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Towards a Sentimental Rhetoric: A Rhetorical Reading of Rebecca Harding Davis's "Life in the Iron Mills"

Since the 1970s and 80s, cultural studies have provided the dominant paradigm for the interpretation of sentimental fiction.¹ In recent years, however, critics such as Joanna Dobson and Elizabeth Dillon have argued for the importance of considering the aesthetic dimensions of sentimental literature.² But for the most part, this new emphasis has created a gap between cultural and aesthetic studies, as the critics in each camp foreground different aspects of sentimental fiction. In this article, I propose to bridge that gap by turning to the rhetorical theory of narrative, an approach that leads us to a clearer perception of both the aesthetic complexity and cultural significance of sentimental fiction. At the same time, I will argue that sentimental fiction, and more specifically, Rebecca Harding Davis's "Life in the Iron Mills," prompts further refinements of the rhetorical model, especially its theorization of the relationship between the author and reader.

Although Robyn Warhol rightly calls her study of the links between authorial gender and the uses of engaging and distancing addresses to narratees in nineteenth-century British fiction an example of feminist narratology, her focus on the relationship between an author's choice of technique and its effect on audiences makes it compatible with rhetorical theory (for a fuller description of Warhol's model see the next section). Furthermore, since Davis's addresses to her narratees are such a central part of her rhetorical strategy, I will begin by suggesting how Davis's practice is only partially captured in Warhol's model. I will then turn to Peter J. Rabinowitz's rhetorical model of audiences and demonstrate how Davis's practice necessitates some additional discriminations among audience positions. I shall then build the bridge between this rhetorical analysis and the case for both the aesthetic and cultural value of sentimental fiction. More specifically, I shall argue that these rhetorical strategies arise in response to historical-cultural circumstances even as they lead to an aesthetically accomplished novella whose purposes include moving its audience to change those circumstances.

Clearing the Ground: Toward a More Nuanced Model of Rhetorical Audiences

Davis's narrator has always posed a problem for critics because of the contradictory appearances she gives. On the one hand, she speaks in a severe and accusatory tone towards a partially characterized addressee, and on the other, she betrays an apparent eagerness to engage the sympathy of the person she reproaches. The narrator repeatedly confronts her addressee with moral questions: "What do you make of a case like that, amateur psychologist?" (12), and, "You laugh at the shallow temptation?" (46). Yet, she also strongly urges him to go down with her "into the thickest of the fog and mud and foul effluvia" and see with his own eyes the life of the mill workers before shrugging it off as a dull and tiresome story (13). Given this problem, the critics Andrew Scheiber and Kirk Curnutt have come to directly opposite conclusions about the narrator, both using Warhol's theory of gendered intervention. Scheiber believes that the narrator's chiding addresses are engaging strategies meant to make the actual reader sympathize with the sufferers, but Curnutt insists that they are distancing strategies, creating "space between the fictional and the real world" (149).

This important disagreement does not mean that either critic has significantly misunderstood Warhol, or that Warhol's model contains any internal contradictions. It shows instead that there are certain complexities about the use of direct addresses to the narratee in "Life in the Iron Mills" that Warhol's otherwise powerful model cannot fully explain. Warhol regards a narrator as distancing when her direct addresses to the narratee characterize him as someone that the actual reader wants to move away from, and Warhol calls a narrator engaging when she uses earnest direct address to invoke identification between the actual reader and the narratee (29). Using Elizabeth Gaskell, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and George Eliot as her examples, Warhol explains how authors use engaging narrators to evoke readerly sympathy: "In realist novels—engaging narrators functioning as their authors' surrogates in earnestly trying to foster sympathy for real-world sufferers—work to engage 'you' through the substance and, failing that, the stance of their narrative interventions and addresses to 'you'" (32–33). She likewise explains how authors use the ironic interventions of distancing narrators to move actual readers away from the positions attributed to the narratee.

Warhol makes a consequential move in the quoted statement above when she yokes the engaging effect of earnest direct address with the authorial intention to solicit sympathy from the actual reader. That move is fine as far as it goes, but it fails to capture the possibility that an author can also use distancing strategies to

generate readerly sympathy for real-world sufferers. "Life in the Iron Mills" provides a powerful example of how the actual reader can be distanced from the narratee and yet still expected to form a strong emotional connection with the sufferers in the story. By restricting sympathetic effects to engaging strategies, Warhol restricts the explanatory power of her model.

