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Dramatized Narrative Audiences

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Abstract: ***Before the explosion of reader-response criticism in the last twenty years, Gerald Prince was able to suggest that critics have largely neglected the narrate in literature in order to concentrate on the narrator, perhaps "because the hero of numerous novels and tales is himself a writer, a narrator…., whereas there has never been a hero who is primarily a reader or a listener, at least not to my knowledge."1 Clearly, the activity of a fiction, unlike the activity been dramatized or implied by works of literature, these narrates generally provide a frame for the narrative or an occasion that makes the tale possible, as for example, the pilgrims function in The Canterbury Tales, or the caliph in the Arabian Nights. Their activity as narrates is always secondary to the tale itself. Even in works like Wuthering Heights or Heart of Darkness, in which the auditors are clearly affected by the tale, their responses either help to establish the reality of the tale (as Lockwood does) or provide a clue about how the "real" reader is to respond.***

Keywords: Fiction, Narratives, October-Light, Moral –fiction, Snappy rhythms, Existentialist philosophy, Narratee, Mystery

1. Introduction

What distinguishes the three novels which are discussed here **(October Light, Kiss of the Spider Woman,** and **If on a Winter's Night a Traveller)** from more traditional texts which a their narrates is that a reader or listener is indeed the primary subject—the hero ---of each novel. Instead of merely being a frame for the more "important" aspect of the structure—the tale – the activity of reading (or of listening) is a primary activity in these novels, and the narratives embedded in these metafictional works seem in some ways secondary to the responses that they elicit from the readers.

We have examined the methods that writers of metafiction employ to alter the reader's expectations about the nature of the literary transaction, emphasizing in each chapter a particular aspect of that transaction. The subject of the first chapter is metafiction that highlights the author's performance and his attempt to teach us to be better readers of performance literature, while the second considers metafiction that draws our attention to the tale itself and to the power of narrative forms; the third chapter, of course, is devoted to literature that is primarily concerned with its medium, its own literary language. Having addressed the teller, the tale, and the medium, we can now turn to metafiction that emphasizes the final element of the narrative transaction, the reader or listener.

By dramatizing the narrative audience for the embedded fictions, these novels also confuse the relationship between narrator and narrative audience and author and authorial audience. While the reader as character reads only the embedded narratives, the 'real' reader reads both the narratives, of the reader's activity and the embedded narratives, aware that both are written by the same author in order to raise questions about the role of the reader in the literary transaction and about the important of narrates of Gardner, Puig, and Calvino function in vastly different ways, suggesting not only these authors 'different attitudes toward their implied readers, but also the flexibility of this particular narrative device.

1) October Light: The Reader of "Common Drugstore Trash"

Gardner's October Light is the most traditional of the three novels discussed here, and its structure is the simplest, with a single dramatized reader and a single (though incomplete) embedded narrative. Through Gardner employs the experimental device of the reader-as protagonist with clearly metafictional intentions, October Light is in many ways a reactionary response to contemporary writers like William Gass. Just as Gass's **Willie Masters' Lonesome Wife** can be read as a fictional enactment of his critical interests, with a leading character who proves "that literature is language, that stories and the places and the people in them are merely made of words as chairs are made of smoothed sticks and sometimes of cloth or metal tubes, "3 Gardner's novel is, as Gregory Morris suggests, "a fictional companion piece "to On Moral Fiction,"4

The "real-life" conflict in October Light is between Sally page Abbott and her seventy-three years old brother, James page, a cranky New Englander who has strong opinions on everything, but especially on the television's role in the corruption of American Values. After shooting out his sister's television screen, James locks Sally in her room, where she stays for several days, eating apples from the attic and amusing herself with a novel she discovers on her floor. Though Sally and James both function as mimetic characters in the novel, Sally also exists as a reader who enacts the critical position Gardner develops in On Moral Fiction—that "metaphor becomes reality when we read":

Thus, the idea that the writer's only material is words is true only in a trivial sense. Words conjure emotionally charged images in the reader's mind, and when the words are put together in the proper way, with the proper rhythms—long and short sounds, smooth or ragged, tranquil or rambunctious—we have the queer experience of falling through the print on the page into something like a dream, an imaginary world so real and convincing that when we happen o be jerked out of it by a call from The kitchen or knock at the door, we stare for an instant in befuddlement at the familiar room where we sat down, half an hour ago, with our book, To say that we shouldn't react to fictional characters as "real people" is exactly equivalent to saying

that we shouldn't be frightened by the things we meet in nightmares.5

Sally, as she begins to read **The Smugglers of Lost Souls' Rock**—the "common drugstore trash" that is the only form of escape available to her—reacts to the character as she would react to real people and is reminded, for instance, of her nephew's suicide by the character in her fiction who is about to jump off a bridge. And though she begins reading hesitantly and without commitment, aware that the novel is trashy, she soon abandons herself to the vision of the fiction and thus becomes Gardner's ideal reader:

But quite imperceptibly the real world lost weight and the print on the page gave way to images, an alternative reality more charged than mere life, more ghostly yet nearer, suffused with a curious importance and manageability. She began to fall in with the book's snappy rhythms, becoming herself more wry, more wearily disgusted with the world….. Life became larger, in vibration to such worlds, and she, the observer and container of this universe, became necessarily more vast than its space….By degrees, without knowing she was doing it, she gave in to the illusion, the comforting security of her vantage point, until whenever she looked up from the page to rest her eyes, it seemed that the door, the walls, the dresser, the heavy onyx clock had no more substance than a plate-glass reflection.6

The words on the page affect sally just as Gardner says reading affects all of us in the critical passage quoted above; indeed, the phrasing and images are nearly identical, and except that the activity is ascribed to a character in a narrative, this fictional passage would not be out of place in On Moral Fiction. As Gardner suggests in this work, the good writer "provides his reader, consciously and to some extent mechanically, with a dramatic equivalent of the intellectual process he himself went through; October Light is certainly a dramatic enactment of Gardner's argument for a moral fiction, and his description of Sally's activity as a reader functions, sometimes mechanically, as "a simulation of real experience [that] is morally educational" (OMF,114). For sally, the words of novel do not merely reflect upon themselves (one recalls the mirror-image page in Gass's text), but instead they make her own world, the world of her room, seem insubstantial (like the reflection of a mirror) compared to the reality of the fictional world.

The fictional world of the embedded narrative is indeed sick," as sick and evil as life in America," as the National Observer blurb on the cover tells us (14). As Robert Morace suggests, Gardner parodies stone's Dog Soldiers through The smugglers of Lost Souls' Rock,7 a work that, like stone's is concerned with drug running, has a convoluted plot, and main characters who are indeed lost souls. Additionally, The Smugglers is a novel that dramatizes the objections Gardner has raised against Pynchon, who "carelessly praises the schlock of the past……and howls against the schlock of the present" (OMF 196) and Vonnegut, whose "novels have the feel of first-class comic books (trash culture elevated to art, if you will) and can easily be read by people who dislike long sentence"(87).The embedded narrative is thus a pastiche of the type of "immoral" contemporary fiction that Gardner believes misleads readers and draws them into a valueless world where life is cheap, the type of fiction that would never appeal to the god-fearing Sally were she not deprived of other entertainment.

