READERS AND TEXTS

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REPRESENTATIVE CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN FICTION

By

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ABSTRACT

When a reader opens a novel and begins reading he enters a fictional world, one which he discovers and unfolds via his act of reading. This basic fact of reader/text interaction is, in short, the focal point of many metafictional works. Metafiction, which is simply "fiction about fiction," centers not only on the writer's processes of creation and his product, the text, but also broadens its scope to include the equally important process, that of reading. The contemporary metafictionists' concern for equating the creative acts of writing and reading engenders a new role for the reader--that of the text's co-creator. The reader, who accepts his new co-creative role, is made more aware of how he activates a text to bring it to life. This fact sets contemporary metafictional works apart from previous "novelistic self-consciousness."

The representative contemporary American writers selected for this study share in common their focus on the reader and his act of reading. The concept of "intertextuality " and its constituent structural parts, the "intertext" and the "intratext," are key elements amongst the fictions here discussed, elements which seek to make the reader more aware of his co-creative role. After all, a text does not exist beyond the confines of print and page until it is read, until it is brought to life via an active, imaginative, and hence, creative mind.

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INTRODUCTION

> Looking back over the last ten years of American fiction writing, one notes that a massive, bewildering change in the literary climate appears to have gathered in energy. Whether the new fiction of the last decade represents a "breakthrough" into fruitful new vistas or the "exhaustion" of a decadent, spent art form, it is, at least, drastically different from the fiction written immediately before by the great American modernists (as they have come to be called) and is based apparently upon totally revised assumptions about the nature and purpose of art.[1]

Contemporary American metafictionists express and represent in their works a change, or perhaps more appropriately stated, a replenishment in American fiction. The emergence of this "new" type of fiction, which is termed "metafiction," occupies much of the literary foreground in North America, Europe and Latin America. Even though the inception of metafictional works looks as far back in literary history as Miguel de Cervantes in Don Quixote and Laurence Sterne in Tristram Shandy, the resurgence of this genre is prominently witnessed in recent American fictional works. The influx of metafiction has resulted in a wave of critical studies, ideologies and theories that attempt to expound upon and explicate not only the nature of the fiction, but also the reasons for the flowering of this genre in the literary tradition.

One aspect of the fiction which writers, readers and critics alike seize upon is the break from the conventional forms of story-telling that have come to be associated with realistic novel forms. Metafiction, the term now used to define this "new" type of fiction, is quite simply

"fiction about fiction," or stated otherwise, "fiction that includes within itself a commentary on its own narrative and/or linguistic identity."[2] The writers considered in this discussion--John Barth, Donald Barthelme, John Gardner, William Gass and Vladimir Nabokov--have been selected as representative American writers who reflect in their fiction, as do many of their contemporaries, the seemingly indigenous metafictional inclination to undermine literary conventions in general and in particular the assumption that fiction should mirror reality in order to be understood. The fictional works of these writers depict as their only reality what the imagination chooses to imagine and then project onto the creation of a fictional world. In this type of fiction, the reader, the receiver of the text, occupies the central role as the co-creator of the text--that is, the creator of the images that appear from the printed page. This process of activating a text becomes the essence of the fiction and that which eventually brings the text to life.

The much considered vital and necessary "imitation" art/life connection that defines realistic fiction is, in metafiction, replaced by an equally relevant art/life link to the characteristics of this genre, those of the imagination and the fictional world it chooses to create: "this 'vital' link [art/life] is reforged, on a new level--on that of the imaginative process (of story-telling), instead of on that of the product (the story told). And it is the new role of the reader that is the vehicle of this change."[3] Metafictional or self-reflexive texts demand that the reader participate actively, that is, imaginatively and intelligently, in the fictional world as the text's co-creator. Self-reflexive texts, by their nature, reflect, announce, and in some instances comment upon their

artistic processes of creation. At the same time, these texts also focus outward, away from themselves, toward the reader. The tension that results from this dichotomy of purpose is, as one critic states, the "paradox" of metafiction, and the reader of the text in his new role is left to resolve and reconcile himself to this tension.[4]

Contemporary American self-reflexive writers (as writers and in some instances as critics) occupy much of the foreground in the meta-fictional evolution of fiction. It can be argued that the wave of meta-fiction in both fictional and critical works stems from the charge laid against literature today that the novel is dead. John Barth, in his seminal and highly acclaimed essay, "The Literature of Exhaustion,"[5] defines contemporary literature by arguing that yes, certain forms of literature have been "exhausted" or "used up," but also that no, the novel is not dead. In a later essay, "The Literature of Replenishment," Barth defends his somewhat misread and misinterpreted earlier essay and contemporary fiction (once again):

> artistic conventions are liable to be retired, subverted, transcended, transformed, or even deployed against themselves to generate new and lively work. I would have thought that point unexceptionable. But a great many people ... mistook me to mean that literature, at least fiction, is kaput: that it has all been done already; that there is nothing left for contemporary writers but to parody and travesty our great predecessor in our exhausted medium.[6]

Raymond Federman in the Preface to Surfiction, a collection of critical studies that investigates, examines in detail, and seeks to determine the present state of fiction, expresses the same concern as Barth: "And one could go on saying that fiction is now impossible ...

because all the possibilities of fiction have been used up, exhausted, abused, and therefore, all that is left, to the one who still insists on writing fiction, is to repeat (page after page, ad nauseam) that there is nothing to write about, nothing with which to write."[7] Comments along these lines locate the crisis allegedly facing fiction, that is, that forms have been exhausted; but these comments also respond to the crisis and offer: in so doing a solution, one which seeks to both defend and "replenish" the state of literature--metafiction. As Federman states, and as contemporary writers have demonstrated in their works, "the only fiction that still means something today is ... the kind of fiction that challenges the tradition that governs it; the kind of fiction that constantly renews our faith in man's imagination and not in man's distorted vision of reality."[8] The responsibility of receiving this type of fiction and of bringing it to life is that of the reader, who in self-reflexive or metafictional works is cast in a new role.

Recent critical studies of this metafictional literature focus on this increasing importance of the reader and the role designated to him (by the very nature of the texts) as the co-creator of the fictional world. The concepts of "intertext" and "intertextuality" are central to the role of the reader in the sense of being both structural and interpretive devices. The structural devices are here associated with the author's formal techniques, while the interpretational aspects are the considerations of the reader who makes meaning of the text. Although the concepts are similar in that they denote the existence of "other texts within the text," (intertext[uality]), and although both concepts are reader-oriented, there exists an important difference that distinguishes

"intertext" from "intertextuality." Intertext and intertextuality are separate parts of the reading process, yet paradoxical in their nature, as one cannot exist without the other: the intertext, defined as the "other" text(s) within the text under consideration, comes to light by the reader who discerns these outside or other texts; the process by which the reader discerns the intertext(s) is "intertextuality." Intertextuality, then, depends upon the presence of one or more intertexts and the reader's "processing" of these texts during the act of reading.

There is a general consensus amongst critics of intertextuality that the intertext consists of the "other" text(s) that can be found within the one being read. These other texts are brought to mind by the reader as he reads. It is important to note that an intertext is not simply an outside work (or works) which has influenced the author. Nor is an intertext only a reference or an allusion to other literary works (within the work). The intertext is the "corpus" of other texts suggested to the reader by the work, and exists as a formal unit and a structural variant of the same text being read. Intertextuality (while embodying the intertext[s]) is the reader's process of activating the intertext, and is ultimately that which makes the text what it is, a complete literary unit. Julia Kristeva, who coined the term intertextuality, defines it as the "sum of knowledge that makes it possible for texts to have meaning."[9] In refining her definition,[10] Kristeva notes three elements of intertextuality besides the text being read: the author, the reader, and the "other" texts. The most central of these elements to intertextuality is the reader, who makes the textual connections in his mind, and from them builds the world of the text.

Intertextuality is an essential process in the act of reading and functions as one means by which the reader makes meaning and sense in the fiction. It is thus a process which relies wholly on the reader who creates, in part, from the other texts, the text he is reading. Though a process of discovering that which becomes the essence of the text, intertextuality is a reader-oriented concept. In making meaning or sense of a text, the reader draws upon other literary works, social and cultural codes. The concepts of intertextuality and intertext in self-reflexive fiction, then, are one means by which the reader is able to find the essence of another world which he releases from and brings into existence beyond the confines of print and page.

Although the critical studies on intertextuality (including the intertext) mention the reader's participation in the process of connecting texts to make meaning, they fall short in rendering or even crediting intertextuality with being a formally reader-oriented concept. Michael Riffaterre in his article, "Syllepsis,"[11] relies on the reader's importance and function in the act of reading in order to form his definition of intertext. But Riffaterre does not always attribute to the reader the full responsibility for the processing of the other texts, or more simply stated, for intertextuality. Riffaterre focuses more on textual aspects, for example, the ungrammaticalities which trigger in the reader the existence of a latent intertext, and the "types" of intertextuality that can exist in a text. However, his definition of intertext as the "corpus of texts the reader may legitimately connect with the one before his eyes, that is, the texts brought to mind by what he is reading,"[12] is helpful in redirecting the essence of the broader concept, intertextuality, away from textual structures towards the reader's processing of the other texts during his

act of co-creating and re-creating the fictional world. Riffaterre's definition of the intertext relies more on the individual relationship established between the reader and the text, and is one that depends upon the reader's literary background as well as on his culture and traditions.

In refining his definition, Riffaterre distinguishes between "text-to-text" connections, influences and associations (a vertical relationship), and the intertext, which is related to the text "laterally" (and via the reader). Intertextuality is defined as the process which operates to reveal or to indicate the presence of other texts, or of a "latent" intertext, and is a "modality of perception "[13] for the reader.

Jonathan Culler, in "Presupposition and Intertextuality,"[14] defines intertextuality in light of its "double focus": it calls to the reader's attention that the meaning of the text being considered is reached only because other texts have previously been written. Meaning is made possible by intertextuality which leads the reader to consider previously read texts as contributors to a code, which in turn makes meaning possible. In light of Culler's definition, intertextuality is not simply an investigation of other literary sources as possible influences on the author, although the intertext the reader discovers can coincide with these influences and sources. But the processes involved are not the same. An author may make structural and thematic use of other texts, and the reader may recognize it as such, but for the reader these texts only become intertexts because of <u>his</u> processes of interpretation and re-creation of the text. This is more than an exercise in identifying and matching literary sources and influences with those the author intends. Finally, Culler's distinction between intertext and intertextuality locates the

intertext as the key element which enables the meaning of a text to emerge, and is thus encompassed by "semiosis," a broader concept, which includes every aspect that contributes to the essence of the text. It is the reader who makes meaning in the text, and the concept of intertextuality is directed towards the reader as a process of achieving meaning: only the reader engages in this.

In the study of intertextuality, a distinction between authorial intention of the intertexts as structural devices (directed towards the reader by the text) and as a thematic aspect of a work of art (the writer's use of the intertexts) must be made. The intertexts of self-reflexive fiction are instrumental to reader participation, but the degree to which the reader deploys the intended intertexts, as well as those he draws from his own past reading, is as individual as is each reader. The intertext, as part of the reading process, as co-creative, can be intended by the author and directed toward his potential reader. Intertextuality is entirely the responsibility of the reader as a means of bringing a text to life: "Texts do not come to life, texts do not generate anything--until they are read.... Metafictional self-consciousness about this basic fact of aesthetic actualization has forced critics--who, after all, are readers --to integrate with their anti-Romantic formalism an awareness of the act of reading. The result has been, I think, the theory of intertextuality."[15]

In current critical ideologies whereby critics and novelists alike turn their interest towards the reader of contemporary metafiction, the concern lies with the reader's response to the fiction, or stated otherwise, more in "the functional reverberations caused by textual strategies in the mind of the reader, than in proving that x influenced y by textual or

biographical evidence."[16] The fictional orientation of self-reflexive literature is towards the reader, and intertextuality is a central aspect of cognition in the reading of this type of fiction. The reader, by discovering and drawing from other texts, is the "locus" of the sum of knowledge Kristeva identifies with intertextuality.[17] The intertext the reader draws from to co-create the text before him is personal, and what critics have perhaps failed to recognize fully is that reading is an individual, personal relationship between the reader and the text. Each reader's interpretation of a literary work is influenced by his intellectual, cultural, psychological and ideological perspectives, which may or may not infuse his reading, in a conscious manner.

In further defining intertextuality as a reader-oriented process, a more precise distinction must be made between "influence" and intertextuality. Intertextuality is a process whereby an intertext is "absorbed and transformed"--"every text builds itself as a mosaic of quotations, every text is absorption and transformation of another text "[18]-- and this process is recognized and actualized by the reader. Influence, however, rests solely with the author's creative processes and his intentions as an artist. Here a source, in the form of another literary work, is seen as an influence on the text during its creation. Part of the reader's co-creation of the text depends, not on authorial influence, but on intertextuality. Perhaps the simplified equations:

"external source + influence = author as creator"

and

"intertext(uality) + processes of signification = reader as co-creator"

best exemplify this distinction.

Laurent Jenny,[19] in expounding upon the concept, is close to Riffaterre in locating intertextuality within the linguistic modes which make language, and hence a text, perceptible. Jenny focuses upon the phonetical, grammatical and semantic systems of language as a structure, and from this structure, meaning in the text is created by the reader. Jenny is in agreement with Riffaterre's premise that an intertext is a structural variant of the text being read, yet, in his concern with a semiotic description of significance and intertextuality, he excludes from his study[20] the importance of the reader.

Jonathan Culler's definition of intertextuality as the "designation of its participation in the discursive space of a culture: the relationship between a text and the various languages or signifying practices"[21] that make a text intelligible, falls short in stating to whom--and to whom, it must be intuited, is to the reader. Intertextuality is primarily a process the reader engages in while reading, in order to interpret the meaning of the text by means of the existing intertext(s). Intertextuality is also the processing of textual connections from one formal literary unit to another, during the act of reading. The interaction between these processes occurs in the reader's mind as he works to bring the fictional world to life.

The focus on the reader by contemporary writers of self-reflexive literature exists within the fiction in the role the writers create for their readers--that of an active participant in the fictional world, as its co-creator. Self-reflexive novels become texts which comment upon or reflect their process of creation to a great extent via the act of reading as a creative activity, where the creative processes of the author are

transferred to the reader. Through various textual strategies and techniques, the re-creative or co-creative acts of the reader are engendered. One such textual strategy which is particularly germane to this discussion is the concept of the "intratext." The intratext can be defined as the text(s) which exists within the text under consideration; an example of an intratext is found in the familiar novel-within-the-novel technique. The intratexts are authorially designated narrative units which, in addition to reflecting the thematic or structural content of the text, can have the effect of "triggering," in the reader, inter-textual reading. The reader's intended activity of connecting the intra-text(s) to the text can be considered a "microscopic" representation of the larger process, intertextuality. Thus intratextuality, although it is an intended narrative design incorporated in the text, can also be considered a reader-directed concept, in that it evokes from the reader intertextual reading. The responsibility for bringing a text to life (intertextually and intratextually) lies with the individual reader who willingly or unwillingly participates in the role designated to him in and by the text. Intertextuality, which can encompass both the concepts of the intratext and the intertext, is one means that enables the reader to interact with a fictional world.

John Gardner, for example, overtly thematizes the creative role of the reader through the characterized reader in the text in October Light. This figure works as an intratextual device to evoke, from the "outside" reader, a greater awareness of reading. Intertextuality in October Light takes the form of a direct address to the reader to co-create the fictional world. The overt thematization of reading locates the domain

of intertextuality in the reader, in Gardner's novel and in Vladimir Nabokov's Pale Fire, in the form of intratexts--other fictions that exist within the novels, in print. There is an equally overt thematization of reading as co-creation in Donald Barthelme's Snow White and John Barth's Chimera, where the intertexts are familiar myths. The authorial intention of intertextuality is implicit in the above works, but the actualization of intertextuality (the process by which the intertexts unfold and are then utilized) is left up to the reader. Intertextuality and its constituent structural parts, the intertext and the intratext, will be revealed as instrumental elements in the active reading of self-reflexive fiction. In this type of reading, the reader takes the responsibility of co-creating the fictional world.

NOTES ON INTRODUCTION

[1]Joe David Bellamy, The New Fiction: Interviews With Innovative American Writers (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1974), p. ix.

[2]Linda Hutcheon, Narcissistic Narrative: The Metafictional Paradox (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1980), p. 1.

[3]Hutcheon, Narcissistic Narrative, p. 3.

[4]For a further explanation of the "metafictional paradox," see Hutcheon, Narcissistic Narrative, p. 7.

[5]John Barth, "The Literature of Exhaustion," The Atlantic (August 1967), 29-34.

[6]Barth, "The Literature of Replenishment," The Atlantic (January 1980), p. 71.

[7]Raymond Federman, ed., Surfiction: Fiction Now...and Tomorrow (Chicago: The Swallow Press Inc., 1975), p. 6.

[8]Federman, p. 7.

[9]As quoted and translated by Jonathan Culler in The Pursuit of Signs (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), p. 104. See Julia Kristeva, Séméiotikè (Paris: Seuil, 1969).

[10]Kristeva, Séméiotikè, p. 145.

[11]Michael Riffaterre, "Syllepsis," Critical Inquiry, 6, 4(Summer 1980), 625-638.

[12]Riffaterre, 626.

[13]Riffaterre, 625.

[14]Culler, The Pursuit of Signs, pp. 100-118.

[15]Linda Hutcheon, unpublished "Position Paper: Round Table on Intertextuality and Influence," International Comparative Literature Association Congress (August 1982), p. 8.

[16]Hutcheon, "Position Paper," p. 9.

[17]Hutcheon, "Position Paper," p. 13.

[18]Jeanine Parisier Plottel, ed., Introduction to Intertextuality: New Perspectives In Criticism, Volume 2, New York Literary Forum (1978), p. xiv.

[19]See Culler, p. 104.

[20]"La Stratégie de la forme," Poétique, 27 (1976), pp. 257-281.

[21]Culler, p. 103.

CHAPTER I

THE LESSON OF THE READER

> The very act of reading a book, starting at the top of the first page, and moving from left to right, top to bottom, page after page to the end in a consecutive prearranged manner has become boring and restrictive. Indeed, any intelligent reader should feel frustrated and restricted within that pre-ordained system of reading.[1]

A reader, upon opening a novel, initially has no idea what his relationship to or role in the text is, apart from making contact with the printed page in the same way Raymond Federman has described as "boring and restrictive." Most readers expect, at least, that the fictional world they are about to engage in will contain typographical order, which in turn structures or patterns an organized means of participating in the fiction by reading from top to bottom, left to right. The self-conscious novelist, on the other hand, very much aware of the imposing restrictions of print and page, challenges the reader who assumes these conventions of reading in all texts. The more passive stance suggested in "conventional" reading is, in self-reflexive fiction, often challenged and replaced by active reading, reading which permits the reader to take the role of "co-creator" of the fictional world.

