The Temporality of Mediacy: The Time of Narrators in Short, First-Person Fiction.

John Marlon Allison Jr
Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

Follow this and additional works at: https://repository.lsu.edu/gradschool_disstheses

Recommended Citation

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at LSU Scholarly Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in LSU Historical Dissertations and Theses by an authorized administrator of LSU Scholarly Repository. For more information, please contact gradetd@lsu.edu.
INFORMATION TO USERS

The most advanced technology has been used to photograph and reproduce this manuscript from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book. These are also available as one exposure on a standard 35mm slide or as a 17" x 23" black and white photographic print for an additional charge.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.
The temporality of mediacy: The time of narrators in short, first-person fiction

Allison, John Marlon, Jr., Ph.D.
The Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical Col., 1988

Copyright ©1989 by Allison, John Marlon, Jr. All rights reserved.
THE TEMPORALITY OF MEDIACY:
THE TIME OF NARRATORS IN SHORT, FIRST-PERSON FICTION

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of Speech Communication,
Theatre, and Communication Disorders

by

John Marlon Allison, Jr.
A.A., Lake City Community College, 1977
B.A., University of South Florida, 1980
M.A., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1985
December 1988
Acknowledgments

No study of this size is the work of one individual. I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. Mary Frances HopKins. Her wisdom and determination are matched in equal measure with generosity and graciousness. Her commitment to this project enabled its completion. I owe an equal debt of gratitude to Dr. Barbara Becker, who introduced me to phenomenology and its application to performance studies, and to Dr. Greg Schufreider, whose courses helped me understand the intricacies of phenomenological thought. I also wish to thank the remaining members of my committee, Dr. Harold Mixon, Dr. Andrew King, Dr. Nathan Stucky, and Dr. Bainard Cowan.

I have had the good fortune to complete this project in a supportive environment, surrounded by friends who gave their encouragement during those times when I had to work alone and gave their time and energy during the hectic days and nights leading up to the completion of the final document. Dr. Beverly Whitaker Long, Nancy Keeshan, Robin and Steve Pulver, Tara and Steve Sandercock, Nan Stephenson Kuzenski, Mr. and Mrs. Ralph W. Stephenson, Jr., and Karen Mitchell have contributed in numerous individual ways to the development and/or completion of this project.

This study is dedicated to teachers. In addition to those mentioned above, I wish to thank Virginia Johnson and Mary McLeod, who started me on this path many years ago; my parents, Marlon and Carol Allison, my first teachers; and Terri Allison who, through her enthusiasm for life and her love and respect for her fellow human beings, continues to teach me the most important lessons.
# Table of Contents

Acknowledgments  ii  
Abstract  v  
Introduction  vii  

1. Time and Narrative: An Overview  1  
   Clarifying Statement  1  
   Statement of Purpose  6  
   Contributory Studies  7  
   Methodology  17  
   Organization of the Study  18  
   Significance of the Study  20  

2. Temporality  23  
   Differentiating Realities With Regard to Time  28  
   The Temporality of Passive Experience  33  
      Retention (Primary Memory) and Recollection (Secondary Memory)  34  
      Protention (Primary Expectation) and Deliberation (Secondary Expectation)  41  
   The Expansive Temporal Field  44  
   Summary  54  
   The Temporality of Basic Actions  56  
   Summary  80  


### Contents

3. The Narrative Structure of Human Temporality: A Case for Mediacy  
   * Temporal Configuration as Narrative Configuration 88  
   * Complex and Extended Actions 95  
   * Mediation in Human Experience and Action 102  
   * The Experience of "Mere Sequence" 117  
   * Summary 122  

4. Toward a Theory of the Temporality of Mediacy in Short, First-Person Narrative Fiction  
   * The Temporalization of Narrative 129  
   * The Narrative Act 144  
   * Guiding Principles 147  
   * Implications for "Literary" Narrative 149  
   * "My Sister's Marriage": A Struggle Between Opposing Narratizations 152  
   * "Between the Lines": The Illusion of Monotemporality 160  

5. The Monotemporal Narratives of Raymond Carver  
   * "Fat": A Narrator in Search of a Narratization 182  
   * "Feathers": Longing for a Former Narratization 190  
   * "So Much Water So Close to Home": Two Versions, Two Narratizations 200  
   * Summary 209  

   Conclusion 211  
   Bibliography 222  
   Vita 230
This study outlines a new theory of time in first-person narrative fiction based on the concept "mediacy." By applying a phenomenological understanding of time to narrators of first-person fiction, the study draws a distinction between narration and narratization. Narration refers to the narrative act, the act of telling. This study contends that although a literary narrative may serve as record of past events, it is primarily a notation of the narrative act. The narrative act is a unified experience that exhibits a structure of beginning, middle, and end, which is notated in a literary text. A narratization, in contrast, refers to the extended temporal field in which the narrator orients himself/herself. Unlike narration, which is recorded in a literary text, narratization usually is only implied by the narration. During a narrative act, which is a basic action, the narrator orients himself/herself on the basis of some envisioned future that s/he hopes to achieve, partly through the act of telling. On the basis of that envisioned future, the narrator determines the actions s/he needs to take to achieve that future. The narrative act, then, is constructed in part on the basis of the futural dimension of the expansive temporal field, which is configured by the narrator in the act of telling. This study differs from traditional analyses of time in narrative in that it recognizes a futural orientation on the part of the
narrator, or mediator, who is engaged in a narrative act, in addition to his/her orientations toward the past and the present. This study recognizes that the narrative act, of which literary narrative is a record, is a dialectic between past and future. The implications of this theory of time in narrative are explored in analyses of short stories by Cynthia Rich, Lee Smith, and Raymond Carver.
Introduction

Performance is one of the best ways of insuring full response . . . to literature, since it demands of the reader a considerably richer participation in the literary text than that ordinarily demanded by silent reading. Performance demands that literature really be experienced not simply in some paraphrasable sense, "understood." ¹

During my second semester of college, I was introduced to this unique approach to the study of literature. Since that time I have been both a student and a teacher of literature in performance. After twelve years, I maintain the conviction that this experiential approach to the study of literature is rewarding. Even so, the study of literature through performance is a little understood method outside of the group in which it is practiced.

Twenty years after Bacon and Breen wrote the preceding rationale for studying literature through performance, Beverly Whitaker [Long] defined performance as

a temporal and spatial actualization of an experience that a literary text notates. A performer's activity is inextricably bound in time as well as space; his actualization (realization, behavior, or more simply, doing) is a demonstrated fusion of voice, body, psyche—all he can bring to the performance; the experience is whatever action the print symbolizes; and the notations, often inexact, are those directions a text provides for that experience. ²


The subject matter to which we apply this definition in practice is composed primarily of nondramatic texts, such as poems, short stories, novels, letters, diaries, and essays. Scholars in our discipline enjoy an ongoing dialogue with various other disciplines, including literary criticism, philosophy, theatre, rhetoric, folklore, and anthropology. This continuing exchange with sister disciplines enriches and strengthens scholarship in performance studies as well as the other disciplines.

My own training in the performance of literature is influenced by scholars in literary criticism. When I entered the field the dominant literary criticism was formalist approaches to the analysis and performance of literary texts. Dramatism, as devised by Kenneth Burke3 and adapted to a form of literary analysis for nondramatic texts by Don Geiger,4 was my earliest and deepest influence. It is a commitment that I maintain, both in my teaching and in my thinking. Consequently, all forays that I make into other disciplines are colored by this earliest influence.

Within the discipline of performance studies, one of my primary interests is first-person narrative fiction. My orientation with regard to these texts is, at base, a dramatistic approach. Performers recognize that literary narrative consists of a cluster of complex relationships between the narrator, the narratee, the context in which


the communication between these two takes place, the content of the
narrative, and the narrator's purpose for speaking. Performers of
narrative are charged with revealing these relationships through
analysis and demonstrating them in performance. Analysis and
performance, however, are not mutually exclusive activities, each
enhances the other. After I studied the phenomenology of human
temporality, my focus eventually, and quite naturally, returned to
first-person narrative fiction.

While teaching the performance of narrative fiction to a class of
novice performers, I was struck by the degree to which scholars in
performance studies had accepted the prevailing notions of literary
theory regarding the issues of time and point of view. Prevailing
theories of time in narrative have focused on the time of the events
and the ways in which event time is manipulated in the narrator's
discourse about those events. Although, in practice, scholars in
performance studies advocate an experiential approach to the
performance of literature, we have not yet fully integrated the
empiricist notion of time in narrative fiction with the experiential
approach to human temporality as advocated by phenomenologists, an
approach more in harmony with the actual practice of performance.
My studies in phenomenology piqued my interest in exploring the
temporality of first-person narrators.

Joanna Maclay described the model of time in narrative that has
had, perhaps, the most widespread use in performance studies. Based

---

5 See, for example, "The Aesthetics of Time in Narrative Fiction," Speech Teacher, 18 (September 1969), 194-96; and "The Interpreter and Modern Fiction: Problems of Point of View and Structural
Maclay's discussions of time in narrative explore how the duration of the events compare with duration in the recounting of those events. Drawing a clear distinction between the time of the telling and the time of the events, Maclay and subsequent theorists in performance studies discuss three fundamental ways that time is manipulated in narrative: scene, in which event time is equivalent to telling time; summary, in which event time is greater than telling time; and description, in which telling time is greater than event time. Structuralist critics recently have added two further distinctions: ellipses, in which the telling time ceases though the event time continues, and pause, in which the event time ceases though the telling time continues. Each of these distinctions is based on temporal duration as measured by the clock.

Although these distinctions are useful in that they help performers characterize different narrative strategies, they often are confusing in that their occurrence is mixed in narrative fiction. For instance, in characterizing narration according to these categories, how does one go about deciding the size of the narrative unit on which to base these decisions? Taken as a whole, narrative is almost always a summary of events because it takes less time to tell about


events than for the events to take place in clock time. Taken piecemeal, narrative is almost always a fully integrated mixture, with shifts often occurring in the midst of a sentence as the narrator moves from description to scene, or from scene to summary. While these categories usually have some generalizations associated with them, for instance, events related in scene generally are more important than those relegated to summary, such distinctions only provide abstract direction for the performer of literature. An even more basic problem, however, is that this system requires the reader/performer to posit the duration of the series of events on which the narrative act is based. Consequently, the reconstruction of the time of the events on which the narrative act is based becomes a primary task in a temporal analysis of narrative fiction.

Because literary theorists and performance theorists have adopted the clock model, discussions of time in narrative run contrary to most studies of point of view in narrative fiction. Discussions of time seek to get beyond the narrative act itself, which the literary text notates, in order to focus on the events upon which the narrative act is based. This method has the effect of attaching a great deal more significance to the events than to the narrative act. The method implies that the narrative act is something to be worked through in order to get to the more fundamental time of the events. While it is true that in many fictional narratives the narrator hopes to focus the reader's attention on the events and away from himself or herself as storyteller, some narrators draw attention to themselves and away from the events related. Put another way, the events related
illuminate the personality of the narrator, whose narrative act is the focus of the narrative.

In her article, "The Solo Performance of Prose Fiction," Lilla Heston notes that "whenever a character-narrator presents other characters in such a way that we are strongly struck by the narrator's filtering, biased, or subjective presence," it is the narrator who interests us more than the story s/he tells. My exposure to this type of narrative in a variety of contexts along with my studies in the phenomenology of time led me to question the accepted view of time in narrative that was operating in the discipline. Although, from an objective point of view, one cannot deny the notion of duality of time in narrative, performances of certain examples of this particular type of first-person narrative led me to believe that a different perspective on time might be more useful in explaining the experience of temporality operational in the performance of these narratives.

Adequate methodologies do not exist for describing time in narratives that feature character-narrators who, in telling a story, focus more attention on themselves than on the events they relate. Neither the distinction between story and discourse, popularized by structuralist critics, nor the distinction between the scene of the telling and the scene of the events, devised by dramatistic critics, can account for the temporal experiences of narrators in this particular type of first-person narrative. A phenomenological understanding of human temporality, on the other hand, seems to offer a starting point

for filling a gap between existing techniques for the analysis of time in narrative and the temporality of the narrator in performances of the same narratives. To that end, this study explores the following question: In what ways can a phenomenological approach to time in narrative fiction, especially first-person narrative fiction, offer a fuller explanation than does traditional analysis for the experience of time in performances of those narratives?

In examining this question, this study assumes a view of texts that is consonant with what Catherine Belsey refers to as "expressive realism," i.e., the implicit or explicit belief that "literature reflects the reality of experience as it is perceived by one . . . individual, who expresses it in a discourse which enables other individuals to recognize it as true." 9 In the past five years the discipline of performance studies has embraced a broader view of performance. In 1987, Beverly Whitaker Long reexamined the definition of performance cited at the beginning of this introduction in light of recent changes in practice within the discipline. 10 Of the four distinct types of performance that she describes, performance as enactment, which is similar in many ways to Belsey's concept of expressive realism, is the only type of performance examined in this study.

The analyses that appear in chapters four and five are based on my interpretation of stories by Cynthia Rich, Lee Smith, and Raymond


Carver. The value of the conclusions does not rely on the reader's agreement with my interpretation of the stories. Readers need not agree with each point in my analyses in order to grant legitimacy to the notion of temporality advanced in this study or to recognize the value of the concept when applied to literary narrative.
Chapter 1

Time and Narrative: An Overview

Clarifying Statement

This study operates under the assumption that the essential defining element of narrative is what Franz Stanzel has identified as "mediacy."¹ Any recounting of events to another person is mediated by the speaker, conveyed through a mediator. Recent studies have even suggested that as human beings we mediate our own reality, i.e., our understanding of events is founded in telling ourselves about our own experiences.² Whether or not we accept this latter statement at face value, we can agree that mediation is inescapable in our dealings in the world. The student who explains that she is late for class because she had a flat tire on the interstate is mediating that reality for the instructor. The committee chairperson who offers a report on the progress of fundraising efforts mediates the committee's activities for the board of trustees. The news that finds its way into our homes each night is mediated by the individual reporter who files the story. Each of these "stories" bears the stamp of a mediator. The good samaritan who stopped to help the student change her flat tire,

¹Franz Stanzel, A Theory of Narrative, trans. Charlotte Goedsche, (London: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1984). Although this term is borrowed from Franz Stanzel, my use of the term in this study is not limited to his definition of the term or to the use of the term in his study. Mediacy, as used in this study, is primarily a temporal distinction.

²See, for example, Barbara Hardy, "Towards a Poetics of Fiction: An Approach through Narrative," Novel, 2 (1968), in which she outlines the idea of the narrative structure of human consciousness. These ideas are elaborated in David Carr, Time, Narrative, and History (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1986).
the harried committee member who is frustrated with the inefficiency of the fundraising committee, and the liberal reporter who covered the same news story all have different points of view on the same events. A significant element of that point of view, that mediation, is the narrator's own temporality.

Discussions of time in narrative, for the most part, have focused on the time of the events and the ways in which event time is manipulated in the narrator's discourse about those events. While these studies continue to be of value to narrative theorists, the understanding of time on which these studies are based is not the only worthwhile perspective on time. Another equally valuable perspective on time is directly related to mediacy. As a mediator, a narrator certainly controls time. As a member of the human community, however, s/he is also subject to time. The latter perspective, the narrator as subject to his/her own temporality, has been neglected in studies of time in narrative.

When I speak of human beings as subject to time, I am not referring exclusively to objective or clock time, although we often are controlled by chronometers. While we tend to organize the day around the clock, it is only at those moments when we call our attention to objective time that it becomes the controlling device of our temporality. The temporality of which I speak accounts for those periods when clock time recedes, becoming a secondary rather than a primary temporal measure. The following discussion clarifies the distinction between objective time and experiential time, based on a phenomenological understanding of temporality.
Objective time is a social construction that, although it does not ignore the significance of past and future, places primary emphasis on the now. Time is segmented by the clock into discrete units. As a consequence, our history and our projections are understood as they relate to the moment that is indicated by the face of the clock. Recent technology has fortified the priority of the now. Digital electronics have erased all traces of the past and future from the faces of clocks. The circular clock face with numbers for each hour and minute offered a spatial representation of past and future—a sense of time past and time yet to come. The pale gray face of the digital watch with only the current time and date underscores the importance of the present in clock time. The phenomenological perspective on time also is concerned with past and future, but not as they are defined by the present. Instead, a phenomenological perspective on time defines the present in terms of the past and the future. The "now," in this view, can never be understood in isolation. It can only be experienced as a stretch between past and future. The present might be described more accurately as an "on the way from" and/or an "on the way to." The "meaning" that the present holds for any individual must always include consideration of past and future.

With regard to literary narrative, this understanding of temporality places the narrator in a unique position. The telling of a story implies some audience and the presence of the audience implies a purpose for telling. The narrator's temporality always involves his/her present as it stretches into the future. His/her temporality is implicated in the purpose for telling the story. However, the
narrator's past is not necessarily implicated in the pastness of the events s/he recounts. For example, a narrator, who recounts events of which s/he was not a part has a past that is distinct from those of the events. As a result, unless the narrator calls attention to his/her own past during the telling of the story, the narrator's temporality, to the extent that it appears, is primarily a futural orientation. On the other hand, a narrator who tells a story in which s/he is either a major or minor character is oriented toward both past and future and takes his/her definition from the events s/he recounts and from the audience and purpose for telling.

The implications of this understanding of the temporality of the mediating consciousness are of particular importance for performers of literature, who embody the narrator (or mediator) in the performance of literary narratives. An understanding of the narrator's temporality will complement those studies that have explored in detail the temporality of the events of narrative and provide a more holistic understanding of the operation of time in narrative fiction.

Although the phenomenological perspective on time has implications for all forms of narrative fiction, this study will be limited to an exploration of its effects in short stories written in the first-person. The effects of the narrator's temporality on the telling of a story are most evident in the first-person and will lay the groundwork for the more difficult task of describing the effects of the narrator's temporality in third-person narrative fiction.

I have chosen the first-person short stories of Raymond Carver for use in this study. The choice of a single author is important
because it forces me to come to terms with any bit of information that does not fit conveniently into a preconceived framework for analysis. The freedom to jump from author to author, narrator to narrator, and story to story in the midst of analysis to respond to a particular point might compromise the value of the findings. Although Carver's stories are central to this study, I use of first-person narratives by Cynthia Rich and Lee Smith initially, to illustrate that the form of temporality that I identify in relation to first-person narratives are not unique to Carver's stories. I chose to place the analyses of the narratives by Rich and Smith prior to the analyses of Carver's narratives because my work with these particular stories in performance led to the idea that eventually evolved into this study.

Carver is an appropriate choice for this study because he is a contemporary writer who provides some interesting variations on temporal themes. "Fat," for example, is an exercise in meta-narration --the highly-defined narrator mediates for an undefined audience her mediation of an experience for her closest friend. In addition, Carver makes use of more traditional forms of time in narrative.

The body of Carver's work is almost evenly divided between first- and third-person narration. Of the sixty-five stories that he published in his career, thirty-two are written in first-person. With the exception of his first collection, Will You Please Be Quiet Please?, in which only one-third of the stories are written in first person, his collections have been almost equally divided between first- and third-

person narration. Of the seven new stories published in his last collection, *Where I’m Calling From: Selected and New Stories*, six are written in first-person. Because Carver works extensively in first-person point of view, he has developed a range in that particular form that is unusual, particularly for a contemporary writer.

Another reason for selecting Carver is that the corpus of his writings is neither so vast nor so thoroughly explicated by critics that it presents an unmanageable volume of literary criticism. A final reason for selecting Carver is that many of his stories appear in two, often significantly different versions. This fortuitous circumstance allows for comparison between different versions of the same story.

**Statement of Purpose**

This study examines the implications of the phenomenological perspective on time for the analysis and performance of first-person narrative fiction. Of particular interest are those stories in which the narrator calls attention to himself or herself by his or her strong subjective presence. The discoveries made in the second and third chapters through an examination of the phenomenological perspective on human temporality are applied in the fourth chapter to short first-person narratives by Cynthia Rich and Lee Smith and in the fifth chapter to three first-person narratives by Raymond Carver. Unlike other studies of time in narrative, this study focuses on the temporality of the mediating consciousness and is, therefore, primarily concerned with the temporality of telling and the degree to which it
is defined and delimited by the narrator's projection of his/her own temporality through the act of telling.

Contributory Studies

Studies that contribute to this research are drawn primarily from phenomenologists who in their work touch on several disciplines, including literary theory, philosophy, history, and performance studies. Phenomenologists are philosophers of experience who, under the guidance of one of the most noted of their number, Martin Heidegger, have concluded that temporality is the fundamental category of human existence. All of our perceptions as human beings, in other words, including our understanding of being, space, art, and even language, are grounded in and built upon our experience of time. Significantly, phenomenologists distinguish between time structures, which are social constructions, and time as lived experience, which does not always adhere to and is not always limited by the socially constructed structures of time. Because phenomenology takes the human being and human knowledge as the central focus of its study, phenomenological studies that have dealt with narrative fiction or performance are derivative studies by people who were either philosophers with a secondary interest in literature or literary critics with a secondary interest in philosophy.

In the past ten years, however, there has been an awakening interest in narrative and narrative structure among groups other than literary critics. Scholars in history and communication studies, for
example, have taken a keen interest in narrative. The work of historians, in particular, has caught the attention of phenomenologists who, as a result, have begun to explore phenomenological approaches to narrative. Of particular note are recent studies by Paul Ricoeur and David Carr. Ricoeur’s study, *Time and Narrative*, explores the gamut from history to literary narrative. Carr’s more recent study, *Time, Narrative, and History*, makes use of literary narrative as a starting point for his description of historical narrative.

Ricoeur bases his discussion of time and literary narratives on a distinction made by A. A. Mendilow between "tales of time" and "tales about time." All narratives are tales of time, since they have some duration. Tales about time, on the other hand, take time as an integral part of the subject matter. Ricoeur shuns the broad category to focus on those narratives where temporality is a central issue in the narrative, analyzing Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway*, Thomas Mann’s *The Magic Mountain*, and Marcel Proust’s *The Remembrance of Things Past.* While his study is insightful and breaks new ground

---


with regard to time in narrative, it passes over the more traditional forms of literary narrative that comprise, by comparison, the infinitely larger group of narratives in which time is also a fundamental issue, though not a part of the subject matter. Because Ricoeur's study of time in literary narrative focuses so specifically on tales about time, its usefulness to the present study will be limited.

Grounded in the phenomenological understanding of time drawn from the writings of Husserl and Heidegger, Carr's study is aimed at elucidating historical narrative. Although Carr's aim differs from the aim of this study, two of his underlying and interrelated concepts are valuable for this research: the narrative structure of human consciousness and temporal closure. In a critique of Hayden White's and Louis O. Mink's theories of historical narrative, Carr argues that because they have based their theories on a linear model of time, they have misunderstood the relationship between narrative and the "real world." Carr extends this criticism to structuralist critics of literary narratives, including Roland Barthes and Seymour Chatman. According to Carr, although subtle distinctions exist in the works of all of these theorists, each maintains that narrative structure is an artificial construction applied to the otherwise chaotic sequence of events that comprise everyday life. Because the act of narrating is seen as the imposition of structure on an otherwise chaotic sequence of events, discussions of time in narrative almost always grant priority to the time of the events. Discussions of the temporality of the act of

---

*Carr, pp. 10-19.*
telling, as a result, usually have been predicated on an understanding of the temporality of the events that are recounted in the narrator's discourse. Carr, in contrast, maintains that human consciousness is inherently narrative in form. Before proceeding with discussions of the narrative structure of human consciousness and temporal closure, however, it is necessary to make a distinction between narration and narrating on the one hand and narratization and narratizing on the other.

In this study I make limited use of the distinction, popularized by the structuralists, between story and discourse, partly because these terms are widely understood. However, this distinction tends to confuse the temporal issues discussed in this study. Therefore, to keep the narrator in focus, narration and narrating will be used to refer to both story and discourse--the story as a whole. The opening paragraph of this chapter identifies mediacy as the essential defining characteristic of narrative. Nothing in prose fiction is unmediated. Much has been made about the distinction between showing and telling, so much, in fact, that discussions of showing often tend to suggest that the narrator disappears at those moments when a text is dominated by showing. Even in stories like Ernest Hemingway's "Hills Like White Elephants," where the narrator's presence is limited to two brief passages of description and dialogue tags, readers rely on the narrator to focus their attention. While the narrator in a story certainly may recede, s/he does not disappear. The narrator, after all, maintains control over the story by choosing which portions to show, which portions to tell, and which portions to leave out.
altogether. The distinction maintained in this study is that narration and narrating refer to both story and discourse. Narratizing and narratization, terms apparently coined by Julian Jaynes, will be used to refer to the narrator's mediation of his/her own temporality.⁹

In what may be construed as an early statement of what Hardy and Carr recently have identified as the narrative structure of human consciousness, Jaynes notes that

[i]n consciousness, we are always seeing our vicarial selves as the main figures in the stories of our lives. . . . New situations are selectively perceived as part of this ongoing story, perceptions that do not fit into it being unnoticed or at least unremembered. More important, situations are chosen which are congruent to this ongoing story, until the picture I have of myself in my life story determines how I am to act and choose in novel situations as they arise. The assigning of causes to our behavior or saying why we did a particular thing is all a part of narratization. Such causes as reasons may be true or false, neutral or ideal. Consciousness is ever ready to explain anything we happen to find ourselves doing.¹⁰

While Jaynes' concept of narratization certainly deals with time, note the extent to which the future and the past are defined in terms of the present. The decision to act occurs not as the narrator actively anticipates the future but as the future overtakes the actant in the present. Consequently, the narratizor, as Jaynes describes him/her, does not have the option to project alternate narrative futures because the future is defined in terms of the present. Alterations of the life narrative are the prerogative of the narratizor only as s/he rationalizes the past.


¹⁰Jaynes, pp. 63-64.
Though Carr makes no reference to Jaynes, were he to critique Jaynes, Carr might argue that although the basic premise is sound, Jaynes, like the structuralists, misconstrues the concept of human temporality. Rather than defining the present in terms of the past and the future, Jaynes defines past and future in terms of the present. Another quarrel that Carr would have with narratization as Jaynes defines it is the suggestion that the narrative is a single, ongoing story.\textsuperscript{11} To be compatible with Carr's theory of the narrative structure of human consciousness, Jaynes' term would have to be broadened to recognize that the temporality of human beings is characterized by temporal closure.\textsuperscript{12} The inclusion of temporal closure as a part of narratization expands the original idea by recognizing that human beings do not narratize a single "life" story. Instead, they narratize any number of "stories."

Standing in the present a human being projects a future based on past events and given circumstances. This temporal span is not limitless. Rather it is characterized by some beginning, middle, and end. For Carr, this encapsulation of time is temporal closure. Moving toward some envisioned end, the actant mediates his/her own actions

\textsuperscript{11}Jaynes, p. 64. Readers should be aware that the concept of narratization is mentioned only briefly in Jaynes' book. Because he never fully explores the implications of this concept, it is impossible to know whether he intended the term to apply to a single narrative or a series of narratives that follow one another sequentially. However, since he refers to narratization as an "ongoing story," I feel it is important to point out what I see as an important distinction between Jaynes' idea and Carr's more fully developed theory.

\textsuperscript{12}This concept is similar to Martin Heidegger's temporal horizon, which is perhaps a more apt term since it suggests the way that time surrounds human beings rather than identifying the end as the most significant aspect of temporality.
in the world, selecting out those elements of experience that are significant and synthesizing them into a "narrative" that moves him/her toward that end. For instance, at the end of her freshman year, an undergraduate student envisions "being admitted into graduate school with a teaching assistantship at Louisiana State University" as her goal. Realizing that a carefully selected curriculum, a certain grade point average, and a specified score on the GRE will improve her chances of achieving her goal, at the beginning of the next semester she selects courses that will prepare her for her intended major, works to maintain a solid grade point average, and arranges to take the GRE at the end of her sophomore year.

For some unforeseeable reason, a point may come when the narrative no longer coheres. At that point the actant may be forced to revise some aspect of the narratization and, by extension, the actions in which s/he is engaged. During the spring semester of her sophomore year, perhaps the father of the undergraduate in the example above dies. Since she can afford the expense of college only through a scholarship she won through her participation in the High School Rally and with the financial assistance of her father, the student realizes that in order to attend graduate school she will have to earn one of the few fellowships offered by the graduate school. Upon investigation the student discovers that she will need to improve her grade point average and make at least 400 points higher than she anticipated on the GRE. Consequently, to achieve her new goal she devotes more of her time to studying and postpones taking the GRE until the middle of her senior year, when she feels she will have had
more experience and the time to take a course to prepare herself for the examination. As the student projects toward her new goal, it affects more than decisions about studying and test scores. The new goal affects her view of herself as a student and, therefore, affects many smaller and more personal situations that she faces as a student. It causes her, in short, to project a different image of herself in the story she is narrating.

Significantly, although an alteration in actions and in the narratization occurs in the present, the motivation to change, though recognized in the present, is based on a newly envisioned end or outcome to her own actions. Some previously unforeseen event that affects the future or new or remembered information about the past usually precipitates the revision in the unfolding narrative. In the immediately preceding example, the motivation to change the narratization and actions came about because of a change in the student's goal, which was precipitated by her father's death. Although her father's death brought about the newly envisioned goal, the new goal, not the event of his death, caused the change in her actions. This new goal, whose realization lies in the future, is responsible for the change in her actions, rather than her father's death, which occurred in the present. For instance, if the student felt it necessary to retake the one course in which she made a "C" in order to achieve her new goal, that particular action would be an event from the past that took on new significance with regard to the newly envisioned end.
In this study, I concentrate on only fictional narrators, particularly the narration and the narratization of the narrator in the fictive world. For example, if the undergraduate in the foregoing example were a fictional narrator, I would be interested in a particular story that she told about her experiences and the way that the story is influenced by the goals that she is working to achieve. I would have no interest in the author that created this narrator. I am not concerned with the author's narratization in this study. Although Carr and Hardy argue that human consciousness, in general, is characterized by a narrative structure, this study distinguishes between the author's narratization and the narrator's narratization. Therefore, in discussing narratization with regard to any of Carver's stories, I do not explore Carver's narratization of his own temporality. Instead, I explore the temporality and the narratizations of the narrators he creates.

In first-person narratives where the narrator is also an actant in the story, the narratizing may or may not operate at two levels of temporality. In some instances first-person narrators who mediate their own temporality are using the narration as a part of a new narratization. Although the narrator is implicated as an actant in the story s/he tells, the narrative s/he tells is a previous narratization that has achieved closure and can be temporally separated from the current narratization of his/her own temporality. Ellen Gilchrist's "Revenge" falls into this category. Rhoda, the narrator, recounts events surrounding a broad jump pit built by her brothers during the

---

summer when she was ten years old. The events she describes achieved temporal closure when Rhoda exacted revenge by executing a perfect pole vault in full sight of her brothers, despite the fact that they had managed to keep her away from the pit for the entire summer. At the time of their occurrence, the events of this story had a profound influence on the narrator's view of her "self." And, although they retain their importance in the character's memory, they are no longer a central issue in the narrator's temporality and her ongoing definition of self.

In other instances, first-person narrators are engaged in almost pure narratization. The narration may be the beginning portion of a larger narratization in which the narrator is actively striving to work out his/her own temporality, i.e., no temporal closure has been achieved. In these instances, the narrator is entangled in the process of narratizing his/her own temporality. The story that s/he tells has not reached temporal closure and, therefore, cannot be understood as temporally separated from his/her attempts to define self in relation to past and future. Carver's "Feathers," for example, falls into this category.\(^1\)

Methodology

To facilitate this study, I summarize the phenomenological perspective with regard to time in relatively passive human experiences, in basic human actions, and in complex or extended experiences or actions, isolating underlying assumptions and key concepts. Although a number of phenomenologists, including Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger, have discussed time in human experience and action, only David Carr explores the degree to which the phenomenological perspective recognizes that human temporality approximates narrative structure. His theories with regard to narrative, however, focus almost exclusively on the narrative structure of human consciousness and the manner in which narratives are constructed in everyday human action as well as everyday human discourse. Carr's unique perspective on human temporality discloses narrative possibilities that cannot be accounted for by more traditional approaches to narrative theory. In the opening section of the fourth chapter of this study, I apply the concepts derived from my exploration of Carr's theory to first-person narrative fiction. Then, to test the validity of my conclusions with regard to first-person narrative fiction, I analyze two short narratives in which the narrator's relationship to the events s/he recounts approximates one of two unique narrative possibilities suggested by Carr. The fifth chapter contains an analysis of three first-person narratives by Raymond Carver that test the other narrative possibility suggested by Carr. The final chapter summarizes the findings of the study and suggests avenues for future research.
Organization of the Study

Temporality

Under the guidance of Carr's *Time, Narrative, and History*, this section of the study demonstrates the difference between the temporality of relatively passive experiences based on Edmund Husserl's *The Phenomenology of Internal Time Consciousness*, and the temporality of basic human actions based on Martin Heidegger's *Being and Time*. The comparison between the theories of the two phenomenologists demonstrates that Husserl's analysis is correct in arguing that human beings perceive time as having a certain thickness or stretch that cannot be accounted for by the empiricist notion that divides time into discrete, measurable units. However, Husserl's analysis does not take into account that most human experience is active rather than passive and, therefore, according to Heidegger, is directed toward the future rather than centered in the present.

The Narrative Structure of Human Temporality: A Case for Mediacy

Building on the comparisons drawn in the last section, this chapter initially focuses on the role of the mediating consciousness in complex and extended human experiences and actions. In addition, this chapter demonstrates that the temporal structure of human consciousness is, at base, a narrative structure. Carr's unique perspective on the temporality of human experience and action allows him to posit the existence of narrative structures that are unavailable
to narrative theorists who advocate more objective models of time in narrative.

**Toward a Theory of the Temporality of Mediacy in Short, First-Person Narrative Fiction**

The first half of this chapter outlines a theory of time in short, first-person narrative fiction based on the temporal stretch of the narrating consciousness. Traditional forms of narrative theory and criticism contend that the narrator stands at a point in time after the events that s/he narrates. This theory, in contrast, argues that even in the midst of an extended temporal experience or action the end is already available to an individual through deliberation and anticipation. Because the agent can anticipate the end of an extended series of actions, s/he can engage in a narrative act that is predicated on the basis of the anticipated end. The second half of the chapter demonstrates the viability of this particular possibility through the analysis of short stories by Cynthia Rich and Lee Smith. In both cases, the first person narrator engages in a narrative act, though neither has achieved the end of the extended temporal action in which they are engaged.