The rhetorical challenge that Gardner takes on in October Light is finally rather complicated, depending as it does on Gardner's persuading us of the immorality and power of the embedded novel, which takes up over one-third of the book. Morris hints at this problem when he attempts to access the staying power of Gardner's work:

Perhaps the most troublesome of Gardner's book's, in terms of its future, is October Light, for its success turns upon the controversy of its structure. What one thinks of October Light often depends upon what one thinks of the inner novel. If one accepts the structural relevance and necessity and effectiveness of the inner novel, then one accepts October Light as a major twentieth-century novel. If, however, one denies the purpose of the inner novel and perceives it as gimmickry, expedience, and failure, then one judges the book as an interesting but minor work of contemporary art.9

There is little doubt that Morris believes this novels is a major work and that the inner novel is relevant, for his own discussion of October Light rests largely on the negative effect that The Smugglers of Lost Souls' Rock has on its elderly reader. But showing how Sally is misled by the embedded narrative is actually only one (and the simplest at that) of the challenges that Gardner must fulfil for his novel to succeed. Because The Smugglers is presented as a lengthy narrative that exists outside of October Light, the reader must be able to experience the novel as Sally experiences it; that is, The Smugglers must entice and intrigue the narrative reader apart from its function in the larger story. At the same time, the narrative reader must enter the audience of Sally and James' tale and find in it a world that is finally more valuable than that of The Smugglers. And if Gardner is to persuade his authorial audience of the superiority of "moral" fiction and of the corruptive power of immoral fiction, he must make us identify with Sally's activity as a reader of the embedded narrative, and he must thus present Sally as a reader whom we cannot easily dismiss as simple-minded or foolish.

The elderly reader is slowly drawn into the story, despite the fact that she "had no intention of reading a book that she knew in advance to be not all there"(15).The narrative reader of the embedded fiction experiences it as Sally does, reading first the advertising blurbs on the cover and then reading one paragraph at a time, for Gardner frequently interrupts The Smugglers with sections describing Sally's response to what she reads. When peter Wagner, the suicidal protagonist, suggests that "All life, he had come to understand, was a boring novel, "Sally utters aloud, "Isn't it the truth!" and hovers "between fury at her brother and escape into the book"(16); this alternating of the narrative (one that is metafictional in its attempt to depict life as nothing more than a fiction)and responds to what she reads in terms of the recent events that led to her imprisonment. The narrative reader is likewise more committed to the outer novel and experiences Sally's reading, which is mediated by the same third-person narrator who tells the outer story, as a

similar distraction from the evening's argument; at this point, we read Sally's reading as it will illuminate the conflict at the heart of October Light . Sally, for instance, laughs at Wagner's making a joke out of suicide by asking what the authorities could do to him for hanging from the bridge, "Shoot him?"(18). But she immediately steps back from the narrative and, recalling her nephew's suicide, is angry both at the novel for making light of the subject, and at herself for giving into the novel's comic effect. Morace indicates that "Sally's taste in books and television is indiscriminate, and this lack of critical taste makes her especially vulnerable to The Smugglers pernicious influence,"8 but she does indeed respond critically to the book when she first begins to read. But as Sally increasingly escapes into the novel. But as Sally increasingly escapes into the novel, reading entire chapters before responding, her critical comments become less frequent, which also encourages the real reader of October Light to experience The Smugglers as an independent narrative audience of Sally's reading.

Before considering the effect of the inner novel on the reader of October Light, we will consider the effect that escape into The Smugglers has on the dramatized reader. Frit, the act of reading (no matter the book) provide Sally with entertainment and encourages her to remain in her room, neglect her chores, and endure the solitude. But in addition to making her more stubborn in her fight against her brother, the book affects Sally's outlook on the world. Though she consciously believes that "She wasn't come child, going to be corrupted by a foolish book"(61),her reasons to continue reading even though she knows large sections of the book are missing reveal an increasingly cynical outlook on life; she continues "merely to escape the stupidity, the dreariness, the waste of things"(42). Sally begins, unconsciously, to echo the Existentialist philosophy proclaimed by the suicidal protagonist of her novel:"…….life's a waste… Love is an illusion. Hope is the opiate of the people. Faith is pure stupidity"(27). And the casual, meaningless, marijuana – inspired sexual orgies of the novel, make her remember her nephew's love affair with an Irish girl of whom James would have disapproved, and inspire regret, as though she had missed something by having remained faithful to her husband all her life:

"The lives she might have lived, the lovers and children she might have had (Horace had gone through world war I and was, he though, too have children; the career she might have had as an actress on the stage, or even as a prostitute in New Orleans—why not? Why not? The young people were right!---she'd missed them all for all eternity……..(370).

While Sally continues to think of the book as trash, written by someone "foolish and inept," she is nevertheless corrupted by "the novel, which had triggered her gloomy mood"(199).

But Sally's reading does more than stir up memories and regrets; it actually alters her behaviour, making her more self-conscious and vindictive. When, on the morning after the fight, Sally refuses to come out of the room or accept James' attempt to forget the whole incident, she sat in bed, "smiling with self-satisfied, malicious delight,"The Story in It" opens with a scene of writing and reading. With the rainy and stormy weather in the background, Mrs. Dyott writes letters, while her visitor Maud Blessing Bourne reads an "obviously good" novel. As the third-person narrator informs us, the reader is happy with her book and her happiness illustrates that she probably reads a French author. After a silence of half an hour, the two ladies begin to converse about reading and living. Maud Blessing Bourne draws a sharp border between the two when she tells Mrs. Dyott, "I know you don't read, ... but why should you? *You* live" (309). This distinction is reiterated by Mrs. Dyott's second visitor, Colonel Voyt, who says, "Well, I *am* a small child compared to you—but I'm not dead yet. I cling to life" (311). Though Voyt's statement lacks direct reference to reading, the subject of his ongoing dialogue with Mrs. Dyott implies that his choice of clinging to life alludes also to his clinging to Mrs. Dyott, who *lives*, rather than to Mrs. blessing Bourne, who *reads.* In fact, the text's discussions pertaining living and reading are coloured by the discussions about love, as Mrs. Dyott tells Voyt that Mrs. Blessing Bourne is in love with him, like herself. Mrs. blessing Bourne denies that she is fond of romances and calls them "vulgar." The characters' discussions regarding novels, romances, love, and vulgarity illustrate how they lose their innocence "in" the stories that they read and criticize for moral reasons. In "The Story in It" the dialogue on French and British novels reflects a tension between the two women. Mrs. Dyott's mishearing of Maud's statement that the book is "a little mild" because of the sound of the storm is a sign of this tensed atmosphere.

Mrs. Dyott's misunderstanding—"A little wild?" (208)—is significant since Maud reads a French novel. Indeed, the sequence continues with Mrs. Dyott's question, "Do you carry [French novels] by the dozen," to which Maud replies with another question: "Into innocent British homes?" (309). The innocence of British homes implies the "mild" British novels. They are "mild" according to both Maud and Colonel Voyt. In the second part of the story, Voyt agrees with Maud that he cannot read British or American novels as they seem to "show [their] sense of life as the sense of puppies and kittens" (315), referring to the human beings who have passion and desire to seek relations. Hence, adopting life from the street results in the writings of "poor twangers and twaddlers" (315). Representing at this point James's concerns of representation and morality, Voyt means that the artist should *relate* the *relations* as an aesthetic adventure.

