PERFORMING THE NOVEL:

VOCAL POETICS OF NOVELISTIC DISCOURSE

By

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To my parents, Derrick and Lillieth (June), and my brothers Derek and Paul,

For their unwavering love and support, and for always encouraging me to pursue the creative

Impulses of my mind.

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things into perspective and for inspiring me with your extraordinary musicianship and your great spirit.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

It seems to me that a prominent thread that knits up the various philosophers and their budding philosophies is the fundamental act of creating a perfect object through which, and upon which, the philosophers' ideologies may be developed and displayed. In the studies I've undertaken thus far, I've been fortunate to meet some of these objects or tools. I think of, for example, Plato's *Ion,* the hero Roland in *La Chanson de Roland,* Montaigne's *Bon Sauvage,* Pascal's dream, Rousseau's *Emile*, Radet, and Barré's *Négresse,* and Poulin's, *Grandes Marées,* just to name a few. And these created objects that are used to propel the authors' philosophy also provide windows into the vast reaches of an ever-changing mind, revealing the authors' passions, fears, uncertainties, and even her/his unexpressed torment. How else would Plato, for example, explain his concept of whether a poet's performance is based on skill and knowledge of content or on divine inspiration, without first creating the ignorant-other, Ion, by which his philosophy could be guided and to whom his questions could be addressed? In fact, by creating the ignorant Ion, Plato is able to construct a dialogue in which Socrates, who can be considered the mouthpiece of Plato, is able to disperse his knowledge about divine inspiration and the talent of rhapsodizing. While I don't pretend to be any such great philosopher, the writing that is contained here begins with a brief study of two objects from where the source of my curiosity comes, and which will later lead me to the study of two genres: opera and the novel. At the onset of my work, the two perfected objects that serve as the impetus for the seedling of a philosophy I have, are two paintings that depict the act of reading.

Cézanne and Renoir on reading
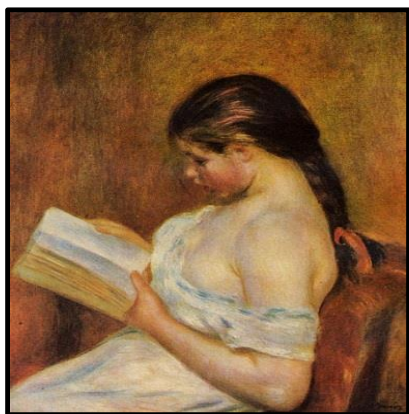
Figure 1. Young Girl Reading - Oil Painting by French Artist Pierre-Auguste Renoir (1891)
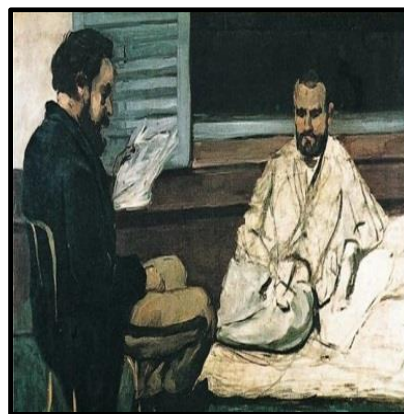
Figure 2. Paul Alexis Reading Manuscript to Émile Zola-Oil Painting by Paul Cézanne (1871)

It was some time ago that I came upon these two paintings. I was preparing to attend a lecture on obscenity in literature, when I discovered the Renoir painting. The Cézanne painting, however, I discovered while writing a paper on Émile Zola's *La Curée* (1871). I find the two paintings very interesting as they depict two very different approaches to reading. In the first painting shown here (Figure 1), the young girl seems to be so engrossed in her reading that her mouth hangs slightly ajar. And as she blushes, her attention is scarce taken away from her reading, for she doesn't seem to notice that her sleeve has fallen from her shoulder, nearly-exposing the crest of her breasts. While this painting may be viewed very differently through the eyes of queer studies, and gender studies, and may also be conceptualized within the framework of an, indeed, period-relevant obscenity discourse— the popular trial of which was not too far

gone with Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* (1857)—when juxtaposed with the second painting (Figure 2), it is the very act of reading that is put into focus. For Cézanne, to my eyes, paints a performance. In his painting I do not see a blushing, young girl, but two men (Emile Zola being around thirty-one-years old, and Paul Alexis twenty-four), inhabiting a single space, where one man (Alexis) reads to the other (Zola). It is interesting to note that, though the men are in what seems to be a regular reading area, Alexis is seated higher than Zola, and Zola is shown to be very pensively meditating upon the text Alexis reads. It would be justifiable to say that Cézanne's painting, based on these few remarks about the physical (dis)placement of the two men, is indicative of a sort of theatrical performance. Here, the performer is Alexis, sitting on a sort-of stage, and his audience is contained in the one man, Zola, who listens to the reading. It is interesting to note here that it is Alexis who is the biographer of Zola, and thus eventually performs—in writing—the text that Zola's life has inspired.

Thinking of the two paintings again and also about my experience with reading, I wonder which painting better describes the approach to reading that I have encountered in my tertiary studies. In both paintings the text has demanded deep meditation, but between the eroticized view of reading and the performed version of reading, which approach have I explored within the context of my literature studies? Furthermore, to continue with the notion of the performed, what notions of sound and silence do the paintings portray? That is to say, at the time of a silent reading, what role does sound play? How do I read?

Some may say, however, that the depictions of reading in the two paintings above are somewhat outdated, for reading looks and sounds differently today. These same persons may mention the advent of audio books and media-enhanced, interactive text that transform reading from a private and interiorized activity into something that is far more physically engaging.

While I do not disagree with these opinions, I do believe that these paintings represent a general understanding of reading that was popular in the nineteenth century and, for the most part, still holds true today. And while Renoir's view of reading the novel may be more typical, Cézanne's, to my eyes, is more unusual, especially based on my experiences with literature. My observation of these two paintings, added to these experiences, have inspired many words.

Two thousand words

The many nineteenth-century paintings that portray the (usually female) subject reading novels can be seen as a representation of the act of consuming the written text.[1] While it can be argued that the figure of the reading female subject is more provocative than that of the reading male subject, who would, probably, be seen writing, the visual spectacle of reading novels fascinated the artists of the time. And it is the act of sitting (reclining!) in a private space, quietly gaining pleasure from the pages of a novel that seems to be showcased in these paintings. Reading, as evidenced in the paintings of the nineteenth-century, is seen as solitary, private and interior. But if I return to the portrait of the reading woman, can I ask her if she hears nothing as she reads? In the private, muted, and interiorized act of her reading, is her mind not filled with a thousand sounds that accompany the passages she devours? She (the painted subject) says nothing in response, but she[2] (the novelist) has written her own texts, and they sound like this:

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[1] A cursory search of this topic reveals portraits of the reading female subject by French painters Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Edward Manet, and Auguste Toulmouche. There are also many American painters, including Mary Cussatt, Edith Cusack, and Seymour Joseph Guy, whose depiction of reading in the nineteenth-century can be considered a main theme of his artistic output.

[2] The following passage comes from the writings of Princesse Pauline de Metternich (1836-1921), and are found in the collection *Je ne suis pas jolie, je suis pire: Souvenirs 1859-1871*, published in 2008. This passage comes from the entry entitled "Une promenade en mer."

Siegneur! du danger! mais retournons! Arrêtez! C'est horrible! Mon Dieu, ayez pitié de nous!—voilà les exclamations qui retentissent de tous côtés … mais il n'y a plus à reculer, le navire est engagé dans cette effroyable lutte des eaux du fleuve et de la mer !— « Voici la barre! » crient les matelots, et à ce moment une vague énorme, gigantesque, une avalanche d'eau effrayante tombe par-derrière sur nous et couvre la *Mouette*…Puis, calme plat, on glisse sur les eaux de fleuve … nous étions irrévocablement perdus !!! (58-59)

Sir! Danger! Let us go back! Stop! This is terrible! Have mercy on us, O Lord !—these are the cries that were heard all around us…but there was no turning back; our little bark entered a frightening battle with the rapids as they rushed us to the sea!—"There's the sand bar!" cried the seamen, and then a gigantic, enormous wave, like an avalanche of frightening water, crashed down behind us and swallowed up the Mouette…then complete stillness, as we glided on the river…we had been surely doomed!!!

How paradoxical to see the silent reader, and then to see the noisy text! And more, if we explore the literary criticism that the noisy text inspires, am I not met there with more silence? The duplicity between the sound in the original text and the passive silence in the reception of the

same is the source of my *ennui.* While this project does not seek to discuss the idea of background noise, or a type of incidental music that could accompany a text, it does seek to problematize approaches to the reception of the novel that go counter to the ideas presented by the silent subject of the paintings I chose as the impetus of this writing. I am not alone in this concern pertaining to the critical reception of the novel. It is here, then, that I will introduce the second impetus for the current study, Mikhail Bakhtin's work on dialogic approaches to reading the novel.

Introducing music and opera

In his work *Esthétique et théorie du roman* (1978), in an attempt to show the inability of popular stylistic approaches to fully analyze the novel, Mikhail Bakhtin states:

> Elle [la stylistique du XXème siècle] ne sait pas aborder le dialogue social spécifique des langages du roman, aussi son analyse stylistique s'oriente-t-elle non sur l'ensemble du roman, mais sur telle ou telle unité subordonnée. Le chercheur passe à côté de la particularité initiale du genre, substitue l'objet de sa recherche, en somme il analyse quelque chose de très différent du style romanesque ! Il transcrit pour le piano un thème symphonique (orchestré) (89).

> It [stylistic analysis of the 20th century] cannot handle dialogue specific to the *langages* of the novel, nor does its stylistic analysis

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orient itself on the entire work, but on some lesser. The researcher

brushes aside the initial singularity of the genre, substitutes the

object of his research, and, simply put, s/he analyses something very

different from the Romanesque style! S/he transcribes an orchestral

piece for a solo piano.

Here Bakhtin argues that, instead of analyzing the language(s) of the text, the popular approaches

to analyzing the novel[3] only describe the style of the novelist, or place a mere secondary motif as

the main theme of the entire work. Bakhtin argues against theoretical inquiries into the novel that

seek to dissect the text as though it were some kind of a mechanical device, rather than

considering it to be the impetus for "reading," a kind of catalyst to a process he deems

"dialogic."

To clarify this point, Lane in the preface to his 2013 anthology on global literary

theory explains what he considers "the rise of theory" or the "theoretical turn" (xxiv) that came

about in the 1960s. He notes that, at that time, literary criticism was affected by three new

categories of enquiry into humanism: language, gender and sexuality, and history. To explain the

difference between literary theory and literary criticism, Lane reveals Jonathan Culler's (2000)

work, in which he states that criticism focuses on the study of literary texts, while theory seeks to

reorient literary texts by including theoretical frameworks from different fields, thus blurring the

lines between literature and other academic disciplines. Additionally, in a presentation by Dilip

Barad on Jul 20, 2013 entitled "Difference between Literary Theory and Criticism," he notes that

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[3] It can be justifiably argued that Bakhtin is referring to the schools of Russian Formalism, (especially the work of Victor Shklovsky, and Boris Eikhenbaum) and Structuralism.

literary criticism is the evaluation, study and interpretation of literary texts. Literary criticism, however, undertakes the philosophical arguments surrounding the methods of and purposes for literary criticism[4]. This rise in theory and literary criticism, with which Bakhtin was certainly involved, was, ironically, the source of his contention. It is not so much, as I will show later, that Bakhtin was against the criticism that was being developed during his lifetime (beginning with formalism) but it was that, for him, none of the historical or contemporary approaches seemed to sufficiently meditate upon the specificities of novelistic discourse before gauging their tools to handle this type of text.

It is, however, the final metaphor of the piano and the orchestra that is most provocative for me. With this notion, Bakhtin would seem to criticize the framework of contemporary approaches to discourse and the novel as being incapable of accounting for the many languages (registers and dialects, for example) within a text. And as such, these theories end up reducing the wealth of harmonic color, and sonic diversity of an orchestra to the homogenous sound of a single instrument. Bakhtin, however, proposes an approach to analyzing the novel that accounts for all the many sounds within the text. In fact, to end his section on novelistic discourse, Bakhtin states:

> Introduire dans le roman, le plurilinguisme y est soumis à une
> élaboration littéraire. Les voix sociales et historiques qui peuplent
> le langage (tous ses mots, toutes des formes), qui lui donnent des
> significations concrètes, précises, s'organisent dans le roman en un
> harmonieux système stylistique, traduisant la position socio-

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[4] This lecture may be accessed online here: http://www.slideshare.net/dilipbarad/difference-between-literary-theory-and-criticism

idéologique différenciée de l'auteur au sein du plurilinguisme de

son époque (121).

Once applied to the novel, plurilingualism leads to elaboration of

the text. The voices of the society, and those of history that

populate the language (all the words, in all forms), that add

concrete and precise meanings, make a harmonious stylistic system

within the novel, bringing about a difference between a socio-

ideological position and the plurilingualism of the author within

his own era.

And it is here that I see the use of the word *voice*, which is both a propos and provocative. For where I once spoke of languages, and colors*,* and where I may have wanted to speak about registers (to be socio-linguistically correct), the word *voices* will henceforth be used.[5] So, by way of resuming the two impetuses for this current study, I may now recall the portrait of the silent reader, who writes and reads a text that is loud with multiple voices.

Looking more closely, now, on the idea of multiple voices, and studying the works of Bakhtin, I cannot help but notice the many references to music (or music-related terms) that populate his work. I see, for example, the words *rhythm, composition, counterpoint, tone, harmony,* and *voices*. I am not alone is this realization, as prominent Bakhtin scholar (and concert pianist) M. Pierrette Malcuzynski (1999) not only reveals the great wealth of musical borrowings in Bakhtin's work (with his use of terms such as *voice, intonation, rhythm,*

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[5] The term heteroglossia is used to describe the idea of multiple, diversified sounds. The term, however, means much more. Holquist (1992) says that heteroglossia refers to the notion that at any, given time there are many forces working to make meaning in a particular place. He mentions four planes: centrifugal and centripetal opposition, discourse and code, etymology and culture, and reader and author.

counterpoint, accentuation, and *polyphony),* but also argues that the musicologist's work finds a resounding space within the context of Bakhtinian poetics.

Anthony Wall, too, sees music in Bakhtin's discourse (perhaps not surprisingly given his musical interests and talents as a pianist). In fact, in a paper published online, Wall states: ". . . very little has been said in international Bakhtin scholarship about the potential – and very real – relationship between Bakhtin's theories of dialogic discourse and the philosophy of music. In the following, I shall attempt to close – ever so slightly – a small part of this gap." [6] Wall's paper, which serves as a launching pad for studies on Bakhtin and music, dwells on the notions of tone, and repetition. He shows Bakhtin's use of music as a basis for theorizing the dialectic (Wall's term) between lesser sounds (those that are mere imitations, without thought), and those which are decorated (creative, artistic).[7] As the perfected object through which to develop his philosophies, Wall chose the keyboard compositions of Johann Sebastian Bach, notably his famed work *Das Wohltemperierte Klavier* (1722). But where Wall turned to these, I will choose another genre of music, and one that is made up of a combination of voices—in the full sense of the word. To do so, I'll look not only to the sound coming from the human throat, but rather to the understanding of the word that is explained in the first medical journals, and that which inspired Jean Starobinski's (2005) idea that any study of civilization starts with a study of the voice.[8] The musical genre I'm referring to, of course, is opera. I believe that by creating a framework for analyzing the novel based on that of analyzing all the voices within the opera, the reader stands to benefit as s/he appreciates the fullness of all the voices within a text. This

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[6] << http://fis.ucalgary.ca/awall/mikhailbakhtine.html>>
[7] idem
[8] Starobinski's study of the human voice and civilization is inspired by, and builds upon the theories of Condillac. Starobinski's novel *Enchantment: The Seductress in Opera* (2008) is one that will shed much light on the notion of transferring words to music. .

notion, on first blush, sounds radical because, of course, the novel is (usually) read, while the opera is performed. And more, the novel may be read over the period of many hours, days, or even weeks, while the opera generally lasts for some part of one evening. In light of these differences, many may say that there is little value in treating the both art forms to similar processes; they are too different.

The opening of Carol Mossman's (1996) work, however, says almost the exact opposite: "No one would dispute opera's heavy debt to the novel" (387). She goes on to paraphrase Donald Grout and Susan McClary as saying, "the beginnings of opera as a form which tells stories with and through music can be situated at that point in history when the conventions of musical composition are shifting away from the "architectural" toward a linear and teleological unfolding not unlike the conventions governing narrative disclosure" (p. 387). In this citation, Grout and McClary reveal that opera arrived at the moment when there was a societal need for a more stable, and closed from of transmitting stories. From these two citations, I can surmise that the opera and the novel are not as absolutely different as we may have thought. Mossman's article continues to list the influence of opera within novels, the results of which I will show later. Her work is similar to those of more recent scholars, such as Leslie Baxter's *Voicing Relationships: A Dialogic Perspective* (2010) and Comrac Newark's *Opera in the Novel from Balzac to Proust*. (2011), who both theorize the textual effect of including discourse about the opera within novels. But perhaps it is the work of Herbert Lindenberger, *Situating Opera: Period, Genre, Reception* (2010) that best sets the stage for my discussion about opera *and* the novel.

In a chapter entitled *Opera and the Novel: Antithetical or Complimentary?* Lindenberger, with a careful study of Plato's triadic modes (lyric, the drama, and epic) shows

that, though seemingly antithetical in nature, the history, and compositional beginnings of the novel (which he calls "narrative") and opera (which he calls "music drama") reveal a oneness between the two (27-28). To Lindenberger's study of historical genesis, I propose a study of historical purpose, and the history of performance. By that, I mean by studying the social impact and use of oral storytelling (orality), and studying the performance of these stories, I see yet another commonality between opera and the novel. And it suffices to mention the names of some of the storytellers who, like the painted portraits of my reading subject, have been the source of artistic inspiration. My references here are to the troubadour, the bard, the jongleur, the orator, and the *comédien* who all declared their tales in, or with, song and melodic voices. They do so even when speaking because the inflection and intonation of their voices were songlike, and even patterned on singers, as Patricia Ranum's 2001 work states. This comparison is important because it not only debunks the myth of the novel and opera being non-related genres, but also reveals the idea that even before the opera and the novel emerged as standardized genres, the categories of public or private, sung or read (or spoken), and performative or non-performative had little bearing. In fact, as I will now show, this blurring of the lines between opera and the novel may be rooted in the very origins of humankind.

Leading in this theory are early modern philosophers Etienne Bonnot de Condillac and Jean Jacques Rousseau. In his *Essai sur l'origine des connaissances humaines* (1746), Condillac states that the speech of early humans, because of its very harmonic nature, could be transcribed into music without much difficulty. Now to define the word harmony I would like to visit the writings of Rousseau in his *Essai sur l'origine des langues : où il est parlé de la mélodie et de l'imitation musicale* (1781). Here, Rousseau praises the progress of France as a nation, but laments that this progress has resulted in French becoming a flat language, devoid of harmony

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and melody. Harmony, for Rousseau, refers to the inflection and cadence of the voice, while melody refers to the mixture of (consonant and vowel) sounds that are in the language. Rousseau argues that progress, which can be understood as a moving away from the instinctual gravity of nature, robbed language of its rich acoustic self. And perhaps it is further progress that made the separation of opera from the novel, and the emergence of the separate genres. Regardless of which theory or literary history is eventually chosen to explain this phenomenon (such as Lukacs, Bakhtin or Watt), I can say that opera and the novel share a history in terms of performance. But even in their present forms, the link between opera and the novel is fairly evident.

Firstly, the word *opera,* which I will take to mean "many works" hints at a genre that is inherently plural. It is important to note that the meaning of this word has often been the source of debate between music theorists, and historians. The confusion, as I understand it, stems from the uncertainty as to which origin to rely upon when ascertaining the definition of the term. For starters, the word in the mouths of Latin-speakers is the plural of the word *opus*, meaning "works." For them, though, "opera" was also used for the singular (feminine) form to mean "work." In the mouths of Italian-speakers, however, the term refers to the word *work,* especially in the context of art. Now, does one follow the roots of Romance languages, or does one bow to the founders of the actual art form? While strong cases may be made for usage of either definition, for my purpose I may choose to use both definitions. From this perspective, an opera is single, collective entity that is comprised of multiple works of art, namely vocal expression, ballet, musical accompaniment, and the stage.

In their turn, opera theorists (notably Catherine Kintzler and Downing Thomas) have studied the poetics elements that combine to make an opera: instrumental music, dance, text,

drama, spectacle, and vocal music.[9] Similarly, from a compositional standpoint, the novel is also made up of many combined parts as in, for example, the difference between narration(s) and quoted spoken text. Additionally, the novel, similar to the opera, creates its own problematic; revealing its own definition of unity (of time, place, and action). For example, in opera, speaking very generally, *recitatives* present the main theatrical action (*l'action*) while the *arias* reveal the interior emotions and thoughts of the character. Other notable operatic segments include the *accompagnato* and the *arietta*, both of which present different types of action and emotion. What is interesting here is the idea of time, since it moves very quickly during the recitatives, but slows down, stops, or even reverses itself during the arias. Using this framework of time—checking how time moves—I can find various ways in which the novel is like the opera.

Another similarity is the plurality of hierarchized voices. At the opera, in order for the genre to be useful, the voices presented must be ordered, and assigned a certain rank or importance at the opera: the heroes will have the robust arias; the leading lady will sing the highest notes but may sing with the voice of the flute when dying or when in love; the confidante will be a lower voice than the leading soprano; the chorus will be the loudest (by virtue of the number of people singing) but will always be in a supportive role, providing the harmonic fabric while the leading soprano and the hero sing above. Similarly in the novel, the representation of the types of voices—human, or not—follow a certain order, raising issues of politics, gender and society, and power relations. It may not be fair to say that since the novel is not performed that it has lost all ties with its ancestry. I believe that the novel is very noisy and that the many types of voices therein combine to create both pleasing harmonies and harsh discords. Even though the reader hears with her/his eyes, an understanding of the combination of these voices helps to

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[9] See Kintzler, C. (1991). *Poétique de l'opéra français, de Corneille à Rousseau*. Paris: Minerve, and Thomas, D. A. (2002). *Aesthetics of opera in the Ancien Régime 1647-1785*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.

deepen the analysis of the text. It is the effect of the existence of multiple voices that interact on multiple planes that constitutes the "dialogism" that Bakhtin describes in certain novels.

It is then not out of pure convenience that I employ Bakhtin's approach to dialogism for this study on the novel and opera. The question I ask now is: Is dialogism for real? This, in fact, is the title of Ken Hirschkop's (1992) work, and which gives me a starting point for defining dialogism. Hirschkop accepts the *realness* of dialogism, but argues that the familiarity with the banal word "dialogue," and the misunderstanding of what dialogue actually is, brings about confusion as to what dialogism actually is. Hirschkop states "…the point I am most concerned to make is that the difference of dialogism from dialogue is what renders the former relevant to my social and political life, that in fact 'dialogism' as a distinctive kind of discourse calls attention to fundamental features of our social and political life too often obscured by our obsession with dialogue…" (108-109). He argues that the need to confine dialogue to the exchange of speech acts makes it impossible for the greater purpose of dialogue to be revealed. It is the novel, then, that restores and reminds the reader of the wider purpose of dialogue: "The key to novelistic dialogism, then, is not an immersion in the authentic plebeian sociability of the public square, but the novelist's ability to endow so-called popular or everyday language with an historical or social significance it lacks in its everyday context" (109). The novelist, as Hirschkop would also seem to suggest, has done his/her part to situate language within the novel in a network of speakers and events, thus rendering language pertinent to history and society.

For an even fuller understanding of dialogism, I turn to the work of Michel Holquist, who sheds the most light on the term. In his work *Dialogism: Bakhtin and his World* (1990), Holquist presents dialogism as the understanding that nothing said or written exists in a vacuum; social, historical, personal, discursive and textual influences all conspire to affect the meaning of

any utterance. Dialogism also assumes that language and speech give order to an otherwise chaotic world. The literary novel, however, as Holquist states, gives the most possible order to the world. But this is not to say the novel, itself is not extremely complex. For this project, this understanding of an endowed, complex language (novelistic discourse) is very important because I believe that the reader of the novel must, in his/her turn, play an active part in re-enlivening and repurposing the language s/he reads. If not, the historical and social endowment of the language (to cite Hirschkop) would serve, in some cases, to render the language inaccessible and useless, especially readers within the realm of higher education. In my experience, for example, when first given Balzac's *Le Père Goriot* (1835), I had no use for it. As an undergraduate student who loved French language, I could not understand why I was given a lengthy novel and told to read it. Why? Was I reading to answer the question: what happened? If so, I'm sure there were many summaries online I could have found. Was I reading to ascertain the social and historical contexts from which the novel was drawn? While that may or may not have been interesting to me at the time, I doubt spending two weeks to read a novel that I may find interesting was the most efficient use of my time. Furthermore, I believed that I should rely on history books to answer questions about history and society. My thinking has come a far way since then, but I still believe that novelistic discourse, though situated in history and society, should not be read in the same way that one reads a history textbook. The novel should do more then tell a story. The novel, for me, presents the reader with a complicated network of endowed language that is anchored to a certain time and place, and challenges her/him to fuse herself/himself with the network and change it, thus resulting in a unique reception of the novel and also a changed reader. The same, I add, holds for the reception of an operatic performance. And thus the notion of a similar treatment of the novel and the opera is revisited.

To continue my discussion on ways in which the novel and the opera have been conceptualized by other scholars, I recall the work of Mossman (1996), who considers the effect and the use of opera within the novel. Using the example of *Le Père Goriot,* Mossman visits the area in the novel where song is referenced, or executed by various characters. Mossman reveals that opera (she also considers various theatrical genres with music) creates three new spaces within the novel. They are "zones of trance and unknowing," "privileged spaces of cognition and complicity," and "intersecting spaces which create mis/understanding and malentendu" (390). Mossman argues that the subjectivity of the human experience of performed sound, when placed within the context of the novel, enriches the text with the borrowed poetics of opera—the operatic. In her discussion of what is lost when the novel becomes opera, Mossman lists the following criteria taken from Bakhtin "the narrative voice, the dialogue between present and past with the consequent relativization of traditional hierarchies, a temporality both subtle and variegated, intersecting planes of language and, more pertinently…a certain capacity to import, naturalize, and domesticate discourses and genres alien to the novel itself" (388). But what is there to discover about the beginnings of the novel, especially the novel that defined the nineteenth-century in France? And what specific knowledge is there about the novel that may fuel my curiosity in the link between the opera and the novel?

In a whimsical book about French history, Catherine Dufour (2012) presents the nineteenth-century in France as strange. In fact, she says that "strange" is probably the best and only term that fits to describe the century (285). The strangeness for her is, partly, seen in that the nineteenth-century was birthed from, and marred by the violence and blood of political and civil unrest, and the most frightening displays of human cruelty, but yet was fruited with the artistic output of these same people. The nineteenth-century novel is one of these fruits.

The French novel in the nineteenth century, as argued by Georges Saintsbury (1917), developed fairly slowly. Starting with Mme. de Stael, whom he credits for making the transition from eighteenth-century sentimentalism to nineteenth-century romanticism, Saintsbury states that the novel moved from sentimentalism to the aesthetic novel, then the novel of style, then short narratives (*contes*), followed by the great analytical texts (which are most studied today), and culminating in the Naturalist novel. The Naturalist novel, in the hands of its greatest proponent, Emile Zola, becomes the "experimental novel." Besides reasons of personal taste, and despite Bakhtin's belief that the ultimate dialogic novel is contained in Dostoyevsky's *ouvrage,* I would argue that Zola's novels are more readily exploitable by Bakhtinian stylistic approaches than any other novel. The reasons for this statement bring me back to what has become the key word for this study: *voices.*

In defining the nature of the experimental novel, Zola (1881) states that the novel is the "process-verbal de l'expérience que le romancier répète sous les yeux du public" '…the verbalization of human experience that the novelist recreates for the public to see' (10). In this description, Zola explains his approach to being a novelist. For him, his work requires that he observe the human in his environment (society), and that he study his interactions with his peers. Then, he (the experimental novelist) must experiment with placing the observed human in many different societies, scientifically noting how the human grows, changes, decays or evolves. The essential aspect of Zola's approach is that he, like Bakhtin, dwelled on, and accounted for all the utterances of the common person. The two novel theorists therefore share in the sense that poetical discourse is limited by its formality, and that only the novel captures the full range of human experience. And though speech discourse is only one shade of dialogism, it does provide a launching pad from which to apply Bakhtinian approaches to analyzing Zola.

Besides this link between Zola's desire to represent the plebian crowd within his novels, Zola shares a novel link to opera. In fact, Zola's description of France during the Second Empire includes many pages describing opera balls, performances of operas, and even the reception of certain operas. I recall, for example, the description of the audience at the giving of Jacques Offenbach's comic-opera *La Belle Hélène* (1864) in Zola's *La Curée* (1872), and the general notion of comic-opera being petty, as opposed to the operas of Wagner. But besides this same notion of how the novel is represented within the novel, I discover in the work of Mosco Carner, for once, an idea of how the novels—of Zola— affect the reception of the opera.

In his 1985 work, *Naturalism in opera: Verismo* , Carner states that the reception of the opera *Tosca* (1900)*,* by Italian composer, Giacomo Puccini, was made possible only because of the shift in "in European literature from romanticism to realism and its more extreme form, naturalism" (6). To put things very simply, *verismo* is a style of writing opera that sought to make the opera as true-to-life as possible. What this means is that the depiction of emotions, the plot, the characters, and the action were blatantly visible, and (more) believable. In terms of the music, the composer moved away from traditional delimitations of the opera into small, almost formulaic parts, but conceived of the art in its totality. Besides this, the palette of harmony used in the opera was at once new and diverse. According to Carner, Zola's novel paved the way for the representation of this truth within opera. From these examples, I see ways in which the interaction between opera and the novel have been treated by theorists. It seems to me, though, that none of these theories unearth the fundamental similarities between opera and the novel. From my perspective, the act of reading is greatly dependent on notions of voice and performance, and a comparative study of opera and the novel will reveal ways in which the reception of the novel can be likened to, and patterned on, the reception of the opera. This study

aims to focus on the role of the reader of novelistic discourse, paying special attention to the influence that the terms *performanc*e and *voice* has on reader-reception. To guide my research, I ask the following questions at the start of the project:

1) In what ways is the novel like opera?

2) In terms of my experiences with reading literature in higher education, what position do studies of voice and performance hold?

My project, sets out to answer these questions, but not by following well-trodden pathways. Instead, by revisiting the origins of opera and the novel that I arrive at new definitions of, otherwise, ancient institutions. In the first chapter, I trace the history of writing, seeking to reveal the processes that brought about the first novel. From there, I follow a similar trajectory as the one I'll take in chapter 2, where I trace the history of opera. In both chapters my ultimate goal is to present the novel and the opera—both with long-established standings within many academic institutions—in a newly conceived way. Thus, a newer understanding of the fundamental similarities between the two is ascertained and notions on the ways in which the reception of the one may affect the reception of the other are deduced. The general nature of these deductions concern the terms *voice* and *performance*.

The second half of the project focuses on these two terms, showing how they may be differently understood not only in the context of the opera and the novel, but also in the context of the literature studies in institutions of higher education. Next, I reveal the theoretical underpinning and the various practical applications of my new understanding of voice and performance and textual analysis. Then, my last chapter sees us visiting a work of Zola's and showing what I call "performing the novel: vocal poetics of novelistic discourse."

It is my intent that this study be useful to anyone who reads novels, and, to a lesser extent, those interested in viewing opera from a unique perspective. Furthermore, since I believe that every academic endeavor should benefit the academician within the classroom, I cannot help but see a pedagogical goal to this study. That is to say, if my approach to reading the novel serves as a refreshing to the persons who work within higher education, and manages to inspire even a minute percentage of its scholars to meditate deeply upon and become better for having read literature—which is one of the great gifts of the academic process— then my work will have served its modest purpose.

