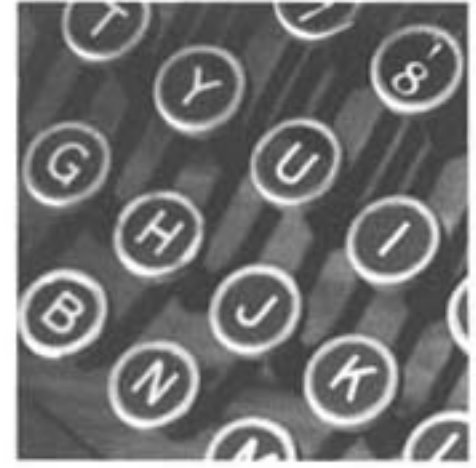


Dual Textual Dynamics and Dual Readerly Dynamics

Double Narrative Movements in Mansfield's "Psychology"

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ABSTRACT: In investigating fictional narrative, critical attention ever since Aristotle has focused on the plot development, and various theoretical models, including the structural, the dynamic, the rhetorical, or the cognitive ones, have been established on the basis of this single narrative movement. But in many fictional narratives, there exist double narrative movements: a covert progression behind the plot development. They constitute dual textual dynamics, arousing or inviting dual readerly dynamics. This essay analyzes the double narrative movements in Mansfield's "Psychology" and the complicated response their coexistence and interaction involve. Based on the analysis, the paper offers a series of theoretical models to accommodate the dual textual dynamics and the (actual or potential) dual readerly dynamics of many fictional narratives.

In many fictional narratives, behind the plot development, there exists a powerful dynamic that runs, at a deeper level, throughout the text. This hidden dynamic paralleling the plot development is what I designate as "covert textual progression" (see Shen, "Covert," *Style*). It involves different "instabilities" on the story level and different "tensions" on the discourse level (see Phelan, "Narrative Progression," *Narrative*), thereby conveying contrasting or even opposing thematic significance, character images, and aesthetic values to those in the plot development, and arousing or having the potential to arouse contrasting or even opposing response from readers. In my previous work, I have distinguished "covert progression" from other types of covert meaning as investigated by various critical approaches since the nineteenth century, including the covert meanings revealed by New Critics and contemporary literary/narrative critics (see Shen, *Style* 7–12, "Covert" 148–52). Other concerns

with covert meaning focus on deep or deeper levels of meaning of the plot development, especially ways in which latent meanings of the plot subvert or oppose its manifest ones. In contrast, my concern with covert progression is a concern with a hidden narrative movement paralleling the plot development. But previously I did not pay sufficient attention to the interaction and joint functioning of the two parallel narrative movements, especially in cases where the meanings of the covert progression subvert those of the plot development. This is the first time I try to offer theoretical models of the dual textual dynamics and the corresponding dual readerly dynamics, both to show and to call for attention to the joint functioning of the two parallel narrative movements. This may enable us to do better justice to the instability, tension, complexity, and otherwise self-contradictory nature of literary narratives.

The present effort to theorize about the dual textual and readerly dynamics is based on the most telling case of Katherine Mansfield's "Psychology." In this narrative, the covert progression takes on an opposite event structure, contrastive focalization, and different degrees of narratorial reliability. More specifically, while in the plot development the event structure is merely "revelatory" and things "stay pretty much the same" (Chatman 48), in the covert progression the event structure displays a progress towards a resolution; while in the plot the focalization keeps shifting, in the covert progression the focalization is quite fixed. Moreover, what appears to be reliable reporting by the narrator in the plot development frequently turns out to be merely character's illusion in the covert progression. This covert progression in Mansfield's "Psychology" very much relies on the ambiguity created by the use of free indirect discourse and point of view or focalization. These devices, among other modernist techniques, have attracted much critical attention in the investigation of Mansfield's fiction, including "Psychology," since she is well known for her masterful use of such techniques. But the covert progression in "Psychology" has remained overlooked in existing literary criticism because ever since Aristotle, critical attention has focused on one narrative movement, the plot development. Indeed, the covert progression is a type of meaning "that readers miss not because it's hidden but largely because their interpretive equipment won't allow them to see what is right there in plain sight" (Abbott 560). As we will see below, unless we revise our interpretive framework and extend attention to another narrative movement behind the plot development, critical sophistication, acumen, and carefulness may not help much in discovering the double narrative movements as such.

Significantly, the dual textual dynamics purposefully created by the author invites dual readerly dynamics. In more specific terms, the covert progression and the interaction between the covert and overt narrative movements invite the authorial audience to change the perception and judgment of various textual details in the overt plot, increasingly altering and complicating the understanding of the rhetorical purposes of the author and the thematic import, character relationship, and aesthetic effects of the text. I use the term “invite” to indicate that the response to the “covert” progression tends to remain a potential previously not yet realized. The reason for this previous non-actualization is not far to seek. If we only pay attention to the plot development, we tend to miss the signals of a textual invitation to see another narrative movement behind it. Only when we consciously try to find out whether there is another narrative movement secretly paralleling the plot development, will the signals of invitation come into sight. The present effort to change the theorization about the plot development into the theorization about two parallel narrative movements may greatly help promote such conscious extension. But of course, the double narrative movements only exist in some, not all, narratives. And the theorization about the dual textual/readerly dynamics is relevant only to those narratives.

In what follows, attention will first be directed to the plot development of “Psychology” as discussed by previous critics. Then I will proceed to reveal the covert progression and its interaction with the plot development in three stages: the beginning, the middle, and the end. Based on the analysis, I will discuss how to extend relevant theoretical models to cover the dual textual dynamics and the corresponding dual readerly dynamics.

PLOT DEVELOPMENT OF “PSYCHOLOGY”

Since its publication in 1919, Mansfield’s “Psychology” has continuously attracted critical attention. But different from Mansfield’s “The Fly,” which has aroused heated controversy (see Shen, “Covert”), critics have offered similar summaries of its plot development. Here is a summary by Desmond McCarthy, first published in *Sunday Times* in 1921:

Psychology is a brilliant snapshot of a relation between a man and a woman, which is essentially a love-liking between two people who funk the intimacy mutual admission implies. They struggle back in conversation to the solid ground of ordinary

companionship, but, having dangled over the gulf together for a moment, they are no longer on terms of comfortable sincerity with each other. (181–82)

A homogeneous plot summary is offered by Pamela Dunbar in *Radical* in 1997: “‘Psychology’ records a meeting between two lovers.... They are a fashionably ‘modern’ couple, both writers, who attempt to live up to the rationalist ideal of a love-relationship based on ‘pure’ friendship. The story deals in the gap between the couple’s tranquil Platonist ideal and their disturbingly passionate and complex feelings for each other” (100–101). Despite diversified formulations, “from its earliest critical reception to the present day,” critics of “Psychology” have reached a consensus that the anonymous male and female protagonists are in love with each other but they try hard to suppress their feelings in order to maintain a safer Platonic relationship (Siegelman 66). And “it is this suppression of their emotions and passion that causes their mental anguish” (Morrow 57).