**The Monotemporal Narratives of Raymond Carver**

Through the analysis of three short, first-person narratives by Raymond Carver, this chapter demonstrates Carr's second possibility for exploring time in first-person narrative. Carver's first-person narrators often find themselves in moments of transition in which they
are no longer able to make sense of their past relationships and are unable to envision an end to the present state in which they find themselves. Stranded in the present, between a past they cannot understand and a future they cannot envision, Carver's narrators provide a chronicle of recent events in an attempt to make sense of their lives and to regain control of their actions. Carver's narrators demonstrate those situations wherein human beings lose the temporal expansiveness and narrative structure characteristic of human consciousness.

Conclusion

The final chapter summarizes the findings of the study and examines some of the implications of those findings for the theory and criticism of first-person narrative fiction. In addition, this section suggests questions that merit further study based on the phenomenology of human temporality and various forms of narrative fiction.

Significance of the Study

The discoveries made in this study should have value for performers of literature and other literary critics. Discussions of time in literary narrative theory are grounded, for the most part, in discussions of the ways in which the time of the events is manipulated in the narrator's discourse about those events. As a result, we have looked most often to the time of the events and the protagonist who
inhabits that time as the site of any significant change in action, character, or thought.\textsuperscript{15}

This study broadens our understanding of the concept of time by expanding it to include two important considerations. First, the findings of this study demonstrate the importance of the narrator's sense of his/her own temporality on the telling of the story. Second, the findings of this study demonstrate, conversely, the degree to which the act of telling affects the narrator's sense of his/her own temporality. As an extension of this second consideration, the first-person narrator, in some cases, can be recognized as the protagonist in whom the most significant changes take place through the act of telling rather than through the events s/he has already experienced.

Exploring the interrelationship between the narrator's sense of his/her own temporality and its effects on first-person narrative has important implications for the performance of literature as well. Performers have long been aware that the narrator's point of view influences the manner in which a story is told. They also are aware that the narrator has some purpose in telling the story--some vision (or version) of the way it will affect himself/herself and/or the narratee. They are less aware, however, of how the narrator's past, in conjunction with the present of the telling and the future s/he envisions, affects point of view. If this study can clarify how narrators define the present in terms of their past and future, it will

provide readers, critics, and performers with the means to particularize narrators and narrative contexts through identification of the traces of their temporality that are embedded in the act of narrating. Furthermore, because critics and performers will have a more holistic understanding of the operation of time in first-person narrative fiction, the products of their labors, both analyses and performances, should enrich the transactions of their audiences with literary texts, both as audience members and as readers.
Chapter 2

Temporality

Explorations of time in current narrative theory, as the previous chapter indicates, are based on the model of the ticking clock. Two underlying assumptions inform any theory that uses this model as a guide for theory construction. First, time is a linear phenomenon. Second, the clock segments time into discrete, measurable units. Chief among the many implications that issue from these assumptions is the conviction that the present is only a momentary intersection between the past and the future.

Narrative theories based on these assumptions assume a dichotomy between the events and the discourse about those events. Consequently, determining the order and duration of events is a matter of primary importance. Having determined the order and duration of events, proponents of these theories explore the continual changing relationships between time in discourse and time in events. In particular, they are interested in how the narrator, in recounting events from the past, creates a meaningful structure for a sequence of events.

This chapter surveys an alternate perspective on time and narrative. Employing the phenomenological concept of experiential time as his guiding framework, David Carr contends that narrative structure is a temporal structure inherent in the way human beings perceive phenomena and exist in the world. Adopting a philosophical perspective that is diametrically opposed to the majority of
contemporary narrative theories, Carr constructs a theory that supports Barbara Hardy’s assertion that, "narrative . . . is not to be regarded as an aesthetic invention to control, manipulate, and order but as a primary act of mind transferred to art from life. The novel merely heightens, isolates and analyzes the narrative motions of human consciousness."¹ This theme is extended in Alasdair MacIntyre’s *After Virtue*, where he notes that

```
Narrative is not the work of poets, dramatists, and novelists reflecting upon events which had no narrative order before one was imposed by the singer or the writer, narrative form is neither disguise nor decoration. . . . [W]e all live narratives in our lives and . . . we understand our lives in terms of narratives. . . . Stories are lived before they are told—except in fiction.²
```

Carr’s phenomenological theory supports the work of Hardy and MacIntyre by demonstrating that human beings experience time in terms of events, which are organized and structured from a vantage point in the midst of experience and action rather than after the event has come to an end.

Phenomenologists, it should be noted, recognize clock time as a temporal structure operational in the everyday affairs of human beings. They do not deny the linearity of clock time nor do they deny that time can be divided by the clock into discrete moments. Clock time is not, however, an inherent characteristic of human consciousness.

While it is conceivable to human consciousness, clock time can not be


experienced by human consciousness because it is discoverable only by moving outside, or transcending, the realm of primary experience to the realm of reflection. Undoubtedly in reflecting on an experience one can trace the sequential steps and explore the significance of individual moments. In primary experience, however, a temporal event, which is perceived as having a beginning, a middle, and an end, is potentially available to the individual perceiver even as s/he is in the midst of the experience.

Carr's study equates the temporal structure of human experience with narrative structure. His definition of narrative, as a result, takes on a character different from definitions based on theories grounded in clock time. Instead of understanding narrative structure as something that is imposed on events from a point in time after the events have occurred, Carr understands narrative structure as characteristic of the way human beings experience and exist in the world. Because Carr recognizes a futural dimension in narrative structure that theories based on clock time do not, his theory can serve as a foundation for identifying and explaining forms of literary narrative that are problematic from other perspectives.

This chapter summarizes the first half of Carr's Time, Narrative and History. The first chapter of Carr's book outlines a phenomenological approach to human temporality based on the phenomenologies of Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger. Chapters two and three explore Carr's own extensions to the work of these two philosophers. The second half of Carr's book, which deals with history, does not pertain directly to the present study. Carr's
theories about time and narrative challenge the foundations of
traditional narrative theory. As a result, his conclusions, if valid,
have important implications for the analysis and performance of
narrative fiction.

Carr's analysis subverts what is considered the "natural" order.
Rather than explaining narrative as the imposition of form on an
otherwise chaotic sequence of events, Carr demonstrates that humans
experience everyday events through a special form of temporality.
According to Carr, phenomenology has demonstrated that temporality is
characterized by a certain thickness or stretch. Human experience has
a temporal dimension whereby the individual couples the "now" with
what has immediately gone before as well as with what s/he
anticipates will immediately follow. This temporal dimension of
experience is not something appended to the experience after the fact,
it is part and parcel of the experience as it is occurring. Experience,
then, includes not only the present (in the sense that the clock
divides time into past, present, and future) but what I shall refer to,
for the time being, as the expansive present.

The expansive present is grounded in the present, but is not
limited to the present moment. It includes the temporal connection
between the present, the just-past, and what the perceiver anticipates
will immediately follow. For example, I recognize the second ring of
the telephone as a part of an expansive present that began with the
first ring of the telephone and will end when I pick up the receiver.

Carr's analysis redefines the concepts of time and narrative. His
redefinition is especially significant for literary theorists and
performers of literature because the expanded views of time and
narrative can account for existing literary narratives that were less
well accommodated by traditional analytical methodologies. Admittedly,
many, if not most, narrators tell of events that have achieved
temporal closure. That is, the narrator begins the narration after the
end of the events in clock time and narrates retrospectively. In
recent years, however, first-person narratives whose narrators are in
the midst of the events they are describing have become more
common. Carr’s theory yields a method that can account for the
narrative form in which the narrator tells his/her story from a
vantage point in the midst of the events.

This chapter examines the phenomenological foundation upon
which Carr developed his theory of narrativity. The first section
contrasts empiricist notions of time with the phenomenological notion
of human temporality. The remaining sections examine the temporality
of two different types of human experience. The second section,
based on the ideas of Edmund Husserl, describes the temporality of
relatively passive human experiences, i.e., experiences in which a
perceiver exercises no control over the object of his or her
experience. The final section, based on Martin Heidegger’s critique of
and extensions to Husserl’s ideas, describes the temporality of basic
actions. Since the vast majority of human experience is active rather
than passive, the last section examines a necessary shift in temporal
focus precipitated by action.
Differentiating Realities With Regard to Time

Phenomenologists claim that human beings have a pre-conceptual or pre-theoretical understanding of time. Human beings, in other words, have a pre-reflective or experiential understanding of temporality that is more fundamental to their existence as human beings than is their conscious understanding of time as a theoretical construct. To say that this understanding of temporal existence is more fundamental does not mean that it is temporally prior to their conscious understanding of clock time. Human beings, for example, may live out their lives without coming to a conscious knowledge of their existence as temporal beings. Nevertheless, they will have existed as temporal beings. To say that this understanding is more fundamental, however, does mean that it is more primordial. That is, temporality is of the essence of human being and, as such, it is inescapable and operational in the everyday and authentic affairs of every human being. Because temporality is operational in ordinary experience even when human beings are not consciously aware of its operation, phenomenologists also refer to it as "pre-thematic."  

The distinction between time as an objective measure and time as a structure of the unity of human experience is indispensable for this study. When the average person speaks of time, s/he most often refers to objective measurement rather than to the temporal unity of experience. Dictionaries reflect this perspective, giving preeminence to definitions that feature the division of time into measurable portions. Unfortunately, the English language does not provide an

---

3Carr, p. 18.
Alternate term to distinguish between the objective measurement of time and the temporality of human experience. Nevertheless, the English language is replete with phrases that express the temporality of human experience. For example, "time flies when you're having fun" and "where does the time go," occupy one end of the spectrum and "time stands still" and "will this class never end" occupy the opposite end.

For phenomenologists time has a very particular meaning, a meaning that is expressed more clearly in these phrases about time, which carry with them the recognition of the individual and the temporal unity of his/her experience. The phenomenological concept of time focuses on the individual. Time is an elemental force that is often beyond the control of human beings, a power to which human beings are individually subject. The only way to understand the individual experience of time, or temporality as I shall often refer to it, is through its operation in human affairs, that is, to examine the individual's sense of his/her own temporality.

The individual nature of temporality, however, has been the primary stumbling block for critics of phenomenology. What good, critics ask, is an understanding of a phenomenon that is unique to each person? The objection is reasonable. If temporality can be understood only in terms of particular individuals, the concept is too broad and general to be useful. However, understanding the temporality of any individual, which is indeed unique, differs from understanding the temporality of human experience in general. Admittedly, the temporality of each individual must be examined
singly through a process of description from the internal perspective of the perceiver. However, Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger have postulated basic categories of human temporality through a process that Husserl sometimes referred to as a phenomenology of phenomenology, or what I shall refer to as metaphenomenology.⁴

According to Robert Sokolowski, metaphenomenology goes beyond descriptive phenomenology in that it "shows how descriptive phenomenology is possible." Metaphenomenology allows the phenomenologist to reflect on "the temporal profiles through which inner objects are constituted and made available for reflection" in the first place.⁵ In other words, through metaphenomenology the phenomenologist reflects on the flow of internal time-consciousness, as opposed to primary experience, so that s/he can describe the structures of consciousness that make the process of descriptive phenomenology possible. Metaphenomenology provides an understanding of the structures and flow of internal time-consciousness in everyday human experience. This understanding, in turn, provides the foundation for the description of time-consciousness in everyday human experience. Whereas description of experience is the province of descriptive or first-level phenomenology, metaphenomenology provides a framework for explaining how and why such description is possible.


The most fundamental distinctions between the human experience of time and time as objective measure emerge from the perspectives that gave rise to each. Clock time emerges from a scientific perspective that considers the external world of objects and events as reality. Time as a lived experience emerges from a philosophical perspective that takes human reality as its focus. According to the former view,

"reality" is utterly indifferent to human concerns. Things simply happen, one after the other, randomly or according to their own laws. Any significance, meaning, or value ascribed to events is projected onto them by [human] concerns, prejudices, and interests, and in no way attaches to the events themselves.⁶

The latter view recognizes the continuity of being and world. As such, being and world are inseparable from a phenomenological point of view. The two concepts cannot be spoken of in terms of a relationship because that term assumes that the two can be separated. Consequently, phenomenologists argue against the priority of physical reality over human reality. Because phenomenologists insist on the role of the perceiver, critics of phenomenology often equate phenomenology with subjectivity.

As formulated by Husserl and Heidegger, however, phenomenology examines neither objective fact nor subjective impression. Heidegger, in particular, carefully demonstrates through his analysis of human action that human experience must be understood in terms of its "being-in-the-world." Put simply, in pre-reflective experience human beings are actively engaged with the physical world. In such activity

⁶Carr, p. 19.
the physical world serves as a "back-drop or sphere of operations for human activity." In pre-reflective activity meaning exists neither in the physical world nor in human consciousness. Instead, both are altered through mutual interaction.

If Heidegger had taken human consciousness as the beginning and end of his analysis, his philosophy would be subjective. To avoid this pitfall, Heidegger's analysis of being is one which recognizes that "being" is grounded in and interacting with the world. His focus on the middle, the between, allows Heidegger to avoid the excesses of both extreme objectivity and extreme subjectivity. According to Heideggerian phenomenology, objectivity and subjectivity are both "transcendencies" that distance human beings from the truth of their being. In other words, each of these perspectives eliminates what Heidegger considers one of the two crucial elements in the phenomenological equation. Subjectivity diminishes the importance of world whereas objectivity overlooks the importance of human being.

Heidegger's analysis of time is similar to that of Husserl's, though Husserl tends to be more subjective than Heidegger. Heidegger bases his notion of time on the human being existing in and constrained by the world. Because phenomenological analysis of being and time is grounded in the world, it does not pretend to analyze time "in itself." In other words, phenomenologists are not interested in time apart from the human experience of time. Instead, they take human reality and the human experience of time as their focus, never losing sight of the actuality that humans do not experience time apart

7Carr, p. 20.
from the world. Because human time-consciousness is grounded in and can be understood only as a transaction within the world, the phenomenological approach to time-consciousness can account for temporal relationships like the unity of experience in the midst of experience, for example, that analyses based on the clock-time model cannot.

A summary of the first half of David Carr's *Time, Narrative, and History* provides helpful background for investigating the implications of the phenomenological perspective on time for narrative theory. Carr's book brings together the phenomenologies of Husserl, Heidegger, and his own investigations with regard to time in a cumulative fashion. This method of accumulation allows him to differentiate the temporality of passive human experience, the temporality of human action, and the temporality of extended and complex human action. The first two issues are the subject of the rest of the present chapter; the third issue is the subject of the chapter that follows.

The Temporality of Passive Experience

Before exploring Husserl's contribution to the phenomenology of internal time-consciousness, the precise meaning of passive experience in this context requires clarification. Carr chose the term passive experience primarily to distinguish Husserl's work from that of his successors, particularly the work of Heidegger. In this context, passive experience refers to those forms of activity, such as perception, in which the perceiver does not effect the outcome of the experience through personal action. For instance, listening to a
melody is an example of what Carr designates as a passive experience. Playing the same melody on a saxophone, on the other hand, is an example of an active experience. Although Carr recognizes the active character of perception, he bases his distinction on whether or not the perceiver effects the outcome of the experience.8

Retention (Primary Memory) and Recollection (Secondary Memory)

Husserl's most profound contribution to the phenomenology of time-consciousness is his recognition that time has a certain thickness or stretch that cannot be accounted for by the empiricist notion that divides time into discrete units. Pursuant to this belief, Husserl identified a special form of memory that accounts for what was previously identified in the present study as the expansive present. The expansive present includes what is commonly referred to as the "now" in clock time as well as the "just-past which attaches itself immediately to the present."9 Husserl uses the terms retention and primary memory interchangeably to identify this phenomenon. Human beings possess this special form of memory without being consciously aware of its existence. Yet, because we enjoy this form of memory, we are able to recognize a succession of notes as a melody or a string of uttered words as a sentence. Without primary memory, there would be no way for an individual to cojoin the note(s) he hears now with the one(s) that sounded immediately prior to it. It would be plausible for the perceiver to call to mind notes heard the week

8Carr, p. 30.
9Carr, p. 21.
before, the month before, or even years ago and thereby confuse them with the notes immediately preceding.

Secondary memory and recollection are terms Husserl uses interchangeably to refer to what is commonly known as memory. With secondary memory the perceiver calls to mind an object or event that is no longer present. For instance, I recall Glenn Miller's rendition of "String of Pearls" even though at this moment I am sitting before my computer terminal. In contrast, if that tune were playing on the radio as I typed, the melody would still be present for me in retention even though some of the notes had already passed in clock time. Without the difference between primary and secondary memory, relationships between sequential perceptions would be impossible to grasp.

The only way to account for this perception of relationships between sequential perceptions is to argue that their proximity explains the relationship. However, unless some clearly distinguishable characteristic inherent in the immediately preceding note could be identified that distinguished it from the one that was sounded in the distant past, the argument would not persuade. Any critic who wished to argue on the basis of perception would be aligning himself with the phenomenological perspective.

Although phenomenologists recognize that time can be investigated apart from human consciousness, they cannot agree with the idea that the essential connection between points in time can be accounted for by the notion of proximity. An example taken from common human experience can illustrate the inadequacy of proximity to explain our perceptions.
When I return to a short-story I have been reading after stopping to conduct some personal business over the telephone, in clock-time my personal business is most proximate as I begin to read again. Although my discussion with the manager of South Central Bell about a mistake on my phone bill has just occurred, when I pick up the book and begin reading again, what has transpired most recently in the story is temporally closer than the phone conversation, which has receded in consciousness.

In the preceding example, the intervening incident, which in objective time was most proximate, was not retained as the focus of my consciousness shifted back to my original task. Although the intervening event had a temporal horizon of its own, the second horizon lost its potency once it reached closure when I hung up the phone. Because the second temporal horizon, the phone conversation, reached closure, it became a part of my secondary memory. The original temporal horizon never reached closure. Therefore, it was retained in primary memory.

Before proceeding with this line of thought, however, the notion of retention requires clarification. In The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness Husserl suggests that retention can most clearly be represented through a comparison between the experience of space and the experience of time.\(^\text{10}\) As Carr points out, "present and past function together in the perception of time somewhat as do foreground and background or focus and horizon in spatial perception."\(^\text{11}\)


\(^\text{11}\)Carr, p. 21.
Whenever human beings see something, they do not see the thing as standing alone. Rather, they see the object as foreground (or focus) standing out from a background (or horizon) that extends behind it and away from it. Although the subject focuses on the object, s/he registers the background or horizon as well. Although the horizon is not the focus of his/her gaze, it exerts an influence over the perception and interpretation of the focus of the perceiver's gaze.

Consider, for example, a standard two-slice toaster. In calling that image to mind through memory, we also call to mind a background congruous with that image, a kitchen. The significance that the toaster has for the perceiver is influenced by this background. Any perceiver who encountered a toaster in the kitchen would attach no particular significance to this discovery. Suppose, however, that the perceiver encountered the toaster in the middle of the living room floor. The significance of the perception as a whole alters drastically. The perceiver's immediate reaction would be that the toaster is out of place. Toasters are obviously kitchen items. Notice, however, the significance of the perception. If the perceiver focused exclusively on the foreground of the perception s/he could not conclude, "the toaster is out of place." The evaluation was possible only because the background was taken in simultaneously. This example demonstrates the essential correlation between foreground and background (focus and horizon) in spatial perception. According to Husserl, horizon-consciousness belongs to every perception. Admittedly, the example is a bit out of the ordinary. Nevertheless, it makes a significant point. Human beings are, for the most part,
unaware of the significance of horizon-consciousness in everyday experience because most of our perceptions confirm our expectations. When we are confronted with the unusual, however, our immediate recognition of the incongruous demonstrates that horizon-consciousness is operational in all perceptions. The opposite is also true. Our immediate recognition of the congruous demonstrates that horizon-consciousness is operational in all perceptions. If human beings did not take in horizon as well as focus in perception, we would be unable to account for congruity.

Husserl contends that a temporal field exists that corresponds to the visual field. In the temporal field, the present serves as the foreground and the "just-past" serves as the background or horizon against which the present stands out.12 As in spatial perception, the foreground and background in temporal perception constitute one another as belonging or not belonging to the temporal experience. In listening to a melody, to return to Husserl's example, although the present note of the melody stands out from the notes that have preceded it by virtue of the fact that it was most recently sounded, it stands out as belonging to and continuing the melody. If, on the other hand, the note stood out like a toaster in a living room, the discordance of the note could be registered only as a result of temporal horizon-consciousness. In other words, the perceiver could not perceive the note as out of character if s/he did not take in the temporal horizon (the melody as a whole in retention) simultaneously.

12Husserl, p. 52; Carr, p. 22.
The temporal background, that part of the temporal field (expansive present) that is not in focus, does not extend backward indefinitely. Like spatial perceptions, temporal perceptions have a limit or horizon. Events that lie outside that horizon have little or no effect on the present. With regard to a melody, the silence that precedes the sounding of the first note serves as the temporal horizon.

In the experience of a temporal object, foreground and background mutually constitute one another as belonging to the expansive present. According to Husserl, to experience a melody is to have consciousness of the present note as well as to have simultaneous retentional consciousness of the notes that preceded it. This statement, however, comes perilously close to a description that illustrates clock time rather than experiential time. In attending to a melody, consciousness is not directed toward the notes but toward the melody as a whole. Undoubtedly the notes of a melody sound one after another in sequence from its beginning to its conclusion. However, when human beings perceive a melody, we do not perceive individual notes. We perceive the melody. As long as the note that sounds maintains the melodic line, we do not pay attention to the note as a note but as a continuation of the melodic line. If, on the other hand, the note disrupts the melodic line, our attention is focused on the note as a note. When this occurs, the final note brings about closure for one temporal field. It may also signal the beginning of another.

Husserl contrasts recollection (secondary memory) with retention (primary memory) by indicating that to recall is to bring to
consciousness something that is not happening, but that did happen. Stated another way, recollection is the process of calling to mind something that is not present either in the "now" (clock time) or within the horizon constituted through the just past. When I hear the opening bars of the "Star Spangled Banner" at an LSU basketball game, for example, primary memory allows me to constitute the melody as the "Star Spangled Banner." At the same time, I can call to mind my experience of that melody as it was sung a cappella by Diana Ross as part of the opening festivities of the tenth annual Super Bowl. What I am calling to mind, in this instance, is not the fact that Diana Ross sang the "Star Spangled Banner"; rather, I am calling to mind my experience of her singing. My recollection of Diana Ross's rendition is secondary memory because it lies outside my present temporal horizon, which includes in retention that part of the "Star Spangled Banner" that has already been sung.

Husserl's parallel with regard to space would be to render present through memory something that is not present in my visual field. For instance, I remember the mimosa tree that grew in the backyard of the house I lived in until I was six years old in Jacksonville, Florida. Notice that the recollection includes not only the focus of my recollection, the mimosa tree, but the spatial horizon as well, the background which locates the focus in the midst of a visual field. Recollection, like the expansive present, partakes of horizon-consciousness. Any individual who calls to mind an actual object from his/her past that is not present within his/her visual field, calls to mind the focus (foreground) of the memory as well as
the background (horizon) from which the object stands out. Objects and events from the past, which by definition lie outside the expansive present, have a spatial or temporal thickness of their own that is called to mind in the act of recollection.

The thing recalled is not present in my visual field but existed somewhere else in space and time. Similarly, the recollected temporal event is not connected with my present temporal horizon but is called to mind as having existed somewhere else in time. The recollection, like the expansive present, has both a foreground (focus) and a background (horizon). When a particular object or event is called to mind, its contemporaneous background is also called to mind. In other words, the past, too, is expansive. Objects and events that I call to mind from the past maintain their identity based on their contemporaneous visual or temporal field, although they may also garner significance from the present temporal or visual field.

Protention (Primary Expectation) and Deliberation (Secondary Expectation)13

The distinction between primary and secondary memory is one significant dimension of Husserl's analysis of time consciousness. Another important dimension is his recognition that the temporal horizon extends not only backward from the present but also forward from the present. His distinctions between primary and secondary memory are paralleled by distinctions between primary and secondary

The concept of deliberation, or secondary expectation, though introduced here, will not be developed fully until the third chapter when complex and extended actions are considered.
expectation. Protention, or primary expectation, corresponds to retention in that it forms the other boundary or horizon for the present temporal field. As with retention, protention constitutes the present as anticipation of the immediate future. In contrast, secondary expectation merely calls to mind some possible future event.

Carr notes, "It is one thing to 'call to mind' some future event (plan it, dread it, look forward to it, just think about it) and quite another to anticipate the immediate future as the horizon of the present."\textsuperscript{14} For example, there is a great difference between my considering the possibility of attaining a position at a major university at some undefined point in the future and my anticipating a proper ending for this example. Granted, the two can be related to one another through a complicated series of causal statements. It is clear, however, that the former has only a limited effect on the present project, whereas the latter is much more crucial to the completion of the present project.

Even though Husserl recognized a corresponding futural orientation, he failed to explore the implications of protention as thoroughly as he explored the implications of retention. This omission on Husserl's part probably resulted from the type of experience he chose to explore. Husserl studied perception rather than human action. Although all human actions involve perception, Husserl studied only those perceptions in which the perceiver had no effect on the outcome of the perception. The perceiver, in other words, was relatively passive. Because the perceiver's actions had no direct effect

\textsuperscript{14}Carr, p. 22.
on the outcome of the perception, the protentional element was not as
central to Husserl's explorations as the retentional element. In the
sphere of human endeavor, few experiences fall into the category of
passive experience to which Husserl devoted the majority of his
attentions. For this reason, critics fault his work. As Heidegger,
Carr, and others have pointed out, the sphere of human concerns is
primarily active, instrumental, and practical rather than passive.
Furthermore, no experience is truly passive because all are ultimately
determined by human activity.\textsuperscript{15}

Despite these limitations, Husserl provided phenomenologists with
the tools necessary to demonstrate that although time can be thought
of as a sequence of discrete units, human beings do not experience
time in this manner. Paradoxically, at the metatheoretical level human
beings find the "scientific" explanation of time clear, while the
phenomenological explanation remains foreign. Yet, in everyday
experience and conversations about that experience, human beings
recognize that the experience of temporal duration varies. Clock time,
for instance, cannot explain why on Monday in your speech class time
seemed to fly and on Wednesday the same class seemed as if it would
never end. Obviously, according to the clock, the class had the same
duration, fifty minutes. Yet, on Monday it seemed to last fifteen
minutes and Wednesday's class seemed to last for three hours.
Phenomenology has the explanatory power to account for this
difference because it takes human perception into consideration.

\textsuperscript{15}Carr, p. 30.
The Expansive Temporal Field

From the experiential perspective, the present moment is surrounded by "time" apart from which the present has no significance. Therefore, it is necessary to characterize time using an image that suggests some breadth and depth. Consequently, Husserl chose to characterize the temporal as a "field of occurrence."\(^{16}\) Although the perceiver's focus is the present (in the sense of clock time), his/her consciousness encompasses the retentional and protentional horizons of the field as well. In fact, it is because the focus of the perceiver's consciousness takes in these horizons that the object takes on any significance whatsoever.

Further explanation of the analogy of spatial perception can clarify this last claim. Human beings do not take their orientation in space from the identification of various individual things that occupy that space. Rather, space is organized in regions. It is the relationships among the things that occupy a space that define it as a region. These relationships—their connected-separateness—help define the region. For example, if I walk into my totally darkened living room and do not know where I am, I grope until I find something that I can identify. When I find something, the rocking chair for instance, although I might assume that I take my orientation from the rocking chair, that deduction would be incorrect. I cannot "take my bearings" from any single object. It is only because I know where the rocking chair is in relation to the sofa, the other chairs, the end tables, the bookcases, the stereo, the television, and the various plants scattered

---

\(^{16}\)Husserl, p. 52.
around the room that I can get my bearings and navigate the room. If I did not understand these relationships, when I found the rocking chair I would remain (both literally and figuratively) in darkness and would be forced to grope my way from object to object. However, because I understand the relationships between the various objects, when I touch the rocking chair, it is as if the room has been illuminated. I have not only illuminated the things that constitute the space, I have also "taken in" the spatial boundaries of the room and take my orientation from the limitations imposed by those spatial boundaries.\(^\text{17}\)

Although the example functions on the premise of darkness, the process of orienting oneself in lived space occurs much the same way. Heidegger claims that we always take our spatial orientation in this manner. If I walked into the same fully lighted room and focused on the rocking chair, my gaze would take in not only the rocking chair but the rocking chair as the focus of my attention as well as the other objects in the room and the walls as the background. This spatial orientation, it should be noted, has nothing to do with the objective measurement of space.

The fact that I am standing two and one half feet from the rocking chair has nothing to do with the way that I orient myself in that space. In fact, if I took measurement into account only with regard to the rocking chair and without reference to the other objects that occupy that space, I would be unable to locate or orient myself

in that region of space. What I have done in this example is eliminate the background or spatial field. If I took measurement into account with regard not only to the rocking chair but to every other object as well, I would have transcended the lived experience to make use of a theoretical construct and would be, therefore, no longer orienting myself in lived space but in theoretical or geometric space. In this last instance, I have eliminated my perceptions from the example and am working with theoretical constructs. As Carr points out,

The supposedly punctual, distinct, and in themselves "meaningless" units of sensation, far from being elements of experience, are in fact the products of a highly abstract analysis which forms part of a causal explanation (not a description) of our experience.¹⁸

As it relates to this discussion of space, Carr's argument is that human beings do not experience theoretical or geometric space in their everyday interactions in the world. Critics of phenomenology argue that this type of example is subjective. They would describe the example as emanating from a vantage point within the perceiving subject because I used myself as the vantage point for describing a particular experience of space. In subscribing to such a view, however, they would overlook one half of the phenomenological equation, the world. The example does not emanate solely from within. Although the method may be labelled subjective because the perceiving subject is the vantage point from which the experience is described, the method is not purely subjective. As the subject, in other words, I do not choose among competing possibilities to

¹⁸Carr, p. 24.
determine a method of orienting self in space. Although I certainly articulate the example, the experience emanates from the various relationships between myself and the objects in the region of space. The process of orienting self in space is not a matter of individual choice, it is a method corroborated by the experience of all human beings.

A similar process of orientation happens with regard to time. I do not take my orientation in time based on the clock. I am situated in the world that can be measured by the clock, but measurement in the objective sense of the word cannot be equated with experience. As human beings experience space from the vantage point of the here, time is experienced from the vantage point of the now. But, as the spatial example above indicates, the "here" is not a limitation. The "here" is not available in experience as a discrete point. It is a part of the multiplicity of space. Similarly, the "now" is not a limitation or separation from the multiplicity of time.19 In other words, both are experientially expansive. In objective space and time, each is an isolated point. In human experience, here and now do not stand alone. Instead, they are our points of access to expansive space and the expansive present. Neither can be separated from the spatial and temporal fields.

In Husserl's analysis of the melody as a temporal object, the present note of the melody serves as the focus or foreground of perception and the "just-past serves as the background against which the present note stands out."20 In perceiving the present note, the

19Carr, p. 25.

20Carr, p. 22.
perceiver "takes in" the previous notes as background as well. Reasoning by analogy, Husserl explains, "this now-apprehension [the present] is, as it were, the nucleus of a comet's tail of retentions referring to the earlier now-points of the motion."\footnote{Husserl, p. 52.} In a description of an event (i.e., any perception that takes up time), then, the basic unit of experience is not, as the classical empiricists have claimed, the sensation. Rather, it is the foreground-background scheme. Consequently, although one can conceive of and talk about a sequence of sensations, one does not experience temporal events as pure sequence. To put this statement in terms that correspond to Husserl's musical analogy, although I can conceive of and talk about a series or sequence of notes, I experience a melody as a melody and not as a sequence of notes. Furthermore, I conceive of the melody as a melody and not as a sequence of notes even while I am in the midst of experience. I do not, in other words, have to wait until the last note has sounded before I recognize that the series of notes is a melody. As Carr points out,

\begin{quote}
The idea of an "event" is already that of something that \textit{takes} time, has temporal thickness, beginning and end; and events are experienced as the phases and elements of other, larger-scale events and processes. These make up the temporal configurations, like melodies and other extended occurrences and happenings, that are the stuff of our daily experience. Even though as temporal they unfold bit by bit, we experience them as configurations thanks to our protentional and retentional "gaze" which spans future and past.\footnote{Carr, p. 24.}
\end{quote}
Neither space nor time, as the previous discussion indicates, are experienced objectively. Rather, they are configured by human beings as they experience the world. Significantly, this process is not simply an internal process of consciousness alone nor is it an external process that occurs apart from consciousness. We experience space only by experiencing objects in space. Likewise, we experience time only as events, things that take or take up time.\(^\text{23}\) This statement does not mean that other methods of understanding space and time do not exist. On the contrary, we can measure and quantify both of these phenomena as an aid to understanding them. However, the quantification of these phenomena can only occur outside of the realm of primary experience.

Ironically, the quantification of time can occur only after the fact. The duration of an event, for example, can be determined only after the event has taken place. Therefore, as a standard of measurement, the clock can measure only backward from the end. The configuration of time from a scientific point of view, in other words, can structure and organize only from a vantage point beyond the end of the event. It is understandable, then, that historians like Mink and White, and proponents of the structuralist school of literary theory would be bound to the notion that narrative is a "fictional" structure retroactively imposed on an otherwise chaotic sequence of events. They perceive the structure as fictional because it has no basis in objective reality, which they see as chaotic and unorganized. Because they maintain this point of view, they take theoretical constructs

\(^{23}\)Carr, p. 25.
rather than human experience as their point of departure. Theoretical constructs are indispensable from their point of view because without them everything is simply chaos. As a result, they can conclude only that the organizer construes meaning after the fact. The shift to the abstract analytical mode requires that all the "facts" be in hand in order to proceed. Hence, the abstract analytic framework can be applied only after the experience has come to an end.