CHAPTER II

A MATTER OF VOICE:

DISCOVERING THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY NOVEL'S ORAL PAST

The nineteenth century[10] in France experienced the greatest explosion of literary

production in the entire history of French civilization. This is seen not only in the various literary

schools that flourished (romanticism, realism, naturalism, symbolism, and the Parnassians), but

in the rise of the century's main literary genre: the nineteenth-century French novel. Seen as a

genre whose defining characteristics are as changing and as untamed as the political and social

conditions of the Romantic era, the novel is said to be representative of the new national identity

of post-revolution France. In support of this notion, Hannoosh (2011) cites Victor Hugo's

famous declaration from the preface to his 1830 play *Hernani*, "While admiring the literature of

the age of Louis XIV, so well adapted to monarchy, contemporary France will be able to have its

own literature . . . the France of the nineteenth century to which Mirabeau gave liberty and

Napoleon power" (452). Hugo's declaration reveals the powerful correlation between

nationalistic, political ideologies, and literary output. There are, however, in these reflections

pertaining to the nineteenth century and its literature, words that have become somewhat cliché

in their usage. For example, what does one mean by the word "literature," or "literary"? And

what about the term "writing"? These terms have become so banal in their usage that they it

wouldn't be surprising if they figured among the list of least-searched words in the dictionary—

even if the definitions offered by scholars are as diverse and varied as the respondents

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[10] I will use the dates of the "long" nineteenth century provided by *The Society of Dix-Neuviémistes* (SDN): 1789-1914.

themselves. Formal definitions of literature are equally problematic, with key terms so varied as the sources consulted. Things become even more complex when question of how I consume, enjoy, and participate in the reading process are posed. Indeed, what does it even mean to read? How does one read writing? And how is this act represented?

According to the various nineteenth-century painters who depict the subject, (Caillebotte, Manet, Renoir, Soulacroix, and Toulmouche, to name but a few), reading is a solitary and mute activity. And it is the latter aspect that is more provocative for my topic, for scholarly approaches to the novel (and to reading) have traditionally excluded two very important concepts: performance, and voice. This omission—attributable to the fragmentation of scholarly work into neatly defined departments, fields, and centuries—has resulted in the glorification of the novel as a phenomenon that was perfected, if not born, in the nineteenth century, the highest form of a single-authored written text, the highest form of literary writing, and a genre normally consumed in solitude, and in silence. On the contrary, I would suggest that the nineteenth-century novel is a descendant of, what I will call, the performed texts[11], in which voice and the system of performance played an integral role in aspects of composition, transmission, and reception, a phenomenon that arguably goes as far back as humankind's ability to invent or recall stories. But in the arguments that follow, I will seek to trace particular historical processes that contributed to the silencing of the voices within the novel, and the consequent removal of the novel from the realm of performance in the nineteenth century.

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[11] A seemingly contradictory statement—seeing that a text usually necessitates writing—the word text has a meaning beyond that which is written down. Ong's 1983 work will inform us of this later.

The Twelfth-Century Novel

The history of the novel, of writing, and the history of reading, for that matter, are essential to this project not only because they reveal various prejudices that affected the explosion of the novel genre in the nineteenth century, but because such a study will assist me in understanding why, when, and how reading literature (and the novel in particular) came to be regarded as a solitary and interiorized act. Furthermore, the study will give some insight into the rise of the novel as a cherished thing within institutions of higher education. In what follows I will summarize study the etymology of the word *literature,* review the history of the novel, compare the history of the novel with the development of the French language, and reveal the influence of the ancient oral tradition on chirographic societies. To launch and guide this discussion in this chapter, I will rely heavily on the work of Paul Zumthor, a Swiss medievalist whose research in his later years focused on medieval oral poetry.

Zumthor's three main texts on the subject of voice and performance in medieval poetry are *Introduction à la poésie orale* (1983); *La Poésie et la Voix dans la Civilisation Médiévale* (1984); and *La Lettre et la Voix* (1987). Zumthor focused much of his work on a topic he had been interested in for many years, oral poetry. His 1983 work called "*Introduction à la poésie orale*" is a declaration of his fascination with the study of voice and presents his main research question: "Y a-t-il une poéticité orale spécifique?" 'Do oral-specific poetics exist' (9). The rest of his work on the subject then seeks to discover and to conceptualize (theorize) the poetics of oral poetry— poetry transmitted by voice and memory only. As the impetuses for his work, he first cites the 1977 work of Irish linguist Ruth Finnegan *Oral Poetry: Its Nature, Significance and Social Context*. Elsewhere, he acknowledges French writer Paul Sébillot for creating in 1881 the term and the notion of *littérature orale.* Among American and British scholars, he mentions

Maurice Bowra (*Primitive Song*, 1962; *Heroic Poetry*, 1978), Albert Lord (*Serbo-Croation Heroic Songs*, 1954; *The Poetics of Oral Creation*, 1959; *The Singer of Tales*, 1971; *The Perspectives on Recent Work on Oral Literature*, 1975) and Nora Kershaw Chadwick (*Poetry and Prophecy*, 1942), and in the German Academy, he mentions Herman Bausinger (*Formen der Volkspoesie*, 1968). Zumthor's publishing of a work on oral poetry is unsurprising because prior to his work on oral poetry, he theorized the notion of "mouvance." This term, which can be translated as "mobility," refers to the notion of ownership of medieval texts. Having argued in his prior work the notion of medieval texts—especially vernacular texts—have various authors, he uses the term "mouvance" to describe the notion of a text being altered and recreated by the various authors (including singers) who copy the text. Zumthor's work is supported by the claim that a text is dynamic, and that the vernacular text, which was never static, is best understood as a composite of the input of the various influences on the text (singers, writers, copyists, for example). Already in this notion of "mouvance" I can begin to predict Zumthor's arguments in his future work, especially in the ones that focus on voice, singers, and performance. After having developed the notion of a poetics of oral poetry, in his 1984 work, Zumthor goes on to ask, "Comment intégrer l'opération vocale dans l'étude des textes médiévaux?" 'How does one integrate the poetics of voice into the study of medieval texts?' Before addressing this question, though, I will begin with his 1987 work in which he enlightens us on the history of two of my key terms: *novel* and *literature*.

As the title for the conclusion to his 1987 work, Zumthor chooses "Et la 'littérature'?" 'And Literature?' placing the word literature in quotation marks. The consequent usage of the word within his conclusion is either italicized or, once again, placed in quotations. By doing this, Zumthor flags the term as one whose meaning, by reasons of disassociation with its etymology,

privileges a certain discourse while silencing others. Suggesting that the term *litérature* has no precise definition, he blames the mass appeal of Romanticism for fueling the exclusion of the historical underpinnings of the term that would give it a more veritable meaning (312). Zumthor's main concern, in fact, is that when we approach literature without the understanding of the fundamental role of voice, we risk becoming trapped in a sort of elitist and ethnocentric imprisonment, and we become walled-in by limited historical experiences (322). To illustrate this notion, he uses the example of Todorov's *Les Genres du discours* (1978) in which literature is treated as a scientifically quantifiable and classifiable object that is historicized using various brands (*marques*). For Zumthor, literature as treated by Todorov, "est partie de l'environnement culturel où nous pouvons la nommer; et s'interroger sur sa validité, c'est pour nous plus ou moins nous distancier de nous-mêmes" 'is part of the cultural phenomenon that allows us to assign a name to something, and to pose questions about its validity; it is, more or less, a way for man to distance himself from himself.' (312). That is to say, the definition of literature here is influenced by the historical experiences which saw humans separating herself/himself from what s/he himself had written, and from what his fellow writers had written; his text is assigned a name, or a code. Indeed, for Todorov (1990), the etymology and cultural significance of the word *literature* in societies across the world proved too massive an undertaking. He thus decided to focus his work on aspects of functionality and structure, leaving the challenge to another brave writer (1-9).While not taking up the task himself, Zumthor does give insight into the history of the usage of the word *literature*.

Zumthor (1987) reveals that the term *literature* evolved from the Greek word *grammaticê*, and related either to the idea of stenography (tracing letters of the alphabet), or, as used by Roman rhetorician Quintilian, to grammar and philology (313). In religious circles, for

example, Zumthor notes that *literature* was used to refer to the scholarly writing of which the pious should be wary. To use a fitting religious analogy, I would say that the term *literature* was to the Church fathers as the apple was to the Eve in the Garden of Eden. That is, the term was used to refer to a sort of worldly knowledge that could prove detrimental to human's relationship with God. Even in the twelfth century, Zumthor notes that the term was still mostly used to refer to the knowledge of writing, and the knowledge of the popular written texts, and was rarely used to refer to the material text itself (313). This definition of "literature" stayed fundamentally the same throughout the centuries leading up to the seventeenth century, though the actual word changed its lexical representation.

In the 1650's, the term *literature* was wedded more to aesthetics and form and was used to reference an assembly of written texts that provided "lectures exquises" 'exquisite readings' (314). Zumthor goes on to state that the term *literature*, as we use it today, appeared in the seventeenth century to fill a void in society caused by the separation of once-united entities (politics, morality, and religion). There was a need for a stable, autotelic, and homogenous discourse, and literature was the answer (320). Consequently, in the background of the convention-heavy seventeenth century, and the encyclopedic-minded eighteenth century, a sort of science of aesthetics was applied to the definition of *literature*, which Zumthor notes, excluded any other form of discourse (314). It is from this exclusion that is based on aesthetics that stemmed the creation of an elite set of privileged men who were seen as the creators and consumers of literature; the source of the creation of the *hommes de lettres*. This is the understanding of literature that was en vogue at the birth of the nineteenth-century novel which, not surprisingly, coincides with the proliferation of various schools of literary thought. I see, thus, a time in which the materialized written object is subject to aesthetic approaches in aspects

of its composition. And for each literary school there is one aesthetic that is preferred over another, or is launched in reaction to another. From this perspective, Romanticism is a rejection of classicism, whereas symbolism (and other modernist approaches) come in response to realism. To summarize, Zumthor's work would seem to offer the following summary: the early seventeenth-century society necessitates homogeneity of discourse; both seventeenth and eighteenth- century societies subject written discourse to scientific (quantifiable and analytical) conventions in its composition; the nineteenth-century writers reject the conventions of the Classical period and replace conventions with art and Nature as the main sources of compositional influence; and the reception of the written subject is once again subject to science (quantifiable and classifiable) by twentieth-century literary theorists. Lane's (2013) discussion of the "theoretical turn" seems to support this fourth point, as he, like Zumthor, suggests that literary criticism and theory became the obsession of literary scholars in the latter half of the twentieth century. Of these four general notions, it is the first that causes the most concern for both me and Zumthor, on account of the (deliberate) exclusion of certain discourses, most notably those that thrived within the oral tradition. What is more, the exclusion of these discourses came at a time when the nineteenth-century novel in France was about to make its entry onto the literary stage. Perhaps I should say re-entry, for past civilizations have seen the novel before.

Revealing that the novel was a direct descendant of the épopée—a heroic tale transmitted in the ancient oral tradition—Zumthor (1987) states that the novel (*roman)* first emerged in the mid twelfth century. He adds that the novel appeared at the meeting place of orality—a system of communication based on memory and voice—and writing (300). For a fuller understanding of orality, scholars in the United States find the counterpart to Zumthor's work on oral medieval

poetry in the work of Walter Ong. His 1982 work, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the World,* appeared one year before Zumthor's work, and both Ong and Zumthor lament literary scholars who neglect any reflection on oral culture prior to the creation of writing. Ong, for example, argues that human communities that didn't have a system of writing (pre-chirographic cultures), still composed texts (13). These texts were conceived for, and were only materialized by, the voice; there was no rapport with writing. That the word *text*, then, should primarily be considered as having to do with a written script, for Ong, is disconcerting (13). Ong, like Zumthor, argues that the development of writing systems in ancient societies did not hinder the influence of the verbalized texts on the written ones. In support of this claim, Zumthor (1983) reveals that the early novel found itself borrowing different aspects from both sets of *texts*: from the oral tradition of ancient societies, the novel keeps the aspects of transmission and reception, but relies on writing for its composition (except in cases of improvisation) and preservation (32). Speaking specifically of the twelfth-century novel, Zumthor (1987) states,

> Contrairement aux contes dont se nourrit le commun du peuple, [le roman]
> requiert de vastes dimensions: longues durées de lecture et d'audition, où
> les enchaînements du récit, quelque embrouillés que parfois ils
> apparaissent, sont projetés vers un avant jamais clos, exclusive de toute
> circularité (300).
> Contrary to the spoken tales on which common folk strived, [the
> novel]called for vast dimensions: long durations of reading and listening
> where various tales, which were so carefully intertwined that they were
> scarcely distinguishable, were presented, like never before, with a
> definite end in mind, avoiding any circumlocution.

Here, I see the novel genre rejecting the open-ended nature of ancient poetry, which Zumthor considers circular (300), but preserves the idea of performance and voice as fundamental in the transmission of the novel. There is also the idea of a listening audience; a concept which, I will now show, is tied up with the definition of the word *roman*.

Focusing on the term *roman*, Zumthor reveals that the verbal phrase *mettre en roman*, literally meaning 'to put into a novel form,' refers to the idea of placing a text in a form that was best adapted to the people who would be receiving the said text (300). Ironically, both Bakhtin and Jakobson, believe that novelistic discourse, especially that of the nineteenth century, alters language in order for it to be included in the novelistic whole. For Bakhtin, this change in considered artistic. For Jakobson, language is made unfamiliar, and that language is defamiliarized in order to serve the purpose of the novel. Yet, the naming of the genre (novel) suggests the very opposite. In fact, the original usage of the term, as Zumthor reveals, hinted at operations done in performance of the story to make the language familiar to the spectators. This would necessitate the use of the vernacular (as opposed to Latin), a register (*langage*), and cultural references that were best suited the listeners' level of understanding, and their milieu.

An example of the notion of novelizing a story (*mettre en roman*) was recently demonstrated during a visit I made to the Chicago Lyric Opera. While there to see a performance of Johann Strauss's *Die Fledermaus*, the principal actor, during an already-comical recitative in the third Act, made an allusion to infamous mayor of Toronto Rob Ford. While it was clear that Strauss knew nothing of Ford, the inclusion of him in this nineteenth-century opera resonated greatly with the audience, and the spectators' response to the opera was heightened thereafter. It is not unjustifiable to think that similar processes took place at the performance of the twelfth-

century novel. And embedded in this notion is the concept that the twelfth-century novel relied on oral tradition in matters regarding performance—the rendering of the text before a group of listeners. Athough the idea of making texts appear before the eyes, and that of preserving it beyond the determined length of a performance was afforded by the genesis of writing, the text was still composed with listeners in mind.

Zumthor provides an example from the twelfth-century *Lais* of Marie de France. In her prologue, Marie de France insists that listening precede writing, so that the voice never ceases to sound within the written text (303). This is the heritage from which the novel of any age stems. For reasons related to exclusion in the name of a progressing civilization, the nineteenth-century novel —in the general terms of its transmission, composition, and reception—was disconnected from this sonic discourse from which it was first inspired. But the novel isn't alone in this exclusion of voice. A brief look at the history of the development of French civilization will show that another aspect of society experienced a loss in its reliance on voice and orality, namely the French language itself.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau in his *Essai sur les origines des langues* (1781) laments the impoverishment of the French language as it moved towards perfection. In fact, for Rousseau, the sign of a language's progress is correlated to the degeneration of musicality within the language. He states :

> Une langue qui n'a que des articulations et des voix n'a donc que
>
> la moitié de sa richesse; elle rend des idées, il est vrai, mais pour
>
> rendre des sentiments, des images, il lui faut encore un rythme et

des sons, c'est-à-dire une mélodie: voilà ce qu'avoit la langue

grecque, et ce qui manque à la nôtre (411).

A language has only half of its richness when it is only made up of

enunciation and spoken voice. Yes, it renders ideas, but in order to

render feelings and images it must include a rhythm and sounds: a

melody. This is the difference between our language and that of the

Greeks.

Here I note the comparison of the French language in the eighteenth century with the language

of the ancient Greeks, the suggestion being that the latter had more musicality than did the

former. It is interesting to note, though, that at the time of the writing (or the publication) of

Rousseau's text, French writer Antoine Rivarol's 1784 essay on the universality of French (*De

l'universalité de la langue française*) was awarded top prize in The Berlin Academy's[12] essay

competition. The proposed subject for the competition was "What has made French a universal

language?"[13] Rivarol's essay, which sang of the glory of French men and the development of the

French language, is seen as one of the major publications to prove the ultimate progression of

French to a level of perfection. Christopher Coski, for example, in his 2011 work *From

Barbarism to Universality: Language and Identity in Early Modern France* juxtaposes Rivarol's

essay with Du Bellay's 1549 work *Défense et illustration de la langue française.* Coski sees Du

Bellay's charge to his fellow poets as that which triggered the move towards perfection and

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[12] Also known as the Royal Prussian Academy of Sciences, the Berlin Academy was established in early July 1700.
[13] The Berlin Academy posed three questions: Qu'est-ce qui a rendu la langue Française universelle ? (What has made French a universal language?) Pourquoi mérite-t-elle cette prérogative ? (Why does it deserve this status ?) and Est-il à présumer qu'elle la conserve ? (Should one expect the language to continue being universal?)

standardization of the French language, an occupation which occupied the time of various language theorists of the seventeenth century (Vaugelas, De Boisregard, Callières, Lamy, and La Bruyère). The Berlin Academy's subject for its 1783 competition, for Coski, is seen as the tardy reward for Du Bellay's quest for the glorification of French. And by 1785, a year after Rivarol's essay, Mme de Staël—who Saintsbury (1916) credits as having bridged the gap between eighteenth-century sentimentalism and nineteenth-century romanticism—published her first work (*Journal de Jeunesse*), and by 1802 her novel *Delphine* was being read by the literate French population. The juxtaposition of these publications (Rousseau, Rivarol, and Mme de Staël) show a strange paradox: the French language reaches its highest point of perfection at the very moment when it is deemed degenerate and poor by one of France's major philosophers. A closer look at Rousseau's arguments, though, will reveal that the lacking element is the singing, musical voice.

Rousseau elaborates on the notion of song and singing in his 1764 work, *Dictionnaire de musique.* A portion of his entry for the term "chanson" reads:

> L'usage des chansons semble être une suite naturelle de celui de la parole
> et n'est en effet pas moins général, car par-tout où l'on parle, on chante …
> Aussi, les Anciens n'avoient-ils point encore l'art d'écrire qu'ils avaient
> déjà des chansons. Leurs loix et leurs histoires, les louanges des Dieux et
> des Héros, furent chantées avant d'être écrites.
>
> Singing and speaking seem to follow naturally. And this notion cannot be
> made any more specific than that, for wherever people spoke, they would
> also sing.…In addition, the ancient Greeks had their songs before they

knew the art of writing—their laws, their stories, the praises of their Gods

and of heroes were sung before they were written.

Here, Rousseau bases his arguments on declarations made by the ancient Greeks, especially

Aristotle, who in his series of questions and answers (*Problemata*) reveals that the Greek

language uses the same term for the words *law* and *song*.[14] Rousseau (1764), then, condemns the

civilized European society for losing this use of song and, as such, becoming barbarous. He

would seem to join with Zumthor and Ong to lament the neglect of the oral tradition, stating that

Homer used to be sung until the rise of writing systems, resulting in "barbares qui se sont mêlés

de juger ce qu'ils ne pouvaient sentir" 'barbarians who involved themselves with judging that

which they could not experience' (111). Elsewhere, Zumthor (1983) states that the culmination

of voice is song (32).

Rousseau would now seem to join Zumthor and Ong in saying that to approach

written texts without an understanding of the influence of the oral tradition of singing at

play, is to do a disservice to the text, and also to the author; it is a barbarous thing.

Rousseau's attention to singing, however, is linked to a desire to see his language

restored to its rich fullness of passion and emotion. This notion is echoed by Duneton in

his 1998 work, *Histoire de la chanson française 'History of the French chanson.'*

Duneton states that to trace the history of song is to trace the history of emotion (16).

Elsewhere he adds, "la chanson a donné forme à la mémoire de l'homme" 'songs formed

the memory of humans' (23). Duneton thereby reveals a certain cultural and civic weight

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[14] *Problemata* , XIX, 28 states: "Why are the nomes which are sung so called ? Is it because before men knew the art of writing they used to sing their laws in order not to forget them, as they are still accustomed to do among the Agathyrsi? They, therefore, called the earliest of their subsequent songs by the same name as their earliest songs"

to the aspect of singing. Downing Thomas, as well, in his 1995 work *Music and the Origins of Language,* sets up music (not just singing) as "a site from which culture itself—its origins and functions—could be theorized, its problems recast and its ideals articulated" (33). Later he suggests that the inherent musical nature of the voice will reveal passions and affections of the human heart (176). The most poignant statement that Thomas gives, and which is inspired by Jean Starobinski (1989) is that the history of societies should begin with the study of the voice (56). In other fields of study, though, the history of human's civilization has little to do with a human's voice as conceived above, but with his/her writing. It would seem that although various sources (Rousseau, Condillac, Zumthor, Ong, Aristotle, Duneton, and Thomas) would agree that the oral tradition preceded writing, semioticians, for instance, choose to start their history of civilization with a study of the oldest written sample they can find. The story these semioticians give is very fascinating and provocative for me because I gain insight into the effect of voice (and sound) at various stages of the development of writing, which on its own has no audible voice; it makes no sound as it sits on paper. What follows is a brief history of writing.

A Brief History of Writing

I start with an exciting recent discovery, which was published by the *Proceedings of the National Association of Sciences* (PNAS) in 2010. The discovery has to do with what was being claimed as the oldest form of writing: markings on 66,000 year-old ostrich eggs. While this discovery is certainly very exciting, what is even more interesting for us is the way in which writing is defined, not only in the context of what it is, but also in the context of human

development. In fact, the PNAS describes writing as human behavior, qualifying it as either modern, or "symbolically mediated" (1), and the writing found on the ostrich eggs, is also described as intentional. These descriptions pertaining to writing prepare us speak about what writing actually is, and the way it developed in ancient societies. A brief overview of writing will show us how we moved from scratching lines on ostrich eggs to spinning out pages of glorified prose.

I begin with the seminal works of semiotician Février (1959) and Higounet (1964), (the latter whose writing was greatly influenced by the former). Higounet starts his colossal study with a definition of the term *writing*, as "expression graphique" 'graphic expression' of language (5). He goes on to say that writing is a current process used to change an inherently ephemeral language into a fixed and stayed object (5). While Higounet's definition of writing may seem a little sparse, Février's work gives more detail of how writing evolved. Writing his work in defense of the French language in the face of other writings on the subject, (Berger, 1891, 1925 *Histoire de l'écriture dans l'antiquité*; Jensen, 1935 *Die Schrift in Vergagenheit und Gegenwart*; Diringer, 1937 *L'alfabeto nella storia della civiltà*), Février starts with a study of civilized human, stating that civilized humans think in concepts (*pensé*), and then these concepts are materialized by a word (*parlé*), which is represented by a movement of the mouth, or the tongue. This word is then further defined by a visual sign (*écrit*). It is, then, a threefold action that brings about the written expression in civilized humans (8). Février states, however, that primitive humans have one main impulse— to act—and therefore has a different approach to the act of writing. Février's primitive humans first start off by expressing himself with the use of concrete and non-concrete things. From this perspective, riting comes about to articulate his experiences, and at this stage, there are fewer words than there are sounds. As writing develops, there is a

simplification of the language, such that there came to be fewer sounds than words, a form of simplification. This "simplification" reminds us of my notion of exclusion, which I discovered relating to discourse within the nineteenth-century novel, and also the standardization of the French language. Now, it is the development of writing that seems to have undergone a similar experience, and it is confirmed in the works of both Février and Higounet.

Reminding the reader of a simplistic binary, civilization before or after writing, Higounet reveals the stages of writing as being threefold: synthetic, analytical, and phonetic. In categorizing the types of writing, however, he uses two headings: non-alphabetic writing, and alphabetic writing. In the latter category, Higounet begins with the then oldest form of writing known: the suméro-akkadienne writing, which dates back to 400-300 B.C. The suméro-akkadienne people, whose origins are not known, but are believed to be linked to Babylon, left writing that was both analytical and phonetic (20). This writing system is followed by the hieroglyphics of Egypt, considered the oldest use of signs, said to date back to 300B.C. From 100B.C to the fifth century, these signs remained in use, even despite the influence of the Greeks in Egypt. From Egypt, Higounet moves to Asia Minor and the development of Hittite hieroglyphics, Chinese writing, Pre-Colombian American writing, and Central American writing. All these forms of writing, except for Chinese writing, (which is still in use today,) evolved from an analytical structure of writing, that eventually moved towards syllabism. The main writing systems to round out Higounet's work on non-alphabetic writing are Cypriot syllabary (500-400 B.C.) and Persepolitan writing (600-500 B.C.), which were a mixture of ideograms and syllables (41). Higounet is quick to credit Egypt with starting the pre-alphabet, calling their writing the pseudo-hieroglyphics of Byblos. The alphabet, though, that eventually fuels much of the writing of future societies, is the tenth-century Phoenician alphabet.

The Phoenician alphabet contained 22 letters, and was spread by Tyr by mass movement and voyage of people who spoke Semitic languages. Other prominent languages were Armenian writing, and Hebrew, which was spread by travel and trade. Next, Higounet's mentions the Arabic writing, which, along with Hebrew, is the first consonant-based language that is still in use today. The success of the writing system is linked to the spread of religion (p 54). It was first used in 512-513 B.C (mixed with Greek and Syriac), and then in 568 B.C (with Greek). The Arabic alphabet, which is influenced by the Armenian alphabet, has 28 letters (57), has been found to have been used in various parts of the globe: Sud-Arabic and Ethiopian writing (1000 B.C), Indian writing (300 B.C), Libyan, and Iberian writing (750 B.C). Then, the Greek alphabet appears.

The Greek alphabet receives significant attention, given that it is the language of the wealthiest culture in the ancient world. According to Higounet, Greek transmitted invaluable knowledge over the centuries, and acted as a go-between (intermediary) in three ways: bridging the gap between the Semitic alphabet and the Latin alphabet (to be discussed later); acting as a link between the historical, the geographical and the graphical; and providing a structural base on which other languages were formed, suggesting that the Greeks were the first to use a system based on vowels. The Greek alphabet was, however, based on the Phoenician alphabet, and the language appears for the first timeI around the 800B.C. Higounet states, « Les plus anciennes inscriptions, celles de la coupe du Dipylon d'Athènes, des vases du Mont Hymette, des tessons de Corinthe, et peut-être celles de l'île de Théra, sont du VIIIe avant notre ère" 'The most ancient [Greek] inscriptions—the ones on Dipylon's pottery goblet in Athens; the ones found on the vases of Mount Hymettus; those on the shards found in Corinth; and, perhaps, those found on the island of Thera—date back to the 800B.C.' (63). One of the important developments that

came Greek was the change in the orientation of the written symbol. This in not only seen in the way that writing moved from left to right, but also in the reversing of the symbols themselves. The number of letters in the Greek alphabet was 24, and they were modified to suit vocal demands of the speakers of the language (66). It is here, perhaps, that I see the first effects of exclusion, as the alphabet was reduced to serve the needs of the prominent speakers of the language. Thus, the development of writing begins to show its utilitarian aspects; the goal of writing, to enter into perhaps a premature argument, was to best serve those who spoke the language that was being written. And the effect of voice on the Greek alphabet was not isolated because the Greek alphabet has also inspired other writing systems: Coptic, Gothic, and Slavic. Cyrillic, too, is an alphabet—albeit a more recent one— inspired by the Greek alphabet. Later, the Greek Alphabet was replaced by the Italic alphabet (of Greek origin), which fostered the explosion of civilization that was Rome. But whereas in Semitic languages the placement of the word in the expression determines the function, category and vocalization of the word, Greek words are determined by the flexional endings. Other modifications show that aspirated consonants were preserved, while guttural sounds were replaced with vowels. The Greek in use today, though, is the miniscule version of the one used to write the ancient manuscripts (67- 68).

Continuing on this evolutional path, I find the first form of Latin writing at the end of the 700B.C, discovered on the Ancient Roman Forum (75). Latin writing, which was derived from the Greek alphabet, also had much influence from Estruscan, one of the Italic alphabets. Latin writing went through much development in the second and third centuries, and in the fifth century, with the rise of Christianity, the writing evolved considerably. The greatest development in Latin writing, though, came about in the ninth century with writings called Carolingian. Carolingian is linked to the Carolingian Empire from which France and Germany were founded,

and was a calligraphic standardization of Latin that made it easier to read. The letters were well-defined, more fixed, there was more space between the letters, and it had a cursive form. This writing was eventually phased out, but it was rediscovered and, it is claimed, to have later become the basis for Italian. Higounet notes, for example, that in the 14th Century, Petrarch, who was searching for a more visually-stimulating script (*harmonieuse et claire*) found the writings of the ninth to eleventh centuries and claimed them to be Roman (p 105). This rediscovery and repurposing of Carolingian script is considered humanistic or reformed Carolingian. From this time onward, Gutenberg's printing presses, in use since the Medieval Period, had a selection of five scripts. They were gothic writing, *calligraphe et luxe, bâtarde* (mixture of the first two scripts), humanistic, and savants and modern writing. Besides these five, there were also various abbreviations and figures. (There seemed to be a return of the graphic heritage of ideograms with the use of abbreviations) (115). For reasons of practicability and aesthetics, Carolingian (miniscule) writing rose to popularity and, as a result, replaced older forms of writing, and this, for Higounet, represents the development of writing systems.

Semiotician Roy Harris, however, finds fault with the type of work presented by Higounet and Février. Harris, who would consider himself an "adequate[15]" semiotician, starts his 1993 study on writing by revealing the great confusion that surrounds the definition of the term "writing" itself. This confusion is not only found among fellow semiotician, but also among the great philosophers on whose theories the *Académie française* was erected. This confusion in the definition of the term *writing*, according to Harris, centers on the notion that the word is always defined in terms of "the system of its functions and its techniques" (9). The idea of writing (for writing's sake) has rarely been studied outside the realm of its own functionality and purpose,

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[15] Harris criticizes his colleagues who, in his opinion, have used a very narrow definition of writing to launch their studies.

and as Harris states, "il faut que l'écriture soit disponible. Mais non dans le sens où il faut déjà

disposer d'un système d'écriture avant de pouvoir d'en servir, plutôt dans le sens où, sans le

concept d'écriture, il n'est pas question d'écrire" 'writing must be accessible. This is not in the

sense that one must first have a system of writing at one's disposal to be able to write, but rather

in the sense that, without the concept of writing, there is nothing to write' (8). Here, Harris

reveals his approach to studying writing, a study that sees the function and purposes of writing as

the resulting (secondary) objects of an established system: writing is studied as a primary means

of expression. The confusion with defining the term *writing*, Harris notes, stems back to the

Encyclopédie entry in the primary *Discours*, where understanding is said to lead to truth, which,

in turn, leads to logic. From this logic, three arts stem: the art of thinking, the art of retaining

thoughts, and the art of communicating them. The art of retaining thoughts leads to the science of

memorizing and the science of using supplemental processes to help retain knowledge, and is

this final step of preserving knowledge that leads to the introduction of writing. Harris's main

contention is found here, for he believes that writing should be studied devoid of any reflection

on its function. He continues to say that a study of writing should also include musical notes and

mathematical symbols (9). A working definition of writing for Harris is a process by which a

sound is visualized, a transformation that makes of an auditory thing, a visual one. It is this

sensorial passage that launches Harris's study. (As I will show later, the use of the word

sensorial, is pertinent, as Harris places much onus on the human reader when it comes to making

validating the purpose of writing.)