Self-reflexive fiction, by its very nature, shares the author's creative processes with the reader: the former's, no doubt, did not follow an organized linear pattern of creation. Yet, writing, as an act, is linear. Thus a tension between the process of the author's creation (his physical act of writing which orders and transforms the images from his mind to the page) and his imaginative freedom exists. This tension

becomes a major concern of the self-reflexive writer who, in sharing his imaginative and creative processes with the reader, must do so within the confines of linear typography. The discerning reader of metafiction, in his co-creative role, experiences the same tension--that between the printed page and his imaginative acts. The only way in which this tension can be dealt with and resolved is by the text itself--the mediator between the author and the reader. Even though the author is dependent upon the printed page to communicate his imaginative processes to the reader, as is the reader in receiving them, both creators can undermine the tyranny of typography. Narrative techniques and devices that disrupt continuous linear narration, while reflecting the author's "non-linear" creative acts, also function to evoke in the reader an awareness of those same creative acts which, by the self-reflexive text, are then offered to the reader. The creative role designated for the reader by and in the text unfolds, not in a continuous linear narrative, but rather, through narrative disruptions of linearity which seek to disturb "the comfortable habits of the actual act of reading."[2] Thus the reader is drawn into an active, imaginative, and creative relationship with the text, in spite of the restrictions the printed page imposes upon the freedom of the imagination and, hence, creation.

What has been termed the "intratext" of John Gardner's October Light, which takes the form of a novel-within-the-novel entitled The Smuggler's of Lost Souls' Rock, acts as an "intertext" because of the characterized reader, Sally Page. The intratext exemplifies not only the effects of narrative disruptions on the "comfortable habits" of reading--for the intratext disrupts or intrudes upon the text itself--but also

provides, within the narrative of October Light, an allegory of reading. As a self-conscious novelist, John Gardner's focus is on the reader, a focus which through the intratext is reflected on two levels: Gardner provides a reader of the inner-novel whose act of reading unfolds the fictional world of The Smugglers, the process of which serves to evoke a greater awareness of reading on the part of the reader who "receives" October Light.

Evoking a heightened awareness from the reader of his instrumental role in creating self-reflexive texts is also overtly exemplified in Donald Barthelme's novel Snow White, where Barthelme directly addresses the reader in the questionnaire appearing at the end of Part One. The structural technique of incorporating the questionnaire brings to the reader's attention what he has perhaps considered and discerned thus far in his reading of the text. Barthelme's obtrusive elucidation of the metafictionist's focus on the reader and on reading is first based on the author's assumption that the reader has thus far attempted to read the fairy-tale or myth "Snow White" as the intended intertext of the novel. The first few questions centre on the reader's possible connection of the two texts: "Do you like the story so far? Yes ( ) No ( ), Have you understood, in reading to this point that Paul is the prince-figure? Yes ( ) No ( ), that Jane is the wicked stepmother figure? Yes ( ) No ( )."[3] In addition to questioning the reader's very probable intertextual reading of Snow White, Barthelme also brings to the reader's attention other aspects of the text: for example, its narrative form, language, plot and characterization. On these issues, Barthelme seeks the reader's opinion: "Is there too much blague in the narration ( ) Not enough blague? ( )" (p. 82). Hence the reader's

consideration of textual elements invites a critical assessment of the work in light of the individual reader's experience of the text.

Barthelme's inquiry is taken to extremes when the reader is brought outside the fictional world to non-fictional "realities." The reader is asked impertinent questions such as: "Would you like a war? Yes ( ) No ( ) ... Do you feel that the Authors Guild has been sufficiently vigorous in representing writers before the Congress in matters pertaining to copyright legislation? Yes ( ) No ( ), [and] ... In your opinion, should human beings have more shoulders? ( ) Two sets of shoulders? ( ) Three? ( )" (pp. 82-83). The apparent irrelevance of these questions in relation to the text severs the reader from the "reality" of the fictional world thus far apprehended. Barthelme removes the reader from the text to his own physical "reality" as a reader in the most interesting question: "Do you stand up when you read? ( ) Lie down? ( ) Sit? ( )" (p. 83). This question mocks the reader's notion of "reality and fiction" as it brings the reader "back at the very end to his concrete nondiegetic identity outside the text."[4] The reader of Snow White is outwardly confronted with the various habits, nuances, and aspects of his role, and this consequently makes the reader more aware of his engagement with the text, as he assesses his various responses to the fiction. Perhaps the reader's most basic response to the fiction (at this point) is evoked from the following question: "Holding in mind all works of fiction since the War, in all languages, how would you rate the present work, on a scale of one to ten, so far?" (p. 83). By bringing to the reader's attention other literary works, in relation to Snow White, Barthelme encourages the reader to consider outside texts, a technique

which can perhaps be interpreted as a "signal" to begin intertextual reading.

John Gardner's concern with reading is expressed as overtly as Bartheleme's but perhaps not as blatantly. Gardner relies more on the intratext and the characterized reader as a means of allegorizing reading, and hence elicits from the reader of the text under consideration a consciousness of his individual act of reading. The intratext of October Light is one means by which Gardner disrupts linear narrative and thus challenges conventional reading habits. Gardner's novel, which is a prominent example of the metafictionist technique of disrupting linear reading, indicates his concern for shaping an active, as opposed to a passive (which is here associated with conventional reading), role for the reader.

A further disruption of reading occurs when the reader of October Light is forced to judge, question, and re-shape his act of reading from witnessing and evaluating the act of the characterized reader, that is, the reader within the narrative. According to Gérard Genette's typology,[5] these readers are respectively the extra-diegetic and the intra-diegetic readers. Thus, to the thematization of reading in October Light, the intratext is an integral device in establishing the interdependent relationship that forms among the extra-diegetic reader (the receiver of October Light), the intra-diegetic or characterized reader, and the texts.

In discussing the intra/intertextual relationships and structure of October Light, it is necessary to establish the genres of the intra/intertexts. October Light, as the James/Sally plot, is a realistic novel,

and therefore it is not surprising perhaps that the character Sally Page reads like a realist. The realistic novel as a genre is broken up by the narrative disruptions of its intratext, the "trashy" novel, The Smugglers, and by Sally who reads The Smugglers like the realist she is. The latter disruption evokes from the extra-diegetic reader an awareness of realist convention which links people to characters. The disruptions in the realistic novel are paralleled by those in the trashy novel, which is broken up by Peter Wagner's learnèd reading (as an intertext) and by the connection Peter makes between life and art. The latter disruption then reflects the life/art connection Sally Page makes as a realist, and also works as a means of evoking, in the extra-diegetic reader, an awareness of trash-novel conventions. A consciousness of these conventions, then, defines the type of intra/intertexts in October Light. The trash novel is a generic intertext to The Smugglers just as realist fiction is a generic intertext to October Light. The intratext, then, to October Light is this particular trashy novel.

In Snow White, a disrupted linear narrative is also encountered by the reader. However, these disruptions are not the result of an intruding intratext as exemplified by The Smugglers in October Light. The familiar myth, "Snow White," is the intended intertext to Barthelme's novel, not only in its conventional fairy-tale format, but also as a parody of it. One of the few instances where Barthelme adheres to convention is in his portrayal of the evil characters, the "witch-like" Jane and her male counterpart, Hogo de Bergerac. For the most part, Snow White mocks literary order, unity and coherence in form, and in his rebellion against convention and the consequential constraints it imposes on reading,

Barthelme presents a novel comprised of "fragments," which generate the effect of a disruptive linear narrative: Snow White is not so much a novel as a sustained collection of fragments, organized loosely around the Snow White fairy tale in what resembles a "collage method."[6] The story "line" of Snow White consists of interrupting snippets of trivia, lists, catalogues and narrative digressions that have no logical connection to any other instances of diegetic disruption. Barthelme also mocks convention by undermining typographical order. For example, the opening page of the novel provides an illustration of the images that are contained within the narrative: an illustration of a series of six linearly descending dots functions as the visual equivalent of the beauty marks referred to in the narrator's description of Snow White. With relative consistency, Barthelme also alternates between conventional typography and black upper-case letters, and the latter typographical arrangement appears as a "sub-title" to the ensuing chapter. These "sub-titles" convey the author's thoughts on the story, his various perspectives on the fiction, and his opinions. In one such instance, the reader is told of the traditional fears of the archetypal Snow White, those being "MIRRORS, APPLES [and] POISONED COMBS" (p. 17). Conventional ploys, as Barthelme demonstrates, belong to another genre: mirrors, apples and poisoned combs are only mentioned in this particular instance.

The characters in Snow White, who are parodic examples of their archetypal predecessors in the traditional myth, frustrate the reader's expectations of a diegetic encounter similar to that of the fairy-tale. Snow White has underlying shades of black; the dwarfs are selfish grotesques who, in Snow White's estimation, "only add up to the equivalent of about

two real men" (pp. 41-42); and the "prince" is pure "frog through and through" (p. 169). In fact, the novel, in mocking conventional form and the resulting stereotyped characters, is devoid of a prince altogether, as Snow White exclaims in distress: "There is something very wrong with all those people standing there, gaping and gawking.... And with the very world itself, for not being able to supply a prince. For not being able to at least be civil enough to supply the correct ending to the story" (p. 132). Barthelme, in dissociating the reader from convention through the use of parody, thwarts the reader's initial expectations of receiving a version of the traditional tale. Intertextual reading, or the reader's connection of Barthelme's text to the fairy-tale, unveils parody and fairy-tales as the two generic intertexts to Snow White. The reader discerns, from this type of intertext and via intertextual reading, that such conventions belong to a past literary genre.

John Gardner, like Barthelme, undermines literary convention by incorporating, in October Light, another novel. The intratext, in addition to disrupting the linear narrative of October Light, also demands that the reader make an imaginary leap into a fictional world that exists in a characterized mind.

As an intratext, The Smugglers of Lost Souls' Rock is paradoxical, a fact which further exemplifies the interdependent connection, discussed here, between the readers (extra-diegetic and intra-diegetic), and the texts. Although The Smugglers appears in print, it is "non-existent" apart from the intra-diegetic reader. The reader of October Light enters two fictional worlds, one of which is the product of the intra-diegetic reader's creative act. The extra-diegetic reader is completely dependent

upon Sally's interaction with, and eventual creation of, the intratext; if Sally does not read, The Smugglers does not exist. Gardner's readers must accept the paradoxical nature of the inner-novel and its relationship to the intra-diegetic reader in order to process it as an intertext, and to discern its relationship structurally and thematically to October Light. The processing of the connections between both fictional worlds which the extra-diegetic reader makes is "intertextuality." The Smugglers of Lost Souls' Rock is one means, and indeed a central and integral one, by which the reader makes sense and meaning of October Light--in terms of the James/Sally events of the main plot, and in terms of the novel as a self-contained unit that encompasses The Smugglers.

The intra-diegetic reader, as the vital link between the two fictional worlds, is also the main focal point of the act of reading in October Light. Thus Gardner is very conscious of how he creates not only a characterized reader, but also the novel that exists within the character's mind. The overtly self-conscious technique of employing an intra-diegetic reader reflects the novelist's interest in shaping a reader and in revealing the processes of creating a fictional world. Gardner carefully portrays the reader/character and describes, within the narrative, the physical and mental preparation she makes prior to the actual act of reading. Sally Page's interaction with the text is traced from her initial eye contact with the dog-eared book, to the response it evokes (initially one of curiosity), to the physical adjustments she makes to and with the text, finally to her decision to read: "She lowered the book, then half-absentmindedly raised it once more to reading range.... She had, of course, no intention of reading a book that she knew in advance

to be not all there; but on the other hand here she was, locked up like a prisoner.... She read: ...."[7] It is in this act--the "She read:"--that Gardner focuses on the reader, and in doing so, opens to the extra-diegetic reader the world of the intratext. The intratext, via Sally's act of reading, launches a series of disruptions in the Sally/James plot, and it is these disruptions which become the plot of The Smugglers. The first few pages of conventional reading (and its expectations) in October Light give way to a much more challenging type of reading, that of co-creating one text in conjunction with the other interrupting intratext. Similarly, with the gaps resulting from the missing pages of the inner-novel, Sally's expectations of comfortable reading are thwarted, and she engages in a creative act as a reader, which at times mirrors the creative processes of the reader of October Light.

Essential to Gardner's depiction and development of the characterized reader are her reactions to the novel she reads, and her development from a passive reader to an active co-creator. Sally's initial reaction to The Smugglers--"She had, of course, no intention of reading a book that she knew in advance to be not all there..." (p. 15)--reveals her expectations as a reader--to have before her an undisturbed narrative. As she settles herself to read, "she let her mind empty, drift like a balloon as she would when she sat down to television" (p. 15). In the initial passive attitude Sally adapts towards reading, she indicates her expectations that the novel will fill her mind with images in much the same way a television screen usurps the creative capacities of the mind by providing the images. However, as Sally's reading process reveals, reading becomes an activity, one which requires the reader to order and

structure the images conveyed by the printed word--from what is said in the text, and more importantly, from what is not said. The missing pages of the novel force Sally to create the text by imagining what is missing. The "comfortable habit" of reading from top to bottom, left to right, is challenged and replaced by a more demanding act, that of creating a fictional world.

John Gardner's concern for active, imaginative reading, as exemplified by the intra-diegetic reader who co-creates a fictional world from what she imagines, is a concern that is shared by Barthelme in Snow White. Barthelme, by divorcing the reader from convention and from his association of convention with "comfortable" reading habits, returns the reader to the most basic aspect of reading, that is, the formation of images from the words that appear on the printed page. Words and language, and more specifically the status of language in the imagination, are the primary focal points of Snow White, as the title character elucidates: "OH I wish there were some words in the world that were not the words I always hear!" (p. 6). In Snow White, the reader seeks the only concrete aspect of the fiction, its language. Snow White lucidly comments on the critical state of the imagination, a crisis which she attributes to her failure and dissatisfaction with life: "It must be laid, I suppose, to a failure of the imagination. I have not been able to imagine anything better" (p. 59). Barthelme extends this comment metaphorically to the debased state of language and communication in society, in what he describes as the "trash phenomenon": "It's that we want to be on the leading edge of this trash phenomenon, the everted sphere of the future, and that's why we pay particular attention, too, to those aspects of

language that may be seen as a model of the trash phenomenon" (pp. 97-98). What the reader of Snow White is left to work with in the fiction is the degenerated status language and the imagination have receded to. In the novel, Barthelme comments on the "crisis" language and the imagination face, but also seeks a remedy for this by bringing to the reader's attention the "critical" state of the imaginative faculty. The means by which he does this is to draw the reader into an active relationship with the text, one which will engender the reader's creative capabilities.

By undermining convention and hence depriving the reader of an orderly, "pre-imagined" fictional world, Barthelme plunges the reader into a narrative situation which is devoid of any "reality" apart from its language. Snow White has no underlying tone or point of view to which the reader can attach himself. The random switching of narration from the "I" to the "we" voice vitiates a clear dilineation of who, at times, is speaking. In addition to the uncertainty this technique incites, Barthelme further confounds the point of view from which the reader judges the novel. Each character is watched and commented on by other characters, to such an extent that not even the conventional and usually trustworthy third-person omniscient narrator can be relied upon by the reader for a perspective from which he can engage with the text. In light of this, the reader's comfortable habit (associated with conventional forms) of depending upon a particular, unequivocal point of view is usurped and replaced by what the reader willingly imagines, from the language of the text, to be the "reality" of the fictional world. The reader, unable to assume a detached stance from the text, must participate in the text as its co-creator or else close the book out of frustrated and deluded

expectations. The disappointment the reader encounters with the novel, if he expects a conventional story and therefore assumes a conventional reading stance, is the same disappointment Snow White expresses with her dissatisfaction of the princeless world: "But he is pure frog. So. I am disappointed. Either I have overestimated Paul, or I have overestimated history" (p. 169), and at this point in the text, Snow White questions her own story.

October Light also focuses on conventional reader expectations, which the intra-diegetic reader, Sally Page, exemplifies in her initial passive attitude towards reading The Smugglers. This type of reading is brought to the extra-diegetic reader's awareness by Gardner, who carefully describes the mental activities of his characterized reader, who eventually abandons her conventional reading habits. One means by which Gardner executes Sally's transition from a passive reader to an active one occurs as a result of the numerous gaps that emerge because of the missing pages of the intratext. These gaps reflect the disruptions that occur in the entire narrative of October Light, and Gardner's reader is offered the same creative act as Sally Page, that of the text's co-creator. One means of bringing the reader/creator role to the extra-diegetic reader's awareness is seen in the light of that carefully delineated transition Sally makes from passivity ("empty mind") to image-creator and eventually co-creator.

When Sally begins contact with the text, her mind vacillates among the words on the page, her memories of Horace, and her anger with James. Intrusions such as these interrupt the narrative of the intratext in much the same way the annoying gaps left from the missing pages do. A further

obstruction to reading stems from Sally's previous experiences with literature, in which she played a passive role as a listener, so much so that her first response to the fiction is a conditioned one: "Isn't it the truth!... Why she said it she could hardly have told you--except that it was something she'd occasionally said to her late husband Horace when he'd read to her" (p. 16). Sally therefore ("Isn't it the truth!") reads, or listens, like a realist. As she pursues the text, Sally rejects her preconceived notions of conventional reading and her ideas of what constitutes a good book (Horace's influence), and welcomes her new "god-like" personage as a reader, and eventually that of an image and text creator: "Life became larger, in vibration to such words, and she, the observer and container of this universe, became ... godlike ... what was real and enduring was the adventure flickering on the wall of her brain" (p. 20). The "annoying" gaps give Sally the opportunity to imagine and to live the fantasies of the "phantom world" as she imagines and creates them. This marks Sally's transition from a passive reader to an active, imaginative co-creator. Consequently, the extra-diegetic reader, as a witness to Sally's transition, becomes more aware of the type of interaction with the text that Gardner intends and instructs him in.

On one level, the intratext of October Light, as an intertext, reveals the vital link between the text and the reader during the co-creational and re-creational acts of reading and of processing a text. The self-reflexive devices of the intratext and the intra-diegetic reader, and the relationship between them that Gardner carefully delineates, reflects the ultimate act of creation--that of the extra-diegetic reader, who works to create a double fictional world. The act of discovering

and making textual connections between The Smugglers and the central James/Sally plot, and the process of making meaning and sense of the latter from these discoveries, constitute what is here termed inter-textuality. In fact, the intratext to a great extent is a factor which determines the events of the central plot. The most obvious link between the intratext and the central plot is Sally's act of reading which, by prolonging the stay in her room, sets off the chain of events in the central plot (involving James, Ginny, Lewis and the guests at the party). In short, the act of reading activates the events of October Light (including The Smugglers): the "life" of both plots is contingent upon the act of reading, at all levels of participation, by both the intra-diegetic and extra-diegetic readers.

