

## **Chapter 1—Introduction: Examining Language that ‘Speaks to’ Audiences in a Collection of Women’s Novels**

Women writing novels during the long 18<sup>th</sup> Century, in both France and England, claimed their right to speak against a backdrop of changing perspectives on language and language use, within a period of social and linguistic upheaval. They wrote during a time when conversation had particular social value, and when women enjoyed a certain reputed ability in those conversational arts. Further, conversation itself operated within a culture of codification which was gaining prevalence during the period, and which had an impact on both the perceived role of conversation and its nature. It would not be surprising, therefore, if conversation, its ‘proper’ conduct as well as its interactional nature, had an influence on writing—and in particular, upon women’s writing. In fact, a basic premise of this study is that conversational language does indeed appear in novels by women. However, this does not mean conversation as may be depicted between characters in stories on the novels’ pages; this does not mean dialogue. Instead, the focus is on answering the question: how do women’s novels ‘speak to’ audiences? This ‘speaking to’ process would apply to the interaction between novel and audience, as well as that involving novel-internal audiences. Both sorts of interaction are created by the words on those pages.

To explore that question, a collection of substantially epistolary novels by women was selected. The expectation was that such novels would show that women novelists used language in ways very similar to those employed in conversation and in non-fiction writing like correspondence and personal journals. That is, these women novelists were more likely to write ‘as if’ speaking with another party. Language used this way reflects interaction, whether it is a character ‘writing’ to another character within the novel or a narrator/character writing a letter to a supposed recipient while nevertheless engaging the external reading audience as a pseudo-addressee at the same time. In some cases, addressing that wider public audience is thinly disguised. Sometimes, the external reading audience is ‘spoken to’ by a narrator, one separate to the letterwriters. Sometimes, a letterwriter makes it easy for the external reading audience to ‘adopt the mantle’ of letter recipient; other times, less so. Language that orchestrates such interaction positions audiences as the other participant in an exchange. At times, this language encourages others to respond, proceeds as if responses have been heard, or simply anticipates a particular response. Alternatively, the language may incorporate shared knowledge outside the current exchange or it may inject support statements that guide the other conversational participants. These, and other, examples illustrate the interactional language that will be referred to as ‘private’ language and which will be explored throughout this study.

In this context, additional big-picture points of inquiry emerge: if these novels contain examples of interactional language use, samples that may be lifted from the novels and analysed, what would these examples—taken together—suggest about women’s language use and writing styles during the period? Further, what might these examples indicate about language use beyond the pages of these novels? Using a range of linguistic-based tools, the novels’ language will be examined for those aspects which position the

audience(s) as interactants in ongoing, two-way communication. Finally, these instances of 'private' language will be considered *vis-à-vis* a broader understanding of women's traditions of communication in the period, and how this understanding, in turn, positions their novels within larger contexts.

### 1.1 Foundations of the Present Study

Examining novels for their language use, situated amid wider communicative traditions, allows the opportunity for 'unusual insights' (Fowler, 1981, p. 80), an opinion supported by Ayres-Bennett, who states, '[t]he setting of literary usage within a broader context of usages allows us better to appreciate a writer's purpose, and the effects he or she is attempting to achieve' (Ayres-Bennett, 2004, p. 16). However, these 'insights' and 'effects' need not be limited to a traditionally or stereotypically literary variety. In fact, literary insights *per se* are not the point, although they may arise through an enhanced understanding of language in the novels. Instead, the language under examination shines light on how writers establish and maintain relationships with audiences via the language choices employed in their writing. This language will be accepted as 'relationship-promoting' language, rather than content-bearing language, throughout this study. It is the relationship-promoting language, the interactional language, that positions the participants 'as if' in communicative exchanges. The goal is to identify and classify examples of language use arising from these novels, thereby illustrating how these pseudo-conversations take place and how the interactants are positioned within those exchanges. It is this understanding that, in turn, may provide information on language use during the period, particularly as that language relates to assumptions about norms of communication, about women's literary styles and about the historical evolution of a language.

Designed as a case study, this inquiry investigates a body of writing that is more typically considered and critiqued as literature. This is not a literary study. Therefore, literary terminology is avoided as far as is practicable, and where a certain term may have literary connotations, it should not be 'automatically' interpreted in that manner. For this study, literature is viewed as language use before it is viewed as literature, even though it is also a specific 'special' type of language use. Despite that, literature can and should be studied as language, a general view advocated by a number of researchers, perhaps most forcefully by Fowler.

As instances of language use, the fourteen selected novels appeared against a particular historical backdrop: that of the Enlightenment as it was unfolding in France and England. One aspect of the larger societal communicative context during this period concerns the position of language and communication in general. Communication itself was experiencing a revolution of sorts. That is, the period involved considerable flux as communicative norms developed and eventually emerged, providing fertile ground for alternate communicative styles as well as alternate topical discourses. Indeed, an environment of competing linguistic alternatives vying for acceptance as norms would have

necessarily fostered divergences—and awareness of those divergences—even as dominant and prestige forms took hold.

As language users, women were a part of the emerging communicative traditions, both influencing and being influenced by, the changes. Women, furthermore, were generally—if reluctantly—acknowledged as having some expertise in given communicative realms. One of these involved conversation: *politesse* in France and politeness in England, a tradition that essentially allowed that men could benefit from the conversational grooming women could provide. Women's writing was also highly visible. The novel, for example, was a genre that women appropriated in significant numbers throughout the period. Women's novels as well as their conversation and other forms of writing are further linked as instances of language use occurring within a sub-context of larger society—a Community of Practice—belonging to women, and thereby governed by linguistic 'rules' and customs particular to that communicative context. Women's communicative realms may have been 'officially' granted to them or may have simply been a fact of life, but how these realms operated—and how they produced communicative forms—deserves attention in its own right. Their novels constitute one such realm.

Gender shaped contexts of communication during the long 18<sup>th</sup> Century, just as it largely determined other factors in one's life. Women wrote within particular communicative contexts, contexts that can be viewed as involving symbiotic and dialogic relationships between conversation and writing. If women made communicative use of the realms granted to them—and certainly they did—it should not be assumed they did so according to externally prescribed rules. They used language in their own ways, treated topics from their own perspectives. In this sense, as a Community of Practice, the women's realm and its corresponding language operated similarly to an anti-society with its corresponding anti-language as proposed by Halliday. In Halliday's view, anti-languages emerge 'when the alternative reality is a counter-reality' (Halliday, 2007, p. 274), which, it can be argued, was the case for women during the period simply because they were not male. Women's language use would have reflected this situation. In making this comparison, the focus is less on anti-language aspects like relexicalization and morphology, and more on which customs of interaction govern the Communities of Practice and whether they diverge from the mainstream—all in reference to the novels under review.

If, for example, use of an anti-language marks identity and particularly identity in opposition to mainstream society, identifying significant 'code words' is an insufficient characterization of an anti-language. Competence in an anti-language includes 'a special conception of information and of knowledge...it implies that social meanings will be seen as oppositions: values will be defined by what they are not' (Halliday, 2007, p. 275), and it is this understanding that shaped the novels women wrote. If women used language according to 'rules' that did not neatly correspond to the larger rules of mainstream society's rules of language use and this style of usage appeared on the pages of women's novels, then their novels would stand as 'anti-novels' in conflict with the notions of appropriacy *vis-à-vis* novel-writing in the period. Such positioning would help explain the alternating bewilderment and

hostility over how to receive women's novels during the period as well as the eventual dismissal of women's novels as unworthy of inclusion in literary canons as time went on.

Women's alternate realities would have been evident in their language use, not just in their topics. Their language could have constituted an 'anti-language' on the pages of a novel, because, prescriptively-speaking, novels were to be written using 'better' language. Further, if women wrote novels using language of a more 'private' nature, and did so in an anti-language way relative to mainstream or men's traditions of written language, it would help explain why women's novels were received with varying degrees of acceptance *as literature*.<sup>1</sup> The position here is that the language used in these novels not only merits consideration as language, but in fact demands consideration as a basis for thorough appreciation of women's novels. Both paths point toward insights into women's communicative traditions.

Competence in an anti-language includes an understanding of 'how to do things' using that language, as well as understanding the special meanings that may be attached to given expressions. If, as Halliday suggests, a 'work of literature is its author's contribution to the reality-generating conversation of society—irrespective of whether it offers an alternative reality or reinforces the received model' (Halliday, 2007, p. 286), then the rules of communication in which that work of literature was produced reveal something about the reality from which it was written, especially if that reality—in print—was deliberately or inadvertently suppressed by the mainstream. It can be argued that women did write in opposition to the 'received model' of society, sometimes so cleverly that arguments ensued over that very issue. An additional contention is that women's alternative realities—those that shaped their Communities of Practice—contributed to the working principles behind their communicative choices and that these choices emphasized establishing relationships between the participants. As stated, an underlying assumption is that the language choices involved in women's writing established relationships with their audiences, positioning them as participants in the exchanges, similar to the techniques used in their day-to-day communicative interactions, whether written or spoken. In this context, the specific question becomes: which aspects of the novels' language 'speak to' audiences?

In considering the connections these writers could establish with their audiences, the novel offers a number of communicative strands which would potentially 'speak differently' to an audience.<sup>2</sup> These communicative strands correspond to the various audiences—or relationships with audiences—already mentioned. That is, letterwriters are addressing different 'recipients', non-letterwriting narrators may be addressing external readers. In fact, Halliday advocates a useful position in this regard, saying that fiction comprises 'two distinct sets of role relationships...embodied in the text: one between the narrator and his readership...and one among the participants in the narrative, which is embodied in the dialogue' (Halliday, 2002, p. 58). Halliday's view serves as an effective starting point, one

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<sup>1</sup> In fact, resolutions to such questions are beyond the scope of this study, but point to the conclusions that a similar evaluation of men's writing could yield more understanding on these points.

<sup>2</sup> In fact, I agree with Bakhtin's perspectives on the novel as multi-voiced, a position that will be discussed further.

extended further in this case due to the epistolary nature of these novels as well as the nature of the interaction that arises as a result. In terms of establishing and maintaining relationships with the potential audiences, these women novelists were quite adept at balancing the needs of a range of participants. In fact, their conversational expertise manifests as a similar prowess for managing a reading audience.

## 1.2 The Present Study: Theoretical Perspectives and Background Information

Chapters 2, 3, and 4 provide the foundation—the theoretical framework, understandings of the period under review, and so on—that informs this study. A range of disciplines and theories have been drawn upon to develop that foundation. No one discipline or theory is applied in a wholesale manner, as the ‘one best way’ to understand the material. Instead, relevant strands from a number of approaches, generally associated with linguistics, are synthesized to produce the most appropriate platform for pursuing and understanding answers to the research questions. As has been stated, the questions—focusing on how these novels ‘speak to’ audiences—is based in Interactional Sociolinguistics (IS). IS, in fact, alternates with Sociohistorical Linguistics (SHL) as the primary guiding principle.

Chapter 2 elaborates this theoretical framework, setting out the initial theory and approach. This begins with IS and follows, perhaps somewhat artificially, with SHL—artificially not only because these approaches do alternate as primary influence but also because they are quite definitely linked. Because the other contributing theories tend to be linguistically based, they shape the prevailing perspectives on language use. These theories include, for example, Discourse Analysis, Conversation Analysis, Critical Discourse Analysis, Systemic Functional Linguistics and Pragmatics. As mentioned, IS largely informs the assumption that interactional language exists in these novels. The links to SHL are particularly significant in identifying and approaching sources, and in situating these results within broader contexts. Chapter 2 discusses a number of other foundational assumptions governing the study, and introduces the Matrix of Communicative Context, which seeks to characterize the factors contributing—to one degree or another—to any given communicative exchange. This Matrix serves as a reference point for the discussion of the strands and components involved in communicative language. Chapter 2, finally, also highlights the more pertinent connections between ‘conversational’ and the interactional language explored in the novels.

Chapter 3, functioning as a ‘requirement’ of the SHL tradition, details the meta-linguistic background as it bore upon the language situation at the time. For example, the desire for codification—particularly that pertaining to language—governed discourses of the day, producing such evidence as a special new role for dictionaries, whether this was prescriptivist (as in France) or descriptionist (as in England). Further, the special connection between women and conversation—particularly within salon culture—contributes to the meta-linguistic environment of the time, representing a problematic component of the private and public spheres. The shifts in private and public space are considered in terms of

Habermas' work, with this representing an introduction of the links to Habermas. Chapter 3 concludes with some observations on letterwriting in the period.

Chapter 4 introduces supplementary perspectives which arose in the examination of the samples, and which were needed to allow proper evaluation as well as discussion of those findings. They are not provided as part of the initial theoretical framework presented in Chapter 2 simply because they were not part of that initial theoretical framework. One of the crucial points presented in Chapter 4 relies upon Tannen's work involving 'rapport talk'. Rapport talk, in turn, is discussed in terms of Joos' language use scales, particularly the 'private' end of those scales, where Intimate, Casual and Consultative language styles are situated. These labels are useful in characterizing the language that 'speaks to' audiences. In turn, 'private' language—a term further developed within this study—is then discussed in terms of Habermas' private and public spaces. These are juxtaposed against one another on a private-public continuum that allows for further characterization of language, relationships and societal space.

Chapter 4 also addresses Common Ground as a unifying element within Communities of Practice, as well as in terms of knowledge types. Knowledge types, per Van Dijk's proposal, again follow a private-to-public distribution, without following one-to-one correspondences. These blended realities governing language choices contribute to the complexity involved in characterizing the private interactional language used in these novels. In turn, this complexity also points toward correspondences with Bakhtin's theory that novels may be viewed as multi-linguaged. Signalling mechanisms, in some cases functioning as discourse markers, are also discussed within the context of Goffman's theory of frame analysis because several of the language use categories utilize such cues.

### 1.3 The Present Study: The 'Informant' Novels and Five Categories of Language that 'Speak to' Audiences

Chapter 5 introduces the study's 'informants', the 'informants' being the novels. All fourteen novels—seven in French, seven in English—were originally published between 1670 and 1770, and all are primarily epistolary in form. The French novels begin and end slightly earlier in the period than the English novels, but all fit solidly within the 1670-1770 time period. They are generally accepted as fictionalized writings, although this is not claimed as an absolute certainty. Again, while all the novels are primarily epistolary, within that label, their precise formats differ somewhat. Chapter 5 further addresses these issues.

In reviewing the novels, five categories of 'speaking to' audiences language emerged, all of them highlighting an aspect of private interactional language. Chapter 5 briefly introduces each of the language use categories, while Chapters 6-10 detail the language samples in terms of those individual categories. Briefly, the categories are divided into the following chapters:

Chapter 6: Addressing Audiences with T/V Personal Pronouns

Chapter 7: Omission of Openings and Closings in the Letters

Chapter 8: Activating Common Ground

Chapter 9: Signalling Storytelling

Chapter 10: Invitations to Engage

Because different aspects of the mini-theory apply more strongly to each category of language use, each 'data' chapter will review the particular theoretical points most applicable to that particular language use category.

#### 1.4 The Present Study: Conclusions and Other Paths to Map

Chapter 11 offers conclusions as well as other avenues for further research. Conclusions cluster into three main types. They relate to the results regarding the language use categories, the links of the novels' language to Bakhtin's theory of the multi-languaged novel, and the novels as language carriers in Habermas' public space. As far as 'language in the novels', the first priority, these findings tend to confirm that private interactional language—in a range of specific forms—is regularly used throughout these novels. Further, these instances of language do promote relationships in accordance with the degree of privacy involved in the interactional language, although positioning of the audience also plays an important role in those relationships. Beyond this, the study's findings can be situated within other theoretical contexts. In fact, this study serves as a 'bottom-up' provider of evidence that tends to add substance to the theoretical positions of both Bakhtin and Habermas.<sup>3</sup> Chapter 11 pursues this further.

Chapter 11 also points toward potential paths for further research, not that these directions come as a surprise. This study was conceived as an initial effort to characterize interactional language in the period—at a minimum, the 'other half' of this work would be a similar examination of the correspondence written by these same authors. This would allow comparisons between fiction and non-fiction language. In addition, similar evaluations of men's fiction and non-fiction writing would be reasonable sources for examination, as this would shed light on how men used interactional language in their writing.

#### 1.5 A Conversational Model in Print: Interactional Language as an Additional Examination Tool

In the context of seventeenth-century upper-class women's material and social circumstances, Madeleine de Scudéry develops a rhetorical theory for new female consumers by modelling discourse on conversation rather than on public speaking. This new rhetoric requires new standards for judging women's speech and writings... (Donawerth, 1997, p. 307).

Donawerth's view is on-target. Scudéry was not only influential *vis-à-vis* women's writing, but more than likely, would have also been influential in this way. This study has been

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<sup>3</sup> Gumperz asserts that linguistic research can provide substance in this way.

launched on a premise of links between interactional language and women's writing. Scudéry may not have been the only influence effecting such links, but she would have been part of the culture, the Communities of Practice, that fostered them. Indeed, this inquiry is guided by the view that women's novels of the period were written as 'part of the conversation', and in accordance with their own language experiences. As a result, these novels also reflect women's experience of 'how conversation was done', even if that understanding shifted to become interactional language on paper.

Of course, the argument here is for a somewhat metaphorical notion of 'conversation', one that houses the range of individual communicative interactions in which women engaged. Donawerth's view of Scudéry's work nevertheless applies to the concerns examined in this study. That is, Scudéry's legacy shaped women's traditions of language use, whether in writing or not. Scudéry's communicative model was not defined by an audience whose role was limited to receiving and absorbing information. For women, Scudéry's model meant that interaction and participation could be integral, recognized components contributing to the mutual creation of the communicative act. Scudéry's tradition helped define women's Communities of Practice, in conjunction with *politesse*-politeness and salon culture, as arenas of female expertise. That their novels would reflect this, via language, is a reasonable proposal.

In light of this, Donawerth's further point that new standards are necessary and appropriate 'for judging women's speech and writings' is particularly valid. In fact, approaches utilizing linguistic traditions such as the one conducted here would serve well as a different sort of instrument, specifically targeting an untapped path for investigating both women's language and writings during the period. This study, for example, examines a track of language that functions as a support system for content-related language tracks: not only is it subliminal during exchanges, it also tends to 'slip beneath the radar' as a research topic. However, if women's writing bears a significant connection to conversation—as suggested by this set of epistolary novels—then language that supports such interaction would be an important path of inquiry to consider.

Women writers may well have employed less formal, more familiar language<sup>4</sup> in their novels than men did, partly because their language was less influenced by formal education and knowledge of the classics, but also because distinctions between 'private' and 'public' became increasingly complex throughout the period, especially for women. While 'private' was allowed to women, it was also claimed by women. It is logical that women would have 'written what they knew', arising from their experiences of language. This study seeks 'signs' of this more familiar language—language creating interaction and relationships—as they appear in these novels. There is no suggestion that men could not and did not 'communicate interactively', or that they never included interactional language in their writing. However, men were heavily involved in the mainstream establishment of the official 'shoulds' of language use during the period. If women's language—particularly their conversation—constituted a sufficient anti-language that men benefitted from specific instruction in it, then

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<sup>4</sup> Defined according to the discussion of Joos' language use scales.



it is reasonable indeed to state that traditional mainstream means for examining novels created by women and which would have reflected women's anti-language would be inadequate. Simply put, a mismatch exists.

In approaching the inquiry as a matter of language use, a different tool for evaluating women's writings and for considering women's language is, in fact, being proposed. This approach offers the possibility of gathering different insights into women's writing as well as their communicative interaction in a particular social, historical and linguistic milieu. In the end, the hope is to contribute to the understanding of women's communicative traditions. Not only would this contribute to the body of knowledge regarding women's language use, but it would also serve to situate women's novels within contexts experienced by women, especially during this volatile period. As language use, literature 'can't shed its interpersonal function' (Fowler, 1981, p. 85) or avoid its role in 'mediating relationships between language users' (Fowler, 1981, p. 80). Equally, this approach does not permit it. Via this examination of private interactional language use in women's novels, and the initial mapping of both the French and English terrains, it is possible to 'map' how these women novelists managed these responsibilities.



## **Chapter 2—Initial Theoretical Framework: Interactional Sociolinguistics, Sociohistorical Linguistics and Other Organizing Principles**

The theoretical framework guiding this study incorporates both Interactional Sociolinguistics (IS) and Sociohistorical Linguistics (SHL), alternatively and simultaneously. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the research question itself is largely motivated by Interactional Sociolinguistics (IS), and is the approach to examining the sources. However, the framework for assembling the study largely arises from SHL.

This is not to say that other related disciplines have no influence. Linguistics by nature is highly interdisciplinary, drawing from such diverse fields as anthropology and literature, as well as a range of social and human sciences. The branches of research traditions within linguistics are equally diverse, and too numerous to list here. However, linguistics does generally explore language, whether this is internal processing and acquisition, or interactional, social exchanges. This study leans toward the humanities side of linguistic work, particularly because the body of language under review occurs in novels, rather than other more stereotypical and literal types of ‘conversation’. While not a literary study, it is equally not linguistic in the sense of providing a descriptive analysis of the structure of either French or English during the time period. Instead, the ‘structure’ involved would more appropriately be considered that of conversation, of interactional language use.

The initial approach follows a tradition ‘that requires the avoidance of preformulated theoretical or conceptual categories and the adoption of an open-mindedness and a willingness to be led by the phenomena’ (Psathas, 1995, p. 2) as revealed by the samples, procedures in line with a descriptionist perspective. As stated in Chapter 1, only in examining the novels to see how the audiences were addressed did the five categories of language use emerge. Further, in keeping with many language-oriented research traditions,<sup>5</sup> this style of examination—engaging in a recursive process of viewing the samples and refining the approach, viewing the samples and refining the approach, and so on—allows the possibility of being ‘led by the phenomena’ that present. What was understood, however, was that the curiosity that motivated the research question was firmly rooted in IS curiosity and this tradition provides the ‘umbrella’ of operating principles.

IS, the research line pioneered by Gumperz, is closely related to a range of other disciplines, and a number of these also shape the approach taken here. Discourse Analysis, Systemic Functional Linguistics, Conversation Analysis, Critical Discourse Analysis, Stylistics and Pragmatics, as well as Sociolinguistics, Historical Linguistics—and especially the aforementioned hybrid of these, SHL—are to be found in the theoretical framework. As Wodak says, ‘[t]he theory as well as the methodology is eclectic; that is theories and methods are integrated which are helpful in understanding and exploring the object under investigation’ (Wodak, 2001, p. 69). This tradition is also described as incorporating ‘complementary methodologies’ (Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg, 2003, p. 20), indicative of the realm of ‘theoretical pluralism’ (Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg, 2003,

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<sup>5</sup> In fact, this approach is in keeping with the traditions of numerous research traditions in language study, including SHL.

p. 21) in which linguistic research typically operates. Such positioning is appropriate, given the requisite blending of language studies and socially-oriented research within the discipline, to name only two of the most obvious influential traditions. Or, considering the diverse social processes investigated particularly by Sociolinguistics, it is not surprising that a single unified theory does not govern all work in the discipline (Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg, 2003, p. 21). Therefore, it is left to the researcher to identify and synthesize the most useful research strands, and aspects thereof, for pursuing given research goals.

In this case, as mentioned, the research question arises from IS, as does much of the approach to analysing the language in the sources. In that sense, IS represents the foundation of the framework. Largely because of the nature of the sources (i.e., novels of the long 18<sup>th</sup> Century), SHL becomes the scaffolding that supports the framework components, relying on the foundation represented by IS. This chapter, then, introduces and links the primary research traditions engaged in this study, particularly in terms of assumptions that guide the inquiry. It begins with the most applicable, before discussing relevant assumptions and presuppositions that apply to the approach. Importantly, the theoretical framework as presented in this chapter represents the position adopted in approaching the study; interim developments and expansions to the approach will be detailed in Chapter 4. This chapter presents a sketch of the initial theoretical framework.

### 2.1 Interactional Sociolinguistics

IS is the main inspiration for this study despite the IS tradition of examining spoken language<sup>6</sup> and also its attention to interpretive processes. This study focuses on *what is offered* for interpretation along with evidence of expected interpretation, rather than emphasizing listener processes. The applicability of IS rests more in its acceptance that interaction indeed takes place, that 'signs' mark moments of interaction, and that interaction tends to be organized in certain ways. In fact, the title of Gumperz' essential work, *Discourse Strategies*, is itself in line with the perspective behind this study. That is, the language involved in 'speaking to' audiences indeed represents discourse strategies. Specifically, these strategies promote relationships, via language, with audiences.

Gumperz acknowledges the value of examining 'signalling mechanisms' because this enables the isolation of 'cues and symbolic conventions' that create frames for interpretation' (Gumperz, 1982, p. 7). He goes on to say that the IS research goal is to:

...find a way of dealing with what are ordinarily called sociolinguistic phenomena which builds on empirical evidence of conversational cooperation...by extending the traditional linguistic methods of in-depth and recursive hypothesis testing with key informants to the analysis of the interactive processes by which participants negotiate interpretations (Gumperz, 1982, p. 130).

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<sup>6</sup> This is true of Sociolinguistics as well.

The goal of this study is to identify those ‘signalling mechanisms’ or ‘contextualizing cues’ that set up the possibility of conversational cooperation or ‘successful’ communication, via the ‘key informants’, the ‘key informants’ in this case being the novels. Furthermore, these mechanisms will be considered for what they bring to the interaction—to the negotiating process—in terms of what is extended to the audiences via the language. Gumperz states that only by examining ‘internal conversational evidence’ is it possible to know whether signalling conventions are shared and whether communication succeeds (Gumperz, 1982, p. 5). This study, in asking about language that ‘speaks to’ audiences, seeks to gather and review ‘internal conversational evidence’, rather than presenting a discussion based on conjecture about what those signals might be. The study, instead, seeks to show what the signals are in connection to this group of sources.

The other primary aspect of IS that applies to this study is the idea that discourse (and IS examines language at the discourse level) is organized in certain ways; again, the ‘signalling mechanisms’ are crucial to identifying these patterns. Using Dittmar’s work as a starting point, the following list reflects the emphases of IS in this regard, distinctions which are relevant to the present study. IS emphasizes interactional language use, and makes basic assumptions that apply to this study.

<b>Interactional Sociolinguistics</b>
Explores the interactive construction and organization of discourse
Characterizes the organization of discourse as social interaction
Relies upon documentation of linguistic and non-linguistic interaction in different contexts
Assumes and identifies co-operative rules for organization of discourse

Figure 2.1 (Adapted from translation by Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg, 2003, p. 18)

This picture of IS illustrates the possibilities for characterizing aspects of interactional language use which prove useful in examining and discussing the language encountered in this study. However, it is worth mentioning that the ‘rules’ mentioned in the final IS box would not suggest formal rules that would necessarily be found in a language reference manual. Instead, these are ‘rules’ that may be gleaned from observing what is actually done in the language samples, a descriptionist rather than prescriptivist approach.

Also as reflected in the table, IS particularly incorporates supporting details of the context of the communication in question. In the case of this study, a particular effort is made to document aspects of the communicative context as well as the meta-linguistic background of the period. Further, and not indicated in the table, IS also tends to employ qualitative analysis in gathering its data, which is clearly the approach here.

## 2.2 Sociolinguistics, Historical Linguistics, Sociohistorical Linguistics

Linguistics as a discipline has incorporated language-in-use perspectives in its research, with certain related disciplines particularly dedicated to this angle. IS, SHL and the broader fields of Sociolinguistics and Historical Linguistics certainly assume this approach, rather than more abstract theoretical notions of language systems.<sup>7</sup> The desire to capture contrasts between ‘structural theories of language form’ and ‘theories of language use in context’ is well marked as an item of interest and debate within linguistics as a discipline: Saussure’s *langue* and *parole*, Jakobson’s *code* and *message*, and even Chomsky’s *competence* and *performance* represent some examples of the labels used in characterizing the distinction. This study, offering a descriptionist perspective, does seek to identify and characterize language in use, approaching the novels as examples of ‘real’ language use. An initial goal of this study, in particular, is to characterize, if possible, interactional ‘norms’ within a certain group of people—that being the Community of Practice represented by women writers of novels in this era.

Sociolinguistics has traditionally focused on variation in language use. Personal style is a factor in variation, as is the situation in which the exchange occurs, the relationship between the participants, and so on. These matters will be further discussed later in the chapter. Language variation may be viewed as comprising the individual differences in the ‘who can say what to whom, when, where and how’ element of language-in-use, and would include differences in usage associated with gender, class, age, education, bilingualism, and so on.

Language change—the cornerstone of Historical Linguistics—is more to do with diachronic shifts in individual innovations in language use, as they may become communal variations, and may in turn become adopted by the wider society. That is, such changes may begin as the insider usage of a given Community of Practice. On the one hand, these changes may remain associated with that group only, thereby becoming a marker of membership, possibly to the extent of constituting an anti-language. Or, on the other hand, they may not. Language variations that spread to the larger community, constituting a change in societal usage may, for example, produce divergent dialects. Variations, particularly those that lead to language changes may arise for numerous reasons, including new access to speakers of other languages or dialects. This may occur due to a shift in print culture and increased mobility between classes or across geographical districts, changes which did occur during the long 18<sup>th</sup> Century, along with an increased interest in codification of knowledge, including language, a mindset that also featured during the long 18<sup>th</sup> Century.<sup>8</sup>

An additional factor for consideration is that of language attitudes. Attitudes about language are not necessarily overtly stated; instead, they may be revealed through language use itself. For example, certain usage may be associated with upper classes while other

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<sup>7</sup> Although they may use the information acquired from studying instances of language use to contribute to understandings of the systems.

<sup>8</sup> These are addressed in Chapter 3.

usage may be stigmatized and perceived as belonging to lower classes, the working classes, the uneducated or, perhaps, to women. Although this is not the main focus of this study, it is reasonable to expect that some attitudes toward language will become evident, especially where appropriateness of usage is concerned.

