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Title - Beyond Genre to Gender and Ways of Seeing: a systemic explanation
of what students of fiction writing learn from from their reading.

Abstract: A semi-narrative exploration of the way the perceptions of two
fiction writing students at the tertiary level have been influenced by the
works of Beverley Farmer and Ernest Hemingway. Feminist perspectives and
ideas on the construction of subjectivity serve as a background to the
systemic-functional discussion of their texts.

The Introduction
I am an English teacher; a teacher of literature and writing. It seems that
my whole life has been spent reading or teaching literature and writing.
Occasionally I find an oddness in such a career; I say, 'I must go to work
.' I close my office door (trying not to smirk), and curl up in a chair
with a novel, a book of poetry, a play. (I did suggest to my children as
they grew up that they should choose careers based on their dearest
hobbies - I don't think they listened.) Perhaps some glimmer of guilt at
taking money for finding and, trying to spread, joy in books, leads me, at
intervals, to academically rationalise the huge value of what I do. So I
write wisely of the role of fantasy, or the new realism, or of historical
novels, or of poetry in the development of the child.   I have dallied on
the edges of believing that reading (good) literature somehow magically
'improves' us; that we become more compassionate, more understanding, more
visionary, (more fully human?) though I have never quite been seduced by
the values of the 'personal response' theory, having been heavily schooled
in respect for 'the work of art' syndrome. (Anyway, it always seemed that
'personal response', when grades were distributed, meant a substantial
interpretation of the text, not unlike what I had learned in my 'lit crit'
classes.)
As with many of my English teaching colleagues I believed that reading
widely was essential to good writing: a quick shuffle through a new class's
stories and the reading students were apparent. Of course the connections

between what the students were reading and the features of their writing were difficult to specify. I had intuition, but I wanted reason; I wanted not subjectivity, but objectivity. I had, as you see, been also heavily schooled in the dichotomies of Western philosophical thought: objectivity/subjectivity, reason/intuition, light/dark, true/false, good/evil, public/private, masculine/feminine. There did appear to be something essential, real, in such dichotomies: something as 'true' as day and night. I had not heard of Derrida and thought about the way one term is privileged as presence, over the other, as absence and of the hidden semantic space between the terms which he called differance. I still believed in the autonomy of the individual. Perhaps I could say I was spoken by the metalanguage of liberal-humanism without knowing anything of its limitations. It was a language that seemed neutral, obvious, transparent: as ideological codings do. As Terry Threadgold writes:
     metalanguages can become institutionally naturalised to the point where one   does not any longer know that one is speaking them, or being spoken by them.   (Threadgold & Cranny-Francis, 1990:17)(my emphasis)
I also believed in the rights of women, in the injustice of male domination. I had, after all, read Woolf, de Beauvoir, Wollstonecraft and, as a graduate student, Greer occasionally came to our literature class. However, in eighteen years of formal education I had been taught almost exclusively by men for all but four. And, in any case, Woolf, de Beauvoir and Wollstonecraft did not question the nature of academic teachings and writings; they simply wanted women to have access to such learning and knowledge as men had. I was inside the portals, learning how to think, speak and write as those mentor women had exhorted. However, in the words of an old Russian proverb, 'Life is not a walk across an open field.' Nor is an education system. As Foucault puts it:
     What is an education system, after all, if not a ritualisation of the word; if not a   qualification of some fixing of roles for speakers; if not the constitution of a   (diffuse) doctrinal group; if not a distribution and an appropriation of discourse, with all its learning and its powers. (Foucault 1972: 227; in Gunew:16)
The problematic in Foucault's interpretation of an education system lies in the clause, 'some fixing of roles for speakers'. In ways I could not know I was also learning a female speaking role, a female discourse, partly from my family and the wider social scene beyond home and education; and partly from that educational system. Not just because those educational sites were dominated by men but because of the historical figures and fiction set for study. Most of the texts in the fiction and poetry we studied were by

men whose main interests were women. It would be difficult to say how deeply our roles as women were affected by the male concepts of a 'heroine', by their concepts of the desirable and undesirable, by their concepts of us as objects in their stories, not subjects in our own.   It is quite recently that I have thought, for example, about Tennyson's 'The Lady of Shalott', one of my favourite poems from undergraduate days. I see it all now. Dangerous, seductive images. She is a male's fantasy. The passive woman locked in a tower; believing she may only look at life

indirectly, never participate, be an agent; accepting that she must only weave pretty things in her tapestry. The ultimate symbol of female impotence because it is a domestic task from which there is no escape: it allows no respite. And, of course the woman would risk all, lay down her life, uselessly, for the Knight in Shining Armour who is free to go tirra-lirraling by any river. And he can show his ultimate power by not even knowing, or perhaps, acknowledging, that it was he for whom she had given up her life. How dare he say, 'She had a lovely face.' As though that were satisfying: what a woman might expect as rightful praise at the end of her life. And the man goes blithely by; a little message pinned on his lapel, Woman, if you step outside you shall surely die. Be good. Behave. Make the pretty image. At home.