On a thematic level of reading, the link between the two fictional worlds develops as connections are made between the text and the intratext by the reader. Both texts reveal a panoply of life occurrences seen in fantasies, fictionalizations, ruminations, sex, violence, despair, love, and death. These facets of life become incorporated into "real" life by the intra-diegetic reader who reveals one of the most essential aspects of the intratext, the fiction/life connection. This connection is demonstrated first by The Smugglers's Peter Wagner, who prefigures Sally Page's transformation of fiction into life, or reality. This link also thematizes reading as a very active process, almost an overactive process, as the characters who "live" fiction are readers acting out their responses to a text. In much the same way, the title character of Snow White attempts to live a fictional

life in her search for a prince.

Throughout the intratext, The Smugglers, Peter Wagner follows a script he writes for himself from intertexts (what he reads), beginning with his attempted suicide: "He'd read the grisly tales--suicides gruesomely, foolishly impaled on the radar antennae of passing ships or splattered obscenely on pilings or rocks--and had planned ahead" (p. 16). Later, Peter assesses his predicament aboard the Indomitable by comparing it to fiction, and in short, lives "intertextually" through books. Fiction, then, is Peter's way of defining his reality: "Things moved, ugly shadows as in a William Burroughs novel; ... all that was happening had happened in some novel he'd read about a hoax" (pp. 94-95). A further example is seen in Peter's comment about his dissatisfaction with life when he exclaims: "I want to live everything that's possible to live, a hundred thousand novels" (p. 116). And he does, at least, live two novels. Aboard the Indomitable the only way Peter can survive is to act according to a plot, as he adapts the role of a "hero" in a trashy novel: "So he too, Peter Wagner, was committed to trash drama, if he intended to survive. Like all the world, Peter Wagner thought" (p. 175).

The intertextually initiated connection between fiction and life that Peter demonstrates by fictionalizing his life is exemplified further by Sally. During her act of reading, Sally comes to see life and those around her as a fiction. In doing so, Sally's personal response to the intratext illustrates the individuality of a reader's response. She also indicates the very personal relationship between a text and its reader in, for example, her response to Wagner's attempted suicide: "you could bet your bottom dollar, no one who'd experienced the tragedy of suicide of

someone near and dear would ever in this world dream of saying such a thing" (p. 18). At this point Sally is still very much a realist. As her connection to the text grows, Sally responds to fictional characters and a fictional world in terms of her life experiences: "It was hard for Sally Abbott to believe that people could do violent acts and not remember, as Peter Wagner had done in her novel, and James had done in her life" (p. 125). Later, Sally associates the villain Fist with James, confuses Lewis with Mr. Nit, and gives Peter the features of Richard (her late nephew who committed suicide). Sally attributes to imaginary characters the characteristics of those who exist in her world, and eventually, the fictional world becomes the "real" world of Vermont in Sally's mind: "Ah, but hadn't she known such people!" (p. 84).

The degree of fictionalization, dramatized by the intra-diegetic reader, activates the processing of The Smugglers as the intratext of October Light. As a reader, Sally brings the fictional world to life by acting what she reads. The numerous allusions to Shakespeare's oft quoted "all the world's a stage " serve as a metaphor for Sally's reading. Via Sally's fiction/life association, the various connections, which the extra-diegetic reader is then able to make, illustrate the intratext/ textual connections. On both a structural and a thematic level of the act of reading, the intratext functions as a device by which the extra-diegetic reader is able to make meaning of October Light as an allegory of reading. The interaction between the intra-diegetic reader and the intratext brings this process to light. The longer Sally remains locked in her room, the more absorbed she becomes in the exciting and bizarre escapades of the drug smugglers, especially Peter and Jane, the two

characters who influence her the most. Sally's personal response to the characters exemplifies reading as an individual experience. For example, Sally responds to Jane's freedom and vitality with envy, and vicariously lives a life free from imposing and restricting moral standards through Jane. As well, Sally admires Peter's "heroic" role and his incisiveness in action, and she identifies with his gloomy philosophy of life, that the "world" is to blame for one's predicament. One of Sally's most significant responses to The Smugglers, and one that best exemplifies her fiction/life association, is her feeling that she has somehow missed out on life: "Those things in that novel, now, how incredible to realize that they were all, in a sense true! ... She, Sally Abbott, had missed all that, such were the cruel mechanics of the universe, as her novel would say" (p. 368). The "cruel mechanics of the universe," that Sally feels she is a victim of, inspire in her the desire to live her remaining years as she would liked to have lived her life, like that of the characters in her novel.

The new found freedom Sally experiences from reading prompts her to take matters into her own hands, as Jane and Peter do. Her contrivance to kill James is as dramatic and inventive as is Peter Wagner's in "knocking off his enemies": "the plan was the only hope she had; ... not her own plan at all but something that had come out of nowhere, like the plan Peter Wagner had had about knocking off his enemies with eels, in her novel" (p. 373). The important aspect of Sally's thinking is not so much the strategy she devises, but her attitude in effecting it--that violence is justifiable, given her situation (which she magnifies, under the influence of The Smugglers). The "trashy" novel, then, induces Sally to a

violent act, one that almost kills her innocent niece. Sally is so consumed by the novel at this point that she distances herself from reality, and is no longer able to distinguish between the two. Ginny's near death does not even jolt her back into reality; her fictionalizing blurs her ability to perceive the gravity of her situation with James, which is no longer a game to determine who will adhere most adamantly to his or her principles. Rather, it involves the lives of other people, primarily those of Ginny and Ed Thomas.

The transformation from fiction to life and of Sally from reader/co-creator to a "trashy novel character" results in violence. Sally's plan to kill James is paralleled by the drunken rampage of James, which is prompted by what he sees on television, a policeman firing wildly at a suspect. In his rage, James is intent upon shooting Sally. The violence (in the intratext and that on the television screen in the central plot) is shared by both texts and is directly connected to Gardner's moral comment on the effects of valueless art. Both of Gardner's texts become, at this point, one and the same, as the novelist demonstrates the effects of such valueless art that is perceived as reality. In the opening chapter, "Premises on Art and Morality," in On Moral Fiction, Gardner comments on the moral aspect of fiction which renders it "valuable" art: "I have claimed that art is essentially and primarily moral--that is, life-giving--moral in its processes of creation and moral in what it says. If people all over Europe killed themselves after reading Goethe's Sorrows of Young Werther, then either Goethe's book was false art or his readers misunderstood."[8] Gardner, then, holds both the writer and the reader responsible for discerning the value of the text, an aspect which he overtly exemplifies

by the intra-diegetic reader who "misunderstands" the trashy novel. In addition Gardner's stance on immoral art is evidenced in the violence that occurs almost simultaneously in both the text and the intratext. This connection between the texts, and the processing thereof, reveal inter-textuality as a meaning-making process of October Light.

The point at which Gardner shows the difference between fiction and life occurs in the endings of both novels. Ginny's near death, Ed Thomas's heart attack, and James's wild intrusion in the party result in James's re-evaluation of his life and his behavior, an art which forces him to accept the changes the modern world has imposed. Sally, as well, evaluates her actions, and in doing so, reassesses the value and the function, in life, of her novel: she views it as "non-reality," pure fiction which she dismisses as senseless. The totally absurd ending of The Smugglers, a modern-day deus ex machina (a flying saucer), breaks Sally's life-link to the novel, and she is ready to return to reality and face a situation that authorial contrivance cannot solve or repair.

Through the use of an intratext and the characterized reader in October Light, John Gardner thematizes reading by providing an allegory of reading which, as a textual device, evokes a greater awareness of that act and functions as a means of shaping the role intended for his potential readers. These devices reflect, on another level, the connection between life and fiction which reading engenders: reading engages one in a creative act that connects life to art, not one that confuses art with life. The events the intratext triggers, as a result of Sally's reading, illustrate a reader who fails to make the necessary distinctions between life and fiction. What the intratext reveals and indicates, the very thing that Sally loses sight of as a reader, is that she is only reading

a book--and as a reader, is free to create a fictional world, or dismiss it entirely by closing the book.

The way in which the outside reader of October Light discerns the novel's themes, and hence makes sense and meaning of the text, evolves to a large extent from the processing of both the intratext and the various intertexts as thematic and structural devices. These processes depend upon the reader's interaction with all textual levels. Thus Gardner's focus on reading as an imaginative and creative process is generated by the structure of the text.

Intertextuality, intratextual connections, and the processing thereof engender active reading as the intratext serves as a "break" from the linear reading of narrative. The numerous gaps and disruptions in the various texts make reading a difficult act, wherein the reader (intra-diegetic and extra-diegetic) activates a text from the images the printed page conveys and, more importantly, from what the textual gaps induce the reader to imagine and hence create. Participation at this level is re-creative and co-creative, as Gardner's intra-diegetic reader overtly exemplifies: one of Sally's functions, then, is to offer to the outside reader the same role Gardner creates for her.

Another means by which Gardner focuses on the extra-diegetic reader's active participation in the text is in the use of intertexts which generate, in the reader's mind, connections to other texts. Inter-textuality, the processing of the "other" texts that come to the reader's mind, is a means by which the reader further builds the images the printed pages convey. This aspect of intertextuality reflects the individual nature of the reader and his act of reading, and is one that is

dependent upon what Wolfgang Iser calls the reader's literary repertoire,[9] from which he draws to make textual connections.

The particular intertexts in October Light are those external works to which the text itself alludes, but which require the reader's recognition of them to be activated as intertexts. For example, the allusion to Henry Fielding's Tom Jones by the phrase "A lad born for hanging," (p. 294) indicates, by the connection of Tom Jones to Richard Page, the unjust treatment of Richard by his father, James. If the reader has read Tom Jones, he is likely to imagine James' treatment of Richard to be as brutal as Thwackum's to Tom. The context in which this phrase appears likens James (the "moral" figure) to Thwackum, as Sally recalls how James had "again and again laid his belt to him, or a milkhose, or a stick" (pp. 294-295). As this textual connection is processed, it contributes to the reader's interpretation of James' and Richard's relationship. The Fielding intertext, as a contributor to the text, thus functions in the overall process of making meaning of the novel.

A further example of intertextuality, as the processing of text-to-text connections, involves the allusions to King Lear. On one level, this connection amplifies the theme of domestic discord in October Light. Reading further becomes an act of discovery, revealing more connections, such as the deaths of children that are "indirectly" caused by fathers, blind to the true nature of their children. On a less thematic level, connections can be made between the extremes Lear and James are driven to: Lear turns mad and raves on the heath, and James, in a drunken rage, is "temporarily insane" in his violent actions. Symbolically, the weather in Vermont reflects the inner turmoil in James: "Outside it was blowing,

as if the weather had been following James Page's mood" (p. 346). This is comparable to Shakespeare's use of pathetic fallacy.

A final example of intertextuality, as lateral connections drawn from the reader's repertoire, is found in The Smugglers, where Marlowe's Dr. Faustus is an intertext. The most obvious link between the two texts is in the character Captain Fist, the "Faust" figure of the inner-novel: Fist is doomed to fall in his greed for money, as Faust is in his lust for knowledge. The associations of Fist/Faust to Lucifer and the numerous references to philosophy complete this textual connection.

Intertextuality, as a reader-oriented concept, as it is thematized in October Light, illustrates the act of reading as the co-creation of a fictional world from the double discovery of the text, both as it appears on the page, and also as it is recreated from the intertexts. The discovery of other texts, which the text itself generates, disturbs the "comfortable habits" of reading because the intertexts, when discovered, disrupt linear reading as the discerning reader stops and makes the connections, before moving on. The "corpus of other texts" within October Light, while it challenges conventional reading, also functions as a means by which the reader arrives at the full meaning of the text.

Within October Light, there exist in print several other intra-texts in the form of poems, or lines from poems. This type of an intra-text, obviously planned by the author, illustrates, through the characters, the "process" of intertextuality as the lateral textual connections which the reader makes. Gardner, by not identifying all the sources of these intended intratexts, induces the reader to stop, look for the sources, and then synthesize the relevance of the intratext to the text. The resulting

effect is the disruption of "conventional" linear reading. This type of an intertext, taken in the context of the narrative, assists the reader in making sense and meaning of the text. For example, the lines from Matthew Arnold's "Dover Beach": "For we are here as on a darkling plain, swept by confused alarum of struggle and flight, where ignorant armies clash by night" (p. 191), which Fist utters, illustrate, from another text, the situation Fist sees himself in. Similarly, the lines from Hamlet, "Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer/the slings and arrows of outrageous Fortune" (p. 174), reflect the thematic concern for suicide in both the text and the intratext, and again, function as a means by which the reader places suicide in the context of the novel and in the perspective of the characters (Peter, Sally, Richard).

In other instances, other poems that are identified in the main narrative, for example, Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey" (pp. 238-239), help to delineate the characters, in this case, that of Estelle Parks. The theme of "Tintern Abbey," as a textual connection to Estelle, reveals more of Estelle's attitude towards life which she views as a cause to celebrate. Similarly, the emphasis on nature by the Romantic poet, as an object of reverence and awe, is fitting in the natural setting of Vermont. Gardner's reference to Kipling--"There the seasons stopped awhile. Autumn was gone. Winter was not. We had Time dealt out to us--more clearly, fresh Time--grace-days to enjoy" (p. 143)--also reflects the seasonal setting when life comes to a standstill. This poem holds specific significance, since James, during this period when "time is stalled," misses the "grace days" of celebration, and almost loses his last opportunity for

reconciliation before the next stage, death. Instead, James remains "locked in" violence and despair, unable to celebrate life, unlike Estelle Parks. This kind of textual connection captures the theme of the novel, explicitly set up by the author and identified in the text, but is not an intertext because it does not depend on reader recognition.

Similarly, other poems recited by Ruth, "The Cat and the Dog," "The Oppossum" and "The Bear," also reflect the theme of change and acceptance that James eventually comes to realize. To Ed Thomas, these poems are "good," because they are true, a view which in the context of October Light, provides a positive version of Sally's negative life/art confusion with bad literature. One of the themes of "The Cat and the Dog"--"Playing both ends against the middle," or "Playing the middle against both ends" (pp. 303-304)--generates a textual connection to The Smugglers and to the central plot in which the characters adapt to life and its trials. These poems function as "microcosmic" structures of the text/intratext structure of October Light, and via the thematic connections the reader makes, provide a means of making sense of October Light as a whole; the smaller fragments contribute to the process of arriving at a meaning.

Both John Gardner and Donald Barthelme, as writers of typically self-reflexive fiction, express in their works , October Light and Snow White, a great concern for ensuring the reader's participation with and in their respective fictional worlds. The means by which Gardner and Barthelme (amongst many other metafictionists) involve the reader actively in their fictions is by sharing their artistic processes of creation with the reader; such transferring of artistic processes is, in short, the essence of self-reflexive fiction.

The novelists' focus on the reader and their interest in the "act" of reading--in fact their obsession with reading--result in fictions that offer a new role to the reader, that of the imaginative co-creator of the text. Self-reflexive fiction, by fabricating a role for the reader in the text, instructs the reader in his new role. The structural techniques or devices of the fiction become one instrumental means by which the reader enters his new role to co-create and re-create the fiction. Reader participation at this level, within the text, actualizes the thematic concern of self-reflexive fiction for engendering active reading. Intertextual and intratextual reading, discussed here as a process of active participation within the fictional world, also become the reader's response to the structural framework of the text, as it has been exemplified here in Gardner's use of an intratext in October Light, and Barthelme's intended intertext (which he parodies), the fairy-tale "Snow White." Structural devices, such as the above, in addition to others--for example, narrative disruptions, authorial intrusions (Barthelme's questionnaire to cite only one example) and unconventional typography--are self-reflexive techniques which the authors deploy to induce active as opposed to passive reading (which is, in this discussion, argued to be associated with conventional forms of fiction) from their potential readers. Vladimir Nabokov, as another representative writer of the self-reflexive, reader-oriented genre of fiction, shares with Gardner and Barthelme the structural device of the intratext, which is here argued to engender intertextual reading. Intertextuality is brought to the reader's attention by fiction that incorporates other intended literary units. Although the nature and structure of the aforementioned fictions are

authorially contrived or constructed, intertextuality is, as it has been illustrated here, a reader-oriented concept, and is the individual reader's processing of the text to create it and hence discern its meaning. The structural techniques evidenced here in the fictions are a means of inducing in, or evoking from, the reader an awareness of building a fictional world from the connections the reader makes in his mind to other literary works. The actualization of this process, intertextuality, however, is the reader's responsibility, an aspect of his new role which he willingly or unwillingly chooses to accept.

NOTES ON CHAPTER I

[1]Raymond Federman, ed., Surfiction: Fiction Now...and Tomorrow (Chicago: The Swallow Press Inc., 1975), p. 9.

[2]Linda Hutcheon, Narcissistic Narrative: The Metafictional Paradox (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1980), p. 139.

[3]Donald Barthelme, Snow White (1965; rpt. New York: Atheneum, 1980), p. 82. All further references will be made to this edition and will appear in parentheses in the text.

[4]Hutcheon, p. 143.

[5]Gérard Genette, Figures III (Paris, Seuil, 1972), p. 238.

[6]Larry McCafferty, "Barthelme's Snow White: The Aesthetics of Trash," Critique: Studies in Modern Fiction, 16, 3(1975), 20.

[7]John Gardner, October Light (1976; rpt. New York: Ballantine Books, 1978), p. 15. All further references will be made to this edition and will appear in parentheses in the text.

[8]Gardner, On Moral Fiction (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1978), p. 15.

[9]Wolfgang Iser, The Act of Reading (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), p. 69. Here Iser defines the reader's repertoire as "all the familiar territory within the text. This may be in the form of references to earlier works, or to social and historical norms."

CHAPTER II

THE IMAGINATION AS REALITY

> A poet's reality can be distinct from, rather than an imitation of, everyday reality. In one of his lucid moments Kinbote in Pale Fire makes a claim that his creator would accept: "'reality' is neither the subject nor the object of true art which creates its own special reality having nothing to do with the average 'reality' perceived by the communal eye."[1]

What art seeks for its "reality," as exemplified by Vladimir Nabokov in the "centaur" work Pale Fire, is the imagination itself--the creative impulse of the artist figure. That "the imagination is the supreme, if not the only, reality,"[2] is the essence of Pale Fire, a novel which undercuts all notions of reality by obscuring what is, in fact, "real" in the fictional world. Nabokov's assertion as an artist that only the imagination is real in fiction is shared with his readers, in part, by the very complex and confusing structure of Pale Fire.

Pale Fire illustrates well the premise established in Chapter One, that the reader of self-reflexive fiction cannot assume conventional reading habits when in the role of the text's co-creator. The act of reading, which has here been argued to be an imaginative and active process of creating a fictional world, becomes in Nabokov's work, as in Gardner's, essential to the reader's discovery and creation of the text. The many levels or layers of fiction that comprise Pale Fire present a challenge to the reader who, in his co-creative act, must uncover and create the many complex and perplexing parts of the novel. The "Chinese-box"

structure, which best describes Pale Fire, becomes the crucial element in discerning the meaning of a novel in which the imagination is the only reality. In Pale Fire, the reader is faced with discovering, in the text, whose imaginative processes are at work.