Not only can the same authorial purpose be fulfilled in different ways, but also the same strategy can serve multiple purposes. We can see that in "Life in the Iron Mills" the distancing strategies, mainly including the reproachful addresses and the detailed characterization of the narratee, are used both to generate ironic distance (from the narratee's positions) and sympathetic engagement with the mill workers. "Do you want to hear the end of it? You wish me to make a tragic story out of it? Why, in the police-reports of the morning paper you can find a dozen such tragedies..." (Davis 50). When Davis has her narrator ask these questions, her goal is to make her reader realize the deficiency of the narratee's moral position, the position of an unsympathetic onlooker who reaps pleasure from reading the tragedies of others, and then renounce the narratee to embrace the values of a more sympathetic reader. In other words, I propose to revise Warhol's model by disentangling techniques and effects. We need to go back to the "Proteus Principle," that there is no "package deal" when it comes to narrative techniques and their functions.³ No technique will always produce the same function and no function can be accomplished by only one technique. We should always study the operation of a certain technique within its particular context of use.

Back in 1989 when Warhol wrote *Gendered Interventions*, she was working within structuralist narratology's problematic assumption that the narratee is the only intratextual position available to the actual reader. Based on this assumption, Warhol suggests that failure to identify with the narratee—as in the cases of ironic direct addresses—leads to the actual reader's repulsion from the fictional world. However, in "Life in the Iron Mills" we see Davis strongly encourage her reader to set herself apart from the narratee even as Davis needs her reader to stay in the storyworld so that the reader can then carry her sympathy for the mill workers over to the real world to start the reform in class relations. Davis's rhetorical questions above are designed to enlist sympathy on behalf of Hugh Wolfe and other fictional characters, and designed to lead the actual reader to recognize that the story of Hugh and Deborah is shared by hundreds and thousands of people "out there" who are sufferers just like them. To fully account for the rhetorical complexity of the novella, we need an analytical model that acknowledges the multiple positions the actual reader can enter as she relocates herself into the fictional world.

This need is partially fulfilled by Rabinowitz's rhetorical model of reading, which differentiates four types of audiences—the actual audience, the narrative audience, the ideal narrative audience, and the authorial audience. The actual audience consists of the flesh-and-blood people who hold the book in hand; the authorial audience refers to the audience the author rhetorically designs his work for; the narrative audience is an imitation of the actual audience in the fictional world which takes the storyworld as real; the ideal narrative audience is the audience the narrator wishes he was writing for, since it accepts his reports, interpretations, and judgments uncritically (“Truth in Fiction” 126–34). Rabinowitz distinguishes various audience positions in order to demonstrate the dynamic ways the actual reader engages and interacts with the literary work. For Rabinowitz, a competent reading requires the reader's participation on at least two levels of interpretation. That is, the reader needs to understand characters and events in the story simultaneously as fictional reality and as authorial constructs. To conceptualize the reader's activity within the fictional world, Rabinowitz identifies the narrative audience and the ideal narrative audience as roles the reader can take on when she relocates herself into the storyworld. However, when cataloguing the intratextual positions of reading, Rabinowitz purposefully excludes the narratee, which he conceives more as a textual property than a role the reader can enter (“Truth in Fiction” 142). James Phelan asserts the necessity of adding the narratee to Rabinowitz's family of audiences in *Narrative as Rhetoric*, and in addition, Phelan argues that we should change Rabinowitz's definition of the narrative audience into “the observer position within the text that the actual reader can take up when reading” and keep the ideal narrative audience, a concept dropped by Rabinowitz himself later in his career. I want to use my reading of “Life in the Iron Mills” to reinforce Phelan's three revisions and to suggest two more modifications of my own:

1. Divide the authorial audience into the hypothetical authorial audience (an imagined version of the actual audience) and the ideal authorial audience (who understands everything perfectly)
2. Further distinguish the narrative and the ideal narrative audience as intratextual positions of reading, and the hypothetical and the ideal authorial audience as extratextual positions or versions of the actual audience.