Perhaps Foucault indicates, though in a different context, something of the ideological framings, the semiosis, of our literary studies, that shaped our female subjectivities:

It was an ethics for men: an ethics thought, written, and taught by men ....A male ethics, consequently, in which women figured only as objects or, at most, as partners that one had to train, educate and watch over when one had   them under one's power, but stay away from when they were under the power of someone else (father, husband, tutor)... it was an elaboration of masculine conduct carried out from the viewpoint of men in order to give form to their   behaviour. (Foucault, 1984: 22-23; in Gunew:108)

Such matters, of course, were 'hidden', unacknowledged: that is, they were not admitted as 'truth', as legitimate knowledge; I do not believe this was because of any patriarchal conspiracy but because they were not seen; could not be seen. Bordieu argues that historical practices are constructed by and construct the habitus within which social practice occurs: it defines the possibilities of our perceptions, actions and ideas:

The habitus, a product of history, produces individual and collective practices -   more history - in accordance with the schemes generated by history. It ensures   the active presence of past experiences, which, deposited in each organism in   the form of schemes of perception, thought and action, tend to guarantee the   'correctness' of their constancy over time, more reliably than all formal rules   and explicit norms. (Bordieu, 1990: 54)

So our habitus inevitably blinkers us; we see within the limits of our histories. And we hear and speak within those histories. Terry Threadgold argues explicitly:

we are also subjects in language, in semiosis. We are, in a sense, what we   can mean (in both senses of can, 'are able to'/'are allowed to'). (Threadgold   & Cranny-Francis F. (eds) ,1990: 11)

The concept of habitus, together with the study of semiotics and feminist discourse highlights the social constructedness of our subjectivities. The liberal humanist view of the autonomous, the rational, individual disappears: there is no essential self, rather there is a subject constantly constructed and constructing through interaction with evolved and evolving semiotic systems, of which language is probably the most significant. As Therese Lauretis explains:

for each person, therefore, subjectivity is an ongoing construction,

not *a*   fixed point of departure or arrival from which one then
interacts with the   world. On the contrary, it is the effect of that
interaction - which I call   experience; and thus it is produced not by
external ideas, values, or material causes, but by one's personal
subjective, engagement in the practices,   discourses, and institutions
that lend significance (value, meaning, and affect)   to the events of
the world. (de Lauretis 1984:159; in Gunew: 28)

The Middle
1.   The Problems
So, I began, curled up in a chair, and having finished my novel, seeking
some objective way of examining the influences of students' reading habits
on their fiction writing. My thoughts on the 'improving' power of (good)
literature were to be drastically revised. Foucault was right, everything
is dangerous. All those wonderful texts I had read, wallowed in, had
probably landed me, right where men had constructed me, with a dish mop and
nappy pail. (Tolstoy obviously preferred Kitties to Annas.) And I could
have no more ideas about tracking down Virginia Woolf's ('essentially')
feminine sentences, after all, Moira Gaten's words were ringing in my head:
     To affirm women's nature as 'naturally' or 'innately' nurturing,
sensitive or   biophilic is to ignore the ways in which those qualities
have been constructed by social, political and discursive practices.
(Gatens, 1991: 89)
My romanticism, like the Lady of Shalott's tapestry went flying out of the
window. As Tennyson said, the mirror was also smashed. I was definitely
ready to become a Donna Haraway, Cyborg: a combinatorial creature, part
robot, part animal, part human. In other words, a boundary breaker.
Better than being a goddess, she said. 'The Cyborg is resolutely committed
to partiality, irony, intimacy, and perversity. It is oppositional,
utopian and completely without innocence.' Her ideas became, more
dramatic, dangerous, possibly monstrous (in Nicholson, 1990: 190-233) but
by then I had stopped listening. Some patterns remained on the shards of
glass; I could salvage something.
2.   The Lost (or Hidden) Agenda
Actually it was covered with a knotty pile of words. 'It' was the issue of
genre. I do believe in the existence of genres. I fancy myself as a
'functional grammarian', too. I see how some genres, such as legal genres,
function to exclude and obfuscate; how some genres, including narratives
and poems, but also news genres and academic writings, especially in
history and philosophy, function to maintain (construct) the assymmetrical
power relationships between men and women. There is also the issue of the
illusion of objectivity that is central to science genres. Poynton explains
the exclusion of the first person pronoun, I, from science texts in terms
of the belief that science is to do with 'truth' rather than 'interests'
and notes that we is permissible because 'the text-producer is always
presumed to speak not on their own behalf but as a representative,
'objective' voice.'
Poynton's argument takes into account the western tradition of valuing

'reason' over 'emotion' and finds the opposition illusory. As well as
observing the exclusion of the 'I' from such genre she also notes the
exclusion of 'overtly attitudinal lexis' from 'highly prestigious forms of
expository and descriptive discourse', in the name of the 'objectivity.
(Poynton in Threadgold & Cranny-Francis, 1990: 252). She writes of the way
representations, at whatever level of discourse, are just that,
'representations'; and that in seeking to be 'objective' academics use what
Whorf (1956) called cryptotypes and Halliday calls grammatical metaphor :
     The effect of such grammatical patternings is to de-problematise the
representations involved, both in terms of the objective/subjective
dichotomy   (where 'I can organise this data into three categories' becomes
'There are three   categories') and in terms of the disguising of
ideology/evaluation (where 'I   think this is the way things ought to be'
becomes 'Our children's futures   depend on the maintenance of the
traditional values of honesty, integrity and the   freedom of the
individual'..) (Poynton; in   Threadgold & Cranny-Francis F.   (eds)
,1990: 253)

Genres frequently maintain the status quo. Significantly Kress and Hodge
make such specific comments about the narrative genre:
     [A] widespread property of narrative serves to signify the stability
of the status   quo. Aristotle's famous definition of narrative, that it
has a beginning, a   middle, and an end, seems too banal to be interesting
or worth challenging, but   as he glossed it it masked an ideologically
loaded progression, from an initial   state of equilibrium, through
complication or disturbance, to a crisis and   resolution, leading to a

new equilibrium. This gives the formula for the classic   narrative of
the status quo. Ideologically this structure acknowledges that the
state of affairs can be disturbed and unsettled, but it promises that they
will   return to a state of equilibrium which is prior and natural and
therefore   inevitable. (Kress &   Hodge,1988: 230)
Though it is useful to deconstruct genres to understand their functions, to
understand their ideologies, as Poynton does, this is very different from
teaching them so they might be replicated. Furthermore, not all samples of
a genre are necessarily good examples. A junior high school history text,
for instance, might have been dashed off for commercial reasons and not
really show how 'historians get on with their work'. (Martin, et. al.,
1987: 6) (Of course the question might well be asked, 'When are historians
not an historians going about their work?'   My first response is to say,
'When they are not arguing their way through evidence and interpretations.'
But this is not so. They are still historians, even when the history genre
they write is superficial and presents uncontested categories of
explanation) I am not saying that genre based programmes have no place; I
am saying that I believe the method is not a cure-all for the writing
difficulties children encounter; and that the method should be used
critically. And that no 'genre' is absolute.
But it is with teaching the features of narrative genre that I have the
most difficulty . Materials developed by LERN and the Studies Directorate,