An inadequacy in the abstract analytic framework, however, needs to be identified. Although Carr argues that theoretical explanations of temporal configuration are misguided, he fails to articulate explicitly why they are misguided. Theorists that depend on objective reality as their field of practice argue that configuration and, hence, meaning are retroactive processes. Yet, they argue that experience is merely a chaotic sequence of events. If, indeed, experience is chaotic, then they cannot argue retroactive configuration because it implies an "end." An "end" can only be recognized as an end, if one follows these theories to their logical conclusions, after the retroactive process of configuration takes place. Otherwise, that point which they refer to as the end is simply another independent point in a chaotic sequence of events. The most that they can establish is that at some random point a human being attends to what has happened and retroactively configures the sequence into meaningful experience.

Obviously, "scientific" theorists do not argue this position. Instead, they use the term "end" in the same way that phenomenologists do. Their use of that term is an implicit recognition that human beings engage in a configuration process in the midst of experience. Put
simply, they depend on an understanding of human experience compatible with the phenomenological understanding as the starting point for their theories. Yet, in their writings they do not acknowledge this understanding, perhaps because their theories allow no place for it.

Even those theorists who might be willing to accept this conclusion might argue, nevertheless, that the meaning discovered through the experiential approach is often wrong. "True" meaning, they might suggest, can be discovered only after "all the facts are in." While it is true that during the experience the exact nature of an event may be misconstrued, one need not wait until the completion of the event for the mistake to be discovered and the proper revision to take place. For example, while making coffee in the kitchen I hear what I perceive to be the opening bars of the theme song for the ABC morning news program, "Good Morning America." After listening for a few more seconds I realize that I am mistaken. Instead, I am hearing the theme song for the "Oprah Winfrey Show." I am able to make this revision in spite of the fact that I have not heard all of the notes of the melody. In fact, I am not listening to individual notes, I am listening to a melody. This point is significant because it emphasizes the fact that I am beyond the present in anticipating what is to follow. I can make the initial determination and the subsequent revision precisely because I do not have to wait until all of the notes are sounded before making the final recognition. In each case (even though the first guess turned out to be incorrect), I have made a determination because after listening to the opening phrase of the
melody, I anticipated through protention the rest of the melody that would follow. In the first case my anticipations turned out to be false. In the second case, the melody I anticipated corresponded to the melody that sounded.

Temporal configuration in the midst of experience, as this last example illustrates, characterizes the everyday experience of events. Carr notes,

The idea of an "event" is already that of something that takes time, has temporal thickness, beginning and end; and events are experienced as the phases and elements of other, larger-scale events and processes. These make up the temporal configurations, like melodies and other extended occurrences and happenings, that are the stuff of our daily experience. Even though as temporal they unfold bit by bit, we experience them as configurations thanks to our protentional and retentional "gaze" which spans past and future.24

In the last example, my retentional gaze allowed me not only to recognize the temporal event as a melody, but also to conjecture about the exact identity of the melody. In venturing a guess, I protended the remainder of the melody. When a note sounded that mitigated against my protention, I ventured another guess based on my retention of all of the melody sounded thus far, particularly the note that disproved my former protention. In this instance, my expectations were fulfilled.

Almost all of the examples of retention and protention cited to this point tend to reinforce the view that retentions and protentions are relatively short-term phenomena. Although their duration often is limited, it would be a mistake to assume that retentions and

protentions have a specified duration. In making that assumption, one would be leaning back toward an understanding of time based on objective measurement. "What distinguishes retention from recollection, and protention from 'secondary expectation,'" according to Carr, "is not the length of their term but their functioning as horizons for ongoing, present experience." The term of a temporal field may be short. When, for example, you give directions in passing to a lost student, your focus shifts from the project at hand to the student and her dilemma. Afterward, your focus shifts back to your own project. The few moments of that conversation establish a temporal field with its own horizons that are constituted at that time through retention and protention. The term of a temporal field may be extensive. Attendance at a play, reading a novel, and lecturing in a seminar are all examples of experiences that involve extended temporal fields in which retentions and protentions are much more complex yet equally important and operational.

Significantly, the horizons of a temporal field, though intuitively recognized by the perceiver, are not a matter of choice. In other words, the perceiver does not decide randomly on the horizons of a particular temporal field. As pointed out earlier in this chapter, human beings may live out their lives without coming to a conscious knowledge of their existence as temporal beings. Nevertheless, they will have existed as temporal beings. Since this process occurs at a pre-reflective level, there can be no question of deciding about the expanse of a temporal field. Nor can there be any question about

subjective manipulation. Temporal horizons are not the sole province of the perceiver in isolation from the world. Instead, temporal horizons are recognized by the perceiver in his/her transactions in the world. The situation that the perceiver finds himself/herself in is equally as much responsible as any perceptual choice for whatever horizons are articulated, whether spatial or temporal. Horizon-consciousness is a transactive or interactive process between being and world.

Summary

Husserl maintains that although clock time is a useful theoretical construct, it is antithetical to the human experience of time. The clock divides time into discrete units and does not have the explanatory power necessary to demonstrate how human beings, in the midst of experience, recognize individual moments as belonging to one another as an event. Consequently, in studying the human experience of time, Husserl identified what I have called the expansive present. Beginning with the perception of a temporal object, like a melody, Husserl discovered a special form of memory that connects the “now” (or present in clock time) to the just-past. Husserl contrasted this special form of memory, retention, with recollection. Recollection, the term we usually associate with memory, refers to a temporal event that exists somewhere else in time. When, through recollection, an individual calls to mind something from somewhere else in time, s/he does not call to mind some temporal point. S/he calls to mind a
specific moment surrounded by a temporal field that has its own horizons that are different than the temporal horizons for the present.

Husserl also recognized a corresponding futural dimension of the expansive present. Protention, or primary expectation, connects the "now" with the perceiver's immediate anticipations of what the present will bring. Secondary expectation, in contrast, which calls to mind some possible future, has more limited potency with regard to the expansive present. Although Husserl did not explore this dimension of the expansive present in detail, his discovery enabled him to recognize that human beings experience the present as a "field of occurrence."

Standing in the present, an individual configures events, recognizing the present moment as part of a larger temporal event that partakes of the just-past and will come to conclusion in the anticipated future. The significance of Husserl's discovery is that it dispels the notion that time is a mere sequence of events that is organized and structured through a retrospective glance. In truth our existence is organized and structured even in the midst of experience. Husserl's discovery does not belie the fact that humans often look back and reevaluate experience through a retrospective glance. However, it does deny the priority of that position.

Before the more difficult task of analyzing the temporality of active human experience can be attempted, a few points of my application of Husserl's analysis require clarification. Early in this discussion I indicated that Husserl's philosophy was more subjective than Heidegger's philosophy. In his analysis, Husserl wanted to describe the contents of consciousness in the midst of experience.
The descriptions he offers and the examples I provide are not descriptions of pure consciousness. As I have indicated elsewhere, human beings are not consciously aware of their own temporality. In my engagement with the world I do not "experience" my own experience, I simply have the experience. Husserl's descriptions indicate a degree of reflection on experience that is not characteristic of human beings in their everyday dealings in the world. The descriptions exhibit, in short, a degree of reflection on experience that does not occur in the midst of experience. Two important implications arise as a result of this disclosure. In the first place, pure consciousness does not exist. Consciousness is always consciousness of something. Husserl's analysis is problematic in that it overlooks the central role that world plays in experience. For him, experience is all. Second, his analysis is not, as he seems to believe, an analysis and description of pure experience. Rather, it is an analysis and description of metaexperience. In other words, Husserl describes the structural features of experience or, how human beings experience what they experience.

The Temporality of Basic Actions

The previous section, based on Husserl's analysis of the temporality of passive experience, demonstrated three important factors. First, human experience assumes temporally expansive forms in which experience is constituted through the retential and protentional structures of human consciousness. Second, in the expansive present, the immediate past, the present, and the immediate
future are interdependent parts of a temporal field. Finally, time is structured and configured in the midst of experience rather than through a retrospective glance.

The notion of the expansive present is helpful in explaining the experience of narrating, but any theory of narrative is incomplete if it fails to account for the active nature of narrating. The narrator is active, not passive, and the degree to which the narrator experiences the temporal unity of his/her own experience is related to his/her active nature. The following discussion clarifies the difference between active and passive experience and provides a foundation for a theory of time in first-person narrative, which will be explored in the initial section of chapter four and demonstrated through the analysis of first-person narratives in the second half of chapter four and in chapter five. The theory proposed in chapter four depends on insights from Husserl, Heidegger, and Carr. An explanation of the differences among these three theorists will clarify further the notion of time under consideration.

In contrast to the previous section, this section explores the temporality of "purposeful, goal-directed" activity. The primary difference between the two sections is the type of phenomena under consideration. The first section examined the temporality of relatively passive experiences in which the perceiver exercised no control over the object that evoked his/her experience. This section of the present chapter and the chapter that follows will be devoted to an exploration of the temporality of active experiences. An analogy from Husserl's

---

26 Carr, p. 28.
analysis will clarify the reason for the division. Husserl distinguished between primary and secondary memory and expectation. Carr distinguishes between basic actions and extended or complex actions.\(^{27}\)
The type of action that serves as the focus of the rest of this chapter is the basic action. In the analysis of passive experience Husserl argued that the perceiver of a melody does not perceive a sequence of notes, s/he perceives the melody as a melody as a result of primary memory and expectation. In a basic action, as in primary memory and expectation, the agent does not concentrate on completing each of the phases of the basic action, s/he focuses on completing the basic action as a whole. Extended or complex actions, which will be addressed in the following chapter, are like secondary memory and expectation in that the agent consciously may contemplate past actions or weigh the relative advantages and disadvantages of a future course of action.

One way to understand the difference between a basic action and an extended action is to conceive of a basic action as the least common denominator of an extended action. An extended or complex action is composed of any number of basic actions. Building a bookcase, for example, which is an extended action, is the result of a number of basic actions, including sawing, planing, hammering, sanding, staining, etc. Unlike an extended action, however, a basic action cannot be divided further into sub-actions. On the basis of Heidegger's analysis, a basic action involves the manipulation of some

\(^{27}\)Carr borrows this distinction from Arthur Danto, *Analytical Philosophy of Action* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1973), pp. 9-17; cited in Carr, p. 33. Although this distinction is never made explicitly by Heidegger, it is implied in the type of example he uses in his analysis of "world."
thing in the environment. Hammering a nail, for example, is a basic action in the extended action of building a bookcase.25

From a theoretical perspective one can argue that each phase of a basic action is an action in its own right. Hammering a nail, from a theoretical perspective, is composed of a number of distinct actions rather than being a single, unified action.29 A description of the actions involved in hammering a nail might proceed as follows. Hammering a nail involves positioning a nail with the left hand, grasping a hammer with the right, drawing back the hammer with the right arm, bringing the blunt end of the hammer down on the head of the nail, and repeating these last two "actions" until the head of the nail is flush with the surface of the board. Carr argues that this type of description is incomplete because it does not express the essential interrelationship among the various phases in the action.

According to Carr, the description would be more accurate if I described, for instance, the proper way to hold the nail in relation to my body, the wood, and the hammer, the proper way to grip the hammer in order to achieve maximum effectiveness with each blow of the hammer, the type of movement to make with the backswing in order to garner the amount of force necessary to drive the nail into the wood, etc. Carr recognizes that "each of the phases must be described precisely as a phase of this action."30 The various phases

25This example is an extension of an example Heidegger uses in his discussion of "The Being of Entities Encountered in the Environment" in Being and Time, pp. 95ff.

29For the sake of clarification it should be noted that this argument is similar to the argument that in passive experience a melody is perceived as a sequence of notes.

30Carr, p. 33.
of the basic action, in other words, are interdependent. No
description of any phase of this action is complete without reference
to the phases that immediately precede and follow the phase under
scrutiny. Carr refers to the interdependence of the phases of a basic
action as conceptual inseparability. "We do not," he asserts, "think of
the elements of the action as separate actions performed in sequence,
nor could we easily perform one of the elements, even in a mimed
demonstration, without combining it with the other movements that
make up the action as a whole." 31

The phases of a basic action, Carr further stipulates, "cannot be
described independently in terms applicable to other contexts." 32
None of the specific phases of this basic action, in other words, can
be used to describe anything other than hammering a nail. One does
not, for example, engage in any of the phases of this particular basic
action in order to write a paper, or to dig a ditch, or to fish.
However, hammering a nail, the basic action as a whole, is an action
that is applicable in any number of extended actions without having
the function it does in the construction of a bookcase. I can hammer
a nail in order to hang a picture, or in order to create a weapon to
defend myself, or in order to create a hole to start a wood screw.

One conceivable argument against this position is that I have
chosen examples of extended actions that are completely out of
character with the basic action of hammering a nail. Obviously,
writing a paper, diggin a ditch, and fishing do not involve any of the

31Carr, p. 33.

32Carr, p. 33.
phases that are characteristic of the basic action of hammering a nail. What if, for example, the extended action were setting up camp and the basic action were driving a tent stake? The quibble is justifiable. However, even the basic action of driving a tent stake with a hammer is different from hammering a nail. Different elements at work in the environment make the process of driving the stake distinct at the level of a basic action. The anchoring strap of the tent to which the stake is attached adds a dimension to the basic action that is absent in simply hammering a nail. The direction at which the stake is driven into the ground so that it will not work its way out of the ground is another. The fact that the stake is being driven into the ground rather than into a piece of wood is yet a third consideration that makes the basic action dissimilar from the act of hammering a nail. Although the act of hammering a nail and driving a tent stake are similar at a conceptual level, they are different in execution.

Before embarking on an analysis and description of the temporality of a basic action, however, several differences between Husserl's analysis and Heidegger's analysis need to be explained. Additionally, although Heidegger and Carr arrive at similar conclusions, their methods of analysis do not correspond. These differences also require clarification. Once the degrees of correspondence and divergence among the three theorists have been elucidated, the description of the temporality of human action can proceed.

Although this example is not intended as an example to clarify Heidegger's concept "being-in-the-world," the example illustrates the degree to which "world" is inescapable even in a retrospective description of the phases of a basic action.
To begin, Heidegger's analysis differs from Husserl's analysis in two fundamental ways. First, Heidegger rejects the term consciousness because it suggests a mind-body split in which thought precedes action. Heidegger adopts the term "being" instead. He also recognizes that being cannot be analyzed apart from its essential counterpart, world. For Heidegger, any analysis of being must be an analysis of being-in-the-world because in human experience we do not come to know being apart from world. Second, in his analysis of the temporality of being-in-the-world, Heidegger argues that the perception of things, which is a relatively passive experience, is not the most pervasive mode of being-in-the-world. Instead, basic actions are the most pervasive mode of being-in-the-world. Consequently, an analysis of the temporality of passive experiences without an analysis of the temporality of basic actions neglects the greater portion of human experience.

Finally, because of these significant differences between Heidegger's philosophy and Husserl's philosophy, any analysis of the temporality of basic actions must avoid the temptation to adopt Husserl's notion of the expansive present without questioning its relevance to the phenomenon under consideration. In the expansive present, according to Husserl, the perceiver's focus in the expansive temporal field is the "now," as it stands out from the horizons of past and future. If an analysis of basic actions confirms that in basic actions the perceiver's focus also is the "now," then Husserl's idea can be adopted. If, on the other hand, the agent exhibits a different temporal focus within the expansive temporal field, Husserl's concepts
will need to be modified to take into account the fundamental differences between perception and action or they will need to be abandoned. In either case, the analyst first must disclose the experiential nature of basic actions.

As the previous section indicates, phenomenologists criticize Husserl's analysis because the sphere of human concerns is primarily active and practical and instrumental rather than passive. In a veiled reference to Husserl's analysis Heidegger notes, "The kind of dealing which is closest to [human being] is . . . not a bare perceptual cognition, but rather that kind of concern which manipulates things and puts them to use." 34 Heidegger's statement has two significant dimensions. First, the statement provides support for Carr's claim that human experience is primarily active and practical rather than passive. Second, the statement further characterizes human activity as the manipulation of things in the environment. The primary difference, then, between relatively passive experience and our experience of basic actions, according to Heidegger, is that passive experience is characterized by the perception of things in the environment whereas a basic action is characterized by the manipulation of things in the environment.

Heidegger's statement also implies two other matters that are important to his philosophy and to the present analysis. First, it reinforces the idea that the concept "being-in-the-world" is central to his analysis. Unlike Husserl, Heidegger avoids the use of the word consciousness altogether. He prefers the term "being" because it does

---

34Heidegger, p. 95.
not suggest the separation of mind and body, or thought and action. As I indicated in the summary of the preceding section, Husserl's analysis purports to be an analysis of pure consciousness. Pure consciousness does not exist; consciousness is always consciousness of something. In using the term "being" to replace consciousness, Heidegger carefully qualifies the term in a manner that is consistent with "consciousness of" through the construction "being-in-the-world."

Second, Heidegger indicates that a basic action, the manipulation of things, is human being's primary mode of being-in-the-world. His statement "[t]he kind of dealing which is closest to [human being] is . . . not a bare perceptual cognition, but rather that kind of concern which manipulates things and puts them to use" refers to the primacy of basic actions over perceptions. For Heidegger, then, one can not properly describe the temporality of basic actions unless s/he first describes the mode of encounter between human beings and those entities that Heidegger subsequently designates as equipment within their environment.

Heidegger's distinction between perceptions and basic actions implies that basic actions are not typified by conscious contemplation of the situation followed by physical response. Carr agrees with Heidegger that a basic action does not involve a clear demarcation between thought and action. Early in his discussion, Carr points to the fallacies of three theories of action that assume that the mental and physical processes are sequential. Carr recognizes that, at least by extension, these theories always assume a mind-body split and therefore have a faulty foundation.
Proponents of the first of these positions claim that in the midst of any action the agent entertains a series of mental pictures or representations of the steps that the action must go through to reach fruition. These mental pictures are subsequently enacted physically. Advocates of the second position do not insist on mental pictures. Instead, they assert that at the very least the agent has a conception or an idea of a state of affairs different from the present state of affairs and the agent enacts the physical behaviors necessary to achieve this envisioned state of affairs. Supporters of the final position maintain that the agent engages in a sort of third-person perspective on their own actions. From this detached position the agent analyzes the situation and enacts the physical stages in order to complete the action.\textsuperscript{35}

The proponents of each of these positions assume that all actions are necessarily divided into thought and bodily response, the former causing the latter. Heidegger and Carr reject this dualistic form of analysis at the level of basic actions. Persons who endorse these positions are analyzing the temporality of all actions based on the model of the clock. Implicit in each of these positions is a mind-body split and the idea that each of the phases of even the most basic action is independent from every other phase. Both Heidegger and Carr oppose the facile segmentation of a basic action into its various phases. Such segmentation is consistent with those theories of temporal perception that were rejected in the foregoing section because they construed human experience as a sequence of discrete

\textsuperscript{35}Carr, pp. 35-36.
moments that are rendered meaningful only through a retrospective glance.

Furthermore, both Heidegger and Carr reject any analysis of the temporality of basic actions based on Husserl's analysis of the temporality of passive experience. Husserl's analysis presumes that the perceiver focuses on an object of perception external to consciousness but within the perceptual field. In basic actions, the agent does not focus on a physical or temporal object external to consciousness and existing within the perceptual field. Rather, s/he manipulates the objects in the perceptual field while focusing on the work to be done. The "work to be done" is a futural state that will exist only as the result of the actions of the agent. Failure to recognize this fundamental difference between Husserl's theory and Heidegger's theory has led some theorists to analyze the basic action as an object. While a basic action can be an object to consciousness, it can be an object to consciousness only after the basic action has achieved closure. In other words, the basic action can be an object to consciousness only after it has passed into secondary memory.

Consequently, theories that use Husserl's method without exploring the essential differences between passive experiences and basic actions ultimately analyze the same phenomenon as those theories that use the clock model. Both analyze the basic action as a whole, and both assume that the significance of the action can be determined only from the vantage point of an end that has been lived-through in clock time. The only significant difference, then, between theorists who use the clock model to analyze basic actions and those who adopt
Husserl's analysis of internal time-consciousness as their foundation is that the former acknowledge that their analysis is initiated from a vantage point external to the basic action while the latter assume that they are operating from a vantage point within the basic action.

Following Husserl's lead, Heidegger and Carr conduct their analysis from the perspective of the agent from a vantage point within the basic action. Consequently, they recognize the necessity of determining the experiential nature of basic actions before describing the temporal structure that typifies them. For Heidegger, as I have already indicated, the experiential nature of basic actions is characterized by human beings manipulating things in the environment. Therefore, the first step in the description of the temporality of a basic action is an internal, experiential description of "being," involved with and manipulating the entities encountered in the world.

Carr's analysis differs from Heidegger's analysis in that Heidegger begins with, and proceeds in light of, being-in-the-world, while Carr foreshortens this process. Carr's analysis confirms that in constructing his theory, he read and was influenced by Heidegger's analysis of "world" in Being and Time. Yet, Carr circumvents discussion of the concept of world within the body of his analysis. However, the significance of "world" is evident in the examples he employs in his conclusions, even though he never makes specific reference to the concept. Because Carr understands and incorporates the concept as an underlying assumption, he is able to avoid the pitfall of analyzing the contemplation of basic actions in his theory.

[^Carr, pp. 38-39.]
The concepts "world" and "being-in-the-world" are crucial to
Heidegger's analysis and serve as underlying assumptions in Carr's
analysis. Therefore, this section of the present study is broader than
Carr's analysis because it refers back to Heidegger in order to
explicate more carefully the analysis of basic actions.

Thus far this discussion has addressed only limitations on an
experiential description of a basic action. Within these limitations,
the analysis can turn toward a phenomenological description of a basic
action and a description of the temporality that characterizes it. As
noted earlier, Heidegger contends that basic actions are the most
prevalent mode of being-in-the-world. A basic action, in turn, is
characterized by the manipulation of something in the environment.
In the manipulation of something in the environment, the agent's
focus is not on the thing itself. Instead, the agent's focus is the
work to be done.\(^{17}\)

Because of Husserl's emphasis on an object of reflection, the
tendency is strong to approach a description and analysis of the
temporality of a basic action based on either the agent's reflections or
the thing(s) s/he is manipulating in the environment. Heidegger
focuses on neither. Instead, he begins his analysis with the agent's
engagement with the thing in the environment. In other words, he
focuses on describing a basic action from an experiential point of
view. Although this statement clarifies the starting point of his
analysis, it fails to clarify what he means by his assertion that the
agent's focus is the work to be done.

\(^{17}\)Heidegger, p. 99.
In a basic action being spans the expansive present of the action, taking its orientation from the future or the protention rather than the "now" of the expansive temporal field. Consequently, the agent is committed to the future, whereas the present and past serve as temporal horizons from which the foregrounded future stands out. In light of Heidegger's analysis, the term temporal field should no longer be considered as a structure of consciousness or mind. Instead, it has taken on new significance in Heidegger. For Heidegger, temporal fields are constituted by being. In other words, as I hammer the nail, my entire being is focused on and committed to the future, the completion of the action, for which the past and the present serve as temporal horizons.

As long as my entire being is committed to the outcome of the basic action in which I am engaged, neither the past nor the present obtrude because they are congruous with the protended future. Consequently, I do not focus on anything in the present, including the present physical state of my body, or the hammer (the thing) that I am manipulating in the environment in order to bring about the future. In other words, I do not distinguish the hammer from what I am doing, nor do I tend to distinguish my being from the hammer. Everything is subordinated to the work to be done.

An understanding of Heidegger's notion that through action being pre-reflectively constitutes temporal fields can explain his opposition to the prevailing view in many of the accepted analyses of basic actions, i.e., that mind takes precedence over body or that the mind functions separately in physical activities. Theorists who discuss
action are accustomed to assuming that mental activity precedes physical activity in all actions. Their perspective, however, endorses a mind-body split because their theory ascribes broader temporal and spatial capacities to mind than to body. From their perspective, although it is possible for mind or consciousness to assume temporally expansive forms or at least to entertain various possibilities, it is impossible for the physical body to be located at any other place in time than the place at which it is located in the "now." An inconsistency is inherent in this position. "Mind," according to these theories, designates any number of processes originating in or associated with the brain. Unfortunately, a similar term has never been coined to designate the physical processes originating in or associated with the body. Heidegger recognized this inconsistency. However, rather than coining a term that would serve body the way mind serves brain, Heidegger chose the term "being" to subsume both. For Heidegger, as I have already pointed out, mind and body are inseparable in a basic action. Furthermore, in subsuming mind and body in the term being, Heidegger tacitly acknowledges that the whole, "being," is greater than the sum of its parts, mind and body. Therefore, to point to the physical body and say that it cannot be ahead of itself because it can only be located in the "now," is comparable to pointing to the brain as the location of the mind and saying that it cannot span a temporal field because it is located in the body, which is located in the "now."

Despite the belief that the body cannot be ahead of itself, it has long been a truism that the end of a gesture or a movement is
implicit in its conception. This statement does not mean that the completion of the gesture occurs in the mind and the musculature of the body complies with the directions of the mind. Rather, it means that the gesture itself spans time. This point is the one that Heidegger and Carr are attempting to make in arguing against the precedence of mind over body with regard to a basic action. Being is already ahead of itself, not as a mind-body split, but as a whole in the execution of any basic action. The confusion that arises as a consequence of a statement such as this one is largely the result of the understanding of time based on the clock model. Being is not ahead of itself in the sense that the "now" and the "ahead of itself" are two discrete points in time. Rather, being is ahead of itself in a stretch across a temporal field.

Carr's basic action is comparable, in many ways, to Husserl's expansive temporal field. In the expansive temporal field, the just-past, the present, and the immediate future are interdependent. In a basic action, the various phases of the basic action are also interdependent. The fundamental difference between the two is that in the former the perceiver focuses on some temporal object, anticipating an outcome which arrives without his/her intervention, in the latter the agent brings about the outcome through the manipulation of some thing in his/her environment. The agent does not focus on any object external to consciousness that exists in the temporal or spatial fields. Instead, the agent's being is focused on or committed to that which is yet to be, that which s/he brings about through his/her basic action. Furthermore, in a basic action the
agent's "being" is committed to the outcome from the inception of the basic action. The entire basic action, then, is lived-through as a stretch across time.

In most cases we are not aware of the projection of being through time because the outcomes are consistent with our projections. Nothing in the experience calls our attention to the process. The only time we explicitly recognize the projection of being through time is when the projection is interrupted or disturbed through the failure or absence of the thing we are manipulating in order to achieve the closure. According to Heidegger, human beings encounter equipment as equipment only at those times when it can no longer be used as equipment, when, for example, it is broken or misplaced. However, Heidegger's statement not withstanding, what is revealed in these moments is not the theoretical properties of the equipment or, as Heidegger says, the thing in itself. Instead, the structures of my involvement with the equipment are foregrounded precisely because the equipment is no longer available. Put another way, the equipment presents itself as that which is used "in-order-to" because I am no longer able to use it "in-order-to." In other words, even when it is broken, my hammer does not become an object upon which I focus my attention, like a relic in a museum. When the hammer breaks, I still see it in light of its instrumental properties.

Consider my use of the hammer more carefully. When in the midst of building my bookcase the hammer breaks, I can no longer use it in order to hammer nails. Although I encounter the hammer in a

---

38Heidegger, pp. 102-103.
new way, I do not focus on the hammer as a "mere thing" (i.e., the sum of its physical properties, wood and metal) isolated from the temporal and spatial backgrounds of the project in which I am engaged. In fact, its appearance is just the opposite. What obtrudes is precisely its character as that which I use "in-order-to" hammer a nail. In other words, its existence as a piece of equipment is revealed for the first time when it can no longer fulfill its function. As long as I am using the hammer I am simply doing the work. When the hammer breaks, however, my attention is called to the structure of my involvement with the hammer and the hammer is revealed as equipment.

Husserl's analysis of relatively passive experiences is problematic in that it requires some object of perception. In a basic action, as Heidegger's analysis indicates, no object of perception exists. A basic action itself can serve as an object of perception, but only through retrospection. When I am doing something, I do not perceive myself as involved in a basic action. However, once the basic action is complete I can play its phases, like the notes of Husserl's melody, in consciousness and can establish thereby a form of temporality. But even this example violates Husserl's analysis because it focuses on secondary memory rather than the expansive present, which includes primary memory (retention) as well as primary expectation (protention). The temporality that is established through such retrospection is not the temporality of a basic action, nor is it the expansive temporality of primary memory. Rather, it is the temporality of retrospection or contemplation. If this form of
temporality is adopted as the temporality of a basic action, the
analysis has come full circle because this position is consistent with
that of structuralists. Specifically, the phases of a basic action are
merely a sequence of chaotic moments that are organized and
structured only through a retrospective glance. Furthermore, temporal
structure must be acknowledged as a fiction that is applied to life
rather than, as Carr claims, a characteristic of human "being" that is
transferred from life to art.

Heidegger's analysis does not consent to this reduction.
Consequently, in order to get at a description of the temporality of a
basic action, equivalents must be established for Husserl's concepts.
The previous section made several points about the temporality of the
present. Through the retentional and protentional structures of human
consciousness the present is expansive and not merely the momentary
intersection between past and future. Even in passive experience a
primary orientation exists within the expansive temporal field. In
order to clarify the temporality of a basic action, equivalents must be
found for protention and retention, and the agent's focus in the lived
temporal field must be established.

In a basic action, retention is no longer a species of memory.
Instead, it is the movement of mind and body in concert with one
another that "lead up to and prepare the way for the present and the
future." Protention, likewise, is not a future state that the agent
"awaits" expectantly. Rather, it is a future state to which the agent

39Carr, p. 34.
commits his/her entire being—not simply the mind or the body, but the two in combination.

The total commitment of being to the future is the most significant aspect of human action. While an agent may engage in the complex mental processes in extended actions, s/he does not entertain them in the midst of a basic action. The agent is simply doing. This statement coincides with the analysis of Heidegger’s statement cited at the beginning of this section. In the simplest actions the agent does not contemplate the action, s/he simply does it.

Husserl’s foreground-background (focus-horizon) schema as used in relation to the temporal field provides a basis for understanding the agent’s temporal orientation in the lived temporal field. In passive experience the "now" serves as the perceiver’s focus and the retentional and protentional horizons serve as the background from which the foregrounded "now" stands out. Remember, the "now" can stand out as a continuation of the temporal event or it can stand out as incongruous with the temporal event in retention. In a basic action, in contrast, the agent is ontologically committed to the future. Consequently, the future is the most salient element of the temporal field as it stands out from the horizons of present and past. In hammering the nail, I do not focus on the hammer as an object or as equipment. In fact, I do not focus on the hammer at all. Instead I focus on the work to be done. Heidegger notes, "the less we just

---

40 Carr, pp. 35-36.

41 See the example on p. 53 of this study involving the theme songs from two television programs.
stare at the hammer-Thing, and the more we seize hold of it and use it, the more primordial does our relationship to it become and the more unveiledly is it encountered as that which it is— as equipment." 42

In action, then, my commitment is to the immediate future. The horizons from which the foregrounded future stands out are the immediate past and the present. The immediate past and present are configured in relation to my primary temporal commitment, the future. As Carr notes,

Since in acting we pretend or intend the future goal . . . there is a sense in which it occupies the center of our concern in action and reflects back upon and determines the present and past. There is indeed something quasi-retrospective about action, as if we were located at the end and from its point of view arranged and organized the present. 43

As long as my activities continue without incident, I remain committed to the future. When my hammer breaks and my activity is interrupted, however, my commitment to the completion of the basic action is disturbed though not severed. Consequently, I encounter the hammer in a new way. Until it broke, I was not aware of it either as an object or as equipment. Instead, I was making use of it without noticing it explicitly. 44 Now that it has broken, however, it is

42 Heidegger, p. 98. The emphasis in this quote is mine. In the statements preceding this quote I acknowledge that I do not "focus" on the hammer either as an object or as equipment. In the quote, however, Heidegger seems to be saying that I focus on the hammer as equipment. This is not, in fact, his intention. The word "encountered" in this context is not synonymous with focus. A few pages later he reveals that the name "equipment" only presents itself after the assignments are revealed when the hammer breaks.

43 Carr, p. 38.

44 Heidegger, p. 105.
revealed as that which was helping me achieve the immediate future even though it can no longer help me achieve that goal. Its existence as equipment is revealed to me only now that it is no longer serviceable.

The fact that I maintain my commitment to the future after the hammer has broken indicates that the commitment is not tied up solely in the use of that particular piece of equipment. If that were the case, my commitment to the completion of the basic action would disappear when the equipment broke and I would resort to the mere perception of the various things in the environment. Because I do not lose my commitment in such cases, something larger must be at work in a basic action that is not solely dependent on my use of this, or any other, particular piece of equipment.

The reason that I do not lose my commitment to the completion of the basic action when the hammer breaks, according to Heidegger, is that the hammer that I have been manipulating is only part of the referential totality within which the work is taking place. When the hammer breaks, I do not stop to contemplate the broken hammer. I either look around for another hammer or for some other thing that will serve in its place, i.e., something to drive the nail. My determination indicates that even beyond the use of the hammer my entire being is committed to the completion of the project. The broken hammer is an incongruity because I am still ontologically committed to the outcome, the work to be done. In this light I evaluate each thing in the environment on the basis of its ability to fill the role of the "in-order-to," I see everything in terms of its
equipmental nature. In other words, the world presents itself as a totality of equipment. Even before the hammer broke the world was presenting itself as a totality of equipment. However, its mode of presenting itself did not appear overtly until one of the many assignments in the totality was disturbed.

An example from the analysis of passive experience can clarify the reason that the world presents itself as a totality of equipment once the hammer has broken. Earlier I noted that a perceiver immediately notices that a toaster is out of place in a living room because s/he takes in not only the focus (toaster) but the horizon (living room) as well. When a perceiver encounters a toaster in a kitchen, s/he does not attach any particular significance to this discovery. Nevertheless, the perceiver has taken in the horizon (kitchen) as well as the focus (toaster). A perceiver can determine congruity or incongruity only because his/her gaze spans the entire spatial field. In a basic action, spatiality is subsumed in temporality. When the hammer breaks it does not appear as a mere thing; rather, it appears as that which is used "in-order-to." This assignment of the hammer to the work to be done is a temporal assignment. Because the hammer is only one piece of equipment in a totality of equipment, the totality of equipment (the world) is in essence a totality of temporal assignments. Furthermore, "'the in-order-to' structure of my involvement with the hammer" is revealed when the hammer breaks. The significance of this statement should not be overlooked. When I am involved in this particular basic action,

45See the example on pp. 37-8 above.
the hammer is not the only equipment. In my focus on the work to be done, my entire being, too, is "in-order-to." The commitment of my being to the outcome of the basic action is a temporal commitment.