Sociolinguistics, then, generally focuses on variation in language while Historical Linguistics looks at language change. Not surprisingly, many of the principles and perspectives of SHL derive directly from these traditions. One major difference between SHL and Sociolinguistics is that of access to the community of language users. When the language users under consideration are not contemporary to the researcher and therefore do not constitute a community that can be physically entered and subsequently observed, surveyed and/or interviewed, and the reconstruction of usage based on available evidence becomes the approach, the realm of SHL is engaged. This clearly applies to the current study, and this is why SHL is arguably as important to this study as IS.

Several SHL researchers have provided useful works introducing and applying methodology of the blended discipline, and these have been influential in shaping the current inquiry. Of these, the initial standard-setting work is Romaine's *Socio-historical linguistics: its status and methodology* from 1982, which not only details her approach but also applies it to a case study of Middle Scots. She investigated shifts in relative clause markers in Middle Scots with comparisons to Old English, Middle English, and early Modern English, drawing her data from various prose and verse, fiction and non-fiction, documents. Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg offer a more recent (2003) work, *Historical Sociolinguistics*, which also discusses the approach and applies it to Tudor and Stuart English, evaluating language variation and change primarily via correspondence samples from the period. Ayres-Bennett's *Sociolinguistic Variation in Seventeenth-Century France: Methodology and Case Studies* (2004) uses the approach to examine a range of language issues with sociolinguistic significance, drawn from a range of sources, with some emphasis on women's usage.

The current study has a particular connection to Ayres-Bennett's work, despite her emphasis on the reconstruction of pronunciation. For example, her study covers a period of French that corresponds to part of this study's focus and she also discusses women's usage. Further, many of her specific assumptions in approaching the research would apply here as well. For example:

Study of past variation is an essential component in the search for a better understanding of the relationship between variation and change, enabling us to consider continuities and discontinuities, how variants enter the norm and how variants are lost (Ayres-Bennett, 2004, p. 15).

Ayres-Bennett has also identified the Enlightenment, as a period of codification awareness, as a particularly rich period for demonstrating shifts in language usage (Ayres-Bennett, 2001,

p. 163). This position, in fact, was instrumental in selecting this time period for the present study.

Although the fourth influential study is not technically in the SHL tradition, *Fictions at Work: Language and Social Practice in Fiction* (1995) by Talbot, specifically examines fictional works from a related perspective. These fictional works include romance, horror, and feminist science fiction, although she also includes some comparisons pulled from advertising and magazine articles. While Talbot operates from a similar viewpoint as the first three sources, she does not emphasize individual elements of language structure or use. Instead, she considers the larger levels of discourses, including how readers interact with them.

The sources Talbot examines are more contemporary than the documents utilized in the other three studies. In addition, Talbot's perspective is more literary than those of the first three works and also more so than the one applied here, but her views of fiction and discourse as social practices involving readers' reactions relate to this study's guiding principles. The approach here is considerably more sociolinguistic than hers, but the discussion looks at interactional communication via fiction in a similar 'large' sense. Further, in a practical sense, Talbot's emphasis on discourse-level language necessarily involves rather lengthy citations as she includes adequate firsthand language samples to demonstrate her points. As far as the practical construction of this study, a similar tactic is employed, including language samples of a length adequate to demonstrate interactional usage. In addition, incorporating examples from as many of the novels as is practicable also results in numerous citations. This is the most direct, effective way for illustrating the nature and characteristics of the samples. It allows the samples to speak for themselves. To gloss over them by merely referring to them, or to risk their effectiveness by over-truncating them, would defeat the purpose of a linguistic inquiry where the language itself is under the microscope.

Beyond this, in two important ways, the current study deviates from a 'pure' linguistic approach. Both aspects have already been hinted at, and both of them represent a link to the humanities 'umbrella' that is perhaps stronger in this study than might be found in other (socio)linguistic studies. In fact, it is this aspect that particularly connects this study to Talbot's work, hers being the most humanities-oriented of the four studies named. In any case, the first of these deviations is the 'higher level' organizing principle contained in the research question, while the second is the use of a body of fiction-only language sources, sources which fit within the parameters of literature.

Reviewing the second of these deviations first, it is important to state that this study only represents 'Part A' of what could be explored. In its full form, it would encompass both fiction and non-fiction sources. As has been mentioned, an SHL approach would be more likely to analyze all sources, not making distinctions between fiction and non-fiction. For example, Romaine's groundbreaking work specifically did not separate source documents on a fiction-nonfiction basis, as has been done here. That fiction, in this case, provides the samples constitutes a humanities element—a link to literature—that is not necessarily



typical of SHL, or other linguistics-oriented work. In this case, however, the novels simply represented a place to start. Just as easily, correspondence could have been the starting point. Alternatively, the study could have been organized to incorporate the full body of samples from both novels and correspondence, looking at their language together with no distinctions between fiction and non-fiction. However, this would not have been a particularly manageable, practical exercise for one study by one person. In addition, possible differences between fictional and non-fictional usage could have been easily obscured. In the end, the accepted linguistic practice of limiting the body of sources to those of meaningful similarity has been followed, with an eventual possibility of testing these results on another set of source documents.

The other deviation from pure (socio)linguistics is that of the higher-level organizing principle. Again, that 'umbrella' is an important humanities, literary link that distinguishes this study. Most linguistics disciplines, and certainly SHL, tend to identify a language component as the point of investigation. Romaine, for example, analysed and tracked relative clause markers—and their shifts—as part of the development of English. The focus here, to begin, is not on one language component. Instead, it is an 'umbrella' of usage types—discourse strands—with certain identifiable categories comprising that 'big picture'. Additionally, that big picture involves interactional language, an aspect which may have implications for 'off the pages' language use. If so, in a field concerned with reconstructing speech—as SHL is—insights of this nature could prove especially valuable.

This study begins with contextualization of language as part of interaction. In addition, because of the potential for tracking fiction and non-fiction as well as the comparative analysis of French and English, it provides contextualization in at least two further paths of language use. This is a direction that seems suited to the development of the SHL research tradition. For example, Ayres-Bennett's work, as a reasonably current representation of work in the field, pays more attention to contextualization of the language use than the first two (i.e., Romaine and Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg). If this represents a shift in the research tradition, then this study—which seeks to contextualize even further—is moving in an important direction. The 'function' of the interactional language not only involves the language of pseudo-conversation (and possibly would contribute to the reconstruction of speech in the era), but may shed light on literary usage as far as language that enables interaction with audiences. Ultimately, the samples are considered as sources of interactional language that indicate intimate and familiar relationships which rely upon rapport established via the novels' language.

### 2.3 Fundamental Assumptions

Two assumptions are central to the proceedings. Both hinge on the well-established principle of patterning in language use that informs Sociolinguistics and other related disciplines. The first of these concerns the accepted perspectives regarding spoken and written language, and the second pertains to the extension of contemporary understandings

of language use to historical instances of language use. Both are fundamental to the approach being constructed here.

Potential distinctions between spoken and written language are important in certain sub-categories of Sociolinguistics, primarily because Sociolinguistics originally focused on speech. In a research environment where the possibility of generalizing findings is paramount, determining which findings about speech extended to writing was initially crucial. However, over time, the trend has been toward accepting a fair degree of generalizability that steers away from a belief in 'rigid divisions' between the two language forms (Nevalainen, 2006, p. 29). While patterning in spoken language may have been examined and established first, 'one can hypothesize that written language as evidenced in texts also varies in a patterned way' (Ayres-Bennett, 2004, p. 2) to the extent that it is fair to assume that language 'exhibits the patterned organization that is a crucial property of language in whatever medium it is manifested' (Romaine, 1982, p. 16). In SHL, the issue takes on a particular twist because the goal, as confirmed by the three SHL studies mentioned, is typically to reconstruct past speech—that is, spoken language—based on written samples. Doing so has required the development and testing of a range of procedures that allow for reasonable conclusions leading to assumptions, including the use of meta-linguistic materials to help complete the picture.

This study does not involve reconstructing speech as such, but rather sets about characterizing the interactional communication presented and represented via the novels' interactional language. These present as pseudo-conversations, occurring in pseudo-conversational settings. Halliday has emphasized that 'the structure of spoken language is of a choreographic kind' (Halliday, 1985, p. 87),<sup>9</sup> and that speech and writing 'are both language; and language is more important than either [form]. It is a mistake to become too much obsessed with the medium' (Halliday, 1985, p. 92).<sup>10</sup> The focus here is on the 'choreography', the 'dynamic moves and countermoves' (Gumperz, 1982, p. 153), accepting that this aspect of the spoken language has been incorporated in communicating with audiences via the written, through the language in the novels.

Exploring the choreography informs not only an understanding of conversation, but also of other forms of interactional communication.<sup>11</sup> Indeed, 'if conversation is fundamental, its processes are likely to underlie or shape processes in other uses of language' (Clark and Wilkes-Gibbs, 1992, p. 109). This is particularly apt in considering these novels because they only thinly disguise their conversational nature, if they do so at all. That is, an 'other' participant is assumed, sometimes even visible, in the exchanges, a non-surprising situation if, as Donawerth suggests, Scudéry provided a conversational model of communicative interaction that, in turn, shaped writing.

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<sup>9</sup> It is worth emphasizing Gumperz' belief in 'adding linguistic substance' to theoretical positions such as Wittgenstein's, as mentioned in Chapter 1.

<sup>10</sup> Halliday has also extensively explored the distinctions between spoken and written language.

<sup>11</sup> 'Modern' communication, with email and text messaging just to name two, has further expanded interactive communication, blurring the line between spoken and written language.

As far as new tools for examining women's language and writing, a need also mentioned by Donawerth, linguistics offers valuable choices. Specifically, 'there exist linguistic methods of analysis which are already valid; if written language is an instance of language, then the same techniques apply to all instances of language' (Clark and Wilkes-Gibbs, 1992, p. 109). The basic assumption—absolutely fundamental to this study—is that, spoken or written, language can be studied *as language*. Further, both language forms inform and support the other, so that significant distinctions between them based on spoken or written status should not be automatically elevated or presumed to be more significant than the links between them that may exist.

The second standard principle of SHL, and of particular significance in this study, is the assumption that 'historical' languages would have varied in patterned ways because sufficient evidence from language studies in contemporary societies demonstrates this to be a reliable position. Romaine labelled this the Uniformitarian Principle, calling it the working principle of Sociolinguistics (Romaine, 1982, p. 122). Romaine states, 'there is no reason for claiming that language did not vary in the same patterned ways in the past as it has been observed to do today' (Romaine, 1982, p. 123) largely because 'the linguistic forces which operate today and are observable around us are not unlike those which have operated in the past' (Romaine, 1982, p. 122). This position has been expanded by Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg in a direction that particularly applies to the approach employed in this study. They emphasize:

...that human languages have always been used in speech communities and, consequently, have been socially conditioned throughout their histories. In theoretical terms this implies, for instance, that if socially motivated mini-theories...work for the present, they are worth bearing in mind when studying the past as well (Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg, 2003, p. 22).

Given the current emphasis on language use as part of an interactional communicative context, this point is particularly relevant to this study. In other words, understandings of conversation gleaned from studies of contemporary language users, coupled with perceptions of conversation in the past, can produce a model for a communicative context in which novels played a role as communicative devices, facilitating 'conversation', and enabling writers to 'speak to' their audiences. Again, the specific goal is to characterize the patterns of interactional usage in this environment, and particularly, to identify the 'signalling mechanisms' involved in those patterns.

Two caveats emerge from this discussion of assumptions. First, while it can be assumed that language in the past varied in patterned ways because it does so now, assigning the same social values to any given aspect would be inappropriate. This is not to say that social values do not apply, rather that the values should not be assumed to be the same as they are perceived to be now. In fact, their potential social value should be questioned as part of the hypothesis-building investigative process. Second, based on the

tradition of reconstructing language use and situating it against the known communicative context, including aspects of the meta-linguistic environment of the period, it is possible to posit additional understandings of the society in which the language lived.<sup>12</sup> The main warning with both of these assumptions is not to apply today's cultural interpretation to given instances of language without substantial period-related evidence for doing so.

#### 2.4 Issues of Sources and Samples

The identification of sources is a crucial component in language research. Sociolinguistics, as indicated, typically involves entering a community and gathering data for analysis, an approach only metaphorically possible for this study. The selection and availability of sources as well as the nature of the samples that provide the data in SHL may present certain challenges largely because SHL is situated differently *vis-à-vis* its language users than social research that enjoys direct access to contemporary language users. Historical data is sometimes viewed as 'bad' or 'weak' due to the arbitrariness, in some cases, of the sources available.<sup>13</sup> However, at least two issues of contemporary studies are not a problem in historical studies, and this may be viewed as balancing out the purported quality issue of sources (and samples).

The first of these is the absence of the Observer's Paradox (Nevalainen, 2006, p. 28), which refers to the problem of informants changing their normal language use—consciously or not—but nevertheless because they know they are being watched. These adjustments, whether or not intentional, clearly influence results in contemporary studies. Secondly, in historical studies, informants cannot misrepresent or otherwise manipulate their linguistic behaviour in direct interviews or surveys administered by the researcher, which is a potential problem in contemporary investigations. In SHL, researchers must rely on something other than personal observation and interaction with informants. Further, SHL researchers cannot—wittingly or unwittingly—draw upon their personal knowledge or experience as a member of a Community of Practice. This changes the research possibilities, but does not inherently weaken them. In any case, fieldwork in the SHL context is simply performed differently than in other forms of Sociolinguistics, including IS, or other social sciences traditions.

Of course, certain other research traditions regularly rely on synthesizing available evidence from the past coupled with current theories of interpretation—history, for example. SHL cannot be unrelated to such traditions. In the SHL context, however, it is the communicative environment which features as a significant exploration site for placing the sources and the samples of language, and thus, for interpreting them. There exists further an important tradition of gaining information from the context in order to 'flesh out' those interpretations. Regarding the matter of language in context, Halliday has stated:

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<sup>12</sup> This constitutes a primary means for determining the social value of language aspects, in fact.

<sup>13</sup> The sources available during the period under review, however, are obviously not 'thin'.

Language does not operate except in the context of other events; even when these are, as with written texts, other language events, any one point made about a piece of text which is under focus raises many further points extending way beyond it into the context (Halliday, 2002, p. 9).

Both Sociolinguistics and Historical Linguistics rely on this type of reasoning: that, in fact, language use is connected to other 'language events' and is really only understood with reference to its context.

In SHL, the context is not only a crucial element of the research, but it may constitute a place to start. For example, Ayres-Bennett urges the use of meta-linguistic information about and from the time period in order to situate the language use under examination. In fact, she states that meta-linguistic details may even clarify which variables are most appropriate for analysis (Ayres-Bennett, 2004, p. 7). Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg also emphasize the value of such meta-linguistic sources because they place 'interpretations on a firmer footing' (Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg, 2003, p. 6). They refer to these sources as 'documentation' (Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg, 2003, p. 7). However this context is viewed, language samples must be considered against the meta-linguistic backdrop.

In this study, the primary sources of language use—the *informants*—are the novels. During this period, of course, ample sources were available, avoiding the 'desperation' that results in arbitrary source-gathering. The choice of sources, here, weighs the advantages of selecting texts of similar genres over selecting a range of different text types. Similar text types are generally preferred for diachronic studies (Ayres-Bennett, 2004, p. 6), based on the hypothesis that 'similar genres of texts will pattern together' (Romaine, 1982, p. 114) as far as language use is concerned. Similar genres are assumed to be more likely to exhibit similar usage; therefore, they would be more likely to provide adequate examples of the variables to be investigated. In turn, they would be more likely to reveal consistent patterns—or variants to them. Further to this, selecting novels of a substantially epistolary nature written *by women* improves the samples' status as coming from similar documents and from a similar population.

Questions of adequate sampling and the subsequent cataloguing of data bring up the matter of quantitative versus qualitative analysis. Romaine states she is neither 'for' one or the other (Romaine, 1982, p. 110), instead cautioning that care must be exercised when statistical claims are made (Romaine, 1982, p. 111). In fact, it seems logical that deciding on the analysis technique is a bit like identifying the theories: the technique which is the best 'fit' against the data should be applied. Among other things, the volume of variable occurrences must be at a certain level before statistical analysis is meaningful. Quantitative analysis requires the counting, in some form, of a particular variable. In language use, however, the very absence of a particular usage may be significant in characterizing language use while being equally resistant to statistical measurement. That is, when the absence of a feature is the significant point, adherence to quantitative measurement may

miss this information altogether. Gumperz holds that quantitative analysis may be of limited use, compared to other approaches, when seeking to identify stages of a process (Gumperz, 1982, p. 35-36), as is being done here. These are the sorts of issues debated in the field, and which prompt cautions like that of Romaine.

While aspects of the variables selected for this study may be countable in some sense, and therefore amenable to a quantitative approach, the study nevertheless is at a level of 'mapping the terrain' (Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg, 2003, p. 9). Specifically, because this is an initial effort to characterize the 'speaking to' language, and it is not really known 'upfront' what sort of results will be obtained, a qualitative approach is more likely to capture a 'flavour' of the mechanisms involved. Attempting to make sweeping claims based on hundreds of instances of usage, and best achieved through quantitative analysis, does not fit this stage of research. This approach seeks to provide a meaningful level of analysis not at 'the level of quantification... [but more of a] token-based approach which simply lists which forms are found, and a slightly broader strategy which examines in addition the social characteristics of the users of these forms' (Ayres-Bennett, 2004, p. 12). That is, qualitative techniques will be used to organize and evaluate instances of interactional language use, a goal in concert with the SHL goal of establishing a 'past stage' of a language, in this case, one that shines light on means of interacting with language. Romaine describes this as investigating 'the genesis and life cycles' (Romaine, 1982, p. 127) of various features of the language. In turn, reaching toward a bigger picture, this study may provide a degree of benchmarking of the interactional language women novelists used to speak to their audiences or used in representing 'speaking to' audiences, both as language use and as fictionalized language use. This effort, in mapping the terrain, may help determine which variables of this type would merit further investigation on a quantitative basis.

## 2.5 Introducing the Matrix of Communicative Context

The environment in which communication occurs, from which it arises, is complex, and discussing it reflects this difficulty. For example, Biber and Conrad<sup>14</sup> suggest consideration of the following elements:

...the participants, their relationships, and their attitudes toward the communication; the setting, including factors such as the extent to which time and place are shared by the participants, and the level of formality; the channel of communication; the production and processing circumstances (e.g. amount of time available); the purpose of the communication; and the topic or subject matter (Biber and Conrad, 2001, p. 175).

These aspects apply to the communication in this study.

In fact, Figure 2.2, the Matrix of Communicative Context, has been developed for this study in order to illustrate such components, including the relationships between them, as

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<sup>14</sup> These components, as Biber and Conrad discuss them, specifically relate to 'register'.

they come together in communicative exchanges.<sup>15</sup> In doing so, the term 'communicative' is intended to capture the idea of 'interactional language use'.

As is evident, Figure 2.2 is organized into four main branches comprised, in turn, of corresponding strands. It is intended as a fairly generic model for interactional language use, although it is presented here specifically to help organise the discussion of this particular study. Figure 2.2 represents one technique for characterizing these components, and does not claim to identify definitively all possible components. Other strands could undoubtedly be added to the branches, and the branches and strands could be divided differently from these.

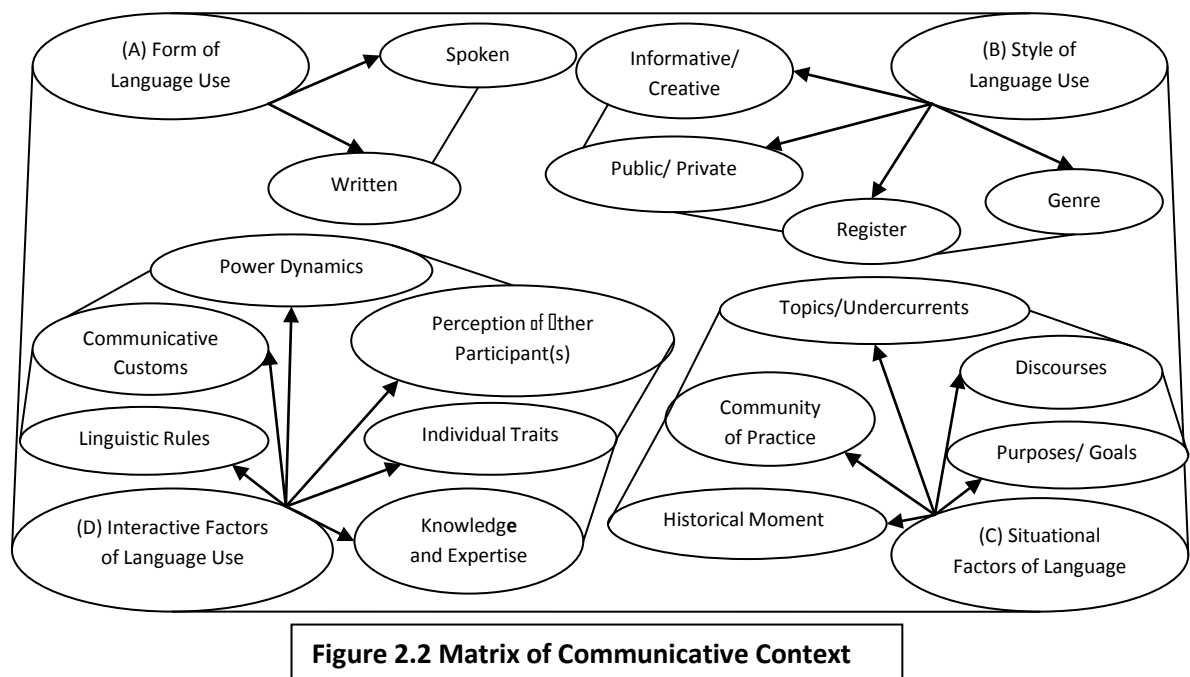


Figure 2.2 illustrates a matrixed situation and is not a linear set of steps. While the branches are labelled alphabetically, in a clockwise direction, this in no way suggests a chronology. In addition, no general rule for primacy is suggested. In any given exchange, primary elements could shift in the course of the communicative event, and would vary from one communicative event to another as well. Gumperz, in emphasizing that communication is negotiated, also emphasizes the dynamic nature of interaction:

...although we are dealing with a structured ordering of message elements that represents the speakers' expectations about what will happen next, yet it is not a static structure, but rather it reflects a dynamic process which develops and changes as the participants interact (Gumperz, 1982, p. 131).

<sup>15</sup> Certainly, attempting to characterize these components is not unique to this study.

Gumperz further acknowledges shifts in the course of interaction, stating that a 'system' of signs channel this progress (Gumperz, 1982, p. 153). Van Dijk also gives particular attention to these dynamic aspects, developing a theory of 'context models' upon which language users rely during the shifting course of communicative interaction (Van Dijk, 2005, p. 75).

That said, within Figure 2.2, Branches A (Form of Language Use) and B (Style of Language Use) relate to the end result of the communicative event. In a sense, they are products. Branches C (Situational Factors of Language Use) and D (Interactive Factors of Language Use), on the other hand, are elements that contribute to the production and use of language in a communicative event. To this point, the discussion has briefly touched upon Branch A, the category comprising the spectrum of spoken and written language use. This will be expanded upon, and the other branches addressed in due course. The important point is that language users draw upon their understanding of the factors in the Matrix of Communicative Context when opting for certain language choices over others as they use language. The novels in question include, as well, certain language choices over others as they 'speak to' audiences.

## 2.6 Some Additional General Assumptions

Several additional points merit clarification prior to continuing. These points relate to general linguistics principles, and are assumed both in Figure 2.2 and throughout the study. To begin, in those cases where the components of communicative context are described as 'choices' on the part of the language user, it does imply that the language user is necessarily aware of the choice. While it is possible to be aware of choosing options—particularly in the case of writing, where reflection and revision are typical parts of the process—this does not mean that evaluating and selecting language options are necessarily conscious activities in all cases. It does, however, mean that most people have some level of linguistic 'repertoire' to draw upon as they manoeuvre through their communicative activities, from the most formal and exceptional to the most mundane, casual or intimate.

The next clarification relates to a particular impact of taking a linguistic approach: specifically, no variety or form of language is put forth as 'better' than another. Likewise, no language style or form is viewed as 'better' than another. Simply, evaluating and ranking language quality is not a factor in this study. That said, certain language options may be more appropriate or more suitable in one context than in another and certain forms (or genres) do gain prestige within a society. This does not, however, imply intrinsic or 'natural' quality of the language itself. A final related point, already demonstrated, is that a descriptionist view of language use, rather than a prescriptivist view, governs this study. Prescribing language use guidelines or otherwise delivering pronouncements on whether language 'should be' used in certain ways is not part of the current approach. Instead, describing how language is used, in practice, and identifying potential significance of that usage, will be the aim.



## 2.7 Interactional Communication in the Novels as Pseudo-Conversation

In general, the word ‘conversational’ in this study should be interpreted as meaning ‘interactional language use’. At times, the term ‘pseudo-conversation’ may capture the interactional, implied ‘to and fro’ nature of the language used to set up relationships between novel and audience. Again, the point is that certain language use in these novels positions the audience exactly that way: as participants in (pseudo)conversation.

That said, the importance of the two fundamental, generalized assumptions governing this study can be reiterated. Again, the first of these is that findings regarding conversation can be generalized to other forms of language use, and particularly to other instances of interactional communication such as those being highlighted in the novels. The second assumption is that findings from studies of contemporary language, particularly those regarding variation in usage, can be generalized to studies of language use in past societies, although the same social significance of given usage is not assumed. Potential social significance may be questioned or explored. Bringing together these two assumptions for the purposes here, the additional ‘new’ assumption is that customs for conversation relate to other kinds of interactional language use, and particularly that in these novels. Therefore, these women writers (and by extension, their audiences) are assumed to have possessed comparable understandings of the communicative customs of their era, whether oral or ‘only’ pseudo-conversational. These understandings, in turn, can be examined with today’s linguistic tools. Three further ‘understandings’ are especially relevant in summing up the points in this chapter.

### 2.7a Three Audiences

The term ‘audience’ merits clarification. While the audiences in this study would be readers, ‘readers’ are not the point of the investigation. However, the approach here is not unrelated to ‘reader response’ theory, discussions of the ‘implied reader’, or the general notion that ‘the reader is constructed as a person with certain kinds of attitudes’ (Talbot, 1985, p. 17). In general, terminology about readers will not be the first choice, in an effort to avoid inadvertently emphasizing ‘audience as reader’ as the above approaches do. Audiences in this study are emphasized for their involvement as interlocutors in a communicative exchange.

Chapter 1 introduced Halliday’s proposal regarding the role relationships involved in fiction. Halliday’s proposal, in table format, may be represented as follows:

<b>Participant Relationships</b>
Narrator → Audience
Character → Character

Figure 2.3 Halliday’s view of role relationships in fiction (Adapted from Halliday, 2002, p. 58)

As also mentioned in Chapter 1, Halliday’s theory represents a starting point, and is useful for characterizing much of the audience-relationship situation in these novels. However, taking into consideration their substantially epistolary form, along with the occasional

addition of a separate, non-letterwriting narrator and the absence of relationships in dialogue, fictional role relationships in these novels are not always as straightforward as the two options advocated by Halliday. In these novels, letterwriters (letterwriting narrators) usually have a stated or implied recipient for the letter(s). When the letters are only viewed from one side, it may be particularly easy for the external reading audience to receive the letters as if an implied recipient (although not always). This is perhaps less likely when two or more letterwriters engage in the exchange. In either case, however, the external reading audience may be included in a somewhat voyeuristic experience.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, it may be useful to consider the participant relationships as follows:

Participant Relationships	Audience
Letterwriter (Narrator) → Audience A	Stated or Implied Recipient of Letter
Letterwriter (Narrator) → Audience A + Audience B	Stated or Implied Recipient of Letter + External Reading Audience 'as if' an Intended Letter Recipient
Additional Non-Letterwriting Narrator → Audience B	External Reading Audience

Figure 2.4 Role relationships between novel and audiences in this study

For this study, the real point is that any of these three audiences may be directly addressed, and how that is done largely determines the 'relationship' between letterwriters and/or non-letterwriting narrators and the range of audiences. Samples and findings will be discussed with an eye toward the audience(s) involved.

### 2.7b Traits of Conversation and the Novels

In discussing traits of conversation, one of the first points is its relationship to Form of Language Use. These connections were originally presented in the Matrix of Communicative Context, and are expanded in Figure 2.5.

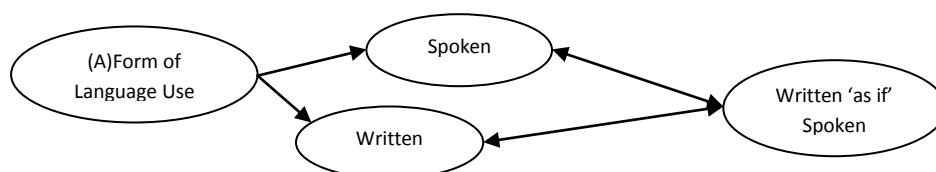


Figure 2.5 Expansion of Form of Language Use

Although conversation would generally be perceived as part of the Spoken Language strand, this is not the only interpretation. Language may be written 'to be' spoken: speeches, songs, scripts. On the other hand, language may be spoken 'to be' written: dictated recordings for

<sup>16</sup> The samples shed light on when the voyeur position is stronger.

later translation. Another, more applicable, option here is that language may be written ‘as if’ spoken (Hasan, 1996, p. 47).

