ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: SIMPLE REGRETS: COUNTERFACTUALS AND THE

 DIALOGIC MIND

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Counterfactuals, or unrealized scenarios, have been a focus of research in an array

of disciplines, though their rhetorical implications have gone largely unexplored. This

interdisciplinary study uses a cognitive methodology in taking a fresh look at

counterfactual scenarios in discourse. The study argues that when counterfactual

scenarios are introduced into discourse and paired with an evaluative stance, the result is

a creative and persuasive scenario that allows a speaker to communicate a perspective

that a listener may reinforce, revise, or reject. Counterfactuals thus have the ability to

convey an evaluation, to convey emotion, to provide a window for disagreement, or to

foster solidarity. In literature, counterfactual scenarios additionally serve as an embedded

element of discourse that may convey the perspective of characters and/or the implied

author. The reader juggles the counterfactual scenarios, and the perspectives they convey, with other textual elements to grasp the meaning of the story.

This study furthers previous research on counterfactuality by considering the phenomenon from a cognitive rhetorical perspective. Rather than focusing on counterfactual thinking, as psychologists have done, or on linguistic forms, as linguists have done, this study considers both the cognitive and discursive dimensions of counterfactuals in a fully integrated analysis. Furthermore, this study places counterfactuals within a communicative paradigm that considers the role of both speaker and listener, or author and reader, in developing and interpreting counterfactual scenarios. This study thus demonstrates the largely unrecognized rhetorical dimensions of counterfactual scenarios in both ordinary and literary discourse.

SIMPLE REGRETS: COUNTERFACTUALS AND THE DIALOGIC MIND

by

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DEDICATION

To my husband Jon and my son Lincoln

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In December of 2002, former Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott of Mississippi gave a speech in honor of Senator Strom Thurmond's 100th birthday. It was during this speech that he made a statement which had a significant impact on his career. In praising Thurmond, Lott noted that when Thurmond ran for the Presidency in 1948, one of the four states he carried was Mississippi. Lott went on to say: "We're proud of it. And if the rest of the country had followed our lead, we wouldn't have had all these problems over all these years, either" (qtd. in Halbfinger). Thurmond had run for the Presidency in 1948 on a platform that promoted racial segregation, and critics accused Lott of being racially insensitive in what many took as an implicit endorsement of Thurmond's segregationist candidacy.

In one sense, the outcry over this statement is puzzling – many people were extremely angry even though Trent Lott had described an event that never took place. Strom Thurmond did not win the Presidency in 1948 – Lott only imagined a scenario in which Thurmond won. Trent Lott was imagining "what might have been" when he introduced the idea that Thurmond could have won the election, as if he were asking, "what if Strom Thurmond had been elected President in 1948?" His answer to the question was implied by his statement "we wouldn't have had all these problems over all these years."

This example demonstrates the fact that a speaker's attitude toward an imagined scenario may be one of the most significant aspects of meaning conveyed to a listener. It didn't matter that the scenario Lott described was a fictitious, "what

might have been" example. What mattered was the way Lott felt about the example –

the perspective on past events that was conveyed by his words. Clearly, his

subsequent statements of regret showed that he understood that the representation of

his own attitude was the problem. He issued a statement noting that "A poor choice

of words conveyed to some that I embraced the discarded policies of the past" (qtd. in

Stolberg). But the attitude he had conveyed proved difficult to retract, and he was

eventually forced to resign as Senate Republican leader.

How did his listeners infer Lott's attitude from the statement that he gave?

Lott's words conveyed not only an imagined scenario in which Thurmond won the

Presidency, but also an implied evaluation of this scenario. Lott's evaluation was

conveyed by the positive depiction of the imagined scenario, which implied a

corresponding negative depiction of the actual scenario. Specifically, Lott's statement

implicitly associated the actual situation, in which Thurmond didn't win, with "all

these problems over all these years." In contrast, in the imagined situation he

described in which the rest of the country had followed Mississippi's lead and

Thurmond had won, "these problems" would have been avoided. The imagined

Thurmond presidency seemed more favorable, as Lott described it, than the actual

outcome of the election and the historical path that followed.

We can pair Lott's statement with another example that seems far removed in

both time and purpose – an excerpt from Virginia Woolf's 1925 novel *Mrs. Dalloway*.

In the novel, the main character Mrs. Dalloway thinks about her life as she walks

along the street in London. She thinks about her current husband, Richard, as well as her friend and former suitor, Peter Walsh. About Peter, she concludes,

> ...she had been right – and she had too – not to marry him. For in marriage a little license, a little independence there must be between people living together day in day out in the same house; which Richard gave her, and she him. (Where was he this morning for instance? Some committee, she never asked what). But with Peter, everything had to be shared; everything gone into. And it was intolerable…. (7-8)

 In Mrs. Dalloway's statement, it is the decision to reject a former suitor that is at issue. Unlike Lott, who implied that the country made a mistake in not electing Thurmond, Mrs. Dalloway assures herself that she made the right choice. At least, she takes pains to reassure herself that "she had been right – and she had too – not to marry him." She implies a contrast between what marriage might have been like with Peter – emotional, dependent – and her refreshingly independent marriage with her actual husband, Richard. In the comparison, Richard seems the more fitting husband, while Peter would have been a husband with "intolerable" needs, thus reinforcing Mrs. Dalloway's conclusion that she had been right to reject him. While Trent Lott's evaluation implied a preference for the imagined scenario, Mrs. Dalloway prefers her actual marriage to the imagined alternative.

It may seem whimsical to yoke together Trent Lott and Mrs. Dalloway, a politically-charged birthday speech and a modernist novel. And yet, they have an uncanny similarity in their representation of a common activity. We recognize the type of thinking that is represented because we too engage in it. Who has not considered, at one point or another, the possibilities for what might have been? We often think about the events in our lives that did not occur but might have: the

invitation that was refused, the position that was declined, or the accident that was narrowly escaped.   Psychologists call this phenomenon counterfactual thinking, and have shown that it is a normal part of our cognition. As Neal Roese and James Olson have written, "Counterfactual thinking is something familiar to nearly everyone. Even if they have not previously heard the term 'counterfactual,' people instantly recognize it, once it has been defined for them, as something with which they are intimately acquainted" ("What Is?").

Counterfactual thinking may seem so normal and familiar that we fail to see the complexity involved in communicating counterfactual scenarios to each other. In fact, we are so adept at presenting and interpreting counter-to-fact scenarios that they may seem to require no special attention at all. Speakers easily introduce counterfactual scenarios with simple statements like "if the rest of the country had followed our lead" or "I was right not to marry him." But clearly, at the very least, counterfactual scenarios must be distinguished from factual discourse. Note that for all the debate inspired by Trent Lott's counterfactual scenario, no one was confused about whether Strom Thurmond actually won the election. Similarly, there is no confusion on the part of either the reader or Mrs. Dalloway about whether she actually married Peter Walsh. We are able to easily partition what <u>might</u> have happened from what actually did. We can discuss these alternative scenarios with an understanding that they did not occur.

Language provides the cues that enable speakers and their audiences to understand these partitions between fact and counterfact when they are discussing

imagined scenarios. For example, "If the rest of the country had followed our lead" introduces a situation clearly marked as counterfactual by the markers "if" and "had." The wording of this opening clause clearly distinguishes it from a scenario marked as factual, which might begin instead with "since the rest of the country followed our lead…." Other linguistic markers, such as the use of the negative in the example from *Mrs. Dalloway*, also help speakers and their audiences distinguish counterfactual from actual scenarios.

It is clear that counterfactual scenarios are not only an aspect of thinking, but intimately tied to language and communication. Psychologists have established a connection between counterfactual thinking and normal cognitive development, emotions like relief and regret, and causal attribution[1]. This psychological account provides vast insight into the cognitive and emotive dimensions of counterfactuals, and yet it is incomplete. Often focusing on elaborate scenarios imagined by individuals, psychologists have paid little attention to the role of counterfactuals in communicative settings. In our everyday lives, we don't just think about counter-to-fact scenarios, we describe them to each other. They are included in novels, glorified in speeches, and even elaborated by historians. Counterfactuals are a creative element of all types of discourse.

For this reason, language provides a natural starting point for investigations into counterfactuals. And in fact, analysis of specific forms that communicate contrary-to-fact information has a long history in the philosophy of language that predates psychological work on counterfactual thinking[2]. Yet until the more recent

explosion of the cognitive sciences, no paradigm existed that related the linguistic expressions of counterfactuality to mental representations and cognitive processes. Recently, cognitive linguists have worked to fully describe this connection[3]. In their most recent work on the subject, <u>The Way We Think: Conceptual Blending and the Mind's Hidden Complexities</u> (2002), Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner enhance the cognitive account with a description of the imaginative processes necessary to produce and understand counterfactual scenarios. They demonstrate that elaborate mental representations are often generated from minimal linguistic input. They show that incomplete information is brought together to form coherent counterfactual scenarios in a process of conceptual integration.

Fauconnier and Turner's account takes strides to establish firm connections between language, mental representation of counterfactual scenarios, and the cognitive process of conceptual integration; they acknowledge the almost ubiquitous role that counterfactuals play in discourse. Yet they fail to explain fully the reasons that counterfactuals play such a widespread and important role. In one sense, the communication of counterfactual scenarios seems like a waste of time. The events described did not happen. The discourse participants understand this. And the circumstances surrounding the original event cannot be repeated – there will never be another 1948 Presidential election, and a woman who has married someone else cannot accept a marriage proposal from the past. So why do people bother discussing counterfactuals at all? Something is missing from the cognitive linguistic and cognitive psychological accounts. For all that they do reveal, they do not fully explain

the purpose that counterfactuals serve in discourse that make them worthwhile topics of discussion.

I propose that counterfactuals serve a purpose in discourse because they can function rhetorically and allow people to communicate a perspective on the past. This rhetorical role is most obvious in statements that not only present a counterfactual, but also include an evaluation of the imagined scenario. In these examples, the counterfactual not only presents a creative scenario, but provides a vehicle for expressing an opinion about that scenario, such as Lott's opinion that the country "could have avoided all these problems" or Mrs. Dalloway's opinion that "she had been right – and she had too – not to marry him." Because the listener is already involved in imagining the counterfactual, the evaluation can be a particularly effective way to encourage the listener to adopt the speaker's perspective.

We see this rhetorical dimension of counterfactuality in the examples from both Trent Lott's birthday speech and *Mrs. Dalloway* – the speakers are presenting views on the past that represent their own unique perspectives. Whether it is the collective history of the country or personal history that is being evaluated, the medium is the same: a counterfactual scenario. By introducing an evaluation of the counterfactual scenario the speakers actively encourage listeners to share their views of past events.

When Mrs. Dalloway notes that "she had been right" and adds "and she had too," she seems to be trying to convince herself that her evaluation of marital options is legitimate. Are we convinced that Mrs. Dalloway did the right thing in marrying

Richard, a man who, according to her, maintains his privacy and stays emotionally detached? Not necessarily, just as most people who heard Lott's remarks did not agree with him that Thurmond's election would have been a positive turn for the country. When counterfactual scenarios are introduced into discourse, they present the perspective of an individual speaker, including that speaker's evaluations, and while the listener must understand the counterfactual in order to understand the statement, he is free to disagree with the evaluation. In other words, while the person who interprets the counterfactual must also interpret the speaker's perspective, he or she need not adopt it. As with any rhetorical tactic, there is no guarantee that speaker and listener will agree on the interpretation or evaluation of a counterfactual scenario.

The rhetorical nature of counterfactual scenarios – their role in discourse, their utility in presenting a speaker's perspective, and their openness to interpretation by a reader or listener – has been neglected in previous studies. For those of us interested in the study of language and literature, the rhetorical nature of counterfactuals is the most interesting fact about them. Counterfactual scenarios give speakers the ability to convey a unique perspective through both simple and elaborate imaginative statements. When counterfactuals are communicated to listeners, these "simple regrets" may help corroborate perceptions or highlight differences in the way we evaluate events.

The examples from Trent Lott and *Mrs. Dalloway* demonstrate that counterfactuals are a recognizable feature of vastly different types of discourse. There are other possible differences as well – counterfactual scenarios may take on very

different properties in different settings. They may be quite short, like the examples above, or as long as an entire novel. The differences in the scenarios themselves, and the contexts in which they occur, may seem to prevent any integrated research on the phenomenon. In part, this assumption may seem born out by the fact that some researchers have been interested primarily in the linguistic nature of counterfactual expressions, while others have been interested primarily in the cognitive operations involved in counterfactual thinking.

I believe this seeming problem can be overcome by considering counterfactuals as a coherent phenomenon with both linguistic and cognitive dimensions, and by providing a more careful analysis of the properties of specific counterfactual scenarios and the contexts in which they appear. These two factors make it possible for me to integrate the research from different disciplines and to consider counterfactual scenarios from a variety of settings in my own rhetorical analysis. Counterfactuals occur across discourse types, and have distinctive rhetorical functions, foremost of which is evaluation. Counterfactuals are a dialogic phenomenon, a theme I will use to organize this book.

In *Chapter 1: Counterfactual Scenarios*, I propose three parameters to distinguish types of counterfactual scenarios: contingency, elaboration, and embedding. Contingency refers to the sense that the counterfactual was once a viable possibility. Elaboration refers to the development of the counterfactual in either a simple or extended linguistic form. Embedding refers to the relation of the counterfactual to other mental representations; for example, a scenario may be

counterfactual with respect to a speaker's understanding of reality or the "reality" of a fictional text. These parameters are useful not only in distinguishing between different instances of counterfactual scenarios, but also help to distinguish research programs that have tended to focus on one type of counterfactual or another. I end the chapter by describing the evaluative counterfactual scenario in terms of these parameters; the rest of this project will focus on counterfactual scenarios that are paired with evaluations.

In *Chapter 2: Evaluative Stance,* I propose that counterfactual scenarios depend on comparison, providing a natural outlet for the expression of evaluation. I examine more closely the role that certain linguistic cues play in indicating that a scenario introduced in discourse has a counterfactual status, and then consider the range of linguistic expressions that additionally introduce an evaluation of a counterfactual scenario. I adopt the term "evaluative stance" to describe a speaker's expressed evaluation of a counterfactual space, and describe the relationships between evaluation and emotion in counterfactual expressions. As a final point, I consider the expressions "good thing" and "too bad" as case studies of evaluative stance in everyday discourse.

In *Chapter 3: Counterfactuals as a Dialogic Phenomenon,* I focus on the role of the listener in understanding, questioning, and developing evaluative counterfactual scenarios that have been introduced in discourse. In placing counterfactuals and evaluation within a communicative context, I consider possible responses that a listener may make to a counterfactual statement, and how these responses reinforce,

revise, or reject the counterfactual scenario or the evaluation. When the listener reacts in a way that reinforces the speaker's assertions, the counterfactual may act as a means of corroborating perceptions; when the listener contests the views, the counterfactual becomes a point of negotiation or even discord. I extend this model to literary discourse, which often includes multiple speakers and listeners.

In *Chapter 4: He Had Never Written a Word of That,* I consider counterfactuals developed within the narrative of Ernest Hemingway's "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" (1938). In this story, the main characters, a married couple, are stranded while on a safari in Africa. The wife attempts to convey her distress by imagining a better vacation they could have taken. Analyzing the represented dialogue, I show that the husband's unwillingness to confirm his wife's evaluation highlights a tension in their relationship caused by his own struggles with regret. I consider this represented dialogue in comparison to other counterfactual scenarios that occur in the narrative, and show that the theme of regret is sustained by the many types of counterfactuals in the story, which unify its disparate elements.

In *Chapter 5: He Should Have Acknowledged Her*, I explore the role of a counterfactual statement in the dialogue of Charles Chesnutt's story "The Wife of His Youth" (1899). This statement occurs at a key moment in the text when the main character challenges his friends to overcome their racial biases by asking "should he have acknowledged her?" The question refers to a man who has failed to make himself known to his darker-skinned former slave wife, and the main character has made it clear that he views the counter-to-fact acknowledgement as the morally

preferred scenario. In this case, the listeners adopt the speaker's point of view and confirm that "he should have acknowledged her." This example demonstrates a successful corroboration of attitudes through the use of a counterfactual scenario. The characters' evaluation of the counterfactual scenario, I argue, encourages the reader to adopt a positive stance toward the theme of racial acceptance.

There are several important conclusions that may be drawn from this study. First, it proves that counterfactual scenarios play a significant role in discourse because of their creative and rhetorical potential, particularly the propensity for conveying evaluations. Second, evaluative counterfactuals communicate the attitudes of discourse participants which may in turn be corroborated, challenged, or rejected by their interlocutors. Third, ordinary language and narrative discourse both include expressions of counterfactuality that may be analyzed with similar techniques and assumptions. The major distinction is that narrative discourse represents a more complex form of counterfactual expression because of its inherently embedded form, and because of the distribution of evaluative stance between multiple speakers. Counterfactual scenarios are not flights of fancy, but integral parts of our conversation and narrative that reflect our dialogic minds.

Chapter 1: Counterfactual Scenarios

What might have been is an abstraction / Remaining a perpetual possibility / Only in a

world of speculation.   — T.S. Eliot, "Burnt Norton"

In one of his best-known poems, Robert Frost encouraged us to consider the

wisdom of looking back on "The Road Not Taken." The main character of Gustave

Flaubert's <u>Madame Bovary</u> expressed regret that she did not marry someone else. A

Korean ice skater who finished first in an Olympic speed race, but was then

disqualified, saw the gold medal go to the second place finisher[4]. Thomas Jefferson

described the character of James Monroe by stating, "if you turned his soul inside out

there would not be a spot on it"[5]. Do all these examples help illustrate the notion of

"counterfactuality"? I believe they do, but if that is true, how can the term

counterfactual be coherently defined?

One of the difficulties that arises in studying counterfactuals is the diffuseness

of the term itself. The term is actively in use in a variety of disciplines, each with a

different set of assumptions and research goals. Working within their own paradigms,

researchers have seemed to take a common meaning for granted; they have not

belabored the process of definition, but dispensed with it quickly. No doubt, when a

common perspective within a discipline may be assumed, the general diffuseness of

the term across fields is less problematic. But the rise of cognitive science has brought

about the need to integrate theories of the mind from cognitive psychology, cognitive

linguistics, and cognitive rhetoric – not to mention the fact that interesting work on

"counterfactuals" has been undertaken in philosophy, literary criticism, history, and legal theory. At this time, those of us interested in the study of counterfactuals are using the same word for a vast range of phenomena. In order to share insights, we must achieve a more precise understanding of our terminology.

A brief sampling of "counterfactuals" taken from major works on the topic demonstrates the use of this term in different disciplines. David Lewis's classic book in the philosophy of language, <u>Counterfactuals</u> (1973), revisits the logic of Nelson Goodman's example, "If New York City were in Georgia, New York City would be in the South" (43). In their edited collection <u>What Might Have Been</u> (1996), Neal Roese and James Olson's essay on the "Functions of Counterfactual Thinking" includes the example "what if you had bought the winning million-dollar lottery ticket last week?" (169). Niall Ferguson's collection of "counterfactual histories," <u>Virtual History</u> (1997), includes a fifty page essay entitled "What if there had been no American Revolution?" (125-175). Most recently, cognitive scientists Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner analyze the example "if Clinton were the *Titanic*, the iceberg would sink" (221) in their book <u>The Way We Think</u> (2002).

An attempt to provide an exact criterial definition of the term "counterfactual" might seem like the best solution to the problem, but the definition would inevitably exclude much of the interesting work that has been done in these various disciplines. Instead of attempting to provide such a definition, I will define three parameters – contingengy, elaboration, and embedding – that are useful in considering how certain counterfactuals differ from other counterfactuals. I will not propose that a single

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definition of counterfactual is wrong or right, but that counterfactual scenarios can be differentiated according to their most important characteristics. The three parameters are also useful in considering the types of counterfactuals that have been the object of study within certain disciplines, thus providing a framework for understanding what researchers in different disciplines mean by the term "counterfactual." Ultimately, counterfactuals are a product of creativity, and a creative person could undoubtedly find an example to challenge any attempt at an exact, delimited, definition.

This chapter will attempt to clear the way for a discussion of the subset of counterfactuals that I will undertake as my own object of study in this book: evaluative counterfactuals. I consider where this particular type of counterfactual falls along the parameters contingency, elaboration, and embedding, and how this type of counterfactual scenario relates to the types of counterfactuals that have been previously studied in other disciplines. With this groundwork laid, I will then provide a much fuller account of "evaluative stance" in the next chapter, including a discussion of the relationship between evaluation and emotions like relief and regret.

<u>The Counterfactual Scenario</u>

In this study, I often use the term "counterfactual" as shorthand for the term "counterfactual scenario." A note is in order to establish exactly what I mean by the term scenario. When I use the term, I am referring to a coherent mental representation that may include actors, agents, events, and relations. A scenario is unified, it may be elaborated, it may be the topic of discourse, and it may change as discourse proceeds.

Counterfactual scenarios in particular have a special ability to express causal relations between events and actions. One of the most common forms that counterfactuals take, the conditional expressed as an if/then proposition, often develops a causal relationship as part of its meaning. The causal relationship may be based on actual scientific principles, as in "if you had heated the water to 100 degrees, it would have boiled," or on a perceived causal relation, as in "if you had told her you needed help, she would have come over to help you." Even counterfactuals that do not adhere to this conditional form, like those developed in history, may start with an antecedent and develop a series of causally related consequences.

While not all counterfactuals express causation[6], most counterfactual scenarios do seem to develop causal relationships, which is also the primary reason that counterfactual scenarios have become a respected mode of inquiry in fields like history. Since scientific studies of the past are not possible, a carefully developed counterfactual can serve as a means for testing a causal hypothesis between a historical event and its proposed outcome (Ferguson 81). Nelson Goodman originally noted that "if we lack the means for interpreting counterfactual conditionals, we can hardly claim to have any adequate philosophy of science" (13), a point which Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner extend to the social sciences (218). In other words, identifying a causal relationship in both scientific and quasi-scientific settings includes the consideration of alternative causes and outcomes.

Finally, I would like to stress the fact that counterfactuality is a cognitive phenomenon, and that counterfactual scenarios, in the view of my project and other

cognitive projects, are a form of mental representation. In fact, psychologists typically focus on the phenomenon of counterfactual thinking, not counterfactual scenarios themselves, in their consideration of the phenomenon. Similarly, cognitive scientists Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner are primarily interested in the cognitive process of conceptual integration demonstrated in counterfactual scenarios. In the remainder of the chapter, I discuss counterfactual scenarios with an emphasis on their role in discourse, and with an understanding that language and cognition are integrated phenomena.

Counterfactual Forms

There are a number of linguistic forms that are linked to counterfactuality; these are forms that allow speakers to describe counterfactual scenarios, and that prompt listeners to imagine counterfactual scenarios when they are introduced into discourse. Some forms are very strong prompts for counterfactuality, others are weaker, and the prompts for counterfactuality may also be strengthened or weakened by pragmatic context. These ideas will be discussed at greater length later in the description of *mental spaces theory*. At this point, I will present a brief overview of the forms in an effort to provide a more precise working definition of the counterfactual, such that it is a recognizable occurrence in discourse.

Counterfactuals are often expressed as conditionals that contain two clauses, the first beginning with "if." When the opening clause contains a past tense verb form, this indicates that the state of affairs has a dubious status that may be interpreted as counterfactual. For example, a statement beginning with "If I taught this class,"

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establishes a counterfactual scenario in which it is given that the speaker is not teaching the class. Consistent with the past tense verb form in the opening clause, a modal form in the consequent reaffirms the unreal status of affairs: "if I taught this class, I would not assign that book."

Modal and negative forms alone can also introduce a counterfactual scenario in discourse. A speaker may introduce an imagined state of affairs by proposing, "I could have taught that class last spring." Like the conditional form, the modal form indicates that the state of affairs was not realized, and is instead being imagined by the speaker counterfactually. Negative forms also allow speakers and listeners to discuss the unreal. When a speaker describes a scenario by stating, "I didn't teach the class last spring when I had the chance," it is also taken for granted that the scenario in which the speaker taught the class is counterfactual with respect to what actually happened.

These are the most common ways that counterfactuals are expressed linguistically, though it is not meant to provide an exhaustive list. A counterfactual is at once a linguistic form and an imagined alternative: the forms provide speakers with linguistic options for introducing scenarios that did not occur. Ultimately, it is the speaker's representation of the status of the scenario that determines whether it is to be understood as a counterfactual. When the speaker's linguistic choices indicate that a given scenario has not actually occurred, then that scenario is counterfactual. Beyond this basic sense in which the counterfactual is regarded as a non-real alternative, counterfactual scenarios vary along many dimensions.

<u>Contingency</u>

Counterfactuals have the ability to explore an imagined version of "what might have been." This characteristic of counterfactuals depends on our sense that an unrealized event was a former possibility, a sense I will refer to as "contingency," a term borrowed from historian Niall Ferguson. When I use the term, I refer to the perception of the degree of likelihood of the counterfactual. When Trent Lott described the means by which Strom Thurmond could have won the 1948 Presidential election ("if the rest of the country had followed our lead"), he was developing a counterfactual that seemed linked to a past possibility, for Strom Thurmond had indeed run for President in 1948 in a major national campaign. As this example demonstrates, contingency in counterfactuals involves viewing scenarios of the past from the point-of-view of the present moment, and recognizing them as possibilities that were not actualized.

In understanding contingency, it is helpful to think about how a possibility is considered and discussed both before and after it is known to be actual or counterfactual. Consider parents expecting a baby. As they wait for the birth, they know that the baby will be a boy or a girl. They may plan for these two alternatives – picking names for each gender, for example. Until the birth, both outcomes are possibilities. After the birth of a baby girl, they can now discuss the past from the present point-of-view, in which they view the possibility of having a daughter as actual and the possibility of having a son as counterfactual. The parents may now

make statements like "if we had had a boy, we would have named him Thomas," a reference to an unrealized possibility for the past.

The contingency of a counterfactual scenario involves other related characteristics, including a sense that the counterfactual scenario "began" at a specific point in the past when reality diverged from counterfactuality. The event identified as the original point of divergence between factual and counterfactual alternatives is typically referred to as the antecedent event[7]. From this antecedent, actual and counterfactual alternatives are viewed as proceeding along "different paths" that take place during the same time frame, and which include at least one key difference, identified by the counterfactual outcome. Although the antecedent event is typically in the past relative to the point of speaking, the counterfactual outcome or outcomes may be in the present or future relative to the point of speaking.

To illustrate contingency and its related properties, consider an actual example. In July of 2002, an airliner carrying Russian school children who were traveling to Spain tragically collided with another plane over Switzerland. The children were scheduled to fly three days before their departure on the doomed plane, but were driven to the wrong airport and missed their original flight (Finn). One could imagine a person stating, "If the students had been driven to the correct airport, they would have lived." This statement identifies a contingent possibility, the scenario in which the children made their original flight and arrived in Spain as scheduled. This scenario is easily perceived as a former possibility because this was the way the trip was originally planned. The antecedent event identified by the statement is the students

being driven to the "wrong airport" instead of the right airport. In the imagined

counterfactual, the divergent outcome is that the lives of the children were saved. In

the actual scenario, the children were instead killed in the plane crash. These two

scenarios develop along simultaneous chronological paths – in one case, the children

spent three days stuck in Moscow and then died tragically in a collision. In the

counterfactual scenario of the same time sequence, the children arrived as scheduled in

Spain, and lived through the time of the collision without incident.

Some points in the past, such as important decisions and life-changing events,

may seem like obvious choices to play the role of antecedent. As many researchers in

counterfactuality have noted, it is common for people to look back at key choices in

their lives – the selection of a college, the decision to get married, a change in career

path – and to imagine a salient possibility that was not realized. Like Robert Frost, we

have a sense that at key points in our lives we could have chosen different paths

leading to different life outcomes. We may imagine what our lives might have been

like if we had pursued other alternatives.

Nonetheless, not all counterfactuals are coupled to points of human decision.

While we easily construe ourselves as agents in our own lives, leading us to imagine

alternatives at key decision points, many events are beyond our control and yet they

play the role of antecedent in counterfactual alternatives. We often view the past as a

cloud of possibilities, some of which have been selected, and some of which have not,

and many forces besides human beings may be perceived as agents of selection. The

sense of selection from real or imagined alternatives leads us to suppose that an event

became actual when it was selected from the alternatives. The alternative possibilities are counterfactual precisely because they were not selected, regardless of whether an agent of selection can be clearly identified or whether the agent of selection is a human being. As Niall Ferguson points out, the ability or willingness to explore unrealized possibilities may be more limited for those individuals who subscribe to a deterministic world view, and more open for those individuals who subscribe to individualism and who believe in the randomness of events (64-79).