As a great master of modernist narrative techniques, Mansfield is well known for her use of fixed internal focalization—usually that of the female protagonist. But in the plot development of “Psychology,” focalization frequently shifts between the male and the female protagonists, a shift that has incurred dissatisfaction and criticism. Sylvia Berkman, for instance, says,

In general Miss Mansfield’s focus is on the individual figure. Every detail of the presentation is selected to convey the emotional timbre of a central character, an intensification of the individual to which the situation itself is subordinate. Among the stories included in *Bliss* a number of the earlier pieces show a fumbling control of this technique. In “Psychology” in particular the uncertain focus proves distracting. Now we are taken inside the consciousness of the man, now of the woman, as they meet in her studio for tea; now we seem to be following an identical stream of thought or feeling in both; now the author makes a statement which carries an unexpected satiric overtone. (163–64)

But if we break free of the critical tradition since Aristotle and open our minds to another narrative movement behind the plot development, we may discover that in a parallel covert progression, Mansfield does exactly what critics accuse her of having failed to do: “limit[ing] the range of focus to a single character, with situation designed to expose emotional experience or character” (Berkman 164).

BEGINNING OF DOUBLE NARRATIVE MOVEMENTS

Behind the plot development where the male and female protagonists secretly love each other, there exists a covert progression where the female protagonist cherishes unrequited love for the male protagonist and constantly projects her feelings onto him. This is the very beginning of the narrative:

WHEN *she opened the door and saw him standing there she was more pleased than ever before, and he, too, as he followed her into the studio, seemed very very happy to have come.* “Not busy?” “No. Just going to have tea.” “And you are not expecting anybody?” “Nobody at all.” “Ah! That’s good.” He *laid aside his coat and hat gently, lingeringly, as though he had time and to spare for everything, or as though he were taking leave of them for ever, and came over to the fire and held out his hands to the quick, leaping flame.* (Mansfield 145, italics added)¹

Leaving aside the dialogue, in the plot development, the italicized words figure most prominently. We see that both the man and the woman are extremely pleased to see each other and we watch the man’s actions. But to the covert progression, the boldfaced words are more important:

WHEN she opened the door and saw him standing there she was more pleased than ever before, and he, too, as he followed her into the studio, **seemed very very happy** to have come. “Not busy?” “No. Just going to have tea.” “And you are not expecting anybody?” “Nobody at all.” “Ah! That’s good.” He laid aside his coat and hat gently, **lingeringly, as though** he had time and to spare for everything, or **as though he were taking leave of them for ever**, and came over to the fire and held out his hands to the quick, leaping flame. (boldface added)

The first sentence “When she opened the door and saw him standing there” puts the woman in the focalizer’s position and we catch sight of the man together with the woman. In the covert progression, the verb “seemed” and the subordinating conjunctions “as though . . . as though” deserve particular attention—they indicate that what is involved is the woman’s conjecture. The repeated “very very [happy]” is a typical female expression. The time is late afternoon and the man, who is meeting another friend Brand at six o’clock this evening, pops in only for a short visit. But the woman, who is secretly

and passionately in love with the man, hopes that the man would stay in her home for a long time, or even forever (“as though he were taking leave of [his coat and hat] for ever”). When the man takes leave to meet Brand, the woman is greatly shocked and badly hurt (see below). The words marked by boldface “seemed,” “very very,” “lingeringly,” “as though,” “as though” subtly indicate that the woman is starting to project her feelings onto the man.

In effect, the man and the woman are of drastically different temperament and mentality, as can be seen in this passage:

Carefully she cut the cake into thick little wads and he reached across for a piece. “Do you realize how good it is,” she implored. “Eat it imaginatively. Roll your eyes if you can and taste it on the breath. It’s not a sandwich from the hatter’s bag—it’s the kind of cake that might have been mentioned in the Book of Genesis. . . . And God said: ‘Let there be cake. And there was cake. And God saw that it was good.’” “You needn’t entreat me,” said he. “Really you needn’t. It’s a queer thing but I always do notice what I eat here and never anywhere else. I suppose it comes of living alone so long and always reading while I feed . . . my habit of looking upon food as just food . . . something that’s there, at certain times . . . to be devoured . . . to be . . . not there.” He laughed. “That shocks you. Doesn’t it?” “To the bone,” said she. (148)

The woman is very romantic and full of imagination. By contrast, the man is unimaginative and unromantic. To the woman’s imaginative eye, an ordinary piece of cake is an invaluable creation by God, but to the man’s dull eye, it is just something “to be devoured . . . to be . . . not there.” Mansfield has purposefully created a couple with totally different dispositions to dramatize the contrast in the covert progression between a passionate woman with unrequited love and an unemotional man who only thinks of friendship. But at the same time, Mansfield has deliberately created an overt plot with the man and the woman secretly and passionately in love with each other. These two narrative movements run parallel throughout the narrative, producing rich and complex thematic meaning in their mutual contradiction and joint functioning, inviting drastically different responses from the authorial audience (see “Complicated Response of Authorial Audience” section).

Although the man is not in love with the woman, he does cherish their friendship dearly. He says to the woman, “Here’s another queer thing. If I shut my eyes I can see this place down to every detail—every detail. . . . Now I come to think of it—I’ve never realized this consciously

before. Often when I am away from here I revisit it *in spirit*—wander about among your red chairs, stare at the bowl of fruit on the black table—and just touch, very lightly, that marvel of a sleeping boy’s head” (149, italics added). Significantly, the man’s words only have to do with a “spiritual” tie, rather than with heterosexual love. In his loneliness, the man as a novelist often visits this place to discuss literature with the woman, a playwright. It is not surprising that when he is away, he would revisit this place “in spirit.”² He also mentions that he loves “that little boy” (149). At the end of the narrative, it is an “elderly virgin” who helps the woman to get rid of her unrequited heterosexual love and accept pure friendship as wanted by the man. The little boy and the elderly virgin echo each other in terms of having nothing to do with heterosexual love.

Having discussed briefly the radical difference between the man and the woman in temperament and mentality, we now proceed to examine the middle part of the narrative.