This is not to suggest that these writers were ‘pretending’ to speak. Further, dialogue as a representation of speech is not considered. Instead, ‘as if’ is intended to highlight the ‘understood’ interaction involved in communication, and which occurs between novels and audiences, with an audience as one participant and the novel providing the other participant, regardless of whether this is viewed as being a character or narrator, as the author or as a combination. The basic point is that the flow between the two language forms is quite active, and that this was also true during the time period in question. Each form informed the other. Conversation, primarily a spoken language form, took on special qualities during the period, supported by a number of written activities that extended or enhanced that conversation. Among these were newspapers and other periodicals as well as various other types of printed materials, including books. Perhaps most notable and least contentious among these was the place of correspondence, which often grew out of the conversations and found its way into publication.

When women shifted their writing towards fiction, epistolary writing featured heavily among the forms they chose. Correspondence—and by extension, journal writing—is in fact generally accepted as being the written genre closest to spontaneous speech (Nevalainen, 2006, p. 29). Even in fictionalized form, letter and journal writing mirrors the directness of speech; it mirrors spoken language in ways similar to as non-fictional letter and journal writing. It anticipates an audience, assumes interaction. Such writing serves as a conduit between oral forms of language and the eventually less epistolary forms the novel took. In these ways, the Spoken-Written dichotomy was fluid and dynamic during the time. Further, the relationship between them was particularly symbiotic as well as dialogic, and women’s communication was representative of this condition. Their novels were written against this backdrop. As interactional communication, the language samples from these novels share certain characteristics with conversation. Written ‘as if’ spoken is intended to emphasize that the letters in the novels (as well as the connective material) are addressed to someone as if that party is contributing to the ‘discussion’. Characterizing how this is achieved via language is the goal.

Conversation Analysis (CA) has investigated a number of conversational aspects that figure into this study. This includes, for example, exploring and identifying predictable components involved in conversation. These studies involve the analysis and observation of unscripted, spontaneous, ‘real’ instances of language use that sought the ‘intrinsic orderliness of interactional phenomena’ (Psathas, 1995, p. 8), rather than focusing on the results of ‘arranged’ conversations *vis-à-vis* checklists based on category systems. Descriptive results of what people were actually observed to do have been the result as well as the tool.

In adapting this perspective for this study, the assumption is that the interactional language created by the novels is also ‘real’ language use, not artificially-scripted ‘for analysis’ language use, a state which renders the novels valuable as language sources.

Conversation—particularly conversational routines—have been found to comprise predictable units within the sequences that emerge throughout an exchange (Psathas, 1995, p. 13-14). For example, ‘opening exchanges’ include ‘hello’ spoken by one participant followed by an equivalent opening response, which may also be ‘hello’, offered by the other participant. Further, research finds that ‘the symmetry of these exchanges did not appear to be accidental, but was a recurrent feature of opening sequences’ (Psathas, 1995, p. 14). In this way, the findings are generalizable. These units:

...were two turns in size; speaker change occurred such that one speaker produced the first turn and a second speaker produced the next; what occurred in the first part of the pair of utterances was relevant to what occurred in the second; and what occurred in the second part of the pair was related to what had occurred in the first (Psathas, 1995, p. 14).

In fact, it is held that the first part of the utterance provides a ‘slot’ which the second part of the utterance is intended to fill (Psathas, 1995, p. 12). In other words, the choreography of interactional language could be identified. As these conclusions were further tested against other kinds of conversational exchange, similar results were found, even if the specific sequence components might be more elaborate, depending on the nature of the conversational routine. In fact, these additional results strengthened the notion that the second part of the utterance was dependent upon or in a relationship of ‘conditional relevance’ *vis-à-vis* the first part (Psathas, 1995, p. 16). These unit sets have been described as ‘adjacency pairs’ (Psathas, 1995, p. 16), and further enable discussion of the components involved in the structure of conversation (or interactional language use), which is one of the essential steps in proceeding through the study.<sup>17</sup> In fact, some of the samples and findings are best discussed as conditionally relevant components in adjacency pairs.

An additional related conclusion regarding conversational interaction asserts that:

...[o]rder was seen to be a produced order, integral and internal (endogenous) to the local settings in which the interaction occurred. That is, it was ongoingly produced in and through the action of the parties. It was not imposed on them, nor was it a matter of their following some sort of script or rules. They were freely involved in that production and were themselves oriented to that production. What they were doing was carrying out actions that were meaningful and consequential for them in that immediate context (Psathas, 1995, p. 17).

In other words, participants in such interactional exchanges know what is expected and know what they are to do in order to achieve certain conversational goals. They know not

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<sup>17</sup> I acknowledge that other approaches to interactive communication emphasize such matters as interruption and overlap in turn-taking. While I would not suggest these do not happen, I also feel that those studies would not be possible if an acceptance of turn-taking and its identifiable parts were not viable. That is, violating the ‘norms’ can only be examined if the norms are also understood.

only when it is their turn to speak, but they understand what sorts of response meet the requirements of conditional relevance.<sup>18</sup> The novels in this study supply this sort of knowledge, as do their audiences, as non-speaking respondents.

These findings are in tune with the work of Grice, in establishing his Cooperative Principle for conversation. This principle comprises the following maxims, maxims which seek to be advisory while also implicitly suggesting conclusions about the course of interactional exchanges. The maxims fall under the headings of Quantity, Quality, Relation and Manner, with sub-maxims for the first three summarized as follows:

Quantity	→ Be adequately informative
Quality	→ Be truthful
Relation	→ Be relevant (Grice, 1975/1996, p. 124)

The fourth, Manner, includes four sub-maxims:

Manner	→ Avoid obscurity of expression
	→ Avoid ambiguity
	→ Be brief
	→ Be orderly (Grice, 1975/1996, p. 125)

In contemplating the Cooperative Principle, it must be acknowledged that there are instances when purely cooperative communication may be nothing but an idealized entity (Fairclough, 1989/2001, p. 8), as these maxims may be intentionally violated for any number of reasons. However, they emphasize the collaborative nature of communication, as well as the role of understanding ‘how to do things’ in conversational exchanges.

In fact, the Cooperative Principle assumes a great deal of knowledge about communicating, as issues such as ‘being adequately informative’ and ‘avoiding ambiguity’ assume the one participant understands the other participant at a level that allows crafting of the communication to meet the other’s needs. In this sense, Grice’s principle goes beyond recognizing the ‘slot’ provided for responsive communication or what sort of remark may be conditionally relevant as the other half of an adjacency pair. Grice’s principle incorporates an understanding of what is acceptable based on the nature of the other participant, the situation in which the exchange occurs, and so on.<sup>19</sup> In other words, Grice’s principle assumes competence in the components of communicative context as shown in Figure 2.2, referred to earlier. Taken together, these move in the direction of ‘genre’ as the term is used in linguistics. That is, participants know the steps involved in achieving goals via language use.

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<sup>18</sup> That said, ‘goodbye’ may be a conditionally appropriate response to ‘hello’, depending on the situation.

<sup>19</sup> I am not suggesting that CA ignores them.

### 2.7c Genre in the Linguistics Sense

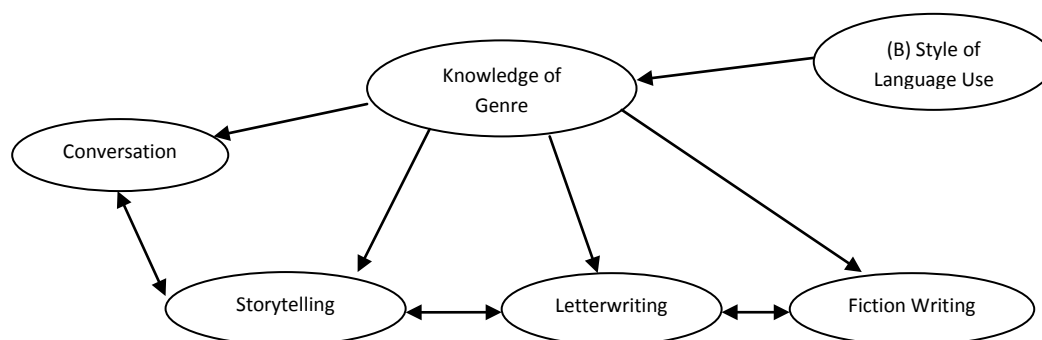
'Genre' in linguistics is not as restrictive as the literary use of the word. In fact, the literary use of the term is actually a specific manifestation of the term as it is used in linguistics—that is, it relates to the obligatory parts or steps in a recognized or understood format. In literary usage, this usually means a format for the written word. In explaining the word's broader linguistic scope, Halliday states:

...generic structure is outside the linguistic system: it is language as the projection of a higher-level semiotic structure. It is not simply a feature of literary genres; there is a generic structure in all discourse, including the most informal spontaneous conversation (Halliday, 2002, p. 44).

In linguistics, *genre* applies to the accepted way of accomplishing something, with an emphasis on the role language use plays. That is, 'wherever language is being used to achieve a culturally recognized and culturally established purpose, there we will find genre' (Eggins, 1994, p. 47). Genre in this sense is about applying cultural and social knowledge in the specific manner required, using appropriate language, in order to serve certain purposes and goals.

Genre...can be thought of as the general framework that gives purpose to interaction of particular types, adaptable to the many specific contexts of situation that they get used in. Genre lays down the way to go about achieving the aim... (Eggins, 1994, p. 32).

Through knowledge of genre, participants are able to judge conditional relevance, or mould their performance to satisfy Grice's maxims. In the case of conversation, through knowledge of genre, participants are able to appropriately and effectively engage in the exchange. They can 'keep up their end' of the conversational deal.



**Figure 2.6 Expansion of Style of Language Use**

This constitutes one example of understanding ‘how to get things done’ via language, and is reflected in Style of Language Use.

The novels in this study reflect an understanding of ‘how to get things done’ via language, particularly via interactional language in the traditions of conversation, storytelling and letterwriting. In turn, the blending of these aspects of Style of Language Use adds fiction and pseudo-conversation to the mix. The language samples illustrate, for example, that ‘slots’ are provided for the other participant’s engagement in the exchange. An understanding of genre (in the linguistic sense) was absolutely mandatory in order for these women novelists to apply conversational savvy to the pseudo-conversations they conducted via and within their novels, as well as to incorporate the other generic components mentioned. For example, parallels exist between the adjacency pairs constituting the conversational units and the back-and-forth style of language used to address the audiences of the novels/letters. Parallels exist between the ‘slots’ allowed for responses—and the restrictions on how they may be filled—and the salutations and openings included in the letters themselves. In addition, ‘slots’ for responses are sometimes filled by the letterwriter, since the recipient cannot actually respond. Storytelling also involves certain typical means for indicating the ‘slot’ to be filled by the ensuing story. These, and other parallels, will be demonstrated by the language samples.

Therefore, in the linguistics sense, three main language-use genres are manifested in these novels. These include conversation, letterwriting and storytelling. All three of these involve an awareness of shared responsibility for the communication. However, because these are novels and not simply letters, understanding of these genres occurs at the ‘meta’ level, rather than simply as communication between two private parties. These two levels of communication are presented simultaneously, a rather complicated feat, and an indication of the language competence required in creating these works. Furthermore, it would be fair to say that the audiences were expected to share that language competence, recognize the genres and play appropriate roles in the exchanges.

## 2.8 Summarizing the Mini-Theory

Finally, this study is couched within a mini-theory that assumes that:

1. Language knowledge arising from current studies informs potential understanding of language use in societies of the past.
2. Links of generalizability exist between spoken and written language.
3. The most applicable linguistic approaches to this study are IS and SHL, which are supplemented by understandings of other research traditions, especially those focusing on interactional language use.
4. Understanding the ‘choreography’ of spoken language provides specific insights for interpreting interactional language use in the novels under consideration.
5. Interactional language use in the novels contributes to a sense of familiar or intimate language use—to ‘private’ language.

6. The interactional language in the novels is largely responsible for establishing and maintaining relationships with audiences; alternatively, interactional language models relationship management via language.
7. Examining specific language samples from the novels may help characterize the specifics of interactional language use in the era; in this case, interactional language as used by women.
8. Links—sociocultural, linguistic or literary—may emerge as the language in these novels is examined.

Additional theoretical contexts will be included as appropriate—especially in Chapter 4—but also as the language samples are presented. This chapter and this list, nevertheless, summarize the main theoretical perspectives brought to the study.



### **Chapter 3—Meta-Linguistic Environment: Language in the Period**

As a time of ideas, the Enlightenment brought debate not only about the nature of things but also the best ways to catalogue and enumerate those ‘truths’. In general, it was an era of codification. For example, the general discussion about men’s and women’s proper roles, about the public and private spheres, occurred in this context, as did the various discourses about developing a literary canon or developing educational curriculum. In addition, the Enlightenment produced ideas about language. Many of these ideas constitute prescriptivist societal discourses, by definition, seeking to dictate usage. The success of these discourses as far as controlling how people actually used languages varies, but people were interested regardless of whether they conformed. In fact, this period presents exactly the sorts of conditions for language change. Gumperz mentions societal ‘innovations’ as instrumental in bringing about language changes mainly because people begin to interact differently. He states:

...when innovations occur—as when new industry creates new occupations and new forms of interpersonal relations; when new transport routes are created, changing traffic patterns and bringing locals into contact with new groups; or when political or religious movements create new bonds among individuals who previously had little contact—novel communication situations arise (Gumperz, 1982, p. 44).

The Enlightenment certainly brought about these sorts of societal innovations, and it is fair to say that one of the cultural movements of the period was an interest in language itself.

The perceived need to catalogue ideas extended to language use. Ayres-Bennett states:

...precisely because it is a period concerned with codification and standardization, [it] is also a time of raised awareness of variation and, somewhat paradoxically, an age when evidence of variation is rich. In other words, as variation becomes increasingly marked and stigmatized during the century, the number of commentaries on non-standard usages...increases (Ayres-Bennett, 2001, p. 163).

Again, this period—1670-1770—was selected for examination precisely for these reasons.

In this study, it is not the high-level philosophies about language that are under examination, but rather what evidence indicates about the linguistic environment in which women communicated and ultimately wrote their novels. To this end, this chapter will highlight several meta-linguistic aspects of the period which characterize the environment, meta-linguistic aspects with particular links to language. One aspect is language standardization, with an emphasis on how this was manifested in the main dictionaries of the period. Language standardization is typically associated with written language and print culture, but it also had a particular connection with spoken language—with conversation—during this period.



The determination about ‘what is in the language’ relies on prescriptivism and codification. In such an environment, language rules must be defined and written—and then, visibly reproduced in grammars, spelling books and dictionaries. ‘Someone’ makes these decisions. In some cases, but not always, these conclusions are drawn from actual usage with a degree of variation deemed acceptable. Regardless of how the standard is identified, at least as concerns instruction manuals, usage deemed as ‘preferred’ is taught.

The language standardization process, furthermore, not only codifies what constitutes the language and prescribes the ‘correct’ and ‘best’ ways to use it, it also exposes the named standard to a larger audience. That larger audience, in essence, develops (or must develop) due to another related process called elaboration. This involves an expanding realm of usage for the new standard ‘in such areas as literature, the courts, education, administration, and commerce’ (Wardhaugh, 1986/1992, p. 30). This is the type of ‘novel communication situation’ Gumperz had in mind. In turn, the elaboration of a standard language creates non-standard languages, a distinction which has social implications for the people who use either the newly standard or non-standard varieties. This connection is no accident or coincidence.

Successful standardisation involves the creation (or acceptance) of a variety as the most prestigious one, on account of its use by those who have status and power in the society (Mesthrie et al, 2000, p. 21).

In other words, the language variety that emerges as the standard gains social prestige along with that elevation. Quite possibly, it is perceived as ‘belonging to’ people of prestige or status as well. The chosen language variety may have enjoyed prestige to some degree prior to becoming the standard, a fact which may have contributed to its rise as the standard, but its status will likely improve further once designated as the standard.<sup>20</sup> As suggested, another result of the process is that rejected language alternatives lose prestige and become associated with a lack of power (Wardhaugh, 1986/1992, p. 31). Those varieties may disappear, be forbidden or, simply, become stigmatized. These shifts also have repercussions for the society involved, and the language speakers within that society, especially the speakers of the newly-demoted varieties.

A further point is that a standard language is often an idealized form of that language. That is, the standard form may well be one that people ‘are asked to aspire to rather than one that actually accords with’ the language they use (Wardhaugh, 1986/1992, p. 30). Governments or other powerful subsections of society may ‘lobby’ for a particular language variety as the best, adopting both official and unofficial methods to produce a standard language designation upon the preferred variety. In today’s world, such overt moves are typically referred to as language planning or language policy, and have serious

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<sup>20</sup> Exceptions are always possible, of course; there are reasons for rejecting the standard. But those are the exceptions.

implications for such matters as education, representing as it does an available and convenient conduit for disseminating the standard language throughout society.

While a linguistic perspective dismisses the possibility of any one language variety being 'better' than another, the notion of 'goodness' does tend to become associated with standard language forms within their speech communities. This goodness, however, is entirely a social decision. That is,

...linguists are agreed that no variety of language is inherently better than any other...all languages and all varieties of particular languages are 'equal'...a 'standard' variety of a language is 'better' only in a social sense: it has preferred status, it gives those who use it certain social advantages, and it increases their life chances (Wardhaugh, 1986/1992, p. 320).

Therefore, while a standard variety is an extremely subjective choice in terms of purported quality, it nevertheless tends to become attractive as something people wish to acquire because doing so brings with it certain social benefits. By the same token, it can be used to identify an 'in group', an elite, who are able to use their access to the standard exactly as a mark of exclusivity.<sup>21</sup> Regardless of the direction it takes, through an affiliation with the standard, identities are created or enhanced. That is, language standardization does tend to unify 'individuals and groups within a larger community' (Wardhaugh, 1986/1992, p. 320).

Predictably, language standardization generally becomes a concern and tends to occur at significant moments of nation-building (McIntosh, 1998, p. 6), as 'the language' of a country helps define nationhood and the corresponding nationality of its members. That is, standard languages tend to become issues 'when ideas about political autonomy are gaining currency' (Leith, 1983/1997, p. 40), as 'part of a much wider process of economic, political and cultural unification' (Fairclough, 1989/2001, p. 47). Clearly, the historical moments in both France and England—being rife with unification, revolution and nation-building concerns—were typical and ideal for such language movements, and the languages of Paris and of London gained status as those locations became more central to a sense of national identity.

An additional comment concerns the relationship between language standardization, written language and print culture. Language standardization is indeed closely related to writing. In fact, some claim that standardization:

...makes most sense when we limit discussion to the written word. It is not only that speech by its very nature is less amenable than writing to being fixed. Writing can be seen to be an indispensable component of standardisation. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine the process without the existence of a written form...[and] once a particular variety has become dominant, writing is a powerful agent of its dissemination... (Leith, 1983/1997, p. 33-34).

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<sup>21</sup> Language associated with the salons, for example, would have had such a reputation.

As Leith states, and as has been suggested previously, elaboration of the standard form is hastened and takes a firmer hold when widely supported by written signs of its influence. Writing, while not fixed easily, is—to paraphrase Leith—more easily fixed than speech. Very simply, accents do persist. In addition, variation in spoken language exists from one speaker to another or from a given speaker at one time and place to other instances of spoken language by that same person. Speech varies at least partly because exact phonological duplication from one moment to another is unlikely. For these reasons, the written word as an element of print culture supports language standardization because it serves to exemplify and spread that standard. During this time period, when an ‘awareness of print as a special phenomenon that offered specific possibilities became very much heightened for writers’ (Hunter, 1990, p. 41), print culture began to serve this function in both France and England.

### 3.1a The Role of Dictionaries

Dictionaries represent one particularly distinct avenue for codifying language and also for designating one language variety as the preferred one. In both France and England, it was a period of dictionaries, although the differences in how this occurred indicate some cultural distinctions between the two countries. In France, the official effort was government-mandated, while in England it was more the elected function of an individual. The goals were somewhat different as well, contributing to and reflecting different communicative environments for language use and change.

In France, producing an official dictionary involved the establishment of the *Académie Française*. Officially, this was achieved in approximately 1635 via an edict of the king (Pellisson-Fontainer and D’Olivet, 1858, p. 7), but it is widely accepted to have been a project of Cardinal Richelieu, who sanctioned its fashioning from literary meetings previously held at the Hotel de Rambouillet in 1634 (Nadeau and Barlow, 2006, p. 70). A main objective of the *Académie* was to safeguard the purity of the French language, a goal it still pursues today. To this end, the *Académie* was to produce a dictionary, which it eventually did do, and continues to do. However, the dictionary produced by the *Académie* emphasizes ‘*bon usage*’. This goal—linked as it was to protecting the French language—has contributed to producing a dictionary which demonstrates an ideal French language (Nadeau and Barlow, 2006, p. 82), confirming the *Académie Française* as an authority on the language, prescribing correct usage.

As previously discussed, language prescriptivism is distinctly linked to the notion of ‘ideal’ and does not necessarily correlate to a language variety as it is actually used by people. The argument can be made that, in France, the real intention of this approach was to keep the prestige language variety out of the mouths of *le peuple*. At the same time, however, because it advocated the use of French, which meant advocating the notion that correct usage was possible in a vernacular tongue, rather than continuing an endorsement of Latin as the official language, the *Académie* can be viewed as rather progressive and revolutionary for the time. In any case, the *Académie Française* does represent an instrument of government-sponsored language standardization efforts, and it did play a role

in French becoming the language of France, a role that becomes increasingly significant across the period.

England was in a similar position in terms of it being a time of change, but its path—including the language development path—emerged somewhat differently. In England, the watershed moment for language standardization was more the culmination of a general societal movement already in progress, rather than an event that started a movement. That watershed moment was the publication of Samuel Johnson's dictionary in 1755. Order in language was a predictable goal in the English environment, as it fit within the larger societal discourses that viewed favourably the pursuit of order. The English language, in its forms of the day, was an obstacle to this in that it was perceived as not corresponding to 'the character of an orderly and well-regulated society' (Baugh and Cable, 1951/2002, p. 257). That is, unlike Latin, 'English had no grammar' (Baugh and Cable, 1951/2002, p. 256), a situation demanding remedy, preferably resulting in 'a polished, rational, and permanent form' (Baugh and Cable, 1951/2002, p. 257) of the language. Fixing English's form, structure and grammar was highly desirable. To some extent, the official refinement of English was left to the dictionary, at least as a crucial step in the process.

While Johnson's dictionary was pivotal in terms of codifying English, it was also pivotal for codifying the meta-process of language standardization in the written form, an occurrence that further highlights the societal 'pursuit of order' atmosphere.

When we think of dictionaries today, we probably have in mind what Johnson achieved—an alphabetical list of all those words which are neither dialectal or slang, together with their meanings. Before Johnson, what dictionaries were available were not of this type. They were either dictionaries of hard words or bilingual ones (Leith, 1983/1997, p. 50).

Further, not only did Johnson's dictionary have a profound impact on the English spellings used today—as they were largely standardized in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century—but Johnson is also largely credited with popularizing the idea that words should generally have only one spelling (Leith, 1983/1997, p. 35). Additionally, in a groundbreaking technique, Johnson provided a range of meanings for the words listed, illustrating them with examples from literature and other items in print, thereby establishing lexicography as a source of authority for dictionaries (Leith, 1983/1997, p. 51). Introducing such practices meant that Johnson, as he set about codifying English, was also highly influential in setting the standard for the cataloguing of languages in general.

Johnson became exemplary of the English tradition that English 'recommended usage...is identified not with the decisions of a committee [as in France], but with particular books, written or compiled by established scholars and literary men' (Leith, 1983/1997, p. 50). Of course, a weakness of this reliance upon one man is exactly that: one man can be wrong, can make seemingly arbitrary choices with no 'checks and balances' process or can simply codify his own prejudices (inadvertently or not) into what becomes accepted as fact. This may have indeed happened with Johnson. Nevertheless, Johnson's dictionary marked a

turning point in the English tradition of codifying knowledge in general, in language standardization in particular, and above all, in the identification of a standard form of English.

Along with the dictionary were the published efforts to codify the grammar—and there were many in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. Priestly, in 1761, published a grammar that typified his ‘good sense’ (Baugh and Cable, 1951/2002, p. 274), which in linguistic terms meant he had an understanding of codifying usage such as it was and not ‘as it should be’. In 1762, Lowth also published a grammar (Baugh and Cable, 1951/2002, p. 274), one more typical of the prescriptivist leanings that would flavour the English approach to language standardization for the remainder of the century. By no means were these the only grammar manuals, however.

In comparing the two countries, France’s move toward language standardization can be viewed as a prescriptivist endeavour using government influence to reinforce the official status of the effort as well as the language, while England’s version of language standardization attempted to capture a range of usages that—together—amounted to ‘English’. Activities in both countries illustrate that language standardization is related to print culture, in that spelling is not generally a problem in spoken language. Such an interest reflects an interest in and awareness of writing, and a shift in the societal discourse about language use.

### 3.2 Conversation and Women: Appropriate for, Appropriated by

Then, as now, women enjoyed a reputation as conversationalists. Depending on the particular societal discourse in effect, this may or may not be viewed as a positive attribute. In the context of the long 18<sup>th</sup> Century, however, this perception included certain specific factors, largely because conversation involved certain specific factors as well. Again, while the situations were not identical in the two countries, there was an acceptance of women as appropriate instructors in the ways of conversation, even if this acceptance was reluctant at times and even if the desirability of conversational skills was not universally accepted. Furthermore, even if blueprints for conversation were debated and authorized, the eventual direction for this form of language was not successfully dictated if ‘fixing’ its purpose and form were the goals. Conversation was less fixed than writing. Still, there were expectations.

In France, the evolution of conversation was instrumental in the evolution of language use in general, and corresponds to societal shifts as well. Language as an entity was evolving, in part shaped by the ‘nobility training program’ happening in the *salons*. In the early part of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, ‘conversation with cultivated women’ was already being recommended to those seeking social education (Goldsmith, 1988, p. 20). As conversation became increasingly associated with the *salons* and these, associated with women, the encouraged styles of interactional communication were increasingly less warrior-like and increasingly more ‘appropriate’ for women (Goldsmith, 1988, p. 21). One example of a movement that governed appropriate language is the notion of *politesse*.

While *politesse* essentially translates as ‘politeness’, particularly during the long 18<sup>th</sup> Century, it conveyed much more. Generally and initially, it was identified with women.

*Politesse* was 'a subtle language involving both the body and the mind, both voice and gesture. The fair sex would use it as a sign of belonging to the nobility, as a shield for their own reputation, and as a measure of worth' (Craveri, 2005, p. 16). Applied to language, *politesse* can be viewed as the verbal accompaniment to noble comportment. Ironically perhaps, women's general lack of education was behind the tacit approval for allowing them to demonstrate French language use. That is, 'precisely because women received no humanist education, their limpid natural French, devoid of both popular vulgarity and of learned jargon, presented itself, in the great language debate, as a model for the nation' (Craveri, 2005, p. 18). Language use became an important issue in this context. In fact, what constituted 'good' conversation was much debated. Scudéry's novels, for example, abound with reflections and recommendations on the topic. Generally, though, the 'aim was to value individual talent and involve everyone in the pleasure of the game' (Craveri, 2005, p. 340), the game being conversation and the conductor of that game being the *salonnière*. Beyond that, however, the participants had to develop their own skills for verbal exchanges, including an intuitive:

...understanding [of] the personality of the person with whom one conversed. This required a sharpened psychological awareness which helped people to be in tune with their interlocutors and so encouraged them to speak in turn and show themselves at their best...the successful conversationalist had first and foremost to allow others to shine (Craveri, 2005, p. 341).

*Politesse*, as it manifested in conversation, regulated the interaction so that social standing no longer controlled the exchange. This became increasingly important throughout the time period, but was instrumental in allowing the earlier *salons* to open their doors to 'newly' ennobled participants, thereby setting the foundation of this particular tradition. An original intention of the *salons* and of conversation instruction had been to, quite literally, teach noble behaviour. In fact, this can be viewed as a sign of meritocracy entering society, in that proving oneself deserving of entry and acceptance, resulted in entry and acceptance. Language use and other appropriate behaviour marked one as deserving. That is, increasingly throughout the period, noble blood was not the requirement, but polite noble-like conduct was, and this included competence in language's *politesse*.

This mixing of society's ranks did involve a certain level of tension, however.

Whenever people of different ranks and orders of society mixed and tried to interact on an equal footing...the possibility of misunderstanding increased. The risk of insult was particularly great in the Republic of Letters, where the citizenry was drawn from all the orders of French society and yet social distinctions were not recognized. Formal rules of speech and behavior were counted on to minimize the potential for such misunderstandings (Goodman, 1994, p. 97).

In other words, while rules of polite conversation had originally set limits so that different classes could mix with some level of equality, those rules became crucial as the topics became more serious. Conversation, thus, opened 'itself out to egalitarian dialogue and the



confrontation of ideas' (Craveri, 2005, p. 358), in conversation that was all the while mediated by women.

This additional and powerful component to *politesse* was recognized by the participants. That is,

...the philosophes adopted the salons as a center for their Republic of Letters and respected the women who led them as governors because they provided the republic with a basis of order. That order could be established only through the voluntary submission to the rules of polite discourse and the female governors who enforced them (Goodman, 1994, p. 91).

This was a culmination of the lessons learned through the earlier *salons*. That is, '[i]f men of letters learned to defend their honor in aristocratic salons in the seventeenth century, they also learned there that formalized, rule-bound discourse was the best way to overcome the problems that social mixing entailed' (Goodman, 1994, p. 97). Therefore, for the purposes of spreading the word and ultimately sharing the ideology of the Enlightenment, the 'men of letters' agreed to be governed by women in terms of conversational rules. It was understood that this government by women involved the *salonnière's* successful 'balancing and blending [of] voices into a harmonious whole' (Goodman, 1994, p. 97), as they facilitated the sharing of the various points of view.