  Harris begins by taking issue with Saussure, especially as regards the differences between

the spoken and the written word. Where Saussure (1922) in the *Cours de linguistique générale*

elaborated on the role of the word as representative of human's efforts to understand his world,

Harris prefers to deal with the notion that the written word has its own social life, which is independent of the immediate needs of communicative spoken words (38). The two entities, therefore, create different objects (*objets*) and should not be subject to any one generalized critical approach. Harris argues, for example, that to subject the spoken word to the same linguistic treatment as the written word would be to reduce human vocal expression to a determined number of phonetic units (49). Harris, therefore, argues for a more inclusive approach to studying language, so in his discussion about reading and writing (the differences between the two, and how the insufficiency of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) to have a bearing on reading) he uses the example of a musician reading a score. For Harris, the notion of execution (performance) is not encoded within the notated score. That is to say, even though there are performance instructions for the musician, none of them actually tell the performer how to make sound on the actual instrument. The musician must take added lessons, or must practice in order to achieve a performance of the piece. A non-performer, for example, is able to read (decipher) a score, and is able to say what is required of him or her, but without any sort of musical training, s/he will be completely unable to perform the music. Harris would say that the written text, just like the music score, should not be seen as one chain in the link that leads the otherwise silent text to being performed, but as the inciter of the integrational approaches that make the chain exist (168). his use of the word *integrational* links to an approach to linguistics (Integrational Linguistics) which sees the written text as incapable of making meaning without reference to other non-verbal clues:

> The term integrational alludes to the recognition that the linguistic
> sign alone cannot function as the basis of an independent, self-

sufficient form of communication, but depends for effectiveness on

its integration with non-verbal activities of many different kinds. [16]

 The greatest point that Harris (1993) makes, though, in terms of writing and reading (the reader)

is that a reflection on reading music is valid for a study of reading in general:

Ce qui différencie la lecture d'une partition d'avec la lecture d'un

roman est d'ordre biomécanique plutôt que d'ordre macrosocial;

car, dans le cas du roman, les lecteurs ne disposent que d'un seul

instrument— à savoir la voix humaine" (168).

That which differentiates the reading of a musical score from

reading is of a biomechanical nature, rather than a macrosocial

one. For, when it comes to the novel, the reader only disposes of

one instrument: the knowledge of the human voice.

The human voice is the only instrument that the reader of the novel, for example, must master,

from which flows the image of a reader who is voicing a text. From this argument, I also focus

on the terms *macrosocial* and *human voice* because they go counter to the image of the young

girl reading (Figure 1), but seem to better describe the painting of Alexis reading to Zola (Figure

2). This is not to say that Harris sees reading as an act of voicing a text in the hearing of another

listener, but that the individual's understanding of herself/himself and of her/his place within a

society come to bear upon what s/he reads. The act of reading, then, is shown as a duplicitous

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[16] Harris discusses Integrational linguistics on his website: < http://www.royharrisonline.com/>

one in that the individual reader is a solitary entity that still enters into dialogue with other societies around her/him. The second idea has to do with the full integration of the reader in making meaning of the text. Both of these ideas of making meaning beyond the words written will prove very essential as I look at the concept of reception in later chapters.

Additionally, according to Harris, one cannot deny the fact that poetry reveals the tradition founded on song and recitation (the oral tradition). He goes on to say that the effects of rhyme, rhythm, assonance, and meter are rooted in oral and musical performance (173). But to go back to what was said earlier about sonic material being changed into a visible one, I bring in the work of Hegel, who suggests that the poet transforms sounds into material which has been penetrated by the (vitality) of the poet's spirit (173). Harris quotes Hegel as mentioning not only the poet, but the poet-writer, stating that s/he "devient de plus en plus indépendant de son héritage bardique" 'gradually became independent of his/her bardic heritage' (173). Hegel, like the main language theorists in this writing, notes the separation of the writer from the oral tradition that once fueled his poetry. It is here that I return to my first theorist, Zumthor, because his work will not only add the connective thread between my study of writing systems and the decline of the oral tradition, but will also give us some insight as to how to rediscover that which was lost.

Writing and Speaking

In a world that combines both writing and speaking, writing signifies a weakening of language. According to Zumthor, the poetics of writing—which make it so that one reads from left to right, with one main sense (sight), and devoid of performative indices—greatly reduces the richness of the resulting written text (35). His most poignant declaration, however, is one

which he gives in answer to the question as to whether the writing stifles the voice: "Sans doute, non" 'surely not' (299). And while he does not care to propose a way of studying the novel as one would oral poetry, he does provide examples that will allow us to pattern my future approach to the novel. Here are the main points that Zumthor (1984) uses as the main launching pads for his poetics of oral poetry: (1) the notion of voice as the unifying factor in any theatrical/performed work; (2) the notion of social values (sex, gender, class) that were governed by the voice—"le récit anecdotique, le potin, les confidences faites au dépositaire historiques drôles à sens politiques, l'exercice ludique et agnostique" 'the anecdotal tale, gossip, the belief in whimsical stories with political undertones; playful, and agnostic writings'(86). In his later work (1987) he suggests that once excluded voices have moved into novels in the form of songs and gests, an element of Bakhtin's heteroglossia. Lauchmann (1993) weighs in when he speaks about punctuation in writing as being linked to the act of speaking such that pauses (commas, colons, semi-colons, periods) and exclamatory points become remnants of orality. Zumthor also notes the development of other genres —the comic strip with bubbled vocal expressions, the radio, television (322) and, I might add, opera.

Revisiting the notion of the classical period excluding oral poetry for reasons of politics and aesthetics, I also note the explosion of the opera in France. Conk (1992), for example, suggests that the opera came in to fill a void left by the demise of the carnival. Here, scholars, who are keen to the ideals of the Bakhtin's *carnavalesque* (1965), will undoubtedly say that opera is perhaps the antithesis of the carnival because it constructs a hierarchy of voices, a prescribed aesthetic and form, and operates through a highly polished system of artistic expression. Nonetheless, the musical treatment of language, and modes of communication can be seen as representing the carnival, to say nothing of the many roles (for both actor and spectator)

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that the theatre creates. For now, though, I will propose that the voices of the minstrels, the

jongleurs, the troubadours, and the bards developed on their own, separating themselves from

novelistic discourse,[17] and developing into songs and, subsequently, into the opera. This is a

notion that will be discussed in later chapters. A final look Zumthor's (1984) work, though, gives

us another—somewhat poetic—approach to dealing with the effect of voice on written text:

> L'écriture demeure et stagne; la voix frisonne. L'une l'appartient et
>
> se conserve ; l'autre s'épanche et se détruit. La première convainc ;
>
> la seconde appelle. L'écriture capitalise ce que la voix dissipe…
>
> elle élève des remparts contre la mouvance de l'autre. Dans son
>
> espace clos, elle comprime le temps, le lamine, le force à s'étirer
>
> en direction du passé et de l'avenir ; du paradis perdu, et de
>
> l'utopie (p 285).

> Writing sits and stagnates, the voice moves. Writing is self-
>
> contained and looks after itself; the voice pours out itself and is
>
> finished. Writing conquers, the voice invites. Writing dwells on
>
> that which the voice expels…writing shields itself against the
>
> mouvance of the voice. In writing's closed cell, the voice
>
> compromises time, invigorates it, and forces it to extend itself to
>
> the past, the future, to paradise, and to utopia.

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[17] This is a term deliberately borrowed from Mikhail Bakhtin's 1940 essay "From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse." Bakhtin's work will be the main focus of the following chapter.

The main idea here is that a study of voice steps in to free written text from being critically approached as fixed and static. And although, I agree that Zumthor's work is best applied to the medieval manuscripts which were not as far removed from the oral tradition, and on those which Zumthor devoted his career, I will use his notions pertaining to voice as a launching pad for my work on the nineteenth-century novel. As I will show in later chapters, Zumthor's work regarding the medieval period finds a counterpart in the work of Mikhail Bakhtin and his approach to the novelistic discourse. For now, however, it would be justifiable to say that, holding true to the ideals of romanticism, the novel created a sort of dual exoticism in that the author was able to spin an endless amount of tales with fiction and half-fact, while being inspired by travels to the orient or to North Africa, and the reading subject was able to transcend her/his own noisy reality by entering a quieted inner place. But transcendence is inherently relative: one can never fully escape reality.

I believe, additionally, that the noise that existed at the site of composition of these novels, and at the noise at consumption of the text (reception) are both essential to the critical approaches to the text itself. That is to say the text is noisy, and so is the reception of it. I will seek to show, like Zumthor has with medieval oral poetry, that an approach to the nineteenth-century novel without an understanding of its noisiness is to limit oneself to a frozen experience. My point here, then, is not to propose a reading of the nineteenth-century novel that would be entirely similar to experiencing a recitation of an *épopée*, or even as opera, but to discover ways in which a study of voice affects the production and reception of the nineteenth–century novel. I close my reflection on the history of the nineteenth-century novel, which has drawn from the field of history, semiotics, philology, music, paleography, and science, by recapping the main points made.

The first point is that the nineteenth-century novel is a descendant of the twelfth-century novel—a genre which was inspired by the oral tradition of ancient societies. And the second point is that, for reasons of exclusion in the face of progress and the need for textual closure, novelistic discourse became separated from its oral past. In the chapters that follow I will look at how I can reunite these excluded discourses (those of voice and performance) with that of the novel. To conclude, I'll spin a little novel of my own.

Once upon a time, the early inhabitants of Earth decided to communicate with each other. They needed a way to make sense of all they could perceive with their senses. One way—and arguably the first way— of transforming these experiences into material was by voicing them with the fullness of sound that was afforded them. People used their voice to express, recount, narrate, and recite all they experience, had experienced, or had believed to have experienced. This tradition of using the voice as the main form of expression lasted a long time, and fueled quite a few centuries of legends and half-real-half-fantastical stories. But, these same people found the use of the voice a little unsettling because the voice could not be recorded, the message that was told would only last for a moment and then would either be forgotten, or retold with different words. In addition, the experience that was narrated was undoubtedly affected by the new person telling it. The new storyteller, for example, didn't remember all the parts, or didn't get the voices just right, so, in order to keep the story more or less "correct," a better way of narrating experiences had to be found, and therefore the birth of writing. By transforming experiences into writing, the record was more trustworthy, and could be transmitted to future generations of people, as long as the document remained intact. As such, the burden (and glory) was no longer placed on the storyteller to be a performer; the transmission of the text was no longer subject to the oratorical talents of the person. So the idea of preserving experiences in

writing did not only affect the message, but also affected the messenger. Whereas the main

storytellers of the time were bards who would practice and perform (sing and recite), the main

messengers after the onset of writing were the poets, the actual writers. The third change brought

about by the onset of writing, was seen in the reception of the message. Now, there was a more

direct link between the message and the receiver; there was, again, no heavy reliance on a

performer to interpret the message. Other differences are seen in the reliance on the eyes, as

opposed to the ears; material was now being marketed for the eyes! It seems as if the old war

between phonocentricsm and logocentricsm was waged quite some time ago. What came with

this fetish of the eyes was also the notion of aesthetics. Just as in music and architecture where

ornaments became the markers of the fetishized gaze on art, literary language, too, moved in that

vein. And, as time marched forward, people started writing more and more, and more. By the

nineteenth century, writing reached its highest point with the tradition of the romantic novel.

Novelists had no boundaries; no limits to what they could include in their work. And the story

being told was a mixture of many experiences: things (un)heard, things (un)seen, things old and

things new, which were all transformed into visual material. So, it would seem, performance lost

out when it came to telling stories. It's no mystery, really. But what happened to the great history

of voicing experiences? There is a line connection storytellers of yesteryear with those of the

nineteenth century: both are telling half-real-half-fantastical stories. But the connecting line that

was cut has to do with the performing voice. How can this line be found again*?* But there is more

to the story, for whereas the nineteenth-century novel is the highest form of visual material,

another type of material reached its climax centuries before. This art form combined the

performing voice of the storyteller with music, dance, and drama to become the craze in the long

century leading up to the nineteenth-century novel's arrival on the scene. This art form is the

opera.

CHAPTER III

OPERATIC TERRITORY:

CONSIDERING THE NOVEL, SPATIAL DYNAMICS OF LANGUAGE, MUSIC, AND

ORALITY

Placing opera

The reader may be surprised at the inclusion of opera in a dissertation that discusses literary criticism and the history of the French novel. In fact, the inclusion of opera may either seem like a poor attempt at making an otherwise banal topic more interesting than it is, or as a way of making this writing fit into a snazzier mold of interdisciplinary scholarship. But if one defines opera using the phases of performance that Zumthor (1983) reveals, and that are mentioned in the first chapter (production, transmission, reception, storage, and repetition), one sees that opera, like the novel, can be considered a performed work and that as such I argue that the novel can be experienced like an operatic work. That this literature (opera) is only considered exploitable within the walls of a specialized school (music schools, and conservatories) is to once again rob institutes of higher education of some of the richness of human expression. And it is this notion of discourse that I must revisit (later) because the discourse that opera offers is such that it is made up of different oral texts, the production, transmission, storage, and repetition of which require special training.

Lindenberger (1984), for one, admits that opera, by virtue of its hybridity, should be viewed as inherently interdisciplinary, but also reveals that it is, on the contrary, the qualities of opera that make it problematic within higher education (17). He adds that musicologists,

knowledgeable of the training and the technical skills needed to speak of musical form, have given themselves the right to claim operatic territory (18). The ability to decode musical notes, for example, is indispensable to any scholar who seeks to perform (or compose) opera. But this understanding does not hinder the non-musicologist (or the non-musician) from benefiting during the reception phase of opera because the reception of a particular work, similar to the reception of a spoken text, only requires that the recipient be present (in the largest sense of that word), and have the ability to perceive (hear, see, and feel). It is perhaps this reliance on perception that troubles the mind of the traditional scholar.

Looking back, I can see that Immanuel Kant is an important source for understanding this reliance on perception, and as Lindenberger (1998) reports, Kant considered that *music* (he does not speak about opera) is overly reliant on *sensations,* rather than on intellect and is therefore "low within the aesthetic hierarchy" (110). Lindenberger (1998) notes that, for Hegel, music is ranked in the romantic era of human's history (111). Houlgate (2010) describes this era as the time when humans freely and sensuously expressed the spirit's vitality. He also notes that it is an inward expression that, contrarily, extends itself beyond art itself.[18] And yet it is only the music of opera that Hegel would deem worthy of inclusion within the music schools, as he argues against the study of the music in isolation from its poetry. And if Kintzler's (1991) reflections on Plato's theories on poetry are to be believed, then poetry, too, by virtue of its reliance on a the subjectivity of aesthetic form and its inclusion of fiction, should be excluded from philosophical reasoning as it is inherently doomed to engender fallacious (sophistic) arguments. These reflections on music and poetry (literature!) would almost make me believe that there is very little academic value to the study of opera. But this is, clearly, not the case.

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[18] See Houlgate, Stephen, "Hegel's Aesthetics," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2010 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2010/entries/hegel-aesthetics/>.

With these perspectives in mind, howver, I seek to achieve a number of goals in this chapter. Firstly, to define opera as a form of data-rich writing that can be considered, or at least evaluated, as an artwork that can be experienced like literature. Then, I will show some of the didactic, linguistic, and literary value of including the study of opera within higher education. Next, I reveal new ways in which the novel is like the opera; and then I present a framework for ways in which the criticism and history of opera can affect criticism of written texts (including literary ones). In the end I hope to bring opera to bear upon current debates about artworks, and in so doing raise its standing within institutions of higher education. I will begin at the beginning and present a history of opera. My simple questions are: When and how did opera come about? Where did it start? Who wrote the first opera?

Opera as an inheritor of the oral tradition

I will begin with the last questions, for those answers seem to be present even in realm of popular culture. "Opera is for the Italians," says the character of Salieri to the young Mozart in the 1984 movie, *Amadeus.* "There are two things an Italian knows how to do: make love, and sing opera," says the character of Sophia in the 1980's hit show *The Golden Girls.* As simplistic, and hilarious as it may sound, the idea that opera, to say nothing of love, was mastered by the Italians is actually historically true: as far as this project is concerned, opera was first created in Italy, by Italians. Donington (1981) suggests that even though the details surrounding the first opera remain obscure, there is, nonetheless, strong evidence to suggest that the first opera was *Dafne.* A collaborative effort between by the librettist Rinuccini, and composers Corsi, and Peri, this opera was first performed in 1598 in Florence's Carnival (104). I am quick to note, though, that this work was not classified as an opera, but rather as a pastoral drama. The word *opera*, as

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Grout (1988) states, was not used until 1634, and is the shortened form of the expression *opera in musica*, a work of music (1). Donington, however, qualifies *Daphne* not only as a pastoral drama, but as *different* from any pastoral that came before. Rinuccini himself, speaking of his next libretto *L'Euridice*, explains this difference. He states that:

…the ancient Greeks and Romans sang entire tragedies on the stage; but such a noble manner of reciting has not only not been renewed, but, so far as I know, not even attempted until now by anybody and this I thought a defect of modern music, very far inferior to the ancient (104).

To add even more depth to Rinuccini's arguments is Ian Worthington's 2002 work on oral performance, Demosthenes and *proemia* in the Athenian assembly. Demosthenes was a prominent orator man in the Ancient Greek society and the *proemia*, were the spoken preludes used before his recitations. In discussing the role of this prominent man, and the legacy he inspired, Worthington states that a good speech is the role of an orator, but that of choosing beneficial policies is assigned to one who is also politically savvy. That the two competences (that of delivering a good speech and that of being clever) should be joined shows a man who is doubly talented. This doubly-endowed man is considered the "cleverest" of orators. And is not one who attains his title by sudden flight, but with much practice. The main points of Worthington's discussion are that the proemia show the relationship that existed between the (advisers) speaker and the listener, in that much attention was paid to the speaker's performance and he was judged on the basis of this.

Reflecting perhaps on the role of Demosthenes in ancient Athens, I return to the notion of a theatrical production that is sung in its entirety as evidence used to judge Rinuccini's work as an opera. It is interesting to note here that it is the librettist (the poet) and not the composer who is making this declaration, as it already troubles my understanding of to which domain opera belongs. I will return to this notion later. For now, though, *Dafne* answers my questions of what, where, and who, I think it important to also address why.

Why opera came into being is another question shrouded by uncertainty because of the lack of evidence from which to draw. Grout, however, provides a general statement that will serve as a preface:

> The custom of using music in connection with dramatic
> presentations is universal. It is found throughout the history of all
> cultures and among primitive and civilized peoples alike. This is
> perhaps because the desire to add music to drama is really part of
> the dramatic instinct itself (1).

Here, the notion of marrying music to drama is seen as instinctual, or even natural. Combined with Rinuccini's notions concerning the ancient Greeks and Romans who sang entire tragedies on stage, the idea of adding music to dramatic oral texts is far from new, but is a form of expression that is as ancient as my existing records allow us to go. I may, therefore, consider opera as the re-addition of music (*rajouter*) to text, or more poetically as the reconciliation of language to music. As I have shown in previous chapters, the language (poetry) of classical antiquity, judging by the writing I studied, has undoubtedly changed. And along the way it has

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been treated by various linguistic and social norms that prefer certain types of discourse, while excluding others. As such, the music that has been re-added to this poetry is also different from what would have been heard on the stage of the ancient Greeks and Romans. I do not pretend to believe that there is any similarity between the music on the stage of Rinuccini's *Dafne* and that of Sophocles' *Elektra,* in fact such a thing, as Higounet (1986) states would be impossible to argue because sound (similar to smell) has no natural historicity, "except in the case where the sound's identification is a secondary act, dependent on the existence of a system of writing" (39). While there may have been a system of recording (writing down) sound in ancient Greece—though it is commonly accepted that these tragedies remained, for the most part, dynamic, improvised, oral texts—there remains no such writing (musical notation) from which to compare the musical aspect of classical tragedy with that of the first opera. And neither is it possible to ascertain which element (the text or the music) came first, but it can be speculated, within reason, which circumstances drew out the first song. Some may say that language, as simple symbolic representations of human experience, had to come first in the order to things. Others may retort, saying that music, as a simple pattern of sounds and silence, had to come first, as the heartbeat is the first primal rhythm of humans.

Some scholars may refuse to enter this debate, saying that overly-simplistic definitions of music and language have no place in a scholarly exercise, and the efforts expended to recreate the development of early humans are best left to other specialists who afford themselves the theory of mysticism. All would agree, though, that tracing the origins of music and language is best done by examining written documents. And consistent with the culture of the Western world, I find myself navigating through the remaining artifacts of the Roman and Greek empires, waiting and hoping to find more artifacts to open up my understanding of how music and text

intersected in ancient Greece and Rome. Perhaps the answer lies in the statement of Condillac, who suggested that the ancestors spoke in such a musical manner that would easily allow for musical transcriptions of his voice. The answer may very well be that the very earliest civilizations were singing ones, and that the creators of opera in the 1600s artfully found a way to transfer the object from its original form into mass entertainment. This understanding of opera, then, brings up not only questions of art as a consumed commodity, but also the poetics of art, that is, the machine through which a phenomenon must pass in order to become a repeatable, perfectible oeuvre. For now, though, I will be satisfied with the understanding that the notion of fully-sung theatrical production was not new in seventeenth-century Italy, but was a return to a sort of discourse that was popular not only in Classical theatre, but also in society.[19]

This idea of inheriting from the past is argued differently by Donington (1981), who defines opera as "a staged drama unfolding integrally in words and music" (19). He conceives of opera as an inheritor of Neoplatonism, such that opera drew on the notions of half-revealing, half-veiling the truth. Additionally, Neoplatonism dwells on the notion of opposites, and on the fundamental idea that despite moral, scientific, and philosophical interventions, many aspects of human experience cannot be explained. The genesis of opera for Donington, then, bows to this form as well, and by virtue thereof, occupies a grey area. For Donington, the genesis, development, composition, performance, and reception of opera are representative of a half-blinded approach to a type of truth. He provides an example of this idea by referencing a painting: Titan's *Venus Blindfolding Cupid*.

In this painting, three women are presented: one holding a bow, another holding a quiver of arrows, and a third, who wearing a crown, blindfolds Cupid. There is, however, another Cupid

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[19] Aristotle's statements in *Problemata X* concerning the singing of the laws in Ancient Greece and Rome is recalled.

in the painting; he leans on the crowned lady, and contemplatively observes his other self being

blinded. Donington explains that this painting depicts the blindfolding of the sensual Cupid in

the presence of the spiritual Cupid, who still sees. Beyond this, however, I see the ideal of the

Neoplatonic approach to art: Cupid represents the ideals of Neoplatonism because he only sees

with his lustful eye, and not with his spirit; he is half-veiled. The idea of opposites, and of

conflicting spaces, herein begins to evolve. To extend Donington's arguments, I wonder if music

and texts are seen as inhabiting two separate spaces, bowing to different defining criteria. And if

music and text, for the sake of argument, occupy these well-defined separate spaces, what makes

up this slippery gray area?

An answer to this question and one that extends the argument of diverging spaces is

Lindenberger's (1984) notion of operatic (musical) vs. verbal (dramatic) space. For him, the

spaces can occupy extreme ends of the spectrum, where the operatic aspects consider terms such

as *histrionic, extravagant, gestural, ceremonial*, and *performative*; while the verbal aspect

considers terms *literary, restrained, referential,* and *mimetic* (76). The essence of Lindenberger's

argument is that on this spectrum, the two extremes collide and dialogue on multiple plains,

depending on the type of opera being represented.[20] I am satisfied, though, with my findings that

opera re-institutionalized the oral tradition of Ancient Greek and Rome by restoring the role of

the singing voice on the stage. However, the singing voice, as Lindenberger's has suggested, is

only a part of the complex operation that constitutes opera. In fact, I believe that the operatic

machine, by nature of how it perpetually navigates between poeticized discourses with reliance

on the leading of the voice, is extremely complicated. I agree with Lindenberger, then, when he

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[20] It is important to note the inclusion of the term *dialogue;* the notion of dialoguing spaces within the opera and the novel will be thoroughly discussed in the following chapter. I will also return to these terms in the following chapter to look at the role of performance in the realm of the reception of performed literature--both that of the novel and of the opera.

speaks of opera as being high-minded, and as the "last remaining refuge of the high style" (15); and the production and performing forces that the machine requires to put itself into motion are indeed *extravagant* (Lindenberger) and so is the support needed to keep the colossal machine up and running. But the danger with approaching opera as a remaining extravagance is that it may encourage a certain reader in her/his use of descriptors such as *fancy, elitist, irrelevant, outdated,* and *obsolete.* Depending upon one's views of the "ivory tower," such descriptions could be either the reason why opera is (or should) be included in the corpus of objects studied in (say) all several disciplines that make up institutions of higher education. But opera has a gentler face that is rarely, if ever, seen or mentioned; and knowing this hidden face takes the focus away from aesthetics and popular criticism, and allows us to concentrate on notions of orality (the role of the performing voice) and the fundamental commonalities that the novel shares with opera. That is to say, the fundamental principles by which the colossal operatic machine functions are so basic, so downright primordial that one cannot help but marvel at this paradox: the thing which is seen as a marker of human's highest level of civilization draws its inspiration from human's most primitive (simple) self; as simple, even, as the breath. Let us look at a little opera[21].

Dialoguing spaces to create meaning

I will start with an excerpt of English composer Henry Purcell's *Fairy Queen* (1692). The libretto is based on William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream.* The excerpt below is taken from one of the opera's most popular arias, "The plaint," or "O let me weep…" and is heard in the final act of the opera:

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[21] The operas included as examples here are chosen at the researcher's discretion and are seen to best illustrate, for an English-speaking audience, the musical treatment of language that is pivotal to this study.

O let me weep, forever weep,

My Eyes no more shall welcome Sleep;

I'll hide me from the sight of Day,

And sigh, and sigh my Soul away.

He's gone, he's gone, his loss deplore;

And I shall never see him more.

From this lament, I will focus on the word *sigh*, which is repeated once in the text, but twice in

the musical score. Now, a sigh has many meanings, not unlike the cultural, social, and gendered

role assigned to a tear. Researchers, in fact, in the realm of psychophysiology suggest that:

Whereas sighing appears to function as a physiological resetter,

the psychological function of sighing is largely unknown. Sighing

has been suggested to occur both during stress and negative

emotions, such as panic and pain, and during positive emotions,

such as relaxation and relief (1005).[22]

It is justifiable to think that, in my excerpt, the character sighs out of grief after having lost her

lover (by awakening to face the reality after a finished dream, perhaps). Whatever the reason

behind the sigh, it can be described an audible expelling of a surplus of air, which results in the

emptying of the lungs. The sigh, as the reader may have already noticed in his/her own human

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[22] Vlemincx, E. et al. *Psychophysiology*, 46 (2009): 1005–1013.

experience, has a visual component; the thoracic cavity swells itself and then collapses downwards as the breath is expelled. With this in mind, let us look at the sigh, which is represented here with the use of a descending interval of a fifth.

Example 2.1

And   sigh,   sigh,   sigh —

The visual representation, and the interpretation of the music by the singer, are both extremely striking in the depiction of the human experience of a sigh. This is not to say that every descending interval of a fifth is representative of the downward heaving sigh, but it seems very evident that the composer, Purcell, deliberately assigned this motif to depict this expression.

Another quick example of this approach to the sigh is found in Georg Friedrich Handel's *Semele* (1744). Staged in England before a somewhat ill-prepared audience, the story of *Semele* retells the Greek myth of the seduction of Semele by Jupiter, which results in the birth of Dionysus. The libretto for Handel's opera was written by the librettist William Congreve. In this excerpt the title character, Semele, is unsatisfied with the attention she receives from her god-lover Jupiter. She decides to draw his attention. She complains:

Semele

Ah me!

Jupiter

Why sighs my Semele?

What gentle sorrow

Swells thy soft bosom?

Why tremble those fair eyes

With interrupted light,

Where hov'ring for a vent,

Amidst their humid fires,

Some new-form'd wish appears?

Speak, and obtain!

Semele

At my own happiness

I sigh and tremble,

For I am mortal,

Still a woman;

And ever when you leave me,

Though compass'd round with deities

Of Loves and Graces,

A fear invades me,

And conscious of a nature

Far inferior,

I seek for solitude

And shun society.

Jupiter (apart)

Too well I read her meaning,

But must not understand her:

Aiming at immortality

With dangerous ambition.

Unlike the excerpt taken from Purcell, herein I see the representation of the sigh in the words "Ah me!" to which the question is asked "Why sighs my Semele?" Once again, the significance of the sigh may be taken into account, for it is clear that Semele uses her sigh to *voice* her conflicted feelings of happiness and fear, and also to alert her lover to her need for attention. The music, however, suggests a similar approach to sighing as that of Purcell: a downward interval. But this time, the interval is of a third, and not of a fifth:

Example 2.2

RECIT.—" AH ME !'

Ah me! Why sighs my Se - me - le?

In the use of sighs in Purcell's music, I see a similar approach to the sigh in the music of Handel: it is a downward inflection. Returning to the excerpt above, I see more than just the musical representation of the sigh, but see an agreement between the rhythm and stress patterns of the sung and spoken text. That is to say, the composer has placed the first syllable of the word *Semele* on the downbeat of the measure, thus assuring that the emphasis is correctly placed on that same syllable. He has also placed the words *Why sighs my* as the anacrusis of the musical measure, which, incidentally, is the exact position of the words in the spoken poetry. The composer and the librettist, therefore, have seemed to agree that Jupiter's utterance, being a question that speaks of some urgency, will be presented as a one-tone group with a rising tone at the end, and the tonic is placed on the first syllable of the final word. [23]

The result is an opera which complements English poetry perfectly, pleasing as it natural. Semele's sigh, though, models notions of dialoguing spaces, as the poetized text (*Ah me!*) is wedded to the poetized music (the descending, major third), which, I would argue, is guided by a mimetic approach to the sigh in human behavior. It is here, perhaps, that the opera scholar will

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[23] By way of personal anecdote, it was interesting to watch French students at la Sorbonne Nouvelle Paris-III sit their oral examinations in which they are asked to read English sentences with varying inflections, changing the tonic within the sentence in order to vary shades of meaning. How fruitful would it be to study English linguistics by studying English Baroque opera! This would certainly prove to be an exciting project for the future.

argue that Baroque music, especially in the hands of the composer (Handel) mentioned above is laced with artifice, and pyrotechnics. S/he may also cite the heavy reliance on coloratura and music-serving melisma as a main point of dissention with my attempt at associating mimesis with Baroque opera's treatment of linguistic expression. At first glance, the excesses of Italian and English Baroque music seem to function as flowery decorations on a pillar, in fact, it is normally said that the Baroque period, in terms of aesthetics, was a time of much ornamentation and excessive decoration, not only in music, but in architecture and in writing. While this may be undeniable, there are, however, other ways of understanding coloratura and melisma within the context of Baroque music that would focus upon mimesis" rather than flowery, superfluous ornamentation. Perhaps too essentialist in its initial departure, this step will help us to make sense of what I hear.

By the way of example, I look, at the following melismata from Handel's *Semele*. Before doing this, however, it is important to note that the character of Semele, unlike her counterpart in Greek mythology, is not the typical pretty-innocent-helpless victim who is powerless to refuse the will of Jupiter. In the opera, contrarily, she is portrayed as a lethally vain woman who, because of her extreme vanity, allowed herself to be duped and deceived, leading to her own destruction. In the following excerpt, then, Semele is seen in a moment of deception. Here, her jealous sister, Ino, presents her with a magical mirror. In the mirror, Semele sees herself transformed from a mere mortal into a beautiful, powerful goddess. In the heights of her magic-aided vanity, she looks at herself in the mirror and declares:

Recitative

Oh, ecstasy of happiness!

Celestial graces

I discover in each feature!

Air

Myself I shall adore,

If I persist in gazing.