NSW Department of Education (1988) are the foundation for a method widely used in NSW and they highlight the limitations that I see. Firstly, the narrative structures modelled are those based on Aristotle's definition with the banality and ideological implications that Kress and Hodge outline. The model is, merely, a structural one, a mechanical one, based, as it is, on the structure of a fairy tale. That is, it does not teach children to think about experience; how stories are about experience.   It does not teach them about partiality, or irony, or intimacy or perversity which is what Donna Haraway's Cyborgs do and what genuine fairy stories do. It does not teach them to see the world around them. To me the models offered and the children's 'joint constructions' are rather sad dead little stories; like pictures painted by numbers. There is no blood and darkness, no joy that is so white it hurts, no ambiguous cat's skin, no giant turnip that lands you swinging, in a bag, like a fool in a tree,wondering about the meaning of life. The real things of story writing bubble up from every word we've heard in our culture and every dark thought or feeling that we have experienced and every compassionate gesture we have ever made. The stories the children have written have not been transformed by the ambiguities of their lived culture. Which is the essence of fairy tales. Angela Carter, A. S. Byatt, Maurice Sendak all understand that is the substance of fairy tales. To me it does not seem worth bothering with them otherwise.

Furthermore the evaluations presented in the LERN materials in terms of attitudinal and descriptive epithets are also structural. The method is very close to the old instruction to use adjectives and adverbs to make the story 'more interesting'. As though 'meaning' is something that can be topped up. I think the real centre of narrative lies elsewhere: in seeing and hearing. Aristotle's crude pattern does not teach children that words can sing; it does not teach children that words in stories can ring right; so that they fit the strange mixture of images and feelings we tingle with. Take, for example, a sentence from Maurice Sendak's picture story book, Outside Over There: Then Ida mad knew goblins had been there. That sentence is cleft by the heavy stress on mad; the word pulls the voice, like a punch that explodes. How differently the sentence reads if that postmodifying, embedded, clause is not ellipsed: Then Ida who was mad knew goblins had been there. All the energy of Sendak's sentence is diffused. But it is impossible to teach such grammatical principles explicitly And if we could teach them then they are only appropriate, as Eco says, if the writer has exactly the same thing to say, or, I would add, if she or he wants to express the same emotional nuances.
The real things of story writing are too complex to teach explicitly.
Take, for example, a child who begins her story : 'The old gate of the churchyard opened with a creak.' At the 'crisis' in the story she writes:

'The grave top slammed shut behind her'. Now it would be impossible to teach a primary school child (even a tertiary student, I think!) that a way of creating suspense is by exploiting verbs that Halliday classifies as 'unrestricted processes'. That is, they can have one or two participants

and if there are two participants then the second participant is a causer of the process. (See below) But even if, in the real world, in the thesis of the event, there is a causer we may choose not to include that 'participant' in the linguistic event ; and so the reader is left in suspense about whether some dire agent has captured the central character. Eleven year old Amanda has internalised that knowledge probably from her reading of Nancy Drew stories, 'Girl detective, you know!'

Again, I am not arguing that some structural teaching is not valuable; but again, it will, at best, give the crudest of foundations to narrative writing. Umberto Eco indicates the problem with simple notions of 'modelling':

even when the critic has isolated the idiolect of a work, this does not mean that   he is in possession of a formula that could engender similar works. If   considered as a work-idiolect the formula could only permit the production of   another work that was absolutely identical to the first. (Eco,1977: 273)

Eco's argument highlights the fact that form and content are indivisible. The task for the fiction writer is to find the words that 'fit' the experience; and, indeed, the structure, that fits the experience. The beginning is not always the best place to start a story.

3.   Back to the Plot

I still had not solved the problem of examining the influence of student's reading on their writing. (Well, the question is relevant to any writer: some pieces of D. H. Lawrence, I see, might have been written by Beverley Farmer and vice versa. And Farmer says she was influenced by Patrick White's novel, A Fringe of Leaves. I wonder what White's writing 'taught' her...but that is another story...)

Well, what I thought I needed was a rigorous linguistic instrument that would show similarities between structures and semantics; that would show, or indicate something of the 'world view' (ideology?) of the writers. An instrument that would analyse the semiotics of the text. Though I had given up the notion of finding Woolf's 'essential' feminine sentence - or her 'masculine' one for that matter - I had just picked up a fragment of the broken mirror with a reminder from Gunew that like it or not we have all been severely gendered:

Clearly the ideologies which function to interpellate individuals as subjects   within culture do so in sexually bifurcated, sexually distinguished ways - the subjects are not sexually neutral, but have masculine or feminine attributes.

(Gunew: 104) [Gunew is actually criticising Althusser for not recognising the ideologies of gender constructions]

While I was dealing with that, behind my back (you should always cover your back) I heard some feminists asking whether I was seriously looking through that masculine theory. Well, yes. Luckily Terry Threadgold hurried by saying over her shoulder, 'There's no need to make the whole wheel again each time...' Then she paused and became really serious (read 'heavy'):

any attempt to undo the masculine/feminine dichotomy, as a symbol of patriarchal and phallocentric ways of knowing, depends precisely on 'not turning our backs' on contemporary theory, methodology, and the classics of

political and social theory, and one might say of linguistic and critical theory as well, but rather on learning how to dismantle and transform this work so as to produce new knowledges, new ways of meaning. Malestream knowledges can   be subverted...' (Threadgold &Cranny-Francis (eds), 1990: 11)

Anyway, simply because my reason has been constructed by my interactions with the social semiotic (family, friends, teachers, acquaintances, books,whoever) does not mean I should deny it. So back to the theory.

