self says that "I am now going to tell her story, as I wrote it down from her own words, without adding anything of my own."<sup>1</sup> In spite of the phrase, "I am now going to tell her story," one would expect, on the basis of this statement, the introduction of a subordinate narrator narrating her own account in the first person; not that this is explicitly promised, but there is a strong suggestion in the phrase, "her own words," that this will be the case. However, this does not occur. Instead the account is given by the primary narrator and Mrs. Pronicheva is referred to in the third person. In addition, quite a lot of explanatory and interpretative "background" material is added. Something similar occurs later in the work when the account is given of an escape from the Darnitsa P.O.W. camp by a man who was given shelter by Kuznetsov's family.<sup>2</sup> Again the account was obtained through a personal interview with an eye-witness. In this instance, however, there is no mention of the eye-witness's "own words," which is not surprising since the second interview took place when Kiev was still occupied and the narrator was still a boy.

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<sup>1</sup>Babi Yar, p. 98. In the earlier edition this was translated as: "I wrote it down myself from her own words. . . . I shall give her story exactly as she told it, without adding anything" (p. 55).

<sup>2</sup>Babi Yar, pp. 176-85.

But the interview with Mrs. Pronicheva took place while the work was being written, when Kuznetsov was fully aware of its importance and of the use to which it would be put. It is not clear why Kuznetsov should have chosen not to incorporate directly Mrs. Pronicheva's first-person narration, or at least portions of it. His decision might have issued from the felt necessity to maintain control over an already complicated handling of point of view. But given Kuznetsov's obvious predilection for authentic documentation, incorporation would seem to be the most natural way of dealing with the material.

A further point worth mentioning with regard to Kuznetsov's handling of point of view concerns the kind of relation with the reader entered into by the narrator. One soon becomes aware in reading the work of the frequency of direct address — particularly obvious in the chapter entitled "A Word from the Author" — and the personal, at times casually intimate, manner with which the addresses are made, seen, for example, in the following: "Would you like me to tell you what Easter, that most glorious of annual festivals, is like if it is properly celebrated?"<sup>1</sup> One does not often find in contemporary literature such a direct and personal relationship between first-person narrator and putative audience.

Capote's In Cold Blood is the only one of the four corpus works that assumes the narrative situation of the authorial novel; however, Capote's authorial narrator is different from the narrator of, say, Tom Jones in that he is not a personal narrator;<sup>2</sup> he does not take on the limnings of an identifiable or knowable persona. Capote's decision to use an impersonal authorial narrator corresponds to his preference for modes of narration which he describes as

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 237.

<sup>2</sup>The term "personal narrator" is taken from Kayser, Entstehung und Krise, pp. 13-23.

"detached."<sup>1</sup> The combining of detachment and the authorial mode of narration involves Capote in several difficulties which require subtle technical strategies. For example, the stated intention to novelize his account necessitates establishing the interiority of his major presented figures, which means that the authorial narrator must somehow gain access to the consciousnesses of those figures. The rendering of consciousness in the authorial narrative situation ordinarily takes the form of thought report. In a fictional account, thought report is accepted by the reader as a convention; that the authorial narrator can gain access to the private thoughts of his characters is ordinarily accepted without reservation. Capote's documentary premise, however, precludes his sprinkling the narrative with "he thought."

Capote develops several means for establishing interiority. He presents private documents such as diaries and letters, in which private thoughts are rendered; he has participants speak at length about themselves either in official situations (for instance when the murderers confess) which issue in documents, or in situations which were apparently interviews conducted by Capote.

While the predominant narrative situation of the work is authorial, some of the personal accounts presented assume the status of incorporated first-person narratives. For instance, Larry Hendricks, Kenyon Clutter's English teacher, becomes a secondary or subordinate narrator in the passage which describes the discovery of the murdered family.<sup>2</sup> Bobby Rupp, Nancy Clutter's boy friend and the last person apart from the murderers to see the family alive, takes on the same narrating rôle in his official statement to the police,<sup>3</sup> as does Perry

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<sup>1</sup>Interview with Truman Capote, p. 260.

<sup>2</sup>In Cold Blood, pp. 50-54.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 40-43.

Smith's father in a revealing document entitled, "A History of My Boy's Life,"<sup>1</sup> which was written for the Kansas State Parole Board in the successful effort to obtain Perry's release from prison several months prior to the murder. There are several other lengthy narratives, but they are distinguished from the ones mentioned here by the fact that most of them are interspersed with comments by the authorial narrator; in these passages, the first-person point of view is not permitted to displace even temporarily the predominant authorial point of view as it is, for example, in Bobby Rupp's account.

For all the detachment with which the authorial point of view is handled the presence and activity of the authorial narrator within the presented world occasionally become apparent. In certain passages the reader glimpses Capote's rôle as a gatherer as well as selector and arranger of the presented material; he recognizes moments when Capote would have had to be physically present in order to have access to the material being imparted. Capote's presence within the presented world is suggested in a variety of ways. There are several instances of direct address to an otherwise unspecified interviewer similar to those found in The Children of Sánchez. One such instance occurs in Larry Hendricks's account. Speaking of Nancy he says, "Well, it was pretty bad. That wonderful girl — but you would never have known her."<sup>2</sup> Elsewhere the rôle of the authorial narrator as gatherer of material is signalled by such formulas as "he later recalled," or "as he later remembered." The context and implications of these formulas can be seen in the following. "'Christ, it was cold,' Perry remembered. 'Dad and I slept hugged together, rolled up in blankets and bearskins.'"<sup>3</sup> The quoted speech indicates the context of an interview, and the phrase,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 103-107.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 51 Italics added.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 109.

"Perry remembered," indicates the presence of the interviewer. The final suggestion of the presence of the authorial narrator within the presented world only begins to emerge in the later stages of the work when the authorial narrator refers to the presence of a reporter or journalist. There is no explicit indication that the references are even to the same person, but it is difficult to conceive of a reader who would not begin to suspect at some point that the references pertain to Capote himself. The suggestion that it is Capote becomes particularly strong near the end of the work. At one point we read: "'That was a cold night,' Hickock said, talking to a journalist with whom he corresponded and who was periodically allowed to visit him. 'Cold and wet.'"<sup>1</sup> And a few pages later: "'Nobody ever comes to see him [i.e. Perry, about whom Dick is speaking] except you,' he said nodding at the journalist, who was as equally well acquainted with Smith as he was with Hickock."<sup>2</sup> The suggestion of closeness and familiarity points inevitably to Capote.

The authorial narrator's detachment likewise does not prevent him from exploiting the prerogatives of the omniscient narrator when the particular situation warrants their use. The authorial narrator is careful not to be caught passing explicit judgement on the major issues and concerns of the work, but when peripheral issues arise he does not hesitate to inform the reader how matters should be valued. One example occurs when the narrator deals with the theory, held by some of the people of Holcomb, that the murderers were really after the family of Taylor Jones and not the Clutters. "The 'Jones Theory' was much repeated — especially to the Joneses, a dignified and sensible family, who refused to be flustered."<sup>3</sup> For the most part, however, such direct statement of value is avoided and the authorial narrator maintains a consistently high degree of detachment.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 274

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 277.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 93. Italics added.

## 1.2 Temporal Vantage Point

There is very little criticism in English which examines the temporal relation which is effected between a narrator and what he narrates. It is not easy to comprehend why so little attention has been given to this aspect of narrative literature when its potentialities have been so thoroughly explored and exploited by writers. Such analysis as does exist in English on this point is ordinarily subsumed, somewhat awkwardly, under the concept of point of view. Ordinarily, this practice leads to confusion since there is no absolute correlation of the devices and effects of the two categories. A wider recognition and more precise identification of this aspect of narrative art, which here will be called the temporal vantage point, would be a significant contribution to the set of critical tools available for criticism of novels and other narrative types.

One critic writing in English who has achieved a partial formulation of the temporal vantage point is A. A. Mendilow, who calls it "the time locus of the pseudo-author," which he describes as "the time of writing of the assumed author in relation to the time when the events recorded are given as having occurred."<sup>1</sup> However, Mendilow mistakenly assumes that "this aspect of time is peculiar to novels written in the first person, whether in the form of letters, journals, memoirs or autobiography."<sup>2</sup> It is true that the temporal gap between events and their narration is more obvious in many first-person novels than in most authorial novels, and also true that, ever since Moll Flanders, this gap is, in general, exploited more thoroughly and systematically in first-person novels; nevertheless

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<sup>1</sup>A. A. Mendilow, Time and the Novel (New York: Humanities Press, 1952), p. 89. "Time of narrating" would be more precise than "time of writing."

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

the narrator of a work in which the authorial narrative situation predominates ordinarily stands, as Stanzel points out, "in a relationship of posteriority to the narrated material,"<sup>1</sup> just as a first-person narrator does. In both narrative situations the temporal relation of narrator and narrated must be ascertained. The figural narrative situation, on the other hand, with its predominantly scenic mode of presentation, disposes of most overt signals of mediation and so a temporal gap occurs only intermittently if at all.

In the first-person narrative situation the treatment of the temporal vantage point follows three basic patterns. The narrator's temporal position can be established at a point long after the narrated events have occurred, which tends to stress the reflective mode of the narration. Or the events can be related very shortly after they are supposed to have occurred, which diminishes the distance between narrating self and experiencing self. Or, finally, events can be related in separate stages by specifying the act of narrating at various points in the work. This is a typical feature of, for example, the epistolary novel; a correspondent's temporal vantage point shifts with each letter he writes. Varying the temporal vantage point is usually restricted to works in which the act of writing (not just the act of narrating) is specified and in which the narrator is self-consciously engaged in writing.<sup>2</sup>

Works in which the authorial narrative situation predominates seldom vary the temporal vantage point. Doing so ordinarily necessitates

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<sup>1</sup>Stanzel, Narrative Situations, p. 43. Stanzel examines several aspects of temporal vantage point in terms of the concept "narrative distance" (Erzähldistanz). Another work which examines in detail the features and devices associated with "narrative distance" is Bertil Romberg, Studies in the Narrative Technique of the First-Person Novel, trans. by Michael Taylor and Harold H. Borland (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1962), especially pp. 95-117.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Booth's "self-conscious narrator." (The Rhetoric of Fiction, p. 155). Booth overlooks the point that some self-conscious narrators — for example, Conrad's Marlow — are not engaged in an act of writing.

the device of a subordinate narrator, in which case a first person narrative situation temporarily replaces the authorial one. Nevertheless Capote achieves something akin to a varying of the temporal vantage point in In Cold Blood. Some of the structural ramifications of his method of segmenting the narrative of events will be examined more thoroughly in the section on narrative phases and arcs of tension in the next chapter; however, the method bears an interesting relation to the concept of the temporal vantage point which should be noted. Each of the four parts of In Cold Blood contains a separate climax and a separate building of suspense which is resolved by the climax. With few exceptions, instances of prediction and foreshadowing in a particular part are directed towards the climax within that part. One effect of this manipulation of suspense, prefiguration, and climax is that the narrator seems to take up his temporal vantage point at or immediately after each climax. The reader's movement through the narrative seems to be directed only to the climax at hand. And only as the climax approaches are signals provided for the reader which suggest continuation of the narrative beyond the immediate climax. As soon as the suspense which has been created is resolved in a climax, the narrator seems to move forward to a point just beyond the next climax, where he repeats the process of bringing the reader towards him. It should probably be emphasized that a varying of the temporal vantage point only seems to occur — that Capote's manner of segmenting the narrative only appears to shift the temporal vantage point — for the reader's conception of the narrator requires that the authorial narrator's position in time, at least in In Cold Blood, be posterior to all the events narrated. There is no clear indication, such as there is in an epistolary narrative, that at one point the narrator has knowledge only of events up to that point, and that at a point later in time he has knowledge of further events. Such a state of affairs can arise in an authorial

narrative situation only when the reader is presented with a narrator whose awareness that he is writing is specified, and that requires a personal narrator.

It is likely that the suggestion or appearance of a shifting temporal vantage point in In Cold Blood is the product of the work's manner of composition rather than its manner of narration. In actual fact Capote learned of many of the events during the time they were taking place. His own position, unlike that of his authorial narrator, is not actually posterior to all the events narrated. Indeed, there are suggestions within the work that his first visit to Holcomb occurred within the first few weeks after the murder.<sup>1</sup> In terms of the manner of composition, then, he learned of the events up to the murder and a little beyond after they had taken place. But he came to know many of the events of the second, third, and fourth parts of the narrative as they happened. By asserting the presence of the narrator, by making him a personal and self-conscious narrator, Capote could have reproduced this process in the work. As it is, these features of the manner of composition are obscured by the chosen "detached" manner of narration. The question of the relation between manner of composition and temporal vantage point is of peculiar import in the novelistic documentary and will arise again in this section in relation to The Children of Sánchez.

In order to analyse the temporal vantage point in Babi Yar, it is first necessary to fix the relative positions of the experiencing and narrating selves. For the most part, the experiencing self is confined to a time span which stretches from September 19, 1941 — the date of Soviet withdrawal from Kiev — to December 1, 1943,

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<sup>1</sup>Capote's presence as a witness to a scene which takes place in a café in Holcomb is suggested in a passage on p. 88. 120 ff

shortly after the Nazi surrender of the city. It is during this period that the experiencing self undergoes the process of maturation which is at the center of the portion of the work that focuses on him. Everything earlier than September 19, 1941 is presented as interspersed expository material; everything later than December 1, 1943, is more a part of the temporal realm of the narrating self than of the experiencing self. The considerable temporal gap between narrating and experiencing selves is defined by the precise dating of the temporal realm of the narrating self: "I spent the summer of 1965 writing this book by night and walking round and watching the bulldozers at work in the daytime."<sup>1</sup>

The temporal gap established in Babi Yar provides for the correcting of knowledge and value discussed in the previous section. Often events occupy a mediate position between the younger, more naïve experiencing self and the older, more mature narrating self. An event which is not fully understood by the experiencing self is rendered or reported together with an indication of its meaning or value as grasped by the more mature narrating self. The explicit formula for this effect would be something like: I did x, and only later did I realize . . . and so on. Kuznetsov's exploitation of the temporal gap created by his chosen temporal vantage point is usually more understated. At one point the confusion of the experiencing self is made explicit. When a close friend becomes a member of the privileged Volksdeutsche, he says, "'So you've got yourselves nicely fixed up,' I muttered, still not quite grasping the complicated situation."<sup>2</sup> At another point the young boy enters the Babi Yar compound without realizing where he is. The narrating self from his superior position enables the reader to grasp the situation while

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<sup>1</sup>Babi Yar, p. 475.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 165.

the experiencing self temporarily remains ignorant of his precarious position.

Separating the thoughts attributed to the experiencing self (whether rendered or reported) from those of the narrating self discloses an interesting feature of the handling of temporal vantage point in the work. The thoughts attributed to the experiencing self tend to be climactic moments in his coming of age. In one of the earlier rendered self-conscious moments the boy's thoughts establish his relative immaturity: "I thought to myself that, after all, I really was young."<sup>1</sup> At a slightly later point he achieves one of his first important insights. "I was struck by how many sick and unfortunate people there are in the world."<sup>2</sup> His process of education and maturation dates from this important reported insight, and at each stage along the way his thoughts, and not just the statements made by the narrating self, indicate to the reader the level of insight and maturity which the boy has reached.<sup>3</sup>

At the same time as he is recording the thoughts and experience of the experiencing self, the narrating self reveals information about conditions and events within his own spatio-temporal realm. He indicates who is still alive and in what circumstances they live.<sup>4</sup> He also examines his present problems of writing the work and understanding the meaning of the events recounted in the work. In seeking for an explanation of how such things as Babi Yar are humanly possible, he admits, "I have been turning this question over in my mind for a long time."<sup>5</sup> Later the narrating self attempts to explain what his intentions are in giving an account of his earlier experiencing self.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 60.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 93.

<sup>3</sup>For some of the important stages, see pp. 94, 140, 203, 218, and 247.

<sup>4</sup>See, for example, pp. 104, 119, and 389.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 321. Italics added.

I did not write this book simply to recall the past :  
 I am writing today about the occupation of Kiev, which  
 I happened to witness and which is well documented ;  
 because the same sort of thing is happening now ; and  
 there is no guarantee whatever that even more sinister  
 events will not occur tomorrow.<sup>1</sup>

As frequently happens in first-person narration, the time levels of experiencing self and narrating self begin to merge towards the end of Babi Yar. Even in the first of the work's three parts, the narrator describes or refers to events which take place between the time span occupied by the experiencing self and the act of narrating.<sup>2</sup> Closer to the end of the work the narrator tells us,

After the war I was sent all over the country and worked on many different construction sites. . . . [then] I managed to get into the Literary Institute, studied in Moscow and became a writer.<sup>3</sup>

After several such passages of highly compressed summary the experiencing self is, as it were, brought up to date and merges entirely with the narrating self.

And here I am, back in Kiev, where my mother, much older now, continues to live in the same house at 28 Peter-Paul Square.<sup>4</sup>

And of course it is during the years between the two time levels that the narrator studied the records dealing with the broader aspects of

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 391.

<sup>2</sup>See, for example, p. 163 where Kuznetsov refers to exams he has written.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 458.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 468. In the original version the final chapter, from which this passage is taken, was called "A Final, Contemporary Chapter." In the new version it is called "A Final Chapter : Getting Rid of the Ashes."

the Nazi occupation of Kiev, which enables him in turn to assume the position of histor in those parts of the work which go beyond the experiences of his younger self. The actual process of researching for the work, however, is not specified in any detail; only its results are presented to the reader.

When Kuznetsov revised Babi Yar after his defection to Great Britain he added material which was written after the first publication of the work. It is interesting that nearly all of this material, written according to Kuznetsov between 1967 and 1969,<sup>1</sup> pertains to the narrating self. As a consequence, the rôle of the narrating self is expanded and the polemical nature of the work becomes even more strongly emphasized. Additions to the experiences and particularly the thoughts of the experiencing self would necessarily involve questions of authority. And in fact, on at least one occasion an addition to the thoughts of the experiencing self does occur. Its effects on the maintenance of authority will be noted in the next section. In the meantime, the inflation of the narrating self's rôle in the work raises problems of more immediate concern. It is arguable that, in a work which in its initial form already gave a great deal of attention to the narrating self, the addition of still more material to his rôle overwhelms the position of the experiencing self in such a way that the immediacy of experience is partially obscured by the polemics of the histor. In addition, these changes mark a movement away from the novelistic part of the dual work premise in the direction of the documentary part, a movement which threatens, though it does not in fact seem to undermine, the harmony of synthesis which the novelistic documentary requires.

In his Introduction to The Children of Sánchez, Lewis relates that he conducted the recorded interviews from which the work was

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 6.

compiled during several visits to Mexico City between 1956 and 1959.<sup>1</sup> During the course of the narratives the reader learns of many events which take place well after the first tapes were made. One can presume that the original tapes contain overt signals of this manner of composition — signals such as: since the last time you were here such and such occurred. Had these signals been retained there would be a varying of temporal vantage point in the narratives; however, if they were ever present, they were edited out by Lewis when he prepared the narratives for publication; with the result that the temporal vantage point in each account is fixed in a position posterior to all the recounted events. Nevertheless, a bit of elementary detective work can uncover some of the original manner of composition. For example, the Epilogue narrated by Jesús purports to be a final summing up from a position posterior to the events in all the other narratives, yet his reference to Marta's three children<sup>2</sup> when the reader, provided he has picked up the scattered clues, already knows of four children and another on the way<sup>3</sup> indicates that his account dates from a point prior to much of the material presented in Marta's final narrative.