Returning to the example of the parents who are expecting a baby but don't know whether it will be a boy or girl, it is clear that the gender of their child is not something over which they have direct control. Whether they identify God, fate, or biology as the determiner of their baby's gender, the counterfactual possibility of having a boy is not connected to any decision that they made. This situation demonstrates that there are any number of forces or conditions that may, through counterfactual assertion, be construed as "making a selection" between alternatives. They are not always depicted as agents, and yet they are identified as determining factors in a selection process. The point is, human control or decision is not a necessary precondition for a specific event to serve as an antecedent event in a counterfactual alternative.

Furthermore, antecedent events are always arbitrarily selected from a series of related events by the person describing the counterfactual. While some may seem "obvious," even seemingly obvious points of decision can be unpacked into a perceived chain of related events, any one of which may serve as an antecedent. The

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person who imagined the Russian children avoiding the crash could have identified the decision to take the trip ("if we had cancelled the trip, they would have lived"), the decision to work with a particular tour guide ("if we had hired an agent who knew what she was doing, they would have lived"), or the instructions from air traffic control ("if air traffic control had warned the pilot of the collision, they would have lived") as the antecedent event in a counterfactual scenario. The perceived chain of related events can be stretched to a seemingly ridiculous extent, a point Niall Ferguson makes by citing an example in which the fate of Rome was traced back to the size of Cleopatra's nose (12).

In fact, Ferguson establishes guidelines for historical counterfactual alternatives that are useful explorations and not frivolous narratives. According to him, good historical counterfactuals must always depend on a specific connection between a counterfactual alternative and a former possibility. In other words, every counterfactual alternative explored in retrospect by a historian must once have been considered by someone (and documented) as a future possibility. Otherwise, it is merely a random speculation and not a useful and historically-informed counterfactual (87). This assumes that counterfactuals either develop from a contingency or they do not. In my view, the notion of contingency is more fluid: contingency can be seen as a characteristic exhibited strongly in some counterfactuals and weakly in others.

In discourse, contingency is determined by the shared understanding two speakers have about the counterfactual scenario; in other words, contingency is determined by the speakers' common ground. In part, the strength of the contingency

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depends on the shared understanding that the scenario once had a very real possibility of becoming actual, similar to Niall Ferguson's sense of counterfactual "plausibility" (85). A speaker may claim "If I had attended the Smith School of Business, I would have been hired for that job"; the statement has a very high contingency if the speaker and listener both know that the speaker applied to Smith, was accepted, but chose not to attend. This example shows that the counterfactual may exhibit very strong contingency in cases in which both the speaker and listener view the unrealized scenario as a former possibility, not just as a speculation.

In cases like these, the strength of the contingency is also affected by the speakers' and listeners' judgments about the probability that the unrealized possibility was likely to occur, similar to what psychologists refer to as the judgment of "propensities," which Roese and Olson define as "the dynamic, preoutcome, actional cues that suggest an increasing trend toward the occurrence of a target outcome" (24). If the speaker of the above statement made it known to her listener that she never seriously considered attending business school, then her statement is not as strongly contingent as it would have been in a situation in which both people know that she seriously contemplated pursuing an MBA degree. Or, we might also consider a public event like an election. If a speaker and listener have general knowledge about the Presidential election of 2000, they might engage in a conversation about counterfactual scenarios in which Al Gore or Bill Bradley won the election in 2000. The unrealized scenario in which Al Gore won in 2000 is more highly contingent than the unrealized scenario in which Bill Bradley won thatsame year, since Gore stayed in

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the race longer than Bradley. Of course, the election of either Gore or Bradley would be judged as more probable than the election of someone who never entered the race at all.

High contingency may also arise when a speaker and listener both perceive that a path of action or development has been interrupted. Psychologists refer to the almost automatic likelihood that a person will think about a particular counterfactual option as the "closeness" of the counterfactual alternative (Roese and Olson 22-25). In discourse, counterfactuals seem closer when both speaker and listener perceive that a progression has been interrupted, creating a natural point of divergence between two scenarios, one that was "in progress" and one that represents a shift in the original plan. When a pregnancy has ended prematurely, a marriage has been called off, a vacation has been cancelled – all of these prompt strongly for "what might have been," and therefore contribute to the strength of contingency when counterfactuals are part of discourse.

Similarly, when conversational participants perceive that events had a limited set of possible outcomes, the counterfactual alternatives seem readily available, and highly contingent – elections, contests, and wars, for example, entail a limited set of outcomes, and the discourse participants are usually both aware of these potential outcomes. This may explain why counterfactual explorations that arise in history and in popular culture are often based on antecedent events like wars and elections, and why "Monday Morning quarterbacking" has become synonymous with the exploration of counterfactual alternatives to the outcomes of football games.

In summary, the sense of contingency is highest in counterfactuals that explore thoughts about "what might have been," particularly when the antecedent is perceived as a former possibility by both speaker and listener, when that outcome is viewed as highly likely to have occurred, when a perceived progression has been interrupted, and/or when a limited number of alternatives form the available set of outcomes. In each case, the counterfactual is construed as an unrealized alternative by the discourse participants. For this reason, highly contingent counterfactuals are typically oriented toward the past – specifically, the counterfactual alternative begins at an antecedent event which is in the past relative to the people discussing it. The point identified by the antecedent serves as the point of "branching" between actual and counterfactual alternatives. Contingency is weaker when any of these factors is present, but to a lesser extent.

Other counterfactuals develop a weaker sense of contingency for other reasons, and these counterfactuals are less easily characterized as examples of "what might have been." These are statements that do not exploit the possibility of an unrealized alternative traced from an antecedent event. Instead, the discourse participants view the counterfactual as a contrasting alternative to a present situation. The statement that develops the counterfactual scenario may imply a sense of possibility and the existence of an antecedent event, but the antecedent event is not the focus of the discussion. Consider the following statements:

If Jack had decided to take the coaching job, we'd be winning right now.

If Jack were the coach, we'd be winning right now.

The first example has a stronger sense of contingency: the antecedent event (Jack deciding not to take the coaching job) is in the past relative to the moment of speaking, and the outcome is in the present. It seems clear that at one time, there was a chance that Jack might have taken the job. The sentence seems to describe "what might have been" – Jack might have taken the job, producing a more favorable result for the speakers in the present. The second example does not develop a strong contingency, even though the meaning of the sentence is very similar. Expressed in the subjunctive rather than the past perfect, the sentence describes a counterfactual scenario that does not develop an unrealized possibility from an antecedent, but rather describes a scenario contrasting with the present moment. The statement does not seem to develop two paths, one actual and one possible, that have diverged. The contrast is between two alternative versions of the present: Jack is not the coach, and the team is not winning, or Jack is the coach, and the team is winning. Presumably, at one time Jack might have become the coach, but this past event is not identified by the counterfactual. The counterfactual does not have a strong sense of "branching" alternatives from an antecedent event in the past.

Such counterfactuals may have some unidentified event in the past as a precondition, though. Consider a statement made by former President Clinton at a fund-raising event for his wife Hillary Clinton when she was running for the U.S. Senate: "I would be here for my wife if she were not my wife" (qtd. in Fauconnier and

Turner 257). This counterfactual scenario – in which Bill Clinton imagines himself

not married to Hillary, but still attending the fund-raiser – elaborates only the present

situation; the past is not mentioned in the stated counterfactual. And yet, a present

situation in which Bill Clinton is not married to Hillary Clinton is logically contingent

upon an imagined past in which they did not get married.

We see that some counterfactuals are not strongly contingent because they do

not develop an unrealized possibility from an antecedent event. This fact does not

preclude the existence of a contingent event prior to the situation named in the

antecedent, but also does not focus on the past point of selection between

contingencies. Counterfactuals of this form often make statements about presence and

absence. Familiar forms include "if Rhonda were here, she would know what to do"

or "if Dad had lived to see you graduate, he would be very pleased." In the first

example, there is no mention of why exactly Rhonda isn't here, though the statement

does describe how her presence would affect the current situation. Similarly, the

second example does not point to a moment at which the speaker's father passed

away, but provides insight through a counterfactual scenario that focuses only on

present conditions in which the father is deceased and therefore not present.

At the far end of the spectrum are counterfactuals that have no sense of

contingency at all – the possibilities explored, in other words, do not qualify as former

possibilities, but depict scenarios that are not and never were available alternatives.

These scenarios have no contingency for a number of possible reasons, for example

because they project people into time periods during which they did not live, because

they imagine abilities that are not possessed, or because they imagine impossible changes to identity or physical laws. Consider the following statement made by a woman decrying the success rate of a Confederate captain whose ship, the U.S.S Alabama, sank many clipper ships: "If I could have sunk him, I would"[8]. Since the speaker did not live during the 19th Century, the prospect that she could have sunk a Confederate captain is nonexistent; the scenario she describes is not an unrealized possibility. The counterfactual has no sense of contingency, and yet it still makes a clear evaluation of the captain's actions.

As cognitive linguists Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner have observed, it is common for people to gain insight into a person's character by imagining him or her occupying a different frame, or to gain insight into a particular situation by imagining a different person facing it (251-253). We may imagine, counterfactually, how Ghandi or George Washington might handle a modern political problem, or we may attempt to counsel a friend by advising "if I were you…." While counterfactuals lacking contingency may be just as creative and provide just as much insight as those which are highly contingent, they do not provide the same type of insight about past actions and events as the highly contingent "what might have been" scenarios.

Elaboration

Psychologist Daniel Kahneman has developed a continuum for sorting counterfactual thoughts based on intentionality. At one extreme, he writes, are those counterfactual thoughts which are completely automatic and not carefully developed. Such a counterfactual thought is invoked, for instance, "when the doorbell makes an

unusual sound." The normal ring of the doorbell, invoked without any conscious

intention, is counterfactual with respect to the expectation for normal events. At the

other extreme is highly elaborate and intentional counterfactual pondering, such as

thinking about "an alternative world in which the south won the Civil War" (375).

Kahneman wishes to distinguish these two ends of the spectrum because he believes

they operate according to different psychological principles, though he considers both

ends of the spectrum examples of "counterfactual thinking" (375-378).

What Kahneman leaves out of his continuum is the point at which

counterfactual thinking is encoded into language. In fact, this point is not necessary

on Kahneman's scale. A single person could engage in an automatic, surprise-

induced, counterfactual thought about the ordinary ring of the doorbell. A person

could also imagine, without any verbal expression, a highly elaborate counterfactual

scenario in which the South won the Civil War. Working only with this continuum, it

is difficult to distinguish simple linguistic counterfactual scenarios from the simple

products of automatic counterfactual thinking; it is similarly difficult to distinguish the

highly elaborate, but nonverbal, results of counterfactual pondering from highly

elaborate counterfactual scenarios in written or verbal form.

In fact, counterfactuals that exist only in thought can be usefully separated

from counterfactuals that take a linguistic form. Although mental simulation takes

place, obviously, in the mind of an individual thinker, too much emphasis on thinking

alone underemphasizes the role of language in communicating counterfactuals and

elaborating them, in particular when the elaboration is a collaborative process.

Linguistic encoding itself is a form of intentionality. If we limit the scale to examples in which linguistic encoding of the counterfactual occurs, the scale is still extremely useful in distinguishing simple from highly elaborate scenarios.

The degree of elaboration, then, is another characteristic that can be used to differentiate certain counterfactual scenarios from others. Every study of counterfactuality, including this one, ultimately relies upon the representation of counterfactual thinking in linguistic form. Language is inseparable from thinking, but language is our gateway into elaborating, communicating, and studying counterfactuals. When counterfactual scenarios take a linguistic form, they can be highly elaborate, with extended description and detail, and in some cases, accompanying visual representation. Other counterfactuals take a less elaborate linguistic form, including counterfactual scenarios that are invoked by a single word.

Perhaps the most elaborate counterfactual scenario is the alternate history, a fictional genre in which counterfactual alternatives to historical events are described. Peter G. Tsouras's novel Gettysburg: an Alternate History, for example, considers the consequences to the Civil War battle at Gettysburg if Confederate Major General J.E.B. Stuart had arrived at a different time. Entire feature-length films have also explored counterfactual scenarios. An example is the film *Sliding Doors*, in which a woman's life is traced along two paths from a point at which she makes a train in one scene and misses it in a counterpart scene; the rest of the movie alternates between the two resulting versions of her life. Another example is the movie *Groundhog Day*, in

which a man lives the same day over and over, but he alone has the knowledge that the day is recurring, giving him the ability to impress people by forecasting events.

Shorter works that treat counterfactual scenarios include television shows, short stories, and essays. One episode of the popular sitcom *Friends*, called "The One That Might Have Been," was an hour-long exploration of imagined scenarios if key points in the characters' lives had taken different turns [9]. The short story "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge," by Ambrose Bierce, describes the attempted hanging and near-escape of a confederate sympathizer. It is only in the final sentence of the story that it becomesclear to the reader that the description of the escape was counterfactual all along: the man was in fact hanged and the near-escape took place only in his imagination. Historical essays, such as those featured in Niall Ferguson's *Virtual History* and Robert Dallek's essay "JFK's Second Term," are also extended counterfactuals that are not as developed as the full novels and films.

Such extended counterfactual scenarios underscore the creativity involved in counterfactuality, but much of the work on counterfactuals has focused not on elaborate scenarios, but on counterfactual scenarios described in individual sentences. The philosophers of language were the first theorists of the mind to label the counterfactual; they defined it as an expression of antecedent and consequent, in which the antecedent proposes a condition that is false in the actual world, and the consequent states an outcome of that antecedent [10]. Counterfactuals were associated with the form of the "if/then" conditional statement in this tradition. Conditional sentences have a bi-clausal structure, with the first clause or protasis beginning with

"if" and expressing the antecedent, and the second clause or apodosis featuring an optional "then" and expressing the consequent.

The goal of language philosophers was to model the logic of counterfactual conditionals. To do so, they adopted truth conditional semantics, a model in which statements are assigned a value of true or false determined by their relation to a model of the actual world. In counterfactual conditionals like "if kangaroos had no tails, they would topple over" (Lewis 1), the conditional antecedent's falseness in the real-world model is the defining feature of a counterfactual – in the actual world, kangaroos <u>do</u> have tails. As Lewis described it, the truth of the antecedent is a sort of "defect" in the counterfactual, "but not the sort of defect that produces automatic falsity or a truth-value gap" (26). David Lewis wrote that "counterfactuals are notoriously vague," though he concluded "that does not mean that we cannot give a clear account of their truth conditions" (1).

Lewis himself attempted to give a clear account by utilizing a *possible worlds theory*, which proposes that "our actual world is surrounded by an infinity of other possible worlds" (Bradley and Swartz 2). In the *possible worlds* semantic model, the consequent of a counterfactual is taken as an expression of truth not in our own but in another possible world. Thus, the antecedent and its consequent are true and meaningful in that possible world, though the antecedent is false in the model of the actual world, or as Lewis put it "my truth conditions guarantee that whenever the premise is true at a world, so is the conclusion" (26). This application of *possible worlds theory* made it possible for Lewis to perform logical operations on

counterfactuals and their truth conditions. The approach of Lewis and other theoretical semanticists connects language to models of worlds, not to mental operations.

This traditional model of counterfactual conditionals has been supplanted by cognitive linguistic models that do describe language in terms of mental operations. This approach aligns linguists with scholars in other disciplines, though linguists continue to study counterfactuality by focusing on shorter forms rather than the more elaborate forms often analyzed by psychologists and historians. New models in cognitive linguistics have been utilized in new analyses of conditional constructions[11].These analyses focus on specific forms and sentences that develop counterfactuality within larger stretches of discourse such as conversation and narrative. The goal is to describe the cognitive processes of actual people involved in language production and comprehension, rather than to model specific sentences according to truth conditions. In other words, cognitive models describe mental processes, not theoretical semantic sets. Nonetheless, the focus of these cognitive linguistic studies is often on the comprehension of individual sentences and utterances like those examined with possible world semantics.

Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner have shown that single words may even prompt basic counterfactual scenarios (239). They have shown that the meaning of a word such as "wrong" may prompt the hearer to imagine a counterfactual scenario (225-227). Consider the earlier statement that school children leaving on a vacation for Spain had been driven to the "wrong" airport. The scene is understood implicitly in contrast to another (counterfactual) scenario – one in which the children were escorted

to the "right" airport. The contrast between these two scenarios is included in the structure of the scene invoked by the word "wrong." In one scenario, the children's journey ended at the airport from which they were scheduled to depart – the right airport. In another scenario, the journey ended at an airport which their airline did not service – the wrong airport.

One benefit of linguistic analyses at such a detailed resolution is that they identify counterfactuality occurring at a level that others have often overlooked, a level that is quite common in everyday dialogue. For example, a man may say to his co-worker "I should have brought my umbrella, so I could keep these documents dry" as they leave the elevator and notice that it is raining. So mundane is this statement that it is easy to overlook the fact that the person's statement describes a counterfactual scenario in which having the umbrella produces the desirable outcome of keeping paperwork dry. Niall Ferguson observes that historians who eschew counterfactual history nonetheless engage in their own simple counterfactuals, such as "the British empire could have been preserved after 1940 by means of alternative policies such as peace with Hitler" (20). It could very well be that these historians simply don't acknowledge the counterfactual underpinning of their simple statements, associating counterfactuals only with much grander ruminations about "what might have been."

Simple counterfactuals such as these also play a more important role in interactive discourse that involves counterfactuality, particularly verbal discourse. While counterfactuals can be introduced and then elaborated in a collaborative process

involving more than one speaker, the ability to create a sustained counterfactual

scenario is more limited in a dialogic setting. People may have sustained discussions

and even arguments about what-might-have-been, but such discussions are unlikely to

ever reach the elaborative detail of an alternate history. Paying attention to

counterfactuals at this level, then, is an important step in seeing the influential role

they play in dialogue.

Embedding

Thus far in the discussion, I have presumed that counterfactual alternatives

differ from reality. This presumption is shared by most researchers who study and

analyze counterfactuals and counterfactuality, beginning with the logical semanticists.

As discussed, philosophers of language sought to identify the relation between a

conditional statement and the actual world, and turned to a *possible worlds theory* to

account for the logic of seemingly false statements that were dubbed counterfactual.

While subsequent researchers have utilized many different models to analyze many

different types of counterfactual scenarios, the generalization has held that

"counterfactual" means "counter to fact," in other words, counter to the actual world

of reality.

Gilles Fauconner has provided a methodology for modeling counterfactuals

that do not contrast with reality, but with other logically coherent mental

representations, referred to as *mental spaces.* The defining feature of counterfactuals,

according to this theory, is "forced incompatibility between spaces" (Fauconnier

Spaces 109). The ability to show that counterfactual scenarios share a connection to

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other mental representations releases the definition of the counterfactual from its anchor to reality, and provides the last important characteristic of counterfactual scenarios, embedding.

Mental spaces theory can be used to model and explain natural language according to principles of embedding. Central to the theory is the assertion that all language is embedded within a specific point of view that serves as the base space for discourse, but which can shift as discourse proceeds. *Mental spaces* are bounded units of information that are by definition incomplete, and which represent "constructs distinct from linguistic structures but built up in discourse according to guidelines provided by the linguistic expressions" (Fauconnier Spaces 16). They are conceptual structures that are the products of language.

As Fauconnier describes in Mental Spaces and Mappings in Thought and Language, a mental space itself may contain propositions, actors, and events that constitute a unified scenario distinct from other mental spaces in the discourse. Differentiation of information occurs when a new space is created as discourse unfolds. New spaces are triggered by pragmatic, lexical, and/or grammatical prompts referred to as *space builders*. Each new space is connected, but separate, from the other spaces that precede it in the discourse; spaces may contribute structure to other spaces with which they share a connection. By showing that all discourse involves an evolving network of connected mental spaces, *mental spaces theory* demonstrates that embedding is a characteristic of counterfactual scenarios. In other words, even a

counterfactual scenario that differs from "reality" can be viewed as a coherent space embedded within another space representing a particular person's view of reality.

A counterfactual space is a particular kind of mental space that is incompatible with its parent space. The counterfactual space develops as discourse proceeds because certain pragmatic, lexical, and/or grammatical cues force counterfactuality within the discourse. Often, these cues work together to build counterfactual mental spaces within a stretch of discourse. Pragmatic cues include contextual information about people and events described in the discourse. Lexical cues include if/then sentences, verbs like "wish," negatives, and other constructions that introduce a counterfactual expression and prompt a counterfactual space. Grammatical cues include tense and aspect, such as present perfect, past perfect and subjunctive forms. Each of the cues may function as a strong or weak indicator of counterfactuality.

With *mental spaces theory*, it is possible to associate reality with the perspective of a specific speaker, since that perspective may include false beliefs about the world, or be reported within a work of fiction. For example, when Mrs. Dalloway thinks about a counterfactual scenario in which she married her former suiter, Peter Walsh, the space created is counterfactual with respect to her own view of her life. The parent space, then, is Mrs. Dalloway's reality, in which she is married to Richard, not Peter. The space that represents the counterfactual "Mrs. Dalloway could have married Peter Walsh" is embedded within the parent space of "Mrs. Dalloway's reality," which is itself embedded within the book *Mrs. Dalloway*.

Recent work by Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner elaborates the mental spaces depiction of counterfactual spaces to include another possibility for embedding: the embedding of an entire space network that includes a blended space. The *conceptual integration model* describes, in more explicit detail, the blending process that must occur in the creation of all counterfactual spaces, a blending process that requires not just two, but four mental spaces. Conceptual integration accounts for complex characteristics of counterfactual spaces, such as the fact that spaces may have emergent properties and the fact that spaces may contain extensive structure not explicitly developed in the discourse (39-57).

For example, consider the following statement made by a doctor in Colorado after he helped to treat a patient who was saved from the brink of death: "This young man would have died in Britain" (qtd. in Kenworthy). The traditional mental spaces model would account for this statement using two spaces – a parent space, in which the young man lives when treated in the United States (the speaker's reality space), and a counterfactual space, in which the young man dies when treated by surgeons in Britain. While this configuration helps us see how the sentence actually alludes to two separate scenarios, one actual and one counterfactual, it does not explain some specific details of the spaces. For example, how is it that a surgical team from Britain, and a patient from the United States, seem to be actors in a unified scene we might label "unsuccessful medical intervention"?

A four-space model explains the cognitive work necessary to bring the elements of this scene together. There are two *input spaces*: one that represents the

elements of the scenario associated with the *United States* and one that represents the elements of the scenario associated with *Britain*.   In an intermediate middle space, called the *generic space*, the roles of "doctors" and "patient" provide a structure for the composition of counterpart relations across the two input spaces, and other relevant frames, such as knowledge of surgical procedures and medical practices, contribute structure. Elements of each space and of their shared structure are selectively projected into a fourth space. The patient and his medical emergency are projected from the *United States* space; the hospital and its doctors and medical practices are projected from the *Britain* space, and the knowledge that the surgeons apply their professional skill in an attempt to save the patient comes from our frame about medical procedures.

The result of the integration process just described is the fourth space, the blended space. The elements that are projected into the blend include features of reality in the United States (the patient and his dire condition), reality in Britain (the existence of doctors and hospitals), and background knowledge, with a resulting counterfactual blend. In the counterfactual blended space the elements are unified into a single cohesive scenario – British surgeons treat the patient, but he dies. The scene developed in this blended space has emergent properties, including the implication that surgeons in Britain are not as competent as surgeons in the United States. This emergent knowledge projects backward to the input spaces. Even though the statement described an imagined counterfactual, a listener may draw the conclusion that

surgeons in Britain are incompetent, or that surgeons in America are especially skilled. The counterfactual has implications for our real-world assumptions.

Much of the cognitive work that takes place in assembling counterfactual scenarios occurs below the level of consciousness (Fauconnier and Turner 56-57). In the case of counterfactual scenarios that describe "what might have been," our intuitive sense is that two specific situations are being compared, actual to counterfactual. It is the elegance of conceptual integration that the input spaces which are brought together to form counterfactual scenarios feel strongly unified, so much so that it may be difficult to identify the input spaces from which these elements were assembled. When we think about counterfactual scenarios, the constructive process goes unnoticed, and when we discuss counterfactual scenarios, their contrast with reality is their most distinctive feature. I will, then, often discuss these scenarios in terms of two spaces because that is our conscious understanding of them at the level of discourse, even though the backstage cognitive processes at work to achieve this understanding require the blending of several spaces in creating a unified counterfactual scenario.

Evaluative Counterfactual Scenarios

This chapter has introduced a wide variety of phenomena that can and have been labeled "counterfactual." It is easy to get bogged down in the differences between counterfactual scenarios, but my goal in the rest of this project is not to explore every type of counterfactual scenario, but rather to focus on a particular

variety, the evaluative counterfactual scenario, that will allow me to demonstrate the dialogic and rhetorical dimensions of counterfactuality.

From this point on, the examples analyzed in this book are those that not only introduce a counterfactual scenario, but which also include an evaluation of that scenario. Simply speaking, the evaluation is an indication that the scenario is "good" or "bad" in contrast to reality as it is viewed by the speaker. In other words, the speaker creates a counterfactual scenario, or an exploration of an unrealized alternative, while also passing judgment on whether the scenario would have been better or worse than what actually happened. There are a number of ways that the speaker can introduce a counterfactual scenario and pair it with an evaluation, a topic which will be explored in depth in the next chapter.

The particular subset of counterfactuals analyzed are also highly contingent, or representations of "what might have been" from the speaker's point of view. This limitation helps reduce the scope to a rhetorically interesting set of examples: counterfactuals with an antecedent in the past relative to the moment of speaking. It is not necessary that every evaluative counterfactual be contingent, or vice versa, but highly contingent counterfactuals that are also evaluative form a subset that has unique rhetorical implications. The speaker, in these cases, introduces an alternative scenario for the past that essentially introduces a new way of seeing past events by contrasting what did happen with what didn't. The counterfactual at once depends on the fixed nature of past events, while exploiting the variable nature of perspectives toward past events. Evaluative counterfactuals that are also highly contingent reinforce the fact

that the past cannot change, while simultaneously demonstrating that attitudes toward the past are anything but settled.

Along the parameter of elaboration, the focus is on counterfactuals that are expressed linguistically and that are relatively simple in their development. While many people have created and examined counterfactuals, very few have noted their prevalence and importance in our daily conversation and discourse. Counterfactuals are present in dialogue that might otherwise seem quite mundane. In fact, it is necessary to examine counterfactuals at a finer resolution to understand their importance not only in highly elaborate and creative instances, but in ordinary exchanges. Although they may not be noticed as "counterfactuals," these simple scenarios are the basic rhetorical form that counterfactual scenarios take, and understanding the role of evaluative counterfactuals in larger stretches of discourse requires first understanding their rhetorical role in simpler forms.

Finally, evaluative counterfactuals are considered as embedded cognitive scenarios that represent the perspective of an individual speaker. A counterfactual scenario, from this perspective, is rhetorical precisely because it represents the perspective of a speaker, including that speaker's views of reality and counterfactuality. Considering counterfactuals as scenarios embedded within a particular speaker's perspective is not only necessary in understanding their rhetorical implications, but also in considering their role in fictional narratives. Fictional narratives provide the last and most complete laboratory for considering the embedded and rhetorical dimensions of evaluative counterfactual scenarios in discourse.

Conclusion to Chapter 1

With the three categories developed in this chapter – contingency, elaboration, and embedding – it becomes easier to organize the phenomena called "counterfactual" in various disciplines, and thus to determine where theories and findings may be generalized across disciplines. Psychologists and historians, in particular, have provided extremely useful insight into counterfactuals that are highly contingent. They have tended to neglect, though, any discussion of the linguistic aspects of counterfactuals. Linguists, on the other hand, have always associated counterfactuals with the language needed to encode them, though they have included many counterfactuals that are not highly contingent, and have at times failed to consider the larger creative and emotive potential of counterfactual scenarios.

The rhetorical force of counterfactuals remains largely unexplored, and evaluative counterfactual scenarios are the best starting point for this rhetorical consideration. Evaluative counterfactuals that are highly contingent convey a perspective on the past that can influence how the past is viewed. Evaluative counterfactuals that are relatively simple in their linguistic form provide the building blocks for larger stretches of discourse and also serve as the best starting point for rhetorical analysis. Evaluative counterfactuals that are embedded within a particular perspective demonstrate that counterfactual scenarios convey a particular person's attitude, and also extend the counterfactual analysis to the full range of discourse, including fictional narratives. These three parameters have guided the selection of examples because highly contingent, simple, embedded scenarios demonstrate

particularly well the rhetorical and dialogic nature of evaluative counterfactuals in discourse.

Chapter 2: Evaluative Stance

"Jesus was the only One that ever raised the dead," The Misfit continued, "and He shouldn't have done it. He thown everything off balance."