James's approbation that Balzac replicated "every sentiment, every idea, every person, every place, and every object" shows his expectation of the inclusiveness of the art work ("Balzac 1875-78" 66). Even if this inclusiveness should be selective, the artist should approach the window with "an air of selection" to see the "wild" weather out. The human scene is like wild weather with its adventurous nature or, as Voyt explains, "intimate, curious, suggestive" relations (315). The "adventures of innocence" are, indeed, "what the bored reader complains of" (320). However, in contrast to Voyt's assertion, Maud seems to be bored with the "wild" relations. According to Voyt, Maud's protests of "the same couple" portrayed in French novels spring from her interest "in something different from life." While Voyt believes that

passionate adventures are natural parts of life, Maud is concerned with "vulgarity": "I *love* life—in art, though I hate it anywhere else. It's the poverty of the life those people show, and the awful bounders of both sexes, that they represent" (317).

"The poverty of the life" in relations becomes more important for comprehending James's realism, considering that Maud reads not only French authors but also the Italian writer D'Annunzio (309). Gabriele D'Annunzio, who, according to James, "has really sailed the sea and brought back the booty," is the only writer named in "The Story in It" ("Gabriele D'Annunzio" 296). James's essay "Gabriele D'Annunzio" (1904) describes the aesthetics of adventure and misadventure. According to James, D'Annunzio has a high degree of aesthetic consciousness through which he makes beauty, art, and forms the aims of his life. In the case of D'Annunzio, "ugliness is an accident, a treachery of fate, the intrusion of a foreign substance—having for the most part in the scheme itself no admitted inevitability" (280). Writing "great" erotic relations freely, D'Annunzio does what the English novelists are unable to do. Yet James seems to be as reserved as Maud about this freedom as it may result in the danger of falling prey to "vulgarity" and depicting "the poverty of life" in an attempt to represent "every person, every object, every detail," including sexual passion.

James echoes Maud's words that "[she] love[s] life in art though [she] hate[s] it anywhere else." D'Annunzio, who derives sexual passion from some "detached pictures" and finds its "extension and consummation" in the rest of life, stands in a risky position: "shut out from the rest of life, shut out from all fruition and assimilation, it has no more dignity than—to use a homely image—the boots and shoes that we see, in the corridors of promiscuous hotels, standing, often in double pairs, at the doors of rooms" (295). It is the integration of life and art that deems erotic relations an aesthetic adventure rather than a representation of "boots" and "shoes" in "promiscuous hotels." Similar to James, Maud considers life and love in art as aesthetic adventures. Her "keeping up" with authors instead of with "somebody" illustrates her wish to position herself "up" without falling "down." Her escape from vulgarity, however, would result in her own destruction. According to Voyt, Maud's wish to read about "decent women" in fiction creates a ruining illusion: "life you embellish and elevate; but art would find it able to do nothing with you, and, on such impossible terms, would ruin you" (318). Ironically, however, although her presumed love for Voyt is the victim of her diffidence, this "shy romance" (326) does not locate her "out" of the story.

On the one hand, James argues that the mimetic task of the novelist should not succumb to vulgarity, while on the other he believes this kind of caution may result in the poverty of life. Love and passion are included in the picture of life, which is "comprehensive" and "elastic" ("The Future of the Novel" 244), while the English novel omitted the colourof passion and sexuality in its paintings—"I cannot so much as imagine Dickens and Scott *without* the 'love-making' left, as the phrase is, out," James says (249). Nonetheless, he goes on, there occurred a big change in the outlook of women, so "we may very well yet see the female elbow itself, kept in increasing activity by the play of the pen, smash with final resonance the window all this time most superstitiously closed" (250). Therefore, when women begin to look out, "great relations" enter in, showing the richness of life, the "wild" weather out.

James's style of storytelling based on "showing" rather than "telling" is collateral to his reservation about writing passion and sexuality. As showing implies an erotic staging versus a pornographic exposition, "The Story in It" employs a seductive contract that erases the border between "in" and "out." When Mrs. Dyott tells Voyt that Maud is in love with him, Voyt asks why she has told him this story. Mrs. Dyott's reply implies the tacit contract: "I mean for her to know you know it" (325). This calculation is reminiscent of Barthes's reading of "Sarrasine," in which he places desire at the origin of narrative and underlines its reciprocal nature. The narrator attains "a night of love for a good story" by means of a metonymic chain of desire: "the young woman desires the Adonis and its story: a first desire is posited that determines a second, through metonymy: the narrator, jealous of the Adonis by cultural constraint, is forced to desire the young woman; and since he knows the story of the Adonis, the conditions for a contract are met" (*S/Z* 88-89). Likewise, in "The Story in It,"

Mrs. Dyott's story functions as a seductive contract. She demands that the story seduce Voyt and leave Maud out of the romance, although this does not change the fact that Maud is in it. The dramatization of narrative desire's metonymic nature—a process in which the listener partakes alongside the storyteller—is also a dramatization of reading literature. It is, indeed, Voyt's question that connects love and passion to storytelling: "if a relation stops, where is the story? If it doesn't stop, where's the innocence?"

James not only is renowned for his mastery of realist representation but also theorizes realism in miscellaneous writings, from his critical essays to prefaces. Although he considers the representation of historical truth as an indispensable function of literature, he argues that the artist's subjective experience is not independent from this representation. James's metaphor of the "house of fiction" envisions "dead walls" that should be revived by the artist's subjective experience ("Preface to *Portrait of a Lady*" 290-91).

However, his stance on realism is ambivalent—that is, while he expresses his reservation about the representation of sexuality as an individual experience, he also argues that art should not deal solely with "agreeable" issues. "The Story in It" reflects this ambivalence by hinting at James's realist vision on the one hand and by creating a *miseen abyme* through the dramatization of the characters' own situations on the other hand. The characters' divergent views on romance and vulgarity mirror James's questions about literary representation of life, sexuality and passion. Although it seems impossible to argue that a particular character voices James's thoughts, his writings nevertheless dramatize—in various forms—his questions and concerns. Still, the literary force of "The Story in It" lies not in characters' discussion of themes reflecting James's personal

inquiries but in characters' contamination in the stories they read and tell.

A **character's voice** is his or her manner of speech. Different characters use different vocabularies and rhythms of speech. For example, some characters are talkative, others taciturn. The way a character speaks can be a powerful way of revealing the character's personality. In theory, a reader should be able to identify which character is speaking simply from the way he or she talks. When a character voice has been created that is rich and distinctive, the writer can get away with omitting many speech attributions (tag lines).

The manner of a character's speech is to literature what an actor's appearance and costume are to cinema. In fiction, what a character says, as well as how he or she says it, makes a strong impression on the reader.

Each character should have his or her distinctive voice. To differentiate characters in fiction, the writer must show them doing and saying things, but a character must be defined by more than one single topic of conversation or by the character's accent.

