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EDITORIAL

This number of NLC sets a double precedent: it is our longest ever, and it is the first issue to be devoted to a single theme. The two facts are not unconnected, since our theme is stylistics and a tendency to be discursive about discourse is an occupational hazard of the stylistician. There is indeed a profusion of commentary in these pages that may be displeasing to those who prefer their insights to figure more severely, on the stark branches of derivational trees. We dare to hope nonetheless that we have brought together a set of interesting and original papers.

Though the contributions all raise theoretical issues in stylistics, they are without exception practical in emphasis and relate their various arguments to the interpretation of specific texts. Two articles are devoted to the stylistic analysis of lyric poems - a much cultivated field. One is by Alex Rodger, of the University of Edinburgh, and is a version of a talk given by him to the Nottingham Linguistic Circle in November 1976. This contribution is too complex to be summarised here, but it may be noted that Mr. Rodger draws attention to the importance of an adequate and sensitive contextualization in the interpretation of poetic texts.

The other "poetics" article is by Pierre Calame, a young Swiss student who has just completed a year of postgraduate study at Nottingham, and who has written a short dissertation on linguistic patterns in the poetry of Robert Graves. M. Calame's contribution outlines a model of analysis based on the procedures of systemic grammar.

Two further articles deal with stylistic aspects of dramatic dialogue and prose narrative, areas which to say the least have not been intensively explored. Many readers may find Deirdre Burton's article on Tom Stoppard the most interesting in the issue, raising as it does the challenging question of the relationship between "real" and "artificial" dialogue.

Finally, Walter Nash's short account of a passage of Lawrentian prose emphasises the necessity of determining a textual and thematic structure as a framework of reference for the location of stylistic devices.

To these articles we append a review of a recent book by Professor H.G. Widdowson, whose name appears more than once in this issue and whose work has prompted the composition of at least one of our articles. He is thus unwittingly (but, we might hope, consentingly,) our fifth contributor.

Christopher Butler Walter Nash

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NOTICES AND PROSPECTS

(1) Forthcoming Meetings:

London, 6-8 November 1977. Lancaster, Spring 1978. Hull, Spring 1979.	Linguistics Association of Great Britain. Details from the Meetings Secretary Paul Werth, Dept. of Linguistics, University of Hull, N Humberside.
Ulster, 28 June - 1 July 1977.	Celtic Phonology Conference. Robin Thelwall, Linguistics, New University of Ulster Coleraine, N Ireland.
Hatfield, 18-20 July 1977.	4th Systemic Workshop on Textlinguistics. Geoffrey Turner, Linguistic Group Hatfield Polytechnic, P.O.Box 109, Hatfield, Herts.
Exeter, 5-13 August 1977.	Seminar on Contrastive Linguistics. Aiden Cahil, Language Centre, University of Exeter, Queens Building, EX4 4QH.
Birmingham, 3-7 April 1977.	5th International Symposium on the Use of Computers in Literary and Linguistic Research. Dennis Ager, Dept. of Modern Languages, University of Aston, Birmingham.

We have been asked to publicise the activities of the Speech Group of the Institute of Phonetics. Details from Celia Scully, Secretary of the Steering Committee, Dept. of Phonetics, University of Leeds, LS2 9JT. Forthcoming meetings in 1977: Loughborough, 1 July, on Synthesis and perception of prosodic aspects of speech; Birmingham, 16 December, Machine recognition of speech.

(2) Reports on Conferences

Child Language Seminar, University of Nottingham; 24-25 March 1977.

An annual event for people actively engaged on work in child language, broadly interpreted: about 50 people attended this years' meeting, with, variously, predominantly linguistic, psychological and educational interests. Papers on: stages in children's syntax, modal verbs, discourse, reading, prelinguistic communication, German Textlinguistik. Particularly interesting papers, I thought, by Gordon Wells (Bristol) who gave a severe critique of

Joan Tough's work on language "disadvantage"; and by Alison Gopnik (Oxford) on the meaning of early one-word utterances. Both these papers will be published in the next issue of NLC, along with other papers from the Seminar and related papers on child language.

Michael Stubbs

The Linguistics Association of Great Britain: Spring meeting 1977; 29-31 March, West Midlands College, Walsall.

The Meeting included some 17 papers. Experience of previous meetings would have led one to expect that of these, about five would be worth listening to, seven almost worth listening to, and five decidedly not worth listening to. In fact, for my money, all but two of the papers were interesting and well presented, which definitely put this among the top rank of LAGB conferences. Furthermore, there should have been something to satisfy all sorts of linguistic taste, since the papers were drawn from a wide variety of areas. At the risk of slighting by omission some who gave papers of equal merit, I would mention in particular a very neat presentation by Margaret Deuchar (Stanford) of the evidence for diglossia in the language of deaf "signers" in Reading; a paper entitled "The Numeral Squish" by G.G. Corbett (Surrey), described as 'the best squish paper I've ever heard' by one whose contribution to the previous issue of NLC does not give the impression of having come from a keen adherent of squishiness; and a study of the historical development of English quantifiers by D. Lightfoot (McGill), showing how, having previously been part of the same category as adjectives, they eventually emerged as a separate category. Also worthy of note was the "First report on an O-V-S language" by D. Derbyshire (UCL). Part of the interest of this paper stemmed from the fact that the date of presentation was suspiciously close to 1st April, that Derbyshire's abstract made frequent reference to studies by G.K. Pullum, and, finally, that Derbyshire himself was unable to be present to give the paper, (having been forced to return to the Amazonian jungle to oversee the publication of his translation of the bible into Hishkaryana), and that G.K. Pullum would perform in his stead. This gave rise to the suspicion of a hoax. In the event, the genuineness not only of D. Derbyshire, but also of the O-V-S nature of the language proved to be all too well documented, and another putative universal bit the dust. In addition to the papers, there was also a "syntax workshop" in which J.R. Payne (Birmingham) and A. Radford (Oxford) discussed various problems to do with the verb seem and related verbs in other languages. A final word should be said about the organization of the conference, which seemed to me to be highly competent, especially in providing a wine and cheese party with provender significantly better than that usually provided on these occasions.

A.S.C.

THEMES AND THESES:

Textual Cohesion and Poetic Significance in Theodore Roethke's "Child on Top of a Greenhouse"

CHILD ON TOP OF A GREENHOUSE

1 The wind billowing out the seat of my britches,
2 My feet crackling splinters of glass and dried putty,
3 The half-grown chrysanthemums staring up like accusers,
4 Up through the streaked glass, flashing with sunlight,
5 A few white clouds all rushing eastward,
6 A line of elms plunging and tossing like horses,
7 And everyone, everyone pointing up and shouting!

Theodore Roethke

If stylistics has any useful purpose it must surely be to establish what has been called "the optimal interpretation" of the work in hand - a reading which is intersubjectively acceptable to the majority of competent readers because it accommodates as many significances as will plausibly contribute to an understanding of the work without irrelevance or inconsistency.[1] In his stimulating and lucidly argued Stylistics and the Teaching of Literature H.G. Widdowson offers revealing insights into a number of literary works including Theodore Roethke's well-known short poem, "Child on Top of a Greenhouse".[2] My intention in this paper is essentially to augment Widdowson's interpretation of this piece, for despite the relevance and acumen of some of his comments on it, his analysis as a whole seems to me to fall so far short of the optimal interpretation that it fails to identify its main theme. The reason, I believe, is his exaggerated concern with certain formal features to the exclusion of a sufficient concern with the poem's implications of situational context.

It must be conceded from the start that Widdowson lays no claim to having arrived at a definitive interpretation, which he rightly believes to be impossible. Furthermore he leaves his readers in no doubt that his analysis is not intended to be an exhaustive one and that questions about the poem's "peculiarities of discourse" over and above those asked in his own pedagogically-oriented handling of it might well lead to other findings. Nevertheless, in a transitional paragraph which both concludes his analysis of Roethke's text and generalises about the approach he recommends, we find the following (p.114):

> "What they [i.e. Widdowson's questions on the text] are intended to do is to make the learner see that the essential meaning of this poem lies not in what is described, and what could therefore be described differently without much loss through explanation, but what is expressed through a particular selection and arrangement of linguistic forms of which there can be no alternative version. (my italics)".

Were the word any to replace this in the phrase I have underlined above, we should have a generalisation about the relationships between verbal art and poetic

significance which is unexceptionable in its denial of the paraphrasability of poetry. But since Widdowson's analytic focus has been almost exclusively on Roethke's particular selection and arrangement of linguistic forms, he does seem to suggest here that he has revealed the very core of the poem's significance, its controlling entelechy or theme. For the present purpose we may define "theme" in this literary sense as the pervasive regulative principle which controls the poem's overall aesthetic organisation and is also its deepest level of significance. Widdowson himself uses the term only once in his book, defining it as "a sort of composite reality" in a context which indicates that he rightly equates it with the poet's uniquely personal and therefore subjective vision of life (p.68). This vision can only be indirectly conveyed (i.e., "expressed" rather than "described") through the poet's imposition on his language-choices of a contextually significant patterning not demanded by the normal rules of the language system. It is through this seemingly gratuitous additional patterning that he conveys to us this idiosyncratic vision of an alternative world - "a reality other than that which is given general social sanction but nevertheless related to it" (p.70). Hence what is said in a poem can never be separated from how it is said, and the theme is most likely to be discovered in the convergent patternings of its chosen language-patterns. Now in so short a poem as "Child on Top of a Greenhouse" we should be surprised to find any very complex configuration of <u>different</u> themes, which is why it is disappointing that Widdowson's otherwise astute analysis mistakes a secondary or supportive theme for the essence of its communicative import.

The reason for this is not far to seek. Almost the whole of Widdowson's interpretation hinges on a single linguistic oddity of the text, namely its grammatical moodlessness or non-finiteness, which I believe he has interpretatively over-exploited to the point of denying that the poem has a worthwhile theme at all. Indeed there is some irony in his insistence that there can be no alternative version of this poem (or indeed any other) and that its essential meaning lies not merely in the linguistic forms the poet selects but in his <u>arrangement</u> of them, for Widdowson spends more than four pages on the arrangement - or as he sees it, the non-arrangement - of Roethke's seven lines, arguing that they are freely permutable, that "other versions are of course possible" and that there is consequently "no apparent significance in the sequence of the lines". Widdowson arrives at this astonishing pronouncement by way of a close-knit argument which is difficult to summarise because of its built-in circularity. Since his conclusions about this poem not only violate one of his own criteria for defining it as a literary discourse but denude it of any cognitive significance, the core of his argument must be reviewed as succintly as possible if the weaknesses of his case are to be isolated, the integrity of Roethke's poem in its given form is to be preserved, and something closer to the optimal interpretation of it is to be suggested.

Widdowson takes off from an initial examination of the

clash between the poem's orthography and its syntax - or rather its lack of syntax. It begins with a capital letter and "ends with a full stop" (actually with an exclamation mark omitted from all four of Widdowson's reprintings) and so is represented as a sentence, i.e., as a complete and independent utterance. Grammatically, however, it is anything but independent, being devoid of main verbs. It consists of a series of line-congruent units which Widdowson classifies as noun phrases but which might equally well be defined as non-finite subordinate clauses of the adverbial class often called "absolute", each including at least one so-called present participle. We are reminded that such structures are intrinsically context-dependent: in other words, to make sense they have to be relatable to some foregoing utterence "which provides the grammatical elements necessary for a sentence to be reconstituted" (p.55). In the poem, however, nothing supplies us with the necessary grammatical information, least of all the title. The noun phrases therefore remain syntactically unrelated to one another, for we have no foregoing sentence to which they might be related as constituents.

For our interpretation of the poem, the most important consequence of this is the absence of tense and thus of any specific time-reference. The nine non-finite verbal elements in the text are all of continuous or progressive form. The overall result is something that is both communicatively and grammatically deviant, namely a "non-sentence" in which isolation of progressive aspect creates an implication of timeless duration of processes. Widdowson therefore sees the poem as being about "...a sensation of ongoing movement which has no attachment to time". This he persuasively associates with the intensely subjective quality of the experience the poem conveys (p.57):

> "The reality which the poem records is that of subjective impression. It is a reality which cannot be expressed by normal language usage since this can of its nature only express that reality which is accepted by shared social conventions".

This observation tells us very little, however, about the controlling theme of "Child on Top of a Greenhouse". According to Widdowson's own reasoning throughout his book, it holds true for all poems and not merely for those composed entirely in non-finite structures. It is therefore surprising that he does not at this point reinforce his case by stating explicitly that as imagined speech, these noun phrases or minor clauses could have no determinable illocutionary force for any face-to-face addresses or indeed for the "speaker" himself. As real locutions uttered by the child during the interlude on the greenhouse roof they would be manifestly absurd, even as soliloquy. They seem no less improbable as reminiscent oral narrative. Without massive expansion of the title into a fully contextualising preamble they would convey nothing to an otherwise unprepared audience. Nor are they much more plausible as reminiscent soliloquy

actually voiced. At best we might regard the text as an unusually grammatically homogeneous representation of "interior monologue". The reality recorded by this poem is thus subjective in the very special sense that the language of the text does not seem intended to represent speech acts at all. It seems designed to symbolise perceptions as immediately and as directly as possible. In terms of the implied context-of-situation, the experience is subjective to the point of the text's being "non-locutionary".

Widdowson next relates the timeless duration effect to the non-sentential status of the text as a whole. Since the line-congruent units of the poem have no syntactic constraints upon them (i.e., they are not constituents of a sentence or major clause) they could, in theory, occur in any sequence. Invoking absence of rhyme as corroborative evidence, Widdowson attempts to prove that the lines are freely permutable. A rhyme-scheme might have partially determined the line-sequence or established unusual (poetic) modes of semantic cohesion among the theses of rhyme-coupled lines: but we have no rhyme, and this supports Widdowson's belief that we have no "order" among the lines, not even that of temporal sequence. A suspiciously cursory glance at the possibilities of referential inter-relationship among the syntactically free-floating noun phrases is held to prove that in terms of lexical repetition and the occurrence of items from associated sets, the lines could be grouped in a variety of different ways. Two perfunctory concessions are made with regard to lines 3 and 4 and line 7, but these are not allowed to disturb Widdowson's conviction that because there are no "cohesive links between the lines of the poem", there is "no apparent significance" in their given sequence and therefore no good reason to suppose that sequence preferable to any the experimenter in permutation may care to produce. And to put this point beyond doubt, Widdowson supplies two alternative versions of his own. Though themselves sufficiently conservative to arouse further suspicions, these are sufficiently damaging to the impact of the poem to convince most readers of the complete invalidity of this part of the argument. We are forced to ask ourselves why Widdowson is so insistent on demonstrating the permutability of the lines that he is prepared to deny the poem any textual cohesion and thus any substantive significance as discourse.

Part of the answer lies in the title, which is clearly modelled on the noun phrase structure conventionally adopted for the titles of many paintings: i.e., zero-determiner + noun + prepositional phrase. This suggests that "...the poem is being represented as the verbal equivalent of a painting" (p.114). Widdowson's hypothesis is a perfectly reasonable one and wholly consonant with two other features of the text: the timeless duration effect already noted, and the transcendence of time suggested by the clash between the 3rd Person reference of the title and the 1st Person references of the text. Since the experiences recorded are so powerfully subjective, the child of the title and the adult painter of the verbal

picture (i.e. the poet) must be one and the same, for in assuming the role of painter, the poet "...cannot choose but to adopt the role of (verbal) addresser". The recurrent textual motif of progressive-aspect-without-tense thus becomes the poem's linguistic equivalent of the visual-aesthetic paradox of static kinesis or timeless duration of process familiar to us from paintings of dynamic action in progress and celebrated in Keats's "Grecian Urn" ode. Since this is also the feature which accounts for our impression of the child's hyper-subjective state of consciousness while perceiving these happenings (and which also accounts for the non-locutionary nature of the text, as I have shown), we have little difficulty in accepting this part of Widdowson's case. We readily concede that part of what the poem expresses in terms of the protagonist's experience is (p.110)

> "...a number of impressions or recollections...capturing a sense of turbulent movement but at the same time unmoving, arrested at the same point by their simultaneity".

We equally readily agree to the iconic quality which confers on the poem its transcendence of the temporal categories + Past and + Present in a way which is not only personal and subjective to the poet-painter but aesthetically appropriate to the poem-as-picture, since the childhood incident and the adult's remembrance of it are conflated in the work of art itself, becoming "simultaneous" in that sense as well as eternally ongoing within the boundaries of the artifact, so that (p.114)

> "...it is through its very expression in the form of art [painting or poem] that this moment's experience is perpetuated, lifted out of the context of real time".

Between them, the progressive aspect motif and the title secure both the effect of extreme subjectivism and that of pictorially-rendered ongoing action. The subjectivism must also be seen to be <u>doubly</u> time-transcendent: to the child, the events seem to be happening uncannily "outside time"; to the adult poet recalling the incident, the events retain their strange out-of-real-time quality but the act of recollection also vividly superimposes personal time past on personal time present. Both effects, it should be noted, are inseparable from the foregrounded motif of timeless progression. Widdowson himself is quite definite on this point (p.110):

> "If these noun phrases are converted into sentences by the insertion of a finite verbal element...they are thereby connected up with external reality..."

i.e., they relate the addresser, his utterances and the experiences they record to the consensus world, the everyday world of time-bound reality, and thus destroy the visionary world of the poem. In any finite-grammar version of the poem, the child's sense of being and perceiving in an unusual timeless dimension disappears, as does the time-transcendent quality of the adult's re-living of the experience.

The real trouble seems to arise because Widdowson wishes to push the poem-as-picture analogy still further, so that it will include types of simultaneity quite different from those already mentioned. A painting that depicts a scene in which numerous different actions are concurrently in progress is able to render them all in a single static image which can also be to some extent perceived by the viewer as a gestalt, instantaneously. The question thus becomes: where, in Roethke's poem, is the linguistic analogue of many different things happening at the same time and indeed all being perceived at the same time? A textual feature equivalent to the pictorial illusion of eternally ongoing movements has been found. What is now needed is another which will do duty as the linguistic equivalent of a picture's "arrest" of these movements, its own real fixity as visual image, so that the events will not merely be "...both past and present, outside time..." by virtue of aspect-minus-tense, but will be "...fixed in the form of the poem itself (my italics) " (p.113). Widdowson has in fact already located this feature - apparently without realising he has done so - in the wholly nominal title which itself suggests iconic fixity; but this does not seem to suffice for his purpose. He reverts to the non-sentential grammar of the text and to the argument that the lack of "cohesive links" among them means that they could occur in any sequence. The same holds true, he now maintains, of the hypothetical clauses or sentences of any finite-grammar paraphrase (p.110):

> "If these noun phrases are converted into sentences by the insertion of a non-finite verbal element... they are thereby connected up with external reality, *but they remain unconnected within the poem.* (my italics). The sentences resulting...could occur in any order as well".

The invalidity of this move has already been signalled by Widdowson's use of the phrase "cohesive links": and here the concept of syntactical constituency is illicitly equated with that of textual cohesion and the absence of the first is used to infer the absence of the second, both in the finite-grammar versions and in Roethke's original. One's objection is of course that a text or discourse is not some super-unit of syntax but a semantic unit - a unit of meaning, not of form. A sentence has structure, but a discourse has *texture*, and these are different kinds of unity, so that[3]

> "...we shall not expect to find the same kinds of structural integration among the parts of a text as we find among the parts of a sentence. The unity of a text is a unity of a different kind".