— Flannery O'Connor, "A Good Man Is Hard to Find"

In a speech delivered in Memphis before his assassination, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. recounted an attempt on his life made while he was signing books in New York City. A woman attending the book-signing stabbed him; x-rays showed that the tip of the knife had lodged at the edge of his aorta, an injury that would have been fatal if the knife had penetrated any deeper. *The New York Times* reported the next day that if he had sneezed, he would have died. After describing the incident in his speech, King quoted a letter he received from a girl who wrote to him: "I read in the paper of your misfortune, and of your suffering. And I read that if you had sneezed, you would have died. And I'm simply writing you to say that I'm so happy that you didn't sneeze" (King).

King's death, as the girl described it in the letter, was counterfactual. When he was stabbed, he didn't sneeze, and he didn't die. She referred to a counterfactual scenario published by the *New York Times*, and she clearly recognized that it was counterfactual with respect to what actually happened, and communicated the counterfactual status when she repeated it to Dr. King. In doing so, she used specific linguistic and grammatical cues that indicated the counterfactual status of the

imagined scenario. Her letter included a conditional with antecedent and outcome, "if you had sneezed, you would have died," conveyed using past perfect and conditional verb forms. The negative statement that ended the quote – "you didn't sneeze" – reinforced the counterfactual status of the scenario.

Counterfactual scenarios, no matter how simple or elaborate, depend on markers like these to indicate their status when they are communicated within a discourse setting. These cues help translate the counterfactual as it is imagined into a counterfactual scenario that can be conveyed in discourse, and that is clearly differentiated from what the persons involved in the discourse see as actual. The girl writing to Dr. King, for example, had several options for communicating the status of the counterfactual scenario: "Good thing you didn't sneeze and die from being stabbed," "They said you could have sneezed and died," and the one she actually chose, "if you had sneezed, you would have died." Every counterfactual scenario, whether simple or elaborate, has its counterfactual status indicated pragmatically, lexically, and/or grammatically when it is communicated successfully to a listener. If the counterfactual status were not indicated in some way, the person interpreting it could be misled about the status of the scenario.

When a counterfactual scenario is communicated, the scenario always contrasts with another scenario, which we might describe as "speaker's reality." The cognitive process of comparison thus plays a vital role in the communication of counterfactuals. The naturally comparative nature of counterfactuals allows speakers to easily express evaluations, in which scenarios are described as better or worse in

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relation to alternatives. Such is the case in the example described, in which the girl not only described the counterfactual scenario, but also added "I'm so happy that you didn't sneeze." This evaluative statement alluded to the counterfactual scenario in which King sneezed and died, and the actual scenario in which he didn't sneeze and lived. Because these two scenarios were already part of the discourse, she was able to easily evaluate one scenario in relation to the other. The point of her letter was to express her clear preference for what actually happened: Dr. King lived through the attempted assassination.

This chapter explores forms available to introduce counterfactual scenarios and their mappings, the comparative nature of counterfactual scenarios in discourse, and the addition of evaluations to the expression of counterfactual scenarios. I argue that the comparative nature of counterfactual scenarios makes them particularly open to the expression of evaluation in the form of evaluative stance, a rhetorical stance communicated by a speaker toward the counterfactual scenario or its "actual" counterpart. Evaluative stance can be weakly or strongly bound with associated emotions. This evaluative stance is ultimately rhetorical because it conveys the speaker's point of view toward the counterfactual scenario, and encourages the listener to understand and adopt the speaker's evaluation.

Conditionals, Counterfactuals, and Mappings
The expression "if you had sneezed, you would have died," takes a form that has often been associated with counterfactuality: the conditional. As briefly discussed in the first chapter, the conditional construction takes a two-part form, typically

consisting of two clauses that are co-referential. The first clause, or protasis,

establishes a condition; the second clause, or apodosis, establishes a result that

depends on the realization of the condition set forth by the protasis. One conditional

form includes a protasis that begins with "if," and an apodosis that may or may not

begin with "then." The order of the clauses may be reversed.

In an example like "If you tell him the truth, he'll stop bothering you," the

protasis expresses the condition – you telling him the truth – that will lead to some

outcome – he will stop bothering you. The outcome does not begin with "then," but it

could, "If you tell him the truth, then he'll stop bothering you"[12]. The co-referential

clauses make sense even when the order is reversed: "He'll stop bothering you if you

tell him the truth." Conditional expressions may enter conversation in a variety of

abbreviated and partial forms; one person could complain "I wish he'd stop bothering

me," to which another might respond "maybe if you told him the truth."

As this example demonstrates, not every statement expressed in a conditional

form is necessarily counterfactual. Though it is clear that "he'll stop bothering you"

holds in an imagined situation in which "you tell him the truth," it is not clear yet

whether you will tell him the truth or not. This statement could be described as

hypothetical, rather than counterfactual, because the antecedent is proposed, but its

status is not yet determined. It should not be assumed, however, that only statements

that describe conditions in the future have the potential to present events with an

unknown status. A statement about the past can also describe an event with an

unknown status, for instance, "If she told him the truth, he'll stop bothering her." Even

though the protasis is in the past relative to the moment of speaking, this statement could be made when the speaker simply is not sure what actually happened. The speaker could continue: "If she told him the truth, he'll stop bothering her, but if she didn't tell him, he'll keep pestering her until she does." The statement does not seem to create a counterfactual scenario, but highlights the speaker's lack of confirmed knowledge about the conditional antecedent.

This example shows that linguistic form alone is not always enough to determine whether a statement develops a counterfactual scenario. In other words, a statement does not come across as "counterfactual" simply because of the linguistic forms used to express it. Rather, the lexical forms, grammatical forms, and situation interact to determine the status of the utterance. In earlier studies of counterfactual forms, such as Nelson Goodman's Fact, Fiction, and Forecast and David Lewis's Counterfactuals, counterfactual conditionals were typically considered as linguistic forms removed from a speaker and situation. More recently, however, it has been recognized that counterfactuality is always rooted in the perspective of a particular speaker and discourse situation.

In his work on conditional sentences, Charles Fillmore proposes that "epistemic stance" be used to describe the speaker's attitude toward the conditional statement. The notion of epistemic stance refines the definition of counterfactual that related it to truth conditions in the actual world by establishing the locus of reality in the perspective of the speaker who makes an utterance. As put forth by Fillmore, the epistemic stance describes "the epistemic relationship which the speaker has to the

world represented by the conditional sentence: the speaker might regard it as the actual world, might regard it as distinct from the actual world, or might not know whether the alternative world represented in the conditional sentence is the actual world or not" ("Epistemic Stance" 142). These orientations have also been described as positive, negative, or neutral epistemic stances toward the conditional statement (Sweetser "Mental Spaces" 321-322; Fauconnier Mappings 93-95).

A positive stance indicates that the speaker associates herself with a world in which the protasis holds; in other words the protasis describes conditions in the actual world as viewed by the speaker[13]. Fillmore's example "Because you studied hard, you will pass the test" represents an actual world alignment, or positive epistemic stance. The speaker is committed to the actuality of "you studied hard." A similar statement conveys a neutral epistemic stance when the speaker does not associate herself either with a world in which the protasis holds, or in which the protasis doesn't hold: "If you studied hard, you will pass the test." She simply does not know whether you studied hard. Finally, the example most pertinent to this study is the case in which the speaker associates herself with a world in which the protasis doesn't hold. This world is counterfactual. A negative epistemic stance of this type is seen in the statement "If you had studied hard, you would have passed the test."

There is a relationship between epistemic stance and the verb forms of a conditional sentence. Barbara Dancygier and Eve Sweetser adopt the term "distanced" to refer to verb forms that have an extra layer of past morphology ("Conditionals" 87-88). Distancing can occur for pragmatic reasons, such as the

desire to be polite. For example, when addressing a professor a student might state "I

wanted to ask you a question" rather than "I want to ask you a question" because the

extra distancing implied by the past tense comes across as less demanding. Added

distancing is also an indicator of negative epistemic stance. When an event occurred in

the past relative to the moment of speaking, for example, the past tense would

normally be adopted to describe the event. In cases in which a negative epistemic

stance is also implied, the event is typically described using the past perfect. For

example, "You *sneezed*" indicates that an event took place in the past relative to the

moment of speaking, but "If you *had sneezed*" indicates not only that the event took

place in the past relative to the moment of speaking, but also that a negative epistemic

stance is adopted toward the realization of that event. Charles Fillmore shows that

there is a systematic relationship between the choice of verb form, the time of the

protasis relative to the moment of speaking, and the time of the apodosis relative to the

moment of speaking ("Epistemic Stance")[14]. In situations in which a negative

epistemic stance is adopted toward a past protasis, a past apodosis will be expressed in

the "conditional perfect," as we see in the example, "If you *had sneezed* you *would

have died*."

Eve Sweetser extends Charles Fillmore's discussion of epistemic stance by

describing the mental space mappings involved in conditional expressions ("Mental

Spaces"). She argues that "an analysis in terms of embedded mental spaces helps

motivate the regularities to be observed in Fillmore's data" (321). According to her

analysis, conditional forms generate embedded mappings between a "base space" of

speaker's reality and the space containing the event described in the protasis of the conditional. Distanced verb forms indicate a negative epistemic stance, and therefore generate a mapping in which a counterfactual space is embedded within the base space of speaker's reality. Sweetser points out that any details that elaborate the situation described in the conditional protasis are likewise embedded within the base of reality, and so it is not surprising that any event associated with the conditional protasis would also inherit the epistemic stance that applies to the protasis. Thus, the apodosis of the conditional will also be described with a distanced verb form, the regularity originally noted by Fillmore, because of the fact that both protasis and apodosis are embedded within the base mental space of speaker's reality.

While the if/then conditional that is the focus of Fillmore and Sweetser's analyses is perhaps the most prototypical and most often studied form associated with counterfactuality, I will reiterate the point made in the first chapter that it is hardly the only available linguistic form. Fauconnier describes the mappings invoked by a combination of pragmatic conditions and lexical and grammatical forms that generate counterfactual mappings (Mental Spaces 109-127). As Fauconnier describes it, pragmatic properties of the discourse, including background knowledge, produce counterfactual space mappings in statements like "In that movie, Brigitte Bardot is an ugly witch" because the discourse participants' real world knowledge that Bardot is in fact very beautiful are incompatible with the counterfactual space in which she is an "ugly witch" (110). Counterfactuality may be lexically imposed by strong negatives like "not" and "prevent," by verbs like "wish," by conditionals, or by modals like

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"might" and "could" (111). Grammatically, counterfactuality may be imposed by combinations of tense and aspect (111-113), as detailed above in the description of distanced verb forms.

Comparison

Like the conditional, the comparison has been studied as both a linguistic form and a cognitive process. A comparative statement is an utterance in which two individuated entities, or comparands, are described in terms of a shared property. The comparative statement establishes each entity's expression of this property along a scale. The result is that the relationship between the entities is established by the extent to which they each express the scalar property. Examples of comparative forms include: "John is taller than Maria"; "Kazakhstan is four times the size of Texas"; "This lecture is more interesting than the one I saw last week"; "She's as nice as her sister."

In Mental Spaces, Gilles Fauconnier demonstrates that comparative statements often involve mapping across two mental spaces. He gives the general form of transspatial comparatives, or comparisons across spaces, as E/M more than E'/M'/Sc (131). E is an event or state that holds in a space M, which maps to its counterpart E' in space M'; Sc is the scale along which E and E' are compared. A statement like "this lecture is more interesting than the one I saw last week" involves two spaces – a present mental space (M) containing the lecture (E) is connected to a past mental space (M') containing another lecture (E') that took place last week. The lecture E in space M maps to its counterpart E' in space M', and interest level is the scale along

which they are compared. The statement establishes that the interest level of the lecture in space M is greater than the interest level of the counterpart lecture in space M'.

The same type of comparative statement can also involve a counterfactual space. Fauconnier considers the example "Her headache prevented Rosa from answering more questions than she did" (133). Like the previous example, this statement involves two spaces, though they are not present and past spaces, but speaker's reality and counterfactual. In speaker's reality space M, Rosa has a headache and answers x number of questions. In another space representing a different scenario, Rosa has no headache – the space is based on "a counterfactual situation ('no headache') in which Rosa *would* have answered more questions than she *actually* did" (133, italics in original). The speaker's reality space M maps to counterfactual space M', and the actual number of questions answered, x, maps to the imagined number of questions answered, x'. Along a scale of quantity, x' outnumbers x. Thus we see that explicit statements of comparison may involve counterfactual spaces.

Even when a counterfactual statement does not explicitly involve a comparative linguistic form, as the example above does, the nature of counterfactual spaces involves the cognitive process of comparison. The development of counterfactual scenarios requires the discourse participants to be aware of at least two distinct spaces. Of course, just because a statement involves two spaces does not imply that it has to involve comparison. A past tense verb, for example, prompts a

past mental space from the base space representing the present speaking moment. There is not a strong sense, when using the past tense in an expression like "I read the paper this morning," that we are inviting our listeners to compare the present to the past.

But because counterfactuals are defined by contrast with another space, the counterfactual statement always invokes a comparison of the counterfactual space to the speaker's reality space. In the earlier example, "If you had sneezed, you would have died," the speaker was suggesting that the scenario in which Martin Luther King, Jr. sneezed and died contrasted with the actual scenario in which he didn't sneeze and didn't die. This statement contains no explicit prompt for comparison: it is in a conditional form, not a comparative form, yet it involves the process of comparing two scenarios that are incompatible with each other. The incompatibility is established by the key difference identified, the sneeze. The contrast involves counterpart events or conditions in the speaker's reality and the counterfactual spaces that share a disanalogy connector[15]. The event of "not sneezing" in speaker's reality is connected by a relation of disanalogy to the event of "sneezing" in the counterfactual space.

Besides the contrast that exists between counterfactual and speaker's reality spaces, there is also a rhetorical pressure that produces a comparative reading of counterfactual scenarios. When introduced into discourse, a counterfactual scenario is no longer a possible course of action or situation. The negative epistemic stance associated with counterfactuals indicates to a listener that the speaker does not believe the counterfactual did or will happen. When a speaker proposes a counterfactual, it is

only natural that we assume the counterfactual space has been introduced by a speaker for a particular reason. Specifically, we assume the counterfactual space will bear on reality in some useful way. Through the introduction of counterfactual scenarios, people encourage their interlocutors to compare reality to an alternative.

It is no surprise that we see statements of an explicitly comparative form that involve counterfactual spaces, as in "Her headache prevented Rosa from answering more questions than she did." It is also no surprise that we find statements of an explicitly counterfactual form that also include comparative forms, as in Dancygier and Sweetser's example "If John had come to the meeting, I'd be happier" ("Conditionals" 84). Counterfactual scenarios require two mental spaces, and the comparison process is invoked by the contrast between them, so the comparative expression "happier" is easily interpreted as a statement about how the speaker in speaker's reality differs from the speaker in the counterfactual space along a scale of "happiness." In the counterfactual space, her happiness is greater.

Evaluation

In his paper describing epistemic stance, Charles Fillmore also introduced another concept important to the understanding of conditional expressions, a notion he labeled "interest." Interest, as he defines it, is "whether or not the speaker puts a positive valuation on the alternative situation in which P [the condition put forth by the protasis] holds" ("Epistemic Stance" 142). Conditional statements that display positive interest are those which express a judgment that the presence of the condition put forth by the protasis is, simply enough, good from the perspective of the speaker.

He provides two examples of linguistic expressions that are related to judgments of positive interest, the verbs *hope* and *wish*. As Fillmore notes, these verbs are closely associated with conditional sentences of the if/then type because they accept the same distanced verb forms that are often found in conditional expressions. Additionally, these verbs express "the speaker's positive interest in the state of affairs expressed as the complement clause" (154). In his example "I wish you liked him," the speaker has a positive interest in the situation expressed in the complement of "wish" (156).

Fillmore does not elaborate on how negative interest might be expressed, but it helps to consider not just how the speaker feels toward the complement clause, but which world (or in Fauconnier's terms, *mental space*) the complement clause describes. In the example "I wish she hadn't said those things" (Fillmore 154), the speaker expresses a positive interest in an alternative state of affairs. It is implied that in the actual scenario, the person referred to with the pronoun "she" said certain things that were inappropriate. In the counterfactual scenario, the person remained silent. This counterfactual scenario in which the person remained silent is the one toward which the speaker feels positive interest: in other words, the speaker prefers the imagined scenario to reality.

The speaker might have expressed her interest in another way, "I regret that she said those things." In this case, it is the actual situation – in which the person referred to with the pronoun "she" said things that were inappropriate – that is described in the statement. Extrapolating from Fillmore's discussion of positive interest, we might label this statement an example of "negative interest." In this case,

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the speaker 's investment is expressed as a negative evaluation of what did happen, rather than a positive evaluation of what could have happened. We see that the expression of an evaluation can be either a positive or negative assessment of the scenario described in the statement.

What is interesting about these two examples is that whether the speaker's words indicate a positive or negative interest, the evaluation seems to be the same. In either case, the speaker is unhappy with what was said by a person that she knows. In one example, "I wish she hadn't said those things," the speaker's focus is on the counterfactual scenario, and it is described in terms of her own positive interest in what didn't happen. In the other example, "I regret that she said those things," the speaker's focus is on the actual scenario, and it is described in terms of her own negative interest in what did happen.

We see from these examples that it is necessary not just to consider whether a positive or negative interest is expressed, but toward which state of affairs the expression of interest applies. Furthermore, because of the comparative nature of counterfactuals, we see that positive interest in one state of affairs relates conversely to negative interest in its counterpart scenario. Also, upon further consideration, it is apparent that judgments of value arise from many types of cues. "Hope" and "wish" are two of the many linguistic expressions that encode a judgment of value, but there are many more, and pragmatic circumstances affecting evaluation as well.

Counterfactuals and Evaluative Stance

Fillmore's work on interest represents a starting point in the consideration of value judgments toward counterfactual scenarios, but clearly a more complete consideration of these judgments is warranted. Speakers can align themselves with either actual or counterfactual scenarios when making their judgments, and a variety of cues besides "hope" and "wish" are available for making evaluations. When describing counterfactual scenarios and their role in discourse, I adopt the term *evaluative stance*. The evaluative stance is based on Fillmore's notion of interest, and like epistemic stance, indicates the speaker's expressed attitude toward the focal scenario.

Evaluative stance differs from interest not only in being a more comprehensive concept, but also in allowing for a value-based judgment of a scenario. Evaluation is a primary tactic of persuasion that allows a speaker to recruit cultural values in passing judgments about people, events, actions, etc. These values reflect criteria or standards that may be held very broadly or more narrowly by specific groups within a culture, at times requiring the speaker to defend the criteria for an evaluation when the audience cannot be expected to readily accept it (Fahnestock and Secor 209-233). Jeanne Fahnestock and Marie Secor maintain that "evaluation is not a matter of taste" (210).

Evaluative stance, on the other hand, can reflect personal taste or cultural values, or a combination of both, depending on the specific discourse situation. In this respect, I split slightly from the more traditional rhetorical definition of evaluation. In arguing for the "rhetorical" nature of evaluative stance, I do not require that evaluative stance convey only cultural values with no personal preferences; rather, I accept a

definition of "rhetorical" that includes the conveyance of personal perspectives, including personal taste, as a rhetorical tactic, in the sense that it encourages a listener or audience to view a particular scenario in a particular way.

Some expressions of evaluative stance, specifically those that seem to fit Fillmore's definition of "positive interest," convey the speaker's views of a particular scenario that seem rooted in the speaker's own best interest. The speaker may evaluate a scenario not because it would have been good *per se*, but because it would have been good for her. In other examples of evaluative stance, the speaker's views of a particular scenario seem rooted in a more culturally-defined system of values, rather than in her own best interest. Of course, the "culturally defined system of values" expressed may align quite well with the speaker's own personal preference, so it is not always easy to determine whether personal preference or cultural values are primarily represented by evaluative stance. In some cases, which will be discussed in a moment, the personal preference expressed may actually be at odds with cultural values. In the rest of this book, "evaluative stance" is used to describe judgments made by a speaker, with the understanding that the criteria justifying the judgment may be either personal or cultural.

The evaluative stance expressed toward a scenario may be positive or negative with a focus on the counterfactual space, or positive or negative with a focus on the actual space. The scenario that is described in the statement is the focal scenario. Thus, there are four possible combinations of evaluative stance and focal scenario. In one case, a positive evaluative stance may be expressed toward the counterfactual state

of affairs. This situation is demonstrated in the example, "It would have been better if she told me." Alternatively, the speaker may make a negative evaluation that focuses on the actual scenario, as in the example "It was worse that she kept the information to herself." As noted in the last section, the positive and negative evaluations of connected counterfactual and actual scenarios are conversely related.

Another pair of converse evaluations arises when the counterfactual scenario is negatively evaluated. Instead of saying, "It would have been better if she told me," for example, a speaker might instead state that "It would have been worse if she told me." In this case, the scenario described is counterfactual, but it is evaluated negatively in contrast to an actual situation in which the person kept the information to herself. The speaker might also make a similar statement by focusing on the actual scenario: "it was better that she kept the information to herself."

When the counterfactual scenario is the focal state of affairs, counterfactuality is forced. In other words, the statement requires a counterfactual space mapped from the parent space of speaker's reality. When the actual state of affairs is the focal scenario, the counterfactual alternative is suggested by the evaluative reading, but it is not necessarily forced and may not be set up as part of the discourse. The fact that it is made available, though, is demonstrated by the fact that the counterfactual scenario can be elaborated easily in subsequent discourse: "It's better that she kept the information to herself. If she had spoken up, she would have made the situation even worse." In this case, making the situation worse is a counterfactual alternative

prompted by the evaluative stance in the first sentence, which weakly prompts for a counterfactual space.

In prompting for counterfactuals, speakers have at their disposal lexical, grammatical, and pragmatic cues that indicate negative <u>epistemic</u> stance. Similar prompts may also convey the speaker's <u>evaluative</u> stance toward the scenario. When evaluative stance is indicated, it guides the listener to encode that evaluative stance as part of the space configuration representing speaker's reality and the counterfactual space. The evaluative stance may be strongly or weakly presented, with a strong evaluative stance being associated with a strong commitment on the part of the speaker to the evaluation, and a weak stance with a weak commitment. Very weak expressions of evaluative stance may be lost on the listener altogether[16].

In most cases, the linguistic cues that prompt for counterfactuality are separate from the linguistic cues that prompt for evaluation, though there are some exceptions. Certain modal verbs, such as "should" and "ought to," may force counterfactuality when they appear in a past perfect verb construction, while also indicating evaluative stance. Let me first note, though, that these verbs have many uses as auxiliaries that do not imply counterfactuality, such as "you ought to go with us," or "the party should be fun." In some cases, "should" may prompt a counterfactual scenario without implying an evaluative judgment, as in a statement like "since we were playing at home, we should have won, but we didn't play that well."

In certain examples, "should" and "ought to" indicate either a positive or negative evaluative stance toward a counterfactual scenario, while also helping to

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create the counterfactual space as part of the verb construction. Let us consider "should" as the example case. In the strongest cases, "should" indicates a clear positive stance toward the counterfactual scenario, as in the statements "I should have married Anna" or "You should have quit that job a long time ago." In this case, "should" indicates that the option to pursue the counterfactual scenario had at one time been available, and that the scenario is preferred when compared to speaker's reality. The speaker does not need to be an actor in the scenario, but this particular use of "should" does imply some volitional actor. Most people would find it odd to hear someone say "The dinosaurs shouldn't have gone extinct" as an expression of evaluation[17], because "should" generally expresses a judgment of a perceived volitional choice. The modal "should" can also be negated, as in "You shouldn't have told her."

When used as an evaluative counterfactual auxiliary, "should" may indicate a split between a person's own preference and an evaluation based on the presumed judgments of others or social mores. When someone declares "I should have gotten more work done this morning" after sleeping in late and reading the paper, we suspect that he is not entirely unhappy with his choice, but feels the need to admonish himself anyway. A speaker can also directly represent another person's evaluation, as in "John thinks we should have left earlier," or "the voters seem to think that we should have run our campaign differently." In some cases, these expressions of evaluation based on cultural values or third-party judgments may be superseded by the personal preference of the speaker: "You shouldn't have told me, but I'm glad you did."

Besides the modal examples of "should" and "ought to," there are a number of verbs that may be used as part of a verb construction that forces counterfactuality, while also indicating a particular evaluative stance toward the described state of affairs. These verbs include "hope," "wish," "save," and "regret." Each of these may be used to introduce a counterfactual state of affairs: "I had hoped she would attend, but she's not here"; "I wish she would try harder"; "She saved him from a horrible fate"; "I regret that I kept my thoughts to myself." In each case, the verb helps to prompt a counterfactual space that is elaborated by the rest of the statement. The meaning of the verbs also indicates that a particular evaluative stance is taken toward the state of affairs described.

There are other linguistic cues that function as statements of evaluative stance in counterfactuals, but which are separate from the counterfactual prompts themselves. In some cases, these can be statements that label the counterfactual scenario "good" or bad": "You could have skipped the meeting, but it's better that you attended," or "If we hadn't placed the jewelry in the safety deposit box, this situation could have been even worse." In each case, counterfactual prompts, such as the past perfect "could have skipped" and the conditional "if/then," build a counterfactual space, while additional linguistic cues, in this case the use of "better" and "worse," express the evaluative stance toward that scenario. Evaluative stance can also be expressed through sarcasm; for example, when a speaker intends to imply that a situation is negatively evaluated, she may do so by ironically stating, "failing the test would have

been great," when what she means to convey is "it would have been terrible if I failed."

These are rather blatant expressions of evaluative stance, but the indicators of evaluative stance can be more subtle, and can rely on implication more than on explicit value labels of "good" and "bad." In many cases, these expressions may seem evaluative because they rely on cultural frames with associated values – in other words, they call to mind our preconceived notions about what constitutes a preferred person, event, or situation. We know, for example, that most people prefer to be happy, so we have no trouble understanding the positive evaluative stance expressed in a statement like "if we had stayed in Paris, we'd be happy." Similarly, most people do not enjoy pain, so there is a clear evaluation expressed by a statement like "If you had taken the medicine, you would have felt less pain." Whenever a positive or negatively valued state of affairs is included as a prominent part of the counterfactual scenario, the evaluative stance may be assumed, but let me emphasize again that this indication of evaluative stance may be quite subtle and subject to interpretation by the listener.

Pragmatic situation also contributes to the indication of evaluative stance toward a counterfactual scenario. Consider the following situation: A husband and wife enter a restaurant for the first time. They are both vegetarian. They sit down, look at the menu, and simultaneously notice that salad is the only vegetarian option. One of them might remark, "I don't see many vegetarian options. We could have gone to Vishnu's" (Vishnu's being their favorite vegetarian restaurant). The

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statement prompts a counterfactual scenario in which they went to a different restaurant. It is strongly implied, though not indicated linguistically, that the counterfactual situation in which they went to Vishnu's is preferred. The reading is brought about by pragmatic knowledge that the lack of vegetarian options on the menu means neither of them will enjoy a good dinner.

Finally, the causal relationships developed by many counterfactuals also provide another option for expressing evaluative stance – the assertion of a positive or negative outcome from a particular antecedent. Evaluations in general are often substantiated by citing good or bad consequences (Fahnestock and Secor 210). Simply put, something is good when it causes good things to happen, and something is bad when it causes bad things to happen. In the case of evaluative counterfactuals, an emphasis may be placed on the positive or negative outcome that arose from the antecedent, and the evaluation will then extend to the entire counterfactual scenario.

Several types of cues can also work together to indicate evaluative stance, as in the example: "If you had had a good night's sleep, you would have felt better." The counterfactual scenario is elaborated with the positively valued "good night's sleep," which is reinforced by our frame knowledge that feeling good is a good thing. The use of the comparative "better" also strengthens the indication that the counterfactual scenario is being favorably compared to speaker's reality. The evaluation of the counterfactual scenario is further enhanced by the implication that the antecedent would have led to a positive outcome.

Evaluative Stance and Emotion

Counterfactual thinking, and accompanying feelings of regret and relief that can be either adaptive or incapacitating, have been widely studied by social psychologists, most recently in the book Regret by Janet Landman. As Landman describes, these feelings, and their relationship to counterfactual thinking, is complex. I will presume, consistent with psychological findings, that counterfactual scenarios are closely related to emotions like regret and relief. For consideration of counterfactuals in discourse, however, I am not so much concerned with the emotions themselves as with the way that these emotions are conveyed from speaker to listener. The emotional attitude that is conveyed in dialogue is closely related to the notion of evaluative stance.