The character will have other interests or personality quirks as well. Although individual temperament is the largest determinant of what a character says, it is not the only one. The writer can make the characters' dialogue more realistic and interesting by considering several factors affecting how people speak: ethnicity, family background, region, gender, education, and circumstances. Words characterize by their diction, cadence, complexity, and attitude. Mannerisms and catch-phrases can help too. Considering the degree of formality in spoken language is also useful. Characters who spend a lot of their lives in a more formal setting often use a more formal language all the time, while others never do. Tone of voice, volume, rate of delivery, vocabulary, inflection, emphasis, pitch, topics of conversation, idioms, colloquialisms, and figures of speech: all of these are expressions of who the character is on the inside. A character's manner of speech must grow from the inside out. The speaking is how his or her essential personality leaks out for the world to see; it is not the sum total of his or her personality.

2) The Implied Reader

Although not working in a narratological vein and although primarily aiming to revitalize literary study by concentrating on readers instead of texts or authors, some theorists and critics in the 1970s produced work of considerable significance for narratology. Perhaps the most influential reader figure in this context is Iser's implied reader.

Much like Ingarden, he distinguished between the text, its concretization by the reader, and the work of art resulting from their convergence.

He argued that the text pre-structures and guides the production of meaning by gradually supplying skeletal aspects or schematized views of what will become the work of art, while leaving between them areas of indeterminacy or gaps to be filled by the reader completing the artwork. The implied reader, which is not to be confused with a real reader ([1976] 1978: 34), allows Iser to take the text as well as the reading activity into account.

Iser was criticized for distinguishing unproblematically between determinate and indeterminate parts of texts (Fish 1981) and for not sufficiently specifying the nature of the gaps or studying their *raison d'être* (cf. Kloepfer [1979] 1982; Stierle [1975] 1980). He was also criticized for overemphasizing textual input and inadequately exploring the freedom (and variable results) that reading may entail (Mailloux 1982: 51–53). Indeed, the implied reader could even be considered a kind of equivalent to authorial intention and textual meaning or to a set of preferred (Iserian) interpretations.

Whatever the validity of these criticisms—and others, directed at Iser's liberal ideological assumptions (Holub 1984: 97–100) or at his failure to give his reader figure a (significant) historical dimension (Suleiman 1980: 25–6)—it remains that the implied reader not only supplied a handy term for students of narrative; it also pointed to the room any (narrative) text provides for the reader and often came to represent the counterpart of the implied author in the structure of narrative transmission (from real author to real reader through implied author, narrator, narratee, and implied reader).

Moreover, it helped to emphasize the dynamics of narrative semiosis, to characterize a number of narrative techniques or strategies, to draw attention to the role of virtuality in narrative, and to promote taxonomies of narrative according to the number (or kind) of gaps obtaining.

3) The Model Reader

While Iser was more interested in narrative fiction than in narrative and drew mainly on phenomenology to elaborate his implied reader, Eco (1979) explicitly claimed to be interested in narrativity (12) and drew primarily on semiotics to develop the model reader (7–10). Paradoxically, the latter resembles the Iserian figure in many ways. According to Eco, a text is the result of two components, the information which the author supplies and the information which the model reader adds and which is more or less strictly determined by the author's input (206). The model reader, which corresponds to the set of felicity conditions that must be satisfied for the text's potential to be actualized (11), removes indeterminacies.

4) The Voice of Reading

Another famous semiotician (or semiologist), Barthes, proclaimed the author's death and the reader's birth as the locus of textual meaning, the place where the various texts constituting a text are united ([1967] 1977). Moreover, he drew attention to the erotic quality of reading and distinguished between pleasurable and rapturous texts ([1973] 1975), just as he had previously distinguished between readerly and writerly texts ([1970] 1974).

The former as opposed to the latter make room for the voice of reading ([1970] 1974: 151–52). They are "traditional" and

can be read or understood in terms of established codes and modes.

Barthes's account exerted considerable influence on theorists and critics interested in poetics as a theory of reading and in the rules and operations underlying literary competence or the ability to read texts literarily (cf. Culler 1975). Though it was widely taken to reject the assumptions and goals of narratology (e.g. the view of texts as structured products rather than productive structuration's, or the ambition to develop a science of narrative), it was also highly influential on narratologists. They viewed many of its arguments as elaborations of points made in Barthes's earlier "Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative" ([1966] 1975). In particular, they regarded its comments on the voice of reading as developments of the brief remarks through which Barthes had drawn attention, in that famous narratological manifesto, to the signs of "the reader's presence […] within the narrative itself" ([1966] 1975: 260) as well as to the narratively signified communication between narrator and audience (249, 260–61, 264; Margolin → Narrator).

5) The Narratee

These brief remarks—along with similar comments by Todorov (1966: 146–47) and parallel work by Genette in his outstanding investigation of narrative discourse ([1972] 1980) as well as Gibson's notion of the mock reader and Booth's discussion of the reader's second self—proved particularly relevant for Prince's exploration of the narratee, a reader figure explicitly tied to narrative and developed in terms of narratological parameters (1971, [1973] 1980). Guided by formalist, structuralist, and semiotic principles, Prince sought to describe more accurately the structural properties of narrative and the nature of its constitutive elements. Specifically, he argued that, just as narrators are distinguished from real or implied authors, narratees should be distinguished from real, implied, or other kinds of readers.

The narratee is the audience (of one or more than one) that the narrator in a given narrative addresses. Like the enunciate (or inscribed addressee of the textual I) in any text, the narratee is different from the real reader (the flesh-and-blood person actually reading the text) and the implied reader (since it is neither the equivalent of the reader's second self nor the counterpart or complement of the implied author and since it has no privileged position or role with regard to interpretation).

The narratee also differs from the ideal reader (who grasps and approves every aspect of the text), the virtual reader (for whom the real author believes s/he is writing and to whom s/he assigns various characteristics and abilities) and from such interpretive notions as superreaders, informed readers, or competent readers (inscribed in the text, it may, in fact, prove incompetent and uninformed).

6) Other Audiences

The narratee, which was examined further by Piwowarczyk (1976), integrated into Chatman's account of the various participants in narrative transactions (1978: 147–51, 253–62) and revisited by Prince (1985), who distinguished a narration's enunciatee from its ostensible (though not real) addressee and from its receiver, resembles what Rabinowitz (1977, 1987) called the "narrative audience" in his characterization of audiences of fictional narratives… likes so well to the mockery of his listener, and though he reveals his somewhat more powerful position by suggesting that he can refuse to tell the tale, the recalling and telling of the films also gives him pleasure, allowing him to "feel fabulous" and forget "all about this filthy cell, and all the rest, just telling you about the film"(17).And as the teller and told compromise and reach an agreement on how to discuss the film, the narrative reader of Kiss of the Spider Woman Begins to view the different responses to narrative as way of distinguishing between the two characters who are as yet unnamed. The narrative's responses reveal an intellectual, a man not used to sitting quietly and escaping into art, one who is interested in the psychological validity of the film's power to transport him to a world other than the one's he's in, and he thus attends to visual details, the images and symbols, the illusion created by the film.