A major corollary of this axiom is that it is a defining characteristic of any text that the sequence of its sentences cannot be disturbed without radical alteration or total destruction of its meaning; and the meaning of "Child on Top of a Greenhouse" is undoubtedly affected in a damaging way by Widdowson's own alternative versions. The only possible motive he can have for denying unity-of-

discourse to Roethke's poem is his need to establish the simultaneity both of the events perceived and of the child's perceptions of them, for he believes this effect to be quite independent of the timeless duration motif and a property of the finite-grammar paraphrase of the poem.

To secure this simultaneity, Widdowson next illicitly reduces the notion of textual cohesion to that of temporal succession. But the sequencing of sentences in such a way that their textual successivity implies external or situational successivity (i.e., chronological sequence) is only one of a vast number of factors capable of endowing a text with cohesiveness. Here it is treated as if it were the sole factor capable of uniting an otherwise heterogeneous assemblage of utterances. Still referring both to the original noun phrases and to the hypothetical sentences, Widdowson observes (p.110):

> "This absence of structural links means that the events which are described are not arranged in any temporal sequence: they all occur _at the same time_ and since no time is specified i.e., in Roethke's text they all therefore occur _simultaneously_ outside time (my italics)".

"Simultaneity" - in the sense of the reader's impression of concurrently ongoing processes concurrently perceived by the child - thus becomes built-in a property of Roethke's text, all permutation-versions and all finite-grammar paraphrases alike. It stems not from the isolation of progressive aspect from tense but from the intrinsic non-cohesiveness of the text, the poem's lack of a unified message. This is in fact flatly asserted as a datum in the opening words of the same paragraph:

> "The lack of connection between the events in the poem and any timebound reality outside it is matched by _a lack of connection between the events described_ in the poem itself (my italics)".

Now the experience conveyed by the poem itself is dissociated from any particular time orientation: "..it extends over time but is not fixed in time" (p.110). The poem-as-painting must therefore in its own form perpetuate, arrest, _fix_ "at the same point" the multiple impressions of ongoing actions. Clearly this fixity cannot be a function of the progressive verbal elements so it must be sought in some other feature or combination of features. It is located in the "absence of structural links" which is then made synonymous with an absence of "connectedness" (i.e. cohesion of discourse). These zero-features are now related to the structural homogeneity of the line-congruent units (noun phrase + progressive participial phrase), and this syntactic parallelism or "similarity" becomes the textual correlate of a situational "association" which compensates for the lack of inherent connection among the perceived events: i.e., the fixative is simultaneity-of-occurrence, which is in turn demonstrable in terms of the freely variable sequence of the lines. Whether Widdowson starts from absence of

normal syntax or from intrinsic unrelatedness among the events perceived ("..they are impressions unconnected with each other but associated because they occur together..." (p.112) the argument proceeds in a self-perpetuating circle which denies the significance of the experience embodied in the poem and therefore the presence of any regulative theme (other than that of timelss duration) which we might identify as its "essential meaning".

Now in respect of the sort of simultaneity which is essentially iconic, it is obvious that no poem can ever hope to convey the whole of its message in this manner. Unlike a representational painting this poem remains, like all poems, immutably linear and serial. Whatever residual image of its total communicative potential we may retain between readings, to experience the poem again we have to begin at the first line and read through to the last. It follows that our cumulative impression of its total significance will always be inseparable from the poet's sequencing of his theses, whether these be line-congruent or not. However ingenious Roethke may have been in finding linguistic equivalents for some of the paradoxical effects of pictorial art, he had to realise his vision serially for readers who can only experience it in the same serial manner: and that presupposes some meaningful principle behind the sequencing of his utterances. Indeed Widdowson himself insists (p.63) that each line of this poem "...only makes sense in association with the other lines of this poem, as part of a self-contained design". We have seen, however, that the phrase "in association" here begs the question of pictorial and perceptual simultaneity, and the only other design or theme he seems to discern is that of turbulent movements in suspension from real time.

Whatever the other virtues of the argument for the poem as verbal picture, the whole case for the actual simultaneity of the child's perceptions of the events themselves (as opposed to the imaginary or mentalistic simultaneity of the childhood incident and the adult recollection) is counter-intuitive. It depends wholly on the argument that the lines are permutable, which entails lack of textual cohesion, which in turn entails absence of significant cognitive pattern in the child's experience. We do not feel this when we read the poem itself, which strikes us as having both design and significance. Nor do we feel that Widdowson's curiously conservative experiments in line-permutation leave the impact of the poem untouched. If we go further than he does and insist on treating line 4 as independently mobile (which Widdowson admits it is not) and on leaving the initial conjunction and the final punctuation mark as the only fixed features of line 7 (which Widdowson concedes to be the concluding line), then 5,037 other variant versions are possible. Even the least far-reaching of these re-arrangements destroys some aspect of the impact of the original, while more radical permutations give rise to complete communicative absurdities (see Appendix). The significance of the line-sequencing may not be immediately apparent, but it exists: for if it does not, then the underlying theme of Roethke's poem can be nothing more than the child's abnormal state of consciousness in itself, and not what

he was conscious of. Widdowson has convincingly demonstrated that the twin features of moodlessness and tenseless progressive aspect capture and convey a near-hallucinatory state of consciousness, and we have seen that it is consciousness itself rather than speech that this poem seems to imitate. Thus the child's unusual mode of perception is accounted for but the significance of his perceptions themselves is not. Widdowson breaks his own stylistic-interpretative rule by over-focussing on what he calls "text" but is actually only syntax. In consequence, he over-generalizes from a single feature of the poem's form and in so doing robs it of any deeper significance.

Again, so far as the child's perceptions or impressions are concerned, it is one thing to say that all the perceived processes happen concurrently on the occasion represented in the poem but quite another to insist that the child actually perceives them all simultaneously. Anyone in such a situation is bound to have a vague general awareness of a multiplicity of phenomena in progress but is extremely unlikely to be able to register them all at the same time. Even when we allow for the hallucinatory implications of the progressive aspect motif, the lines of the poem still present the phenomena in a series of perceptual frames which differ markedly in content and in direction, range and depth of focus, and so they could hardly be perceived simultaneously. Far from being a mere melange of superimposed but unrelated images, the poem in fact seems designed to present a cumulative series of different acts of attention, and combined significance of which the reader must perceive for himself, like the child or the reminiscent adult. I am of course aware that I am appealing to situational rather than formal or even textual criteria for the unity and meaningfulness of this poem. I do so precisely because the implied situation is itself as much a channel for our recovery of information about the meaning as is the text, and in this respect it is sadly neglected in Widdowson's analysis.

Before attempting to summarize the effects of the poem Widdowson remarks (p.110) "There is more to the experience which the poem expresses than is daptured by saying that it is in suspense from time reference". As we have seen, however, the only components of meaning the remainder of his analysis adds to this are "simultaneity" and "turbulence" as attributes of the perceived movements. His final account of the relations between formal features and implied situation remains firmly in the realm of abstraction. Those who have followed his argument thus far are now invited to accept (p.112)

> "...that the poem represents a series of unordered impressions of things happening simultaneously in suspense from real time, that these impressions are associated as the similarity of the syntactic pattern of the noun phrases suggests...and incomplete in that they are not registered by complete sentences".

Somewhat earlier, however, we are given a slightly more concrete characterisation of the situation (p.57):

> "The boy is perched on top of a greenhouse, physically aloof from the world below and at the same time removed from the reality which it represents, detached from real time and aware only of a kind of timeless movement".

Now almost every term of this description evokes an image of someone in a near-mystical state of perceptual and emotional withdrawal from the ordinary world, but a reading of the poem suggests something rather different - an excited attention to, and a sense of involvement in, a scene in which that world is strikingly transformed, a world not only violently energetic but in certain respects interestingly metamorphic. Roethke's poem, I suggest, does not merely convey a visionary message, as do all genuine poems: it expresses that vision at the very moment of its formation as childhood experience. This is the value of Widdowson's comments on the timeless duration motif, which expresses the visionary state of consciousness. What is lacking is any account of the visionary content. Violation of the rule of tense and thus of the concept of time-bound reality is far from being the only violation of categorial rules in this poem. If there was some irony in Widdowson's insistence that the essential meaning of the poem depends as much on the arrangement as on the selection of linguistic forms, there is even more irony in his frequently repeated definition of poetic vision as the expression of the poet's uniquely individual awareness "...a reality other than that given general social sanction but nevertheless related to it" (p.70).

Valid for all genuine poems, this formula has a special relevance to the present one by being a near-paraphrase of what I believe to be its unique underlying theme: the eternal tension between the demands of social convention on the one hand and the promptings of a sudden anarchic will to complete freedom of action on the other. The poem presents this tension as experienced by the child in a state of unusual excitement induced by the novelty of his location and the unusual nature of the contingent circumstances. The world he perceives from a new physical perspective is most certainly not the "consensus world" as this would normally be perceived by the human - and presumably mainly adult - referents of line 7. It provides a new mental perspective as well. It is nevertheless related to the conventional world (a) by being an alternative version of it, (b) by the reactions of <u>everyone</u> to the boy's situation and his own awareness of that reaction, and (c) by the moral dilemma with which these two contending aspects of his vision confront him. Widdowson has rightly insisted (p.63) that "...the breaking of code patterns prepares the way for the creations of patterns in context" and that these express the elusive underlying theme of any poem. Yet there are several important patterns-in-context which he overlooks or ignores in exaggerating the iconic qualities of the text, and these all indicate the presence of such a theme as I propose. Rhyme-schemes

and conventional cohesive ties are far from being the only factors capable of conferring unity of discourse on a poem. Structural parallelism is another, as Widdowson more adequately demonstrates in his handling of other texts; yet here he neglects several semantically powerful patterns of this kind which establish equative and contrastive equivalences of crucial thematic importance. Even lesser parallelisms directly relevant to line-sequence are overlooked. Lines 6 and 7, for example, share a common pattern of two progressive participles where the other lines have only one each, and since line 7 is clearly closural, there are as good reasons for believing that these two lines must occur in this sequence and at this precise point in the text as there are for conceding that line 4 must follow line 3. Line 4 itself does not have the noun phrase structure shared by all the other lines, and in Roethke's original is significantly the medial or central line of the whole poem - a fact which may prove to have thematic implications of some importance. Even four such points of relative stability among the lines throw further doubt on arguments for their permutability and for the simultaneity of the child's perceptions, while consideration of syntactic (as opposed to literary) theme may lead us to see that there are also good reasons why line 1 should open the poem. More important still as a cohesive force is any foregrounded pattern which involves the violation of selection rules, and here again Widdowson has nothing to say about such devices in this poem, in which they confer animacy on things inherently inanimate, humanize one species of the vegetative order of being, and invest another with the urge to behave as if not merely living but animate. All of these features combine to express an underlying theme which we might conveniently label Nature-versus-Nurture, as I hope to show. First, however, I should like to consider the contribution to cohesion made by the implied context-of-situation.

Roethke's title may not be a sentence enabling us to impose syntactic form on the series of noun phrases, but in itself it provides a major clue to the poem's significance which is even more important than its "pictorial" implications. For the title, too, is in its own way deviant, though the functional conventionality of its structure slyly camouflages the fact. Any gallery catalogue would arouse more than formal-aesthetic interest if it were to list such titles as Nude on Top of a Fireplace", "Nun on Top of a Cooling-Tower" or even "Baby on Top of a Wardrobe". In other words, such titles hardly ever announce that the human subject is in some improbable, bizarre or downright hazardous situation. Roethke's title clearly announces a "Taboo" situation for the juvenile protagonist, and the text makes it amply clear that his location is both inherently and circumstantially a thoroughly dangerous one. The locative phrase <u>on top of</u> may well have implications beyond those of literal precariousness, suggesting a confident sense of domination, as in <u>on top of things</u>, <u>on top of his job</u>, <u>on top of the world</u>. It has undertones of potential presumption, hubris. The child is where he ought not to be. He may fall off the roof because of the force of the west wind (lines 1, 5

and 6) or through it because of the weathered state of disrepair of the panes of roofing-glass (lines 2 and 4). The wind itself is powerful to cause the elm-tree, a notoriously rigid species, to sway in violent agitation (line 6). Beneath his feet and beyond the audibly brittle glass and fragments of inoperative putty, the child can see seedling chrysanthemums inside the green-house, while reflected on the surface of the glass or high overhead he can see a scatter of white clouds moving east at speed. Below him, and beyond the greenhouse, he perceives not only the more distant line of elms but all the other human participants in the scene, who are gesticulating and calling out loudly for reasons the reader will have no difficulty in guessing. Even without closer scrutiny of the lexical values of the text we can see that despite its mundanely domestic and rural or subarban setting, the situation has the dramatic quality of involvement in *a dilemma*, which is not at all elicited in Widdowson's description of the boy's aloofness, removal from reality and detachment from real time. The initial linking conjunction at line 7 is not the only signal that this line is both textually final and thematically closural. It contains the only instance of immediate repetition of an item (*everyone*) which demands unusual intonational prominence at its second occurrence in any vocal performance of the poem - its sole mode of illocutionary effectiveness. Roethke's final exclamation mark, together with the list-final conjunction *and*, clearly reinforces the summarizing effect of this line. Whatever the child's emotional mood may be, his conclusion seems to imply an attitude paraphraseable as "Just LOOK what I'VE done!" Line 7 in other words seems to present the consequence of everything that precedes it whether overtly stated or situationally implied.

In terms of its "grammetrics"[4] the text as analysed by Widdowson does consist of noun phrases or nominal groups but not every group is congruent with a single metrical line. There are seven lines but only six noun phrases. At lines 1, 2, 5, 6 and 7 the line-boundary coincides exactly with the noun phrase boundary. At first sight this also seems to be the case at line 3 but at line 4, the crucial mid-point of the poem, the intratextually normative pattern (noun phrase + defining relative clause) is disrupted. Line 4 is clearly an extension of the line 3 noun phrase and the *half-grown chrysanthemums* is therefore the only noun phrase which has a complex and syntactically ambiguous string of three qualifying elements and so occupies two complete lines instead of one. It is also the first of only two noun phrases in the poem to include a pre-head epithet (the other being *a few white clouds*). Its structure may be analysed as follows:

Modifiers	*Headword*	*Qualifiers (rankshifted/ "embedded")*	
the half-grown	chrysanthemums	staring up like accusers	(Q1)
		up through the streaked glass	(Q2)
		flashing with sunlight	(Q3)

There is obviously some difficulty here about deciding

whether the recursive relationships within this group are wholly linear or wholly depth-recursive or partly both. Q2 is clearly related to Q1 by the verbal element staring and is thus related to the headword. Q3, however, is indeterminate in its relationships to the whole of the rest of this noun phrase. It may have linear relation to the remainder and so may directly qualify chrysanthemums. The punctuation nevertheless suggests a non-restrictive "additioning" function, so that it may be depth-recursively related not to chrysanthemums but to the streaked glass. This textual ambiguity seems to me to have communicative and situational implications of some importance. The sudden extension of the nominal group, together with Q3's indeterminacy of reference, temporarily disrupts the intratextual syntactic paradigm, suspending the momentum of the poem and suggesting a moment of hesitancy and uncertainty for the percipient himself; and this may prove significant when we examine the pattern of deviance from selectional rules, especially in terms of what precedes and what follows line 4.

Apart from simply listing the nine progressive verbal elements on which the timeless duration effect depends, Widdowson makes almost no comment on their individual values in the context or their combined meaning-potential. His situational and thematic summaries include only two hints of the most abstract kind: dynamic movement and turbulent movement. All these progressive forms (billowing, crackling, staring, flashing, rushing, plunging, tossing, pointing, shouting) are in fact contextually classifiable as dynamic and not stative uses, for all will admit the addition of an appropriate form of auxiliary be in the past, present or future tense. This clearly promotes some of the poem's pervasive suggestion of ongoing processes of great inherent energy or intensity. Furthermore the constant rankshifting or embedding of the qualifying participial clauses has the effect of conflating Subject and "Predicate", of subsuming rheme under theme and thus allowing Actor to dominate Process. This effect is reinforced by the frequency with which verbs capable of transitive use (in the surface grammar sense) occur here in intransitive clauses - e.g., flash, rush, plunge, toss, point, and shout. Even stare, in combination with the particles out and down, can take Direct Objects having the feature /+ animate/or/ +human/. Thus this series of free-floating noun phrases or non-finite subordinate clauses does three things: it (i) isolates progressive aspect from tense with effects we have seen, (ii) tends to identify Process with Actor, and (iii) creates a pervasive pattern of dynamic intransitivity which further isolates each Actor from all the others, so that each appears to be "doing its own thing" without connection with or concern for any other participant in the scene. All of this might in fact seem to support Widdowson's view of the poem, which reduces the child's vision to a mere random collage of kinetic-process images itself so lacking in significant form and cognitive value as to be unworthy of the quality and intensity of the near-mystical mode in which the protagonist experiences it. But we have already touched upon a pattern

which runs counter to this notion of isolated, unconnected happenings. The child reacts to everyone, just as everyone reacts to the child: they are unlikely to be pointing and shouting at the clouds or the elms. The chrysanthemums also are staring up as if animate and indeed doing so like accusers as if human, and they are unlikely to be staring at the glass roof or accusing the few white clouds of some culpa. The superficial intransitivity of the clauses at lines 3 and 7 in fact partially conceals the relationship between the starers and the object of their stares, between the pointers and what they point at, between the shouters and the cause or addressee of the shouting. And as I hope to show, those "participants" represented as flashing (line 4), rushing (line 5) and as plunging and tossing (line 6) are likewise in covert relationship with something else in the situation.

The exceptions to this predominant pattern of dynamic intransitivity are of course the transitive clauses of lines 1 and 2, where we are confronted with descriptive problems of ergativity or causativity in relation to the verbs billow and crackle. The scope and length of this paper make full discussion of these difficulties impossible here, but enough can be said here to indicate something of their peculiar contextual value in the poem. Except in certain rare trade and technical uses, crackle is essentially a verb which, while it denotes a one-participant process, invariably presupposes some causative agency which is not linguistically realised in the sentence. It is thus normally confined to use in such intransitive clauses as the fire crackled or the undergrowth crackled, whose deep structure might be crudely paraphrased as combustion caused the fire to crackle or some animate agent or inanimate force caused the undergrowth to crackle. Subject-nouns denoting animates seldom (if ever) combine with this verb and nouns denoting human beings are least likely of all to do so. Even nouns denoting parts of the human body resist combination with it, as this oddity of *my feet crackle at night demonstrates. Roethke's unusual use of surface transitivity here seems to make the verb into a semantic hybrid, an amalgam of features associated with the related verb crack (another causative) and the visual implications of "crazing" carried by the technical transitive crackle, a fusion of causative, fractural, auditory and visual features all of which are of course connotatively reinforced by the Direct Object nominal group splinters of glass and dried putty. More complex still are the descriptive problems raised by Roethke's use of billow. This verb is of course statistically rare and is almost exclusively restricted to archaic-literary use when the Subject-referent is the ocean. Used in this way it is more common in modern English as a noun than as a verb and for good reason, for in its non-transferred and non-figurative uses it remains stubbornly a verb denoting a one-participant process. Dictionaries and concordances do not seem to record such transitive uses as the wind billowed (out) the sails and a hasty scanning of several literary texts in which one might expect to find analogues of line 1 has not so far yielded a single instance.[5]

Conversely, sentences such as the sails billowed out, his parachute billowed open, and the tent billowed wildly are not only acceptable at first sight but occur quite frequently. Nearly all such uses occur, however, in contexts which either overtly name or exophorically imply the movement of air as the natural agency or force operating on such artifacts as sails, tents, garments, etc. In its most "radical" or non-transferred uses the verb billow clearly has ergative or causative implications - hence the theoretical acceptability but redundancy of the sea billowed or the waves billowed; whereas even reflexivisation (*the sea billowed itself) seems unacceptable, while combination with a direct object (*the sea billowed the ship) seems even more so. But such sentences as *The wind billowed (out) and "the wind billowed itself (out)" seem equally unacceptable, whereas sentences on the model of the wind billowed (out) the sails (out), though apparently rare, feel more acceptable despite their redundancy. Still more acceptable are the sails billowed (out) in the wind and her skirts billowed (out) as she waltzed, chiefly because the agentive force is either syntactically demoted, reduced to a mere circumstance registered by a locative prepositional phrase or an adverbial clause, or is omitted entirely, presumably to avoid redundancy.