Being-toward-the-future is a temporal commitment of my entire being to the outcome of the basic action in which I am engaged. When I commit my being to that outcome, everything in the environment is sighted in terms of that outcome. By the concept world, Heidegger means any totality that is configured by an agent from the perspective of being-toward-the-future. To borrow Carr's analogy, the outcome of a basic action is like a problem to be solved not through contemplation (the weighing of various possibilities), but through action. It "organizes not only my bodily disposition and my implement, but my whole environment."46

Since in a basic action the agent already is committed to the outcome, the arrangement of the successive phases through which my body passes, the way in which I hold the equipment, and the way in which everything within the immediate environment appears, is configured as the basic action begins. I do not need to contemplate the various phases of the basic action either through mental pictures, ideas, or in terms of cause-effect relationships, because the configuration has already taken place. Furthermore, the configuration is a proactive temporal configuration of being rather than a retroactive configuration by the mind.

---

46 Carr, p. 39.
Carr cautions, however, "this emphasis on the future-orientation of action, and on the role of the end in organizing 'backward' in time the various phases of the action which are the means to its realization, must not obscure the fact that the agent is still rooted in the present." In other words, although the agent commits his/her entire being to the future, that protended future is vulnerable to the actual future in which the protentions of the agent can be rudely disappointed. The character of that disappointment differs for basic actions and for passive experiences. In action, unlike contemplation, the agent's entire being is committed to the outcome. The future is, therefore, more fragile in the sense that the outcome of experience is not all that is at stake in action. The being of the agent, to a certain extent, is implicated in the protended future.

Summary

The introduction to this chapter noted that among narrative theorists the prevailing view is that human experience lacks inherent structure. Consequently, the predominant view is that narrative structure is a "fictional" structure imposed on an otherwise chaotic sequence of perceptions, events, or actions. The primary reason for embarking on this analysis was to respond to that claim by offering an alternate point of view. A second reason for conducting this analysis was to provide a foundation for explorations of more complex experiences and actions.

47 Carr, p. 40.
This chapter has explored alternately the temporality of relatively passive experiences and the temporality of basic actions. The analysis revealed that both passive experiences and basic actions are characterized by a certain stretch or thickness, which was identified originally as the expansive present. In passive experiences, the perceiver couples the "now" perception with what has immediately gone before (retention) as well as with what s/he anticipates will immediately follow (protention). In basic actions, the agent's commitment to the completion of an action organizes and structures everything within his/her environment from the vantage point of the end retrospectively, even though s/he has not yet "lived-through" the action. With regard to basic actions, then, it is necessary to replace the term "expansive present" with another term that recognizes the expansiveness of the temporal field but is not rooted solely in the present. Phrases like "expansive temporality" and "temporal expansiveness" henceforth will denote the immediate temporal field.

The organization and structuring of perceptions and basic actions from a vantage point in the midst of experience not only indicates the interdependence of all of the moments of a perception or the phases of a basic action, it distinguishes these perceptions and basic actions from those that came before (secondary memory or recollection) as well as from those that will follow (secondary expectation or deliberation). This method of temporal configuration, in other words, effects temporal closure from a vantage point in the midst of the perception or the basic action rather than from a vantage point after
the end of either in clock-time. Temporal configuration, then, is a proactive process of perceiving and acting in the world.

Proactive configuration, as the analysis has shown, is vulnerable to the "actual" future. In other words, our perceptions and actions can be disappointed by temporal sequence. The fact that protentions and actions can be disappointed, however, does not change the fundamental truth that human beings engage in proactive configuration. As Carr notes,

While there is necessarily a sequential order underlying experience and actions, this is not an order that can figure in our experience by itself, apart from the configurational organization represented by events and actions. The bedrock of human events, then, is not sequence but configured sequence.\(^4^6\)

Before proceeding to the next chapter, the information contained in this chapter needs to be situated in relation to the primary subject matter of this study as a whole. The introduction to this study noted that some narrators, in contemporary fiction in particular, appear to be caught up in the midst of a narratization (a narrative that has not yet achieved temporal closure). This chapter made use of the theories of Husserl, Heidegger, and Carr in a cumulative fashion to explore in detail the temporality of relatively passive experiences and the temporality of basic actions. Although the vast majority of human existence is taken up by perceptions and the execution of basic actions, they are only the building blocks that go together to make up complex and extended actions. In order to demonstrate the applicability of these theories to narrative fiction, this study must

\(^{46}\)Carr, p. 44.
explicate the temporality of extended and complex actions, to which
the acts of verbal narrating and intrapersonal narratizing belong.
The process of configuring time in passive experiences and in basic
actions will be important in the next chapter when the analysis
focuses more directly on the temporality of extended and complex
actions.
Chapter 3
The Narrative Structure of Human Temporality: A Case for Mediacy

In the preceding chapter I offered an explanation of relatively passive experiences and basic actions, an analysis that disclosed two interrelated aspects of human experience. First, human experience assumes temporally expansive forms and second, temporal expansiveness implies a method of temporal configuration inherent in human experience. This theory suggests the priority of the perceiving and/or acting subject and his/her own sense of temporality over the idea that temporal configuration is imposed on experiences only after they have reached a conclusion in clock time.

Whereas the preceding chapter focused exclusively on explaining the temporality of relatively passive experiences and basic actions, this chapter focuses on the temporality of more complex and extended human actions. More specifically, this chapter focuses on the issue of whether or not the temporal configuration of complex human experiences and action can be said to exhibit a narrative structure. In order to confirm Carr's proposition concerning the narrative structure of human consciousness, this chapter explores three additional points of correspondence between human temporality and narrative structure in order to determine whether human temporality exhibits a narrative structure.

First, to establish a correlation between human temporality and narrative structure, the configurational structure that typifies human temporality must be confirmed as a configurational structure that is
uniquely narrative in nature. To that end, the temporality of relatively passive experiences and the temporality of basic actions examined in the last chapter must be shown to exhibit a narrative structure. If temporal configuration is indeed a type of narrative configuration, then the temporality of passive experiences and basic actions, which have already been described, must be shown to be similar or equivalent to the temporality of narrative.

Second, once the correspondence between human temporality and narrative structure has been corroborated at the level of passive experiences and basic actions, the analysis must demonstrate that narrative structure is not confined to the types of experience and action that have served as the focus of this study thus far. Further analysis should reveal that this configurational structure is the form of temporality that characterizes the type of extended and complex actions that comprise the vast majority of everyday human experience.¹

Finally, according to Carr, the term narrative suggests more than temporal configuration. It also implies a mediator, or teller, and an audience for whom the experiences are mediated. Therefore, to substantiate the claim that the configurational structure characteristic

¹The term "everyday" has a very specific meaning in Heideggerian phenomenology. As used by Heidegger it is denotes a type of "inauthentic" existence. As used in this study, the term should be considered synonymous with terms like typical, ordinary, and normal. At the risk of alienating phenomenologists, I chose to use everyday instead of any of its synonyms because I think the term carries less baggage than its synonyms for readers who are not schooled in phenomenology. Unfortunately, the scope of this study does not allow me to address the extremely important issues of authentic and inauthentic existence as they apply to narrative fiction.
of human temporality is equivalent to narrative structure, the analysis must demonstrate some element or elements of human temporality that approximate the intricate relationship between the narrator and his/her audience in everyday human experience.\(^2\)

As the study progresses, it calls into question not only the temporality of human experience, but traditional assumptions about literary narrative as well. Foremost among the assumptions questioned with regard to literary narrative is the notion of duality of time. Almost all discussions of time in narrative share the assumption that the "here and now" of the telling are clearly distinct from the "there and then" of the events recounted. Depending on which time model is used to define this critical phrase, one may or may not always discover a duality of time in narrative. Reconceptualizing the concept of time based on the more subject-centered model conceived by phenomenologists alters what is meant by the concept "duality of time." The objective model necessarily creates a distinction between "then" and "now" based on the arbitrary clock model.\(^3\) While the more subject-centered phenomenological model does not deny the viability of the objective model, it calls into question the concept "duality of time," which measures events solely on the basis of their duration in clock time and cannot take into account the unity of events within time. As it relates to narrative theory, the phenomenological method

\(^2\)Carr, pp. 45-46.

\(^3\)The clock model is arbitrary in that it cannot account for the concept of duration.
questions the automatic, habitual division of any narrative into "time of the telling" and "time of the events."

Admittedly, applying a phenomenological model of temporality to narrative will not automatically obviate the distinction between the time of the telling and the time of the events, making them part of the same temporal stretch. In fact, for most first-person literary narratives, in spite of the reconceptualization of time on the basis of a phenomenological model, a distinction between the time of the telling and the time of the events will still be evident. Or, to put the equation in phenomenological terms, the subject-centered model will continue to recognize a distinction between the temporality of telling and the temporality of events in most first-person narratives. The telling, which takes place in the expansive present, usually belongs to a different temporal field than the events, which achieved closure at some point prior to the telling and are a part of the secondary memory rather than the expansive present.

Nevertheless, the phenomenological model cannot unquestioningly accommodate the notion of duality of time that is taken for granted in conventional narrative theory. When the concept of duality of time is accepted without question, it precludes certain narrative options. Because of this equivocation between a more subject-centered phenomenological model and more objective models with regard to duality of time and its manifestation in literary narrative, this study focuses on what I perceive, based on my investigation of the phenomenological model in the last chapter, as a more fundamental concept--mediacy.
Temporal Configuration as Narrative Configuration

The analyses of passive experiences and basic actions in the previous chapter demonstrates that both share a common characteristic. Specifically, they exist across time and are set apart from other experiences and basic actions through temporal closure, which means that they can be expressed only in terms of a beginning, a middle, and an end. As Carr notes, "A sequence, a series, or a process can theoretically be endless, but an event, an experience, or an action is something that begins and ends."\(^4\) Furthermore, the analyses demonstrate that the process of configuring passive experiences and basic actions is something that can occur in the midst of an experience or an event as well as after an experience or an event has achieved closure.

Carr agrees with the majority of narrative theorists who argue that "only from the perspective of the end do the beginning and the middle make sense."\(^5\) His fundamental disagreement with narrative theorists in general and structuralists in particular centers around the availability of the end. According to narrative theories that base their discussions of time on the clock model, the end is available to the perceiver or agent only after s/he has lived through it, in other words, only after the end has passed in clock time. In Recent Theories of Narrative, Wallace Martin summarizes the prevailing view among narrative theorists:

\(^4\)Carr, p. 47.

\(^5\)Carr, p. 7.
Narratives concern the past. The earliest events recounted take on their meaning and act as causes only because of the later ones. Whereas most sciences involve prediction, narrative involves "retrodiction." It is the end of the temporal series—how things eventually turned out—that determines which event began it: we know it was a beginning because of the end.6

According to Carr, through anticipation the end is always already available to the perceiver in the present. The process of temporally configuring experiences and basic actions, in other words, cannot be considered exclusively retroactive. Instead, temporal configuration is first and foremost a proactive process. Carr acknowledges that perceivers often look back on events and retroactively reconfigure them in narrative form based on subsequent experience(s). However, he has great difficulty with theories that want to reserve this configurational process for retroactive application. Carr argues that in everyday experience human beings engage in a proactive form of temporality that configures time futurally. Most phases of any experience, event, or action, in other words, are potentially available in the "now" as the individual actively anticipates the future.

The cornerstone of Carr's theory that individuals engage in a proactive form of temporal configuration concerns the concept of the end, which was discussed in the second chapter. Because the argument is central to his belief that human beings engage in proactive configuration of time, it bears repetition here.

The quantification of time can occur only after the fact. The duration of an event, for example, can be determined only after the

---

event has taken place. Therefore, as a standard of measurement, the clock can measure only backward from the end. The configuration of events that take up time into meaningful structures, from an objective point of view, can take place only from a vantage point at or beyond the end of the event. It is understandable, then, that historians like Mink and White, and proponents of the structuralist school of literary theory would be bound to the notion that narrative is a "fictional" structure retroactively imposed on an otherwise chaotic sequence of events. They perceive narrative structure as fictional because it has no basis in objective reality, which they see as chaotic and unorganized. Because objective theorists maintain this point of view, they take theoretical constructs rather than human experience as their point of departure in discussing time. Theoretical constructs are indispensable from their perspective because without them all human experience is simply chaos. As a result, they can conclude that the organizer construes meaning only after the fact. This abstract analytical mode requires that all the "facts" be in hand in order to proceed. Hence the abstract analytical framework can be applied only after the experience has come to an end.

However, the abstract analytical framework has an internal inconsistency. Although Carr argues that theoretical explanations of temporal configuration are misguided, he fails to articulate explicitly why they are inconsistent. I suggest that theorists that depend on objective reality as their field of practice argue that configuration and, hence, meaning are retroactive processes. Yet, they argue that experience is merely a chaotic sequence of events. If, indeed,
experience is chaotic, then they cannot argue retroactive configuration because it implies an "end." An "end" can be recognized as an end, if one follows these theories to their logical conclusions, only after the retroactive process of configuration takes place. Otherwise, that point which they refer to as the end is simply another independent point in a chaotic sequence of events. The most that they can establish is that at some random point a human being attends to what has happened and retroactively configures the sequence into meaningful experience. Obviously, "scientific" theorists do not argue this position. Instead, they use the term "end" in the same way that phenomenologists do. Their use of that term is an implicit recognition that human beings engage in a configurational process in the midst of experience. Put simply, they depend on an understanding of human experience compatible with the phenomenological understanding as the starting point for their theories. Yet, they overlook this understanding in writing their theories because their theories cannot accommodate it.

Those theorists who might be willing to accept this conclusion will argue, nevertheless, that the meaning discovered through the experiential approach is often misguided or wrong. "True" meaning, they maintain, can be discovered only after "all the facts are in."

Paul Ricoeur, for example, in the first volume of his monumental study of time in narrative, argues that stories, whether fictional or historical, are constituted only after the completion of three temporal
periods: prefiguration, configuration, and refiguration. Martin summarizes Ricoeur's position as follows:

The first is the beginning state, when human beings find themselves in a situation that they want to change or simply to understand. This is the time of "prefiguration": given our knowledge of social practices and human inclinations, we can envisage what is likely to happen next and plan to intervene, if that seems wise, to affect the outcome. The second time is that of action, or "[con]figuration": we try to do, or understand, as events unroll. Finally, there is "refiguration": we look back at what happened, tracing the lines that led to the outcome, discovering why plans did not succeed, how extraneous forces intervened, or how successful actions led to unanticipated results.

At a surface level, it would appear that the analysis of relatively passive experiences and basic actions conducted in the last chapter does not disagree with Ricoeur's analysis as presented here. However, closer inspection reveals that Ricoeur departs from the earlier analysis in one important way. Unlike the other theorists whose work has been summarized in this study, Ricoeur recognizes that human beings engage in forms of temporal configuration prior to acting and in the midst of events. However, he does not confer narrative status on the processes of prefiguration or configuration. Instead, he insists that the term narrative be reserved until his third temporal moment, or refiguration. Although Ricoeur recognizes the notion of temporal expansiveness in the midst of experience, he does not, in the final estimation, break with the clock model of time in narrative. For Ricoeur, like other theorists who operate from a more objective point

---


8Martin, p. 76.
of view, narrative configuration is a retroactive process that can take place only after all the facts are in hand. The crux of his argument seems to rest on the perception that human beings recognize the narrative dimensions of experience only after they have "refigured" them when they have passed in clock time.

While it is true that during any experience the precise futural dimensions of the experience may be misconstrued, one need not wait until the completion of the event for the misperception to be discovered and the proper revision or reconfiguration to take place. From a strictly logical perspective, Ricoeur's argument suggests that although human beings project themselves temporally toward the future, we are incapable of altering our vision of the future once we are in the midst of the events and something goes awry. Ricoeur suggests that although an agent decides on a course of action in the prefiguration stage and sets about accomplishing that course of action in the configuration stage, the agent in the configuration stage is, nevertheless, at the mercy of what "time" brings. Ricoeur's theory suggests that evaluating the relative success of the course of action can occur only in the refiguration stage. The phenomenological model of temporal configuration outlined in the second chapter demonstrated how, in the midst of an experience, a mistaken perception is revised automatically when an individual realizes that his/her protention is mistaken.9

---

9See the discussion of revising mistaken protentions in chapter two, pp. 51-2.
With Ricoeur's insistence on reserving narrative status for the reconfiguration stage, we encounter once again to the primary stumbling block for theorists who use the objective model of clock time. Namely, narrative configuration can take place only from the perspective of the end in clock time, when the individual (agent) attains an overview of the experience that allows him/her to graft a narrative structure on to the experience. According to the structuralists, in particular, and even Ricoeur, whose theory is an eclectic blend of structuralism and phenomenology, the "end" is not available to human beings until they have passed it in clock time. Hence, narrative can exist only as a reflection on past experience. My exploration of Carr's analysis has demonstrated that although one may reconfigure from the perspective of the end in clock time, human beings structure their experience from the perspective of a projected end, even though they have not yet lived through it. Granted, in acting quasi-retrospectively from a projected end, an individual may find that events in temporal sequence may intervene between his/her actions and the projected end, but even given this unforeseen interruption, the individual does not have to wait until the end has passed in clock time to project an alternate end and reconfigure or renarratize his/her experience. Such reconfiguration takes place naturally in the midst of experience as the individual projects an alternate ending and quasi-retrospectively revises his/her actions in light of this new envisioned end.

None of the theorists examined in this chapter or the last, other than Carr, grants narrative status to the way that human beings
perceive phenomena and exist in the world. The logical configurational structures, particularly beginning, middle, and end, that the majority of narrative theorists would like to reserve for retroactive application to human experience are, as Carr persuasively argues,

structures and relations that exist for the experiencer or the agent in the process of experiencing and acting; they constitute the meaningfulness or direction of the experience or action; it is in virtue of them that these things "make sense" prior to and independently of our reflecting on them and explicitly recounting them to ourselves or to others.10

Complex and Extended Actions

Thus far this study has dealt only with the analysis of relatively passive experiences and basic actions. If we are to confirm the narrative structure of human consciousness and human action, it becomes necessary to range beyond these most basic events into the more complex and extended actions of which experiences and basic actions are only the building blocks. In exploring these extended events, I reintroduce and examine two concepts that were raised in Husserl's examination of internal time consciousness: first, recollection, or secondary memory, and second, what we shall henceforth call deliberation, or secondary expectation.

Chapter two analyzed relatively passive experiences and basic actions as the least common denominator of human experience. In truth, they are only the building blocks of more complex and extended actions. Included in the category of extended experiences or actions

10Carr, pp. 50-1.
are phenomena that vary widely with regard to the extent of their
temporal stretch. Extended temporal actions range from attending or
delivering a fifty minute lecture or building a bookcase at one end of
the spectrum, to longer and more complex actions like writing a
dissertation, achieving career goals, or raising a child at the other end
of the spectrum.

Once we move to events that have a larger temporal span, a
number of different factors must be taken into consideration. The
simple retentional-protentional structure identified in the last chapter
with simple actions, such as listening to a melody and hammering a
nail, is not adequate to explain long-term events. Longer and more
complex events are more subject to changing circumstances and to the
intrusion of events that require a revision in the projected end.
Furthermore, events that have a large temporal expanse require that a
great many more disparate elements be related to one another and
held together in the completion of such a project. Nevertheless, we
can speak of such things as building a bookcase, reading a book,
writing a dissertation, achieving career goals, or raising a child as
events that maintain their identity as coherent events despite the fact
that they are interrupted and crisscross one another at many levels
prior to achieving temporal closure.

Earlier I used an example that involved the interruption of my
reading of a short story by a phone call that dealt with personal
business. I can revise that example slightly now and extend it to
demonstrate how the narrative structure of human consciousness works
with regard to extended actions. Instead of a short story, let us say
that I have been reading Clyde Edgerton's novel *Walking Across Egypt* for about thirty minutes every night before going to sleep for the past week. On Saturday morning, because I have nothing planned, I sit down to finish the last ninety-five pages of the novel. Shortly after I get started I receive a phone call from a colleague regarding some books she has offered to lend me that will be helpful in completing my dissertation. Since my colleague will be leaving town for a month, it is imperative that I pick up the books immediately. Returning with the books, I reluctantly put a bookmark in the novel and put it on my nightstand to continue my reading every night prior to going to sleep. The dissertation calls.

The foregoing example demonstrates the way in which complex experiences crisscross and overlap in everyday human experience. Writing the dissertation and reading the novel are both examples of extended actions that I am variously engaged in and disengaged from over a period of time. Work on the dissertation had come to a halt because I could not find certain key sources in the library. The promise of the missing books from my colleague indicated that I could once again take up my work on that project, though I would have to give up the more pleasurable project of finishing the novel.

According to Carr, as I pick up where I left off with the dissertation, I must remind myself of where I am in relation to the completion of the dissertation. This reassessment involves determining where I stand in relation to what I have already done and also in relation to what remains to be done. This reassessment is a temporal reassessment. Because I have not worked on the dissertation for
nearly a week, what I have accomplished does not remain in retention. Rather, I must call to mind something that is no longer present. In other words, through recollection I reopen the temporal horizon that closed when I stopped working on the project. In calling to mind where I stand in relation to what has already been done, I simultaneously call to mind what remains to be done. It is only in relation to my temporal stretch between these two points—one given and the other projected—that I can take my bearings and pick up the thread of my work. Similarly, every time I pick up Walking Across Egypt for a few stolen moments of pleasure, according to Carr, I have to "'pick up the thread' of the story and re-establish myself in the retentive-protentive frame of mind."\textsuperscript{11} In other words, I have to check my memory in order to relocate myself in the midst of all that has transpired in the novel since I last put it down.

The constituent parts of an extended event or action are broken down into smaller units so that I can deal with them individually, just as a dissertation is broken down into major sections (such as theory and analysis), chapters, subsections within those chapters, paragraphs, and sentences. Although I must deal with each of these smaller units one at a time as they arise, I always deal with them in light of the increasingly larger contexts of which they are a part. No section exists in isolation. Every sentence I type is part of the larger contexts that interlock with one another not at the level of "dissertation," but at the level of completing the dissertation. Writing this dissertation is a temporal process. Everything that ultimately will

\textsuperscript{11}Carr, p. 55.
be contained within its bindings was written as the result of a
temporal stretch between what has been done and what remains to be
done.

Writing this dissertation is only one of the temporal projects that
I find myself involved with at present. I also prepare for classes,
give lectures, read books, cook meals, maintain relationships with
friends, attend parties, conduct professional business, etc. All of
these activities overlap and intersect one another. Each has its own
temporal structure. Every time I turn aside from these activities to
the dissertation, I focus my attention on the project at hand. I take
stock of where I am in relation to the completion of the project. I
recall what I have accomplished and deliberate on what remains to be
done. These horizons or boundaries determine what I do. Without
such stock-taking, which is at base a temporal activity, I could not do
anything. I would be, in essence, paralyzed because unless I know
where I stand, I cannot determine what needs to be done.

The preceding analysis and extended example were couched in
terms consistent with Carr's analysis of complex and extended
experiences and actions. This analysis reveals what appears to be an
inconsistency when compared with his analysis of the narrative
structure of experiences and basic actions. Carr's analysis of
experiences and basic actions demonstrates that the temporalization of
these phenomena exhibits a narrative structure prior to reflecting upon
them. On the other hand, his analysis of complex and extended
experiences and actions suggests that the agent engages in a conscious
intrapersonal telling when relocating himself/herself in an interrupted
long-term action. Although I do not deny the possibility that agents may engage in this type of conscious intrapersonal activity, I suggest an alternative that is more consistent with Heidegger's analysis of action and with the theory Carr outlined in his analysis of basic actions.

Rather than "reminding" or "telling" himself/herself where s/he is in relation to completing the complex action, an individual begins with a basic action that, in its execution recalls the extended temporal horizons. For instance, when I begin reading *Walking Across Egypt* twenty-four hours after the last time I put it down, I do not say to myself, "When I put this down last night, Mattie was stuck in that cane chair whose seat had been removed. As I recall, she would not call to her neighbors because she did not want them to know that every day after lunch she watched a soap opera before doing the noon dishes. She was hoping that her son would come by to rescue her before her neighbors missed her and came over to check on her." Instead, I simply begin reading at the place where I left off. That action, in and of itself, recalls the temporal horizons of the extended action in which I am engaged. In many cases, it is action itself rather than conscious contemplation on the part of the agent that reestablishes him/her in the extended temporal field.

At the level of complex and extended actions, Carr appears to make the mistake he warns against in his analysis of basic actions. Specifically, he makes a distinction between thought and action, or mind and body. Furthermore, in doing so he aligns himself with Ricoeur in at least one respect. Like Ricoeur, Carr takes the agent
outside the realm of primary experience in analyzing complex and extended actions. Strictly speaking, then, his analysis is not in that sense a phenomenological analysis, since it is a description of reflection about primary experience rather than primary experience itself. This shift in Carr's analysis has important implications for the manner in which narratization is defined. If narratization is defined in light of Carr's analysis of complex and extended actions, it is consistent with Jaynes' use of the term, that is, narratization is a conscious intrapersonal telling. If, on the other hand, it is defined in light of Heidegger's analysis of action, it must be defined as a pre-reflective lived narrative configuration.

In addition, the difference between a definition of narratization based on Carr's theory and a definition of narratization based on Heidegger's theory has implications for the terms "recolletion" and "deliberation" as well as for the recollective-deliberative horizon of extended and complex experiences and actions. Heidegger probably would reject the terms recollection and deliberation since they denote conscious activities that may divorce the agent from primary experience. Nevertheless, he would be willing to recognize the extended temporal horizons of extended and complex experiences and actions. Although a human being may engage in recollection and deliberation, s/he reestablishes himself/herself within the extended temporal horizon only when s/he engages in action. The extended temporal horizons, in short, are constituted through action rather than through reflection.
In spite of the difference between Carr's and Heidegger's perspectives, the preceding discussion demonstrates two important interrelated points with regard to extended and complex actions. First, once we move beyond relatively passive experiences and basic actions, the specific retentional-protentional framework described as inherent in human experience in the previous chapter no longer offers an adequate explanation. Nevertheless, at the level of complex and extended actions, a similar configurational structure inherent in human experience becomes operational. Second, at the level of complex and extended actions, the configurational structure is still characterized by temporal closure. In other words, even though we are dealing with much longer temporal expanses, which are interrupted by other concerns and experiences, complex and extended actions maintain their identity as actions because they are characterized by the structure of beginning, middle, and end that was associated originally with passive experiences and basic actions.

Mediation in Human Experience and Action

The title of this chapter implies that the temporal structure of human experience is, at base, a narrative structure. The analyses conducted thus far illustrate why theorists like Hardy, MacIntyre, and Carr believe that the temporal structure of everyday human experience is equivalent to the temporal structure of narrative. Like narrative, which is characterized by a structure of beginning, middle, and end, human experience is characterized by temporal closure, which also is characterized by a structure of beginning, middle, and end. However,
the term narrative, as Carr acknowledges, refers to more than temporal structure. It also implies two other factors directly related to the concept of mediacy: a mediator, or storyteller, or in terms of literary narrative theory, a narrator; and an audience, to whom the narrative is related.

According to conventional narrative theory, the narrator tells the story from some point in time after the conclusion of the events. The narrator's location beyond the end of the events recounted endows him/her with a certain privilege. Specifically, because the narrator knows how the events turn out, s/he looks back on experience, selecting only those elements or events for inclusion in the narrative that have some direct bearing on the narrative. Almost everything extraneous is removed.¹²

At one level, selection is possible because narrators are in a position that no one else can occupy and therefore they know in a way that no one else can. Specifically, narrators know more than either the characters in their story or the audiences to whom they tell their stories. More importantly, narrators know what to tell (selection) and what order to tell it in (arrangement) not because of their temporal position at or beyond the end of the events recounted, but because they are not limited strictly to their own points of view with regard to the events. In telling stories, narrators simultaneously adopt the often disparate points of view of both their characters and their audience in order to fund the principles of selection and

¹²Exceptions exist for every rule. Mystery writers, for example, often include extraneous information or leave out pertinent information in order to "throw the hounds off the scent."
arrangement. Scholes and Kellogg identify this characteristic of the narrative voice as irony.

I *rony* is always the result of a disparity of understanding. In any situation in which one person knows or perceives more—or less—than another, irony must be either actually or potentially present. In any example of narrative art there are, broadly speaking, three points of view—those of the characters, the narrator, and the audience. . . . Narrative irony is a function of disparity among these . . . viewpoints.\(^{13}\)

At first glance, human beings would seem incapable of adopting this complex point of view on their own experiences from a vantage point in the midst of those experiences. Because we are caught up in the flow of instants, conventional narrative theorists would argue, we cannot possibly have the sort of superior knowledge that is accorded to narrators who recount past events. Carr summarizes their anticipated objections to his position as follows:

As participants and agents in our own lives, according to this view, we are forced to swim with events and take things as they come. We are constrained by the present and denied the authoritative, retrospective point of view of the story-teller. Thus the real difference between "art" and "life" is . . . the absence in life of that point of view which transforms events into a story by *telling* them. Narrative requires narration; and this activity is not just a recounting of events but a recounting informed by a certain kind of superior knowledge.\(^{14}\)

\(^{13}\)Robert Scholes and Robert Kellogg, *The Nature of Narrative* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1966), p. 240. Scholes and Kellogg briefly discuss a fourth point of view that is established in sophisticated narrative—the author's point of view, which may be quite distinct from the narrator's. I recognize that this distinction is important, but have chosen to exclude it in my discussion because the author's temporality is almost never an issue in first-person narrative fiction.

\(^{14}\)Carr, p. 59.
Carr tackles two interrelated issues in this statement that require explication: the superior knowledge of the narrator and the notion of telling. The idea of superior knowledge alluded to here refers not only to the narrator's temporal location in relation to the events or experiences, but to the employment of the complex points of view available to the narration in the creation of a narrative. Telling, as we shall see, although it can be a verbal activity, is not even necessarily communication in the strict sense of that term.

According to conventional narrative theory, because human beings are temporally locked in the present, the most we are capable of is a chronicle, i.e., a simple description of events in the order in which they happen. We are incapable of constructing narratives about complex and extended actions because, until we have lived through an outcome that we can identify as the end of an extended action, we cannot tie all of the disparate events together. The most that we can hope to do is to maintain a chronicle of the events until such time as we can recognize a larger pattern. Only then, from the position of the end with the superior knowledge afforded us by having lived through the complex experience as a whole, can we engage in the principles of selection and arrangement that allows us to transform a chronicle into a narrative.

Once again we encounter the notion that we have been seeking to dislocate at every turn. Namely, human beings, thoroughly grounded in the present, are temporally disconnected from the past and the future. At the level of relatively passive experiences and basic actions, we established that the present exists only as a stretch
between the retained past and the pretended future. At the level of complex and extended actions we reintroduced the concepts of recollection and deliberation to determine that an individual can act only if s/he reflects and deliberates on where s/he stands in relation to what has already been accomplished and what remains to be done. As Carr notes, "[t]he essence of the reflective and deliberative stance or activity is to anticipate the future and lay out the whole action as a unified sequence of steps and stages, as required by the envisaged end."\(^\text{15}\)

In essence, the agent occupies a position of superior knowledge with regard to his/her own actions in that s/he already envisions (or en-versions) the outcome and retrospectively organizes the sequence of events needed to achieve that outcome. In other words, the agent simultaneously sustains the points of view of both the agent as teller, who locates self in relation to recollected past and expected future, and the agent as actor, who must act in the present toward the expected outcome. Carr argues that,

This prospective-retrospective principle of organization, though it does not literally eliminate the noise or "static," does permit us to distinguish the relevant and the useful from the intrusive, and allows us to push the extraneous into the background. This capacity to attend to what counts is like the author's principle of selection.\(^\text{16}\)

The principle Carr describes is not unlike William James' concept of selective attention. In Principles of Psychology, James postulates a stream of thought that exists as a part of the stream of consciousness.

\(^{15}\)Carr, p. 60.

\(^{16}\)Carr, p. 60.
Of the stream of thought James states, "It is interested in some parts of these objects [of the stream of consciousness] to the exclusion of others, and welcomes or rejects—chooses from among them, in a word—all the while." Carr's theory offers the guiding principle for such selection; the agent as teller projects a future state on the basis of which the agent as actor selects and organizes actions as well as carrying out those actions. The degree to which the agent manages these two points of view on his/her actions determines the extent to which s/he is able to act successfully.

This view of narrative, that human beings organize their experiences in this quasi-retrospective manner and act on the basis on an envisioned outcome, is incompatible with traditional theories of narrative. Traditional theories do not include the type of configurational process described above because the "actual" future, as opposed to the projected future, often intervenes, rendering the narrative invalid. Theorists who adopt this perspective argue that because projected narratives are vulnerable to the future, they do not have the same claim to "truth" or validity of those narratives that are told by storytellers who occupy a temporal position after the events narrated.

In basing their arguments on truth and validity, however, they stand on shaky theoretical ground. While a narrator who organizes a story from a position at or beyond the end of a complex series of events does have the advantage of basing his/her selection of events

---

on a kind of "lived-through" knowledge that is not available to the agent in the midst of a complex series of events. His/her selection is no more truthful or valid. Selection always involves the inclusion of some events and the exclusion of others based on a point of view. Two agents who lived through two identical series of events undoubtedly would choose to narrate different events of the series depending on what each saw as the significant aspects of his/her experience. In short, each narrative would embody a different point of view. Neither could lay claim to truth or validity. One's location in objective time has little, if anything, to do with truth claims with regard to narrative.

Even though unforeseen events can intervene between the agent and the projected end, the very fact that human beings act toward, rather than wait for, the future demonstrates that they have adopted a quasi-retrospective point of view in orienting themselves in time. The degree to which we achieve success or experience failure in our day to day actions demonstrates the narrative stretch of human consciousness. Neither of those concepts would have meaning without the notion of an end, which implies a beginning and a middle, or without the notion of choosing between or selecting from among competing courses of action. Furthermore, if the unforeseen arises, hampering us from achieving the anticipated end, we do not passively wait for whatever comes our way. Rather, we work to overcome the obstacle, all the while keeping our eye on the goal. As Carr notes, "we are constantly striving, with more or less success, to occupy the story-teller's position with respect to our own actions."18

18 Carr, p. 61.
maintain the storyteller's position with respect to our own actions is not necessarily a verbal activity. We strive to maintain this position through our ongoing actions rather than through consciously telling or reminding ourselves of our position within the complex action in which we are involved.