Emotions are deeply connected to our evaluations, and therefore emotions are a way for us to indicate our evaluative stance toward a scenario. We feel positively toward scenarios that we prefer. We feel negatively toward scenarios that we disdain. Descriptions of emotion thus become another way by which speakers indicate their evaluative stance toward a scenario. We have seen the capacity of emotive words in examples like "I'm happy that you didn't sneeze." Because the meaning of these words includes an emotional attitude toward a counterfactual scenario, they are words that convey evaluative stance while also prompting a counterfactual scenario. Our frames for certain emotions prompt us to expect consistent evaluative stances toward scenarios that invoke those emotions.

Counterfactuals can also provide a means by which we relate our emotions to others. The linguistic nature of counterfactuals, then, is important in describing not

just how we think about emotions through counterfactuals, but how we talk about emotions using the language of counterfactuality. When counterfactuals are introduced into conversation with emotive descriptors, we may presume a certain evaluative stance toward that counterfactual, as when terms like "good" and "bad" are used to describe counterfactual scenarios. Similarly, when evaluative stance is indicated, an emotional stance toward the counterfactual scenario may be implied. If someone describes a counterfactual scenario as better or worse, there are strong implications that feelings such as regret, relief, or disappointment that are consistent with the evaluation are indicated as well.

Thus, we see that the relationship works both ways: emotive words can indicate a positive or negative evaluative stance consistent with the emotion conveyed, and evaluative stance implies a corresponding emotional attitude, such as regret or relief, that is consistent with the evaluation. Consider a statement made by the husband of astronaut Laurel Clark that illustrates the relationship between evaluative stance, counterfactuals, and emotion. Clark died aboard the space shuttle Columbia six weeks after her entire family had been involved in a small aircraft collision. Her husband Jon Clark expressed his regret that the entire family survived the crash, stating "I've lamented about that, wishing that we had all just died, because then it would have changed the course of history. They wouldn't have launched" (qtd. in Dunn).

The statement refers to two events that are clearly emotional for Clark: the plane crash itself and the death of his wife aboard the space shuttle Columbia. Clark uses the word "lament" to describe his feelings about the family surviving the plane

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crash, then invokes a counterfactual scenario with the use of "wish" in the statement

"wishing that we all just died." The family didn't die, but Clark expresses both a

positive evaluation of the scenario in which they died, and an associated emotional

judgment of the survival, which he "laments." Such a judgment of a seemingly

positive event – the survival of his family in a plane crash – is explained by the details

of the counterfactual that he imagines. In the counterfactual scenario, the antecedent

event is the plane crash. As a result of the plane crash and his wife's counterfactual

death in the plane crash, the space shuttle Columbia does not launch and the lives of

the astronauts aboard are spared. The causal connections developed in the

counterfactual space explain the evaluative judgment of the counterfactual space,

which in turn reinforces the emotion of regret associated with their survival in reality.

This is not to imply, however, that all counterfactual statements are somehow

connected to deeply rooted emotions. Quite the contrary. Counterfactual scenarios

may very well be connected to deeply rooted emotions when the dialogue takes place

between intimates who are likely to share these emotions with each other, or when a

person like Jon Clark feels comfortable expressing his emotions about events. In

everyday conversation, emotions related to evaluative stance in counterfactuals may

be more casual or may in fact be a response to situational circumstances. Many types

of counterfactual utterances may express regret over not buying a new ink cartridge,

forgetting to mail a bill payment, or wasting time standing in line at the grocery store.

People may use emotive words in these situations as well, even though they do not

invoke the deeply rooted emotions that can also be associated with counterfactual scenarios.

The expression of emotion in counterfactuals, just like the expression of emotions in any type of language, may also be used as a rhetorical tool. The speaker may be using an emotional appeal to persuade the listener to adopt a particular attitude toward the counterfactual scenario. Although all counterfactual expressions are linked to the speaker's perspective, and often encourage the listener to adopt a particular attitude, they are most unarguably rhetorical when persuasion is the primary purpose of the counterfactual expression. For example, a recent appeal to Maryland motorists asked them to consider pedestrian accidents by asking them to "imagine the impact if this had happened to someone you love." They are asking the listener to call up a counterfactual scenario filled with emotion. The emotion is triggered by replacing the victim in the crash scenario with a counterpart counterfactual victim who happens to be "someone you love."   The clear purpose of the ad is to change attitudes and behavior.

Case Study: "Good Thing"

The natural connection between counterfactuals, comparison, and evaluation has given rise to two special constructions that utilize evaluations as simple prompts for counterfactual scenarios. These expressions are "good thing" and "too bad." While they are not always used to introduce counterfactual scenarios, they are readily available for this purpose. Consider the following examples:

Good thing you're my friend.

Good thing you're my friend; otherwise, I'd have no one to turn to.

In these examples, "good thing" indicates a positive evaluative stance toward an actual state of affairs. In the first example, only the actual state of affairs is described, and the prompt for a counterfactual space is weak. In the second example, the evaluation of the actual space is the same, but it is followed by a description of a condition in the counterfactual space. This condition is provided as a justification for the evaluation. This pairing of evaluation and justification for the evaluation is the hallmark of "good thing." Too bad is used in much the same way, except for the fact that it indicates negative, rather than positive, evaluative stance:

Too bad he came with us.

Too bad he came with us; otherwise, we would have had a nice time.

In the second case of "too bad," similar to the second case of "good thing" above, the justification provided for the evaluation describes a condition in the counterfactual space. The condition "we would have had a nice time" is counterfactual with respect to the situation "he came with us." In other words, the speaker believes that the scenario in which he didn't come is preferred to the situation in which he did, but the preferred scenario is counterfactual.

In other cases, the statement can describe a condition in the "speaker's reality" that relies on an inferred condition in the counterfactual space, but without actually describing the counterfactual space itself. If someone lamely joked, "Good thing your name is Mark. We're out of nametags for Steve," only conditions in the reality space are described – according to the statement, it is true that your name is Mark, and that the person speaking is out of nametags for Steve. And yet, the statement may seem highly anomalous if the listener does not imagine a counterfactual scenario. In that scenario, it is bad that your name is Steve because then you won't get a name tag. Conversely, it is good that your name is Mark because you will get a nametag. It is the evaluative statement which licenses, in fact necessitates, the development of this counterfactual scenario in understanding why the evaluation is justified.

"Good thing" and "Too Bad" can be used in a number of forms that follow this pattern. The range of forms include statements like: "Good thing he told her, because she never would have figured it out herself"; "Too bad you're late; you missed seeing Dad"; "Good thing you just cleaned your room, or else you would have been in big trouble"; "Too bad you're tired, since I was going to take you out to dinner." All of these forms follow the basic patter of offering an evaluation, and then presenting a counterfactual alternative that justifies the evaluation.

Additionally, "Good thing" and "too bad" can be used as interjections to comment upon the last statement made by a conversational partner. An employee who declares, "I'm here to resign my position," might be troubled to learn of the

counterfactual alternative when his boss replies, "Too bad! I just authorized your raise" or relieved to learn of the counterfactual alternative he avoided when his boss replies, "Good thing! I was planning to fire you anyway."

<u>Conclusion to Chapter 2</u>

As we have seen, counterfactuals are closely connected to the cognitive processes of mental space mapping, comparison, evaluation, and to the linguistic expressions that prompt for these processes. Counterfactuals are comparative in that they develop two spaces, speaker's reality and counterfactual, and invite comparison between them. Comparative forms may require counterfactual spaces, just as counterfactual forms may also include specific comparisons.

One outcome of the inherently comparative nature of counterfactuals is that they easily convey evaluations. Evaluative stance refers to the speaker's attitude toward a counterfactual scenario, the communication of which depends on linguistic and/or pragmatic cues. Some expressions of evaluative stance also function as counterfactual prompts, like "should" and "wish," while other expressions of evaluative stance supplement counterfactual prompts. Because a counterfactual implies a contrast with the actual scenario, there is a converse relation between the evaluation of the counterfactual scenario and the evaluation of the actual scenario.

Emotion is also related to evaluation. We have expectations that our emotions toward actual and counterfactual events are consistent with the evaluations we make of them. Emotive language is one way to indicate evaluative stance. When emotions are not explicitly called up, they may be implied by the evaluative stance that is

expressed. Emotions may enhance the rhetorical functions of counterfactuality when counterfactuals and emotional appeals are paired for persuasive purposes.

Chapter 3: Counterfactuals as a Dialogic Phenomenon

Listen Ana hear my words / They're the ones you would think I would say if there was a me for you   — They Might Be Giants, "Ana Ng"

A few years ago, during the very early stages of this project, I spent a week at my sister's house in Wisconsin. One day during my visit, we went out to lunch while her husband was at work. Her three children were with us, and while she gathered various items from the car and helped the kids out of their seats, she set the car keys down on the front seat of the car. The driver's side door was still open, and when she had finished getting all the kids out of the car, she returned to the driver's side and used the auto-lock button to lock all of the doors in the car automatically, as she usually does when parking the car in public.

Just as she was about to shut the door, she noticed the keys lying on the seat. She grabbed the keys before shutting the door, and as we walked away from the car, she exclaimed: "I almost locked the keys in the car. That would have been great! Can you imagine? Joe would have had to come from work to bring the keys." I responded by agreeing, "yeah, that would have really changed our plans."

The counterfactual that is the topic of this short conversation – the scenario in which the keys were locked in the car – was part of a communicative exchange, not just a proposal made by my sister. Thus far in this book, I have considered the pragmatic, lexical, and grammatical choices available to a speaker when she introduces a counterfactual into discourse, and the range of possibilities for expressing an evaluation of either the counterfactual or actual situation described in the statement.

The expression of counterfactuality has been examined as an interactive phenomenon, with an understanding that both a speaker and a listener are involved in the discourse, but I have focused almost entirely on the choices available to the speaker in establishing and describing the counterfactuals in dialogue.

This example underscores the fact that it is also necessary to consider the role of the listener within the dialogic framework. When I responded "yeah, that would have really changed our plans," I was entering the dialogue in a particular way that "played along" with the counterfactual scenario. In the paradigm of face-to-face communication, the listener has many available options in which he may reinforce the counterfactual and its evaluation, as I did, or may revise the counterfactual scenario or the evaluation in a less supportive response. Alternatively, the listener may completely reject the counterfactual or the evaluation that is asserted by the speaker. In this chapter, I will consider a range of available responses that help us understand the listener's role in dialogue that involves evaluative counterfactuals.

Of course, unlike this example, many other discourse situations involve speakers and listeners who are not engaged in a face-to-face exchange. When Trent Lott made his comments about Strom Thurmond, most of the people who would later criticize him were not present, and responded to his remarks publicly after his speech was made public. In this case, the rhetorical interaction included a counterfactual statement, and a host of responses, that were not made in a face-to-face exchange between speaker and listener. Written discourse, too, obviously precludes synchronous interaction between two communicators. As E.D. Hirsch describes it, "In normal oral

communication speaker and audience inhabit the same moment, whereas in writing they occupy different moments, making the model of communication an analogy or metaphor rather than a reality" (37). I disagree that the model of communication in asynchronous communication is a metaphor only, for it shares important and predictable features with face-to-face exchange, but evaluative counterfactuals are certainly more complex when the communicators are separated by time and space. For one thing, the speaker may never know the listener's response. For another, written discourse also involves a "speaker" and "listener," whom we may also call author and audience, who often do not know each other's specific identities.

Fictional narrative is by far the most complex example of written discourse, since the temporal and spatial distance between author and audience is further complicated by the fact that the perspectives of multiple speakers can be conveyed by a single text. The speakers in fictional narrative include characters whose words and thoughts are conveyed through direct and indirect means, a narrator who may have a more or less overt presence in presenting the story, and the author, who may be understood as the speaker with ultimate control over the discourse situation. Fictional narratives also include multiple listeners, such as characters who listen and respond to other characters in depicted dialogue, and the reader who interprets and derives meaning from what the many speakers have to say. In interpreting the roles of multiple speakers and listeners, the reader must also juggle counterfactual situations that are embedded elements of a fictional text.

Clearly, accounting for the possibilities of literature presents the most complex and multi-layered application of the dialogic paradigm of counterfactuality. What qualifies as a counterfactual in a literary text? How do the various speakers pass judgments on the counterfactuals that are introduced? How do readers understand these judgments while also arriving at their own evaluations of embedded counterfactual scenarios? To answer these questions, I begin by exploring the basic paradigm of listener response in a conversational, face-to-face situation in which speaker and listener are in the same place at the same time. Though there are a host of asynchronous discourse situations that could be examined, for the purpose of the current project I focus on the most complex example, fictional narrative discourse. I explore the dialogic nature of literature, and consider how evaluation of counterfactuals can function as a crucial aspect of meaning in literary texts.

The Listener's Response

When a speaker engages a listener in conversation, the listener has various cues available to him that allow him to make meaning from the information that is provided. Many of these cues are provided by the speaker: presumably, she speaks in a language he understands and uses grammatical and linguistic constructions that he can interpret. Other cues are provided by memory and environment; these may include the pragmatic situation, the listener's knowledge of the speaker and of their shared common ground, and his own cultural frames brought to bear on all aspects of the language and the discourse situation.

The actual language involved in the exchange, then, is just one aspect of the discourse situation, but the aspect over which the speaker has the most direct control. In choosing words and constructions in the production of meaningful discourse, the speaker provides the listener with guidance that allows him to create meaning from her utterances. Nonetheless, language always underspecifies meaning; in other words, the meaning conveyed by an utterance is significantly more complex than the language used to convey it. Mental spaces and conceptual integration theory is a tool that makes the seemingly hidden layers of meaning apparent and predictable, particularly in the case of counterfactual scenarios.

For his part, the listener must pick up on and understand the cues that are available to generate the more elaborate meanings expressed. In applying mental spaces theory, I will assume that the listener has the ability to construct the mental spaces made available by the language of the speaker. In many situations, multiple space configurations are possible and the listener may not arrive at the exact meaning intended by the speaker. There are also, of course, circumstances in which words are not heard, misinterpreted, misunderstood, or simply unfamiliar to a certain listener because of differences in common ground.

Much more could be said about the ambiguities and breakdowns of communication that disrupt the transmission of meaning from speaker to listener; however, the consideration of these disruptions is a sidetrack from the purpose of this project. In discourse situations the listener's ability to make meaning from a particular utterance or set of utterances is the foundation of rhetorical analysis – from this point

forward, I will begin with the assumption that the listener is successful in understanding the basic meaning intended by the speaker. But what then? The listener is not just a passive recipient of information, but a full active participant in an exchange of meaning.

Herb Clark characterizes this exchange of meaning as a joint activity, similar to other joint activities "like shaking hands or playing a piano duet" (325). The speaker and listener are engaged in an interaction requiring them to coordinate their activities if the discourse exchange is to succeed and proceed; otherwise, it breaks down. Communication requires not just that speakers talk and listeners pay attention, but there must also be a coordination of "what speakers mean and what listeners take them to mean" (Clark 325). In other words, the listener is not a passive recipient, but a participant in the ongoing creation and elaboration of meaning that is undertaken jointly with the speaker.

It is here, though, that it is necessary to consider the rhetorical nature of meaning exchange. Clark describes the ongoing joint actions and cooperation of both speakers and interlocutors in the ongoing exchange of meaning[18]. With his emphasis on coordination, he sometimes overlooks the conflicting goals and potential disagreements that may disrupt truly cooperative interaction, as well as the persuasive intentions of the speaker and the judgments of the listener. These potential disruptions and rhetorical goals and judgments are not counter to coordinated exchanges of meaning, but part of them. Communication is a joint activity requiring the interaction

of speaker and listener, but people are not strictly accommodating or devoid of persuasive intentions and suspicions in the service of coordination.

Evaluative counterfactuals demonstrate this point quite well. When a speaker shares a counterfactual scenario and evaluates it, and a listener hears and understands what has been said, there is a great degree of coordinated language, framing, and creativity involved. But the listener may also answer within a predictable range of responses, not all of which reinforce the speaker's meaning or rhetorical intention. It is possible to understand, and yet respond in a way that is not completely cooperative. This is not necessarily a subversion of coordination, but coordination considered within a broader range of interactive and rhetorical options.

Conceptual Integration Analysis
At this point, I would like to return to the example in which my sister and I were "almost" locked out of the car. This example may seem mundane and not strongly persuasive, but for these reasons I think it can provide an excellent example of the role that counterfactuals play in everyday conversation. Upon analysis, it will become clear that most of the meaning involved in the exchange is not explicitly developed, and that in fact, this seemingly basic and short example is much more complicated than it may at first appear to be.

The situation we imagined, being locked out of the car, is what psychologists call a "close counterfactual" – the feeling that something almost happened (Roese and Olson 22-25). The relief we felt when we escaped this situation was typical and probably not unlike the reaction most people would have had in a similar situation. I

am much more interested not in how we felt, but in what my sister meant when she said: "That would have been great! Can you imagine? Joe would have had to come from work to bring the keys." How was her understanding of the situation, and her evaluation of that situation, conveyed to her listener (me)? And moreover, what did I mean when I responded, "Yeah, that would have really changed our plans," and how else could I have answered her?

Our cultural frames played an important role in our understanding of the situation. When my sister told me "I almost locked the keys in the car," her statement was drawing on the extensive cultural experience we both have with keys. Like most members of our culture, we both knew that a key to a car is necessary to gain entry to that car when it is locked; furthermore, we both knew that modern cars have a feature called "auto-lock" that allows every door to be locked at the same time, a feature which many people use consistently whenever parking the car, thus making it easier to "lock out" both potential car thieves and oneself. We also had frame knowledge of the situation "being locked out," in which the person who wishes to gain access to the car cannot do so because the keys are not available; the experience of being locked out of the car often involves frustration, delay, reliance on another person to open the car, and in some cases the ability to see the keys through the windows. Neither of us needed to mention these aspects of our shared cultural knowledge – they were invoked when my sister made reference to almost locking the keys in the car.

The frame scenario of being "locked out," in fact, is itself a counterfactual blend that can be imported whole into a person's understanding of a particular

situation. The notion of "locked" and "unlocked" are contrasting terms with meanings that rely on a blend with the other. Consider something that is "locked." In one mental space, a container has an opening, a person who intends to gain access, and it is in the open position. Another mental space features the container with the opening, a device that changes the opening from open to closed, a person who intends to gain access, and it is in the closed position. In order to envision the container as "locked," we must blend the scenario in which it is closed with the scenario in which it is open.

The blended space involves the projection of information from both the "open" and "closed" input spaces. Depending on which elements of the input spaces are projected, different integration scenarios are possible. If the container's state is projected from the "closed" space and the opening device is also projected, it can be "unlocked" and access can be attained. If the container's state is projected from the "closed" space and the opening device is not present, the container is "locked" and the person who intends to gain access is "locked out." Each of these blends includes information from both "open" and "closed" input spaces that stand in contrast to each other, because the "unlocked" condition includes the projected inference that the container could be locked, and the "locked out" condition includes the projected inference that the container could be open.

My sister's statement, "I almost locked the keys in the car" recruited these basic counterfactual blends as part of a more elaborate blend network. In this particular situation, the container was the car, the opening was the door, and the device was the key, and the counterfactual blend was invoked by her use of the word

"locked." This basic blend informed the input spaces in a more extensive blend

representing our actual situation. In this more elaborate blend, the "speaker's reality"

space included the two of us, my sister's children, her car, the doors in a locked

position, the key's location in her hands, and the result that the car could be

"unlocked" with the keys and we were not locked out. The disanalogous

"counterfactual input space" included the two of us, my sister's children, her car, the

doors in a locked position, the key's location on the seat, and the result that the keys

were unavailable and we were "locked out."

　　　The counterfactual blend – the one invoked by her statement "I almost locked

the keys in the car" – projected the elements of these spaces into a coherent

counterfactual scenario in which the location of the keys on the seat would have meant

that we were "locked out" of the car instead of being able to unlock the doors with the

keys, a scenario in contrast to reality in which we could, in fact, open the doors when

we needed to do so.

Figure 1. Counterfactual Blend
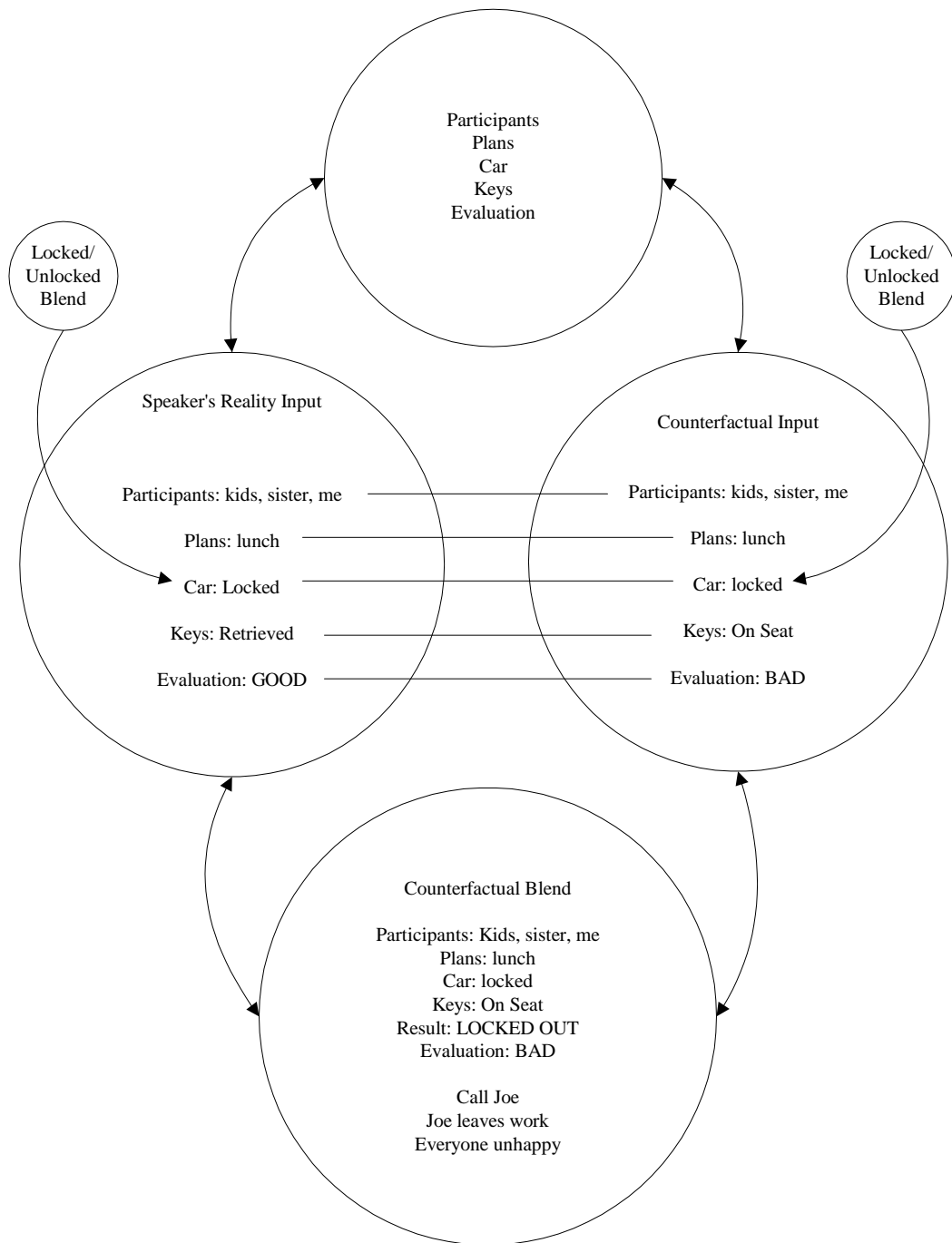
This counterfactual scenario was present in both of our minds as we continued

our dialogue. My sister referred to this scenario with the pronoun "that." There was

no antecedent for "that" in our discourse, other than our shared understanding of the

scenario that had almost occurred, the "locked out" counterfactual blend. The verbal

construction "would have been" confirms that my sister was aware that this scenario

did not occur. In other words, my sister did not have to say "if I had not retrieved the

keys from the seat, we would have been locked out," for the counterfactual nature of

the scenario had already been established by the context of the discourse. Her sarcastic

use of "great" also made an evaluation of the scenario depicted by this counterfactual

– she did not compare this situation favorably to speaker's reality, the actual situation

in which the keys were "saved." This evaluation enhanced the contrast between the

reality space and the counterfactual input space: it was clear that the actual space was

preferred to the counterfactual. The contrast between the good and bad inputs became

a part of the counterfactual blend that now included an evaluation. The evaluation

which took place in the blend – compressing the contrast between good and bad –

projected backward to the input spaces, further enhancing the evaluation by

reinforcing the goodness of speaker's reality, and making the "locked out" scenario

seem even more displeasing in comparison to the preferred "keys in hand" scenario.

When my sister elaborated her statement by adding "can you imagine?", she

was highlighting the imaginative nature of the counterfactual blend. By highlighting

the creative construction of the space, she gave herself an opening to provide more

structure to the basic scenario that we both shared in which the keys were locked

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inside of the car and we were all locked out. When she added "Joe would have had to

come from work to bring the keys," she enhanced the space with details that

elaborated the counterfactual blend. Because we shared this space, she did not need to

provide any more specific information that identified the counterfactual scenario – we

both knew that the counterfactual was the focus of our discussion and the product of

her imaginative reasoning. In this elaboration of the counterfactual blend, we were all

locked out of the car, and her husband Joe had to leave work to come open the doors

for us. She did not have to tell me that Joe had a set of spare keys, nor did she have to

tell me that no other keys were available or that gaining access to the car would be a

priority that would justify his leaving work. She was able to elaborate the

counterfactual blend with an assumption that I understood these points already and

that I shared her vision of the scenario and her evaluation of it.

My response confirmed these assumptions. First, by responding "yeah," I let

her know that I had followed her logic and that I agreed with the conclusions she had

reached about the consequences that would have followed from locking the keys in the

car in the counterfactual space. By adding, "that would have really changed our

plans," I emphasized the difference between the counterfactual and the actual space by

noting the "change of plans" that arose in the counterfactual blend, which then

projected back to the input spaces in a dynamic adjustment to the counterfactual

network. In speaker's reality, our plans included a nice lunch out with the kids. In the

counterfactual input space, some other "plan" for the same period of time, though not

identified, shared the "bad" stigma that the entire counterfactual input space had

attained. In the blend, the two different plans for the same period of time were
compressed into an unwanted "change of plans" indicated by my statement.

In summary, we see that this very short dialogue involved complex conceptual
integration network and development of meaning that was largely unspecified within
the discourse. The contrast between the "reality" of having the keys and the
"counterfactual scenario" of locking ourselves out involved existing blends for
"locked" and "unlocked," as well as cultural frames for auto-lock, for keys, and for
being locked out. All of these were brought together into a counterfactual scenario
that my sister also evaluated sarcastically in comparison to reality.

My response to my sister's evaluative counterfactual reinforced her statements.
I supported her imagined counterfactual scenario by acknowledging it with "yeah," by
adding structure to the blend network by noting the change of plans it would have
involved, and by implicitly supporting her evaluation that the counterfactual scenario
would have been unfortunate and unpleasant. My response was not surprising given
the situation, in which we both desired to have a nice lunch without bothering her
husband and worrying about the car. In a more fixed sense, my response was not
surprising within a general pattern of accommodating interaction between my sister
and me. But the interaction could have been much different, and that is what I am
most interested in exploring here.

Reinforcement
When my sister made her statement: "That would have been great! Can you
imagine? Joe would have had to come from work to bring the keys," there were a

number of other ways that I could have responded that would have been cooperative in different ways from the actual response I made. I will focus on this specific example, but these general patterns extend to any interaction between discourse participants that involves evaluative counterfactuals. In general, a listener may focus on the evaluation, the input spaces, the connectors between inputs, or the blended space when responding. Though I will consider these patterns of response separately, they may appear in concert; additionally, "reinforcement," "revision" and "rejection" are types of responses that may appear together in a listener's actual reaction.

I would also like to note that identifying the focus of the listener's response does not imply that the rest of the blend network remains unchanged. In fact, that would be misleading – any small change to an element of the network will have cascading effects. Rather, the response categories represent entry points by which the listener can adjust or enhance the entire network. Even a small change or addition is bound to have implications for the rest of the network; I do not intend to focus on these implications at present, but to consider the various entry points that represent types of responses available to a listener when an evaluative counterfactual scenario has been introduced into discourse.

The first option is reinforcement – a listener may specifically support the speaker's evaluation by reinforcing the evaluation of the contrasting input spaces in the blend network. My response "Yeah, that would have really changed our plans" implicitly confirmed my sister's evaluation of the "bad" counterfactual input space, the space in which we were locked out of the car, which she judged with her own

sarcastic remark "that would have been great." In essence, a listener can add to the space by reinforcing and extending the evaluation that has been made by the speaker. This confirmation could have been even more direct. For example, I could have replied "You're right – that would have been terrible," or "You're right – that would have been really great," essentially echoing the evaluation she already made with either a literal or sarcastic evaluation of my own focusing on the "bad" space.