An additional reason the *philosophes* chose the *salons* as a site for discussion was the tradition of writing associated with them. That is, the *philosophes* sought an opportunity to extend their theories into writing, particularly writing that would reach and influence the public. This was, after all, the purpose of 'conducting' the Enlightenment. Furthermore, because of the way in which writing corresponded to the conversation and also because of the various written forms utilized, written language was stretched as well. Therefore, while:

...conversation was the governing discourse of the salon-based Republic of Letters, it was not the only form of discourse. Rather, it was the matrix within which and out of which the written word flowed.<sup>22</sup> If conversation shaped the discursive space within the boundaries of the salon, writing moved the Enlightenment out of that circumscribed world and into the public world beyond it. The public was first a reading public, and the philosophes both created and represented that public by writing for it...there was no hierarchy of genres, no queen of the arts, in a republic whose citizens engaged in all the variety of literary practices, stretching the limits of the literary itself (Goodman, 1994, p. 136).

The written word, then, was developed and utilized as an extension of *salon* conversation, as it had been during the previous century, although the topics were becoming less literary and

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<sup>22</sup> This observation reinforces the relationships involved in the aspects of communication, as shown in the Matrix of Communicative Context, in the previous chapter.

more political and philosophical. Further, as pseudo-conversation, a reciprocal response from readers was expected.

Publication, however, did not necessarily have the effect the *philosophes* might have desired as they opened the debates of Enlightenment to the public. In other words, although:

...[t]he creation of a critical reading public was the project to which the men of letters...dedicated themselves...This goal...eluded them, for the more the philosophes reached out to shape the reading public in their own image, the more its reading empowered that public to assert its newfound independence by challenging the claims of the men of letters. To their dismay, the philosophes discovered that the very practice of publication tore the Republic of Letters apart as surely as it expanded it (Goodman, 1994, p. 182).

In France, Enlightenment debates, in print, could not be managed in the same way conversation had been. The written word was taking on its own life, the new reality being that, '[t]he polite discourse of Enlightenment could not be sustained in the public world of print...the movement from controlled salon discourse to the public world of print destroyed their dreams of harmony and unity' (Goodman, 1994, p. 185). As a result, by the mid 18<sup>th</sup> Century, spoken and written language began to diverge in terms of social usage. Written language—at the very least—could escape the rules of *politesse* as they had been known in the *salon*, even if discussion and debate were still conducted in this newly public sphere of writing.

Conversation in this changing scene shifted and became 'openly critical of the government, confrontational, and conspiratorial' (Craveri, 2005, p. 374), as it pursued the debates of the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. *Politesse* in conversation was not adaptable to the new public oratory, which took over 'the monopoly of the spoken word' (Craveri, 2005, p. 374), as a counterpart to the more heated discussions the printed word was encouraging. In short, the outcome of many conversations was opinion (Landes, 1988, p. 42) and not necessarily uniform opinion at that. In this evolving environment, public dialogue may have constituted a conversation of sorts, but it was not one of *politesse*.

Finally, a comment regarding recent scholarship *vis-à-vis* the relatively accepted perceptions of 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Century French *salons* is needed. As discussed here, there are substantial differences in the institution of the French *salon* from one century to the next, despite the historical tendency to paint them all as the less influential 18<sup>th</sup> Century institution. Again, recent research emphasizes the considerable influence of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century *salon* on both French literature and French culture. Views to the contrary, which downplay the 17<sup>th</sup> Century salon as merely a place for social graces training, are posited as being an initial part of a 're-visioning' of French culture that officially began in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century.

This re-visioning may be viewed as one example of the taste for codification and standardization that was sweeping the time period, one example of the taste for establishing

official records and for articulating how it 'should be'. Beasley, for example, discusses the shift in *salon* influence as a power struggle within French culture, one between official and 'unofficial' realms, one in which language had a particular role to play. The *salonières* were part of 'worldly society' (*le monde*), which, particularly by the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, was in direct conflict with the monarchy and its official representatives (Beasley, 2006, p. 22), primarily because of the power they were able to exert in the literary field as well as their approach to doing so, given that their approach incorporated conversation as a collaborative tool.

These worldly women were trying to establish another venue for literary evaluation and production, one founded upon collaboration and conversation, one where reason and *bon sens*, as defined by the group and founded upon worldly ideals, could be used to determine literary value. This alternative space for literary evaluation did not, however, exist as an entirely separate entity. Its habitués and founders interacted with, or were often the same figures, as those in the literary sphere as it is traditionally defined. And the new critical values developed in the salons were designed to alter the entire literary field (Beasley, 2006, p. 27).

Literary discussions in the *salons* in no way conflict with the emphasis on conducting 'proper' polite conversation. Clearly, *something* had to constitute the subject matter in these conversations. Further, given the number of *salonières* who were themselves writers, the number of writers who frequented the *salons* and who openly acknowledged the value of having their work reviewed there, as well as the collaborative writing that was created in the *salons*, it seems a matter of common sense that literature would have been a topic. Additionally, by mid 17<sup>th</sup> Century, many of these *salons* had a pedagogical aim, one beyond that of teaching conversational style or good manners: 'to teach habitués how to evaluate literature of all genres according to worldly standards' (Beasley, 2006, p. 29). That is, they were claiming a certain authority where literature was concerned, and 'conversation was at the heart of this process that created literature and determined its value' (Beasley, 2006, p. 31). Conversations may have been considered as a sort of game, but could also be a serious game.

At the same time, as the second half of the century progressed and Louis XIV further exerted his own authority, the *Académie Française* became more closely associated with him personally. Louis XIV, in fact, took over as the 'protector' of the *Académie* in 1672, a move which indicates an awareness of the value of connecting a certain kind of language with official power. As has been mentioned, governments typically endorse a language policy at moments of nation-building and the king was the government. Not only did *salon* culture make a claim on language, *salon* culture emphasized collaborative, collective reasoning, rather than reason, as announced, endorsed and handed down by a central authority. That is, 'the salon milieu was offering a new way to reason and to construct value and knowledge. Worldly activity in the empire of letters, guided and fashioned by salonnières, formed a kind

of counter-culture' (Beasley, 2006, p. 39), one apparently well-perceived by Louis XIV. In claiming the *Académie* for the monarchy, making it official in this sense, Louis XIV established 'outsiders' and 'insiders' with regard to both language use and the world of letters.

Indeed, '[s]alons can be seen as rival homes for linguistic precepts and literary values' (Beasley, 2006, p. 84). Increasingly, throughout the period, this power was seen as too significant in developing the officially-preferred image of French culture. It was too contrary to the image of France being actively codified through official channels. The official image of France and its culture could neither be controlled and shaped by women, nor could it be *perceived* as being controlled and shaped by women: 'in the development of a sense of national culture, literature was accorded a central role. However, an influence on literature thus constituted a determining force on the representation of the entire culture identified with France' (Beasley, 2006, p. 101). Conversation, manners, *politesse*, *sociabilité*: these were seen as acceptable unofficial realms of influence for women. An official role for women, and corresponding official power and influence, was not advocated by the central authority. In fact, women's official role could only be to be unofficial.

England was also experiencing shifts in regard to language use, and incorporating politeness into its conversation was one of them. To some extent, this was influenced by the translation of French conduct books into English. Similar to France, the English focus on such matters began prior to 1700. The English notion of polite conversation emphasized the idea of fostering 'a voice that has regained some of its ancient simplicity' (Potkay, 1994, p. 103), a notion echoing the appropriateness of uneducated French women where the French language was concerned. Also similar to the French situation, English women were viewed as 'instrumental in polishing men's otherwise coarse manners; in transforming them, so to speak, from orators to conversationalists' (Potkay, 1994, p. 77). This distinction presumably incorporates some notion of the reciprocity of the conversational exchange, rather than the more one-sided oratory tradition that might involve an audience whose overt participation and co-constructive efforts in achieving communication were not expected.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, politeness was viewed as bridging a communicative gap, apparently between genders, in that 'the company of women would...render learned style conversational and accessible' (Potkay, 1994, p. 82), 'learned style' being viewed as belonging to men.

Despite these similarities, some important distinctions between *politesse* and politeness also emerged. Among these are the site where politeness was practiced, the manner in which politeness was governed, and the eventual form, purpose and effect of politeness in England. In fact, English women's contribution did not correspond so clearly to a site in terms of physical location as it had in France, particularly early in the period. This is because the site of politeness, in England, was the coffeehouse.

The establishment of the English coffeehouse has been attributed to the emergence of a 'virtuoso community' in England (Cowan, 2005, p. 11). This community was interested in things continental and especially Italian, including coffee. This community was also

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<sup>23</sup> Chapter 4 examines these contrasting language styles.

affiliated with universities: '[i]t was part of the character of a virtuoso to be learned and wise without being pedantic or scholarly' (Cowan, 2005, p. 11). In addition, the virtuoso culture emphasized 'civility, curiosity, cosmopolitanism, and learned discourse' (Cowan, 2005, p. 89), a culture which eventually came into contact with that of cosmopolitan London and the 'bourgeois sociability' that existed there (Cowan, 2005, p. 89). Shoulders rubbed in both directions, largely because of the public nature of the coffeehouse.

This location had the effect of making politeness very public.

As a code of conduct and an art of self-presentation...English politeness was not a substitute for some older definition of nobility but the complement to and completion of social virtues...The value of politeness lay not in its ability to define an elite that had lost its social and political function but in its quite different ability to socialize and politicize private virtue by making it public and civic (Goodman, 1994, p. 120).

The public location made politeness a public activity. It may have been 'behind closed doors' but they were not private doors in the sense of the French *salon*. Approval was not required to enter a coffeehouse. That is, '[e]ntry was open to anyone willing to pay the penny admission fee. In a sense, the penny took the place of the *salonnière*, for its payment signified tacit consent to submit to the rules of polite conversation. These rules were posted at the door' (Goodman, 1994, p. 122). The inclusion of money in this process was surely a particularly significant component in the English model, a point that will be revisited.

That said, much like the French *politesse* of the *salon*, the polite conversation of the English coffeehouse could 'create the illusion of social equality by suspending distinctions of rank' (Goodman, 1994, p. 122). The cost of admission was perhaps different, but the 'illusion' of a levelled hierarchy once inside appears to be quite similar. In England, however, the 'republic' which developed in this public place relied upon personal restraint and accountability in the exchange of ideas, rather than on a human (female) mediator overseeing the process. That is:

[t]he discipline of polite conversation produced an ideal of liberty without, however, governance, for the Whig conversational ideal emphasized freedom from external constraint and submission to politeness as an internalized discipline. Coffeehouse conversation was good if it flowed freely and no one controlled it (Goodman, 1994, p. 122).

England, in other words, introduced a 'do-it-yourself' element to the process of politeness. Indeed, in England, '[p]olite speech may be defined as a thoroughly conventional code of self-censorship about one's physical or passional desires or aversions, whether in speech or in writing, in jest or in discussion' (Potkay, 1994, p. 76). The English political environment would have strengthened the impetus to cultivate the virtue of personal restraint, as would

a less centralized culture of religion. That is, England espoused a less external tradition of controlling individual behaviour than did France. Personal responsibility for monitoring one's own politeness represents a particular English twist to the notion of *politesse*.

However, England's politeness model also implies resistance to women 'governing' men in the apparently 'levelled' hierarchy, a tacit agreement that had allowed the French *salons* to operate. Importantly, women could be 'coffee-women'; that is, the proprietor of the establishment. In fact, women ran some twenty percent of London establishments in the year from 1692 to 1693 (Cowan, 2005, p. 251), and women running coffee-houses could be viewed as relatively 'conventional' (Ellis, 2001, p. 37) in the period. However, there is also an assumed connection between a woman running the coffeehouse and her involvement in prostitution, an issue likely related to the exchange of money occurred in the public environment.

While owning an establishment may have constituted 'governing' the interaction to some degree—that is, by posting the rules—there is no indication that women regularly participated in the conversations or, in fact, that they regularly attended simply to absorb information as a non-speaking audience.

In theory, there is no reason why any woman who found her way into a coffeehouse could not have joined the conversations there, but in practice there is no evidence of any woman actually taking part in a coffeehouse debate. Understanding this absence requires that we take into consideration the distinctions of class and status as well as gender, for it was the women of England's social elite who were most significantly absent from coffeehouse society. The coffeehouses of London were simply no place for a lady who wished to preserve her respectability (Cowan, 2005, p. 246).

That said, '[s]ome exceptional women may have moved with relative ease in the company of the coffeehouse, especially when they had specific business to attend to' (Cowan, 2005, p. 248). Evidence exists to support this (Cowan, 2005, p. 248), including such examples as art auctions that could typically be held in certain coffeehouses (Cowan, 2005, p. 249). However, in terms of being facilitators or leaders of the conversation, or even being active conversational participants, these examples do not support a role for women. In the English context, it appears that women in the coffeehouse had a marginal, possibly dubious, role maintaining the location for those who would or could converse.

A final point regarding coffeehouse conversation in England as well as the progress of politeness in that environment relates to the role of the written word, specifically, that of newspapers. Given the academic history of the coffeehouse, this tradition is not surprising. Newspapers were present and visible, thereby allowing a different role for the written word than it had played in the French *salon*.

Coffeehouse owners encouraged the integration of reading and conversation by providing newspapers to their customers. They took this aspect of their trade

seriously enough to apply for a monopoly on it in 1729. Newspapers became the occasions and topics of the conversations that took place in the coffeehouses (Goodman, 1994, p. 123).

Of course, written materials had always been important in the French *salon*. However, this incorporation of newspapers became possible due to the improved accessibility of printed materials, as well as the relatively new and related tradition that newspapers could exist in numbers. In addition, it represents a new relationship between the printed version of news and oral discussions of the news, within the particular rules of polite conversation as they operated in England.

English polite conversation was able to adapt and encompass discussions in writing and of written information in a way that had not been possible in France. Discussion and debate in England did not signal an end to politeness. Instead, politeness became an increasingly inextricable facet of writing. In fact, English politeness enjoyed a particular renaissance as part of the written word. In the English context, politeness became a feature of written language. For example, the increasingly prescriptivist grammarians of the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century drew upon *The Spectator* for clarification of proper English usage, not due to the linguistic purity of its language but because of 'its considerable cultural authority in matters of manners and politeness' (Fitzmaurice, 2000, p. 195). A transition, and an awareness of that transition, were in the works throughout the century.

Another analysis suggests that changes in English during the period included items of syntax, idiom and expression (McIntosh, 1998, p. 23), changes which contributed to a 'gentrification' of the language (McIntosh, 1998, p. 23), a shift related to politeness. Additionally, however, the changes are viewed as moving the language 'in the direction of writtenness...[making] it less oral' (McIntosh, 1998, p. 23) further suggesting that,

...most of the same features that give late eighteenth-century prose its gentrified character can be reanalysed as ingredients in the new print culture.

"Standardization," which seems by definition to encourage formality, precision, and abstractness in language is equally a trend towards writtenness (McIntosh, 1998, p. 23-24).

Of course, such a perspective also highlights the interrelatedness of the various processes involved in print culture, standardization, and so on. Nevertheless, the shift that occurred in England does seem to place particular emphasis on politeness as being related to the written word, which had not necessarily been the case in France. That is, 'the novelty of the so-called new rhetoric of the eighteenth century lies in the degree to which it submits both oral and written composition to the standards of written culture—rationality, abstraction, logic' (Potkay, 1994, p. 63). One possible reason for this is that precision of expression, whether written or oral, came to represent civilization in England (McIntosh, 1998, p. 142). While concern over the 'feminization' of English culture was also an issue during the time period,

perhaps it was nevertheless more important to be civilized and to foster the signs of civilization, than to risk falling into the disarray that was descending on France at the time. Of course, England had already had its revolution, while France was heading toward one.

Another site for polite conversation in England, one where women had a clear role, was emerging during this time. This realm was the salon culture of the Bluestockings, the first wave of which hit its peak around the mid-eighteenth Century, and which applied to a certain category of women. Bluestockings were described as:

...women who are socially prominent not because they are aristocratic, and not always because they are wealthy, but because of their learning, because they are women of letters...the group can be taken to include most of the well-educated but not aristocratic women linked through correspondence as well as social interaction in London, Edinburgh, and perhaps Dublin, from around 1750 to the early decades of the nineteenth century (Guest, 2003, p. 60).

Therefore, it was not social rank that was the distinguishing factor, rather it was learnedness. Further, writing supported the links between them; indeed, a good number of these woman were also published authors. They are widely recognized for their correspondence, and for their active commentary on things literary. In this sense, they are comparable to the French *salonières*. In addition, parallels can be drawn to the *salonières* because the Bluestockings also 'instill[ed] notions of polite, enlightened behaviour as opposed to aristocratic decorum through their sociability, through the conversational practices the importance of which they so frequently emphasize' (Guest, 2003, p. 74).

Additional comparisons between the *salonières* and the Bluestockings exist in terms of the perceptions of their influence on society at the time, in particular their role in the newly conceived egalitarian 'civil society'. This involved:

...the construction of a social domain of civility and relationships located between the domestic sphere, however defined, and the public, institutional arenas of politics and the state. In civil society, men and women of the middle and upper classes were to meet and mingle in ostensibly egalitarian sociability, supposedly free from the formality and imposed hierarchy of courtly society (Kelly, 2001, p. 164).

Such a description obviously has a familiar ring to it.

Also among the parallels between the French and English salons is the issue of whether the salons originated as literary realms, only later incorporating politics. As mentioned, the French *salons* earned this reputation as they evolved during the period. In the English example, one camp contends that the early Bluestockings were notable for their lack of political factionalism (Guest, 2003, p. 63), that their affiliation should be regarded as with the 'world of letters' (Guest, 2003, p. 67) while simultaneously emphasizing ways to be 'socially and publicly useful' (Guest, 2003, p. 69). On the other hand, it is also suggested that



the early Bluestockings represented ‘broad political traditions and upheld a particular political, social and economic programme’ (Kelly, 2001, p. 164), very likely modelling a civil way of mingling harmoniously with those of different political views.

Few would dispute that the later Bluestockings were overtly political, but this may be because they were political in ways that are more recognizable to ‘today’s audience’. That is, the early Bluestockings operated within different social constraints, obscuring their opinions and positions from today’s readers. Indeed, considered against what came after 1800, ‘when visible at all, Enlightenment women writers...seemed not only conservative and unprogressive but blinkered and unfeminist as well’ (Bannet, 2000, p. 20). However, attempting to ‘rate’ degrees of political commitment is not a particularly productive activity, among other reasons, because it assumes a ‘level playing field’ for women’s political involvement across the centuries, which is not the case. It is possible that women of this era appeared less political because it was expected that they not *appear* political. In addition, ‘being political’ was differently manifested during this period. In both cases, ‘how it was done’ is the issue. In other words, the genre of ‘behaving politically’ was undergoing codification at the time and it did not necessarily correspond to how it would be done today. Further, women of the period were perceived as ‘less political’ because that perception was in accord with the desired codification—the revisioning—current at that time, regardless of possible realities.

Societal circumstances and discourses—the meta-linguistic environment—cannot be overlooked in contextualizing English language use and shifts. The Bluestockings operated within a particular set of meta-linguistic circumstances. That they had a literary focus is a safe position—and that conversation was central to their interaction, whether in person or in correspondence, is also accepted. Specifically:

‘Conversation’, or a discourse of culture and civility in mixed company, replacing both the formality and masquerade of courtly upper-class society and the supposed roughness and coarseness of male-only society or plebeian society, was a major feature of the ‘Bluestocking club’ (Kelly, 2001, p. 165).

Therefore, while salons in the two countries (or in the different centuries) cannot be described as identical, they do have certain components in common. These include conversation, writing of all kinds, literary interests, levelling of distinctions in social rank, and debateable degrees of political involvement—and the important role of women.

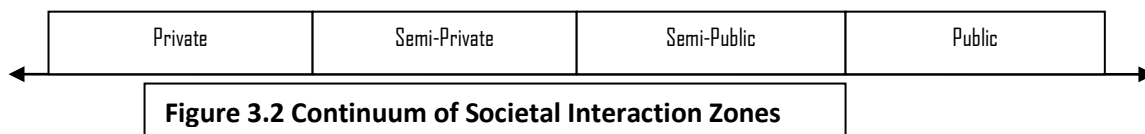
### 3.3 Public and Private Spheres as Spheres for Women and their Language

The matter of public and private spheres is complex. The position taken here, and stated upfront, is that these spheres represent ends of a continuum, not separate distinct zones, with substantial ‘grey area’ in between. An applicable and thorough analysis of the matter comes from Jürgen Habermas’ *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. Much of

the current work on the subject responds to this.<sup>24</sup> While a gross oversimplification, Habermas' basic position regarding these spheres is that 'domestic' is associated with 'private' and 'the court' with 'public', with the realms of politics, letters and the new commodity-exchange market emerging between them.

These labels are useful, as long as they are not interpreted as representing clear distinctions between the zones. At least during the time period involved, when so much in society was in flux, such well-defined, apparently settled distinctions could not have been possible. Despite the desire to codify, any distinctions could have only been emerging. In addition, this range of labels—as long they are accepted as overlapping—supports the complex weave connecting these strands as places for language use. That is, 'private' domestic discourses could appear outside the private 'domestic' sphere. 'Public' discourses could appear in the private sphere. It is exactly the mixing of language use styles across the zones—using a 'wrong' style in a 'wrong' zone—that can cause miscommunication or more serious 'violations' of sociolinguistic customs.

Again, even if these spheres could be completely separated into discrete zones, they were not in this time period. Rather, as stated, 'private' and 'public' tend to sit at opposite ends of a continuum with a number of overlapping 'grey areas' between them. However, some means for referring to the spheres is necessary, and labels obviously help do this. Therefore, as reflected in Figure 3.2, a continuum of private-public zones is offered that includes 'semi-private' and 'semi-public' as mid-range descriptors along the continuum.



This approach has the benefit of encompassing Habermas' interim zones without getting bogged down in his vocabulary, while also introducing the terminology that will be used to categorize and characterize language use in the novels.

Two aspects of Habermas' theory are particularly relevant to this study. The first is his contention that a literary public sphere emerged prior to a political one—or, more specifically, that a kind of 'grassroots' insurgency was instrumental in forging the new distinctions between the spheres. He states:

Even before the control over the public sphere by public authority was contested and finally wrested away by critical reasoning of private persons on political issues, there evolved under its cover a public sphere in apolitical form—the literary precursor of the public sphere operative in the political domain (Habermas, 1962, p. 29).

<sup>24</sup> Habermas' is not the only voice on the topic, and his theory is not without its problems—among these, is the brief consideration of women's place in these spheres.

This has a clear application to the roles of women and salons, as they have been discussed. Habermas, however, offers further insights into how this shift evolved, with a limited description of women's experience.

The circles of persons who made up the two forms of public were not even completely congruent. Women and dependents were factually and legally excluded from the political public sphere, whereas, female readers as well as apprentices and servants often took a more active part in the literary public sphere than the owners of private property and family heads themselves. Yet in the educated classes the one form of public sphere was considered to be identical with the other; in the self-understanding of public opinion the public sphere appeared as one and indivisible. As soon as privatized individuals in their capacity as human beings ceased to communicate merely about their subjectivity but rather in their capacity as property-owners desired to influence public power in the common interest, the humanity of the literary public sphere served to increase the effectiveness of the public sphere in the political realm (Habermas, 1962, p. 56).

It is, first, an intriguing claim that the 'educated classes' did not differentiate between these spheres, despite records apparently providing distinctions about attendees. Second, it does clarify the societal evolution in terms of people mobilizing toward a different communal presence. Finally, it is worth noting that communication identified as being 'merely about their subjectivity' would likely include women's novels in this period, providing a 'justification' for not taking these writings 'seriously'.<sup>25</sup>

In a sense, Habermas' position also illustrates the difference between perceptions of public space and the reality, a situation that effectively dictates appropriate public space for women, although Habermas does not discuss it quite this way. On the other hand, it also emphasizes that, in both England and France, women generally found themselves better received in the literary public sphere than in the political. At least, they were more *easily* received in the literary public sphere. They were granted access and not so easily codified out of the literary public sphere, as they were the political public sphere. In the end, this situation provides significant context for the novels in this study and the language they contain.

The other aspect of Habermas' theory that is particularly relevant—and which will be further addressed as part of the conclusions—is that of the newly evolving commodity-exchange economy. Language became a part of this commodity-exchange economy, as words came to have monetary value. They could be bought and paid for. For example, as part of the new commodity-exchange economy, according to Habermas, 'the news itself became a commodity...[e]ach item of information had its price' (Habermas, 1962, p. 21), one example of words having monetary value in this environment. This has been observed to

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<sup>25</sup> Thereby illustrating the potential problem of women's writing being evaluated with mainstream (male) and inappropriate tools is again demonstrated.

some extent already, as newspapers were features of the coffeehouse and the language exchanged there.

One final comment regarding the private-public continuum in France and England concerns shifts in the apparent role of these societal zones, shifts that tend to move in opposite directions. That is, in France, the societal influences of the *salon* began early in the period (in fact, prior to 1670). In the period, the *café* played less of a role in societal change. Later in the period, the *café* became more important, particularly as the Revolution approached. At the same time, the *salon* lost the control it had exercised as it came into competition with the *café* and the related public language of news. In England, however, the coffeehouse performed a significant role in conversation and the dissemination of news earlier in the period, while the Bluestocking salon culture began to carry weight around the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>26</sup> In other words, in France, the *salon* gave way to the *café* as a significant site for interactional language use, while the English coffeehouse started strong as a site of communicative exchange but eventually came to share this role with the Bluestocking salon culture. Given the shifting private-public societal spaces, these movements suggest something different was happening in the two countries in terms of societal priorities. In moving away from *salon* culture, France was moving away from a polite 'structure'. In moving to include salon culture, English was moving toward polite structure. Therefore, while societal discourses in the two countries were similar, the direction of change was not the same and variation at any given point in the period would have existed.

### 3.4 Correspondence and Correspondents

Letters, of course, were by no means a new form of writing. They were, however, particularly prevalent in the period, an era perhaps 'saturated' with letters of various types (Cook, 1996, p. 17). However, during the long 18<sup>th</sup> Century, much about letters shifted. Not only was letterwriting caught up in the codification culture, but the range of purposes served by letters expanded, as did the range of people participating in the exchanges and the awareness of the generic structure that constituted 'letter'. In fact, letterwriting was also caught up in the sorts of 'novel communication situations' mentioned by Gumperz, and previously cited. At least three particular societal tendencies shaped these shifts:

The first development was the centralization of the state and its administration...the second was the religious reforms...that encouraged a greater intimacy and inwardness in spiritual devotion; and the third was the spread of literacy and the movement away from oral culture (Schneider, 2005, p. 37).

To this, a fourth may be added: that is the increasing geographical mobility of the population, which put more people in the position of using correspondence as an alternate to face-to-face interaction. This particular combination of societal realities contributed as

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<sup>26</sup> As has been discussed, the perception at that time was that the Bluestockings were not 'political', a perception that could not continue after 1800.

well to an increasing sense of letterwriting as a desirable skill worth cultivating. That is, ‘the skill of letter writing began to be recognized as a social behaviour through which one’s courtesy and civility were exhibited and measured’ (Schneider, 2005, p. 43). In this sense, letterwriting’s social status came to compare to the position enjoyed by conversation during the period as far as making a statement about one’s social comportment. Increasingly, facility in language use made the man—and the woman.

One sign of letterwriting’s importance—and the belief in the proper ‘teachable’ structure of letters—was the prevalence of letterwriting instruction manuals. Specifically,

...[t]he increase in the number of pedagogical and civility manuals that discuss letter writing attests to the prestige attached to accomplished letter writing, and to the growing sociocultural significance of letters in the period (Schneider, 2005, p. 43).

While such manuals had existed throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> Century—as well as before that—their number increased during the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. Additionally, letterwriting came to be a substantial topic, for example, in grammar books. One such example is Charles Gildon’s *Grammar of the English Tongue*: the 1711 edition included only grammar, but a revised version appearing only a year later included letterwriting (Mitchell, 2007, p. 186). Certainly, a detailed survey of the specifics of letterwriting instruction manuals is not appropriate here. However, letterwriting instruction manuals did rather uniformly spell out generic structural requirements that included an appropriate opening, attention to properly respectful language throughout, followed by an appropriate closing and signature. ‘Appropriacy’ in these matters is the operative word, perhaps the most difficult of the concepts to teach, as it relies upon social judgments arising from knowledge of traditions in particular Communities of Practice. These judgments relate to the elements of the Matrix of Communicative Context.

In letterwriting, excellent sociolinguistic understanding is required to make these decisions, employing ‘appropriate’ and ‘proper’ language of the ‘who can say what to whom, when, where and how’ variety. For example, in the event of ‘unequal relationships of power’ between writer and reader, attention to such details as ‘correct social salutations and greetings and other formal aspects’ of letter composition (Barton and Hall, 2000, p. 7) become especially important. At the same time, because letters allowed a ‘social inferior’ to ‘hold the floor’ in an uninterrupted flow of language (Schneider, 2005, p. 44), they may be viewed as performing an equalizing function when unequal status relationships are represented in the exchange.

Additionally, not only were letterwriting manuals prevalent, but the perception of the audience for these manuals was growing, too, as the need for letterwriting ability increasingly extended across all ranks of society. That is, letterwriting was not limited to government or military business. It was not limited to legal matters; it was not limited to social requirements of the upper classes. It was not conducted solely as a means of extending literary discussions or other conversations as had occurred in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century

French *salons*. Specifically, the social status of letterwriters was likely to include more lower-class or working class individuals with a valid need for letterwriting as a part of their business and personal lives. For example, there is evidence that non-professional letterwriters such as ‘soldiers, farmers, craftspeople and merchants’ regularly exchanged letters (Poster, 2007, p. 36). Furthermore, correspondence from the late 17<sup>th</sup> Century includes letters from ‘the nobility, gentry, professionals, merchants, bankers, artisans, shopkeepers, farmers and servants—hence, even the underclasses were writing letters’ (Schneider, 2005, p. 54).