4.   Act IV

Well, the answer was with me all the time: Systemic/Functional grammar. (This is definitely Act IV: I am sure Shakespeare took a big breath before setting up Actium or Shrewesbury.) The beauty of systemic-functional

grammar is that it takes into account the relationships between structures and semantics; a relationship that is always functional. Building on the work of the anthropologist Malinowski and the linguists Firth and Hjelmslev, Halliday has mapped a finite set of interlocking systems and networks which account for all the possible ways we can encode the cognitive content of our experience, our attitudes to that content, our communication roles and the way we develop the 'message' of the clause into longer units: into text.

Halliday calls it an 'extravagant grammar, not a parsimonious one.' (Halliday, 1985: Intro.) Perhaps because of this it is, in some ways, a difficult grammar. Structurally it works from the classifications of traditional grammar; those classifications were, in any case, 'functional' in that, for example, the words which functioned as the processes of a clause were classified as verbs, and the meaningful unit which they predicated was classified as a clause; adverbs functioned as adjuncts, or the circumstances of the processes; then, something/s, person/persons, or ideas or facts or utterances or thoughts, were directly involved in the process: these 'participants' are obviously 'nominals. Someone might make a statement, ask a question, give an order and there is the foundation of the communication roles. Speakers and writers also position themselves in relation to their statement, question or command by assessing usuality, obligation, probability. These functions are realised by our modals: sometimes, ought, perhaps. Because word order is central in the structure of English the first word or phrase in the clause will be the 'message' of the clause: what the clause is about. Or, in the case of a clause-complex a clause might function as the 'message'.

The development of the grammar, which is an explanatory grammar, a philosophical grammar, was influenced by the work of the anthropologist, Malinowski. From his observations of tribal peoples Malinowski came to argue that all languages developed as a mode of action, not a mode of thought. He argued that the most basic linguistic structure (S)ubject, (V)erb, (O)bject, was based on actions that occur between people. Take for example tiny babies. From the beginning they are involved in someone doing something to them, for them; or they are doing something themselves. They are participants in processes. Through their daily activities they are involved in processes by themselves, such as gurgling, smiling, sucking.

These are one participant processes. (Traditionally such processes were classified as an intransitive verb.) The participant in these processes are Actors. These examples are all material action processes. But there are also processes in which someone else is involved. For example: the parent pats the baby's back. This is still a material (action) process but two participants are involved in it. In such a situation one participant will be the Actor, or Agent, and the other will be the Affected. Some processes are thus restricted to one or two participants. Others might have, inherently, either one or two participants. From earliest days the baby lives this knowledge. The baby might lift her head; or the parent might lift her head. In either case the baby is the one who 'acts' the process. From the beginning, then the baby 'understands', bodily, about what linguists call the ergative (which is when there is an outside Causer, or Initiator, of the action.) The baby, 'knows', too, when she has control, agency, over her own actions, and when someone else assumes power over them.

Though this is the briefest of introduction to the systems of the transitivity network it may be possible to see how our daily cultural actions are instantiated in our linguistic relationships and choices. Perhaps it clarifies why Halliday argues that:

Even such a 'purely grammatical' function as 'subject' is derivable from language in use; in fact the notion that there are 'purely grammatical' elements   of structure is really self-contradictory.' (Halliday, 1973: 31)

Thus we might glimpse how language is an expression of the social semiotic. The patterns of our material actions; our mental actions, thinking, feeling, perceiving, speaking; our relational actions, classifying in terms of categories, situation or equivalence are instantiated in the semantic possibilities of the language and realised in grammatical structures. Our intentional actions, our unintentional, accidental, actions, our goal

directed actions, are all reflected in our linguistic systems. And each 'choice' we make, leads to other 'choices', for the terms of the systems are mutually exclusive and dependent. And though the baby 'understands' about being an Actor, or an Agent, or an Affected, as she learns to speak she learns when she speaks, that there are options about what is reflected in the linguistic event: She might say, 'I was taken to school', so the Agent is left implicit. She might say, 'I was taken to school by my Mum.' Or she might say, 'Mum took me to school.' The event in the real world, the thesis is the same; but the linguistic event indicates the way language makes its own reality: indicates the way it 'constructs' what we see. Similarly she might say, 'Mum chopped quickly', or 'Mum chopped the wood quickly'. In all processes the 'participants' are cast in a semantic role derived experientially: roles such as Beneficiary, Benefactor, Sayer, Senser, Affected, Goal, Agent, Attributor, Initiator, Medium (when we are the Actors of the process, but there is a separate Initiator, we are the Medium of the process.) Eventually the child learns too, that ideas, metaphenomenon, have power to be Actors and Agents, and can put humans in the role of the Affected. Thus she might say, 'The idea that I was going

to boarding school (Causer) kept me (Medium) awake all night.' However, if she says, 'The idea that I was going to boarding school gave me bad dreams,' then the roles change to Benefactor and Receiver. She is still in a position of powerlessness, as we recognise if we have ever accepted the role of Receiver of unwanted gifts. If she had said, 'When the idea of going to boarding school gave me bad dreams I got up and finished reading my book,' then she would have been reassuming the roles of Actor: and her role of Receiver has been distanced to the temporal circumstances of her Actor roles.