Unlike Babi Yar, The Children of Sánchez does not present a confined time span separated from the temporal position of the narrator (or, in this case, narrators) by a substantial temporal gap. Instead, the narratives move in an unbroken progression towards the narrating selves established present. There are interspersed references to conditions extant within the temporal realm of the narrating selves in The Children of Sánchez, just as there are in Babi Yar. As early as Manuel's first narrative the reader is told of his "present

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<sup>1</sup>Children, pp. xiii and xx.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 496

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 453, 472, and 484.

compadre and best friend."<sup>1</sup> Such references occur so frequently in both Babi Yar and The Children of Sánchez that they would seem to be brought about by the special nature of the novelistic documentary. That such references should proliferate in the novelistic documentary and not in the novel proper is not surprising. After all, the first-person narrator of a novelistic documentary has an actual temporal realm and not just a fictive one, and it is unlikely that its existence will be presented only in strictly attenuated form. References to conditions within the realms of the narrating selves increase in frequency in the latter parts of the narratives until, in several of the narratives, there is a complete merging of the time levels of experiencing and narrating selves. This occurs in the narratives of Manuel, Consuelo, and Marta, but not in Roberto's. Instead, his narrative ends with a brief general statement about the human condition as he sees it.<sup>2</sup>

One interesting aspect of temporal vantage point in The Children of Sánchez concerns the attitudes which his children have towards Jesús. The strength of their almost obsessive statements of respect for Jesús is one of the unifying features of the narratives. In the earlier portions of the narratives, when the experiencing selves are quite young, the expressions of respect for Jesús seem somewhat unusual because they are so insistent, but such feelings are hardly improbable. However, in the later narratives, when the experiencing selves are much older and hence closer to the narrating selves, the statements become less easy to credit. That a ten-year-old should fear and respect a dominating father is entirely credible, but that

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 36.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 409. There may be a problem of composition involved here. With his frequent journeys and imprisonments, Roberto might not have been available to bring his narrative up to date.

an adult with a large family of his own should feel the same way and with the same intensity is surprising and makes the reader realize just how powerful a figure Jesús is in the lives of his children. Even at the end of her final narrative, when the temporal merging of narrating and experiencing selves has already been effected, Marta can say, "While my father lives, I have nothing to cry about. After that, yes, the world will end for me."<sup>1</sup>

The treatment of temporal vantage point in The Armies of the Night raises some of the same problems encountered in the discussion of point of view. Does one, for instance, consider the temporal remove of narrator from figure in terms of an authorial narrative situation? Or does one speak of a temporal gap between narrating and experiencing selves? In the section on point of view it was decided, because of the nominal identity of narrator and presented figure, to use the terminology for first-person narration, and for the same reason that terminology will be used here.

The Armies of the Night exhibits most of the features of temporal vantage point already discussed in relation to the other works. There are, for example, the same discrepancies in value, knowledge, and interpretation, and the same devices for correcting them. However, in The Armies of the Night, these features are largely confined to Book One, "History as a Novel," which is concerned with the activities of Mailer. In the second book, Mailer as experiencing self disappears and only the narrator, now in the position of histor, carries on. It is in Book One that Mailer brings about the merging of time levels of the narrating and experiencing selves, and in the working out of this feature Mailer departs from the more orthodox

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 484.

practices of Lewis and Kuznetsov. For one thing, coming as it does at the very end of Book One,<sup>1</sup> the merging, which is signalled by a specification of the act of writing, provides a natural sense of completion and so gives the narrative the appearance of being a unified and self-sufficient entity. Its integral relation to Book Two is only established within Book Two — by back references to events and ideas presented in the first book. On the other hand, the merging of time levels ordinarily involves a shift from the past to the present tense. In The Armies of the Night the past tense is maintained, which has the effect of making the merging only partial. The past tense makes allowance for the continuation of the narrative in Book Two. Another interesting aspect of the way Mailer handles the merging of time levels is the effect of circularity which it lends to the narrative. The partial merging of time levels is initiated in the following sentences :

Still he was not injured unduly. His hide was hard. He laughed when he read the red bordered story in Time about his scatological solo at the Ambassador Theater — he laughed because he knew it had stimulated his cause. And as the days went by, he contracted to write an account of the March on the Pentagon, and wrestled with the difficulties of how to do it, and appeared on a television show and amazed himself. For if he had been half as conservative as Russell Kirk in prison, he was half as militant on television as H. Rap Brown.

Then he began his history of the Pentagon.<sup>2</sup>

The story in Time is, of course, the one which Mailer incorporated at the very beginning of the work, just as the promised account is the one we have been reading; and so the temporal vantage

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<sup>1</sup>Armies, p. 215.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

point coincides temporally with the material first presented to the reader, though this fact is withheld from him until the end of the first book.

One feature relating to temporal vantage point which differentiates The Armies of the Night from the other corpus works is the enormous amount of cerebration attributed to the experiencing self. In Babi Yar, thoughts attributed to the experiencing self are infrequent and, as pointed out earlier, are almost always climactic moments of anagnorisis. In The Children of Sánchez, nearly all the thoughts related pertain to the narrating selves. The parallel problem in In Cold Blood — relating the thoughts of the figures presented in the third person — is handled in the main by documentation and by shifts to subordinated first-person narration. Only in The Armies of the Night is extensive cerebration attributed to the experiencing self. To some extent this can be explained by the absence of any lengthy temporal gap between the narrated events and their narration. Mailer is closer to his experiences than Kuznetsov is to his, and closer than the Sánchezes are to their earlier memories. Nevertheless the sheer amount of thought attributed to the experiencing self in the work raises problems of authority which will have to be dealt with in the next section.

### 1.3 The Problem of Authority

The modern novel has evolved a number of devices for coping with the two interrelated aspects of narrative situation which comprise the concept of authority. The first of these aspects involves the channels of information available to a narrator; the second involves questions of probability and verisimilitude, and they can

be clarified by posing two questions: How could the details and events presented in the narrative come to be known? and, Can they be attested according to the criteria of probability and verisimilitude ordinarily imposed on mimetic and factual types? These criteria will vary according to whether the narrative is mimetic or factual, since the different narrative modes have different conventions and elicit different expectations on the part of the reader, but the question remains the same: Granting those conventions and expectations, can what the narrator says be attested? Scholes and Kellogg isolate four basic narrative conventions which have been used throughout the Western narrative tradition in order to ensure authority: 1) the guise of divine inspiration, 2) the rôle of eye-witness, 3) the dispensation of tradition, and 4) the guise of the histor as one who critically examines his sources.<sup>1</sup> Of these, only the second and fourth pertain to the problem of authority as it occurs in the novelistic documentary.

It is easy to see how the problem of authority should be of special importance in the novelistic documentary. By the documentary portion of its dual work premise, the novelistic documentary asserts its historicity not as a matter of conventional subterfuge but as a point of fact; consequently its criteria for authority will be those applied not to mimetic but to factual narrative types. On the other hand, the novelistic documentary patterns itself on the modern novel, which subjects it to the possible influence of techniques particular to fictional rendering. The authors of the corpus works had little in the way of precedent to model their works on, and nowhere in their works or statements about their works do they show any knowledge either of the few partial analogues available or even of each

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<sup>1</sup>Scholes and Kellogg, The Nature of Narrative, pp. 242-44.

other's works. One can assume that Mailer, writing in 1968, could hardly have been unaware of Capote's In Cold Blood (1965), but their approaches to their material are so different that there is little suggestion of influence. It would seem that the four writers confronted the problem of authority largely unaided; they differ both in the way they handle the problem and in the degree of success which their different methods bring them.

Of the four basic devices for assuring authority described by Scholes and Kellogg, Kuznetsov exploits both of those thought to pertain to the novelistic documentary; that is to say, his narrative situation, as pointed out earlier, combines the eye-witness with the histor. In those portions of the narrative devoted to the experiencing self, Kuznetsov has available all the advantages with regard to authority typical of the first-person narrative situation. As many critics have pointed out, the first-person narrative situation answers automatically the question, How did the material come to be known? Provided that the narrator does not present material to which he cannot possibly have had access — for example the unspoken thoughts of another character — his claim of authority is seldom questioned. However, even in the case of first-person narration, the criteria for authority will be different for a narrative which seriously claims absolute historicity from what they would be for an orthodox novel. The differences become clear if one considers the convention governing the relation of lengthy dialogue in a first-person novel. Because of the convention, the objection that no one could possibly remember verbatim a lengthy dialogue in the relatively distant part simply does not arise in orthodox novels. But it would in the case of an autobiography, and it does in the case of a novelistic documentary. That Kuznetsov is not insensitive to the problem is demonstrated by a passage in which he relates some advice his mother had given him: "I have never forgotten these words of hers all my life. Maybe

she didn't use exactly those words, but I have conveyed the exact sense of what she said."<sup>1</sup> This caveat is sufficient to provide the necessary authority for all the other renderings of lengthy dialogues and speeches. The reader is made aware that Kuznetsov is sensitive to the problem, and this stated sensitivity satisfies the requirements for authority in factual narrative.

Throughout the portion of the work controlled by the witness point of view, there are frequent indications of the attempt to ensure authority; for example, he states that when he wrote the work his mother helped him "in getting the details and facts right."<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, there are moments when Kuznetsov seriously impairs the treatment of authority. It was mentioned in the previous section that most of the material which Kuznetsov added to Babi Yar prior to its publication in revised form pertains to the rôle of the narrating self. One major addition to the thoughts of the experiencing self occurs in the following passage. (In keeping with the practice of the revised edition, new material appears in square brackets.)

Instead of moving away I stared straight at him and thought: So you click your shutter, then you'll develop the film and make some prints and send them home to your family, so that they can see what your war has brought you. You photograph it as though it were your own property: you acquired the right to do so by shooting. But what have you to do with St Andrew's church, or with Kiev itself? The fact that you came here shooting and murdering? Like a highway-robber? [What is this banditry going on all over the world? First one gang appeared, with their red banners and their fine slogans, murdering, robbing and destroying. Now another has arrived, also with red banners and fine slogans, also murdering, robbing and destroying. You are all bandits.]<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Babi Yar, p. 159.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 468.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 223. Italics added.

The passage continues for another dozen or so lines with yet another addition (a much shorter one) to the boy's thoughts. One must assume that Kuznetsov fully intends the reader to accept that these additions were part of the experiencing self's original thoughts, in which case the reader must suppose that the narrating self only later remembered them. What in fact happens is that the authority for the entire passage is called into doubt. If the narrator later finds it possible to revise an earlier memory of thoughts in the distant past, then the earlier memory was very likely far from accurate or even, possibly, true.<sup>1</sup>

In the rôle of histor, the narrator frequently makes careful distinctions between widespread popular beliefs and ascertainable facts. Through a careful examination of documents he is able to correct a widely believed story concerning a Ukrainianian football team which, having soundly beaten several Nazi military teams, was dispatched to Babi Yar.<sup>2</sup> The story which Kuznetsov pieces together differs in detail from the popular account which survived, but it is no less exciting and it ends in the same way. Ordinarily, in separating fact from fancy, Kuznetsov is careful to establish authority by specifying his sources, which are usually either documents or the testimony of eye-witnesses. But sometimes his sources are left unspecified. At one point he gives a highly circumstantial account of a meeting between the employees of the Kiev radio station and the newly arrived Nazi authorities.<sup>3</sup> His source could only have been an eye-witness, but he neglects to establish his access to the material. Because the narrator as histor usually goes to great lengths in producing documents and informants, his authority is sufficiently strong to enable him to forego such measures on occasion without

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<sup>1</sup>It should be noted that the experiencing self could have no recollection of the arrival of the earlier "gang" and could not have conceived of them in the terms stated.

<sup>2</sup>Babi Yar, pp. 289-94. The chapter is entitled "The Dynamo Team: A Legend and the Truth."

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 78-79.

in any way impairing it. The reader accepts the account as one portion of a larger fabric, the authority for which provokes little doubt. Indeed, the narrator as histor is more successful in establishing and maintaining authority than he is in his rôle of witness-participant despite the fact that the latter is usually thought to provide more readily for authority.<sup>1</sup>

There is an additional problem regarding authority in Babi Yar — one that cannot be given adequate attention in a study of this nature. If the view of Russian society generally held in the West is not absolutely mistaken, then one is forced to be at least mildly skeptical about many of the passages in the revised edition which Kuznetsov claims were excised from the original manuscript by Russian censors. Given the strident anti-Soviet tenor of these passages, it is not surprising that they would be censored. What is surprising is that Kuznetsov could have written them and remained free — remained, indeed, one of the more infrequently threatened of Russian authors. For he was not a Daniel and not a Solzhenitsyn; he was permitted both to publish and to travel. It remains entirely possible that Kuznetsov did write the passages when he said he did, but it is difficult not to entertain the belief, voiced by Herbert R. Mayes, that the passages were added by Kuznetsov after his defection to Great Britain.<sup>2</sup> Until such time as positive evidence becomes available, one must accept Kuznetsov at his word. And even if evidence should prove that the passages were not in the original manuscript, the status of the work as a novelistic documentary would not necessarily be jeopardized unless it could be shown that Kuznetsov has misrepresented the facts which he narrates, though a failure to maintain authority in one respect will in all probability weaken the reader's impression

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<sup>1</sup>According to Scholes and Kellogg the authority of the histor "seemed to the ancients . . . greater than that of the eye-witness." (The Nature of Narrative, p. 243).

<sup>2</sup>Mayes, "The Emerging A. Kuznetsov," p. 4.

of the authority of the work generally.

Capote's selection of an impersonal or "detached" narrative stance precludes those explicit assurances that all presented material is entirely authentic which personal narrators and narrating selves can make to readers. Indeed, the impersonal narrative stance would seem to put Capote at a disadvantage in ensuring authority; his task is made more difficult than it is for the other authors of the corpus works. On the other hand, it might be the case that the relative difficulty of his task forces Capote to be more conscious of the problem of authority and thus enhances his treatment of it, for it is true to say that In Cold Blood reveals more conspicuous attention to authority than any other of the corpus works.

Ordinarily the narrator of a novelistic documentary need only assume responsibility for establishing his own authority. Once he has produced the account of an eye-witness, for instance, he is under no necessary obligation to establish his witness's claim to authority. If the accurately transcribed account itself is faulty in detail, no harm is done to the documentary premise. Therefore when Capote's only possible source for a lengthy scene replete with dialogue is the testimony of a twelve-year-old girl,<sup>1</sup> no damage occurs with respect to the authority required in a novelistic documentary. Her recorded testimony is, after all, a document. A reader can question the extent to which a twelve-year-old could be expected to recollect in precise detail an event which might not have impressed her at the time as being of any significance, but the documentary premise which underlies the account asserts only that the account itself is presented without distortion.

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<sup>1</sup>In Cold Blood, pp. 19-22.

There are times when Capote transfers the claim to authority to his source. In Part Three, for example, Dick delivers a long, highly circumstantial account of his cheque-passing sprees and his journey with Perry through Mexico and the southern United States. The claim for the authority of the account does not rest solely on the assumption that it is rendered accurately by the narrator; there is an additional claim that the account itself is accurate. Early in the interrogation, the narrator refers to Hickock's "one authentic gift, a brilliant memory."<sup>1</sup> A few pages later he returns to Dick's "talent for something very like total recall,"<sup>2</sup> thereby expanding the assertion of authority to include the substance of Dick's account as well as the accuracy of its rendering. This device might be seen as the reverse of the problematic treatment of documentary sources; whereas problematic treatment increases the weight of responsibility incumbent on the principal narrator, the other transfers responsibility to another.

The selection of an authorial narrative situation for a novelistic documentary places an additional burden on the maintenance of authority. In so far as it is documentary, the work must satisfy the criteria applied to authority in factual narrative types. And in so far as it seeks to be novelistic in terms of the criteria for the modern novel, it must establish the interiority of one or more of its presented figures. In the first-person narrative situation these requirements do not conflict. First-person narration automatically establishes a degree of interiority in the narrating self, and it can establish interiority in the experiencing self without jeopardizing its authority. However, in an authorial narrative situation the requirements can operate in contradiction to each other. Presented figures can establish their own interiority by temporarily usurping the dominant

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 178.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 182.

authorial mode and revealing themselves through secondary first-person narration, but when the authorial narrative situation prevails, the authorial narrator can render the unspoken thoughts of others only at the risk of undercutting his claim to authority. One way to resolve this contradiction is to translate spoken words into what appears to be unspoken thoughts. Oscar Lewis frequently employs this device in Five Families. It is clear that passages in Five Families which are recorded as thoughts were originally spoken aloud in the presence of Lewis and his recording assistant. When these passages were fitted into the narratives, they were transcribed as unspoken thoughts. The following passages from In Cold Blood — and there are many like them — show how Capote employs a similar device.

It was Saturday, Christmas was near, and the traffic crept along Main Street. Dewey, caught in the traffic, looked up at the holly garlands that hung above the street — swags of gala greenery trimmed with scarlet paper bells — and was reminded that he had not yet bought a single gift for his wife or his sons. His mind automatically rejected problems not concerned with the Clutter case.<sup>1</sup>

Dewey had imagined that with the deaths of Smith and Hickock he would experience a sense of climax, release, of a design justly completed. Instead, he discovered himself recalling an incident of almost a year ago, a casual encounter in Valley View Cemetery which, in retrospect, had somehow for him more or less ended the Clutter case.<sup>2</sup>

The similarity of these passages to passages in Five Families is not difficult to establish. In both instances, the authors have chosen narrative stances which eliminate all, or nearly all, overt trances

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 121.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 282.

of the narrator's physical presence. We know, because he tells us,<sup>1</sup> that Lewis was present during the five days recorded in Five Families, and we suspect, unless we are prepared to believe that Capote is so unfaithful to his stated generic intentions that he has invented the thoughts which he attributes to Dewey, that he was with Dewey on both occasions and recorded Dewey's spoken thoughts.<sup>2</sup> An interesting feature in the quoted passages is the subtle compromise that is effected between signals which would obviously refer to spoken words and those which would refer only to unspoken thoughts. In place of the specific "he said" or "he thought to himself," we get ambiguous signals such as "was reminded" and "he discovered himself recalling," both of which could be used in contexts of either spoken or unspoken thought. The absence of any indications of the presence of a recording companion gives the appearance of private thought, but it is only an appearance and does not preclude the necessary presence of a recording medium.

Capote's rigorous adherence to the requirements of his stated generic intention enables him to use such ambiguous signals in the endeavor to establish interiority without endangering the authority for his narrative. The reader must assume either that the necessary channels of information were available or that Capote is inventing. Because of the rigorous attention given to effecting and maintaining authority, most readers would be unlikely to suspect that Capote has invented the material. Indeed, if the reader makes a careful examination of passages which seem to lack requisite authority he invariably finds himself able to reconstruct in detail how Capote gained access to the material presented. For all his "detachment," Capote leaves his footprints all over the presented world; the careful reader eventually begins to uncover them and glimpses behind the

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<sup>1</sup>Lewis, Five Families, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup>The other possibility, that Dewey later reported the thoughts to Capote, seems on close reading of these and similar passages less likely.

presented world Capote's former presence in it, gathering his material. This potential for reconstruction further reinforces the already strong basis for the authority of the work and adds a dimension to the handling of authority not present in the other corpus works.

With its unorthodox variant on first-person narration, The Armies of the Night possesses all the advantages, as well as the attendant snares, which first person narration meets in its handling of authority. Mailer, like Kuznetsov, is the eye-witness source for much of what he narrates. However, Mailer is not content with access to the private thoughts and feelings of his own narrator-protagonist, yet, in seeking to establish the interiority of others, he does not use, as Capote does, the devices of subordinate first-person narration and speech translated into seeming thought. Instead he resorts to speculations about the thoughts of others — speculations which are always explicitly stated as speculations. The degree to which Mailer calls attention to his method of speculating on mental processes is made clear in an early passage: ". . . cease all speculations as to what was in Lowell's head. 'The one mind a novelist cannot enter is the mind of a novelist superior to himself,' said once to Mailer by Jean Malaquais."<sup>1</sup> Having introduced and commented on the method of speculation, Mailer goes on to speculate frequently on the private thoughts of others, always specifying that he is speculating.