No object sure before

Was ever half so pleasing.

Myself I shall adore,

If I persist in gazing.

From this text, I will examine the word "gazing," which is the focus of almost all the coloratura and melismatic treatment within the air:

Example 2. 3

- dore,   myself I shall a - dore,   If I persist in gaz - - - -

- ing,   my- self I shall a - dore, .

Here, I see two main characteristics of Baroque opera: the repetition of text, and the use of many notes on one syllable (melisma). This latter notion is the stuff of coloratura. I will look, however, at the first idea, that of repetition. The question that may be asked by critics of Baroque opera: Why repeat the same text over, and over? The simple answer to that, since I have already

decided to view opera in the context of other artistic production, it is never acceptable to say anything about any one thing only once. I need only look at the big space there is between the covers of dictionaries, or examine the role of adjectives, adverbs, and synonyms within any language to understand why. Or, from a literary standpoint, it suffices to examine the many pages of text used to describe the architecture of second-empire France in a Zola novel, for example. All this to say that, as communicators, humans take pride in being able to speak about the same thing in different ways; and not only do we take pride in it, we have used our innate linguistic abilities as markers of our progress as members of a highly civilized society.[24] Repetition, then, is a necessary part of the human experience, and documentation is the source to which we must turn in order to study it. In fact, it is thanks to this reliance on repetition, and the ability to recognize repetition, that our species has flourished, and achieved the level of cultural sophistication requisite for the production of the works herein discussed.

This notion is explained in Sheila Rabillard's presentation of Edward Said's (1983) interpretation of Giambattista Vico's work (1744). Rabillard (2008) cites Said as saying:

> Near the end of *The New Science*, after having laid forth in detail
>
> the precise way in which human history is not only made by men
>
> but also made by them according to cycles that repeat themselves,
>
> Vico then proceeds to explain how these repetitions are intelligent
>
> patterns that preserve the human race (144).

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[24] Rousseau's treaty on the degradation of the French language in the face of an increase in civility comes back to mind.

I can extend this understanding of repetition to justify the importance of patterns in biology, or the patterns which taught our ancestors which actions would ensure their survival and those which would surely lead to their destruction. It is this necessity to repeat that is so central to our experience that it is presented to us on stage, and in other genres, too. In fact, it is this notion of repetition that is the stuff of, say, Beckett's *En attendant Godot*, or Poulin's *Les Grandes Marées,* to give but two examples. In the case of Beckett, the absurd repetition of actions of Estragon and Vladamir that makes up the essence of the play can be seen as commentary on the repetitive nature of life as humans wait for what is to come next. Similarly, for Poulin, the ebb and flow of the tides that affect life on *l'île Madame* can be seen as an allegory of perpetual repetition that (with or without reason) paradoxically becomes the one constant for the human species. Additionally, it is repetition that partially informs Zola's work on naturalism, in the sense that he compiles, produces and reproduces facts, indicators, and narratives that, in their repetition, find what he considered to be scientific value. In fact, repetition is the operating principle behind any scientific endeavor, for if an experiment cannot be repeated its principles cannot be ascertained. These few examples lead me to make one main declaration: to repeat is human. (Here I might add that to do so thoughtlessly or automatically is instinctual, which is also human, and proper to all living beings as well.) It is, therefore, not out of pure decoration and the need to subscribe to the tendencies of the Baroque period that repetition is included in Baroque opera. The use of melismas, though, has yet to be examined in the context of human behavior. For so far, I have only looked at communication in terms of verbal language; the things we say. Communication, though, is made up of non-verbal cues as well.

A critical reference for this sort of work is De Certeau's 1996 work *Vocal Utoposias: Glossolalias*. Herein, De Certeau illustrates the semantic value of non-words that must work in

tandem with any written text in order to make meaning. The reception of a voiced message, then, is the focus of this approach, and it's applicable to the areas under discussion here. De Certeau contends that, should speech be examined not through semiotic, or lexicographic lens, but based solely on the aspects of performance—how it is said—one stands to discover a network of dialoguing systems, (an opera, he says!) that operate whenever communication takes place. In order to make his point, he uses an interesting reference to preface this concept: St Augustine's declaration in the *Ennarrationes in psalmos* to "let… fullness of joy without measure surpass the limits of syllables"(42). Used elsewhere to justify the existence of the Holy Spirit's leading to speak in tongues, De Certeau applies this understanding of unmeasured syllables to include notions of meaning-making that do not conform to the normal linguistic approaches. In fact, his definition of the term *glossolalia* is "a class of related deviant linguistic behaviors characterized by discourse that is fluid and mobile, divisible into phonemic units, and entirely or almost entirely constituted by neologisms" (1). His work, then, conceptualizes communication as inhabiting various spaces: one definite space governed by the spoken words within a certain language, and another indefinite space where the act of saying is governed by the voice. To that effect he says, "Glossolalia has metalinguistic value but in relation to the act of enunciation. It isolates speech from all that one says. In this theoretical vocal space, speech can say itself" (33).

In this latter statement, glossolalia is defined as the theoretical approach to communication that focuses not on the mode of speaking, but the act of speaking. Vocal utopia is defined, then, as a transitory stage between muteness (where one is at a loss for words) to actual speech (where one speaks in words). The in-between stage—which is void of any language, and governed by an "abjection of meaning," and influenced by the need to say something, and the belief in the use of speech— is considered utopic because it is linguistically neutral (31). Within

this privileged space, the phenomenon of speaking in tongues, of repetition, of vocal inflection, of grunts, of sighs, of tears, and of all non-verbal expressions have a decidedly linguistic value. From this discussion, I would like to focus on two fundamental points. The first is the idea of words failing to make meaning, as evidenced by St. Augustine's statement, and the second is the role of both verbal and non-verbal clues working in tandem to fully communicate. Returning to the realm of Baroque opera, I can see melisma's functioning as these unmeasured syllables, or non-words that work in conjunction with the actual word to better translate its meaning. Semele, then, in her "ecstasy of happiness" cannot limit her expression to one utterance, and neither can she help but show her ebullience at the sight of her improved beauty. Her repetitions and coloratura are adjectives, synonyms, hyperboles, analogies, rhetorical phrases, and exclamation signs which conspire to show how excitedly content the woman is. (We will remember that Semele was a very vain woman to begin with!) This notion of meaning-making, non-verbal clues within the realm of opera is echoed by Austrian conductor Nikolaus Harnoncourt. Speaking in an interview about Slovak soprano Edita Gruberova, Harnoncourt says:

> I think she and her voice are one. The sound you hear is who she is… She has a wonderfully flexible voice, with endless possibilities and an incredible number of colors. She's really the only female singer, or coloratura singer today, who doesn't see the coloratura as sport but as something really expressive."[25]

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[25] This is taken from a documentary of Edita Gruberova and her preparation for a production of the opera *Lucrezia Borgia* . [Donizetti: Lucrezia Borgia / The Art of Belcanto (2009)]

This statement supports the argument that the approach to language on stage is not always superficial in any aspect that involves performance. Here, I have shown that the composition of the music and the performance of it is a form of human discourse (expression) that has taken on different forms, but that all work in tandem to make meaning.[26]

The examples I have taken from Purcell and Handel are particularly apt for this project because they provoke several notions. Firstly, they allow me to consider the fundamental simplicity of the operational forces behind operatic treatment of language in this period as the counter-narrative to the contemporary criticism of opera as a high art form. Next, they reveal operatic treatment of language as mimetic and representational in that it is inspired, on some level, by human behavior not normally associated with it. Also, having established opera as an inheritor of the orality that novelistic discourse excluded, I see examples of how operatic discourse includes orality—as it relates to vocal utterances, and the use of altered repetition—in order to communicate and make meaning. At this point the opera scholar will be extremely concerned about the broad strokes that I have taken in describing an art that already has many shades of itself. And it is true that while a few examples have shown moments in which Baroque opera has shown instances of an academically exploitable approach to the treatment of language at the opera, I may not be able to speak as broadly of all types of opera. In fact, I agree with Corse (1987) who argues that "[w]hether opera is generally considered an art or whether it is taken as essentially meaningless often depends on the individual work in question" (13). (Her use of the word *art* here is placed in contrast to the word "meaningless.") Following this notion, I will now study a type of opera that is the best example of the treatment of language at the opera, and one that will bear much meaning for this project.

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[26] The ways in which this can be transmitted to the novel will be fully explored in the chapter that follows.

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Perrin and Cambert's *Pomone* as doubly-altered discourse

The opera of which I speak is the work of French composer Robert Cambert, and librettist Pierre Perrin. I choose the work of these men for one main reason: the site at which the work was created. Now, the word *site* is a loaded one, and one that should be explained. We are in seventeenth-century France, that is to say, the time when the *Académie française* exploded with methodic knowledge; conventions of form—pertaining to everything, really—were being polemicized in various forms; religion and politics confronted each other about issues of morality; a time in which the French language was being meticulously dissected and discussed for reasons of correctness; and a time in which France was perhaps the most determined to prove the sovereignty of its language, its people, its politics, and its land. The main point here is that everything was scrutinized, inspected, debated, and examined. Also, France at this time was still responding to Du Bellay's 1549 charge to declare the glory of France by writing it. So, unlike the origins of Italian opera which may forever be half-shrouded by much uncertainty, the beginnings of French opera, by virtue of this attention paid to writing, are clearer. And the writing of French opera reveals yet another fascinating story.

French opera did not begin in France, but as Murata (1995) notes, in Italy. Murata suggests that the first "French" opera was in Italy in 1638, offered in celebration of Louis XIV's birthday. The opera, *Sincérita trionfante*, was performed in Italian, and composed by an Italian composer, but was given the name *French* because it was sponsored by the French ambassador, and celebrated a momentous French occurrence. This enchanting spectacle, which was witnessed by members of the French nobility, impressed many, and two years later, opera was brought to Paris. It was in the 1640s, at the behest of Cardinal Mazarin that opera troupes from Italy were carried to Paris in order to sell Italian opera to the French. According to Weiss (2002), Mazarin's

goal was to "Italianize French culture" (40). This attempt was a complete failure. Combined with the negative effects of the 1648 *Fronde* in Paris, and the length of these cumbersome operas, the enthusiasm for Italian opera was not to be found. The operatic machine, too, (the language, the music, the staging, the set, and the dancing) was a strange spectacle that did not appeal to the French. But while the style of opera didn't appeal to the French, the idea of opera itself did, and this engendered various attempts at equating similar spectacles in France.[27] Finally in 1666, as Giraud (2010) reports, a very resolute French poet, who was weary of having to rely on any sort of Italian influence in the creation of his French music, decided to combine efforts with a talented French composer to create a French version of that which audiences in Italy, England, and Germany enjoyed. These two men were Pierre Perrin (librettist), and Robert Cambert (composer).

Together Perrin, and Cambert proposed the creation of an academy of music, which at that time of its conception, as Giraud states, was "a state-sponsored collegial structure aimed at inventing and perfecting a national art form" (12). Simply put, the true creators of French opera[28] decided to take Italian opera and novelize it (*mettre en roman*) to please the national French taste. Their most successful collaboration resulted in the pastorale *Pomone* which was performed in 1670. They had a tremendous success, and the taste in French music was finally satiated. Unfortunately, Perrin and Cambert were not as keen on managing their finances, and though the

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[27] Other fore-runners to opera—which can be better studied as separate births, and not as miscarriages— were the pastorales, and the comédies ballet. Other early children are classified as airs (See Gordon-Seiffert, 2005; 2011 for a detailed history). Giraud finally defines French opera, not only in terms of geography, and the biography of the composer, but by the content and form of the libretto, and the style of the music, as it conforms to the conventions of a national taste. This taste in music, which is decidedly a subjective thing, in the 17th-century is, otherwise, structured by the *Académie française*, and the dialogue between the court and the private circles (salons) in Paris. (See Rollin, 2006, for a description of national taste in the 17th-Century.)
[28] This is the title of Arthur Pougin's (2011) work *Les Vrais Créateurs de L'Opéra Français, Perrin et Cambert* .

performances of Pomone were many, as Giraud (2010) reports, neither Perrin nor Cambert had written agreements with their benefactors, and received very little of the profit from their opera's performances. Perrin ended up in debtor's prison, and Cambert left France for England. It was then that Jean-Baptise Lully, an Italian, naturalized-French man, who was favored by Louis XIV, appeared on the scene to make Perrin an offer he could not refuse: sell his privilege to the opera to Lully in exchange for his freedom. The exchange was made, and Lully would end up receiving endless rights to stage performances at the *Académie Royale de Musique*. The story, then, becomes somewhat absurd, for I will now show yet another Italian man trusted to novelize Italian opera for the French public. The Italian man does manage to do this, and in the fourteen years of his *tragédies en musique* the impact that the work had on the masses was curiously phenomenal. In fact, Lully was able to recreate the full life cycle of any art: false starts; perfecting the art; repeating it successfully; receiving criticism of all forms; losing mass appeal, but keeping faithful followers (even some fifty years after his death); and finally leaving a legacy behind him against which new directions in opera could be checked and compared. But how did the Italian man, the foreign *Florentin*, manage to do this? There are many possible explanations, but first must remember that Lully was not alone; he worked closely with the French librettist Philippe Quinault. That Lully, then, should be the sole recipient of glory is to be very unfair. One quick example is enough to ascertain the nature of the relationship between the two men. Weiss (2002) presents Charles Perrault's arguments in defense of the Quinault, who, after the production of the opera *Alceste* (1674), was being accused of being a mediocre librettist.

> In a word that is to be sung, the syllable we hear ought to lead us to
> guess at the one we have not heard; and in a sentence, some words

we have heard ought to lead us to supply those that have escaped

our hearing; and finally, a portion of a speech ought to be sufficient

to let us understand the whole of it. Now, that cannot be done unless

the words, the expressions, and the thoughts are entirely natural,

familiar, and in common use; thus, Monsieur, they are blaming

Monsieur Quinault for just the point on which he most deserves to

be praised…" (46).

Interesting in this brief passage is the notion of the work it took to prepare the text to make it understandable and suitable for the French public. That is to say, the collaboration between the librettist, and the composer was pivotal in the success of the *tragédie lyrique*, though Weiss suggests that French opera in the hands of Lully was thrust upon the French public by "royal decree" (45). What was not forced upon the French public was the production of Perrin and Cambert, *Pomone.* I wonder if the same attention to altering the text played a role here.

To add more depth to my project, is the work of Catherine Kintzler, who focuses on the treatment of language (text) at the opera. When describing opera, Kintzler (1991) defines music as a poetic musical material, fulfilling the same role as the text in a theatre (16). She cites the work of Perrin, as it pertains to the musical object within opera, "il faut que la musique reçoive une fonction poétique à part entière" 'music must receive a separate poetic function of its own' (190). In terms of the text used for opera, Kintzler opens her thesis with a separation of the *texte poétique* into two distinct theoretical domains: poetic theory, and philosophical theory. This separation, however, is not complete, as there is a continuity and homogeneity between the two domains at their initial conception. Using arguments from Aristotle and Plato as the basis for this distinction,

she contends that any critical reflection on the poetic text as an "aesthetic object" will lead to a philosophical status being granted to the object (10). "Pour penser l'objet esthétique il faut se donner une logique, une physique, une éthique et une ontologie" 'In order to become an aesthetic object, one must accord the poet text a logic, an anatomy, an ethic, and an ontology' (10). She goes on to state that it is only by studying language (text), and then by presenting itself as language, that music is able to fulfill its role in the poetic scheme of opera (191). (The French composer Rameau, who works in the mid-eighteenth century, according to Kintzler, is the first to set up music as a separated, exploitable subject). Darlow (2012), as well, argues in his article that a libretto is only made into a drama when it has music. While this statement does not negate the independence of music and libretto, it does highlight the primary importance of utility: the libretti were composed for the music, and the music composed for the libretti. The process of separating the two, then, similarly to the process of finding out the primal order of language and music, is futile. And the undoing of the two would, consequently, undo the genre (drama). Returning to the work of Kintzler, though, I get a glimpse of the poet's approach to the poetic text for singing, which serves as the preface to the opera:

> Ce que j'ai ajouté du mien, est que j'ai compose la pièce de vers
>
> lyriques et non pas alexandrins, parce que les vers courts et remplis
>
> de césures et de rimes sont plus propres au chant et plus commodes
>
> à la voix qui reprend son haleine plus souvent et plus aisément.
>
> J'ajoute à cela qu'étant plus variés, ils s'accommodent mieux aux
>
> variations continuelles que demande la belle musique, ce qui comme
>
> vous savez a été observé devant moi et pratiqué par les Grecs et les

Latins. Ce qui m'est pareillement singulier en cette comédie, c'est

une manière particulière de traiter les paroles de musique françaises,

dans laquelle il y a des observations et des délicatesses jusqu'ici peu

connues et qui demandent un art et un génie tout particulier.

To distinguish my work, I composed the piece with verses for

singing and not alexandrines because short verses with many

caesura and rhymes are better suited for singing and more fitted to

the singer, who is thus able to take a breath more frequently and with

more ease. Added to that, being so varied, my verses allow the

continuous variations that the beautiful music demands, which, as

you know, had been practiced by the ancient Greeks and Romans.

What is also just as distinguishing about my work is the manner in

which I apply the lyrics to the French music, a process made up of

delicate operations that heretofore where not done and ones that

required a special art and genius.

This citation from Perrin is very provocative for this research in several ways. In it I note the use

of the verb *to add*, the juxtaposition of the words *alexandrine* and *lyrical*, the reference made to

the human breath, the notion of the rhyme and rhythm in the oral tradition of the Greeks and

Romans, and the notion of treating French words with music in order to render a new genre. The

use of the verb *ajouter* strikes me as interesting as it sets up an interesting comparison between

what is not *du mien* 'mine,' I suspect the theatre, as being a lesser art form. Also, the verb, albeit

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better set as *rajouter,* reminds me of the notion of endowing language with the musicality that it once had, and that is still inherent to it. The second notion of preferring shorter verses over longer ones because of how easily they lend themselves to lyrical exploitation is important because it shows that a meditation on the text is present when the music is being prepared. And the main justification here has to do with the need to accommodate the human breath. (This approach to writing opera which is reliant on the breath recalls the discussion about the representation of the sigh in the selected works of Handel and Purcell.) Perrin continues to state that the poet must also exclude certain elements from the poetic text before it can be rendered ready for singing. In the preface to the *Recueil des paroles de musique*, Perrin says:

> Sur ce pied-là j'ai tâché de faire mon discours beau, propre au chant et pathétique : et dans cette vue j'en ai toujours choisi la matière dans les passions tendres qui touchent le cœur par sympathie d'une passion pareille, d'amour ou de haine, de crainte ou de désir, de colère, de pitié, de merveille, etc. et je n'en ai banni tous les raisonnements sérieux et qui font dans la froideur, et même les passions graves causées par des sujets sérieux, qui touchent le cœur sans l'attendrir.

> Thus I've tried to write my most beautiful lyrics, ready to be sung and full of emotion. And I've always written about subjects to inspire tender passions that touch the heart and inspire therein a similar passion, be it love or hate, fear or desire, rage or pity, or the

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fanciful, etc. and I rid the language of all notions of serious

reasoning and anything that is cold, even the heavy emotions caused

by serious matters, which touch the heart without softening it.

The most provocative word here is *pathétique*. Using this word to coin the verb *pathétiser* "to render full with pathos," Kintzler reveals that Perrin's alteration of the text to transform it into one that is suitable for singing happens through a process of exclusion, and preferential treatment of certain discourses (361). That is to say, the librettist avoids any "raisonnements froids et sérieux. Délibérations, maximes, narrations seront autant que possible évitées" 'cold and serious reasoning; deliberations, maxims, and narrations are also avoided as much as possible' (361). This is done, she continues, so that the opera can focus purely on powerful emotions that make the listener feel immediately. The operatic text, then, before it is merged with the poetics of music, will become smaller. And this is the first alteration.

The second alteration that discourse undergoes at the opera has to do now with the addition of music. Once again, I visit the work of Kintzler (1991) to find that she borrows two terms from Louis Racine (the son of the grand moraliste Jean Racine), and Perrin: *nature* and *declamation.* Louis Racine suggests that music, just like declamation, is an imitation of nature (361-362). He goes on to say that the composer, when putting music to words, must follow the leading of the performing orator. Though Racine uses this logic to argue that music is less natural, and thus less affective, than a spoken text, he does otherwise reveal the importance of nature in creating the melodic contour of the recitatives. In fact, Kintzler clearly reveals this as she says:

…et alors on peut dire que c'est un traitement musical de certains systèmes linguistiques (phonétique, prosodie, système du vers, mécanique de la métaphore) dans lequel le musicien se donne les systèmes linguistiques comme modèle.

…and so one can say that it is the musical treatment made up of certain linguistic systems (phonetics, prosody, versification, the play of metaphors) in which the musician uses the linguistic system as a model.

Rousseau, too, as Kintzler reveals, agrees with Louis Racine on the notion of recitative leaning on the declaimed voice to inspire its shape:

Manière de chant qui s'approche beaucoup de la parole; c'est proprement une déclamation en musique dans laquelle le musicien doit imiter autant qu'il est possible les inflexions de voix de déclamateur. Ce chant est ainsi nommé récitatif parce qu'il s'applique au récit ou à la narration, et qu'on s'en sert dans le dialogue. (*Dictionnaire de la musique*) (382).

Way of singing that is very similar to speaking; it is literally a type of musical declamation in which the musician must, as much as possible, imitate the vocal inflections of the orator. This type of

singing is also called *recitative* because it follows the nature of recitation or narration that are used within the dialogue.

These reflections on the role of nature, and the performing orator reveal the second alteration of discourse that the text will undergo. So, as I showed in the examples of Handel and Purcell with an operatic representation of the sigh, I have shown the presentation of French national opera as a type of discourse that was twice altered: once by the poet who made the words, not only suitable for singing, but also suitable for the lay Frenchman or Frenchwoman; and secondly by the composer who, relying on mimesis (the tending of the orator's performing voice), mated the suitable music to the already altered text. This, perhaps, was a major key to the success of French opera. The fact that the opera was no longer foreign meant that the message that it wanted to transmit could be understood. I remember previous attempts to sell Italian opera to the French didn't work, even when the libretto was translated into French. From what I've shown here, opera worked when the entire operatic machine was novelized to suit the French.

Considering the novel

With all this in mind, the reader can now better assess similarities across the realm of opera and music that bear upon the study of the novel. At the end of the previous chapter, I was satisfied to discover that the novel was a descendant of the oral tradition in which voice played a central role. In this chapter, I studied an art form, opera, which also placed a central focus on the voice that developed in the seventeenth century. At the end of this chapter, I have discovered many new and fundamental similarities between the novel and opera that will allow me to open lines of inquiry into how both genres may be treated following similar critical approaches. I have

discovered that the opera, like the novel, is in part a form of written discourse that has been altered in order to suit its professed purpose. Next, I discovered that, unlike novelistic discourse, the oral tradition, and orality *tout court,* plays a central role in not only the composition of the opera, but also aspects of transmission, and reception. The final similarity between the opera and the novel is that both present a system of dialoguing spaces, since they both fulfill their role of narrating a story. The novel, which has evolved since its very inception, has been in a constant state of change, but it has largely remained a genre that records truthful descriptions (as we see in Balzac's realism or Zola's naturalism), while infusing when appropriate, necessary or artistic, some (or many) fictional elements. Examples abound in the *Rougon-Macquart* series, in which authentic details of departments stores, haute couture, trains, banking systems, criminal proceedings and so forth are taken from actual events of the Second Empire, but complemented by fictional characters who as it were act alongside of the other characters who are based upon real individuals (Worms for Fredric Worth in *La Curée*, Grundeman for Rothschild in *L'Argent*, and so forth, but also regular visits from Marx, Napoleon and others). But how is it, then, that when it comes to the reception of the novel terms such as *orality, dialogue, voice*, and *performance* are rarely heard? The chapter that follows will show how the first three words mentioned here have appeared in the context of literary theory. The last word (*performance*), however, has not. I now recall the two paintings of the young girl reading quietly in her salon, and that of Alexis reading a manuscript aloud to Zola, and I begin to see where Cézanne may have understood like I do, that the novel must be performed in order for it to be fully communicating its story to the one receiving the text.

CHAPTER IV

PERFORMING THE NOVEL:

AN OPERATIC PERFORMANCE AND THE PARADOXICAL READER

The focus upon the performative elements that link opera to the novel brings me now the issue of how this performance is undertaken, since, as in opera, this too, requires a performer. Now, the reader of this writing may ask, "Having done away with the fourteenth-century orator, and the singing bard, who now will fulfill this function?" The answer to this question, simply put, is: you, the reader. However, as I will show in this chapter, contextualizing the reader of the novel against the background of performance means that s/he occupies a multidimensional space that is very unusual. What follows seeks to explain the term *performance* not only as it pertains to theater and opera, but also as it pertains to the classroom and the learner, and finally to the reader of novels. I will begin with a reflection on my personal experiences as a teacher of French language and literature.

Performance Revisited

As a teacher, I have used the word *performance* to refer to the outcome on a given assessment, say, a test. More specifically, as a teacher of French language, I have also chosen to use the word *performance* to refer to whatever skills my students demonstrate when they use the target language. As such, I see activities of speaking, listening comprehensions, and reading as classroom activities that constitute small performances. Similar to the performance that Cézanne painted of Alexis reading to Zola, my students perform for me and for their classmates whenever

they are given classroom activities. Each of these tasks is a sort of cognitive and physical activity that, in its operation, resembles an operatic performance and as such runs counter to the kind of passive reception that we associate with the act of reading.

When it comes to teaching of literature, the assessment of the pedagogical intervention – itself a kind of performance— is not always as evident. In other words, if my students manage to use a certain grammatical structure correctly, I as the teacher can say that the student's performance (on the test) proves that s/he has mastered the specific structure. For literary studies, on the contrary, I find it harder to assess the performance of my students. Perhaps the problem lies in my failure to teach reading, as opposed to teaching writing.

Stanley Fish (1982) sheds some light on the notion of reading, arguing that in reading in institutions of higher education, there is a focus on meta-literature, or what he would consider "describing". For Fish— who also argues for an active and responsible community of readers "freed from the tyranny of the text and given the central role in the production of meaning (7)"— any reception of reading that is hinged on a study of forms only manages to describe the text; meaning is not found therein, but requires "activity" in order to interpret the text.

In his 1984 essay, Fish elaborates on the notion of freedom, juxtaposing his views with that of Owen Fiss. Fish argues that Fiss's general view of interpretation as a dynamic process that is otherwise governed by disciplining rules created by the pull of two magnetic poles— complete subjectivity, and total positivity—is flawed by the mere fact that Fiss's rules constitute a text, and as such, are also subject to individual interpretation. Fish ultimately contends that readers and texts are not in need of constraints when it comes to interpretation (1333). Additionally, Fish reveals that the reader is afforded a double independence, one in the meaning of the literary text s/he reads, and another in the rules (criticism) that s/he adopts in the reading

of the literary text. Fish's approach to this double independence of the reader is very important

for my own project because it feeds into my later argument of texts (literary, critical) constituting

voices whose resonant power is determined by readers who move freely through the text,

interpreting on the basis of pre-conceived notions about its importance and its meaning for a

particular community of readers delineated beforehand.

Iser's 1974 work also postulates the existence of a "community" that helps individual

readers define the meaning of "gray spaces" that lack explicitly articulated meaning. Iser

proposes that the lack of precision in a certain text ignites the interpretative faculties of the

reader and favors a profound interaction between the reader and the text, providing the reader

with a "role." Iser is different from Fish, because he imagines more freedom of interpretation

than what is allowed by Fish's "communities" of interpreters, but like Fish, Iser envisions an

active reader, one who is not, and indeed cannot be, satisfied with an analysis of symbols in

order to assign meaning to a text.

Mikhail Bakhtin's work also contributes this area of reception, in particular in the essays

gathered together in *Esthétique et théorie du roman*. As mentioned in the introduction to this

project, Bakhtin critiques more formal approaches to literary studies as being incapable of

accounting for the many languages within a text. These systematic approaches, which could also

include any Saussure-based work (formalism, structuralism, semiotics) end up reducing the

wealth of harmonic color, and sonic diversity of an orchestra to the homogenous sound of a

single instrument. Bakhtin's dialogism, polyphony, heteroglossia, and speech genres all point to

the many sounds that combine within a single text (the principle example being the dialogic

novel). In fact, his work suggests, as mentioned at the beginning of this project, the centrality of

the term *voice.* Looking more closely at the idea of multiple voices, and studying the discourse of

Bakhtin, I may also note the many references to music (or music-related terms) that populate his work, notably *rhythm, composition, counterpoint, tone, harmony,* and *voices*. By this route, the terminology of performance finds a practical and theoretical home in my teaching of language and literature. I also get an idea of the type of performance that I expect to encounter when speaking of the novel. In these two examples, reading can be linked to classroom activities and the quantified outcome of assessment of content or to the activity that brings readers in to play a central role in interpreting the multiple voices and the musicality within the text. I believe, however, that there is even more to reading, especially reading novelistic discourse. In order to see how far I can extend the role of performance in the realm of reading, I will write about a performance.

A soprano walks on stage at the Metropolitan Opera and gives one of the best performances of her professional career. Indeed, for her second-act aria, she received a 10-minute standing ovation! Is the reader curious about why her performance was so memorable, and so successful? Of course! The power of narrative is to build desire by leaving crucial information out, and then to offer the possibility of "filling it in", by bringing the narrative backstage as a means of helping us understand performance not in the context of teaching, but now in the context of the theater. The story begins at the Metropolitan Opera in New York City. The date is September 29, 1967.

Performance in Fiction: Violet's Story

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It is Friday. An always-overly-prepared soprano, Violet, arrives backstage at the opera house. It is four in the afternoon. She is to perform the lead role of "Leonora" in Verdi's *La Forza del destino* tonight. She is uncharacteristically nervous now, not because she doesn't know her notes—in fact, she's performed the role before, and she's no stranger to the famous Met—but because with hours to go before the performance she has yet to rehearse the blocking with the stage director. This is particularly difficult for her, seeing that she has often made a thing about rehearsing *everything* with her colleagues many days before the first performance. This time was different, though. And times, in general, seemed to be different everywhere.

— "Isn't it extraordinarily singular that late September in New York City should feel like those unbearable mid-summers in rural Mississippi!" exclaimed Violet as she dabbed the glistening from her forehead and cheek.

Herbert, the director, without lifting his eyes from his notes, let out an adequate chuckle, which left no imprint of happiness on his boyish face. You see, a week prior, Violet had to leave New York to visit her family in Laurel on account of a hurricane that devastated much of her town, killing a few folks as well. While her colleagues fully understood her need to visit her family, especially her dear mother, they didn't deny that not having their lead singer was no easy task. Herbert, most of all, was left wearing many hats, as it was he who had to fill in for

Violet during rehearsals. Rumor had it that Herbert made up for this by being overly flirtatious with the lead tenor, Bruno, during the love scene in the first act.

—"How are things at home, Madame Barnes?" said Herbert in a sympathetic voice.

—"Oh, you are so kind to ask, dear." she sang back to him. "Beulah did ravish our little home, but I quickly saw to it that my parents were moved to safety. Higher ground, as it were! And things are…shall we say…fine, *en général,*" she said in her still-strong Southern drawl, while pressing her index finger to the bridge of her nose.

—"I'm happy to hear that," replies Herbert.

—She laughs, "You are so wonderful, dear. And they'll be just fine, mother and father. I guess one needs these little…occurrences, shall we say, to keep us alive and vigorous…a little agitation *qualche volte* to remind us of where we are. Wouldn't you agree, Mr. H?" she says gently clearing her throat, almost swallowing the end of her question.

—"Yes, yes…yes. Exactly that," replies Herbert.

The stage door opens and the *répétiteur* enters.