The interdependent relationship between the dramatized narrator also reflects that of the writer and reader of the novel, for by placing his characters in these narrative roles, Puig directs his authorial reader's attention to the processes by which the author and reader struggle to extract meaning from a text. Molina, who admits to inventing "some things, to round them out for you, so you can them the way I'm seeing them…..well, to some extent I have to embroider a little"(18), essentially denies his authority by telling films created by others; Puig similarly creates the illusion that he has expunged himself as author, by weaving "real" films into his invented ones and by cinematic fashion, without the mediation of an "authorial" narrative voice. This strategy forces the authorial reader to look for meaning as it arises through the dialectic developed between the fictional film world and the "real" prison world and between the romantic narrate and the realistic narrate. In Valentin, then, Puig dramatizes this authorial reader, for whom he constructs Kiss Of the Spider Woman ; not only do we enter the fictional worlds of the films along with Valentine and identify with his role as narrates, but the effects of the novel are created for a reader like the intellectual and "uppity" Marxist, who denigrates the popular and pleasurable forms of art, suggesting to Molina that it is a "vice, always trying to escape from reality like that, it's like taking drugs or something"(78). That Valentine represents the authorial reader is, I believe, made explicit by the inclusion of the footnotes on homosexuality; the "authoritative" voice of the footnotes responds directly to a clinical question posed by valentine, who asks to know more "about people with your [Molina's]Type of inclination*" (59).

The asterisk refers the reader to a discourse of the type that Valentin reader during the day, a summary of "scholarly" discussions of homosexuality. Ronald Scwartz suggests that "The reader may prefer to skip over the footnotes since they represent the "serious voice" of authority, society, possibly the author."16 The footnotes are indeed the author's response to implied reader like Valentin who believe that an understanding of human being results primarily from serious

study, for Valentin – along with the authorial reader --- learns more about Molina and his homosexuality from the narratives he tells and his actions toward his cellmate than from the type of theoretical discourse provided by the footnotes. Puig thus undermines the authoritative discourses he summarizes in those footnotes and elevates the status of popular forms as means of humanizing understanding.

As the reader enters the narratives of popular films, he or she is distanced from the "reality" of the prison cell,while the prisoners' discussions about the films return the narrative reader to the real world depicted in the larger fiction; this strategy allows the narrative audience to experience the popular fictions both as an escape from and as a means of entering the narrative of the prisoners; in other words, we experience the structure of Puig's novel as an enactment of the two responses to art which are fore grounded by the dialogue between the two dramatized narratees. Though Valentin enjoys the film about the panther woman because it gives him the pleasure of interpreting it psychoanalytically,he finds Molina's second telling ideologically offensive because it is "a piece of Nazi junk"(56) that distorts the "reality" of Hitler's regime; but he sees in the film an opportunity to "educate" Molina, and his condescension insults the narrator and makes him cry:
---of course you're offensive the way you… you think I don't even…..realize what Nazi propaganda is, but even if I…. if I do like it, well, that's be-…… Because it's well made, and besides it's a work of art, you don't under-…. Understand because you never even saw it.(56.ellipses Puig's)

Molina thus attempts to direct Valentin's interest to the pleasures of art and asks him to ignore the "political stuff," since "when it came to the live scenes the films was divine, an absolute dream"(89),while Valentin continues to justify his interest in a film which he says he hates: "But all the same I want to know how it turns out, just to understand the mentality of whoever made the film, the kind of propaganda they were into"(87).The authorial reader comes to understand that neither the ideological reading of the political activist or the escapist, romantic reading of the homosexual alone is adequate; indeed, the structure of the novel requires us to experience both types of reading, the "escapist" popular narrative of Molina's movies and the "realistic" narrative of the prisoner's dialogue.

But as the dramatizednarratee, Valentin is affected more by Molina's pleasure than Molina is by Valentin's ideology. Molina is a self-conscious narrator who educates his intellectual listener about the conventions of the popular media: "I like to leave you hanging, that way you enjoy the film more. You have to do it that way with the public, otherwise they're not satisfied. On the radio they always used to do that to you. And now on the TV soaps"(25-26). Valentin is so manipulated and affected by Molina's story – telling strategies, learning as he does "the bad habit" of pleasure, that when he tells about his girlfriend, he unconsciously mimics Molina's narrative style and even borrows the fictive name and title bestowed on his story by his cellmate:"

Jane Randolph in….. The Mystery Of Cellblock Seven"(43). Puig similarly encourages hisauthorial readers to respects to Molina's talent as a manipulator of narratees, not only as they enter the narrative audience for each film, but also as they enter the plot of Kiss of the Spider Woman . Molina's attention to detail allows him to play one audience against the other, warden against Valentin, and he manipulates both to achieve the effects that he wants--- a relationship with Valentin and a pardon from the warden. The poisoning of Valentin's food weakens him as the prison official hopes it will, but Molina uses his cellmate's illness for a different purpose; no longer able to read his political Texts, Valentin increasingly comes under the influence of Molina's films, abandoning himself to the pleasure and escape from his suffering which they offer. And Molina convinces the warden that in order to act realistically, to persuade Valentin that his mother has visited, he must return to his cell with packages of food, which he then uses to nurse Valentin back to health. The ability to create illusions and tell stories enables Molina to do more then simply escape from reality; it gives him the power to alter his situation.

Molina nurtures Valentin both physically and psychologically, humanizing him and winning his affection through generosity. As Valentin responds to Molina's narratives and nursing, he comes to understand that the act of making someone feel better, whether physically, by providing food and clean sheets, or mentally, by telling narratives that allow the individual to escape from reality temporarily, is an activity as moral and effective as the revolutionary activity that continues to occupy him. As he listens to Molina's final two film narratives--- one a supernatural tale about zombies and the other a melodramatic romance--- Valentin allow himself to enter their narrative audiences, to refrain from wise comments and intrusive ideological interpretation, to simply be affected by the stories and Molina's manner of telling. Earlier, Molina suggested that "boleros," a popular type of song," contain tremendous truths"(139) and suggests that Valentin has no right to dismiss them as "a lot of romantic nonsense"(133).By the end of novel, Valentin is able to see the value of romance and suggests that the last film,which Molina finds so sad because he foresees in it the separation of Valentin and himself, similarly tells a simple truth. The ending which Molina finds so "enigmatic," that the woman both cries and smiles at the death of her lover, seems "the best part of the film" to Valentin:

- It means that even if she's left with nothing she's content to have had at least one real relationship in her life,even if it's over and done with.[V]
- But don't you suffer even more, after having been so happy but then winding up with nothing?[M]
- Molina, there's one thing to keep in mind. In a man's life, which may short and may be long, everything is temporary. Nothing is forever.[v]…
- Yes, it's easy to say. But feeling it is something else.[M]
- But you have to reason it out then, and convince yourself.[V]
- yes, but there are reasons of the heart that reason doesn't encompass .And that's straight from a French Philosopher, a very great one. I got you that time……..[M](259)

The authorial audience recognizes this discussion not only as an interpretation of the film we have just heard along with Valentin, but also as a discussion of the ending of the novel in which the dramatized narrator and narratee are characters. Though Kerr suggests that their disagreement indicates that a "switch occurs also in their 'philosophical' positions,"17 Valentin and Molina are still essentially the same type of narratee, one intellectual and stoic, the other sensitive and romantic. Each has, however, recognized the value of the other's way of responding to narrative structures; Valentin's rational acceptance of the emotional truth offered by the narrative is tempered by Molina's emotional suggestion that the truth of the fictional ending---- that it is better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all – might be unrealistic because he is unable to feel its truth. This discussion of the ending of the film draws the reader's attention to the question of fictional ending is general; not only does the discussion reflect the characters' attitudes toward their relationship which must soon end, but it also reminds the reader that his or her own involvement in the fictional world of Kiss of the Spider Woman is about to end.