At the outermost layer of the Chinese-box narrative structure is Nabokov, the author/engineer of the novel, Pale Fire, which is the next inner-box within the structure. V. Botkin, the almost invisible American scholar of Russian descent and teller of the tale, is the third "box" and Charles Kinbote, Botkin's anagrammatic double, pseudonym and disguise, is the fourth diegetic-box in the structure. For the greater part of this discussion, the narratorial pseudonym, Kinbote, will be used. Within the physical structure of the novel, there are four separate texts: the epigraph taken from James Boswell's The Life of Samuel Johnson, the Foreword (presumably written by the commentator/editor, allegedly Charles Kinbote), the poem "Pale Fire" (supposedly written by the American poet, John Shade), and the Commentary and Index (allegedly written by Kinbote). The greatest complexity in this Chinese-box structure is in the commentary, which contains another Chinese-box: the commentary, while it purports to explicate the poem, "Pale Fire," tells the story of Zembla, "a distant northern land," and its exiled King, Charles the Beloved. This story encompasses the Gradus assissination plot or story, which unites the Zemblan intrigue and the Shade story at the end of Kinbote's narrative. To complete the complex insertion of the boxes within Pale Fire, it is necessary to locate John Shade, the poet, within "Pale Fire," as it is an autobiographical work of poetry. Thus Nabokov, Kinbote and Shade are the creators of the structural and narrative Chinese-boxes that, when placed

one inside the other, comprise Pale Fire. The reader must work his way through the multitude of narrative boxes and re-create the fictions to determine, if possible, who created them--other than, of course, Nabokov.

Some critical studies[3] of Pale Fire reveal a discrepancy as to the correct order of the inner-containing narrative boxes within the structure of the novel. The "primary author" of Pale Fire is, on one hand, considered to be Shade, who, in addition to writing the poem, creates the character, Kinbote, and the commentary. On the other hand, Shade, King Charles, Gradus, and Zembla are seen as products of Kinbote's (the alleged editor) fantastic imagination. Although both sides of the argument are valid interpretations of Pale Fire, given a novel with no reality other than what exists in the imagination, what emerges as the central issue from these discrepancies in relation to this discussion, is the hermeneutic clash amongst the studies of Pale Fire. The discerning reader of the novel also experiences a hermeneutic clash while reading the novel, that between his interpretation of the poem "Pale Fire," and the editor's, which the commentary expresses. These differences, which the critic as reader discerns, give rise to the conflicting interpretations of the novel.

The question as to who and what is real and what is imagined that active reading engenders is the paradox of Pale Fire; the only possible answer to the reader's uncertainty on this issue, rests with the individual reader and his interpretation of the novel. Thus the reader is plunged into a narrative situation that is confusing, on the one hand, but on the other, more positive, hand, one which offers the reader a great deal of freedom to create and re-create the text in light of what he perceives is the "reality" of the novel. Pale Fire is a process of discovering and unfolding

the various fictions that lie within the novel's complex structure. And, as in any act of reading, the fictions that are discovered depend upon the degree of interaction to which the reader chooses to participate in each text.

Nabokov's focus on the reader and his act of deciphering the text, apart from the novel's structural complexity, are also seen in the relationship between the other creator figure (presumably), Charles Kinbote, and the extra-diegetic reader. As the alleged author/editor of the Foreword and the Commentary, Kinbote is the first creator figure encountered in Pale Fire. The Foreword evokes a consciousness or an awareness of reading as a demanding act, both physically and mentally, as Kinbote makes various suggestions as to how the reader should approach the texts (commentary and poem):

> Although those notes, in conforming with custom, come after the poem, the reader is advised to consult them first and then study the poem with their help, rereading them of course as he goes through its text, and perhaps, after having done with the poem, consulting them a third time so as to complete the picture. I find it wise in such cases as this to elminate the bother of back-and-forth leafings by either cutting out and clipping together the pages with text of the thing, or, even more simply, purchasing two copies of the same work which can then be placed in adjacent positions.[4]

Thus, even before reading the poem and the commentary, any notions of conventional reading habits or of a linear narrative are thwarted. The obvious question that arises, as Kinbote indicates, is quite simply that of the order of Pale Fire: from poem to commentary, from commentary to poem, or the combination of both at the reader's will. No matter what order the reader decides to approach the novel in, he is confronted with

two separate and distinct narratives: the nine hundred and ninety-nine-line autobiographical poem, allegedly written by John Shade, and (presumably) Kinbote's commentary. At the outset of the novel, the poem appears to be the source from which Kinbote draws to write his commentary, which then provides the physical structure of Pale Fire: Foreward, Poem and Commentary. Both "Pale Fire" and the commentary are, then, the intratexts of the all-encompassing work, Pale Fire. In light of Kinbote's apparent reference to "Pale Fire," the poem is seen as the intratext (text within the text) of the commentary. However, the divergent path the commentary takes from the issues or themes discussed in "Pale Fire" and the degree of fictionalization that emerges perhaps as a consequence of this become, for the discerning reader, the object of concern in establishing the relationship of the poem to the commentary. For the most part, this discussion will concern the textual relationship between the poem and the commentary, and the intra/intertexts of both narratives.

Before examining the poem as the intratext to the commentary, it is necessary to indicate that the relationship among these texts and their relevance to each other is open to question, a fact which is indicated by the tone and style of the Foreward. Following critical convention, the Foreward begins on an objective note with Kinbote's scholarly authority: "'Pale Fire,' a poem in heroic couplets, of nine hundred and ninety-nine lines, divided into four cantos, was composed by John Francis Shade..." (p.1). But Kinbote's objectivity soon gives way to personal comments which intrude on the critical voice. Kinbote's obsession with Shade and the enthusiasm it engenders ("Never shall I forget how elated I was upon learning...that the suburban house [rented for my use...] stood next to

that of the celebrated American poet whose verse I had tried to put into Zemblan..." [p.5]) make the reader begin to suspect the validity of the judgments Kinbote makes of "Pale Fire" in the commentary. Thus the reader, without the benefit of an objective Foreword, is left directionless and free in his approach to Pale Fire.

Initially, Kinbote's commentary has some relevance to Shade's poem, if the reader believes or assumes that Shade wrote "Pale Fire," and Kinbote wrote the commentary. In Kinbote's note to lines 1-4 of the poem, the editor explains the image: "I was the shadow of the waxwing slain/By the false azure in the window pane." (p. 15). Soon this editorial note develops into a personal commentary which marks the beginning of Kinbote's desperate attempt to link himself intimately with the poet as his close friend, and to establish himself as the subject of "Pale Fire." This interpretation of the commentary is based on the assumption that there are separate authors of the poem and the editorial notes, a view which seems to be a logical assumption, given the outer structure of the novel: Foreword, Poem, Commentary/Index. However, this seemingly logical association between the poem and the commentary becomes questionable when, within the commentary (in addition to details concerning John Shade's life), there are said to exist two other stories, that of Zembla and its beloved King Charles, and the story of the assassin/criminal Gradus. The author of these stories appears to be Kinbote. Thus, the authentically intratextual relationship based on relevance between the poem and the commentary that has been assumed thus far, becomes questionable because of the hermeneutic clash the reader discerns. For example, Kinbote's note to line 12 of "Pale Fire": "Perhaps an allusion to Zembla, my dear country"

(p. 46), has little obvious relevance to the images in the opening Canto. The "perhaps" suggested by Kinbote becomes the most "definite" level on which the reader can judge Kinbote's explication. In fact, the reader's interpretation of the entire commentary is based on "perhaps". Nabokov's assertion, that only the imagination is real, is the basis from which the reader is to judge the commentary. The reader's uncertainty (planned by Nabokov) as to what is the reality of Pale Fire enforces Nabokov's claim.

Throughout the commentary, the relationship between John Shade and "Pale Fire," "Pale Fire" and the commentary, and Shade and Kinbote/ King Charles is one that rests on the imagination, but on whose imagination, it is uncertain--other than Nabokov's. The only viable link between the poem and the commentary is Kinbote's discussion of the structure of "Pale Fire," and his description of the poet's writing habits, a link which there appears little cause for the reader to doubt. "Pale Fire," as it exists as an intratext to Pale Fire, is an autobiographical poem written in heroic couplets. The paradox here is that "Pale Fire" is a double intratext: on the one hand the poem focuses on the poet's life, his parents, childhood, marriage, failing health, and the death (supposedly by suicide) of his daughter. In this respect, "Pale Fire" is a relevant intratext, structurally, to the novel, as a text within the text. On the other hand, "Pale Fire" is an irrelevant intratext when placed in the context of the editor's notes, as the poem bears little connection to its alleged commentary. As an intratext to Kinbote's notes, the poem serves as a means, and at best a tenuous one, for the editor to tell the tale of what are presumed to be his fantasies. Images and words in "Pale Fire" trigger mental associations in Kinbote's mind that link the poem to his fantasies.

These fantasies or fictionalizations, supposedly sparked by the poem, enable Kinbote to depict himself "in" the poem, as both its source and subject matter.

According to the definition of an intratext, "Pale Fire" appears to have no lateral connection to the commentary. Rather, what serve as the intratexts to the commentary are the stories of Zembla and Gradus (alias Jack Degree, Jacques de Grey, James de Gray, Ravus, Ravenstone and d'Argus). As intratexts, these stories exist within the alleged outer layer of the commentary, which is supposedly the editor's explication of the poem. Thus Pale Fire becomes a parody of editing, and the reader participates in the relationship between a structurally and thematically self-contained poem, and the narrative of an (insane?) editor who tries to read into it his own fantasies, which comprise the tales he tells of Zembla, King Charles, and possibly New Wye. This is the only text-to-text connection that forms a viable link between the two distinct texts of Pale Fire. But, it is one that is based on the reader's assumption that John Shade is the author of "Pale Fire," and Charles Kinbote the author of the commentary.

The editor's interest in the poem stems initially from his fictionalization of the "dear" friendship (developed within a few months) between himself and the poet. Kinbote's obsession with Shade and Shade's poem is the result of another fictionalization: that he furnished Shade with the material for "Pale Fire" from Kinbote's distant northern homeland, Zembla (the history which Kinbote chronicles in his notes), and his intriguing life as the (now disguised) exiled King Charles of Zembla. Upon the sudden death of John Shade (another story), Kinbote obtains the

manuscript of "Pale Fire," only to discover that the poem overtly contains little, if any, of the material he provided. The much dismayed editor attributes this fact to the "domestic anti-Karlist" (p. 46) censorship of Shade's wife, Sybil. Kinbote, nonetheless, searches the text to find any trace of his story, only to conclude that "the final text of 'Pale Fire' has been deliberately and drastically drained of every trace of the material I contributed" (p. 51). Thus Kinbote takes it upon himself to supplement Shade's text: after all, as Kinbote states, "it is the commentator who has the last word" (p. 12). What the reader must decipher (based on the assumption that the texts were written by separate authors) are the true connections, if any, between the texts. Reader involvement in the texts becomes the only way the meaning of Pale Fire can be discerned: "Nabokov left the integration of the poem and narrative for the reader to manage as best he can, a task especially teasing since Kinbote has already done such a zany job of it before the reader gets his chance to play."[5] Kinbote's "zany job" is the central issue of Pale Fire, for it involves the product of two acts of reading: Kinbote's, as a reader/critic, and the extra-diegetic reader's, who reads the product of Kinbote's reading. The extra-diegetic reader must then also participate in re-creating the imaginative processes of Kinbote's act of reading, which creates the two worlds of the main narrative: New Wye and Zembla.

The most intriguing fantasy of the commentary is the relationship between Charles Kinbote and the King of Zembla. Owing to the commentary (if the reader believes it), the reader assumes that Kinbote is the exiled King in disguise, who, because of a revolution in Zembla, flees to New Wye where he lives under the disguise of an English professor, C. Kinbote, at

Wordsmith College. Yet, the commentary can be looked at from a different, equally valid view: that King Charles and all other related characters and incidences (including "Pale Fire" and Shade) are the figments of a solipsistic, egocentric lunatic's imagination. And there is no way to determine absolutely which interpretation is correct. What is of importance, though, is the hermeneutic clash which the extra-diegetic reader discovers between the poem and what is presumably its commentary.

This reader, who determines the lateral textual relationship between the poem and the commentary, soon discovers that the two texts cannot be connected in the light of one as the critical interpretation of the other. The first hint of the irrelevant connections between the texts occurs, as cited earlier, in the first editorial note. Other examples pertaining to this discussion are found in the notes to lines 17, 71, 149, 169, and 171, to mention only a few. Kinbote's note (p. 45) to line 17 (p. 15): "And then the gradual and dual blue," and the one to line 29 "gray," have no relevance to Shade's imagery in "Pale Fire." Rather, Kinbote, in the mental association he makes between "gradual and gray," begins the story of the assassin, Gradus, who plots to murder the exiled King, Charles X. As one of the major stories in the commentary, the Gradus plot is one which Kinbote imagines and develops, in conjunction with the progress Shade makes on the poem (which Kinbote records). As Shade nears completion of "Pale Fire," the assassin moves closer to his target. The Gradus story reads like a "mystery" novel, as Kinbote traces all of the assassin's movements and thoughts, and this serves as a generic intratext to the commentary. In relation to Shade's poem, however, the Gradus plot has no contextual relevance. Rather, Kinbote takes, or makes, the

opportunity to begin one of the major digressions which he fully develops in the course of the commentary.

To serve as a second example, Kinbote's note to line 71 (p. 64) begins the chronicling of the Zemblan monarchy. Shade's line; "I was an infant when my parents died" (p. 17), triggers, from the word, "parents," the unfolding of Charles X's lineage (also allegedly Kinbote's). This digression is completed during the commentary, as the entire history of Zembla is revealed in subsequent notes. Eventually the extra-diegetic reader is brought to the "present" narrative of the exiled King, presumably Kinbote, who, in this instance as in many others, more than supplements what the domestic censor, Sybil, allegedly persuaded her husband to omit from "Pale Fire," and the commentary becomes further removed from the poem as a possible intratext.

"One foot upon a mountaintop, one hand" (line 149, p. 19) sets in motion, in the mind and pen of the editor, King Charles's escape from Zembla (pp. 90-97). The escape, which is one of the editor's major digressions from the poem, has nothing to do in the mind of the extra-diegetic reader with line 149, in the context of the poem. Thus begins the second major story in the commentary. As this story progresses in further notes, the link between King Charles and Kinbote becomes more likely. Yet, this link bears no relevance to the poem, and so further exemplifies Kinbote's interest in becoming, and desperation to be, the centre of Shade's poem. Kinbote, in this note, imagines a thrilling tale to tantalize his poet and the extra-diegetic readers with, and includes in it allusions to the conventions of a fairy-tale: "he was given a fairy-tale meal of bread and cheese, and a bowl of mountain mead" (p. 92).

What emerges as the intertexts to this note are, as in Snow White, both the fairy-tale and a parody of the fairy-tale, which are the intertexts to the alleged intratext, the poem. King Charles does not meet a beautiful woman fit to become his queen, but rather, meets a dishevelled country girl who tries to seduce him and fails. The King, like Kinbote, is a homosexual, thus strengthening the link between them, as the reader presumes they are the same character. At the end of the note, the editor remarks: "I trust the reader has enjoyed this note" (p. 97), a comment which evokes, from the extra-diegetic reader, further suspicions about what and for whom the editor is writing.

The note to line 171, "knew nothing, and a great conspiracy" (p. 19), which alludes to the theme of death in "Pale Fire," evokes from Kinbote an explication of the revolutionary figures of Zembla, one of whom is Gradus. In addition to providing the reasons for the revolution, Kinbote reveals more about Gradus, and the development of the "mystery" plot coincides (only in Kinbote's mind) with the creation of "Pale Fire": "We place this fatidic moment at 0:05, July 2, 1959--which happens to be also the date upon which an innocent poet penned the first lines of his last poem" (pp. 99-100). Since this is the only reference to the poem, it becomes increasingly evident to the reader that Kinbote's concerns lie more with his tales of Zembla and King Charles than with conventional editing practices of "Pale Fire." Thus the parodying of literary critics and criticism serves as another generic intertext to Pale Fire.

Line 169, "about survival after death was known" (p. 19), in which the poet embarks on one of his major themes, is simply referred to by Kinbote in a further note (to which he directs the reader--the note to

line 549 [p. 149]). The reader, then directed to another part of the commentary, is severed further from any expectations of linearity in Kinbote's narrative. In the note to line 549, the editor makes a personal judgment on the poet's intentions: "Here indeed is the Gist of the matter. And this, I think, not only the institute (see line 517) but our poet himself missed," and then proceeds to launch into a theological discussion. Part of the note includes a recorded dialogue, supposedly between Kinbote and Shade, which is reproduced from Kinbote's notes in his pocket diary, and then, becomes the intratext to this note.

The examples cited above, while illustrating the minimal relevance of the commentary to its supposed intratext, "Pale Fire," also function as digressions in the main narrative. The extra-diegetic reader not only has a poem and its alleged commentary to consider, but also has two additional tales to follow as a result of these digressions, in addition to the outer layer of the commentary, Kinbote's alleged relationship to John Shade (which encompasses the inner-tales). While the reader assumes the responsibility of making sense of, or creating, the major texts of Pale Fire, the poem, the commentary, and their respective intertexts, he must also assume the stance of a judge or a critic in order to determine what is true and what is false in his co-creation of the novel. The tyranny of linear narrative imposed on the reader, one that writers of self-reflexive fiction associate with conventional or traditional narrative, is completely undermined by the creator/editor figure, Kinbote (via Nabokov). Kinbote usurps the linear power from convention in his commentary, and replaces it with another "tyrannical" element, his forceful, overbearing, omniscient narrative voice: Kinbote becomes the "godlike" personage of the fiction.

The digressions in Kinbote's commentary, while they undermine narrative convention, also evoke, from the extra-diegetic reader, textual connections to other works of this nature. The most striking example that comes to mind is Tristram Shandy, the great digressive novel. In this light, Tristram Shandy could be seen as an intertext to the commentary. Robert Alter, in his discussion of Pale Fire, expands upon this inter-textual connection in the further similarities which he notes between the texts:

> [In Tristram Shandy], episodes like Slawkenbergius's Tale, the descent of the hot chestnut into Phutatorius's codpiece, the several variations on the story of Trim's amour with the fair Beguine, all reproduce the basic narrative operation of the whole novel: a great fuss and bother over misunderstandings permeated with hilarious double meanings hovering over a rude base of sexual fact.[6]

This kind of self-replication is more persuasive in Pale Fire than in any other novel by Nabokov. Kinbote's interpretation of "Pale Fire" is, if the reader believes Shade wrote the poem, a gross misunderstanding and misinterpretation, and the "rude base sexual fact" here would be Kinbote's sexual preference for males which he imparts to the reader with great enthusiasm. Thus one interpretation of Kinbote's obsessive relationship to John Shade places the latter as the desired love object of the editor, and the digressions, or Kinbote's "precious tales," are his means of seducing the poet.[7] For example, Kinbote explains his voyeuristic tendencies towards the Shade household and goes to great lengths in describing, to the reader, his various "peeping strategies" (see, for example, pp. 55-57). In another editorial note, Kinbote describes his elation at spying an opportunity to be alone with Shade, and remarks

humorously that he "resembled a lean wary lover taking advantage of a young husband's being alone in the house!" (p. 193).