MIDDLE OF DOUBLE NARRATIVE MOVEMENTS

The following passage immediately follows the beginning:

Just for a moment both of them stood silent in that leaping light. Still, as it were, they tasted on their smiling lips the sweet shock of their greeting. Their secret selves whispered: “Why should we speak? Isn’t this enough?” “More than enough. I never realized until this moment. . . .” “How good it is just to be with you. . . .” “Like this. . . .” “It’s more than enough.” But suddenly he turned and looked at her and she moved quickly away. (145–46)

As indicated by this passage, for the whole middle part of the narrative, in the plot development the man and the woman, who are passionately in love with each other but who try hard to suppress their feelings, think alike, and we enter their minds in turn. In order to save space, I will refrain from tracing step by step the plot development and will focus on the revelation of the covert progression.

In the covert progression, we only follow the woman’s perspective and only enter her mind. The man, after laying aside his coat and hat, stands “just for a moment” before turning around. During this brief interval, the woman, who is rich in imagination and full of passion, projects her

feelings onto the dull and unromantic man, imagining that both of them are tasting “on their smiling lips the sweet shock of their greeting.” But actually the man, who is not in love and who just pops in for a short visit, is not shocked at all. The expressions “smiling lips” and “sweet shock,” characteristic of the woman’s romantic and passionate mentality, go beyond the man’s dull and unemotional temperament. The adversative and emphatic “But suddenly” dramatically indicates the gap between what the woman wants/imagines the man to do and what the man actually does. Then the woman starts preparing tea:

She lighted the lamp under its broad orange shade [...]. He sat up clasping his knees. It was delightful—this business of having tea—and she always had delicious things to eat—little sharp sandwiches, short sweet almond fingers, and a dark, rich cake tasting of rum—**but it was an interruption**. He wanted it over, the table pushed away, their two chairs drawn up to the light, and the moment came when he took out his pipe, filled it, and said, pressing the tobacco tight into the bowl: “I have been thinking over what you said last time and it seems to me. . . .” Yes, that was what he waited for and so did she. Yes, while she shook the teapot hot and dry over the spirit flame **she saw those other two**, him, leaning back, taking his ease among the cushions, and her, curled up *en escargot* in the blue shell arm-chair. The picture was so clear and so minute it might have been painted on the blue teapot lid. (146–47, italics original and boldface added)

In the plot development, we have access to the mental activities of both the man and the woman. But in the covert progression, we only have access to the woman’s—starting from “It was delightful” in the mode of free indirect discourse, we enter the inner world of the woman and watch how she projects her imagination onto the man. Earlier on, after the man entered the house, the woman was immersed in the illusion of their secret selves exchanging loving words. When the man suddenly turned, she went to prepare tea, which, however, is in her eye “an interruption” to their loving exchange, and so she wants to finish tea as soon as possible and she projects her desire onto the man. What is crucial to the covert progression is the expression “she saw those other two”—with “those other two” referring to the man and the woman sitting in the “two chairs drawn up to the light” after tea is “over” in what appears to be the man’s imagination. It is beyond doubt that the woman cannot enter the man’s mind, and the anaphoric

reference “those other two” unobtrusively yet unequivocally indicates that “He wanted it over, the table pushed away, their two chairs. . .” is, instead of the man’s wish, actually the woman’s imagination projected onto the man and she is now extending that projected illusion.³ Let us compare what happens in reality and what simultaneously happens in the woman’s imagination:

In reality	In the woman’s imagination
He sat up clasping his knees [waiting for tea]	him leaning back, taking his ease among the cushions [ready for a loving exchange after tea]
she shook the teapot hot and dry over the spirit flame	she curled up <i>en escargot</i> in the blue shell arm-chair [ready for a loving exchange after tea]

Although the woman is full of the illusion that they secretly love each other, she is somewhat aware that the man only cherishes spiritual friendship with her, and she has to cover up and suppress her passion in order to maintain their relationship (see below). In the passage quoted above, she imagines that the man says to her: “I have been thinking over what you said last time and it seems to me. . . .” These words projected onto the man are far from explicit in expressing love and the ellipsis also functions to signal the woman’s suppression of her passion. Moreover, from “Yes, that was what he waited for and so did she,” we can also catch a glimpse of a characteristic of the woman’s projection: putting the man in a more active position and herself in an echoing position. This is a way this playwright with strong self-esteem tries to gain psychological balance. Significantly, as an intellectual, the woman’s sense and rationality also come into play when considering her relationship with the man: “Well. Why didn’t they just give way to it—yield—and see what will happen then? But no. Vague and troubled though they were, they knew enough to realize their precious friendship was in danger. She was the one who would be destroyed—not they—and they’d be no party to that” (151). As a thirty-year-old playwright, the woman is mature, experienced, and intelligent. From the words in free indirect discourse “She was the one who would be destroyed—not they—and they’d be no party to that,” we can infer that she is actually aware that the man is not in love with her

and if she “yields” to her feelings, the man will be hard put to accept it and their relationship will come to an end. This will be a devastating blow to her—she is living alone and it would be disastrous to lose such a long-term trusted and truthful friend. In order to maintain their friendship, she has to suppress her passionate love, but her imagination and self-esteem join hands to project the suppression as being mutual:

For the special thrilling quality of their friendship was in their complete surrender. Like two open cities in the midst of some vast plain their two minds lay open to each other. And it wasn't as if he rode into hers like a conqueror, armed to the eyebrows and seeing nothing but a gay silken flutter—nor did she enter his like a queen walking soft on petals. No, they were eager, serious travellers, absorbed in understanding what was to be seen and discovering what was hidden—making the most of this extraordinary absolute chance which made it possible for him to be utterly truthful to her and for her to be utterly sincere with him. And the best of it was they were both of them old enough to enjoy their adventure to the full without any stupid emotional complication. Passion would have ruined everything; they quite saw that. Besides, all that sort of thing was over and done with for both of them—he was thirty-one, she was thirty—they had had their experiences, and very rich and varied they had been, but now was the time for harvest—harvest. Weren't his novels to be very big novels indeed? And her plays. Who else had her exquisite sense of real English Comedy? (147–48)

In the plot development, the frequent appearance of the plural pronoun “they” indicates that we are having the shared or collective point of view of both the man and the woman, and we see their mutual suppression of their passion. In the covert progression, however, the opening conjunction “For” indicates a continuation of the woman's own mental activity in free indirect discourse. The first part of the passage is suggestive at once of medieval romance and of the woman's romantic temperament. The negative syntactic patterning “it wasn't as if he [. . .] nor did she [. . .]” implicitly conveys the woman's suppressed romantic wish to be conquered by the man as a prince so that she can become the queen. In order to maintain their friendship, she has to resort to her reason and imagine themselves to be companions in travelling without the complication of love, which paves the way for her final acceptance of pure friendship.