One device which Mailer uses in signalling the speculative nature of his rendering of interiority is the use of tentative or hypothetical locutions such as "perhaps" and "as if." A frequent context for this device is the narrator witnessing an event in which little or nothing is said. He then goes on to speculate on the unspoken

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<sup>1</sup>Armies, p. 40.

dialogue which underlies the event. The following is one of a number of such moments :

Then wishing to move the Chaplain to the next office, the turnkey reached for Boyle's sleeve, and tugged at it, as if to say, "You may be wearing the Collar, but you're just Sonnyboy to me." Like a shot the Chaplain's hand flew out and knocked the turnkey's figures away, as if Boyle was replying, "Get those guilty hands off this Cloth."<sup>1</sup>

The use of hypothetical locutions in The Armies of the Night is not confined to speculation about what might be going on in an individual's mind in a particular situation witnessed by Mailer; they are used for the invention of entire scenes and situations as well. All of the major instances of invention occur in Book Two,<sup>2</sup> and the reason for their being there is not difficult to ascertain. Book Two no longer deals with what Mailer actually witnessed, but rather what he was able to reconstruct from records and the accounts of other participants and witnesses. In order to make "dramatic" the material thus gathered he renders circumstantially occurrences about which he knew very little other than that they (or something like them) had taken place. The following is a characteristic example :

Now soldiers were being rotated rapidly, sometimes by the half-hour — no relationships between troops and soldiers was to be permitted to grow. Perhaps for good cause. Earlier in the day, a couple of Negro demonstrators were reported to have taunted a Negro soldier until he had finally been obliged to hang his head, turn it away. One can conceive of the dialogue.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 162. Italics added. Other major examples occur on pages 145, 208, and 258.

<sup>2</sup>There are a few instances of what appear to be invention in Book One (e.g. pp. 151, 156, 157), but these are momentary phantasies or speculations of the experiencing self. The narrating self simply records them.

"Hey, nigger, how long you going to kiss Mr. Charlie's who-who-who? Going over to Vietnam, going to be a nigger hero, huh? Going to have your photograph in a honkie paper, that right, is that right? Hey, Mr. Big, give us some skin, take your fat black hand off that honkie asshole rifle and give us some skin. You're the man! You're the man!"<sup>1</sup>

Mailer's use of invention would seem initially to be in conflict with the definition of the novelistic documentary provided earlier in this study. The documentary component of its dual work premise would seem to proscribe for the novelistic documentary all instances of invention, which is to say, all fictional material. However, Mailer's inventions are not presented in the form of conventional fictional sentences; they are not advanced as pseudo-facts. Indeed, quite the reverse is the case. Unlike ordinary fictional sentences, Mailer's inventions expressly assert their inventedness; they are transparently speculative: "One can conceive of the dialogue." Because Mailer is explicit about the nature of these passages, no problems regarding authority arise.

A further aspect of the problem of authority in The Armies of the Night has to do with the extensive rendering of cerebration mentioned at the end of the preceding section. Were this cerebration attributed to the narrating self, no problem of authority would obtain, but its attribution to the experiencing self raises serious problems. One could argue that, although style indirect libre — the mode in which most of the private thought is presented — ordinarily disposes of mediation so that thought emanates directly from the thinking mind, the nominal identity of writer, narrator, and figure makes it seem that in this case mediation does not cease altogether and that in fact

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<sup>1</sup>Armies, p. 269. Italics added. Other examples appear on pages 257 and 270.

the thoughts are the thoughts of the narrating self superimposed on the experiencing self. In the absence of any signals to the contrary, the argument is a plausible one, but there are signals to the contrary. As noted earlier, at the conclusion of each long passage of style indirect libre a signal is provided which attributes the thoughts to the experiencing self and changes the passages retrospectively into a kind of thought report. Of course, Mailer is much closer in time to his narrated material than, say, Kuznetsov is to his, but even so memory alone could not account for passages of such length and circumstantiality. The passages inevitably strike the reader as fictional approximations or reconstructions, and in so doing run directly counter to the documentary part of the dual work premise which underlies the novelistic documentary.

One should hasten to add that the diminishing of authority in The Armies of the Night is not solely a question of Mailer's undue reliance on memory. Capote might well have done much the same thing. The difference is that in The Armies of the Night the undue reliance is signalled in the text. Authority, then, is an aspect of the work as it presents itself to the reader; Mailer allows it to be impaired if not altogether destroyed in his work whereas Capote, even if he is guilty of the same practice, does not permit his claim to authority to be undermined.

Because The Children of Sánchez is wholly rather than partly composed of documentation, it is far less susceptible to problems in its handling of authority than the other corpus works. While it is true that the different narrators circumstantially reproduce detailed occurrences including passages of dialogue, and true also that their accounts are often contradictory, Lewis is only under the obligation to render their accounts faithfully. The interest in the work lies

more in the nature of memory and interpretation than in their accuracy or factuality. A problem which does arise in the work concerns the language used by the narrators. This could be passed over as a problem inherent in translation, but Lewis is fluent in Spanish and had the help of others equally proficient or even more so.<sup>1</sup> Lewis makes a point in his Introduction to the work of indicating how little education the Sánchez children received; therefore it is surprising to come across passages which exhibit marked capacities for intellection and abstract expression. Remarks like "I shouted with desperation, with rage, with all the anxiety of life,"<sup>2</sup> and "When a Latin really wants to capture some illusion, whether out of vanity or caprice, the first thing he will do is get married"<sup>3</sup> are, given the context of a "culture of poverty," surprising enough. But Manuel's observation that "the Pope lived in portentous opulence"<sup>4</sup> goes beyond the merely surprising.

However, the rigor of Lewis's method is revealed by his anticipation of this potential threat to authority. In the Introduction he writes :

The English translation [of the original tapes] gives a surprisingly high level of language and vocabulary to relatively unlettered people. The fluency of language and the vocabulary of Mexicans, be they peasants or slum dwellers, have always impressed me. . . . Manuel's use of such sophisticated terms as "subconscious," "luminaries," and "portentous opulence" may be surprising, but Manuel reads the Spanish version of

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<sup>1</sup>See Children, p. ix and Lewis, Pedro Martínez: A Mexican Peasant and his Family (1964; rpt. London: Panther, 1969), p. 5.

<sup>2</sup>Children, p. 191.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 278.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 338.

Reader's Digest and has a flair for intellectuality.<sup>1</sup>

This is the only point on which the authority for Lewis's work is open to question, and he both anticipates the question and answers it.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. xxii.

## CHAPTER 2

### ADDITIONAL ASPECTS OF STRUCTURE

#### 2.1 Narrative Phases and Arcs of Tension

Critics of the novel have only rarely turned their attention to analysis of the nature and functions of the divisions and subdivisions that appear in the works they examine. Occasionally critics comment on the more obviously unusual uses of such divisions — the chapters on "Cetology" in Moby Dick or the essayistic chapters in Tom Jones. But ordinarily they mention the divisions of a novel only in so far as they provide a handy means for citation; in themselves, the divisions have for the most part been taken for granted and so have attracted little critical interest.

Philip Stevick is one of the few critics writing in English who has devoted effort to the sort of study undertaken in this section.<sup>1</sup> Regrettably, Stevick has chosen to call a variety of isolable narrative units "chapters"; as a consequence of this practice, his use of the word "chapter" is not always clear. Sometimes it refers to what is commonly understood by the term; at other times it embraces

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<sup>1</sup>Philip Stevick, "The Theory of Fictional Chapters," Western Humanities Review, XX (1966), rpt. in The Theory of the Novel, ed. by Stevick (New York: Free Press, 1967), pp. 171-84, and "Fictional Chapters and Open Ends," JGE: The Journal of General Education, XVII (1966), 261-72.

sub-sections as well as other units such as episodes which may or may not be distinguished typographically in the text. At times Stevick makes statements which are valid for some but not all of these different units. In the present study, the term narrative phase will be used to denote the typographically distinguished units of narration — books, chapters, sections, sub-sections — into which prose narratives are often divided. And the narrative phase, which is, like the sentence or the paragraph, a formal unit of composition, will be distinguished from the arc of tension which is rather different in nature. Despite the fact that Stevick does not explicitly distinguish them, his study provides valuable insights into both narrative phase and arc of tension.

In one of his articles, Stevick points out several "justifications for the convention"<sup>1</sup> of the formally distinguished narrative unit, or, narrative phase; he notes, among other things, that "it is possible to change a scene more conveniently between chapters . . . than within them. And it is possible to omit irrelevant periods of time between chapters more easily than to offer perfunctory summary."<sup>2</sup> He goes on to remark that "adjustments and modulations [of tone] are considerably facilitated by the device of the chapter,"<sup>3</sup> and that "the technical demands of writing a novel, with its scenic shifts, its omissions, and so on, are easier to meet when the narrative is divided."<sup>4</sup> Although very little attention has been given the narrative phase by critics writing in English, it can be, and has been, exploited in a number of ways to achieve a variety of effects. Far from being a very minor technical convention whose potentialities and functions can be enumerated rather quickly, it is a subtle and complex aspect of narrative

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<sup>1</sup>Stevick, "The Theory of Fictional Chapters," p. 181.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 181.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 182.

art which taken alone would be a fertile area for literary research. That Stevick, for one, understands this to be the case is apparent in his statement that "the beginnings and endings, the technical shifts, the relations between chapters in Jane Austen alone are so subtle and various as to justify a book in themselves."<sup>1</sup>

The arc of tension is not as easily described as the narrative phase. Generally speaking, in dealing with arcs of tension we are dealing with segments of a narrative which possess within themselves the pattern of situation, action, and resolution which is projected on a larger scale by the whole narrative — itself, ordinarily, one overspanning arc of tension. Stevick, in writing about the audience psychology involved in what are here being called arcs of tension, makes the point that "the writer [of a novel] induces anticipations which can be fulfilled at different levels, days which begin and end, alliances which are made and broken, locations which are visited temporarily, antagonists that are vanquished."<sup>2</sup> At its simplest level, the individual complete episodes in the string of episodes constituting an episodic narrative will be consecutive arcs of tension incorporated within a larger, inclusive arc of tension. In more complex types, the single strand of arcs is replaced by more complex patterns. A work might contain, for instance, several major arcs each of which, in turn, contains several secondary arcs that overlap in such a way that one arc is initiated before another, initiated earlier, has been completed; the possible permutations are infinite in number. Frequently, though by no means always, the rendering of arcs of tension will correspond compositionally with narrative phases. Indeed, one way of exploiting narrative phases for particular effects is to run a clearly established arc of tension through its

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 183.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 174.

expected resolution at the end of the narrative phase. Stevick points out one of the more flagrant instances of this device in Tristram Shandy.<sup>1</sup> At the end of Chapter Eight in Volume Two Sterne writes: "Imagine to yourself; — but this had better begin a new chapter." And the following chapter opens with: "Imagine to yourself a little squat, uncourtly figure of a Doctor Slop." Although it is important to maintain the distinction between narrative phases and arcs of tension, the one a unit of composition, the other a unit of action, in fact in the corpus works arcs of tension are almost invariably congruent with narrative phases so that in isolating and examining the one the reader will simultaneously discover the other.

One reason for studying narrative phases and arcs of tension in relation to the corpus works is that their use and the relationship between them operate differently in the novel and in factual narratives. Both novels and factual narratives use the device of the narrative phase; however, in the latter the narrative phase is seldom more than a convenient unit of composition used to segment the work according to temporal divisions and subject matter. The setting up in factual narratives of patterns of suspense and resolution, and the manipulation of the relations between arcs of tension and narrative phases are among the signals of novelizing tendencies. For example, the moment Napoleon's fate in Russia or at Waterloo is treated suspensefully, the moment the question, What will happen when Napoleon reaches Moscow or meets Wellington? is raised, the historian will be moving toward the characteristic effects of fictional as opposed to factual narrative. In the novelistic documentary, then, the establishing of arcs of tension and the artistic manipulation of narrative phases will constitute one of the areas in which the process of novelizing will be most apparent.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 182-83.

The Armies of the Night is sub-titled "History as a Novel: The Novel as History." Each of the two major narrative phases into which the work is divided takes one part of the sub-title as a portion of its own title. Book One is "History as a Novel: The Steps of the Pentagon"; Book Two is "The Novel as History: The Battle of the Pentagon." The nature of the two major narrative phases and the relationship between them have caused some confusion. David Lodge, for example, argues that Mailer abandons the principles according to which the narrative phases are composed and may even have been confused about the principles himself.<sup>1</sup> However, Lodge has apparently failed to follow Mailer's elaborate arguments concerning those principles. At one point Mailer becomes explicit about the issue.

Doubtless it has been hardly possible to ignore that this work resides in two enclaves, the first entitled History As a Novel, the second here before us called The Novel As History. No one familiar with husking the ambiguities of English will be much mystified by the titles. It is obvious the first book is a history in the guise or dress or manifest of a novel, and the second is a real or true novel — no less! — presented in the style of a history. (Of course, everyone including the author will continue to speak of the first book as a novel and the second as a history. . . .) However, the first book can be, in the formal sense, nothing but a personal history which while written as a novel was to the best of the author's memory scrupulous to facts, and therefore a document; whereas the second, while dutiful to all newspaper accounts, eyewitness reports, and historic inductions available . . . while even pretending to be a history (on the basis of its introduction) is finally now to be disclosed as some

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<sup>1</sup>David Lodge, "The Novelist at the Crossroad," Critical Quarterly, II (1969), 112.

sort of condensation of a collective novel.<sup>1</sup>

This passage, and there are a number of others like it, reveals acute insight into the problems involved in fashioning a novelistic documentary, especially the problem of authority. Book One, as Mailer points out, is considerably more novelistic in appearance than Book Two, yet its claim for authority, resting, as it does, on that which the writer has directly experienced, is more absolute than can be the case for the second book. Book Two is, in appearance, more like orthodox historical narrative than Book One, largely because of its reliance on secondary sources of information, the absence of Mailer as experiencing self, and the emphasis on the broader current of events rather than the involvement of particular individuals whose activities are rendered in detail. Yet in Book Two the narrator can no longer attest with any certainty the authority of his source, and lacking such authority, the work becomes, as Mailer sees it, more akin to a fictional work.<sup>2</sup> Each source is the product of individual experience which, if expanded, could become an alternative version to Book One. Each can be seen as a potential fragment of the kind of work Mailer has fashioned in Book One, and so added together they became, as Mailer suggests, portions of "a collective novel."

Books One and Two of The Armies of the Night are segmented in different ways; the first has two levels of subdivision; the second only one. Book One is divided into four "parts," each of which has its own title and its own separately numbered and titled set of sections. Book Two, which is only about a third the length of Book One, is not divided into separate parts and has only one numbered and titled set of sections. It is an interesting feature of the work that the titles

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<sup>1</sup>Armies, pp. 254-55. Lodge actually quotes a fragment of this passage, but he either refuses to credit the argument or finds it more confusing than helpful.

<sup>2</sup>Mailer is here working from something very like a theory of fiction as lie.

(especially those of the sections) function — as is frequently the case in narrative works — as prefiguring devices; that is, they signal the central idea of the section or the course of action depicted in it or a combination of the two. In this way, the titles like other prefiguring devices help to establish the arcs of tension which are presented in the separate narrative phases. In addition, the titles of the four parts of Book One establish the strict chronological framework imposed on the wide-ranging activity and ever wider-ranging digressions presented in the book. Each lesser arc of tension has its own climax either of thought (in the sense of an epiphany) or action, and, in turn, each of the major arcs of tension set up by the division into two books reaches a climax — the first being the personal climax of the experiencing self in terms of his involvement in the March on the Pentagon; the other, the climax of the march itself. The latter, because of its position as well as its more generalized significance, functions as the climax of the work as a whole.

The activating principle behind all of the major and many of the minor arcs of tension is bound up with Mailer's concepts of the moral ladder and the rite of passage. Again and again the question raised or problem confronted concerns whether the next rung of the moral ladder can be or should be mounted and whether those concerned will successfully undergo the rite of passage undertaken. Throughout the work, prefiguring devices are generally directed towards establishing the rungs; they seldom indicate whether they will be successfully mounted; consequently the evocation of suspense is usually concerned with what will happen, what the outcome will be. In contrast to this, In Cold Blood consistently prefigures outcomes and places its suspense on how the outcome will be effected. The scope and intentions of this study preclude an exhaustive study of the nature and functions of prefiguring devices and types of suspense. For present purposes, only a few of the more important distinctions are necessary.

Narrative works (unlike most dramatic works), because of the presence of a narrator for whom the presented events are ordinarily anterior to his narrating, can employ without difficulty prefigurative devices which indicate actual knowledge of forthcoming events and situations as well as those which lack such knowledge. In other words, they can state 'facts' about forthcoming events as well as merely foreshadow them. With regard to suspense, an important distinction obtains between end-oriented and middle-oriented suspense. End-oriented suspense, that is, suspense directed towards the ends of arcs of tension and particularly the overspanning arc of tension of the entire work, is today largely confined to novels and short stories which exhaust their meanings at the level of action. The "whodunit" is a familiar example. In narratives which exploit end-oriented suspense, the questions elicited will be questions like: What will be the outcome? Will the hero survive? Middle-oriented suspense moves the attention away from questions of outcomes (whether of subordinate arcs of tension or of the entire work) towards questions concerning how they come about. In Cold Blood is emphatic and consistent in its employment of middle-oriented suspense. Even disregarding the work's subtitle, "A True Account of a Multiple Murder and Its Consequences," it is surprising how thorough and explicit Capote is in his evocation of middle-oriented suspense. For example, in the first part, from the title itself, "The Last to See Them Alive," through the five explicit advance references to the murder, no questions concerning the outcome are permitted to intrude. It is significant that one of the very early advance references signals the eventual deaths of the murderers in addition to the death of their victims.<sup>1</sup> Throughout the work the reader's attention

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<sup>1</sup>On page three the narrator mentions "four shotgun blasts that, all told, ended six human lives." It is likely that on first reading one will forget this statement and its implications. Neither the Clutter family (the four victims) nor the two murderers have been introduced at this point. So the number six will have no immediately apparent significance.

is focussed on how outcomes are effected; suspense as to what will happen is experienced only by figures within the work in relation to whom the reader is almost always in a position of superior knowledge.

To turn for a moment to the employment of narrative phases, In Cold Blood has four major separately-titled narrative phases, and a coda which effects a resolution of the central tensions brought about by the narrated events. (The coda is not distinguished typographically.) The major narrative phases are subdivided into untitled phases separated only by a space in the text or, depending on what edition one uses, a row of asterisks. To bind together the lesser narrative phases Capote uses a variety of cross-cutting devices. It would require a lengthy chapter simply to enumerate the various kinds of cross-cutting techniques Capote uses; a few selected examples will have to suffice. At one point the shift pivots on sound, a device common in films. One phase ends, "A car honked. At last — Dick." The next begins, "'Good grief Kenyon! I hear you.'"<sup>1</sup> Another shifts from the horror of a public lavatory where Perry suffers extreme pain and sickness to the privacy and sense of comfort and safety of Nancy's bedroom.<sup>2</sup> One final example illustrates the ironic effect often communicated through the shift from one narrative phase to another. At the end of one section Arthur Clutter, brother of Herbert Clutter, makes the prediction to journalists: "'When this is cleared up, I'll wager whoever did it was someone within ten miles of where we now stand.'" This is followed by, "Approximately four hundred miles east of where Arthur Clutter then stood. . . ." <sup>3</sup> Capote manipulates these transitions in various ways for various effects. Some of the shifts are temporal, some spatial; many contrast atmospherically or

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<sup>1</sup>In Cold Blood, p. 13.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 72.

tonally. Through them an intricate system of counterpointing is constructed, and in the counterpointing a novelistic treatment of narrative phases is manifest.