According to Carr, a second argument against the narrative structure of human experience and human action in everyday experience is that narrative requires telling, and where no audience exists there can be no telling. If, for example, someone entered a study where another person was reading a manuscript on prose rhythm and asked, "What are you doing?," the reader's response might be as simple as "I'm reading a manuscript." Granted, this response does not constitute a narrative. However, if that first individual followed that response with the simple question, "Why?," the reader probably would feel obligated to respond with some short explanation. The explanation, it should be noted, is not one that must be contrived at that instant. Rather, the narrative structure is already there, being lived, and waiting, if you will, to be spoken. Consider the following examples:

When I saw the editor of *Narrativity* in Jacksonville last weekend, she asked me if I would serve on the editorial board of her journal. I said that I anticipated receiving my first manuscript. I was being polite. Yesterday the editor called me. She wanted to know if I could review an article for her immediately. She hated to impose but one of her reviewers had returned it after eight weeks with a note that said that administrative duties would not allow him time to review the manuscript. It was an awful imposition but she hoped that I could have my response in the mail by tomorrow afternoon. Anyway, I told her if she sent it by express mail that I would try to meet the deadline. This morning when I got to the office the manuscript
had arrived. Now I'm trying to finish reading it so that I can get it in the mail this afternoon. My schedule won't allow me to work on it tomorrow.

Last week a colleague of mine gave me this manuscript on prose rhythm. When he asked me to read it four months ago I agreed. I thought he would give it to me right away. I certainly didn't expect him to give it to me during the busiest part of the year. I have been tied up every evening this week with the candidates we are interviewing for the new position in the department. But, this week is probably the only chance I will have to read it, since next week will be tied up with orientation activities and the following week I will be conducting a seminar every night for new graduate teaching assistants. If I don't get it back to him by Friday, I won't be able to get back to it for a month.

I just got my prospectus back from my dissertation advisor and he says although my literature review is good as far as it goes, I have neglected to look at what's been done with prose rhythms in Performance Studies. He gave me a photocopy of an original manuscript of an essay that appeared in a journal called Narrativity back in the 1980s. He says that it's better than the published essay because it was heavily edited before it was published. I hope it's good. He won't approve my prospectus until I expand that literature review.

Although in everyday experience we often are not asked the "why" question (except, perhaps, by children), the answer to that question lurks just below the surface in what phenomenologists might refer to as a pre-reflective, lived narrative form. Each of the foregoing responses gives voice to the lived expansive temporal horizons or boundaries that we have been discussing as constitutive of narrative structure. And, although these types of "stories" often are lived rather than verbalized to others, they nevertheless emulate narrative form, with evident beginnings, middles, and (projected) ends.
The telling, in each of these cases, occurs from a point somewhere in the middle that is experienced in terms of an actual beginning and a projected end. As a result, each story also demonstrates the speaker's assumption of the points of view of the agent as teller (quasi-retrospective), and the agent as actor (in the present). Before I analyze the existence of temporal horizons in each of these stories, I should note that these particular tellings reveal the extended temporal horizons of each of these speakers. The extended temporal horizon in each of these cases is what Carr refers to as the boundaries that are constituted through reflection and deliberation and that subsume the horizon constituted through retention and protention. The more immediate retentive-protentive horizon, demonstrated by the agent's actions, was broken by the interrupting question. In other words, although the speakers reveal their extended temporal horizons in these mini-narratives, the narratives themselves disrupt both the retentive-protentive horizons as well as the extended temporal horizons of which they are a part. The act of telling in each of these cases does not further the narratization (the lived narrative configuration), in which the agent quasi-retrospectively determines the order in which s/he needs to do things and on the basis of which s/he acts.\footnote{In the fourth chapter, we shall have occasion to discuss narrative acts whose retentive-protentive horizons are inextricably embedded in the extended temporal horizon of a complex and extended human action. Though the narratives explored here interrupt both of these horizons, they demonstrate the degree to which agents are aware of both the immediate and extended temporal horizons of their projects.}
The act of reading the manuscript constitutes the retentive-protentive, or most immediate temporal horizon for all three narrators. For the first speaker, the phone call from the editor of the journal and the anticipated action of depositing the manuscript in the mail with attendant suggestions constitutes one of the extended temporal horizons within which the narrower retentive-protentive horizon is embedded. This extended temporal horizon interacts with another extended temporal horizon constituted by the duties she implies in the final sentence of the narrative. Although the horizons of the second extended temporal field are not specified, it is evident that the speaker has taken into account the things she needs to accomplish tomorrow and has decided that she cannot count on that time to finish her review.

For the second speaker, the extended temporal horizon is constituted by the receipt of the manuscript "last week" and "Friday," after which he will not have any extra time to read the manuscript for a month. In light of that beginning and that end, the speaker quasi-retrospectively organizes everything he has to accomplish before Friday. This extended temporal horizon also is embedded within an even larger extended temporal horizon that includes the duties the narrator specifies within the narrative. Those duties include interviewing applicants for a job in his department, overseeing orientation activities for incoming graduate students, and conducting a seminar for graduate teaching assistants. The temporal boundaries that constitute this particular horizon as specified by this speaker are "this week," when he is engaged in interviewing candidates for a
position in the department, and a month from the present, when he foresees that his schedule will be more conducive for reviewing manuscripts.

The most immediate extended temporal horizon for the third speaker is constituted by his talk with his dissertation advisor, where he received further instructions with regard to the literature review, and the approval of the prospectus, which apparently will be accomplished as soon as he revises the literature review. Unlike the other speakers, this narrator does not specify a larger extended temporal horizon, although one or more must surely exist. For example, the fact that he is writing a dissertation implies one larger extended temporal horizon.

Examples like the ones discussed above indicate the degree to which narrative configuration forms the basis for action even when we do not feel compelled to "tell" anyone, even ourselves, what it is that we are doing. The predisposition to organize our actions in terms of an extended temporal horizon or, to engage in lived narrative configuration with regard to our experience, reveals two important points about human beings and human action.

First, even though the telling of stories (narration) often has an important function in social interactions with others, lived narrative configuration (narratization) has a more practical function in everyday life. In other words, although we often look back on our experiences, revising them, embellishing them, and commenting on them as we recount them to others in social settings, narrative configuration has a much more practical purpose in our everyday lives. Specifically, our
ability to engage in narratization with respect to our extended
temporal experiences and actions (in the midst of those experiences
and actions) is what allows us to pre-reflectively select and organize
the basic actions that allow us to achieve envisioned ends.

Second, in the midst of complex and extended actions predicated
on an extended temporal horizon we "see" our actions from the
perspective of an audience to whom the lived narrative is directed, in
addition to the perspectives of the storyteller (the quasi-retrospective
point of view) and the agent (the point of view of ourselves as
characters at whatever point we find ourselves in with respect to the
extended action as a whole). Carr describes the process of making
sense of an action or an experience as a process of intrapersonal
communication. "I (the narrator) tell or remind or explain to myself
(the hearer) what I (the character) am doing." In justifying or
explaining my own actions to myself, he adds,

the 'self as audience' to whom I address myself is
perhaps really a stand in for the genuine other: the
peers, friends, and authorities of my social milieu to
whom I so often give an accounting of myself by
recounting what I am doing and what I am about.\(^{20}\)

The "self," as George Herbert Mead, Herbert Blumer, and other
symbolic interactionists have pointed out, is a social construction.
The self arises through interaction with others. Eventually, individuals
learn to take on the perspective of either some specific other or what
Mead refers to as "generalized other" through communication with
others and, ultimately, through communication with oneself from the
perspective of others. The term self only makes sense when coupled

\(^{20}\text{Carr, p. 63.}\)
with the term other; neither can stand alone. Therefore, in using the
term self one always automatically brings other into the equation.21

Although Carr and Mead and Jaynes speak in terms of intra-
personal communication, Heidegger would argue that communication in
a strict sense, that is, "telling" oneself, is possible though not
necessary in either basic human actions or complex and extended
human action. Lived narrative configuration, though it may be raised
to a conscious level, can remain at a pre-thematic level as well. In
fact, whenever intrapersonal narrative configuration is raised to a
conscious or thematic level, the agent may objectify his/her own
experience, thereby disrupting both the retentive-protentive horizon as
well as the extended temporal horizon of the complex action. Unlike
Mead and Jaynes, who acknowledge the role of intrapersonal
communication, Carr variously couches the equation both with and
without communication. Although he speaks of telling, reminding, and
explaining in some contexts, in other contexts he argues that
narratives are lived phenomena.

In spite of these differences among theories and theorists, this
analysis has demonstrated the irony that Scholes and Kellogg identified
as central to narrative. Specifically, the analysis has demonstrated

21For further discussion of this perspective on the nature of
human action and social interaction see George Herbert Mead, Mind,
Self, and Society (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1934) and Herbert
Blumer, Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method (Englewood
Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1969). For further discussion of these
concepts as they relate to literature and performance see John M.
Allison, Jr., "Rehearsal in the Performance Process: A Description of
Selected Works in Transactional Theory, Symbolic Interactionism, and
Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1985.
how the narrator simultaneously adopts the often disparate points of view of the teller, the character(s), and the audience in the midst of an extended temporal experience or action in order to fund the principles of selection and arrangement. Embodiment of these various points of view on any experience or action, rather than the act of interpersonal verbalization, according to Carr, is the hallmark of narrative structure of human consciousness.

We maintain that all these structures and organizational features pertain to everyday experience and action whether or not the narrative structure or the act of narrative structuring takes the form of explicit verbalization.22

Reacting against Louis Mink's assertion that stories are told not lived, Carr maintains stories "are told in being lived and lived in being told."23

In other words, passive experiences, basic actions, and complex and extended actions and experiences all exhibit narrative structure whether or not they are ever verbalized to ourselves or to others. Human consciousness exhibits narrative structure independent of any sort of verbalization. Despite the fact that Carr is unwilling to grant priority to narrative in its literary embodiment, he does make one concession with regard to literary narrative. Although the narrative structure of human action and experience is temporally prior to its embodiment in literary narrative, literary narrative, with a narrator who recounts events from a temporal vantage point at the end of the events s/he describes and who is therefore capable of seeing all of the

22 Carr, p. 62.

23 Carr, p. 61.
events as a whole in all of their irony, is a more highly refined extension of the viewpoint inherent in human action.24

The Experience of "Mere Sequence"

Before turning to the fourth chapter, in which I apply these discoveries to fictional narratives, it is important to acknowledge that on rare occasions human beings do experience what Mink and White refer to as "mere sequence." The addendum that follows compares those rare occasions with what Carr has described as the narrative coherence of everyday life, demonstrating that time as mere sequence is the exception rather than the rule when discussing the temporality of human experience.

Later in his book, Carr discusses one further point that is germane to the present study. I am primarily interested in short narrative fiction in which the narrator is narrating from a vantage point in the midst of a complex or extended experience or action that has not yet reached closure; therefore, it is important to explore what may prove to be a possibility with regard to the question of why the events related in a literary narrative do not achieve closure.

Earlier we noted that extended and complex experiences and actions are often interrupted and intersected by other extended and complex experiences and actions. Therefore, individuals periodically find it necessary to reestablish what may be referred to variously as our temporal grasp of the extended action, our location in the reflective-deliberative framework, or, put simply, narrative coherence

24Carr, p. 61.
with regard to an extended temporal project. Sometimes an
individual's need to reestablish self in a larger temporal framework
involves a simple shift of focus from one temporal project to another.
For example, when I return to my office to continue working on my
dissertation after attending a meeting where faculty have been
discussing the criteria for including specific items on a reading list, I
simply shift my focus from one temporal project, the completion of
the reading list, to another, the particular section of the chapter I
happen to be working on. At other times, however, an individual may
lose sight of the larger temporal project while s/he is in the midst of
working on that project. Carr notes,

We all know what it is to "lose track" of what we are
doing while we are doing it. In some cases it may be
perfectly clear what we are doing in the immediate
sense (hammering a nail, writing a memo) but not why
we are doing it, that is how it fits into or hangs
together with a larger project and the other actions
that belong to it. It becomes detached from its
"surroundings," that is, from what precedes and follows
it. The larger project, of which it and other sub-
actions are parts, has disintegrated for us, has lost its
wholeness, completeness, or coherence.²⁵

In admitting the need to take stock periodically of where we stand
with regard to a temporal project while working on that project, we
call attention to a facet of human experience that has existed as
background in the study thus far. Namely, "at higher levels of
complexity . . . [human experiences and actions] have a tendency, or
at least a capacity, to fly apart or to fragment, thus losing their
narrative coherence."²⁶ Until this point in the study we have been

²⁵Carr, p. 87.
²⁶Carr, p. 88.
trying to define human temporality on the basis of its similarity to narrative structure. Now we turn to definition by difference. More specifically, we define the narrative structure of everyday human experience with reference to its opposite—time as a mere sequence of differentiated moments. Significantly, this move focuses our attention on the theories of time and narrative that we have associated with Mink, White, and the structuralists since the beginning of this study. In light of the discoveries we have made thus far, the view of time as sequence, advocated by adherents to the structuralist perspective, is the constant threat to the narrative coherence of temporal experience.

At what Heidegger refers to as moments of extreme anxiety, as well as in moments of severe boredom and fatigue, human beings experience what Carr would refer to as narrative incoherence. In other words, at these times human beings tend to lose their ability to "make sense," or temporalize, or narratize, the elements of their experience. This inability to engage in narratization renders human beings helpless in the senseless onslaught of one thing after another. At such times human experience borders on the character of "mere sequence." Unable to maintain the temporal grasp on any of the temporal projects in which s/he is involved, the individual experiences moment after moment without knowing how to place them into a larger temporal or narrative framework. Even in these moments, however, human beings constantly strive to reestablish control, or narrative coherence, over their own experience. To the extent that human beings strive to regain control and usually succeed
in reestablishing order, we rarely experience the total chaos of mere sequence. According to Carr,

mere sequence is not so much a possible type of experience as it is the dark and looming outer limit of experience, the chaos which stands opposed to order. It is the threat that experience will pass over into its opposite. This is a threat which is, admittedly, in varying degrees, permanently present at the periphery of our consciousness. . . .27

With this conclusion we turn away from the temporality of human experience as defined by phenomenologists and toward the type of temporality described in traditional narrative theory. Early in Chapter one we noted that Mink, White, and the structuralists, in particular, asserted that narrative coherence is an imaginative form imposed by authors and historians on temporal sequence, which they describe as the essence of reality. This study has argued from the beginning that human time is configured time, not only from the perspective of the end in clock time, but from a perspective in the midst of events as well. The retentive-protentive and recollective-deliberative grasps of the agent or mediator or narrator illustrate the impossibility of separating human experience and temporal considerations. Rather, the temporality of the experiencing human being cojoins the two, recognizing that human experience is a way of being-in-time. Only by insisting on a clear distinction between time and experience can one posit time as a series of differentiated points connected by human imagination only after the fact.

As readers of both literary and historical narratives, we are accustomed to the idea that a "good" narrative, told from a vantage point.

27Carr, p. 88.
point sometime after the end of the events in clock time, eliminates all unnecessary events and neatly ties up all of the threads of the plot. Admittedly, life as a whole does not correspond to the neat package often associated with literary and historical narrative. As human beings we constantly contend with interruptions to our temporal projects. On occasion we even encounter static, in the form of an experience or event that in no way ties in with any of the diverse complex or extended experiences or actions in which we are variously engaged. Such experiences, however, are the exception rather than the rule. Although we may from time to time encounter such an incoherent moment, for the most part we manage to make sense of our experiences, not once they have passed in clock time, but from a vantage point in the midst of those experiences. Furthermore, we have the ability to engage in purposive action, based on our ability to project the consequences of various courses of action available to us and to chose a path based on a careful weighing of the desired ends of our actions.

The fact that, for the most part, our experiences and actions make sense for us indicates that narrative coherence can be characterized as the "norm" or "rule" with regard to human experience. Narrative coherence can also be characterized as the norm or rule in that it serves as the standard whereby we identify and name those elements of experience that deviate from it. The primary way we label an experience or an action as unsuccessful is by comparison with regard to our temporal projection with regard to that experience. The phrase, "things didn't turn out like I planned," compares the outcome
of a particular course of action to the recollective-deliberative
framework or, as Carr says, the "story-like projection" in which the
course of action was decided on.26

Carr summarizes his position as follows. The events and actions
of everyday life are either already

embedded in the stories provided by our plans and
expectations or, if they are not, we look for and
anticipate the stories to which they do, will, or may
belong. Narrative coherence is what we find or effect
in much of our experience and action, and to the extent
that we do not we aim for it, try to produce it, and try
to restore it when it goes missing for whatever reason.
It is in this broad sense that we insist that everyday
reality is permeated with narrative. . . . Life can be
regarded as a constant effort, even a struggle, to
maintain or restore narrative coherence in the face of
an ever-threatening, impending chaos at all levels.29

Summary

To demonstrate the correspondence between human temporality
and narrative structure of human consciousness, three additional
correlations have been drawn between human temporality and time in
narrative. First, the relatively passive experiences and basic actions
examined in chapter two were shown to exhibit a narrative temporal
structure. Second, the analysis of the extended and complex actions
that comprise the majority of everyday human experience were shown
to exhibit, at base, a narrative structure. Finally, because narrative
traditionally implies a relationship between a mediator, or teller, and
an audience, the analysis demonstrated elements of human temporality

26Carr, p. 90.

29Carr, pp. 90-91.
that approximate this intricate relationship in everyday human experience.

The first section of this chapter demonstrated that at the pre-reflective level of experience, relatively passive experiences and basic actions exhibit a unified temporal structure even in the midst of the experience or action because the "end" of the experience or action is already available to the perceiver or the agent in the midst of the experience or action. Through the protentional-retentional structure, the perceiver pre-reflectively locates self in the present by reference to a retained past and a protended future. Similarly, the agent in a basic action commits his/her entire being toward the attainment of a futural state, thereby taking primary measure from the futural state without ever consciously reflecting about what that futural state entails.

The second section demonstrated how agents employ an explicitly narrational framework in temporalizing more complex and extended experiences and actions. Because complex and extended experiences and actions are often interrupted and intersected by other complex and extended experiences and actions, as an agent turns his/her attention to some particular extended action s/he must relocate himself/herself in the larger temporal framework. The reorientation process involves reorienting self with regard to the "end" of the larger temporal sequence through action and thereby organizing quasi-retrospectively the steps or stages that must be accomplished in order to complete the larger project. In other words, at the level of
complex and extended actions, we are still dealing with the concept of temporal closure.

The third section of the chapter demonstrates that individuals engage in narratization in order to maintain a sense of equilibrium within their own worlds. Our ability to engage in narratization with respect to our extended temporal experiences and actions (in the midst of those experiences and actions) is what allows us pre-reflectively to select and organize the basic actions that allow us to achieve envisioned ends. In maintaining the role of storyteller through narratization, individuals simultaneously incorporate and balance the points of view of the narrator, the subjects, and even the audiences (self and/or others) for whom they act as they do and to whom they would be prepared to relate the narrative structures they live through the actions they perform in everyday life.

The final section of the chapter demonstrates that the perspective advocated by the structuralists is diametrically opposed to the position of the phenomenologists. Human beings experience time as "mere sequence" only on those occasions, such as moments of anxiety, when they lose their ability to "make sense," or temporalize the various elements of experience. Carr equates these moments with narrative incoherence. Narrative incoherence, however, is the exception rather than the rule. When they occur, human beings strive to reestablish control, or narrative coherence, over their own experience.

From the beginning of this study to the present, we have been contrasting theories of time based on an objective model with theories
of time based on a more subject-centered model. For the most part, theories of narrative, whether in literary study, history, or performance studies, have adopted the more objective model without questioning its premises. Thus far, this study has contrasted the two, exploring the implications of the more subject-centered model for everyday human experience. In doing so, it has replaced objective time as measured by the clock with the temporality of the perceiving subject and the acting agent. With the help of Heidegger and Carr, I have established that at certain levels of human experience and action time assumes temporally expansive forms characterized by narrative coherence. In making this shift, this study has displaced the notion of duality of time as the primary defining characteristic of narrative and replaced it with the concept of mediacy. The first half of the chapter that follows explores the implications of replacing the notion of a duality of time with the temporality of mediacy at a theoretical level. The second half of chapter four and the greater part of chapter five apply these discoveries to short works of first-person narrative fiction.
Chapter 4

Toward a Theory of the Temporality of Mediacy in Short, First-Person Narrative Fiction

The first three chapters of this study demonstrate that human beings are, in essence, temporal creatures. Time, in the most primordial sense of the term, is not something that exists for us independently of our experience of the world. Rather, it is part and parcel of the manner in which we experience the world; it is, in fact, our primary mode of being-in-the-world. Moreover, narrative structure—beginning, middle, and end—most closely characterizes the temporal structure of everyday human experience and action. Significantly, the narrative structure of human experience is operational as we anticipate the outcome of an experience or action, as we locate ourselves in the midst of an extended experience or action, and/or as an extended experience or action achieves temporal closure. Narrative structure, in short, need not be reserved for a retrospective application to the varied elements of human experience and action.

This perspective does not deny that time, in the objective sense of the term, is operational in everyday human experience. Obviously, the clock exerts a great deal of influence over human activity. Although this study has argued against the priority of an objective model of time, its primary objective has been to clear a space along side the clock model for a more subject centered model of temporality.

As I turn my attention away from the temporality of everyday human experience and back toward time in literary narrative, my goal
is the same. Theories of time in narrative based on the more objective model need not be abandoned. I believe that the phenomenological model, based on the works of phenomenologists in general and articulated most thoroughly by David Carr, offers a new perspective that can take its place along side more objective models and the theories of time in narrative that are grounded in them. Ultimately, I hope for a pluralistic understanding of time in narrative.

The phenomenological model questions notions of time in narrative that are accepted as given in narratology. Specifically, the phenomenological model outlined in the two previous chapters recognizes the notions of expansive temporality, and extended and complex experiences and actions. In doing so, the phenomenological model locates the site of temporality within the perceiving/acting subject, or, in the case of literary texts, within the narrating subject. Consequently, the phenomenological model calls into question the generally accepted idea that a clear distinction exists between the time of the events and the time of the telling.

In replacing this distinction with a more complex understanding of temporal expansiveness, the phenomenological model acknowledges that a narrative may be related from any "moment" within an expansive temporal framework. The "telling," as a result, may be as much a part of the extended temporal action as are the events related by a narrator. Furthermore, the complex action or experience in which the narrator is involved may not achieve closure even in the act of telling. In other words, the "end" of the extended action or experience may still exist somewhere in the future for the narrator.
Even though that future does not reach fruition in the narrative act, it is nonetheless important in understanding the narrative as given. In projecting an end, as pointed out in the last chapter, an agent quasi-retrospectively organizes his/her actions in order to achieve that end. Therefore, even though the end may never be articulated explicitly by the narrator, it still influences the construction and telling of the narrative.

In spite of the arguments against the use of the terms first-person and third-person with regard to narrative, they remain the primary means of distinguishing point of view in narrative fiction. Therefore, although these terms are set aside initially, they are reintroduced in the second section of the chapter. When they are reintroduced, however, they are redefined and differentiated from one another in light of the temporal stretch of the narrating consciousness.

The last major section of the present chapter explores the implications of the temporality of mediacy for monotemporal narrative, that is, narratives in which the narrator tells his/her story from a vantage point in the midst of an extended temporal field that includes the events recounted and has not yet achieved temporal closure. Because the phenomenological method depends on the individual character of specific narrators and narratives, this last section analyzes two short works of first-person, monotemporal narrative

---

The Temporalization of Narrative

Thus far, with the help of David Carr’s theory of human temporality, I have demonstrated that one reason human beings narrate, tell stories, is to make sense of the world for themselves and for others. More importantly, I have confirmed Carr’s conviction that for the most part human beings structure the experiences and actions of their worlds in a narrative fashion not only retroactively as they look back on experience and action, but proactively as they act toward achieving an envisioned future. Narrative configuration, as a result, has been rescued from its status as the end product of experience and action, to be established as a process that is instrumental in achieving the future.

Recognizing narrative as an instrumental process requires that the critic maintain in the critical foreground the complex dynamics involved in the act of narrating. The act of telling "stories" in everyday human experience has no terminal value in and of itself, it always is imbedded in some larger temporal context. Human beings tell stories to make people laugh, to change people’s minds, to clarify situations, to put forth their own point of view, etc.2 Even when human beings tell stories to themselves in the absence of any actual external "audience," they necessarily take into account a point of view

---

other than their own. For example, when we tell ourselves stories about a series of events in order to justify our own actions, we automatically take into account (at the very least) anticipated objections specific others or a social group to which one belongs might have about those actions. The need to justify arises only through the recognition of disparate points of view. The narrator, then, while s/he may speak to no one but himself or herself, adopts a point of view on the actions that is other than his/her own.\textsuperscript{3} Even when such stories are thought through without being "verbalized" to another, an alternate perspective influences the "silent" or intrapersonal telling--the internal narratization.

The telling of a story, then, is a temporal act that takes place within a larger temporal context that almost always has been configured by the narrator prior to the telling of his/her story. When applied to literary narrative, Carr's theory does not negate the narrator's relationship to events that have already been lived through. It does, however, draw attention to the often neglected futural dimension of the narrative act. In insisting on the futural dimension of the narrative act, Carr's theory allows consideration of a broader range of narrative possibilities than do theories that focus primarily on the relationship between the time of the events and the time of the telling.

\textsuperscript{3}The joke in narrative form, at first glance, appears to be an exception to this rule. However, when you consider how often you either clean up a joke to tell it to a particular person or chose not to tell certain jokes to, say, your parents, you can see that the general principle of taking the other's perspective is still operational in "fixed" texts.
Most theories of literary narrative recognize, at least nominally, that literary narrative consists of a cluster of complex relationships between the narrator, the narratee, the context of the communication, and the content of the narrative. In practice, however, the narratee and the context of communication often are accorded less significance than the narrator and the content of the narrative. In examining narrative, phenomenology begins with the perceiving and acting subject (the narrator) and his/her situatedness in the world, which, as this study has shown, is grounded in the narrator's sense of his/her own temporality. To that end, narrative in general and "literary" narrative in particular must be reconceived in light of human temporality. Specifically, the shift to the more subject-centered model of temporality recognizes that in addition to the temporality of the events from the past recounted in the narrative, the perceiving and acting subject is grounded in a world of which the narratee and the communicative context are integral components. Based on this situatedness in the world, the narrating agent projects and is subject to the horizons of an extended temporal field. In other words, the narrating subject in telling his/her story (narrating) also narratizes his/her place in the world.

Although the dominant form of narrative is one in which the narrator discusses events that happened in the past, the conclusion that narrative focuses on the relationship between a narrator speaking in the present and events from the past is an oversimplification of the narrative act. This conclusion takes for granted the ways in which narrative is used in everyday human experience. In everyday human
experience narrators almost always discuss events from the past, yet they do so with narratee(s) in a communicative context. The narrative act, while recounting events from the past, has implications for the future as well as for the present defined by the telling. The narrative act, of which a narrative is a record, is a dialectic between past and future. While the narrator draws on (real or fictive) events from the past, the structure of the narrative is equally dependent on what the narrator is trying to achieve—the envisioned future. The future envisioned by the narrator almost always extends beyond the temporal boundaries of the basic act of narrating—temporal boundaries that should not to be confused with the temporal stretch of the events recounted in the narrative act—to a state of affairs the narrator tries to bring about, in part, by telling the story.

As I have noted, the act of narrating is an instrumental process. The ordering of events in a particular narrative structure is based on the narrator's situatedness in the temporally expansive present. If for some reason I create two different narratives covering the same span of events, it is not because I arbitrarily choose to impose different narrative structures on those events. Instead, the two different narratives arise as I temporalize or narratize two different extended temporal fields. Consider, for example, the following hypothetical sequence of events.

In the early hours of a Monday morning, I finish typing up the final examination for one of my classes. The examination, scheduled to be given around noon that same Monday, has to be run off and collated prior to that time. After driving across town to the
university to pick up some other materials that I need to have
photocopied, I drive to the nearest photocopying center. The earliest
time they can have the exam ready is at 3:00 p.m., too late to meet
my deadline. At their suggestion I drive across town to one of their
branch offices that is not subject to the end of the semester crunch
at the university. On the way to the second photocopying center, my
car breaks down. The mechanic at a nearby station cannot even look
at my car until around 1:00 p.m. I call several friends. The first two
are not at home, the third has back trouble and cannot get out of
bed. The fourth friend agrees to pick me up, take me to have the
exam copied, and deliver me back to the university. Though not
feeling the end of the semester crush, the second photocopying center
is swamped. I take one of the clerks aside and tell her my dilemma.
She agrees to try to rush the order. The order is completed fifteen
minutes before the examination is scheduled to start. Because we are
in a hurry and I know the part of town we will be travelling in, I
drive. In our haste to get back to school, I exceed the speed limit
and am ticketed by the police. I arrive for the examination twelve
minutes late. The test is neither stapled nor collated, but I give it
out piecemeal. Fortunately, none of my students has left.

On that ill-fated morning, the envisioned end of my actions was
arriving at school with the copies of the examination. Therefore, the
configured temporal field or narratization began at that point when I
focused my attention on the task at hand and would end when I
arrived at school with examinations in hand. The outside deadline for
my arrival was 12:00 a.m. As I began my errands that morning, the
clock time was important, but secondary to achieving the task at hand. In other words, the time itself was unimportant apart from the actions I had to perform in order to achieve my goal.

From the point of view that I have espoused throughout this study, this sequence of events could be the focus of either a narration or a narratization. As I am in the midst of these events, they serve as a narratization. Even while I am living through them, however, I can narrate at least some of these events either to myself or to any of the other participants I encounter during this extended temporal event. For example, suppose I narrate the events of the morning to the mechanic, to the friend who comes to pick me up, to the clerk in the second photocopy center, and to the police officer. In each case my "story" is different. Admittedly part of the difference in each story is the result of events that have come to pass since the last time I was engaged in narrating. The addition of new events, however, is not the most significant difference. In fact, the story I tell the police officer, though it falls later in the sequence of events, probably is a great deal shorter than the story I tell the clerk at the second photocopy center, even though other events have taken place since I told my story to the clerk. At the point in time when I encounter the police officer I am so constrained by the deadline, the narration is a great deal shorter. In the first place, I recognize that I am in the wrong and deserve the ticket and that whatever I say will not change this simple fact. In the second place, I realize that telling a longer story will keep me from achieving my goal, arriving at school in time to give the final examination. With the clerk in the
photocopy center, however, whether I get the tests photocopied
depends on how convincing I am in telling my story. Because I am
not as constrained by my deadline in that circumstance and because
my success depends on my persuasiveness, I add a great deal more
detail in relating the story.

In each of the many narratives I might tell during this extended
series of events, the futural horizon of the extended temporal field
always is arriving at school in time for the scheduled examination.
Even if I fail to mention the examination deadline in any of these
narratives, it is nonetheless important in the creation of the narrative
because it is the "end" of the complex, extended temporal action
toward which I am working. It also serves as the basis for the
selection and arrangement of the events, though uncompleted, into a
narrative form. Each narration, in short, is based on the "end" of a
complex temporal action that has already been sighted in advance.

A substantial number of narrative theorists have focused on other
kinds of narrative acts that occur after the events have achieved
closure. From their point of view, as I have established throughout
this study, a narrative can be constructed about this sequence of
events only after I have achieved my goal. Ricoeur, who comes
closest to the phenomenological model, would deny narrative status to
any of these stories. The explanations that I have termed narratives
would fall within Ricoeur's configuration stage. According to Ricoeur,
narrative status cannot be conferred on this sequence of events until
I have lived through the end of the events and refigured them on the
basis of the end. For example, if I felt the need to tell the class why
I was late arriving for the examination period, I could tell a narrative about my morning’s adventures. Or, if two weeks later I met with a group of friends to celebrate the end of the semester, I could contribute this narrative as part of a ritual of telling actual horror stories about the semester we had all just finished.

The examples of narratives told later are temporally different from those narratives recounted before the events achieved closure, but the latter are nonetheless narratives. The "end" of the extended series of events, though interrupted by many unforseen incidents, was always already available to me and, therefore, allowed me to create narratives about my experiences even in the midst of those experiences. Furthermore, the tellings that originate after I have lived through the end of the events are parts of new extended temporal actions and experiences. Put another way, the after-the-fact narrations are part of new narratizations. In the first instance, the narrative used to explain my tardiness to the final examination may be a strategy to ward off any complaints that might be made to the departmental administration. Although I certainly do not say this to the students, it is part of an envisioned end that extends beyond the expansive present of the telling. With that end in mind, the narrative becomes an instrument to circumvent any complaints. Moreover, the narrative is created with that end in mind. The story I tell to my friends at a local restaurant two weeks later is part of another envisioned extended temporal event or narratization. The extended temporal event is a party of indeterminate length for the purpose of exorcising the stress that accumulated over the course of the
semester. Laughter and commiseration having been deemed by this particular social group as the proper tools for use in such exorcisms, I contribute a humorous version of the story. The constraints of the context as dictated by its "end," or purpose, determine which aspects of the story will be given primary consideration and which aspects will be accorded secondary consideration in any particular telling. The telling, in short, is a configuration of these events based on the constraints of the expansive temporal field in which I am currently engaged.

Although this configurational process technically could be called a reconfiguration of the events, the term reconfiguration suggests a conscious comparison of this configuration with another configuration or with the events themselves. While such comparison is conceivable from an objective point of view, I do not compare this particular configuration with some other or with the events themselves, it is a natural outgrowth of the temporal context in which I find myself.

Because in these latter incidents I have lived through the end of the events, the events that were at one point in my life part of a narratization, have been turned into a narration of events that have a beginning, middle, and end. Furthermore, that narration does not stand alone disconnected from time and context. Most narrative theory would lead one to believe that narrating is a disconnected act in the sense that the primary purpose of narrative is to represent faithfully events that happened in the past. The theory proposed by Carr, which I adapt to literary narratives, does not seek to override or overrule the importance of the past in narrative theory. Instead,
the proposed theory attempts to include a futural dimension that will complement existing narrative theory. The cornerstone of the theory Carr proposes with regard to everyday human experience and action, which I argue should be applied to literary narrative, is that although narratives almost invariably relate events that happened in the past, human beings use narration to make sense of and exist in the expansive temporal field in which we are engaged. To that end, a temporalization of narrative and narrative theory would recognize the following axioms with regard to narrative.