Letterwriting manuals increasingly reflected this range of students. As early as 1612, for example, one such manual designated itself for ‘students who will continue with Latin and the “common man” who needs English only for his apprenticeship’ (Mitchell, 2007, p. 179). Fisher, in 1757, was one of the first to specifically emphasize women as being rightfully among her students (Mitchell, 2007, p. 188). Therefore, a correlation exists between the increased need for letterwriting skills across the social spectrum and letterwriting instruction manuals seeking to answer that call. Part of what they sought to teach was the sociolinguistic ability to make judgments about using appropriate language. These were not simply grammar manuals.

### 3.4a Properties of Letters

Privacy was not a given property of letters during the long 18<sup>th</sup> Century. While the exchange of a letter might imply a two-way exchange between a writer and a reader, this was not guaranteed. Of course, it may be equally untrue of correspondence in today’s society as well<sup>27</sup>, but some specific realities governed the non-dyadic nature of correspondence during this period. In some ways, the environment for letters was significantly different from today’s environment.

Letters in the early modern era were sociotexts: collective social forms designed, understood, and expected to circulate within designated epistolary circles. Epistolary phenomena such as additional letters enclosed within a single packet intended (or not) for another’s inspection, common (group, joint) letters intended for more than one recipient or written by more than one sender, oral clarification of letters by bearers, and ‘memorials’ all constitute multiple-party access to letters. The traditional dyadic model of letter exchange, therefore, is insufficient to comprehend the collective nature of letter writing, transmission, and reception in the period. Multiple parties, indeed, often had access to all stages of the epistolary process, during composition, transmission, and reception (Schneider, 2005, p. 22).

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<sup>27</sup> Current interactional forms of language use such as email or social networking sites add another dimension to this question of who is involved in the exchange.

Therefore, creating a letter may have involved a lack of privacy: a letter may have been dictated to a secretary or other scribe, who in turn actually wrote the letter.<sup>28</sup> In this way, at least one other person could be a party to the contents of letters as they were being written. Another different reality involves the matter of the messenger. While an 'official' regular postal service was making inroads in both countries during the period, the security of delivery was by no means assured. Several of the novels, in fact, make reference to these realities of letterwriting.

At the receiving end, if letters of the era were sociotexts as Schneider states, then the letterwriter could not assume that the eventual audience for the letter at its destination would be the one person named as the other half of a dyad. Even when a letter safely reached the intended addressee, there was no guarantee that that party would be the only one to read it. Letters were read *en famille*, to the family, intentionally shared with others. News, regardless of its private-public status, was conveyed via letters, and best with some care. The sociotext aspect of letters granted them a certain level of implied 'public-ness', even if the anticipated audience group was fairly small.

Further, certain aspects of the language of correspondence, which may simply appear as conventions of the genre to today's letterwriter, arose in response to the letterwriting reality of the day. These did not necessarily originate as simple social niceties; rather, they served specific informative purposes for the recipients: dating letters (Schneider, 2005, p. 56) and indicating the location where they were written (Schneider, 2005, p. 57) was information offered to the recipient to aid in gauging how much time had passed since a given letter had been created. These inclusions addressed 'epistolary continuity', and allowed the recipient to consider the currency of the information included and the likelihood that any other letters might have gone astray (Schneider, 2005, p. 55). During the long 18<sup>th</sup> Century, such calculations could also be related to establishing the 'authenticity and reliability of the information' (Schneider, 2005, p. 65) contained in the letter, fair concerns for the letter recipient.

Regardless of how 'official' a letter's content or how 'public' its news, conveying information was not the only function of a letter. They also maintained connections between people<sup>29</sup>, a purpose particularly valuable in a period of increased geographical mobility, such as the long 18<sup>th</sup> Century. Letters allowed people to 'stay in touch'. In seeking 'epistolary continuity', participants in the letterwriting exchange are also seeking relationship continuity. In fact, this 'rhetoric' is *polite*. It tends to the relationship between the participants, not the letter's content. That is,

...letters required a specialized language in order to function properly as exchanges of communication and as signifiers of social relationships...if letters said nothing about news or business, they spoke volumes about connection, about the initiation, consolidation, and maintenance of social ties (Schneider, 2005, p. 67).

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<sup>28</sup> Of course, there are instances in today's society where letters are also dictated, then written by another.

<sup>29</sup> Of course, this function of letters remains today.

In fact, the goal of this study is to identify and characterize language that performs these functions.

While ‘private’ is a troublesome term, tending to the relationships between parties is nevertheless a ‘private’ function of letters. Furthermore, these private functions can be conveyed via ‘official’ correspondence, just as they can in intimate or familiar letters. Indeed, royal or governmental letters could have such a purpose, even if it was not the only purpose. Equally, ‘private’ letters could include commentary on matters official or public. In fact, it is exactly this complex *mélange* of purposes—the potential blend within any given letter—that requires the placement of private and public on a continuum. That said, ‘private’ letters between ‘private’ people may be particularly likely to include examples of language designed to support those relationships, rather than merely convey information. When ‘official’ correspondence includes the ‘private’ function of tending to the relationship—even if it is still a formal relationship—the language employed may well be ‘private’. While private language is the subject of the next chapter, it is worth mentioning its connection to private letters, as there is a strong parallel between the two. That parallel has to do with providing a human aspect in the correspondence and the specific language used to achieve that end. At the other end, of course, is the letter as sociotext, where a lack of privacy for the letter is anticipated. As the samples will show, some of the letters are written as sociotexts, easily available to an external reading audience in this way. Other letters, those depicted as being ‘intimate’,<sup>30</sup> do not satisfy the level of ‘public-ness’ more typical of the letter as sociotext.

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<sup>30</sup> This term will be defined in Chapter 4.



#### **Chapter 4—Interim Developments: Growing the Theory and Pointing toward Conclusions**

This chapter builds on Chapters 2 and 3, while also introducing certain theoretical matters encountered during the study. Chapter 4, in a sense, synthesizes these two chapters but also presents interim developments that ‘grow’ the mini-theory. These developments are presented somewhat ‘out of order’, in that they became apparent in the course of examining the samples—in a strictly chronological relation of things, they would have been presented as part of the conclusion. However, they are introduced here, prior to reviewing the samples, because they are needed to adequately characterize those observations. They are needed as well in order to discuss those observations. At the same time, because they are not part of the initial framework—they do suggest the direction of the conclusions—it was not appropriate to subsume them under the heading of Chapter 2, as if they were known upfront. Indeed, it would be disingenuous not to acknowledge that the perspectives discussed here in Chapter 4 were, in fact, *not* in place when the study began. Rather, they constitute part of the learning process revealed in the course of conducting the research.

Interactional language has been presented as paramount in pursuing an investigation into language that ‘speaks to’ audiences, and Interactional Sociolinguistics (IS), as an avenue allowing exploration of that language.<sup>31</sup> Interactional language involves a kind of choreography of parts. It is most evident in conversation, but also in other sorts of interactional exchange, including the ‘pseudo-conversations’ presented via and in the novels. Study of this choreography includes identifying not only the typical ‘slots’ where language performs certain functions within communicative exchanges and what those related pairs look like, but also the cooperative construction of exchanges and the notion that knowledge of communicative strategies on the part of the interactants is vital to that construction. These participants must offer reasonable signalling mechanisms, ‘reasonable’ being defined by the audience and situation. In addition, the locations where these exchanges take place are significant, and link to Habermas’ view of private and public space. A private-public continuum has been developed to help illustrate these potential locations for language use.

The main goal of this chapter is to further characterize language use according to that private-public continuum, specifically incorporating the interim additions to the mini-theory. These additional developments are situated within the ‘umbrella’ provided by Habermas’ view of private and public space. However, they also seek to clarify ways, using language, in which the novels promote relationships with audiences. Some of these techniques are larger ‘big-picture’ considerations, such as the establishment of common knowledge between the parties. Equally, however, some language use choices are smaller linguistic components that provide the signalling mechanisms Gumperz has described. These perspectives are useful in understanding the five categories of interactional language use that comprise the data sections of this study, as well as in understanding the discussion of the samples themselves. The additions to the mini-theory, then, reflect supplemental ways of discussing the language

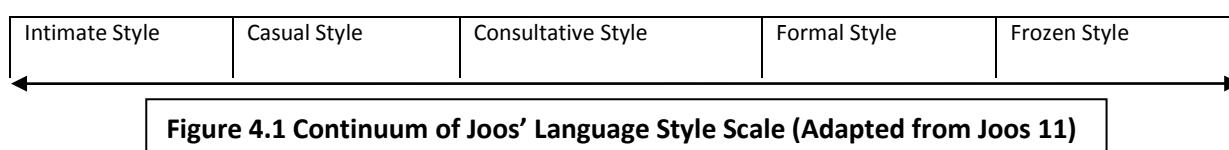
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<sup>31</sup> As previously acknowledged, a range of disciplines—including Sociohistorical Linguistics, Discourse Analysis, and so on—are also influential.

of the novels as encountered in the analysis process. They also indicate directions the conclusions will take.

#### 4.1 Characterizing the Private in Interactional Language

While characterizing interactional language as a private type of language is not the main goal of this study, shedding light on its tendency to support private relationships using signalling mechanisms not necessarily intended for wider audiences helps not only to complete the meta-linguistic picture<sup>32</sup> but also emphasizes the functions of the language in the samples. A useful reference for characterizing interactional languages comes from the Language Use Scales developed by Joos in 1962, regarded as both a classic and as a baseline, particularly the scale dealing with Language Style. In this scale, Joos names five categories of Language Style; these are reflected in Figure 4.1.

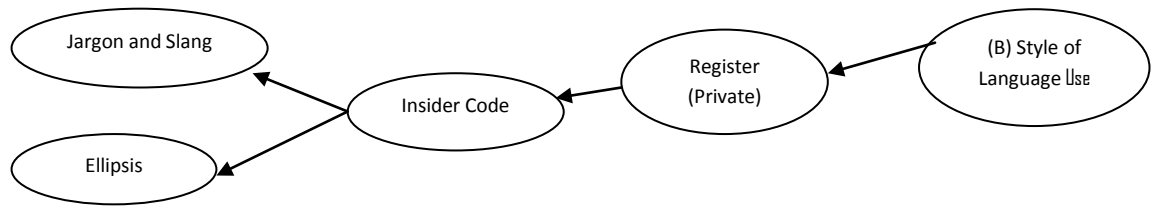


The styles most relevant to this study are Intimate Style, Casual Style and Consultative Style. These three categories tend to cluster toward the private end of the continuum. Intimate Style can be viewed as the most private of the styles, while Casual Style and Consultative Style represent degrees of familiar language.

Two basic distinctions separate and characterize these ways of using language. The first is the manner of interaction—that is, what is expected and allowed as far as audience participation. This can be viewed as corresponding to the choreography of parts already discussed. The second distinction is the extent of ellipsis—that is, what can be left out and how it can be referenced in order to include it. The balance of these—audience participation and ellipsis, and how they work together—largely determines language style as Joos discusses it. In the novels, the sense of audience participation and use of ellipsis must be managed by the writer in order to create the illusion and sense of interaction.

Ellipsis, as an aspect of 'insider code', is represented in Figure 4.2, along with jargon and slang, which Joos also names as significant indicators of language style.

<sup>32</sup> Including placement within Habermas' private and public spheres.



**Figure 4.2 Expansion of Register to reflect elements of private language**

These aspects of insider code are most evident in the first category, Intimate Style. Per Joos, Intimate Style ‘excludes public information’ (Joos, 1961, p. 29). Further, Intimate Style is characterized by jargon (Joos, 1961, p. 30), which may be viewed as an extreme form of insider understanding, in that it not only refers to something that is not general public knowledge but refers to it using shorthand specifically understood between the participants, and perhaps understood only by them when their particular shorthand is employed. As Joos says, Intimate Style is ‘severely limited in [its]...use of public vocabulary’ (Joos, 1961, p. 32). In fact, Intimate Style may be essentially incomprehensible to outsiders, although it may be possible to ‘interpret’ these conversations, especially if exposure to the exchange is extended. In the case of these novels, the ‘ongoing communicative exchange’ nature of these novels allows some use of Intimate Style because the external reading audience is able to engage with the exchange along with the ‘internal’ audiences, gathering common ground the longer the exchange continues. In this way, the external reading audience gains some measure of insider status, in some cases, and can cope with some Intimate language. More often, however, Intimate language positions the external reading audience as an observer, understanding the exchange perhaps, but as a voyeur, not a participant.

Casual Style provides more detail on background, but still assumes common ground is there and can be incorporated with a relatively quick reference. That is, Casual Style includes public information but ‘takes it for granted and at most alludes to it’ (Joos, 1961, p. 29). This seems to be a specific manifestation of ellipsis, which Joos describes as a particular trait of Casual Style. Casual Style, as the ‘middle’ language style, ‘is for friends, acquaintances, insiders; addressed to a stranger, it serves to make him an insider simply by treating him as an insider’ (Joos, 1961, p. 29). Slang, the other main characteristic of Casual Style (Joos, 1961, p. 23), is also significant in ‘making someone an insider’ as slang may cover insider code or perform ‘shorthand’ for what the parties know between them, even if that information is relatively public. It is the manner of referring to it and incorporating it—including the degree of ellipsis or slang involved—that shapes the communication’s position on the private-public continuum. These novels are particularly effective at turning strangers into insiders, using these techniques.

Consultative Style is characterized by audience participation and ellipsis. In Consultative Style, per Joos, ‘the addressee participates continuously’ (Joos, 1961, p. 23), making extensive use of ‘listener’s insertions’ (Joos, 1961, p. 28), which would range from simple techniques, including body language, that would confirm understanding or request

clarification, to overt questioning of the speaker. In addition, per Joos, in Consultative Style, '[t]he speaker supplies background information—he does not assume that he will be understood without it' (Joos, 1961, p. 23). Further, background information<sup>33</sup> is provided 'as fast as it is needed' (Joos, 1961, p. 29). Furthermore, Joos describes Consultative Style as the 'norm for coming to terms with strangers—people who speak our language but whose personal stock of information may be different' (Joos, 1961, p. 23). Consultative Style, then, would be instrumental in 'weighing people up' in the process of evaluating what common ground is likely shared with a 'new' contact. Further, 'slots' for comprehension confirmation and questioning would be typical as the participants work out their common ground. If the speaker cannot assume the listener will understand the incorporation of background information—and may indeed require further details—room for the requests must be allowed. Or, in the case of the novels, details can be incorporated 'as if' requested. In this sense, in the novels, listener insertions are assumed and acted upon.

The final two categories—Formal Style and Frozen Style—are at the more public end of the language use continuum. A main feature of both of these styles is the lack of obvious participation or visible contributions from the audience. Beyond this, Formal Style has a 'dominating character', as it is designed to inform (Joos, 1961, p. 35), not to be questioned. Formal Style displays a tendency toward 'holding the floor', a feature of a style referred to as 'report talk' (Tannen, 1991, p. 77)<sup>34</sup>, as well as focusing on message delivery. Frozen Style, again lacking audience contributions, is 'for people who are to remain social strangers' (Joos, 1961, p. 41). Frozen Style is intended to be remembered and repeated as it was originally presented; Frozen Style may be reviewed and reconsidered later (Joos, 1961, p. 41). It is easily associated with writing, and in particular literature, but may equally arise from film<sup>35</sup> or (especially) from oral folklore; in such ways, it is not restricted to writing.

In the novels, Frozen Style occurs when authorities or luminaries are quoted, Frozen Style thus being incorporated to lend credence to what is being said, even if the immediately surrounding and framing language is of a more familiar nature. Further, Formal Style, particularly as the authoritative voice delivering 'facts', occurs in the novels that include a narrator separate to the letterwriters, a narrator who nevertheless addresses the audience directly. That it tends to be a non-letterwriting narrator who delivers these moments of formal language—of public language—is not surprising. This is what an omniscient narrator does. However, neither Frozen nor Formal Style typify the essential features of the pseudo-conversational interactional language under consideration in this study.

An important point is that the language use categories do not correspond to a spoken-written continuum; the spoken-written contrast is not essential to familiarity or formality of language style. Intimate Style is not limited to speech and Frozen Style is not limited to writing. This is useful to bear in mind when reviewing the language of the novels, because, after all, all of that language is written. Further, as stated, for this study, the three

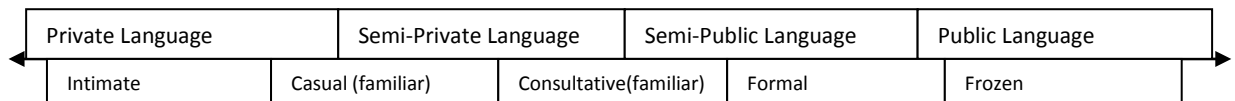
<sup>33</sup> Knowledge types will be addressed later in this chapter.

<sup>34</sup> Tannen's work will be further discussed in this chapter.

<sup>35</sup> Arguably, of course, film language was originally written. However, it is generally introduced to the larger audience and enters public usage via the oral language of the film.

categories of interest are those at the private end of the continuum, namely, Intimate, Casual and Consultative.<sup>36</sup> They help capture the sense of the Interactional Language.

As has been suggested, Interactional Language may be equated with degrees of 'privacy'. Joos' language use scales point out how such language might look, what its 'signalling mechanisms' might do. To clarify the discussion, these categories can be mapped against a further modified version of the private-public continuum already discussed in terms of Habermas' private and public societal spaces, as shown in Figure 4.3.



**Figure 4.3 Continuum of Private and Public and Language Use Scales**

This is not to say that Intimate language would only be used in 'private' space or that Frozen language would never occur in 'private' space. In fact, that these are not exclusive correspondences is a foundational position of the study, crucial to understanding the points explored. It is at the heart of the confusion over 'appropriate' language use in the period, particularly when words occurred on the pages of a novel in the public domain.

However, associating 'private' language with the domestic sphere is useful in elaborating the mini-theory. Of course, this association is not without its problems, just as the general separation of private and public spheres itself is also problematic. Nevertheless, for this study, 'private' language can be viewed as originating in the private realm of the home: it would tend to be exchanged between family members (especially in the home environment) and also with those who are sufficiently intimate to regularly belong in the domestic space. Finally, Joos also makes the point that language styles may be mixed in any given exchange: it is not necessarily that only one style is used in an exchange (Joos, 1961, p. 19). That language users can and do exercise this freedom also adds complexity to the examination of the samples, although it also supports the findings.

#### 4.2 Register, Rapport and Relationships, and the Language of the Novel

Another means of categorizing choice in language use relates to register. Register, in broad terms, refers to the formality level of the language, although it is a rather fluid concept. Often, register is discussed in terms of vocabulary, perhaps as Halliday suggests, because vocabulary is 'obvious' (Halliday, 2007, p. 17), helping to shift a rather abstract notion into something more visible and quantifiable. Certainly, vocabulary is an important aspect, but register is not completely captured using it as a sole reference point. Register, for example, can be viewed as a 'variety of language used for a specific purpose' (Brown, 1987, p. 208), as part of a situational context, rather than as a dialect. It is a 'sub-variety' of language, chosen by a language user from a wider repertoire of language options and based upon that

<sup>36</sup> Despite of label of 'casual', I would discourage fixation on this word. For the purposes of this study, 'casual' is a marked term associated with 'familiar' and further connected to 'familiar relationships', rather than to any connotations related to sloppiness or laziness.

language user's understanding of the communicative context. For example, language used in a library situation, where assistance is being requested, would typically be from a relatively formal register in terms of vocabulary—but it would also be delivered in a relatively soft voice. If not, it would not be an entirely appropriate register for that situation. On the other hand, as part of the crowd in a stadium of football fans, not only would informal vocabulary be appropriate, but yelling would generally be appropriate as well.<sup>37</sup> Registers, therefore, involve manner of delivery and not just the vocabulary. However, on the written page, other means of conveying register must be used, means that do not rely on body language or voice quality, and that are more innovative than trading around synonyms.

Importantly, a register is not a 'marginal' or otherwise incomplete or limited language (Halliday, 2007, p. 18). That is, it is not a pidgin. Additionally, language users generally have access to a range of registers, each associated with given purposes and with membership in various Communities of Practice, where a range of customs would govern language use. Typically, individuals are 'fluent' in a number of registers, as well as in the knowledge needed to choose one that is the most appropriate given the situation, the participants and so on. They carry this knowledge and regularly access it, whether or not they realize it. Further, register choice is largely determined by what is appropriate, not by what is 'correct'. This judgment relies heavily on a range of situational factors, and on the knowledge and experience of the participants.<sup>38</sup>

That said, divisions between private and public—as locations and as language—simply are not definitive and discrete. Therefore, language usage decisions based on location is not cut and dried. Other factors influence the communicative context. Domestic language may include non-reciprocal usage in the case of relationships of unequal status—i.e., from the master to the servants—as one party in these exchanges would have some degree of entitlement in using private language. At the same time, social acquaintances—distinct from close family friends—might be granted access to the domestic space without also automatically being granted the intimacy of private language. The domestic location, by itself, would not necessarily bring about a shift to private language. On the other hand, private language between family and friends is not restricted to the home environment. Family members, accustomed to using private language, may well use private language in public places.

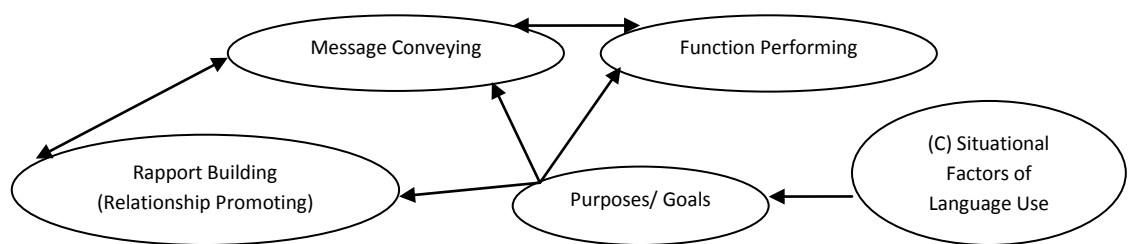
Further, private language may appear in highly ritualized public situations as 'asides' that do not necessarily pertain to the situation at hand. For example, in courtroom proceedings or religious services, where distinct roles are assigned to the participants—roles of varying but definite degrees of status—public language routines and formal register features are the expected norm. However, in the case of something unexpected and 'private' happening—a can of pens being knocked over in the courtroom or a baby burping at the moment of baptism—brief interjections of private language may occur. Private

<sup>37</sup> Of course, one can easily go too far, and cross the line into inappropriate language use in the football stadium environment, too.

<sup>38</sup> These factors cluster as Situational Factors in the Matrix of Communicative Context.

language has a certain appropriateness in such cases, as it handles these non-scripted ‘private’ interruptions to the public proceedings and their respective ritualized language. Private language smoothes the potential awkwardness of the ‘human’ lapses that may interrupt public rituals. Nevertheless, the use of private language in practical terms is usually determined by the relationships between the participants.

Rapport—or the desire for rapport—is also crucial in language usage decisions. Rapport in communicative exchanges can create communicative relationships that are removed from the participants’ relative status in general. Language choices, based on how one speaker perceives the other party, the purposes and location of the exchange—to name a few possibilities—can establish rapport. Misjudgments in these areas can destroy rapport and perhaps destroy the chances for positive communicative outcomes as well. Rapport-building can itself be the purpose of a communicative exchange. However, it is probably more typical that rapport-building as a goal would be balanced with message-conveying and function-performing goals within an exchange.<sup>39</sup> Further, the balance of their influence, and corresponding shifts in language style, would ebb and flow throughout any given exchange. Figure 4.4 locates rapport-building as part of the purposes/goals strand in the Matrix of Communicative Context.



**Figure 4.4 Expansion of Purposes/Goals strand of Situational Factors of Language Use**

Certainly, this study is not unique in seeking to explore these distinctions in language use. To that end, Tannen’s work has been particularly influential. In fact, the ‘rapport building’ component of Figure 4.4 specifically relates to what Tannen calls ‘rapport talk’. Rapport talk is language used for ‘establishing and negotiating relationships... [where emphasis] is placed on displaying similarities and matching experiences’ (Tannen, 1991, p. 77). Tannen further describes rapport talk as focusing on intimacy and striving for connections with the other participants, with ‘symmetry’ representing success in the exchange (Kendall and Tannen, 2001, p. 553). In related research, the term ‘listener-oriented’ language has also been used, drawing attention to language whose ‘main intention [is] the establishment and maintenance of good social relations’ (Brown, 1982, p. 77). In this study, rapport-building in interactional communication is seen as seeking to encompass solidarity and camaraderie as well as establishing a sense of ‘similar-ness’ and of reaching consensus, within a communicative exchange. Therefore, it aligns rather well with both ‘listener-oriented’ language and with ‘rapport-talk’, as these are both intended to capture

<sup>39</sup> Mutual exclusivity is not suggested.

language which addresses the social needs of the exchange. Further, rapport-building emerges as an important factor in private language. In this study, the term ‘relationship promoting’ will generally be used, although the crucial role rapport-building plays in that process should not be overlooked.

Before further addressing ‘relationship promoting’, two other categories shown in Figure 4.4 merit clarification. These are the categories of message-conveying and function-performing. Tannen’s term, ‘report talk’, stands in contrast to rapport talk. Report talk emphasizes the speaker’s independence, particularly the goal of improving personal status in the exchange by ‘exhibiting knowledge and skill’ (Tannen, 1991, p. 77). ‘Message-oriented’ language is another term referring to this type of language. Message-oriented language, from the speaker’s perspective, focuses on ensuring that the message is delivered to and understood by the listener (Brown, 1982, p. 77). Alignment exists between the concepts of ‘message-oriented’ and ‘report-talk’ in that these emphasize content. In Figure 4.4, these goals are further divided into ‘message-conveying’ and ‘function-performing’. The intention with these labels is to allow discussion of the goals these language strands may carry, not to suggest mutual exclusivity (similar to Joos’ view that language use styles can be mixed). For this study, the rapport-building nature of ‘relationship-promoting’ language, as it appears in the novels, is the main focus.

An understanding of these communicative goals helps shed light on language use during the period, and particularly, in the samples. That is, the rapport-building goal of private language corresponds well to that of the literary public sphere, to the salon culture of the period, as these environments fostered an appreciation of conversation for its form. These environments also emphasized the promotion of relationships. In addition, the interactional language in the samples, because it tends to the social needs of the communication, is also similar. Therefore, listener-oriented rapport-talk—relationship-promoting interactional language—calls to mind the collaborative ‘polite’ language of salon culture, where value was placed on egalitarian participation and maintaining the conversational flow. On the other hand, message-oriented report-talk is designed to deliver the information, to ‘get the point across’.<sup>40</sup> Aligning with this is the language of the coffeehouse-*café*: in these environments, status could be earned by the speaker who demonstrated knowledge and skill, to paraphrase Tannen, as opinions were delivered. In fact, the quest for linguistic superiority based on well-expressed opinion—a previously-mentioned goal of the coffeehouse-*café*—corresponds rather well to message-oriented report-talk, as well as to Formal language use from Joos’ scale.

In opting to include private interactional language in the territory of their novels, these novelists employed tried-and-true means for establishing conversational rapport, means not unlike the traditions of ‘polite’ conversation already familiar both to themselves as well as to a good portion of their reading audience, especially during the period. Using these means not only improves the chances for rapport with that audience, it helps

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<sup>40</sup> This contrast in language use is often discussed in terms of gender tendencies, as will be discussed in the conclusion. Tannen in particular associates report-talk with men and rapport-talk with women.



characterize the sort of relationships the novels could cultivate with those audiences. Simply, these moments put the emphasis on the audience, on an abstract but ‘real’ listener. In using language that ‘speaks to’ audiences, the novels reach out in a personal or private way, despite the public arena in which the language occurs.

Guesswork, albeit informed guesswork, plays an important role in working out what will result in communicative rapport, and by extension, the sort of relationship a language user may be seeking to cultivate with an audience. Informed guesswork is a part of register selection and part of the knowledge base that allows Grice’s Cooperative Principle to function, a knowledge base arising from membership in similar Communities of Practice. While this guesswork draws upon the language user’s language competence and sociolinguistic understandings, it also draws upon the language user’s sense of common ground with the other participant(s).

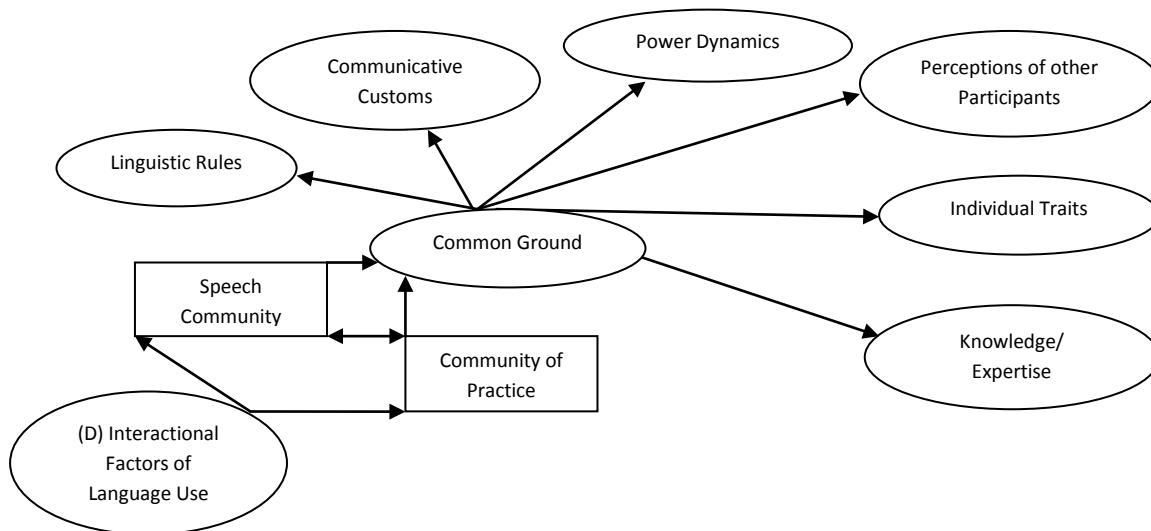
#### 4.2a Aspects of Common Ground

Common ground, ‘the sum of...mutual, common or joint knowledge, beliefs and suppositions’ (Clark, 1996, p. 93), is instrumental in communicative success, and plays particular roles in shaping private language and the choices involved in promoting private relationships.<sup>41</sup> Not only are these decisions largely based on *how well* participants know one another but also upon *how* they know one another (i.e., as colleagues, neighbours, best friends), what their relationships are (i.e., family members or social acquaintances), as well as what the function of the interaction is (i.e., purchasing a train ticket, arguing over the condition of a teenager’s bedroom, explaining the advantages of a particular advertising campaign, selling an item to the general public). In these novels, the private interactional language employed by the novelists not only reflects certain ‘common ground’ traditions, but encourages and assumes these understandings on the part of the audiences. In fact, calling it ‘private’ in the case of relationship-promoting interactional language is rather redundant, but emphasizes the point.