We can see that in “Life in the Iron Mills” the narratee is not an incarnation of the ideal audience, but various positions the actual audience is expected to move away from. “You, Egoist, or Pantheist, or Arminian, busy in making straight paths for your feet on the hills, do not see it clearly,—this terrible question which men

here have gone mad and died trying to answer" (Davis 14). Davis wants her reader to separate herself from the perfectly indifferent narratee who turns his eyes and mind away from the filthy lives of the mill workers. To enable her reader to do so, she needs an alternative intratextual position where the reader can make observations and judgments of the narratee without being forced to leave the fictional world. Phelan's redefinition of the narrative audience nicely describes this intratextual position. The interaction between the reader and the narratee also highlights the role of the ideal narrative audience in "Life in the Iron Mills," which Rabinowitz defines as the audience the narrator wishes he was writing for (134). The ideal authorial audience in "Life in the Iron Mills" would be an audience willing to shed tears for misery of the mill workers and thus the direct opposite of the complacently unsympathetic narratee. As the actual reader dissociates herself from the narratee, she leaves her temporary position amongst the narrative audience to become a member of the ideal narrative audience. The narratee, the narrative audience, and the ideal narrative audience are therefore all necessary concepts to understand the intratextual movements of the actual reader as she responds to authorial strategies in Davis's novella. Although we do not always have to distinguish the narratee, the narrative, and ideal narrative audience, since they often overlap, by keeping all three entities we can more readily account for the range of interactions between the actual reader and the literary text.

It is worth noting that in "Life in the Iron Mills" the ideal narrative audience is an implied position rather than one clearly inscribed in the narrator's discourse. That means the reader needs to infer the qualities of the ideal narrative audience or the authorial norms, instead of collecting them directly from the narrator's discourse. The critic Amy Schrager Lang complains of not having a place to locate herself in "Life in the Iron Mills," after being dislodged from the position of the narratee: "Davis's hostile narrator doubts even the willingness of her reader to come down into the 'nightmare fog' where the mill workers live. This assault on the reader is, presumably, meant to dislodge us from our position of complacent indifference to the plight of the individual worker... But ultimately the story offers us no alternative position in which to locate ourselves" (134). But Lang's comment points not to the deficiency of Davis's rhetorical design, but rather to the necessity of inferring the characteristics of the ideal narrative audience based on the narrator's attitude towards the narratee. In "Life in the Iron Mills" such inferences are not hard to make, given the directness of the narrator's critique of the unsympathetic narratee.

Lang's uneasiness also points to a standard practice in sentimental authors' employment of earnest direct address. As a rule, sentimentalists use earnest direct

address to create the position of an ideal narrative audience,⁴ not a flawed narratee. A comparison between the following passages from Stowe and Davis respectively will be able to show Davis's difference from the other sentimentalists:

To you, generous, noble-minded men and women, of the South, —you, whose virtue, and magnanimity and purity of character, are the greater for the severer trial it has encountered, —to you is her appeal. (Stowe 622)

You laugh at [Deb's pain]? Are pain and jealousy less savage realities down here in this place I am taking you to than in your own house or your own heart, —your heart, which they clutch at sometimes? (Davis 23)

While Stowe's direct address invokes a compassionate, virtuous, and magnanimous ideal narrative audience with which the actual audience is encouraged to align itself, Davis's brings into existence an imperfect narratee that the actual reader needs to turn away from in order to enter the ideal narrative audience. However, both strategies are geared toward the same rhetorical end—turning the reader into an ideal audience, which Rabinowitz calls the authorial audience.

Rabinowitz's authorial audience includes both the audience the author rhetorically designs her work for, and the audience that responds to authorial strategies in the way the author desires. I want to separate the two types of audiences and call the former the hypothetical authorial audience and the latter the ideal authorial audience, since we see a significant divergence between the two audiences in "Life in the Iron Mills." When Davis calls the narratee "amateur psychologist" (12), "Egoist," "Pantheist," and "Arminian" (14), she is obviously invoking a flawed narratee. Why would Davis create such a flawed narratee? These various incarnations of the narratee indicate something about Davis's hypothetical authorial audience, her imagined projection of actual readers. This group can be distinguished from the ideal authorial audience that gets all her moves (and that is like the ideal narrative audience except the ideal authorial audience remains aware that it is reading fiction). Davis recognizes the gap between her hypothetical authorial audience and her ideal authorial audience, and designs her rhetorical strategies accordingly to close that gap. In other words, the rhetorical goal of Davis is to turn an indifferent hypothetical authorial audience into a compassionate ideal authorial audience, and she attempts to do so by devising three distinct intratextual positions—the narratee, the narrative audience, and the ideal narrative audience—that allow the actual audience to make judgments and form connections. Compared with Stowe and many other sentimentalists, Davis undertakes a more challenging rhetorical task in "Life in the Iron Mills," one that places a higher moral demand on the reader, since rather than inviting her reader to identify with an ideal self,