First, narration (the act of telling) is a basic act embedded within a narratization. A narratization is the lived narrative configuration of an extended temporal event that has not yet achieved closure, yet its end, sighted in advance, serves as the basis for selecting actions to achieve that end. Narrating, then, is a strategy for achieving the envisioned end of a narratization.

Second, although both narration and narratization are temporal categories that have a beginning, a middle, and an end, the beginning, middle and end of the narration does not correspond to the beginning, middle, and end of the narratization. Whereas the beginning, middle, and end of the act of telling are recorded in a written narrative text, the beginning, middle, and end of the narratization are, like the events described in any narrating, only implied by the written narrative text. The end of the narratization exists somewhere beyond the temporal boundary of the narration. Though the projected end of the narratization often remains unrecorded, it is nonetheless important in explaining this one (among many possible) narrative configuration(s)
for this particular series of events. For example, if I wrote down the narrative I told my friends at the end of the semester party, the beginning, middle, and end recorded would correspond to the beginning, middle, and end of the narration, the act of telling. Because in narrating that series of events I did not include a discussion of how this particular narrative fit into the situation in which we all found ourselves, the relationship of the story to other stories that had been told that night, and my purpose in relating the story, the temporal boundaries of the extended event (the narratization) would not be recorded in my narrative. Nevertheless, the influence of that unrecorded context (which is, as I contend, a temporal context) finds its way into the narration and, hence, my narrative. Similarly, if I recorded the narrative I told my students on that fateful examination morning, it also would bear the traces of the narratization in which I was engaged at that particular moment, even though the elements of the narratization were not explicitly discussed. Narration, in short, always bears the mark of the unrecorded narratization, or temporalized context, of which it is a part.

Third, the events and the narrative act may be a part of the same expansive temporal field. As noted earlier, unless a written narrative text ends in ellipsis, indicating that the act of narrating continues indefinitely, the act of narrating has a definite beginning, middle, and end. Even though the act of narrating usually has the structure of a clearly identifiable beginning, middle, and end, the events recounted in the narrative (from the point of view of the narrating subject) may or may not have a clearly defined beginning,
middle, and end. When the events recounted in the narration appear, from the point of view of the narrating subject, to achieve resolution, the reader is dealing with a previous narratization that has been lived through. Because the narrator has already lived though the (once envisioned, now completed) end of the extended series of events, a former narratization has achieved temporal closure. In retelling those events from a standpoint beyond the end of the interrelated series of events, the narrator is using a former narratization as a narration in a new extended temporal field. The new extended temporal field is not limited to the temporal horizons of the events recounted in the act of narrating. On the contrary, it takes into account the temporal horizons of the narratization of which it is presently a part, for instance, when I told my students my reasons for being late in order to forestall any complaints to the departmental administration.

Although the vast majority of my telling was devoted to the events I experienced earlier that morning, this particular telling was defined by the context in which I found myself with my students, the students themselves, our mutual stated purpose for being there, and my unspoken purpose in telling the story; all are factors in my narratization, which is lived rather than told.

When, on the other hand, the events recounted in the narration fail, from the point of view of the narrating subject, to achieve resolution, the reader may be dealing with a narration in which the events recounted share the same temporal endpoint with the concurrent narratization. In other words, the envisioned end of the series of events in which the narrating subject is entangled has not
yet been lived through. As a result, the narration becomes an action to help the narrator achieve the end of his/her current narratization. The narration and the narratization share the same extended temporal field and therefore the narrative can be labelled monotemporal. For example, the narration I engaged in with the clerk at the photocopy center had a beginning, a middle, and an end. The end of the narration, however, was not commensurate with the end of my actions. The end of my actions was arriving at school in time to give the examination. Although I had not lived through all of the actions that would eventually land me in the classroom facing my class, I was nonetheless able to create a narrative from the point of view of that envisioned end. The act of telling, then, like all of the other actions of that morning before I arrived at school, was part of the same extended temporal field. All of my actions that morning, including the acts of narrating, were geared toward arriving at school with the examinations in hand. The acts of narration were not reflections on primary experience, they were part of my primary experience. In short, the time of the narration and the time of the narratization were one in the same. Hence, the narrative was monotemporal, as were all the narratives I told that morning prior to arriving at school.

Although these examples are based on a hypothetical example grounded in human experience rather than a "literary" narrative, they point to the kind of distinctions that can be made with regard to literary narratives. Although the events recorded in literary narrative probably never occurred, narrative form implies that they did. Similarly, the use of narrative, which I have defined as having
instrumental value rather than terminal value, implies a larger temporal context of which the narration is only a part. Although narrative theorists have not focused their study on a larger temporal context into which the narration falls, they have focused a great deal of attention on "reconstructing" the events on which any particular narrative act is based for the purpose of comparing the telling with the actual events. From a phenomenological perspective, the narratization of which the telling is a part is no more fictive than are the events that are studied by a significant number of narrative theorists. A narrative, after all, is a blueprint for a narrative act, not for the events which the narrative purports to relate. To that end, the analysis and criticism of literary narratives need to reflect cognizance of the futural dimensions of the act of narrating.

Narratologists for the most part examined narratives that had obvious distinctions between the events and the telling of them, distinctions suitably measured by "clock time." Notions of the futural orientation of the narrator were not relevant to their studies. Furthermore, many narratologists assume that narrative has terminal value rather than instrumental value. More specifically, they assume that in any given narrative both the events and the discourse about those events achieve closure. Even those narrative theorists who recognize narration as a process rather than a product, suggest that the end or purpose of the narrative is achieved in the telling.

Although in rare cases the narrator's purpose may be achieved in the act of telling, most often the futural state toward which the narrator is working lies somewhere beyond the boundary of the
narration itself. Consider, for example, the manner in which Hercule Poirot, Agatha Christie's Belgian detective, wraps up most of his cases.¹ Having solved the mystery to his own satisfaction, Poirot gathers the major players and narrates the events that lead up to the present moment, when he plans to reveal the perpetrator of the crime. As the eccentric character that Christie has drawn, he may narrate the events for any number of reasons. If the futural state that he is working toward is the apprehension of the criminal, then even though his narrative reveals the identity of the murderer, the apprehension of the criminal by the police may lie well outside the boundary of the narrative itself. If the detective's primary purpose is the satisfaction that comes when people admire and praise his powers of deduction, the futural state still lies beyond (though just beyond) the boundaries of the narration. Even though the envisioned futural state lies just beyond the boundary of the narration, it is nonetheless outside the realm of the narration. Furthermore, this envisioned futural state is as central as the events themselves in determining the manner in which the narrative is constructed and told. Only if Poirot were unsure of the identity of the criminal as he began the narration and if, through little traps in the narrative, he were able to deduce the identity of the criminal, would the futural state and the end of the narrative coincide in the naming of the criminal.

¹Although the adventures of Poirot are usually recorded either by an anonymous third-person narrator or by Captain Hastings, "Poirot's earnest mascot and would-be mentor," Poirot's solutions are usually an embedded first-person narrative told by the detective himself.
A final reason narratologists have not accorded a great deal of significance to the futural dimension of narrative is their unquestioned acceptance of the idea that narrative can be divided easily into "story" and "discourse." According to Seymour Chatman,

> each narrative has two parts: a story (historie), the content or chain of events (actions, happenings, plus what may be called existents (characters, items of setting); and a discourse (discours), that is, the expression, the means by which the content is communicated.⁵

This division sets up the expectation that narrative depends on a tension between past and present. The definition, by its very construction, confers priority on the events. Performers dealing with narrative, however, are interested in the fact that a narrative is, strictly speaking, a record of the narrative act, the discourse. The division of narrative into story and discourse fosters the notion that the rendering of events in any narrative is a more or less objective record of those events. Even though the narrative may include a detailed account of events, it is nonetheless an account of the events configured by the narrator based on the events, the communicative context, and the future state the narrator is trying to achieve.

**The Narrative Act**

The narrative act is dependent on the end or purpose of the more extended complex action of which it is a part. The hammering of nails for the purpose of building a bookcase is determined by the envisioned finished bookcase. Similarly, the construction of a story

---

depends on the futural state the narrator is working to achieve through the narrative act. As with the bookcase, many other actions may be involved before the narrator actually achieves the envisioned futural state. Also, in both cases, unforeseen actions or events may intervene between the act of nailing and the completion of the bookcase or the act of telling and the achievement of the futural state the narrator is striving to bring about. Although each of these basic actions helps bring about an envisioned future, it is selected and carried out with the envisioned future in mind. The basic action and the extended action, in other words, are interdependent.

The narrative act is a single basic action among many basic actions in an extended temporal field. According to the phenomenological model, the function of the narrative act is analogous to the function of the "now" in the expansive present, which was discussed in the second chapter. The "now" is not available in human experience as a discrete point, cut off from other moments in an expansive present; it is a point of access to the multiplicity of time. Similarly, the expansive "now" of the narrative act is a point of access to an extended temporal field. The narrative act encircles the past and the future of an extended temporal field. In the narrative act, in other words, the envisioned future is "spoken" in terms of the past and the past is "spoken" in terms of the envisioned future. For this reason, the phenomenological model leads to the conclusion that the

---

6Although the narrative act may take on more complex forms, as in a narrative of great length or an epistolary novel, the subject matter of this study is short works of narrative fiction, which are analogous to basic acts in everyday human experience.
narrative act is a dialectic between the past and the future. In any given narrative act, then, although one may be more salient than the other, neither should be discounted in the study of narrative.

For all the emphasis that this study has placed on the futural dimension of human experience and the futural dimension of narrative structure, it does not seek to displace or dispose of the obvious relationship between past and present in narrative. Instead, it attempts to overlay the futural dimension of the narrative act on an existing structure already outlined by narratologists. Admittedly, such an overlay inevitably refigures the whole of narratology. However, in doing so it extends rather than denies the significance of most narratological concepts. In fact, the work the structuralists have done with concepts such as "narratee" enables a broader definition of narrative that includes consideration of the futural dimension of the narrative act.

The idea that the narrative act is a dialectic between past and present in an extended temporal action is not limited to first-person narrative. Indeed, if the idea is valid, it must apply to both first-person and third-person narrative. The orientation of the narrator within the extended temporal field in various forms of narrative, however, need not be divided equally between past and present. The following examination reveals that although the futural dimension of the narrative act is applicable to both first- and third-person narrative, it is more prominent in first-person narrative and most salient in monotemporal first-person narrative.
Guiding Principles

In *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, Wayne Booth maintains that the terms first-person and third-person have been overused to such a degree that they have lost their effectiveness as descriptors.7 Despite these arguments, the terms first-person and third-person remain the primary means of differentiating point of view in narrative fiction. Therefore, it is important to define the term "first-person" as it is used in this study. Since this study has relied on a subject-centered model from the beginning, the term will be defined with regard to the narrating subject. The term first-person refers to a narrator who, in addition to his/her role as narrator, is either a major or minor character within the world of the story.4

Furthermore, because the narrator is represented as an experiencing and acting human being within the world of the story, s/he is subject to human limitation. In other words, the narrator cannot reveal the thoughts and feelings of other characters in the world of the story, nor can s/he report on the activities and actions of other characters to which s/he was not a witness unless they are shared with the narrator by some other character within the world of the story. In short, the narrator who is subject to human limitation can only report on and conjecture about what s/he sees and hears.

---

7 Wayne C. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1983), pp. 5-6. Although Booth recants on p. 241, I contend that, when used generally, these terms cannot account for the complexities of the issue of point of view.

In first-person narratives that adhere to the logic of human experience and action, the reader engages in the imaginative enactment of the temporality of an other. Specifically, the reader experiences a fictive world from the standpoint of the temporality of the narrator. Whereas a third-person narrator often effaces himself or herself in the telling of the story, the first-person narrator usually identifies himself or herself not only as the teller of the story but as a character within the world of the story s/he tells as well. The first-person narrator is given body and voice, a certain proximity to the events and, consequently, a role that effects his/her perceptual and attitudinal point of view on those events. Furthermore, the first-person narrator occupies a position in the fictive world that is most similar to the position of the experiencing and acting human being in the world described in the first three chapters.

Traditionally, readers, particularly those most experienced readers, critics and theorists, have assumed that the narrator stands at a point in time somewhere after the end of the events in the story. Furthermore, they argue, the narrator looks back on those events investing them a significance and a coherence that they would not have for that narrator if s/he did not possess superior knowledge about the events on the basis of having lived through them. Even when one shifts perspective to the more subject centered model, narrators almost always limit themselves to relating events that have already happened, that is, the events narrators discuss have passed in clock time. This shift in perspective, however, does not support the idea that the narrator stands at some point anterior to the series of
events endowing them with coherence and significance the events do not otherwise have. In fact, because the end of the extended temporal field is largely the prerogative of the perceiving and acting subject as s/he exists in and is constrained by the world, the shift in perspective necessitates a reconsideration of the notion of the end. The narrator, in telling about a series of events, may not yet have achieved (lived-through) the envisioned end of the series of events.

In some contemporary instances of first-person fiction, in particular, narrators seem to be narrating from a vantage point in the midst of an extended series of interconnected temporal events. Undoubtedly, from either point of view, the events that first-person narrators recount in these narratives have already passed in clock time when the narrator begins speaking. Nevertheless, the act of telling seems to be as much a part of the "story" as are the events that have passed in clock time. Furthermore, even when the telling brings the events "up to the moment," the temporal stretch of the narrating consciousness seems to include not only the act of telling but some other (often unspecified) imminent action or event that is implied in the act of telling. Therefore, the act of narrating can take place, for any number of reasons, prior to the narrating subject's living through the envisioned end.

Implications for "Literary" Narrative

Narrative theorists have been most interested in the relationship between the events recounted in any particular narrative and the manipulation of those events in the narrator's discourse about them.
In effect, narrative theory has been limited to a discussion of the relationship between points in time, specifically the relationship between the past and the present. Because I am interested in a practical, experiential form of criticism, the theory proposed here encourages the inclusion of an essentially futural dimension of "literary" narrative along with the more traditional retrospective view advocated by most narrative theorists.

Although the theory proposed here is applicable to all forms of narrative, this study is limited to first-person narrative fiction in which the narration and the narratization are conceivable as part of the same extended series of events. In other words, the study focuses on those first-person narratives that can be considered monotemporal from a phenomenological perspective. The reason for limiting the present study to this particular type of narrative is centered in the conviction that these narratives have been least well served by conventional narrative theory. Also, focus on this particular type of narrative illuminates various possibilities within this particular form that deviate from the outline of the form described in the hypothetical personal example above.

The preceding sections establish the following important points. First, any narrative act is a basic act that has a beginning, middle, and end. Second, although the basic action exhibits this structure, the events covered in the narration may not, from the point of view of the narrator, exhibit a beginning, middle, and end structure. Because the interrelation of an extended series of events is the prerogative of the narrator and not a function of clock time, the temporal boundary
of an extended series of temporal events may exist in the future.

Third, given this possibility, an act of narration can be one of the
many basic actions the narrator uses in his/her attempts to achieve
the end of the extended series of temporal events.

From an experiential view, although narration is always part of a
narratization, the events of the narration and the events of the
narratization are only occasionally cotemporal, i.e., belong to the same
extended series of temporal events. Consequently, one of the chief
difficulties facing the practical critic of first-person narrative is
determining whether or not a narration and a narratization are
cotemporal. The "end" of the narrator's narratization, after all, is
seldom encoded explicitly into the narration. Conclusions in this area
are largely the prerogative of the reader. The primary obstacle, then,
concerns determining the character of the narratization. First, the
reader must look at the events recounted in the narration. If, from
the point of view of the narrator, the events recounted exhibit a clear
resolution, i.e., a beginning, a middle, and an end, then the reader
probably is dealing with a clear temporal distinction between the
telling and the events. If, on the other hand, the events exhibit no
clear resolution, chances are that the end of the extended series of
events recounted in the narration still exists at some point in the
future for the narrator. Moreover, the narration is a strategy that
the narrator employs to achieve the end of the narratization.

Because in such cases narrating is but one basic action among
many that make up an ongoing narratization, the narrative act can
conceivably fall anywhere within the expansive temporal field of a
narratization. For example, the narrative act might come immediately after an inciting action or event in an ongoing narratization, or it might be one of the final actions that enables the narrator to achieve the end of a narratization. Without examining specific monotemporal narratives, however, it is difficult to explain the various directions a cotemporal narratization can take. To that end, this study now turns its attention to specific examples.

"My Sister's Marriage": A Struggle Between Opposing Narratizations

On first reading "My Sister's Marriage," one is struck by the degree to which the narrator, Sarah Ann, seems preoccupied with the narratees to whom she is speaking. Although the narratees are never identified specifically, the kind of information that the narrator supplies along with her reference to them as "outsiders" and "strangers" who couldn't possibly understand her situation, the reader recognizes that the narratees are unknown to the narrator. This factor alone is not remarkable. What is remarkable is the degree to which Sarah Ann appears to be threatened by the presence of the narratees. She assumes that the narratees will not understand her position and, in fact, will take her sister's side "in all of this" (p. 161).

The "story" itself is fairly straightforward. At some point in time, unspecified by Sarah Ann, her mother died, leaving Olive and her

---

to take care of their father. Their father, Dr. Landis, foisted the roles of wife and mother on to Olive, the eldest daughter. A strict disciplinarian, Dr. Landis also encouraged his daughters to depend on him for all social knowledge and proper attitudes. As Olive matured she began to rebel against his authoritarianism. Eventually she began to meet a young man, Mr. Dixon, in secret. When she had fallen in love with him, she asked her father to meet him. He insisted that this young man was not proper and that she end the relationship. Olive eloped with her young man but continued to write letters to Sarah Ann, hoping to restore a relationship with her father.

From the beginning, Sarah Ann coveted the relationship between her father and Olive. "Taking care of our father," she says, "was like playing a long game of 'let's pretend,' and when little girls play family nobody wants to be the children. I though it wasn't fair, just because Olive was three years older, that she should always be the mother. I wanted to sit opposite my father at dinner and have him smile at me like that" (p. 162). She was glad, then, when Olive began "walking out with young men in the evenings" (p. 162). Eventually Olive told Sarah Ann of her relationship with Mr. Dixon, a secret that Sarah Ann kept from her father. When the truth came out Sarah Ann sided with her father, and when Olive eloped with Mr. Dixon she was almost joyful in knowing that she would never have done that to her father. When the letters began to arrive from Olive after the elopement, Sarah Ann kept them from her father. One day when he was coming into her room he saw her hiding them in a cubbyhole in her desk and demanded that she surrender the letters to him so that he could burn
them. A year after the elopement, she discovered the letters in his
desk drawer, "tied in a slim green hair ribbon—it was one of mine,
but I suppose he had found it and thought it was Olive's" (p. 169).
Fearing that he would be constantly reading them and thinking of
Olive, she took them to the incinerator in the back yard and burned
them one by one while her ailing father watched from his bed by the
window.

This summary of "My Sister's Marriage" appears to provide a
distinct beginning, middle, and end. The changes in the family
brought about by the death of the mother serves as the beginning.
The middle includes a complex series of events including instances of
Sarah Ann's resentment, Olive's rebellions and elopement, and Sarah
Ann's minor deceptions and reconciliations with her father. Included
in the end would be Sarah Ann's care for her father after Olive
eloped, discovering Olive's letters and burning them. This summary
discourts, however, the degree to which the context in which Sarah
Ann speaks is integral to the "story." The narrative both begins and
ends with remarks aimed more at influencing the narratees than
impacting information.

When my mother died she left just Olive and me
to take care of Father. Yesterday when I burned the
package of Olive's letters that left only me. I know
you'll side with my sister in all of this because you're
only outsiders, and strangers can afford to sympathize
with young love, and with whatever sounds daring and
romantic, without thinking what it does to all the other
people involved. I don't want you to hate my sister--I
don't hate her--but I do want you to see that we're
happier this way, Father and I, and as for Olive, she
made her choice. (p. 161)

Maybe you feel sorry for Father, maybe you think
I was cruel. but I did it for his sake and I don't care
what you think because you're all of you strangers, anyway, and you can't understand that there couldn't be two of us. As I said before, I don't hate Olive. But sometimes I think this is the way it was meant to be. First Mother died and left just the two of us to take care of Father. And yesterday when I burned Olive's letters I thought, Now there is only me. (p. 169)

Additional comments made throughout the story highlight the significance of the context in which Sarah Ann speaks. Although it is not unusual for narrators to make direct comments to narratees or to indicate the narratees' level of knowledge by the kind and amount of information they offer, Sarah Ann's comments are more than informative, they are intended to be persuasive. Hence, the presence of the narratees and her tone toward them indicate some imminent action or event whose eventual outcome depends on how well she tells her story.

For Sarah Ann the specific situation in which she speaks serves as the impetus for one narration whereas her desires serve as the basis for another. In speaking to the group of "outsiders," she is trying to achieve one envisioned end, while fearing another envisioned end. Throughout the narration Sarah Ann states over and over again that she and her father are better off without her sister, Olive. Therefore, though it is not specified, the end of the narration that Sarah Ann desires is a future that she shares with her father--alone--and a conviction that the situation is right for both of them.

In many ways the end of this narration mirrors Sarah Ann's perception of the state of affairs between herself and her father during the period of time after her father discovered that she was hiding Olive's letters and before she discovered, in turn, that he was
hiding them. Their relationship was thrown out of balance for Sarah Ann when she discovered Olive’s letters in his desk drawer. The burning of the letters was an attempt on her part to restore herself as the only person in her father’s life. The narrative act in which she is engaged is also designed to achieve that end. The presence of the outsiders occurred at a point in time after she had burned the letters. Though their presence, from objective point of view, can be described as belonging to a different time, it is intimately related to all of the other events she relates in the narrative. Just as the burning of the letters was an attempt to regain control of her situation, the narrative act in which she engages is designed with the same end in mind. The narrative act is a verbal parallel to the physical act of burning the letters. Although they are distinct actions and take place in different "clock" times, they are executed for the same end or purpose. Similarly, finding the letters and confronting the outsiders are parallel experiences that disturbed her understanding of her self and her situation.

The end of this narratization is evident in the text when Sarah Ann pays less attention to the narratees and more attention to the chronology of an event. For example, Sarah Ann’s account of her father’s convincing her to surrender Olive’s letters.

"I want you to give me her letters," he said. "To burn."
"Won’t you read them, Father? I know that what she did was wrong, but she sounds happy--"
He stared at me and came into the room. . . .
He kneeled suddenly beside me and spoke very softly and quickly.
"We’ll keep each other company, Sarah Ann, just the two of us. We can be happy that way, can’t we?"
We'll always have each other, don't you know?" He put his hand on my hair.

I knew then that was the way it should be. I leaned my head on his shoulder, and when I finished crying I smiled at him. . . .

"You take them," I said. "I can't--"

He nodded and took them and then took my hand.

(pp. 168-9)

Unlike most of Sarah Ann's accounts of events in this narrative, this one is interrupted by only one direct reference to the narratees that does not further the chronology of the event. "I don't know what made me say that except, you see, I did love Olive" (p. 168). Other comments that include the narratees also further the chronology of the events, as when she describes her father standing in the doorway. When speaking of herself and her father alone, Sarah Ann appears to be guided by the end to a narratization that would insure that she is able to stay with her father and care for him. At other times in the narrative, she seems guided by an alternate end--one in which she envisions that someone will come between the two of them or, as a result of her actions, they will be miserable together.

The end of the alternate narratization against which Sarah Ann is projecting might take on any number of forms. However, whatever from the end of the alternate narratization takes, it involves a future wherein Sarah Ann either must share her father with another or something will come between them. We know from the story that her father is ill. It also is likely that when she burned Olive's letters, which her father had been hoarding, his health worsened. Among the possibilities for the feared future are the following: (1) Sarah Ann's father will be taken out of her care and placed in an institution, (2) someone, perhaps a professional nurse, will be brought in to care for
her father, (3) Olive will be called in to take care of her father, or
(4) both of them will always know that he wishes for someone else
and resents being trapped with Sarah Ann.

When projecting against this narratization, Sarah Ann's attitudes
and tone shift from pleasant to sharp. The opening and closing
paragraphs of the story, for example, seem to be based on the
projected end of this narratization. Disparaging comments about Olive
also seem to be based on the projected end of this narratization.
Sarah Ann notes, for example, "I loved Olive and I see now how she
took advantage of that love. Sometimes I think she felt that if she
was to betray my father she wanted me to betray him too" (p. 162).
They are also marked by a possessiveness as, in the forgoing quote,
when Sarah Ann refers to their father as my father.

Throughout the narrative Sarah Ann juggles two different
projected ends. When focusing on the envisioned future that she
shares with her father, her tone is warm and almost childlike. When
threatened by the envisioned future wherein she must either share her
father with another or live with the knowledge that he would prefer
someone else, she becomes harsh and accusatory. Based on the needs
of the moment, Sarah Ann formulates her narration in medias res.
The act of narrating serves as a mid point in an extended series of
actions that has not yet achieved closure. Her mother's death and the
changes in the family function as the beginning of this complex series
of events, and some unnamed action that will occur after her
narration will eventually serve as the end. For Sarah Ann, then, the
narration and the narratization are part of the same temporal stretch.
The end of the events she is describing in her narration has not yet been achieved. Furthermore, she cannot maintain focus on one envisioned end. Instead, she bounces back and forth between the two envisioned ends. As she shifts back and forth between the two, her attitudes toward the things she discusses and her tone toward the narratees change. The end of the events she is describing is commensurate with the projected end of the narratization in which she is engaged. In other words the events described in the narration do not necessarily exhibit a beginning, middle, and end structure. Instead, they exhibit a beginning and a middle. The end, whether positive or negative, has yet to be decided.

From a phenomenological perspective, the narrative would exhibit a duality of time if, for example, as a result of Sarah Ann's narration the "strangers" decided that although Sarah Ann was not dangerous, she was incapable of providing the type of care that her father needed. And, therefore, Olive and her husband were summoned back to Conklin to care for both Sarah Ann and their father. The same story told from Sarah Ann's point of view with this actual lived through end in mind probably would exhibit a duality of time. Were Sarah Ann to tell her story from a point in time after Olive and her husband returned to Conklin and Sarah Ann had been displaced as chief caretaker of her father, the telling would be, in all likelihood, part of a new narratization. She would be telling the story to an audience with some new end in mind. The selection and arrangement of events in the story would be predicated on the new temporal field in which she found herself. For example, Sarah Ann might tell the
story to a group of young ladies her own age in order to convince them that Olive wasn't really needed but had come back because she was jealous of the closeness between Sarah Ann and her father. The new story, the narration, would be structured with that end in mind. The events in this hypothetical story would have a beginning, middle, and an end. As the story stands, however, it lacks a resolution.

"Between the Lines": The Illusion of Monotemporality

From the standpoint of temporal logic, "Between the Lines" clearly exhibits a duality of time. Ordering the events in a strictly chronological order indicates that the events discussed in the opening exposition are most proximate to the telling. Approximately three-quarters of the narrative, however, is concerned with the events of March 17, 1976, which occur prior to the time at which the narrative is related. Nevertheless, the structure of the narrative creates the illusion that the narrative is monotemporal.

The first quarter of the story is largely devoted to exposition. The narrator, Joline B. Newhouse, devotes this section to introducing herself and her position in the community. Other characters and places that are detailed later in the narrative, though mentioned briefly in the exposition, are clearly of secondary importance in the opening exposition. Joline's tone toward her audience is warm and friendly. Because of the type and amount of information she gives,
however, it is obvious that the narratees are individuals with whom she is unfamiliar. Joline's attitudes in this section deal mostly with herself and the things that she does. She considers herself gifted ("I've had God's gift of writing from the time I was a child" p. 315), popular ("[The phone] rings all the time, of course. Everyone around here knows my number by heart" p. 316), important ("[M]y column means everything to folks around here" p. 314), and long-suffering ("I knew where Glen was. Glen was over on Caney Creek where his adopted half-sister Margie Kettles lived, having carnal knowledge of her in a trailer. They had been at it for 30 years and anybody would have thought they'd have worn it out by that time" p. 316). She admires each of these qualities in herself. When other characters are mentioned, such as Alma and Eben Goodnight or the townspeople as a group, Joline is condescending. She holds herself up as an example for the community and the stated purpose of the column she writes for the Greenville Herald is to "uplift my readers if at all possible, which sometimes it is not" (p. 314).

The rest of the story deals specifically with the events of one day in her life, March 17, 1976. In this section although Joline is aware of and is constantly manipulating the perceptions of the narratees, she also presents a chronology of events. In keeping with the first section, the reader sees that Joline has a high opinion of herself and of her function in the community. In contrast to the first section, we watch as she gradually loses control over her surroundings. Because she makes such a clear distinction between "that day" and the present of the telling not only verbally but also through tone and
attitude, the reader naturally expects the story to end with a return, in some way, to the positive attitudes about herself and the friendly tone exhibited throughout most of the story. Instead, the story ends with the tone and attitudes experienced by Joline on that particular day. More specifically, the story ends within the temporal stretch she experienced on that day.

In the third chapter it was noted that human beings struggle to maintain a narrator's point of view on their own actions, even in the midst of an ongoing experience or action. The narrator's point of view is comprised of a combination of an inclusive point of view from the perspective of the end, the character's point of view from within the action, and the narratees' point of view directed by how much s/he knows about the action prior to the telling. "Between the Lines" is an excellent example of the mixed use of all three. The first section and much of the rest of the narrative is told from the perspective of the end. Until the final paragraph Joline seems to know how the events turn out and makes comments about the events accordingly. Joline demonstrates her awareness of the narratees' point of view through direct commentary throughout the story. In the exposition at the beginning of the story she provides a great deal of background information about herself, her function in the community, and the community itself. This degree of exposition recognizes that the narratees are not in possession of this information that is necessary for understanding the narrative. The point of view of the character in the midst of the action, however, is demonstrated only in the closing paragraphs of the story.
Glenn went on and I sat there swaying on the breeze for a minute before I went after him. Now where will it all end? I ask you. All this pain and loving, mystery and loss. And it just goes on and on, from Glenn's mother taking up with dark-skinned gypsies to my own daddy and his postcard to that silly Lavonne and her cup of coffee to Margie with her head in the oven, to John Marcel Wilkes and myself, God help me, and all of it so long ago out in those holy woods. (p. 322)

After the first sentence of this paragraph, Joline reverts to the present tense. In doing so, she breaks the character of the narrative as she has been telling it up until that point. Because of this sudden shift late in the story, it is difficult to tell whether the end of the story is spoken from the point of view of the narrator who has lived through the end of an extended series of events, or of a character in the midst of an extended series of events. The shift is troubling.

Joline, who has presented herself as almost omnipotent in the community of Salt Lick becomes Joline the human being capable of making mistakes. The manipulation of the perspective of the narratees, encouraging them to share her feelings of superiority to the other residents of Salt Lick disappears in this last section of the narrative. The egocentricity of the narrator is replaced by a genuine humility, wherein Joline places herself in the company of all the wretched sinners she has commented freely upon throughout the story.

Leaving the reader within the point of view of a character in the midst of an action is atypical when the narrator is so clearly established from the beginning as operating from the inclusive perspective in which the narrator exists (in time) beyond the end of the events s/he describes. It is arguable that the final paragraphs of the narrative are a hybrid of the inclusive point of view and the point
of view of the character in the midst of the action. Joline does, after all, direct one question to the narratees in the final paragraph, "Now where will it all end? I ask you." Logically, since Joline has established a clear distinction between the present and March 17, 1976 both in tone and in attitude, these final musings cannot be a hybrid. Artistically, however, they can coexist. One major source of the movement in the story is a change of attitude within Joline--the movement from egocentricity to humility. Temporal logic is secondary to the demonstration of this change. If ordered logically the egocentricity would follow the humility and would be, therefore, a negative change, defeating one apparent purpose of the story. For all her self-centeredness, and the low ebb of events on March 17, 1976, readers feel "uplifted" because she drops all pretentiousness at the end of the narrative. Were the story arranged the opposite way, readers would not be uplifted. Following the logical temporal sequence to its logical conclusions would leave the reader with a story in which no major change took place in the protagonist. If we consider the final paragraphs a hybrid construction, whereby both the character and the narrator make realizations, however, the force of the change is doubled. A change in thought for both the narrator and the character occurs. Joline, both as narrator and as character, has participated in what Norman Friedman would refer to as a maturing plot.

At the end we see Joline, the character, searching for an ending she cannot project. She is in a transitional mode, a mode to which she is unaccustomed. Throughout the story her attitudes indicate that she considers herself more refined than any of the other people in her
community. The closing paragraphs reveal that due to circumstances (for once) beyond her control, she is unable to maintain her lofty position. She is no longer a controller of events and, therefore, time; she is subject to events and, therefore, time.

"Between the Lines," then, abdicates a duality of time in its closing paragraph. Although a clear distinction between the events of March 17, 1976, and the present of the telling is maintained until the final paragraph, the distinction is dissolved in Joline's closing remarks. At the end of the story she indicates her inability to envision a future that will resolve the various threads of the narrative that she has been telling.