For the novelists to select language that could build rapport and promote relationships with their audiences, they had to understand—in a ‘common ground’ sense—exactly how to do that. Common Ground knowledge, particularly as it shapes language use, allowed these novelists to choose language that would work for this purpose. As Figure 4.5 illustrates, Common Ground feeds out of the connection between speech community and Communities of Practice. In turn, common ground acts as a filter for the range of interactional factors that enter into communicative exchanges. As with most aspects of this discussion, however, the direction of influence is not necessarily as one-way as the figure suggests.

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<sup>41</sup> In fact, a common understanding of the genre of conversation as well as that of epistolary writing both constitute important aspects of Common Ground influencing the choices evident in these novels.



**Figure 4.5 Speech Community and Community of Practice as they influence Interactive Language Use**

In this study, Common Ground may comprise information running the gamut from private to public. However, the language information running through the samples is not only that of the tangible topic. Parallel to that stream is the undercurrent of 'knowing how to get things done with language'. This common understanding of genre includes how to convey personal information among 'insiders', common ground that arises from membership in a Community of Practice. This term, 'Community of Practice', encompasses more than a speech community. In a speech community, people perceive themselves as sharing a language. A Community of Practice, while also involving a common language, emphasizes not only more localized meaning nuances—as in an anti-language—but also *culturally appropriate* ways of using that language, particularly managing social expectations in given environments, usually those associated with a particular group. A Community of Practice, for example, determines the specific application of the maxims of the Cooperative Principle.

Communities of Practice are powerful because they shape personal as well as social identity:

It is through participation in a range of communities of practice that people participate in society, and forge a sense of their place and their possibilities in society...Communities of practice emerge as groups of people respond to a mutual situation (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, 2003, p. 57).

People generally belong to a number of Communities of Practice simultaneously, sometimes with considerable overlap between them, sometimes with virtually none. Certainly, these novelists belonged to a number of them. Communities of Practice are significant at this point in the discussion due to their role in providing Common Ground. That is, belonging to the speech communities of French speakers or English speakers constituted one influential reality for these women, but their membership in Communities of Practice associated with

those speech communities added a more individualized, specific influence on their choices in given interactions. Those memberships allowed judgments about ‘appropriate’ language choices, but would also shape interpretations by audiences. Further, these memberships would have provided the grammatical and lexical competence that qualified these women, as speakers of their language in addition to being masters of relevant communicative customs, to make competent choices about genre, register, and so on. In these ways, the speech community and the various related Communities of Practice it were instrumental in providing the Common Ground brought to the interaction afforded by these novels.

#### 4.2b Knowledge Types as Common Ground

A final component in the Common Ground picture is the nature of information. Some information—public information—is broadly known; it is common knowledge across a wide range of Communities of Practice. Other information—private information—may only be known within the most intimate circles. Between the two, in the grey area of the continuum, would be semi-public and semi-private. This summation is essentially a common-sense extension of the on-going discussion of private-public spheres and private-public language. However, particularly in light of Joos’ perspective on how information is treated, an additional tool for considering information types is useful. Van Dijk’s proposal regarding knowledge types offers one approach.

Van Dijk emphasizes that background knowledge is a significant factor upon entering a communicative exchange. It frames the exchange, but background knowledge also continues to be accumulated, evaluated and acted upon throughout that exchange, allowing for judgments that contribute to the establishment of common ground. While Van Dijk, a founder of CDA, explores the internal cognitive processes involved in accumulating knowledge, it is his characterization of knowledge types that are relevant to this discussion. Per Van Dijk, knowledge can be described and categorized as:

<b>Knowledge Type</b>	<b>Characteristics of Knowledge Type</b>
Personal Knowledge	Autobiographical; personal, private experiences only known by others if explicitly shared
Interpersonal Knowledge	Personal knowledge known by two or more others due to shared communication or common experiences
Group Knowledge	Socially shared knowledge involving common group experiences of general, abstract knowledge acquired by group members (i.e., professional or social gatherings); may be viewed as beliefs or superstitions by outsiders
Institutional or Organizational Knowledge	Socially shared knowledge of an institution or organization where ‘official’ discourse may be recorded in various documents while ‘unofficial’ discourse is not; involves an official induction as a new member which includes revealing the organizational code

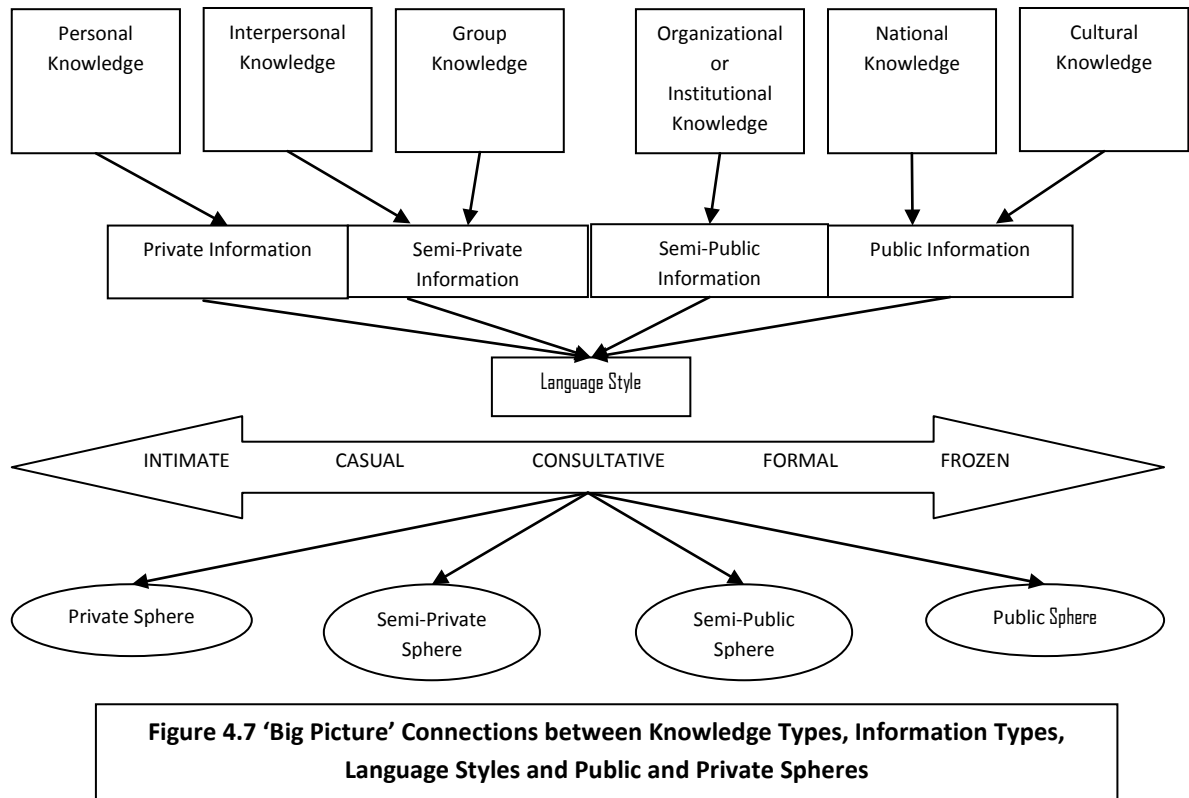
National Knowledge	Knowledge shared by citizens of a country, typically acquired through schooling; very little will be personal or interpersonal knowledge
Cultural Knowledge	General knowledge shared by those who identify as belonging to the same culture; acquired through all levels of the culture (family, school, media, etc.); usually not about concrete social or historical events (this is typical national knowledge)

Figure 4.6 Knowledge Types (Adapted from Van Dijk, 2005, p. 77-80)

These knowledge types could correspond to Communities of Practice, particularly shedding light on how one person would be a member of numerous Communities of Practice simultaneously. Drawing upon Van Dijk's proposal, the knowledge involved in the interpersonal or group categories would likely extend to a relatively small number of people in relatively private Communities of Practice. National or cultural knowledge, on the other hand, would extend to more people, providing the more general public variety of common ground. However, the potential combination of knowledge types and corresponding Communities of Practice produces, at least, another highly matrixed situation.

In any given exchange between two individuals, activating the appropriate shared body of knowledge not only allows references to be made to it during that exchange, it also shapes the conduct of the communication itself. In speech encounters, the evaluation and adjustment process may be subconscious and 'automatic'. In the case of writing novels, however, it could be quite conscious and deliberate. Additionally, the novels would require signalling mechanisms that anticipate and accommodate as many possibilities as would help foster the desired relationships and communicative rapport with their audiences. After all, it was essential that an external reading audience not only understand the story on offer, but that they also like the story.

Figure 4.7 depicts the ‘big picture’ of the connections which lead to language use in whichever contextual sphere it occurs.



While these factors figure into language use, considerable and frequent mix-and-match choices occur. However, knowledge types may correspond fairly predictably to information type. Beyond that, however, the language style used to deliver these information types is not a one-to-one alignment. Not surprisingly, the novels do not adhere to a ‘pure’ separation pattern tying public information to public language or private information to private language. That is, even on the pages of a novel, information need not be presented in the apparently corresponding language style.

The informed guesswork previously mentioned also requires a sensitivity to the ebb and flow of the exchange because Common Ground can be accumulated during discourse. Therefore, understandings of Common Ground must comprise not only the pre-exchange assumptions but also that which is negotiated and established during the exchange. In fact, Common Ground is an especially significant umbrella for the rest of the study. Common Ground governs private language options in that it also governs the guesswork involved in choosing registers, pursuing paths of rapport, assuming or seeking relationships, and (re)incorporating information, because it is drawn upon as a primary source of communicative knowledge. Private interactional language is tailored to meet the needs of

participants within the course of an exchange.<sup>42</sup> The tailoring process typically relies heavily on information obtained from the listener during the exchange, not only in overt contributions of information as the listener keeps up the other end of the conversation, but also through the various signs of comprehension and other conversational supports the listener provides.

In the case of these novels, Common Ground cannot shift due to these typical processes—such shifts must, instead, be created by the novel if the novel is to approximate interactional private language. Because the novels do exactly this, noting the distinction between the Common Ground brought to an exchange and that accumulated during the course of an exchange is significant. Simply put, these writers could only actually benefit from one kind of common ground—that which they bring to the exchange—while nevertheless creating the illusion of benefitting from, and incorporating, the other. Their guesswork is particularly skilled and paramount to the success of their writing. ‘Best guess’ judgments regarding Common Ground greatly improve the chances of communicative rapport—and in this case, improve the chances of engaged audiences.

#### 4.3 A Look at Signalling Mechanisms

Signalling mechanisms are delivered in a number of ways throughout the novels. The two main examples usually occur together, offering contextualization cues to the audiences. The first of these has to do with frames, while the second—discourse markers—may well occur within frames, although they are not restricted to that. Both of them have to do with the boundaries that section off parts of discourse, or, in this case, coordinate not only the letters and the stories they contain but also the relationships promoted.

Two aspects of frame analysis are relevant to this study, and specifically, the language use in the novels. The first of these deals with ‘out-of-frame’ activity. This operates first at the ‘upper level’ of organizing principle in that the relationship-promoting strands of private language can be view this way—with this perspective added to the mini-theory. That is:

...during the course of any activity framed in a particular way one is likely to find another flow of other activity that is systematically disattended and treated as out of frame, something not to be given any concern or attention...the main track carrying the story line was associated with a disattend track, the two tracks playing simultaneously. Now a second stream of out-of-frame activity must be considered, this one even more consequential, perhaps, for the main activity than the first, yet nonetheless—to a degree—kept out of focus.

In doings involving joint participation, there is to be found a stream of signs which is itself excluded from the content of the activity but which serves as a means of

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<sup>42</sup> I am not suggesting that formal, public language does not incorporate such considerations. How it does so and what information is available for such situations is, however, different.

regulating it, bounding, articulating, and qualifying its various components and phases (Goffman, 1974, p. 210).

Goffman specifically suggests punctuation as one such ‘disattended’ track (1974, p. 210), and certainly that plays a role in these novels. However, less obvious disattend tracks also regulate the language of these novels. These would include the numbering of letters as well as ‘labels’ that include the identities of the writers (and, sometimes, recipients) and date and location details for the moment of writing. These are, in a sense, subliminal pieces of information, helping to regulate the collections for the benefit of an external reading audience and, to a lesser degree, providing the sort of identifying details an actual letter could well include. These details are not tended to in the same way as the content of the main story line, but their omission—or more commonly, their inconsistent inclusion—make a difference to the sort of relationship extended or portrayed. What is offered in out-of-frame details affects how the material is received—ultimately, it affects the relationship promoted.

The private interactional language in these novels can also be viewed as an out-of-frame disattend track. It does not carry the content of the story, but it does regulate both the telling of that story as well as the relationship promoted. In fact, the notion of ‘disattended out-of-frame’ strikes a particular resonating chord *vis-à-vis* the examination of the language that tends to the social, interpersonal relationship-promoting aspects of exchanges. While it may not have been as invisible during the period—when a certain standard of ‘proper’ conversational skill was valued—it was nevertheless not the content strand of the communication. In these novels, private interactional language indeed functions as ‘a stream of signs which is itself excluded from the content of the activity, but which serves as a means of regulating it’, to again use Goffman’s terms.

Therefore, while the idea of ‘out-of-frame’ activity applies to private interactional language at a theoretical level, it is also useful in characterizing the language in the novels. This language may function as ‘connectives’ regulating ‘directional flow’ because they make it clear ‘who is doing what at the moment it is being done’ (Goffman, 1974, p. 211). While some connectives may be considered ‘standard’ as they relate to writing (ie., ‘he said, he replied he answered’) (Goffman, 1974, p. 211), these ‘standard’ connectives are not the key in the novels under consideration. Instead, the ‘devices for linking statements by one actor to replies by another in pairs meant to be seen as linked’ (Goffman, 1974, p. 212) are of more interest. For this study, connectives that function as such devices would have particular meaning with respect to relationship-promoting language, seeking links with the audience. Again, these presumably ‘non-standard’ connectives may link parties that do not appear on the pages and regulate the discourse using language, not only other framing systems like punctuation.

At this point, it is worth revisiting the terms ‘contextualizing cue’ and ‘signalling mechanism’. For the purposes pursued in this study, these terms are very similar to the ‘boundary markers’ that provide frames. In these novels, ‘pieces’ of language—certain

expressions—provide frames. Some of them may well be considered discourse markers. Discourse markers have been defined as ‘elements which bracket units of talk’ (Schiffrin, 1987, p. 31). These are generally considered to be language components, however, rather than labels on letters that do, very definitely, separate the letters in these collections. Discourse markers contribute to ‘discourse coherence—how speakers and hearers jointly integrate forms, meanings, and actions to make overall sense out of what is said’ (Schiffrin, 1987, p. 49). In the case of the novels, the ‘attended’ story line is only one track being ‘made sense of’. The role of disattended relationship-promoting language in the ‘overall sense’ of the exchanges is, instead, the focus. It is just as present as language telling the story, even if it functions at a somewhat subliminal level.

While there are a number of frameworks in which discourse markers operate, as well as a number of categories for discourse markers, the rather symbiotic ‘information-participation’ category is probably the most typical of those in these novels. ‘Information-participation’ discourse markers are ‘complementary’ as well as ‘socially sanctioned’ (Schiffrin, 1987, p. 267). Many of the discourse markers—particularly those phrased in similar, consistent language across the novels—tend to ‘reach out’ at a personal level, promoting a private relationship, encouraging or assuming participation of the other party. In some cases, this involves names or titles, but a range of other ‘engaging’ discourse markers are used as well. These are also often used to begin or conclude a particular track of narrative. In fact, discourse markers are typically:

...found in specific discourse environments...these environments all mark transitions from one phase of discourse to another, and thus, they all relate (possibly large) discourse segments...one might argue that it is precisely in transitional locations such as these—where interlocutors are jointly engaged are jointly engaged in productive and interpretive tasks centered on establishing the relationship between somewhat abstract and complex discourse segments—that speakers may want to create or reinforce, solidarity with their hearers (Schiffrin, 2001, p. 66).

Of course, in the case of these novels, the relationship issue may involve a somewhat abstract audience at times. Nevertheless, discourse markers tend to relationship-promotion in these novels.

Other examples in the novel are more focussed on connecting discourse segments; they occur at points of transition. With that in mind, the second application of frame analysis can be presented. These discourse markers distinguish one activity, perhaps from another activity, but more often—in these novels—from embedded activity. Goffman explains:

Activity framed in a particular way—especially collectively organized social activity—is often marked off from the ongoing flow of surrounding events by a special set of boundary markers or brackets of a conventionalized kind. These occur before and after the activity (Goffman, 1974, p. 252).



He goes on to discuss 'episoding conventions' and particularly 'brackets' that frame these embedded activities. In the novels, this provides another way of viewing the labelling of the letters but more importantly it also provides a means of identifying the overt switching points in the novels, usually where a narrative shift is being signalled. In the novels, these switching points are often delivered via a moment of 'direct address', a particular trait of theatre, but which involves a character 'stepping out of character'—that is, out of the main story line—to deliver an 'aside' to the audience (Goffman, 1974, p. 231). A great deal of embedded storytelling takes place in these novels, and it is often framed with language that alerts the audiences to both the switch from the main storyline and, then, back to it. Again, the language delivering these alerts—the signalling mechanisms—can appropriately be viewed as discourse markers.

In fact, in the last three language use categories discussed in this study largely cluster into types of discourse markers, given the rather fluid nature of discourse markers themselves. In these novels, the discourse markers do simultaneously regulate the information and promote relationships. Some of them occur in obvious moments of transition. Certain turns of phrase regularly emerge, expressions that perform these functions. 'Discourse marker' is a useful concept for considering these instances of language.

On the other hand, other characteristics of the language resist categorizing as recurring or typical expressions; it is their role that identifies them as contributing to private interactional language. Among the difficult categories to examine is the matter of ellipsis: what can be left out or covered via 'shorthand' is particularly abstract. Decisions about 'shorthand' rely heavily on accurately guessing about common ground. At issue is not only what can be left out but how it can be referenced and incorporated into the present exchange. If too much is omitted, or referenced in a manner that is not meaningful or sufficient for the listener, communicative rapport is unlikely to be achieved—unless the speaker stops and returns to the area of breakdown, offering a more complete explanation. Likewise, if the speaker does not attend to requests for clarification made by the listener, communicative rapport becomes less likely. The speaker risks losing the audience. This is true for the novels as well. Furthermore, the more Common Ground assumed, the more private the language can be. That is, much need not be stated overtly if it is 'understood'. It is the management of this shorthand that plays so significant a role in the novels' private language.

Most of the novels, to one extent or another, position participants as insiders simply by addressing them as such, to use Joos' turn of phrase. Because these are novels, however, 'too much' insider code must be avoided. That is, because this is pseudo-conversation, not conducted in face-to-face real time, the sense of interaction must be provided instead solely by the language in the novel. The addressee's contribution cannot actually occur in the 'slot' allowed in conversation, even if it may occur in another letter in the volume. There can be no visible 'listener insertions' from an external reading audience in real time when the language is on the pages of a novel. Therefore, in order to convey the illusion of participation, different techniques are needed.

Creating the illusion of participation is a major factor in shaping the novels' language use. These novels consistently and overtly use language to engage others with interactional language. One technique, as evidenced by the samples, involves the 'speaker' simply proceeding as if the addressee has responded. For example, the 'speaker' may make clarifications and confirmations as if the addressee has requested the information. In novels where both correspondents' words are visible, a kind of turntaking is visible. These function as the delayed 'slots' of conversation, and respond to or otherwise acknowledge what was previously 'said' by the other, perhaps even quoting the other letterwriter in order to make the reference clear. These are rather self-conscious but recognizable means for establishing conditional relevance when the other half of the adjacency pair is not visible in the immediate vicinity. Openings to letters may well include acknowledgements, for example, while closings may request such responses or acknowledgements from the other party. Further, in the novels, jargon and slang cannot be the primary sign of familiarity in the language, as this runs too great a risk of the wider audience not understanding the insider code. An excessive anti-language would render the novel inaccessible.

In the samples, the private interactional language effect may be achieved via the handling of information. To use Joos' terms, this involves incorporating and explaining public information as needed. Sometimes this involves delivering the entire background story, sometimes it involves alluding to the knowledge as if the audience already knows, whether with a limited explanation or with private shorthand. While exchanged within an environment of larger culture, much of the information exchanged would be personal, and not generally known publicly. It is, in general, the handling of personal information that compensates for the inability to use other private language techniques in the novels.

While Joos equates personal information with Intimate language, in these novels, personal information is more often relayed via Casual or Consultative language styles, not in Intimate style. This blending technique—relaying personal, private information in non-intimate style language—effectively heightens the sense of interaction, personalizing 'speaking to' the audiences, even when the language style cannot be the most intimate style available. In fact, relaying private information in consultative or casual style—rather than intimate style—may be viewed as a 'violation' of the expected; however, as mentioned in discussing the Cooperative Principle, expectations may be violated by competent language speakers at any time, for various reasons. These violations may involve risks, particularly of being misunderstood, but they also allow for special effects. These novelists perform these 'violations' with the result of bringing 'conversation' to the written page.

The personal touch allowed by these language choices provides a 'cease-fire' of public norms of language use, a result not unlike the forbearance of societal ranks in the *salon*-salon and coffeehouse-*café* cultures and the corresponding temporary suspension or relaxing of the 'who can say what to whom' rules within those environments. It is this feature of private language that renders it both logical and ideal within these two sub-cultures. In fact, Communities of Practice within these environments would have conceivably been at least partially defined by the use of private language in situations that were not

obviously solely domestic. Private language manages the suspension of public sociolinguistic rules, and opens the door for the relaxing of other public behavioural norms, even if only temporarily and only within a particular environment and communicative exchange. By extension, private interactional language includes the understanding that it manages the relationships between the participants, at least during the course of the exchange. Private interactional language, in positioning the participants in particular relationships, tends to the rapport component of the interaction. In these novels, familiar relationships—using familiar language—may be offered to the audience, including the external reading audience. Intimate relationship may be portrayed, but not extended to the external reading audience. But, in the case of the novels, private interactional language ensures that the audiences are ‘on the same page’ as the novel, engaged in some level of ‘personal’ relationship. Each category of language samples examines means for doing this.

#### 4.4 Directions of Things to Come

Habermas has already been mentioned for his work regarding private and public space during the period. This theory provides a kind of ‘umbrella’ of contextualization both for the meta-linguistic environment in which these novels appeared, and also the significance of the novels and their language as part of the language-as-commodity environment. In fact, the samples here may be viewed as examples of Habermas’ language-as-commodity argument manifesting as a particular problem for women. Another theoretical view, however, also links to this discussion and influences the conclusions: Bakhtin’s theory on the novel as being multi-linguaged. Like Habermas, further application of Bakhtin’s theory will be addressed in Chapter 11, as part of the conclusion, but a crucial link between this study and Bakhtin’s theory *vis-à-vis* the languages of the novel is that this study provides a ‘bottom-up’ means of exploring that theory. That is, the language strands examined in this study make sense as different voices delivering different languages, in the way Bakhtin describes, even though the focus here has begun as relationship-promotion.

In discussing languages in the novel, Bakhtin describes the ‘internal differentiation, the stratification characteristic’ inherent to language (Bakhtin 67), a description very much related to register as well as the languages associated with Communities of Practice. In fact, it is also very much related to what is being examined here as language that ‘speaks to’ audiences. Bakhtin states that such differentiation or stratification particularly features in European novels from the period, saying it is:

...of primary importance for understanding the style and historical destinies of the modern European novel, that is, the novel since the seventeenth century. This latecomer reflects in its stylistic structure, the struggle between two tendencies in the languages of European peoples: one a centralizing (unifying) tendency, the other a decentralizing tendency (that is, one that stratifies languages) (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 67).

Bakhtin, then, attributes to languages certain characteristics that have already been discussed as part of the meta-linguistic environment of the period. Specifically, the 'centralizing' drive toward codification of language sat opposite a reality that people used language in a variety of ways that included such features as register as well as the shifts that may have also been occurring in language use across the period. For Bakhtin, it is a natural step to accept that novels, by nature, could include this same language struggle.

Further to this, Bakhtin advocates the need to approach study of the novel in a way that avoids an artificial oversight of the range of languages on offer in the genre. He states that all too often 'substitutions' are likely, substitutions that oversimplify the examination of the novel to an extent that understanding or even recognition of the languages contained in the novel becomes obscured. The two primary tendencies involve an orientation toward the language of the author or a focus on only one or two of the 'languages' that 'artificially' isolates them as 'the' language of the novel, at the expense of the various others (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 263). This study, from the beginning, has attempted to avoid arriving at reduced conclusions of this type, instead drawing attention to a range of ways language is used, albeit emphasizing a particular type of language strand. As with Habermas, further study could be conducted to develop these findings as evidence to support the theories, and Chapter 11 will consider this. For the moment, however, Bakhtin's work regarding the languages of the novel and Habermas' theories on the private and public spheres suggest directions in which these language samples point.

### **Chapter 5—Core Components: The Novels and the Language Categories**

This chapter presents the core components of the study, introducing the novels and the basics of the language use categories. Both have, of course, been mentioned, but included here are further details for discussing the ‘data’ and the findings. This chapter is also somewhat administrative and procedural, but necessary for those reasons as well.

All the novels selected were popular—that is, widely read—during the period, but they would be rather unknown to today’s audiences, particularly outside academia. Selecting these novels, then, adds an ‘archeological’ element to the study, in that they would have been widely available and well known during the era even if they have subsequently been somewhat ‘lost’. Further, special effort has been made to use, insofar as possible, early editions of the novels that would have been widely available during the period, ‘targeting’ audiences of peers rather than audiences several centuries later. In some cases, original early editions (even if not the absolute earliest edition) have been utilized. Other novels are facsimile reprints of early editions or recent critical editions of early versions. The idea was to consider editions that were circulating during the period, that were ‘speaking to’ audiences of the day, before conscious revisioning of the works came into play.<sup>43</sup>

Applying sociolinguistic terminology to this study, the novels may be viewed as ‘informants’, as they provide the language samples that reveal usage. Because the goal is for the novels to ‘speak for themselves’ as much as possible, profiles of the writers are not included. Much as reader-oriented discussions are not the goal, neither are novelist-oriented discussions. For this study, these two parties—readers and novelists—exist as factors in the communicative context rather than as focal points. Therefore, while this study acknowledges that these novels were written by women writers, that fact is an aspect of the context.

Women writers did create the novels; they were instrumental in creating the ‘conversations’. They made the choices about language use. From their experiences in Communities of Practice, they had particular understandings of how to facilitate conversation—communication—using interactional language in certain ways. The goal here is to identify those ‘ways’ of using language as they are revealed in the novels. In fact, the novels are positioned as ‘interactants’, facilitating conversation according to the Communities of Practice in which the novels (and their readers and writers) existed. In this light, the sketches of the novels provided in this chapter do not discuss the authors. Instead, this chapter outlines basic details of the selected novels, including their compositional format, their subject matter and the main letterwriting participants as well as the publication dates of the original editions and the editions used in this study.

In addition, the language categories will be introduced, also in a ‘thumbnail sketch’ manner. Because each ‘data’ chapter will begin with a review of the most relevant aspects of the approach *vis-à-vis* that particular language use category, that will not be done in this

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<sup>43</sup> This effort has not been absolutely perfect: the main doubt on this front arises from R/Voyage D’Espagne, which will be further addressed.

chapter. However, a few comments apply across the categories and can be included at this point, introducing both the categories and the ‘data’ chapters.

### 5.1 Practical Issues Regarding the Texts

Beginning with the matter of publication, these novels all originally appeared between 1670 and 1770, although subsequent editions and reprintings may have appeared after that or after the dates listed as the ‘appearance’ date. The appearance dates are intended to represent the first date of publication insofar as establishing this date is possible, particularly since ‘circulation’ may have been more typical than publication in some cases, during this period. In some cases, the date shown indicates the date of the first part of a serialized work. The full titles of the novels are as follows, with underlining emphasizing the portion of the title viewed as a ‘core’ to identification. The title abbreviations that will be used in this study are based on these core elements of the titles. The informant-novels are: *Mémoires de la vie de Henriette-Sylvie de Molière*; *Love Letters between a Nobleman and his Sister*; *La cour et la ville de Madrid vers la fin du XVIIe siècle: Lettres de la Comtesse d’Aulnoy*, *Relation du Voyage d’Espagne*; *Letters written[sic] by Mrs Manley, to which is added a Letter from a supposed nun in Portugal, to a Gentleman in France, in Imitation of the Nun’s Five Letters in Print, by Colonel Pack*; *L’Histoire du sieur Abbé-Comte de Bucquoy, singulièrement son évasion du For-l’Évêque et de la Bastille: Lettres de deux dames au sujet de l’abbé de Bucquoy dont l’une est à Paris, et l’autre à La Haye*; *Familiar Letters betwixt a Gentleman and a Lady*; *Anti-Pamela or, Feign’d Innocence Detected*; *Lettres d’une Péruvienne*; *The Life of Harriot Stuart written by herself*; *Lettres de Madame du Montier et de La Marquise de \*\*, sa fille*; *Lettres de Mistriss Fanni Butlerd à Milord Charles Alfred, de Caitonbridge, Comte de Plisinte, Duc de Raflingth*; *The History of Ophelia*; *Lettres du Marquis de Roselle*; and *The Delicate Distress, a novel in letters by Frances*.