Alternatively, I could have made a complementary evaluation of the speaker's reality space, in this case, the "good" space, by saying something like: "It's a good thing you noticed the keys on the seat." This statement functions in a similar manner to the last example, in that I would be reinforcing her evaluation by extending it without changing the structure of the two input spaces that have already been set up. The only difference is that in this case, the statement reinforces the implied evaluation of the speaker's reality space, the space in which we were not locked out. Because the two spaces have contrasting evaluations, a positive evaluation of speaker's reality confirms the original evaluation just as a negative evaluation of the counterfactual space does. In both cases, the speaker's response strengthens the existing relationship between the input spaces by focusing on the contrasting evaluative status, simply good or bad, that exists between them.

The structure of the counterfactual blend can also be elaborated by adding structure to either input space which would then be available for projection into the counterfactual blend. I could have said, for example, "Yeah, we have a lot to do today" an addition to the speaker's reality input space that has implications for the

counterfactual blend. While the original input space contained no details about the rest of our day, my response would have enhanced the input space by adding to reality the fact that we had a lot to do. This fact may then be projected into the blend, where our imagined scenario now includes even more annoyance over the fact that we have to wait to get into the car when we have many other things to do. The result is a reinforcement of the "bad" and "good" evaluations of the original input spaces.

I also could have offered reinforcement by more fully elaborating the original structure of the blend space beyond the structure she had already developed with "Joe would have had to come from work to bring the keys." There are any number of ways in which the counterfactual blend could be elaborated. I could continue to focus on Joe, saying "It would have been a real inconvenience for him," or on us, saying "if the baby needed diapers, we would have been in real trouble." In turn, my sister might have added more structure herself, responding "Joe might have had to go home first to get the keys." In this way, discourse participants can elaborate a counterfactual blended space quite extensively as long as they both continue to add structure and make it the focus of discussion.

In fact, such extended discussions often serve as a justification for a counterfactual evaluation. In the example above, the situation in which my sister and I found ourselves was accidental and not a result of a conscious decision made by either of us. In other cases, a speaker may evaluate a counterfactual situation primarily to justify a decision that has been made, and listeners may respond by adding structure to the counterfactual that further enhances the evaluation. Consider a speaker who has

decided not to take a cruise to Alaska. In discussing the decision with a friend, the speaker might state "It was a bad time of year for us to go – July would have been a terrible time for me to miss work." A speaker might respond by offering many more details that justify the evaluation and therefore the decision – "you wouldn't have had a good time," "You would have been thinking about work constantly," "your co-workers would have been in a bind without you," or "you would have had twice as much work to do when you got back." All of these responses reinforce the undesirability of the counterfactual blend by adding structure that supports a negative evaluation, thus reinforcing the evaluation and the speaker's original decision.

Revision

There are other types of responses that revise the original blend; they imply that the speaker has not whole-heartedly accepted the evaluation or other aspects of the structure of the counterfactual network.   In other words, the speaker does not simply mirror and/or add to the existing statements and structure, but revises the evaluation, the connectors, the input spaces, or the counterfactual blend in some way. In some ways, responses that revise the original blend are the most interesting to analyze because they highlight the underlying complexity of counterfactual scenarios.

I'll begin by considering ways in which a listener may respond by challenging or adjusting the speaker's evaluation. In the original example, my sister presented a sarcastic evaluation of a counterfactual situation by stating "that would have been great." Rather than directly or implicitly confirming her evaluation, I could have focused on the evaluation itself as the part of her statement needing adjustment. For

example, I might have replied "It wouldn't have been that bad" or "it's not the worst thing that could have happened." The conversation might end here, or I might elaborate my own evaluation by introducing new elements to the counterfactual space. For example, I might have said, "It wouldn't have been that bad – we could have had lunch while we were waiting for Joe," in which the added detail, having lunch while waiting for Joe, is meant to illustrate a more tolerable aspect of the counterfactual scenario. I also could have introduced an entirely new counterfactual scenario to act as the focus of comparison, such as "It could have been even worse – if Joe didn't have a spare key, we would have had to pay for a locksmith."

These examples illustrate techniques for partially accepting the evaluation that has been put forth while also offering some revision. Yet another general tactic of response is for a respondent to partially accept the counterfactual blend, but with some revision of the inputs that have been projected into the counterfactual blend. For example, recruiting from our background knowledge that Joe is a surgeon, I could have responded to my sister's statement "Joe would have had to come from work to bring the keys" by stating "he may not have been able to leave work right away, since he's in surgery this afternoon."

In this case, the information that has been projected from one input space – the input space of speaker's reality – included our knowledge that Joe was at work, and would have left work in the counterfactual scenario because of the importance of our situation. By introducing an event with even more urgency, a surgical operation, as part of reality, my reply questions the legitimacy of elaborating the counterfactual

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blend with the description of Joe leaving work to come help us. Instead, my statement that Joe is in surgery this afternoon implies that elaborating the blend in this way would be an error. My revised statement does not question the legitimacy of the whole counterfactual blend, but revises the blended space by replacing one inference based on a projected detail with a different inference based on a different projection. In the revised counterfactual scenario, Joe is unable to leave work to bring the key.

There are also ways in which a respondent can revise not just the evaluation or content of existing input spaces, but the entire blend constructed from the two input spaces. One example relates back to the notion of contingency, and the understanding that a speaker and listener share that a counterfactual situation is more or less probable. In fact, a listener may disagree with a speaker on this point. My sister's declaration, "that would have been great," was based on the assumption that we both focused on the all-important keys – in other words, that the keys were in our common ground – and that we both understood that being locked out of the car had "almost" occurred. But her assumption might have been wrong, and I could have responded by questioning the likelihood of this event. I might have replied, for example, "You definitely would have noticed the keys before you shut the door." My statement questions the legitimacy of projecting the "keys on seat" detail to the counterfactual blend. This revised blend is constructed from the same inputs, but the state of the keys as "retrieved" is projected to the blend rather than the state of the keys "on the seat."

Finally, a counterfactual blend may be completely revised by a listener who fails to accept the antecedent event identified in the counterfactual, and replaces it

with a different antecedent event. In other words, the listener introduces new events and new connectors between the input spaces, while retaining most elements of the original input spaces and blend. Imagine that I had responded to my sister's remark "that would have been great," by stating "well, you should have gotten the Onstar option when you bought the car." Onstar is an expensive system that allows a vehicle to be unlocked remotely. By making this response, I would have been identifying a different antecedent than the one that was implied by the current discourse and situation, but keeping much of the existing network. The causal event in the original counterfactual was the point at which my sister retrieved the keys from the seat. In my revised causal assertion, the important prior event was the decision not to order Onstar as an option on the car. In the revised counterfactual blend, rather than calling Joe and having to wait for the keys, we could have called Onstar and had the car unlocked immediately.

Finally, a counterfactual blend may be revised almost completely by a listener who fails to accept the antecedent event identified in the counterfactual, and replaces it with a different antecedent event. In other words, the listener introduces new events and new connectors between the input spaces, while retaining only a few elements of the original spaces and original blend. I could have responded, "If we had taken the train like I suggested, we wouldn't have had to worry about the car." In this case, some of the original elements of the input spaces are retained – we are still out to lunch, and the kids are still with us, and the "locked out" situation still exists as a coherent scenario, and is still undesirable. But in this case, the situation is avoided not

because my sister retrieved the keys, but because speaker's reality is completely different – the keys don't even matter in this scenario because we have taken the train instead of bringing the car. Responses of this type rely on the notion that counterfactuals identify specific events in a longer chain of related events, and imply a specific causal relationship between the antecedent and outcome.

Rejection

Finally, there are a number of ways in which a listener can respond to a speaker by simply refusing to engage the counterfactual conversationally, even when the counterfactual has been understood. In other words, the respondent acknowledges the counterfactual space network, but rejects it altogether by refusing to maintain it as a topic of discussion. One mode of disengagement is dismissal – dismissive responses could include statements like "that's stupid" or "Let's not even talk about it." A response of this type can also point to the counterfactual nature of the space network as a motive for its dismissal: "Why even talk about it now?" or "it's a moot point, now, isn't it?" Note that in each of these replies, the existence of the counterfactual network is acknowledged pronominally.

A respondent can also reject the evaluation that has been put forth instead of the counterfactual. By rejecting the evaluation, the listener completely disrupts the space network by rejecting the assignment of "good" and "bad" to the original input spaces and also dismissing the disanalogy connector between them. It's hard to imagine that I would have rejected my sister's assertion that the counterfactual situation, in which we got locked out of the car, could have been anything but

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unpleasant, but I might have said something like "I wish we had been locked out." In this case I am simply rejecting the evaluation with no explanation.

And of course, a respondent can refuse to cooperate with a counterfactual evaluation in all the same ways that he can refuse to respond to any other discourse situation. The respondent can pretend not to understand, ignore the speaker, change the subject, etc. In these cases, the speaker does not acknowledge either the counterfactual blend network or the evaluation.

Literature as Rhetorical Dialogue

The next two chapters of this book, in which I closely analyze counterfactuals in two works of literature, may seem like a dramatic leap from a simple conversation about locking the keys in the car. I contend that this leap is justified, though, by the fact that literature can be examined using the same basic model of dialogue that I have used to analyze counterfactual statements and their responses. Extending this dialogic model to literature involves several assumptions: that literature is one example of a rhetorical exchange between a speaker and an audience; that literature is not only rhetorical, but that dialogic models of speakers and listeners extend to literature and provide insight into literary texts; that literature does include counterfactuals as part of this dialogic meaning exchange; and finally, that literature has the ability to convey an evaluative stance, and that this stance can be accepted, revised, or rejected by a reader. As I will describe, these assumptions are grounded in the work of other literary theorists as well as in my own analysis of counterfactuality as a literary phenomenon.

Though it may not be prototypical of persuasive writing, literature has long been considered a form of discourse that can function "rhetorically." Wayne Booth's influential 1969 book, <u>The Rhetoric of Fiction</u>, proposed a framework for the rhetorical analysis of fictional narratives. In his view, fiction is rhetorical because authors make specific choices that are intended to communicate values and beliefs to an audience. The evidence of these choices, he argues, can never be expunged from a text. Characters, scenes, direct commentary and other narrative techniques serve "rhetorical" ends because they have been selected by the author with the needs and reactions of an audience in mind. Booth writes that "the author cannot choose whether to use rhetorical heightening. His only choice is of the kind of rhetoric he will use" (116).

Thus, the essence of the rhetorical nature of literature is the communication that takes place between an author and an audience. Booth was well aware, though, that the identity of the author in a literary text is masked by the presence of a narrator, and shaped by the details of the story that lead the audience to make conclusions about the author's beliefs and values, regardless of any knowledge of the author's actual biography. He therefore replaces the term author with the term "implied author," noting that "the implied author chooses, consciously or unconsciously, what we read; we infer him as an ideal, literary, created version of the real man; he is the sum of his own choices" (75). Anyone who reads a text, in other words, encounters the implied author as its controlling speaker.

While Booth complains that "there have been innumerable efforts to rule the audience out of critical consideration" (39), his own analysis focuses largely on the implied author and evidence of the choices made in creating the text, such as inclusion of overt commentary. An alternative approach to the rhetorical nature of texts focuses more attention on the audience, and the audience's interpretation of the elements of the text. This is the view taken, for example, by Sonja K. Foss, when she notes that "…a narrative, like all rhetoric, is addressed to someone and is designed to appeal to that person" (232).   Various methods have been applied to describe the experience of an audience reading a text, from Stanley Fish's reader-response criticism to more recent cognitive approaches like the approach taken by Todd Oakley in analyzing the graphic novel *Maus: a Survivor's Tale*.

As the methods of analysis have evolved, so has the precision with which the audience's experience has been described. Using cognitive methods such as mental spaces and conceptual integration theory, it is possible to analyze the way that cues made available by the text structure certain responses and interpretations. These responses are not unlimited, any more than a sentence has an unlimited number of meanings, but constrained in predictable ways and open in predictable ways to individual judgments. The increase in precision has also moved the level of analysis from a general audience, to specific "readers" who experience the text as they read and construct meaning within a rhetorical framework.

In adopting this mode of analysis, I view literature as rhetorical because it is a form of communication between author and audience, and also because the language

of a text always influences the reader who encounters it, even though the "influence" may not be intentionally persuasive or intended to move the reader to a particular action. The elements of the text combine to portray fictional events and characters according to a particular perspective or series of perspectives. It is not possible to tell a story without conveying a particular point of view or views. The reader of a literary text, like a member of any audience, may ultimately reject the perspective or perspectives represented, but the rhetorical exchange is successful, from my view, when the reader must first adopt the perspective in order to reject it.

The "rhetoric" of the text is not a blueprint of the author's views, but rather a result of the cumulative effect of implied author, narrator, character viewpoints and the details of the text that make available to the reader these particular perspectives. This cumulative effect can be analyzed well with models of dialogue that may be extended to account for characteristics of narrative. Recent work in linguistics has emphasized this point by treating face-to-face conversation as a basic paradigm that provides insight into narrative structure. Vera Tobin, for example, has argued that the principles of joint communication that Herbert Clark has identified for conversation apply equally well to literature, though they are complicated by the layers of narrative meaning. Similarly, in their forthcoming book Conditional Space-Building and Constructional Compositionality, Barbara Danygier and Eve Sweetser analyze conditional statements in literature using the theory of mental spaces that was originally developed as a model for natural language.

Counterfactuals in Literature

Let me propose simply that there are three levels at which one can consider a work of literature "counterfactual." In a very broad sense, entire works of literature are counterfactual with respect to the real world. In other words, the "actual world" is the base space for a literary text that is counterfactual with respect to this base. On the narrative level, works of literature include embedded elements that are counterfactual with respect to other details of the text. In this case, fictional reality is the base for a counterfactual alternative represented in the text. Finally, narrative dialogue and other representations of a particular character's point of view can include embedded counterfactual scenarios, and the base space in this case is the perspective of a specific character. I'm particularly interested in the last two embedded levels, but first let me consider the way in which all literary texts can be labeled counterfactual in relation to an actual world base.

Before cognitive linguists developed an explanatory model for counterfactuality that defined it in terms of a speaker's perception of reality, counterfactuals were defined as statements with an antecedent that was false in the model of the actual world. A counterfactual conditional was viewed as meaningful in another possible world, though it was false in our own world. This notion of counterfactuality has been extended to literature because in a sense all literature is by definition "false" in relation to the actual world, and its meaning does indeed seem to arise from a very full exploration of another "possible world."

Whatever the limitations of *possible worlds theory* as an explanatory model for counterfactual statements, the notion that literary texts explore "possible worlds" has

provided insight into the nature of literature and reading. Ruth Ronen has observed

that applying the *possible worlds* tradition to literature has turned fictional works into

a legitimate topic of philosophical discussion because fiction cannot be dismissed on

the grounds that it is devoid of truth value or simply false (20-21). Marie-Laure Ryan

extends the connection between possible worlds and literature by describing reading as

an experience of "re-centering" in which the reader takes on the identity of someone

living in the world of the text, regarding that world as actual (21-23). Ryan, like other

narrative theorists, has based a model of fiction on the assumption that experiencing a

text is like experiencing another possible world. Narrative models in this tradition

often adopt the term "world," as in Ryan's "text worlds," Richard Gerig's "narrative

worlds," or Umberto Eco's "fictional possible worlds."

Besides a sense of inherent falseness, and a meaning that seems to depend on

another world of possibility, fiction is also "connected" to the actual world in a sense

similar to the "connection" between a counterfactual and its base (see Figure 2).   As

Ryan points out, all texts must have a minimal connection to the actual world in order

for the text to be accessible to readers (31-47). But some texts exploit this

connectedness by explicitly presenting probable or possible alternatives to the world in

which we live; exploring these alternatives is not a byproduct of fictionality but part of

the very purpose of the text. For example, utopias and dystopias, works of science

fiction, or satiric works like *Gulliver's Travels* all present fictional worlds which

exploit specific connections to the actual world by presenting alternatives. The

connection can also be based on contingency, or the sense that the narrative explores a

divergent path based on a specific change to the actual past, as is the case in alternate histories.

Figure 2. Fiction as Counterfactual

Actual World (Reader's Reality Space)

Counterfactual Narrative
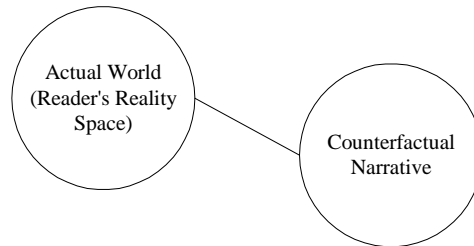
These examples demonstrate ways in which the terms "possible world" and "counterfactual" can and have been applied to entire works of fiction. Narrative theorists have also noted the existence of embedded narrative alternatives – including variations of past events, dreams, and alternative endings – within works of fiction. Marie-Laure Ryan, who has developed a series of labels to identify types of "possible worlds" that can exist within a narrative, calls them "textual alternative possible worlds" (32). Gerald Prince refers to his version of narrative alternatives as the "disnarrated," or, as he puts it, "...all the events that do not happen but, nonetheless, are referred to (in a negative or hypothetical mode) by the narrative text" ("Disnarrated" 2). In a similar vein, David Herman refers to the exploration of non-events as "hypothetical focalization" (231).

While all of these may appear as embedded narrative elements, not all are necessarily presented with equal degrees of narrative authority in the texts in which they appear. Lubomír Doležel has noted that interpreting the status of narrative

possibilities requires the reader to assess the authority with which they are presented (237). A character's wishes and dreams, for example, are subordinate in narrative status to the rest of the text. Other possibilities may be presented by sources of varying authority in the text. The implied author or creator has the most authority, with the narrator having less authority than the implied author but more authority than the individual characters. For example, in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, two different endings are presented by the narrator, giving them more authority than possibilities presented directly by a character, but less authority than possibilities presented with no narrative intervention.

In addition to variations in authority, it is also true that not every space embedded within the narrative level of a text is a clear-cut example of a counterfactual space. Counterfactuals are a particular type of space connected by disanalogy to the space of fictional reality, and developed by a speaker who conveys a negative stance toward the embedded space (see Figure 3). As mentioned previously, narrators and implied authors are two of the speakers whose points of view are represented in the text. These speakers who develop the narrative provide cues that the alternative is characterized by a negative stance. In other words, the embedded alternative does not share the same level of "reality" as the rest of the narrative. The reader may assess the reality of the space through linguistic and grammatical cues – for example, a narrator may describe an alternative to the past using a distanced verb tense. Other cues are available too, such as the details of the embedded space, the relation of the embedded space to the rest of the text, and even the spacing and font of the text[19].

It is clear, then, that there are constraints on what can be considered a counterfactual scenario embedded in a text, and certain embedded narrative elements fall outside of this definition. A character or narrator's plans for the fictional future, for example, may not be presented with a negative stance because the plans may become actualized in the text. Similarly, a character's dream world may have no connection of disanalogy to the fictional base – it may simply explore a fantasy, rather than present a counterfactual alternative. Alternative endings – such as that of *The French Liuetenant's Woman* – are not easily characterized as counterfactual elements when the speaker does not convey a negative epistemic stance toward either scenario. Because fiction is inherently creative, the status of an embedded scenario as a counterfactual space may be subject to interpretation, particularly in experimental texts.

**Figure 3. Embedded Narrative Counterfactual**
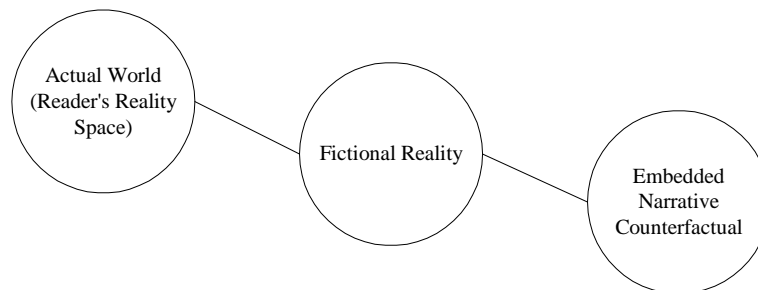
Finally, counterfactual alternatives may be embedded in the represented speech or thoughts of a particular character. This level of embedding differs from the narrative level in that the counterfactual space is presented specifically as a space that contrasts with reality as it is viewed by that character, not with the narrative as a whole

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(See Figure 4). The character's perspective may be conveyed in a number of ways. Most directly, the character's words may be directly represented in narrative dialogue. The characters words and thoughts may also be represented indirectly, as in free indirect discourse. Mrs. Dalloways' thoughts about "what might have been" if she married Peter Walsh, for example, represent an embedded counterfactual scenario that specifically represents Mrs. Dalloway's view of reality.

Figure 4. Character's Counterfactual
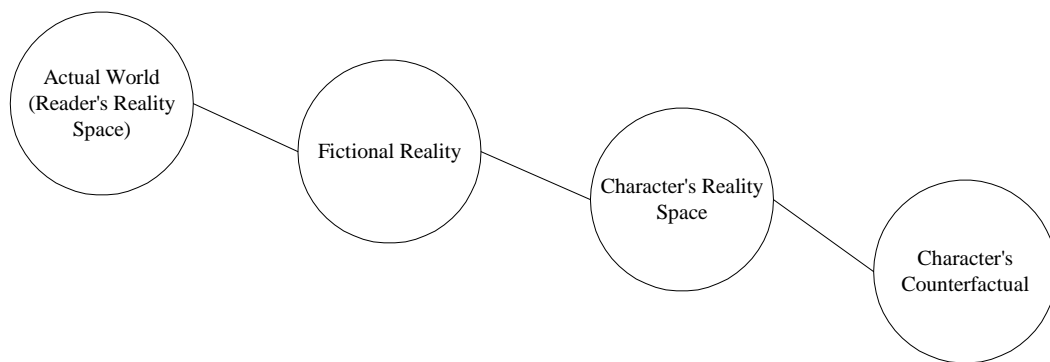
Counterfactual spaces embedded in a character's perspective are always made more complicated by the fact that the speaker's perspective is embedded within the base of the text. The layers of embedding, with different "speakers" and "perspectives" represented at each level, means that even seemingly straightforward dialogue about "what might have been" must be considered within a larger network of embedded spaces. As a result of the multiple layers of embedding in the text, the reader must also understand that a counterfactual associated with a character's point of

view is counterfactual only from that character's perspective, and perhaps not from the perspective of the narrator, implied author, or even another character who also participates in the dialogue.

Literature and Evaluative Stance

Thus, it is well established that literature is rhetorical, and that literature includes counterfactual spaces that are embedded at various textual levels. The outcome of these two facts is that literature, like the many other examples of written and spoken discourse that I have analyzed thus far, has the ability to convey an evaluative stance through the introduction of a counterfactual scenario and an evaluation of that scenario. The counterfactual space is connected to a base space, and that space is associated with a particular speaker. The speakers include implied author, narrator and characters.

When a counterfactual scenario is part of a fictional text, the implied author, narrator, or character can each take an explicit or implicit evaluative stance toward that counterfactual scenario. And in fact, the evaluation is typically distributed across all three, with the reader often left unsure of the true source of the evaluative stance. Even an evaluation made in the direct speech of a character may seem to reflect the implicit evaluative perspective of a narrator or implied author. For example, in "The Snows of Kilimananjaro," which will be analyzed in the next chapter, the main character describes stories that he wishes he had written. Since a major theme of the story is the importance of using one's gifts before they are lost, the evaluation seems to belong as much to the implied author as to the main character. In this case, with the

character's perspective embedded in the fictional text presented by narrator and implied author, the evaluation is distributed across all three speakers. When a narrator makes an evaluation, the evaluative stance is shared with the implied author but not necessarily with a character. When a character acts as the narrator, the evaluative stance is shared with the implied author.

Not every speaker in a text has equal authority in the assertion of evaluations, either, just as the level of authority varies in the introduction of counterfactual scenarios. In cases where details of the text seem to present conflicting evaluative stances coming from character, narrator, or implied author, the evaluative stance of the implied author carries the most authority. In the excerpt from Mrs. Dalloway included in the introduction, for example, Mrs. Dalloway declares it a "a good thing" that she did not marry her former suitor, Peter Walsh. While Mrs. Dalloway's evaluation of the counterfactual scenario is clear, the evaluative stance taken by the narrator and implied author is arguably ambivalent. Mrs. Dalloway's life is not particularly happy, and her husband has trouble communicating his feelings to her while Peter Walsh is emotional and exuberant, though also impulsive. The implied author's more ambivalent evaluative stance toward the counterfactual scenario, conveyed through the narrator, supersedes Mrs. Dalloway's direct evaluation.

So we see that a fictional text conveys the perspectives of multiple speakers, and that the evaluation is therefore distributed rather than clearly associated with one speaker's stance. Depending on the text, the speakers may seem to share the same evaluative stance or take conflicting views of a counterfactual scenario. In some

cases, the evaluative stance is represented directly in the language of the text, whereas in other cases, the evaluative stance must be inferred from textual evidence that supports an implicit view toward the counterfactual scenario. Evaluations that are linked to the perspective of the implied author carry the most authority in the text, while the character's evaluations carry the last authority and may be contradicted by the evaluations of the implied author. Generally, though, the character's evaluations are made more explicitly and therefore more easily recognized; the evaluations of an implied author and narrator are rarely made explicit, and therefore are typically more ambiguous and subject to interpretation.

Audience Response

Just as there are a number of potential speakers in narrative discourse, there are similarly a number of potential listeners. Characters may act as listeners, and in certain types of texts, the narrator may respond to a character's thoughts or words as a listener also. The reader also acts as a "listener" who may respond to the evaluation of counterfactuals presented in the text. Just as the implied author's evaluation has the most authority within the text, so the reader's response to the counterfactual is the highest space of meaning for that particular reading of the text. The reader is the listener who has access to all embedded spaces, and all evaluative stances, and the reader's own response to events in the text are shaped by this access to each embedded layer of meaning. In order to explain the potential responses of the reader in more detail, I will examine each layer of embedding in turn, beginning with the embedded mental space representing the perspective of a specific character.

As described, literary dialogue may include counterfactual scenarios introduced by specific speakers, and the speakers may assess them with all the same evaluative techniques as real people in conversation. The character's evaluations may then be contradicted by other characters. Just as a listener can reinforce, revise, or reject a counterfactual in conversation, so a fictional character can reinforce, revise, or reject the evaluation of a counterfactual scenario presented by another character. Readers identify the perspective taken on the counterfactual with the speaker who introduces it into dialogue. If another character responds, the reader identifies the response with the perspective of the responding character. In this case, the reader is an overhearer who has a modeled response available as part of the total space network, but the reader is always in the most informed position to analyze both the speaker's evaluation and the response within the total network of embedded meanings.

Besides direct dialogue in which both a speaker and listener are represented in the text, certain narrative techniques, such as free indirect discourse, give the reader access to the perspective of a single character, and that perspective may include the exploration and evaluation of embedded counterfactual events. In this case, the presence of a direct listener is removed from the equation, and the reader is in a more straightforward position to "listen" to the speaker's perspective without another character acting as a responding intermediary. In this case, though, the narrator's presence is more noticeable, since "…the words are the narrator's and a paraphrase of the character's speech" and "we cannot be sure that the words attributed to the characters are the exact ones spoken by them" (Foss 233). Thus, when an evaluation

is identified with the perspective of the character, the reader may additionally ascribe that evaluation to the narrator and/or implied author. In some cases, other details of the text may undercut the character's explicit evaluation. As the only listener in this dialogic exchange, the reader must determine whether an evaluation of a counterfactual situation given by a particular character should be weighed against other details of the text.

One way to think about a character's embedded counterfactual space is to return to the idea of contrast. When a counterfactual space is embedded within the character's perspective, and the counterfactual is evaluated, the counterfactual space is being put in contrast with speaker's reality, that is, the character's views about what counts as "reality" in the fictional world. The character's evaluation may be completely foolish – in fact, the character's notion of "reality" may not match the reality of the fictional world as it is presented by the rest of the text. The focus is on the contrast between the "actual" world of the character and the "counterfactual" space introduced by the character, but the reader's total space network always involves other embedded spaces and the potential for other evaluative perspectives.

When a counterfactual space is embedded within the narrative level but not associated with the perspective of a particular character, it contrasts with the reality not as a particular character views it, but as it is depicted by the entire text. In some cases, these counterfactual spaces may be directly evaluated by the narrator or implied author by being labeled with evaluative terms. An evaluative stance toward counterfactual spaces may also be conveyed through a consistent depiction of the

counterfactual scenario as either "good" or "bad" in relation to the narrative base. The evaluation may also be implied (or supplemented) through the contextual details of the counterfactual space and the rest of the narrative with which it contrasts – the counterfactual space may contain "better" or "worse" options than the narrative base.