Although I have argued that the envisioned end of a narratization is characteristic of the way human beings perceive and exist in the world, an alternative exists. That alternative, discussed briefly at the end of the third chapter, is the experience of mere sequence. Sequence does not preclude narratization. It does, however, preclude the selection and arrangement of events in the narration. A narration based on sequence rather than a narratization presents event after event in linear fashion. It is chronicle rather than narrative. And, although the narrative may have a beginning, the rest is middle. The events in the narrative have no end and as far as the narratization is concerned, although the narrator is searching, no end is in sight. Hence, sequence narratives or chronicles can be characterized as monotemporal. Often, the goal of such narratives is the restoration of the temporality that is characteristic of human being, namely, the narrative structure of experience and action. The monotemporal
narratives of Raymond Carver, which will be discussed in the following chapter, approximate chronicle in that his first-person narrators often seem paralyzed, incapable of engaging in any sort of action that would allow them to alter the present in which they are currently trapped.
Chapter 5

The Monotemporal Narratives of Raymond Carver

The first-person short stories of Raymond Carver are particularly appropriate for my study because many of them are monotemporal narratives. While other writers create an occasional monotemporal narrative, Carver does so consistently. Carver's monotemporal narratives differ from those analyzed in the last chapter in that they present character-narrators who have lost their ability to narratize their position in the world. These narratives might be described as chronicles because they present event after event in linear fashion. Although they have beginnings and middles, the narrator is still searching for an end. The narratives analyzed in this chapter come from four different collections, representing various stages in his career. One of the stories, "So Much Water So Close to Home," has appeared four times in Carver's collections in two significantly different versions.¹

Although Carver's collections have been well received by reviewers and critics, many of them are unable to break the barrier of his unusual subject matter. Almost all reviewers of his work have developed catch phrases to describe his narratives. They have been

variously called chronicles of blue collar despair,² "normal nightmares,"³ and "low rent tragedies."⁴ Reviewer’s consistently focus on the fact that Carver’s narratives are peopled with lower-middle-class "waitresses, mechanics, postmen, high school teachers, factory workers, and door-to-door salesmen," who "... worry about whether their old cars will start, where unemployment or personal bankruptcy are present dangers, where a good time consists of smoking pot with the neighbors, with a little cream soda and M&M’s on the side."⁵ Both praise and criticism of Carver’s work centers on the fact that he is the writer "who reaches the parts that other Americans don’t. Mobile caravan parks, all-night cafes, bakehouses, drying-out centers for alcoholics, the kitchens and porches to which men and women return from their dead-end jobs."⁶ As a rule, reviews of his narratives begin with a list of character types and end with broad generalizations about the world that his characters navigate. "Carver’s stories are populated by characters who live in America’s shoddy enclaves of convenient products and conventionality--people who shop


at Kwik-Mart and who live in saltbox houses or quickly built apartment complexes."\(^7\) Though critics tend to restrict their discussions to Carver's unique choice of subject matter, it is not the most distinctive defining characteristic of his narratives. Although he devotes a great deal of space in each of his collections to lower-middle-class characters who live mundane lives in Middle America, it is something beyond (or perhaps beneath) socio-economic class that defines his work.

Stories such as "Are You A Doctor?,"\(^6\) and "A Small, Good Thing" (C, 59-89), for example, demonstrate that Carver is not limited to members of the lower-middle-class as subjects for his narratives. In the former, an established physician enters into a strange relationship with a woman that he meets as a result of a strange phone call. The latter details the struggles of an upwardly mobile young couple as they try to come to terms with the death of their eight year old son.

Meredith Marsh points out that although Carver often chooses to write about ordinary people, "[h]e implies that underneath their words, intellectuals lead the same mysterious lives of everydayness shot with desire and dread that the rest of the species is doomed to, so it

\(^{7}\)Weber, p. 36.

\(^6\)Will You Please Be Quiet Please; The Stories of Raymond Carver (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1978), pp. 29-38. Henceforth references to Carver's books will be noted within the text through the use of the following abbreviations. PBQP for Will You Please Be Quiet Please, citation above; TAL for What We Talk About When We Talk About Love (New York: Knopf, 1981); F for Fires: Essays, Poems, Stories (New York: Random House, 1984); C for Cathedral (New York: Random House, 1984); and WICF for Where I'm Calling From: New and Selected Stories (New York: The Atlantic Monthly Press, 1988).
scarcely matters whether he records the failings of a psychiatrist or his patient."9

For this study the significant features of Carver's short stories are not his subjects or his characters but those characteristics that relate to temporality. Some of Carver's critics move beyond the identity of his characters to identify three separate but related characteristics that define his narratives. These characteristics, though seemingly unrelated, all inform and are informed by the temporality of mediacy. First, critics note that Carver's narratives are less fully developed than "traditional" narratives. Utilizing a minimalist style that Michael Gorra describes as a "slice of life," Carver creates narratives in which characters often "are seen without benefit of antecedents or social context."10 Second, critics note the "personal precariousness" of Carver's characters, that is, many of his characters find themselves in situations that make them question their identity.11 Third, Carver's characters (his first-person narrators, in particular) are plagued by their inability to articulate their own experience.12 After a brief examination of each of these characteristics, this chapter explores how they converge at the issue

---


of temporality. The chapter concludes with an analysis of three of
Carver’s monotemporal first-person narratives: "Fat," "Feathers," and
"So Much Water So Close To Home."

Although debate about whether or not Carver fits into the
minimalist camp has begun to occupy a number of critics since the
publication of Where I’m Calling From, many of his stories fit the
description of minimalist prose. Michael Gorra describes minimalist
prose as "... so attenuated that it can't support the weight of a past
or a future, but only a bare notation of what happens, now." In the
less minimalist version of "So Much Water So Close to Home," the
narrator, Claire Kane, describes the degree to which she feels cut off
from both past and future.

The past is unclear. It's as if there is a film over
those early years. I can't even be sure that the things
I remember happening really happened to me. There
was a girl who had a mother and a father—the father
ran a small cafe where the mother acted as waitress
and cashier—who moved as if in a dream through grade
school and high school and then, in a year or two, into
secretarial school. Later, much later—what happened to
the time in between?—she is in another town working
as a receptionist for an electronics parts firm and
becomes acquainted with one of the engineers who asks
her for a date. ... After a short while they decide to
get married, but already the past, her past, is slipping

13 See, for example, William L. Stull, "Beyond Hopelessville:
Another Side of Raymond Carver," Philological Quarterly, 64 (Winter
1985), 1-17; and Marilynne Robinson, "Marriage and Other Astonishing
Bonds," rev. of Where I’m Calling From: New and Selected Stories, by
35, 40-1.

14 Gorra, p. 155.

15 The original, longer version, which I refer to here, appears in
Fires, pp. 167-86. The minimalist version appears in What We Talk
About When We Talk About Love, pp. 79-88.
away. The future is something she can't imagine. (F, p. 175)

This description supports Gorra's assertion about minimalist prose and aptly describes many of Carver's characters, particularly his first-person character-narrators. Gorra argues that "such a world is confusing . . . for the characters themselves. If nothing can be expected on the basis of the past, then each new moment can bewilder a character, freeze him or her into a confusion of inaction."16

Particularly troubling in Carver's stories is the fact that the stories seem to be chronicles that stop abruptly rather than end. In other words, the reader is left without the satisfaction of having experienced a beginning, a middle, and an end. As a result, the reader questions whether or not this is a "well-wrought" narrative.

In a discussion of Carver's third-person narrative, "Preservation" (G, pp. 35-46.), Gorra makes several observations and asks a number of questions. Though the observations are specific to this particular story, most of the questions are applicable to Carver's narratives in general.

"[W]hy should it end there? It is in no way an ending in their lives; dinner still has to be eaten, the floor mopped, the auction attended. Their lives will presumably continue in precisely the same way. What makes this extremely thin slice better than one further down the loaf, what makes Carver's choice of an ending anything more than arbitrary? . . . What makes this moment count? . . . For this ending to work one needs the social detail, the context, that Carver's deliberately undersuggestive prose won't provide, and the story collapses under the weight of its own crust."17

---

16 Gorra, p. 155.
17 Gorra, p. 156.
The fact that many of Carver's narratives lack "endings" leads to the second major point that critics less judgmental than Gorra make with regard to Carver's narratives, the precariousness of his characters. In drawing a parallel between Carver's writing style and the characters that populate his stories, a reviewer for the New York Review of Books notes that in Carver's narratives "... character after character [is] poised on the edge of some abyss, the verge of despair." This sense of "personal precariousness," or as the reviewer alternately terms it "on-the-vergeness," is an important clue to understanding the temporality of Carver's narratives, particularly his monotemporal first-person narratives. Although one critic argues that Carver's stories record "... the fore-tremors and aftershocks," of changes in his character's lives, most other critics agree that it is the moments of transition themselves, apart from the past or the envisioned future, that Carver has mastered.

Typically, Carver writes about characters whose lives are in suspended animation, verging on disarray: the salesman between jobs, the writer between stories, the student between semesters, the husband or wife between marriages, and the insomniac, caught between waking consciousness and the escape of sleep. Carver's chosen task is to convey through the most fitting language and symbols the special moments when these people have sudden, astonishing glimpses behind the curtain which separates their empty lives from chaos.

---


19 Marsh, p. 39.

20 David Boxer and Cassandra Phillips, "Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?: Voyeurism, Dissociation, and the Art of Raymond Carver," Iowa Review, 10 (Summer 1979), 76.
The impact of such glimpses is heightened by the fact that the stories often are told from the point of view of the character in transition. As readers we are allowed neither the comfortable distance afforded by an impartial, objective third-person narrator nor the satisfaction of knowing how these situations turn out. Instead, we experience the transition itself, from the point of view of the character-narrator as s/he lives through it.

In a review of *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love*, Michael Koepf agrees that Carver is masterful in severing all vestiges of past and future from the present. "Raymond Carver is a consummate master of Now. There are no getaways of hope allowed into the future of back into the past. His immense skill as a writer forces us to constantly face up." Koepf uses an image spoken by the suburban housewife in "I Could See the Smallest Things" (*TAL*, pp. 31-36) to point out what he sees as a parallel between Carver's characters and ourselves as human beings. "A plane passed overhead. I imagined the people on it sitting belted in their seats, some of them reading, some of them staring down at the ground" (p. 34). Koepf notes, "In a way we're all belted to our seats, and our times, staring up or down for answers." This image works because, like the suburban housewife we have no sense of the past and future of the passengers in the plane. We glimpse them in our imaginations as in

---


22Koepf, p. 16.
transition, cut off from their past and their future. We don't know where they've come from or where they are going to. Although Koepf's analysis of the image may point to some of the dilemmas presented by modern life, it seems an inordinately pessimistic point of view. Nevertheless, it serves as a good descriptor of many of Carver's characters, who seem incapable of purposive action because of their inability to envision alternatives to present situations. As Bruce Allen notes, "what [the stories are] really about are the spaces between the 'important' things in people's lives, those moments when nothing makes sense or connects with anything else."23

Closely allied to the inability of Carver's characters to engage in purposive action is their inability to articulate their experience. One reviewer notes that "The only way for [Carver's characters] to validate themselves is through the performance of some act--any act--that gives them the illusion of free will."24 Another reviewer notes, "What Carver is after, with his many devices, is the soul of inarticulate America, the people who smash things, jump through windows, drag their wives round the house by the heels screaming 'I love you,' and often need rocks, hammers and firearms to help them express their feelings."25 A third reviewer notes that "[t]ime passes


in agonizingly linear fashion, the chronology of a given scene marked by one fraught and simple gesture after another." 28 The same reviewer refers to Carver as a chronicler. A distinction was drawn between chronicle and narrative in the third chapter of this study. The primary difference between the two was that the chronicler does not know how the story is going to turn out and is thereby limited to a "blow-by-blow" description as in calling a baseball game, whereas the narrator has a grasp of the end of the story from the beginning and on the basis of that knowledge selects from among all of the available information only that which is pertinent to the narrative s/he is relating. Many of Carver's first-person narrators are indeed chroniclers for two reasons. First, they narrate only that portion of the extended temporal action in which they are presently engaged. Second, because they have lost control of their world, the ability to narratize their own temporality, they cannot foresee any logical course of action that will lead them into the future. Consequently, they tell only what they know. In doing so, however, they are struggling once again to occupy the position of narrator in their own lives. As a result, both characters and readers are left with what one reviewer referred to as a "desperate and hopeless sense of something gone wrong." 27

collection Will You Please Be Quiet Please is subtitled "The Stories of Raymond Carver," no other collection with that title exists.


27 Fisketjon, p. 132.
The fourth chapter demonstrated that a narrator can narrate an extended temporal action from a vantage point in the midst of the action rather than waiting until s/he has lived through the end to engage in narration. Because Carver's character-narrators cannot envision an outcome to the experiences and actions in which they are engaged, they narrate the only thing left to them--points of transition between the "important" points in their lives. At the moments in which we encounter Carver's character-narrators, they have lost their ability to narrate their position in the world. Often the character-narrators' inability to narrate their position in the world is a result of an unexpected incident, some action or event that they were unable to foresee. In "So Much Water So Close to Home," for example, the narrator loses her ability to carry on her role as a wife when she learns that on a fishing trip her husband and his buddies allowed the body of a young girl, found dead in the river, to remain tied up to a tree until they have finished their expedition. This unexpected occurrence makes her question her relationship with her husband. Her inability to maintain the repetitive narratization that she has been living out throws her into an unexpected moment of transition.

All of these major points discussed above intersect at the notion of temporality. The third chapter posited that human beings narrate their position in the world in addition to narrating stories about their own experiences. It also established that a narratization and a narration can be part of the same extended temporal event. In the closing section of the third chapter, the experience of "mere sequence" was determined to be the result of the loss of the ability to narratize
one's own place in the world. The experience of "mere sequence" or chaos, the inability to look forward, to plan, and to act purposively, are the substance of Raymond Carver's first-person monotemporal narratives. In most of Carver's narratives we encounter characters who have abruptly lost their ability to narrate their positions in the world. In many cases the narratizations in which his characters were engaged prior to being severed from the future were admittedly repetitive. Nevertheless, they planned and acted toward that future. In a "Small, Good Thing," for example, Ann Weiss is planning her son's eighth birthday party when he is unexpectedly run down by a hit and run driver.

During the period when individuals lose their ability to narrate their own position in the world, they become cut off from the past and the future. Forced to narrate extended temporal events in which they are engaged, they fall back on what has just happened. It is no surprise then that Weber refers to Carver as a chronicler.28 Many of his narratives deal with a series of events that span a relatively short period of time, a day or a weekend. Furthermore, they are told in the present tense, giving the sense of immediacy, as if they are told while they are happening. Rarely are characters given last names. In some first-person stories, the narrator never even reveals his/her own name, let alone details about his/her life prior to the events related in the story.

The narratives usually tell of events that occur when the unexpected event enters the character's life. It is tempting to say

28Weber, p. 36.
that the narrator tells of events immediately prior to and immediately
following the unexpected event. Although it seems appropriate to
speak of events prior to and following the unexpected event, readers
rarely encounter the characters either before the event that altered
their lives or after they have overcome the disruption. When viewed
in terms of the expansive temporal model rather than the clock model,
Carver’s narrators rarely are shown before, during, and after the
unexpected event. Instead they are shown only during that expansive
period of time when their lives are in disorder. Occasionally stories
deal with the narrator’s life before and during the upheaval. Only
rarely do we glimpse the return to order. Reviewers who note the
precariousness of Carver’s character-narrators speak of the chasm, the
cliff, or the abyss into which the character-narrators look.29 The
phenomenon to which they refer corresponds to the chaos that ensues
when in anxiety we loose the ability to narratize our own existences.

According to Heidegger

... when something threatening brings itself close,
anxiety does not "see" any definite "here" or "yonder"
from which it comes. That in the face of which one
has anxiety is characterized by the fact that what
threatens is nowhere.30

Although the example given here is a spatial example, it points to the
loss of expansiveness, the sense that both time and space are fluid
and connected, that the individual experiences both spatially and
temporally. In other words, in anxiety, individuals experience time

29See, for example, Houston, p. 32; and Rev. of Cathedral, by
40-1.

30Being and Time, p. 231.
and space as distinct points as they lose the ability to cojoin the present with the past and the future or the here with the there. Once again the notion of chronicle makes sense when referring to Carver's work. The narrator caught up in anxiety is no longer able to make sense of, to temporalize, his/her world. Rather than having an encapsulating view of a series of events, s/he begins with what just happened and proceeds until s/he stops, not the logical "end" that we anticipate in narrative because we are taught to anticipate the future.

Carver's characters are inarticulate in two senses of the word. First, they lack the vocabulary to express themselves. As a result, they often resort to physical action, sometimes violent, to express themselves. Second, and perhaps more importantly, Carver's characters are inarticulate in that they are unable to express themselves fully. This type of inarticulateness on the part of Carver's characters, particularly his narrators, is a direct result of their inability to envision a futural state. In those cases where the narrator narrates from a vantage point in the midst of an extended temporal action or event, the narrator is doomed to produce a chronicle. Denied access to a projected end by his/her own anxiety, the narrator has no recourse except to recount events as they happen. Commenting on the structure of Carver's narratives, one reviewer noted, "Time passes in agonizingly linear fashion, the chronology of a given scene marked by one fraught and simple gesture after another."31 These scenes, often presented through the consciousness of a created first-person narrator, demonstrate the narrator's inability to articulate his/her own

---

experience because s/he feels isolated from his/her own past and future.

Two other issues require clarification before turning to an analysis of Carver's monotemporal first-person narratives. First, the commercial literary establishment, by which I mean newspaper and journal reviews of literary works, always refer to Carver as the creator of his narratives. While technically speaking this assessment is true (he did, after all, create the narratives), in another sense this conclusion is misleading. Over the course of his career, Carver has made increasing use of the first-person format. Many stories are centered in the consciousness of a character who not only exists in the world of the story, but usually is the major participant in the world of the story as well. Logically, the narratives are constructed from the point of view of the narrator and, therefore, express his/her temporality rather than the temporality of the actual author. The temporality of either the actual author or the implied author is not at issue here. Because Carver is not telling us stories about himself, taken from his own experience, it would be inappropriate to impose what we know of the temporality of the author onto the temporality of the narrators of his narratives. Furthermore, although there may be temporal dimension to the implied author, we are not concerned with his temporality in first-person narratives either. At any rate,

---

32 The first chapter noted that relative number of first person and third person short stories in each of Carver's collections. Among the seven new stories in his latest collection, six are written in first person. Of the thirty stories Carver selected from previous books to include in this collection fifteen are written in first person and fifteen are written in third person.
where reviewers attribute particular characteristics to Carver, this study recognizes that those attributes usually belong to the narrators he has created.

Second, although literary narratives imitate human experience, they are not equivalent to human experience. According to Carr, the artistic manifestation of human experience in literary texts is more highly refined and crafted than everyday human experience. To that end, the effects achieved are often more coherent than everyday experience in that a certain amount of selection and embellishment goes into the literary imitation of human experience. Artistically rendered human experience, for example, is not subject to the interruptions that are characteristic of everyday human experience. More importantly, however, in everyday experience we struggle to maintain the narrator's role in our own lives. In the fictionalization of human experience, the narrator may begin in this role but end the story from the point of view of the character within the action. As a result, the story may end without a sense of narrative equilibrium. In other words, the reader may not feel a balance between the three different points of view (the narrator, the character, and the audience) as the narrative ends. It is important to keep these distinctions in mind as we turn to an analysis of three of Carver's first-person narratives.

"Fat": A Narrator in Search of a Narratization

"Fat" (PBQP, pp.1-6) is an unusual story in that it involves a
dual level of telling. The first two short paragraphs of the story confront the reader with the bifurcated scene of the telling.

I am sitting over coffee and cigarettes at my friend Rita’s and I am telling her about it. Here is what I tell her. (p. 1)

The narrator, who is never identified by name, proceeds to tell her friend, Rita, about the fat man that she waited on one night at the restaurant where she works, the conversation she had with her live-in boyfriend about fat people later that same night, and how she and her boyfriend made love against her wishes before they went to sleep. The story is remarkable only in that for some inexplicable reason, the waitress-narrator seems to be obsessed with the fat man. She becomes so fascinated, in fact, that she seems unable to get on with her life.

Initially, it would seem that this story could easily be divided into the structuralist divisions of story and discourse. The story would involve the night in the restaurant when she waited on the fat man. The discourse, spoken at a different time and place, would be at Rita’s house over coffee and cigarettes. However, a second level of discourse exists in this particular telling, involving the when and where of the telling of the first two paragraphs of the story, cited above, a few scattered comments during the course of the narrative, and the last five paragraphs of the story, which follow.

I feel depressed. But I won’t go into it with her. I’ve already told her too much. She sits there waiting, her dainty fingers poking her hair. Waiting for what? I’d like to know. It is August. My life is going to change. I feel it. (p. 6)
Although each of these series of actions appears to occur at different places and times, they are part of the same extended temporal field for this narrator. The change that the narrator speaks of in the last paragraph of the story is integrally related to her encounter with the fat man in the restaurant. Embedded within this narrative are three different (though not temporally distinct) series of actions. The first series of actions involves the events of the night when the fat man sat at her station and she served as his waitress, her discussion with her boyfriend about fat people later that night, and the love making session with her boyfriend in which she was an unwilling participant. The second series of actions involves her telling this story to her friend, Rita, over coffee and cigarettes. The third series of actions involves the telling recorded in the excerpted passage above. Although we can refer to these series of actions as different from one another in that they occur in different places and clock times, they are not distinct from one another in that they all arise as the result of her encounter with the fat man and, therefore, are part of the same extended temporal field. The waitress-narrator perceives the second and third series of actions as connected to one another and to the first series of actions in that they all issue from her encounter with the fat man.

The change that the narrator speaks of in the last paragraph of the narrative is something for which she is actively searching. The fact that she is searching for this impending change is revealed by the fact that she both tells the story and listens to it as if disembodied. In other words, the time and place of the second and third series of
actions are the same—they are cospatial and cotemporal. In the objective sense of the terms time and space, these series of actions take place at the same (clock) time and in the same (geometric) space.

The use of present tense verbs reinforces the idea that the second and third series of actions occur simultaneously. In the beginning of the story, the waitress-narrator does not say, "I was sitting over coffee and cigarettes at my friend Rita’s and I told her about it. Here is what I told her." She says, "I am sitting over coffee and cigarettes at my friend Rita’s and I am telling her about it. Here is what I tell her." The impression left by this narration is that the waitress narrator is simultaneously participating and watching. The reason that she is participating as well as watching is alluded to in comments she makes to Rita as she tells of the events of that fateful evening. Shortly after the beginning of the story, when one of the characters comments, "Who’s your fat friend? He’s really a fatty" (p. 2), the narrator says in an aside to Rita, "Now that’s part of it. I think that is really part of it." Later, toward the end of her story, the narrator says in another aside, "I know now I was after something. But I don’t know what" (p. 4). In making this statement, the narrator acknowledges that for some unknown reason she was and still is captivated by this unusual man. Although she still cannot understand the attraction, either as teller or as watcher, she continues her search to understand what she was after. She continues the search not only by telling the story to another, but by observing herself and the other while she is in the midst of telling the story, as
if she hopes to gain some clue from either her friend's reaction or from her own telling.

The waitress-narrator is not necessarily searching for the meaning of the actions of the night when she waited on the fat man. In fact, for this narrator, the meaning of those actions is inseparable from her present and her future. The events of that night can only "mean," for the narrator, if they allow her to understand the present and thereby move forward into the future. Because she cannot explain the change that she feels is coming, the narrator is cut off from the past, represented in the story by the boyfriend and her unwillingness to engage in the sexual act with him, and from the future, which remains unknown to the reader as well as the narrator. In short, the narrator is trapped in the expansive temporal field, unable to return to the patterns of her life prior to the events of the evening in question or to move forward until she can understand the change that she feels is imminent—a change that is inextricably bound up in the "meaning" of her encounter with the fat man. Because the narrator perceives the telling(s) as an extension of the events of that night rather than separate from those events, they belong to the same temporal expanse. Although from an objective point of view it is arguable that because the telling(s) take place in a different spatio-temporal frame a duality of time exists, this argument ignores the degree to which the plot, the character-narrator's actions in a struggle to effect change, also is present in the telling.

In this simple six page story, then, we can see each of the three elements described by critics as definitional for Carver's narratives
and connected, in this study, to human temporality. First, the character-narrator is cut off from the past and the future. The narrative is monotemporal because, from the point of view of the narrator, all three sets of actions contained in this story are part of the same temporally expansive field. They are centered in her experiences on the night when she waited on the fat man. Because all of the actions belong to the same temporal stretch, this narrator exists in a temporal limbo. The narrator is not only unable assume the roles she "lived" prior to her encounter with the fat man, she doesn't even bother to describe them. She doesn't even directly connect these changes to her experience of the evening in question. She also is unable to act purposively with regard to her own future. Nevertheless, the narrator is searching for the means that will allow her to move forward with her own life, her own definition of herself.

The acts of telling the story and watching herself as she tells the story are efforts on her part to discover a purpose, an envisioned end, that will allow her to break out of the temporal limbo in which she finds herself. If she were telling the story in order entertain her friend or simply to impress her with the unusualness of the events of the night in question, if she could, in other words, effect any temporal distance, then the narrative would not be monotemporal. She tells the story only in order to try to come to terms with the events herself. She obviously hopes that through the act of telling and/or through the act of observing herself telling the story that she will realize something about those events that will provide a clue as to
what action she needs to take in order to set goals and, thereby, get on with her life.

Second, she exists in a precarious state in that she can no longer define herself through any of the roles that she has traditionally depended on for self-definition. It is no coincidence that she is not telling this story during a coffee break at work. Her role as a waitress has changed, it changed for her that night when she, among all of the staff at the restaurant, showed kindness to this fat man while the others made disparaging remarks about his weight. The change that began while she was waiting on the fat man spilled over into the other roles through which she defined herself. She is no longer comfortable in her role as lover to her boyfriend. Even her relationship with her friend Rita has changed. The slightly disparaging remarks in the final paragraph indicate a change in the quality of their friendship.

As a result of the events of that particular evening, the waitress-narrator has been left self-less. The precarious state in which she finds herself is grounded in the fact that she can no longer define who she is. For some unexplained reason, her commerce with the fat man stripped her of the easy and comfortable roles that she used to define herself for herself. This limbo is what she tries to overcome through simultaneously watching herself and telling her story to others.

Finally, she is unable to articulate either a reason for the changes in her life or a close to this narrative because she is in the midst of a search for a narratization that will allow her to redefine
herself. Such redefinition in light of the new narratization for which she is searching will allow her to move forward into the future. It will also allow her to redefine her role in the relationships she no longer finds comfortable. As yet, however, she has been unable to envision an "end" that will allow her to move beyond the temporally expansive present into the future. The story, then, from a phenomenological perspective has a beginning and a middle, but it lacks an end because the narrator, though she is taking actions to help herself find an end, has not yet conceived what that end will be. The telling of the story is an action. Her observation of herself in the midst of the act of telling the story is a simultaneous action. However, as the last paragraphs of the story indicate, they are fruitless actions, because they do not bring the narrator any closer to the elusive "end" that would allow her to break out of the temporal limbo in which she finds herself.

From an experiential point of view, it would be pointless to determine what this narrative "means" in the traditional sense in which that term is used. If the story can be said to have meaning, its meaning lies in the fact that this experience is antithetical to most human experience. In other words, it means only to the extent that it fails to mirror the vast majority of human experience. The narrative does not have a beginning, a middle, and an end. The reader is left in medias res. The meaning, in this case, is the struggle that the character is experiencing, not the resolution of a struggle or tension that we usually associate with the term "meaning." The narrative only makes sense experientially. As one critic notes, Carver's narratives
are "difficult to summarize." The reason that the stories are difficult to summarize is that in summarizing them we use a temporal-causal model that ultimately rests on the beginning, middle, end structure that characterizes narrative. Because many of Carver's narratives lack endings, they are difficult, if not impossible, to summarize using this model.

"Feathers": Longing for a Former Narratization

Like "Fat," "Feathers" (C, pp. 1-26) is a narrative that might easily be classified as exhibiting a duality of time. The majority of the narrative revolves around the events of one evening, when Jack, the narrator, and his wife, Fran, have dinner with one of Jack's coworkers, Bud, and his wife, Olla. Narrative passages at the beginning and the end of the story, similar to those in "Fat," tend to indicate that although the events of the evening in question are a very important part of the "story" here, much remains unspoken by the narrator. This narrator devotes most of his narrative to a single series of events that belong to a much longer series of events that are hinted at rather than openly stated.

Admittedly, from an objective point of view, one could argue that the "story" of the night Jack and Fran had supper with Bud and Olla has a distinct beginning, middle, and an end. One could construe the plot as beginning with the invitation to dinner--"This friend of mine from work, Bud, he asked Fran and me to supper" (C, p. 1)--and

---

33Allen, p. 4.
ending with a description of fond goodbyes and the couple's drive home.

But I remember that night. I recall the way the peacock picked up its gray feet and inched around the table. And then my friend and his wife saying goodnight to us on the porch. Olla giving Fran some peacock feathers to take home. I remember all of us shaking hands, hugging each other, saying things. In the car, Fran sat close to me as we drove away. She kept her hand on my leg. We drove home like that from my friend's house. (C, p. 26.)

Nevertheless, in telling the story, Jack, the narrator is not content to let the events of that particular evening stand alone. Just prior to the summary of the evening's end cited above, Jack talks about the things that have happened to his family and his life since the events of that important evening.

Later, after things had changed for us, and the kid had come along, all of that, Fran would look back on that evening at Bud's place as the beginning of the change. But she's wrong. The change came later--and when it came, it was like something that happened to other people, not something that could have happened to us. (C, p. 25)

Prior to the evening at "Bud's place," Fran and Jack had been content to spend their evenings alone together, "Some nights we went to a movie. Other nights we just stayed in and watched TV. Sometimes Fran baked things for me and we'd eat whatever it was all at one sitting" (C, p. 5). According to Jack, one of their favorite pastimes when sitting in front of the TV was wishing for things they did not have.

We wished for a new car, that's one thing we wished for. And we wished we could spend a couple of weeks in Canada. But one thing we didn't wish for was kids. The reason we didn't have kids was that we didn't want kids. Maybe sometime, we said to each other. But
right then, we were waiting. We thought we might keep on waiting. (C, p. 5)

The decision not to have children is one of the things that changed as a result of their evening with Bud and Olla.

Although both Bud and Jack are coworkers in some type of unnamed industry, Bud and Olla live in the country and Jack and Fran in suburbia. Bud and Jack have much in common. Their wives, on the other hand, have nothing in common. Olla is a housewife, who stays home to take care of her eight month old child, Harold. Fran works in a creamery and is very independent. Fran is tall and willowy with long blond hair. Olla is a plump little woman with a red face who wears her hair in a bun. Fran is a loner who asserts her independence in an argument with Jack early in the narrative, an argument originally about Fran's not wanting to go to Bud and Olla's house at all, and then about what they should contribute to the meal. Olla is a family woman who, during the course of the evening, demonstrates her devotion to both her husband and her son. Discussions of her admiration of her deceased father and her devotion to her mother, who is still alive, further reinforce this characteristic of Olla's personality. Fran's thoughts center around herself. Olla thinks mostly of others, particularly her family.

During the course of the evening, Olla extends her warmth to both Jack and Fran. Although Jack, because he likes Bud, is predisposed to like Olla, Fran is less easily influenced. Several times early in the evening Fran makes inappropriate comments to Bud and Olla, which are either overlooked or met with kindness. For example, after Fran and Jack have been installed comfortably in the living
room, Bud asks if they mind watching the last twenty laps of a car race on the television. When Jack says Bud should leave it on, Fran remarks, "Maybe one of those damn cars will explode right in front of us... Or else maybe one'll run up into the grandstand and smash the guy selling the crummy hot dogs" (C, p. 11.). Later, when Olla begins to explain the presence of "an old Plaster-of-Paris cast of the most crooked, jaggedy teeth in the world" sitting on a doily on the TV, Fran, who is picking the cashews out of a can of mixed nuts offered by their hosts, pretends she hasn't heard and says, "What was that?... Sorry, but I missed that" (C, p. 13).

Two additional elements add mystery to the evening. The first is Bud and Olla's family pet, Joey, a peacock. Joey swoops down out of a tree like a vulture when Jack and Fran arrive and pesters them until they are safely within the house. The second element is eight-month-old baby Harold, who remains out of sight during most of the story, but announces his presence through periodic fussing over the course of the evening. When the baby arrives, both Jack and Fran are taken aback by the ugliness of the baby. Fran gasps, but to cover her gaffe she says that she thought she saw a bat at the window. With Bud and Olla, Jack follows the dictum, "If you can't say anything nice, don't say anything at all." However, he tells the narratee,

Bar none, it was the ugliest baby I'd ever seen. It was so ugly I couldn't say anything. No words would come out of my mouth. I don't mean it was diseased or disfigured. Nothing like that. It was just ugly. It had a big red face, pop eyes, a broad forehead, and these big fat lips. It had no neck to speak of, and it had three or four fat chins. Its chins rolled right up under its ears and its ears stuck out from its bald head. Fat hung over its wrists. Its arms and fingers were fat. Even calling it ugly does it credit. (C, p. 20)
The strangest event of the entire evening begins when, to stop Harold’s fussing, Olla asks Bud to let Joey in the house for a few minutes. Olla observes that neither Joey nor Harold is able to settle down because their routine has been upset. That routine, as Jack and Fran discover, is a strange sort of family ritual where Joey enters the house and plays with Harold, running his neck underneath Harold’s shirt and tickling the baby’s stomach.

Little else is told about the evening. Jack does not even bother to record what either he or Fran made of this unusual ritual. Yet, when it comes time to leave, Fran has been completely won over. When Jack and Fran arrive home they decide, on the spur of the moment, to try to have a child of their own. They are successful. Jack provides few details about the events that occurred from that night until his telling of this story, but the sketch he provides indicates that much has changed in his household.

Goddamn those people and their ugly baby," Fran will say. . . . "And that smelly bird," she’ll say. . . . She says that kind of stuff a lot, even though she hasn’t seen Bud and Olla since that one time.

Fran doesn’t work at the creamery anymore, and she cut her hair a long time ago. She’s gotten fat on me, too. We don’t talk about it. . . .

I still see Bud at the plant. . . . If I ask, he tells me about Olla and Harold. . . . We’re still friends. That hasn’t changed any. But I’ve gotten careful with what I say to him. . . .

Once in a blue moon, he asks about my family. When he does, I tell him everybody’s fine. . . . The truth is, my kid has a conniving streak in him. But I don’t talk about it. Not even with his mother. Especially her. She and I talk less and less as it is.

Although he protests that the beginning of the change did not occur that night, his choice to connect the story of that night with the
changes in his own family belies his statement. That first series of events are part of an extensive temporal framework that undoubtedly contains many more series of events that document the changes that have taken place in his life. Jack's inability to leave out allusions to the changes that have occurred in his life since the evening he and Fran spent with Bud and Olla indicates the degree to which they are connected in his own mind.

The disconnectedness that Jack feels in his present state is illustrated early in the narrative when, in describing Fran, he reverts to the present tense and describes her appearance prior to all of the changes he documents in the last section of the story.