The textual connection to Tristram Shandy amplifies the reader's understanding of the digressions as they function to disrupt traditional linear narrative, a disruption which ultimately has the effect of shaping the type of reading in which one engages in the text. The discovery and co-creation of Pale Fire demands active participation from the reader, intratextually and intertextually, a process which inevitably forces the reader to make aesthetic judgments while he works to bring the fiction to life. For example, the reader may question why there is no absolute interpretation of Pale Fire, and consequently, what is Nabokov's intention in a work of art of this nature. The hermeneutic clash the reader discerns between his interpretation of "Pale Fire" and the editor's opens to question the relationship, if any, between the alleged authors and their texts, and the inter relationship (if any) among these texts. The actual fictional worlds the reader creates in Pale Fire are both the purpose and the paradox of the novel. The fictional worlds the reader creates may exist only in his imagination, yet they appear in print. Without any guidance from the text, the reader faces a very difficult task in making sense and meaning of the novel: "In Pale Fire the narrator, laughing diabolically within the hole separating the poem from the commentary, denies us--indeed, forces us to continually question--all physical, psychological, epistemological, and aesthetic guidelines...[and] denied the security of habit, [we as readers] must see and decide for ourselves."[8] This is then one aim of Pale Fire--active, intelligent reader participation.

Reading intertextually, as illustrated in the discussion of October Light, where the extra-diegetic and intra-diegetic readers' acts of interpretation stem from a "certainty" of their respective texts, is one way of processing a text to arrive at its meaning. This type of reading in relationship to Pale Fire, however, depends upon what interpretation the reader believes is true, and this, of course, is contingent upon his degree of participation in the text. If the reader believes the most favoured interpretation of the novel, that John Shade wrote "Pale Fire," and Kinbote the commentary, then the following intertext/textual relationship assists the reader in making meaning of the novel. If the genre of the autobiographical poem is the intertext to "Pale Fire," and literary criticism is the generic intertext to the commentary, then the extra-diegetic reader may likely discern that art is a creative process, and criticism is parasitic. This relationship between the texts reveals a second intertext to both texts, in that fantasy fiction, in this case Kinbote's, becomes the intertext to the commentary. The fantasy fictions --Zembla, King Charles and Gradus--are then assumed to be figments of Kinbote's imagination. This supposition, then, is based on the reader's assumption that Kinbote is an egocentric lunatic determined to convince himself and his readers that he is the subject of "Pale Fire." Further, Kinbote is an irresponsible critic. The way in which the reader is able to arrive at this interpretation as a particularly valid one is found in one definite similarity between the texts, and that is the theme of death. However, even in this textual connection, the treatment of death by both creator figures is quite different in their two narratives. In "Pale Fire," Shade reveals a very carefully considered, personal view of death which,

as the autobiography indicates, emanates from his responses to the deaths of his parents and his Aunt Maud, the suicide of his daughter (which he relates with particular sadness), and his own "momentary death," experienced during a heart attack. These many experiences evoke from the poet serious consideration of the metaphysical postulation of life after death.

Kinbote, on the other hand, is obsessed by his fear of death. In an early note (to line 62), he states: "Often, almost nightly, throughout the spring of 1959, I had feared for my life" (p. 61). What Kinbote labels fear becomes paranoia (in the reader's mind), as Kinbote recounts the violent deaths of his Zemblan predecessors, in the belief that he (King Charles) is the next victim. Kinbote's paranoia drives him to seek the poet, in whom he places his hopes of achieving immortality in art. The textual connection in the theme of death provides an explanation of Kinbote/King Charles's obsession with Shade in his desperate determination to find himself in "Pale Fire." As the literal poem suggests (for it is Shade's autobiography), Kinbote should be unable to do so, and so he superimposes the murder-mystery plot of Gradus. The impression the reader forms from yet another interpretation--that Gradus/Jack Grey is a convict seeking revenge on Judge Goldsworth, whom he mistakes for Kinbote/Botkin--strengthens the reader's interpretation of Kinbote as a lunatic fictionalizer, and the Gradus plot to assassinate King Charles then becomes a figment of Kinbote's wild imagination. The murder of Shade by Grey, an error in calculation and a case of misinterpretation, reflects on a thematic level what Kinbote does to the poem in his commentary. Kinbote's narrative can be interpreted as a gross miscalculation and

misrepresentation of Shade's intentions and hence of "Pale Fire," and more an act of creating a text that does not exist from the imagination, than one of co-creating a text, imaginatively--but as the ultimate product of another creator's imagination.

If one judges Kinbote's bizarre interpretation of the poem in light of the many misinterpretations the notes reveal, it is then perhaps even more accurate to designate the parodying of literary criticism as the intertext to the commentary. As was already previously suggested, Kinbote, as an editor, digresses from his alleged purpose of objectively explicating the poem, and instead, creates from it other fictions. Kinbote writes not from the "reality" of "Pale Fire," but rather, from what he convinces himself is "real," and that is his imagination. The meaning of Pale Fire which the extra-diegetic reader makes from this intertextual connection is that there is no reality in fiction other than the imagination. Given the fact that there is no one discernable or absolute reality in the novel, this meaning appears to be a valid one.

The tension between reality and the imagination that forms in Pale Fire is thematized in the two dominant creator figures, Shade and Kinbote. Shade's art is considered real, as it is assumed to be true to life. Kinbote's, on the other hand, is imaginary or "unreal" given the context, "Pale Fire," from which he supposedly draws. The hermeneutic clash between the extra-diegetic reader's interpretation of "Pale Fire " and Kinbote's, as a reader/critic, illustrates how the reality of art is perceived subjectively, and hence differently, by each individual. The uncertainty as to what is in fact the reality of Pale Fire (that Nabokov deliberately intends to baffle his readers with) illustrates on another

level--the author's--the tension between reality and the imagination, the awareness of which Nabokov seeks to bring to the reader. This tension reinforces Nabokov's claim that the imagination is the supreme, if not the only reality, and this claim creates the theme of Pale Fire. The questions these major issues or problems in the text evoke are what guide the reader to making meaning of Pale Fire. Active reading, then, becomes a means of discovering and sorting out the many levels of fiction that, in the end, lead the reader to construct the meaning of the work.

Nabokov, as a self-reflexive writer, shares with his reader his concern in Pale Fire for active reading, as does John Gardner in October Light. Reading, as an act of discovery and co-creation which October Light overtly thematizes, is also thematized in Pale Fire. The act of reading in Nabokov's novel occurs on several levels: first, Kinbote's, who is a reader of "Pale Fire" (this the extra-diegetic reader assumes in light of the commentary which the reading allegedly provokes); secondly, the extra-diegetic reader, who reads "Pale Fire" and interprets it, and who also reads the commentary, supposedly the product of another reader's act, and interprets it in realtion to the poem, and to the character, Kinbote. Nabokov initiates active reading processes in the extra-diegetic reader by the "Chinese-box" structure of the novel, and by the hermeneutic clash which Nabokov obviously intends to have arise between Kinbote's interpretation of the poem and the extra-diegetic reader's. Active reading is also induced by the narrative disruptions that occur because of the intratexts to the editorial notes, which make conventional linear reading from top to bottom, left to right, impossible.[9] The intratexts, as already witnessed in October Light, serve as a means by which the reader is able to

co-create Pale Fire, for the intratexts are, in short, what comprise the novel.

If he views "Pale Fire" as the intratext (the text within the text) of Kinbote's narrative, the extra-diegetic reader re-creates the fictional world Kinbote imagines to exist in the poem, that of Zembla. Reading then becomes an act of decoding what is real from the discrepancies the reader discerns between the poem and its alleged commentary. The fictional world of Zembla, which comes into existence from Kinbote's reading of "Pale Fire," is then twice removed from the extra-diegetic reader, and its reality becomes tenuous at best. During the reading process, Zembla and its events (Disa, King Charles, Gradus, etc.) become disruptive forces for the reader who attempts to read intratextually from poem to commentary. Eventually the reader must abandon this type of reading, and enter Kinbote's fictional world and accept it, or else close the book as a result of frustrated expectations. Thus the narrative disruptions shape or dictate the extra-diegetic reader's type of reading.

Another type of narrative disruption that occurs in Pale Fire results from intertextual reading. The intertext, as previously defined, consists of the external works to which the text itself alludes, but which require the reader's recognition of them to be activated as intertexts; the activating process is intertextuality. An example of this, as previously mentioned, is the lateral textual connection the reader makes between the commentary and Tristram Shandy. The numerous digressions of both texts form the structural and functional basis of this connection. Tristram Shandy, while purporting to be an autobiographical work on one level, appears at times (because of the numerous digressions that make the novel) to seem

anything but the "life and opinions" of Tristram. Similarly, the commentary of Pale Fire digresses from an explication of Shade's autobiography. Smaller examples of Tristram Shandy as an intertext occur in Kinbote's use of the word "Alas!" which alludes to Sterne's diction, and Kinbote's reference to Shade Hall (Shandy Hall). The reader's association of Nabokov's work with Sterne's, both thematically and structurally (Tristram Shandy as a self-aware novel shares its processes of creation with the reader), amplifies the reader's understanding of Pale Fire as a self-conscious and a self-reflexive novel.

In order to generate from the extra-diegetic reader an awareness of intertextual reading during the process of making meaning of the text, Nabokov provides within Pale Fire planned textual allusions that the writer figures, Shade and Kinbote, make within their works. These allusions, which link texts laterally (for example, "Pale Fire" to Pope's Essay on Man), serve as the author's (in this case, Shade's) sources, as influences upon his work. As a microcosmic structure of textual allusions, these textual references reflect the larger process of intratextual and intertextual reading, as they direct the reader to other texts which he then incorporates in his processes of making meaning. The reader of Pale Fire, in the process of linking the poem to the commentary, and on a larger scale, of locating the intertexts of both (which he draws from his literary repertoire) reads intratextually and intertextually. For example, the reader, by locating the sources of Shade's poem in his meaning making reading of "Pale Fire," derives from this textual connection a way of discerning the meaning of Pale Fire, the text on which he projects these connections.

Mary McCarthy, in her much acclaimed study "Vladimir Nabokov's 'Pale Fire'," [10] discusses Pope's Essay on Man as an intertext to both "Pale Fire," and Pale Fire. John Shade is a well-known Pope scholar in the fictional world of Pale Fire, and has written a book on Pope, which he mentions in his autobiography, and which Kinbote mentions in the commentary. The title of Shade's book, Supremely Blest, directs the reader to Epistle II of the Essay: "The starving chemist in his golden views/ Supremely blest, the poet in his muse" (II. 269-270). In the commentary, Kinbote does not quote these lines exactly, but as McCarthy points out, these two lines are, in short, what Pale Fire is about--the paradoxical attitudes of man to which man's dual nature is subject. Kinbote, of course, does not recognize this. In the context of the novel, the paradoxical nature of man is exemplified by the Botkin/Kinbote doubling, which Botkin camouflages, and the Kinbote/King doubling which Kinbote seeks to disguise, on the one hand, but brings to awareness (to Shade), on the other. These levels of doubling result in the invention of other people and other lands. The extra-diegetic reader, in making this textual connection and further connections between Pope and "Pale Fire"/Pale Fire, is able to project these textual connections to the ultimate creator, Nabokov.

In content, Epistle II reflects much of the major issue the reader encounters in Pale Fire, that being its numerous levels of creation, or in short, the many texts, both the intratexts and the intertexts, within the novel. The reader witnesses in Part V, II of Pope's Essay, several similarities to the Shade/Kinbote relationship in Pale Fire:

> Vice is a monster so frightful mien,...
> But where th' Extreme of Vice, was ne'er agreed:
> Ask where's the North? at York, 'tis on the Tweed;
> In Scotland, at the Orcades; and there,
> At Greenland, Zembla, or the Lord knows where.
> No creature owns it in the first degree,
> But thinks his neighbour further gone than he;...[11]
>
> (ll. 217-226)

As an intratext, this passage explains much in the story, and in the story within the story of Pale Fire. Zembla in the Essay signifies the extreme north, and the Zembla of the novel (Nabokov's allusion to Pope) is a "distant northern land." Kinbote/Botkin, in the outer story of Pale Fire, is Shade's neighbour, and in this story Botkin, unwilling to admit his vices, focuses on those of his neighbour: Shade's vice is alcohol. A further example of a neighbour's vice is found in Kinbote/Botkin, whose vices are inversion (note the anagrammatical doubling of their names) and deception --the disguise of Kinbote as the King of Zembla. Shade may or may not know this, as Kinbote hints. Botkin/Kinbote is also guilty of inventing the story within the story, in a commentary which allegedly proposes to explicate an autobiographical work. The textual connection of vice brings this larger sin to mind. Thus the textual connection to Pope reveals for the reader some of the issues in Pale Fire.

McCarthy also illustrates another possible intertext to "Pale Fire," and that is the Wordsworthian Prelude. Although Shade writes in heroic couplets, a poetic style associated with Pope, the context of his poem, as McCarthy explains, is more Wordsworthian: the similarities she notes lie in the "Wordsworthian pastures--rambling autobiographical, full of childhood memories, gleanings from Nature, interrogations of the universal: a kind of American Prelude."[12] Perhaps in content "Pale Fire," as an

autobiographical work, is more closely connected to Wordsworth, but the poem, in the context of the novel, and in its relationship to the commentary, directs the reader to Pope's Essay on Man.

The key lines of Pope that reflect a central issue of Pale Fire are, as Kinbote notes, discarded by Shade. Pope's lines from Epistle II, IV: "See the blind beggar dance, the cripple sing,/The sot a hero, lunatic a King" (ll. 267-268), sum up, in short, Pale Fire. Of the discarded lines, Kinbote remarks in his note: "I have never been able to ascertain retrospectively if he really had 'guessed my secret,' as he once observed (see note to line 991)" (p. 136). If the conscientious reader follows Kinbote's instructions and turns to the note to line 991, he discovers that Kinbote has Shade's poem in his possession, and he describes it as "immortal imagery, involutions of thought, new worlds with live people" (p. 194), and this is precisely what occurs in the commentary. The reader, if he reads intratextually and intertextually, engages in the game of discovering the meaning of Pale Fire. The Pope intratext, which induces intertextual reading (the reader makes other textual connections), both illustrates Shade/Nabokov's sources, and also reflects the similar themes between the works, which the reader discovers. Shade, in his poem, discusses the theme of death and reflects upon the metaphysical problem of the after-life. Pope discusses this as well in the Essay. Kinbote, who acknowledges Shade's indebtedness to Pope for Pope's elucidation of these themes, also considers the same themes Shade and Pope discuss. For example, Kinbote, by fictionalizing Zembla and King Charles from his reading of the poem, seeks immortality, or an after-life in Shade's work of art. In the note to line 991, Kinbote finally possesses what he

believes to be his immortality, the batch of index cards that are, "Pale Fire."

Shade/Nabokov's use of Pope as a textual influence in the creation of "Pale Fire" and Pale Fire engenders, as previously illustrated, the text-to-text connections made during the act of reading. The Pope text, while it activates reading on an intertextual level, thematically and structurally, is an intended or authorial allusion which is offered to the reader to assist in his meaning making processes. Other intended texts that aid the extra-diegetic reader in discerning the meaning of Pale Fire are Shakespearean. The most obvious one is from Timon of Athens, which, as Kinbote notes, contains the title of Shade's poem:

> ...I'll example you with thievery:
> The sun's a thief, and with his great attraction
> Robs the vast sea; the moon's an arrant thief,
> And her pale fire she snatches from the sun,
> The sea's a thief...(IV. iii, 435-439).

Kinbote, who "quotes" these lines from memory from a Zemblan translation, misquotes Shakespeare:

> The sun is a thief: she lures the sea
> and robs it. The moon is a thief:
> he steals his silvery light from the sun
> The sea is a thief: it dissolves the moon (p. 50).

Shakespeare's lines, which explicate the universality of theft, also explain the nature of art: art steals from nature by imitating or reflecting it. In Pale Fire this quotation is particularly apt for it illustrates how Shade imitates Pope. Yet on another level, the quotation reflects what Kinbote attempts in editing "Pale Fire." What results--the commentary--is an example of theft and also one of distorted mimesis. From this link, then, the reader perceives Pale Fire as a satire, and the

target of Nabokov's satire is the critic/editor who in "supplementing" the inadequacies of the author, not only steals from him, but distorts his work by an interpretation that does not view the work of art as an autonomous entity.

The passage from Timon of Athens, which is Nabokov's source, is important to the extra-diegetic reader's understanding of Pale Fire. Just as Shakespeare's lines suggest a pattern of circular reciprocity and harmony, so too does the structure of Pale Fire. The poem and the commentary must be read as reciprocating texts. To depict Kinbote as a parasite and a thief (as his Zemblan translation indicates he is), and to determine who is the 'true' author of both texts, are fruitless endeavours for the reader, and thus postpone the discovery of the novel's meaning. Rather, the reader must see the interconnections between the two texts, and the reflection which, no matter how distorted, one is of the other. After all, Kinbote's amazing stories unfold, and as a character in these stories, Kinbote is hard to give up. Pale Fire must be read as something indeterminate, like the universe, as Shakespeare's quotation indicates. The textual reference, and hence the reader's connection of Pale Fire to Timon, enable the reader to arrive at this level of meaning. In a particularly appropriate statement, P. Stegner sums up this approach to, and interpretation of the novel: "If life itself is the perplexed artistry of mimicry and deception, then understanding and order can only come by allowing the imagination to participate in the game."[13] The game in Pale Fire is played with the imagination at all levels of creation: Nabokov's, Shade's, Kinbote's, and the reader's.

The disruption in linear reading which the various textual references impose, as intended by the self-reflexive writer, Nabokov, is a means by which the reader participates in the game of making meaning of the text. The intended textual connections within the narratives of Pale Fire, evoke, from the reader, an awareness of creating a literary text by connecting it to outside texts--for example, The Essay on Man and Timon of Athens. These texts not only lead to the discovery of Nabokov's intended meaning of Pale Fire, but they also elicit from the reader further textual connections that he makes while reading intertextually and intra-textually. The thematic link of Timon to Pale Fire provokes the reader to make further connections between both texts. For example, Timon and Kinbote are similar characters as both are exiled misanthropes who live in their memories of the past. This intertextual connection draws the extra-diegetic reader to another text which bears the same theme, that of Nabokov's earlier novel, Pnin. In Pnin, the exiled Russian Professor, Pnin, reflects Kinbote/Botkin: both are exiles, and both are the displaced members of their respective university departments.