Molina's death is as enigmatic to Valentin as the ending of the final film is to Molina.Valentin allows himself to be drugged in order to escape the pain of being tortures, and the drug-induced dream about the spider woman which ends the novel shows the extent to which Molina's narratives have altered him. Whether Molina "was sad or happy to die that way, sacrificing himself for a just cause," or whether he "let himself be killed because that way he could die like some heroine in a movie"(279) is something Valentin believes only Molina knows. But Valentin does not know what the authorial reader knows, that Molina used his talents as fiction-maker not merely to recall movies to entertain his cellmate, but to manipulate the warden and Valentin in order to get out of prison and to win the latter's affection. Though Schwartz suggests that Kiss of the Spiderwoman is Puig's attempt to grapple with the political stranglehold the Argentine government exercises over its masses,"18 the authorial reader is lead to believe that Molina's final act reveals a commitment to the ideals of romance rather than to those of political action. Not only does he know that his actions will likely lead to his death (he withdraws his money for his mother), but he uses that possibility to enact and revise the ending of the final film which he tells Valentin may hope that he will someday be released from the prison, Molina is less idealistic about social change than his Marxist cellmate, and death is the final escape for Molina from the pain of finally having had "One real relationship" and "winding up with nothing". While Valentin's dream reflects his interpretation of the film, that Molina will always be with him in his thoughts, Molina's self-sacrifice validates his own more melodramatic interpretation ---- that the suffering of having lost the joy of love is worse than never having loved at all. "Each time you've come to my bed, "Molina tells Valentin,"I 've wanted….. not to wake up again…But it's not some notion that's gotten into my head or something; I'm telling you the only thing I want is to die" (236). Molina clearly dies as a romantic heroine, not as a social revolutionary fighting for a just cause.

Though Puig's novel is political in that it "explicitly reveals the sad state of the Buenos Aires prison system [and] the punishments meted out to anarchists,"19 the authorial reader is persuaded that narrative acts are perhaps more effective than political ones and that popular forms can affects us in ways that explicitly didactic discourse cannot. Not only does Puig weave the dialogue of Valentine and Molina around the film narratives, but his authorial reader recognizes that the relationship between the prisoners develops as a variation of a popular romance, with Molina's death providing the sad, enigmatic ending which his films all have in common. And within the 'real' world of the prison cell, the narrator whose life is finally more able to influence his reality with his fictions than the ideological narratee is with his serious study. For despite Valentine's noble intentions as a revolutionary, he begins as a member of the intellectual elite with disdain for the escapism of popular forms, but Molina's narratives allow the dramatized narrate to enter the world of the populace he hopes to free from political oppression. Puig's novel is indeed a political one, but not simply because he depicts the narrator and narratee as victims of an in just system; by weaving the popular fictions into the structure of his narrative, Puig democratizes literature and persuades his intellectually elite authorial reader of the power of popular are to affect us and make us human.

By dramatizing his narratee, Puig shows that narratives provide Valentine an experience that explicitly political discourse cannot; the opportunity to suppress his own ego in order to enter the world of another, to form emotional attachments, and to recognize his own humanity. Valentin understands that he has a heart only when he becomes "attached to the character. And now it's all over, and it's just like they died" (41). The emotional understanding he develops as a narratee enables him to express affection for his cellmate and to escape temporarily the oppression of the political system, to act, as he says "like a decent human being "(202). And by Molina's narratives a part of the larger fiction, Puig reminds his authorial reader that the world in which narrator and narratee exist also a fiction, and that the reader has similarly suppressed her own ego to enter that world and to become attached to these characters. Though the pleasure of entering a fictional world is a temporary one, just as the relationship developed between Valentin and Molina must end, and just as the happy escape provided by the films lasts only as long as the telling, Puig suggests that the pleaser offers more than an escape from reality. The activity of reading requires us to suppress our egos to temporarily enter a world created by another, Puig suggests, and is thus an activity which encourages us to form attachments to characters and experience the loss of ending; in other world, fictional structures enable us to experience what is necessary to be decent human beings.

7) If on a Winter's night a traveller: The protean Reader

While Gardner and Puig use their dramatized narrates as principal characters, they essentially argue through these readers for the effectiveness of a particular type of literature; that is, though Sally and Valentin are both important character in the larger fictional worlds of October Light and Kiss of the Spider Woman, their activity as readers functions to show the potential of literary forms to affect us, to alter our behaviour, to make us better or worse human beings in

the reality that exists outside of fiction. These characters thus respond to the embedded fictions in ways that enable Gardner to denounce the immorality of contemporary narrative strategies and Puig to elevate the status of popular narrative forms. Calvino's If On a Wnter's night a traveller, however, employs the device of the dramatized reader in a radically metafictional way, for instead of arguing for a particular reading strategy or a particular form of literary discourse, Calvino depicts a variety of readers, a multiplicity of texts, and a number of different situations which require us to engage in the activity of reading. As the real reader encounters this multiplicity, he or she must become a protean reader in order to keep us with Calvino, who, as Russell Davies suggests, "Has made a virtue of his lack of, or chronic impatience with, a convinced narrative standpoint."19 But If on a winter's night a traveller is a text designed to both flatter and frustrate even the most protean of readers. Calvino's rhetorical strategies, on the one hand, seem to deny the primacy of the author's role in the literary transaction, for the narrative beginnings suggest that writers are also readers attempting to decipher a chaotic world. But on the other hand, Calvino cleverly manipulates his readers, persuading us to consent to a game designed to both fulfil and frustrate our expectations for structure and closure.

Madeleine Sorapure suggests that "To defeat the myth of the authoritative author, Calvino not only puts his name into the text but also multiplies images of himself throughout, thus making it difficult, if not impossible, to determine the single controlling voice of the author."20 Though Calvino, like Barth, does in fact undermine his "authority" as a truth – giver or message – maker by assuming multiple narrative voices, his inclusion of his name in the text alerts the reader to the author's role as constructor of the fictional worlds which appear in the text. Calvino makes it impossible for the reader to forget that he is manipulated by its operator, who begins the novel with a self – conscious address to the reader: "You are about to begin reading Italo Calvino's new novel, If on a winter's night a traveller. Relax. Concentrate. Dispel every other through. Let the world around you fade."21 By foregrounding the reader's activity and by alerting the reader to the noise and flurry taking place in the world outside of the fiction, where "the TV is always on in the next room "(31), Calvino also draws our attention to the radically reflexive reading experience provided by this text.

With the "You" of the first sentence, for instance, Calvino immediately makes his reader aware of the double – levelled activity of entering a fictional world. The narrative reader enacts the experience of the you of the novel, reading these first lines as preparation for beginning Calvino's latest work. The authorial reader, however, recognizes that he or she is in fact beginning thenovel by reading about beginning it, and therefore must reflect upon the activity of reading as he or she reads. As the narrator pretends not to know very much about the narrative reader to whom he is directing his discourse, his introductory comments seem both paternal and solicitous: "try to foresee now everything that might make you interrupt your reading. Cigarettes within reach, if you smoke, and the ashtray. Anything else? Do you have to pee? Allright, you know best "(4). Though a seemingly tentative and playful discussion of our preparedness for the activity of reading,this quotation also reveals the extent to which our comfort as readers depends upon the author's construction of the text --- and not the reader's need for a cigarette or the use of the bathroom – will be the thing that interrupts his reading. And rather than being a means by which he extirpates the author from the author from the text, Calvino's references to himself (in the third – person, of course) remind us that the reader is entering a world controlled by

" an author who changes greatly from one book to the next. And in these very changes you recognize him as himself " (9) . Calvino thus prepares his authorial reader to expect the unexpected.