Fran's a big tall drink of water. She has this blond hair that hangs way down her back. . . . Sometimes when her hair gets in her way she has to pick it up and push it over her shoulder. She gets mad at it. "This hair," she says. "Nothing but trouble." Fran works in a creamery had has to wear her hair up when she goes to work. She has to wash it every night and take a brush to it when we're sitting in front of the TV. Now and then she threatens to cut it off. But I don't think she'd do that. She knows I like it too much. She knows I'm crazy about it. I tell her I fell in love with her because of her hair. I tell her I might stop loving her if she cut it. (C, p. 5)

By the time the reader reaches the end of the narrative, s/he knows that Fran does not fit this description at all. Jack tells us that she quit her job, cut her hair, and has gotten fat. This reversion would tend to indicate that Jack has not come to terms with any of the changes that have taken place in his life. It also tends to indicate that he would welcome a return to the time before they spent the evening with Bud and Olla.
Unlike Fran's, Jack's memory of that evening is pleasant in spite of all the changes that have taken place in his life. One possible explanation for his fond memories of that evening is that it served a dual function in his life. More specifically, from his point of view, the evening was both the end of one narratization and the beginning of a new narratization. The first narratization, which involves his friendship with Bud, came to an end at some undefined point after that night. The second narratization, which involves the changes in his life and lifestyle since that night and which has not achieved closure, began with that evening. The narratization guiding this particular narrative is the second narratization.

Like the waitress-narrator of "Fat," Jack, in telling his story, demonstrates that he is cut off from his past and his future, that his position in the world as he sees it is somewhat precarious, and that he is unable to articulate a satisfactory ending to his narrative. The degree to which Jack demonstrates these traits, however, is different qualitatively than the degree to which they are demonstrated in "Fat."

Jack can be said to be cut off from the past in the sense that the relationships that meant the most to him have changed drastically. Whereas the relationships for the narrator of "Fat" have changed so drastically that she can no longer conceive of them as they were prior to her encounter with the fat man, Jack clings to his memory of his relationships as they existed prior to the moment of change. Toward the end of the narrative Jack catalogs the changes that have taken place in Fran and in his relationship with her. He also notes the change in his relationship with Bud. Elsewhere in the narrative he
discusses the character of these relationships prior to the change. I have already pointed out that in discussing Fran prior to their evening at Bud and Olla's house, Jack lapses into the present tense. His description of the former Fran is presented with a positive attitude. Particularly interesting is his discussion of their conversations. Prior to the evening at Bud and Olla's, Jack and Fran used to dream about the future. Although they recognized that many of their dreams would never come true, they were pleased to share this time with one another. After the change, they talk "less and less." Now, Jack notes, "Mostly it's just the TV."

The amount of talk between Jack and Bud has also diminished and it is marked by awkward moments, especially with regard to discussing one another's families. Although Jack still considers Bud his friend, their friendship has lost the ease that it had prior to the dinner party. Whereas Bud used to talk about Olla all the time ("Bud had said her name to me any number of times.") Bud only speaks of Olla now when he is asked. Similarly, Jack only talks about his family when Bud asks, which is "once in a blue moon."

Unlike the waitress-narrator in "Fat," Jack has fond memories of the time prior to the dinner party. He holds on to the memories of his evenings with Fran and his friendship with Bud. In fact, it is because he finds it difficult to let go of the previous time that he has difficulty in dealing with the present. He longs for a previous narratization, in which the future, though it never seemed to change from day to day, was predictable. In his present narratization, which includes the night of the dinner party and many other events since
that time, he is unhappy because, even though it is no more confining
that the previous narratization, it is a situation that makes him
uncomfortable. He doesn't know what to expect, when, for instance,
Fran says, for no apparent reason, "Goddamn those people and their
ugly baby. . . . And that smelly bird. . . . Christ, who needs it!"
Similarly, he doesn't know what to expect from his son, who "has a
conniving steak in him." If the former narratization was uneventful,
at least it was not threatening. As it stands, he has lost control of
the narratization and can no longer occupy the narrator's position in
his own life because he cannot envision an end that will allow him to
understand his present.

Though Jack seems to be a better storyteller than the waitress/
narrator in "Fat," both share an inability to interpret events. The
narrator in "Fat," for example, is unable to explain her fascination
with the fat man. In telling Rita about her encounter with him she
admits that the fact that he is so fat is part of it but not the sum of
her fascination. Similarly, Jack does a good job of describing the
events that took place on the night of the dinner party, but he is
unable to attach significance to the ritualistic dance between baby
Harold and Joey. Nor is he able to connect this mystery to the
events that subsequently happened between himself and Fran. In fact,
the significance of most of the events of that night are never even
explored. Among the particularly interesting events are Olla's
narrative about Bud's fixing her bad teeth, the ugliness of Bud and
Olla's baby, and the sudden change in Fran's attitude toward the
whole evening. Their decision to have a baby based on the events of
that evening is totally unexplained. Although the evening ended on a high note, Jack is unable to even conjecture concerning what brought about the change.

Because Jack cannot to attach meaning to any of these events, he is unable to project an end to the narratization in which he currently is engaged. Because he lacks the ability to project an end to the narratization, he is left with the fruitless act of telling. Unlike the waitress-narrator of "Fat," however, he does not seem to be actively searching for a temporal end that would endow these events with significance. As noted earlier, the waitress-narrator of "Fat" in both telling her story and watching herself in the process of telling the story searches for an end that will allow her to make sense of her world. Jack accepts his world as unalterable and has resigned himself to accept the state of affairs as they stand.

In "Feathers" as in "Fat," the reader is left in the middle without a resolution. The plot in "Feathers," as in "Fat," continues at the level of telling. Although the events of the evening of the dinner party were in a different time, the plot continues in the protagonist's ongoing journey toward understanding. The struggle is more important in this story than is a resolution. Even though it is possible, from an objective point of view, to posit a duality of time in this narrative, taking that step requires the reader to overlook the connection between the events of the evening of the dinner party and the present state in which Fran and Jack find themselves. Even though the latter is mentioned only briefly, the economy with which it is related is voluble.
"So Much Water So Close To Home": Two Versions, Two Narratizations

Carver's habit of revising published material has produced two significantly different versions of "So Much Water So Close to Home." The first, and surprisingly the less minimalist version of the story, appeared originally in Furious Seasons, and was subsequently included in Fires and in Carver's most recent collection, Where I'm Calling From: New and Selected Stories. The second version appears in What We Talk About When We Talk About Love. The primary difference between the two versions is that the first is monotemporal whereas the second version exhibits a duality of time. Interestingly, when Carver selected what he considered the best examples of his work from previous collections for inclusion in his latest collection, he selected the monotemporal version as representative of his work.

"So Much Water So Close to Home" is a complex narrative. It would be tempting to argue that the crux of the narrative is the fishing trip where four men find the naked body of a young woman floating in a river. The men, five miles from their car and even further from civilization, decide against disrupting their fishing trip. Tethering the body to a tree, they proceed with their activities. Three days later (one day early, the men would hasten to point out), the men hike out and immediately call the sheriff. The men are surprised by the public outrage at their indifference. One of the men

---

Although each of the three less minimalist versions of "So Much Water So Close to Home" has been slightly revised, they are essentially the same.
expresses his exasperation, as well as his inability to explain their actions, saying,

"She was dead, dead, dead, do you hear?" . . . It's a damn shame, I agree. She was a young girl and it's a shame, and I'm sorry, as sorry as anyone else, but she was dead, Claire, dead. Now let's leave it alone. Please, Claire. Let's leave it alone now." (E, pp. 167-8)

Although the lack of human decency of one group of human beings for another human being represented by this incident is horrific, it is not the story here. The narrator of this story is the wife of one of the fishermen, Claire Kane in the original version, Claire in the revision. The story is her attempt to come to terms with the indifference of her husband and his friends. In the second version of the narrative, Claire acquiesces to her husband's point of view. Her submission is conveyed through a symbolic act. After spurning her husband's sexual advances and his bed for a few days, she submits to his advances. In submitting to her husband sexually, Claire reverts to the wifely role she played prior to the fishing incident and, thereby, ends the original narratization. Consequently, the narrative act recorded in the revision is part of a new extended series of actions and a new narratization.

In the original version, she does not submit. In the final scene of the original version, Claire is talking with her husband on the phone. Lulled by his voice, Claire is almost hypnotized into submission. "He says something else and I listen and nod slowly. I feel sleepy. Then I wake up and say, 'For God's sake, Stuart, she was only a child'" (E, p. 186). Her refusal to absolve him of his guilt or to resume her role as "wife" keeps open the temporal horizon of these
extended temporal events. The story, Claire's attempt to come to
terms with her husband's involvement in this incident, has no
resolution. It began when she learned of the incident. The middle is
composed of all of the incidents until the point where she stops
telling the story. The story has no end. Matters are as unresolved
at the end of the narrative act as they were at the moment when she
discovered her husband's involvement in the incident at the river.

Because this study focuses on monotemporal narratives, it will
henceforth be concerned only with the original version of the story.
Unlike the other narratives analyzed in this chapter, "So Much Water
So Close to Home" does provide social antecedents. The manner of
their presentation, however, is unusual. Although the narrative is told
in first-person, the narrator speaks of her past in the third-person, as
if the past she speaks of were not her own.

There was a girl who had a mother and a father—the
father ran a small cafe where the mother acted as
waitress and cashier—who moved as if in a dream
through grade school and high school and then, in a
year or two, into secretarial school. Later, much later—
what happened to the time in between?—she is in
another town working as a receptionist for an
electronics parts firm and becomes acquainted with one
of the engineers who asks her for a date. . . . After a
short while they decide to get married, but already the
past, her past, is slipping away. The future is
something she can't imagine. . . . Once during a
particularly bad argument . . . he tells her that someday
this affair (his words: "this affair") will end in violence.
She remembers this. She files this away somewhere and
begins repeating it aloud from time to time. (E, p. 175)

Although, unlike many of Carver's narrators, Claire has memories of
her past, the details are sparse. Furthermore, in telling of her past in
the third-person, Claire Kane dissociates herself from her own history.
With the exception of this passage, little else is told about the lives
of the major characters prior to the fishing incident. The reader finds out other information incidentally.

In addition to the sparsity of information about the past, much of the information integral to the expansive present is presented in an oblique fashion. The reader learns, for example, that the narrator's husband, Stuart, has the type of job that requires a coat and tie. Yet, what he does for a living is never mentioned. Also, though their son, Dean, is an important character in the story, no details are provided about his age or his appearance. The narrator, then, is not only cut off from the past and the future, her vision of the present is severely limited.

Because "So Much Water So Close To Home" is focused almost exclusively on the expansive present, it fits easily into the "slice of life" category described by Carver's critics. More importantly, however, in fitting into that category, the narrative demonstrates the degree to which the narrator is cut off from both past and future. She exists in a state of temporal limbo unable to identify with her past and unable envision an alternate future. Although Claire stands up to her husband at the end of the story, there is little hope that the change in her demeanor will lead her into a positive and different future. Claire notes earlier in the story,

[N]othing will change for Stuart and me. Really change, I mean. We will grow older, both of us, you can see it in our faces already, in the bathroom mirror, for instance, morning when we use the bathroom at the same time. And certain things around us will change, become easier or harder, one thing or the other, but nothing will ever really be any different. I believe that. We have made our decisions, our lives have been set in motion, and they will go on and on until they stop. (E, pp. 174-5)
Claire is paralyzed in the present. Although she is cut off from her own past and future, she identifies herself with the drowned girl in the river.

I look at the creek. I float toward the pond, eyes open, face down, staring at the rocks and moss on the creek bottom until I am carried into the lake where I am pushed by the breeze. Nothing will be any different. We will go on and on and on and on. We will go on even now, as if nothing had happened. (F, p. 173)

Like the dead girl in the river, Claire drifts along with the current, incapable of altering her course. Unless some other event occurs that alters the direction that their lives have taken since the fishing incident, she and Stuart are doomed to continue in the direction charted when she discovered of his involvement in the incident with the girl in the river.

The personal precariousness that Claire feels is related intimately to the estrangement she feels from past and future. She lacks the ability to connect with any other time. "The past is unclear. . . . The future is something she can't even imagine" (p. 175). Claire's feelings of dissociation are manifested in the form of headaches for which Stuart encouraged her to see a doctor. As a result of her visit to the doctor, she went away for a while to a clinic.

Every afternoon at four o'clock her head begins to hurt. She holds her forehead and feels dizzy with the pain. Stuart asks her to see a doctor and she does, secretly pleased at the doctor's solicitous attention. She goes away for a while to a place the doctor recommends. Stuart's mother comes out from Ohio in a hurry to care for the child. But she, Claire, spoils everything and returns home in a few weeks. (F, pp. 175-6)
Although she feels better about her situation when she returns from the clinic, a new element in her world reinforces her precariousness. The sense of personal menace that Claire feels is embodied in Stuart's mother who, after Claire returns from the clinic, "moves out of the house and takes an apartment across town and perches there, as if waiting" (F, p. 176).

The sense of personal precariousness of the narrator centers around her dealings with men later in the narrative. Claire decides to attend the funeral of the girl the men found in the river. While filling up with gas to make the trip across the mountains to Summit, the attendant on duty remarks, "It's quite a drive for a woman. . . . Road's not all that good.' . . . And while I'd be willing to bet you wouldn't have car trouble with this, I know this car, you can never be sure about blowouts and things like that" (F, p. 181). Claire is aware of the "feel" of his eyes as she searches for her credit card, and when the attendant offers to check her tires, Claire becomes tense and snaps at him.

On the road Claire becomes aware that she is being followed by a pickup truck. She slows down several times to allow him to pass, but always at the wrong time. Eventually the truck passes her but the driver rides along beside her for a while waving and honking his horn. Shaken by the experience, Claire finds a wide shoulder where she can pull off. The pickup returns. Claire starts the car and rolls up the windows and prepares to drive off, but she is blocked by the other vehicle.
"You all right?" the man says as he comes up to the car. . . . "You okay?" He leans his arms on the door and brings his face close to the window. I stare at him and can't find any words. . . .

"Come on, roll down your window. Hey, are you sure you're okay? You know it's not good for a woman to be batting around the country by herself." He shakes his head and looks at the highway, then back at me. "Now come on, roll down the window, how about it? We can't talk this way."

"Please, I have to go."

"Open the door, all right?" he says, as if he isn't listening. "At least roll the window down. You're going to smother in there." He looks at my breasts and legs. The skirt has pulled up over my knees. His eyes linger on my legs, but I sit still, afraid to move. (F, p. 182)

The threat of violence from men rests most closely to home in the person of Stuart. The threat of violence that Stuart made after five years of marriage hovers on the brink throughout the narrative. Although Stuart refuses to discuss the reasons why the men decided to leave the girl tied up in the river, Claire tries to force the issue by recalling an incident from her youth. "The Maddox brothers," she says. "They killed a girl named Arlene Hubly near the town where I grew up, and then cut off her head and threw her into the Cle Elum River" (E, p. 173). Stuart fails to see the connection and Claire slaps him. Stuart is on the verge of striking her when he suddenly drops his hand. Later, he tries to force the issue of sex. Grabbing her from behind he tells her he thinks he knows what she needs. When her pleas fail to move him, she stomps on his toes, yelling "stop" over and over again. Stuart throws her to the floor, leans down, and says, "You go to hell then, do you hear, bitch? I hope your cunt drops off before I touch it again" (E, p. 185). Stuart once again gains control of himself and physical violence is avoided. Two nights later,
Stuart breaks the lock on Claire's door but only stares at her while his anger dissipates. Although Stuart never actually strikes Claire, the emotional violence between the two adds to her sense of precariousness and her inability to break the repetitive temporal cycle that began with her knowledge of Stuart's complicity with the other fishermen.

Claire Kane exhibits the same types of inarticulateness that plague Carver's other narrators. Claire's inability to express herself is summed up in the final line of the narrative, "For God's sake, Stuart, she was only a child" (p. 186). Although Claire is more eloquent in this final line than at any other point in the narrative, it does not begin to express the depth of the emotion that she feels about her husband's involvement in the incident at the river. Unable to put her feelings into words, Claire often resorts to physical acts to express herself as, for example, when she slaps Stuart when he fails to see the connection between the murder of Arlene Hubly and the body he and his friends found in the river. Earlier in the story, frustrated by Stuart's failure to see anything wrong in what he did and by her inability to express herself, Claire rakes her arm across the kitchen drainboard, sending "the dishes and glasses smashing and scattering across the floor" (p. 168). As the gap of silence between Claire and Stuart grows wider and wider, Claire moves out of the bedroom, preferring to sleep on the couch rather than share a bed with Stuart. Rather than explain her actions to Stuart, she tells him that she is not sleepy and plans to stay up a while longer. The next night she doesn't even bother to offer an explanation.
The inarticulateness of the narrator, in this case, is matched by the inarticulateness of her husband. Once he tells Claire of the woman in the river, he fails to see the need to justify his actions to her or to anybody else, other than to say that the girl was already dead. When Claire persists, he turns the question back to her. "Tell me what I did wrong and I'll listen," he says. "It's not fair. She was dead, wasn't she?" When Claire counters with an impotent, "You know," Stuart responds, "What do I know, Claire? Tell me. Tell me what I know. I don't know anything except one thing; you hadn't better get worked up over this" (F, p. 167). As they muddle through the next few days, Stuart tries to express himself through recourse to the sexual act. Because he cannot understand that he has done anything wrong, he is baffled when Claire rejects him. When he does lash out at her verbally, his responses have nothing to do with the problem between them. Instead, they are personal attacks.

Claire also is inarticulate in that she cannot envision any future for herself or for her family other than the cycle in which they are presently engaged. Like the dead woman floating in the river, she goes with the current unless she becomes snagged in some bushes. Because Claire is unable to see any end to this cycle of events, she cannot take any action that would break the cycle. At the point in the story when she slaps Stuart she says, "This is crazy, I think as I slap him. We need to lock our fingers together. We need to help one another. This is crazy" (F, p. 173). Nevertheless, rather than saying this to him, she tries to strike him again. The fact that she cannot see any other way to cope with this situation is demonstrated over
and over again through the refrain, "Nothing will be any different. We will go on and on and on and on" (F, p. 173).

Summary

Each of the character-narrators in the narratives analyzed above share three common characteristics. First, the stories that they tell may be described accurately as "slice of life" narratives. Only rarely do the character-narrators provide background information about the situations in which they find themselves. When they do, the background material is sketchy at best.

Second, each exhibits a sense of personal precariousness. All of the narrators are at a juncture in their lives where they have lost their ability to define themselves in the roles to which they were accustomed. Because of her experience with the fat man, the waitress-narrator in "Fat" is no longer comfortable defining her "self" in terms of her relationships with her boyfriend or the friend to whom she tells the narrative. Jack's relationships with both Fran and Bud have changed drastically as the result of a dinner party. Claire Kane's role as wife is irrevocably changed after her husband shows flagrant disregard for the body of a dead girl.

Finally, the narrators in these stories are unable to articulate their experience. Claire and Stuart are reduced to physical gestures to vent their frustration with one another. Although Jack "tells a good story," he is unable to draw connections between the mysterious events at the dinner party and the changes that they bring about in his family life. Similarly, although the waitress-narrator in "Fat"
actively searches for the reason that her experience with the fat man changed her life, she is unable to articulate the reasons that the changes have come about.

Each of these characteristics of Carver's narratives and his narrators converge at the site of temporality. Because the narrators have lost their ability to envision an end to the extended series of actions in which they are involved, they have lost their connection to the past as well as to the future. Cut off from the past and the future, the social roles to which they have become accustomed are severed. Therefore, meaningful action with regard to significant members of their worlds becomes fraught with difficulty, if not impossible. The difficulty of human relationships manifests itself in an inability to communicate with one another. Reduced to gestures that foster rather than alleviate tension, the characters in Carver's narratives lash out at one another. His narrators, on the other hand, tell of their experiences from a vantage point in the midst of the extended, though limited, temporal field in which they are engaged. Unable to envision the outcome of present events, the narrators stop telling their stories in the middle, leaving their narratees and the reader as lost in the events as they are. The theory of narrative temporality argued in this study provides a unified explanation of these effects in Carver's stories.
Conclusion

A substantial number of narrative theorists have long considered "past to present" the fundamental temporal frame of narrative. Consequently, theories of time in narrative have examined the temporal relationship between the events, which occurred in the past, and the telling, which occurs in the fictive present. These methods of analyzing time in narrative are predicated on an objective clock model of time. This model predisposes analysts to consider the tension between the past and the present as fundamental to understanding the operation of time in narrative. For most traditional and many contemporary first-person narratives, this method of analysis is revelatory, but not for all. Some first-person narratives are characterized by the strong subjective presence of a narrator. In such cases, readers often are interested more in the narrator's biased perspective than the events s/he recounts. A method of analysis based on clock time is less functional for analyzing these narratives.

I was motivated to undertake this study because I perceived the differences between the answers provided by objective methods of analyzing time in first-person narrative fiction and my sense of enacted time when performing the role of the narrator in certain first-person narratives. In my observation in the classroom and my own engagement in performances of highly subjective first-person narrators, two recurring factors emerged. First, narrators who tend to focus more attention on themselves than on the events they recount usually seem to orient themselves on the basis of the present as it stretches into the future, rather than on the basis of the events they
recount. Second, although we expect a change in the fortune, character, or thought on the part of the protagonist, we expect that change to occur during the events the narrator recounts. In some instances of first-person narrative, these significant changes occur in the protagonist-narrator as s/he tells his/her story. To account for these recurring factors, I looked for another theory of time in narrative.

In David Carr's *Time, Narrative, and History*, I discovered a different approach to understanding human temporality. To derive his theory of human temporality, Carr examined the phenomenological theories of Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger. On the basis of the theories of these two phenomenologists and his own extensions to their work, Carr demonstrates that narrative structure characterizes temporal structure of human experience and action.

By comparing and contrasting the theories of Husserl, Heidegger, and Carr, and extending their theories to time in first-person narrative fiction, I have created a new theory of time in first-person narrative fiction based on the concept of mediacy. In applying a phenomenological understanding of time to the narrators of first-person fiction, I make a distinction between narration and narratization. The term narration refers to the narrative act, which exhibits a structure of beginning, middle, and end. The narration is the experience that a literary text notates. A narratization, on the other hand, refers to the extended temporal field in which the narrator orients himself/herself. During a narrative act, which is a basic action, the narrator orients himself/herself on the basis of some
envisioned future that s/he hopes to achieve, partly through the act of telling. On the basis of that envisioned future, or end, the narrator determines the actions s/he needs to take to achieve that future. The narrative act, then, is constructed in part on the basis of the futural dimension of the expansive temporal field. The value of this study lies in its recognition of the expansive temporal field in which the narrator operates and the degree to which the narrative act is determined on the basis of futural dimension of the narrator's narratization (configured temporal field).

The term "narratization" is borrowed from Julian Jaynes, who describes a narratization as an intrapersonal telling. My use of that term is consistent with, though broader than, Jaynes' usage. According to the phenomenological perspective, intrapersonal telling necessarily involves reflection on experience. In reflecting on experience, human beings leave the realm of primary experience, which is the province of phenomenology. In order to make my use of the term consistent with the phenomenologists, I have expanded the definition to mean a "pre-reflective, lived narrative configuration."

The second definition, narratization as pre-reflective, lived narrative configuration, is more consistent with the phenomenological perspective. Although human beings do engage in intrapersonal tellings, these tellings are not within the province of the type of action explored in this study.

Husserl was among the first theorists to devise the notion of expansive temporality. Basing his observations on human experience rather than objective reality, Husserl determined that in attending to a
temporal object, like a melody, human beings engage in a special form of memory that connects the "now" (or present in clock time) to the just-past. Husserl contrasted this special form of memory, retention, with recollection. Recollection, the term we usually associate with memory, refers to a temporal event that exists somewhere else in time.

Husserl also recognized a corresponding futural dimension of the expansive present. Protention, or primary expectation, connects the "now" with the perceiver's immediate anticipations of what the present will bring. Secondary expectation, in contrast, which calls to mind some possible future, has only limited potency with regard to the expansive present. Although Husserl did not explore this dimension of the expansive present in detail, his discovery enabled him to recognize that human beings experience the present as a "field of occurrence," rather than a point in time.

Standing in the present, an individual configures time and recognizes the present moment as part of a larger temporal event that partakes of the just-past and will come to conclusion in the anticipated future. The significance of Husserl's discovery is that it dispels the notion that time is a mere sequence of successive moments that is organized and structured into a narrative structure through a retrospection. In truth, we organize and structure our experiences from a vantage point in the midst of experience.

In critiques of Husserl's theory, Heidegger agreed with Husserl's basic premise but argued that most human experience is active rather than passive. In his discussions of time, therefore, he chose to focus on human action rather than human perception. On the basis of this
shift from human perception to human action, Heidegger identified the future rather than the present as most salient dimension of the expansive temporal field. In basic actions, the agent's commitment to the completion of an action organizes and structures everything within his/her environment from the vantage point of the end retrospectively, even though s/he has not yet "lived through" the action.

The configuration of perceptions and basic actions from a vantage point in the midst of experience points to the interdependence of all of the moments of a perception or a basic action and accounts for the unity of time in human perception and action. It also enables human beings to distinguish perceptions and actions from one another. This method of temporally configuring experience offers an explanation of why human beings experience human events as having temporal closure, that is, a perceived beginning, middle, and end.

Carr equates this method of configuring experience from a vantage point in the midst of experience with narrative structure and applies his discoveries to more extended and complex experiences and actions. At the pre-reflective level of experience, relatively passive experiences and basic actions exhibit a unified temporal structure even in the midst of the experience or action because the "end" of the experience or action is already available to the perceiver or the agent in the midst of the experience or action. Through the protentional-retentional structure, the perceiver pre-reflectively locates self in the present by reference to a retained past and a protended future. Similarly, the agent in a basic action commits his/her entire being toward the attainment of a futural state, thereby taking primary
measure from the futural state without ever consciously reflecting about what that futural state entails.

Using Husserl's notions of recollection and deliberation, Carr demonstrates how agents employ an explicitly narrational framework in temporalizing more complex and extended experiences and actions. Because complex and extended experiences and actions are often interrupted and intersected by other complex and extended experiences and actions, as an agent turns his/her attention to some particular extended action s/he reorients himself/herself in the larger temporal framework or narratization. According to Carr, the reorientation process involves recalling the "end" of the larger temporal action and organizing quasi-retrospectively the steps or stages that must be accomplished in order to complete the larger project. Although Carr and other theorists discuss this process of locating oneself in a larger temporal frame as if it were a process of intrapersonal communication, human beings do not necessarily raise this process to a conscious level, even though active reflection is one possibility. In most cases, the process of relocating oneself in a larger temporal frame is simply a matter of shifting from one lived narrative configuration to another or by engaging in some action that in and of itself recalls the narratization of which it is a part. Narratization, then, though it is described by Julian Jaynes as a process of intrapersonal communication, also can refer to a pre-reflective lived narrative configuration. Narratization as a process of intrapersonal communication is not necessarily a phenomenological concept, because it suggests the realm of reflection that disrupts primary experience.
Narratization as a lived narrative configuration, however, is consistent with Heidegger's phenomenological thought.

Finally, Carr demonstrates that individuals engage in narratization in order to maintain a sense of equilibrium within their own worlds. Our ability to engage in narratization with respect to our extended temporal experiences and actions (in the midst of those experiences and actions) is what allows us to pre-reflectively select and organize the basic actions that allow us to achieve envisioned ends. In maintaining the role of storyteller of their own lives through narratization, individuals simultaneously incorporate and balance the points of view of the narrator, the character, and the audiences (self and/or others) for whom they act as they do and to whom they would be prepared to relate these narratives.

Having demonstrated that narrative structure is characteristic of the way human beings perceive phenomena and exist in the world, Carr argues that the experience of time as "mere sequence" is a constant threat to our ability to engage in purposeful action in the world. In other words, the ability to act, to pre-reflectively set goals and bring them to fruition, depends on the narrative structure of human consciousness. When human beings lose the ability to perceive the unity of experience, they experience time as "mere" sequence. The loss of the ability to narratize their own experience prompts human beings to try to reestablish narrative coherence.

Taken together, the phenomenological perspectives of Husserl, Heidegger, and Carr, can account for narrative possibilities that are not explainable by the theories of narratologists who depend on a
more objective, clock model of time in narrative. In everyday experience human beings certainly reflect on experiences that have already achieved temporal closure and verbalize these experiences in narrative form. Retroactive narrative configuration, however, is not the only possibility.

If literary narrative is an imitation of human experience and action, its authors can create narrators who, in the act of telling, exist in the midst of an ongoing extended temporal action that has not yet achieved temporal closure. Taking their primary orientation from an envisioned future that they have not yet attained, these narrators tell of events that, though they are in the past in clock time, are part of an ongoing expansive temporal field. Using these events in a narrative act, they strive to effect change. In other words, the narrative act can be viewed as a basic action, organized and arranged on the basis of an end that has been envisioned by the narrator, for the purpose of altering an existing state of affairs or warding off an unwanted state of affairs that seems imminent. Authors also can imitate that state of affairs in which an individual struggles to reestablish his/her ability to narrate an existence threatened by the onslaught of moment after moment in a temporal sequence. Raymond Carver's narrators, who often use this strategy, demonstrate that the narrative act, itself, can be employed as a strategy to attempt to reestablish narrative coherence.

The narratives analyzed in this study demonstrate that these two types of experience are viable options for fictional narrative. Their existence points to the need to broaden the theoretical base of
narrative theory. Although the dominant form of literary narrative is one in which the narrator focuses on events that happened in the past, the conclusion that narrative always focuses on the relationship between a narrator speaking in the present and events from the past is an oversimplification of the narrative act. This conclusion takes for granted the ways in which narrative is used in everyday human experience. In everyday human experience narrators almost always discuss events from the past, yet they do so with narratees in a communicative context. The narrative act, while recounting events from the past, has implications for the future as well as for the present defined by the telling. The narrative act, of which a narrative is a record, is a dialectic between past and future. While the narrator draws on events from the past, the structure of the narrative is equally dependent on what the narrator is trying to achieve—the envisioned future.

The act of narrating is an instrumental process. Recognizing the narrative act as instrumental requires that critics maintain in the critical foreground the complex dynamics in the act of narrating. In everyday human experience, the act of telling stories has no terminal value in and of itself. The narrative act always is imbedded in some larger temporal context that almost always has been configured by the narrator prior to the telling of his/her story. In configuring the context in which s/he speaks, the narrator envisions some futural state which, through the act of telling s/he hopes to achieve. When applied to literary narrative, this perspective draws attention to the often neglected futural dimension of the narrative act.
As applied in this study to literary narrative, the phenomenological model of expansive temporality is based on the way that the narrator in a first-person narrative configures his/her existence in the fictive world. The phenomenological model does not deny that, when viewed from an objective perspective, the events related are in the past. However, when the events are viewed from the perspective of expansive temporality, they may belong to the same expansive temporal field to which the narrative act belongs. In such cases, the narrative can be labelled "monotemporal." The narrator in a monotemporal narrative is oriented primarily by the envisioned end that s/he hopes to bring about, in part, through the act of narrating. Furthermore, the envisioned end almost always has something to do with the narrator's definition of self. Hence, the narrators of monotemporal narratives have a greater potential for undergoing change during the course of the narrative act.

This study is valuable for performance studies in that it closes the gap between the theory and practice of performing literature. Although scholars in performance studies have long recognized the rewards of an experiential approach to studying literature, they have accepted the prevailing notions of literary theory regarding the issues of time and point of view. This study outlines a pluralistic approach to the study of time in narrative fiction, integrating the empiricist notions of time in narrative fiction and the experiential approach to human temporality. As a result, it produces a theory of time in narrative that is more in harmony with the practice of performing literature, particularly first-person narratives.
In addition to answering certain questions about the operation of time in narrative, this study also generates questions. The notion of expansive temporality raises the most provocative questions. Although in this study I have dealt only with narratives that I consider monotemporal, the idea of the expansive temporal field in which the narrator operates is not limited to this particular type of first-person narrative. All narrators operate within an expansive temporal field. Yet, past events, those that exist in what Husserl refers to as the secondary memory, also can assume expansive temporal forms for the narrator. Given this set of circumstances, the term "duality of time" can be reexamined as a dialectic between a duality of expansive temporal fields. This idea has implications for all forms of narrative fiction, though it is most readily applicable to forms of first-person narrative that are more traditional and forms of narrative that feature third-person reflector narrators. The concept of expansive temporality is more problematic for third-person omniscient narrators and third-person objective narrators. However, these areas also warrant exploration.
Bibliography


Boxer, David, and Cassandra Phillips. "Will You Please Be Quiet Please?: Voyeurism, Dissociation, and the Art of Raymond Carver." Iowa Review, 10 (Summer 1979), 75-90.


Rev. of *Cathedral*, by Raymond Carver. *Publisher's Weekly*, 8 July 1983, p. 58


Vita

John Marlon (Jay) Allison, Jr., was born December 11, 1957, in Jacksonville, Florida. At the age of six, he returned with his family to the farm in Suwannee County, Florida, that had been identified with the family name for three generations. In June 1975, he was graduated from Suwannee County High School and in the fall he entered Lake City Community College. He received his A.A. degree in 1977, graduating summa cum laude. Later that year he began coursework at the University of South Florida in Tampa. The following summer he married Terri Lynn McClure. In December 1980, he received his B.A. in Speech-English Education. He entered the M.A. program in Speech Communication at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in August 1981. Two years later, in August 1983, he entered the doctoral program at Louisiana State University. In June 1985, he defended his thesis, "Rehearsal in the Performance Process: Selected Readings in Transactional Theory, Symbolic Interactionism, and Performance Studies," and received his M.A. degree. During his graduate studies, both in North Carolina and in Louisiana, he had the good fortune to serve first as an editorial assistant and later as assistant editor for Literature in Performance.

His coursework at the doctoral level included studies in philosophy, literary criticism, theatre, and communication theory, in addition to his primary focus on the performance of literature. In the summer of 1987, he accepted a visiting lecturer's position at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He will continue in that capacity through the fall semester of 1988.
DOCTORAL EXAMINATION AND DISSERTATION REPORT

Candidate: John Marlon Allison, Jr.

Major Field: Speech

Title of Dissertation: The Temporality of Mediacy: The Time of Narrators in Short, First-Person Fiction

Approved:

Mary Frances Hopkins  
Major Professor and Chairman

J. Glenn Hamby  
Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

David Ponder

H. St. A. Key

Harold Meyer

J. Bernard Carson

J. William Strickland

Date of Examination:  
August 30, 1988