Further intertextual connections include Hamlet, because the suicide of Hazel by drowning calls forth, to the reader, the tragedy of Ophelia. Both are victims of circumstance: Hazel is rejected by her blind date, and Ophelia is rejected by Hamlet (or so she thinks). Also, in the Hamlet textual connection, similarities are seen between the Prince of Denmark whose throne is usurped by Claudius, and King Charles who is dethroned by a revolution.

Other intertextual connections of this nature lead the reader to The Tempest, which also deals with the theme of exile. Prince Prospero's

lost kingdom is paralleled in Pale Fire to the lost kingdom of Zembla. Similarly, the new world of the Ile of Devils in The Tempest reflects that of New Wye, the new world of Botkin/Kinbote. On another level, connections to The Tempest unfold the great mirroring device of Pale Fire, in the textual link to the importance of language as a means of communication and as an artistic device. Prince Prospero teaches Caliban language; in Pale Fire, language has a dual function--that of communicating the text to the reader, and that of mirroring its processes of creation. The latter function is thematized in the many "reflections" language plays with. For example, "Zembla" connotes semblance, which becomes resemblance. "Gradus" means regicide, and the title to the poem, Kinbote suggests, "Solus Rex," means exiled king. The anagram Kinbote/Botkin, and the comparison Sybil Shade makes to Kinbote, "botfly," a parasitic horsefly, reflect the parasitic nature of Botkin/Kinbote as the critic/editor of "Pale Fire," which then reflects the relationship of the commentary to the poem. The lemniscate to which Kinbote provides a dictionary definition (a brilliant stroke of irony) is the key to discerning the circular relationship between the poem and the commentary: the poem is dependent on the commentary, at least in Kinbote's mind, and the commentary, of course, draws from words and images in the poem. The reader's discovery of this relationship between the texts shapes how he reads Pale Fire.

Although Pale Fire encompasses two separate and distinct texts, the reader, in making meaning of Nabokov's very complex novel, must read intratextually in order to connect both texts. The interdependent relationship that forms between the poem and the commentary, then, becomes one means by which the fictional world is brought to life. In the context of

this discussion, intratextual reading can be argued to be that which activates and encourages intertextual reading, reading which amplifies the meaning the reader discerns. This, of course, requires the reader to participate imaginatively and intelligently in the fictional world as the text's co-creator. The reader's willingness to read intratextually and intertextually can perhaps be considered as one response to the demand made by self-reflexive fiction, and that is that the reader actively engage with all possible creative aspects while generating a text.

NOTES ON CHAPTER II

[1]John O. Stark, The Literature of Exhaustion (Durham: Duke University Press, 1974), p. 82.

[2]Stark, p. 65.

[3]For full details on these studies, see Andrew Field, Nabokov: His Life in Art (Boston: Little Brown, 1967), p. 300, and Page Stegner, Escape into Aesthetics (New York: Apollo Editions, 1966), p. 129.

[4]Vladimir Nabokov, Pale Fire (New York: Berkley Books, 1981), p. 12. All further references will be made to this edition and will appear in parentheses in the text.

[5]Donald E. Morton, Vladimir Nabokov (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1974), p. 111.

[6]Robert Alter, Partial Magic (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976 , p. 187.

[7]For a further explanation of Kinbote's sexual proclivities in relation to the sexual suggestiveness in the commentary, see Donald E. Morton, pp. 113-116.

[8]Richard Pearce, "Nabokov's Lolita and Pale Fire," in Sarah Blacher Cohen, ed., Comic Relief: Humor in Contemporary American Literature (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978), pp. 43-44.

[9]See references to Raymond Federman's Surfiction: Fiction Now... and Tomorrow, in Chapter I of this thesis.

[10]Mary McCarthy, "Vladimir Nabokov's 'Pale Fire'," Encounter, 19 (October 1962), pp. 71-84.

[11]William K. Wimsatt Jr., ed., Alexander Pope, Selected Poetry and Prose (1951; rpt. New York: Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1972), p. 208.

[12]McCarthy, p. 71.

[13]Steger, p. 130.

CHAPTER III

FICTION MAKERS IN THE "TREASURE HOUSE" OF LITERATURE

> Narrative, in short--and here they were again in full agreement--was a love relation, not a rape: its success depended upon the reader's consent and cooperation, which she could withold or at any moment withdraw; also upon her own combination of experience and talent for the enterprise, and the author's ability to arouse, sustain, and satisfy her interest.[1]

As a writer of self-reflexive fiction, John Barth evinces a great concern for engaging the reader in a "love" relationship with the text. This is exemplified by and thematized in the dynamic, creative role Barth offers to and shares with the extra-diegetic reader. The emergence of this "love" relationship, which is best described as the mutual exchange between the text and the reader, or the printed page and the reader's imagination, ultimately depends upon the reader's willingness to participate actively in the fictional world. What stimulates reader participation, and in part sustains it, is the ability of the text, or the narrative, to evoke from the reader the images that bring the text to life beyond print and page. If a "love" situation ensues, the text and the reader become partners during the act of reading, and the text is brought to life.

In the trilogy Chimera, the reader is offered a narrative encounter that overtly exposes Barth's imaginative and creative processes of building a fictional world. The much flaunted artifice of Chimera illustrates the making of the fiction, which in turn reflects the obvious "love" relationship developed between the author and his work of art. At the

same time, Barth's deliberate exhibition of his artistic processes brings to the reader an awareness of the type of relationship he in turn is to establish with the work as the co-creator of the text. Hence Barth shares with and transfers to the reader his fiction-making processes. The reader, if he accepts this type of relationship and the responsibility of building the world of the fiction, embarks on an imaginative journey that brings him to the origins of the literary tradition--myth and legend. As the reader retraces, through his reading, Barth's processes of creating Chimera, he discovers at the heart of the work, the art of story-telling.

In bringing the reader back to the origins of fiction, Barth thematizes how he creates something "new" from what exists in the treasure-house of literature, by exploring his imaginative capacity as the creator of the "new" fiction. What becomes essential to the reading and co-creation of this type of fiction is the reader's willingness to dismiss his notions of "everyday reality" and the accompanying assumptions that art must be "realistic" to be understood. In order to induce the reader to abandon the limitations "everyday reality" imposes on imaginative freedom, Barth takes the reader back in literary time to the mythic and legendary origins of fiction, where the reality the reader perceives is what he allows his imagination to conceive and create. In light of this, myth and legend become the generic intertexts to the three novellas that comprise Chimera: the "Dunyazadiad," the "Perseid," and the "Bellerophoniad." In the "Dunyazadiad," the reader is brought back to the legendary tales of The One Thousand Nights and One Night and discovers in Barth's novella how the legend came into being. Similarly, "Dunyazadiad"'s making unfolds in much the same way as that of its intertext. In the

second and third novellas the reader "looks back" to the Greek myths of Perseus and Bellerophon as the archetypal patterns from which Barth expands and launches his innovative fictions. Each novella, then, encompasses a retrogressive journey through literary time. The obvious and intended intertexts of Chimera bring to the reader an awareness of intertextuality as an essential part of the reading process. Barth's technique of creating fictional worlds from those contained in the vast treasure-house of literature offers the reader an opportunity to incorporate, in the making of Chimera, his collection of fictional worlds. Barth's return to myth and legend does not reveal his intentions to create new myths. As he states: "It's a presumptuous thing to aspire to, perhaps--to really make a new myth."[2] Rather, it reveals his intention to create a new fiction from existing myths and legends. The reader of fiction, as well, creates a new fictional world from the other texts he has read and builds, in part, from his reading experiences the text under consideration.

The opening novella of Chimera is structurally and thematically similar to its intended intertext, The Book of a Thousand Nights and One Night.[3] In the "Dunyazadiad," Barth structures his narrative in the same manner as the legend, that is, the tales-within-tales technique. This major similarity between the works directs the reader to the legend and, from the ensuing textual connections he makes, the reader amplifies his fiction-making processes of the novella in light of its intended intertext. For example, the two main female characters read as doubles as they both face the same crisis--rape and death at the hands of their king. Both characters postpone their peril by telling tales (the thematized

issue in both works), and in the end, resolve their crises. The reader's creation of Barth's heroine is enhanced by the textual connection he makes to the archetypal heroine.

In spite of the obvious similarities between the text and the intertext, several aspects of the legend appear in the novellas in a different order from the original. To cite only one example, the legend's frame tale of King Shahryar and his younger brother Shah Zaman appears as one of the tales-within-tales of the "Dunyazadiad." In Barth's story, Dunyazade's tale, which opens the novella, and the Genie's story of his crisis (he faces writer's block) form the framing tales. In a thematic context, however, these differences are insignificant, as the central concern of both fictions is the telling of tales; in short, the act and art of fiction-making become the fiction's plots. In the legend, Scheherazade's distressed father, the Waizir, is the first teller of tales, as he attempts to discourage his daughter's noble plan of sacrificing herself for the sake of the other threatened virgins; the Waizir recites parables to forewarn Scheherazade of the fate her actions will incur. On a structural level these parables become one of the tales-within-the-tale of the legend. On a thematic level, the Waizir's tales engender the act of fiction-making; Scheherazade, inspired by the Waizir's tales, abandons her original plan and replaces it with another, which unfolds as The Book of A Thousand Nights and One Night. Consequently Scheherazade entertains the King with tales, stalls her impending death long enough to change the King's heart, and eventually ends the crisis threatening herself and the other virgins. In "Dunyazadiad," Barth's story follows much of the archetypal pattern, but diverges from the original in that the Genie appears

and supplies Scheherazade with one thousand and one tales with which she entertains King Shahryar. But the outcome of both fictions is the same, and the telling of tales resolves the crises. The reader who discovers this similarity, amongst others, connects the two texts and uses the original to make sense and meaning of Barth's very complex, and at times confusing, fictional work. One meaning the reader arrives at is that the telling of tales is Barth's chief concern (the intertext aptly thematizes this), and the making of "new" fiction from an older form of art demonstrates one means of inventiveness and creation.

The intended intertext of the second novella, the "Perseid," is the Greek myth of Perseus.[4] By using myth as the literary source of his fictional work, Barth elaborates on the theme established in the "Dunyazadiad"--that a new perspective in fiction-making can be gained by "looking back" over past literary accomplishments in order to "look forward" to possible new achievements. As an intended intertext, the myth supplies the traditional aspects of the "plot" and the conventional characteristics of the hero. The reader builds Barth's fictional world, in part, from the connections he makes to the conventions of the myth. For example, the initial "plot" of the "Perseid" recaptures in retrospect the heroic deeds of Perseus, which are the same accomplishments as those recorded in the myth. Via intertextual reading, then, the reader re-creates Barth's hero, and this textual connection assists the reader in building the first half of the novella. However, Barth's hero departs from his archetypal predecessor in that he appears in the fiction as a middle-aged, overweight, "has been" hero who is dissatisfied with his life thus far.

Barth's variation of and departure from the traditional mythic hero pattern develops the theme that new forms of fiction can be created from what already exists in the treasure-house of literature. Thus Barth's hero, as a thematized example of this, embarks on a journey of self-exploration: Perseus recounts his glorious heroic past in order to understand his present situation and to gain insight into the future. Perseus, in the narrative "present" as a "has been" hero, searches for a pattern upon which to model the second half of his life. Perseus, however, fails to find a suitable pattern, abandons his attempts at searching for a model, changes the mythic-heroic pattern, and succeeds in becoming a "true" hero by looking forward to the future. In the novella, Perseus ultimately demonstrates the correct reason for retrospective contemplation, and that is to gain the proper perspective on one's future role. Barth extends this theme to the "life" of fiction, first within Chimera, most notably in the second and third novellas ("Bellerophoniad" is a counter-companion piece to "Perseid"), and as will be argued later, beyond Chimera. Intertextual reading illuminates the transition in Chimera from myth and legend to innovative fiction, as the reader, by referring back to mythic origins by making textual connections, actually witnesses this transition in the "life" of fiction.

"Bellerophoniad," the final novella of Chimera, is the counter-piece to the "Perseid," as the character Bellerophon illustrates a failed hero. As an intended intertext, the myth supplies for the reader the concept of heroism and the heroic deeds from which the character Bellerophon attempts to define and pattern his life. Reprinted midway through the novella is the "Bellerophon" section from Graves's volume.

Barth's reproduction of Graves's account, however, is only a partial one, as Graves's final section depicting Bellerophon's descent to earth where he wanders aimlessly as a lonely, lame, blind man (his punishment for excessive pride) is omitted. In departing from the myth to supply his own ending, Barth turns his pseudo-hero into a self-conscious version of his own story: Bellerophon "is" the letters he holds in the Maryland marsh from which he narrates. In short, Bellerophon becomes the novella and achieves immortality, not as a hero (as he had hoped), but as a fictional piece, one in which he is reduced to repeating his life story (his punishment for aiming too high).

At the outset of the novella, Bellerophon, who experiences the same crisis as Perseus, reviews his life in comparison to the hero, Perseus's in order to determine an identity for the future. However, Bellerophon's search is not without several complications. The "identity" search is interrupted by one of the many complexities of the fiction--the character Polyeidus turns the previous novella "Perseid" into a document designed to teach Bellerophon the proper reasons for reviewing and renewing life. In this section of the "Bellerophoniad," the "Perseid" becomes the second intended intra- and intertext. Bellerophon, unlike his hero, Perseus, inevitably fails in seeking immortality from a mythic-heroic pattern, and achieves immortality only as the documentation of his own life. Bellerophon is reduced to a mere imitation of the ideal mythic-hero, as Zeus explicitly states to Polyeidus: "your man Bellerophon has become a perfect imitation of a mythic hero" (p. 297). In the thematic context of the novella, and of Chimera, this remark is a broader comment of Barth's perception of mimetic or "realistic" fiction. Although the

mythic and legendary intertexts are obvious and intended, they are not meant, in their existence in Chimera, to be interpreted as an example of mimetic art. Rather, Barth demonstrates to the reader, by these intended intertexts, that fiction can be a structural and thematic elaboration of other fictional pieces and the result need not be mimetic to be valid. By bringing this to the reader's awareness, Barth encourages further intertextual reading, reading which enables the reader to amplify one of the major themes of Chimera--that fiction-making can emerge from the creator's incorporation of the wealth of literature that exists in the vast treasure-house of fiction, in his present fictional world. The other texts from which the reader draws to make meaning and sense of Chimera provoke the reader's enactment of this theme. The reader's treasure-house of literature is his past reading experience, and the reader, by extending previous encounters with fiction to the text under consideration, meets the demands that reading be an imaginative, active and creative engagement with the text.

Self-reflexive fiction, as it has been illustrated thus far in October Light, Snow White and Pale Fire, shares with the extra-diegetic reader the authorial processes of creating the fictions. It is the text, the mediator between the author and the reader, that communicates and contains the artifice in which the reader actively participates in order to bring the fictional world to life. As in the aforementioned fictions, Chimera transfers to the reader its fiction-making processes, and one such process is discerned from the intertextual design of the novel. The intended intertexts of Chimera illustrate Barth's consciousness of and concern for--as a metafictionist--conveying to the reader his artistic

processes of building a fictional world. And these he offers to the reader on many levels.

At the most simplistic and general structural level, Chimera is comprised of three novellas which serve as mutual intratexts in that they are the texts within the periphery of the all-encompassing text, Chimera. The three interdependent novellas engender intratextual reading as each novella is thematically and structurally linked to the other two. On yet another level, intertextual reading is generated by the several intratexts of each novella, which are structurally designed as the tales-within-tales of each intratext. The rather incestuous intratextual and intertextual relationship formed between and within the novellas is, metaphorically speaking, a textual "love" relationship. The mutual dependency the reader discerns, in forming the larger fictional world of Chimera, becomes an important means by which the reader is able to re-create the novel. Reading Chimera is, in short, a willing participation in the intra/intertextual design, which becomes the essence of the novel.

The metafictionist's view of "reality," which in this discussion has been seen to be that which the mind imagines and creates, is brought to the reader's awareness by the very complex structure of the fictions. Chimera, like Pale Fire, consists of numerous, intricately arranged narrative products of the imagination, which are compounded in the tales-within-tales narrative technique. The reader's imaginative co-creation of the several tales becomes the "reality" of Chimera. John Barth employs the same structural technique and discusses the same themes as does his forerunner, Vladimir Nabokov, in Pale Fire. In the context of this discussion, then, Pale Fire can be seen as an intertext to Chimera both

structurally and thematically.

The narrative of Chimera, like that of Pale Fire, is best described as a Chinese-box. As it has already been seen in Chapter Two, the Chinese-box structure challenges conventional reading habits and the reader's assumption of engaging with a linear narrative, and it does so by disrupting conventional linear narrative practices. The act of reading, which is here argued to be an active and imaginative process of co-creating a fictional world, is in Barth's work, as it is in Gardner's, Barthelme's and Nabokov's, essential to the discovery of the text and the meaning-making process enacted during the reading of self-reflexive works. The structure of Chimera, then, is a crucial aspect the reader works with to arrive at the meaning of the novel. The reader who intertextually connects the type of novel which Pale Fire is to Chimera reads one as a structural and thematic variant of the other, and is assisted by this textual connection in finding the possible meanings of Chimera. One meaning which is discerned in light of this textual link is that the novel's "reality" is what is imagined in the mind of the creator--author or reader.

Initially, the reader of Chimera is presented with three major texts, "Dunyazadiad," "Perseid," and "Bellerophoniad," and these texts compose the narrative of Chimera. Each novella, as an "outer" structure, contains intratexts, and these intratexts as inner-tales give the novellas their Chinese-box arrangement. The structure of Chimera, which can be described also as intratexts-within-intratexts (the novellas and their respective inner-units of narrative), encapsulates as well as thematizes the central issue of the novel--story-telling. Fiction, as a product of the imagination, is thematized on many levels, beginning with Barth, the

characters he creates (who, as tale-tellers, imagine), and finally, the extra-diegetic reader, who imagines and hence creates the many tales that are told within the text. In light of the emphasis placed on the imagination in fiction-making and on intratextual and intertextual reading, Pale Fire again serves as a kind of intertext to Chimera, mostly because of Nabokov's superb creation of Charles Kinbote, a paragon amongst activators of imaginative capabilities: the fictionalizer's imagination, in short, becomes Pale Fire. In Chimera, Barth's fictionalizers or story-tellers engage in the same role as that of Kinbote: they are inventors of fiction.