A good example of an evaluative perspective on a counterfactual space from the narrative level is seen in the classic movie *It's a Wonderful Life*. In this movie, the character George Bailey is allowed to see the counterfactual world that "might have been" if he had never been born. He is coached to consider this space in a negative light, just as the details of the movie influence the viewer to consider the space in a negative light. In the "reality" of the film, for example, George saved his brother from drowning and his brother became a war hero. In the counterfactual alternative his brother died and the many soldiers his brother later saved in the war also died. This unfortunate consequence, avoided in fictional reality, gives reality a positive luster because of its positive consequences. These details are supported by many others that provide an unambiguous depiction of the counterfactual as an undesirable alternative.

A person viewing this movie will undoubtedly agree with the evaluation, unless he or she takes an extremely uncooperative stance that directly conflicts with the stance conveyed by the details of the film, because the evaluation is presented in a very consistent manner at a high level of authority[20]. In most literary texts, on the hand, evaluations are not presented in a consistent and unambiguous manner, but must be assessed through an analysis of details and perspectives that may themselves be contradictory. There is rarely an unambiguous evaluation that a counterfactual

alternative is "good" or "bad"; even when a character declares this to be so, the distribution of evaluative stance across speakers leaves room for contradiction. As a listener with access to all embedded spaces, the reader is in a position to contrast counterfactual alternatives, and to understand the explicit and implicit evaluations of these alternatives, as part of the reading experience. Evaluative counterfactual scenarios are an available source of meaning for readers who may impose their own judgments and analysis on the details of the text.

Finally, certain books that emphasize the contrast between the "actual world" – in other words, the reader's reality space – and the contents of an entire fictional narrative convey an evaluation of the actual world through contrast with the counterfactual alternative. Such is the case for alternate histories, in which the connection to the actual world is exploited, providing the potential for evaluation particularly through the exploration of alternative consequences. If an alternate history depicts the south winning the Civil War, for example, and shows the United States and Confederate States in a favorable position as a consequence of this event, then a positive evaluation is implied. If, on the other hand, an alternate history depicts the south winning the Civil War, then focuses on the continued existence of slavery and the unfavorable position of United and Confederate States as a consequence of this event, then a negative evaluation is implied. Because the contrast is between the fictional text and the actual world, the evaluative stance conveyed has the potential to influence the reader's actual judgments of real historical events.

<u>**Conclusion to Chapter 3**</u>

In this chapter, I have attempted to link what may at first seem like dramatically different activities – face to face conversation and literature – using the theory of mental spaces and conceptual integration as a common framework. There are many types of reactions available to a listener that may be broadly characterized as responses that reinforce, revise, or reject the counterfactual scenario. In other words, the listener may reinforce the counterfactual blend and/or the related evaluation, may revise the counterfactual blend and/or the related evaluation, or may reject the counterfactual blend and/or the related evaluation. The listener's various options for reinforcing, revising, or rejecting the evaluative counterfactual scenario have been described in terms of entry points into the counterfactual blend network.

Literature is both dialogic and rhetorical, though special considerations must be made to account for the embedded nature of literature. Counterfactual spaces in literature can be represented at three levels of embedding: literature itself can be considered counterfactual with respect to the actual world or "reader's reality space"; coherent scenarios within the narrative can be counterfactual with respect to the "fictional space"; and coherent scenarios representing the perspective of a character may be counterfactual with respect to that character's "reality space."

Literature also includes the potential for multiple speakers and listeners. When an evaluative stance toward a counterfactual scenario is included in the text, it may be distributed across the perspectives of character, narrator, and implied author. These perspectives may align or contradict each other, and textual elements may contribute to the evaluative stance implicitly. Listeners in the text include characters who listen

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and respond to other characters in dialogue, and the reader who has access to all embedded spaces and evaluative stances. The reader is at the highest level of interpretation and has access to the full meaning conveyed by the various evaluative perspectives and embedded scenarios in the fictional text. The reader, like a listener in conversation, may be influenced by these perspectives, and an act of literary interpretation may ultimately include acceptance, revision, or rejection of certain evaluative stances. These points will be elaborated in much more detail in the analyses of "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" and "The Wife of His Youth" in the next two chapters.

Chapter 4: He Had Never Written a Word of That

She said a good day / Ain't got no rain / She said a bad day's when I lie in bed / And think of things that might have been — Paul Simon, "Slip Slidin' Away"

Ernest Hemingway's 1936 story "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" demonstrates the variety of roles that counterfactuals play in narrative discourse. This story includes counterfactuals at various embedded levels of the story. In the narrative dialogue, one character introduces counterfactual scenarios and another character responds, highlighting the discord between a husband and wife. The wife's evaluative counterfactuals introduce the theme of regret, and the husband's testy responses heighten the tension between them and underscores his own struggle with regret in the story.

The dialogue establishes counterfactuality, evaluation, and regret as themes that are crucial in binding the other elements of this story. The story includes two somewhat unusual narrative techniques that also represent embedded counterfactual scenarios. Some sections of the story are printed in italics and seem to represent the stories that the main character might have written, in fact wishes he had written, but never did. The story also includes two incompatible endings presented at different levels of authority. In this chapter, I consider the elements of the narrative that present counterfactual scenarios and the means by which evaluation is conveyed at each embedded level of the narrative. I consider how some critics have either criticized or

ignored the story's disparate elements, and propose a unified reading that integrates the various embedded levels of counterfactuality.

<u>Approaches to "The Snows of Kilimanjaro"</u>

I begin with a confession: when I first read Ernest Hemingway's "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" as an undergraduate, I skipped the story's italicized vignettes, dismissing them as superfluous to the "actual story." The vignettes, similar to the inter-chapters of Hemingway's collection *In Our Time*, consist of graphic narrative fragments which are distinct from the rest of the text. Detailing events and scenes far removed from the African setting of the story, the vignettes at first blush seem to bear little on the story's development. The story is developed instead by sections of dialogue and by free indirect discourse that conveys the thoughts of the protagonist, Harry, directly to the reader.

Upon many subsequent readings since my days as an undergraduate, I have come to appreciate that the disparate components of this story – which also include an epigraph and the two incompatible endings – each contribute fully to the meaning it achieves. But my early experience highlights a problem facing any reader of this text – the need to integrate its fragments into a global interpretation of the story. The nature of the text challenges readers to construct and appreciate the story as an integrated unit; the story's fragmentation is a significant interpretive problem for both novice and expert readers who hope to understand and appreciate the story holistically.

The plot of the story is carried primarily by the dialogue and free indirect discourse. The protagonist Harry, stranded at an African safari camp with his wife and

their servants, lies on a cot dying of gangrene. He dwells on the lost opportunities of

his life, specifically, the squandering of his talent and his failure to live up to the

promise of his early writings. He concludes, "It was a talent all right but instead of

using it he had traded in on it" (11). As his wife Helen attempts to make him

comfortable, he treats her with alternating tenderness and contempt as his thoughts

turn increasingly inward and toward the past. His memories of the past are represented

in the italicized vignettes as would-be stories, and two versions of Harry's last

moments are depicted in the two alternative endings.

Some early critics of the story cited its fragmentation as a major artistic flaw.

In their commentary, Caroline Gordon and Allen Tate admired the story, but

ultimately felt that the story exhibited "both the virtues and the limitations" of

Hemingway's method. Finding the story lacking in "tonal and symbolic unity," they

lamented especially that the controlling symbol, the mountain of Kilimanjaro, appears

only at the end and does not integrate the various "planes" of the story. They found

the story to be a "magnificent failure" (143-144). Marion Montgomery attempted to

provide a framework for the major symbols of the story, which he identified as the

hyena of the plain and the leopard of the mountain (145-149). He too found the story

lacking in artistic unity, however. He identified the endings as the point at which the

story falls apart (149).

More recently, criticism of the story has taken its artistic success for granted.

Rather than criticize the story's fragmentation, critics have often assumed that each

section comments on Harry's decay as a writer, viewed as the central problem in the

story that integrates its components. The presumed significance of Harry's character is certainly warranted – after all, it is his imminent death that gives the story its wrenching poignancy. Harry has often been read as a semi-autobiographical stand-in for Hemingway himself, perhaps contributing to the inclination to make him the center of attention and to view the story as his "professional manifesto" (Dussinger 54). Gennaro Santangelo notes "Almost all critics agree that the story is among Hemingway's most autobiographical with its clearly veiled allusions to personal events in his own life" (252).

But Harry's centrality brings with it an implicit understanding that the other main character, his wife Helen, contributes little to the significance of the story. Like Margot Macomber in "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber,"[21] Helen has been readily dismissed as the emasculating wife of a sympathetically under-fulfilled husband[22]. Dismissing Helen so readily has led to an error of omission: the dialogic sections in which she speaks, and the second ending in which she discovers Harry's body, have figured far less prominently in the criticism than the vignettes and first ending. Though Harry's imminent death gives rise to the psychological crisis at the heart of this story, Helen and the sections in which she appears deserve more attention. A reading which focuses exclusively on Harry – or which considerably downplays major segments of the story – is simply not an integrated reading.

I propose that one way to better integrate Helen and the various components of the story is to focus not just on Harry, but on the major preoccupation of the characters and the central theme of the various fragments – explorations of what might have

been. On one level, the characters themselves have perspectives on what might have been, and these counterfactual scenarios are conveyed to the reader by the dialogue and free indirect discourse. The story provides a glimpse of both Helen and Harry's views of the past through their own exploration of counterfactual scenarios, and through their responses to each other. Helen's perspectives are conveyed primarily by the narrative dialogue, while Harry's are conveyed by both the dialogue and italicized vignettes. A counterfactual scenario contrasting with fictional reality also occurs in the first ending of the story.

At each level of the narrative, counterfactuals are not only introduced, but evaluated by characters, narrator, and implied author. The various explicit and implicit evaluations of what has been, what could have been, and ultimately what should have been develop the theme of regret so central to the meaning of the story. Counterfactuals are the primary unifying premise of this story, and provide one prism through which we can analyze the integrated meaning it achieves. Through the various representations of counterfactual scenarios, the story itself becomes a meditation not just on the role counterfactuals play in the experience of regret, but also on the relationship of the counterfactual to writing and narrative. By providing various representations of "good" and "bad" counterfactual scenarios, the story encourages the reader to accept a global evaluation of "good" and "bad" writers and writing.

Narrative Dialogue
The key moment that introduces evaluative counterfactual scenarios in "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" occurs early in the narrative dialogue. As Helen and Harry sit

together, worried and wondering what to do with themselves while they wait for help

to arrive, they bicker over whether Harry should drink a whiskey-soda. Helen changes

the subject abruptly in the following excerpt:

> "I wish we'd never come," the woman said. She was looking at
> him holding the glass and biting her lip. "You never would have
> gotten anything like this in Paris. You always said you loved Paris.
> We could have stayed in Paris or gone anywhere. I'd have gone
> anywhere. I said I'd go anywhere you wanted. If you wanted to
> shoot we could have gone shooting in Hungary and been
> comfortable." (5).

In this stretch of dialogue, Helen introduces a series of counterfactual

scenarios. In this instance, it is Helen's regret, not Harry's, which is in focus. Helen

first shifts the focus to a discussion of counterfactual alternatives by stating, "I wish

we'd never come." The linguistic prompts[23] develop a scenario in which Harry and

Helen did not travel to Africa at some point in the past. The antecedent event that

distinguishes speaker's reality from counterfactual is the trip to Africa: in Helen's

understanding of reality, the couple is in Africa on a safari, but the simple alternative

scenario she first describes contains no trip and no safari.

Helen's simple statement expresses her attitude toward her immediate past. As

readers, we know that Helen's husband is suffering from gangrene on their African

safari. When she makes the statement "I wish we'd never come," Helen does not

name the condition, nor does she name the location to which they traveled, though the

reader knows that it's Africa. We can infer from her statement that she "wishes" for

an alternative because she views it as preferable to the actual situation, presumably

because she wishes to avoid the pressing problem of her husband's condition. In this first vague counterfactual, Helen is beginning to establish a causal link between an action and an outcome. She wishes for an alternative in which not coming to Africa means that Harry does not get ill. It is the causal connection between Africa and Harry's condition that explains why Helen "wishes" that they'd "never come," even though the scenario she develops does not explicitly mention either Africa or gangrene.

Helen then continues her engagement in alternative possibilities by elaborating her vague counterfactual: "You never would have gotten anything like this in Paris," she declares, "You always said you loved Paris. We could have stayed in Paris…"[24]. In the counterfactual alternative, the couple stayed in Paris, which we can infer was their location before the safari. The claim "you never would have gotten anything like this in Paris" indicates that Harry's dire condition is not part of the counterfactual scenario, reinforcing the assertion that the trip to Africa was the direct cause of Harry's condition. Helen introduces the idea that another vacation might have been a better choice, and through contrast with their current situation, this scenario reinforces Helen's asserted attitude toward their current location and predicament. She views this counterfactual scenario as a better alternative than their actual African safari. It is not clear from the story whether the couple considered staying in Paris at the time of their departure; but regardless, it is the option which Helen retrospectively sees as an alternative possibility that she wishes they had chosen.

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Helen does not continue to elaborate on the scenario in which they stayed in Paris, instead shifting back to vague statements about past options. When she says "we could have stayed in Paris or gone anywhere," she ceases her elaboration of the Paris narrative, instead shifting to more general terms. It is not that she wanted to stay in Paris, but that she recognizes that there were other options besides Africa; in fact the options were seemingly unlimited, for they could have "gone anywhere" besides Paris. Presumably, the only place excluded from these options is Africa, for avoiding Africa is the ultimate goal of her deliberation. When she continues, "I'd have gone anywhere," the focus shifts from the available options themselves to Helen's attitude toward those options. Helen does not specify the location of any particular trip in this statement, and actually it is the lack of specificity that carries her point. That point is, any trip to any location would have suited her. The counterfactual possibilities themselves are not as important as Helen's willingness.

Her next statement, "I said I'd go anywhere you wanted," seems very similar to the last, though in fact it provides a shift that changes the antecedent event that Helen has identified. By adding "you wanted," Helen recasts the contingency she first established when she stated "we could have stayed in Paris." Rather than a past choice that both Helen and Harry made, Helen stresses the divergence between actual and counterfactual scenarios as a point at which <u>Harry</u> made a choice. Helen now assigns herself a passive role – she said she was willing to take any vacation that Harry wanted to take. If they came to Africa, the logic follows, it was because Harry

chose to take this vacation in Africa. It is Harry's choice, and not her own, which Helen regrets.

As she continues (it is the longest single statement Helen makes in the story), she drops everything she has said to imagine a new counterfactual possibility. "If you wanted to shoot," she says, "we could have gone shooting in Hungary and been comfortable." Helen's assertion shifts from her wish to stay in Paris, to a vague longing for anything else, to an imagined alternative in which they chose a different destination for a safari-like vacation. This scenario is consistent with her proclamation that she would have done anything Harry wanted, for presumably Harry wanted to shoot[25]. This statement further reinforces the causal link between Africa and the condition – it is not just going on a safari that caused her husband's gangrene, but taking the trip to Africa specifically. The result is a focus on Africa as the primary cause of Harry's condition, and on Harry as the person who chose the trip to Africa.

Helen's counterfactual statements establish several simple scenarios, all of which are more preferable, from her perspective, to their current predicament. Her evaluation is conveyed largely by the pragmatic situation, since her husband's condition and possible death are clearly something that she wishes to mentally undo. The evaluative stance is also conveyed when she begins her litany of counterfactual options with the verb "wish." Her statements express her desire for other vacations in Paris, Hungary, or anywhere, and her evaluations of these vacations have implications for her views of reality. Specifically, her positive evaluations imply a negative view

of the safari they are on and a negative view of Africa, which she implicitly identifies as the cause of her husband's condition and their current discomfort.

The shifting nature of this stretch of dialogue also reflects the point that Helen is making about their vacation destination: Helen has a preference for something, anything, besides a safari vacation in Africa, and she also seems to have an unlimited sense of contingency for the past. Helen does not, even in her imagined alternatives, settle on any one possibility. She begins with an imagined trip to Paris, but quickly abandons that possibility before her narrative is developed. She continues to develop only vague expressions of possibility that emphasize her willingness to accede to Harry's wishes, and she concludes with another simple counterfactual in which the couple traveled to Hungary. Even in the vacations she imagines, Helen is unable or unwilling to commit to a single counterfactual option. The unfolding possibilities she describes are not elaborate narratives, though they succeed in conveying her evaluation of their situation. The reader must juggle these evolving counterfactuals in interpreting events from Helen's point of view. She does not develop a single detailed counterfactual scenario, but expresses her attitudes using a series of shifting, unelaborated alternatives.

We can view Helen's ability to imagine a host of scenarios for leisure as a symptom of the lifestyle that her wealth has enabled. It has not been necessary for Helen, or for Harry since their marriage, to choose exclusively between desirable options. For them, whatever has not been done today can still be done tomorrow. Helen's ability to imagine alternative vacations in either Paris or Hungary – or

anywhere – demonstrates the freedom that she is accustomed to in pursuing her whims. Even in imagining the past, she does not make an exclusive choice, but considers a series of possibilities, any one of which would have been better and more "comfortable" relative to their African predicament.

Harry focuses on her wealth, and the whimsy made possible by such wealth, when he testily responds "your bloody money" (5). At this point, the dialogue shifts to Harry's words and the reader develops a new mental space to represent Harry's perspective. It becomes immediately clear that his perspective will not reinforce Helen's views of the immediate past. He is unwilling to cooperate with the sentiment of her counterfactual musings, and he does not validate her evaluation of either the actual situation or the counterfactual vacations she imagines. He does not commiserate with her, share his own regrets, or elaborate her counterfactual scenarios. Instead, he points out what he sees as the enabling factor in all of their vacations, both real and imagined: Helen's money.

It later becomes clear that the most destructive effect that money and comfort have had on Harry is his tendency to approach writing with the same sense of limitless opportunity reflected in Helen's counterfactuals. He had "delayed the starting" (5), even as he had saved the things he meant to write "until he knew enough to write them well" (5). At times, he had considered writing about Helen's friends (10); he had even considered writing about the "big birds" which encircle their African camp (3). Harry has been saving stories, saving them while he lived his comfortable life, saving them until he can muster the discipline to write them down. But as long as the opportunities

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of each tomorrow have provided him with the option to shift from one experience to the next, the stories have never been committed to paper. As Harry puts it, "it was never what he had done, but always what he could do" (11).

Imminent death, of course, has changed all that. As psychologist Janet Landman notes, "Perhaps [regret] all boils down to death: for if we weren't mortal, we could always re-do the unhappy things in some future " (34). As he lies on a cot dying, Harry repeatedly thinks and talks about the things he has never done and will never do. Even so, he does not seem completely committed to the foreclosure of opportunity. Even after he repeatedly mentions the "nevers" of his future, he later seems more optimistic when he claims "if he lived he would never write about her" (23). Helen's words describing alternate vacations not only remind Harry of the degenerate effect of her wealth, but also prepare us to recognize the role of unlimited contingency in ruining Harry's productivity. In this respect, Helen's counterfactuals reflect Harry's own inability to make definitive choices, which persists even as death looms.

As the dialogue continues, Helen defends herself, eventually restating her original wish that they had not gone on the trip, saying, "I wish we'd never come here" (6). To this, Harry responds "you said you loved it." With this response, he petulantly locks in on Helen's evaluation of Africa, in essence accusing her of being fickle in displaying changing attitudes. It is Helen's evaluative stance toward Africa that Harry has finally acknowledged and rejected, calling her to task for it. It is at this point that Africa, and Helen's implication that Africa has caused their problems,

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becomes a point of contention between them, and a point that will trouble Harry throughout the story.

Through Harry's own represented thoughts later in the story, the readers gain an understanding of what Africa, and this specific trip to Africa, symbolizes for Harry. After considering the dullness and futility of the lives of the wealthy – his current acquaintances and spouse – Harry turns to the subject of Africa, thinking "the people he knew now were all much more comfortable when he did not work. Africa was where he had been happiest in the good time of his life, so he had come out here to start again" (10). The notion that the people he knew were "more comfortable" when he did not work echoes Helen's statement that they could have "gone shooting in Hungary and been comfortable." That was precisely the point for Harry – Africa was a place where he could feel refreshingly uncomfortable. He thinks, "They had made this safari with the minimum of comfort. There was no hardship; but there was no luxury and he had thought he could get back into training that way" (11). Harry had hoped that this back-to-basics vacation would restore his soul and sense of motivation.

Debra Moddelmog has noted that it is ironic to think of Helen and Harry as "roughing it" – the Africa they experience is the Africa of rich vacationing Americans (123). They are surrounded by black servants! Yet, from Harry's perspective, this vacation represents a link to the past and to the type of writer he was and wants to be again. To him, as Moddelmog describes it, Africa is a type of "fat farm" (119) where he claims he can "work the fat off his soul the way a fighter went into the mountains to work and train in order to burn it out of his body" (11). Africa is not what he will

write about, but it is the context in which he can imagine himself becoming a writer again. Moddelmog points out, "Harry perceives his return to Africa as an attempt to resuscitate that former, more desirable self that he was when he was young, poor, and disciplined" (124). Harry suffers from an internal conflict that has stymied his writing career: he desires comfort, and has married the woman who can provide it, though it is discomfort that allows him to write. Even his death, in the form of painless gangrene, proceeds with a minimum of discomfort. Even so, he clings to the vision of Africa not as one of many vacation options as Helen imagines it, but as the site of inevitable discomfort that would have allowed him to write.

It becomes clear, when the symbolic value of Africa is revealed later on in the story, why Harry responded so contentiously to Helen's counterfactual statements. In refusing to vindicate her attitude of regret, he responded harshly to the implied evaluation she was making of Africa, and perhaps by extension, to his potential to write again, since Africa represented the wellspring of his future work. By insisting that another trip would have been more "comfortable," Helen discounted the very quality of the trip that had made it so appealing to Harry, its (in his view) discomfort. He equates comfort with failure to write, as when he considers that "each day of not writing, of comfort, of being that which he despised, dulled his ability and softened his will to work so that, finally, he did no work at all" (10). Africa, on the other hand, is a place of discomfort and inspiration. Helen's counterfactuals irritate Harry because they imply a negative view of Africa while also reminding Harry of the wealthy lifestyle and its possibilities that had made him seek out Africa in the first place.

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As Helen and Harry continue to bicker, and Helen plies him with "I don't see why that had to happen to your leg. What have we done to have that happen to us?" Harry shows increasing irritation. First, he gives her several logical causes for his condition – a scratch, lack of iodine, a poor mechanic and a broken-down truck. When she responds, "I don't mean that," he introduces a counterfactual scenario of his own. He responds "if you hadn't left your people, your goddamned Old Westbury, Saratoga, Palm Beach people to take me on—" In Harry's counterfactual scenario, it is the marriage and not the trip to Africa that should be undone. In the implied cause and effect logic, it is their marriage that has led to their current predicament, and by extension it is their marriage which is chosen as the target of a negative evaluation. Helen attempts to counter his view when she replies, "Why, I loved you. That's not fair," but his attitude has been communicated. He has appropriated her use of counterfactual scenarios, and his negative evaluation of their marriage has superseded her negative evaluation of Africa.

As Helen did in her own counterfactual thinking, Harry also uses the counterfactual alternative to emphasize her responsibility and to de-emphasize his own. The point of contingency that he identifies is their marriage, and he frames the marriage as a choice made by Helen. It was Helen's decision to leave "her own people" to pursue him that led to their current situation. Both characters identify antecedent events that undo their African safari, then suggest the desirability of these other unrealized alternatives. In doing so, both characters also emphasize the fault of the other in choosing the doomed alternative. Harry's evaluation of Helen later

preoccupies him and we see that his view of her is intimately intertwined with his visions of what might have been.

In keeping with the attitude introduced by his previous counterfactual – that Helen's "taking him on" was the point at which their problems began – Harry continues to pass judgments on their marriage, and especially on Helen herself, later in the story. He continuously assesses and reassesses both her and the perceived effects their marriage has had on his career. His awareness of impending death – symbolized by a hyena that passes by his bed and sits on his chest – has brought a new salience to his assessments of the past. He is wracked by feelings of regret, particularly about the course his life has taken since he met Helen.

Harry blames Helen for the wealth, and the lifestyle, that she has provided him. He thinks of her as the "rich bitch" and "destroyer of his talent" (11). He refers to their marriage repeatedly in the terms of economic exchange[26], as if by prostituting himself he has also sold away his talent. He feels that by marrying her he has "traded away what remained of his old life" (13)– the life of discomfort that allowed him to write. He had "sold his vitality," (12) and "he had chosen to make his living with something else instead of a pen or pencil" (11). The rich friends who surround them he at first considers interesting enough to write about, but he later realizes that only fools like "poor Julian," a thinly disguised F. Scott Fitzgerald, are bamboozled into writing about the glamour of the rich.

Ultimately, though, he tempers his bitter attitude toward Helen, reminding himself twice that his failure is not her fault. He manages to find points about her to

praise. He finds that "she was always thoughtful" (10), that she "loved him dearly as a writer, as a man" (11), that she "was a good looking woman, and had a pleasant body," (12), that she "was a damned nice woman too" (13). Ultimately, he concludes that "she *was* very good to him. He had been cruel and unjust in the afternoon. She was a fine woman, marvelous really" (14). Though he never concedes feeling any love for her, maintaining that it was all a lie, he retracts the harsh evaluation of their life together first introduced in the dialogue, and later elaborated in his own thoughts. He even gets her to admit that apart from his medical condition, she had, in fact, enjoyed traveling to Africa.

The initial evaluative counterfactuals that appear in the dialogue display the discord between Harry and Helen, and also expose the difference in their evaluative perspectives. Helen's simple counterfactuals depict a negative view of Africa, a view at odds with Harry's vision of Africa as the ultimate site of discomfort and inspiration. Though Helen's evaluation is motivated by his own impending death, Harry stubbornly refuses to reinforce her views or to sympathize with her regrets. Instead, he targets their marriage with his own negative evaluation. Though his assessment wavers, his evaluation of Helen and their marriage continues to preoccupy him throughout the story. Evaluations of Africa also continue to preoccupy him, until he finally gets Helen to admit that she has enjoyed Africa. Harry accused Helen of being fickle, but ultimately the story shows that they are both somewhat fickle in their evaluations. While understanding the characters' initial evaluative stances, the reader

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sees how these evaluations change in the story, and how the evaluations actually function as a channel for regret.

The reader's access to both characters' perspectives also underscores the role of contingency and possibility in the meaning of the story. Both characters' counterfactual statements are motivated by their awareness that Harry could die. Counterfactuals represent unrealized alternatives of the past, but until this point in their lives, both characters have also been plagued by an awareness of the unlimited possibilities for the future. For Helen, there was always the possibility of another vacation to Paris or Hungary. For Harry, there was always the opportunity to write his masterpiece when he regained his discipline and finally mustered the will to write. In both of these cases, Harry's possible death brings a new finality to the choices of the past.

But we see that both characters' counterfactuals are still muddled by an unlimited sense of contingency. Counterfactuals in the dialogue reveal that coping with regret, for Helen, includes imagining vague counterfactual narratives, but her imagined scenarios are short and indistinct precisely because she moves so readily from one to the next. Helen explores counterfactuals as a way to escape discomfort, yet even as she imagines scenarios she seems unwilling to focus on a specific alternative to the past. Her counterfactuals, as a result, are neither specific nor memorable.

Harry's recent past, we learn, has been characterized by a similar inability to develop specific narratives when faced with the possibility of limitless comfortable

choices. Even as his death seems imminent, he still dwells on the topics he will or will not write about – not Helen, not her rich friends, but perhaps the buzzards encircling the camp. Elaborating a simple counterfactual into a narrative requires one to focus on it, and neither Helen nor Harry seems capable of this kind of focus either now or in the recent past. In later sections of the story, Harry moves readily from one possible story to the next as he gathers his memories into narrative material. The reader comes to appreciate that so long as the narrative impulse is tempered by comfort and opportunity, the results lack the true finality of artistic creation. Removed from the immediate surroundings, though, Harry's would-be stories come closer to narrative material than anything Helen could ever imagine, and that is what the italicized vignettes represent.

Stories That "Might Have Been"

Thus far, my analysis has focused on a small excerpt of the story's dialogue, and on the connection between that dialogue and the perspectives and evaluations of the characters expressed in other parts of the story. I have attempted to show how the attitudes revealed by counterfactuals in this early section are picked up by later sections of dialogue and free indirect discourse. I will now return to the general topic of counterfactuals –scenarios of what might have been – to show that the italicized vignettes are another counterfactual form functioning within the story.

These vignettes are both spatially and temporally separate from the rest of the text. Distributed throughout the story, the five italicized sections seem to represent Harry's memories of the past as a soldier, a husband, an expatriate, and a grandson.