In its radical use to denote the process of oceanic swell, therefore, billow is a verb symbolising a one-participant process, so far as the code is concerned. Natural forces such as wind and lunar-gravitational pull remain implicit, linguistically unrealised, as initiators or causers of the process. They are either unknown, or so obvious as to be irrelevant to the message. In terms of M.A.K. Halliday's systemic grammar, billow in this sense cannot normally realise a "middle" process[6] (e.g. he marched off parade and he marched his platoon off parade): hence the unacceptability of *the wind billowed (itself). If anything other than a noun denoting the sea is to combine with billow as its subject, then the code demands that it be a noun denoting the situationally affected entity or Goal, and that the clause be intransitive, unless redundancy is deliberately sought; and we have seen that redundancy of the transitive kind (the wind billowed (out) the sails) seems to be very rare.

Since billow is also resistant to passive transformation (*the sea was being billowed, *the seat of my britches was being billowed out) we may conclude that the most predictable form of clause the code would produce as an equivalent to line 1 of the poem is the seat of my britches billowing out in the wind, in which the ergative Initiator of the action is demoted to the status of nominal complement in a locative prepositional phrase. Roethke's deliberate redundancy in introducing the wind as surface subject renders explicit what the code normally leaves implicit: a natural force as Initiator but not Actor of the process denoted by the verb. The "First Cause" or Prime Mover is revitalized and made manifest. The effect on the reader is not, however, one merely suggestive of an inanimate force operating as the contingent cause of a non-directed action on the part of some other inanimate entity. The

impression is rather of some quasi-animate entity carrying out a goal-directed action, illusory though this may be. Some linguists have already suggested on well-argued grounds that subject-nouns denoting such natural forces as wind, rain, fire, etc, should perhaps simply be classified as "grammatical animates". The fact that D.A. Cruse was led by his investigations in this area to insist on the dissociation of the semantic feature /± human/ from the concepts of agentivity and causativity[7] indicates that when we are not thinking purely as descriptive linguists, we have a strong tendency to interpret grammatical analogues of Roethke's first clause in animistic or anthropomorphic terms, and in so doing "smuggle in" the concept of intentionality. As Halliday puts it "...in English, the enforcing of a non-directed action is the same thing as taking a directed action".[8] Halliday expands on this by pointing out that many clauses of the type he calls "descriptive operative" with verbs capable of implying causation take on an intentionalising effect when a Direct Object is introduced (e.g. he sank vs. he sank a well), and especially where there is a resultative (he sank the well deep). This intentionalising effect of the introduction of an extensive complement or Direct Object also extends to reflexives where these can occur, again with the possibility of a resultative (he sank deep into the cushions vs. he sank himself deep into the cushions). Here it is simply the fact that there is a Complement, reflexives being merely one sort of instance, which separates the Initiator from the Actor and consequently makes the initiation of the action seem intentional.[9] Halliday's examples of course have human referents as subject and initiator. But Roethke's conversion of billow from a one-participant event-descriptive process to a two-participant action-descriptive process, with a causative Subject as Initiator and an extensive complement or Direct Object as Actor, has the same effect of separating the two and thus of carrying a hint of intentionality on the part of the "grammatical animate", the wind. Also, the presence of a resultative frequently tends to be strongly suggestive of intentionality, so that the inclusion of out here reinforces the pseudo-animacy of the natural force as causative agency.

Nevertheless it is the presence in the context of another pattern of deviant Subject-Verb combination endowing inanimates with apparent intentionality, which sustains the otherwise faint hint of deliberate goal-directed action by the wind in Line 1. Except in combination with subject-nouns denoting liquid or semi-solid masses (e.g. water, avalanches, etc.) the verb rush commonly presupposes human or at least animate intention. In line 5 however it combines with the inanimate subject clouds and the implication of deliberate action is subtly reinforced by the qualifying pro-form all, which slyly suggests that some of the few white clouds might well be rushing in directions other than eastward should they choose to do so. Similarly, plunge and toss tend to presuppose a subject capable of intention, even when used in intransitive clauses as here. But in line 6 they combine with the noun elms, which has the feature /+ organic/ but not

the feature /+ animate/, and we shall see that there are excellent contextual reasons for assigning intentionality to the subject in this case. Finally, of course, we have stare, which in the code demands a Subject-noun with animate or human reference; and while this verb sometimes denotes an involuntary process, it is here clearly an intentional and "intense" action on the part of the metaphorically quasi-human chrysanthemums. In the context of this pattern of categorially deviant Subject-Verb combinations, the unusual transitivity of the clauses forming lines 1 and 2 reinforces the general illusion promoted by the poem of independent, unconnected entities carrying out deliberate and violently energetic actions on their own initiative. The wind seems wilfully to inflate the boy's clothing, while his own feet appear to act as independent agents in their own right as they cause further damage to the already fragile glass of the greenhouse roof. Everything inanimate in the poem seems to act as if from dynamic energy directed from within itself, yet nearly every Subject-noun is one lacking the features/+animate/ and /+volition/ in the code.

The overall result is an underlying theme of ontological rebellion or presumption which is also one of illusion. The various entities appear either to behave as if they had already arrogated to themselves the characteristics and capacities of higher orders of being, or to struggle fiercely in an attempt to violate the categories of the established natural order by becoming something higher than they are. This theme of natural rebellion is obliquely announced in lines 1 and 2, as we have seen, but grows more explicit as the poem proceeds, receiving its own climatic statement in line 6. This unit is marked off from those before it by incorporating not just one progressive dynamic verbal element but two, thus doubling the implication of anarchic energy and effort. In this instance, trees behave like horses, or try to do so. But the Actors here are not a natural clump, cluster or random scatter of elms: they constitute a line and so represent the vegetative order of nature brought under human control and the discipline of planned cultivation. The metaphorical equation is therefore not with a freely-galloping herd but with a tethered line of horses which have been restricted by others to the spot where they stand and rebelliously struggle to break free. These rooted and regimented elms plunge and toss in an apparent attempt to achieve the free locomotion of the animal order, fretting not only against human control but against the natural limitations of genus. The image is less a semantic hybrid, an amalgam of /+vegetative/ and /+animate/, than an image of attempted transcendence of the natural order by violent self-will. Somewhat less rebelliously but no less energetically a few white clouds rush toward a seemingly chosen destination as if with the headlong, wilful impulsiveness of people and animals, and thus appear to the child to act in consequence by directing their own inner energies outward.

In its impact on the reader line 6 contrasts powerfully with line 3, despite the vegetative nature of both Actors.

Line 3 seems to imply the immobility of the chrysanthemums as well as the fixed intensity of their directed visual attention, so there is contrast in terms of stillness versus violent movement on the part of members of the same natural order. At first the chrysanthemums acquire only the feature /+animate/ which is shared by the elms and is here expressed by staring up, but the feature /+human/ is instantly added by the adjunct like accusers, which adds a further feature we might define as /+moral condemnation/. Both unusual features are reinforced by the syntactic parallelism between staring up (line 3) and pointing up (line 7), which associates the chrysanthemums with the human referents of everyone and so establishes the condemnatory attitudes of both. At the same time, the syntactic parallelism between the simile-adjuncts like accusers and like horses link the flowers with the equally vegetal trees by indicating that both are violating the natural order of things, though in very different ways and with opposite kinds of motivation. The pervasive illusion of ontological presumption is reinforced, yet at the same time we are reminded that both Subjects remain immutably vegetable in the world of time-bound reality. Furthermore, because pre-head adjectives are rare in this poem, the epithet half-grown here seems to demand some contextual motivation. We may perhaps locate it in the concept of immaturity: it could apply as appropriately to the child as to the chrysanthemums. The crucial difference between the two is that the latter, as immature plants, are where they should be - undergoing human protection and nurture in the shelter of the greenhouse, not perched precariously on top of it, dominating it and the world immediately around it. Hence their moral condemnation of their human peer's presumptuous behaviour. Even more under the care and control of adult human planning than the rebellious elms, the half-grown flowers are, with situationally typical juvenile self-righteousness, on the side of everyone, everyone. Ironically they thereby arrogate to themselves the exclusively human prerogative of moral judgment, seeking even higher spheres of being than the elms.

In terms of the "real" world, of course, all this self-willed violent physical energy and moral earnestness on the part of the elemental and organic orders of being is an illusion as much for the reader as for the child. Every apparently volitional action by an apparently agentive Subject is in fact caused by the contextual arch-Initiator, the wind. It is the wind which causes the few white clouds to rush with apparent urgency in a seemingly chosen direction; the wind which causes the elms to rear and plunge like agitated horses in a picket-line; the wind which causes either the chrysanthemums or the panes of roofing-glass to flash their respective messages of moral reprobation and dangerous incitement to the child who is where he should not be. In the surface grammar of the clause forming lines 3 and 4, either chrysanthemums or glass could be the Subject of flashing, though the quasi-instrumental adjunct with sunlight might suggest sunlight itself as the implicit Initiator here. Intermittent rapid emissions of light, however, require the rapid intermittent movement of something; so the real

Initiator here is probably once again the turbulent wind, which by driving the clouds across the face of the sun causes them to cast rapidly-passing shadows on the roof, giving us the heliographic image perceived by the boy.

It may be objected that while all this establishes a fairly high degree of unusual or "foregrounded" cohesive patterning in the poem it does not finally and convincingly account for the precise sequence the poet has given to its lines. The various kinds of deviance would still be present and the parallelisms in structure might still operate in some analogous way, whatever the sequence of the lines. It is conceded that Line 7 must be text-final and it is probable that on grounds of poetic theme as well as of syntactic form, the <u>elms</u>-image should perhaps immediately precede it. It <u>is also</u> clear that lines 3 and 4 must go together in that sequence, and that there may be good reason why the anomalous line 4 should be medial in the text. But might not the <u>clouds</u>-line come first, or for that matter the line referring to the child's feet? Why should the poem not open as follows:

(2) My feet crackling splinters of glass and dried putty,

(5) A few white clouds all rushing eastward,

(1) The wind billowing out the seat of my britches,...

This sort of question suggests one reason why the grammatical units making up the text are, from one important perspective, more appropriately interpreted as non-finite adverbial clauses of the absolute type than as complex noun phrases. The latter view encourages us to see each premodifying element and its headword merely as the initial segments of a nominal group of the structure M(odifier) + H(ead) + Q(ualifier) in which Q is in every case an elliptical restrictive or defining relative clause. On the other hand classification of these units as supplementive non-finite absolute clauses raises the important issue of thematic structure, the organisation of a message in terms of theme and rheme (or topic and comment). It allows us to see the MH-elements of each structure as the Subject of a transitive or intransitive clause:

S	V	DO
My feet	crackling	splinters of glass and dried putty

S	V	A
A few white clouds all	rushing	eastward

Unlike appositional or additioning relative clauses with an initial <u>wh</u>-group, or those clearly marked by subordinating conjunctions, or those with an initial verbal element and "understood" Subject, supplementive adverbial clauses of this absolute type must have overt Subjects, normally realised by lexical nouns, precisely because in any major sentence they are not themselves overtly bound to the main clause, even on a semantic level, by any shared element.

Of all the kinds of subordinate clause this is the one which most closely resembles a declarative-mood main clause. So while clauses of this type cannot have mood, they may nevertheless be said to have obligatory (i.e. neutral or unmarked) Subject-theme. Syntactic thematisation is a matter either of obligatory or of optional ways of meaningfully structuring a message in terms of the normal or unusual sequencing of its constituents in relation to its mood and interpersonal function. Here every minor clause of Roethke's poem has as its obligatory S-theme a nominal group with a different lexical noun, except for the final clause which has the universal pronoun everyone as theme. Significantly, not a single clause has the fully human pronoun I as its S-theme, so despite the fact that the child himself is the silent narrator or pseudo-addresser here, he is much less of an overt presence in the poem than Roethke's title might lead us to expect. After all, it does not read: "Greenhouse Roof, with Child". The concept "child" dominates the title not merely by situational and connotative implication but does so syntactically as the unmodified headword of an HQ nominal group, in which the locative prepositional adjunct at Q can be seen as a sort of predictorless "rheme" or comment on the "theme" or topic child. Yet in line 1 not even the seat of my britches is S-theme and therefore Actor in the process the clause realises. The wind, as pseudo-Actor and real Initiator of action here, is both Subject and theme of this crucial opening clause and thus becomes the leading theme or topic of the whole minor sentence forming this discourse. The child himself features in the two opening clauses only hyponymously as wearer of the "britches" and "possessor" of the feet; and the fact that my feet is once again pseudo-Actor but really Initiator in this clause promotes the contextual illusion of independent goal-directed action on their part. As Widdowson's own argument demonstrates, these intrinsically dependent structures can have no formal claim to sequential precedence over one another, for they never meet up with a main clause which will serve to determine their sequence. Communicatively they remain mere free-floating realisations of circumstantial contingencies unrelated to any pivotal main event or action. Similarly, as complex nominal MHQ-groups they are individually unrelated to any finite verbal element and in consequence cannot expound the categories Subject, Complement or Direct Object of a major sentence.

Roethke's text thus consists of a single minor sentence, which itself consists of six S-theme minor clauses. But each of the latter can also be seen as a complex nominal group, and since all are therefore of the same grammatical rank and syntactic potential, all the formal thematic options are in theory open: were one finite predicator (or more) to be introduced, any one of these nominal groups could become either the normal S-theme or the marked C- or O-theme of the sentence, From a strictly formal point of view, there can be no theme at all in Roethke's moodless sentence, which means there certainly cannot be any obligatory or unmarked theme. And for this very reason, what the poet has chosen to put first becomes

significant and communicatively important, since he presumably intends his moodless sentence to be ideationally a meaningful discourse. The initial nominal group in line 1 thus becomes a very special equivalent of marked theme. Now the ideational function of theme (as initial clause element) is to announce the topical perspective, the point of departure for the whole message. Theme in general represents "what this message is about". The function of marked or unusual theme is to give special prominence to something not normally expected or predictable in the initial position. It emphatically announces what the message is about by focussing special attention on the information carried by the thematic element. It is therefore significant, for example, that the S-theme of the minor clause constituting line 1 is not my britches' seat or the seat of my britches, but the wind. What is true of theme within a clause is also true of sequence of clauses, especially as between dependent and independent clauses where in general a subordinate clause becomes more semantically prominent by occurring in the marked "bound-free" sequence than it is in the unmarked "free-bound" sequence. What Roethke's first clause is about is the wind, and in a special sense what the whole of this minor sentence is about is the wind billowing out the seat of my britches. The roles of the wind as pseudo-Actor in a seemingly goal-directed action and covert Initiator of other apparent "actions" by inanimate entities is thus a major aspect of what Roethke's whole message is about. Syntactic theme and the "micro-theme" of the title here converge with the underlying poetic and textual theme. This is why it is important that in terms of surface grammar we have as the equivalent "marked theme" in this minor sentence a clause of unusual transitivity immediately followed by another of the same kind, this time with a partially human Subject:

S	V	DO
The wind	billowing out	the seat of my britches
My feet	crackling	splinters of glass and dried putty

The parallelism establishes a direct semantic equivalence between the wind and my feet as pseudo-Actors and covert Initiators, so that the child, represented by the hyponymous feet, "does to" other things as the wind "does to" his clothing and to many other things in the scene. The action of the landscape-dominant Initiator and its effect on the locality-dominant boy come first. It is interesting to note that the introduction of an independent clause with the child as S-referent, e.g., I stood on the greenhouse roof, would considerably reduce the prominence and communicative importance of Roethke's initial absolute clause even if the latter were to remain in the initial position. What would normally realise a mere contingent circumstance thus becomes one of the most subtly but significantly deviant clauses in the whole text and the one which announces an essential aspect of the literary theme of the poem by being the equivalent of unusual syntactic theme in this minor sentence. To those who would object that

the title has already announced the theme of the poem, its main topic and focus, I would reply that this gives all the more reason for wondering why the child himself does not figure more prominently as a fully human agentive Subject in the grammar of the text and why Roethke should choose to open the poem with a deviant transitive clause referring to the wind. For neither by its own linguistic form nor by situational implication does the title presuppose, entail or even hint at the relevance of a near-gale-force wind. But if that wind's pervasive, incitatory and delusive roles are to be announced as of prime thematic importance, if a specific semantic equivalence between my feet and the wind is to be established (together with its more general partial equation between the wind and the child), and if the texually contrastive and thematically significant pattern of abnormal transitivity is to play its part in both these operations, then lines 1 and 2 must occur in their given places. Also, the child's natural and almost inevitable shifts of perceptual focus from feet-and-glass to the chrysanthemums beneath and beyond them, then back to the flashing glass make line 5's given position much more compatible with the rest of the design of the text than would any shift to third-line position in the poem, while intensification of the atmosphere of rebellious energy and agitation requires the poem to conclude, as we have seen, with the two double-predicator clauses. Line 5, too, must go where Roethke put it. The case for non-cohesion and line-permutation simply will not hold in the face of the evidence.

Lines 1 and 2, then, establish the main theme of the poem - the physical and moral predicament of a child momentarily tempted to be "as free as the wind" by a sudden vision of anarchic energy in Nature. Line 3 brings in the countertheme of Nurture-in-immaturity, while line 4, by breaking the pattern and suspending the forward momentum of the one-clause-per-line movement, reinforces by its syntactic and referential ambiguity the suggestion of a moment of uneasy equilibrium and hesitation between choices. Up through the streaked glass emphasizes both the location of the immature chrysanthemums and that of the boy while reminding us of the dangerously weathered state of the roof. In lines 3 and 4, the seemingly goal-directed actions of the two initial transitive clauses gives way to the Actor-oriented intransitivity of staring and flashing - though the reader is well aware that the child is the implicit "target" of damning looks and flashed messages alike. At line 5 the momentum takes up again with a reversion to the theme of illusory self-will in inanimates, this time the headlong-rushing clouds, while line 6 presents the thematically synoptic elms-into-horses image - the poem's most violently extreme expression of the theme of illusory presumption and rebellion in Nature. Line 3 has already prepared us for the final counterstatement of the other side of the theme - the necessity for the discipline of Nurture among the immature. Line 7, the conjunction-linked final unit in a list-related set, presents itself as the consequence of all that precedes it and in so doing draws tacitly on the semantic equivalence set up in the

first two lines between the wind and my feet, between the ubiquitous and turbulent causer-of-turbulent-actions and the child who has ventured where he should not. Physically trapped in the dilemma of whether to move or not, morally caught between the appeal of wildly rebellious nature and the smug condemnation of his floral siblings, the child sees that condemnation shared and reinforced by everyone - and the instant repetition of the word records, by intonational implication, the mixture of delighted amazement and guilty trepidation with which he recognizes his own role as Initiator of all this agitation in the familiar human world about him, the guardian and practitioners of Nurture.