The assertive “Passion would have ruined everything; they quite saw that” both echoes and contradicts her thought in free indirect discourse as quoted above “She was the one who would be destroyed—not they—and they’d be no party to that.” As mentioned above, although the woman is conscious that her passion is unrequited, her self-esteem and rich imagination function to project the suppression of passion as being mutual. But passionate love is not to be easily suppressed, especially for a woman as romantic and imaginative as the female protagonist. And so her inner world is still frequently filled with the illusion of their loving each other dearly, but she tries hard to cover up her passion in her external behavior (see below).

The passage that follows is about their having cake and their contrastive opinions on the cake already quoted at the end of the first section, which reveals the great difference in temperament and mentality between the male and female protagonists. Then they become silent, but this time the silence appears unusual to the woman:

A new silence came between them. Nothing in the least like the satisfactory pause that had followed their greetings—the “Well, here we are together again, and there’s no reason why we shouldn’t go on from just where we left off last time.” That silence could be contained in the circle of warm, delightful fire and lamplight. How many times hadn’t they flung something into it just for the fun of watching the ripples break on the easy shores. But into this unfamiliar pool the head of the little boy sleeping his timeless sleep dropped—and the ripples flowed away, away—boundlessly far—into deep glittering darkness. (149–50)

Judging from “Nothing in the least like” and “how many times,” this passage involves a comparison between this “new silence” and previous cases of silence in the woman’s mind. The woman has come to the realization that if she does not give up her unrequited love and accept pure friendship, she herself would be “destroyed,” and so this time the silence and the ripples after the silence is broken have changed in her eyes. What she sees is no longer “the circle of warm, delightful fire and lamplight” or ripples breaking on the easy shores, but “deep glittering darkness” boundlessly far away. As quoted above, the man loves that little boy, and the image of “the little boy sleeping his timeless sleep” from the woman’s perspective seems to imply the woman’s half-conscious realization that the man will never fall in love

with her.⁴ The image of darkness, signaling the hopelessness and danger of her unrequited love, reoccurs later on the same page: “They faltered, wavered, broke down, were silent. Again they were conscious of the boundless, questioning dark. Again, there they were—two hunters, bending over their fire, but hearing suddenly from the jungle beyond a shake of wind and a loud, questioning cry” (150–51). The images of “the boundless, questioning dark,” “the jungle beyond,” and “a loud questioning cry” all seem to imply the woman’s worry, doubt, and sense of danger about her unrequited passion for the man. And this conscious or subconscious apprehension functions to pave the way further for her giving up passion and accepting friendship at the resolution.

Then the man starts discussing literary creation with the woman, and the communication between the two writers becomes easy and agreeable, but not for long:

On the talk went. And now it seemed they really had succeeded. She turned in her chair to look at him while she answered. Her smile said: “We have won.” And he smiled back, confident: “Absolutely.” But the smile undid them. It lasted too long; it became a grin. They saw themselves as two little grinning puppets jigging away in nothingness. “What have we been talking about?” thought he. He was so utterly bored he almost groaned. “What a spectacle we have made of ourselves,” thought she. And she saw him laboriously—oh, laboriously—laying out the grounds and herself running after, puffing here a tree and there a flowery shrub and here a handful of glittering fish in a pool. They were silent this time from sheer dismay. (152)

Although usually reticent, when the topic shifts to literary creation, the man, a novelist eager to exchange ideas with the woman about literature, becomes enthusiastic and voluble. And the woman playwright also temporarily concentrates on the professional discussion and starts to feel satisfied. However, romantic passion soon gains the upper hand and she starts again longing for the exchange of loving words. He feels “utterly bored” with the discussion about literature, finding themselves “jigging away in nothingness”—making no progress in expressing love, and she continues to project her own feelings onto the man.⁵ At the same time, however, the mature and intelligent playwright still resorts to her reason and so she draws an analogy between following the man to talk about literature and following the man to grow trees/flowers or breeding fish, which promises harvest.⁶ This also implicitly paves

the way for her coming to accept friendship at the resolution. The following passage runs:

The clock struck six merry little pings and the fire made a soft flutter. What fools they were—heavy, stodgy, elderly—with positively upholstered minds. And now the silence put a spell upon them like solemn music. It was anguish—anguish for her to bear it and he would die—he'd die if it were broken. . . . And yet he longed to break it. Not by speech. At any rate not by their ordinary maddening chatter. There was another way for them to speak to each other, and in the new way he wanted to murmur: "Do you feel this too? Do you understand it at all?" . . . Instead, to his horror, he heard himself say: "I must be off; I'm meeting Brand at six." What devil made him *say that instead of the other*? She jumped—simply jumped out of her chair, and he heard her crying: "You must rush, then. He's so punctual. Why didn't you say so before?" "*You've hurt me; you've hurt me! We've failed!*" said her secret self while she handed him his hat and stick, smiling gaily. (152–53, italics added)

What is crucial to the covert progression is the referring expression "the other" in "What devil made him say that instead of the other." The anaphoric "the other" refers back to "he wanted to murmur to her: 'Do you feel this too? Do you understand it at all?'" Since a person cannot penetrate into another person's mind, it is impossible for the woman to know what the man wants to say. The prepositional phrase "instead of the other" unobtrusively yet unequivocally signifies that the sweet words the man "wants" to utter are actually imagined by the woman. To the woman who is passionately in love with the man and who is longing for loving exchange, the unemotional talk about literature is just "maddening chatter" by two "fools" "with positively upholstered minds" and so she longs for a "new way" or "another way for them to speak to each other." But, the unromantic man is not even aware of the woman's wish and so he just takes leave to keep his appointment with another friend. Although badly hurt and desperately wishing the man to stay, the woman tries to cover it up by "smiling gaily" and urging the man to "rush" off. This struggle between passion/love and self-esteem/reason in the woman continues in what follows:

"You've hurt me—hurt me," said her heart. "Why don't you go? No, don't go. Stay. No—go!" And she looked out upon the night. She saw the beautiful fall of the steps, the dark garden ringed with glittering ivy, on the other side of the road the huge bare

willows and above them the sky big and bright with stars. But of course he would see nothing of all this. He was superior to it all. He—with his wonderful “spiritual” vision! She was right. He did see nothing at all. Misery! He’d missed it. It was too late to do anything now. Was it too late? Yes, it was. A cold snatch of hateful wind blew into the garden. Curse life! He heard her cry “au revoir” and the door slammed. (153–54)

In contrast with the plot development where both the man and the woman are troubled by their feelings, in the covert progression only the woman is troubled by her feelings and the man, with his merely “spiritual” vision and his mind set on friendship, is not even conscious of the woman’s emotional disturbance (“superior to it all”). The woman has a very complex personality, being extremely romantic and imaginative with passionate unrequited love but at the same time mature, experienced, and sensible with strong self-esteem. From the woman’s thought “Why don’t you go? No, don’t go. Stay. No—go!” we can see the fierce struggle between her reason and her passion, each getting the upper hand in turn. Her perception of the scenery suggests a romantic mentality, but her judgment of the man—“he would see nothing of all this. He was superior to it all”—indicates on the other hand her sensible and intelligent realization of the essential difference between the man and herself. In the plot development, we see that both the man and the woman try to suppress their passionate love because of their shared Platonic spiritual ideal, but in the covert progression, we watch the romantic woman lamenting over the “spiritual” vision the unemotional man alone cherishes.