— "Ah, there you are, Martin," shouts Herbert. "Shall we get to work, Violet?"

—"*Io sono pronta, signore.*" she says playfully.

But she was far from being ready, and things were far from being fine. You see, in her early career, she suffered from tremendously crippling stage fright, which resulted in some damaging reviews in the New York Times. In fact, she was once said to have the presence of a cardboard box on stage. Only in the past five years

of her mature career did she manage to overcome her fright by painstakingly dissecting every aspect of her career, and slowly and meticulously preparing every aspect of it. She did her *vocalises* every day, and met with a teacher once a week. She did research on the roles she was to perform. She traveled to the birth place of the composers she would sing, and walked through their homes, trying desperately to inhabit the spaces that sat them as they composed, centuries ago, the music that she would eventually sing. She memorized her roles weeks before showing up for rehearsals. She memorized everyone's roles. She knew the overture by heart, and knew all her entrance cues better than the conductor. She practiced giving interviews in front of her mirror, and in English, French, German, and Italian. She practiced her laugh, she practiced her curtsey. She practiced being a diva. She practiced everything. By this rigorous processing, she was able to steel herself against her own nerves, and against the uncertainties of opera critics. It is perhaps this barricading, along with her upbringing that eventually made this woman—the reigning soprano on American soil—the most private of people.

—"Don't let 'em see you sweat!" her mother used to say.

Violet held on to those words and made them her faith. She revealed none of her struggles to anyone around her. Oft, not even to herself. As she now prepared to rehearse a role for the first time, frightfully close to show time, she was also hiding another great distress. She had lied about her parents. The storm had destroyed her family home and her parents were holed up in a gritty shelter that had no name. Violet, being an only child since her brother went off to join the

army, was the sole protector of her parents: the people who worked so hard to buy her first piano, and scrape together the wherewithal to send her to lessons. Violet tried very hard to find a temporary home for her parents, but there was nothing she could do in such a short time. But she tried. She left New York. She left. But there was not enough time to find a better refuge for her parents. So she left them in the shelter and flew back to New York.

—Mamma and Pops are in a shelter and I'm singing Verdi at the Metropolitan, she sighed to herself. She felt unwell. She could not bear the fact that she abandoned her family for her career.

—"That's what they'd want; I make them proud," she said, trying to console herself. "I'll go back as soon as I'm finished with *Leonora.* I'll go back." She would not be consoled, though, for she was deathly afraid of stepping on stage in a few short hours to present herself as the daughter of a wealthy nobleman, and more frightened by what her parents would have to endure in the squalor in which she left them. She'd do her best to drown her *ennui* in the music. She'd try, or that's what she told herself.

The heat of the afternoon was scarcely cooled by the evening, and the opera house was fully warmed by the crowds of white gloves and binoculars that showed up to see Violet's performance. Among the opera-goers that night was the Times' most revered critique, Bonnie Reich. She was recognized by many, if not for her unmistakable locks, but by the mere fact that all the ushers seemed to become sweeter for her, even brushing her red velvet seat before she sat. But why was she attending *tonight's* performance? It was rare for her to appear on opening

night. Despite her unprecedented presence tonight, all peoples conspired to please her for her magical pen had the potential to puny even the most powerful of performances.

Violet waited in the wings to make her entrance, numbing herself by rehearsing her blocking and gently clearing her throat. The sound of applause as Maestro Pradelli mounted his podium was muffled by the curtains which were eager to reveal the beauty of Eugene Berman's stage. Violet hears her cue; she enters into herself, vowing not to come out until she was safely in her loft apartment in New York's West Village. She's backstage after the first act. From her dressing room, she allows herself to hear the applause of the audience; she won't be consoled, though, because for her the applause of strangers mocks her as she thinks of her desolate parents. The second act begins like the first, and Violet is now Leonora. She enters the stage generically, promising to do what she could to do the role justice and leave the theater as soon as she could get out of her heavy costumes. But unbeknownst to Violet, she was, in fact, giving the most memorable of her performances that night. Ironically, in her attempts to suppress thinking about her family, she fully transmitted the plight of Leonora, who like Violet, was friendless and in need of consolation of refuge. Then came a moment in the opera where both Violet and "Leonora" received their balm: the second act aria, a prayer "Madre pietosa Vergine." Here Verdi's music, though composed between the years of 1861 and 1862, captured very well what the Violet felt about being so far from her dear parents. In this aria, the tragic love story of the leading man Don Alvaro and leading lady Donna Leonora, destined to not end up happily-

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ever-after because of the intervention of Donna Leonora's brother, Don Carlo. In the second act of the opera, we see Leonora dressed in men's clothing outside a monastery. She is fleeing the wrath of her brother who wants to kill her, because it is her lover (Don Alvaro) who killed their (Don Carlo and Donna Leonora) father. In her anguish, Donna Leonora stops to pray. She sings:

Madre, Madre, pietosa Vergine

Perdona al mio peccato,

M'aita quell'ingrato dal core a cancellar,

In queste solitudini espierò, espierò l'errore...

Pietà di me, pietà, Signor, pietà di me, pietà, Signore ...

Deh ! non m'abbandonar, pietà, pietà di me, Signore,

Deh! non m'abbandonar, ah ! pietà, pietà di me, Signor.

Merciful Virgin-Mother

Pardon my sins

Help me to never more remember that ingrate,

Here, in these lonely places, I will atone for my sins...

Have mercy on me, Lord...

As she sings, the voices of the monks within the tower, accompanied by the strains of the organ are heard. Leonora joins her song with that of the monks as she sings:

Ah que' sublimi cantici ...

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Dell'organo i concenti,

Che come incenso ascendono a Dio sui firmamenti,

Inspirano, inspirano a quest'alma

Fede, conforto e calma ! ...

Ah, what sublime singing...

And the strains of the organ,

That like incense waft up to God in His firmanent,

And here they inspire faith, comfort and calm within my soul!

At the end of her aria, Violet allows herself once again to hear the sounds of the

applause, which were quite thunderous now. The orchestra dares not continue

until Violet has pacified the audience: she breaks character, faces the boisterous

theater and bows her head graciously. As she looks out into the room, she notices

the movement of handkerchiefs and tissues against the moistened cheeks of many.

She would like to think, too, that Ronnie was somewhat moved by her

performance, as well. What would she write in her commentary?

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"A Colorful Performance," was the chosen heading for Ronnie's much

awaited critique. The draft of the critique deemed Violet's performance as

"adequate to rouse response from her crazed groupies" and "solid enough to

assure her future roles at the Met". What Ronnie really wanted to write was that,

of all the performances of Violet's she'd been to, this particular one was the most

stirring for she had never heard the diva produce more truthful sounds than she did tonight. Ronnie meant that, while the singing was technically solid, it was affected by a sincerity and a naked vulnerability that, at various moments, completely transformed the steely singer from the South into a fragile and frightened creature on stage. And the sounds that Violet allowed to come up from her throat were, indeed, at times animalistic. They were untamed. Ronnie was most impressed by this for, she herself, though armed with her reputation and her powerful pen, sought only to be bold enough to write wildly and freely. She no longer wanted to be inhibited by the expectations of her readers who looked to her for scathing, spiritless reviews. If only she could reveal herself to her readers; tell them that she had a spirit. If not her in her readers, perhaps she could confide in Violet.

The critique that appeared in the papers the following morning, though, revealed no warmth for Ronnie was cold and filled her critique with back-handed compliments: "Though her Southern drawl was scarce masked by the Italian she at times butchered, Barnes's colorful voice ably managed to render justice to Verdi's adequate score." But Violet wouldn't read any of Ronnie's critique. And the other person who would hear Ronnie's truthful recount of the performance she witnessed was the Italian baritone Manrico Busoni, who made his debut at the Metropolitan that evening in the small role of "Fra Melitone".

Busoni was significantly younger than Ronnie. They met while he was a young singer at Juilliard. As part of his work-study, he worked at the reception desk at

the entrance to the conservatory's Morse Hall. Ronnie at the time frequented

many student performances for she was writing a weekly column on promising

young talent in New York City. Busoni won Ronnie over with his smile and the

special attention he paid to her. And she was inclined to show him much kindness.

It was, in part, her review of him that landed him his first role at the Metropolitan,

and she would not dare miss his first career as a professional singer. Later that

evening, as they undressed in her Manhattan apartment, Ronnie told Busoni all

she wanted to write about Violet, saying that Violet inspired her to write truthfully

and passionately. But Busoni was no admirer of Violet's, and refused to hear

anything too uplifting about the singer. ——"Her Italian is not good," he

grumbled.

<div align="center">***************</div>

Performance and Theory

This story, though mostly fictional, serves two functions as regards the work presented

here. Firstly, it exemplifies with a degree of accuracy all that constitutes a performance, and

secondly, it is an example of a novelistic discourse that I will be privileging as I explore in all of

its phases from production to reception.

I can define performance as perceivable outcome based on a multitude of past, present,

and future subjectivities that act upon the performing subject. In the case of Violet, the

experiences she had years prior to the present time, and those she had only hours prior, affected

her current state of mind. Additionally, the alignment of her past experiences with the current

impetus of the music that she sings affects her performance as well. She is also actively thinking

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about what her future actions, and also about the review she will get as they relate to her current state, and these future subjectivities also affect her performance. But perhaps there is another way to see these subjectivities as not only chronologically classifiable, but as delimited by notions of psychological and physical space. Performance, then, can be defined as a perceivable product that is based on the resultant forces of the performer's psychological and physical spatialization. I prefer this notion of space because it encompasses the notion of chronology, but does not bow to the ontology of linear time.

What I have described thus far resembles Bakhtin's chronotope, and novelistic discourse. Here, spatial and temporal subjectivities, combined with the cultural, social, historic, and discursive frameworks of both reader and the work itself, conspire to situate meaning and interpretation of a certain text. One frequently cited example is Bakhtin's anecdote about two men sitting in a room on a snowy day. One man stands up, looks out the window, and exclaims, "Well!" From this example, Bakhtin illustrates that the word *well* has very little meaning if not situated spatially and temporally within the framework of the novel. To understand the utterance, Bakhtin states that the reader must be aware that it is the month of May, and that both men have been waiting for end of winter for weeks. Additionally, the reader must agree that both men shared three similar perspectives: firstly, they can both see that is it snowing outside; next, they are both anxiously and frustratingly awaiting the start of spring; and, finally, they have the same interpretation of what a snowy May means for the coming of spring. With these ideas in mind, the reader can make sense of the one man's otherwise incomprehensible utterance. Bakhtin shows that the linguistic elements of the spoken or written phenomenon rely on non-verbalized clues to verify its meaning, and the clues relate to the performance of the word, before the men and the scene outside. For my purposes, Bakhtin's study on temporality and spatiality as they

pertain to the framework of the novel is very provocative. To add even more to this, though, I may take the entire study of dialogism.

In his work *Dialogism: Bakhtin and his World* (1990), Holquist presents dialogism as the understanding that nothing said or written exists in a vacuum; social, historical, personal, discursive and textual influences all conspire to affect the meaning of any utterance. Dialogism also assumes that language and speech give order to an otherwise chaotic world. The literary novel, however, as Holquist states, gives the most possible order to the world because it provides a whole to sew together the many strands of discourses, chronotopes, and speech genres in the polyphonic spaces of the text. From this perspective, the novel is extremely complex. But is dialogism for real? This, in fact, is the title of Ken Hirschkop's 1992 work, and which gives us a starting point for defining dialogism.

Hirschkop accepts the realness of dialogism, but argues that the familiarity with the banal word *dialogue*, and the misunderstanding of what dialogue actually is, brings about confusion as to what dialogism actually is. Hirschkop states "…the point I am most concerned to make is that the difference of dialogism from dialogue is what renders the former relevant to our social and political life, that in fact 'dialogism' as a distinctive kind of discourse calls attention to fundamental features of our social and political life too often obscured by our obsession with dialogue…" (108-109). He argues that the need to confine dialogue to the exchange of speech acts makes it impossible for the greater purpose of dialogue to be revealed. It is the novel, then, that restores and reminds the reader of the wider purpose of dialogue: "The key to novelistic dialogism, then, is not an immersion in the authentic plebeian sociability of the public square, but the novelist's ability to endow so-called popular or everyday language with an historical or social significance it lacks in its everyday context" (109). I find this notion very useful because the

complexities of the psychological and physical spaces that I mentioned above are fully dialogued in the novel.

To add yet another dimension to this novelistic complexity, I return to the work of Mossman (1996) who, incidentally, considers the effect and the use of opera within the novel. Using the example of Balzac's *Le Père Goriot*, Mossman visits the area in the novel where song is referenced, or executed by various characters. Mossman reveals that opera (she also considers various theatrical genres with music) creates three new spaces within the novel: the first is the "zone of trance and unknowing;" next, she mentions the "privileged spaces of cognition and complicity;" and thirdly, she speaks about "intersecting spaces which create mis/understanding and malentendu (390). She argues that the subjectivity of the human experience of performed sound, when placed within the context of the novel, enriches the text with the borrowed poetics of opera—the operatic. Later in her work, she mentions various objects that are lost when the novel becomes opera, listing the following criteria taken from Bakhtin: "The narrative voice, the dialogue between present and past with the consequent relativization of traditional hierarchies, a temporality both subtle and variegated, intersecting planes of language and, more pertinently…a certain capacity to import, naturalize, and domesticate discourses and genres alien to the novel itself" (388). Here, while my study would inform Mossman on how these discourses became alien to the novel, it is her study that ever so slightly reveals the notion of multiple spatial and temporal networks of performed voices that the novel inspires in order for meaning to be made. It is her study, too, that will later invite us to explore the nature of sound. For now, though, her study invites us to return to Violet and see the effect of the voices that constitute the psychological and physical spaces she inhabits.

For Violet, psychologically, she occupies many spaces, and each space links to her identity, of which each is a composite element. She is a daughter; she is a daughter who is torn by a sense of duty to her parents, and also a sense of duty to her audience; she is a fragile woman who has steeled her nerves by preparing every aspect of her performance; she is a performer, singing a dramatic role, which is considered a Verdi heroine; she is interpreting the role of Leonora, who in the second act finds herself clothed like a man in order to gain admittance into a monastery wherein she will find refuge from her pursuers, and perhaps pardon for the guilt-provoking error she made. The psychological state of the woman she portrays merges with her state of mind, for both women seek refuge from blame and guilt. In this merging of psychological spaces, the performance rendered is exponentially affected. Her physical space, as well, presents her with much subjectivity: she is at a highly reputed opera house, and it is the night that the press is in attendance; she is surrounded by her colleagues on stage and those in the orchestra; she is not alone in her physical space. As she performs, her physical presence allows her to be influenced by that of others around her: the sighs and sobs of the audience, their applause, their ill-timed coughs and throat-clearing; their energy, the verve of the orchestra, the particular mood of the conductor that evening, the chemistry between herself and the leading man, the warmth of the opera house, to name only a few, all conspire to affect Violet's performance. And I will focus again, like in previous chapters, on the word *voice*.

Firstly, there is the voice of the soprano, the soloist, or the leading lady in the opera. Her voice is the most prominent. Secondly, there are the voices of the monks—a group of male voices, singing in a lower register to that of the soprano. Then, there is the voice of the organ, which is in an accompanying role. I will also include the combined voices of the orchestra, which are, however, silent during the exchange between the soprano, the monks and the organ.

Each voice here carries with it a certain cultural, historical, and social weight. For example, the voices of men chanting in unison recall Gregorian chant, or the Masonic lodge, and the sound of the organ recalls the church, and the sound of a solo soprano is the voice of the heroine, or the damsel in distress. With the combination of these weighted voices, (the orchestra is silenced, the monks are in the distance (muted), and the organ is faintly heard, the soprano voice is most prominent, and hers that dictates the harmonic movement of the musical passage) many analyses are possible. For example, in terms of physical spatialization, the operatic stage presents—with the use of three voices—two separated spaces: outside the monastery, and within the monastery. The three voices also present a layer of understanding that transcends the physical to reach notions of gender, religion, society, and politics. In other words the three voices at the very same time, exploiting their ability to sound, blur the lines between the separation of space, morality and religion.

Leonora's voice blends perfectly with that of the monks and the organ to create a perfect melodic line, which is contoured organically by her leading. In fact, she herself is transcended as she forgets her fright and draws inspiration from the chanting of the monks, and the chords of the organ. It would not be too much of a stretch to say that in a single passage which lasts for a brief minute, Verdi erases the notion of exclusion that the female persona from the all-male society of the monastery. Though a small idea, I argue that the complexity of layers that a study of voices adds to the understanding of opera. More importantly, I believe that the notions of temporality, planes of language, and the inclusion of foreign discourse do, in fact, exist in opera. What if I go even further to look at the sounds—which, for the sake of continuity and cohesiveness, I will call voices—that the audience evokes? And here I include not only the boos, hisses, and applause,

but the whispers exchanged between friends— *c'est trop bon ça*[29]—, the *bravos*! shouted, and

which make for a multi-layered dialogue: between the stage and the audience; and between

varying members of the audience. And finally, what of the inner-voices that affect the individual

as she performs? What about all the voices that combine to make the conscience, or that work to

fulfill Descartes' *cogito ergo sum*? As I have tried to demonstrate in the creation of my

protagonist Violet, an operatic performance is not only the artistic combination of the multiple

voices that are contained within a musical score, but it is the combination of all the present

audible and non-audible voices that correspond with the physical and psychological

spatialization of the performing and the non-performing forces. It is important to note the

inclusion of the term *present*, as I will show see that psychological and physical presence will

greatly affect my performance of the novel. Speaking of the novel, though, how does an

understanding of an operatic performance relate to the reception of the novel? To start answering

that question I will say: let the reception of the novel be treated like that of an operatic

performance.

It is here, then, that I will return to take up the second reason for including my novelistic

writing: we are privy to all phases of the novel. That is to say, the novelist is also the researcher

and, as such, is able to answer questions pertaining to the novel's creation and life. To recall

Zumthor's phases of the fourteenth-century novel, I can separate what is to follow into five

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[29] This is taken from an unpublished 2005 recording of a performance on Handel's *Rinaldo* sung by French soprano Annick Massis. In the reprise of the main theme of the aria "Lascia ch'io pianga" (Leave me to weep), where the performer is encouraged to provide embellishments, one audience member is heard giving his approval of the soprano's interpolated high notes, which created the effect of inconsolable sobbing. Also audible on the recording, besides coughs and the clearing of throats, is the sound of sniffling, which for me, signifies that members of the audience were moved to tears. It is interesting to note that this performance was at Milan's La Scala, an opera house known for its insatiable, harsh, and unbending audience. For the performance of this aria, the audience responded with thunderous applause.

categories: production, transmission, reception, preservation, and repetition. In each of the categories, I will show the role of voice(s) and performance.

Starting with production, the main character of the writing I created was, in fact, inspired by the life of a leading African-American soprano who retired from a stellar career in opera in 1984. In order to create her character, I listened to many interviews of hers, paying attention to the register of the language she used, and all non-verbal cues she adopted when presenting herself. The reaction of the interviewer was also studied to get initial reactions to the soprano's mannerisms. Additionally, I did biographical research on her to ascertain the whereabouts of her family, and the relationship she shared with each of its members. The minor characters mentioned here, too, were not purely fictitious, but were created with some truth to factual people who interacted with the main character. This information, which was gathered by doing the work of an ethnographer, served as the raw material, as it were, for the fiction I created. This raw data, though hidden from the readers' eyes, is greatly important for my study because it holds in it material that was performed for the novelist. That is to say, by watching and listening to a human subject, an original performance was received. From this original performance the information to create the novel's characters was ascertained. In an interesting discovery, then, I see that the novel I created was actually already performed. The raw data, then, had to be transformed into novelistic discourse, into a form of writing that transforms the richness of this original performance into useful material for the person (the reader; you) for whom the performance will be recounted.

A similar argument to ours is found in Gerard Genette's 1982 work on literary discourse. In this work he speaks about his French term *figure*, stating:

The spirit of rhetoric is entirely contained in the awareness of a

possible hiatus between real language (that of the poet) and a

virtual language (that which would have been used by "simple"

common expression"), which must only be reestablished by though

in order to delimit a space of a figure. This space is not empty: on

each occasion it contains a particular mode of eloquence or poetry.

The writer's art lies in the way in which he sets out the limits of

this space, which is the visible body of Literature" (47).

In this citation, though the word *performance* is not used, I see the notion of the use of rhetoric to

transform an otherwise near-to-original (virtual) thing into poeticized literature. This notion of

figure, though, leads us into the phase of transmission and preservation. The latter phase here

needs little explanation, for without the use of the written text, the original performance could

neither be transmitted nor kept after the passing of the novelist. While it is true that the novel is

transmitted in written form, and a style of writing that is fit for this specific type of discourse, it

seems to omit yet another aspect of production, which I can reveal through the lens of

performance. That is to say, the novelist himself, being present for an original performance,

applauded and booed during parts of the performance that he liked, or did not like quite as much.

And this subjectivity of the novelist plays into the characters he builds in the novel. In this case, I

was extremely tickled by the language of the soprano, not only the register of her spoken

English, but by the fact that she included foreign words in her eloquent responses to the

interviewer. I was also careful to not make her come across as pompous and egotistical, choosing

instead to soften the character of the *prima donna assoluta* by revealing her inner thoughts as

that of a conflicted, fearful, and worried daughter. Additionally, the balance of fact and fiction

and how they affect the main character are all based on the novelist's attempts to render a useful

performance of the text for the way in which it will now be received. These choices were not

made randomly, but link to my reception of the original performance. Another discovery, then, is

that that the novel is the written account that is not only transformed by rhetoric, but is subject to

the novelist's reception of an original performance.

To illuminate this idea, I cite an example from Plato. This understanding of an original

performance, as I have called it, in the hands of Plato becomes a question of the quest for the

original.

> Socrates: …The gift which you possess of speaking excellently
>
> about Homer is not an art, but, as I was just saying, an inspiration;
>
> there is a divinity moving you, like that contained in a stone which
>
> Euripides calls a magnet, but which is commonly known as the
>
> stone of Heraclea…For all good poets...compose their beautiful
>
> poems not by art, but because they are inspired and
>
> possessed…For the poet is a light and winged and holy thing, and
>
> there is no invention in him until he has been inspired and is out of
>
> his senses, and the mind is no longer in him: when he has not
>
> attained to this state, he is powerless and is unable to utter his
>
> oracles. [30]

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[30]*Ion is a dialogue written by Plato in* 380 B.C.E. The version used here is translated into English by Benjamin Jowett.

In this famous dialogue between the philosopher Socrates and the rhapsodist Ion, Plato discusses the idea of the original. The dialogue, which imitates the influence of the hermeneutic circle among the philosophers, shows the idea of inspiration and how an artiste manages to present him/herself. According to Plato, the artiste is so inspired by a god or a muse to the point where s/he is outside of her/himself. While Plato's example is best demonstrated with the use of a rhapsodist, and though I disagree with the notion of an artiste whose individual artistry is not recognized, I agree with Plato's notion of a magnetic chain of influence that makes it so that the artiste is always, at best, a second-hand interpreter of a supposed original:

> Ion: I am persuaded that good poets by a divine inspiration
>
> interpret the things of the Gods to us.
>
> Soc.: And you rhapsodists are the interpreters of the poets?
>
> Ion: There again you are right.
>
> Sock: Then you are the interpreters of interpreters?
>
> Ion: Precisely.

For my purposes, the Platonic example here supports my idea that the novelist, like the singer, is inspired by a something that was perhaps inspired by something else. It is perhaps here, though, that scholars will call to mind the terms "mimesis" and "diegesis." While both terms contain within them many pages of conflicting definitions, in their simplest of forms, mimesis is considered to represent a certain action by showing, and diegesis represents the action by telling. This is not to say, however, that mimesis is bounded up by performative arts and diegesis by novelistic discourse. In fact, I believe that both mimesis and diegesis play a role in the

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performing arts and in the novel. This, then, is yet another rarely known similarity between the opera and the novel. Additionally, I would boldly suggest that Baroque opera can be categorized using the terms of mimesis and diegesis. By that, I mean the narration of action (the recitative) is diegetic in nature, while the aria—which demonstrates strong emotion, or effects the *comble d'émotion* 'climax of emotion' to cite Rousseau—is mimetic in nature. And yet I will also say that the musical aspect of the opera, including the singing voice, may be mimetic in nature. I believe that the same categorization may be done when it comes to the novel. In fact, it is an understanding of the degree to which mimesis and diegesis affect the production of the novel that gives a better understanding of how performance is applied to novelistic discourse. I argue that any reception of the novel that dwells only on testing the discourse for its diegetic nature is tantamount to receiving only the recitatives of an operatic performance; the arias are not heard. To push this analogy a little further, I will say that excluding the arias from any Baroque opera will surely allow me to receive an autotelic, cohesive narrative from which various conclusions may be drawn. However, the arias provide much detail not only about the composer's style and genius, but details about the opera's characters, which carry within them the pathos that fill the theater with abundant and varied emotions, and assure the purging of emotions, or the catharsis at the opera's conclusion. From this point I insist on the following: the goal of opera is not only to artfully transmit the details of the story to a passive audience, but it is use the transmitted story as the framework on which a performance to incite strong human emotion among a present and active audience is hinged. The same must be said of the novel. (By way of personal anecdote, I admit that this feeling of overwhelmingly strong emotion upon reading a novel has been experienced only once. The chapters that follow will reveal this experience.)

But how can the opera-goer expect to have a similar experience upon having read a novel when there are so many differences between the two? For example, one usually, with few exceptions, goes to an opera house and attends an opera in a single evening, or in one sitting. One may, however, take weeks to complete a novel, pausing and restarting, and reading in different psychological and physical places. To address this seeming contradiction, I suggest that the only requirement for both opera-goer and novel-reader is that s/he be present. As in attending an opera and similarly when reading the novel, the individual must show up and be physically and psychologically present in order to fully benefit from the performance s/he will witness. The opera house, the singers, the orchestra, the ball gowns, the opera gloves, and the binoculars are the *objets* that the opera creates and uses to usefully transmit what it will. The novel, however, which transmits itself in writing, has very few requirements: writing displayed on paper. And what of the reception of the opera and the novel; one sits at an opera house and attends a performance by singers and players who display varying talent on stage. In fact, when it comes to questions of utility and transmission, the opera relies wholly on the talent of its trained performers to transmit itself. The novel, as I understand it, does not. Perhaps, however, I can use these seeming differences between the opera and the novel to my advantage, and perhaps I will see that these differences are not differences at all. In order to do this, I will continue by focusing on the terms *talent, utility and transmission* and *reception.*

Jean-Pierre Perchelet in his work "*L'Héritage Classique*" (2004) opens his third chapter with a citation by Jean François de La Harpe (1976) stating, "Qu'un sublime talent soit un talent utile" 'Let a sublime talent be a useful one'. Using this maxim as a charge to artistes to clothe the display of their talent (their artistic output) in the cloak of usefulness, which included the teaching of morality, La Harpe also reveals the notion that talent can be useless. I imagine, for

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example, that it is useless for a talented speaker of Latin to recite his poetry to an audience of country folk who speak or understand no Latin. As talented as s/he is, the talent, but for those in the audience, who admire the sound of a foreign language, is demonstrated in vain; the message s/he brings will not be understood. This idea is not foreign to the novel, for as I mentioned in previous chapters, the novel earned its name in part from this idea of usefulness. That is to say the performer in the fourteenth-century used his talent to novelize the story he was relating in order to make it most useful to the specific audience. It is reasonable to say, too, that is was usefulness that brought about the explosion of writing systems, and consequently, the creation of the literate society, where not being able to read and write is a handicap. That is to say, as Zumthor's work supports, one can imagine a society that—having grown weary of relying on selected, talented performers, who would continuously alter their tales, and whose performances were very volatile as they depended on the physical and psychological state of the performer—decided to have a more stable and reliable method of transmitting performances by writing them down. Now the novelist, the one who writes, also uses his/her talent to artfully transmit the inspired tale s/he tells so that the tale can be most useful to the one who receives it (the reader). And once the novelist has completed his novel (and is dead) his/her work is complete. Similarly, once the composer has completed his/her opera (and is dead) her/his work is done. I move, then, into the phase of reception. And here I find the main concern of this project.

Using the protagonist Violent once again, I recall the efforts she made to prepare for her performance of Leonora. And I add now that she, much like Plato's *Ion* was a third-hand interpreter of an interpreter. In this case, the composer Verdi did the first interpretation of the *virtual* (Genette's term) performance that was inspired within him. As Violet prepared her performance by not only training her voice to render Verdi's music and collaborate with all the

performing forces, she also has constant dialogue with herself in order to create the role of

Leonora. In this particular instance, though, the tragedy that has befallen her parents and her

sense of guilt of abandoning her family for her career affect her performance, making a single

moment in the opera, which adequately provides the refuge both Leonora and Violet seek,

particularly memorable. Violet, though, is not the only character in my novel. There is Bonnie,

the opera critic who, where Violet found refuge, finds freedom and abandon to write passionately

and without fear. Additionally, I have Busoni who narrow-mindedly checks his appreciation of

multidimensional art with a focus on only one particular aspect: the pronunciation of Italian.

There is, too, Herbert, who works on the stage directing, and Pardelli, who collaborates with the

orchestra, singers, and stage director to create one cohesive interpretation of the composer's

work. Finally, there are the members of the audience who react to what they witness by varying

degrees of applause, crying, or by not reacting at all. Moving away from the novel to address

meta-novelistic notions, there is the author of the novel, and then there is you, the reader. The

two questions to you: 1) within the confines of the novel, which role(s) does (do) the reader

play? Having been present for this performance (reading about Violet) what will your inspired

performance (in writing, speaking, reading, or listening) focus on?

Considering the first question, many readers are like Busoni, drawing strong conclusions

by blindly focusing on one aspect of an otherwise complex and intricate display of dialoguing

networks, refusing to grapple critically with complexity.

Thinking back to my time as a beginning student of literature, I believe that, at times, I

was like Ronnie, having strong interpretations about a certain work, but refusing to accept them

because I was uncertain about their validity; choosing instead to adopt and repeat the convictions

of others around me, hiding behind other theorists and their complex jargon. Other times, I was

like the audience members who, with varying degrees of presence and participation, react to a performance I witnessed. That is to say, I was able to express what I felt, and was able to have my feelings affected by those around me. Perhaps, though, I am best when I see myself as Violet. That is to say, the vigor, dedication, and passion with which she approaches her craft are highly commendable, and the very things that I strive to emulate. Additionally, she hones her talent in order to make it better able to render the art she encounters. Violet, too, allows the voices of the physical and psychological spaces that she presently occupies to affect her performance. She sings, for example, music that was composed two centuries ago, and she portrays a character that is essentially foreign to her, but Violet connects with Verdi's "Leonora" by dwelling on the notion of refuge. The performance Violet gives, however, is unique to the one combination of the exponentially many combinations of physical and psychological spaces that she happens to inhabit at the moment in which she performs. Violet's, then, is the role that I would like to play, but perhaps the choosing of the specific role is not one that can be predetermined. That is to say, throughout my experiences, I have played all of the roles mentioned. The essential point, then, is not to predetermine the role I play, but be to be always aware of two things. The first is that the novel I read is a written transmission of a performance that inspired the novelist, and secondly that I have an active role to play in receiving the performance; I must perform the novel.