There is of course neither main verb nor main clause because when the poem closes the boy has as yet taken no action and made no definite decision, physical or moral. The main action is unrealised - hence the timeless duration effect. Widdowson's analysis establishes valuable correlations between that effect, the form of the protagonist's pseudo-utterances, and the peculiar psychological state and mode of perception they directly symbolise. It does not, however, account for the significance of the content and pattern of the perceptions themselves, which is the underlying theme of the poem, to be perceived by the reader in exactly the way the child perceives it and the adult recollects it. That it does not do so is unsurprising, since the denial of textual cohesion denies the possibility of the presence of any such theme. The one I have proposed is wholly compatible with the timeless duration effect but jettisons the more literalistic implications of the poem-as-picture hypothesis. In my suggested reading, the child's unusual positional superiority over his world, combined with the circumstance of a wild west wind, gives him a new perspective on it which is not merely physical but truly visionary - if delusory - while still sharply relating him to "...the world which is given general social sanction" in its final and only non-figurative line.

The expenditure of so many words in repetitive description and explication of Roethke's own sixty-three words may strike some readers of this paper as absurd - but that is a hazard the stylistician must risk if he is to do his job properly, and the more effective the poem, however short, the greater the number of words needed to account for the unity of its convergent patterns-in-context. Speaking of the "effects" of this poem, Widdowson wryly concludes:

> "As is perhaps apparent, they are not easy to describe with any degree of explicitness and indeed we would not expect them to be, since it is precisely the lack of explicitness that the poem seeks to convey. So that even if we wished to explain what the poem was about, the very terms we would be obliged to use in our explanation would necessarily mis-represent the meaning in some way",

It is a salutary warning, and I am very conscious that my own unwieldy efforts to make the burden of Roethke's poem more explicit may have grossly distorted it. I can only say that the interpretation I have suggested seems to me to be reasonably self-consistent as well as compatible with the linguistic data of the text. Definitive interpretation remains impossible but we must make the effort to reach the optimal interpretation, and that means accounting for as many thematically relevant patterns as we are able to perceive. Short of this, stylistics will remain a mere academic game, and all interpretations will remain equally valid or invalid. If I am wrong about the underlying theme of Roethke's poem, no great harm is done, except to the patience of my readers. Being what it is, the poem itself will remain invulnerable to the worst that papers like this one can do to it.

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APPENDIX: Consequences of line-transposition

Widdowson's line-transposed versions of the test are here shown with the original line-positions indicated in the margin.

3 The half-grown chrysanthemums staring up like accusers,
4 Up through the streaked glass, flashing with sunlight,
5 A few white clouds all rushing eastward,
6 A line of elms plunging and tossing like horses,
1 The wind billowing out the seat of my britches,
2 My feet crackling splinters of glass and dried putty,
7 And everyone, everyone pointing up and shouting.

2 My feet crackling splinters of glass and dried putty,
3 The half-grown chrysanthemums staring up like accusers,
4 Up through the streakad glass, flashing with sunlight,
1 The wind billowing out the seat of my britches,
6 A line of elms plunging and tossing like horses,
5 A few white clouds all rushing eastward,
7 And everyone, everyone pointing up and shouting.

If it really is the case that there is no significance in the sequence of the lines, then given only retention of of initial And (and final mark of exclamation) for any concluding line, the following are are only two of the 5,037 other possible versions.

7 Everyone, everyone pointing up and shouting,
4 Up through the streaked glass, flashing with sunlight,
2 My feet crackling splinters of glass and dried putty,
6 A line of elms plunging and tossing like horses,
1 The wind billowing out the seat of my britches,
5 A few white clouds all rushing eastward,
3 And the half-grown chrysanthemums staring up like accusers!

6 A line of elms plunging and tossing like horses,
4 Up through the streaked glass, flashing with sunlight,
3 The half-grown chrysanthemums staring up like accusers,
5 A few white clouds all rushing eastward,
2 My feet crackling splinters of glass and dried putty,
1 The wind billowing out the seat of my britches,
7 And everyone, everyone pointing up and shouting!

Readers will agree that these two versions have distinctly different implications of context from those of the original poem.

Notes and References

The general notion of literary theme used in this paper owes much to M.A.K. Halliday's "Linguistic Function and Literary Style" and to Ruqaiya Hasan's "Rime and Reason in Literature", both of which are published in Seymour Chatman (ed.), Literary Style: a Symposium, London, 1971. I have also drawn on R. Hasan, "The Place of Stylistics in the Study of Verbal Art", Style and Text (Skriptor, Sweden) 1975, for which I do not presently have full bibliographical data.

1. G.N. Leech, A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry, London, 1969, pp.221-222.

2. H.G. Widdowson, Stylistics and the Teaching of Literature, London, 1975, pp.54-57, 63, 108-115. All further page references are made in the text of my paper.

3. M.A.K. Halliday and Ruqaiya Hasan, Cohesion in English, London, 1976, p.2 et passim.

4. P.J. Wexler, "Distich and Sentence in Corneille and Racine", in Roger Fowler (ed.), Essays in Language and Style, London, 1966, p.104 and footnote.

5. A number of Conrad's best-known "sea stories" were scanned for instances of billow used transitively in this non-transferred, non-figurative sense, as was Hilaire Belloc's The Cruise of the 'Nona'. I have within the past week found an instance in the improbable context of a Pinter play: "BETH: I didn't swim. I don't swim. I let the water billow me". See Harold Pinter, Landscape and Silence, Loneon, 1970, p.16.

6. M.A.K. Halliday, "Notes on Transitivity and Theme" Ot.1, JL 3 (1967), pp.37-81 and Pt. 3, JL 4 (1968), pp.175-215; also M. Berry, Introduction to Systemic Linguistics: 1 Structures and Systems, London, 1975, pp.149-161 and 181-189.

7. D.A. Cruse, "Some Thoughts on Agentivity", JL 9 (1973), pp.11-23, especially p.16 and pp.19ff. That this is an area of considerable ambiguity and difficulty is recognised by R.D. Huddleston, The Sentence in Written English, Cambridge, 1971, pp.506-508, and "Some Remarks on Case Grammar", Linguistic inquiry I(4), October 1970, pp.501-511; see also W. Boagey's review in Foundations of Language 11 (1974) pp.583-589 of D.L.F. Nilsen, Toward a Semantic Specification of Deep Case (Janua Linguarum, Series Minor, 152), Mouton, The Hague, 1972.

8. Halliday, JL 4 (1968), pp.184ff.

9. Halliday, JL 3 (1967), pp.72-73

A POETIC MODEL:

an analysis of Robert Graves' "The Cool Web"

I. INTRODUCTION

The investigation of linguistic patterns in poetry may be viewed in a variety of ways which mainly depends on the ultimate aim we have in mind. The approach may be purely descriptive or strongly orientated towards interpretation, the one being the linguist's, the other the literary critic's. But between these two extreme viewpoints, there is room for a third kind of approach "which attempts to show specifically how elements of a linguistic text combine to create messages" (Widdowson, 1975:6). The method used in the present dissertation has much in common with what Widdowson regards as being "most centrally stylistic" (ibid.:6). However, it must be said that the orientation here is more descriptive than interpretative in the sense that I try to relate linguistic patterns to a 'public meaning' (Sinclair, 1968:216) stated beforehand. Therefore, I am concerned with what linguistic patterns at different levels of analysis can add to the meaning, but nevertheless, I do not reject the possibility of having to reinterpret the latter in view of the former. This implies that I do not only consider to be relevant the textual features that corroborate the meaning and, by doing so, I hope to counterbalance the effect of the mainly intuitive interpretation made in the first instance.

It is important to note that I restrict my investigation to three "levels", namely the interlevels of 'graphology' and 'phonology', and the level of "form". Each level can be described in terms of a number of units arranged on a rank scale.[1] The graphological one is a modified version of the model proposed by Halliday et al. (1964:51) in that I have included the text, that is the whole poem, as the highest unit. Furthermore, I have renamed the lowest unit as "Orthographic sign" instead of "Letter" because of the restricted meaning of the latter and in order to deal with punctuation (e.g. exclamation mark, dash, etc.). For my purpose, the phonological rank scale has the foot as its highest unit. The reason is that I am not concerned with the oral rendition or with the 'delivery design' and 'delivery instance' of the poems (Jakobson, 1960), but only with the 'verse instance'. This means that I am interested in the intrinsic prosodic characteristics of a poem making use of "linguistic elements - [...] - which have their own expectations of phonological form" (Fowler, 1966:84).

1) Rank Scales:

Graphological	Phonological	Grammatical
Text	(Tone group)	Sentence
Stanza	Foot	Clause
Line	Syllable	Group
Orthographic word	Phoneme	Word
Orthographic sign		Morpheme

At all ranks, the units carry part of the meaning or at least point to it, but they do so in a "complex and tightly packed way" (Sinclair, 1964:68). In order to deal with the points where the structure of two or all three "levels" meet, in harmony or disharmony, we need to include an intermediate stage between the linguistic patterns and meaning, namely "grammetrics". We can now draw a diagram of the framework showing the relationship between the different stages of analysis (Fig.1).

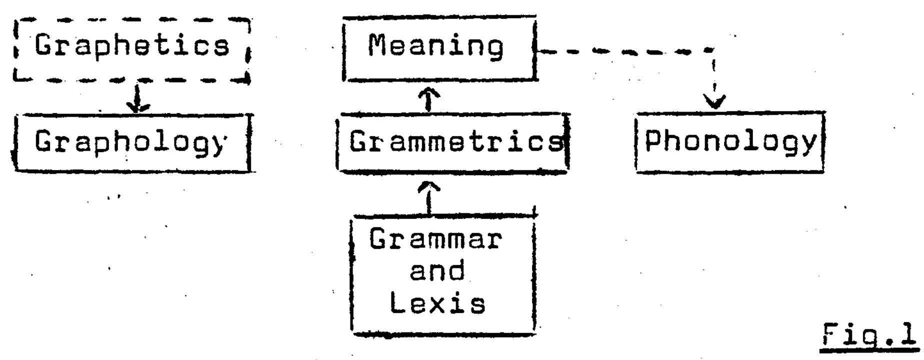

Fig.1

2. A text for analysis: 'The Cool Web' by Robert Graves

1 Children are dumb to say how hot the day is,
2 How hot the scent is of the summer rose,
3 H w dreadful the black wastes of evening sky,
4 How dreadful the tall soldiers drumming by.

5 But we have speech, to chill the angry day,
6 And speech, to dull the rose's cruel scent.
7 We spell away the overhanging night,
8 We spell away the soldiers and the fright.

9 There's a cool web of language winds us in,
10 Retreat from too much joy or too much fear:
11 We grow sea-green at last and coldly die
12 In brininess and volubility.

13 But if we let our tongues lose self-possession,
14 Throwing off language and its watery clasp
15 Before our death, instead of when death comes,
16 Facing the wide glare of the children's day,
17 Facing the rose, the dark sky and the drums,
18 We shall go mad no doubt and die that way.

2.1 Introduction

Graves argues in this poem that the crude reality of life may be apprehended in two different ways, with or without language. Adults' response is of the first kind, children's of the second. Adults escape "the wide glare of the children's day" (l.16) by soothing, controlling everything with a flow of words, but are caught by the "cool web" of language and "coldly die" (l.11). Children do not have language and its "experiential"

element to mediate the impact of the world. However, this way is no better than the other. If we choose it, we shall die mad (1.18).

There is not much hope since even the insulating effect of language is illusory. Man has in his hands a pseudo-powerful tool that only merges everything into a dull uniformity.

2.2 Graphology

The text is stanzaic but irregular. In effect, whereas the first three stanzas have four lines each, the fourth one has six lines. The only orthographic sign drawing our attention is the colon at the end of line 10. It implies a relation of cause and effect between the two parts of the stanza.

2.3 Phonology

The rhyme-scheme presents itself as follows:

Stanza I	:	abcc
Stanza II	:	abcc
Stanza III	:	abcd
Stanza IV	:	abcdcd

As it stands, we can divide the poem into two parts: stanzas I, II and stanzas III, IV. Another point in favour of such a division is the repetition of /hau/ ("how") in stanza I and /sp/ ("speech" and "spell") in stanza II. The rhythmical scheme (see Table A, p. 37) also suggests a division into two parts: on the one hand stanzas I and IV with nine different lines out of ten, and on the other hand stanzas II, III with seven similar lines out of eight. We can see at once that the latter parts do not coincide with the former. The reason for this double structure will be explained later; for the time being let us simply accept that it is related to the two ways of apprehending the world.

2.4 Grammetrics I

The three two-point divisions suggested by the stanzaic form, the rhythmic and the rhyming schemes overlap. This is shown in Table I below:

stanza	graphology	rhyme	rhythm	change of features
I				- - -
II				- - X
III				- X X
IV				X X -

Table I

This overlapping has a cohesive role in the poem, but also exemplifies one of Graves's favourite ways of leading the reader smoothly from one point to the other before defeating his expectation. In effect, we can see that only

one feature is changed at a time, except between stanzas III and IV. A more delicate analysis would show that the progression is even more subtle and that within a given feature changes are anticipated. The rhyming scheme, for instance, could be said to be aacc in the first stanza if we take into account the /-z/ consonantal rhyme of ll.1,2. In stanza III, the conventional rhyme "die/volubility" reminds us of the scheme of the previous stanza, but it also announces the following one. Even the rhyming scheme of the last stanza can be regarded as displaying the abcc type if we give 'cd' a general symbol c* repeated twice in lines 15,16 and 17,18. Thus, the basic pattern is progressively altered, even 'regressively' for stanza I , and we may sum up this point in Table II.

stanza	I	II	III	IV
	a a ⟷ b c c	a b c c	a b c → } c* c → d → }	a b c* c*

Table II

It seems, then, that the poem displays an orientated fluctuation with regard to the poet's attitude towards language. Orientated because Graves rejects gradually the mediation of language. Fluctuation because in the first two stanzas, Graves appears to move towards an acceptance of its restraints and in the end does not altogether reject it. So, the poet as such is striving between the two extremes. In the last stanza, he frees himself from some of the constraints set up in the poem. Graphologically we have now a six-line stanza. Rhythmically there are as many patterns as there are lines, but we still find rhymes and the last line has the same rhythm as 1.9.

Coming back to our previous divisions, we can explain them better now. In the first two stanzas, we may assume that the poet, using the mediation of language, describes what life is for man when he is without language and then when he has it. Consequently, the most regular part occurs in stanza II. In the last two stanzas, the poet discards the mediating influence of language and logically we find the least regular part at the end since he takes the same topics but in reverse order: man with language and then without it. We may summarise in Table III what has been said so far.

Stanza	P+L	P-L	M+L	M-L	Regularity
I	X			X	+-
II	X		X		++
III		X	X		-+
IV		X		X	--

Table III

P : poet M : man L : language + : with (language
- : without (language)

2.5 Grammetrics II

There are five sentences and none is congruous with a line, but many clauses and minor clauses are. In fact, we must read as far as II.11 and 12 to find the first two-line clause. The only other one occurs in II.14 and 15. In the first case, we do not feel that a strong enjambment takes place and indeed if it were not for the absence of a full-stop, the sentence might very well end after "die" (1.11). The effect is slightly different in the second case where the expectation is strong, but oddly enough not so much for line 15. The whole sentence of stanza IV is arrested, and we wait till the last line for its independent clause to occur. The effect thus created conveys an impression of anguish still emphasised by other features we shall discuss later.

2.6 Grammar II

At the rank of clause, two very marked constructions strike us. In line 2, the predicator P occurs within the nominal group S:

m h P q

How hot the scent (<u>is</u>) [of the summer rose]

In line 9, there is a predicated theme and the required relative pronoun before "winds" is missing. As it is also rhythmically irregular, this line comes into prominence. It is paradoxical in that while Graves alludes to "the cool web of language", he seems to reject it all the more conspicuously.

Parallelisms in the first two stanzas are worth mentioning:

I:1 How hot the day is mh;mh;v
I.2 how hot the scent is mh;mh;v

Incidentally the strange grammatical structure of line 2 finds a justification here.

1.3 How dreadful the black waster mh;mmh
1.3 How dreadful the tall soldiers mh;mmh

1.5 speech, to chill the angry day h;PC
1.6 speech, to dull the rose's cruel scent h;PC

1.7 We spell away the... SPAC
1.8 We spell away the... SPAC

In this part, Graves accepts language and through the repetition of the same feature, he hints at how the use of its conventions may make life become dull. Here, the effect of the images is smoothened whereas in stanza IV, ll.16, 17, another instance of parallelism has a completely different impact. Its structure is certainly less obvious than the others, but the main reason for its crude immediacy lies in its being foregrounded by appearing only once in this part. It reinforces the impression of anguish discussed at the end of the previous section.

The use of the definite article is worth some comment. It is used quite often in stanzas I and II (ten occurrences), but not in stanza III, nor in the first three lines of stanza IV and used again in ll.16,17. They are listed in Table II with their use.

line	use	'explanation'
l. 1	homophoric (cataphoric)	(l.16)
l. 2	cataphoric; cataphoric	summer rose ; summer
l. 3	cataphoric	evening sky
l. 4	cataphoric	drumming by
l. 5	anaphoric	l.1
l. 6	anaphoric	l.2
l. 7	anaphoric	l.3
l. 8	anaphoric ; anaphoric	l.4 ; l.4
l.16	cataphoric ; anaphoric	children's day ; l.1
l.17	anaphoric (three times)	l.2 ; l.3 ; l.4

Table II

The cataphoric use of the definite article presupposes no previous mention; it is explained later on. Therefore, the text is arrested because we expect an explanation. If it is homophoric, no explanation is given. Both uses occur appropriately in stanza I and stress the lack of experience of the children. The anaphoric use in stanza II with regular backward reference shows that knowledge and experience have been acquired. In 16 and 17, all but one of the definite articles are anaphoric, but the impact of these lines is nevertheless stronger than in stanza II. We can see at least four reasons for that. First, the dramatic shortening of the expressions leads to less easily "spelt away" images which come one after the other like flashes.

l.2 the scent of the summer rose
l.6 the rose's cruel scent → the rose l.17

l.3 the black wastes of evening sky
l.7 the overhanging night → the dark sky l.17

l.4 the tall soldiers drumming by
l.8 the soldiers and the fright → the drums l.17

Second, we find five occurrences of "the" in only two lines; third, the sudden and dense reappearance of "the" is foregrounded and fourth, all the images appear in two lines instead of four in stanza II.

There is a very close relation between the use of parallelisms and the use of definite articles. We may expand on this feature a little and say that we have a foregrounding by repetitions in stanzas I and II where Graves not only accepts the conventions of language, but also confines himself to even more restrictive ones.

2.7 Lexis

The four lines of stanza I correspond lexically to the four lines of stanza II:

11.1,5 day
11.2,6 scent, rose
11.3,7 evening sky/night
11.4,8 soldiers

We think immediately of relating soldiers to war and, by opposition, we may infer love from rose. A more obvious opposition is day and night as well as "hot" (stanza I) and "cold" (stanza III). The repeated use of this device emphasises the poet's sense of the extremity of the problem he faces, the problem of language.