Mansfield is well known for her masterful use of imagery. The scene the female protagonist perceives seems to symbolize subtly the contrast between worldly love and spiritual friendship. Love in itself is beautiful and shining but cherishing unrequited love for a man who only thinks of friendship can be dangerous. The “dark garden ringed with glittering ivy” echoes the earlier “glittering darkness,” indicating the woman’s worry and despair. Similarly, the “bare” willows seem to signal the fruitlessness of her unrequited love. If the garden and willows on earth symbolize the woman’s worldly love, the sky “above” seems to be associated with the man’s “superior” “spiritual vision.” Although only bespangled with stars, the sky is “bright.” The vast “bright” sky forms a contrast with the enclosed “dark” garden, subtly implying the woman’s sensible realization that spiritual companionship is the only way out.⁷ However, her passion gets the upper hand again, making her

inner self exclaim in utmost despair "Misery! He'd missed it. It was too late to do anything now. . . . Curse life!" In effect, the woman's utmost despair forms a most important step in the progress toward giving up her passion and accepting friendship at the resolution.

END OF DOUBLE NARRATIVE MOVEMENTS

Back to her room, the woman immediately and finally bursts out:

Running back into the studio she behaved so strangely. She ran up and down lifting her arms and crying: "Oh! Oh! How stupid! How imbecile! How stupid!" And then she flung herself down on the *sommier* thinking of nothing—just lying there in her rage. All was over. What was over? Oh—something was. And she'd never see him again—never. After a long long time (or perhaps ten minutes) had passed in that black gulf her bell rang a sharp quick jingle. It was he, of course. And equally, of course, she oughtn't to have paid the slightest attention to it but just let it go on ringing and ringing. She flew to answer. (154–55)

In the covert progression, the adverb "strangely" indicates that the woman behaves very differently from on former occasions. Previously, when the man took leave, the woman surely was not so much hurt and did not feel so angry and so desperate. For a long time, her passionate love for the man has remained unrequited and she has to try hard to suppress and cover up her passion. As discussed above, this time she is "more pleased than ever before" to see the man; and this time she has come to the realization that her unrequited passion for the man may "destroy" their relationship or rather, herself. And so this time she is more desperate than ever before to have the man's return of her love. The failure this time results in her utmost frustration, anger, and despair, which constitutes another important step towards her giving up her passion and accepting friendship at the very end.

Now her passion and reason continue to fight fiercely with each other. We may even sense the tension in the same textual elements. Her crying "How stupid! How imbecile! How stupid!" seem to be a functioning of both her passion and her reason, targeted at both the man and herself. More specifically, her passion makes her hate the "superior" man with "spiritual vision" for failing to respond to her worldly love; meanwhile her reason and

self-esteem make her hate herself for stupidly cherishing unrequited love. The image of “black gulf” may indicate her despair due to her passion, but at the same time may also indicate that she has more or less realized that if she does not give up her unrequited passion, there is simply no way out (notice the association between “black” and the earlier images of “darkness”). The absolute conclusion “All was over” seems to be ascribable to her passion, to her hopelessness of winning the man’s love, while the more positive “something was” seems to indicate the working of her reason—friendship still remains. But passion immediately dominates again, making her swear that “she’d never see him again—never.” When the doorbell rings, her frustration and despair make her reluctant to answer it, but she flies to answer because of the joint functioning of her deep love for the man and her treasuring of their friendship.

It was “an elderly virgin,” a “good friend” who has rung the bell, and who “simply idolized” the female protagonist (154). Usually the latter would politely, though condescendingly, ask the former in to enjoy the former’s admiration, but today she finds an excuse not to do so. The friend does not mind and hands her a bunch of violets:

For a moment she did not take the violets. But while she stood just inside, holding the door, a strange thing happened. Again she saw the beautiful fall of the steps, the dark garden ringed with glittering ivy, the willows, the big bright sky. Again she felt the silence that was like a question. But this time she did not hesitate. She moved forward. Very softly and gently, as though fearful of making a ripple in *that boundless pool of quiet* she put her arms round *her friend*. “My dear,” murmured *her happy friend*, quite overcome by this gratitude. “They are really nothing. Just the simplest little thrippenny bunch.” But as she spoke she was enfolded—more tenderly, more beautifully embraced, held by such a sweet pressure and for so long that the poor dear’s mind positively reeled and she just had the strength to quaver: “Then you really don’t mind me too much?” “Good night, *my friend*,” whispered the other. “Come again soon.” (155, italics added)

The word “friend” is repeatedly used to highlight the fact that this “elderly virgin” (compare “spinster” and “old maid”) represents friendship as opposed to heterosexual love. Lesbian love is also excluded since the elderly virgin is “a pathetic creature,” so pathetic and humble that whenever the woman opens the door after she rings the bell she would say: “My dear, send me

away!" (154) From the female protagonist's perspective, there appears again the contrast between the enclosed "dark" garden (worldly love) and the big "bright" sky (spiritual friendship). And again she feels the frustrating "silence" in her conversation with the man. This serves as the last catalyst for the woman to abandon her dangerous unrequited love and accept peaceful friendship as represented by the elderly virgin. The image of the pool appears again, but this time we no longer see ripples flowing away "into deep glittering darkness" but a "boundless pool of quiet" without any ripple, which symbolizes at once the peacefulness of friendship and the peace of mind the woman finally obtains. After saying good-bye to the elderly virgin,

she walked back to the studio slowly, and standing in the middle of the room with half-shut eyes she felt so light, so rested, as if she had woken up out of a childish sleep. Even the act of breathing was a joy. . . . The *sommier* was very untidy. All the cushions "like furious mountains" as she said; she put them in order before going over to the writing-table. "I have been thinking over our talk about the psychological novel," she dashed off, "it really is intensely interesting." . . . And so on and so on. At the end she wrote: "Good night, my friend. Come again soon." (155-56)