Halliday's functional grammar is different from structuralists, such as Saussure, with his differentiations between la langue and la parole. For Saussure, the former was the language (presumably knowledge of which we all possessed and the latter was our actual language). Saussure's ideas were closer to Chomsky's notion of competence and performance. Competence, for Chomsky meant our latent knowledge. He denied that 'language use' was significant and was purely interested in explaining the innate cognitive processes of language and language learning. Chomsky believed that we all learned language and he did not see significance in the way that people, social groups, use language differentially and that this may mean they have different access to meaning. Certainly he ignored the possibility of the way we use language 'reflecting' and 'constructing' our view of the world and ourselves and our place and power within it. Thus he would not have seen as significant the fact that an eleven year old girl who read Nancy Drew and wrote stories with the central character (female) habitually in the role of Actor, in Material, Intentional, Goal directed (two participants) processes. He would not have observed that another girl , in the same class, wrote stories in which the central character (female - and little) was always in the role of the Affected, or the Medium. That is, even when she was represented grammatically as an Actor, her role was initiated by someone/something else. Whereas, for people who are interested in how power relationships are 'constructed' such differences are very interesting. And if these semantic differences may be shown to be directly related to the meaning potential of the language, to the networks of semantic systems, then Functional Grammar offers a powerful tool for examining social semiotics.

For Halliday, on the other hand, what is said is always examined against what might have been said. What we say may be examined against the silence of what is not said. As a teacher, shuffling through the new class's stories, I suggest I was seeing students with differential access to the meaning potential of the language. As a feminist I see the possibility of differential access to that potential along gendered lines and the possibility of the habitual distribution of powerful semantic roles unequally along gendered lines.
It is in these terms that I understand Halliday's argument about text and the transmission of culture. He writes:
    Text is the primary channel of the transmission of culture; and it is

this aspect - text as the semantic process of social dynamics - that more than anything else has shaped the semantic system...acting on and reflecting on the environment   are in turn the means of creating the environment and transmitting it from one   generation to the next. That this is so is because the environment is a social   construct. If things enter into it, they do so as bearers of social values.   (Halliday, 1978:141)

Text may be one of the dominant ways we are interpellated as gendered subjects within the culture.

5.   Act V
     Interlude

Usually Act V is a relatively brief act. Shakespeare did not leave the central substance of the text until the end, he unravelled the plot and tied off the loose ends. Though he usually also indicated a way forward, not without some sense of pain and loss. (Yes, I know that later editors made the Act and Scene divisions, but I think they were working from the organic shape of Shakespeare's texts.) Aside: If you are interested in Shakespeare and in the distribution of power between the genders I recommend Marilyn French's text, Shakespeare's Division of Experience. French highlights how well Shakespeare knew the awful space constructed between the genders. When Desdemona moves across the female boundaries into the site of male power, instantiated in their languages, she is destroyed. When together Antony and Cleopatra tried to transgress those boundaries they were both destroyed. Think of Cleopatra dressing Antony in her tires and mantles and wearing his sword Phillipi: she thought she was playing. It is an unforgiving gendered world, then and probably now. I am often amazed by Shakespeare's insights which seem so contemporary. Perhaps his awareness came from the fact that all actors were men. They were obliged to see through the eyes of women: to move back and forth across the boundaries.

The Characters

Grace and: Simon *   Two young people, male and female. Both are in their   mid-twenties. Both have spent some time since
school working on rural newspapers.

Beverley Farmer and   Two authors, male and female. The first living, the
Ernest Hemingway   the second deceased
             .
     Setting

Rural (read, new) university.
A four semester creative writing programme.
     Plot

A reading programme, structured and unstructured. Various writing schedules, stories, poems and a writing and reading journal.
*Not their real names.

Both students were eager to write. Some of Grace's class pieces have already been published in the main stream anthologies and papers. Simon's

have appeared in our university magazine.
Quite early I could see some influences of Beverley Farmer's stories in
Grace's writings. Though not in an obvious copying way. I had read
'Sally's Birthday' in class as well as snippets from Milk and Home Time ;

and 'The Albatross' and 'Black Genoa' were in their set anthologies. When I
read Simon's early fiction work I was not surprised that he recorded in his
reading journal that he had just finished For Whom the Bell Tolls . In
class I had read 'Indian Camp' and 'Hills Like White Elephants'. There was
no doubt from Simon's comments in his reading journal that he admired
Hemingway enormously; but when I later asked him if he had thought his
writings were influenced by Hemingway he said, 'Not consciously; not then.
Maybe later, yes.'
Now, of course, there is no way of knowing what voices they had each heard
that made them so responsive to those particular writers. They are
certainly writers that I have admired, and, I could name two of my own
stories which might have been influenced by my reading Hemingway and later
Beverley Farmer. I do remember feeling specifically that Farmer's writing
and made me 'see' some extraordinary events in my own life, that I had not
'seen' before. She also made me 'see' the natural world very sharply, even
to see beauty in trailing cobwebs.
I think this is what has happened with Grace and Simon. It is the
similarities between what they 'see' and what their author sees that is
surprising; so, too, is how that seeing is reflected in the kinds of
grammatical 'choices' they have made. Farmer herself makes a relevant
comment in A Body of Water :

     In the hands of these writers [Lawrence, Malouf, Handke, Garner], a
transcendental moment of fusion characteristically takes place, between one
persona and another, or a person and an object...Perhaps the only factor
that   makes 'real' life different is the absence in it of a reader: there
being no   observer, no focus of attention, no witness . (Farmer, 1990:
197)
Her comment is relevant because it begs so many questions. For one thing
she fuses the roles of 'reader' and 'witness' and they are fused in the
process of focusing attention. We might take that 'fusion' at the simplest
level: in real life we do not have someone illuminating, 'witnessing' the
'transcendental moment'. Farmer makes such witness unproblematic; but it
is not. Who sees what? Out of all the minutae of the scene around us what
do we see? The shadows moving across a golden wall, the unfolding of a
magnolia, the door between two people; legs that scissor past a newsstand;
the rock that holds the papers against the wind; the old man, looking over
his shoulder? And who does what? To whom? For what reasons? Who acts? Who
is acted upon? The things we witness are to do with the way we have been
'constructed': with the way we have, through our dwelling in the habitus
, been constructed by it and have been instrumental in constructing it.
What circumstances do we see? The time of the day? On the clock face? Or
on the swell of the tide? Or do we notice, rather, the manner in which
someone walks? Do we observe the unfurling of a flower, a hibiscus, as