Davis asks her reader to reject a less-than-ideal self—the hypothetical authorial audience—in order to become a member of the ideal authorial audience.

To understand how Davis seeks to shape her readers simultaneously as members of the fictional world and members of society, we need to probe a little further the interrelations between Rabinowitz's audiences. A major contribution of Rabinowitz's theory of reading is that he recognizes and explains the "double consciousness" of the reader in the reading process. That is, the reader is simultaneously in and above the fictional world at the time of reading ("Truth in Fiction" 125). This recognition calls for a model that theorizes both the intratextual and extratextual activities of the reader, which Rabinowitz's does, but he does not explicitly distinguish the intratextual from the extratextual. I believe such a distinction is necessary for understanding how sentimental texts may make interventions in a sociopolitical sphere. I call the narratee, the narrative audience, and the ideal narrative audience intratextual positions, and the hypothetical authorial audience and the ideal authorial audience extratextual positions or versions of the actual reader herself. The intra- and extratextual positions are related in significant ways: when the actual reader of "Life in the Iron Mills" moves away from the narratee to join the ideal narrative audience, she also rejects the hypothetical authorial audience to become a member of the ideal authorial audience on an extratextual level. Although the social interventions sentimental fiction seeks to make always happen on an extratextual level with the actual audience turned into an ideal authorial audience, they happen through the intratextual movements of the reader. The interconnectedness of the intra- and extratextual positions is thus the reason why social change can be made possible by literary means. The sentimentalists capitalize on this interconnection or the duality of the reading experience to turn their actual reader into social reformers. To strengthen its effect, many sentimental authors choose direct addresses to blur the distinction between the real and the fictional world.⁵ Davis's chiding direct address is innovatively used to turn a group of indifferent readers the author has in mind into movers and shakers in society.

Using the Model:

A Rhetorical Analysis of "Life in the Iron Mills"

In this section, I want to go further in the direction of answering the "why" question (why Davis creates a flawed narratee, why she employs a different strategy from Stowe) by getting more specific about the historical cultural reasons. In a historical study of "Life in the Iron Mills," Andrew Silver helpfully places the novella vis à vis a popular literary tradition in the mid-nineteenth century—the picturesque travel narrative, and further considers the intertextual relationship between Davis's

story and a picturesque story “A Night Under Ground,” published shortly before Davis’s in the same literary magazine (*Atlantic Monthly*). Silver believes that Davis’s story is a critical response to this tradition, representing “one of the first American critiques of the picturesque” (96). Silver finds at the core of the picturesque narrative a tendency to aestheticize the life of the working class. Picturesque authors often turn the commonplace poverty of the lower class into a site of class fantasy so as to afford the middle and upper classes, who are at once the producers and consumers of such narratives, a pleasurable escape from their own monotonous and emasculating routines of life. It thus serves an ideological function, averting the eyes of the middle and upper classes from real social problems (95–96). In light of Silver’s conclusion about Davis’s relationship with the picturesque tradition, we can reasonably surmise that Davis may have believed that the *Atlantic Monthly* readership, acting simultaneously as the intended audience and catalyst of this literary fad, harbors the same aestheticizing tendency. This tendency is what Rabinowitz calls a “distorting presupposition” that distracts the reader from the intended or authorial meaning of the text (*Before Reading* 26).