The "Dunyazadiad," the first novella of Chimera, is perhaps, in the reader's perception, a "pilot" piece as it establishes the structural pattern and exposes some of the artistic concerns expressed in the middle and final fictions. "Dunyazadiad," by flaunting its artifice, brings to the reader's awareness the self-reflexive nature of the novella, which in turn reflects that of Chimera as a whole. There then exists a part/whole connection between the major intra-texts and their contribution to the fiction-making processes of Chimera. It seems that the "Dunyazadiad" was written after the "Perseid" and the "Bellerophoniad."[5] In a reverse linear order, then, the latter two novellas can be considered authorial sources for the "Dunyazadiad." The reader, however, when he encounters Chimera and reads the novellas in chronological order, perceives the first as a structural and thematic intratext to the succeeding fictions as he unfolds and builds the remaining novellas from his reading of the "Dunyazadiad." In retrospect, however, the discerning reader discovers that Chimera can be read in any order, as each novella comments on the other two. This exemplifies the incestuous intratextual nature of the

novel which, metaphorically speaking, describes the relationship of the texts-within-texts and the inner tales-within-tales of Chimera's Chinese-box structure.

The intratextual design of "Dunyazadiad" unfolds in the system of Chinese-boxes, which Barth bases on the structure of The One Thousand Nights and One Night. The "Dunyazadiad" consists of two frame-tales and several tales-within-tales within the frame stories. As it has been shown, this structural similarity renders the legend an intended intertext to "Dunyazadiad," and the reader is directed to this intertext by the authorial figure, the Genie. The tale of The One Thousand Nights and One Night frames the second frame-story in the novella, that of the Genie (a thinly disguised Barth [p. 8]), who wants to write a story very much like the one he appears in. The Genie's aspirations are narrated to the reader by Dunyazade in her recollection of their conversation: "Or whether one might go...beyond even the usual tales-within-tales-within-tales-within-tales which our Genie had found a few instances of in that literary treasure-house he hoped one day to add to, and conceive a series of, say, seven concentric stories-within-stories, so arranged that the climax of the innermost would precipitate that of the next tale out" (p. 24). This describes the narrative structure of the fiction in which the reader is engaged in this first novella.

In the fictional world of the novella, the teller (and inventor) of each tale is revealed as the inner-tale unfolds, but the multitudinous involuted units of narration obscure, at times, the authorship of the tales (apart of course, from Barth's). As the Genie informs the extra-diegetic reader in part three of the "Dunyazadiad": Alf Laylah Wa Laylah,

The Book of the Thousand Nights and a Night, is not the story of Scheherazade, but the story of the story of her stories" (p. 55). Here Scheherazade's story is narrated by her sister Dunyazade, and the source of Scheherazade's stories is the Genie who relates them to her from his book of tales lying open on his desk in America. The apparent lack of certainty as to the authorship of the stories and the time warp (the Genie is a figure from the future who knows Scheherazade will tell her tales, and has already read her book) confuse the reader who later discovers that the Genie is a twentieth-century story-teller who returns to the past to visit his favorite tale-spinner and archetypal teller of tales, Scheherazade. However, the confusion in reading that ensues from linear and chronological disorder and the somewhat vitiated intra-diegetic authorial voice should not be distracting, as the point Barth makes by confounding order is that all authors have drawn from the same stories. Scheherazade and the Genie demonstrate this as intra-diegetic authorial figures, and illustrate Barth's theme that inventive fiction can be created from what has already been written. The "Perseid" and the "Bellerophoniad" also expound this theme.

John Barth adds to the complication that ensues from this narrative disorder in the fiction by the Chinese-box structuring of each novella. In the "Dunyazadiad," the outermost narrative box of the seven-part Chinese-box unit is the "Dunyazadiad," Barth's novella, which contains the remaining six inner-units of fiction. The next narrative unit, the "present" situation of the novella, is Dunyazade's tale of the crisis she faces with Shah Zaman. Dunyazade's narrative serves as a frame tale, for her tale is interrupted by the remaining five tales in the Chinese-box,

and the resolution of Dunyazade's crisis is not achieved until the five inner-tales have been told. The third narrative box, or the first tale within Dunyazade's frame tale, is the story of Dunyazade's (and Scheherazade's) precarious situation with King Shahryar. Both Dunyazade and Scheherazade narrate parts of this tale. The crisis of their story precipitates the fourth tale, that of the Genie who narrates the story of his life crisis, writer's block. The appearance of the Genie results in the revelation of the background of Dunyazade's (and Scheherazade's) story, as the sisters explain their predicament to the Genie. At this point in the novella, the relationship between the container and the contained in the Chinese-box structure works from the inside out. Thus "Dunyazadiad" is created, in part, by the narrative movement from inner-tales to outer tales. The solution the Genie provides for the sisters begins the fifth inner-tale, the legend of The One Thousand Nights and One Night, which is related to Scheherazade by the Genie, and again, the relationship between the container and the contained is reversed. Scheherazade repeats these tales to the King, and this diegetic unit becomes the sixth narrative box. The crisis the sisters face when the Genie and consequently Scheherazade run out of stories, one thousand and one nights later, brings the reader back to the "present" narrative, that of Dunyazade. The seventh and final tale of the novella is Shah Zaman's, which completes the "present" narrative of Dunyazade. This tale is narrated by Shah Zaman to Dunyazade, and the final resolution of the several crises is achieved. The outermost layer of "Dunyazade" is Chimera, which is the final narrative box.

Despite the disruption which the tales-within-tales technique imposes on linear reading, the story of "Dunyazadiad" is, in short, formed from these disruptions. The interruptions become the story as each narrative box completes the other diegetic units by either providing the missing details of an earlier narrative, or by resolving the crisis of another tale. This illustrates, in part, the interdependent relationship of the intratexts. Intratextual reading is induced as the reader creates each narrative box from the other "boxes" within the system of interconnected narratives. What Barth encourages the reader to discern, in the panoply of involuted narratives, is that the actual telling of tales is of central importance, as is the creation of the tales from what has previously been written. The "Dunyazadiad" serves as a microcosmic structure of this larger thematic concern in Chimera. The interdependent relationship demonstrated between the intratexts of the first novella is continued in the second and third novellas, where the same narrative structure is repeated. Barth not only exemplifies the dependence of one fictional work on other works intratextually, but does so intertextually as each novella is a structural and thematic intertext to the other novellas. This aspect of fiction-making takes on larger proportions as Chimera is created from other literary sources. In fact, Barth takes the reader back to the origins of fiction, the oral stage of story-telling. For example, the "Dunyazadiad" is presented as primarily oral (though in print): tales are told, thus reminding the reader of the original oral form of fiction. Story-telling, one of the focal points of Chimera, is expressed in "Dunyazadiad" as a crisis situation: the Genie suffers from a writer's block, and Scheherazade must, quite literally, "publish" or

perish. Scheherazade survives and resolves her crisis by telling tales, but the Genie does not overcome his writer's block. Unlike Scheherazade, the Genie fails to create new fiction from fiction that already exists--he falls short in understanding that "the key to the treasure is the treasure."

The crisis Barth illustrates in the writer figure, the Genie, exemplifies on a much larger scale the crisis Barth perceives in contemporary fiction, that is, that the possibilities of creating new forms or modes of fiction have been "exhausted": "By 'exhaustion' I don't mean anything so tired as the subject of physical, moral, or intellectual decadence, only the used-upness of certain forms or exhaustion of certain possibilities."[6] In Chimera, Barth voices this concern by bringing the reader back to the origins of fiction, from which he creates Chimera. Via the retrospective and prospective movement in the fiction, Barth involves the reader in the literary concerns facing contemporary metafictionists. The characters in Chimera reflect this concern in their processes of reviewing their past lives to define their present states, which they hope will determine their futures. In each novella, at least one character embarks on a journey of self-exploration: the Genie in "Dunyazadiad," Perseus in "Perseid," and Bellerophon in "Bellerophoniad." The Genie's lucid expression of this concern--"he aspired to go beyond them [his past performances] toward a future they were not attuned to and, by some magic, at the same time go back to the original springs of narrative" (p. 10)--establishes one of the major themes the reader is to develop. This theme becomes the key to discovering the meaning of Chimera, and is repeatedly expressed in the phrase:

"the key to the treasure is the treasure." The treasure, of course, is the literary tradition, and the crisis the Genie faces is that of the writer and his relationship to the tradition. In the context of Chimera, then, the entire literary tradition becomes an intertext. In order to make meaning of the novel the reader must connect each novella to its mythic or legendary origins, in addition to making textual connections between Chimera and his own treasure-house of fiction.

Another means by which the reader re-creates Chimera is established in the first novella by its overtly flaunted artifice. The "self-reflexiveness" of the fiction becomes part of the very meaning of the novella. For example, Scheherazade remarks to her sister: " pretend this whole situation is the plot of a story we're reading, and you and I and Daddy and the King are all fictional characters...it comes down to particular words in the story we're reading, right?" (p. 8), and this, in essence, is exactly the case for fiction. What brings fiction to life, apart from the language encoded in "a couple-dozen squiggles" (p. 8), is the act of reading. The self-reflexive text and its show of artifice shape the type of reading required by an active reader to bring the fiction to life. The overt exemplification of the creative processes of Chimera poses a challenge to the reader, whose act of reading unfolds the fictional world as he fulfills the text's directions. An appropriate example of this is the Genie's revelation of his intention to write a story with seven concentric tales (p. 24), which suggests to the reader that there are perhaps, seven tales within the fiction that he must discover. Further suggestions as to how the extra-diegetic reader should

shape his processes of reading occur in the dialogue between Scheherazade and the Genie: "They speculated endlessly on such questions as whether a story might imaginatively be formed from inside, as it were, so that the usual relation between container and contained would be reversed and paradoxically reversible" (p. 24). "Dunyazadiad," and Chimera as a whole, read intratextually and intertextually from the inside out, and the order of the Chinese-boxes which the reader discovers varies. Each narrative box is not necessarily contained within its preceeding box; thus, the key to reading Chimera is, for the most part, found in the "Dunyazadiad."

From the intratextual type of reading encouraged by the structure of "Dunyazadiad," Barth prepares the reader for the Chinese-box narrative of the next novella. In "Perseid," there are five containing units, the outermost unit of which is Barth's creation, the "Perseid." Within this periphery lie the three major intratexts of the novella. The first is Perseus's tale which he narrates from heaven (immortalized as a star) to Medusa, his fellow constellation; this narrative is a repeat of Perseus's tale told to Calyxa, which forms the second major intratext. The fourth narrative-box, and the third intratext, is the portrayal of Perseus's tale composed in Calyxa's murals. Thus Calyxa knows Perseus's life story before he narrates it to her, and there are, in effect, two intra-diegetic creators of Perseus's tale. In this narrative situation the murals serve as the intratext to Perseus's narrative to Calyxa, and later, to Medusa. The final box in the structure is Chimera, which places "Perseid" in an intratextual and intertextual relationship to the other novellas.

One of the central themes in "Perseid" is that of the mythic-hero who recounts his past life to find out where he has been, in order to

determine where he is going. Perseus, who models his life on the pattern of mythic heroes, states:

> whether I felt my post-Medusa years an example of or an exception to the archetypal pattern for heroic adventure--set me to years of comparative study, to learn what the pattern might be and where upon it I currently was. Thus this endless repetition of my story: as both protagonist and author, so to speak, I thought to overtake with understanding my present paragraph as it were by examining my paged past, and thus pointed, proceed serene to the future's sentence (pp. 80-81).

Writing becomes a metaphor for living, and the pattern of the mythic hero, as established in the myths, becomes the thematic intertext to "Perseid."

The murals in "Perseid," in a sense, read as legends since they precede Perseus's narration of his life story. Similarly, the tale of The One Thousand Nights and One Night is the legendary intertext to the Dunyazade/Scheherazade/Genie narrative, as it is assumed that the extradiegetic reader is familiar with the ancient tales. Even though these intertexts are intended by the author, the processing of these texts is the reader's activity. Myth and legend function as generic intertexts and serve as a touchstone from which the reality of the fiction can be created by the reader. For example, the murals (which prefigure the legend in "Perseid") reveal a discrepancy between what the murals depict as reality and what Perseus perceives as reality. Thus, to each teller of the tale, the reality depicted in the fiction differs. As a consequence of this the only source of certainty about reality, in any of the novellas, is the individual imagination. Ultimately this reality becomes that of the reader who imaginatively creates the fictional world as he perceives it.

Intertextual reading, as has already been demonstrated, can link Barth's view of reality in Chimera to that of Nabokov in Pale Fire. The reader of Nabokov's novel is uncertain as to who wrote the commentary or even the poem. Determining the possible author(s) of the intratexts in Pale Fire is not, as it has been earlier discussed, the point of the novel. Rather, the tale--the product of the imagination--is what the reader discovers and focuses his imaginative capabilities on.

In the final novella, "Bellerophoniad," the Chinese-box narrative structure is employed again, and as in the first two fictional works, the outermost narrative situation is Barth's in his fiction, the "Bellerophoniad." The next unit of narration within the box structure is Bellerophon's life story, told by him to Melanippe. Bellerophon, like his hero and role-model Perseus, narrates his story directly to his audience, though not as a constellation, but as a bundle of letters afloat in a Maryland marsh. Like Perseus, Bellerophon recounts his past life and traces it to middle-age, the "present" stage of his narrative, in order to determine his future. In this sense, "Perseid" serves as an intertext to the final novella. The reader, having read "Perseid," makes these various textual connections to arrive at the meaning of the one novella in light of the other. This process also works retroactively as the reader, for example, in making meaning and sense of "Bellerophoniad" from "Perseid," also enhances or amplifies his meaning of "Perseid," as the second novella is partially re-created via the intra-and intertextual connections the reader makes to the final fictional piece. The third diegetic unit in the final work is the story Bellerophon narrates to his wife, Philonoë, and this is the same story that is told in the "present"

narrative situation to Melanippe. The double narration of the same tale in the "Bellerophoniad" forms a textual link to that of "Perseid," as the reader recalls Perseus's narration to Medusa and to Calyxa. "Perseid" thus functions as an intertext to "Bellerophoniad," both structurally and thematically. However, there are several differences between the novellas which render them textual counterparts which only intertextual reading illuminates. For example, Perseus and Bellerophon differ in their understanding of heroism. Perseus, the "true" hero, adapts a new life pattern, while Bellerophon, on the other hand, tries to relive a pattern without changing it, fails in his endeavours, and,as a consequence, becomes a comic counterpart to Perseus. In the section of "Bellerophoniad" where Polyeidus delivers a lecture, Polyeidus comments: "I envisioned a comic novella based on the myth; a companion-piece to 'Perseid,' perhaps" (p. 202). This illustrates the intended textual connections between the final two novellas during the reading process, and ultimately heightens the reader's perception of the three novellas as an interconnected entity. Thus, further textual connections between the novellas arise to direct or shape the reader's act of reading intratextually (connecting the novellas to each other), and intertextually (connecting the fictions to their mythic origins as well as to other literary works).

The fourth narrative-box of the "Bellerophoniad" consists of several boxes which contain information that Polyeidus wrote Chimera. This becomes the final narrative unit in the Chinese-box structure. The fourth diegetic unit consists of the letters and lectures, presumed to be the author's, that comment on Chimera and previous Barth works. These letters, printed in the text, from Polyeidus could possibly equate

Polyeidus with Barth but this connection points outside the text in question to its author. The extra-diegetic reader is directed by these letters towards textual connections to other Barth works from which he is then able to amplify his understanding of Chimera. The very much flaunted artifice of this fourth narrative situation evokes in the reader an awareness of the author's own processes of creation, from which, in part, the reader works to co-create the text.

The Chinese-box narrative structure of Chimera forms an intricate intratextual design that perhaps yields a little more confusion that clarity upon the first reading. Despite the complexity of the structure, the Chinese-boxes are arranged in an "orderly" fashion as either the container or containing diegetic unit of another narrative situation. The act of reading as discovery and eventually co-creation disentangles the several narrative situations, and the reader builds from them the complete literary unit of the novellas, and ultimately Chimera. The narrative design of Chimera induces and, in fact, demands active participation by the reader. The Chinese-box structure also functions as a means of evoking from the reader an awareness of new possibilities in fiction-making, an awareness which reflects Barth's view of contemporary fiction which he discusses in that much acclaimed essay, "The Literature of Exhaustion." Barth's earlier fiction also deals with this issue as his novels demonstrate that the possibilities of art have not been "used up." Barth brings this to the reader's consciousness by writing fiction that encourages the reader to connect the literature under consideration to his other experiences of fiction. The mental process of this acitvitiy, here defined as intertextuality, is induced by the intratextual and intertextual

narrative design. The reader, however much encouraged by the fiction to create from his treasure-house of fiction, remains in the end, solely responsible for this type of reading. The artifice of the fiction evokes in the reader a consciousness of his mental process during the act of reading.

Active reading of Chimera, intertextually and intratextually, brings the reader back to the earliest form of the literary tradition, the oral. This active reading also becomes a system of discovering, intratextually, the cross-references within the novellas and between them. Cross-referential reading also extends outwards towards other literary works as the intertexts to Chimera. The most overt intertexts are Barth's earlier works, for example, The Sotweed Factor, Giles Goat-Boy and Lost in the Funhouse. In spite of Barth's incorporation of other works of fiction in Chimera, he demonstrates that the possibility of creating new fiction from other works and genres has not been "exhausted." As a self-conscious writer, Barth brings this to the reader's awareness by the way he knows best, and that is in fiction-making. The fiction that Barth creates is not traditionally realistic, and in this, Barth follows in the footsteps of his favorite predecessors, Jorge Luis Borges and Vladimir Nabokov. Intertextual reading that connects Barth's work to other self-reflexive works reveals a thematic link most notably in the concept of the "reality" of the work. The reality of Barth's fiction is invented, and exists only in the imagination that chooses to create the work. This perspective on reality exemplifies and thematizes the crisis facing contemporary fiction, and deals with this crisis by effectively disproving via fiction that the possibilities of "form" have been exhausted: "Having lost out in the

contest to 'represent reality,' fiction could survive only if it abandoned 'reality' altogether and turned instead to the power of words to stimulate the imagination."[7] The type of fiction Barth writes offers the reader an opportunity to create "reality" from that which he is stimulated to imagine. Thus this type of fiction, of which Chimera is an overt example, does not attempt to define reality, nor does it adhere to what one would consider "everyday reality." The reader's divorce from a defined view of reality in the fiction allows for the free reign of his imagination as he co-creates the fictional world. In an interview, Barth states that reality is the world his mind imagines, and this he shares with the reader by transforming the reality depicted by his imagination "[the] impulse to imagine alternatives to the world can become a driving impulse for writers. I confess that it is for me."[8]

The reader's textual connections to previous Barth works during his reading of Chimera amplify the meaning he is able to discern as he places Chimera in the thematic context of those other works. The many links between Barth's fictions establish the incestuous intertextual nature of his works. Chimera exemplifies this intratextually, within each novella and between the novellas, and intertextually, in relation to other Barth works. The Chinese-box structure extends, at least thematically, beyond Chimera, as Chimera can be depicted as a box within the treasure-house of Barth fiction, as well as other fiction (for example, myth and legend). Chimera can then be interpreted as a means of reviewing literature, as it looks back over the tradition to return to the origins of fiction; inter-textual reading becomes the mode of conducting the review.