Farmer does, seeking 'just' to capture its appearance, remarking its 'red
and yellow pleats, very fine like crushed silk' (Farmer, 1991:270); or do
we see a poppy, as Berger does, and imagine the calyx as split by the
force of the red's need 'to become visible and to be seen'? (Berger,
1989: 111) Berger describes the colour as 'brazen scarlet': that
attitudinal epithet, 'brazen' links, inevitably to the 'brazen' 'scarlet
woman', especially as it is linked to the mental process of perception
('seen'). One of the noticeable features of the Berger sentence is that
there is the use of the passive, without an Agent: to be seen? By whom?
Who does the seeing is obviously not important. Grace, on the other hand
'sees' her magnolia as it begins to bloom, quietly in the dark garden'.
Farmer says, as beautiful as Berger's story is, 'Once in Europa', is a
man's story: Odile is a complex character but 'a man put these words, this
story, into her mouth'. (Farmer, 1991: 260)
What we witness will, I suggest, be a matter of our subjectivity.
Halliday's explication of Bernstein's theory of codes was, I think, moving
towards these ideas of the habitus and the growth of subjectivity, with
all the sense of the possibility of closure implied. He writes:

     The culture is transmitted to him [or her] with the code acting as a
filter,   defining and making accessible the semiotic principles of his
[her] own   subculture, so that as [s/] he learns the culture [s/]he also
learns the grid or   subculture angle on the social system. The child's

linguistic experience reveals   the culture to him [her] through the
code, and so transmits the code as part of   the culture. (Halliday,
1978: 111)
The child's reading experience might, therefore also offer the child the
gender patternings of the culture; might offer the distribution of power
between the genders deemed 'acceptable' within the culture. That is, each
gender is the site of a sub-culture. Eventually, then, females and males
will learn to write differently, too. But, an aspect of that difference
may be to do with perception: it may be related to what we actually see.
This is related to subjectivity, of course: to the cultural shapings of
each person, as a subject. That shaping will determine where they are
positioned on the social power grid; how they represent female and male in
terms of the roles of actors, agents, initiators, behavers, sensers,
thinkers.
But I digress. After Grace's first semester I lent her a copy of A Body of
Water . I was charmed by it, drawn into its beauty; I thought she would be
too. The text is a Writing Journal , there are her monthly observations,
interpellated with the stories she writes over the year. Grace submitted
her final assignment, actually called 'October', at the end of that month.
There is, too, a section called 'October' in Farmer's work: there is a
section for each month. I dare say, that should Grace have written her
assignment in March, then she would have 'seen' something of what Farmer
had 'seen' in March. I think Farmer focused (Farmer's word about 'witness)
for Grace the events of a Bathurst spring; she also focused her attention
on the processes of writing, on the qualities of dreams, on the sound of
chimes and on the memory of walking with her friend over a metal railway

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bridge. What is obvious in both women's writing is the embedding of their
subjectivities in beautiful things. My note to myself on Grace's work was:
     Look at the narrator's connections with the natural world: the
sensory world   defines a complex positioning of that narrator. A sort of
embedding in beautiful   things.
from 'October':
_____a_____   _____b_____
The gardeniscool and greennow it is October
againCarrierProc/IntensiveAttrib/NaturalTemporal/Natural /Return
Clause a: Type: Relational/Intensive

Clause b:
nowitisOctober   againConj/ TemporalCarrier
/EmptyProcess/Relational/
IntensiveCircumstance/   Circ./
temporal/   temp
specific/annual
Clauseb): Type: Relational/Intensive (enhancement
_____a_____
Iwent outthis morningActorProc/Material/
Action/Movement/
IntentionalCircumst./physical loc.Circumst/temporal/specific/diurnal
Clause a1: Type: Descriptive/Material
_____a2_____
andthe magnolia treehas   begun to bloomquietlyin the dark
gardenCon/AddActor/NaturalProc/Material/
EventCircumst/   Circumst/ location/
Manner   natural setting
Clause a2: Type: Descriptive/Event
_____a_____
The budsareflame-shaped /but dark and hard /and finehazed with down the
indescribable colour of bloom on a dark grapeCarrierProc/Rel/
IntensAttribute/ physical phen. (recursive structure - postmodifying
nominal groups) (extension))

Clause a): Type: Relational/Intensive
Grace's subjectivity is defined by her classifications of what she 'sees'
in the natural world. Because she does not present herself in the role of
the attributor in her intensive relational clauses her classifications are
presented as absolute propositions. At the same time the way the tonic
falls on 'indescribable' suggests her tentativeness, and her sense of
wonder, as well as her certainty of a beauty that eludes definition. It is
not just her role of attributor, as definer, that is therefore qualified;
as readers we, too are positioned with her because that colour is presented
absolutely as 'indescribable' through that ellipsed postmodifying intensive
clause: with down which is the indescibable colour....
_____ba_____   _____a_____   _____bb_____
Working in the library today/ (hypotactic clause)Iwas   thinking of

how to write of memory,/ like water in a blue bowl, /shimmering and reflecting on the surface but a deep, clear colour beneath (hypotactic clause)Circumstance/
temporal   ProcessorProc/Mental/Cognit. Range/Goal/
Metaphenomenon
(projection)
Clause a): Descriptive/Mental/Cognition