Performing the novel, then, goes beyond the mere act of reading. Performing the novel involves a complex process by which the multiple layers of presently audible voices embedded within a certain text are acknowledged, sounded, and dialogued with the voices of the person reading, which, in turn, are subject to the readers current physical and psychological spatialization. I notice here the insistence on sound (with the terms *audible* and *voices*). This will be of greater importance in the following chapter, but for now I exploit sound for its slippery and

ephemeral nature, especially within the realm of performance. That is to say, what one hears, and how one hears it depends on one's physical displacement. (What one hears sitting on the lower right-hand side of the concert hall, for example, will be significantly different from what one hears sitting front row and center of the balcony.) Furthermore, at the end of the performance the sound is gone. When it comes to the novel, the audible voices the reader hears as s/he performs the novel will be dependent on where s/he sits: the experiences s/he had prior, the persons (theorists, novelists, researchers, academics, strangers) s/he has encountered; the composition of the surrounding physical environment that may affect what s/he hears. And as is typical of sound, it echoes for a while then fades away. When it comes to performing the novel, the audible voices that may be present at the first reading of the novel may be significantly faded, or no longer sounding when the novel is read again. Or perhaps, there will be many more voices. Thus, as reading is repeated, a different performance of the novel is attained.

Fish testifies to this notion, though in his writing, revealing that his essays on reading reflect the various minds he occupied over the trajectory of his writing. Perhaps most useful for this project, though, is Hans-Georg Gadamer's 1960 work *Truth and Method*. In this work, I am fascinated by Gadamer's use of the term *horizon*. For him, interpretation does not take place in a vacuum. Using the term *horizon*, which he borrows from Edmund Husserl, Gadamer explains the idea of one's position of humans in the world with reference to his/her existence and his/her understanding of him/herself. Examining the term *horizon,* I see the idea of limited visibility, but I never see the idea of a static, fixed perspective. In fact, according to Gadamer, this horizon, which is unique to each individual, changes constantly as the person's identity changes as s/he grows. The most known of his concepts has to do with the fusion of one's unique horizon (consciousness) with that of history. He states, "When our historical consciousness places itself

within historical horizons, this does not entail passing into alien worlds unconnected in any way with my own, but together they constitute one great horizon that moves from within and beyond the frontiers of the present, embraces the historical depths of our self-consciousness" (271). From Gadamer's work I latch on to the notion of an ever-changing understanding of ourselves, of those around us, and of the performances that I witness and give.

By way of summary, I will recall several ideas I've tried to articulate in this chapter. Firstly, I defined the term *performance* as I have come to use it in my teaching, showing that the separation between (operatic) performances is not exclusively incomprehensible to the study of novelistic discourse. Next, I defined performance as it pertained to the opera, using novelistic presentation of a performance to give full insight into what constitutes a performance. Finally, I applied the definition of operatic performance to the novel, arriving at an understanding of what is means to perform the novel. I now arrive at a paradox: the reader is the one who performs the text, and is also the one who experiences the catharsis at the end of the performance. In an interesting nod, then, to Diderot's 1830 work *Le Paradoxe du comédien,* in which he argues that the performer is emotionless and only reflects the strong emotions of the hot-spirited audience, I see where the reader's paradox, who is both performer and audience member, must occupy multiple spaces and play many roles as s/he performs the novel. Before ending this chapter, I revisit Violet's story to wonder which role I play as a teacher of literature. Perhaps I know play the role of Pradelli, the conductor who, in our story, is given the least attention, but who, in essence, works the most to successfully conduct the many cogs of the operatic machine, most of his work not seen as he works from the orchestra pit.

CHAPTER V

VOCAL POETICS OF NOVELISTIC DISCOURSE

At this point in my study, I will focus on the four terms that have formed my theoretical

base: *vocal, poetics, novelistic, and discourse.* These words, even when relieved of their

semantic duty within the context of any meaningful phrase, still bear with them the weight of the

literary schools of criticism from which they were derived. The only term, perhaps, which is not

like the rest is the term *vocal*, for it seems to belong to another realm not readily associated with

literary theory, but is nonetheless given the primary position in my theoretical framework. From

the very onset, the visual representation (on paper) of my hereafter proposed ideas pretends to

view the poetics of novelistic discourse through the lens of objects pertaining to the voice. In this

chapter, I intend to explain the theoretical underpinnings of these terms, revealing the discordant

sources from which they came, and showing how, in the context of my study, they tune

themselves to a pleasing harmony.

Discordant Derivatives

My use of the term "poetics" was inspired by Catherine Kintzler's 1991 work *Poétique

de l'opéra français –de Corneille à Rousseau*, in which she makes a formidable argument,

defining what she proposes as an academic approach to opera. She argues, using a simple

anecdote that the academician is not concerned with reconstructing music from a discovered text,

but may be concerned with seeing how a text could have been divided into various parts to fit the

utility with which poetics and the *poetician* are concerned. Here Kintzler, like Thomas (2002),

believes that a study of the musical offerings of opera, which include the study of the aesthetics of the marriage between the music and language, is best done in by a musicologist.

Kintzler reveals that her study combines two approaches to textual treatment. The first, grounded in the work of Plato, deals with the philosophical object, and sees the text in four ways—"logique," "physique," "éthique," and "ontologique" 'logically, physically, ethically, and ontologically'. According to Kintzler, Plato states that theories about poetry, by virtue of the genre's inclusion of aesthetics and fiction, is inherently doomed to turn into fallacious (sophistic) arguments. In response to this notion, Kintzler reveals a second approach to studying poetic text that is based on Russian formalism and French structuralism. From these perspectives the text is untethered from its author, and its derivative culture(s) and contexts in order to be explored as an isolated work. The poetic she chooses are the libretti from operas in 17th –century France, and its with this example that she develops her writing on poetics. Kintzler divides the approaches to studying opera in three ways, and assigns tasks to just as many people: the musicologist, the historian, and the poetician. Her own work falls into this last category. To this end, in his review of Kintzler's work, Buford Norman (1993) states,

> Her approach is especially useful for literary scholars,
> since French opera between 1659 and 1765 is by no means
> an "objet atypique au sein du classicisme français"
> 'atypical object in the heart of French classicism'(25) but a
> texte poétique which "obéit à des règles poétiques
> spécifiques, mais cependant conformes, à leur manière, à la
> généralité des lois du théâtre" 'poetic text which obeys

specific rules of poetics that cater to the specific nature of

French opera while bowing to the general categorical rules

of theater'(11) (497).

The provocative aspect of her work for me, however, is her use of the anatomy of Classical

Tragedy (*tragédie classique*), which she considers a relative of opera (*tragédie lyrique*) to

formulate a theoretical base of conventions that governs the phenomenological and utilitarian

existence of opera. In fact, in her 1986 work she states :

> On soutiendra la thèse suivante, à savoir que le théâtre
>
> lyrique de cette époque, bien qu'il ne soit pas réglé *comme*
>
> le théâtre dramatique, est cependant réglé sur lui, grâce à un
>
> certain nombre d'opérations (translations, oppositions,
>
> inversions et transformations) (69-70).
>
> We propose the following argument: though opera in the
>
> Classical Age did not bow to the rules of Classical Theater,
>
> classical opera—by a series of translations, juxtapositions,
>
> inversions, and transformations of these rules— based itself
>
> on them.

Norman (1998) states that:

>For Kintzler, the *tragédie lyrique* is both an inversion and a transposition of spoken tragedy. The inversions, such as changes of scene for each act, the use of machines, and the presence of music and dance, involve doing something that is forbidden in spoken tragedy, and are ultimately less interesting than the transpositions - where the general laws of Classical theatre still apply, but different ground rules are in effect. To take the case of vraisemblance (verisimilitude), which is at the heart of the famous rules of neo-Classical theatre, once one accepts the presence of divinities, a 'logic of the supernatural' dictates what can happen - gods cannot fly without wings, monsters and storms cannot violate the then-known natural laws. Like ordinary vraisemblance, the 'logic of the supernatural' is based on an 'experience conceived as possible' (296), a 'visible that has never been seen' (520). The tragédie lyrique constitutes a fascinating rationalization of the irrational, a world with unusual assumptions but no less rigor of organization than any other art form (226).

Here, Norman reveals the essence of the nature of poetics that Kintzler employs. While her work does not perfectly intersect with my own, I will nevertheless borrow from hers several points.

Firstly, I borrow the theoretical approach which studies the historicity of two seemingly

disparate entities, and which by a focus on translations, juxtapositions, inversions, and

transformations, shows how the entities are inextricably linked. Next, I borrow the use of the

term poetics as it relates to rules of composition and transmission (performance), of the poetic

text (content) of opera. Thirdly, I take inspiration from her general insistence on utility in the

face of performance.

The reader of this work will, perhaps, question the use of the term *poetics*, especially in

light of what I have shown above. By that I mean, when I speak of poetics, I think of

conventions, which in turn leads me to think of restrictive approaches to textual analysis. The

preceding chapters, however, have insisted on the freeing of the voice. I am quick to note, then,

that the term is purposely contradictory. It wouldn't be incorrect to say, too, that Kintzler's

theoretical framework served as a model for this work. In fact, like Kintzler, who employed the

approach in Figure 3, I use the approach shown in Figure 4
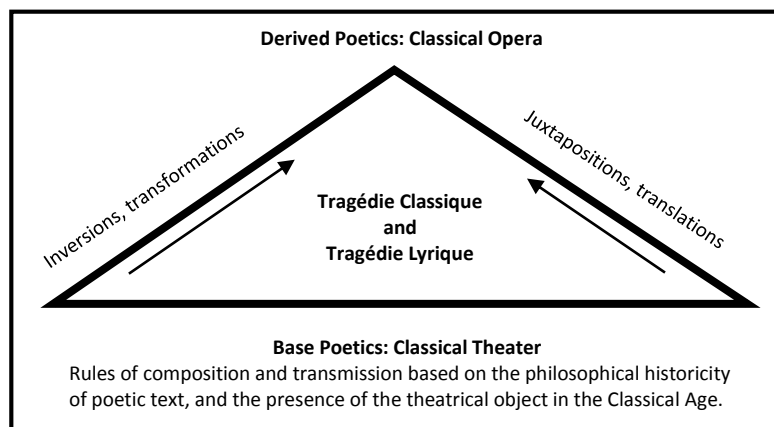
Figure 3. Kintzler's Approach to Deriving the Poetics of Classical Opera
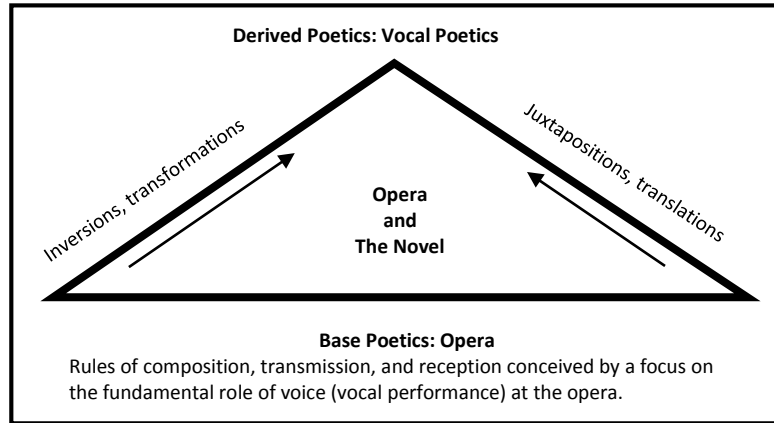
Figure 4. Proposed Approach to Deriving Vocal Poetics

The term "vocal poetics," as I see it, refers then to a set of conventions that are fundamentally based on the properties of voice and vocal performance in the context of opera. Voice, by its very nature as a sonic thing, is also a slippery thing, and structuralist approaches to the novel, perhaps unwilling to contend with anything too slippery, pretend to analyze novelistic discourse with a skewed understanding. Here, it is Bakhtin's 1940 essay "From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse," in which Bakhtin reveals reasons for the failure of stylistic literary analysis to fully analyze the novel.

Written in 1940, Bakhtin's "From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse" is made up of three essays in which the author focuses primarily on the genre, or the "stylistic specificum" of the novel. He argues that stylistic studies of the novel—which he considers a fairly recent phenomenon (the 1920s), —have not fully understood the "peculiarities that define the novel as a genre, and they are also remote from the specific conditions under which the word lives in the novel" (42). For Bakhtin, "every novel is a dialogized system made up of the images of 'languages,' styles and consciousnesses that are concrete and inseparable from language" (49).

Furthermore, like Kintzler who treats poetic text as a self-created entity that defines the rules by which it is to be conceptualized, Bakhtin suggests that: "Language in the novel not only represents, but itself serves as the object of representation. Novelistic discourse is always criticizing itself" (49). Based on this observation and calling attention as well to the plurality of different types of languages (polyglossia and heteroglossia) and the "interanimation of languages" within the novel, Bakhtin presents an adequate approach to stylistic analysis of the novel:

> The basic tasks for a stylistics in the novel are therefore:
> the study of specific images of languages and styles; the
> organization of these images; their topology…; the
> combination of images of languages within the novelistic
> whole; the transfers and switchings of languages and
> voices; their dialogical interrelationships (50).

I should note here that the term *heteroglossia*, in its simplest definition, is used to describe the idea of multiple, diversified sounds. The term, however, means much more. Holquist (1992) says that heteroglossia refers to the notion that at any given time there are many forces working to make meaning in a particular place. He mentions four planes: centrifugal and centripetal opposition, discourse and code, etymology and culture, and reader and author. Here, my study gains a lot from Bakhtin's analysis of language in many ways. Firstly, the use of the term *novelistic discourse* provides a blanket expression that links to a wide array of texts, thus allowing us to avoid the messy task of classifying and defining types of novels (sentimental

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novel, vs. the contemporary novel, for example). Secondly, his study of the history of this type of discourse complements my study in the first chapter, though Bakhtin reveals that the novel "was formed and matured in the genres of familiar speech found in conversational folk language…and also in certain folkloric and low literary genres" (50). Additionally, Bakhtin's analysis of novelistic discourse as being fraught with multidimensional planes of dialoguing sounds of different types reminds us of my own analysis of opera. I continue to see, then, the relationship between opera, through the poetics of Kintzler, and the novel, through the dialogic discourse of Bakhtin.

Yet, those who read my study will undoubtedly highlight the fact that Bakhtin accorded no value to the study of poetic (direct) genres to the stylistic study of the novel. In fact, he states that "differences between the novel…and all other genres—poetic genres in the narrow sense— are so fundamental, so categorical, that all attempts to impose on the novel the concepts and norms of poetic imagery are doomed to fail" (43). For Bakhtin, once entered into the domain of the novel, any language—be it poetic or not—becomes henceforth an object of novelistic discourse that should only be conceptualized dialogically. This understanding of the conceptual differences between novelistic discourse and poetic text is clear to me, and accepting it does not hurt this study. My study, in fact, does not pretend to liken the reception of poetic text to that of novelistic discourse. I do, however, claim that the treatment of poetic text at the opera—paying attention to the role of voice and performance—may be likened to the act of reading a novel. I am, thus, not focusing on the stylistic analysis of libretti, but am interested in examining the libretti in the context of opera and opera culture, and seeing what bearing there is on approaching novelistic discourse. And as I have stated in prior chapters, the continuum between these two is voice. *Vocal poetics*, then, is the term I have coined to reconcile Kintzler to Bakhtin, and by

extension, to reconcile studies that focus on poetic text to studies that focus on novelistic discourse. I am, however, not the first to use the term, for vocal poetics has already found a home for itself in scholarly writings.

It is the work of Vanessa Guignery that comes closest, if only in the naming of itself, to my study here. Guignery, who prefers to use the term *poetics of voice* directs a symposium that seeks to treat the role of voice, and/or voice-related objects in the context of eighteenth-century English literature. From the very introduction to her seminar series, I read the similarities between her work and my own. I also read an initial reaction to the question of treating voice, a creature of sound, and written text, a popularly silent thing in a similar light. She says:

> The objective of this seminar is to analyze the poetics of voice in contemporary literature in English. It may seem paradoxical to evoke the concept of voice when dealing with a written text which, by definition, is mute. Voice in writing can only be a simulacrum, a fiction, an illusion, a spectre, but we propose to study the modes of representations of these effects of voice and orality, covering the whole spectrum from verbal overflow to aphasia, from effusiveness to muteness.

Though Guignery's chosen corpus differs from my own, it still falls under the category of novelistic discourse. Her study, then, provides an interesting insight into ways in which voice troubles and rhythms my understanding of the quiet text. But though Guignery's work is the

closest to mine, she credits other sources for their contribution to her current work. Among the sources she cites is Dominique Rabaté's 1999 work *Poétique de la voix*, yet another author whose work bears much resemblance, even in its superficies, to mine. Theoretically, though, as I will show, Rabaté's work is essential to understanding the extent to which voice are essential to textual analysis. What follows is a grouping of main points pertaining to poetics of voice as learned not only from Guignery's 2009 edited volume of essays *Voices and Silence in the Contemporary English Novel,* and Rabaté's 1999 work, but also from array of sources that treat the effect of voice on how I understand objects within and around the novel, the reader of the novel, and also the novelist.

Sound and Silence Signifying Much

The first lasting notion that I borrow from Guignery is one that I, too, used as my original impetus: the myths surrounding the silent text and the silent reader. At the opening of her work, Guignery cites Pascal Quignard's 1990 work *Petits traités,* stating that "the book is a piece of silence in the hands of the reader" (87). Guignery, in her turn, states that, essentially, the acts of reading and writing are "both processes of devocalization" (1). From these two statements it would seem that Guignery and Quignard condemn the novel to a silent fate. Both authors, however, use the purported silence in writing and the reading of the novel to set up a shocking juxtaposition with what they say next. For Quignard, as Guignery reports, writing is a process by which the writer, attentive to the sweetness (*suavitas*) of silence, reconstitutes the visible vestiges of the lost voice, which came about at the phenomenon of *logos* (1). From this, the understanding of the writer as a sort of vocal archaeologist, and the text as a playground for sweet silence and reconstructed sound begins to emerge. As I continue to look at the interplay between sound and

silence, I will not treat the acts of reading and writing together, but separate the novel into two general parts: the writing (composition) of the novel—looking at the role of the author, and the elements of characterization; and the reception of the novel—focusing on the role of vocal poetics in textual analysis, and in reading.

Beginning with the notion of writing, there is the 1985 work of Wier, and Hendrie, who state that, in the field of fictional writing, the writer's unique voice is central to the writing process. In fact, as they state, the writer uses narrative voice and the voices of the characters in subtle and not-so-subtle ways to filter his/her own sensibility (4). In fact, voice (and tone) "are crucial elements of contemporary fiction, at once specific and vague, at once clearly understood and difficult to define adequately" (3). Provocative for my study in this citation is a hint of the elusive, or slippery nature of voice that I met in the previous chapter. Wier, and Hendire argue, thus, that authors harness this nature of voice—even in the confines of the written text— and use it to muddy the transmission of their own finer feelings. Guignery, too, agrees that "authors still rely on voice as a mode of representation and a performative tool…" (7). Besides the inclusion of the voices of narrative and character voices in the study of vocal poetics, another approach to the novel, and one that is more traditional in its definition, treats the author's voice manifested in literary elements surrounding the novel.

To this end, Lee Smith's article *The Voice behind the Story* (1985), which does not argue the use of narrative voice to fragment the author's own feelings, sees, rather, the writer as increasingly narcissistic. He argues that the decisions about writing which we categorize as linguistic (or devices in writing style) constitute the writer's voice:

Even the small considerations of language contribute to any

writer's voice: such prosaic questions as the length of

sentences, the favored grammatical constructions, the

imagery, or the lack of imagery. All these are points of

style, and it is only through style finally—through

language—that any writer can be original. All the themes

are old (99).

It is from this understanding that the phrase *finding one's voice* stems, nd this, perhaps,

is the more traditional usage of the term *voice* when it comes to written prose. The writer of

novels has at her/his disposal ways of distinguishing herself/himself and making her/his unique

voice heard, and finding one's voiceis not limited to prose-writing, but is also studied in the

realm of poetry.

Traditional approaches to poetry would seem to suggest that in the presence of the strict

conventions of style, the poet has limited room through which to develop his own voice. Yet,

others may say that the conventions that apply themselves to poetry—especially poetry prior to

the late nineteenth century—were the framework on which the poet could hang his genius.

Regardless of the restrictive or supportive role of the conventions of poetry, vocal poetics has

applied itself to poetry. One interesting work that reveals the role of voice and vocal poetics in

poetry is Lisa Goldfarb's 2011 work *The Figure Concealed: Wallace Stevens, Music, and

Valéyran Echoes*.

In her work, Goldfarb traces, like I have done in previous chapters, the link between

music and literature. However, where I speak of vocal poetics of opera and the novel, Goldfarb

chooses the music of Wallace Stevens, and the poetry of Paul Valéry. The impetus for the

introduction to her work are the last stanzas of Stevens' poem "Sad Strains of a Gay Waltz[31]". In

these stanzas, Goldfarb reads,

> …a call that the speaker of the poem utters with a note of urgency.
>
> Before we can no longer yield ourselves to poetry, before our
>
> disbelief prevents us from finding solace in the sounds of words,
>
> the poet must create figures through which we search for authentic
>
> expressions of ourselves (1).

Elsewhere she states that, for Valéry, "the language and form of a poem must prompt us,

as readers and poetic speakers, to break from the patterns of ordinary speech, and to transform

our voices" (8). Here I gain a new understanding of the role of the language and form of poetry:

they are tools that force the reader to transform her/his voice. But it is not in an internalized

meditation on the text that brings about this transformative process; it is through performing the

poetry (reading and speaking) the text. Furthermore, as Goldfarb mentions, Rosu (1995), who

also works on Stevens' theory of musical poetics, states that sound is used "to upset conventional

meaning of poetry as a mode of performance;" and continues to highlight "the relationship

between musical and linguistic meaning or the dialogic dimension of Stevens' verse" (5). What

is striking in this discussion in the use of performance, in the sense of vocalization of a text, to

draw out the prosodic musicality of the text with which to better interpret the said text. An

---

[31] Too many waltzes—The epic of disbelief/Blares oftener and soon, will soon be constant./Some harmonies skeptic soon in a skeptical music// Will unite these figures of men and their shapes/Will glisten again with motion, the music/ Will be motion and full of shadows.

example of this approach to poetry was demonstrated by Baudelaire specialist, assistant-librarian

at the *Bibliothèque historique de la ville de Paris*, and curator of original collections of books by

Apollinaire, Baudelaire & Nerval, Jean-Paul Avice.

In a lecture entitled "Baudelaire de l'Albatros au Cygne: L'Invention des tableaux

Parisiens" given at Vanderbilt University's W.T Bandy Center for Baudelaire and Modern

French Studies on November 13, 2013, Avice recited, by heart, two Baudelaire poems:

"L'Albatros," and "Le Cygne*,*" both poems taken from the poet's collection *Fleurs du mal*

(1857). One is quick to note here that Avice did not perform the poems as one would perform a

theatrical piece, that is to say with magnified gestures and expressions fit for a stage. In fact, he

mentioned that one should never perform Baudelaire's poetry, but simply recite it. Reciting the

poetry, then, is the act of enlivening the text with the use of the voice. Avice recited the poems.

For him, he sees this process as useful when interpreting various parts of Baudelaire's work. In

his response to the theme of an expression of beautiful anguish devoid of articulated solutions

that permeates the work of Baudelaire, Avice suggests that the prosodic musicality of

Baudelaire's poetry is redemptive for the text and for the reader. That is to say, in various

moments of Baudelaire's poetry, the prosody of the text conspires with the poetry to answer

epistemological questions about the text, or better advise the reader on the poet's intentions.

Goldfarb, too, shares a similar opinion about reciting poetry. In fact, for her, the act of

performing poetry is seen as a reconnecting with the origins of the poem. And for Valery and

Stevens, as Goldfarb states, "a poem is born deep within the poet's sensibility and is realized in

the act of speech. As we speak the words, we at once give voice to the poet's own sense and

express what Stevens calls elsewhere more broadly 'the rhythm's and tones of human feeling'

(877)" (103). Additionally, both Valery and Stevens, Goldfarb states, see poetry as "synonymous

with the movement of a distinct and mysterious human voice…" (103). Here, the reciting voice

that enlivens the poetic text is seen as integral to usefulness of the poetry itself. To clarify this

statement, Goldfarb presents us with one of Valéry's most poignant arguments on the role of

voice. In his *Oeuvres I* (1957) he states,

> A poem on paper is nothing but a piece of writing that has
>
> undergone everything that one can do with a piece of
>
> writing. But among all its possibilities, there is one, and
>
> one only, that ultimately creates the conditions whereby it
>
> will assume the greatest form of action. A poem is a
>
> discourse that demands and sustains a continuous liaison
>
> between the voice that is, the voice that is imminent and
>
> that must come. And the voice must arise and excite the
>
> affective state of which the text is the only verbal
>
> expression. Remove the voice and the voice that must be,
>
> and everything becomes arbitrary. The poem is reduced to a
>
> series of signs only linked by the material traces they leave
>
> one after the other." (Translated by Goldfarb.)

Valéry's statement here strengthens my work not only because it reminds me of the fundamental

role of detecting the voice of the author in the written work, but it boldly suggests that to remove

the voice from poetic text is to untether the text to where it floats meaninglessly. I am quick to

note here that there is no mention of an oneness of interpretation or a homogeneity in the voice

that is detected in a certain work. In fact, I side with Barthes, for one, who in his 1973 work *Le Plaisir du texte* argues that the written literary text, in the hand of the both the writer and the reader, becomes an object endowed with affection. In this sense, I believe that the text is erotic. In the context of this eroticism, when it comes to detecting the writer's voice, one may highlight indexes that reveal the author behind the text, but one should not believe that the author visible in (*derrière du texte* 'behind the text') the text represents the true personality of the author. That is to say, in Barthes' understanding, the writer is allowed to fetishize her/his writing, endowing it with a political, social, or religious content, and treat it as unrevealing of any personal ideologies. Similarly, the reader separates her/himself into one who, despite her/his individual subjectivity vis-à-vis the content of the text, is still able to take pleasure from the writing of the text. For my purpose here, though, I am contented to note the fundamental inclusion of voice within the academic approach to text. And now I have shown ways in which vocal poetics have allowed us to conceptualize and detect the individual voice of the novelist, and also that of the poet.

Continuing the focus on the composition of the text, I look now at aspects of vocal poetics and narrative. Here, I will not focus on the use of quotation marks within written text, but note the continued effect of orality on written narratives. As I have highlighted in previous chapters, the use of punctuation, for example, is a strong reference to the role of voice within written text. Punctuation, then, is a thing of vocal poetics. In fact, I may now say that punctuation serves to orchestrate the flow of sound and silence in written text. Without this orchestration, many texts would be absurdly ambiguous. Examine, for example, the following questions:

> *Did you eat mom?*

> And

> *Did you eat, mom?*

In both statements, the inflection of the voice is governed by the inclusion of the question mark at the end of each statement. The comma, however, which indicates a separation of subject and object makes a tremendous difference in the meaning of the statements. While this sort of study may seem trite, other scholars have found similarly seemingly trite things from which to rediscover the vestiges of voice that remain in text. One such work is William Gass's 1985 essay entitled "And."

In this work Gass uses the simple conjunction "and" as a launching pad into studies of the continuous influence of orality on written texts. Starting with a counting of the usages of the word in James Joyce's text *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (3381 appearances of the word), and *Ulysses* (7170 appearances of the word), Gass shows how the linguistic (lexical, morphological) and cultural significance of the word is purely vocal; one that lends itself to the perpetual unfolding of a story, rather than a fixed, and static text conceived by writing. Consider the following:

–The man you saw in that picture was Guido Spirelli. He
was my first husband from a marriage, which I had later
annulled.
–And?
–And I shot him just to see him die. What do you mean
"and ?"

In this comical excerpt from a popular TV series[32], I see the usefulness of the simple conjunction in the realm of performance. One imagines being able to expand this story of the young girl in Italy by simply adding new statements connected by the word *and*. Curiously enough, similar studies have been applied to biblical text, showing the use of *and* as a tool by which improvisation and expansion on an idea could have easily been affected. Here, one remembers Zumthor's notion of *mouvance*, noting, too that the use of a conjunction such as *and* would be invaluable to the process that he describes. Vocal poetics, then, governs the anatomy of the written text. It also lends itself to the content of the text, which is discovered through reading.

Returning to Guignery, I note the role of the reader. Guignery suggests, and as I have argued in previous chapters, is not a silent process. She states that "reading actually consists of listening to the voice of the text, to its resonance, from the very silence of the page…a successful book is one that manages to make voices heard or at least to create the illusion of voice in all its variations and tonalities" (1). The provocative point here is that though the act of reading is conceived by the senses as a silent process, the silent page, paradoxically, conjures up many voices that, for Guignery, lay latent in the text until it is read. In that sense, Guignery and Bakhtin would seem to agree that the novel, adding here the voices of the novel, bound themselves up within the confines of multilayered novelistic discourse. For me, however, the voices that are latent in the text, while they do sound and interact on multiple planes within the novel, only constitute one level of my understanding of vocal poetics and the novel. Additionally, where Guignery would merely encourage the reader to listen to the voices, I insist that the reader perform the voices. For now, however, I continue with Guignery's study as she reveals the benefit of vocal poetics in making sense of novelistic discourse.

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[32] This excerpt is taken from the fourth episode of the seventh season of the *Golden Girls*, entitled "That's For Me To Know."

In fact, Guignery argues that the presence of voices in the text is not only conceivable as an ornamental feature, but as infinitely useful:

> Be they strident or lulling, vociferous or muted, live or
> spectral, effusive or reticent, voices are palpable in literary
> texts and are not only an aesthetic object but also an
> efficient tool of characterization as well as a resourceful
> metaphorical and metonymic device (1).

Here, Guignery announces that vocal poetics not only concern elements within the text, such as characters, for example, but also metalinguistic and metacognitive elements as well. Working within the text, Guignery looks also at the utterances of the characters, stating that the use of many voices within a text manages to "challenge monolithic narratives and logocentrism, and break the bars of the prison of silence," Additionally, she highlights a type of characterization which is marked by excessive speech. This she terms *compulsive verbosity* (4). Of note here is the idea that those who are classified as having logorrhea do not speak excessively only for their benefit, but for the satisfaction of knowing that they are being heard. In the realm of written texts, the effect of this compulsive disorder can be noted in the author's demanding that s/he be heard. The prefaces, for example, of philosophical works that salute the reader can be seen as the writer's need to know that s/he is being heard.

Elsewhere, Guignery continues to look at narratives through the guise of vocal poetics, evoking again Rabaté's 1999 work *Poétique de la voix*. Rabaté states that "contemporary narratives have renounced the utopia of totality and continuity, and have opted instead for the fragment and the murmur" (13). This statement is very provocative to us because it would almost

seem to signify a renaissance in the purpose and purported role of written narrative. That is to say, as I have shown in previous chapters, one of the reasons for the rise in the written text, was indeed the need for continuity, and totality. Recall that the political, social, religious, nationalistic, and linguistic instability of seventeenth-century Europe favored and encouraged a stable, autotelic, and reliable genre that could be repeated. Novelistic discourse, then, sought to relate history (both in fact and fiction) not as the performer would relate it, but in an almost-scientific way, where the anatomy of the book itself is seen as a metaphor of the beginning and the end of the story. Elsewhere, too, trusting the tale and not the teller, to quote Wie, and Henrie Jnr. (1985), was the operational motto at the site of the move from performed oral texts to narrated (read) written texts. This, for Rabaté, is utopic, and for a society in perpetual movement, this utopia was endlessly comforting. Perhaps, too, the very act of sitting in silence to read a novel, removed from the noise of a turbulent life, was a great luxury. Guignery's understanding of vocal poetics entertains studies of silence, too.