Capote's handling of the larger narrative phases — the four separately titled books, "The Last to See Them Alive," "Persons Unknown," "Answer," and "The Corner" — and the relation of phases to arcs of tension derives its effect from the gaps between the knowledge possessed by those within the presented world and the narrator's superior knowledge (superior because it is retrospective) which is shared, for the most part, by the reader. For those within the presented world, tension in the first half of the work centers on the question of who is responsible for the murders; the tension is compounded by the fear that the person responsible is a member of their own community. The answers to those questions raised by the community — Who did it? Will they be apprehended? Will they be convicted? Will they be executed? — are known in advance to the reader. His questions are on the order of, What, exactly, happened in the Clutter house? Why did they do it? What kind of men are these? In a sense, then, there are two parallel sets of arcs of tension operating within the work: the one relating to the presented figures, the other relating to the curiosity and expectations aroused in the reader. Book Two can be used to indicate how this manipulation of parallel arcs operates. In the first place, the title of this narrative phase, which is a tag from the death certificates of the Clutter family, functions ironically. The identity of the murderers remains unknown to the Community and to the authorities working on the case, but it is in the course of this book that their personalities are laid bare for the for the reader; to him they become "known" for the first time. The parallel arcs of tension operate even at this level.

The eighteen subordinate narrative phases which comprise Book Two vary from one to seven pages in length with one phase of

over twenty pages. Most of those phases which center on the community and the investigating authorities (ten in all) depict the growing sense of anxiety and the search for clues which might indicate who the murderers are. At the same time they reveal to the reader much about the community and about what the community thought of the Clutters. But the clues are meagre: the suspects — Bobby Rupp, the mysterious pock-marked Mexicans, Jonathan Daniel Adrian, the several people who had in the past expressed grudges against Herb Clutter — all innocent; in fact the arc of tension set in operation by the fears and suspicions of the people of Holcomb and Garden City does not resolve itself in Book Two. It continues to expand until its eventual resolution in Book Three. But for the reader a degree of resolution is effected. Book Two, and in particular the long section which contains the biography of Perry written by his father, the letter from his sister, and the analysis of the letter by Perry's friend and mentor Willie-Jay, goes a long way towards satisfying the curiosity aroused in the reader concerning the murderers. And for him, a resolution of sorts is achieved in the final section. Perry and Dick, hitch-hiking in the Mojave Desert, wait for "some solitary traveller in a decent car and with money in his billfold — a stranger to rob, strangle, discard on the desert."<sup>1</sup> Momentarily frustrated in their hope, they walk off down the highway singing "The Battle Hymn of the Republic." At this point the process of revelation seems to reach a limit as their essential natures become momentarily crystalized in the juxtaposition of the contemplation of still another murder and the calm, even joyful marching and singing which immediately follow it.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 127.

Lewis's The Children of Sánchez is divided into three major narrative phases framed by a prologue and an epilogue. Prefaced to the work is the lengthy introduction by Lewis which provides the theoretical background and statements of method and intention necessary for understanding how the work was constructed and what it purports to be. Jesús Sánchez provides the framing prologue and epilogue, and in each of the three major narrative phases, four of Jesús's children present segments of their "life-stories."<sup>1</sup> Their narratives follow, in each major narrative phase, the same sequence — Manuel, Roberto, Consuelo, Marta — and cover approximately the same time span. Much of the novelistic effect which critics have perceived in the work can be attributed to Lewis's treatment of narrative phases. Without the segmenting and intercalating of the life-stories and the grouping together of segments according to the time spans covered the work would probably lose its novelistic nature.

In The Children of Sánchez, arcs of tension are not as pronounced and consequently not as readily apparent as they are in The Armies of the Night and In Cold Blood. Since there is not much in the way of prefiguration or suspense, little anticipation directed towards specific events is induced in the reader. Instead, arcs of tension are based on felt phases of life — childhood, adolescence, young adulthood. Each of the narratives in each of the three major narrative phases ends just as a life phase is coming to its conclusion. In the following part the narrators pick up again with the opening out of the new life phase. The felt phase of life becomes, then, the principle according to which arcs of tension are composed, and these in turn are congruent with the separate segments of the life-stories and the major narrative phases. The links between the major narrative phases and between the segments

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<sup>1</sup>Life-story or life-history is a technical term for a frequently used method in anthropological studies. Lewis is the first to use interspersed, interlocking life-stories or "multiple autobiographies."

of each narrator's life-story are strongly marked. In Part One, Manuel begins his narrative at the point at which J sus concludes his prologue — the death of Lenore, J sus's first wife and the mother of the four narrators. Roberto likewise begins with memories of their mother. Consuelo refers to her death, but was too young to remember very much about her, and Marta, only two at the time of her mother's death, cannot remember her at all. In Part Two, Manuel, Roberto and Marta pick up where they left off, Manuel and Marta with their marriages,<sup>1</sup> Roberto with leaving home to join the army. Consuelo begins where Marta's first narrative breaks off, with the night Marta runs away to live with Crispin.

The composition of arcs of tension, major narrative phases, and segments of the life-stories according to distinguishable phases of life endows the work with a coherent and immediately perceptible temporal framework. However, there is yet another level of narrative phases. Each segment of each life-history is subdivided into smaller units which are distinguished, like the lesser narrative phases in In Cold Blood, only by spaces in the text. These narrative phases are less strongly linked with one another than are the larger narrative phases. Initially these lesser narrative phases would seem to be typographically distinguished episodes within an episodic structure. Yet, if one accepts Mendilow's description of the episodic structure as a presentation of independent units "linked only by a common character and the idea of temporal succession,"<sup>2</sup> then the structure of the narratives cannot even be said to be episodic since frequently there are not even temporal links between them.

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<sup>1</sup>"Marriage" is an ambiguous term in the work. It can refer, as it does here in Marta's case, to any relatively stable relationship in which the couple lives together if only intermittently.

<sup>2</sup>Mendilow, Time and the Novel, p. 225.

Often it cannot be said with any certainty that one unit follows another in time; instead, each narrative phase initiates a new narrative thread so that they follow each other only in their order of presentation and not necessarily according to historical sequence. What binds these unlinked narrative phases together is the superimposed temporal framework which operates at the level of the larger narrative phases and arcs of tension. The clarity of temporal ordering on a higher level allows for the less strictly defined temporality at a lower one.

Babi Yar is divided into three major narrative phases, each of which is further divided into separately titled subordinate narrative phases which are, in turn, further segmented into typographically spaced lesser narrative phases. Prefixed to Part One is an author's preface in which Kuznetsov describes the history and development of the work. This is followed by a titled section, equivalent in status to the titled sections of the three parts, which states the work's generic intentions and presents an account of a trip to Babi Yar undertaken by the experiencing self at the very end of the central time span.<sup>1</sup> Each of the three parts presents separate arcs of tension with separate climaxes for the portion of the narrative devoted to the experiencing self and for the portion devoted to the victims of Nazi persecution. For the experiencing self, each climax is a moment of deepening awareness of self, and each is expressed in terms of a developing manhood. While it is true that Babi Yar employs far more prefiguration than The Children of Sánchez, the prefiguration operates mainly with reference to minor arcs of tension. The three

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<sup>1</sup>In the earlier edition this section, which appears under the title "A Necessary Explanation," is printed in italics and functions as a preface to what follows.

major arcs of tension are organized according to felt phases of life in a manner similar to the arcs of tension in The Children of Sánchez. In Babi Yar, however, the pattern is not as clear. For one thing, the life phases in Babi Yar involve internal changes and not changes in external status (marriage, leaving home, and so on) as they do in Lewis's work. And for another, the composition of narrative phases according to life phases is not as pronounced in Babi Yar. Unlike The Children of Sánchez, Babi Yar does not always terminate its major narrative phases at the point where a life phase comes to a close.

There is a further similarity regarding the nature of narrative phases in the two works. As in The Children of Sánchez, it often happens that there are no clear sequential signals linking narrative phases. Within one narrative phase there might be the conventional "and then . . . and after that" signals, but the temporal relationship between the end of one narrative phase and the beginning of another — even when both deal with the experiencing self or with the fate of the Jews — is often only vaguely implied, not explicitly stated. The implicit temporal link is supplied, as in The Children of Sánchez, by a superimposed temporal framework, which is derived from the historically verifiable dates and events of war-time Kiev. While not all the occurrences pertaining to the experiencing self can be precisely located within this historically conditioned time span, it nevertheless provides them with a clearly defined temporal context.

Several of the subordinate narrative phases in Babi Yar are unusual in nature and function. These are the sections with the shared title, "A Word from the Author," of which there are four, and those with the title, "A Chapter of Original Documents," of which there are two. In both, the narrative of events ceases and the work momentarily becomes timeless and essayistic. Essayistic passages of substantial length are uncommon though certainly not unknown in the

twentieth-century novel, and they are proscribed by most normative theories of the novel. On the other hand, the chapters of documents, if not the chapters "from the Author," have at least one obvious modern analogue — the "Newsreel" sections in Dos Passos's U.S.A. trilogy. Like the "Newsreel" sections, the chapters of documentation project the social and political pressures which are experienced by the figures within the presented world, and in so doing they provide a bridge between the experiencing self and his immediate circle of family and acquaintances on the one hand and the victims of the Nazi occupation who are only indirectly known to the narrating self on the other.

## 2.2 Character and the Novelistic Documentary

Throughout this study various phrases, particularly "presented figure" and "figure within the presented world," have been used where the term "character" might have been expected. The avoidance of "character" in relation to the novelistic documentary has not been accidental; "character" is most useful as a critical term when it is restricted, as it usually is, to fictional contexts. Because the novelistic documentary precludes fictionality, its presented figures cannot strictly speaking be called characters, yet, in keeping with its novelistic structure, the novelistic documentary presents its figures in much the same way that the novel proper presents its figures — in other words, as if they were characters. A discussion of the presented figures in the corpus works must be careful to honour both aspects of the novelistic documentary's dual work premise. To ignore either the novelistic presentation of figures or the fact that these figures have an existence prior and external to their verbal context (a factor precluded in the case of the invented figure) would be to risk falsifying the works.

Perhaps the best way to approach the problem of character in relation to the novelistic documentary is to consider the kinds of knowledge which the reader brings to bear on the presented figures in various types of narrative. The reader's knowledge of a fictional character is strictly limited by the context of its presentation; nothing can be known about a fictional character beyond what is projected by the work. However, a factual narrative can never exhaust what there is to be known about its presented figures, and in reading a factual narrative the reader will naturally bring his prior knowledge of the presented figure to bear on the presentation of that figure in the particular work. A condition similar to that which operates in the novelistic documentary occurs when an historical figure is introduced into an historical novel. Within the work he will to all appearances function as a character. But beyond the work he is (or was) an actual person. And the better known he is as a person, the more the reader's knowledge of him as a person will modify the reading experience. Nevertheless, the functioning of the historical person as a character is confirmed by the largely fictional context into which he is introduced. In the novelistic documentary even this supporting context is absent. Figures in a novelistic documentary are similar to characters not in terms of or as a consequence of a controlling fictional context — for there is no such context — but because of the novelistic structure of the work.

In the novelistic documentary, presented figures, like genuine historical figures in historical novels, depend for their effect on the reader's awareness that they have an existence outside the work. The extent to which the presented figure's external existence will modify the reading experience will presumably vary according to how well known the figure is. Mailer, for example, is a public — some would say notorious — figure; his reputation strongly influences the informed reader's experience of The Armies

of the Night. On the other hand *Jésus Sánchez* (the name, it should be remembered, is a pseudonym) is, beyond what the work presents, very nearly unknowable. However much its impact varies, the reader's awareness of external existence of presented figures is always a modifying factor in the reading experience. And more importantly, the dual work premise of the novelistic documentary ensures that the non-fictionality of the presented figures will be continually asserted. Various devices such as the incorporation of authentic documentation serve as constant pointers to the persons who stand behind the presented figures.

The following remarks on the presented figures in the corpus works will be primarily concerned neither with character typology nor with enumerating the various techniques of characterization. The central concern will be with those aspects of the presented figures which emerge most emphatically from each of the works. These mainly involve the relations of presented figures to actual persons and other features of "character" and "characterization" peculiar to the novelistic documentary. Naturally, attention will also be given to the presentation of figures in so far as it constitutes one of the main, meaning-bearing elements of the work in question.

The relationship between Mailer the public figure and Mailer the presented figure can lead to some confusion. Obviously there must be a high degree of correspondence between the two, otherwise there would be little point in calling the presented figure Mailer. However, it is a mistake to assume that public and presented figures are coextensive; the presented figure is a patterned selection and interpretation of the man, not the man himself. Mailer establishes the distinction between his public and presented selves through the device of a document. The article in Time, representative of an

un-inventive and non-novelistic mode, comments on Mailer as a person. By posing the information in the document and then counter-acting its import by altering the story it tells, Mailer achieves two things at once. First, he appears in the rôle of a narrator who purports to set the record straight in the interest of historical veracity. And second, which is of more immediate concern, he distinguishes Mailer as presented in the work from the Mailer present in the external world who is susceptible to examination by public media. This separation enables the Mailer within the work to take on the potentialities of a literary character. Once he establishes the presented figure, Mailer goes to some lengths to remind the reader of the public reputation behind it. For instance, he provides the reader with much of the sort of autobiographical information customarily reserved for dust-jacket blurbs, as well as with information publishers would no doubt prefer to forget, such as his widely publicized assault on his second wife.

It would be unjust to The Armies of the Night to move on to the next work without commenting if only very briefly on the nature and dimensions of the figure which Mailer projects, for Mailer's presentation of himself as figure is executed on a grand scale: he is at times deadly earnest, even anguished, often broadly comic; capable of large gestures and petty meanness; deeply committed to a variety of causes, while intensely introspective and analytical. Above all he is, as Barry H. Leeds has suggested,<sup>1</sup> painstakingly, even morbidly, honest about his weaknesses and failings, particularly his tendency to assume poses and his occasionally dubious motives and actions.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Leeds, The Structured Vision, p. 250.

<sup>2</sup>Bernard Bergonzi comments suggestively on Mailer's "Montaigne-like curiosity about the human being one happens to know best — oneself." The Situation of the Novel (1970; rpt. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972), p. 250.

In The Children of Sánchez the presentation of figure is one of the main meaning-bearing elements of the work. Much of the interest in the work lies in the gradual unfolding of the personalities of Jesús and the four members of his family whose life-histories are presented. The five narrators often attempt to characterize themselves explicitly and, even more often, they attempt to characterize each other. The most penetrating and impressive attempt at explicit characterization is the following one by Consuelo, though there are many other attempts worthy of quotation.

. . . even if they [Manuel, Roberto, and Marta] tried to change, I don't believe they could. None of them, perhaps myself included although I meant to try, seemed to have the right qualities of character. For example, if someone gave Manuel a common stone, he would hold it in his hand and look at it eagerly. In a few seconds, it would begin to shine and he would see that it was made of silver, then of gold, then of the most precious things imaginable, until the glitter died.

Roberto would hold the same stone and would murmur, "Mmmmm. What is this good for?" But he wouldn't know the answer.

Marta would hold it in her hand for just a moment, and without a thought, would throw it carelessly away.

I, Consuelo, would look at it, wonderingly. "What might this be? Is it, could it be, what I have been looking for?"

But my father would take the stone and set it on the ground. He would look for another and put it on top of the first one, then another and another, until no matter how long it took, he had finally turned it into a house.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Children, p. 280.

Such attempts are modified by the implicit characterization of self which emerges from what the narrators say and how they say it. This implicit characterization of self intensifies or, at times, even contradicts a narrator's explicit characterization of himself or the characterization of himself by another, so that the reader achieves a level of insight into the presented figure that is available neither to the figure himself nor to the other narrators. Consequently, the reader becomes aware — in a way that the figures never can — of the extent to which the presented figures are, as Lewis puts it, "badly damaged human beings."<sup>1</sup>

Only one further aspect of the presentation of figure in The Children of Sánchez will be isolated here. There are a number of features in the work which have a unifying function or effect, which, that is, contribute to the binding together of the separate narratives. Paramount among these features is the treatment of Jesús. Jesús is present as narrator only in the prologue and epilogue; however, in each of his children's life-histories Jesús is the central concern of the narrator. It is Jesús who provides their standards, Jesús who judges their every action, and it is only Jesús's judgment that counts. Jesús dominates his children not just in the sense of providing the external rules according to which the family conducts its affairs; he dominates their thoughts, their attitudes, their opinions, even their opinions of themselves. There is the temptation to ascribe Jesús's rôle in the lives of his children to the traditional norms of Latin family life, but the stereotype in this instance is simply inadequate. It cannot begin to account for the almost obsessive regard for Jesús expressed by the narrators. The norms of Latin family life are perhaps a necessary or contributing, but hardly a sufficient, condition

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. xxxi.

for this near obsession. The extent to which he dominates the lives and thoughts of the narrators — and hence their narratives — provides Jesús with a centrality in the work which gives its title special point, for, central to our accumulated knowledge of the major narrators is our knowledge of their relationships with Jesús. They present themselves very much, that is, as "the children of Sánchez."

Two aspects of the presentation of figures in In Cold Blood have been of particular interest to critics. The first is the similarity of figures in the work to characters in Capote's earlier novels and short stories.<sup>1</sup> The second is the difference in weighting and value accorded to Perry Smith and Dick Hickock.

Readers familiar with Capote's earlier work cannot avoid being struck by the uncanny correspondences between several of the presented figures in In Cold Blood and characters in Capote's earlier novels and short stories. Perry, Dick, and even Herb Clutter are all haunted by doubts concerning identity and self-image, a familiar concern in Capote's work. Perry and Dick are, like Capote's fictional grotesques, physically disfigured, and for both disfigurement functions as an index of underlying personality. George Garrett has commented on the "amazing fact" that presented figures in In Cold Blood "have all the characteristics of [Capote's] typical fictional protagonists."<sup>2</sup> He singles out Perry Smith to illustrate his point.

Perry Smith is perfectly, patly, and in almost every detail a spooky embodiment of Capote's earlier fiction. He has all the right characteristics: a rich and childish

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<sup>1</sup>This similarity has been examined by Garrett, "Crime and Punishment in Kansas," pp. 4-8, and by Goad, "Daylight and Darkness," pp. 7 and 45-52.

<sup>2</sup>Garrett, "Crime and Punishment," p. 8.

imagination, his dreams including one marvelous recurring dream which is mystical in beauty and implication, his physical deformity, his sensitivity, even his background.<sup>1</sup>

The existence in Capote's novels and short stories of fictional analogues of the figures presented in In Cold Blood has an unusual effect on the relation between presented figure and actual person. That there are such analogues, and that they should be so striking, accentuates the presentation of the figures as if they were characters. This emphasis on the character-like presentation of figures, in turn, makes the signals that point to their verifiable existence in the actual world even more conspicuous.<sup>2</sup>

The differences in weighting and value according to which Perry and Dick are presented, though closely related to each other, can be handled separately. With regard to value, one cannot help becoming increasingly aware in reading the work of the numerous value distinctions that are explicitly drawn between Perry and Dick. Throughout the work, other presented figures compare the two, and almost invariably the comparison favours Perry over Dick. For instance, Willie-Jay, a fellow convict, thinks of Perry as "a poet, something rare and savable,"<sup>3</sup> while to him Dick is only "a vicious blusterer."<sup>4</sup> Both Dewey and his wife, although they think both men deserve to hang

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Garrett's argument (pp. 6-7) that the analogues have an ambiguous effect and only serve to confuse the reader who is familiar with Capote's earlier work fails to take into account the interaction of character-like presentation with the reiterated signals pointing to verifiable actuality. Confusion would occur only if these signals were absent.