Hypotactic Clause ba
Workingin the libraryProcess/Material/AbstractCircumstance/Physical location
Clause ba): Type: Descriptive/Material
_____bb_____   _bb1/ bb2_____
howto write ofmemorylike water in a blue bowlshimmering /and reflecting on the surface but a deep , clear colour beneathCircumstance/ Manner (in question)Process/Mental/Verbalisation/
PerfectiveGoal/
Psychological state
projectionCircumstance/
comparison
(enhancement)Circumstance/
Manner/co-ordinated: (elaboration-> extension:
addition/
adversative)
Clause bb: Type: Mental/Verbalisation
(I have some difficulty classifying 'to write of'; finally, I think it is a mental process of verbalisation which is a projection; in the same way that speaking is)
Grace has 'focused', 'seen', the processes of writing. It is important to note the perfective, 'to write' (as opposed to the 'reality' of the imperfective, 'working'); and the way her text is developing through a series of projections as Farmer's Body of Water opens with similar features.
Beverley Farmer
This new writing: I want it to be an interweaving of visual images - more open, loose and rich, and free from angst. And if I keep a notebook this time as I go, it will grow side by side with the stories, like the placenta and the baby in the womb.
_____a_____   _____b_____
Iwantit to be an interweaving of visual images - more open, loose and rich, and free of angstProcessorProcess/Mental/AffectiveRange Goal/
Metaphenomenon
Projection
Clause a): Type: Descriptive/Mental/Affective
Clause b
itto bean interweaving of visual images - more open, loose and rich, and free of angstSubjectPredicatorComplementCarrier/ Ref: 'This new writing'Process/ Relational/ Intensive
PerfectiveAttribute/ creative quality

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Clause b): Type: Relational/Intensive
_____ba_____   __bb_____

And ifI keepa notebookthis timeas I goConj/Addit/
ConditionalActor
(behaver)Process/
Material/
Creative/
IntentionalMedium/
(Range Goal)
projection)Circumstance
Temporal/
SpecificCircumstance
Manner
(personal)
Clause ba) Type: Descriptive/Material/Creative
asI   goConjSubject'pres Finite   Predictor
'go'Circ/temp/simultaneousBehaver/AgentProc/Material/Abstract/
Creative/Middle/Intentional
Clause bb): Type: Descriptive/Material

_____a_____
itwill growside by sidewith the storieslike the placenta and the baby in
the wombActor/
MediumProcess/
Material/
Event/
Circumstance
MannerCircumstance
Manner
(comitative)Circumstance
Comparison
Clause a): Type: Descriptive/Event

One of the very interesting aspects of Farmer's use of the process, 'grow'
is that she has used it non-causatively: as an event process. But 'the
notebook' remains in the semantic role of 'the Medium' because its growth
depends on her establishing the conditions for its growth. Her sense of
Agency, her sense of her role as an Initiator, I hypothesise, lies in her
sense of moving with, not against, natural processes of growth. Hence her
comparison of the baby growing in the womb is so appropriate: the
experience of pregnancy for me was certainly of a process that went on, in
its own preset order, though I was the essential condition of that process.
Perhaps I was the Keeper of the process, as well as the Initiator.
Farmer's use of the process 'keep' semantically realises the nuances of my
feelings: it is an interesting process because while it is not a
'causative/non-causative' pair, it is the notebook that remains in the

state of 'being kept' . The usual classification would, of course, be that
it is a Relational process of Possession. Farmer might, for example, have
written, And if I have a notebook... However, the dynamic process is not
quite like that, for it takes the passive, whereas have does not. We can
say, A notebook was kept (by Farmer) but we cannot say A notebook was had
(by Farmer). It may be seen as a process that takes Cognate Range: the
Complement is essential to express the extent of the process. And this
seems to me to be important because she is then defined in terms of Agency,
and not just in terms of what she owns.
A characteristic feature of Farmer's writing (in this text, at least) is
that she is foregrounded in the role of Subject, as Attributor, as Actor,
as Senser. Her Goals are often Range Goals which are her own mental
projections of metaphenomenon. The processes that she defines herself with
are often 'one participant' but, importantly, intentional.
Similarly, these patterns are foregrounded in Grace's writings. There is a
sense of women in control of their lives: as Farmer would say, as subjects
in their own stories. (Farmer, 1991: 260) I simply regret there is not
more space to show you the refinements of the way their subjectivities are
thus framed. Imagine, two women sitting on an evening hillside, one
recently bereaved, unwell, 'circled by' mosquitoes, and yet the women are
not presented in the role of the Affected, but rather as intentional
Actors. Imagine a young woman, who weeps, who is 'careful to do the
weeping', herself; thus she is taken by surprise when she takes the role of
'consoler': she, too, is the Actor. Her use of the reflexive, myself,
establishes the patterns of her control, not over others, but over herself.
Both Farmer and the young student define themselves in terms of their
natural world and in terms of their projected understanding of others.
Simon and Hemingway
Simon's writing reminded me of the Hemingway character, Nick. Simon's
world touches the world of Kings Cross, of drugs and dangerous people: it
is the contemporary parallel to the dangers Nick saw, setting out, riding
trains during the Depressions, living in Madrid during the Civil War. I
say saw because the mental process that is foregrounded in both Simon's and
Hemingway's writing is the mental process of sight. I was surprised at how
much watching they did. Simon and Hemingway both 'see' the natural world;
but with a much broader view than Grace and Farmer. They see sunlight and
rain, creeks and mountainsides, bays and trees: not light moving across a
wall during the day; not buds and unfurlings and shoots; not hidden things.
(Interesting, my choice of 'hidden'!) Circumstances, are frequently

barriers: they may be doors, or, in Simon's case, a baby, even
metaphenomenon, such as 'orders', in For Whom the Bell Tolls . They are
both given to classifying people. So though their writing, too, is marked
by Relational/Intensive clauses those clauses are often to do with social
classifications, such as fascists, prostitutes, whores, old men, young
girls. They also classify with attitudinal epithets: 'she was an ugly old
thing'; and Anselmo thinks Pablo is like a 'boar that has been altered';
but then he takes back that comparison, 'But he is ugly enough..'
(Hemingway, 1976: 175)

And though I did not find any 'extensive' relational clauses in Farmer or
Grace's writing they do feature in Heminway's and Simon's. I was
surprised to 'see' how they both record dislike for thinking things.
Anselmo does not like to think 'of the killing'; Simon's character tries
not to think of a transvestite and lover at 'the Cross' 'making love'. And
although the young man had run towards a fight between 'two whores', in the
end he does not like to look at it. It seems to me that there is a
fascination with danger in both Hemingway's work and Simon's. They want to
remain in the semantic role of 'watchers'. In fact, in one story, Simon's
character goes to 'the Cross' to look; but he is afraid to be seen
himself; he spends some time trying to escape observation.