2.8 The theme of the poem.

It seems that the poem evolves from apparent reality to metaphor. Apparent reality because we have recognised a symbolic meaning in "rose" and "soldiers", namely "love" and "war". Metaphor because language is "a cool web" (1.9) which first appears to be a securing envelope, but as the metaphor develops it turns out to be a net we are caught in. Therefore, man is self-assured and fluent, but loses his innate intuition; and we are left with this cruel dilemma still unsolved by the poet.

line	scansion	feet	syllable/feet
1	/- x x/- x/- x/- x/- x/	5	3 2 2 2 2
2	/ x/- x/- x x x/- x/-/	5	(1) 2 4 2 1
3	/ x/- x x/-/- x/- x/-/	6*	(1) 3 1 2 2 1
4	/ x/- x x/-/- x/- x/-/	6*	(1) 3 1 2 2 1
5	/ x/- x/- x/- x/- x/-/	6**	(1) 2 2 2 2 1
6	/ x/- x/- x/- x/- x/-/	6**	(1) 2 2 2 2 1
7	/ x/- x/- x/- x/- x/-/	6**	(1) 2 2 2 2 1
8	/ x/- x/- x/- x/- x/-/	6**	(1) 2 2 2 2 1
9	/- x/-/- x/- x/- x/-/	6***	2 1 2 2 2 1
10	/ x/- x/- x/- x/- x/-/	6**	(1) 2 2 2 2 1
11	/ x/- x/- x/- x/- x/-/	6**	(1) 2 2 2 2 1
12	/ x/- x/- x/- x/- x/-/	6**	(1) 2 2 2 2 1
13	/ x/- x/- x/-/-/- x/- x/	7	(1) 2 2 1 1 2 2
14	/- x x/- x x x/- x x/-/	4	3 4 3 1
15	/ x/- x/- x/- x/-/-/-/	7	(1) 2 2 2 1 1 1
16	/- x x/-/- x x/- x/-/	5	3 1 3 2 1
17	/- x x/- x/-/- x x/-/	5	3 2 1 3 1
18	/- x/-/- x/- x/- x/-/	6***	2 1 2 2 2 1

/ : foot boundary
: silent stress
- : strong beat
x : weak beat

6* : similar six-foot lines
6** : similar six-foot lines
6*** : similar six-foot lines
(1) : partially sounded foot (one syllable)

Table A

line	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII
1	F-	SPCA-	h;v;h;PC	v;CSP	mh;mh;v		
2	-F-	-A-	C	CS(P)	mh;mhq;v	pc	mmh
3	-F-	-A-	C	ZZ	mh;mmhq	pc	mh
4	-F	-A	C	ZZ	mh;mmhq	PA	v;h
5	F-	ASPC-	h;h;v;a	h;PC	v;mmh		
6	-F	-C	a	h;PC	v;mmh	mh	
7	F	SPAC	h;v;h;mmh				
8	F	SPAC	h;v;h;aa	mh;mh			
9	F	SPC	h;v;mmhqq	pc;PCA	v;h;h		
10	B3	Z	hq	pc	aa	mh;mh	mh;;mh
11	F-	aa-	SPCA;AP	h;v;h;pc;;h;v			
12	-F	-a	A	pc	aa	h;h	
13	B1	AASPC	h;h;h;v;SPC	mh;v;h			
14	B2-	PAC	v;h;aa	h;mmh			
15	-B2	A	a	pc;pc	mh;ASP	h;h;v;	
16	B2	PC	v;mmhq	pc	mh	mh	
17	B2	PC	v;aaa	mh;mmh;mh			
18	F	aa	SPCA;PC	h;av;h;mh;;v;mh			

Table B

(Structural analysis)

F : independent clause
B1 : finite, dependent clause
B2 : non-finite, dep.dl.
B3 : minor clause

underlined letter : rankshift
( ): included in the previous element

I,II, ... : layers

3. Suggesting a poetic model

Linguistics has already provided us with a number of useful and satisfactory techniques of stylistic description. However, when we try to compare some poems by different authors, or even by the same author, we run into difficulties. Similar linguistic patterns are used to suggest different interpretation, in other words, the same means generate different effects. It may then be helpful to devise an underlying poetic model by making use of the linguistic clues sorted out in the course of the descriptive analysis. Taking 'The Cool Web' as an example, we can first base an investigation on lexical distribution (Table IV).

line	
1,21314	day, scent, rose, evening sky, tall soldiers drumming by
5,6,7,8	angry day, rose's cruel scent, overhanging night, soldiers, fright
9,10	cool web
11,12	coldly die
13,14,15	But if...
16,17	children's day, rose, dark sky, drums
18	go mad, die that way

We can see immediately that some lexical items occur more than once. The "scene" of the poem is introduced in stanza I, further developed in stanza II and reappears in lines 16,17. In stanza III, we are presented with a metaphor which leads to a pre-climax. Instead of the expected conclusion, we find in the first lines of stanza IV a continuation of stage 2 which includes a return to the initial 'scene' (ll. 16,17). Then, all of a sudden, the poem reaches a new climax and ends there, without conclusion. What has been said so far can be summed up in the following model:

stage			
1	Initiation	stanza I	
2	Development	stanza II	
3	Pre-climax	stanza III	
4	Continuation	lines 13,14,15	stanza IV
5	Re-initiation	lines 16,17	stanza IV
6	Climax	line 18	stanza IV

What clues, other than the lexical ones, can give support to this model? The stanzaic form accounts for stages 1,213 and 4,5,6. The rhyme-scheme in its more delicate version simply reinforces the stanzaic division. The rhythmical scheme suggests the following stages: 2,3 and 1,4,5,6. The definite article and parallelisms occur in 1,2 and 5; they seem to justify the subdivision of stanza IV into three stages. A last point, also in favour of this subdivision, may be mentioned and concerns line 18 (stage 6) where we find the independent clause of the sentence of stanza IV.

This tentative model was tried out and seemed to work nicely with a number of Graves's poems. However, "Pre-climax" and "climax" do not always echo each other and indeed, the former is sometimes missing. Furthermore, "Re-initiation" is often subtly inserted in "continuation" or in "Climax". Bearing these remarks in mind, our model may be amended as follows:

Initiation
Development
(Pre-climax)
Continuation (—)
(—) Re-initiation (—)
(—) Climax

The rounded brackets show something optional and the dashes show that "Re-initiation" can be attached to "Continuation" or to "Climax".

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DIALOGUE AND DISCOURSE

On stylistic analysis
and
modern drama texts,
with an illustration from
Tom Stoppard.

1.

It is an interesting fact that stylisticians do not write about modern dramatists and modern drama texts. By this, I do not mean to imply that they deal with them inadequately but - much more simply - that they appear not to study them at all. There is a very clear exemplification of this fact in Bailey and Burton (1968), the only comprehensive bibliography to date. Firstly, in their index of "Styles under Scrutiny" there are no modern dramatists listed at all. Secondly, and much more significantly, their major divisions of the book as a whole present a large section entitled "English Stylistics in the Twentieth Century", which, after general theoretical studies, lists of statistical studies and entries on translation problems, is subdivided into two substantial sections; "Prose Stylistics" and "Style in Poetry". In the light of this phenomenon, Halliday (1964) is worth considering:

> It is part of the task of linguistics to describe texts; and all texts, including those, prose and verse, which fall within any definition of 'literature' are accessible to analysis by the existing methods of linguistics. (my emphases).

Since any usual definition of literature would include three genres, I think the continued exclusion of dramatic language from modern stylistic analysis deserves some consideration.

The first, and most obvious reason for the bi-partite and not tri-partite categorisation is the fact that non-poetic dramatic dialogue may sometimes be classified as merely another type of prose. Abercrombie certainly makes this point clearly enough (Abercrombie, 1963):

> Most people believe that spoken prose as I would call what we normally hear on the stage or screen, is at least not far removed, when well done, from the conversation of real life. Writers of novels are sometimes praised for 'naturalistic dialogue'; others such as Miss Ivy Compton Burnett, are criticized because nobody speaks like the characters in their books.
>
> But the truth is that nobody speaks at all like the characters in any novel, play, or film. Life would be intolerable if they did; and novels, plays or films would be intolerable if the characters spoke as people do in life. Spoken prose is far more different from conversation than is normally realised.

Since this passage was intended for a linguistically naive audience, these are both sound and necessary statements - making the sorts of distinctions it would be both proper and essential to make in such a pedagogical context. Page (1973), writing on speech in the novel makes a similar point - incorporating in his text, for comparison with fictional speech, a short piece of a transcript of naturally-occurring conversation - complete with hesitation phenomena, repetitions, false starts, stammers etc. that characterise almost any transcript of naturally-occurring talk. Also, he provides actual, literary-critical examples of Abercrombie's "most people":

> A familiar kind of tribute to such mimetic writing is to praise it for its closeness to real speech. We are told, for instance, that "dialogue...consistently echoes the speech of the day", that "there is no line of dialogue from a novel that could not easily be imagined proceeding from the mouth of an actual person"; and, of a modern novel, that "the dialogues...could not reproduce actual speech more faithfully, and more unselectively, if they had been transcribed from a tape-recorder". These are striking claims from impressive sources. But it seems probable that the whole concept of realism as applied to fictional speech is often based on an inadequate or inaccurate notion of what spontaneous soeech is really like.

Certainly, a linguist with even minimal experience of naturally-occurring speech - either on tape, or in the inevitably tidied-up representation of a transcript, would have to agree. On the other hand in the context of stylistics, the very point that Abercrombie and Page are dismissing - the fact that readers have the impression that fictional speech or spoken prose seems to be like naturally-occurring conversation is extremely interesting and relevant. Here, surely, is evidence of what we normally use as the starting point of a stylistic analysis; the fact that the analyst, as reader, has certain intuitive impressions of a set of stylistic effects - intuitions which should be open to linguistic justification on a closer study of the text.

If we accept that there is an interesting relationship between play dialogue and real conversation - a relationship to be considered more fully below - and we agree that it might be linguistically interesting to consider the language used in dialogue specifically in the light of this relationship, then the stylistician has an immediate problem in deciding what to use for his conceptualization of the underlying linguistic mechanisms that are, in some way, being used and exploited by the writer of dialogue, and reacted to by the reader of dialogue. For, despite the many quibbles in aspects of stylistics writing - which syntactic paradigm to use, what constitutes "style", the goals and focusses of stylistic analyses, the relevance of different linguistic features etc. - there is never any real doubt expressed about the fact that, in order to write about style in a linguistically-justifiable way, we must be able to relate the language used in a text or by an author to the conventions

of the language as a whole. All practical stylistics papers carry this assumption. Thus, for one example among many, Benamou (1963) presents a theory suggesting that style results from deviations from linguistic conventions, and against this analyses a sentence from Proust, connectives in Voltaire, adjectives in Colette, and verbs in Camus. (See also Gorny 1961, Ohmann 1964, Greenfield 1967, Hill 1967, Jakobson 1968, Enkvist 1971, Fowler 1972, Quirk 1972, Widdowson 1972.)

This underlying methodological principle is explicitly reinforced in more theoretical papers too. Thus Mukarovsky (1932) makes a comparatively early statement on the idea of norm and deviation with relation to poetry:

> The distortion of the norm of the standard is... of the very essence of poetry.

Whilst Bloch (1953) states that this comparison between the norm of the language used and the language as used in the text is a basic parameter for stylistics:

> The style of a discourse is the message carried by the frequency distributions, and transitional probabilities of its linguistic features, especially as they differ from those same features in the language as a whole.

Similarly, and more recently, Stankiewicz (1960), in his discussion of poets as innovators - in this context, writers using familiar words in unusual syntactic structures - makes a statement about stylistics procedure which is generally applicable to all varieties of language-in-use:

> The student of poetry is in no position to describe and explain the nature of poetic language unless he takes into account the rules of the language which determine its organisation.

Of McIntosh's proposed four stylistic modes (1961), normal collocations and normal grammar/unusual collocations and normal grammar/normal collocations and unusual grammar/unusual collocations and unusual grammar, it is interesting - though not perhaps surprising, that it is the more noticeably deviant texts that attract the attention of most stylisticians. Thus, much of the impetus behind the transformational-generative approach to work in stylistics lies with those texts which exploit most fully potential deviance from linguistic norms of the everyday, familiar automatized language. Levin, for example (1963, 1964, 1965) uses the grammar to define difference in poetic language, with the explicit underlying hypothesis that deviancy in itself is a marker of poeticalness, and the more measurably deviant a text can be shown to be, the more poetic it is in its effect. Similarly Thorne's (1965) notion of constructing micro-grammars for individual poetic works assumes that there are noticeable points of similarity and dissimilarity between the grammar of the piece being studied and the grammar of the underlying language as a whole. From the latter, the poet selects some features and rules,

but not others. Both Saporta (1960) and Riffaterre - the latter working in an information-theory context - would support these ideas, for example (Riffaterre 1960):

> The stylistic context is a linguistic pattern broken by an element which was unpredictable.

There is, of course, a symbiotic relationship between stylistic analysis and syntactic theory. The sort of reciprocal relationship between study of text and study of syntax of the language, where knowledge of the one is enhanced by study of the other, is brought out particularly well by Franges (1961) where he points out that our concept of the underlying norm can only be taken for granted in some areas, and that continual modifications must be carried out. I take it that this underlies all the statements quoted here, and the many others that could be drawn on to illustrate the dependence on the norm/deviation relationship as a focal issue for practical and theoretical stylistics:

> Ainsi norme et déviation ne doivent etre prises qu'en tant que termes appartenant a la stylistique descriptive ne pouvant avoir ni valeur esthetique ni critique. Il va de soi qu'il reste encore beaucoup a faire pour déterminer ce qu'est la norme.

I find Halliday's (1964) brief resumé of the norm/deviation question particularly sensible - his conclusion being that the analyst needs to consider both the norm of the underlying language in so far as he knows it, and the norm set up by the early patterns in the text itself.

From all this, it follows automatically, that in order to talk about style linguistically, we need to have access to an accumulation of linguistic information about the standard language - if I can use that term in a common-sense sort of way just now - and information which is working towards theoretical coherence and is descriptively adequate at all the linguistic levels that are to be considered in the text being studied. If, therefore, we are interested in the norm/deviation relationship realised in the micro-conversations of a drama dialogue, it similarly follows that we need a relevant set of linguistic materials with which to describe this relationship. Clearly, the sorts of features traditionally used in stylistic analysis, will not, on their own, be sufficient. It is particularly interesting to consider the only linguistic analysis related to my interests here - Page's work on speech as represented in the novel (Page 1973). He certainly does raise some of

> the fundamental questions of the nature of fictional speech its role as one of the elements of the novel, and its relationship to other elements and to the speech of real life.

When it comes to actual concrete analyses of text, however, he concentrates exclusively on represented speech as an element of the prose, and emphasises its formal

relationships with the other prose elements of the novel, rather than its relationship with the "speech of real life". Accordingly, he analyses it in terms of lexis, syntax, orthographic conventions etc., as this very typical quotation demonstrates clearly:

> There is a sense in which, in such speeches as these, lexical and syntactic features are made to correspond to qualities of moral character. The formal syntax of Fellmar, remote from the structires of spontaneous speech, suggests the artificiality and unreliability of his behaviour as well as his social status; at the other extreme, the blunt declarations of Western, who prefers short sentences and has a marked distrust of subordinate clauses, are consistent with his impetuous manner and his indifference to canons of polite behaviour. His vocabulary relies heavily on short, concrete words, in contrast to the more morally unsound characters for abstractions.

Given that Page is writing about speech as part of a novel, as opposed to dialogue spoken by real human beings in a tangible, visible set of some kind, there is some justification for this sort of approach, although it is a real pity that he did not consider the fictional-real relationship more thoroughly. However, consider also this extract from John Russell Brown (1972), where the topic is specifically theatre-talk:

> The short second sentence - "Well, why don't you?" - points attention at Cliff's inability to reply, but, because it is in two phrases, it also sharpens the rhythm and so reveals a quicker attention under Jimmy's opening gambit. Then, the phrase lengthens until the unexpected "New Economics", which is punched home with a rounder, polysyllabic and partly repetitive phrase. The growth of power is further shown by the assurance of the following, almost throw-away sentence. with neat, running alliteration, at the end:- "It's all a matter of payments and penalties." This relaxed verbal tension is offeet by a growing physical exertion as Jimmy 'Rises', and then the climax of this part of the speech can come freely in its longest and its largest single phrase, "those apocalyptic share pushers".

It is, I think, fairly obvious that if we want to consider play-talk and its degree of likeness to real-talk, then discussing sentences, phrases, alliteration, polysyllabic words etc. is not going to tell us very much. The only possible linguistic level to use as a basis for analysis is discourse, or, even more specifically, conversation - as an aspect of discourse. As yet, of course, conversational analysis is uncollected, only partially adequate theoretically, sporadically insightful, occasionally at a dead end. Nevertheless there is now a substantial body of descriptive linguistics of conversation available, and if we are ever going to go beyond mere intuition and assumption in this very interesting potential area of stylistic analysis, then we must use this type of linguistics for our information about the norm.

2.

I now want to give you a piece of modern drama text to consider as data, and to offer some comments on the talk in the light of work in conversational analysis. I have chosen for this, the opening section of Tom Stoppard's The Real Inspector Hound, (Stoppard 1968) for the very simple reason that I find it an interesting play. There are, of course, problems in presenting only a small section of the text - and I shall, I'm afraid, be making comments that refer to the play as a whole from time to time. I have written about a whole text elsewhere (Burton 1976), but short texts are rare, and assume and present a subtly different set of assumptions, for the reader and/or audience. Stylistic analysis must come to grips with long texts in the end, and what I am offering here is a taste of the type of job that could be done on a whole, long text given time, space and reader-tolerance.

Let me first present the data, follow this with an explicit statement of some of my intuitive responses to it, and then give some means of accounting for these intuitions with reference to specific studies in conversational analysis, some of which in turn, refine my interpretation of the play. To conclude I will suggest other, related ways of talking about the data - in particular about ways of distinguishing between conversation-like dialogue and some types of non-conversation-like dialogue.

* * * * * * *

The first thing is that the audience appear to be confronted by their own reflection in a huge mirror. Impossible. However, back there in the gloom - not at the footlights - a bank of plush seats and pale smudges of faces. (The total effect having been established, it can be progressively faded out as the play goes on, until the front row remains to remind us of the rest and then, finally, merely two seats in that row - one of which is now occupied by MOON. Between MOON and the auditorium is an acting area which represents in as realistic an idiom as possible, the drawing-room of Muldoon Manor. French windows at one side. A telephone fairly well upstage (i.e. towards MOON). The BODY of a man lies sprawled face down on the floor in front of a large settee. This settee must be of a size and design to allow it to be wheeled over the body, hiding it completely. Silence. The room. The BODY. MOON.

MOON stares blankly ahead. He turns his head to one side then the other, then up, then down - waiting. He picks up his programme and reads the front cover. He turns over the page and reads.
He turns over the page and reads
He turns over the page and reads
He turns over the page and reads
He looks at the back cover and reads.
He puts it down and crosses his legs and looks about.
He stares front. Behind him and to one side, barely visible, a man enters and sits down: BIRDBOOT.
Pause. MOON picks up his programme, glances at the front cover and puts it down impatiently. Pause...
Behind him there is the crackle of a chocolate-box, absurdly loud. MOON looks round. He and BIRDBOOT see

each other. They are clearly known to each other. They acknowledge each other with constrained waves. MOON looks straight ahead. BIRDBOOT comes down to join him.