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Told from Harry's point-of-view, the vignettes mix loosely connected scenes and stories. The short final vignette is the only one which focuses on a single coherent episode. Though separate from the rest of the text, the vignettes pick up language and topics raised by the rest of the story, such as Paris, pain, death, quarrels, love, and marriage.

Like the counterfactuals in the dialogue, which are introduced with linguistic prompts like modal verbs and negatives, the vignettes are marked by explicit linguistic forms that guide the reader in interpreting these as the stories that Harry should have written. In describing the scenes, Harry dwells on the fact that "he had never written a line of that" (7), "he had never written a word of that" (8), "he had never written any of that" (17), "he had never written about Paris" (22), "he knew at least twenty good stories from out there and he had never written one" (23). The counterfactual reading is reinforced when he notes: "Now he remembered coming down through the timber in the dark holding the horse's tail when you could not see *and all the stories that he meant to write*" (22, my emphasis). Scott MacDonald called these italicized sections the "experiences Harry had put off writing and which, indeed, were worth writing about. The italicized sections, in other words, portray those experiences which *should have been* used in the creation of fiction" (71, emphasis in original). Their visual form, with a different font and separation from the rest of the text, helps to indicate their counterfactual status.

Clearly, these are the stories that Harry wishes he had written, and the vignettes prove to us what Harry had the talent to produce. It is only in the vignettes

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that Harry's true vision, symbolically separated from Helen, her wealth, and Africa, can be witnessed and evaluated by the readers. The counterfactual stories Harry imagines in the vignettes are distinguished by their specificity and clarity. These vignettes are detailed, sensuous, and concrete. It becomes clear that Harry does indeed possess real talent because his would-be stories are so artistic – they contain several plots that might have formed whole stories, as well as details and settings that could have graced the fiction he might have written. These counterfactuals seem to represent true writing, the type of writing that would have been worthy of him.

However, the vignettes still present multiple possibilities without settling on the important elements of each potential narrative. While the vignettes seem to present interesting possibilities for narrative material, they still lack selectivity – Harry has not performed the most important operation a writer must make on his narrative material, choosing what to include and exclude. As a result, the narratives seem to have the promise of true writing while still presenting a largely unorganized hodgepodge of ideas and details. Each subsequent italicized vignette, though, seems to present pieces that are closer to whole, true stories. The last italicized vignette, which describes a single episode, comes the closest of them all.

The inclusion of these vignettes, in all their concrete detail, allows the reader a glimpse into a non-existent world – we can appreciate the counterfactual stories that do not exist. The foreclosure that comes with impending death, and Harry's recognition that these stories have been irrevocably lost, has tragically provided the only clarity that enabled him to produce them, and even then it is without the

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selectivity needed to turn them into actual stories. It is ironic that his act of creation is placed squarely in the realm of the counterfactual, where it does not "actually" exist.

In fact, these italicized sections have an unusual logical status. They are counterfactual from Harry's perspective, and the reader shares this perspective because he relates the vignettes to us. We appreciate that in Harry's thoughts, these are stories that don't exist – they are the stories that were never written (though they could have been). But in fact, for the reader, they exist in some form. It's not that they were "never" written – they were written, for the reader's intents and purposes, by the implied author. The reader must juggle contending mental representations of the same narrative material. In one state of affairs, a series of "memories" as unrealized stories exist in counterfactual relation to reality from Harry's point of view – he might have written these stories, but didn't. In another state of affairs, the memories are realized narrative elements of an actual story written by the implied author Ernest Hemingway. Though Harry failed at this goal, his stories do have an actual existence, and as readers we get to understand them as both counterfactual scenarios from Harry's point of view, and actual elements of the fictional narrative written by the implied author. As a result, to the reader the counterfactual vignettes represent both the promising but unorganized products of Harry's imagination and true narrative material, for they exist in spaces at each level of embedding.

Harry's attitude toward these stories and his own ability to write them is also made clear in various places in the narrative. Clearly, these are the stories that he wishes he had written. His repeated use of "never" conveys a sense of hopelessness

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and despondence. He regrets the turn he allowed his life to take. He goes so far as to state that he had a duty to write these stories, and failed. Helen imagines a different vacation in which Harry's condition is avoided. Harry imagines a different lifestyle altogether, in which he worked and produced rather than allowing his talent to atrophy while he was "comfortable." While Helen wishes for Paris, Harry wishes for his masterpiece.

The specificity of his imagined stories contrasts with the vagueness of Helen's own counterfactual scenarios. When she imagined vaguely "what might have been," it was only to avoid the pressing problem that they were facing, and to attempt to share an emotional connection with her dying husband. Her scenarios were not all that important in and of themselves, but were vehicles for expressing her attitudes. Her lack of imagination is consistent with her character – she is someone who reads rather than produces anything of her own. "She was always thoughtful," her husband noted, but only about things that "she knew about, or had read, or had heard somewhere" (10). She cannot take dictation, and even as Harry lies dying, she offers to read to him, as if he would be soothed by hearing what others have produced. Helen's regret is authentic, but not creative.

Harry's counterfactuals also convey his attitudes – they reflect his regret and disappointment with a concrete poignancy. But more than that, they are concrete in the way that only literature is elaborate. Harry's counterfactuals embody the clarity that has been missing from his cushy, comfortable existence. Unlike Helen, he has the ability to produce and create, when removed from the degenerative influence of

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money and comfort. Though the italicized vignettes are ultimately not true stories, and they in fact belong to the implied author as much as to Harry, they suggest his promise as a writer had he been able to overcome his desire for comfort. But of course, the reader knows that only death will allow him to escape his comfortable existence.

The Two Endings

I have introduced an analysis of counterfactuals in this story that first focused on scenarios developed within embedded spaces representing the characters' perspectives and introduced and evaluated with contextual and linguistic cues in the narrative dialogue and free indirect discourse. The second example of counterfactual scenarios, the italicized vignettes describing Harry's stories, represent both embedded counterfactuals from Harry's point of view, and Harry's actual memories at the level of fictional reality (written by the implied author). In the case of the vignettes, linguistic cues, such as the use of "never," were supplemented with the use of spacing and an italicized font to set the vignettes apart visually and to imply a status distinct from the rest of the narrative.

The existence of two mutually incompatible endings provides the reader with a third experience of counterfactual scenarios in the story. The first ending, in which Harry is rescued and flown toward Mt. Kilimanjaro, is logically incompatible with the second ending, in which Helen awakes to find Harry dead in his cot. These endings lack the explicit markers utilized by other sections of the narrative – neither ending is printed in italics, and neither begins with or includes linguistic markers of

counterfactual status. The only textual marker that distinguishes these two elements is

their spatial separation from the rest of the story. Nonetheless, the reader must resolve

the contradiction of the endings.

Of course, another possible reading is that resolution of the two endings is

simply impossible, that they exist in a conflicting status that cannot be resolved. In his

discussion of narrative self-erasure in modern and post-modern texts, Brian McHale

notes:

> Narrative self-erasure is not the monopoly of postmodernist
> fiction, of course. It also occurs in modernist narratives, but here it
> is typically framed as mental anticipations, wishes, or recollections
> of the characters, rather than as an irresolvable paradox of the
> world *outside* the characters' minds. In other words, the cancelled
> events of modernist fiction occur in one or other character's
> subjective domain or subworld, not in the projected world of the
> text as such. 101.

This description of a modernist technique applies well to "The Snows of Kilimanjaro."

I will show that the first ending fits McHale's analysis perfectly – it is a seeming

contradiction which takes on the characteristics of a dream, allowing the reader to

resolve it with the second ending by embedding it within Harry's view of reality.

In the first ending, Harry is rescued and flown toward Mount Kilimanjaro, a

rescue that ultimately proves to be a fantasy. On first reading, though, the first ending

can easily be mistaken for the "actual ending." For one thing, it is printed in regular

font, not in the italic font that has been used to represent Harry's counterfactual

stories. Neither is it introduced or marked with the expected linguistic markers for

"what might have been." And finally, the ending provides the concrete detail and

elaboration we expect from an actual narrative – details about the plane, about the

pilot, and about the situation of Harry's rescue that seem perfectly in accord with

fictional reality. As the scene ends, though, this section of the narrative seems more

like a dream, including a description of flying toward a mountain "unbelievably white

in the sun" (27). When the section ends with "and then he knew that there was where

he was going" (27), it is reminiscent of the symbolic epigraph describing a leopard

which froze near the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro (3).

The reader's suspicions that the ending is not "actually happening" are

confirmed by the second ending, in which Helen finds Harry with his gangrened leg

exposed, and discovers that he is not breathing. Since Harry is dead and still in the

camp in the second ending, it forecloses the possibility that the first ending concluded

the story. The second ending appears after another break in the story, indicating a

narrative shift. Obviously, the first ending, in which Harry is rescued and lives, is

incompatible with the second ending, in which Harry dies. Furthermore, the first

ending is set in the morning, while the second ending is set at night, another confusing

contradiction in an otherwise sequential plot.

Readers navigating their way through these endings in the creation of meaning

are now faced with an interesting interpretive dilemma. Two incompatible endings to

the story have been presented. The endings cannot both be absorbed into the logic of

the text. Like a jury deliberating about what version of events "actually happened,"

readers, primed by their experience with other stories, are driven to develop one

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complete story from the two disparate pieces, and may feel inclined to choose one

ending as the "actual ending."

As readers, like jurists, we can only interpret based on the available evidence.

The second ending seems to supercede the first ending because of its placement in the

story. We expect the final sentences of a story to give us the final outcome of the

story, based on our expected frames for "endings." Because we have also been given

access to Harry's thoughts throughout the story, Harry's rescue seems to change easily

from an actual account of fictional reality to a dream that exists entirely within Harry's

perspective. This interpretation is one adopted frequently by critics of the story, like

Gennaro Santangelo, who writes that the plane journey is best understood as a fantasy

(256).

The first ending can also be viewed not only as a dream or fantasy embedded

within Harry's reality, but also as a counterfactual scenario embedded within fictional

reality. The second ending takes over the status of "actual ending" when the first

ending is subordinated to the status of dream. From a narrative perspective, the dream

also represents the story as it might have been. Harry could have been rescued, rather

than dying as he did in the second ending. The possibility for rescue, mentioned

frequently by Helen through the course of the narrative, is excluded as a narrative

reality by Harry's death. But it is still available to readers as the counterfactual

outcome of the story, the unrealized alternative in which Harry was rescued. Like

Helen's imagined trip to Hungary, and like Harry's would-be stories in the italicized

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vignettes, the first ending represents something that never "actually" happened with respect to the reality of the story.

And yet this first ending, with its connection back to the title and epigraph and its suggestive symbolism, has proved to be more intriguing to many readers than the second ending. Debate has raged about whether this ending represents a confirmation of Harry's failure or his ultimate redemption. Some readers seem to have forgotten that the second ending even exists[27]. In the 1995 Scribner edition of the text, a picture of a plane flying toward a snow-capped mountain graces the cover. For a fantasy and counterfactual, this ending has garnered much attention from readers who consider it the most crucial part of the story. What is interesting to note is that the first ending depends for its meaning on the final ending – like all counterfactuals, it exists in contrast to "reality," in this case fictional reality.

The final ending ultimately forces Harry, Helen, and the reader into a similar position – every alternative is finally and irrevocably foreclosed by Harry's death in the final ending. Helen and Harry will never return to Paris, Harry will never write his masterpiece, and this will never be a story in which the protagonist is rescued. Like Helen and Harry, the reader is required to accept the finality of the second ending, providing a new clarity on the counterfactual alternative that preceded it. We too truly appreciate the counterfactual narrative when we are forced to accept its impossibility.

Unlike the other counterfactual scenarios, though, in this case the reader is given little guidance in how to evaluate the counterfactual scenario. The penultimate ending is not clearly marked as better or worse than the "actual ending" with any

specific evaluative details presented by the text. Rather, the reader must determine

how to evaluate the ending in a comprehensive reading of all counterfactual scenarios

and perspectives in the story, a task which some critics have obviously taken to heart,

focusing much critical attention on this penultimate ending and its meaning. Though

the fact has gone previously unnoticed, I propose that this meaning is crucially

dependent on the counterfactual scenarios introduced in other sections of the story.

The penultimate ending does in fact make an evaluative comment about the

specificity and clarity of narrative. Like Harry's would-be-stories represented in the

vignettes, the penultimate ending is sensuous, concrete, and artistic. It depends for its

meaning on its own foreclosure. This ending has become so much a part of the

narrative that in a sense it is more real than the actual plot, and has garnered more

attention. In giving us this final elaborate counterfactual section, Hemingway

dramatically moves the counterfactual from the indistinct, unrealized realm of

imagination, to the specificity of actual narrative.

We see a progression of counterfactual scenarios, and a developing evaluation

of the impulse to create them, as the narrative proceeds. Helen, driven by regret, and

subject to whims and possibilities symptomatic of wealth and comfort, creates only

simple scenarios as she moves readily from one unrealized contingency to the next.

Harry, also driven by regret and atrophied by wealth, but possessing a true talent,

creates concrete and sensuous scenarios that become more organized and elaborate as

he moves closer to death. The penultimate ending, a counterfactual scenario

introduced by Hemingway and more detailed and elaborate than any other

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counterfactual in the text, provides the definitive example of a counterfactual scenario raised to the level of narrative material. It is introduced by the author and is counterfactual with respect to fictional reality, so in this respect the "good" counterfactual ending belongs to Hemingway just as the "good" stories in the vignettes belonged to Hemingway, too. Harry's death confirms the counterfactuality of the ending, and demonstrates Hemingway's willingness to select between available options and to force his reader to do the same. The ending also confirms that only the author of the story has the ability to turn a counterfactual scenario into true narrative material.

Conclusion to Chapter 4

It is clear from this analysis that the narrative dialogue introduces a theme of counterfactuality central to the meaning of the story. Narrative dialogue that includes evaluative counterfactuals represents reality from the perspectives of each character, and the counterfactuals serves as a hallmark of the discord between them. Their different attitudes toward Africa and toward their marriage highlight the regret experienced by both characters in the story, and become important recurring topics in Harry's thoughts. Ultimately, it becomes clear that Africa and the marriage are just a veil for Harry's real source of regret – his unwritten stories. As becomes clear in the italicized vignettes, the stories are the most important element of any past alternative he wants to imagine.

Through an examination of counterfactuals, it becomes clear that what-might-have-been scenarios function at another narrative level in the story. While

representing the embedded perspectives of the characters, counterfactuals also represent actual narrative memories in the case of italicized vignettes, and a counterfactual narrative possibility in the case of the penultimate ending. Only by considering the sections together is it possible to appreciate the connection developed between writing and counterfactual alternatives. From the vague counterfactuals imagined in the context of wealth and opportunity, to the more concrete counterfactuals imagined by Harry but conveyed by Hemingway, to the elaborate penultimate ending which belongs to Hemingway alone, the counterfactual alternatives move progressively from the vague and banal to the level of artistry and narrative. The story forces us to recognize that counterfactuals, motivated by regret, are also made lucid by the awareness of foreclosure, an awareness which the characters and the readers eventually share. The story emphasizes the role of the writer – both the fictional writer Harry and the implied author Hemingway – in turning unrealized possibilities into the realized elements of narrative.

Chapter 5: He Should Have Acknowledged Her

I shall be telling this with a sigh / Somewhere ages and ages hence: / Two roads

diverged in a wood, and I— / I took the road less traveled by, / And that has made all

the difference.   — Robert Frost, "The Road Not Taken"

      Ernest Hemingway's story "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" demonstrates some of

the forms that counterfactual scenarios can take when they are embedded in literature.

They can appear within dialogue, playing the same rhetorical role that counterfactuals

play in the real conversations on which dialogue is modeled. In this case, characters

serve as the "speaker" and "listener," with the reader in a position to overhear the

conversation. Counterfactual scenarios may also appear in the character's thoughts

that are conveyed, with narrative intervention, to the reader. In this case, the character

and narrator act as dual speakers with the reader in the position of listener. Finally, as

we saw in "The Snows of Kilimanjaro," the presence of two incompatible endings

allows the implied author to assert narrative authority by offering one "counterfactual"

and one "actual" ending. The explicit and implicit evaluative stances toward the

counterfactual scenarios provide the reader with a series of spaces that can be fully

evaluated in a rich, integrated reading of the story.

      "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" includes each of these possibilities in a single

story, and for this reason provides an excellent demonstration of the use of

counterfactuality as a unifying theme. The short story "The Wife of His Youth" by

Charles Chesnutt does not include the same variety of narrative techniques, but does include another excellent demonstration of a counterfactual scenario in the narrative dialogue that has broader implications for the textual meaning. The counterfactual scenario plays a blatantly rhetorical role in achieving a remarkable change in attitudes. This important counterfactual allows a speaker to convey his own evaluative stance and to change the attitudes of his listeners, who echo his evaluation.

But of course the story is a narrative with greater complexities of embedding. Unlike the "Snows of Kilimanjaro," this story has an overt narrative presence. The narrator's commentary at times undercuts the evaluations and moral authority of the main character. As a result, this story is a particularly good example of evaluative stance that is distributed across speakers in narrative discourse. The reader must assemble the various perspectives, and integrate spaces of varying knowledge, in arriving at an understanding of the story. Through these multiple narrative spaces, the story allows the reader to resist the uncritical and sentimental evaluation made by the textual audience.

"The Wife of His Youth"

Published in 1899, but set in 1880, "The Wife of His Youth" is a short story exploring the lives of free African Americans living in post-Civil War Ohio. The main characters are united by their involvement in a social club dedicated to the societal and educational advancement of its members. The protagonist of the story, Mr. Ryder, is the leader of this club. The members of the club all live in Groveland, Ohio, commonly believed to be a fictional counterpart to Cleveland, the Ohio city

where Charles Chesnutt lived during most of his adult years (Fleischmann 462). The story's setting, along with the experiences of black characters in the story, alludes to a particular time and place in American history.

Specifically, the story's references to "the war" and to the existence of slavery in America ground it in the era directly following the Civil War. During this postbellum era, a shift occurred not only in the status of slaves relative to white citizens, but in the status of slaves relative to half a million other African Americans. By 1880, a generation after the 13th Amendment, millions of former slaves, the first generation of free children born to former slaves, the population which had already been free before the war, and a generation of their children, constituted the African American population of the United States. While it is easy to assume that African Americans all faced the challenges and opportunities of freedom simultaneously with the end of the Civil War, some black Americans belonged to families who had already achieved freedom before the war even began[28], and as a result black citizens had varying degrees of personal identification with slavery, though all were now equal in their entitlement to freedom.

The official erasure of slave and free categories that had defined the African American demographic was further complicated by the stratification of racial composition in the population of African Americans. African Americans of mixed black and white heritage, who, according to available records, had been more likely to be kept in privileged slave roles and to be set free, were counted in the 1850 census as a separate racial category. By 1880 the distinction between African Americans and

those of mixed race was blurring, a trend that would be further solidified by the "one

drop rule" of segregation. As Anne Fleischmann points out, it is important to note that

"The Wife of His Youth" is set during a time period when traditional groupings used

to distinguish African Americans had become outmoded, and the story itself

dramatizes the challenges to identity wrought by the evolution of these racial

categories. This story, Fleischmann writes, is about "the post-Civil War extinction of

'mulatto' and 'free born' as social and legal categories" (462).

The group of characters at the center of the story are light-skinned black

Americans who did not experience slavery firsthand, either because they were free

already, or because they were born after the war. The social club that unites them

becomes a vehicle to demonstrate the race and class tensions that arise between this

particular group of African Americans, who pride themselves on exclusivity, and those

whom they exclude. Additionally, the story provides an ironic commentary on the

idealization of white standards inherent in the club's goals and activities. The club

described in the story strives for a particular type of "refinement" characterized by

European educational standards and social practices and a preference for light skin.

The stated purpose of the club is to "establish and maintain correct social standards"

amongst African Americans, a group "whose social condition presented almost

unlimited room for improvement" (47).

The tone in the story is set by the narrator, who describes the club in a subtle

yet unmistakably ironic style. As the narrator introduces the club in the opening

paragraphs, he labels it the "Blue Vein Society" – a name given not by the members

but by those outside it, who contend that the club's members have skin that is light enough to show blue veins. Though acknowledging that the members deny this requirement as well as the other supposed requirement of free birth, the narrator also notes that very few of the members had either dark skin or a slave past. By exposing the readers to both the accusations and the denials of the club's requirements, but then proceeding to call the club the "Blue Veins" throughout the story, the narrator aligns us with the viewpoint of those who mock the club and its purposes. The narrator points out, too, that "opinions differed…as to the usefulness of the society" (47). The club's harshest critics, according to the narrator, often become its staunchest supporters once they have been granted membership.

Thus the narrator's tone is both descriptive and subtly mocking. An even more blatant irony suffuses the narrator's depiction of Mr. Ryder, the leader of the Blue Veins and protagonist of the story. The narrator exposes the hypocrisy of Mr. Ryder's position simply by quoting his own words and describing his actions.   He relates Mr. Ryder's own comment that he "has no race prejudice," immediately followed by a statement of his own blatant desire to move closer to whiteness and white ideals:

> We people of mixed blood are ground between the upper and the
> nether millstone. Our fate lies between absorption by the white
> race and extinction in the black. The one doesn't want us yet, but
> may take us in time. The other would welcome us, but it would be
> for us a backward step. 48.

Mr. Ryder's belief that identification with the black race represents a "backward step" is a clear indication that he does, in fact, harbor race prejudice. In his spare time, Mr.

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Ryder loves to read the English poets, particularly Tennyson, and plans to propose to a woman "whiter than he" (49) by quoting from a Tennyson poem. In describing Mr. Ryder as both a man with "morals above suspicion" and with racist biases toward other (darker) African Americans that excludes them from the scope of his consideration, the narrator shows us a man with obvious contradictions in his character.

Nevertheless, by telling the story of the club and its leader in more detail than an outsider could possibly know, the narrator invites us to sympathize with the club members and especially with Mr. Ryder. Furthermore, the ironic tone is sometimes undetectable: throughout the story, the descriptions are at times detached and seemingly uncritical. We learn of the support many members draw from the club and of Mr. Ryder's unwavering dedication to the club and its goals. He is described as a "genius of social leadership" (48). We learn of his sincere love of literature, his hard work in a profession that has enabled him to buy his own home, and his willingness to sustain a long contented bachelorhood. We are left to weigh Mr. Ryder's more admirable characteristics against his racism and glorification of whiteness.

In this respect, the narrative technique is quite different from Hemingway's telegraphic style, in which the narrative intervention and interpretive stance is harder to detect. In this story, there is a clearer distinction needed between the embedded spaces of narrator and characters. The characters' perspectives obviously do not take into account the narrator's ironic commentary, though the reader is aware of both their words and actions and the potential irony of their situation as conveyed by the

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narrator. As the plot develops, certain events are known to the reader, narrator, and

Mr. Ryder, but not to the other members of the Blue Vein club, so that the separate

spaces within the story also contain varying levels of knowledge about events in the

plot. Juggling the contents of these separate spaces is essential to interpreting the

story. Suspense and tension in the story depends on the reader's ability to contrast the

contents of Mr. Ryder's space with those of his friends, and to keep them both distinct

from the perspective of the narrator.

The tension of the story is heightened by the introduction of a character who

epitomizes everything Mr. Ryder and his friends disdain. A woman arrives at Mr.

Ryder's house on the very day he has planned to give a ball to honor Molly Dixon and

to serve as the romantic backdrop for his proposal of marriage. Although the woman,

who introduces herself as "Liza Jane," interrupts the work of writing the toast and

marriage proposal to Molly Dixon, Mr. Ryder graciously offers her a place in the

shade and refers to her as "madam." If we suspect him of overt racism, his actions do

not reveal it here – he listens to her patiently and seems sympathetic to her situation.

At worst, his behavior is patronizing but polite.

Both the description and dialogue that ensue reveal the differences between

Liza Jane and the members of the Blue Vein club. While many of the members are

too young to remember the war – Mr. Ryder, at about 50, is one of the oldest – Liza

Jane is "quite old." Even her clothes are of "ancient cut," and a bonnet reveals tufts

of "short gray wool." Most remarkable is her color, which is very black, in fact so

black that "her toothless gums…were not red, but blue." While blue veins are the

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symbol of light skin and black gentility in the story, Liza Jane's empty blue gums are emblems of her own dark color and impoverished history. In fact, she is such a living embodiment of her slave past, that "she looked like a bit of the old plantation life, summoned up from the past by the wave of a magician's hand, as the poet's fancy had called into being the gracious shapes of which Mr. Ryder had just been reading" (51). He had been reading of Tennyson's "sweet pale Margaret," an idealized version of white womanhood that contrasts so perfectly with the image of Liza Jane that she too seems an idealized version of something very different – womanhood ravaged by racism and history. Werner Sollors has described her as "South and slavery, black culture and black consciousness, folk and past, mother culture and memory" (161).

When Liza Jane opens her mouth to speak, her words are delivered in a slave dialect that also contrasts with Mr. Ryder's standard dialect.   She reveals to Mr. Ryder that she has been wandering from place to place since being set free after the war, and for twenty-five years has been working as a cook while searching for her former husband, a "mulatter" man named Sam Taylor. Though Sam was free before the war, his freedom was threatened, and she warned him to that he was about to be sold into slavery. Though Sam escaped, she was punished for her actions by being sold "down de ribber" (52), and as a result was unable to locate Sam, and assumed Sam was unable to locate her, after the war. Mr. Ryder asks her gently prodding questions about the possible success of her twenty-five year quest, even suggesting that "perhaps he's outgrown you, and climbed up in the world where he wouldn't care

to have you find him" (53). Liza Jane is adamant in her belief that her search will eventually prove successful.

The text does not give any hint as to whether Liza Jane recognizes Mr. Ryder as her former husband Sam Taylor, though she does state that she could "pick him out of a thousand men" (53). If she does recognize him, there is nothing in the text that would reveal this fact to the reader. Neither does Mr. Ryder reveal to her his own realization that he is the man whom she is seeking. It is not clear to the reader, either, when Mr. Ryder realizes who she is. At a point in their conversation, he asks to see a picture of Sam Taylor, which he studies "long and hard." After their conversation, he looks at himself in the mirror. As Barbara Dancygier has discussed, images of reflection in fiction are often used to represent a decompression of identity, with character and reflection presenting two distinct aspects of a single character. The decompression of identity is also marked in literature, she notes, by the use of two different proper names, in this case "Sam Taylor" and "Mr. Ryder" ("Identity and Perspective"). A reader experienced in these literary conventions will no doubt infer at this point that Mr. Ryder and Sam Taylor are indeed one and the same, and that Mr. Ryder has realized this fact as well, though the point is never explicitly made in the narrative.

The story ends with the ball given by Mr. Ryder, the ball at which he had planned to propose to the woman "lighter than he," Molly Dixon. By this point in the story, three distinct spaces of knowledge have been created. The first is Mr. Ryder's space, which contains detailed knowledge of his own life history, of the meeting with

Liza Jane that afternoon, and of his own identity as Liza Jane's long lost husband. The second is the space of the members of the Blue Vein Club, including Molly Dixon, none of whom are aware of Mr. Ryder's true identity or of the existence of Liza Jane. The third space is that of the narrator, which includes access to the perspectives of both Mr. Ryder and his Blue Vein guests, as well as the narrative potential of irony and completion possible in the story's ending. The reader must juggle all of these spaces as the ending proceeds.

<u>The Ending</u>

The ending of this story demonstrates the rhetorical nature of evaluative stance in communicating a perspective from a speaker to an audience, as modeled by Mr. Ryder and his guests at the ball. In this case, Mr. Ryder develops an elaborate counterfactual scenario for his friends, and his goal is to encourage them to share his own perspective on the events he describes. His purpose is both moral and personal: his own fate will be determined by whether or not he can convince his friends to share his evaluation.   Convincing them is no small matter, since the perspective he wishes them to adopt represents a drastic shift from their previous attitudes. In short, his intention is to encourage them to accept Liza Jane as his wife.

At this point in the story, identified in the text as section III, Mr. Ryder is prepared to address the social club which has gathered for the ball. The reader knows that the original purpose of the ball was to create a forum for Mr. Ryder to propose marriage to Molly Dixon; the proposal was to be delivered in the toast he had been writing that afternoon before the arrival of Liza Jane. As the ball begins, the narrator

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describes a setting that is quite formal and up to the standards of etiquette which the club wishes to maintain. We are informed that the ball has brought together all the distinguished "colored" people of the city, including teachers, doctors, and lawyers. The guests are arrayed in evening costume, entertained by live string music, and waited on by black servants. The narrator also informs us that although the guests are "colored," that "most of them would not have attracted even a casual glance because of any marked difference from white people" (54).