The first chapter not only makes the reader self – conscious about his or her participation in the narrative transaction, but Clavino also self-consciously displays the imaginative process by which the author constructs his reader, proving that the writer's audience, as Ong would say, is always a fiction. From the tentative and general solicitations about the reader's physical comfort, Clavino moves swiftly to a detailed narrative of the reader's trip to the bookshop; he still pretends, however, not to know all, wondering, for instance, if the book was wrapped or simply placed in a bag, if the reader has an important job or an unnecessary one. As he includes specific details of the reader's activity apart from reading If On a winter's night a traveler, the authorial reader is further distanced from the 'you' of the novel, the novel who is gently mocked by the narrator. Though Calvino may not be able to know his real reader's expectations, he is certain of the expectations he attributes to this fictional reader: Calvino's Reader is a cynical man who knows that "the best you can expect is to avoid the worst"(4) and allows himself the "youthful pleasure of expectation " only in regard to books. His ideal book is thus one in which he can "take possession of this newness at the first moment, without having to pursue, to chase it"(7); what most exasperates the Reader is to find himself at "the mercy of the fortuitous, the aleatory, the random, "and he desires the activity of reading to provide an orderly world which does not exist outside of the text, to allow him to enter "an abstract and absolute space and time in which you could move, following an exact, taut trajectory "(27). Calvino's male reader, than, is one of frank Kermode's apocalyptic readers who, "to make sense of their span … need fictive concords with origins and ends, such as give meaning to lives and to poems ."22

While the male Reader continues to expect a completed novel, Calvino's authorial reader knows after the first interrupted beginning that fragments are all he or she can expect from the titled chapters. Though we might enter the first narrative beginning along with the dramatized reader and expect it to be carried through to the end, the intrusion of the manipulative metafictional voice at the beginning of Chapter two distances us, not only from the Reader's expectations, but also from his reading experience. For the authorial audience, reading continues – we read about the binding error that causes the same signature to be repeated over and over and not the repetition of the same signature. The narrator relates the second person protagonist's initial commenting upon his misreading – his failure as an authorial reader:

You are the sort reader who is sensitive to such refinements; you are quick to catch the author's intentions…… But at the same time, you also feel certain dismay; just when you were beginning to grow truly interested, at this very point the author feels called upon to display one of those virtuoso tricks so customary in modern writing, repeating a paragraph word for word. (25)

Calvino is of course displaying one of those virtuoso tricks, but not the one the Reader identified ; by referring to the tricks of modern writing, Calvino calls his authorial audience's attention to his own virtuosity and thus distances us from the male reader's expectations for a conventional novel. The book we are reading is certainly not the book that the you of the novel is reading. And our expectations must no longer – if they ever were – be the same as his . That is, while the male reader continues to be annoyed by the interruptions. Calvino's authorial audience ceases to expect finished narratives and instead reads the titled chapters with full knowledge that the expectations they raise will be frustrated. If on a winter's night a traveler is not, as one reviewer calls it, " a book about broken narrative promises, " 23 but rather it is a book that simply makes different promises than conventional novels. Instead of promising an orderly and authoritative narrative that will help the reader the make sense of the world, Calvino promises the reader the experience of entering multiple potential worlds in the process of being read, "the promise of a time of reading that extends before us and can comprise all possible developments "(177). Once the authorial reader recognizes Calvino's strategy, he or she adjusts the expectation of what will be found in the titled chapters accordingly, and reads like Ludmilla – to catch a voice, to enter a world that is different from the world of the other beginnings . The fact that this adjustment occurs fairly quickly is both a tribute to Calvino's responsiveness.

But as the male Reader pursues both a complete novel and the Other Reader, he becomes a character in a metafiction that does indeed satisfy the type of reader who expects to discover in books the order of an absolute space and time : the dramatized Reader begins and ends by reading Calvino's novel, his existence contained within the covers of the text and lasting only as long as the reading. One critic suggests that the numbered chapters describing the reader's activity form "a framing device that follows the romance pattern,"24 while another indicates the extent to which the reader's quest fulfils the function of a detective novel.25 Calvino, of course, parodies both romance and detective fiction in the numbered chapters, a strategy which allows him to fulfil on one level the reader's expectations for an orderly working out of events, particularly since these popular genres are those most likely to adhere to conventional expectations. As the reader pursues the mystery of the interrupted novels, he meets a number of different types of readers and non-readers and becomes involved in just about every aspect of the book business by meeting a professor, a publisher, a writer, an Ircanian Director General whose job it is to ban books --- with all roads leading to a translator in charge of an apocrypha conspiracy . At the centre of both the mystery and the romance is the Other Reader, Ludmilla, whose love of reading inspires jealousy in Marena, who in turn uses his talent as a translator in an attempt to prevent her from ever again reading a complete novel. As the narrator tells the Reader, "the pursuit of the interrupted book, which instilled in you a special excitement since you were conducting it together with the Other Reader, turns out to be the same thing as pursuing her "(151). Both detective novel and romance come to a conventional conclusion, with the mystery unravelled and the Reader and Ludmilla married.
Calvino 's depiction of the quest in terms of reading, however, makes it impossible to view the male Reader (Whose only name is his function in the text) and Ludmilla as mimetic characters. Though their story provides both a narrative impetus for the novel and the working out of the romance / detective plot satisfies certain readerly expectations, Calvino employs one – dimensional characters to persuade the authorial reader of the invalidity and artificiality of the conventional expectation that the author should create a stable reality from a chaotic world. That is, these characters function both structurally and thematically, but unlike the dramatized readers of Gardner and Puig, they resist a mimetic reading;

The Reader, Ludmilla, Lotaria, Irnerio, Marena, and even the writer, Silas Flannery, have little reality apart from their attitudes toward literature. Ludmilla's apartment is likewise depicted only to show the ways we read character through the signs of one's possessions, and the lovers' activity, far from producing and reading resemble each other most [in] that within both of them times and spaces open, different from measurable time and space "(156). The metafictional frame both establishes reading as the theme of the novel and provides the structure for a reading experience that is contrary to conventional expectations that literature should somehow help us make sense of the world. In other words, by foregrounding his position in regard to reading in the numbered chapters, Calvino not only fulfils the expectation of the Reader desirous of a conventional plot, but also the expectations of a meaning –seeking reader like Lotaria, who "wants to know the author's position with regard to Trends of Contemporary Thought and problems That Demand a Solution "(44). But Calvino fulfils these desires metafictional instead of realistically, drawing our attention to the artifice of realistically, drawing our attention to the artifice of even the most conventional literary forms. Within the frame of the novel, therefore, both the male Reader's and Lotaria's expectations are frustrated; the Reader never does fine the ending of any of the novel beginnings, andLotaria is disdained as a reader who reads books "only to find in them what she was already convinced of before reading them "(185). Through the metafictional numbered chapters, Calvino persuades his actual reader to consent to, and perhaps acknowledge as more real though less satisfying, the alternative reading experience provide by the interrupted beginnings.