Note: Almost always, MOON and BIRDBOOT converse in tones suitable for an auditorium, sometimes a whisper. However good the acoustics might be, they will have to have microphones where they are sitting. The effect must be <u>not</u> of sound picked up, amplified and flung out at the audience, but of sound picked up, carried and gently dispersed around the auditorium.

Anyway, BIRDBOOT, with a box of Black Magic, makes his way down to join MOON and plumps himself down next to him, plumpish middle-aged BIRDBOOT and younger taller, less-relaxed MOON.

1. BIRDBOOT: (sitting down; conspiratorially): Me and the lads have had a meeting in the bar and decided it's first class family entertainment but if it goes on beyond half-past ten it's self-indulgent - pass it on...(and laughs jovially) I'm on my own tonight, don't mind if I join you?
2. MOON: Hello, Birdboot.
3. BIRDBOOT Where's Higgs?
4. MOON: I'm standing in.
5. MOON AND BIRDBOOT: Where's Higgs?
6. MOON: Every time.
7. BIRDBOOT: What?
8. MOON: It is as if we only existed one at a time, combining to achieve continuity. I keep space warm for Higgs. My presence defines his absence, his absence confirms my presence, his presence precludes mine...When Higgs and I walk down this aisle together to claim our common seat, the oceans will fall into the sky and the trees will hang with fishes.
9. BIRDBOOT: (he has not been paying attention, looking around vaguely, now catches up) Where's Higgs?
10. MOON: The very sight of me with a complimentary ticket is enough. The streets are impassable tonight, the country is rising and the cry goes up from hill to hill - Where - is - Higgs? (Small pause) Perhaps he's dead at last, or trapped in a lift somewhere, or succumbed to amnesia, wandering the land with his turn-ups stuffed with ticket-stubs. (Birdboot regards him doubtfully for a moment)
11. BIRDBOOT: Yes...Yes, well I didn't bring Myrtle tonight - not exactly her cup of tea, I thought, tonight.
12. MOON: Over her head you mean?
13. BIRDBOOT: Well, no - I mean it's a sort of thriller isn't it?
14. MOON: Is it?
15. BIRDBOOT: That's what I heard. Who killed thing? - no one will leave the house.
16. MOON: I suppose so. Underneath.

17. BIRDBOOT: Underneath?!? It's a whodunnit man! - Look at it! (They look at it. The room. The BODY. Silence.) Has it started yet?
18. MOON: Yes.
(Pause. They look at it)
19. BIRDBOOT: Are you sure?
20. MOON: It's a pause.
21. BIRDBOOT: You can't start with a pause! If you want my opinion there's total panic back there. (Laughs and subsides.) Where's Higgs to-night then?
22. MOON: It will follow me to the grave and become my epitaph - Here lies Moon the second string: where's Higgs?...Sometimes I dream of a revolution, a bloody coup d'etat by the second rank - troupes of actors slaughtered by their understudies, magicians sawn in half by indafatigably smiling glamour girls, cricket teams wiped out by marauding bands of twelfth men - I dream of champions chopped down by rabbit-punching sparring partners while eternal bridesmaids turn and rape the bridegrooms over the sausage rolls and parliamentary private secretaries plant bombs in the Minister's Humber - comedians die on provincial stages, robbed of their feeds by mutely triumphant stooges -
- and - march -
- an army of assistants and deputies, the seconds-in command, the runners-up, the right-hand-men - storming the palace gates wherein the second son has already mounted the throne having committed regicide with a croquet-mallet - stand-ins of the world stand up! (Beat.) Sometimes I dream of Higgs.
(Pause. BIRDBOOT regards him doubtfully. He is at a loss and grasps reality in the form of his box of chocolates.)
23. BIRDBOOT: (Chewing into the mike.) Have a chocolate!
24. MOON: What kind?
25. BIRDBOOT: Black Magic.
26. MOON: No thanks.
(Chewing stops dead.)
(Of such tiny victories and defeats...)
27. BIRDBOOT: I'll give you a tip then. Watch the girl.
28. MOON: You think she did it?
29. BIRDBOOT: No, no - the girl, watch her.
30. MOON: What girl?
31. BIRDBOOT: You won't know her, I'll give you a nudge.
32. MOON: You know her, do you?
33. BIRDBOOT: (suspiciously, bridling) What's that supposed to mean?
34. MOON: I beg your pardon?
35. BIRDBOOT: I'm trying to tip you a wink - give you a nudge as good as a tip - for God's sake, Moon, what's the matter with you? - you could do yourself some good, spotting her first time out - she's new, from the provinces, going straight to the top. I don't want to put words into your mouth but a word from us and we could make her.

36.	MOON:	I suppose you've made dozens of them like that.
37.	BIRDBOOT:	(instantly outraged) I'll have you know I'm a family man devoted to my homely but good-natured wife, and if you're suggesting -
38.	MOON:	No, no -
39.	BIRDBOOT:	- A man of my scrupulous morality -
40.	MOON:	I'm sorry -
41.	BIRDBOOT:	- falsely besmirched.
42.	MOON:	Is that her? (For MRS DRUDGE has entered.)
43.	BIRDBOOT:	Don't be absurd, wouldn't be seen dead with the old - ah. (MRS DRUDGE is the char, middle-aged, turbanned. She heads straight for the radio, dusting on the trot.)
44.	MOON:	(reading his programme) Mrs. Drudge the Help.

There are various intuitive interpretations I take from the text; Moon is paranoid, Birdboot is guilty, Higgs is an important feature it seems. Common sense explanations for this are of course available, but it would be interesting to account for these things more formally. There are also general impressions of the play as a whole that I would like to tie up descriptively.

One important feature of the play is the parodic artificiality of the talk of the play-within-the-play - a whodunnit which starts as the extract above closes. The embedded play is very much of the "Six O'clock the master will soon be home" variety; when Mrs Drudge switches on the radio an announcer immediately says "We interrupt this programme for a special police message"; when she herself answers the phone she says "Hello, the drawing room of Muldoon Manor one morning early in spring"; characters are continually stalking off the stage-upon-the-stage declaiming "I'll kill you for this Simon Gascoyne". In contrast to this, a complementary feature of the play is the talk of the critics - Moon and Birdboot. They sometimes clear their throats and talk elegant "critic-talk" "I urge you to the Theatre Royal for this is the very stuff of life itself", Moon has fantasy monologues (see for example utterances 8/10/22), but much of their talk is taken up with fairly ordinary-sounding banalities (see utterances 23-26) and exchanges of information and opinion. Eventually, the relatively realistic world of Moon and Birdboot gets thoroughly and inextricably entangled in the relatively "stagey" world of whodunnit - two of the whodunnit characters end up as critics, whilst Moon and Birdboot follow the luckless Higgs as murder victims in a superbly complex metadrama finale. The point I want to make from that is this; Stoppard sets up two distinct types of talk at the beginning of the play - the embedded play which ostentatiously creaks, and the critics-talk which carries on urbanely, but not noticeably in such a "stagey" way. In between, though, there are Moon's fantasy monologues - a sort of "time out" from his conversation with Birdboot. These I think form an important bridge whereby the seemingly realistic world of Moon and Birdboot and the blatantly artificial world of the whodunnit will eventually mingle. I am not, of course, suggesting that the critics' world is straightforwardly and unproblematically

realistic - far from it. But I am suggesting that, apart from time-out sequences, their talk and behaviour here seems appropriate and acceptable as everyday interaction. If this is the case, then Stoppard is exploiting knowledge of features of communicative competence that we as readers share, aspects of which can be brought out by reference to relevant work in sociolinguistic description.

In the light of these suggestions, I would like to consider two papers on conversational analysis in some detail; Roy Turner's work on therapy-talk and pre-therapy-talk (Turner 1972), and Mitchell-Kernan's work on sounding and marking (Mitchell-Kernan 1972).

Turner's very rich and perceptive paper discusses in fine detail the socio-organisational features of therapy-talk which allow the possibility of the therapist producing "announced openings" such as, for example, "Well, we might as well begin" or "Look, before we start" at some point after talk has actually been under way for some time. His point is that for many "occasioned" or "scheduled" activities, like therapy-talk - or presumably seminar-talk, committee-talk etc - it is entirely routine and commonplace for starting remarks to be made in this way. He argues that if we are to come to grips with the generative features of speech events, we must treat such commonplace features as determinate structures to be analysed and not glossed over.

There are several observations in the paper that are relevant to the situation that is set up at the beginning of Stoppard's plays, where Birdboot and Moon are "assembling over time before the occasioned activity begins". As Turner says, early assemblers may be described as "doing waiting", and this activity is observably distinct - in that, for example, newcomers to the setting can tell whether the activity has started or not. Doing waiting involves "getting through time with talk" and this in itself has noteworthy and distinct features.

In The Real Inspector Hound, the occasioned activity is, of course, the embedded play. For a scheduled activity to begin, Turner points out, either an announced hour arrives, or participants wait for some complement ot persons to assemble. This complement may consist of named persons or members of some category (see Sacks 1972). Thus, in the former case, a dinner party cannot start without, say, "Bill and Mary", but in the latter case, a surgical operation requires a certain number of nurses, whose individual identities are quite immaterial. The time/participant distinction is an interesting one for distinguishing between different kinds of contexts. When giving a party, for example, the host does not wait until 8.30 p.m., or 30% of the guests arrive - the party starts when the first guest appears. With regard to the play-text there are several related points to be made. Doubtless somewhere in the fictional world the embedded play had an appointed starting time - but, as every theatre-goer knows, this would be only marginally reliable. A play starts when the first actor appears. Birdboot (utterance 17) can ask "has it started yet" simply because one actor (of dubious functional status) - the body - is already there. Similarly,

Moon's response "it's a pause" is equally valid given the ambiguity of the scene as presented to them.

A more significant feature of the extract is Birdboot's repeated question "Where's Higgs" (3/5/21). As Turner points out - and as every seminar-leader knows - a group that assembles regularly will wait for all members of the group to be present before officially "starting". The repeated enquiry for Higgs suggests that, for Birdboot, he is an essential member of the participant-group, and that it would be entirely inappropriate to start the play without him. Turner also points out:

> After the initial meeting, all participants are able to membership all other members of the complement, and...at any assembly, any one of them can see the categorial composition of participants already present, and know the identity of those yet to arrive.

Given this, he formulates a "starting rule":

> All complement members must be present, or 'beginning' in their absence [must be] accountable.

In the light of this, remarks on and about complement members' absences are seen not as mere description, but accounts of how the present company stand with regard to starting. Thus, Birdboot repeatedly asks for the expected-Higgs, and Moon repeatedly explains Higgs' absence and his own presence - emphasising the oddity of both states.

It is a distinguishing feature of "waiting talk" that, if it re-occurs once the scheduled activity has started, then it is heard as "interruption". This is certainly the case later in this play - as anyone with a text can verify. A noticeable point here is that waiting-talk comes to an end when the "starter" - say, the therapist, - arrives, <u>not</u> when the topic under way is finished. Notice how, in utterance 43 Birdboot simply breaks off when Mrs Drudge, the starter of the play-within-the-play, arrives on stage.

A particularly interesting and important feature that Turner brings out, is the question of how talk gets generated in waiting time. One principle is again based on the notion of Membership Categorisation Devices. (Sacks 1972). The idea is that the intending speaker selects a membership categorisation device embracing the maximum number of fellow-participants, and a topic for which any category member will have a value. Thus, in Turner's student-participant data, a common opener is focussed on living accommodation. This rule is over-built for the data here, there being only two participants, but notice that Birdboot memberships Moon as a critic - rather than say, another man or husband etc. and chooses topics for which he will have a value. Thus talk about the play, the actress etc. are generated in accordance with this. On several counts then, Moon and Birdboot can be recognised as "doing waiting" in accordance with underlying rules of everyday behaviour.

Mitchell-Kernan's paper is one of a growing body of work on artistic verbal skills in ethnic minority groups (see Stewart 1967, Labov 1969, Wolfram 1969, Abrahams 1972). Here, though, she is pointing out for the most part how "signifying" can be used not as a marked-out artistic activity, but in the course of everyday conversation - as a kind of talk-with-underlying-critical-implications, for the "wise" (Goffman 1963) to pick up. I think a piece of her explanatory data makes clear what sort of activity signifying is:

> The interlocutors here are Barbara, an informant; Mary one of her friends; and the researcher. The conversation takes place in Barbara's home, and the episode begins as the researcher is about to leave.
>
> Barbara: What are you going to do Saturday? Will you be over here?
>
> R: I don't know.
>
> Barbara: Well, if you're not going to be doing anything, come by. I'm going to cook some chit'lins (rather jokingly) Or are you one of those Negroes who don't eat chit'lins?
>
> Mary: (Interjecting indignantly) That's all I hear lately - soul food, soul food. If you say you don't eat it you get accused of being sadity (affected, considering oneself superior). (Matter of factly) Well, I ate enough black-eyed peas and neck-bones during the depression that I can't get excited over it. I eat prime rib and T-bone because I like to, not because I'm trying to be white. (Sincerely) Negroes are constantly trying to find some way of discriminate against each other. If they could once in a while get it into their heads that we are all in this together maybe we could get somewhere in this battle against the man.
> (Mary leaves)
>
> Barbara: Well, I wasn't signifying at her, but like I always say, if the shoe fits wear it.

A precondition for the application of the term "signifying" to some speech act, is the assumption that the meaning decoded by the recipient was consciously and purposefully formulated at the encoding stage by the addresser. Notice though, that the reading from Mitchell-Kernan's data implies ambiguity at the encoding stage (certainly so if we believe Barbara's concluding statement). But, it was decoded by Mary as signifying and once the talk was thus coded by the recipient, the addresser accepts the interpretation as appropriate. There is an important point that I do not have time to elaborate on here which concerns the continuous re-classification of talk by co-participants in the talk (see Burton 1977b).

It seems to me that there is an analogous piece of talk in the Stoppard data - (utterance 32 onwards). Here Moon's

remark seems quite neutral - neither noteworthy as malicious or innocent, until Birdboot demonstrates his own interpretation of it as casting aspersions on his moral character - thereby indubitably also demonstrating that "the shoe fits".

Mitchell-Kernan comments on Mary's response to Barbara, pointing out that her retaliation also involved indirect comment of a signifying kind. Whilst talking about obstacles to brotherhood, she implies that behaviour such as that which Barbara has just indulged in is typical of artificially induced sources of ethnic schism. Birdboot's response to Moon - about two pages further on in the play - is formulated in the same way:

Birdboot:	Oh I know what goes on behind my back - sniggers - slanders - hole in the corner innuendo - What have you heard?
Moon:	Nothing.
Birdboot:	(urbanely) Tittle tattle. Tittle, my dear fellow, tattle. I take no notice of it - the sly envy of scandal mongers - I can afford to ignore them.

This sort of attack-in-defence is presumably a routine way of replying to insinuations when they have hit home, but since standard English presumably attaches no value to acts such as signifying, it therefore has no set of terms in which to talk about them, so the ethnographic data and descriptions are a useful way-in to thinking about and talking about constituent features of such events.

Mitchell-Kernan's informant who commented on this piece of data given above, suggested that the root of this exchange lay in the past somewhere, and that probably Barbara was repaying Mary for some insult of the past. The informant thought that Barbara was trying to raise her self-esteem by asserting superiority over Mary, suggesting also that this type of exchange was probably symptomatic of the relationship between the two women and that one might expect to find them jockeying for positions of superiority over any number of issues. Thus here, as elsewhere, signifying in everyday conversation is seen functionally as a means of establishing dominance. This set of remarks also seems relevant in the case of Birdboot and Moon. An important message we get from the play concerns the career prospects and problems of the two men - in particular intimations about the highly competitive nature of the profession they're in. They are - and presumably have been for some time - jockeying for superiority. Moon is second string to Higgs, whilst Puckeridge stands in for Moon - though we learn that Puckeridge has never yet had the chance to write anything at all. We later discover that Birdboot has a whole review in neon,whilst all Moon has ever achieved in this line was a display of "unforgettable" for a play that - predictably enough - he has forgotten the name of. Significantly Birdboot's reply to this piece of information when it comes is "Oh, was that you? I thought it was Higgs." Given this theme - which eventually dominates the outcome of the play, in that it turns out that Puckeridge is the eventual murderer and Higgs and Moon are his victims, and given this information from Mitchell-Kernan's informant,

I would want to reconsider my original statement that Moon's remark (32) which initiates the sounding sequence was neutrally-encoded. Of course, there is no sensible way we can talk about what "Moon really meant", but it makes sense to see this particular signifying episode - and others that follow later - as verbal battles for superior status, as well as - or perhaps instead of - information about Birdboot's affairs, or instances of Moon putting his foot in it. In fact, we need to consider this point in our assessment of Moon as a character and participant in the dialogue. Is he gauche, or is he in fact playing one-upmanship games? This becomes an important issue when, later in the play, the same sort of signifying occurs again:

Birdboot:	Tittle tattle. Tittle, my dear fellow tattle. O take no notice of it - the sly envy of scandal mongers - I can afford to ignore them. I'm a respectable married man -
Moon:	Incidentally -
Birdboot:	Water off a duck's back, I assure you.
Moon:	Who was that lady I saw you with last night?
Birdboot:	How dare you! How dare you. Don't you come here with your slimy insinuations. etc etc etc

Now, with Moon's cliche-formulated resumption of the sounding strategy, it seems to me that we have to decide whether he is blunderingly stupid, or calculatedly getting the upper hand. Given the fact that he chooses to repeat the speech act, <u>and</u> chooses a well-worn cliche with which to do it, I would suggest that the latter interpretation is the sensible one. With regard to the cliche, notice that Mitchell-Kernan has a relevant comment here too. In discussing signifying as an art form, she points out that poor attempts at signifying do exist - and that they are recognisable as poor-art rather than non-art given the fact that they get responses like "that's lame" or "that's phony" from onlookers and co-participants. (See also Labov 1969 on this.) This is presumably analogous to the familiar groan-response to a bad pun, which acknowledges the use of a verbal trick, but criticises the realisation from an aesthetic point of view. The play data also has a connection here with work on the art of verbal duelling among Turkish boys (Dundes 1972). Dundes distinguishes between immediate spontaneous creativity in this context, and a very similar strategy where the responses are rote-learned by the user. Here the test is to remember appropriate responses rather than to make them up. Moon's cliche seems similarly chosen. Mitchell-Kernan points out that much-used signifying phrases "may lose their effectiveness over time due to over use. They lose their value as clever wit." This is certainly true of Moon's cliche. It is much less subtle than his earlier formulations.

One other point that arises in Mitchell-Kernan seems worth bringing out here. She makes the case that - since signifying depends on both an explicit non-offensive content, and an implicit offensive content, the information-exchange

is structured in such a way that both parties have the option of avoiding direct confrontation. Or, to put it another way, there is the double potential of provoking confrontation without unequivocally exposing the original speaker's intent (see my comments on Moon's innocence/guilt above). She provides a nice analogy with the archetypal secretary story - where the boss's hand keeps coming into contact with the secretary's knee. Should the secretary disapprove of this behaviour she can either say something like "I'm not that kind of girl" or - more subtly - "Oh excuse me Mr Smith, I didn't mean to get my knee in your way". Given the first utterance, the boss is in the powerful interactional position of feigning hurt ignorance and also implying that she has a nasty mind. Given the option of accepting the explicit content and ignoring the implicit content, the second utterance could be politely effective. If the boss is innocent, the remark is of no consequence. If he is guilty, they can thus avoid direct confrontation. There is a nice corollary to this, which explains how it is that we know that Birdboot is guilty. He chooses to hear and react to the implicit content of Moon's remark - thus unequivocally presenting himself as guilty.