Figure 5.1 illustrates a basic timeline for the appearance dates of the novels. Due to the rather lengthy titles of many of the novels, as a practical matter, title abbreviations are used in Figure 5.1. These same title abbreviations will be applied throughout the study, following the introductory ‘thumbnail sketch’ paragraphs in this section.

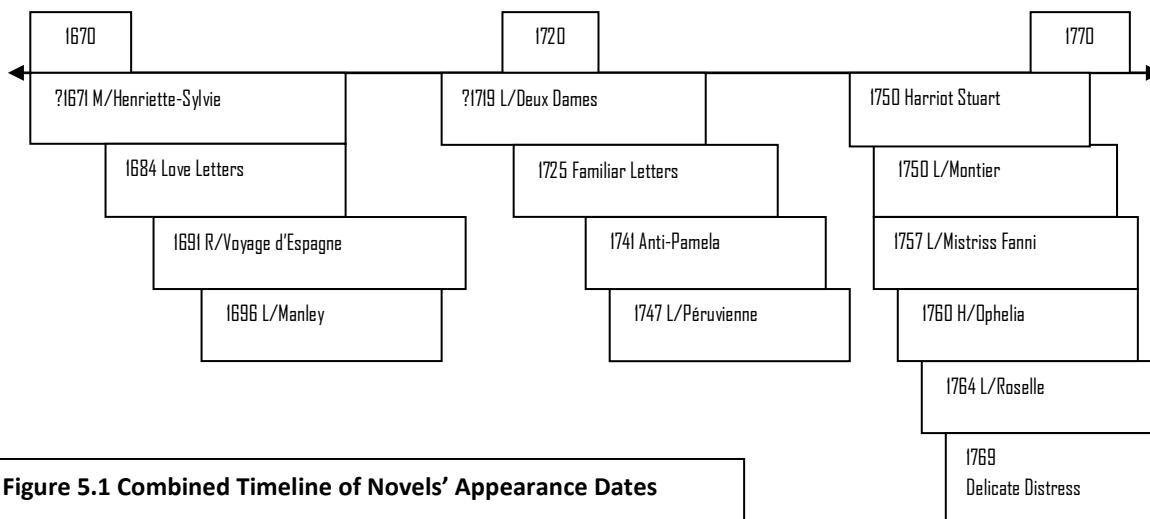


Figure 5.1 Combined Timeline of Novels' Appearance Dates

Figure 5.1 also illustrates the degree of ‘pairing up’ that exists between the novels. That is, novels from roughly similar points in the time period have been selected and appear together in Figure 5.1.

Regarding compositional format, all the novels are substantially, if not exclusively, epistolary. Three novels periodically include an additional narrator, which is why the word ‘substantially’ is added in describing the source novels.<sup>44</sup> Further, despite being properly viewed as epistolary, there is some variation in exact format. For example, the novel may be written as one long letter, as several letters or as a more extensive collection of letters, sometimes with introductory or other connective material at various points in the story. Some read as journals, possibly presented via letters. In addition, some of the novels offer only one letterwriter’s perspective, while others show the exchange of letters. The consistent point is to compare language use in novels of this generally similar format. As discussed, the epistolary form has been specifically chosen due to the likelihood of interactional communicative forms being used, specifically those indicating interactional communication between novel and audience—between letterwriter and recipient—thereby improving the chances of adequate examples.

A common characteristic of epistolary novels from this era is that of the presentation piece. Merely thumbing through books of the period makes this obvious. In general, for this study, the presentation pieces are not included as part of the language use under review. One reason for this is their somewhat irregular inclusion. That is, while including one or more presentation pieces before the ‘real’ story begins is not unusual, neither is it mandatory. Of the fourteen novels considered, five do not include a presentation piece of any kind. One includes only the introduction that appeared in the *Works*, and is not specifically affiliated with the novel in question. Further, for the most part, a separate evaluation of the presentation pieces would be more appropriate than ‘lumping’ them in as part of the novel.

The second main reason not to include the presentation pieces is that they are typically written in ‘voices’ outside those of the novel, often purportedly aimed at a different reading audience. For example, presentation pieces may be used to explain how the collection of letters came to be ‘found’ and to justify their subsequent publication. They may claim to be correspondence between the author (or perhaps the ‘finder’ of the collection) and a publisher or editor, or they may be ‘disclaimers’ issued by a (possibly supposed) publisher or editor. In some cases, they are particularly reflective and separate from the collection of letters. Finally, presentation pieces tend to be self-conscious acknowledgements that a novel is being offered. They are, in terms of interactional language, not ‘in the spirit’ of the letters being considered. In short, the decision to exclude them constitutes a subjective choice evaluating their ‘separateness’, given the different voices delivering the words as well as the potentially different identities of the audiences involved.

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<sup>44</sup> This distinction will be further addressed.

That said, three exceptions have been made. In these cases, the presentation pieces contribute to the story in ways that justify their inclusion. The first two exceptions establish the content strands of the letter collection. One such exception is *Lettres d'une Péruvienne*, which includes (as the second orientation piece) an '*introduction historique*' which is essential to the novel as a source of background information. It is specifically provided as such. The second exception is the 'argument' which opens *Love-Letters between a Nobleman and his Sister*, which provides background knowledge that situates the letters of Part 1 as well as the remaining letters and adventures in Parts 2 and 3. The third exception—different from the first two—is the introduction from *History of Ophelia*. This presentation piece is included because it is presented as written by Ophelia and establishes the epistolary nature of the novel as well as the relationships between parties. It is essential to the novel, and justified in that such details are typically included in the first few lines of the first letter. These three pieces are instrumental in contextualizing the respective stories, the letters, the participants and their relationships, or in clarifying the background knowledge that informs the communication. These three novels are not quite complete without these presentation pieces. The external reading audience would be positioned too much as an 'outsider', not sharing enough common ground to follow the basics of the stories without them. Simply, these three presentation pieces 'ground' the stories. Therefore, these three have been included.

As far as content is concerned, the selected novels are generally accepted as not being actual correspondence between real people.<sup>45</sup> That is, the study is investigating fictional works. However, because the line between fiction and non-fiction, or autobiography, is not necessarily a clear one, particularly during this time period, the claim of 'fictional' is a bit fluid. Many of these novels may well have suggested to their contemporary audiences the alleged exploits of known people of the time, their identities obscured (or perhaps not so obscured) by fictitious names. *Love Letters between a Nobleman and his Sister* is one example. *Lettres de deux dames*, on the other hand, purports to discuss the life of a real person, although it is not clear whether that individual actually existed or that two women actually exchanged these letters on the subject. Further, *Mémoires de la Vie de Henriette-Sylvie de Molière* and *The Life of Harriot Stuart* may be regarded as including much that is autobiographical, while others—including *Relation du Voyage d'Espagne* and *Letters written by Mrs Manley*—also suggest that they include some real experiences. Nevertheless, even with this range of caveats in effect, this collection of novels is accepted as essentially fictional. Similarly, the authorship of H/Ophelia is accepted at face value, while nevertheless acknowledging recent rumours and debate on the subject arise.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Equally, I am not evaluating whether a work is a novel, a novella, etc.

<sup>46</sup> In fact, the approach taken here might be of use in distinguishing between novels or sections of novels written by Sarah Fielding or her brother, Henry Fielding.



On a different note, spellings used in the citations generally reflect the spellings as they appear in the sources.<sup>47</sup> Further, other ‘unusual’ usages are retained as well. In the French works, for example, accents are used as they are shown in the novels, not updated to current usage.<sup>48</sup> That said, certain aspects have been adjusted: these include the ‘silent’ changing of the long typographical ‘s’ and the reinsertion of individual characters obviously dropped in the printing process. Beyond this, ‘correcting’ usage has been avoided, despite there being an unsurprising but notable amount of variation across the sources. As a ‘new’ concept in the time, standardization had not yet taken hold. This is part of the value of these sources, for purposes of this study. Attempting to regularize usage would risk obscuring exactly the sorts of usage details of interest in this study; it would defeat the purpose.

As a further general note, in this chapter and throughout the discussion of the samples, the French novels will be presented first before moving on to the English novels, insofar as this is practicable. Not only does this approach offer some consistency *vis-à-vis* a starting point, it is also logical, given that the French novels start and finish somewhat earlier in the period than do the English novels. However, in cases where it is more reasonable to group the novels differently—according to similar results, for example—that will be done.

## 5.2 The French ‘Informants’: Seven Epistolary French Novels

The following section provides a brief introduction of each of the French novels, highlighting those aspects previously mentioned as they apply. All of the French novels are recognizable as epistolary. No connective material is involved, although *Lettres d’une Péruvienne* does include the *introduction historique*. No claims to comprehensive literary summaries or analyses of the novels are made. Rather, the novels are introduced as informants, providing the language samples.

### 5.2a (?1671) *Mémoires de la vie de Henriette-Sylvie de Molière*

By Marie Catherine des Jardins de Villedieu

*Mémoires de la vie de Henriette-Sylvie de Molière* (M/Henriette-Sylvie) is divided into six parts, each part comprising a single letter. All letters are from Henriette-Sylvie to ‘Madame’, a woman of some power and status, a social superior to Henriette-Sylvie, who has requested that Henriette-Sylvie write to her. Ostensibly, this is to explain and justify her life, to ‘set the record straight’, from Henriette-Sylvie’s point of view. She begins her account by establishing her orphanhood and adoption, along with the problems this status causes her. In fact, she is ‘misunderstood’ from the beginning, and continues to be throughout her adventures. Beyond relating events and describing her encounters and relationships with

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<sup>47</sup> This includes secondary sources where the English used in the citations may not agree with the overall spellings adopted here.

<sup>48</sup> The absence of accent marks in the French works may be particularly jarring to today’s readers of French. Elie de Beaumont is particularly notable in this regard. Again, ‘modernizing’ these aspects was over-ruled by the interest in presenting works as close as possible to those in circulation at the time. At the same time, marking each deviation each time it occurs would be at least as distracting as adjusting to the older print or language styles.

various people, Sylvie also includes a fairly consistent stream of criticism of French society in general, and men in particular. She is particularly scathing about French society's lack of judgment and its accompanying tendency to judge, although she makes these criticisms with considerable wit. Therefore, the work is entertaining, lively and fast-paced. The work appeared, serialized, from 1671-1674 (some accounts say from 1672). The French version employed here is based on an edition of 1702, which was included in the *Oeuvres* of that year. That 1702 'collective' edition is considered as 'identical' to the serialized edition. A 'fragment d'une lettre' precedes the memoirs as a presentation piece, but it is not included in the study.

5.2b (1691) *La cour et la ville de Madrid vers la fin du XVIIe siècle: Lettres de la Comtesse d'Aulnoy, Relation du Voyage d'Espagne*

By Marie Catherine d'Aulnoy

*La Cour et la Ville de Madrid vers la fin du XVIIe siècle: Lettres de la Comtesse d'Aulnoy, Relation du Voyage d'Espagne* (R/Voyage d'Espagne) comprises fifteen letters, all written by 'la comtesse' to her 'chère cousine', who has requested the accounts. The letters detail the impressions of the *comtesse* as she makes the voyage from France to Madrid, as well as her time in Madrid. Her impressions, which may or may not be based on an actual trip to Spain, can be characterized as equal parts informative travelogue, pseudo-historical report, critical observations of a foreign society, and tales of the characters along the way. Many of the descriptions are quite detailed and specific; it is not clear that they are entirely accurate or that they are based on personal experience. An awareness of the exotic colours the account, although it does not dominate. The work first appeared in 1691; the edition used here is a facsimile of the 1874 edition, published in 2005.<sup>49</sup> It does not include a presentation piece.

5.2c (?1719) *L'Histoire du sieur Abbé-Comte de Bucquoy singulièrement son évasion du For-l'Évêque et de la Bastille: Lettres de deux dames au sujet de l'abbé de Bucquoy dont l'une est à Paris, et l'autre à La Haye*

By Anne Marguerite du Noyer

*L'Histoire du sieur Abbé-Comte de Bucquoy singulièrement son évasion du For-l'Évêque et de la Bastille: Lettres de deux dames au sujet de l'abbé de Bucquoy dont l'une est à Paris, et l'autre à La Haye* (L/Deux Dames) includes six letters between two women, one who knows the story of the Abbé-Comte de Bucquoy (and identified as writing from La Haye), the other woman asking to hear the story (this woman writing from Paris). Additionally, a 'placet' purportedly written by the mother of the Abbé-Comte to the king is embedded in one of the letters. The letters recount the story and related details of life of the Abbé-Comte, and particularly his escape from the Bastille. The story reads rather like a legend, which the

<sup>49</sup> I have not been able to confirm that this 1874 edition is, in turn, an identical facsimile of the original. The editors admit 'correcting a few errors', while stating the novel is 'preserved'. I acknowledge, given the findings, that such a confirmation would be valuable. I have recently become aware of reprints that may be of earlier editions, and this avenue is worth pursuing.

letterwriters acknowledge, but they continue to relate his apparently real exploits.<sup>50</sup> The version used here is in French, a 1989 facsimile reproduction of an 1866 critical edition, which is in turn based on the 1719 edition. This 1719 version appeared in the *Oeuvres* of Madame du Noyer, where reference is made to an earlier version, but the 1866 editors were not able to locate an edition prior to that in the *Oeuvres*. No presentation piece is included in this edition.

#### 5.2d (1747) *Lettres d'une Péruvienne*

By Françoise de Graigny

*Lettres d'une Péruvienne* (L/Péruvienne) is a collection of forty-one letters, all written by Zilia, a Peruvian princess initially abducted by Spaniards, then 'rescued' from them by the French and eventually relocated to France to live. Most of the letters are written to Aza, her absent betrothed; however, the last five are to Déterville, her French 'champion'.

L/Péruvienne details, on the one hand, Zilia's despair at being torn from both her country and her betrothed, and on the other hand, also explains her impressions and understanding of French society, particularly in comparison to her native country. She interprets what she sees 'innocently' and 'naturally', initially amazed but eventually despairing of and critiquing the flaws she sees in French values and conduct. She ultimately accepts an 'outsider' position relative to French society, in a rather utopian tradition.

L/Péruvienne includes two presentation pieces, the second of which is included in the language analysis. This presentation piece, the '*introduction historique*', is essentially a brief history lesson on Peru as it was understood at the time. This *introduction* orients the external reading audience to the context in which the 'letters' were 'written', information referred to throughout the letters. While Peru is presented exotically, to some extent, it is equally not presented excessively romantically. The relatively objective<sup>51</sup> *introduction historique* contributes to this balance. L/Péruvienne first appeared in 1747, but the critical French version used here is based on the 1752 edition.

#### 5.2e (1750) *Lettres de Madame du Montier et de La Marquise de \*\*\*, sa fille*

By Jeanne-Marie lePrince de Beaumont

*Lettres de Madame du Montier et de la Marquise de \*\*\*, sa fille*, (L/Montier) includes sixty-four letters, most between Madame du Montier and her daughter. The letters describe, on the one hand, the daughter's experiences and impressions of Italy, where she is living with her husband and her children, a place presented with some sense of exoticism. On the other hand, however, the letters also focus on the domestic crises and scandals experienced by the daughter, which are largely but not exclusively caused by the behaviour of her husband. Some difficulties derive from the 'foreign' world in which she finds herself, but much also arises from her insecurities (not necessarily unfounded) relating to her husband. She seeks

<sup>50</sup> I have not been able to definitively ascertain the degree of truth involved in this story, but I lean toward this having been a real person, even if his adventures may be exaggerated.

<sup>51</sup> Objective, given what was understood at the time.

advice and comfort from her mother. In turn, Madame du Montier writes to offer that advice. While much of Madame du Montier's advice is decidedly religious in tone, it is worth noting that she encourages her daughter to pursue that religious understanding and comfort *herself* and not necessarily through the intermediary represented by a priest. Some embedded storytelling occurs. L/Montier includes four presentation pieces; none are included in the 'data'. The original serialized French version appeared in 1750, and as a two-volume set in 1756. The copy used here is an original 1762 edition.<sup>52</sup>

5.2f (1757) *Lettres de Mistriss Fanni Butlerd à Milord Charles Alfred, de Caitonbridge, Comte de Plisinte, Duc de Raflingth*  
By Marie-Jeanne Riccoboni

*Lettres de Mistriss Fanni Butlerd à Milord Charles Alfred, de Caitonbridge, Comte de Plisinte, Duc de Raflingth* (L/Mistriss Fanni) is a lengthy collection of letters written—as the title suggests—by Mistriss Fanni Butlerd to Milord Charles Alfred, chronicling the rise and fall of their love affair, from Mistriss Fanni's perspective. The first sixty-one letters are numbered, but there are roughly that many more that have not been numbered. While it centers on their relationship and Mistriss Fanni's emotional state throughout the upheaval created by that relationship, the letters also include some 'daily news' and some of Miss Fanni's personal philosophies, especially about men—especially about *him*—after Milord announces his change of heart. Much of it is 'conversation' that occurs on pages of letters rather than in person.

Although the presentation piece from Mistriss Fanni is not included in this study (there are actually two presentation pieces), hers is significant and merits exploration in its own right. While essentially defending the publication of the letters, it is Mistriss Fanni herself who is publishing them, and this, following her persistent efforts within the novel to regain the letters from Milord upon the collapse of their relationship. This is an unusual take on the rather typical technique of including a disclaimer or other explanation for publication, and may be viewed as powerful and feminist. Rather than combining the language of this presentation piece with the language of the collection of letters, a study that explores the potential contrast between the two would be more appropriate, even though the writer and the 'target' of that presentation piece are the same. The public forum makes a difference to the otherwise 'private' correspondence.<sup>53</sup> The original French version of L/Mistriss Fanni appeared in serialized form in 1757; the version used here is an original 1759 French edition, considered to be the first 'complete' edition.

<sup>52</sup> While I could not confirm its absolute consistency with those earlier versions, this edition would have nevertheless circulated among the audiences of the day.

<sup>53</sup> And, in fact, would be a very entertaining inquiry, given the connection to private-public locations for language use that emerge in this study.

### 5.2g (1764) *Lettres du Marquis de Roselle*

By Anne-Louise Elie de Beaumont

*Lettres du Marquis de Roselle* (L/Roselle) comprises ninety-one letters exchanged between the Marquis and a handful of people in his intimate circle. In fact, L/Roselle involves an ensemble cast of letterwriters with varying relationships and purposes for writing. These include Léonor, his illicit lover, as well as la Comtesse de Saint-Sever (his sister), and Monsieur de Valville (a friend of the Marquis). In addition, letters are exchanged between la Comtesse and her friend, Madame de Narton, as well as between Monsieur, Madame and Mademoiselle de Ferval. Léonor's exchange with her friend, Juliette, is also included. The basic debate is between those who want to see the Marquis safely married and his own stated preference to continue 'seeing the world' in pursuit of both his libertine ways and a decidedly inappropriate wife. These various relationships and purposes position audiences quite differently, although the external reading audience remains on the outside. The original French version appeared in 1764; the one used here is an original French version dated 1765. There is no presentation piece.

### 5.3 The English 'Informants': Seven Substantially Epistolary English Novels

This section introduces the seven English novels as informants. Of these, five are easily identifiable as epistolary in form, while two are somewhat mixed. While still primarily epistolary, they do include connective material related by a separate narrator. As with the French novels, literary summaries or analyses are not claimed; instead, pertinent profile information for contextualizing the novels' language is offered.

#### 5.3a (1684) *Love Letters between a Nobleman and his Sister*

By Aphra Behn

*Love Letters between a Nobleman and his Sister* (Love Letters) is arguably the least epistolary of the novels. It is divided into three parts, the first of which is a collection of fifty-seven letters primarily between Sylvia and Philander, presenting their illicit love affair, including its discovery and interruption, as well as their attempted but thwarted flight. Parts 2 and 3 detail their mainly separate adventures, bringing in a range of other characters. Part 2 is fairly evenly split between letters and narrative, although that narration is heavily involved in framing the letters. Part 3, on the other hand, is narration with fewer letters involved, although the telling of tales—embedded storytelling—is more prevalent.

As mentioned, an 'argument' precedes the three volumes, an argument that not only summarizes the entire story—setting up the background knowledge—but is also apparently written by the same narrator who provides the connective material in Parts 2 and 3. Most of the letters, particularly in Part 1, are between Philander and Sylvia. However, Octavio exchanges letters with both Philander and Sylvia, and Sylvia's sister writes one letter as well. Love Letters first appeared in 1684. The version used here is a facsimile reprint, which does not include a publication date or a statement as to whether it is a reprint of the original 1684 edition.

5.3b (1696) *Letters written [sic] by Mrs Manley, to which is added a Letter from a supposed nun in Portugal, to a Gentleman in France, in Imitation of the Nun's Five Letters in Print, by Colonel Pack*  
By Delarivier Manley

*Letters written [sic] by Mrs Manley, to which is added a Letter from a supposed nun in Portugal, to a Gentleman in France, in Imitation of the Nun's Five Letters in Print, by Colonel Pack* (L/Manley) includes eight letters written by Delarivier Manley, describing experiences of a coach ride, and one letter by a 'supposed nun'.<sup>54</sup> The letters do not indicate exactly to whom they are directed, but reference is made to letters sent to Mrs Manley by this person in an ongoing exchange, and the dedication suggests they are being published by the person to whom they were originally addressed. One letter's closing indicates the addressee is male. Storytelling features prominently, with some stories provided by other passengers on the coach. In fact, L/Manley is generally witty, the descriptions of her travelling companions being rather lively. However, it is also evident that the letterwriter is 'escaping' London, apparently pursuing some much-needed 'down time'. A few lines from poems are interspersed throughout, with the nun letter concluding the collection. The version used here, dated 2006, is a facsimile reprint of the original 1696 edition. It opens with a 'dedicatory' that is not included in this study.

5.3c (1725) *Familiar Letters betwixt a Gentleman and a Lady*  
By Mary Davys

*Familiar Letters betwixt a Gentleman and a Lady* (Familiar Letters) is a set of twenty-two letters exchanged between Berina and Artander, primarily on the subject of whether men and women can or should be friends. Rather philosophical, it is also a debate, not always conducted playfully. In addition, it is fairly ambiguous as to whether their own relationship is best described as friendship or whether this is a flirtation (thinly) masking something more. In addition, detailing of various acquaintances and their activities are included. Snippets of poetry are interspersed throughout the exchange, along with some instances of embedded storytelling and political reflection. Further, there is a sense that these letters are intended to model the 'proper' way for a gentleman and a lady to correspond, perhaps even demonstrating the futility of trying to be friends only. However, politeness and proper conversational conduct are apparent, in any case. Familiar Letters appeared in 1725 as part of Davys' *Works*; the version used here is apparently taken from the *Works*, although this is not specifically stated. It includes a presentation piece labelled 'The Preface to the Works of Mrs Davys, 1725'. As such, it does not appear to be specifically associated with Familiar Letters. It is not included in this study. The edition used here was published in 1999.

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<sup>54</sup> She very subtly acknowledges both Mme d'Aulnoy's *R/Voyage d'Espagne* and the *Lettres Portugaises*.

### 5.3d (1741) *Anti-Pamela; or, Feign'd Innocence Detected*

By Eliza Haywood

*Anti-Pamela; or, Feign'd Innocence Detected* (Anti-Pamela)<sup>55</sup> is the other candidate for 'least epistolary' of the novels, in that the letters are consistently framed or linked by connecting narrative clearly not belonging to the letterwriters. However, because nearly fifty letters are interspersed throughout the novel, it is reasonable to consider it as substantially epistolary.

The narrator begins the relation of the story, reappearing throughout the novel and contextualizing the letters. Many of the letters, particularly at the beginning of the novel, are between Syrena and her mother. However, various other recipients are also involved, typically the parties chosen by Syrena and her mother for their various schemes. The point of all this activity is to find Syrena a husband (who can also take care of the mother), or alternatively, someone who will make Syrena his mistress (and also take care of the mother). The work is entertaining and satirical, but it is also highly critical of a society which reduces women to such schemes to look after themselves while simultaneously judging them for doing so. The original English edition appeared in July 1741, with a second virtually identical edition published in October 1741. The version used here, published in 2004, is a critical edition based on the second 1741 edition. There is no presentation piece.

### 5.3e (1750) *The Life of Harriot Stuart written by herself*

By Charlotte Lennox

*The Life of Harriot Stuart written by herself* (Harriot Stuart) is divided into two parts, comprising one long letter. While designed as a letter written to Amanda, it reads more like memoirs than a letter *per se*. Harriot is a rather precocious young woman relating a series of romantic adventures, with a number of poems interspersed throughout the story along with a few embedded letters. Much of Harriot's conflict arises from her contentious relationship with her mother, but also from her relentless pursuit of romantic adventures. These adventures occur in America, England and France, as well as 'on the high seas' between America and England, and add an exotic component to the work. While the adventures are related in a light-hearted tone, an occasional serious mention of her relationship with writing is offered. Additionally, Harriot's keen eye allows for a number of observations that critique accepted wisdom. Harriot Stuart officially appeared in 1750.<sup>56</sup> The version used here, published in 1995, is a critical edition based on that original and only edition. There is no presentation piece.

### 5.3f (1760) *The History of Ophelia*

By Sarah Fielding

*The History of Ophelia* (H/Ophelia) is one long letter written to 'Your Ladyship', separated into two volumes, comprising fifty chapters. Some, but not all, of the chapters suggest a closing to the writing session, with a continuance later, but this is inconsistent and does not

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<sup>55</sup> The link to Richardson's *Pamela* is evident.

<sup>56</sup> While the original title page shows a 1751 date, the correct date is 1750.

really divide the novel into separate letters. The letter is essentially a memoir, beginning with the 'orphan birth' of Ophelia and her upbringing by her aunt, from whom she is abducted by the man she will eventually marry. Her story includes her growing attachment to Lord Dorchester, as well as her presentation to London society and her impressions of the morals of that society as she learns to manoeuvre through it. This is offered in contrast to the idyllic pastoral perspective she gained with her aunt, although 'ignorance as innocence' is not necessarily presented as positive. Further, attitudes on language form a theme. The story also involves recounts of various romantic adventures, including some related via 'storytelling' and some embedded letters.

The original work appeared in 1760, and the version used here—published in 2004—is a critical edition based on that first edition. Two presentation pieces are included. The second, the 'introduction', is written by Ophelia and clarifies not only the recipient's identity (however vaguely) but also the fact that the recipient has requested the letter. It is included in the discussion of the novel's language use because it reads as the first letter, or, possibly, as the first part of the first letter.

### 5.3g (1769) *The Delicate Distress, a novel in letters by Frances*

By Elizabeth Griffith

*The Delicate Distress, a novel in letters by Frances*, (Delicate Distress) is divided into two volumes, involving an 'ensemble cast' of letterwriters. The main exchange takes place between Lady Woodville and Lady Straffon, who are sisters. The secondary exchange takes place between Lord Woodville and Lord Seymour, with one or two other letterwriters involved as well. Lady Woodville and Lady Straffon primarily discuss Lady Woodville's fear of her husband's potential infidelity, as well as the lives of their families, friends and acquaintances. Storytelling, including embedded letters, features in relating these stories, particularly in Volume 1. In addition, both ladies 'philosophize', something they are somewhat self-conscious and self-deprecating about doing. Lord Woodville, in writing to Lord Seymour, mainly expresses his desire for an old flame, while Lord Seymour not only cautions against acting on that desire but also relates his own 'troubles', mainly relating to a woman. These troubles, in fact, arise from the storytelling featured in Volume 1. Awareness of the 'correct' way to write and its relationship to producing 'pleasing writing' emerges as a theme, including one 'attack' on a letterwriter who has not properly attended to the generic conventions as anticipated by the letter recipient.

The original English version appeared in 1769 as one-half of a set of novels.<sup>57</sup> The version used here, published in 1997, is a critical edition based on the 1769 London edition, rather than the 1769 Dublin edition, with the former edition having appeared first. Two presentation pieces are included, with Lady Straffon (Frances) named as the compiler of the collection, in an explanation piece somewhat typical of the period. Neither is included as

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<sup>57</sup> The other half of the set was comprised of a novel by her husband, an apparently unique situation at the time.



part of the study, although the second presentation piece was probably the most difficult to exclude.

#### 5.4 A Few Points of Textual Comparison

As mentioned, the specific epistolary form of the novels varies. For example, a majority of the novels show the letterwriting from the perspective of one letterwriter only. These include M/Henriette-Sylvie, R/Voyage d'Espagne, L/Manley, L/Péruvienne, L/Harriot Stuart, L/Mistriss Fanni and H/Ophelia. A few show an exchange between two primary letterwriters: Love Letters, L/Deux Dames, Familiar Letters and L/Montier. Two, the last two chronologically-speaking, show a round-robin ensemble cast exchange: L/Roselle and Delicate Distress. Anti-Pamela, on the other hand, is a bit of a blend: while both sides of the exchange between mother and daughter are generally shown, both sides of other exchanges may or may not be visible. This range of 'takes' on the epistolary form contributes to positioning of both the 'speaker' and the audiences.