While Calvino recognizes and in his parodic way fulfils the desires of readers like the protagonist and Lotaria, his ideal narrative reader is Ludmilla, for whom:

Reading means stripping herself of every purpose, every foregone conclusion, to be ready to catch a voice that makes itself heard when you least expect it, a voice the conventions of writing .(239)

While the protagonist finds it difficult to "keep up with her, this woman who is always reading another book besides the one before her eyes, a that does not yet exist, but which, since she wants it, cannot fail to exist " (72),Calvino not only keeps up with her narrative demands, but he fulfils them . Each beginning after Ludmilla is introduced in the second numbered chapter is a response to her desire to catch a different narrative voice, to enter a different narrative audience. her desire for a novel that brings her "immediately into a world where everything is precise, concrete, specific "(30), for instance, prompts "Outside the town of Malbork, " which begins with " An odour of frying waft [ing] at the opening of the page"(34), and her wish "its driving force only the desire to narrate, pile stories upon stories "(92) is met with a narrator who finds "stories that cannot be told until other stories are told first" (109). This strategy has prompted at least one critic to suggest that Calvino abandons his authority by adopting multiple voices in order to satisfy the Other Reader and therefore "invites his readers to play an active role in the construction of the novel and thus to assume some of the responsibilities traditionally belonging to the author."26 but what this interpretation ignores is that Ludmilla is a construction of Calvino's which enables him to meet the rhetorical challenges he has set for himself in his novel. Rather than suggesting that the rather is so powerful that her desires must be must be met, this strategy allows Calvino to show the extent of his own power as a narrator with multiple voices. His inclusion of Ludmilla's desires, then is another of the means by which be structures novel and encourages his authorial reader to enter the narrative audience of each titled chapter ; that is Calvino uses Ludmilla's desires to persuade us to play his game, to read the beginning in order to see if he meets the challenges he sets for himself through her : But while the authorial reader is thus prepared for the incomplete narratives and alert to the expectations raised through Ludmilla, he or she nevertheless enters the narrative audience if the titled chapters, enticed by the stories promised there; through this metafictional device, then, Calvino induces his authorial audience to reflect upon its own act of reading and to be self – conscious about the processes by which it enters different narrative audiences.

Through the metafictional frame, the authorial reader observes multiple readers employing different strategies in various situations and must identify in some way with each of the readers and situations; we have all heard a text read aloud, been part of a study group, glanced at other readers in the library,and approached a text with preconceived ideas. But as observers of these readers 'failed reading strategies in regard to the interrupted beginnings we, are distanced from them and discouraged from entering the narrative beginnings as they do. Instead of reading the titled chapters for an authorial truth, an orderly plot, or even a sense of an ending, we read multiple narrative voices, all tentatively engaged in their own acts of reading the world. While the authorial reader is of course encouraged to search for "truthful" descriptions of reading in the metafictional frame, he or she experiences, the activity of reading differently in the beginnings, knowing that they are only potential sources of meaning, immanent rather than imminent . Though Calvino tempts the reader's natural desire to detect links between the stories by including similar proper names and narrators who all seem to have trouble beginning their stories, he ultimately frustrates this desire to bring order to the multiplicity of the titled chapters by emphasizing the distinctive way each narrator attempts to read and narrate his experience in the world. And critics who have attempts to explain If on a winter's night a traveller by isolating one or another of the beginnings to suggest that it provides the key to the novel are guilty of attempting to escape both the burden and pleasure of being a protean reader . The reader, by beginning again and again, experiences the sense of confusion and chaos that these multiple narrators confront within their fictionalized world.

For If on winter's night a traveller is finally a novel that resists readers who wish to attribute a single meaning to it. Calvino's reader must be protean, at times like Lotaria, entering reading, metafictional chapters to observe many readers reading, and at times like the male reader, Following the romance and detective plot of the frame to its conventional conclusion. And like Ludmilla, the reader must forgo conventional expectations that narrative will make order of disorder to enter the narrative audience of the fragments; the reader instead must expect from each new beginning an inconclusive yet distinctive narrative voice in the process of attempting to order the multifarious experience of being in the world.

By drawing our attention to the artifice of conventional novels through the metafictional frame his parody of popular genres, Calvino persuades us of the more "true – to – life " nature of his interrupted narratives . In this sense, then, Calvino does refuse the god – like stance of the authoritative writer in that he depicts the impossibility of writing one "true " novel ; the writer, like the reader, is in the world and not outside it. But of course, it is through his own artifice that Calvino gains our consent to the "realism " of his narrative fragments and alters our expectations regarding the realism of traditional novelistic conventions . The experience of reading, however, finally must be distinct from the experience of being in the world, and as Kermode suggests, books "that continue to interest us move through time to an end, an end we must sense even if we cannot know it."27 Calvino can only persuade us to accept his fragments by housing them in a metafictional frame that begins and ends with the Readers reading Calvino's If On a winter's night a traveller, for the vision of multiplicity and chaos reflected in the titled chapters mat be more than even the most protean reader can bear.

In the continuum of effects created by the use of a dramatized reader illustrated by the three novels discussed here, Calvino's use of this device is by far the most radically metafictional and self – reflexive; the authorial reader is not merely called upon to consent to a single vision of what it means to be a reader, but he or she is also asked to reflect upon and to enact the various experiences described by the text . Calvino's second – person protagonist / reader compels the reader to be self – reflexive in a way that is distinctly different from either Gardner's elderly reader, Whose responses are revealed through the third – person narrator of the outer novel, or Puig's narrates, Whose conversations about the films are unmediated by an authoritative narrates exist in a frame where reading is, though important, not an end in itself, the you of If on a winter 's night a traveller 's frame has no identity apart from

his activity as a reader, the same activity in which the actual reader of the novel is participating ; in other words, while the authors of October Light and Kiss Of the Spider Woman subordinate the metafictional elements to the mimetic "outer " narrative in order to raise questions about the effects of fiction on readers in the world, the outer reality of Calvino's novel is itself about books, their consumption --- their being read.

2. Conclusion

Although we are encouraged to view Ludmilla as Calvino's ideal reader, she is the one who suggests that the pure pleasure of reading is "transformed into something else "as soon as a reader learns too much about how books are made, and as members of Calvino's authorial audience, we are never allowed to abandon ourselves completely to what she calls "the unsullied pleasure of reading" (93). Calvino deromanticizes both the creative process and the reading process by exposing the means by which an author constructs the text, and ultimately, a society constructs its literary conventions and values. Like the male Reader, Calvino's authorial reader must self – consciously cross the boundary line, "on the side [of which] are those who make books, on the other those who read them" (93). As we make our way through this particular text, we are compelled to reflect not only upon the complex relationship between its narrator and dramatized readers and its author and ourselves, but also upon the complicated process by which all books are conceived, produced, translated, sold, consumed, and interpreted. In addition to making its authorial reader conscious of his or her own activity, Calvino's If on a winter's night a traveller makes its reader reflect upon all the different types of reading that help constitute the text.

References

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[10] George P. Ellolt, "Fiction and Anti – Fiction, " American Scholar, 47 (summer 1978), p. 406.
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