<sup>3</sup>In Cold Blood, p. 34.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 36.

for their crime, express a certain sympathy and preference for Perry. The wife finds Dick's photograph terrifying, Perry's less so.<sup>1</sup> Dewey more than once expresses a sympathy for Perry that he cannot feel towards Dick, and his preference leads him to disbelieve Perry's confession that he alone actually committed the murders.<sup>2</sup> According to the story Perry tells, even Bonnie Clutter felt that he was somehow a better person than Dick.<sup>3</sup> The narrator never makes an explicit value judgement favouring Perry over Dick; indeed he is careful to state that Perry is decidedly lacking in virtue.<sup>4</sup> The nearest the narrator comes to making an explicit favourable comment about Perry occurs in his statement, "without being kind, he was sentimental."<sup>5</sup> Yet for all the "detachment" of the narrator, the work selects and presents the thoughts and actions of Perry and Dick in such a way that the valuations made of them by other presented figures are repeatedly confirmed. It is Dick who runs over stray dogs, molests young girls, desires "hair all over the walls,"<sup>6</sup> while Perry shows, even as he kills, some human feelings. And while Dick plans an escape from prison without bothering about Perry,<sup>7</sup> Perry refuses even to consider escaping without Dick.<sup>8</sup> In addition Perry gives as the reason for his confession that he alone did the killing the fact that he wanted to relieve Dick's family of some of their suffering.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 133.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 203, 209-210, 282.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 199.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.; p. 151.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 81.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., repeated on several occasions.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 216.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 218.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., pp. 235-36, 209-210.

Differences in the weighting or proportion accorded to Perry and Dick parallel the differences in valuation. Although the reader learns much about Dick, certainly enough to form a clear impression of him, what he learns is inconsiderable in comparison to what is revealed about Perry. One sample indication of the unequal weighting is the amount of incorporated documentation devoted to the thoughts and backgrounds of the two murderers. Taking only the more extensive documents — those of over five hundred words — there are approximately sixteen pages comprising five different documents pertaining to Perry as against just one document of two pages pertaining to Hickock.

George Garrett has argued that the differences in valuation and especially the unequal weighting constitute "cheating" on Capote's part. While he admits that some selection and weighting is inevitable, Garrett argues that the reader is tricked into accepting Hickock as a "conventional 'heavy'" who serves as little more than a convenient foil for Smith. To Garrett, all this constitutes a mere "trick of fiction" which is entirely out of place, however expedient it might be, in a work that deals with "a real murder and a real hanging."<sup>1</sup> Garrett's argument has merit, but he overlooks one or two crucial points. Capote's decision to write a work that was at once documentary and novelistic saddled him with the necessity to endow one or more of his principle figures with interiority. It is fairly certain from what the reader does learn of Hickock that he lacks a capacity for intel-  
lection. He is neither introspective nor capable of generalizing on his experience. Perry, on the other hand, has a rich and complex inner life of dreams, phantasies, and longings, all of which he is capable of articulating. So, in fact, only Perry's interiority was

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<sup>1</sup>Garrett, "Crime and Punishment in Kansas," p. 8.

available to Capote for rendering, and consequently the weighting, given the novelistic portion of the dual work premise, was determined by the nature of the material Capote was exploiting.

Babi Yar is in some respects less fertile than the other corpus works for the study of presented figure. Mailer makes the feature a crucial one by distancing himself from the figure through the use of the third person and then subjecting his figure to intensive scrutiny. Lewis presents contradictory interpretations of his figures by each other with the whole unified by the figure of Jésus. Capote uses documentation to delve deep into the interiority of Perry Smith. Kuznetsov's handling of presented figure, on the other hand, is more conventional, less influenced by the special nature of the novelistic documentary. What has already been said about the special relation between presented figure and actual person pertains, of course, to Babi Yar as well, only Kuznetsov is far more explicit in his insistence on the historicity of everything he relates about his experiencing self.

Two of the peripheral figures in Babi Yar are character-like in a rather special way. Kuznetsov's grandfather, with his eccentricities, his convenient proclivity to forget his earlier stated views, and his garrulity; and Degtyaryov the sausage maker, with his speech mannerisms and other peculiarities, are "characters" in the sense that we often speak of actual people as characters. W.J. Harvey, who calls such a presented figure a "Card" writes that "when we describe a person in such terms [that is, call him a character] we often have at the back of our minds the notion that life may here be imitating art, that such a person . . . is distinguished by some fiction-like idiosyncrasy."<sup>1</sup> And he goes on to state that

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<sup>1</sup>W.J. Harvey, Character and the Novel (London: Chatto and Windus, 1970), p. 58.

"the distinguishing feature of the Card . . . is his relative changelessness, combined with a peculiar kind of freedom."<sup>1</sup> Kuznetsov achieves an unusual effect by using figures who, one assumes, are already "characters" in actual life in a context which deals in the presentation of character-like figures, an effect which is made particularly pointed by the reminders to the reader that these are in fact real people.

While Kuznetsov's use of figures who are already character-like is noteworthy, the main interest regarding presented figure lies in his treatment of the experiencing self. The progress of the younger Kuznetsov from childish innocence, through deepening perception of the evil which surrounds him, to his final ascent to a level of awareness far in advance of his years has a special impact which derives from the frequent distancing and consequent objectivity with which the narrating self treats the experiencing self on the one hand, and from the continually reinforced assertion of the historicity of his experiences on the other. This combination of features — the movement towards anagnorisis, the objectivity with which this movement is frequently rendered, and the stressed relation between figure and actual person — provides for the reader a natural focal point to which he can, and probably will automatically, relate all of the other material presented in the work.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid. p. 61.

### 2.3 Time Treatment and Tense

With the possible exception of point of view, no structural aspect of narrative art has received as much critical attentions as what James called the "eternal time question."<sup>1</sup> Such criticism as we have to date, however, is usually more concerned with philosophical conceptions of time than with time as an aspect of narrative technique; more immediately engaged in the final meanings that emerge from the treatment of time than in how these meanings are achieved. Consequently, most of the criticism devoted to the analysis of time in novels and short stories has been expended on those works in which time has overt thematic implications. Proust, Joyce, Faulkner — these attract attention, but not, or at least not as often, writers whose handling of time is less complex or less philosophically oriented. And yet the handling of time in narrative art demands critical attention even when time is not one of the main meaning-bearing elements of a work. Although time is not, for the most part, one of the central thematic elements of the corpus works, it is perhaps in their handling of time that they reveal most clearly their novelistic structuring. Given what Mendilow has called "the time-obsession of the twentieth century,"<sup>2</sup> it might seem surprising that the corpus works exhibit so little conspicuous interest in time. There is practically no attention given to philosophical conceptions of time, and, while it is handled in all of the works with considerable subtlety and sophistication, the technical manipulation of time lacks anything approaching the complexity with which readers of the twentieth-century novel have become familiar. The reasons for the largely straightforward, non-problematical handling of time in the novelistic documentary may lie in the very newness

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<sup>1</sup>James, The Art of the Novel, p. 14.

<sup>2</sup>Mendilow, Time and the Novel. This is the title of Mendilow's first chapter.

of the form. Because readers will necessarily be unfamiliar with his generic intentions, the author of a novelistic documentary, unless he is willing to risk alienating his audience altogether, must attempt to offset the strangeness occasioned by his generic intentions by making some major structural aspects of his work comparatively conventional, and thereby familiar. Should the novelistic documentary become a firmly established narrative type, authors will be able to rely on a greater degree of familiarity, which will enable them to experiment more freely with an increasing number of narrative elements.

Because, as Mendilow suggests, time affects every aspect of narrative art,<sup>1</sup> it is impossible to discuss any structural feature of the corpus works without bringing in temporal considerations of one kind or another. Partly, of course, this is a reaffirmation of the point made earlier that the various constituents of structure are inextricably intertwined and can only be tentatively isolated for critical purposes. But in addition, the very nature of literature as a time-art makes the isolation of purely temporal considerations especially difficult. Several features of time treatment in the corpus works have been discussed in earlier sections: temporal vantage point has already been analyzed in a separate section, and some aspects of time treatment inevitably emerged in the discussion of narrative phases and arcs of tension. From the multitude of remaining aspects of time in the corpus works that could be examined, only a few will be selected for attention in this section — chronological arrangement, pace, and certain effects which issue from the handling of tense. To facilitate discussion, these categories will be described in general terms prior to turning to the individual works.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 31.

Chronological arrangement involves the differences between the order of events as they occur in time and the order in which they are presented to the reader. Ordinarily a novel establishes a central time span; any material anterior to that time span will constitute part of the vorgeschichte or "pre-history" of the story. In addition, events included within the central time span itself may be rearranged. Naturally, it is not always easy to determine whether certain material is part of the pre-history or part of a rearranged central time span; however, as Mendilow points out, "there is as a rule one point of time in the story which serves as the point of reference. From this point the fictive present may be considered as beginning."<sup>1</sup> Where such points of reference emerge, it is not difficult to distinguish between pre-history and segments of broken chronology.

Pace in narrative involves the relation between narrating time (the amount of time taken to present material)<sup>2</sup> and narrated time ("the amount of time required by the events that are said to occur"<sup>3</sup>). While these time levels are in almost all cases sufficient for the analysis of pace, some works project additional time levels. When the act of writing is specified, as for instance in Tristram Shandy, it can take on a duration separate from narrating time. In a work of this kind, the narrator can, for example, disclose that he has taken a year to write a passage that it takes only an hour to narrate. Another way of multiplying time levels is demonstrated in Horace

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 96.

<sup>2</sup>This can be measured by the amount of time required to read the work or passage aloud under ideal conditions.

<sup>3</sup>Boris Tomashevsky, "Thematics," in Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays, ed. by Lee. T. Lemon and Marion J. Reis (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965), p. 78.

McCoy's They shoot horses, don't they?; here narrating time remains stable, but narrated time is distributed across two time levels. The work presents a young man standing trial for murder. In the few minutes which elapse while the judge passes sentence, the events of several days are recollected by the accused and related to the reader. The reader's conception of pace will vary according to whether he relates narrated time to the span of several days (in which case the pace will appear to be very fast) or to the span of several minutes (in which case the pace will appear to be extremely slow).<sup>1</sup>

The nature of the temporal lacunae — stretches of time that are not presented in the narration — which occur in narrative literature is another feature which can be studied in relation to pace. Temporal lacunae are handled differently in novels and factual narratives; it is typical of novels that the temporal gaps which occur are indirectly characterized or "coloured" in such a way that the reader is given some notion of a filling-in of the lacunae by the "transference of the quality, the mood, and the symbolic values of the realized time phases"<sup>2</sup> or even by implied processes and developments relating to characters and their actions. In factual narratives, on the other hand, temporal lacunae typically remain, in the absence of direct filling in by the author, entirely empty. The examination of the handling of temporal lacunae is of particular interest in relation to the novelistic documentary because, by their consistent, indirect filling in of temporal lacunae, the corpus works reveal further evidence of their careful adherence to the novelistic portion of their dual work premise.

In its handling of grammatical tense, the novelistic documentary reveals with exceptional clarity the special nature of its amalgamation

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Mendilow, Time and the Novel, p. 72, and Romberg, The First-Person Novel, p. 38.

<sup>2</sup>Stanzel, Narrative Situations, p. 105.

of novelistic and documentary impulses. Of particular significance is the use and meaning of the past tense in the novelistic documentary. Roy Pascal, in an article on the work of the German critic Käthe Hamburger, has examined a number of peculiarities which inhere in the "epic preterite" — the past tense used in fictional narrative.<sup>1</sup> In third-person narration, whether authorial or figural, the epic preterite can combine with a group of temporal adverbials which indicate present or even future reference — now, today, tomorrow, and so on. The following sentences illustrate this combination:

Tomorrow he was leaving for New York.  
She was coming to the ball tonight.<sup>2</sup>  
Now he turned to go.

In orthodox factual narratives, and indeed in ordinary discourse generally, the first two sentences could not occur, and the third would occur only rarely.<sup>3</sup> Only two of the corpus works, In Cold Blood and The Armies of the Night, narrate in the third person, and both of them employ the past tense in combination with temporal adverbials that indicate a present or future reference. For the most part these combinations are restricted to the use of "now," but on occasion the other temporal adverbials are used as well. To give just one example from each work, in The Armies of the Night we get the sentence: "The rumors were livelier this morning at the coffee

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<sup>1</sup>Pascal, "Tense and Novel," Modern Language Review, LVII (1962), 1-11. The epic preterite is also discussed by Stanzel, Narrative Situations, pp. 33-37, and by Romberg, The First-Person Novel, pp. 30-32 and 106-110.

<sup>2</sup>This sentence assumes a reading with no stress on "was." By placing stress on "was" the meaning of the sentence changes: She was coming to the ball tonight (but could not obtain tickets).

<sup>3</sup>"Now," unlike the other temporal adverbials, may be used in combination with the past tense even in factual statements and narratives. Cf. Pascal, "Tense and Novel," p. 2.

urn."<sup>1</sup> And in In Cold Blood: "it was as though today were Sunday."<sup>2</sup>

The occurrence of the epic preterite with temporal adverbials of present and future reference is a further indication of the thoroughly novelistic structuring of the corpus works involved, for in employing such combinations the corpus works exploit a device which is almost entirely restricted to fictional rendering.

Another striking feature of the handling of grammatical tense in the corpus works is the remarkably high incidence in all of them of "had" in reference to events and circumstances operant prior to the central time span, and the only slightly lower incidence of "is" and other present (and even future) time markers used to refer to events and circumstances in effect posterior to the central time span. In this instance it is the documentary portion of the dual work premise that is given emphasis through the manipulation of tense, for while there is nothing which precludes an equally high incidence of these time references in orthodox novels, it is not likely to occur. To concentrate first on the use of "had," the author of an orthodox novel typically invents his pre-history; it is a part of his projected fictional world, a product of his artistic endeavour. Some novels dispense with pre-history almost entirely. For the writer of a novelistic documentary a pre-history is part of the given. The figures, institutions, situations, and so on which he presents actually have pre-histories, and the references to these pre-histories, frequently signalled by "had," are indications of the verifiable reality with which he is dealing. The explanation for the high incidence of present time markers is not very different. The world presented in a novelistic documentary does not cease to exist with the closing of its narration. That some of

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<sup>1</sup>Armies, p. 191.

<sup>2</sup>In Cold Blood, p. 125.

the elements of that world should frequently be described in the present tense is to be expected since the descriptions pertain to things as they continue to be (and as they can be seen to be) outside the confines of the narratives which render them.

Of the four corpus works, Lewis's The Children of Sánchez remains, in its handling of chronological arrangement and pace, closest to the methods characteristic of factual narratives. The chronology within any single narrative segment is almost never reordered, and the almost entirely report-like mode of narration combined with an extremely lengthy central time span results in the fast pace of narration typical of factual narrative types like the biography and the autobiography. Where Lewis achieves a novelistic texture is in his segmenting and intercalating of the separate life-histories. Through this method, each period in the projected time span is rendered in parallel accounts so that the strict linearity of historical (or clock) time is superseded in a manner that is seldom possible in an orthodox factual narrative.

The absence of specific sequential connectives between lesser narrative phases is indicative of the closeness of Lewis's treatment of chronological arrangement to the usual methods of the orthodox life-history. Lewis's method is probably determined by the nature of his materials, for not only did he obtain his material over a long period and in many separate recording sessions, but the material itself did not emerge in anything like its original chronological order. The problem confronted by Lewis is defined in the introduction to a recently compiled and as yet unpublished life-history. The compilers of the work, the working title of which is A Chief is a Chief by the People, write that "the book emerged in anecdotal form, and in order to systematize the material, we

have often had to impose our own time-sequence."<sup>1</sup> If the imposed time-sequence in The Children of Sánchez were to take the form of a specified chronology with explicit time references not present in the original materials, then the account would be falsified. But in fact, the arranging or "imposing" in the work is a matter of the order in which materials are presented to the reader within a chronological framework that is specified only at the level of the major narrative phases.

Despite its predominantly fast pace of narration, The Children of Sánchez frequently moves into brief passages of scenic presentation so that there is momentarily a near equivalence of narrated and narrating time. It is a peculiarity of the work that a large percentage of what appear to be constituted scenes are actually recurrent or habitual actions presented as if they were single depicted events. The following is a typical example.

[Manuel] would come in at mealtime and start ordering us around with his sergeant's voice. "Skinny, go call Chubby!" But Marta almost always refused to come . . . we had to pull her in by the hair or by the arm. Then she would flop down on the box which served as her chair, making a show of her bad humour. I would say, "Go wash your hands you pig."

"What business is it of yours? Damned skinny brat! Always butting in where she shouldn't."

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<sup>1</sup> John Perry and Cassandra Perry, Introduction to A Chief is a Chief by the People: An Autobiography by Jason John Jingo (unpublished typescript, 1972). Cf. Clyde Kluckholm, "The Personal Document in Anthropological Science," The Use of Personal Documents in History, Anthropology and Sociology, by Louis Gottschalk, Clyde Kluckhohn, and Robert Angell (New York: Social Science Research Council, 1945), p. 153, and L.L. Langness, The Life History in Anthropological Science (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965), p. 48.

"Shut your snout and go wash," Manuel would order.

"Oh, I'm terribly afraid of you! Shut me up if you can, you cursed Chino."

Manuel would start to take off his belt to hit her and Marta would then get up.<sup>1</sup>

Lewis's use of orthodox scenic presentation and of apparent scenes contributes to the novelistic texture of The Children of Sánchez by providing for the occasional sense of immediacy typical of the novel. By contrast, events and situations in orthodox factual narratives, in their consistently compressed, report-like mode of presentation, tend to remain remote.

Kuznetsov breaks the chronology of the central time span in Babi Yar by opening with an episode — the visit to the ravine — which actually occurs at the very end of the narrative portion dominated by the experiencing self. Through this device he is able to reveal to the reader in advance the historical and personal significance of the Babi Yar ravine and to suggest the nature and extent of its impact on the experiencing self. The reader's experience of the rest of the narrative is modified by his advance knowledge of the work's centre of focus; he is aware, before any of the participants, of what actually goes on behind the barbed wire fences of Babi Yar and what those goings on will mean to the presented figures and to the public when they are eventually exposed.

Following this episode, Kuznetsov establishes the point at which his central time span begins — the withdrawal of the Soviet army from Kiev and the simultaneous incursion of the Nazi forces. Having established this point of reference in the second chapter, Kuznetsov goes on in the third chapter to sketch in part of the

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<sup>1</sup>Children, p. 90. Ellipsis in original. The passage continues in the same vein for another half-dozen lines.

pre-history of his narrative. As usual, he is explicit about what he is doing: "Here I am going to make the usual type of digression and tell the history, at least in general outline, of our little family — who we were, what sort of people we were and why."<sup>1</sup> Once this passage of pre-history is complete, the portion of the narrative devoted to the actions and experiences of the experiencing self proceeds in an ordinary chronological manner, but it is interspersed with references to circumstances pertaining to the narrating self, passages devoted to the experiences of the persecuted minority groups of the Ukraine which are presented either according to their original chronological order or according to when they became known to the experiencing self, and essayistic passages in which the temporal flow ceases altogether.

The essayistic passages — the chapters of original documents and "words from the author" — are in themselves entirely removed from the criterion of pace. There is no narrated time, so there is no time level to which narrating time can be related; nevertheless, because the act of presenting material does not cease, the passages have the effect of slowing pace overall, an effect which is further enhanced by the numerous passages of scenic presentation.

The treatment of chronological arrangement in In Cold Blood is very nearly an illustration of Ford Madox Ford's "chronological looping method" — a technique whereby the author attempts to "get in the character first with a strong impression, and then work backwards and forwards over his past."<sup>2</sup> In the opening pages of

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<sup>1</sup>Babi Yar, p. 38.