Again, thinking of Moon as perhaps somewhat sharper than he at first appears, Mitchell-Kernan points out that in a signifying round, the advantage is the initiator's, who, because of the explicit/implicit ambiguity, is free to deny a pejorative interpretation. Thus Moon provokes Birdboot to a not-really-necessary declaration of his innocence - which at once proclaims for us his guilt - and then leaves himself the option of insisting on the innocence of his initial remark. (Utterances 34/38/40). Having recognised the similarity between what is going on the talk in Stoppard's play and the Afro-American speech act "signifying", it proves extremely profitable to consider ethnographic details of the latter as enhancing our understanding of the former.

Though this sort of work which combines conversational analysis with stylistic details of the text is undoubtedly illuminating, and certainly helps to account for certain intuitions about the text, it is not, of course, rigorous stylistic analysis. Nevertheless, as the details mount up - and they do so in a surprisingly rich way - the analyst is able to ground his sociolinguistic intuitions in a linguistically interesting way by reference to the ever-growing body of detailed work on naturally-occurring conversation. Let me mention briefly some alternative work of relevance to the data here.

John Laver's work on phatic communion (Laver 1974) which specifies quite particular features of opening and closing stages of this otherwise rather vague concept, is certainly useful in conjunction with the sorts of comments about everyday-like characteristics of the talk drawn from Turner's paper. A deeper consideration of Sacks's concept of Membership Categorisation Devices is relevant to a major topic in the play as a whole. Interactants are variously classified as 'individuals' or 'occupants of a professional occupation'. This holds both for odd ambiguous utterances

as well as for the outcome of the plot itself. Sacks's type of classification device is extremely helpful in disentangling this complexity.

One much more rigorous approach, much more centrally linguistic, and much more time and space consuming, would be to see what structural discourse statements could be made about the text in the light of the work reported in Sinclair and Coulthard 1975. Clearly, a simple classroom-type model would be inappropriate here, given the different status-relationships of the participants. Clearly also, the rahge of appropriate acts, moves and exchanges will have to be adjusted in order to allow for the freer range of interactive possibilities that hold outside the classroom. Clearly, also, the channels of interaction that hold for the theatre are more complex than those of most naturally-occurring conversations, in that the talk is made to be overheard, and made with notions like plot exposition in mind. I have suggested elsewhere (Burton 1977a) a functional model that is designed to cope with this problem, and would suggest that - if this is combined with the Sinclair and Coulthard descriptive procedures, then many utterances would need double-coding automatically. Moon's monologues, for example - whilst in terms of the microcosmic interaction they are clearly asides - in that Birdboot pays no attention to them - in terms of the macrocosmic interaction they are highly informative, in that they are crucial for the audience's understanding of both Moon and the plot as a whole.

I want to finish with a comment or two about those monologues, which, will in fact bring me back neatly to where I began; considering the ways in which some dialogues are "lifelike" and some are not. It seems to me that it would be incredibly easy to do a traditional linguistic-stylistic analysis of these monologues as "art" - or "poetic prose" - or even "poetry", in terms of items like parallel clause structures, obtrusive rhythmic patterns, alliteration, semantic tricks etc - I feel there is no need to go into specific detail here, for this is familiar material. I would like just to make this remark; where it is easy to do this sort of analysis, the talk must be unlike real talk. With Schegloff (Schegloff 1968) I am a great believer in the artfulness of conversation - but it is a very different sort of "art" from any that can be taken account of neatly and simply in terms of syntax, phonology and traditional categories of stylistic analysis.

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ON A PASSAGE FROM LAWRENCE'S "ODOUR OF CHRYSANTHEMUMS"

1. A sample text

Intuitive response to D.H. Lawrence's classic story "Odour of Chrysanthemums" suggests that its theme might be defined in the one word alienation. A woman is alienated from her husband, and this is the major issue; but it includes or is contingent upon other alienations - family relationships are strained, a housewife is uneasy among her neighbours, man is a mere tenant in his industrial environment. These paradigmatic variants of the general theme are explored cumulatively in a series of episodes any one of which would provide a representative stylistic sample.

One such sample text, perfectly defined and self-contained, occurs shortly after the beginning of the narrative. It lends itself readily to analysis in terms of structure and stylisation, or frame, informative pattern and stylistic device - in fact, to the kind of model that might be used in the discussion of a poem (see Nash 1976). The following notes accordingly take into account the general patterning of the text as a narrative framework, the structuring of its content, and the relevance of stylistic device to structural intention. My metalanguage, except where otherwise indicated (and apart from ad hoc terms) is based on Quirk et.al (1972). The text is that of the Penguin (1968) edition of The Prussian Officer and Other Stories. Lines are numbered for convenience of subsequent reference:

1 The engine whistled as it came into the wide bay of
2 railway lines beside the colliery, where rows of trucks
3 stood in harbour.
4 Miners, single, trailing and in groups, passed like
5 shadows diverging home. At the edge of the ribbed
6 level of sidings squat a low cottage, three steps down
7 from the cinder track. A large bony vine clutched at
8 the house, as if to claw down the tiled roof. Round
9 the bricked yard grew a few wintry primroses. Beyond,
10 the long garden sloped down to a bush-covered brook
11 course. There were some twiggy apple-trees, winter-
12 crack trees, and ragged cabbages. Beside the path
13 hung dishevelled pink chrysanthemums, like pink cloths
14 hung on bushes. A woman came stooping out of the
15 felt-covered fowl-house, then drew herself erect,
16 having brushed some bits from her white apron.
17 She was a tall woman of imperious mien, handsome,
18 with definite black eyebrows. Her smooth black hair
19 was parted exactly. For a few moments she stood
20 steadily watching the miners as they passed along the
21 railway; then she turned towards the brook course.

22 Her face was calm and set, her mouth was closed with
23 disillusionment. After a moment she called:
24 "John!" There was no answer. She waited, and
25 then said distinctly:
26 "Where are you?"
27 "Here!" replied a child's sulky voice from among
28 the bushes. The woman looked piercingly through the
29 dusk.
30 "Are you at that brook?" she asked sternly.
31 For answer the child showed himself before the
32 raspberry-canes that rose like whips. He was a
33 small, sturdy boy of five. He stood quite still,
34 defiantly.
35 "Oh!" said the mother, conciliated. "I thought
36 you were down at that wet brook - and you remember
37 what I told you -"
38 The boy did not move or answer.
39 "Come, come on in," she said more gently, "it's
40 getting dark. There's your grandfather's engine
41 coming down the line!"
42 The lad advanced slowly, with resentful, taciturn
43 movement. He was dressed in trousers and waistcoat
44 of cloth that was too thick and hard for the size of
45 the garments. They were evidently cut down from a
46 man's clothes.
47 As they went towards the house he tore at the
48 ragged wisps of chrysanthemums and dropped the petals
49 in handfuls along the path.
50 "Don't do that - it does look nasty," said his
51 mother. He refrained, and she, suddenly pitiful,
52 broke off a twig with three or four wan flowers and
53 held them against her face. When mother and son
54 reached the yard her hand hesitated, and instead of
55 laying the flower aside, she pushed it in her apron-
56 band. The mother and son stood at the foot of the
57 three steps looking across the bay of lines at the
58 passing home of the miners. The trundle of the small
59 train was imminent. Suddenly the engine loomed past
60 the house and came to a stop opposite the gate.

2. Setting: symmetry and perspective

An eminent feature of this passage is the symmetry of its scenic arrangement; it begins and ends with the lively bustle of the little engine and the silent, shadowy "passing" of the miners. The engine appears first in 1, the miners following in 4-5, while at the end of the text the miners reappear in 58 and the engine in 59. The inversion (engine - miners / miners - engine) seems to suggest that industry has the first and last word; machines have greater vitality than human beings. (The engine is of course mentioned at one other point - in 40-41 - but the reference is made in direct speech, and is not an element in the general pattern of scenic description).

Within this frame other symmetries are incorporated. Thus in 6, the cottage "squats" three steps down from the cinder track, while in 56-57, a woman and a boy (two of the inhabitants of the cottage) are seen standing at the foot of the three steps. There is another striking

example of symmetrical recursion in the dishevelled pink chrysanthemums of 13-14, which reappear as the ragged wisps of chrysanthemums in 48. These two phrases occur at almost exactly correspondent points in relationship to the beginning and end of the text. By line 14, indeed, the scene is set, and we return to it, after the presentation of the actors, in 47ff. Its elements, and their placing in the text, may be recapitulated thus: engine (1) - miners (4-5) - steps (6) - chrysanthemums (13-14) // chrysanthemums (48) - steps (57) - miners (58) - engine (59).

The layout plots a simple scheme of movement, from the railway line to the house to the garden, where the central encounter between the woman and the boy takes place, and so from the garden back to the house and the railway line; a tour in the course of which attention is carefully drawn to the chrysanthemums that figure in the title and symbolise the theme of the narrative. Throughout the text, shifts in perspective are marked by the occurrence of constructions (mainly adjuncts) indicating a position or direction. Some place adjuncts, e.g. past the house, 59, opposite the gate, 60, look forward to another scene, but the majority relate to the staging of the current action: At the edge of the ribbed level of sidings (5), Round the bricked yard (8), Beyond (9), Beside the path (12), towards the brook course (21), before the raspberry canes (31), towards the house (47), at the foot of the three steps (56).

The position of these elements in their respective sentences is of some relevance to the structure of the text as a whole. The first four of the quoted instances make a well-defined group; as their typography indicates, each of them occurs at the beginning of a sentence. The second paragraph, in which these examples occur, is in effect a set of stage directions - a register in which the "fronted" place adjunct is not uncommon. There is, however, a further stylistic point. The effect of this positioning is to create a powerful end-focus on the scenic elements in the sentences concerned - e.g. on the low cottage, the few wintry primroses, the dishevelled pink chrysanthemums. The adjuncts thus point to features of landscape which constitute not only a background imagery but also a source of feeling, in that they condition the reader's responses to the text.

In the remaining examples the place adjuncts have receded to a post-verbal position where as a rule they merely specify the location or direction of a movement on the part of one or other of the actors. The focus is now on people, on humanity depressed and struggling, rather than on the vegetation that so compellingly symbolises the depression and the struggle. The place adjuncts lose something of their dynamic importance and become mere labels of position. In one instance (and dropped the petals in handfuls along the path, 48-49) this softening of emphasis is particularly noticeable; the place adjunct along the path occurs after, and is in a sense subordinate to, the process adjunct in handfuls. The latter is involved in the emotive energy of tore at and dropped, in a way that the former is not.

These differences in the positioning and semantic implication of the place adjuncts are by no means fortuitous. They are symptomatic of a deliberate shift of emphasis, further discussed below, from environmental colouring to human response.

3. <u>The development of the scene: phases and modes of narrative</u>

The scene develops through passages of description and direct speech which intermesh, gradually constructing the pattern of relationships between the human figures and their environment. Though they are not typographically signposted, it is possible to discern the phases of development with some degree of certainty. The text appears to be constructed on the following frame:

<u>Phase</u>		
I	from:	The engine whistled as it came into the wide bay of railway lines beside the colliery, where rows of trucks stood in harbour. (1-3)
	to:	Beside the path hung dishevelled pink chrysanthemums, like pink cloths hung on bushes. (12-14)
II	from:	A woman came stooping out of the felt-covered fowl-house...&c. (14-15)
	to:	Her face was calm and set, her mouth was closed with disillusionment. (22-23)
III	from:	After a moment she called: (23)
	to:	They were evidently cut down from a man's clothes. (45-46)
IV	from:	As they went towards the house he tore at the ragged wisps of chrysanthemums...&c. (47-48)
	to:	Suddenly the engine loomed past the house and came to a stop opposite the gate. (59-60)

Of these phases, I and II present a clear descriptive unity; in I an environment is described, while II shifts to a description of the woman. Phase IV begins as Phase I ends, with an allusion to the chrysanthemums, and returns to "environmental" description; thus in formal marking and in content it, too, is fairly well-defined. Only Phase III is irregular, not so obviously devoted to a single purpose (e.g. describing a background or a personality), shifting back and forth between speech and description, leaving unanswered certain questions of character and behaviour. In this very lack of closure it is the vital centre of the text, a seed of narration rather than a descriptive ground.

In the shifts from phase to phase, the mode of narration alters in relationship to the content. A rough account of these changes is presented in the following table:

Phase	Lines	Mode	Content
I	1-14	Description	An environment
II	14-16, 17-23	Description	A woman placed in the environment: her relationship to it by implication discordant
III	24-46	Direct speech, with some descriptive intrusions	The woman and a child in confrontation
IV	47-60	Description, with one brief intrusion of direct speech	Woman and child together confronting the environment

This requires some amplificatory comment. Phase II consists in effect of two separate passages of description (11-14, 15-21), in the first of which the woman makes a "dynamic" entry onto the scene, while in the second she holds something of a "static" pose. This shift is reflected in stylistic details to be discussed presently. Another feature which is necessarily overlooked in the tabular account is the role, in Phase III, of what are called "descriptive intrusions" (31-34, 38, 42-46). It is in fact through these, and not through speech, that the boy is presented. He speaks only one word; otherwise it is the woman whose voice is heard in this bleak setting, and whose character is reflected in the reporting tags or style adjuncts (said distinctly, 25, asked sternly, 30, said more gently, 39).

The salient point of this development is the involvement of the human figures with each other and with their shiftily animated surroundings. (By human figures I mean of course the woman and the boy; the miners are neutralised figures, mere shadows in the dusk of industry). The environment has a suppressive power which is hinted at in the figurative language of Phase I (e.g. clutched at the house, as if to claw down the tiled roof, 7-8) and which is quite strongly established for the reader by the time he reaches Phase IV. In the responses of the woman towards her surroundings we sense both antagonism and a helpless resignation; while the boy appears as the victim of an anxious parental concern that expresses itself in fruitlessly punitive gestures (cf. raspberry canes that rose like whips, 32, where the environmental detail indirectly suggests the threat of punishment for disobedience). Woman and boy alike are engaged in a struggle to exert an individual will, against each other and against the conditions that overwhelm them.

4. The actors, (i): identity and relationship

The relationship of the two actors is ingeniously plotted in the grammar and lexis of Phases II and III. A series of minor shifts in syntax or vocabulary brings the characters closer to each other and also to the reader; by almost insensible degrees they are "established" for him as figures with an identity - not yet complete, not

yet so fully-realised that they are actually mentioned by name, but certain enough for them to be accepted as textual acquaintances, as "the woman and the boy in our story".

In 14 a woman (note the indefinite article) is introduced; in 17 she is described quite fully as a tall woman of imperious mien, &c; in 28 she is the woman; in 35 her role is specified and she is the mother; in 50 there is a further change of determiner - his mother - fully establishing her relationship to the boy.

The son first appears as a disembodied voice (a child's sulky voice, 27) and then as the child in 31. In 33 a descriptive phrase specifies his sex and age - he is a small sturdy boy of five. At his next appearance, in 38, he is the boy, a designation that shifts to a "warmer" synonym in 42, with the lad. The establishment of the actors as a pair, or corporate unit, conforms to the general pattern of movement from general to particular identity; thus mother and son in 53 is followed by the mother and son in 56.

The tactics of establishment are remarkably consistent. Determiners (a, the, his) lead from an unmarked or "inchoate" preliminary identification (e.g. a woman) towards the firmer base of an anaphoric reference (e.g. the woman), or yet further towards the endophoric allusion that makes the textual connection between one figure and another (e.g. his mother). (For "endophoric", etc, see Halliday & Hasan 1976). Synonymic and hyponymic variants (child, boy, lad, son; woman, mother) are also of obvious importance in the progressive familiarising of the two characters. We may note further how in two places an expanded description of the actor (a tall woman of imperious mien, &c., 17, a small sturdy boy of five, 33) is the precursor of the anaphoric reference with definite article + noun denoting sex and age (the woman, 28, the boy, 38). The process of identification can be summarised thus:

A. The woman

	Designation	Comment
i	A woman, 14	Indefinite article: preliminary, "inchoate" identification
ii	a tall woman of imperious mien, handsome, with definite black eyebrows, 17	Indefinite article: pre- and elaborate post-modification; figure described
iii	the woman, 28	Definite article: figure now "anaphorically based" in the text
iv	the mother, 35	Definite article: hyponymic variation of noun: the woman's social role textually established

	Designation	Comment
v	his mother, 50	Shift of determiner to possessive pronoun: connection with other figure textually established

B. The boy

	Designation	Comment
i	a child's sulky voice, 27	Premodifying genitive makes preliminary identification; denotes age, not sex.
ii	the child, 31	Definite article: anaphoric reference gives figure some base in text, but sex still unspecified
iii	a small sturdy boy of five, 33	Indefinite article: pre- and post-modification: age and sex specified
iv	the boy, 38	Definite article: figure now "anaphorically based" in text
v	the lad, 42	Definite article: synonymic variation; warmer, more intimate response suggested, the reader's sympathy invited - cf. the effect of pathos in the description of trousers and waistcoat "cut down from man's clothes"

C. Woman and boy together

	Designation	Comment
i	mother and son, 53	No determiner: preliminary identification of the corporate unit: further hyponymic shift (to son), in line with already established shift (see Aiv) to mother
ii	the mother and son, 56	Definite article: anaphoric reference gives textual underscoring to the relationship

As a footnote to this analysis of identities and relationships in the text, it may be added that a further relationship is introduced in the woman's remark There's your grandfather's engine coming down the line! (41-42) This has a twofold function. It makes a point of intersection between what we see of the environment and what we learn about the actors - we might say that the outer, descriptive phases I and IV here briefly intrude upon the inner phase III. Secondly, it establishes a point of connection with the next episode (Penguin pp.206-207), in which the engine-driver/ grandfather is seen in conversation - or rather, confrontation - with his daughter.

5. The actors, (ii): the woman

As well as establishing the woman's social position, the text provides a number of effective indices to her character. A feature of obvious importance is the alternation of modifier and adjunct as carriers of evaluative description: tall, imperious, handsome, definite, smooth, calm, set / exactly, steadily, piercingly, sternly.

The adjuncts are particularly noteworthy, in that they relate or "interlock" presentations of three different aspects of her being - physical appearance, activity, and manner of speech. Thus the manner adjunct in her smooth black hair was parted exactly (18-19) defines an appearance, or, to use a distinctive and convenient term, a pose; in the woman looked piercingly (28) the adjunct qualifies an activity; while in she asked sternly (30) a style adjunct denotes her manner of speech.

Pose, activity and speech-style are the three elements by means of which her nature is intimated to the reader, and in 17-23, a passage of extended description, these elements appear to be arranged in a patterned scheme, punctuated by time adjuncts (for a few moments, then, after a moment). The scheme may be summarised: Pose - TA - Activity - TA - Activity - Pose - TA - Speech. The elements of the pattern are diversely weighted, however, as a reading of the passage will show:

> She was a tall woman of imperious mien, handsome, with definite black eyebrows. Her smooth black hair was parted exactly (POSE). For a few moments (TA) she stood steadily watching the miners as they passed along the railway (ACTIVITY); then (TA) she turned towards the brook course (ACTIVITY). Her face was calm and set, her mouth was closed with disillusionment (POSE). After a moment (TA) she called (SPEECH):

Throughout the text generally, her "activities" present a point of stylistic interest. There is some contrasting of transitive and intransitive patterning; more precisely, there is a contrasting of operative and static processes. At her first appearance, in 11-14 (the first part of Phase II), the woman is an agent with some volitional and operative power over her own person and the things around her (cf. drew herself erect, having brushed some bits from her apron, 15). In the remainder of Phase II, and throughout Phase III, however, all effective activity withers, and the agent makes no impress on her surroundings. Such phrases as she stood steadily watching, she said distinctly, the woman looked poercingly, she asked sternly, denote no activity more positive than looking and speaking.