This is the very end of the narrative. The woman is now enjoying peace and happiness, forming a sharp contrast with her rage and pain when the man took leave. Her rationality has won final victory. To this mature playwright, her earlier passionate unrequited love is now only a "childish" dream, which she has got rid of. The "*sommier*" may have sexual implications and the woman's tidying it up also seems to symbolize getting out of her passionate love and turning to the track of peaceful friendship. Previously, since she was longing for loving exchange with the man, the woman was annoyed at the discussion about literature that the man wants. By contrast, now she expresses in the letter to the man her keen interest in this kind of spiritual talk. What she says at the end of her letter is exactly what she says to the elderly virgin when parting. The repetition of these words likewise shows that she has given up heterosexual love and has embarked on the path of pure companionship.

In the plot development, however, we do not see any substantial change in the relationship between the man and the woman. They want to become spiritual companions, but "try as they might, they fail" (Gray 86). The "unpleasant and frustrating evening ends with [the man] leaving without either of

them having made any progress towards the goal both secretly desire” and “[i]rony exists in the fact that the couple discusses the resolution of hidden conflicts while acting in opposition to their words” (Morrow 57–58). We do see the woman’s rage and frustration, and tend to take it as Mansfield’s effort to dramatize a moment in which the chance for something more, and all the risks that come with it, slips away.

All in all, by creating a covert progression paralleling the plot development, Mansfield has represented different kinds of mentality of the protagonists and two different types of psychological relationships between them.

DUAL EVENT STRUCTURE

As we have seen, the overt plot and covert progression of “Psychology” display contrastive “instabilities,” respectively arising from the conflict between the protagonists’ passionate love and their Platonic ideal, and from the conflict between the woman’s unrequited love and the man’s only concern with friendship. Significantly, the two parallel narrative movements differ greatly in the way they deal with the instabilities. Seymour Chatman has offered a distinction between traditional plot of “resolution” and modern plot of “revelation” (47–48). In the former type “there is a sense of problem-solving, of things being worked out in some way,” while in the latter type, things “stay pretty much the same” (48). The plot structure of “Psychology” is a typical modern revelatory one where the relationship between the man and the woman stays pretty much the same. They are secretly in love but “cannot speak their feelings for each other,” so they only “communicate unintended emotions through their differing responses to the same stimuli” and their “[u]nstated sexual desire remains suppressed” (Kaplan 153–54).⁸

By contrast, in the covert progression, we do see a zigzag movement towards a resolution—the woman finally giving up her unrequited passion and accepting pure friendship as cherished by the man. Predictably, from this time onward, the woman and the man can enjoy a harmonious spiritual companionship, and their communication will become not only more agreeable but also more fruitful.

The existence of the contrastive event structures in the two parallel narrative movements presents a grave challenge to existing narrative poetics,

which is only concerned with the event structure of the plot alone. In terms of the narratives with a covert progression behind the plot, we need to take into account the following three dimensions:

EVENT STRUCTURE

- (a) **The event structure of the plot:** whether it is revelatory or moving towards a resolution.
- (b) **The event structure of the covert progression:** whether it is revelatory or moving towards a resolution.
- (c) **The relationship between the two:** whether they are subversive to each other or are complementary to each other.

In "Psychology," the progressive structure of the covert progression very much subverts the static structure of the overt plot. But on the other hand, the latter paradoxically lends itself to the former by setting it off and making it more impressive. The two narrative structures complement each other in helping portray in a highly ingenious way the full complexity of the psychology involved. If we move from the "story" level to the "discourse" level, we will find that the dual focalization and dual narratorial (un)reliability in the two narrative movements are of a similar subversive-strengthening nature.

DUAL FOCALIZATION AND DUAL (UN)RELIABILITY

It should have become clear that Mansfield presents the woman's frequent subjective projection in the covert progression as what appears to be objective fictional facts in the overt plot, which gives rise to contrastive modes of focalization and different degrees of narratorial reliability. In the overt plot, focalization keeps shifting, as observed by Berkman: "Now we are taken inside the consciousness of the man, now of the woman, as they meet in her studio for tea; now we seem to be following an identical stream of thought or feeling in both; now the author makes a statement which carries an unexpected satiric overtone." In the covert progression, however, the woman consistently functions as the focalizer: what seems to be focalized by the man turns out to be focalized by the woman, which goes contrastive or even opposite to the man's thinking. Moreover, what appears to be viewed by the

narrator or by both protagonists also frequently turns out to be focalized by the woman (such as “Instead, to his horror, he heard himself say,” “For the special thrilling quality of their friendship was in their complete surrender,” and “They saw themselves as two little grinning puppets jiggling away in nothingness”). Insofar as the overt plot is concerned, we have unreliable narration—presenting the woman’s wishful imagination as fictional facts.⁹ By contrast, in the covert progression, since the woman’s wishful thinking is narrated as it is, the narration is consistently quite reliable. Faced with such texts with dual narrative movements we need to revise existing theoretical models of focalization and narratorial reliability by considering three dimensions.

FOCALIZATION

- (a) **In terms of the plot:** What mode of focalization is used? Who is the focalizer?
- (b) **In terms of the covert progression:** What mode of focalization is used? Who is the focalizer?
- (c) **The relationship between the two types of focalization:** whether they are subversive to each other or complementary to each other.

NARRATORIAL RELIABILITY

- (a) **In terms of the plot:** Is the narration reliable? In what ways is it reliable or unreliable?
- (b) **In terms of the covert progression:** Is the narration reliable? In what ways is it reliable or unreliable?
- (c) **The relationship between the two types of reliability:** whether they are subversive to each other or complementary to each other.

In “Psychology,” the event structure, mode of focalization, and narratorial reliability of the covert progression all subvert those of the overt plot. But on the other hand, the latter functions to strengthen the former by serving as a helpful foil, setting the former off and rendering it more revealing and engaging. Alternatively, we can see the two narrative movements as setting off each other and complementing each other in conveying complex individual psychology and interpersonal psychological relationship. This complicates or has the potential to complicate the reader’s interpretative process.