<sup>2</sup>Ford Madox Ford, Joseph Conrad: A Personal Remembrance, p. 130; cited by Mendilow, Time and the Novel, p. 104.

the work, Herb Clutter is presented in a lengthy, static sketch complete with references to his physical appearance, personality, habits, and biographical details. But Perry and Dick are initially depicted in action; little information is given about them beyond what can be inferred from their behaviour. Only later in the work, particularly in Part Two, is the reader provided with glimpses of their past lives. The reasons for the difference in the initial presentation of Herb Clutter (and his family as well) and of the murderers are not difficult to determine. The reader first sees Clutter on the last day of his life; soon he disappears altogether from active participation in the narrative, so his initial presentation must be carried out with considerable economy. To put this in a slightly different way: the reader, if he is to understand and evaluate the murder properly, must know by the time the murder occurs who is being murdered and what he is like. With Perry and Dick the more leisurely method of getting in the character first with a strong impression and then filling in the background is more appropriate. They remain at the centre of the narrative throughout its course.

While the initial presentation of Clutter is a departure from Ford's description of the method, later on he is presented — in the same way that Perry and Dick are — according to the chronological looping technique. After the murder, several retrospective passages fill out the reader's knowledge of Clutter. A section partly devoted to Clutter in Part Three provides one of the clearest illustrations of Capote's method of working back and forth over his characters' past.<sup>1</sup> The section begins as a retrospective passage devoted to Bobby Rupp's memories. He thinks of past Christmas celebrations, then of the one immediately following Nancy's death.

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<sup>1</sup>In Cold Blood, pp. 166-69.

He then thinks of another Christmas "some years back"<sup>1</sup> when he walked through snow-drifts to the Clutter's farm, and he remembers Herb Clutter telling of a Christmas "when he was Kenyon's age."<sup>2</sup> Clutter's narrative of struggling through a heavy blizzard provides the reader with a valuable insight into his personality as well as with a fragment of his early life. Capote arrives at this insight by moving steadily back in time, first from the reference point in relation to which Bobby's reverie is revealed to be retrospective, through Bobby's memory of an earlier Christmas, and finally to Clutter's memory of a still earlier Christmas. This gradual peeling away of the past is a method used by Capote throughout In Cold Blood, particularly in relation to Perry Smith.

In keeping with his stated desire to remain "detached" from his work, Capote has employed scenic presentation to an extent quite unknown in factual narrative. In addition to varying the pace of narration in a manner characteristic of novelistic rendering, the multiplicity of minutely detailed scenes probably accounts for much of the fascination which reviewers have attributed to the work. The scenes are laden with the typically novelistic device of the seemingly irrelevant but telling minor detail. In realistic novels, such details are part of the novelist's attempt to persuade the reader of the "life-likeness" of his projected world, yet the device is seldom present in factual narratives, which really do deal with verifiable events and circumstances in the actual world. Since, in novels, the use of such details is accepted as part of the author's process of invention, readers are not likely to ask how they could have become known to and remembered by the narrator. But with In Cold Blood, the presence of such details can easily raise just that question.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 168.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

Because the details no longer pertain to invention but to research, readers are likely to be impressed by their employment.

Capote faced one problem in relation to pace that was inherent in his materials. His central time span stretches from shortly before the murder to the execution of Perry and Dick — that is, from November 15, 1959 to April 14, 1965. Fully nine-tenths of the work is devoted to that portion of the time span from the day of the murder to the day the murderers are convicted and sentenced, March 29, 1960. From that point, through a period of just over five years, appeals and other legal maneuvers delayed the carrying out of the imposed sentence. This period is compressed into little more than twenty pages, causing an extremely fast pace of narration with large leaps in time. Capote's problem was one of trying to maintain sufficient evenness of texture so that the final sections of the work remained integrally related to the preceding material. The solution he attempted was to continue employing scenic presentation (the scenes are generally shorter than those earlier in the work) and to combine with his scenic presentation the depiction of habitual or ongoing activities. The larger time leaps are signalled very briefly ("Two years passed."<sup>1</sup> "Another three years passed."<sup>2</sup>), after which the narrative moves into scene or ongoing activity. And at the very end, two long scenes, the execution and the retrospective coda, bring the work to a close. The continued employment of scenic presentation in the later sections offsets the extremely rapid overall pace of narration and provides for the necessary textural correlation between the final sections and the rest of the work.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 264.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 278

Mailer's The Armies of the Night presents what is essentially the same central time span twice over, with two different sets of narrative methods. In each of the two Books which make up the work the focus is on the period 21-23 October, 1967, the weekend of the march on the Pentagon. Book One is more leisurely and more detailed in its rendering of the period. In Book Two, the narrative more often becomes discursive and essayistic as the social and political background and the preliminaries to the march are sketched in. In addition, the second book moves slightly beyond the time span established in the first to present a final climactic moment in the chain of events — the suffering of the few dedicated demonstrators who choose to go to prison rather than admit guilt and pay fines. This climax, because of its temporal position both in the chronology of narrated events and in the reading experience, and because it is not mitigated by the ironic comments with which Mailer presents his personal climax in Book One, stands as the culmination of the entire narrative. It is, as Mailer puts it, "the last of the rite of passage."<sup>1</sup>

The Armies of the Night is the only one of the four corpus works in which there is repeated use of the device of distended pace. This device ordinarily occurs in works in which considerable material is devoted to the rendering of mental processes. What usually happens is that the reflections of a character are rendered in considerable detail. Without any signals to the contrary, the reader will assume that there is a near equivalence of narrating and narrated time; however, in the case of distended pace it is signalled to the reader that the narrating has consumed more time than the thoughts are originally supposed to have taken. Mailer is frequently explicit in signalling distended pace. At one point, for instance, the following parenthesis

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<sup>1</sup>Armies, p. 287.

occurs :"(The reverie we have just attended [nearly two pages long] took no more in fact than a second. Mailer 's melancholy assessment of the forces now mounting in America took place between two consecutive lines of Goodman 's poem)." <sup>1</sup> Distended pace is practically unknown in factual narrative types, and Mailer 's use of it is indicative of the attention which he, like the authors of the other corpus works, gives to the novelistic portion of his dual work premise.

#### 2.4 Presentation of Space

While the treatment of time in the novel has attracted considerable critical attention, the treatment of space has received little in the way of systematic examination, at least in Anglo-American criticism. Such criticism devoted to space as there is in English is confined mainly to "setting," which usually has temporal as well as spatial implications, or "background," <sup>2</sup> which is not sufficiently inclusive as a critical category. Space in narrative art is seldom as obtrusively significant as time; still, the spatial details of a narrative work often constitute the materialization of the work's meanings in addition to providing the physical context of the presented action.

In Cold Blood, The Armies of the Night, and Babi Yar show marked similarities in their handling of space. All three employ the minutely discriminated and particularized spatial framework and multiplicity of physical objects characteristic of the modern novel, <sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>2</sup>See, for example, D.S. Bland, "Endangering the Reader's Neck: Background Description in the Novel," Criticism, III (1961); rpt. in The Theory of the Novel, ed. by Stevick, pp. 313-31.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Ian Watt, The Rise of the Novel, pp. 26-28.

and in addition all three are organized around significant single spaces or sets of significant spaces. These spaces do not function as purely neutral environments in which climactic moments happen fortuitously to occur. In the course of the narratives special significance is attributed to them so that they are seen to contribute to the shape and meaning of the actions they envelop. Babi Yar, as it is presented, is not just a ravine anymore than the Pentagon is presented as just a government building or River Valley Farm as just a farm; they are significant spaces — spaces which participate in the meanings generated by the works.

From one standpoint, In Cold Blood can be viewed as a series of convergences. River Valley Farm is the first place of convergence, but prior to that, the farm is counterpointed with the open road, the territory of the two killers. On first sight, River Valley Farm is a prosperous but typical American farm where "nothing out of the ordinary"<sup>1</sup> ever occurs. Its apparent typicality is concomitant with the geographical position it shares with the surrounding area. Garden City, the nearest town, "seems just another fair-sized town in the middle — almost the exact middle — of the continental United States."<sup>2</sup> But for the people of Garden City, just as for the Clutters of River Valley Farm, the space which they inhabit is more than merely typical. Both are places of security, places which provide "a sense of roots and contentment."<sup>3</sup> And for Herb Clutter, the farm approaches "the green, apple-scented Eden"<sup>4</sup> he longs for. It is this Edenic space with its sense of rootedness that is invaded by the murderers, whose contrasting rootlessness is reflected in the highways which they

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<sup>1</sup>In Cold Blood, p. 33.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

compulsively travel. Almost the whole of Part One consists of spatial cross-cuts from the still serenity of the farm to the approaching, fast-moving forces which will shatter its tranquility. In the convergence of stillness and motion, River Valley Farm ceases to be either typical or Edenic and is transformed briefly into a place of nightmarish action.

In Parts Two and Three, the work opens out spatially as the murderers move away from the locale of the crime, down into Mexico, back to Kansas briefly, south into Florida, and finally back once more to Kansas, this time in custody. Throughout the period of their travels, the narrative switches back and forth between their activities and the aftermath of their crime as it is experienced by the communities of Holcomb and Garden City. Scenes depicting the fear, the unfamiliar sense of insecurity, the loss of a sense of community experienced by the residents of Finney County, nearly all of whom believe that the murderers are still among them, people they have known and trusted, alternate with fragments depicting the restless wanderings of Perry and Dick. The second convergence occurs midway through Part Three when Perry and Dick, exhausted by their "running a race without a finish line,"<sup>1</sup> are apprehended in Las Vegas.

In Part Four, the counterpointing of the murderers and the people of Finney County continues. The prison, which is, as William Wiegand points out "ironically the only community in which they have existed with such lingering permanence,"<sup>2</sup> is juxtaposed, in alternate sections, with the community of Garden City and its environs, now restored to tranquility and contentment but with an expanded knowledge of their fragility. The narrative in Part Four moves steadily towards the final place of convergence — The Corner, which gives the part its

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 166.

<sup>2</sup>Wiegand, "The 'Non-fiction' Novel," p. 250.

title. And *The Corner*, with the grotesque horror of the executions, repeats the nightmarish quality of that first place of convergence. The preeminence in the narrative of death and of places in which death is present is underlined in the coda, for the concluding scene, which promises regeneration of community and affirms the survival of the values on which community depends, takes place in the cemetery where the Clutters lie buried.

*The Armies of the Night* employs convergence in space in a similar manner, but in this case there is only one place of convergence — the Pentagon, and the movement towards it is presented twice. In each of the work's two books, the approach to the Pentagon is gradual. It is immediately apparent from the subtitle of Book One that the Pentagon is to be the scene of the central actions depicted, but the narrative moves through and renders in detail other spaces, approaching the Pentagon slowly and with mounting foreboding and suspense. This movement through spaces surrounding the Pentagon, ending finally with the penetration into its interior, operates as a materialization, a physical correlative, of the idea of the rite of passage which is central in the work.

One striking fact which emerges from the work in relation to the Pentagon is that while everyone involved with the Pentagon — the marchers, the defending forces, the government, the public — accepts the importance of the place, there is a wide divergence of views concerning its meaning, and it is partly from this clash of views that the March on the Pentagon derives its underlying implications. To the public, the government, and the defenders it is very nearly sacrosanct, a place not to be violated by the likes of the marchers. To the marchers it is a centre of power, the base of operations for those who direct an immoral war. For Mailer, the

malevolence of the Pentagon is not limited to its rôle in the present war. He sees the Pentagon as the metonymic center of "technology land." It epitomizes every negative aspect of mass consumer society as Mailer sees it — "anonymous, monotonous, massive, interchangeable."<sup>1</sup>

In the work, the Pentagon becomes, for all concerned, invested with a significance that lies beyond easily definable features and rational analysis. The struggle at the Pentagon is, as Mailer repeatedly makes clear, a symbolic battle, and what is at stake is something much more than a mere building, however objectively important that building might be. What, precisely, is at stake in this symbolic battle can be elucidated with the help of several concepts developed by Ernst Cassirer, particularly the notion of hallowing. According to Cassirer,

Hallowing begins when a specific zone is detached from space as a whole, when it is distinguished from other zones and one might say religiously hedged around. This concept of a religious hallowing manifested concurrently as a spatial delimitation has found its linguistic deposit in the word templum.<sup>2</sup>

Cassirer goes on to suggest that the "threshold" of the templum is an especially venerated zone because it separates the templum from the profane world.<sup>3</sup> In The Armies of the Night, the majority of the

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<sup>1</sup>Armies, p. 228.

<sup>2</sup>Ernst Cassirer, Mythical Thought, Vol. II of The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, trans. by Ralph Manheim (3 vols., 1925; rpt., New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), pp. 99-100. Compare the following passage from The Armies of the Night: "There [the Pentagon] sat, geometrical aura complete, isolated from anything in nature surrounding it." (p. 110).

<sup>3</sup>Cassirer, Mythical Thought, p. 103.

American people are seen to conceive of the Pentagon as something in the nature of a quasi-religious templum, a "Holy of Holies,"<sup>1</sup> and it is fitting that some of the climactic moments of its invasion should be played out on "The Steps of the Pentagon" — its very threshold. Cassirer does not say what happens when one segment of a society refuses to abide by the sacral notions of the majority. To the majority of Americans, the marchers are barbarians, but these barbarians are not outsiders; they are members of the same society as the majority. And even though their efforts to levitate the Pentagon add a comic dimension to it, this action and others like it show an implicit recognition of the sacro-symbolic value of the place.

Like The Armies of the Night, Babi Yar is organized around a particular significant place. Both works go so far as to print maps of the significant places and their surrounding regions on their endpapers, and both works take great pains to communicate the extraordinary nature of the spatial zones on which they focus. However, in Babi Yar the central spatial zone is known only indirectly to the experiencing self until the very end of the central time span. He hears about it from a number of sources, but with the exception of the one visit when he does not even realize where he is, the ravine itself remains beyond his immediate experience. In fact, the first-person narrator becomes thoroughly familiar with Babi Yar and what took place there only in the years which fall between the central time span and the act of writing. From his position of hindsight, the narrating self is able to reveal to the reader the centrality of Babi Yar in the shared experience of the people of Nazi occupied Kiev. For the entire course of the central time span, the ravine

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<sup>1</sup>Armies, p. 252.

as a place not just of death but of death on a massive scale represents a threatening possibility which overshadows their movement through the (only) comparatively safer regions which surround it. Any deviation from prescribed behavior can mean immediate removal to the ravine, and from very early on in the occupation, the residents of Kiev know what such removal invariably means.

Babi Yar eventually becomes, like the templum, "hedged around," but in this case is hedged around by terror, not by any conventional religious attitude. People come to avoid the vicinity of Babi Yar; they see it as baleful, even preternatural. One of the major contributions of the revised version of Babi Yar is the restoration of a passage which describes the efforts of the Soviet authorities to erase every vestige of the ravine and what went on there.<sup>1</sup> Their first attempt ends in disaster, and it is a measure of the awe in which the people of Kiev hold the ravine that the disaster is described by them as "'Babi Yar takes its revenge.'"<sup>2</sup> Their comment is an index of the preternatural quality they attribute to the place as well as of the manner in which it is presented to the reader, for as it is presented, Babi Yar is something more than purely a physical context. It is a concrete, spatial manifestation of everything that is evil, not just in Nazi tyranny but, as Kuznetsov argues at great length, in tyranny in any form.

The Children of Sánchez is unlike the other corpus works in its comparative paucity of descriptions of spatial environment, and to this extent it is less novelistic in its treatment of space. Lewis partially offsets the lack of spatial description in the narratives by

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<sup>1</sup>Babi Yar, pp. 470-74.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 474.

devoting several pages of his introduction to a description of the Casa Grande vecindad (slum tenement), the "little world of its own"<sup>1</sup> which is the locale of much of the presented action, and to describing the physical details and objects which surround the narrators.

While the narrators tend to take their shared spatial world for granted so that little detailed attention is devoted to it, they are all conscious of its shaping influence in their lives. What they are most conscious of (and what the reader becomes progressively aware of) is that for the residents of the Casa Grande place is destiny. Their spatial world is not one they have selected; it is imposed upon them by their poverty. And in turn it contributes to the cycle of poverty in which they are enmeshed. In their accounts, the narrators frequently refer to the dehumanizing effects of their environment. Manuel, for instance, speaks of the desire to escape:

When I saw how other people lived . . . the nice homes in the movies, and magazines, and in the rich neighbourhoods, the luxuries that exist, I felt . . . well, degraded, to live the way I did. I felt unfortunate, but at the same time, it should give me incentive, no? That is when I say, "I have to rise . . . I must reach that level." Because, in reality, it is humiliating, saddening, not to have a nice home and to have to live with other people all the time.<sup>2</sup>

However, Manuel's efforts to escape, like those of his sisters and brother, are futile. His environment has made him very nearly incapable of existing in any other surroundings, for his environment is an embodiment of Lewis's "culture of poverty," that "design for living which is passed down from generation to generation."<sup>3</sup> Movies

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<sup>1</sup>Children, p. xiv.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 186. Ellipses in original.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. xxiv.

and magazines can disclose what lies beyond his limited spatial context, but they cannot provide him with the tools necessary for transcending his world. He cannot, as Consuelo puts it, "pass through the wall"<sup>1</sup> that closes him in.

## 2.5 Unifying Ideas

Literary works, apart from those which exhaust their meaning at the level of sheer action, project a set of ideas which both unify the work and ensure that its appeal and relevance transcend the immediate audience. To put this point another way, the structure of a literary work of art is, in Stanzel's words, "a structure of meaning."<sup>2</sup> This additional dimension — the dimension of central ideas or themes — of the literary work of art is embodied in and communicated through the various structural elements and devices employed in the work. Since themes emerge from all the structural details of a work, the study of their possible presence in the corpus works is a fitting conclusion to these chapters on structure.

One of the critical cruxes raised by the novelistic documentary is whether such a narrative type can be said to possess a thematic dimension. In general, factual narrative types forego this dimension; their concern lies in the disclosure of events and circumstances in the actual world in so far as they are recoverable. Those factual narratives which do aspire to a thematic dimension — one thinks again of the works of Macaulay for instance — usually come in time to be read for their artistic rather than their factual value. On the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 433.

<sup>2</sup>Stanzel, Narrative Situations, p. 10.

other hand, that the novelistic documentary renders its factual materials in a fully novelistic structure would seem to imply that its concerns move, or can move, beyond disclosure of fact to the imposition of a unifying thematic framework on fact. And since theme is not, as critics have so often observed, inherent in the random events of the real world, the presence of themes in the corpus works would point to the artistic (as well as the specifically novelizing) activity which lies behind their composition.

In an interview published several years prior to the publication of In Cold Blood, Capote referred to the difficulties involved in endowing factual rendering with a thematic dimension. He noted that "in reporting one is occupied with literalness and surfaces, with implication without comment — one can't achieve immediate depths the way one may in fiction."<sup>1</sup> Of course "depths" as Capote uses the word may refer to something other than theme — to the fully rendered personality of his presented figures for example. But the desire to penetrate surface suggests equally the desire to discover and articulate underlying meanings. It is possible, even likely, that Capote eventually came to see the novelizing of reportage as one way of achieving "depths" in this sense. However, it remains to be seen whether or not In Cold Blood does in fact project a unifying theme.

Certainly the work projects a number of subsidiary themes, many of which reiterate concerns found in Capote's earlier novels and short stories: the search for identity, the obsession with childhood innocence, the dream world of magic and phantasy. However, all these are restricted in their relevance to parts of the work or to individual presented figures; none of them functions as the

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<sup>1</sup>Capote, Interview with Pati Hill, p. 260.

unifying theme of the work. Capote has made one statement about In Cold Blood which seems initially at least to be a formulation of its central thematic concern. "It's what I really think about America. Desperate, savage, violent America in collision with sane, safe, insular even smug America — people who have every chance against people who have none."<sup>1</sup> A number of details in the work can be cited in support of this formulation. There is for instance the carefully established fact of the suggestive geographical position of Kansas and Garden City in the very middle of America. And then too there is Perry's repeated statement: "They never hurt me. Like other people. Like people have all my life. Maybe it's just that the Clutters were the ones who had to pay for it."<sup>2</sup> Because Capote's statement can be supported by reference to the work it is not easy to explain why it seems inadequate, why it seems more a statement of motive than a formulation of theme. Perhaps its inadequacy lies in its being restricted to a wholly American frame of reference, for in the end the work comes to refer not just to a specifically American problem but to an American instance of a more universal problem — the loss of community.