As the evening proceeds through literary program, dinner, and after-dinner toasts, the scene represents the epitome of the cultural elitism that the Blue Vein society has come to represent in the story. While the "colored" guests are indistinguishable from white people, their "black" servants are not. While the statement that the guests have no "marked difference from white people" may simply imply that the bearing of these guests would not set them apart in a white crowd, it clearly suggests that their color is a factor as well. In other words, there is a conflation in this description between the formal, professional, "colored" guests who are lighter in skin tone, and their servants who are described as "black." Liza Jane – who informed Mr. Ryder that she has kept herself for twenty-five years working as a cook – is aligned by color and by trade with the servants rather than with the guests.

As the host of the ball, Mr. Ryder is the person responsible for the decorum and respectability of the people and events, and also, we would assume, for hiring the black servants. The narrator has informed us that Mr. Ryder had hoped the ball "would serve by its exclusiveness to counteract leveling tendencies, and his marriage

to Mrs. Dixon would help further the upward process of absorption he had been wishing and waiting for" (49). He had also planned to propose during a climactic toast, not eschewing the publicity of the proposal when he felt sure he would receive "the answer he expected" from the light Mrs. Dixon (49). If the ball seems to epitomize the elitism and white idealization of the club, that is because Mr. Ryder has planned it himself.

Of course, Mr. Ryder planned the ball and the toast before he knew that his long-lost wife would arrive on the scene to indirectly challenge all that he has esteemed in his social life. The ending creates a new sense of irony for the reader, since the reader can appreciate both how Mr. Ryder intended to enjoy the ball – as a celebration of exclusivity and upward mobility for both himself and his friends – and the racial dilemma that Mr. Ryder now confronts. Though the description of the ball indicates that it is proceeding as Mr. Ryder had hoped, the reader's understanding of the ball is changed by the double identity of Mr. Ryder as both "dean of the Blue Veins" and "Sam Taylor." While the dean of the Blue Veins planned an exclusive ball to which "black" people were invited only as servants, Mr. Ryder and the reader know that as Sam Taylor he was/is married to one of these black servants.

The final toast that Mr. Ryder gives is a deliberate rhetorical situation in which he must align his old and new identities. He had planned to use the toast for one type of performance – a proposal of marriage. Though Mr. Ryder's life has changed, the rhetorical situation has not. He is faced with an audience of friends he must address, an audience of friends whose attitudes toward race are very similar to

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his own. Rather than confirm those attitudes with a proposal to Mrs. Dixon and a move "upward," Mr. Ryder chooses to exploit the rhetorical situation in a much different way. The reader, from a much more privileged position of knowledge, can appreciate the rhetorical situation from both the audience's and speaker's points of view.

Mr. Ryder begins his toast with a discussion of woman as the "gift of Heaven to man," noting that "the quality which most distinguishes woman is her fidelity and devotion to those she loves." So far, the toast is what his friends expected. But he uses this opening as a segue to the story of Liza Jane, which he works into his toast using the "same soft dialect" with which she told it to him, a dialect that comes "readily to his lips." The use of this dialect is the first instance in which Mr. Ryder willingly associates himself with Liza Jane. It is a surprising choice for a man whose public image has been distinguished by his educational elitism, and who has made a social career of distancing himself from people like Liza Jane. The readiness with which he speaks in this dialect shows that the distance he has worked so hard to maintain between himself and "the plantation" disappears easily – also suggesting that the distance was not as great as he supposed. Mr. Ryder's choice to speak in the dialect has a positive effect on his listeners; they are not shocked, but rather listen "attentively and sympathetically." Mr. Ryder has judged his audience well.

Mr. Ryder concludes his brief recount of Liza Jane's story with a rhetorical flourish:

> Such devotion and confidence are rare even among women. There are many who would have searched a year, some who would have waited

> five years, a few who might have hoped ten years; but for twenty-five years this woman has retained her affection for and faith in a man she has not seen or heard of in all that time. 55.

Through the emphasis created by this crescendo, he illustrates Liza Jane's extreme "devotion and confidence." Though he had originally planned to praise women for their beauty, in praising Liza Jane he focuses on attributes of character rather than physical appearance.

Mr. Ryder next asks his friends to imagine a counterfactual scenario, beginning "suppose that this husband, soon after his escape, had learned that his wife had been sold away, and that such inquiries as he could make brought no information of her whereabouts." (55). He continues to elaborate a scenario in which Liza Jane's husband has given her up for lost, sought his own life and fortune in the north, and done quite well for himself. In the imagined scenario, the husband has even "set his heart upon another" and managed to "win the friendship and be considered worthy of the society of such people as those I see around me." His contentment is interrupted by "the fact that the wife of his youth, the wife he had left behind him…was alive and seeking him, but he was absolutely safe from recognition or discovery unless he chose to reveal himself." Mr. Ryder's description of the man brings Liza Jane's story closer to the lives of his audience, since this long-lost husband so closely resembles a man they might actually know, a point he takes pains to emphasize. Of course, he presents this scenario as a counterfactual with no personal contingency: it represents what might have happened to someone, but not necessarily him.

Of course, to the reader the scenario is not counterfactual, and the resemblance

between Mr. Ryder and the man more than uncanny. As the reader maintains the

space representing the audience's perspective, it must be assumed that his friends may

or may not suspect that Mr. Ryder is describing his own situation. On the other hand,

the reader knows, in the space of Mr. Ryder's perspective, that the story he is telling is

his own. Each detail that he adds provides structure to both of these spaces – the

"counterfactual" space that he describes to his friends, and the "fictional reality" space

of which both Mr. Ryder and the reader are aware, in which he is the man being

described.

Mr. Ryder ends the description of the scenario by asking "what would he do,

or rather what ought he do, in such a crisis of a lifetime?" This is a rhetorical

question, though, which he does not allow his friends to answer. Instead, he

introduces a new element into the story: he asks his audience to imagine that he is the

man's "old friend," who has been sought for advice, and who must help his friend

mull over the situation. To this end, he imagines quoting to his friend, "This above all:

to thine own self be true / And it must follow, as the night the day/ Thou canst not then

be false to any man." In Mr. Ryder's space, in which he knows he is the man he has

described, the friends that he is addressing are counterparts to the "old friend" who

advises the man. In the audience's space, however, he is the "old friend" counseling

the imaginary man, since the identity of this man is unknown to them. In this way,

Mr. Ryder is both a counterpart to the man and to the man's friend in different spaces,

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both of which are available to the reader. Mr. Ryder, in a sense, advises himself on how to act, while also placing his friends in the position of advisors.

Imagining himself speaking as the old friend, he concludes by pretending to ask the man "Shall you acknowledge her?" He then asks his friends for their opinion: "And now, ladies and gentlemen, friends and companions, I ask you, what should he have done?" What he is really asking for is their evaluation of two different possible outcomes: one scenario that ends with acknowledgement, the other with denial. He wants to know how they evaluate the spaces, and which one they endorse. He pretends to put the evaluation fully in their hands, but in fact, he has carefully guided their evaluative stance all along.

He has already given them a model for the type of advice an "old friend" would give in this situation, and the model suggests that acknowledgment is the preferable outcome. Furthermore, he quoted from Shakespeare, a writer whom the club members have traditionally valued, in order to point out that being true to oneself necessarily excludes the option of being false to someone else. He reminds them of their own touted social standing when he addresses them as "ladies and gentlemen, friends and companions." Though Mr. Ryder has put the decision in their hands, he has carefully presented the options so that acknowledgement comes across as the only preferred and morally upstanding choice. His own evaluative stance toward the situation has been carefully communicated. The narrator notes that the situation described by Mr. Ryder seems more than imaginary to his audience, but had "the nature of a personal appeal."

When his friends reply "He should have acknowledged her," they confirm their own preference for acknowledgement. Considering that this very club is based on exclusivity and the social ostracism of people they consider their racial inferiors, this preference for acknowledgment represents quite a moral and rhetorical feat for Mr. Ryder. By sympathetically telling his friends the story of Liza Jane, bringing it closer to their own situation by describing a supposed counterfactual scenario, and then recasting the story with his own guiding evaluation offered through the voice of the "old friend," Mr. Ryder leads his friends to make the choice he wants them to make.

It is also important to note that the first person to respond to his question with "he should have acknowledged her" is Molly Dixon, whose response is then "echoed" by all the other guests. When she makes her response, she has "streaming eyes." As readers, we may assume that Molly is moved not just by the pathos of Mr. Ryder's story, but by her awareness that her own future hangs in the balance as well. When Mr. Ryder responds to his friends "I thank you, one and all. It is the answer I expected, for I knew your hearts," we are reminded of his earlier pronouncement that he was sure the marriage proposal would result in "the answer he expected." In effect, the interaction that has taken place has been a rhetorical performance of orator to his audience, just as Mr. Ryder originally imagined the toast. So too has it been a personal appeal to Mrs. Molly Dixon, which she has personally answered in turn. Mr. Ryder has seized the rhetorical situation to communicate not only to his audience, but to Molly Dixon, and to gain her approval of a "proposed" marriage she had not been anticipating.

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When Mr. Ryder thanks his friends and brings Liza Jane into their company, her obvious difference from them has not diminished. She is now thrust into the "scene of brilliant gayety," though she herself is dressed in gray with the "white cap of an elderly woman." She has been led to the scene from an adjoining room – in other words, her place has not been at the party, but lying in wait on the periphery of the party, the station normally reserved for servants. Mr. Ryder announces "this is the woman, and I am the man, whose story I have told you." With this statement, Mr. Ryder compresses the aspects of identity that he carefully brought into alignment with his deliberative rhetoric. Mr. Ryder and the man in his counterfactual scenario are now viewed by his audience as one and the same. The imaginary wife and the "elderly woman" are also brought together in the person of the woman standing before them. When Mr. Ryder announces "Permit me to introduce you to the wife of my youth," his statement echoes the introduction of a couple at the end of a marriage ceremony. With their identities made known to the audience of Mr. Ryder's friends, they have now been reunited as man and wife by this announcement.

With this carefully crafted performance, Mr. Ryder has managed to persuade his friends to drastically change their attitudes. At the ball which was intended to maintain the highest standards of exclusion, Mr. Ryder and his group of friends have instead chosen to accept a person whose presence clearly violates their presumed standards. Were it not for the marriage that she has doggedly fought to renew, Liza Jane would never be deemed a fit member of the "Blue Veins." At the end of the story, the potential for long-term happiness of Liza Jane, her husband, and the social

group is not made clear. At the point of the ending, though, Mr. Ryder's rhetoric succeeds in encouraging his friends to positively evaluate a scenario of acknowledgement, first in the abstract, and then in reality. Like a true social leader, he has helped maintain the cohesion of the group, and has once again succeeded in aligning his friends' opinions with his own.

The Reader's Perspective

As readers, though, we are of course guided by the narrator and by our knowledge that the story is a work of literature with obvious symbolic import. The narrator emphasizes the extent to which Liza Jane represents a " bit of the old plantation" – her speech, her dress, and her appearance are all parts of her characterization that emphasize not just who she is, but what she symbolizes. As readers, we also know that the narrator undercuts Mr. Ryder's moral authority throughout the story. Our appreciation of the ending, then, is enhanced by its role not just as a vehicle of social negotiation, but also as a vehicle of narrative meaning. We appreciate the transformative role it plays for the characters just as we appreciate the multifaceted role it plays within the narrative. The reader's task of evaluation is ultimately more complex than the task of evaluation dramatized by the characters in the story, for the reader has access to a greater number of narrative spaces with various levels of knowledge and evaluations, including the space of the ironic narrator.

For one, the reader is aware of the ball both as it is and as it could have been, a bit of knowledge that is shared with Mr. Ryder but not with his guests. As events unfold, the ball may be appreciated in both its actual and counterfactual form.

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Everything seems to proceed according to Mr. Ryder's careful plan, and yet, this is not

the ball that Mr. Ryder had originally planned, for the presence of Liza Jane has now

connected Mr. Ryder to his long-lost past, a past that has put him in a tenuous

position. Where before the ball was to be a celebration of his successful social life, his

Blue Vein friends, and his soon-to-be light skinned wife, the party now puts a

spotlight on his connection to the blue-gummed Liza Jane. If the ball was meant to

focus on those among the excluding few, Liza Jane's arrival has put the focus on the

excluded, and provides a counterfactual irony to the events at the ball.

Foremost among these events is Mr. Ryder's toast, which the reader can also

imagine in contrast to the toast that might have been. We know, and his guests

assume, that Mr. Ryder had planned to propose to the woman in whose honor the ball

is being held, Molly Dixon. The toast he actually gives does result in a marriage – but

rather than marking the beginning of a new life for Mr. Ryder, it marks the renewal of

an old life he thought he had escaped, and a marriage to a woman with whom he now

has very little in common. In Mr. Ryder's own racial terms, this marriage for him is a

"backward step." He takes the step willingly, but does not take it alone – he coaxes

his friends to evaluate his decision in a positive light before he actually acknowledges

Liza Jane.

The reader has a more thorough understanding of the question "should he have

acknowledged her?" that Ryder poses to his textual audience. As Ryder describes the

counterfactual scenario to his friends, the readers are aware that it matches the details

of fictional reality. When he asks his audience whether the man should have

acknowledged his long-lost wife, the reader is in a position to answer the question as well, but with access to more spaces of textual meaning. The reader can also understand this as a probing question about Ryder's own behavior. In their afternoon meeting, Ryder did not make himself known to his wife, but he could have done so, rather than keeping up appearances at the ball and turning their reunion into a rhetorical performance. The question makes another counterfactual space available to the reader – the space in which Mr. Ryder acknowledged his wife at their first meeting. The narrator and the implied author, in raising this question in Mr. Ryder's own words, invite the reader to evaluate this counterfactual scenario for themselves, and to decide whether the counterfactual acknowledgement would have been preferable to his actual actions.

Many readers have found Ryder's eventual acknowledgement worthy of praise, despite his failure earlier in the afternoon. This story is commonly read as a metaphor for racial union, with the marriage to Liza Jane representing Mr. Ryder's acceptance of his own identity and past and his willingness to suspend the distance he and his friends have maintained between themselves and African Americans of a darker complexion. Eric Sundquist writes that the story represents Charles Chesnutt's own "meditation upon the complexities of his own acknowledgement of a past – not the literal past of his youth (although that is part of it as well) but rather the symbolic past of his race. Liza Jane seems summoned up as though by conjure, a reminder of Ryder's as well as Chesnutt's obligation to confront and, as Ryder does, to embrace a painful past and the culture that is carried with it" (299). Earle Bryant's reading of the

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story as a case of "metaphorical marriage" is in keeping with Sundquist's views. Bryant notes that the title of the story alludes to the Old Testament book of Malachi, in which the prophet admonishes the Israelites for abandoning the Hebrew wives of their youth. In this story, as in the Biblical story, the marriage is a metaphor for the embrace of identity, culture, and heritage ("Scriptural Allusion" 58-61).

In some respects, however, these readings overlook the narrative tone that is sustained throughout the text. The reader, in the end, is not guided solely by Mr. Ryder's rhetoric as are his friends, but by a multi-layered narrative with strongly ironic components. Most notably, in the ending, ironic details infuse the rhetorical performance by which Mr. Ryder persuades his friends to accept the evaluative stance that he carefully introduces through the words of the "old friend." By having the friend quote Shakespeare, Ryder has re-aligned himself with the European literary history he abandoned when he failed to include the poem by Tennyson, and instead told Liza Jane's story in her own dialect in the toast. Not only does he quote from *Hamlet*, but he introduces the quote as "the words that we all know." Presumably Liza Jane is not included in "we all." While he clearly reaches his audience carefully and well through this rhetorical choice, to the reader the choice is a reminder of his Euro-centric exclusionary tendencies. His full acceptance of Liza Jane – and of the identity she may metaphorically represent – is not without its ambiguity.

The use of the Shakespearian quote may even be a return to the subtly mocking portrayal of Mr. Ryder that was characteristic of the earlier part of the story. Not only may the narrator be mocking Mr. Ryder for his reliance on whiteness to convince his

friends to accept blackness, but there is no sense that he, nor they, recognize the irony

of their own situation. Furthermore, the statement which Ryder quotes is actually

made in the play by Polonius, the windbag buffoon of *Hamlet*. The fact that Mr.

Ryder draws wisdom from these words and uses them to put forth his evaluation

leaves that evaluation open to the reader's critical judgment. The situation is similar

to a point earlier in the text, when the narrator noted that despite Mr. Ryder's love of

poetry, "his pronunciation was sometimes faulty" (48). In both of these cases, the

narrator engages the reader in a mutual feeling of superiority over Mr. Ryder, a role

not unlike the one Mr. Ryder and his friends assume toward their supposed inferiors.

There is also the question of whether Mr. Ryder's turning the toast into his

own rhetorical tour-de-force is fair to anyone but himself. While he accomplishes his

ends, and convinces his friends to proceed with a moral superiority that supercedes

their presumed racial superiority, the outcome is ambiguous. His wife, when brought

into the "scene of brilliant gayety," stood "startled and trembling." He has turned the

acknowledgement into a public spectacle rather than a private reunion, and his wife

does not seem to respond with a sense of vindication or happiness. Rather, she seems

more out of place now, when her marriage has been reaffirmed, than if she had been

working at the ball as a cook. While her quest has ended, the ending of the story does

nothing to establish her happiness.

We see then, that Mr. Ryder's rhetorical performance allows the reader to

appreciate the characters' moral judgment, while also inviting the reader to make a

more informed judgment about Mr. Ryder and the role of denial and

acknowledgement in his life. In this way, the rhetorical nature of the evaluative

situation extends to the reader, who has access to all narrative spaces and therefore an

appreciation of basic events, and the symbolic interpretations possible through a fuller

appreciation of the symbolic meanings, counterfactual scenarios, and ironic overtones

of the narrative. Like Mr. Ryder's audience, the reader is invited to consider "Should

he have acknowledged her?" In the more informed position, the reader is also invited

to evaluate Mr. Ryder, the Blue Veins, and the meanings of the text in a fuller context.

Mr. Ryder's acknowledgement is no clear-cut moral victory. Those who have

read it as such have failed to see the complexities of evaluation throughout the story.

Mr. Ryder attempts to guide his audience to the evaluation he wishes them to make,

and the reader may be guided to come to the same conclusions. But such a reading

overlooks the contradictions and ambiguities of evaluation throughout the story.

When considered in that fuller context, Mr. Ryder's rhetorical tour-de-force is hardly

an unequivocal affirmation of his marriage or alignment with his race. The implied

author invites the reader to consider evaluation as a rhetorical theme when he places

the question "should he have acknowledged her" at the climax of the story – and

access to multiple, contradictory spaces encourages the reader to answer the question

for him or herself, rather than be guided by sentiment and rhetoric like Mr. Ryder's

direct audience.

<u>Conclusion to Chapter 5</u>

Chesnutt's 1899 story demonstrates a social negotiation that dramatizes racial

relations twenty-five years after the end of the Civil War.   While Mr. Ryder and his

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friends work to re-establish in their social lives racial categories that have become legally outdated, Liza Jane enters the picture as a woman both associated with slavery and with a very dark complexion; she thus stands as a direct representation of two sources of stigma for the African-American characters who make up the "Blue Vein" social club. For "marriage" to her to be considered acceptable, the characters have to overcome their biases toward the wife and her situation, an evolution in their thinking accomplished by Mr. Ryder's careful and deliberately evaluative rhetoric.

Evaluative stance is an aspect of meaning construction in counterfactuals that is showcased particularly well by "The Wife of His Youth." We see that evaluative stance conveys a speaker's point of view to his audience, and that the role of evaluation can take on a rhetorical dimension beyond the representative level of the story's dialogue, but also on the level of narrative meaning conveyed to the reader. The "Wife of His Youth" depicts the successful use of evaluative stance to communicate an attitude persuasively. The speaker convinces his friends to adopt his point of view toward the space of acknowledgement, and in the process maintains social cohesion in the face of a potentially divisive issue.

The reader is in a position of overhearer, and can fully appreciate the evaluative situation presented by Mr. Ryder that works so effectively on his audience of friends. At the same time, the reader has access to a broader spectrum of narrative spaces, including not only the space of the audience's knowledge and perspective, but also that of Mr. Ryder and the narrator. These spaces add components of irony and symbolic significance to the evaluative interpretation. While the reader is still placed

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in a position of evaluation, the reader's task is complicated by these additional

elements of meaning. As a result, the reader may evaluate Mr. Ryder and his rhetorical

performance much differently than his immediate audience.

Conclusion

We have seen that counterfactual scenarios enter into our discourse in countless ways. They make their way into political speeches, into ordinary conversations, into popular press articles, and into literary texts. They come in a variety of forms, some simple and some highly elaborate. The very simple forms may be easy to miss, and yet these simple forms also demonstrate the pervasiveness and hidden complexity of counterfactual scenarios. Whether simple or elaborate, counterfactuals are creative elements of our discourse that can be communicated from speaker to listener, or from author to audience. They are, in other words, a dialogic phenomenon.

Previous studies have focused on the functions of counterfactuals in establishing causal relationships, in expressing emotions like regret, in constituting our thinking about normal and abnormal events, and in structuring our mental representations of the unreal. My study is unique in that it has focused exclusively on the rhetorical dimensions of counterfactual scenarios. I have examined a single function, the expression of evaluative stance, to demonstrate one use of counterfactuality as a rhetorical tactic in a variety of dialogic settings.

It has become clear that counterfactual scenarios are more than just creative products of the imagination – they are useful in communicating our attitudes, and in guiding others to share those attitudes. We do this, quite simply, by indicating whether a counterfactual scenario is "too bad" or a "good thing" in relation to some other state

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of affairs. Of course, there are a variety of ways to indicate these judgments, some very obvious, and others more subtle. Some judgments may be highly personal – intimately connected to deeply-felt emotions or to the life history of an individual. Others may be more abstract, representing moral judgments or rhetorical evaluations that reflect social or cultural norms and expectations.

In any case, when a speaker describes a counterfactual and pairs it with an evaluation, a unique individual perspective is conveyed to a listener. The listener has the choice to corroborate, challenge, or reject the counterfactual or the evaluation that has been proposed. In this respect, the development of a counterfactual scenario is not only a joint activity, but a collaborative activity in which the structure of the counterfactual can be supplemented, changed, or dismissed as discourse proceeds. This study has examined not only the way that listeners collaborate with speakers in conversations that involve counterfactuals, but also the way that readers assemble meaning and make judgments from the variety of counterfactual spaces presented in a literary text.

At a more general level, I hope this study has provided yet another piece of evidence for a promising new direction in the study of language and literature. This has been a truly multidisciplinary endeavor, drawing in research from a variety of disciplines not heretofore brought together in a consideration of counterfactuals. Ultimately, though, my work has been guided by a cognitive paradigm. Like other researchers in psychology, linguistics, and other cognitive sciences, I view counterfactuals as products of our mental lives that can be conveyed by language,

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including the language of literature. I have provided a cognitive rhetorical model for the study of counterfactuality in all types of discourse.

Counterfactuals, in my view, express not only our emotions, not only our capacity for imagining the unreal, not only our ability to re-imagine the past, but our essentially dialogic minds. We examine states of affairs by placing them in contrast with other imagined states of affairs. We heighten the essential contrast by introducing an evaluation. Effectively, counterfactuals allow us to place real and imagined scenarios in conversation with each other. They also play a very important role in the dialogue of people who converse face-to-face, in the interaction of speakers and audiences, and in the dialogic exchange between the speakers of a text and its audience of readers. Counterfactuals allow us to construct meaning from scenarios that are imagined.

Notes

[1] For a thorough overview of psychological research on counterfactual thinking, see Roese and Olson's introduction to What Might Have Been: The Social Psychology of Counterfactual Thinking.

[2] Traditional philosophical accounts of counterfactuality and its forms include Goodman (1955) and Lewis (1973).

[3] Work in the field of cognitive linguistics that describes the connection between counterfactuality and mental representations includes the research of Barbara Dancygier, Gilles Fauconnier, Todd Oakley, Eve Sweetser, and Mark Turner.

[4] 2002 Winter Olympics, short-track speedskating men's 1500 meters. The gold medallist was American Apolo Anton Ohno, and the disqualified skater was South Korean Kim Dong Sung. Sung was disqualified for cross-tracking.

[5] This quotation from Jefferson is recounted by a "Virginia lady," according to the White House's biography of James Monroe available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/history/presidents/jm5.html>.

[6] On this point, I agree with Fauconnier and Turner (219), who dispute Roese and Olson's assertion that "all counterfactual conditionals are causal assertions" (Social 11).

[7] In linguistic studies of counterfactual conditionals, the "antecedent" is also the term used to refer to the protasis clause. In referring to the "antecedent event" in this chapter, I do not refer exclusively to the form of the protasis, but to the perceived originating point of the counterfactual scenario. This is the way the term is used by Neal Roese and James Olson, for example.

[8] Statement made by the tour guide on a tour of the Maryland Archaeological Conservation Laboratory at Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum in St. Leonard, Maryland.

[9] Friends season six, "The One That Could Have Been," episode 225565. This episode originally aired on Feb. 17th, 2000, on NBC. Refer to the NBC Friends episode guide for a synopsis, <http://www.nbc.com/Friends/episode_guide/135.html>.

[10] For an example of the philosophical approach to counterfactual conditionals, see David Lewis's book Counterfactuals. Lewis himself cites the work of Richard Montague and Robert Stalnaker, among others.

[11] Cognitive linguistic analyses of conditional constructions include Charles Fillmore's "Varieties of Conditional Sentences," Eve Sweetser's From Etymology to Pragmatics, Barbara Dancygier's "Interpreting Conditionals: Time, Knowledge, and Causation," and Dancygier and Sweetser's forthcoming book Conditional Space Building and Constructional Compositionality.

[12] In their forthcoming book, Barbara Dancygier and Eve Sweetser describe semantic differences between conditional expressions that include "then" and those that don't include "then."

[13] Strictly speaking, the protasis describes conditions in the world not necessarily as the speaker views them, but as the speaker represents her views. The perspective conveyed by a statement does not necessarily align with the actual views of the speaker.

[14] Helpful and extended discussions of the relationship between verb form, mental spaces, and epistemic distance can be found in Eve Sweetser's book From Etymology to Pragmatics, Michelle Cutrer's dissertation, and Gilles Fauconnier's book Mappings in Thought and Language.

[15] For a discussion of the vital relation of disanalogy, see Fauconnier and Turner p. 99.

[16] Weak expressions of evaluative stance have a rhetorical purpose as well. The weaker the stance, and thus the weaker the sense of commitment on the part of the speaker, the easier it is for the speaker to retract it or to claim that no such evaluation was intended.

[17] This statement would be acceptable in a situation in which the comment refers to a probability, not an evaluation, for example, "Given all that we know about their adaptability, the dinosaurs shouldn't have become extinct. The fact that they did leads us to suspect that an extraordinary event caused their demise."

[18] See, for example, Clark's discussion of "joint activities" (29-58) and "joint commitment" (289-317) that emphasize the cooperative role of discourse participants.

[19] In Ernest Hemingway's "The Snows of Kilimanjaro," for example, certain elements of the text are separated from the main narrative and printed in italics.

[20] A viewer might disagree with the evaluative stance of some aspects of the counterfactual space. For example, in George's "counterfactual life," his wife has become an "old maid" librarian, and appears truly desperate and unhappy. I find this part of the movie amusing, though it is clear that the point of the counterfactual scenario is to present a negatively valued alternative, which as a viewer I accept.

[21] In her article "Actually, I Felt Sorry for the Lion," Nina Baym argues that Margot Macomber has been unfairly vilified in readings of "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber."

[22] Oliver Evans refers to Helen as "death-in-life" (154), while Robert Fleming compares her to a "feeding vampire" (80).

[23] Specifically, the use of the verb "wish," the past perfect verb tense, and the negative expression "never."

[24] In his essay from French Connections, J. Gerald Kennedy provides an interesting account of the symbolic value of Paris to Hemingway and to Harry in this story.

[25] The statement itself is ambiguous between two readings. One reading of "if you wanted to shoot," is that Harry did indeed want to shoot, a fact that Helen is acknowledging. Another reading is that Helen is not sure whether Harry wanted to shoot, so that when she says "if you wanted to shoot," she is presenting this as a possibility, not as a foregone conclusion.

[26] In "Consuming Hemingway," Lyall Bush provides an insightful analysis of the economically structured relationship between Helen and Harry, and of the commodification of Harry's products, namely writing and sex.

[27] Janet Landman, for example, mentions "the death on Mount Kilimanjaro of Hemingway's fictional writer" (102).

[28] According to the 1860 Census (the last census before the Civil War), the population of slaves living in all states was approximately 4 million, while the population of free African Americans was approximately 500,000. Census data is available through the University of Virginia at <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/cgi-local/censusbin/census/cen.pl?year=860>

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