The presence of silence, is given much attention. For Guignery, silence, far from being obsolete, constitutes its own language, one that has "psychological, emotional, ethical, and political implications" (1). This notion is pertinent to my usage of vocal poetics, as it very pertinent to performance. Musically speaking, it is the patterning not only of sound, but also of silence that makes rhythm. Of equal importance to the orchestra are the moments when the kettle drums punctuate cadences as are the moments when there is no sound. In fact, in some musical works, especially those of Handel, silence is used not only to suspend time, but also to heighten the dramatic tension of a certain musical moment. Arguably, one of the most readily cited examples of this is said to be in Handel's "Hallelujah" from *The Messiah* (1741). I believe a stronger example is found in the "Amen" from the same work. Commonly called a "pregnant

pause," the composer, at the highest point of harmonic tension at the final cadence, writes an entire measure of silence. The listener is held unsatisfied. Once the silence is observed, the resulting music is a satisfying birth of doubly-pleasing sound; the silence has passed, and the tensions in the preceding chord are resolved. Once again, I am not alone in including music in discourse on vocal poetics. Guignery introduces the work of Graham Swift (2009), who sees the patterning of sounds (words) and silences in the novel as tantamount to the rests and notes in music. For him, as Guignery (2009) notes, "silence is not necessarily the opposite of speech, and needs not be equated to absence, lack, block, withdrawal or blank…but may be seen as a wilful decision not to say or else to unsay" (2). The benefit of Guignery's work, then, is not only her use of the term "poetics," or her focus on orality and sound as meaning-making indices, but her holistic focus on sound; an approach by which even non sounds are explored.

Following in this vein is Wittgenstein's work *Tractatus* (1974), in which he argues that "what we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence" (74). This statement is in contrast to Genette's theory of virtual language (that which cannot be said) to poeticized language through the *figure* of rhetoric. Wittgenstein's arguments, however, are partially echoed by de Certeau, who contends that the absence of words, and not sounds, refers not only to what we cannot speak and is continually affected a need to speak. As for Guignery (2009), "speaking the unspeakable" and "voicing the *unvoicable*" (3) are terms used to depict the idea of resistance, remembrance, reconceptualization , and notions of counter-narrative discourse as they affect writing taken from postcolonial and posttraumatic contexts. Elsewhere in her work, Guignery argues that silence is at times a powerful tool by where the victim refuses to speak to his/her torturer. She states that silence "may therefore be interpreted as a political stance, a way to deny the authority of the oppressor" (5).

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To add some new layering to this understanding of voicing the unvoicable, I visit the 2011

work of Vete-Congolo, *L'interoralité caribéenne: le mot conté de l'identité*. Herein, the term

interorality—a term which was inspired by Kristeva's lexicographically and semantically similar

word *intertextuality*-relates to the dialogical and dialectic processes by which oral texts within

the Caribbean territory are transmuted (transposed) into new ones. These new oral texts, namely

Creole, allow us to discover the philosophy, phenomenology, and hermeneutics of the Caribbean

territory. The key terms associated with this topic are many, and include the following: orality,

phenomenology, aesthetics, philosophy, hermeneutics, and dialogism. Vete-Congolo is quick to

list the things that she includes in her study, and the ones that she does not. Starting with the

excluded notions, she notes the use of the words *master,* and *slave.* She claims that the use of

these terms denotes a certain prejudiced ontology that should no longer be reproduced in

academic writing. She prefers the terms *the enslaver*, and *the enslaved*. Similarly, Vete-Congolo

refuses the use of the term *Créolité*, which, for her, represents a biased view of the purported

exchange between the enslaver and the enslaved, as it only focuses on the enslaved, and hardly

on the enslaver. Another notion that is excluded from this work is the essentialist view of

métissage. She includes Hegel's notions of the "spacious realm of the beautiful," using this to

launch her arguments about aesthetics and beauty in the face of chaos and anti-humanity. She

also uses Bakhtin's notions of dialogism, revealing an understanding of Bakhtin's dialogic

approach as a deconstructive phenomenon with a focus on a plurality of subjectivities. Her main

discussions, however, focus on speech production (which included the transmutation of oral

texts). For her, this may be considered the first aesthetic in the Caribbean. While other studies

focus on the creation of Creole as the language of deficiency (cognitive deficiency of the

enslaved to imitate the enslaver's speech), Vete-Congolo sees Creole as a display of philosophical logic and reason.

The example relates to the expression "*manger du caca*" 'to eat some shit,' in the context of the enslaver and the enslaved. Whereas the term was used in the context of aggression to subdue, punish, and warn the enslaved, the use of the term in Creole relates to the idea of duping someone. Devoid of the enslaver's voice, but still informed by the chaotic circumstances from which the term was heard (the essence of interorality), what remains is the spoken term in Creole. This, for Vete-Congolo, represents the philosophy and the psychology of the Caribbean psyche. Speech and discourse (voice and silence), her work encourage, should be considered the starting point of any study of the Caribbean. Creole, which bases itself on interorality, demonstrates the philosophical value of aesthetics. In this study, Vete-Congolo, who states that the corporeal and the psyche cannot be separated from each other, also presents new layering to my understanding of how voices combine and create new sounds across divergent spaces. Her work also brings me out of the sonic space of the novel and invites us to explore the outcomes of dialoguing voices from outside of the text with the sounds and silences that live within it.

It is here, then, that I return to Guigery's work, once again, to look at the role of the reader. When speaking about verbose texts, she states that the reader "needs to fill the gaps…pierce through the wall of words to make sense of proliferating stories. This is even more necessary when a novel presents a polyphony (or, in a cases, a cacophony) of voices which meet, blend together or clash, proposing contradictory versions of the same event "(4). This understanding smacks of Fish and Iser. For me, however, I add that the voice of the readers must interact fully with the other voices in the text, etc. Citing Gennete's use of the term transvocalisation, Guignery concludes that vocal poetics is grounded on the idea of a "multiplicity of perspective

and thus challenges any claim to a monological truth, but it also suggests the failure of any narrative stability and epistemological reliability." I believe that adding the plurality of the reader's voice to the existent ones within the text create the ultimate deconstruction. This is to fully perform the novel.

A few concluding notions by Guignery hold true for this study. She states that vocal poetics are a way of testing the "limits of language and its ability to make sense of individual and collective stories" (7). Towards the end of her writing, Guignery provides a quote that may serve as the preface to this work:

> For all its silent status, writing thus continues to conjure up
> voices, not only for their orality and musicality, but also for
> their function as sources of dialogism and, ethical, and
> political metaphors. Speech and silence are instruments of
> power, of self-assertion, and self-definition: they take part
> in the constitution not only of an individual and his or her
> life story, but also of a group, a community, a nation, and
> their history (6).

From this citation, I latch on to the inherent definition of voices that enriches my study with notions of politics, and ethics, and encourages notions such as gender, sexuality, and race. That is to say, as Guignery suggests here, and as other scholars cited previously show, the word "voice" is to be understood in its broadest definition. What follows is my understanding not only of voice in the context of novelistic discourse, but also my understanding of vocal poetics.

Vocal Poetics

To the existent field of vocal poetics that I have just explored, my work aims to contribute at the levels of composition, transmission, and the reception of novelistic discourse. At the levels of composition and transmission, which stage the acts of writing the text, I include authors not only of traditional novels, but also those authors whose work is considered "secondary," or "literary criticism." In saying this, I admit that the only discriminatory filter I employ is that the writing be considered novelistic discourse. I remember, though, that novelistic discourse does house within itself poetic text, but both discourses (novelistic and poetic) create separate *objets* with which to discuss them. The nature of the contribution I propose, similar to what was discussed above, is guided by a notion of (the) voice.

The definition of the term voice throughout this study has been ascertained by the use of many contexts, and many notions of the term have been related. It would not be wrong to say that this use of the term is unsettling, at the very least. This use of the term *voice* however, is fully reflective of my understanding of the nature of voice. That is to say, like Zumthor who believes in the eroticism of live sound, I believe in an eroticism to the concept of the term *voice* as it relates to my work. In my use of the term *erotic*, though, I borrow the usage of the ancient Greeks which are hinged upon the sensuous and the fluid. Far from establishing itself on solid footing, voice prides itself on its malleability and rogue-like flexibility. Thus, in terms of its definition, the term voice will fill any space into which it is poured; it may refer to the various discourses of characters within a text, or it may refer to the narrative style of the author. Voice, too, may refer to the mood employed in a certain writing, or it may actually refer to the actual sonic entity that sounds from the throat. If this is the case, the term voice is endowed with all the qualities of fluid-sensual sound. Here, too, the notion of how sound is perceived brings out the

idea of the sensuous. That is to say, though I primarily perceive sound with my ears, sound

resonates and vibrates, moving the air around us and causing other senses (sight and touch) to be

employed. And depending on the space into which the sound is emitted, it will be molded

proportionately before touching the listener's ear. Though this is not my main idea that novels be

read out aloud, I do borrow from my colleagues who study vocal poetics the idea that

epistemological approaches to poetic text (for us the poetic text included in novelistic discourse)

benefits from en-voicing text. The definition of voice too, may be as broad as the definition in

the first medical journals.

To this effect, P.J Salazar (1995) uses a scholarly journal published in 1580 to give an

overview of the philological understanding of the human voice in the sixteenth century, stating

that at the end of the sixteenth century, and all throughout the seventeenth century, the human

voice fascinated not only the minds of the erudite scholars of the time (La Primaudaye, for

example), but also the minds of the wider public. Salazar also classifies the main questions asked

about the voice into three groups: human voice, and the animal voice; the human voice, and the

voice of nature; and the voice and sound:

> ...la voix exprime le secret des choses, la voix
>
> instrumentale le secret de la musique théorique, la voix
>
> humaine le secret de la musique humaine laquelle jointe à
>
> la voix des bêtes lève le voile sur le secret de la musique
>
> mondaine, dans une série toujours dédoublée de renvois et
>
> de reflets qui imprime son élan à cette enquête (17).

…the voice expresses the secret of things, the voice of

instruments expresses the secret of musical theory, the

human voice expresses the secret of human music, to which

is joined the voice of animals, lifting the veil pertaining to

the secret of the world's music, this in an ever-

complementary series which continually feeds its original

purpose.

It is perhaps this understanding of the term that inspired Jean Starobinski's (2008) idea

that any study of civilization starts with a study of the voice. My notions of voice here reveal

how large of a term it is; it is one that is hard to contain. And that works well for my purpose.

Additionally, the use of the term voice necessitates the presence of someone to voice the text,

and also the presence of someone to receive the text. As I have shown in prior chapters, the one

who reads the text, and the one who receives it are usually the same person. With this

understanding of voice in mind, I set out to widen the field of vocal poetics.

Vocal poetics for me, then, constitute a certain way of approaching textual analysis based

not only on the notions of voice that I have discussed above, but also in the fullness of the term

as discussed in the context of vocal performance at the opera. Inspired by the opening to

Wesling, and Salwek (1995), who focus on "human selfhood and subjectivity, as understood

through the guise of voice" (1), and Valéry's notions on the role of voice in poetry, I arrive at a

fuller understanding of the peculiar views of my study. It is not only that I boldly suggest that

notions of performance not only be applied to poetry but also to the novel, but it is that I suggest

that performance and voice (as I have already defined with specific care to my study) are also

central to the critical reception of novelistic discourse. For me, as mentioned above, performance studies was encouraged and employed as I conceptualized the voice as an almost winged thing, able to travel between varying subject-based planes of physiological and physical displacement. In that sense, I believe that vocal poetics provides us a line with which to dialogue extra-textual and intertextual aspects of the novelistic discourse being explored. Vocal poetics also allows me the necessary language to write about the complex layering of dialoguing that are orchestrated when one reads.
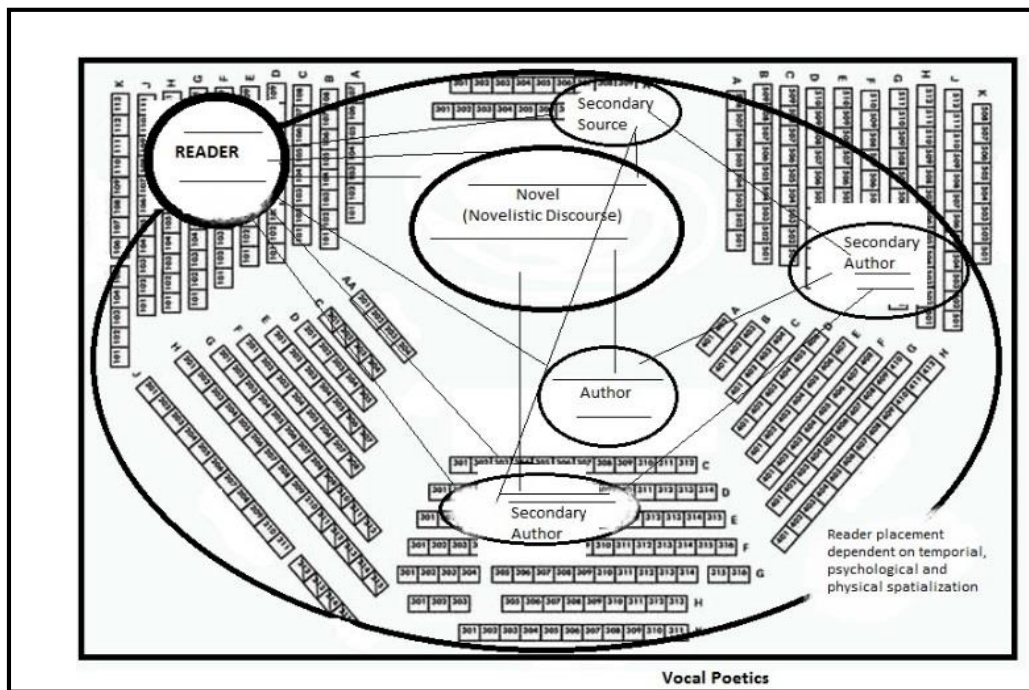

Figure 5. Diagram showing Proposed Vocal Poetics

In this very rudimentary diagram, the form of the theater, I get a view of the role of vocal poetics that I am undertaking. This choice of this shape was made not solely because theater and performance studies informed my deducing of the nature of voice, but because it is, in fact, the

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best space in which to explain the complexities of my understanding of vocal poetics. In this space, I have placed the texts (the primary text on center stage, and secondary texts in various sections of the theater); the reader; and the author. I may add as many secondary sources as there are spaces in the hall. And I may even add other readers, who dialogue with each other as well. Looking at the symbols used, now, I will note the primary inclusion of circles. The smaller circles, being concentric, independent, and closed entities, represent here one system of plurivocal, dialogism. The lines within each circle symbolize this dialogue, aided by notions of voice, which takes place within the one dialogical system. The lines that project out of the circles and touch other systems represent the interanimation, to cite Bakhtin, of multiple layers of dialogical systems. The biggest circle on which the reader sits represents the various spaces (psychological, physical, chronological, ideological, political, to name a few) that the reader may occupy as s/he reads the novel. I note that movability is granted to the reader and to no other entity in the theater. This is not to say that the text I static, but that it is changing of the reader's horizon, to cite Gadamer, that allows her/him to differently see the complex multidimensional network of dialogical systems that are at work. The final symbol used, the rectangle, which contains this galaxy of dialogically bound systems, represents my notion of vocal poetics.

In this chapter I have been concerned with linking my understanding of vocal poetics with that of those who have previously employed the use of the term, or terms close to it. At the end of this chapter, I have shown that my work does not pretend to disprove any existent theory, but contrarily, seeks to re-conceptualize and absorb them into my own framework of vocal poetics. And it is by using an already amorphous term—both in its ontological and phenomenological nature—*voice*, that I manage to neatly fit so many theoretical approaches into my work. I propose now that an additional contribution of my work is to the general field of

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literary criticism. It is not that I seek to propose a new area of literary criticism. I believe, in fact, that within institutions of higher education may move away from separating itself into followers of various schools of criticism, and will move towards entangling these once separated spaces to see what new dialogues will be made. My notion of vocal poetics deconstructs well-established schools of criticism and constructs lines of communication between them, where the reader of novelistic discourse, based on her/his present space, is the main moderator, and eventually the main performer. The chapter that follows puts my theory of vocal poetics to practice.

CHAPTER VI

PERFORMING THE NOVEL

In this chapter I will seek to put into practice the theories I teased out pertaining to my understanding of vocal poetics and performing the novel. And as I attempted to do in chapter 3 with the inclusion of novelistic discourse, I intend to adopt another form of experimental writing here. That is to say, I will attempt to, for the very first time, describe what performing the novel could look like. What follows, then, narrates a personal encounter with novelistic discourse and a brief glimpse into the questions and responses evoked by the text.

Performing a novel

In the springtime of 2013, while visiting the market district south of Rue Mouffetard in Paris, I discovered a small bookstore. I had been in search of textbooks on French grammar. I figured this bookstore, being less crowded and much smaller than the Gilbert Joseph's I had visited before, would provide a less hectic experience, allowing me the opportunity, perhaps, to browse peacefully, and without hurrying. I entered and immediately lost track of my initial intentions, for it wasn't long before I found myself browsing the collection of nineteenth-century novels. It was there that I discovered a collection of short stories (*contes*) by Émile Zola. What I say next used to be a source of great embarrassment, but in light of what has been discussed so far in this project, I have fewer qualms admitting: prior to this discovery in the small bookstore in Paris's 5th district, I was not aware that Zola ever wrote short stories. In fact, I met Zola by studying his naturalist novels, namely those contained in the series *Rougon-Macquart.*

Additionally, I encountered Zola when studying the Dreyfus Affair, namely his literary involvement in the publication of his letter "J'accuse…!" Needless to say, I was eager to encounter this new (to me) shade of Zola's personality. I, therefore, selected a collection of short stories entitled *Contes à Ninon.* The first story in the collect was "Simplice," and it was also the first story I read. This story has quickly become my favorite short story to date.

"Simplice" recounts the story of an only-child, who, despite his royal parenthood, has only one distinguishing characteristic: he is simple. Frightened by the life that his King and Queen-parents have envisioned for him, Simplice runs away from his castle and lives in the forest. There, he has no human contact, but does not live in solitude for he is surrounded by the trees and animals who befriend him. One such creature that finds favor with Simplice is the undine of the river. Known for her deadly, suicidal-homicidal kiss, the undine effortlessly seduces Simplice and none of the forest's creatures is able to prevent him from going to her. The two meet and share the deadly kiss. Two scientists later discover Simplce's body next to the river. They surmise that he must have leaned over to pick a flower and drowned. The researchers find the supposedly deadly flower and give it a name: *Anthanpheleaia limnaia*.

At the end of that story, I turned the page and moved on to another one. Simplice's story, however, was still on my mind, so I read it again. And as I read, I discovered more layers of meaning as I tried to find out what drew me to the story. Now, it is one thing to read a story and enjoy it secretly. But managing to read the words of a story is not the ultimate reward of higher education. Personally, should I go back to my time as a young student of literature, should I attempt to treat this story to any scholarly writing, it seems that it would not be sufficient to simply say what the story is about and give a summary of the main points. Academic writing, as I understand it, requires the scholar, firstly, to have an answer in the face of the art s/he

consumes, and then requires the scholar to communicate this answer to other scholars, eventually contributing to the wealth of dialogue that the studying within an institution of higher education affords. The ultimate goal of this dialogue, then, is to render the scholar(s) changed—in every sense of the word; —moving her/him through different stages of ignorance, different stages of certainty and uncertainty, with the aim of benefitting the communities with which the scholars interact.

I break my performance of "Simplice" here to revisit the guiding theory I exposed at the onset of this project: Bakhtin's notions on art and answerability. That same notion is recalled here, but as I have tried to show in the previous chapters, in order for the answer to have value for the scholar and for higher education, it needs to be performed. Having said that, I boldly suggest that the process of doing academic research on highly specialized areas of concentration is anything but social-forward. By that I mean that the nature of the process is such that we spend hours in solitude reading and writing. Then, we publish our work and it enters the great oblivion, perhaps to re-echo something to say that it was read. Yet, we work, in theory and in practice, to become contributing members of a community of people. We disagree that these people are virtual, intangible types. In fact, the purpose of the community gathering at conferences, for example, is to finally bring these contributing members together in the same physical space for them to dialogue (moving through moments of discord and concord) and live with each other for as long as they please. And for many scholars, this is the case, exactly. And like the paradoxical opera singer who develops her talent alone in a sparse practice room by day and becomes a tragic hero before hundreds of fans by night, the scholar is constantly thrown between moments of solitude and moments of public exposure. But for many other scholars, moments of solitude are followed by moments of silence which are succeeded by moments of impotence in the face of an

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art that is too beautiful, or too ineffable to comprehend. It is here that this project inserts itself: by understanding performance and availing oneself of the freedom of voice, one stands to answer unceasingly about art; one seeks to truly benefit from one's time as a reader of literature. Having related the story of Simplice, now, relying on notions of performance as a framework, and vocal poetics as theoretical grounding, I will seek to provide an answer.

I enter the theater where "Simplice" is to be performed. I know full well that I am both the performer of the story and also the spectator. Physically, I sit in a quiet room in the *Bibliothèque nationale de France* on a sunny Thursday afternoon. Psychologically, I feel invincible because I know nothing about this text and can only stand to learn. Additionally, I am eager to see if this text will serve the purpose of my project, for I am expected to produce some writing while abroad. From where I sit in the proverbial theater, even before the performance has begun, I can make out the face of the author Zola. Around him I see those associated with him: naturalism, second empire France, the experimental novel, *J'accuse…!,* and the Rougon-Macquart. They are mumbling and I barely hear what they say. I hope they don't prevent me from hearing the performance. It's about to start.

As the performance goes on I look around the theatre and there are new guests that have arrived. Each guest, depending on the area of the performance, lets out a sound of appreciation or disgust, and depending on where they sit in the hall, their sound is louder or fainter to me. As the performance comes to an end, I realize that I recognize other voices in the room. Many of them are very close to me. In fact, some of voices I hear are my own; the ones that come from inside me. I call them my own passions.

I will allow myself yet another quick break from the experience of performing the novel to correct an idea I mentioned earlier. It is to say that, in approaching the text, one is never alone

in the proverbial theater, which I may call the reader's mind. In fact, one enters the space already laden with experiences, ideas, desires, uncertainties, fears, and philosophies that walk in with the reader. Now, as Barthes (1973) suggests, the reader—just like the theater-goer who, though s/he already knows the outcome of the tragedy, is still able to experience the cathartic effect—is able to separate herself/himself in two (*cleavage*). And by an act of perversion, the cleaved minds of the reader are not aware of each other. For me, however, this foray into the performance of novelistic discourse troubles the notion of the perverse reader.

For me, the perverse reader, or to return to the term I used in prior chapters, the paradoxical reader, is sufficiently able—to the extent to which such a thing is even possible—to hear and un-hear existent voices so that the voices coming from within the text will be able to fully resound. In other words, if the reader approaches the text bent on reading a certain meaning into the text, the only sound resounding in the text will be the one that the reader forcefully puts there. Consequently, the reader will close herself/himself off from dialoguing with other voices that may have different understandings of the text. To compound this scenario, I may think back to an experience in class, where a certain theorist demands a certain reading of a text; s/he silences the voices of the reader and fills the space with her/his own, thus forcefully altering any understanding (and use) the text could evoke for me. I return, however, to my performance of "Simplice" to see what is to be achieved from allowing inner-voices and those within the text to interact organically and without force.

My own passions

I return to my theater and I am surrounded by many voices; some very close, some barely audible, others morphed into different sounds by virtue of their being combined with other

sounds in a very sonorous space. The first ones I bring to the fore, and this is always the case, are the ones that come from me. These, I call, my own passions.

The first voice speaks to me about the beauty of the text. By that I mean the collection of sounds that the author has chosen to present the story of Simplice are among the most attractive aspects of the story. In fact, I cannot help but recite a paragraph of the story aloud. It is the part in the story where Simplice has made his presence in the forest known, and it is clear that he will reside there. The forest, too, which presents itself as a living, sympathetic organism reveals itself to Simplice:

> Somme toute, la forêt ne le vit pas d'un mauvais œil. Elle
> comprit que c'était là un simple d'esprit et qu'il vivrait en
> bonne intelligence avec les bêtes. On ne se cacha plus de
> lui. Souvent il lui arrivait de surprendre au fond d'une allée
> un papillon chiffonnant la collerette d'une marguerite.

> On the whole, the forest saw no harm in him. It was
> understood that Simplice was just a simple being, living in
> good communion with the flora and fauna of the forest.
> They, in their turn, stayed, and revealed themselves to him.
> Often, in fact, he managed to easily observe, low on the
> forest's pathway, the butterfly ruffling the daisy's collar.

And is it this last line that I want to repeat and have many speakers recite back to me. I love the sound of the language not only because of the lexical anatomy of the words *chiffonnant,*

collerette, and *marguerite,* but because the placement of the words reflect the activity they describe. That is to say, I appreciate the onomatopoeic nature of the word *chiffonnant*, as I can hear the sound of ruffling. I also appreciate the fact that the author uses the gerund, which not only reflects the live-time action of the butterfly, but also seems to isolate the term in the context of the sentence. The words that follow, also based on their sonic attributes reveal the anatomy of the object being depicted: the perfectly round white petals of the daisy. That is to say, the repetition of three triple-syllabic words reveals, for me, a cyclical action: the circularity of the daisy, once again, seems to be easily presented.

Besides the imagery conjured up by these three words, the beauty of the image and its use within the context of the story make the paragraph all the more attractive to me. That is to say, in order to show the extent to which the forest has entrusted itself to Simplice, and by extension, the extent to which the forest no longer sees Simplice as a regular man, but as a being of goodness, the author chooses the image of a delicate butterfly and its interaction with an even gentler object, the daisy's petals. And I note, too, that this interaction between the butterfly and the daisy takes place at the depths of the forest's pathway. The author tells, thus, that even the footsteps of the man (Simplice), walking through the forest and bending himself to shadow the butterfly did not manage to fluster even the flightiest of things. And the story is fraught with this language; language that reveals more with each time it is performed. The story that this language presents is also very appealing. Though, one may say that the story ends tragically, in my understanding of the text, I see it to be positive. In fact, I admire Simplice and I understand the moral he teaches.

I see myself in Simplice because he, like me, without his knowing it, or his wanting it, was set on a path. In some ways, I believe, we all start like that, and until we are psychologically

and socially able to make our own decisions, we follow the path that is prescribed for us. Simplice, though, at a given time, removed himself from the path he was set on, and moved to another path. And there on this path, he retaught himself all that he could, relying only on the things that were given to him by Nature. That is to say, his affair with the forest was facilitated by his ability to perceive the forest using his senses and his passions. And it is this complete reliance on his passions and his senses that fuelled his curiosity, and his energy to act (his *action*). It is also this dependence on passion and senses that caused his death. As tragic as it may sound, Simplice died having finally achieving his ultimate objective—as simple and selfish as it may have been—and he dies completely fulfilled. There is also a sense of inevitability in the action, as if Simplice was dutifully following his nature to the point that nature itself could not intervene. In the excerpt that follows, Simplice discovers his love for the undine:

> Simplice s'était choisi pour bonne amie une libellule dorée,
> au fin corsage, aux ailes frémissantes. La chère belle se
> montrait d'une désespérante coquetterie : elle se jouait,
> semblait l'appeler, puis fuyait lestement sous sa main. Les
> grands arbres, qui voyaient ce manège, la tançaient
> vertement, et, graves, disaient entre eux qu'elle ferait une
> mauvaise fin. …
> Simplice devint subitement inquiet.
>
> La bête à bon Dieu, qui s'aperçut la première de la tristesse
> de leur

ami, essaya de le confesser. Il répondit en pleurant qu'il était gai

comme aux premiers jours.

Maintenant, il se levait avec l'aurore pour courir les taillis

jusqu'au soir. Il écartait doucement les branches, visitant chaque

buisson. Il levait la feuille et regardait dans son ombre.

—Que cherche donc notre élève? demandait l'aubépine à la

mousse.

La libellule, étonnée de l'abandon de son amant, le crut devenu fou

d'amour. Elle vint lutiner autour de lui. Mais il ne la regarda plus.
Les grands arbres l'avaient bien jugée: elle se consola vite avec le

premier papillon du carrefour.

Les feuillages étaient tristes. Ils regardaient le jeune prince

interroger chaque touffe d'herbe, sonder du regard les longues

avenues; ils l'écoutaient se plaindre de la profondeur des broussailles, et ils disaient:

—Simplice a vu Fleur-des-eaux, l'ondine de la source.

Simplice chose for himself a best friend. She was a golden dragonfly with a frail bodice and with wings that quivered. The beautiful thing that she was also showed herself to be fated by a hopeless flirtatious spirit. She mastered her little technique: she worked to entice Simplice, but then she nimbly flew off just out of the reach of his hand. The tall oaks, who saw this little game, cautioned her strongly, saying that she would only end up being hurt.

Then, Simplice suddenly became worried.

The Lady Bug, who was the first to read the sadness of Simplice, tried to bring her concern up to him. He answered through his tears that he was just as happy as when he first arrived.

Yet now, unlike before, he scoured the thicket from dawn to dusk. He divided the branches and investigated every sound. He looked under the leaves and searched the shady glooms.

What is our young student searching for? asked the

hawthorn of the moss.

The dragonfly, surprised by this new sensibility of her

lover, believed that Simplice had fallen madly in love with

her. She flew to him and showered him with many

affections. But he paid her no attention. The tall oaks had

correctly predicted this outcome: the dragonfly, devastated,

quickly attended to her sorrow by consuming the first

butterfly she could find.

Then, the trees of the forest became sad. They saw the

young prince interrogating every bush, carefully combing

through the pathways. From the depth of the underbrush

Simplice's disquiet came up to the summit of the great

trees. And they knew:

Simplice had seen Fleur-des-eaux, the undine of the spring.

As I see it, Simplice is so possessed by his love for the undine that his every action, be they

uplifting or not, is aimed at finding her. I find this inspiring because it teaches about living with

passion, and leaving nothing undone in the quest to achieve a goal. Simplice, in this sense, can

be compared to the dragonfly, who is skilled in a sort of toying with the object of her desire. As

morality would necessitate, she is punished for this frivolity. Her unrequited love, precipitated by

her own inconstancy, transforms her into a venomous creature, leaving this beautiful story as a

monster, devouring the most delicate of insects.

Besides this, to recall the notion of inevitability, there is something comforting about the omniscient trees that wisely predict the outcome of the interaction between Simplice, the undine, and the dragonfly. And, unlike the Greek chorus that offers a reactionary punctuation to past action, the wise trees seem to speak before the action occurs and are never frightened by what is known; nothing, therefore, is wholly new. Similarly, I take comfort in the notion of some all-knowing thing that has seen, has felt, has experienced, and has understood before I have. For varying people, this all-knowing thing has different names, but in the story of Simplice, it is the forest that plays the role. For me, Simplice is a role-model. I see him representing a goal in life, that of unplugging oneself from any sort of predestined life and investing in one's passions.

Additionally, I see Simplice as representing the guide to formal education. Following a similar idea, institutions of higher education, like the forest, is an aged thing with many creatures. It is a wise being that has seen a lot. Within its walls, one must use the senses and invest in one's passions in order to fuel all one's endeavors within higher education. I note here, though, the name of my protagonist "Simplice," which makes undeniable reference to the word "simple." His name, though, not only describes his personality, but also his approach to the new life he decided to lead in the forest. That is to say, once rid of the high life his royalty demanded of him, he was able to truly observe and learn from his surroundings:

> Dans les commencements, il eut quelque peine à
> comprendre leur langage; mais il s'aperçut bientôt qu'il
> devait s'en prendre à son éducation première. Il se
> conforma vite à la concision de la langue

des insectes. Un son finit par lui suffire, comme à eux, pour désigner cent objets différents, suivant l'inflexion de la voix et la tenue de la note. De sorte qu'il alla se déshabituant de parler la langue des hommes, si pauvre dans sa richesse.

Les façons d'être de ses nouveaux amis le charmèrent. Il s'émerveilla surtout de leur manière de juger les rois, qui est celle de ne point en avoir. Enfin il se sentit ignorant auprès d'eux, et prit la résolution d'aller étudier à leurs écoles.

At first, he had some difficulty understanding their language, but he quickly learned that he needed to rely on his instincts. He quickly adapted the concision of the insects' language: one sound was enough for him, as it was for them, to designate a hundred different objects, simply by following the inflection of the voice and the pitch of the sound. In doing this, he rid himself of his parents' language, which now seemed to sound so poor as it left their affluent mouths.