The Conclusion/Epilogue
I know what I am supposed to do in a conclusion: I am supposed to summarise
my arguments (which will be very convenient for you if you are doing a skim
read and you want to get the gist of the paper and decide whether you will
read further), but as I have already destroyed the academic genre by
confounding it with others I prefer the epilogue mode. It gives more
opportunity for reflection on the characters motivations and futures; and
to admit the interpersonal nature of all exchanges, so frequently
'silenced' in academic discourse in the name of that shibboleth,
objectivity.
Actually when I sat down to write this paper, my computer singing to me
with its grey screen glowing like a distant cloud, I looked at my sixty
pages of linguistic analysis. I looked at all those little boxes dividing
up the structures and functions Actors and Agents, Moods and Finites and
Residues and Predicators and Themes and Rhemes and I thought, this is going
to bore everyone witless. I will watch their faces glaze, I will see them
pretend to have appendicitis to escape. How many of the 'participants' at
the conference will be eccentric enough to sleep with a four hundred page
introductory grammar book under their pillows, which the author had wanted
to call a brief introduction? (Frustrated, my computer began to weave a
vortex and concertined squares and circles and fanned them out again.) They
(the conference 'participants') will undoubtedly have cart loads of other
eccentricities, but that one will be rare. You see, I actually believe
that the way we make knowledge, the voices we can hear, and speak, are
predicated on our eccentricities, though we have denied them. As we deny
the role of the personal and the fictional in academic endeavours. (I use
the first person pronoun we, that Poynton explained is used to construct,
support, a faith in corporate objectivity, but I use it in the simple sense
that in our academic genre we have patently excluded them: all, or almost
all, of us. There are some feminists working to give those silences voice.
Everything that I know academically has in one way or another been
influenced by all the discourses that I have heard or spoken. That
includes private discourses and educational discourse, gender discourse,
fictional discourse: Shakespeare and Tennyson and French and all the host
of other authors that I have encountered over the forty six years of my
reading life. The division between public and private, fiction and fact is
one we have constructed. The private and the fictional are the not-said,
the silence, in the corpus of academic work. But they are

epistemologically potent. Here, I should like to extend Threadgold's
(1987) use of the concept, episteme. She uses it in the original terms in
which Foucault defined it:

>   By episteme we mean...the total set of relations that unite, at a
> given period,   the discursive practices that give rise to
> epistemological figures, sciences, and   possibly formalised systems...The
> episteme is not a form of knowledge   (connaissance) or type of

rationality which, crossing the boundaries of the most   varied sciences,
manifests the sovereign unity of a subject, a spirit or a   period: it
is the totality of relations that can be discovered, for a given period,
between the sciences when one analyses them at the level of discursive
regularities. (Foucault 1972: 191)

It is probably not too extreme to suggest the episteme is to do with the
discursive regularities within which knowledge, science, is 'made'; 'made'
in the sense of 'accepted', as knowledge, as science. While Foucault
defines his concept of episteme in terms of the 'set of constraints and
limitations which, at any given time, are imposed on discourse' he
stresses the 'limitation is not the negative limitation that opposes
knowledge (connaissance) to ignorance, reasoning to imagination...'.
However, he moves to the idea that the 'analysis of the episteme ' does
'not question its right to be a science, but the fact that it exists'. In
some ways his argument seems thus to move towards closure; but he does
conclude by stressing 'historical practice' over any notion of 'a
transcendental subject'. (Foucault, 1972: 192)

He leads me back to the questions of discursive functions. I want to move
beyond his central focus on 'what it is for that science to be a science'
to the question he discounts, 'given the existence of something like a
science, what is its legitimacy?' Those of us who teach fiction know that
the mythmakers' dreams of such figures as Dedalus and Icarus are ancestors
of deep space probes past Jupiter and Mars. Science/Fiction is another of
those binary oppositions of western thought; and the first term is
implicitly privileged by Foucault, too. Whereas, I suggest, that fiction
and what is accepted as science are not oppositional, but conditional. It
is not just the totality of the relations between the discursive
regularities that should be seen as within the terms of the episteme ,
their silences should also be included. And questioned.

Perhaps that is why (human motivations are inevitably obscured) I have
'chosen' to confound genres of fact and fiction: to make manifest that all
knowledge is but representation. And I must remind myself that Functional
Grammar, as beautifully complete as it seems to be as a model which
accounts for the texts and meaning potential of our language, is but a
representation.

I should like to draw to a conclusion with words from my once supervisor
and special mentor, Terry Threadgold (who would have no idea how much she
has changed what I 'see'):

>   the whole knotty problem of the relationship between representation
> and what   we think of as reality, is not the old marxist false-
> consciousness argument in a   new guise. There is no sense of semiotics

as a 'science' or master knowledge   which can somehow get at the 'truth'
'behind' other people's lies. All   representations, including semiotics
itself, that is including theories and   knowledges, are 'lies' in the
sense of constructions, fictions.
    (Threadgold, in Threadgold & Cranny-Francis, 1990: 3)
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