Within the context of other Barth works, the most overt intertextual link thematically and structurally to Chimera is the short story "Menelaiad" in the Lost in the Funhouse series.[9] In the "Bellerophoniad," Polyeidus/Barth directs the reader to this textual connection, as he states in his lecture: "the long short-story 'Menelaiad' and the novella 'Perseid,' for example--deal directly with particular manifestations of the myth of the wandering hero and address as well a number of their author's more current thematic concerns: the mortal desire for immortality, for instance, and its ironically qualified fulfillment--especially by the mythic hero's transformation...into the sound of his own voice, or the story of his life, or both" (p. 199). In addition to this noted thematic link between the works, the short story is a structural variant of Chimera. The "Menelaiad" contains fourteen sections, numbered one through seven, which are then reversed and unwind in the narrative from seven back to one. In each section, Menelaus, the major character, attempts to complete his life story of how he became immortalized. In order to reach the centre of his story, Menelaus must first enter into a series of frames and interconnected narratives, which take the form of the Chinese-box structure. Each narrative-box within the structure is identified by a number of quotation marks, and the reader, if he hopes to connect the various levels of narration, must forego any attempt at linear reading, stop, count the quotation marks, and piece together the narrative-boxes.

In the "Menelaiad," there are nine levels of narration. At the outermost level is the "Menelaiad" Barth's creation. The second narrative situation is Menelaus's voice. Within these outer boxes lie the seven sections that appear consecutively and then counter-consecutively to

comprise the fourteen sections. The first narrative frame that Menelaus enters is his narration of Telemachus's visit. The second is Menelaus's story of himself and Helen at sea, which is then told to Telemachus and forms the third narrative-box. The fourth narrative-box is Menelaus's narration of Eidothea and Proteus, which is told to Helen, and the fifth consists of Menelaus's story (which he tells to Proteus) of himself and Eidothea. The sixth narrative-box is Menelaus's narration of himself and Helen in Troy, which is told to Eidothea, and the final tale is Menelaus's explanation of why Helen left with Paris (which is told to Helen).

Each of the intratexts or inner-tales in the "Menelaiad" is connected, as one story leads to the telling of the next. As an inter-text to Chimera, the "Menelaiad" incorporates the same Chinese-box narrative structure. The reader who is familiar with the interlocking and expanding Chinese-box narrative technique of the short story builds his act of reading Chimera from his reading experiences of other Barth fiction. The reader of Chimera becomes actively involved in a narrative situation whereby each story, as it is discovered and created, reveals subsequent stories, until the last is finally created. It is in the final inner-tale, as exemplified in the "Menelaiad," that the reader finds the impetus, as Barth states, of story-telling. Similarly, the last fictional piece in Chimera brings the reader back to the first tale, where the impetus to imagine and create stems from, first, necessity, as in the case of Scheherazade, and then, the desire to imagine, which the Genie overtly demonstrates. The final novella ends with a blank: "It's no 'Bellerophoniad.' It's a " (p. 308), and this has the effect of returning the reader to the beginning of Chimera where he seeks to find

the answer to fill in the blank. The mute ending of the "Bellerophoniad" leads the reader to the origins of literature, which he discovers in the "Dunyazadiad."

The blank ending of the novella can also be filled with "Chimera," the three part mythic monster, with the head of a lion, body of a goat, and tail of a serpent, that serves as a titular metaphor of the novel. This metaphor demonstrates the interconnecting and circular pattern of the novel. Intertextual reading links this structural aspect of the novel to another Barth fiction, the short story "Frame Tale," also from the Funhouse sequence. The moebius strip, containing the words "Once upon a time there was a story that began" (pp. 1-2), is the story. The pattern of the moebius strip, and the infinite repetition of the words, is a symbol of the pattern of the novellas that comprise Chimera. These novellas can be read in any order, as each novella is a thematic and structural commentary on the other two.

Further intertextual connections which heighten the reader's meaning-making processes in Chimera and which also illustrate the thematic unity amongst Barth's works can also be made with Lost in the Funhouse. In the title story, Barth mocks the claim that fiction necessarily mirrors reality exactly. Barth confirms an alternative to reality by depicting in the story mirrors that distort reality. The central character in the story becomes "lost" in the funhouse of mirrors. In this story, Barth uses mirrors as a symbol for art. Some art purports to reflect the real; the appropriate image for this mimetic art is the normal reflecting mirror. The distorting mirror images in this story, however, reveal that art, as a product of the imagination, can also be

non-realistic. As an intertext to Chimera, the short story assists the reader in discovering the meaning of a work in which the only reality is the imagination.

In another story, "Life-Story," Barth's narrative technique is similar to that of Chimera and "Menelaiad." The involuted Chinese-boxes in this story support the argument that life is a fiction, and that everyone is a fiction-maker. This argument, expounded upon in a fictional work, thematizes the art/life connection Barth makes. As one critic writes:

> Barth is, as he should be, tentative about the connection between art and life; for him, it is at best hypothesis--but a most useful one, providing a theme for nearly all of his artistic output. Barth's novels are commentaries on theories of the novel; insofar as novels are a part of life.... The result is the movement of artistic self-consciousness to the foreground of the artifact; the result is the production of 'imitations of novels' which 'attempt to represent not life directly but a representation of life'.[10]

Thematically, "Life Story" expands one of the meanings of Chimera, which is that life is a fiction. The "Perseid" and "Bellerophoniad" overtly illustrate this theme, as the lives of the major characters are recorded in fictions: Perseus's is contained in Calyxa's murals, and Bellerophon's appears in the muddled letters that he eventually becomes. In the "Dunyazadiad," fiction is the life-sustaining force of the characters Scheherazade and Dunyazade and their lives are fictionalized in the legend, The One Thousand Nights and One Night as well as in the "Dunyazadiad." On another level, the fiction/life connection is expressed in Chimera, as the novel is a recording of its life as fiction. Chimera,

in short, is a novel about itself and its "life"-rendering processes.

The Barth short story which best undermines the "reality" asspciated with mimesis and realistic fiction is "Echo." The story serves as a thematic intertext to Chimera, as it purports that the non-real is "real." "Echo" is a parody of mimetic fiction, and this parody is expressed by the title character who can only repeat the words of others. Barth expresses, in this story, his view of writers who reduce fiction to mere repetition of previously written work. In Chimera, Barth expands this theme by creating a new fiction from the very origins of the tradition. The myths are retold in a different inventive way. Hence the fiction earns its title as innovative fiction. The imaginative ability of its author, which Chimera reflects, is shared with the reader, who is invited to participate imaginatively in the fictional world as its co-creator.

The Barth intertexts mentioned above may be considered intended intertexts by Barth, as these intertexts place Chimera in thematic continuity with previous Barth works. The overt allusions to other Barth fiction (for example, in the letters and lectures in "Bellerophoniad" which connect Barth with Polyeidus, and which also serve as a commentary on Barth's works) direct the reader to Barth intertexts. Intertextuality, as it has been here defined, is after all the reader's processing of textual connections during the act of reading, and functions as a process from which the reader makes sense and meaning of the text. The textual connections the reader makes to other Barth works, structurally and thematically, amplify the meaning he makes of Chimera. In fact, the earlier fictional works discussed here illustrate that the possibilities

of art have not been exhausted. Barth has proven this several times over with each new fictional work, and Chimera is an even more elaborate fictional response to the charges that forms of literature have been "exhausted." Chimera is also an answer to the question facing novelists today: "Where does the contemporary writer go when the freshness had disappeared from the narrative tradition, when 'artful fiction,' as the Genie says, has dropped from favor and no one reads it anymore but a few critics and some unwilling students? Where does he go when his own well runs dry? Chimera answers, back to the origins."[11] Barth may thematize, in his fiction, the change in contemporary literature, but it is the reader who places the "crisis," which fiction today allegedly faces, in the context of Chimera via the connections he makes to other texts. In this instance, the "crisis" of contemporary literature also serves as an intertext to Chimera in the response it has evoked. As a response, Chimera is an innovative and consciousness-provoking fictional work, forcing awareness of not only its processes of creation, but also its "place" in the vast treasure-house of the literary tradition.

NOTES ON CHAPTER III

[1]John Barth, Chimera (New York: Random House, 1972), p. 26. All further references will be made to this edition and will appear in parenthes · in the text.

[2]Joe David Bellamy, The New Fiction: Interviews with Innovative American Writers (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1974), p.13, quotes this.

[3]The edition consulted and referred to in this discussion is edited and translated by Richard F. Burton (New York: The Modern Library, 1932).

[4]Barth's source for information on the myths of Perseus and Bellerophon is Robert Graves's double volume study, The Greek Myths (1955; rpt. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1977).

[5]David Morrell, John Barth: An Introduction (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1976), p. 162.

[6]John Barth, "The Literature of Exhaustion," The Atlantic, (August 1967), p. 29.

[7]Joe David Bellamy, ed., Superfiction or the American Story Transformed (New York: Vintage Books, 1975), p. 3.

[8]In John Enck, "John Barth: An Interview," Wisconsin Studies in Contemporary Literature, 6, 1(Winter/Spring 1965), 8.

[9]John Barth, Lost in the Funhouse (New York: Bantam Books, 1969), pp. 127-162.

[10]Tatham Campbell, "John Barth and the Aesthetics of Artifice," in Joseph J. Waldmeir, ed., Critical Essays on John Barth (Boston: G.K. Hall and Co., 1980), pp. 45-46.

[11]Jerry H. Bryant, "The Novel Looks at Itself--Again," in Waldmeir, ed., p. 214.

CONCLUSION

YOU HAVE FALLEN INTO ART--RETURN TO LIFE[1]

The above direction to the reader is the note upon which Willie Master's Lonesome Wife, William Gass' novel of typographical contrivance, linear chaos and narrative disruption, ends. Gass' somewhat disconcerting ending exemplifies the dual focus of the metafictional works discussed: first, in the premise established by and in the works that fiction is art, not life, and second, that a central focus of the text is on the reader. The reader, while reading, creates a fictional world from the very artifice of the text which initially engages him in the fiction and eventually induces his imaginative, and hence, creative capacities. The reader of self-reflexive fiction is offered an opportunity to create a fictional world--an artistic product which he brings to life via reading. This degree of reader involvement in and with a text mirrors that of the writer's actual processes of creation, and it is the reader's active imaginative participation that re-enacts these processes to generate and produce a text.

The imagination is that which becomes, in essence, Willie Master's Lonesome Wife. The heroine of the novel introduces herself in terms of her imaginative activity: "Departure is my name. I travel, dream. I feel sometimes as if I were imagination (that spider goddess and thread-spinning muse)--imagination imagining itself imagine." Intrigued by her imaginative capacity, she continues: "I dream, invent, and I imagine.... I dream like Madame Bovary. Only I don't die during endings. I never

die." The heroine of the fiction imagines and invents the world of the text, an act which, within the context of self-reflexive fiction, mirrors the same imaginative act of the reader who co-creates and re-creates the text while reading.

In addition to illuminating the vital and integral role of the reader's imagination in self-reflexive works, Gass' fiction overtly and blatantly exemplifies the metafictionist's consciousness of subverting and undermining past literary conventions, those conventions which seek to connect art to life and which also assume all readers to be satisfied by this link and thus willing to participate in texts in a linear and a chronological fashion. Thus literary conventions are "exploded" in Gass' fiction as he presents the reader with a text that deviates from traditional typographical and narrative forms. Typographical and narrative disorder is expressed by frequent changes in print type and size, print which is patterned in shapes on the page, different page colors, unnumbered pages, footnotes which become a unit of narrative (some of which eventually consume the page), marginal notes, illustrations, and multiple units of narrative. Gass' novel is, in short, a visual and fictional extreme of the metafictional concerns that are expressed by Barth, Barthelme, Gardner and Nabokov in their works. These fictions seek to bring to the reader's attention the restrictions which conventional forms impose on reading, an imposition which makes reading, as Raymond Federman states, "boring and restrictive."[2]

The reader of Willie Master's Lonesome Wife is plunged into a confusing narrative situation, one in which he is maligned, questioned, and challenged. Of course, this "attention" which is lavished upon

the reader is in keeping with the metafictionist's focus on the reader and on reading. However, Gass carries this to extremes as he indicates his intention of seducing and abusing the receiver of his text: "Now that I've got you alone down here, you bastard, don't think I'm letting you get away easily, no sir, not you brother." In fact, the further the reader reads, the more he becomes manipulated, entrapped, and victimized by the text, as Gass deliberately intends him to be: "Once I get the reader captured in the book, I really want to do things to him. Still, I can entice him like a whore. And I hope to write about certain kinds of objectionable attitudes and feelings in such a way that the reader will accept them, will have them, while he's reading. In that sense the book is a progressive indictment of the reader. If it works."[3]

In Willie Master's Lonesome Wife, the reader is openly confronted with this very process of "progressive indictment." For example, the reader is told: "oh, yes, how I love you now I have you here, why, you're perfect, perfect...how I love you now I have you here--and as long as I talk to you, as long as I threaten you, as long as I bait you, as long as I call you names and blaspheme your gods...then dear brother, lover, fellow reader--than I've got you deep inside me." Intimidating and offensive as remarks of this nature may appear, they are a conscious reminder to the reader of his relationship to the text--he is only reading a book and playing in it the role of "reader." The reader is also made aware, by these remarks, of another aspect of his relationship to the text, a relationship in which the reader is in full control. He can participate in the fictional world, or close the book at will. By bringing this essential but basic fact to the reader's attention, Gass

reminds him of the physical reality that exists outside the text, one that distances him from the fictional world. This distance is reinforced by authorial intrusions that seek to sever the author from the text. An example of this can be seen in the following remark: "The muddy circle you see just before you and below represents the ring left on a leaf of the manuscript by my coffee cup. Represents, I say, because, as you must surely realize, this book is many removes from anything I've set pen, hand, or cup to." However, the reader as a co-creator is not removed from the text as is the author; yet, in spite of his physical and mental attachment to the text, the reader is left to resolve the tension that arises between his imaginative involvement in the text, and at the same time his physical reality which detaches him from the text. Donald Barthelme brings the same awareness to the reader (of his dual and somewhat paradoxical relationship to the text) in an equally overt way, in the questionnaire of Snow White. For example, one question returns the reader to his physical reality to the text: "Do you stand up when you read? ( ) Lie down? ( ) Sit? ( )."[4]

Textual aggression often becomes the main mode by which the reader is made aware of his paradoxical involvement in and detachment from the fictional world. In some narrative instances in Willie Master's Lonesome Wife, the reader is openly assaulted, insulted, and upbraided for his involvement in the text. Diagonally printed across the page in large black letters is the author's remark: "YOU'VE BEEN HAD, FROM START TO FINISH." Facing the reader, in a single paragraph commenting on this statement, is the insult: "haven't you, jocko? you sad sour stew-faced sonofabitch. Really, did you read this far? puzzle your head? turn

the pages this and that, around about?... But, honestly, you skipped a lot. Is that any way to make love to a lady, a lonely one at that?" The sexual act that dominates the narrative is, in short, a metaphor for fiction writing, and in the novel it is "the heroine who livens up the act by inventing fictional worlds.... Just as she is her body, so 'the poet is his language. He sees his world, and words from his eyes, just like the streams and trees there. He feels everything verbally'--as does the reader."[5] Language, the mediator between the text and the reader, is the medium by which the reader embarks on his imaginative engagement with the text, a "love" relationship which unfolds for him the world of the fiction. That the reader engages with the somewhat vituperative narrative of Willie Master's Lonesome Wife is a fact about which the author comments with amazement: "Really, did you read this far?" However, this statement indicates the author's assumption that the reader will establish a "love" relationship to the text--that he will, in short, "make love" to the lonely lady.

The textual harrassment of the reader, one instance of which questions the conscientiousness of his act, is a metafictional technique of evoking from the reader a greater awareness of his actual act of reading. John Barth, in short story, "Life-Story," from the Lost in the Funhouse series, adopts a similar aggressive stance towards the reader: "The reader! You, dogged, uninsultable, print-oriented bastard, it's you I'm addressing, who else, from inside this monstrous fiction. You've read me this far, then? Even this far? For what discreditable motive? How is it you don't go to a movie, watch TV?"[6] The paradox of statements along these lines (characteristic of self-reflexive, reader-oriented works) is

that writers are also as print-oriented and as subject to the same tyranny of print as is the reader. However, conscious attempts at subverting and castrating the authority and the tyranny of the printed word in metafictional works at least make the reader aware of this fact, and at the same time offer the reader an opportunity to escape from the tyranny imposed by print by encouraging and inducing him to read imaginatively. Gass' novel is perhaps one of the more extreme and unsubtle thematizations of the metafictionist's focus on the reader and on reading.

The concept of intertextuality, as it has been argued in this study, is a concept which exemplifies the freedom of the reader as he transfers the images he makes, from the page to his mind, and then extends them outwards to his other experiences in fiction. Intertextuality is the reader's momentary disengagement from the text as he pauses to draw from other fictional worlds the images which amplify those induced by the text he is reading. The generation of a textual world and the creation of it from an active imagination are the responsibilities of the reader in the new role self-reflexive fiction extends and offers to him. In his new role, the reader participates in a fictional world in order to bring a text to life. Self-reflexive works encourage the free reign of the imagination by undermining textual tyranny via various metafictional techniques which seek to subvert the absolute control of the printed page. The concepts of the intratext and intertextuality, as they are here discussed in representative American fictions, actualize and thematize the attempts of contemporary metafictionists to involve the reader in the creative processes of the text. After all, "texts do not come to life,

texts do not generate anything--until they are read. Without the reader, texts remain collections of black marks on white pages."[7] The metafictionists' awareness of this basic fact and their attempts to deal with it within their fictions have resulted in a new role for the reader, one which has become a central aspect in the self-reflexive "replenishment" of American literature today.

NOTES ON CONCLUSION

[1]William Gass, Willie Master's Lonesome Wife (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971), unnumbered pages. All further references will be made to this edition.

[2]See Raymond Federman's Introduction to Surfiction: Fiction Now... and Tomorrow (Chicago: The Swallow Press Inc., 1975), p. 9.

[3]In Thomas LeClair, "A Conversation with William Gass," Chicago Review, 30, 2(Autumn 1978), 100.

[4]Donald Barthelme, Snow White (1965; rpt., New York:Atheneum,1980),p.83.

[5]Linda Hutcheon, Narcissistic Narrative: The Metafictional Paradox (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1980), p. 85.

[6]John Barth, Lost in the Funhouse (New York: Bantam Books, 1969), p. 123.

[7]Linda Hutcheon, unpublished "Position Paper: Round Table on Intertextuality and Influence," International Comparative Literature Association Congress (August 1982), p. 8.

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