Rabinowitz believes that the reader approaches literary texts with all kinds of preexisting engagements, biases, and prejudices. These a priori commitments may bar her from participating in the authorial reading, i.e., the reading desired and intended by the author.⁶ In order to recover the intended meaning, the reader needs to banish her own prejudices to follow the authorial lead. Davis’s heavy investment in the success of authorial reading leads her to make a strong intervention in the ridding of such prejudices. Davis thematizes reading in “Life in the Iron Mills” to foreground the critical importance of authorial meaning and the authority of the author in the production of authorial reading. She represents and criticizes the iron mill visitors—Mitchell, May, and Kirby—as defective readers of an artistic project that attempts to capture the reality of life. The Kori woman, a statue carved by the worker Hugh Wolfe, puzzles the visitors at first sight and sends them to the “author” for an “authentic” explanation. However, Hugh’s explanation that the sculpture represents a hungry person hardly convinces the visitors. They laugh at this implausible interpretation and offer their own in replacement of it, but they do not realize that their own interpretations are biased by their professional and class backgrounds. Davis designs the plot to show that the reader may turn a blind eye to the authorial meaning because of her cultural and political commitments, and therefore intervention is needed from the author to guide the reader away from these distorting factors. Led by this belief, Davis adopts an aggressive narrator as her proxy in the fictional world, addressing a narratee that serves as a surrogate of

her own prejudiced higher class audience. Through the chiding addresses, Davis wants to draw her reader's attention to the class biases of the hypothetical authorial audience and thus steer her away from them.

Davis further strengthens her intervention by embodying the qualities of a resistant reader in a fictional character—Mitchell. In other words, Davis's construction of Mitchell is part and parcel of her rhetorical construction of her imperfect narratee. She uses Mitchell to expose and critique the aestheticizing tendency of the leisure class, with the hope that her reader would participate in her critical examination of that class's attitudes and habits and renounce them accordingly. The following passage amply demonstrates Davis's implied and yet powerful critique of Mitchell as a representative of the leisure class. It begins when Mitchell beholds Hugh's sculpture in the dark with three of his gentlemen companions on an "exotic" trip to the iron mills.

Mitchell started back, half-frightened, as, suddenly turning a corner, the white figure of a woman faced him in the darkness, —a woman, white, of giant proportions, crouching on the ground, her arms flung out in some wild gesture of warning.

"Stop! Make that fire burn there!" cried Kirby, stopping short.

The flame burst out, flashing the gaunt figure into bold relief.

Mitchell drew a long breath.

"I thought it was alive," he said, going up curiously.

The others followed.

"Not marble, eh?" asked Kirby, touching it.

One of the lower overseers stopped.

"Ko!l, Sir."

"Who did it?"

"Can't say. Some of the hands; chipped it out in off-hours."

"Chipped to some purpose, I should say. What a flesh-tint the stuff has! Do you see, Mitchell?"

"I see."

(Davis 31–32)

Mitchell is the first person among the group to catch sight of the statue, which shows the unusual quickness of his practised aesthetic senses. He initially perceives the statue with fear, since it is so lifelike and—as a result of the lifelikeness—so strange. The reaction of Mitchell reflects the usual way that upper class travelers or mental travelers reading picturesque travel narratives look at the lower class: they view them as aesthetic objects. When the objects of their aesthetic gaze move across the boundaries of art and attain a "life" of their own, their strangeness startles them to an unbearable degree. It is also no coincidence that Mitchell's fear is excited by the sight of a gigantic woman. The masculine appearance of the woman seriously disturbs the gentlemen travelers who are in constant search of images of gendered others to reassert their own masculinity. When the sculpture is later revealed to the

travelers by the light of fire, the initial fright of Mitchell quickly gives way to a new sensation—an emerging aesthetic curiosity. Now no longer feeling threatened by the realness of the woman, Mitchell eases back into his habitual position of an aesthete to observe and relish a newly discovered novel spectacle. He steps up in order to examine the woman in more detail. Following him, the group begin commenting on various aspects of the sculpture—its material, color, origin, and so on. To Mitchell and his companions, the Korl woman has become a mere aesthetic object, now that its constructed status frees its beholders from any immediate moral obligations. Kirby and Mitchell’s emphasis on “seeing” the color of the woman further betrays them as aesthetes concerned mainly with sensual pleasures of their own. Further still, Mitchell’s final reply “I see” acquires an ironic undertone, since although Mitchell “perceives” the Korl woman, he never “apprehends” the real meaning of it. Davis uses the double meaning of “see” to contrast Mitchell’s perceptual power with his limited ability to “feel,” that is, to develop an emotional connection with the suffering characters.