This recession into "inoperativeness" is introduced by a sequence of "pose" elements (see above). The clauses presenting these are, as one might expect, structures of intensive complementation in which the verb is a mere copula (was) and the subject is in most cases a noun denoting a part of the body (hair, face, mouth). She becomes for a time a face, a voice, a mien - nothing

more. It is only in the passage's last phase that the will to goal-directed activity is reasserted (broke off a twig with three or four wan flowers and laid them against her face, 52-53, she pushed it in her apron-band, 55-56).

She is characterised by one fine stylistic touch in Phase IV, where instead of "she hesitated" we read her hand hesitated (54). There is a shift of initiating agency from the whole person to a part, the hand, which is treated as though it had an independent will. This device expresses in a very telling way her division against herself, her alternations of voluntary act and involuntary response, and her reluctance to admit any feeling of tenderness about her marriage. It betrays a vulnerability which we might not suspect in a tall woman of imperious mien. .with definite black eyebrows.

6. The actors, (iii): the boy

The boy is not so intensively portrayed, and yet the presentation of this secondary figure is carefully structured. There are analogies between his introduction into the text and that of the woman. Of her, it is observed that she drew herself erect, having brushed some bits from her white apron (15-16), and then, in immediate continuation, She was a tall woman of imperious mien (17). Subsequently it is stated of her son that the child showed himself before the raspberry canes that rose like whips (31-32) and that He was a small, sturdy boy of five (32-33). Here are obvious parallels between the reflexive constructions (drew herself erect, showed himself) and between the descriptive, subject-complemented statements (She was a tall woman of imperious mien, He was a small, sturdy boy of five). There is, moreover, a subtler functional parallel between the participial clause having brushed some bits &c (16) and the place adjunct before the raspberry canes &c (31-32). Each of these in its own way projects a character: the woman's active and precise, the child's passive before the intimation of punishment.

He is presented through alternations of "pose" and "activity". The "activity" is at first merely existential (He stood quite still, 33, The boy did not move, 38), yielding to movement (The lad advanced slowly, 42) and then to suddenly positive (and destructive) action (he tore at the ragged wisps of chrysanthemums, 47-48). Thus although he says practically nothing he gradually emerges as an active "wilful" personality - a development which, indeed, makes something of a counterpoise to the mother's recession from stern admonition into conciliation, gentleness, and pitiful hesitancy. The earlier stages of his emergence are marked by the strategic use of manner adjuncts (defiantly, 34, with resentful, taciturn movement, 42) as well as by the modifier (sulky, 27) that characterises his one utterance. The description of his clothing in 43-46 - the most extended "pose" - is important in constituting a transition between the earlier, "passive", and the later, "active" stage of presentation. The actor is endowed - literally

invested - with a presence.

7. The environment

It is an essential feature of the text that the environment should not be a mere background, but should seem to be informed with a covert and in some respects hostile animation. The human actors encounter the dispiriting shapes of non-human presences.

The first phase of the text is largely devoted to the establishment of a sense of the environment as a psychic shadow-partner to the human world - and here the descriptive modifier is a pervasive device: the ribbed level (5-6), a large bony vine (7), ragged cabbages (12), dishevelled pink chrysanthemums (13). There is a shadowy anthropomorphism in these constructions, a suggestion of the skeleton (ribbed, bony), of poor clothing (ragged), of neglected appearance (dishevelled). The environment lives a depressed and impoverished existence, like its occupants. A feeling of resignation is implicit in the very sentence-structure - e.g. in the "existential" sentence There were some twiggy apple-trees &c (11) and in the sentences with "fronted" place adjuncts and intransitive verbs (grew, hung) which suggest "state" rather than "event" (Leech 1971, p.5). Only in one powerful instance (A large bony vine clutched at the house &c, 7) do sentence-structure and verb-type project a sense of agency and volition.

A skilful feature of the style here is that the constructions quoted above, with their shifted, metaphor-making collocations, are set among other premodified noun-phrases where there is little or no metaphoric intent, e.g. a low cottage (6), the bricked yard (9), a few wintry primroses (9), the long garden (10), a bush-covered brook course (10), some twiggy apple-trees (11), the felt-covered fowl-house (15). These constructions are purely descriptive; the metaphor-bearing phrases lurk among them and in a way are natural extensions of them - there is after all a descriptive similarity between bony vine and twiggy apple-tree.

A related point is that the supremely symbolic chrysanthemums are also made to "lurk" in the general hyponymy of vegetation which includes the wintry primroses, the bushes by the brook, the apple trees, the winter-crack trees, the cabbages and, a little later in the text, the raspberry canes. At a first encounter, the chrysanthemums are seemingly no more than neglected flowers in a straggly and soured garden. If it were not for the title of the story, we might pay no particular attention to them. There is, however, a further stylistic focus upon them, a device of presentation which they share with the vine and the raspberry canes. All three items (vine, chrysanthemums, raspberry canes) are marked in the text by subordinate or complementary constructions with like or as if: as if to claw down the tiled roof (8), like pink cloths hung on bushes (13-14), like whips (32).

In the first and last of these instances, the focus

is powerfully sharpened by the inclusion in the construction of verbs or nouns with antagonistic or punitive connotations (clutch, claw, whips). There are fairly obvious reasons for this heavy stylistic underscoring. The image of the bony, clutching vine marks the beginning of a description of the cottage, the garden, and the two actors; from the outset a note of hostility and struggle is sounded. The stylistic emphasis is thus related to the general structure of the text. Similarly, the allusion to the raspberry canes makes the point that the child lives against a background of hostility; to some extent the plants symbolise the environment he has to contend with, and to some extent they express the character of his relationship with his parents. It may be noted incidentally that this is another point in the text at which there is an "intersection" of structural elements, i.e. of the description of the environment which mainly occupies the opening and closing phases of the passage, and the encounter of personalities which constitutes the central phase. (Cf. the allusion to the engine in 40, and my comment on this).

The initial reference to the chrysanthemums (hung... like pink cloths hung on bushes, 13-14) is not quite so emphatically underscored; indeed, there is a gesture of ineffectuality both in the simile itself and in the apparently flaccid repetition of hung. The reference is marked, if we are alert to it, but not so strongly marked that we cannot be distracted by other matters. Strength of allusion is postponed until the flowers are referred to a second time, after a human encounter, when the ragged wisps of chrysanthemums (47-48) assume something like a personality. Common collocations of ragged and wisps - "ragged clothes", "wisps of hair" - suggest this to the reader and perhaps suggest also a pathetic contrast with the earlier description of the woman, whose smooth black hair was parted exactly (18-19).

8. Conclusion

These notes assume as indispensable three elements (if that is the right word) of procedure, i.e. an intuitive response to the text, a search for textual pattern, and an identification of the linguistic/stylistic features that support intuition and demonstrate the patterning. The assumption is possibly a commonplace applicable to any piece of stylistic analysis, but it implies footnotes which may well be worth writing.

The first of these concerns the importance of structure. In the analysis of lyric poems (hitherto a major preoccupation of stylisticians) one important element of structure - the articulatory pattern, or "frame" of the text - is manifested through the poem's metre, stanzaic scheme, etc. In prose the discursive framework is rarely manifested in this way, and so a structural interpretation at this primary level becomes an important preliminary to further observations on the text. Without such an interpretation remarks on language and style are necessarily random and unrelated. However, it is not simply a matter of determining a structure which then

provides a framework of reference for stylistic features. The case is rather that linguistic and other promptings suggest a structural scheme which provides points of reference for stylistic features which then amplify and confirm the scheme.

It is important to realise that the reader's intimations of the patterning of a text may be guided by clues other than linguistic. A literary text has a total power of appeal which is to be described in terms of semiotics or aesthetics, including some aspects of linguistics, rather than of a strictly and exclusively linguistic model. In certain respects a text may be similar to a picture, in that it has an iconographic programme (this could indeed be said of the Laurence passage); or it may have something in common with music, say, in its repetitions of a *Leitmotiv*, or even with mathematics in its modelling of some principle such as that of binary alternation. All these things may be described in linguistic or quasi-linguistic terminology, but they are not in the strictest sense proper to linguistics. The point is perhaps obvious, yet it is one that linguistic stylisticians do not always readily concede.

A study of the Lawrence passage reveals the importance of two structural levels, or planes of analysis. The first of these is a plane of articulation, the scheme of cohesion and design in the text (described here mainly under the headings of "Setting and perspective" and "Development"); to describe this is to establish the ground upon which eminent stylistic features are mapped, and to provide for the prose text something roughly equivalent to the stanzaic or sectional scheme of a poem. The second level of structure is a plane of information (or possibly "motif"), and involves the superimposition on the articulatory plane of elements of characterisation, symbolism, etc. (In the foregoing account, analysis on this plane is represented by the sections on "The actors" and "The environment"). Inevitably one uses words like "superimposition" or "intersection" in trying to describe the relationship of the two planes, but they are misleading. "Interlocking" or "intermeshing" would be more satisfactory. It is necessary to understand the scheme of articulation before we can respond fully to the contained pattern; but on the other hand we need to have some response to the pattern of character and symbolic motif before we can properly perceive the articulatory design.

The reading of such a text is indeed a process of intermeshing and mutually supportive responses. Intuition (literary sensitivity, a predisposition to find patterns of meaning) is vital, but after the first impulses it does not continue to work unprompted. Further promptings come with the observation of linguistic/stylistic features which are perhaps marked by pairings, contrasts, gradations, or some other method of foregrounding. Intuition is thus strengthened or modified, and is equipped to begin the definition of structural levels in the text. The discovery of one level involves the perception of another; and meanwhile the detection of linguistic features continues, supporting or qualifying

the structural interpretation, guiding the intuition to further discoveries. The diagram at the foot of this essay is an attempt to chart the process of interlinking discoveries and impulses. It is empirically derived from the study of one short passage and is quite certainly too simple in outline to serve as a hypothesis accounting for what happens when we attempt a close reading of a piece of prose fiction. Nevertheless, it points to important elements in the reading process and may usefully draw attention to the fact that in many instances stylistic description is necessarily a complex of linguistic and extra- (or supra-) linguistic references.

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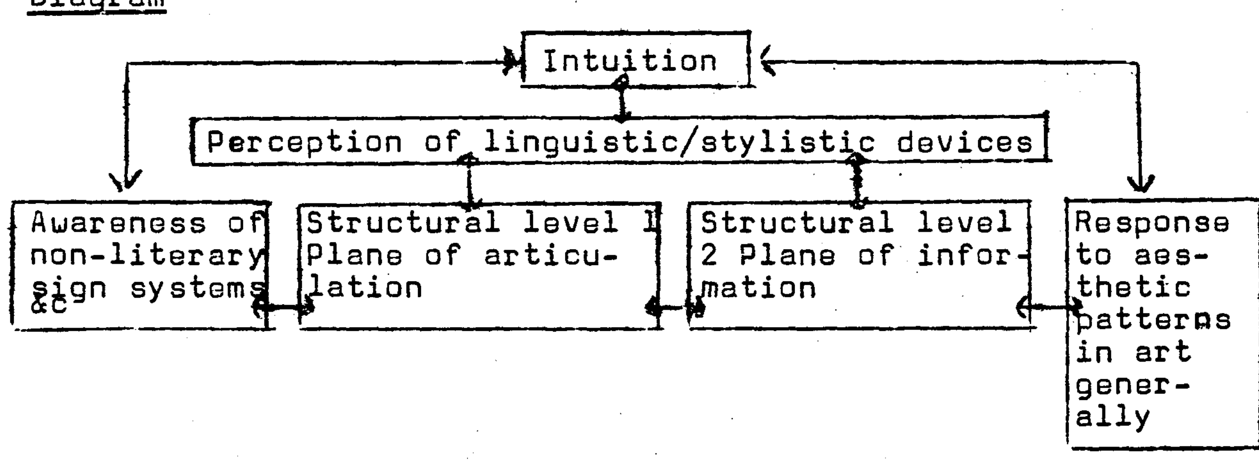
Diagram



REVIEW OF

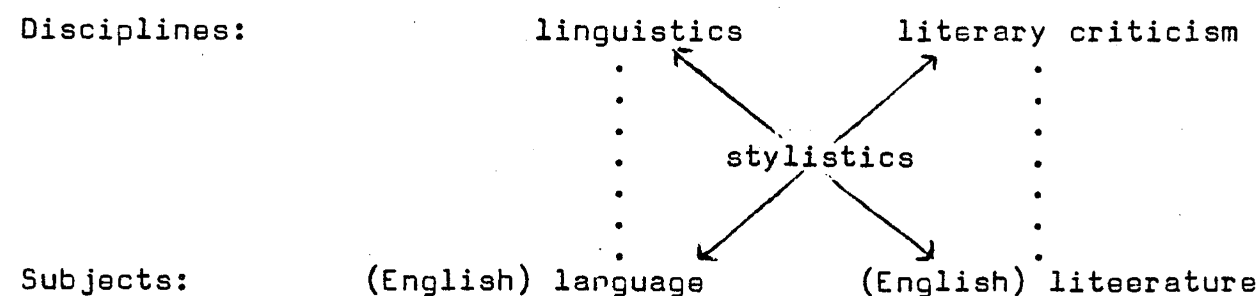
H.G. Widdowson Stylistics and the Teaching of Literature
London: Longmans, 1975

Henry Widdowson's recent book is the most interesting 'introduction' to stylistics and language/literature teaching I have come across. This is no mean compliment - as these days, I tend to settle down to such titles with a self-righteous sense of duty being fulfilled, an inward sigh, and plenty of black coffee near at hand. This book is clearly written, sensibly selective, states explicitly what the author is trying to do, and presents a substantial number of his original and provocative ideas on stylistics, literature and pedagogy which are not otherwise easily accessible except in thesis or periodical form (see Widdowson 1972, 1973). A broad overview of relevant theoretical points, coupled with numerous small, detailed examples, gives a balanced reading in this large and spreading topic. Best of all, there are stimulating formulations of problems, concepts and background criteria that any teacher of stylistics must welcome.

Two problems though; I am not sure who the book is written for, and I would have liked more space and time spent on the practical work - which seemed rather unexciting in comparison with the wider theoretical and pedagogical issues raised in the book. I will return to these problems below, but let me first give a brief description of the layout and topics covered.

The book is arranged in two main sections, prefaced by "Aims and Perspectives", rounded off with a conclusion on "Stylistics and Literary Appreciation", plus a short annotated list of "Further reading" (there's no news here incidentally).

In "Aims and Perspectives", Widdowson discusses the relationships eventually diagrammatised thus:



pointing out the centrality of stylistics - which may be used in different ways for different goals. He also draws a useful - if terminologically awkward - distinction between literature as text, and literature as discourse, which is expanded in the following two chapters.

In "Literature as Text", (Chapter 2), he discusses how linguists use literature as text. In other words, how they examine a piece of literary writing in as much as it exemplifies the language system. He contrasts a Hallidayan approach with the transformational-generative one, showing how the former assumes that the text can be accounted for

in terms of the standard language description, and how the latter approach is largely interested in those artifacts that cannot be easily described thus. The problems in the text thus provoke interesting linguistic problems per se.

In "Literature as Discourse" (Chapter 3), he regards the literary work as a piece of communication, whose "meaning" is not to be found in the elements of the code alone, but in the relationship between these and the text in contexts of use. He argues that discourse (in his sense) is interpreted by correlating code and context with a special recognition of 'superimposed' patterns of linguistic organisation.

Part One is rounded off with a chapter called "The Nature of Literary Communication", which expands ideas in Chapter 2. Crucial here is the notion that literary works use patterning to create acts of communication which are self-contained units, independent of social context, and expressive of a reality other than that sanctioned by convention. He uses as a specific example, a comparison of addresser/addressee relationships and pronoun usage in "normal" communication, and in literary communication, the idea being that in the former the sender and addresser are identical and the addressee and the receiver are identical, whereas in the latter, this relationship is more complex. It is diagrammatised thus:

			III	
"normal"	I Sender Addresser		II Receiver Addressee	
literary	Sender	I/II Addresser	II/III Addressee	Receiver

This is surely a thesis topic in its own right - and in a more theoretical work there are many problematic issues and examples to be raised. However, in a book of this kind, he is doubtless wise to take a common-sense approach, and to leave out the caveats and quibbles that would cloud the nice simplicity of the notions expressed here.

Part Two begins with a chapter "Literature as Subject and Discipline", which focuses on pedagogic principles which underlie the teaching of literature and stylistics. Widdowson attacks the Leavisite view, and argues for teaching interpretive procedures, general understanding of communication - treating the study of literature as the study of communicative potential in the language concerned, together with the manner in which it is realised in literature and conventional discourse.

Chapter 6 "Exercises in Literary Understanding' focuses on the selection and arrangement of linguistic forms, showing how pupils/students can be guided from evidence to interpretation. He argues that the learner can come to understand how literary language works as well as how non-literary language works.

The concluding chapter "Stylistic Analysis and Literary Appreciation" points out quite sensibly, that stylistics is not the end product of literary appreciation, but a clear and relevant and verifiable way towards that end. Again, he gives some quick examples, and - as in the previous chapter - I wish he had taken more time over this. I suspect that the brevity in these two chapters was on account of restrictive stipulations from the publishers, and, whilst I certainly wouldn't wish the earlier parts of the book to be any shorter or less explicit, it seems to me a pity that, when the book has practical ends in view, it should skimp on practical details.

To return to the question of readership. There are several overt reasons to suggest that the book is intended to convert the non-believers - to show that stylistics is a useful activity in various types of teaching/learning environments. Thus, it presumable presupposes a relatively naive linguistic reader. On the other hand, the practical examples, analysis and advice are not sufficiently clear and explicit for a naive reader. I have difficulty in imagining anyone, without considerable experience in doing stylistic analysis in a rigorous and thorough linguistic way, having the confidence to use this book as an aid to teaching preparation. There is a similar problem in some of the exegesis passages. In discussing Halliday's work on Leda and the Swan, for example, Widdowson writes about nominal groups, heads, modifiers, qualifiers, etc., without any explanation of how these fit into a descriptive system. Now, whilst these are not difficult concepts by any means, and a little patient reading would probably sort out what his argument is about, I feel that the naive reader would hesitate at this - very early - obstacle. It's a chicken and egg problem as usual, but I feel that the book is really valuable to the competent stylistician, and bemusing for others, whilst the force of the persuasive argument is directed at the uninitiated.

I have been wondering who I would recommend the book to. Certainly to students who I knew were capable practical analysts, but who needed a broader outlook on what they were doing and why. Certainly to similarly competent students who were embarking on teaching careers and needed ideas, confidence, a well-argued rationale to convince them that stylistics was teachable and well worth teaching. I would recommend it also to any research student - there are many truly perceptive, insightful and thought-provoking ideas in this book.

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Alison Gopnik: "No, there, more and allgone: Why the First Words Aren't About Things".

and other articles on child language.