The brutal murder committed by Hickock and Smith, "outsiders" who have never known community, exposes the fragility of the sense of community which the residents of Holcomb and Garden City, including the Clutters, had taken for granted as a permanent feature in their lives. The murder destroys the familiar rhythm and pattern of life in the community, and its members learn for the first time to look on each other in fear and suspicion. And of course the murder is particularly horrible to the surrounding community precisely because

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<sup>1</sup>Cited by Garrett, "Crime and Punishment in Kansas," p. 4.

<sup>2</sup>In Cold Blood, pp. 239, 249.

it is the Clutters who are the victims.

Feeling wouldn't run half so high if this had happened to anyone except the Clutters. Anyone less admired. Prosperous. Secure. But that family represented everything people hereabouts really value and respect, and that such a thing could happen to them — well, it's like being told there is no God.<sup>1</sup>

Through the efforts of Al Dewey and his colleagues, the sense of community is restored to the residents of Holcomb and Garden City, but things will never be the same, for the new dispensation is vitiated by the new knowledge of its vulnerability. One lesson learned is that community can never be complete as long as some men are excluded from ever sharing in its benefits, and the kernel expression of the need for community — a need felt most painfully by life's "outsiders" — is the phrase from Donne surprisingly quoted in Perry's journal:

"No man is an island, Entire of itself."<sup>2</sup>

Any attempt to document fully the theme of community and to trace its implications through the work<sup>3</sup> would swell this section beyond reasonable proportions; indeed, a thorough thematic interpretation of the corpus works would be a sizeable undertaking in itself. One reason for avoiding a conventional thematic approach to these works is that such an approach would fail to account for the special generic status of the novelistic documentary as a form whose nature is determined by the rare presence of a dual work premise. Since the approach taken in this part of the study is an examination of structural features and their generic implications, the main issues at stake in this section are the presence or absence of a thematic dimension and the novelistic as opposed to documentary import of

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 71.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 120.

<sup>3</sup>Some aspects of the theme have been explicated in detail by Goad, "Daylight and Darkness," pp. 42-55.

theme. Once the presence of a unifying theme is discovered, only a brief statement of its substance and, in some cases, the means by which it is expressed will be provided.

Like In Cold Blood, The Armies of the Night is full of the interests and concerns present in its author's earlier works. As Barry Leeds observes, we find in the work "many familiar Mailer ideas . . . among them his theories of obscenity, cancer, excretion, witches, the Devil, God, and the soul."<sup>1</sup> And like Capote, Mailer has selected one set of ideas as the single unifying theme of his work. In another passage Leeds isolates this central theme. "The nature of the moral choices which plague men of conscience and the necessity of defining oneself existentially through courage in one's choice is a recurring theme throughout the book."<sup>2</sup> While Mailer examines the problems of choice and courage in a variety of contexts — for example in relation to war, boxing, bullfighting, and other conflict situations — the theme's central expression lies in the complementary ideas of the "moral ladder" and the rite of passage.

Choice and courage are topics of concern throughout The Armies of the Night, but specific references to the moral ladder and the rite of passage do not emerge until comparatively late in the work. The first lengthy description of the moral ladder occurs well into Part Four of Book One.

Seen from one moral position . . . prison could be nothing but an endless ladder of moral challenges. Each time you climbed a step . . . another higher, more dangerous, more disadvantageous step would present itself. Sooner or later, you would have to

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<sup>1</sup> Leeds, The Structured Vision, p. 259.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 255.

descend. It did not matter how high you had climbed. The first step down in a failure of nerve always presented the same kind of moral nausea. Probably, he was feeling now like people who had gone to the Pentagon, but had chosen not to get arrested, just as such people, at their moment of decision, must have felt as sickened as all people who should have marched from Lincoln Memorial to the Pentagon, but didn't. The same set of emotions could be anticipated for all people who had been afraid to leave New York. One ejected oneself from guilt by climbing the ladder — the first step back, no matter where, offered nothing but immersion into nausea.<sup>1</sup>

In the closing sections, the idea of the rite of passage is introduced and linked with the moral ladder. As Mailer sees it, to ascend the moral ladder beyond one's normal level of endurance is to undergo a rite of passage. While Mailer refuses to ascend, several dozen protestors take up the challenge. For them, "the rite of passage was invoked, the moral ladder was climbed, they were forever different in the morning than they had been before the night, which is the meaning of a rite of passage."<sup>2</sup>

Although the moral ladder and the rite of passage are only specified quite late in the narrative, in the closing pages they come to be associated with something that is introduced much earlier. In the sections which describe the evening at the Ambassador Theatre — the evening referred to in the Time article — Mailer presents several lines of a poem by Robert Lowell.

O to break loose, like the chinook  
salmon jumping and falling back,  
nosing up to the impossible  
stone and bone-crushing waterfall —

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<sup>1</sup> Armies, p. 195. There is an earlier but less explicit reference on p. 163.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 280.

raw-jawed, weak-fleshed there, stopped by ten  
 steps of the roaring ladder, and then  
 to clear the top on the last try,  
 alive enough to spawn and die.<sup>1</sup>

On first reading the lines appear to be cited only as an example of Lowell's artistry. Nothing is said about the passage which would indicate any particular significance in The Armies of the Night; there is no suggestion yet of the moral ladder or rite of passage. But the lines are used as a leitmotif in the work, and on the penultimate page they are finally linked explicitly with the central theme: "Here was the last rite of passage, 'the chinook salmon . . . nosing up the impossible stone,' here was the thin source of the stream."<sup>2</sup> Only in retrospect is the reader able to grasp the thematic centrality of the passage from Lowell's poem.

There is less potential for a thematic dimension in The Children of Sánchez than in any of the other corpus works. Capote, Mailer, and Kuznetsov are bound to actuality, but unlike Lewis they are not bound exclusively to previously existing accounts of actual events and circumstances. Lewis, being in this regard less author than editor, is not as free as the others in his range of artistic activity in that for him selection and arrangement are restricted to the narrative fragments provided him by the members of the Sánchez family, and this lack of freedom makes it considerably more difficult for him to impose a unifying thematic framework on his materials. Obviously, the narrators are not consciously artists; they do not themselves attempt to construct artistically structured narratives

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 45. It is not clear whether or not Lowell actually read the poem on the occasion depicted.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 287. Mailer's ellipsis.

of their experiences. Still, their accounts do disclose a set of recurrent concerns which, when ordered and significantly foregrounded by Lewis, emerge as something at least akin to subsidiary themes. The qualification here — "something akin to" — is a necessary one, for while "theme" is one of the less clearly defined terms in the critical lexicon, the things which critics isolate as themes are usually capable of formulation at a high level of abstraction. The recurring interests in The Children of Sánchez cannot be formulated in such terms. Nevertheless, if they are not precisely themes, they assume in the work the function or status ordinarily assumed by themes. Among the more prominent recurrent concerns are the problem of defective relationships, particularly the relationships Jesús has with his children; the interrelated problems, experienced by the members of the family, of the desire to unite the family (felt most strongly by Consuelo) and the desire to escape from the family and the pressures it exerts on its members; and the desire to improve oneself in order to attain a less damaging life style — a desire which none of the narrators is capable of acting on for any length of time for the very reason that their life style has rendered them incapable of sustained effort; their feeling of being trapped becomes self-perpetuating.

If any one idea can be said to unify these and the other concerns expressed in the work, it is Lewis's idea of the culture of poverty which the work is written to illuminate. In this context, the argument that the culture of poverty is not an adequate anthropological concept is beside the point. Taken as a literary idea, it provides a useful means for analyzing the presented world and recognizing the coherence of structure which underlies its welter of seemingly random, unrelated elements. With the aid of the description of the culture of poverty, the reader is able to perceive how the events and circumstances presented in the work relate to

each other in terms of the particular "design for living"<sup>1</sup> which Lewis defines. While this too is only "akin" to a conventional literary theme, and while it is unlikely that a reader would independently arrive at precisely the same formulation of the idea as Lewis expresses in his introduction, the notion of the culture of poverty is a positive and necessary contribution to the reader's understanding of the work as a meaningfully unified artistic construct.

The grounds for a thematic analysis of Babi Yar are even less certain than they are in the case of The Children of Sánchez, and the reasons for this state of affairs are not easily ascertained. Kuznetsov is not, like Lewis, restricted to pre-existing narrative fragments; he retains the same freedom as Capote and Mailer to impose on his work a unifying thematic framework. And yet Babi Yar does not possess such a framework in anything like the sense that In Cold Blood and The Armies of the Night do. It is true that certain familiar formulations come to mind which would seem to elucidate the central theme of Babi Yar; among them the likeliest as well as most obvious is "man's inhumanity to man." But this is too vague, too open-ended, too widely applicable to be a satisfactory statement of the theme of this (or any) particular work. It is less an expression of theme — of an idea or set of ideas which unifies the work and is projected as its central meaning — than it is an expression of a fundamental area of human experience which supplies recurring subject matter for literature; though admittedly this distinction is easier to state than to demonstrate.

If attention is confined to that portion of Babi Yar which centers on the activities and apprehensions of the experiencing self, it is possible to read the work as if it borrowed and adapted that

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<sup>1</sup>Children, p. xxiv.

merging of theme, action, and pattern presented in the Bildungsroman, a form which is described in terms that refer equally to both idea and depicted process — terms like growth or development or coming of age. However, while an analysis of Babi Yar according to the structural criteria of the Bildungsroman would be useful and revealing, the results would be partial, for they would fail to take into account the substantial portion of the work devoted to events and situations which are beyond the ken of the experiencing self. Only one aspect of the work's double focus would be available for analysis, and the task here is to discover whether there is a thematic framework which unifies the whole work.

Ultimately, a search for a central unifying theme of Babi Yar fails, and it fails for an interesting reason. Kuznetsov has replaced theme (in the sense used in this section) with a strong didactic intent. The result is not so much meaning as message; in the place of a unifying conceptual scheme to be apprehended by the reader, there is a lesson for him to learn.

From the very first pages Kuznetsov stresses the verifiable historical truth of his account; he interrupts the narrative time and again to remind the reader that what he is reading is no mere story. And as the work progresses, Kuznetsov makes it increasingly clear that his factual account is not written simply to set the record straight or to inform the reader about a particular set of events.

I did not write this book simply to recall the past: I am writing today about the occupation of Kiev, which I happened to witness and which is well documented; because the same sort of thing is happening now; and there is no guarantee whatever that even more sinister events will not occur tomorrow. Not the slightest guarantee.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Babi Yar, p. 391.

In an earlier passage, Kuznetsov even specifies his presumptive audience. "I want especially to remind the young, vigorous and active people, for whom this book is intended, of the need for caution and of their responsibility for the fate of mankind."<sup>1</sup>

Throughout Babi Yar, particularly in the chapters entitled "A Word from the Author" and in the passages written after his defection to Great Britain, Kuznetsov is aggressively, at times even stridently, didactic. (At one point he admits to "a certain tendentiousness."<sup>2</sup>) Given the materials he is dealing with, his approach is neither surprising nor regrettable. Since one of the more fascinating features of the work is the ability of the experiencing self to pass through a corrupt and brutalizing world without being either corrupted or brutalized, it is fitting that the narrating self should project a committed conscience against evils, both actual and potential, which are still with us. Nevertheless, it is likely that some readers will feel that the stridency occasionally gets out of hand and tips over into bathos. The following is an example of the kind of passage readers might find objectionable:

I loathe you all, dictators, enemies of life; I scorn  
you as the most loathsome things which the earth has  
ever given birth to. You are cursed! Cursed! CURSED!<sup>3</sup>

However, one's opinion of Kuznetsov's explicit didacticism is less important than one's recognition of its presence and its central position as the main unifying agent in the work.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 265.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 295.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 421.

A CONTEXT FOR  
THE NOVELISTIC DOCUMENTARY

Up to this point, the direction taken in this study has involved a progressive focussing of attention on the four corpus works. Following the initial approaches through theoretical and literary-historical frames of reference, the works were subjected to an intrinsic, structural analysis. The strategy of progressive focussing was a necessary one for arriving at a clear conception of the special nature of the novelistic documentary; however, in this closing chapter the direction will be reversed. There is considerable evidence that suggests that the novelistic documentary is only one instance of a wider trend of experimentation in factual reportage, and it would be useful to place the novelistic documentary in this wider context of related contemporary efforts.

The emergence of increasing experimentation in factual reportage has not gone unnoticed by critics. According to George Steiner, "we are, it would seem, in a transitional stage of poetic documentation, a period in which the techniques and conventions of the novel are used for the presentation of psychological, social, and scientific material." He goes on to remark, "reportage and factual exposition are now heir to the liberties of the novel."<sup>1</sup> After examining a variety of contemporary works, David Lodge suggests that experimentation in factual rendering might be one natural response to a widespread belief (which Lodge does not share) that

Art can no longer compete with life on equal terms,  
showing the universal in the particular. The alternatives

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<sup>1</sup>Steiner, Language and Silence, p. 421.

are either to cleave to the particular — to "tell it like it is" — or to abandon history altogether and construct pure fictions which reflect in an emotional or metaphorical way the discords of contemporary experience.<sup>1</sup>

Jonathan Raban, in commenting on the work of Capote and Lewis among others, speculates on what he sees to be "a growing awareness of the novel's real possibilities as a form, and a new confidence in the idea that the descriptive techniques of the novelist give him a unique advantage over the rational analyst."<sup>2</sup> And, to give only one further example, Bernard Bergonzi, in a chapter with the suggestive title "Beyond Fiction?"<sup>3</sup> views the novelistic documentary (though of course he does not use the term) in a broad framework of contemporary works which either experiment with factual rendering or which alternatively accept, exploit, distort, and subvert the conventional distinctions between fact and fiction, usually in a context of romantic irony.

All of the critics cited are interested primarily in experimentation relating to the novel, but the trend identified here extends beyond novel-based experimentation into other narrative modes and even other artistic media. The trend, being a contemporary one, is too close to us to allow for an exhaustive mapping of all its aspects, but some indication of its range, and variety, at least, is possible.

The obvious place to begin a survey of the trend is with the authors of the corpus works. Although Kuznetsov has not as yet produced a work similar to Babi Yar and although Capote has reputedly

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<sup>1</sup>Lodge, "The Novelist at the Crossroads," p. 131.

<sup>2</sup>Jonathan Raban, The Technique of Modern Fiction: Essays in Practical Criticism (London: Edward Arnold, 1968), p. 12.

<sup>3</sup>Bergonzi, The Situation of the Novel, pp. 221-250.

sworn off the "non-fiction novel," both Mailer and Lewis have continued to experiment with factual reportage. Mailer followed The Armies of the Night with Miami and the Siege of Chicago,<sup>1</sup> published in the same year. As its subtitle suggests — "An Informal History of the American Political Conventions of 1968" — in this work Mailer is not attempting another novelistic documentary. In fact, the work is an example of a literary phenomenon which was a favourite among American publishers and readers of the sixties, a phenomenon that for awhile received the awkward name, "instant history." And while Mailer retains the device of referring to himself in the third person, in keeping with his altered generic intention he is no longer "the Historian" and "the Novelist" but, more modestly, "the reporter."

In 1970 Mailer published a further venture in factual narrative, A Fire on the Moon, which is an account, if only partly such, of Apollo 11, man's first landing on the moon. In A Fire on the Moon Mailer attempts a further elaboration of his experiment with narrative situation. The narrator continues to present himself in the third person, but now he is no longer "Mailer," no longer the Novelist, the Historian, even the reporter, but "Aquarius." As the work progresses, the account of Apollo 11 and even the activities of the experiencing self tend to recede into the background to be replaced by the metaphysical (and presumably "Aquarian") ruminations of the narrating self, so that the work often appears to be less a factual narrative than a sprawling, encyclopedic philosophical excursus to Mailer's life's work. The journey of Apollo 11 often becomes not so much the subject of the work as its pretext. These comments are not intended as adverse criticisms of A Fire on the Moon, only very tentative

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<sup>1</sup>Primary sources mentioned in this chapter will be listed in the Bibliography, but not cited in footnotes unless actually quoted.

efforts to come to terms with a bafflingly complex and multifaceted work.

Oscar Lewis has continued to achieve popular as well as critical success with his experiments in anthropological investigation. In 1964 he published Pedro Martínez, about which he has written: "In this book I have tried to do for the Mexican village what my earlier volume The Children of Sánchez tried to do for the urban slum."<sup>1</sup> Once again the basic principle of composition is the "multiple autobiography," but this time there is not the precision of symmetry in the presentation of the narrative fragments. The order of narrators shifts from part to part; sometimes one narrator does not appear at all in a part, other times a narrator will present two or even three of the sections in a particular part. Lewis's method undergoes even more radical alteration in his next work, La Vida (1966), his first genuine best-seller. Parts of La Vida are narrated from an authorial narrative situation, and at several points Lewis's research assistants enter the presented world of the narrative. In addition, several segments of La Vida mark a return to the method of presenting accounts of individual days which Lewis used originally in Five Families. These departures in the manner of presentation give La Vida a more variegated structure than The Children of Sánchez and Pedro Martínez, possibly at the cost of slight losses in unity and coherence.

More recently, Lewis has published what is to date the only actual sequel to a novelistic documentary. His Death in the Sánchez Family (1969), aside from bringing the main narrators (all but Marta who does not participate) up to date, fulfils a set of conditions outlined in the discussion of method which appears in the introduction to Five Families. There Lewis describes an alternative approach to the study

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<sup>1</sup>Lewis, "The Children of Sánchez, Pedro Martínez, and La Vida," p. 481.

of the family. Instead of multiple autobiographies or accounts of individual days, the approach "is to select for intensive study a problem or a special event or crisis to which the family reacts. The way a family meets new situations is revealing particularly of many aspects of family psychodynamics; it also points up individual differences."<sup>1</sup> The "Rashomon" technique or multiple point of view continues to be the basis of the narrative situation, but the emphasis has shifted from the autobiographical accounts of The Children of Sánchez and Pedro Martínez to a concentration on the single event — the death of Aunt Guadalupe, who was only a very minor figure in the earlier work on the Sánchez family.

One of the obvious questions which arises with respect to the novelistic documentary is whether the type is a fertile, and therefore permanent, contribution to narrative art, or whether it possesses the kind of fad value which would quickly lead to the exhaustion of its possibilities as an artistically viable narrative type. The continuing efforts of Mailer and Lewis suggest potential fertility, but there are indications to the contrary. Indeed, the corpus works, and in particular In Cold Blood, have already inspired at least one purely epigonic effort, Brian Moore's The Revolution Script (1972). Based on the kidnapping in Canada of the British diplomat James Cross by members of the F.L.Q., Moore's work is an awkward hybrid of the verifiable framework of the novelistic documentary and what Moore admits to be pure invention, unsupported by documentary evidence of any kind.<sup>2</sup> What reduces Moore's work to the purely epigonic, however, is not simply that he has mixed fact and fiction, but that he has adopted the surface apparatus of the novelistic documentary without any perception of its real potentialities for rendering

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<sup>1</sup>Lewis, Five Families, p. 4. Cf. La Vida, p. xix.

<sup>2</sup>Brian Moore, Note prefaced to The Revolution Script (London: Jonathan Cape, 1972), p. v.

lived experience. The work consequently appears less an attempt to exploit for valid artistic purposes the structural criteria of the novelistic documentary than a crude attempt to climb on a bandwagon.