By doing so, Davis tries to move her actual reader away from Mitchell and the kind of defective reading he is guilty of producing. To complete her intervention, Davis also creates a defective authorial figure in the character of Hugh Wolfe. Hugh’s attempt to explain himself to his “readers” fails miserably, and yet his failure results not so much from class differences, as from his sharing of the same aestheticizing tendency. Hugh seeks to find in sculpting an escape from his own dehumanizing life and finally chooses to express his ambitions, frustrations, and hopes in the captive form of a woman. This approach towards life builds a connection between him and his upper class visitors. It makes his explanation seem rather unconvincing when he tries to show his audience that the Korl woman means anything other than a romanticized vision of working-class life. This representation of Hugh as a flawed author further complicates the character, making him some sort of combination of a victim and a perpetuator of social injustice.

Looking Ahead: Towards a Sentimental Rhetoric

The way Davis makes her intervention in “Life in the Iron Mills” gives us a new way to think about the role the author may play in producing the authorial reading. Rabinowitz once suggests that authorial reading depends to a great extent on the reader’s inclination and background and can thus be very circumstantial.

To join the authorial audience, then, you should not ask what a *pure* reading of a given text would be. Rather, you need to ask what sort of *corrupted* reader this particular author wrote for: what were that reader’s beliefs, engagements, commitments, prejudices, and stampings of pity and terror? The reader, in other words, can read as the author intended

only by being in the right place to begin with—and that can come about only through an intuitive mix of experience and faith, knowledge and hunch—plus a certain amount of luck. (Before Reading 26–27, emphases original)

This insight, although applicable in many cases, rather restricts the role of the author in the collaborative act of generating authorial reading. Basically, Rabinowitz is saying that the reader can only speculate about the author's vision of her ideal authorial audience, and that the accuracy of these speculations is far from guaranteed. Sentimental authors, however, are usually more invested in authorial reading than such a reader-oriented view makes allowance for. Many sentimental novels are committed to bringing social change ultimately with the help of the reader who transfers her sympathy for the fictional figures to sufferers in real life. The advent of this change relies on the success of authorial reading in the first place. Only when the reader follows the authorial lead to become a sympathizer of the poor in the story can she possibly begin acting on her sympathy in the real world. The sentimentalists try to ensure the success of authorial reading either by clearly articulating their expectations or making their "norms" explicit to the reader, such as in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, or by directing the reader's attention to the pitfalls of interpretation, such as in "Life in the Iron Mills."

Since the strategies of sentimental authors are dictated by the social end of their literary projects, it makes sense to look at sentimental fiction as rhetoric—the communication between the author and reader on a special occasion and for a special purpose. The occasion for sentimental rhetoric would be an unsatisfactory status quo that the sentimental authors are eager to redress via literary means, and the purpose is the transformation of the reader into an ideal audience, and the society into an ideal world. A rhetorical reading of sentimental fiction enables us to contextualize the formal and aesthetic choices of the authors and in this sense helps settle the quarrels between cultural and aesthetic studies of the sentimental novel. My reading of "Life in the Iron Mills" does not claim to resolve all interpretive problems of the text, which are many and various, but I hope it does show that we can fruitfully apply the rhetorical model to sentimental texts to appreciate both their aesthetic complexity and cultural significance.

Notes

¹ Jane Tompkins is a representative figure in cultural studies of sentimental fiction; her famous claim that sentimental novels are "powerful examples of the way a culture thinks about itself, articulating and proposing solutions for the problems that shape a particular historical moment" has shaped the field in significant ways (xi).

² Dobson, for example, argues that “the shift to a cultural critique has tended to direct scholars away from the kind of evaluation available in more traditional aesthetic and formalist investigation” (264). In support of an aesthetic appreciation of the sentimental novel, she further suggests that “sentimental writing can be seen in a significant number of instances to process a conventional sentimental aesthetics through individual imagination, idiosyncratic personal feeling, and skilled use of language, creating engaging, even compelling fictions and lyrics” (265).