COMPLICATED RESPONSE OF AUTHORIAL AUDIENCE

In Mansfield's "Psychology," as in Mansfield's "The Fly," "Revelations," "The Singing Lesson," or in Edgar Allan Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart," Stephen Crane's "An Episode of War," Kate Chopin's "Désirée's Baby," among others, the implied author has deliberately created a covert textual progression behind the overt plot development (see Shen, *Style*). As compared to narratives with only the plot development—though often containing different branches and layers, in narratives with a covert progression paralleling the plot development, the implied author invites a much more complicated response from the authorial audience. As I have discussed elsewhere (Shen, *Style*), the relationships between the covert progression and the overt plot largely fall into two basic categories: the subversive and the supplementary. In one category, we can further distinguish different subtypes, each inviting the authorial audience's response in a specific way.

No matter pertaining to what type, in such a narrative, the implied author typically invites triple decoding from the authorial audience: the decoding of the overt plot, the decoding of the covert progression, and the decoding of the relationship between the two narrative movements. Upon first reading, we usually only pay attention to the plot, but if we consciously and carefully search for the possible existence of a parallel undercurrent in reading the text again (and again), we may discover that the implied author has created a covert progression which conveys contrasting or even opposing thematic significance, contrasting or even opposing character images, as well as different narrative techniques and aesthetic values. Moreover, we are invited by the implied author to decode the interaction between the two narrative movements.

In Mansfield's "Psychology," the thematic emphasis of the overt plot is placed on the difficulty and failure in communication among people, whose "lives [are] surrounded by a bubble of his or her own private emotions" and those bubbles "never coalesce with each other" (McCarthy 182). By contrast, in the covert progression, the thematic emphasis falls instead on the woman's zigzag progress towards giving up her unrequited passion to achieve successful communication and a fruitful relationship with the man.

In terms of characterization, the man and the woman remain anonymous, and in the covert progression, the implied author seems to invite us to view them as representing certain types of people—the type of literary woman

who is very romantic, imaginative, sentimental yet intelligent, experienced with strong self-esteem and the type of intellectual man who is unromantic and insensitive with spiritual vision. The covert progression aims at revealing the complex personality/mentality of the woman (who cherishes and finally gives up passionate unrequited love) against the “flat” personality/mentality of the man (who is not even aware of the woman’s passion), while the overt plot focuses on their shared inner passion and their shared suppression of the passion. This “sharedness” between the two protagonists in the overt plot not only submerges the complex personality and mentality of the female protagonist but also blocks from view the contrast between the highly imaginative/romantic woman and the highly *unimaginative/unromantic* man. Nevertheless, this “sharedness” in the overt plot functions to set off the particular personality/mentality of the woman and the contrast in personality/mentality between the woman and the man in the covert progression.

Our gradual perception of the covert progression increasingly complicates and changes our interpretive, ethical, and aesthetic judgments (see Phelan, *Experiencing*). Interpretively, in reading the overt plot, we are increasingly worried that “neither protagonist says what they think” (Kokot 71), failing to get anywhere in their communication. Not surprisingly, the ethical judgment of both protagonists tends to be somewhat negative, as reflected in Dunbar’s comment: “The rational relationship to which the hero and heroine aspire is represented as a living lie—hindering access to disturbing but deeper and more ‘genuine’ feelings” (103–4). But in gradually perceiving the covert progression, we will move to a point where we feel especially delighted at the fact that such a romantic woman can still give up her passionate love and accept the man’s spiritual friendship so that the two protagonists with drastically different temperaments/mentalities can walk on the same path towards fruitful companionship.

In uncovering the covert progression, not only our ethical judgment will turn from somewhat negative to quite positive towards the protagonists, but also our aesthetic judgment will become much more positive. Instead of viewing the mode of focalization as being regrettably unstable and distracting (as in the overt plot), we become increasingly appreciative of Mansfield’s ingenious artistic manipulation of focalization—not only consistently using the female protagonist as the focalizer,¹⁰ but also very subtly creating in the overt plot the illusion of the frequent shift in focalization which sets off the consistent use of focalization in the covert progression. Moreover, the

covert progression very much rests with subtle and skillful choices of words, such as “lingeringly, as though he had time and to spare for everything, or as though he were taking leave of them for ever,” “she saw those other two,” “instead of the other.” In the process of uncovering the covert progression, we newly perceive the artistic value as well as thematic relevance of such textual details behind their trivial or digressive appearance in the overt plot.

In general, in those narratives with double narrative movements as such, we can use the following diagram of readerly dynamics:

READERLY DYNAMICS

(a) **Readerly dynamics of the plot development**

How the authorial audience is invited by the implied author to respond to the plot development. How flesh-and-blood readers in different sociohistorical contexts respond to the plot development in different ways.

(b) **Readerly dynamics of the covert progression**

How the authorial audience is invited by the implied author to respond to the covert progression. How flesh-and-blood readers in different sociohistorical contexts respond to the covert progression in different ways.

(c) **Interaction between the two readerly dynamics**

How the authorial audience is invited by the implied author to respond to the interaction between the covert progression and the plot development. How flesh-and-blood readers in different sociohistorical contexts respond to the interaction in different ways.

CONCLUSION

The covert progression is a significant dimension of the overall textual dynamics and readerly dynamics of many fictional narratives, but it has been overlooked in the long critical tradition. Ever since Aristotle, critics of narrative fiction have focused on one narrative movement—the plot development (often with various layers and branches of its own). To descry the covert progression or “in some cases multiple covert progressions”¹¹ (Abbott 561), it is a prerequisite that we free ourselves from the bondage of the critical tradition and open our minds to the possible existence of a parallel textual movement behind the plot development. If the covert progression

in Mansfield's "Psychology" is very much hidden, the covert progressions in many other narratives are more obvious (see Shen, *Style*). Even in "Psychology," the ending does somewhat explicitly show that the female protagonist has given up her illusions, but previous critics still tend to see her *only* as willfully returning to her illusions *because the plot development does not permit them to see otherwise*. Similarly, a trained reader paying careful attention to focalization can easily perceive that the opening paragraph of "Psychology" is narrated from the perspective of the female protagonist, who is very excited to see the man and assumes that the man feels the same. But this impression is quickly suppressed by "Their secret selves whispered . . .," which leads to the impression that both of them are in love with each other, an impression reinforced by many words that follow. This is why generations of critics have overlooked the fact that the woman cherishes unrequited love for the man. When we pay attention only to the plot development, we are constantly in the process of fitting things into the logic of this one narrative movement and can only see the man and the woman as two lovers mutually suppressing their passion. Only when we open our minds to a covert progression behind the plot development will the woman's unrequited love come into sight. It is time for us to extend relevant theoretical models and frameworks to accommodate the dual textual dynamics and the corresponding dual readerly dynamics in many fictional narratives.