The way of life of his new friends charmed him. He marveled especially at their way of deciding on their kings,

which was by simply by not having any. Simplice felt

ignorant in the presence of these creatures, and finally

decided to study at their schools.

These passages show the act of a simplistic return to one's instincts (senses and passions) and

using them to learn. In this case, Simplice learned not only how to communicate with those

around him, but also learned about the obsoleteness of hierarchical systems and the importance

of self-governance.

It was also in the context of this simple perception of things with the senses that he

discovered the undine, which eventually killed him. What sense can I make of this death? At first

reading, though happy that Simplice kissed the undine, I was saddened by the death of my hero

(my role model). After reading again and pondering this death, I realize that Simplice has not just

merely died, but has been transformed into something else:

L'homme savant se souciait peu du cadavre. Il s'était emparé

de la

fleur, et sous prétexte de l'étudier. il en déchirait la corolle.

Puis, lorsqu'il l'eut mise en pièces:

—Précieuse trouvaille! s'écria-t-il. Je veux, en souvenir de ce

niais, nommer cette fleur _Anthapheleia limnaia_.

The wise man wasn't bothered too much by Simplice's

cadaver. He took a hold of the flower, and under the pretext

of studying it, he tore its petals off. Then, when he had ripped

it to pieces he said:

What a precious discovery. In memory of this drowned

simpleton, I will name this flower Anthapheleia limnaia.

Here, I see the entrance of two men, described as *homme savant* 'a scholar' and *homme d'esprit* 'an intelligent man,' who come upon the remains of the undine and Simplice. The scholar, using his science, theorizes on what caused the death of Simplice, and commemorates him by assigning undine a scientific name to denote her species. Simplice, indirectly, is thus immortalized by this name.

Returning to the metaphor of the forest as an institution of higher education that I proposed, what sense can I make of this transformation of Simplice? For me, I see two approaches. The first sees Simplice entering the institution as a simple man, whose energies are allow him to freely and instinctually explore many areas and deeply learn life-long (life-changing, perhaps!) skills. He then discovers his passion and curiously pursues it until his curiosity is satisfied, and he graduates from the state of ignorance, his spirit leaving to fly and pursue every other passion, and leaving behind the shell of the simple thing he was.

The second approach, however, to Simplice's transformation in the context of formal education, shows, perhaps, a critique of higher education itself. By that, I mean the two men enter the institution (the forest), already bearing titles, and go about exploring what they see. Unlike the simple Simplice who relied on his instincts to humbly learn from that which he could

perceive, these men, ignorant of the beautiful story that led to their discovery of the undine and Simplice, use science to destroy the flower and come up with a name for it. This fetish for naming and classifying branches of knowledge and the information housed in each, and the arbitrary misguided and often times destructive tendencies within higher education to be critiqued here. In this light, I reread the last lines of the story:

> Ah! Ninette, Ninette, mon idéale Fleur-des-eaux, le barbare
>
> la nommait
>
> _Anthapheleia limnaia_!

> Ah! Ninette, Ninnette, this barbarian has called my perfect
>
> Fleur-des-eaux _Anthapheleia limnaia_!

Here, the narrator speaking to Ninnette, calls the scholar a barbarian. This seems once again to critique higher education, especially if I juxtapose Simplice with the barbarians that come at the end. It seems as if the story has granted Simplice a sweet transfiguration to a higher ideal, while showing the supposed scholars as ignorant, unnatural (as they are not concerned by the plight of their fellow man), abusive and barbaric. Simplice thus teaches the fruits of simplicity. What is rather complex, though, are the many voices that the story conjures up. And what I have just read represents only the voices that come from me.

I break my performance here again to reflect on the narration of the voices I consider to reveal my own passions, or the things I like about Zola's "Simplice." Now, it may very well be that my feelings about the work may be misguided and poorly-dialogued, seeing that I have

purposely tried to only dialogue the voices that the text seems to send out and the voices that these inspire within me. It is at this point, then, that I must investigate the other voices with which I interact as I try to provide answers for the story I am performing.

I hear voices

Before entertaining the other voices in the theater, there still remain a few inner-voices that pose questions concerning the text I have just read. I wonder, for example, the extent to which Simplice's death is a morally laudable event. That is to say, in my explanation, Simplice's death could be reconceived as a transfiguration from complete ignorance to the heights of knowledge and experience, but is that the author's morale? Is there more to be understood from the end of Simplice's life, which comes as the culmination of his knowing. (In his case, he experienced the kiss of the undine and dies.) Does knowing (too much), or wanting to know (too much) result in death? Does the dragonfly destroy the butterfly because the *knowledge* of her lover's rejection forces her to become deadly? Looking at other texts, I recall the fate of Semele, for example. Was the knowledge of Jupiter's full godlike appearance the cause of her death? I recall, too, the fate of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. And voices multiply as I wonder if the quest for (too much) knowledge is rewarded by death. Or does this death represent the death of curiosity? Now, as I move to dialogue with other voices, I dwell on the notions of death, transfiguration, morality, knowledge, and destruction.

Looking around in the theater, I realize that I can hear the voice of the author, Zola. But, only knowing him in the context of his *Rougon-Macquart* series, I wonder that this earlier work (*Simplice*) has in common with his older works?

Emile Zola (1840-1902) was a nineteenth-century novelist, known for two main things: the leading innovator of the naturalist novel, and the article "J'accuse..!," surrounding the Dreyfus Affair. Zola's literary output is significant because of the attention he, himself, paid to the style of writing he intended to achieve. Starting at the age of 28, Zola set out to write his colossal work *Les Rougon-Macquart*, which chronicles the life of a family of Frenchmen from the South of France. Over a period of twenty years, Zola consistently published, polished, and gained popularity, for his writing of the series. One can say that Zola had great timing, in that he lived long enough to complete the work, and that he gained wealth and popularity as well. Now, it is said, especially by historian George Saintsbury (1919) that Zola was not the founder of Naturalism, and that Edmond de Goncourt and his brother, Jules, claim this title. Well, I will agree that even if this is the case, time was not on their side, for Jules died at a very young age, and his brother did not gain much popularity. Be this as it may, Saintsbury does argue that it was Zola, in fact, who brought Naturalism to its perfection. But what exactly is Naturalism? According to Sainstbury again, the three principles of Naturalism are the idea of experimentation-observation, the belief in Darwinism/Spencerianism, and the theory of the lesion. Zola states that his work has a moralist ideal, as it looks at resolving the issue of finding out how men behave in society. Looking at the story of *Simplice,* which Zola published when he was twenty-four-years old (four years prior to starting his work on the naturalist novel) what links are there to be seen between the two works? It wouldn't be unreasonable to say that, in the early work of Zola, the author's interest in nature, science, and morality are evident.

Returning, however, to my questions about death, knowledge and morality, is there an answer to be found in the notion of naturalism and lesions? According to B.W. Wells (1893), the definition of Zola's ideas about naturalism and primary lesions are presented in the preface to the

first novel, *La Fortune des Rougons* (1871) of the *Rougon-Macquart* series. Wells translates Zola's notion of naturalism as:

> … the slow succession of accidents of nerve and blood
>
> declare themselves in a race as the result of a primary
>
> organic lesion, and determine according to his surroundings
>
> in each of the individuals that compose it, the feelings,
>
> desires, passions, all the human manifestations, natural and
>
> instinctive, to whose products I give the conventional
>
> names, virtues and vices (385).

Death, when seen through the lens of naturalism, is an inevitable process, and so *Simplice's* death is a natural occurrence that is observable and scientifically acceptable, preordained in fact from the beginning moments of his life.

From his very genetic makeup, Simplice is physically, psychologically, and socially incapable of fulfilling the duties for which his inheritance fated him. He thus fled to the forest, where these same attributes that rendered him unfit for the throne ensured his survival. Once filled with the knowledge of the forest, he sees the undine, and is filled with passion.

> —Que ne disais-tu que tu étais un homme? Nous nous
>
> serions cachés de toi, nous t'aurions refusé nos leçons, pour
>
> que ton oeil de ténèbres ne pût voir Fleur-des-eaux,
>
> l'ondine de la source. Tu t'es présenté à nous avec

l'innocence des bêtes, et voici qu'aujourd'hui tu montres

l'esprit des hommes. Regarde, tu écrases les scarabées, tu

arraches nos feuilles, tu brises nos branches. Le vent

d'égoïsme t'emporte, tu veux nous voler notre âme.

Why didn't you tell us that you were a man? We would had

hidden ourselves from you and would have forbidden you

to learn of us so that the veils would have not been lifted

from your eyes and you would have not seen Fleur-des-

eaux. You came to use with the innocence of a simple

beast, but now you reveal yourself to be possessed by the

mind of a man. Look how you trample upon the beetles;

you tear our leaves and bruise our branches. The winds of

selfishness have carried you away, and you now want to

rob us of our soul.

I note, here, that Simplice's passion for the undine, coupled with his manly nature (containing

the original lesion) transformed him into an egotistical, uncaring man. Though he tried to escape

his humanness by fleeing to the forest, he could only manage to convince the forest, but could

not deny the call of nature in the presence of an all-conquering passion for Fleur-des-eaux. His

death, then, in the context of what I have just said, is natural.

This idea of the deadly outcome of denying one's nature is further exemplified in another

Zola novel, *Thérèse Raquin* (1867). Here, the protagonist Thérèse, a young, passionate woman,

tempered by the heat of the North African sun, finds herself in two unfortunate spaces: at the bedside of her sickly, languid cousin Camille, and in a yellowish-brown, humid, and dimly-lit house set in a gray Paris. There, she is eventually made to marry her sickly cousin, who is slowly decaying before her eyes. Unhappy with her fate, she takes a lover, Laurent, and together they decide that happiness will be theirs if they murder her half-brother/husband. Like Lady Macbeth, she acts against her own nature, and alongside of Laurent suffers from the consequences of their action. Haunted by her actions, she too decays away.

Returning to Simplice, I continue to ask questions about the overall moral, if any, of the work. And while I may not have answers right away, I am motivated to keep searching for them, and am encouraged to reread the text several times. In so doing I notice that besides the notion of death and morality, Zola pays special attention to aspects of freedom as they relate to the forest. In fact, in a beautiful passage describing the flora of the forest, Zola writes:

> Dans ces temps anciens, on n'embellissait point encore les
> arbres à coups de ciseaux, et la mode n'était pas de semer le
> gazon ni de sabler les allées. Les branches poussaient
> comme elles l'entendaient; Dieu seul se chargeait de
> modérer les ronces et de ménager les
> sentiers. La forêt que Simplice rencontra était un immense
> nid de verdure, des feuilles et encore des feuilles, des
> charmilles impénétrables coupées par de majestueuses
> avenues. La mousse, ivre de rosée, s'y livrait à une
> débauche de croissance; les églantiers, allongeant leurs bras

flexibles, se cherchaient dans les clairières pour exécuter des danses folles autour des grands arbres; les grands arbres eux-mêmes, tout en restant calmes et sereins, tordaient leur pied dans l'ombre et montaient en tumulte baiser les rayons d'été.

L'herbe verte croissait au hasard, sur les branches comme sur le sol; la feuille embrassait le bois, tandis que, dans leur hâte de s'épanouir, pâquerettes et myosotis, se trompant parfois, fleurissaient sur les vieux troncs abattus. Et toutes ces branches, toutes ces herbes, toutes ces fleurs chantaient; toutes se mêlaient, se pressaient, pour babiller plus à l'aise, pour se dire tout bas les mystérieuses amours des corolles. Un souffle de vie courait au fond des taillis ténébreux, donnant une voix à chaque brin de mousse dans les ineffables concerts de l'aurore et du crépuscule. C'était la fête immense du feuillage.

In these former times, trees were not sculpted with shears, neither was it customary to plant lawns and create sanded pathways. The branches grew as it was intended for them to grow; only God himself undertook the task of taming the rambles and cutting back the footpaths. The forest that

Simplice encountered was an enormous nest of greenery, with flowers upon flowers, and impenetrable hedge groves parted by majestic avenues. The moss, drunk with dew, let itself go and grew with full abandon. The rosewood stretched out its nimble arms to dance giddily in the pools of light around the great trees. The trees, in turn, calmly and serenely wormed their feet in the shadows beneath and then climbed uproariously to greet the rays of the summer sun.

The grasses grew wherever they pleased, flourishing in the dark as they did in the light. The leaves kissed the woods, and in their haste to blossom, the daisy and the forget-me-nots presented their flowers upon the bark of withered tree trunks. And all these branches and all the grasses and all the flowers sang; they caressed, pressing themselves closer to each other in order to babble with more ease and to softly tell their secret petal-love stories. A single breath of life flowed throw the dark thicket, and animated each little sprig of moss that lent its voice to the delightfully ineffable forest concerts that were heard from dawn to dusk. It was the great foliage festival.

The forest is depicted as a zone devoid of human intervention, but it is also as zone of complete freedom and complete abandon. In fact, one cannot help but see something very erotic about the presentation of the forest. And now I hear other voices, such as William Blake's, who sees the forest as the zone of experience. I also hear the voice of Flaubert, who in his *Madame Bovary* (1856) describes a type love as free and untamed as the unkempt mane of a horse. But what does Zola want the reader to understand by the world that the forest represents? Once again, as I dialogue with the various voices that the text conjures up, I seem to be left with more questions than answers. And there are still many voices that still echo around us. What follows is a quick example of additional voices that the text evokes.

To begin, I see the notion of freedom, coupled with Simplice's escape from his life in the court, as reminiscent of the work of Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *Romance de la rose* (1275):

> Les femmes sont nées libres, mais la loi les a soumises à
>
> certaines conditions qui leur ôtent leur liberté naturelle.
>
> Nature n'est pas si folle qu'elle fasse naître Marotte
>
> seulement pour Robichon, si nous regardons bien, ni
>
> Robichon pour Agnès , ni pour Perrette ; elle nous a faits,
>
> beau fils, n'en doute pas, toutes pour tous et tous pour
>
> toutes, si bien que, malgré le mariage institué pour
>
> empêcher la débauche, les querelles et les meurtres
>
> passionnels, et pour faciliter l'éducation des enfants dont
>
> les conjoints ont la charge, les dames soient laides,

s'efforcent par tous les moyens de retourner à la liberté
primitive.

Women are born free, but law relegates them to certain
conditions that robs them of their natural liberty. If we
really think about it, we realize that Nature would not be as
silly to create Marotte only for Robichon, neither Robichon
only for Agnès; neither Agnès for Perrette; nature made us
all, young man, and don't doubt it, all women for all men,
and all men for all women, so much that, despite the
institution of marriage that seeks to prevent debauchery,
quarrels, and crimes of passion, and facilitate the
upbringing of children of which the parents are in control,
women become hideous, as they try with all their might to
return to the original liberty of their primitive existence.

This description of women bring born free brings us to the work of Rousseau's 1772 work,
Rousseau juge de Jean-Jacques:

 Tous les premiers mouvements de la nature sont bons et
droits...Mais bientôt manquant de force pour suivre à
travers tant de résistance leur première direction, ils se
laissent défléchir par mille obstacles qui, les détournant du
vrai but...l'homme oublie sa première destination.

> All the original motions of nature are good and
>
> correct…But now, lacking the drive to resolutely follow the
>
> calling of their primitive nature, man allows himself to be
>
> distracted by a thousand obstacles that turn them away
>
> from their true goal…man forgets his original calling.

Additionally, I hear voices of Descartes, Pascal, and D'Alembert, who all speak about removing the yoke of dogma and perceiving the world around using only the individual faculties gifted to the individual.

Elsewhere, Rousseau's voice brings with it his discourse on the deterioration of the French language. I remember now the story of Simplice who considered the language of his parents to be poor. A similar idea is found in Francis Fénelon's (1651-1715) discourse, who said of the French language in the seventeenth century: "Notre langue manque d'un grand nombre de mots et de phrases : il me semble même qu'on l'a gênée et appauvrie, depuis environ cent ans, en voulant la purifier" 'Our language lacks a great number of words and phrases. It seems, too, that in our century-long attempt to purify the language, I have only managed to upset it and impoverish it.' This discourse on language conjures up other voices, such as Diderot's discourse on the language of the deaf as a site of inquiry into the role, use, and development of language contained in his *Lettre sur les sourds et muets* (1751). I also hear voices of Chomsky and his discourse on universal grammar (1966).

Elsewhere, if I revisit the notion of nature and primary lesions, I hear a faint voice of Sartre and his discourse on existentialism. I also hear his discourse on enlightenment and *Orphée noir* (1948). I can, in fact, reconsider Semplice's death as the final fruit of true enlightenment.

And isn't the allegory of the inevitable doom at the possession of, looking upon, or inhabiting of the object of one's desire very evident?

Furthermore, if I consider the idea of the forest's spirit, the reference to the undine, and to notions of spiritual transfiguration and transformation, I hear discourses of pantheism. I also hear the gamut of the Jung's work, notably his notions on psychology and alchemy (1944) and theories on that which is seen and how it is inextricably linked to that which is never seen: rhizome theory (1963).

In the realm of poetry, I reread Robert Frost's 1916 poem "Choose Something Like a Star:"

<div align="center">

O Star (the fairest one in sight),

We grant your loftiness the right

To some obscurity of cloud.

It will not do to say of night,

Since dark is what brings out your light.

Some mystery becomes the proud.

But to be wholly taciturn

In your reserve is not allowed.

Say something to us we can learn

By heart and when alone repeat.

Say something! And it says "I burn."

But say with what degree of heat.

Talk Fahrenheit, talk Centigrade.

Use language we can comprehend.

</div>

Tell us what elements you blend.

It gives us strangely little aid,

But does tell something in the end.

Here, unlike the lack of reasoning given at the end of Simplice, Frost's poetry tells that science is needed to fill the silent void that man faces in the presence of nature's ineffable entities. The unknown, beautiful undine that becomes the flower—in order to overcome the deafening, and frightful silence of its existence—is given a scientific name. For Frost, the beautiful star may not simply say what is does, but must quantify itself and give a report *academisée* of its existence. Frost would seem to say that, though science eventually fails to tell everything we need to know, it does fill a void.

As I near the end of this writing, it is necessary to say that, while the approach that I have described above is similar to Kristeva's intertextuality in its overall reliance on multiple texts that combine to determine meaning to that of intertextuality, mine distinguishes itself by setting the stage for the governance and overall organization of these texts. That is to say, my work acknowledges the existence of multiple texts, labels them as voices, and then presents a theory of vocal poetics as a framework that governs the hierarchical structuring and uses of these texts. I could go on for many pages, telling of the voices that the text inspired within us and those that it evoked from elsewhere. In fact, I haven't even mentioned the countless poems that speak about trees and the knowledge they teach. I marvel at all the sounds that a short simple story has conjured up. Looking on what I have done in this chapter, and looking at the work I've undertaken in this project, I see that my approach to performing the novel should result in many answers in the face of art. That is to say, I will fully take on my responsibility in the face of art.

Now, it will take more art to transform all the sound I have produced into new art (literary criticism) that will be received by other readers and hearers, but that is for another project. For now, however, I will review what was just done and discuss yet another potential benefit of my work on vocal poetics.

In my approach to performing the novel, I saw it necessary to include the information surrounding the logistics of my first encounter with the text. By that, I mean not only how the text was discovered, but the uniqueness of the circumstances—to borrow from Bakhtin's notion of situatedness— under which it was read. Next, I executed a reading of the text, devoid of overwhelming external voices that would threaten to distort my reading. After the first reading, I paid more attention to the voices I seemed to hear the most prominently, and, like Simplice, I embraced passion and invested in them. These passions produced questions about the text that fuelled my curiosity and begged us to have dialogue with other voices. I, thus, dialogued with the author, his output, his literary school, and with other theorists surrounding him. Next, I sought to find connections between the unanswered questions I had and other theorists from a varying cross-section of disciplines, time periods and genres. Finally, I see the theater as a loud place with many voices echoing and reechoing constantly.

Looking at the voices I have conjured up above, I note that the only detectable reason used in the hearing of these voices comes from the reader's experiences. That is to say, there is no limitation by time, language, genre, discourse, or discipline. There is no strict abiding given to theories that would seek to compartmentalize literary criticism into neat canons and scientifically classified categories and subcategories. In fact, similar to the forest presented by Simplice, the presentation of voices here is purely overgrown, entwined, and uncontained. Perhaps, then, vocal

poetics pretends to change not only the approach to novelistic approach, but also the approach to literary criticism, which I do insist upon considering a form of art.

My notion of challenging approaches to literary criticism finds support in the work of Michael Pierssens. In a talk entitled "Literary History's Many Turns," given at Vanderbilt University's Robert Penn Warren Center on February 11, 2011, Pierssens argued that the telling of literary history based on periodization imposes an often unacknowledged bias that affects the reception of the history presented. After presenting further arguments that culminated in him revealing that "there are no straight lines anymore," Pierssens proposed new approaches to telling literary history. These approaches, which gave the name "literary turns," are the following: linguistic turns (using metalinguistic objects as a classification tool); sociological turns (a study of gender, or the outbreak of war); psychoanalytic turns; deconstructive turns; geo-critical turns (a classification based on topography is central); epistemological turns; ethnocritical turns; and other turns that include classifications based on digital indices, affordance theory, memory, and notions of deliberate omission. To this list of literary turns, I may humbly add my little one about vocal poetics.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

My project started with a look at the history of writing, seeking to investigate the

processes that brought about the first known forms of writing, and then the processes that led to

the creation of the novel. Once the historicity of the novel was ascertained—showing the

fundamental impact of orality not only in the creation of oral texts, but also its continued

influence on the earliest written forms of novelistic discourse—I discovered that at the heart of

the novel was vocal performance. Long before the creation of printing presses and the

accompanying fetish for visible stimuli, stories were performed and novelized before a listening

audience. Admittedly, this is a rather obvious recollection of the relationship between literature

and orality, but for my purposes, it opened up the lines of inquiry about reasons for the exclusion

of notions of orality in genre of the novel. Additionally, my discovery invited is to investigate

which aspects of the novel's oral past were still included within novelistic discourse.

Furthermore, I surmised that these remnants of the novel's past could be epistemologically

relevant. The ultimate contribution of this chapter was, however, the way in which I was able to

present the novel, not as a purely made-for-writing text, but as a descendant of a once-performed

genre. With this is mind, I moved onto the second chapter, continuing in the wise of

reintroducing old genres (opera and novel), and tracing the influence of orality.

My next motion was to find ways of reconceiving opera within the context of orality. By

that, I showed that, similar to the novel, opera, too, inherited from the tradition of performance

that preceded its existence. After showing that the musical score, once again like the novel's

words, is a time-preserved, data-rich document that stores information about the link between a sort of instinct-based inflection and a poeticized rendering of the same inflection. The first two chapters of my work, then, allowed me to establish many points, the more crucial of which are:

1. Though seemingly disparate in their ilk and their reception, the opera and the novel—because of their inheritance from oral performance, and their continued inclusion of remnants of this past in their separate discourses—allow themselves to be treated along similar lines of enquiry and similar critical processes.

2. Looking at the historicity of both genres, notions of voice and performance are found to be very present. The terms (voice and performance), however, are only readily applied to one of these genres. My curiosity to find out what benefit there may be to applying the terms to the other genre (the novel) was fully sparked.

At the end of the second chapter, I took voice and performance as my key terms, looking to treat the both terms in the context of the opera (a familiar area for the terms) and the novel (a more unfamiliar area).

In chapter 3, the second of these terms, *performance,* was discussed. I started by looking at the popular uses of the term within formal education, especially in the disciplines that pertain to the novel. I discovered that the term performance was more so used in the language learning classroom to designate a certain competence. Otherwise, the term was used to speak about any measurable student output based on an applied stimulus. Next, I moved on to explore the realm of performance in the context of the opera. Here, my writing took on a freer form as I created a story based on the life of a certain opera singer. Like Rousseau's *Emile,* I created my Violet as the perfect performer who exemplified the multifaceted planes of dialogue that take place in a certain instant of any given operatic performance. I treated the notion of sound and spatialization,

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showing that physical, psychological, social, historical and political spaces combine with the added subjectivity of sound make infinite permutations that affect performance. I then applied this understanding of spaces and performance to act of reading a novel. There, I showed that the reader, or as I called him, the paradoxical reader, plays the role of both performer (transmitter) and spectator (receiver). I, then, defined the notion of performing the novel as the process by which the paradoxical reader's reception of the text is affected by the multiple spaces to which s/he is transported, carried along by the combinations of sounds s/he hears within the text, those surrounding the text, and those that come from her/him.

My next task as I moved on to chapter 4 was to reveal the theoretical impetuses for this study, and to finally contextualize my work so far in the framework of vocal poetics. Here, I recalled the work of Bakhtin, not so much for his notions about art and answerability, but his exposition on novelistic discourse, which served as a launching pad for my work. The work of Kintzler, too, was recalled in order to show how hers inspired the theoretical process I used: two disparate genres were shown to be histrionically linked by core aspects, and the phenomenological nature of these core aspects in the one (opera) was used to ascertain the similar aspects in the other one (the novel). After doing this, I explored the work that already exists in the field of vocal poetics, and showed how my work interacts with it. At the end of chapters 3 and 4, I presented these lasting points:

1. The notion of the paradoxical reader finds a theoretical base not only in the individual fields of psychoanalysis, deconstruction theory, structuralism and formalism, queer studies, continental philosophy, reader-response theory, language pedagogy, essentialism, musicology, and vocal poetics, but is also fully housed in the realm of performance studies.

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2.   Vocal poetics, as I understand it, relate not only to the individual ways in which portions of a text can be deconstructed with the subjectivity of *voice* writ large, but is also a guiding framework—inspired by the greatest definition of the term voice—to help discover the multiple layers of dialogic systems that novelistic discourse affords to the reader and to the literary critic.

From this theory-driven chapter, I set out in chapter 5 to demonstrate the performance of a novel. The novel I chose, which is classified as a short story, was Zola's *Simplice.* I tried to show the effect of voices and space on the interpretation of novelistic discourse, resulting in a personal performance of the short story. And while the performance was not complete, as the amount of voices sounding were many, I concluded that this approach to performing the novel never results in silence in the face of art; the reader and the literary critic will be fueled in his curiosity to discover more from the text, and to create art her/himself. The final point made in this chapter pertained to the unlocking of prescribed approaches to literary criticism, restoring the role of artist to the critic, allowing her/him to be the conductor and orchestrator of the theories s/he is inspired to use.

All of this sounds quite flowery and idealistic, readers of this work may say. In fact, if I argue that the reader is placed as the main conductor of the voices with which s/he dialogues, what prevents the reader from purposely ignoring voices s/he does not wish to entertain? The simple answer to that concern is that there is nothing preventing the reader from un-hearing voices that the text inspires. Similarly, however, to the process of receiving feedback from written criticism, the reader will, as s/he has various experiences, will dialogue with sources that my completely disagree with his/her work. My work here encourages would also then encourage

the reader to find out why these voices sound the way they do and investigate and reinvestigate how these voices change over time. In fact, in my writing here, I am aware of voices that would disagree with my application of vocal poetics to novelistic discourse and not to poetry, which would seem to be a more logical choice.

Additionally, others may be concerned with each use of the word "voice" and "opera," stating that the terms are so broadly defined that, without continuous negotiation to the specific sense of the word being alluded, one is constantly unsure. To these concerns, which I have already treated in various ways and in different chapters, I add that this writing a testimony of my philosophy as it came to me at the time of the writing. As I grow and have experiences with other voices, it is very likely that this philosophy will morph itself into new shapes. I may find, perhaps, that tracing the effect of voice on novelistic discourse is, indeed, to broad a scope for academic research. I may decide, in fact, to trace the effect of vocal performance on novelistic discourse, such as short stories, as opposed to novels. Alternatively, I may decide that, seeing that the ultimate beneficiary of my work is the reading student, it may be better to focus this work on pedagogical approaches to the novel in higher education. And even there I may discover limitations, for not only do I pretend to encourage a sort of freedom, which is already a scary thing, but I do not give any insight as to how this approach would be assessed within in higher education. That is to say, in light of this approach to literary criticism, how is performance measured? Furthermore, what weight can objectively be given to personal experience in a system that seems to reward the knowledge and recounting of others'? And is all this even to be considered for the sake of answerability?

For now, though, at the end of this project, I conclude that it wasn't such a crazy idea after all to try to liken the novel to the opera, and furthermore, try to argue for a similarity in

their composition, transmission and reception. I see, contrarily, that by studying the operational factors that existed at the creation and establishing of both art forms, new life is given to both.

Throughout this project, especially in chapters 2 and 3, it may have been evident that there was an undercurrent of sociocriticism surrounding the view of opera. That is to say, the counter-narrative to my nouveau theoretical unpacking of opera was that of trying to show opera as a valuable possession and not as an obsolete, and elite, wasteful art. I continue here by adding that opera, though an unpopular art form today, is immortalized by the nature of performance. Each voice that interprets the figures that make up the lines and spaces of the musical score breathe new life into the music, rendering it fresh and remade at each performance. Added to the subjectivities of the spectator, the opera is perpetually recreated. Looking at the novel now, the critique of higher education that may have been present in parts of this work, was actually more present at the onset of my project. I believe that, similar to the fate of opera, reading the novel has been considered unpopular, unnatural, and elite. Perhaps if I remember my conclusions here about (live) performance immortalizing art, I may convince myself and my students not only of the joys of reading the novel, but also of the disservice it would be to the institutions of higher education should they not be given the opportunity to read novels and attain to the morality the institution teaches.

Finally, I combine the opera and the novel again, and I see them as ever-living, infinitely dynamic museums that document sound-producing data and dormant voices. They both are constantly renewed by each performer who interprets them. And, like a museum, they teach, they correct, they foster interaction between peoples, they foster dialogue, and then they destabilize. In fact, by housing actual artifacts that tell unfinished stories, and by requiring my presence to fully perceive them with my senses, the opera and the novel both aim at rendering us changed as

I leave the performance having added to the life-changing experiences I have just had. If I, for one, am called upon to prepare a defense for the study of either the opera or the novel within higher education, I may return to what I have just mentioned. Additionally, I may use the example of da Vinci's *La Gioconda,* which is housed in the Louvre: questioning whether the novel or the opera are valuable forms of art within formal education, is tantamount to asking if *La Gioconda* should be thrown in the garbage since it has been around for a while. That is to say, it is not mainly the pretty picture of da Vinci's muse that keeps us going back to look at the painting, but it is the curiosity about the convergent factors at its creation that intrigue us. We leave each viewing with more curiosity and more awe. The opera and the novel are easily just as powerful. And yes, I do embrace all that is popular and new, and so does my work on vocal poetics.

How interesting is it, for example, to look at the way writing is evolving in the society today! In fact, a cursory look at written exchanges between friends on social media reveal that the way we have grown accustom to writing our language is no longer sufficient. That is to say, it seems as if the writing I find there is laden with an abuse of punctuation marks, symbols and a wide selection of emoticons that express many different shades or emotion. This observation says to me that writers are finding a way of making their text sound as if spoken by their own mouths. While this process may not be considered new and unique to our current time, the tools with which the writer transcribes her/his voice are unprecedented. And the many possibilities for critical inquiry that these noisy texts provide are endless. I, for one, am interested in applying the term *performance directions* to these types of symbol-laden texts. By studying the "traditional" use of punctuation in academic writing, for example, the use of the same for transcriptions of improvised theatrical performances, and the image of writing available on social media

platforms, I suspect I will be able to continue to trace the presence of orality and voice within written expression. For now, though, as I pretend to discuss the inclusion of text messaging, star-quoting, and all forms of emoticon-laden texts within institutions of higher education, let us always remember to cherish and keep the data-rich pathways to infinite knowledge that the opera and the novel design. This is my little philosophy.

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