³ Sternberg proposes the “Proteus Principle” in “Proteus in Quotation-Land,” which he refers to as the “many-to-many correspondences between linguistic form and representational function” (112).

⁴ The “ideal narrative audience” could also be substituted by the “perfect narratee” in this sentence, since in Stowe and many other sentimental works, the authors collapse the difference between the narratee and the ideal narrative audience as they bestow on their narratee all admirable qualities they wish their reader to acquire. By doing so, the sentimental authors also conflate the hypothetical and the ideal authorial audience, a distinction I am about to make below.

⁵ In *Living to Tell about It*, James Phelan suggests that communication in homodiegetic narratives (narratives with characters as narrators) happens on a double track: on the one hand, the narrator reports, interprets, and evaluates events and actions for the narratee—his direct addressee in the story world, and on the other, the narrator indirectly communicates all kinds of information to the reader through his reporting, interpretation, and evaluation (12). Earnest direct addresses, in some realist novels, are used to collapse the two levels of communication by making the reader feel directly addressed by the narrator, thus removing the ontological obstacles when the reader transfers her sympathy from the fictional world to the real world.

⁶ Rabinowitz’s idea of authorial reading is anticipated by Wayne Booth when the latter discusses the beliefs of the reader in *The Rhetoric of Fiction*: “Regardless of [the reader’s] real beliefs and practices, [she] must subordinate [her] mind and heart to the book if [she is] to enjoy it to the full... The most successful reading is one in which the created selves, author and reader, can find complete agreement” (138). In other words, the reader must resist the distraction of her own values and beliefs and embrace those of the author completely in order to produce a successful reading.

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WANLIN LI. "Towards a Sentimental Rhetoric: A Rhetorical Reading of Rebecca Harding Davis's 'Life in the Iron Mills'" / 193

This article bridges the cultural and aesthetic critiques of sentimental fiction by turning to a rhetorical model of reading, a model that allows us to recognize both the cultural significance and aesthetic complexity of sentimental fiction. More specially, I use Rebecca Harding Davis's "Life in the Iron Mills" as a case study to illustrate how Davis devised her narrative strategies to move her reader to change the social reality they both faced. In other words, her strategies arise in response to specific historical and cultural circumstances even as they lead to an aesthetically accomplished novella. At the same time, the paper also seeks to make the theoretical intervention that sentimental fiction, "Life in the Iron Mills" in particular, prompts further refinements of the rhetorical model. That is, we can further discriminate the audience positions Peter Rabinowitz proposes in order to better account for the varied and complex reading situations in sentimental fiction.

JOSEPH CARROLL. "Teaching Literary Darwinism." / 206

During the past two decades, I have taught twenty-five courses that contain substantial evolutionary material. Those courses group into two distinct sets that have interlaced chronologically through the twenty years: (1) a graduate seminar in literary theory that I have taught fourteen times; and (2) eleven interdisciplinary seminars, eight for undergraduates, and three for graduate students. In this article, I describe all these courses and explain how the graduate seminar in literary theory has changed over time, as both evolutionary psychology and literary Darwinism have become more mature and sophisticated. Being committed to a biocultural perspective, I discuss the problem of advocacy, how to make sure that students understand that they are free to think out their own positions. I give examples of paper topics, describe the way students respond to evolutionary ideas, and sketch out an ideal curriculum centered on evolutionary theory as a comprehensive explanatory framework within which to synthesize research in the social sciences and the humanities.

JUDITH P. SAUNDERS AND VICTORIA INGALLS. "Evolutionary Science and Literary Design: Teaching Huxley's *Brave New World* in Interdisciplinary Collaboration." / 239

The authors, faculty at a small, private liberal arts college, have collaborated many times in interdisciplinary pedagogical ventures, linking evolutionary science with literary study. One of us is an animal behaviorist in the Biology Department, the other a literary scholar in the English Department. In this co-authored essay, we offer detailed description of a team-taught course, *Evolution, Behavior, and Literature*, explaining course content and design. Readings and assignments lay the groundwork for a scientific understanding of human behavior, including cognitive and emotional functions; this enables us to present literature in an evolutionary context, as an artifact of the adapted mind. As illustrative example, we offer an extended discussion of Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, identifying key topics in evolutionary psychology and cognition pertinent to interdisciplinary analysis of this novel.