It is worth mentioning that the new century has witnessed an "explosion of Mansfield studies" (Kelly 388), which has offered valuable new readings from various angles. But if we fail to perceive the covert progression in many narratives created by Mansfield, no matter how hard we try and no matter how well we analyze her modernist techniques, in investigating these narratives we will not be able to enter successfully the position of the authorial audience. As indicated by Mansfield's "Psychology," "Revelations," "The Singing Lesson," and "The Fly" (see Shen, *Style* 94–144), in narratives with a covert progression paralleling the overt plot, missing the former and the interaction between the two will unavoidably result in seeing only a partial picture (if the covert supplements the overt) or a false picture (if the covert subverts the overt) of the thematic significance of the text, only a more flat or a distorted image of the characters involved; and we can only appreciate the narrative's aesthetic value in a limited or even wrong way. The process of experiencing the covert progression is a process of gaining a fuller, more balanced or more accurate understanding of the thematic import and

artistic quality of the whole work, and of the relation among author, narrator, character, and reader.

I believe that with the extension of existing theoretical models and with more critics engaging in the investigation of the covert progression behind the plot development, we may find a fresh and fruitful area for narrative study from various perspectives, including the structural, the rhetorical, the cognitive, the political, among others, which may help narrative study to gain new impetus and help us to better understand the rich and complicated art of fictional narrative and the communication among the implied author,¹² narrator, authorial audience, and actual readers.

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NOTES

1. This narrative consists of many short paragraphs, but to save space, I have not respected the paragraph division.

2. In the plot development, since we have already formed the impression that the man and the woman are secretly in love with each other, we tend to take the man's words (that he can only remember what he eats here and he often revisits this place in spirit when being away) as indications of his love for the woman (see, for instance, Mounic 145–46).

3. Words similar to “those other two,” which are crucial to the covert progression, are of little significance in the plot development and tend to be overlooked (see below). Only when we consciously and carefully search for the potential existence of an undercurrent, can we possibly discover the “covert” progression (see Shen, *Style* 1–12, 146–49).

4. As many critics have noticed, the little boy is very likely to be associated with Mansfield's younger brother who was killed in the war, and her “private emotions about her [dead] brother strengthen this part of the story” (Wright 205–6). In interpreting the overt plot, Pamela Dunbar thinks that the man's “attachment” to the statue of the little boy “suggests deeper feelings” which “are again suppressed in the name of Platonic friendship” (102). Similarly, Anne Mounic takes the image of the little boy as a symbol of love or “Eros” (146).

5. Joanna Kokot treats “[h]e was so utterly bored” at their enthusiastic discussion about literature as a fictional fact and takes it as indicating the elusiveness of the communication between the two protagonists (72).

6. In interpreting the overt plot, Francine Tolron takes it that the love between the man and the woman “calls for a blossoming into a physical intercourse, as suggested by the author’s very words: ‘now was the time for harvest—harvest’” (167).

7. In interpreting the overt plot, critics tend to overlook the contrast between the dark garden and the bright sky. Dunbar, for instance, observes, “The setting itself however, another Eden scene with its references to a fall and a dark garden, to (poison) ivy and a (weeping) willow—the Book of Genesis was mentioned earlier in the sketch—does not augur well for the future course of the lovers’ relationship” (102–3).

8. After summarizing previous critical consensus that “the man and woman are either past lovers now unable to reestablish what was in any case a wobbly intimacy, or they are would-be lovers frustrated in the expression of their desire for emotional closeness,” Siegelman offers an alternative reading—“that the friends’ failure to establish a romantic intimacy may be due to the man’s sexual interest in other men” and the woman’s hidden “Lesbian feelings” (66–67). Leaving aside whether this alternative reading of the plot is valid, from this perspective, the event structure of the plot is still quite static without moving towards a resolution.

9. In narratives with a covert progression paralleling the overt plot, narratorial unreliability tends to go beyond existing models and classifications (see Shen, “Unreliability”). The factually unreliable narration in the overt plot of “Psychology” is a rhetorical device for the purpose of setting off the reliable narration *by the same narrator* in the covert progression, and it does not involve any gap between the narrator and the implied author. In Kate Chopin’s “Désirée’s Baby,” behind the antiracist overt plot with ethically reliable narration, there exists a racist covert progression with ethically unreliable narration *by the same narrator*, and the ethical unreliability of the narration is also attributable to the implied author (see Shen, *Style* 70–92). When antislavery modern readers discern the racist covert progression behind the antiracist plot, they will refuse to enter, or rather retreat from, the “authorial” reading position and will enter instead a resistant and critical reading position. In Poe’s “The Tell-Tale Heart,” the covert progression is characterized by multiple interplay between the unreliable and the reliable, which may function to enrich our understanding of narratorial (un)reliability (see Shen, *Style* 32–49). First, the narrator is factually reliable in telling the narratee about his dissemblance and cunning, but is ethically unreliable in taking delight in his immoral behavior, a delight as conveyed by the same words. Second, the narrator-protagonist is interpretively and factually unreliable in interpreting and reporting the policemen to be dissembling, but is ethically reliable in deeming the “_dissemblance” to be a villainous act, a reliability that is, however, undermined by his taking pride in his own dissemblance. Third, the narrator is factually somewhat unreliable in claiming that he is sane since he displays notable features of insanity, and meanwhile he is factually somewhat reliable in making this claim since he retains enough rationality in calculatingly executing the murder.

10. Although the man never functions as the focalizer, occasionally we have the narrator’s perspective as a contrast to the woman’s perspective, such as the words in the brackets: “After a long long time (or perhaps ten minutes) had passed in that black gulf”

or the joyful description of the clock which forms a contrast to and sets off the woman's frustration in free indirect discourse: "The clock struck six merry little pings and the fire made a soft flutter. What fools they were—heavy, stodgy, elderly—with positively upholstered minds."

11. In Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart," for instance, there are two ironic undercurrents—one main and the other subsidiary—paralleling the plot development throughout the text, which may be considered as dual covert progression (see Shen, *Style* 4, 32–49).

12. As I discussed elsewhere, to gain a more accurate understanding of the stance of the implied author (the person in the writing process), it is often necessary to find out the connection between the so-called "real author" (the person in daily life, outside the writing process) and the implied author (see Shen, "Implied Author"; Shen, *Style* 16–20). This connection is very important to the investigation of the covert progressions in Chopin's "Désirée's Baby" and Crane's "An Episode of War" (see Shen, *Style* 50–92). Similarly, the connection between the sociohistorical context and the implied author's stance in creating the covert progression cannot be neglected in Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart" and Mansfield's "The Singing Lesson" (see Shen, *Style* 32–49, 111–24).

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