Of course the question of the fertility or otherwise of the novelistic documentary is unanswerable, not only for the simple reason that it is too soon to tell, but also because the problem is too crudely formulated as an either-or proposition. After all, the contribution made to narrative art by the novelistic documentary will not be measured solely by the number and quality of future novelistic documentaries, though more, even if only a few, examples of the type will doubtless be forthcoming. The contribution must also be measured by the impact which the type has on other narrative forms. It is already safe to say that the type has not only inspired widespread experimentation in factual reportage but has also helped to create a wider audience of readers who are increasingly receptive to such experimentation.

A work by Jane Kramer with the charming if profuse title, Honor to the Bride like the Pigeon that Guards its Grain under the Clove Tree (1970), indicates one response to the novelistic documentary. Written by the wife of an anthropologist, the work is an incredibly complicated account of marriage Moroccan-style. While the verifiable factuality of the narrative is slightly offset by the device of including the author and her husband in the account thinly disguised by pseudonyms, the reader's belief in the detailed veracity of the narrative is constantly reinforced by such devices as precise dates, journal entries, authorial comments on how the story came to be known, and a generally report-like mode of narration. Since none of these is foreign to the orthodox novel, and since there is the (albeit transparent) use of a fictional guise for the author and her husband, the total effect of the work is that a semi-fictional

narrative, very much along the same lines as Hazlitt's Liber Amoris.<sup>1</sup>

In Great Britain, the experimentation with factual materials within the novel appears to have taken the form of a revolt against the conventions of fictional rendering. Both Bernard Bergonzi and David Lodge have investigated this trend in the contemporary British novel, and both cite the following passage from B.S. Johnson's Albert Angelo (1964) as representative of the trend. (The passage opens the fourth and final section. Before that point the work has presented the story of a young architect who is unable to follow his profession and is obliged to teach for a living.)

— fuck all this lying what im really trying to write about is writing not all this stuff about architecture trying to say something about writing about my writing im my hero though what a useless appellation my first character then im trying to say something about me through him albert an architect when whats the point in covering up covering over pretending pretending i can say anything through him that is anything I would be interested in saying.

— so an almight aposiopsis

— Im trying to say something not tell a story telling stories is telling lies and I want to tell the truth about me about my experience about my truth<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Although there seems little reason to doubt the influence of the novelistic documentary on Honor to the Bride, the work can be viewed as an extension of a favourite narrative type of The New Yorker — in which it first appeared, and for which Miss Kramer is a staff writer. The type is a short narrative, usually in the first person, written in such a way that the reader has no way of knowing whether it is factual or fictional — an effect that is easier to attain in a short form than in a long form.

<sup>2</sup>Cited in Bergonzi, The Situation of the Novel, p. 242, and in Lodge, "The Novelist at the Crossroads," p. 113.

In this passage Johnson uses an extreme form of Romantic irony to abrogate the fictiveness of his narrative; he then goes on to present the autobiographical underpinnings of the story which appears in the first three sections of the work. Johnson's generic intentions are clarified in a statement quoted by Bergonzi:

I'm certainly not interested in the slightest in writing fiction. Where the difficulty comes is in that "novel" and "fiction" are not synonymous. Certainly I write autobiography, and I write it in the form of a novel. What I don't write is fiction.<sup>1</sup>

Bergonzi views the practice of Johnson and other British writers producing similar work as a belated revolt against Eliotic impersonality and the conventions of the well-made novel, which has remained the dominant English form long after the radical experimentation undertaken in other parts of the world.

So far this discussion has continued to center on novel-based experimentation; however, as already stated, this is only one aspect of the total picture. Another aspect, already mentioned in relation to Mailer's Miami and the Siege of Chicago, is the vogue of "instant history" which was particularly strong in the middle sixties. The best known example of the type is probably William Manchester's The Death of a President (1963), the painstakingly detailed account of the assassination of John Kennedy. Although there is very little in the structure of Manchester's work that appears particularly novelistic, the author has explained the intention behind his piling up of detail as a desire to impart to the work "the veracity of fiction,"<sup>2</sup> by which he apparently means the verisimilitude of the

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<sup>1</sup>B.B.C. recording, 1967: "Novelists of the Sixties." Cited in Bergonzi, The Situation of the Novel, p. 244.

<sup>2</sup>Quoted by Raban, The Technique of Modern Fiction, p. 9.

realistic novel. Manchester's statement is a particularly clear expression of one of the central paradoxes involved in so much of the present day experimentation in factual narrative (including the novelistic documentary). Ever since the onset of the novel synthesis, writers have gone to great lengths to endow the realistic novel with the capacity to communicate a sense of experienced reality. Now, in attempting to communicate reality itself, writers find themselves drawn to the individual features and often even the form itself of the realistic novel.

The vogue of instant history appears in retrospect to have been only one instance of a somewhat older and perhaps (for the vogue seems to have spent itself) less short-lived mode of historical narrative — the minutely detailed historical reconstruction of a selected event or set of events. One of the best known examples is Cecil Woodham-Smith's The Reason Why, an account of the charge of the Light Brigade and some of the main personalities involved in it. Works like The Reason Why are hardly examples of radical experimentation in factual rendering, but they do reflect the widespread demand for accounts of genuine lived experience. Furthermore, such works appear to fulfil a particular need; with the writing of history becoming increasingly specialized and "scientific", comparatively little material has been available for the educated but non-specialized reader. Biography has been the form that did most to cater for such readers, but it alone could not fill the gap. The non-specialist audience projected by works like The Reason Why is signalled by the emphasis on narrative rather than analysis and particularly by the absence of any dependence on the reader's prior historical knowledge. Even when major events and personalities peripheral to the particular matter at hand are introduced, they are described in detail rather than simply mentioned; very little is

taken for granted. This feature endows the works with a peculiar kind of autonomy or self-sufficiency seldom found in more highly specialized modern historical works.

The projection of an audience of non-specialists is also, of course, precisely what makes the work of a professional anthropologist like Lewis as available to the student of literature as to the student of the social sciences, which is not to say they will view Lewis's works in the same way. And while the life-history predates Lewis's contribution by well over a century,<sup>1</sup> his example was instrumental in creating a broader audience for works in a similar vein as well as in inducing other writers to produce such works. The Autobiography of a Runaway Slave (1968), the personal account of Esteban Montejo compiled by the anthropologist Miguel Barnet, is perhaps the best known orthodox life-history to tap this new, wider audience. Barnet began his tape-recorded interviews in 1963 when Montejo was a hundred and four years old, and from that vantage point Montejo was able to reconstruct approximately the first forty years of his life. These figures alone are suggestive of the fascination and rarity of Montejo's narrative.

However, the main line of activity initiated by Lewis's efforts has not been in the direction of the individual life-history. Neither, for that matter, has it been in the direction of studies devoted to the individual family, for while Lewis's works present the anatomy of a selected family, the best known works which have followed anatomize entire communities.

In one of these works, Torregreca (1969), the author, Ann Cornelisen, recounts her experiences over a number of years in an

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<sup>1</sup>Kluckhohn, "The Personal Document in Anthropological Science," pp. 82-83. However, according to Kluckhohn, the first example of a life-history published as such by a professional anthropologist did not appear until 1908 (p. 86).

Italian village, and in recounting her own experience she creates, as her subtitle expresses it, "A World in Southern Italy." As a consequence of the work's first-person narrative situation, the reader is guided into and through the "world" that emerges from the account by a narrator for whom it remains as alien as it is for the reader, even after she has spent several years living in that world. Reader and narrator share the same sense of disorientation, of foreignness. Rather than being brought into direct contact with the presented world, as he is in The Children of Sánchez, the reader is brought into the author's alien view of it; therefore he remains continually aware of and distanced from the essential strangeness of the people, the customs, the beliefs and attitudes that inhabit the presented world. The maintaining of an "outside" view contrasts both with Lewis's practice and with that of the writers to be mentioned next.

In 1963 Jan Myrdal published Report from a Chinese Village, a work which has had possibly an even greater impact than Lewis's works. Although he does not list Lewis among those who influenced him, it is unlikely that Myrdal, who is the son of the renowned Swedish social scientist Gunnar Myrdal, could have remained ignorant of Lewis's work for very long. Nevertheless, his decision to make a protracted visit to China and to report on peasant life there had already been made prior to the appearance of The Children of Sánchez.<sup>1</sup> Even leaving aside a direct influence, it could be argued that Lewis helped to prepare the way for Myrdal's work, even if only to the extent of helping to create an audience for it. And at any rate, what we are dealing with here is not something as straightforward and mechanical as direct or even indirect influence, but a particular

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<sup>1</sup>Jan Myrdal, Report from a Chinese Village, trans. by Maurice Michael (1963; rpt. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967), p. 20.

set of conditions, a social and intellectual climate, which provided for the creation and enthusiastic reception of works like those of Lewis and Myrdal as well as other experiments in factual reportage.

Myrdal describes his generic intentions in a lengthy introduction. He sets out what he sees to be "his duty . . . to report, not to distort,"<sup>1</sup> and outlines his wish to produce "a book that was to be concrete and factual."<sup>2</sup> Towards the end of the introduction he insists, as if in direct reply to Lewis, that the work "is no novel,"<sup>3</sup> and indeed there is little evidence that Myrdal wished to impart to the work a novelistic structure. It combines authorial descriptions with numerous first-person accounts delivered by the people of the village and with an interesting device whereby at the end of an informant's account there is a brief section devoted to the opinion which the villagers have of the informant. These sections, which begin "People say of . . . ," provide, in a very different and far more direct way, for the "Rashomon" effect which Lewis exploits in his works.

The English translation of Report from a Chinese Village led to the inception of a series of similar "reports." So far the series includes, among others, Studs Terkel's Division Street: America (1966), which takes Chicago as its "village," and Ronald Blythe's Akenfield: Portrait of an English Village (1969). Terkel's work is particularly interesting in that it retains many of the questions which he directed to his informants. The editing out of the questions was one of the features which anthropologists objected to in Lewis's works.

The few works mentioned so far constitute only a fraction of the work being done in book-length factual narrative. There are

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 36.

many other works deserving of comment — Ronald J. Glasser's 365 Days (1971) and John Hersey's The Algiers Motel Incident (1968) are only two examples — but the trend is a contemporary one and the corpus of available material swells almost from day to day. Only a retrospective view will be able to make complete sense of the abundance of material, and that, obviously, will not be possible for several years. Since the intention of this chapter is to suggest the range of the trend rather than to comment on all of its products, it is more to the point to look beyond book-length factual narratives to experimentation in other forms of factual reportage.

A field of endeavour that has close links with the work of Capote and Mailer is the controversial practice with the controversial title — the new journalism. The argument over the term and concept of new journalism has been as sustained and vitriolic (and frequently as unilluminating) as the one over "non-fiction novel." Even Tom Wolfe, one of the foremost practitioners in the mode, finds the term an unhappy choice,<sup>1</sup> but he has continued to use it, as have other writers on both sides of the controversy.

Wolfe has argued that new journalism represents an attempt to move "beyond the conventional limits of journalism"<sup>2</sup> to an "artistic" mode of journalistic reporting. The conventional reportorial method of journalism is, as Stanzel points out, the reporting of "an event or series of events . . . with consecutive chronology and usually with a constant degree of compression."<sup>3</sup> As a consequence of the conventional method, "the usual . . . form of [journalistic] reporting does not really provide a structure capable of interpretation."<sup>4</sup> The

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<sup>1</sup>Tom Wolfe, "The Birth of 'The New Journalism,'" New York, February 14, 1972, p. 45.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 43.

<sup>3</sup>Stanzel, Narrative Situations, p. 13.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

lack of interpretability is precisely what new journalism attempts, through its "artistry," to overcome. According to Wolfe, "the idea was to give the full objective description, plus something that readers had always had to go to novels and short stories for: namely, the subjective or emotional life of the characters."<sup>1</sup> From this it is only a very short step to the novelistic documentary. And in fact Wolfe's article on new journalism makes it clear that the devices used in revolutionizing journalistic reporting are drawn almost entirely from the novel and the short story: there is the playing with point of view, the use of extended scenic presentation, even passages of interior monologue. (Indeed, articles in the new mode look like short stories, which seems to be the whole point.) All of this requires, as Wolfe insists, "a depth of information that had never been demanded in newspaper work." "We had," he writes, "to gather all the material the conventional journalist was after — and then keep going."<sup>2</sup>

The obvious charge that can be levelled against Wolfe is that he has exaggerated his claims. His belief, for instance, that the new journalism has been responsible for "dethroning the novel as the number one literary genre"<sup>3</sup> shifts the traditional statement on the death of the novel to the status of an Oedipal usurpation of the form. But reservations about Wolfe's claims do not alter the fact that journalistic reporting has seen in recent years — Wolfe dates the movement to the early sixties — widespread experimentation relating to both aims and techniques, and Wolfe, along with such writers as Mailer, Jimmy Breslin, and Gay Talese, has been at the forefront of this experimentation.

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<sup>1</sup>Wolfe, "The New Journalism," p. 45.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., cover page.

Moving, finally, beyond narrative forms altogether, one can cite as a further instance of recent experimentation in factual rendering the "documentary theatre," which has attracted considerable attention in recent years, particularly in Germany.<sup>1</sup> Documentary theatre emerged as a separate and identifiable mode in the nineteen-sixties when Erwin Piscator, whose entire life work points, in a sense, to the eventual creation of the mode, produced in successive years Rolf Hochhuth's The Deputy (Der Stellvertreter, 1963),<sup>2</sup> Heiner Kipphardt's In the Matter of J Robert Oppenheimer (In der Sache J. Robert Oppenheimer, 1964), and Peter Weiss's The Investigation (Die Ermittlung, 1965). In the next year, Piscator wrote of the emergence of this new mode, saying: "It is a dramatic art which distils from reality . . . a work of art that meets the requirements of a drama and attains in content a degree of actuality . . . rarely possessed by previous dramatic literature."<sup>3</sup>

Peter Weiss has provided the most thoroughgoing theoretical description of documentary theatre. In a frequently reprinted manifesto made up of fourteen propositions outlining the nature, scope, materials, and social as well as artistic implications of the mode, he writes:

Documentary Theatre is a theatre of reportage. Records, documents, letters, statistics, market-reports, statements of banks and companies, government statements, speeches, interviews, statements by well-known personalities, newspapers and broadcast reports, photos, documentary films and other contemporary documents are the basis of the performance.

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<sup>1</sup>A survey of documentary theatre appears in World Theatre, XVII (1968). The entire volume, which bears the title Piscator and the Documentary Theatre, is devoted to the topic.

<sup>2</sup>Called in Great Britain The Representative.

<sup>3</sup>Erwin Piscator, "Post Investigation," World Theatre, XVII (1968), 349.

Documentary Theatre refrains from all invention; it takes authentic material and puts it on the stage, unaltered in content, edited in form.<sup>1</sup>

Weiss's description gives all the appearance of projecting a dramatic equivalent to the novelistic documentary. Nevertheless, when one comes to his statement with a prior knowledge of some of the plays it purports to describe, its latent equivocation is readily apparent. In fact nearly all of the formulations of the mode contain the same kind of equivocation; for Weiss there is "edited in form," which on the surface seems to point to little more than selection of material and arrangement of its sequence. It will be shown in a moment that much more is involved. Piscator, in the statement cited above, speaks of "a degree of actuality," and in another article writes of plays which comply with "the strictness of exact historical analysis, without having to forego the freedom of creation."<sup>2</sup> How, one is forced to ask, does a playwright achieve both strictness and freedom?

It is just this dichotomy between adherence to verifiable fact and freedom of artistic invention that R.C. Perry examines in a careful study of The Deputy and The Investigation in relation to their sources.<sup>3</sup> Citing the invention of characters and dialogue in The Deputy, Perry argues that for all the play's historical underpinnings,

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<sup>1</sup>Peter Weiss, "Notes Towards a Definition of Documentary Theatre," Theatre Quarterly, I (1971), 41. This translation has been chosen over the less coherent one which appears in World Theatre, XVII (1968), 375-85, under the title "Fourteen Propositions for a Documentary Theatre." The manifesto originally appeared in the German magazine Theatre Heute, March 1968.

<sup>2</sup>Piscator, "Postface to The Political Theatre," World Theatre, XVII (1968), 353.

<sup>3</sup>R.C. Perry, "Historical Authenticity and Dramatic Form: Hochhuth's Der Stellvertreter and Weiss's Die Ermittlung," Modern Language Review, LXIV (1969), 828-39.

"there can obviously be no historical authenticity in the strict sense of the term."<sup>1</sup> The play is, as Perry sees it, "a subjective edifice raised on a foundation of certain historical facts."<sup>2</sup> In Weiss's play the problem emerges in a more subtle form. There is little overt invention, but, as Perry points out, Weiss "has abandoned literal authenticity in a number of important respects."<sup>3</sup> Chief among these are the moulding of documented statements into free verse, with consequent changes in vocabulary and syntax, and the amalgamation of several living persons into single representative characters. Weiss also, on a few occasions, goes beyond his source material into what Perry calls "interpretative additions."<sup>4</sup> These interpolations extend the moral and thematic relevance of the documented material in such a way that the play becomes an examination of contemporary society and universal moral issues rather than purely a rendering of Nazi Germany and its atrocities.

It is apparent from Perry's analysis that documentary drama is not — and has not attempted to be — a complete amalgamation of dramatic form and absolute factual authenticity. And it is equally apparent from the survey of documentary theatre given in the edition of World Theatre previously cited that the further one moves from Germany the less literally factual the mode becomes. It is tempting to argue that the special dictates of the drama preclude such an amalgamation, that the very teleology of drama requires an artful compromise as opposed to a total synthesis. But the same argument could easily have been advanced by critics of the novel prior to emergence of the novelistic documentary, and it would have been equally plausible. In fact, given the artist's propensity to refute

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 828.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 839.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 833.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 837.

the critic, it is likely that the moment a critic's statement that a fully documentary theatre is impossible becomes sufficiently public, a fully documentary theatre will surface.

The documentary theatre is as good a place as any to close this survey. Numerous other works could be cited; given adequate resources, similar experiments in film and television could be examined; but these could only add to the evidence of widespread experimentation in factual rendering, and the presence as well as range of experimentation rather than the sheer quantity of instances is the point here. Having noted the presence of the trend, one inevitably leaps to the obvious question: Why? Why is this experimentation taking place? What social and artistic forces are at work here? Is there some shift in our basic notions of reality, or in our ability to perceive reality, that explain the communication of its content in modes of rendering hitherto devoted mainly to artistic invention? Obviously one can only speculate.

To suggest only one or two possible answers, the combination of urban life and mass media confronts the individual with countless discrete phenomena — many serious, all competing for attention — without any shaping or controlling context. Forms like the documentary theatre and the novelistic documentary take the raw factual data and give them depth, continuity, context — in short, a structure of meaning. Perhaps even more important than the provision for interpretability is the narrowing of focus; reality becomes pre-selected for the perceiver. At a trivial level the importance of this focussing is revealed in the familiar stories of the vacationers who cannot be certain whether they enjoyed their holiday until the photographs are developed; or the person who watches on television events taking place just outside his own home. In each case the act of selection and the reduction of scale to the comprehensible are made for the perceiver. A further

consequence of the increased communication generated by mass media is that we are made aware of the existence of unfamiliar places and societies without actually learning very much about them. Lewis's works, like Montejo's Autobiography and Myrdal's Report, help to close the gap between vague awareness and genuine understanding. Here, pre-selection, reduction, and interpretability provide for the unfamiliar and remote rather than for making the immediate manageable.

Whatever the answers, it is certain that the experimentation with factual rendering initiated in the sixties — of which the novelistic documentary is a central instance — has profound implications for the literary sociologist, and presumably will have at some point in the future equally profound implications for the historian of ideas.

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