Beyond this, several other 'takes' present. Three read as memoirs: M/Henriette-Sylvie, L/Harriot Stuart and H/Ophelia. Two novels—R/Voyage d'Espagne and L/Manley—are largely (although not exclusively) travelogues. Two are collections of love letters: L/Péruvienne and L/Mistriss Fanni. However, this is not to say these generic categories are adhered to so strictly that no other generic styles enter the picture. Further, other novels combine a range of generic styles as well. This 'blending', in fact, can be viewed as characteristic of the novel as a genre, including the blending of the voices involved.<sup>58</sup> Of course, the voices that 'speak to' the audiences—or at least the words involved—are the point of inquiry.

#### 5.5 Data: The Five Language Categories that 'Speak to' Audiences

These categories have, of course, been briefly introduced. This section provides a somewhat more thorough introduction, although the individual 'data' chapters will provide the bulk of that relevant information and discussion. Nevertheless, this section provides 'thumbnail sketches' of each category, along with some 'big picture' commentary on the approach to this part of the examination.

First, it is worth reiterating that these specific categories emerged in the course of examination, as the 'phenomena' were allowed to reveal themselves. Based on observations of usage, examples from the novels were 'sorted' for their similarity. This was a lengthy, time-consuming process. Once these groups of similar usage were assembled, appropriate labels were developed and applied. Each category was identified because it nurtured rapport between participants, promoting relationships at the private end of the private-public continuum. Undoubtedly, some samples will have 'fallen through the cracks' and the categories could probably have been divided differently. However, this study does represent a genuine effort to 'map the terrain' of interactional language present in these novels.

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<sup>58</sup> In fact, I agree with Bakhtin on these points.

Additionally, it is also appropriate to clarify that ‘speaking to’, first and foremost, for the purposes of this study, refers to the actual language presented to an audience. However, it is not excessive or unreasonable to recognize a more abstract meaning for ‘speaks to’. That particular meaning emphasizes that different audiences ‘hear’ the same words ‘differently’. Although that more metaphorical meaning of ‘speaks to’ is not the main focus of this study, the opening to consider it is there.<sup>59</sup> Nevertheless, the goal here is to characterize what audiences are offered for interpretation.

As a final point, the first two categories, Addressing Audiences with T/V Personal Pronouns and Omission of Openings and Closings in Letters, reflect differences between French and English usage as being the important area of findings. The last three categories, however, do not necessarily extend that line of observation. Instead, these three categories indicate that audience position, and specifically tending to the audience’s needs as participants in the exchange, are the important areas. The last three categories are also more related to frame analysis, as they all—to one degree or another—involve language that ‘brackets’. They either ‘set off’ a content strand from the overriding narrative, they are interjected within the overriding narrative for various reasons, or both. In some cases, these ‘language pieces’ function as discourse markers.

#### 5.5a Category 1: Addressing Audiences with T/V Personal Pronouns

This category, the topic of Chapter 6, is fairly typical of the language components isolated for study in (socio)linguistic work. Seven of the fourteen novels involve marked use of these personal pronouns. Historically, of course, in both languages, T/V choice reflected relationship status between parties. In certain ways, this holds true in the novels where it figures into the language use choices. Equally, seven of the novels employ only the V form of personal pronoun. The reasons—and relationships promoted—are not necessarily the same. This category, more than the others, suggests intriguing differences between French and English use. In addition, the choice of T/V personal pronouns affects the positioning of the external reading audience, as well as signalling relationships between the indicated letterwriters and recipients.

#### 5.5b Category 2: Omission of Openings and Closings in Letters

Chapter 7, dealing with the Omission of Openings and Closings in the letters, discusses the only category to focus on generic conventions. Category 2, on the other hand, is mainly a question of ellipsis because, as per Joos’ language use scales, ellipsis can be understood as more typical of familiar language in familiar relationships.<sup>60</sup> Ellipsis, used in this way, may position the external reading audience as part of that familiar relationship or it may keep that audience ‘on the outside’.

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<sup>59</sup> Likewise, reader response theory is also on the ‘other’ side of the research coin, as is the emphasis Interactional Sociolinguistics allows for examining interpretation.

<sup>60</sup> This application of Joos’ language scales will be explained further.

### 5.5c Category 3: Activating Common Ground

This category, discussed in Chapter 8, brings into play the matter of knowledge types, particularly as they link to degree of familiarity between the parties. While a number of sub-categories were observed, in the interest of space, only two are discussed. The first is Overtly Tagging Relationships and the second is the Dialogue Effect. Overtly Tagging Relationships flags the level of familiarity as well as distinctions in social rank, and is instrumental in whether the external reading audience is able to ‘adopt the mantle’ of intended letter recipient. The Dialogue Effect, on the other hand, is a way of establishing common ground, as it usually involves ‘volleying’ relevant content between the participants. To one degree or another, the external reading audience shares the information, whether as insider or voyeur. These options have an impact on the position of the audiences and the relationships implied.

### 5.5d Category 4: Signalling Storytelling

This category, in Chapter 9, is particularly strong in terms of frame analysis: it specifically looks at the ‘signalling mechanisms’ that ‘flag’ a shift in the narrative, either in the topic or in the narrator or both. Specific expressions, both in French and English, tend to recur.<sup>61</sup> Because a great deal of embedded storytelling occurs in these novels—including letters embedded in letters—this form of framing is fairly consistent. In addition, Signalling Storytelling as a category facilitates understanding on the part of the reader—whether this is the intended recipient or the external reading audience—because it smoothes shifts in the storyline, which aids in reader comprehension. It is considerate of the letterwriter to include them, and affects the audience’s ‘relationship’ with the text.

### 5.5e Category 5: Invitations to Engage

This last category, covered in Chapter 10, is perhaps the most obviously interactional. Similar to Chapters 8 and 9, certain language recurs and tends to act as discourse markers. However, in Invitations to Engage, the expressions are very focused on the other participant’s engagement with what is being said. Potential reactions from the audience, for example, are anticipated, assumed and incorporated into the flow of the narrative, albeit they often take the form of interjections. In a sense, these interjections are made on behalf of the audience. This enhances a sense of the personal in these exchanges. Many of them work in promoting familiar relationships with the external reading audience as well as with the intended recipient. Regardless, they shape a reader’s engagement with the text.

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<sup>61</sup> These function as a kind of discourse marker.



## **Chapter 6—Samples and Findings, Part 1: Addressing Audiences with T/V Personal Pronouns**

Although T/V personal pronouns—*tu/vous* in French, *thou/you* in English—constitute one of the most visible aspects of interactional address, it was not immediately evident that these would play a role in addressing these audiences. Only upon commencing the fourth French novel did T/V usage begin to emerge as a factor in addressing audiences. Likewise, a role for T/V pronouns in the English novels had not been anticipated. However, *thou* occurs in the first English novel as well as in the last, producing questions about usage.

### **6.1 Some Contextualization of T/V Pronouns in the Mini-Theory**

Typical of Indo-European languages, French and English both include a history of T/V pronouns. These pronoun choices are generally part of register, and are good examples of both the contrast between the simultaneous operation of the grammatical construction of discourse and the more social aspects of communicative interaction. Grammatically, the basic distinction between T/V pronouns is one of singular versus plural. Arguably, however, the more important and more complex distinctions arise from the social application and implication of the words. Few speakers or students of French, for example, would not recognize *tu* as the ‘familiar’ form. *Thou*, however, would likely be less recognizable to speakers of English as the familiar form of address, given the evolution of the English language.

While ‘T’ choice represents ‘familiar’ in this pairing, explaining exactly what constitutes ‘familiar’ is far less simple than employing the word, a statement no less true of the long 18<sup>th</sup> Century than it is today. In fact, the period in question was one where ‘sorting out’ proper usage was in flux, not necessarily simple to pin down, and yet, important as an aspect of codification. For example, in discussing the period of 1660-1715, Brunot<sup>62</sup> opens the discussion of ‘*tutoyer*’ by paraphrasing the typical position from the period: *tu* belonged to the common people, so much so that its usage barely deserved a mention in his analysis (Brunot, 1947, p. 375). However, he then enumerates various other applications for *tu* use: in cases of particular familiarity, equality or contempt, variations between spoken and written usage, use in literature and performance, and even in Biblical ‘conversations’ involving God. Further, language use in France shifted considerably—especially the sociolinguistic factors—after 1715, when Louis XIV’s reign ended (Lodge, 1993, p. 179), and pronouns would have logically been part of this change in language use. However, that is not to say that the use of *tu* was simplified or clarified after that point in time.<sup>63</sup> In fact, ‘T’ usage may well have become more widespread while gaining particular sociolinguistic implications, both in interaction between individuals and as markers of rank in society. It may have become more nuanced, if the novels offer a glimpse of usage at the time. The

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<sup>62</sup> Bakhtin has described Brunot as ‘the historian’ of the French language, and his thirteen volume work on the topic supports the title.

<sup>63</sup> A further point is that perceptions of usage do not always correspond with actual usage. As mentioned, this can be one of the weaknesses of data obtained through interviews and surveys but not substantiated through samples’ analysis.

choice of *tu* or *vous* appears to become an increasingly self-conscious matter of deliberate selection, at least in these novels.

Likewise, the English situation is not particularly clear. Perhaps surprisingly, the descriptions of English usage are not overly different from those of French usage.<sup>64</sup> For example, the use of *thou* is described as having all but fallen out of use by the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, 'except in certain specialist registers and in some parts of the north' (McMahon, 2006, p. 149). However, something like this rather vague, sweeping summation could be applied to English usage today.<sup>65</sup> Therefore, its applicability in terms of where the lines of usage were drawn during the period is troublesome. Much like the French *tu*, *thou* is deemed appropriate as a tool distinguishing status between participants. It could be used to show disrespect but could also be used to show closeness within the family (Nevalainen, 2006, p. 195). Further, if *thou* was 'generally retained in the private sphere...[it] could also surface in public discourse' (Nevalainen, 2006, p. 194), with *thou* not only continuing in the Bible but also in 'a full range of genres' (Nevalainen, 2006, p. 194). As time moved on, and *you* became the standard form and not just the polite form, *thou* could still be a stylistic choice in cases not tied to religious usage or local and regional preferences (Mugglestone, 2006, p. 285), drawing upon its traditional connotations of 'intimacy and closeness' (Mugglestone, 2006, p. 285). The English samples tend to reflect such stylistic usage.

All that said, in these samples, familiarity is supported as a factor in 'T' choice. In fact, *intimacy* between the parties—not just familiarity—is a factor in 'T' usage, as love affairs are associated with the choice. As such, 'T' use represents private use, on the private-public continuum, even if it could well be used between 'private' people in a public context—just, perhaps, not too loudly. This sort of cross-over, between language use and location of language use, contributes to the difficulty in making 'proper' pronoun choices in a polite society.

In addition to a familiar (or intimate) relationship, in these samples, 'T' choice also marks solidarity. That solidarity may be associated with the familiarity of the ties between parties—ties that immediately suggest they are 'on the same side'—but there are other instances when 'T' choice marks certain nuances in that solidarity. One of these is Intimacy, especially of an illicit or secret variety. A second type arises from Emotional Distress,<sup>66</sup> and a third relates to Supportiveness, which can, in turn, also be related to the choice of 'T' in Emotional Distress. Both Emotional Distress and Supportiveness usage can occur in conjunction with the Intimacy variety as well. The real point is that 'T' choice is more likely when aspects of solidarity co-occur.

A final—and different—type of solidarity is that of Marking Membership, whether this is personal, group, social rank or class, cultural, and so on. This last category takes on

<sup>64</sup> Surprising because English might be perceived as having lost 'T' usage, in a sense, while French had not and still has not.

<sup>65</sup> I am thinking, for example, of certain American religious groups that use *thou* within their group as both the custom and as a marker of membership. This constitutes a specialist register, and *thou* is the norm as a marker of insider status.

<sup>66</sup> This type is typically cited in the literature on T/V use.

rather special connotations, however, because it is imposed upon characters, thereby imposing certain types of membership that an external reading audience is expected to recognize. In fact, Marking Membership takes on a certain significance when it reflects a move on the novelist's part to model use by people who are 'alike'. That is, while it may be a matter of intimacy for those involved in the exchange, an outsider may well note class alignment even if the participants are not setting out to give outsiders that impression. These solidarity categories are particularly noteworthy with respect to the French samples, but the pattern occurs in the English samples as well.

## 6.2 Samples: Tu/Vous (T/V) Pronoun Use in the French Novels

As stated, it was not immediately apparent that T/V usage would be an issue in the novels, as *tu* is not used in addressing the audiences in any of the first three novels—M/Henriette-Sylvie, R/Voyage d'Espagne and L/Deux Dames. In fact, the dominance of *vous* was not surprising as it is rather a default choice in terms of addressing strangers (or an external reading audience). It is also ideal for displaying an appropriate respect and *politesse* with acquaintances and even family members—or known letter recipients, as in these sources. The *vous* choice in these samples in no way seemed marked. Because no contrasting 'T' use occurred, potential implications of *tu* did not enter into the interaction in terms of the relationships fostered, the rapport being established, and so on, in these three sources. However, the remaining four French novels—L/Péruvienne, L/Montier, L/Mistriss Fanni, L/Roselle—all of which appeared after the turning-point date of 1715, all include at least one instance of *tu*. Further, in exemplifying private language, the usage in these four novels not only involves the T/V contrast but also depicts a range of reasons for the *tu* choice.

The first samples come from L/Péruvienne. L/Péruvienne, from 1747, is the first to use *tu* and does so for particular effect. Zilia, the letterwriter, has two correspondents. The first of these is Aza, her betrothed, a fellow Peruvian and also her brother. The second is Déterville, her French rescuer who falls in love with Zilia and who provides for her in France, but whom she nevertheless rejects as a suitor.<sup>67</sup> In dealing with Aza, Zilia consistently uses *tu*. The relationship is clearly intimate, as are the letters. However, Emotional Distress is demonstrated by Zilia in many of her letters. In particular, many of her first letters reflect her despair at being taken from Aza. For example,

Aza! comment échapperas-tu à leur fureur? Où es-tu? que fais tu? si ma vie t'est chère, instruis-moi de ta destinée. (Grafigny, 1983, p. 258)

In letters such as this, the use of *tu* emphasizes the relationship and the emotional nature of the situation. Zilia, however, also uses *tu* in the more factual letters she writes to Aza, those in which she explains her circumstances and impressions of France.

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<sup>67</sup> As far as the reader can tell.

J'ai passé bien du temps, mon cher Aza, sans pouvoir donner un moment à ma plus chère occupation; j'ai cependant un grand nombre de choses extraordinaires à t'apprendre; je profite d'un peu de loisir pour essayer de t'en instruire (Grafigny, 1983, p. 283)

Additionally, Zilia employs *tu* in the angry addresses she makes to Aza that are actually embedded in her letters to Déterville, the only other addressee to whom she writes, after she learns of Aza's betrayal. These addresses again demonstrate the Emotional Distress strand of solidarity but are also bound to the Intimacy strand. In these letters, using *tu* with Aza reflects the continuing bond of intimacy Zilia shares with him, a bond which endures despite his betrayal. Although writing to Déterville, she tells Aza:

Tu m'as vue à tes pied, barbare Aza, tu les as vus baignés de mes larmes, et ta fuite...Moment horrible! Pourquoi ton souvenir ne m'arrache-t-il pas la vie? Si mon corps n'eût succombé sous l'effort de la douleur, Aza, ne triompherait pas de ma faiblesse...Tu ne serais pas parti seul. Je te suivrais, ingrat; je te verrais, je mourrais du moins à tes yeux. (Grafigny, 1983, p. 358)

For Zilia, Intimacy determines *tu* choice ahead of other kinds of solidarity. With Aza, she uses *tu* in all 'conversations' regardless of topic or emotional state, although Emotional Distress certainly operates in many of her letters. However, even when she might want to use *vous* with Aza as a means of injecting emotional distance between them, the intimate bond they share in her eyes overrides this, and she continues to use *tu*.

In writing to Déterville, however, Zilia addresses him as *vous* only, a more formal choice which emphasizes the distance she feels with him, juxtaposed against the eternal intimacy she shares with Aza. In fact, using *vous* in this situation not only highlights the distance between Zilia and Déterville, regardless of their warm friendship, but it also emphasizes Zilia's outsider status in France. Despite his private betrayal, Aza is Zilia's countryman; she cannot be an outsider with him. In this sense, Zilia's choice of *tu* with Aza also Marks Membership. She is Peruvian, she is not French. Regardless of Aza's 'defection', he, too, is Peruvian.

In the next French novel, *L/Montier*, the pronoun of choice between mother and daughter is *vous*, and this, in spite of their obvious familial bond.<sup>68</sup> *Tu* is used in one passage, written by the mother to the daughter:

Que je te plains, pauvre mere! pour sentir ta situation, il faut l'avoir éprouvée.  
(LePrince de Beaumont, 1762, p. 206)

<sup>68</sup> This is not necessarily unusual in French families, especially in the past. Further, since the audience for these letters might include other 'listeners' as the letters are read, *vous* is a preferred polite form.



This usage occurs in response to the daughter's despair at tending to both her child and her sister, who are suffering from smallpox, a harrowing event during the period, particularly since the child dies. This 'T' usage reflects solidarity of the Supportiveness variety, specifically offered during a dark hour. The supportive emergence of *tu* is in response to the Emotional Distress on the daughter's part, Emotional Distress shared by her mother, who offers her most personal empathy, enhancing it by choosing *tu*.

The next French novel, L/Mistriss Fanni, also mixes *tu* and *vous*, far more extensively, primarily based on emotional state. These letters are love letters, all written by Mistriss Fanni to Milord Charles Alfred. Intimacy governs these letters, including her desire for 'extra' intimacy. Moments of Emotional Distress trigger much of Mistriss Fanni's use of *tu*. Initially, Mistriss Fanni uses *vous* in addressing Milord, despite the illicit intimacy already in place.

Je ne prierai point le Ciel avec vous, mon aimable ami; les vœux que nous lui adressons sont trop différens. Vous voulez qu'il vous prive de la vie, si vous devenez infidèle; & moi je lui demande votre bonheur; votre éternel bonheur, sans examiner si c'est moi qui doit toujours le faire... (Riccoboni, 1759, p. 8)

However, in Letter 27, Mistriss Fanni begins to mix the usage, as she becomes more desperate and Emotional Distress influences her pronoun choice.

Oh! cela m'est impossible; je ne puis vous donner ma parole: n'exigez pas cela, je vous en prie, ne l'exigez pas cela. Je ne sçaurois. Taisez-vous...Oh! tais-toi. (Riccoboni, 1759, p. 41)

She mixes usage again in Letter 28, also at a moment of emotional turmoil. In this case, she revels in her experience of love while simultaneously despairing over the trauma of her continuing battle with insomnia,<sup>69</sup> freely mixing *tu* and *vous* throughout.

Mais je veux dormir, oui, dormir...Cela n'est pas si aisé qu'on le diroit bien. Je prens un livre pour me distraire; il est à mon cher Alfred: il l'a touché; ce livre ne m'endormira pas. Je relis cette Lettre charmante, je la remets dans ce porte-feuille que j'ai vû si souvent dans tes mains. Ah! qu'il sent bon! Il sent comme toi...Mais cela finira-t-il? Je vous dis que je veux dormir: entendez-vous, Milord? je veux dormir... (Riccoboni, 1759, p. 42)

As the collection continues, mixing pronouns becomes the norm for Mistriss Fanni. However, the intensity of Mistriss Fanni's emotional state peaks in the following extension to Letter 61, and her increasingly consistent use of *tu* adds to the urgency and immediacy of

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<sup>69</sup> I would suggest that Mistriss Fanni's struggle with insomnia contributes to her fragility and insecurity, and ultimately, her expressions of emotional distress.

this letter.<sup>70</sup> In this letter, the use of *tu* dominates, while usage prior to this was more balanced, if anything, leaning toward a dominance of *vous*. This somewhat lengthy example illustrates the degree of her engagement, although this is not the entire letter.<sup>71</sup>

Je vais t'écrire: je ne sçais comment, car je suis folle. Ce soir ma tante va bien: on la guérira; je n'y pense plus. Je ne vois que toi, ton amour, le mien, le plaisir d'être aimée, celui d'aimer moi-même. Ah! qu'on est heureux d'avoir une ame sensible! Qu'il est doux de se livrer à une passion si tendre, quand Sire Charles est l'objet qui l'inspire & qui la partage!...Je ne te connois donc pas? je ne te connois point assez? je ne douterois jamais un moment de l'ardeur?...Oh! va te promener avec tes plaints. Je t'adore, mon cher petit. N'est-ce pas te prouver que je te connois?...Je crois vous voir dans votre lit avancer la main, choisir ma lettre entre toutes celles qu'on vous presente, déchirer vite cette enveloppe...Dans ton lit. Mais d'où vient que j'aime ton lit? c'est que j'aime tout ce qui t'aproche, tout ce qui t'appartient. Je voudrois être tout ce qui te plaît, me transformer en tout ce que tu desiras; tu l'aurois d'abord. Oh! comme je volerois pour te contenter! (Riccoboni, 1759, p. 96-97)

After this letter, more balanced mixing generally resumes. However, in the following passage, one in which Mistriss Fanni knows she is correct in her suspicions about Milord's affections, distribution of the pronouns corresponds to her emotions of the moment. In this letter, *vous* correlates to anger and an effort to inject distance into the relationship, while *tu* corresponds to intimate references.

Non, je ne puis effacer de mon imagination ces tristes idées que vous me reprochez; votre presence les écarte sans les détruire. Eh! comment pouvez-vous accorder votre amour & vos devoirs? Dans le même cas une femme peut remplir les siens sans trahir ce qu'elle aime; elle n'a besoin que d'une complaisance où son coeur, où ses sens même n'ont point de part: elle se prête, elle ne se donne pas. Mais vous dont les desirs doivent prévenir, doivent précéder le pouvoir de remplir ces devoirs...Non, je n'y sçauois penser; je n'obtiendrai point cet effort d'un coeur qui vous adore....Quoi! moi je pourrois chercher sur ta bouche les traces des baisers qu'une autre y auroit imprimés...Je pleure dans tes bras... (Riccoboni, 1759, p. 169)

Mistriss Fanni resumes using 'V' as she introduces the name of the 'preferred' woman into the conversation, a topic that interrupts their intimacy as far as Mistriss Fanni is concerned. As Mistriss Fanni realizes that Milord is indeed aligning himself with, is indeed

<sup>70</sup> Numbering of the letters ceases in this part of the book as well, which adds to a sense of disorientation for the extended reading audience, and enhances the depiction of Mistriss Fanni's deterioration.

<sup>71</sup> Mistriss Fanni's writing, particularly as it becomes increasingly disjointed, proceeds as if in conversation with Alfred; that is, sometimes very little context is provided and she changes topics frequently. She writes with extensive ellipses throughout the letters.

marrying, an appropriate woman, she switches to dominant *vous*, particularly when she demands that he return to her the love letters she has written. Prior to this letter, *vous* usage might have at least partially been a sign of respect and an attempt to observe social niceties, as Mistriss Fanni has been trained to do. The interjecting of *tu* amongst such usage emphasizes that she is overcome by her emotions and is thus unable to abide by the social expectations requiring the more polite *vous*. In fact, in the course of the letters, being overwhelmed by her emotions is less of a temporary state and more indicative of the unravelling of Mistriss Fanni.

Mistriss Fanni reclaims her pronouns as she distances herself from Milord. Her *tu* usage reflects both the private and intimate relationship shared by these two characters, a relationship that need not abide by public usage or public expectations in its language—at least, not until the relationship is over. To emphasize this point, in the final letter—the one flagging publication of her letters in the ‘public papers’—she addresses him with *vous* only. Distance in their relationship, yes, but also reverting to the style required by public decorum.<sup>72</sup>

The last French novel, *L/Roselle*, with its ensemble cast of letterwriters, also involves a range of distribution as far as T/V pronoun usage is concerned. Two of the main letterwriters, Madame de Saint-Sever and Madame de Narton, exchange more than two dozen letters on the topic of Madame de Saint-Sever’s brother, the Marquis de Roselle. These two women, of similar high-ranking social class, address one another throughout with reciprocal *vous* usage.

On the other hand, *L/Roselle* also includes an exchange of letters between two other women, Léonor and Juliette. In the seven letters between them, *tu* is the pronoun of choice. While this may be attributed to the intimacy between them, given that they are particularly close friends, it also Marks Membership. In particular, it emphasizes the low social rank and questionable character the two women share.<sup>73</sup> Through their letters, Léonor and Juliette reveal that they are both scheming ‘gold diggers’. Juliette, in Letter 42, demonstrates this by expressing her delight at Léonor’s situation and offering to support her efforts to ensnare the Marquis.

Tes projets m’étonnent. Toi, ma chere, devenir une femme de qualité! Vouloir épouser!...A tout prendre, tu fais fort bien; que risques-tu? Entre nous pourtant, là, comment pourrais-tu jouer le triste rôle d’une honnête femme? C’est du haut comique. Voyons comment tu t’en tireras. Je t’aime, de viser ainsi au grand. Tu vas être, si tu réussis, le modele & l’héroïne du corps...Tout le monde n’est pas né, comme toi, pour les grandes aventures. Voilà ce que c’est que de réunir la beauté, l’esprit, & le courage. Je connoissois déjà tes talens; avec cela, tu m’étonnes encore.

<sup>72</sup> As mentioned, the presentation piece to *L/Mistriss Fanni* would be an intriguing study.

<sup>73</sup> In turn, depicting *tu* usage in this manner associates *tu* with people of the lower classes, and characterizes it as ‘the way they talk’. It stigmatizes the usage and the users, simultaneously.

Allons, pousse ta pointe, je te servirai de mon mieux. Tes intérêts sont les miens.  
(Elie de Beaumont, 1765, p. 67-68)

From Juliette's perspective, this *tu* usage represents Supportiveness even though Emotional Distress is not Léonor's motivation. In turn, in Letter 71, Léonor accepts Juliette's good wishes while also stating what Juliette can do to support Léonor's plans. It is a request for assistance, but not due to Emotional Distress. On the contrary, Léonor sounds rather cold-blooded as she enumerates the details.

J'ai quitté l'Opera. Je sais ce que je risque; mais il est des occasions où il faut savoir risquer. Tant que je resterois Actrice il ne m'épouserait point. Ne pourrais-tu venir ici? Tu me serois utile; il faudroit paroître une femme d'un état honnête, un peu de mes parentes, demeurant en Province, & qui sachent mes malheurs & mes vertus...viendrait m'arracher aux séductions. Entends-tu cela? Tache, tâche, ma Juliette, de me faire ce plaisir. Tu sens que ma fortune seroit la tienne; que dans quelque rang que je fusse, tu ferois ma meilleure amie, & que je saurois donner à ma parente tout le lustre qu'il faudroit. Je t'assure que si je deveins femme de qualité, j'en saurai prendre le ton... (Elie de Beaumont, 1765, p. 126-127)

*Tu*, used by Léonor and Juliette as a tool for marking their solidarity and as a tool for conveying plans and commentary that are as coarse as their letters, also serves to mark their shared low status and base character. Even if inadvertently, *tu* as used by Léonor and Juliette may well represent a sign of their common anti-language, an anti-language shared due to their membership in the anti-society of the '*filles d'Opéra*'.<sup>74</sup> This constitutes their Community of Practice. Further, their 'sameness' in this regard is emphasized not only by their exclusive use of *tu* with each another but also by their avoidance of *vous*.

However, when it suits her purposes, Léonor is quite capable of using *vous*, although this use may be viewed as acting, as the 'putting on of airs' she acknowledges in her letter. Léonor uses *vous* in her letters to the Marquis, a contributing factor in the affectation she assumes in attempting to convince him of her acceptability and goodness, a performance specifically conducted in order to procure a marriage proposal from him. Léonor's sensitivity and competence on this score are noteworthy: while she may be of lower rank than the other letterwriters (save Juliette), she understands the implications of pronouns. She apparently knows the value of using *vous* with an individual of higher rank when she is seeking 'membership' at that societal level.

On the other hand, the Marquis, Léonor's 'target', does not generally use *vous* with her. In fact, he also shows a convincing understanding of pronominal implications, his choice with Léonor being only one. As an aspect of the Marquis' desire for intimacy with Léonor, he

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<sup>74</sup> Of course, I cannot be sure whether the author deliberately did this for effect or whether she was simply distributing usage as accurately as she could, according to perceptions of usage.

generally addresses her as *tu*.<sup>75</sup> However, in his first letter to her, he begins with *vous*, switching to *tu* midway through, a sign that he is pursuing that intimacy. By his third letter to Léonor, the Marquis uses *tu* comfortably, with *vous* perhaps emphasizing his *fear* of emotional distance from her.

Vous me haïssez! je le vois, je le sens...Léonor, au nom de cet amour dont je suis pénétré, daigne ne pas me désespérer ainsi! Accepte au moins ces foibles gages de ma tendresse! chere & trop vertueuse amante, rends moi plus de justice à ton tour. Hélas! songe que ces dons que je t'offre avec tant de plaisir, sont les seuls soulagements de ma douleur: m'envierois-tu cette consolation? Moi te soupçonner d'avidité! Ah! Léonor! Est-il possible que tu juges si mal d'un coeur tout à toi, qui ne respire que pour toi! Si tu étois assez cruelle pour me renvoyer encore cet écrin...Ah! garde-toi de me réduire au désespoir (Elie de Beaumont, 1765, p. 37-38).

When the Marquis finally 'sees the light' and confronts Léonor over the deceitful measures she has taken to ensnare him, he uses *tu*. Given the context provided by the other letters, it seems unlikely he does this to emphasize his social superiority at this late moment in their relationship. He does not feel superior, he feels tragically reduced to something less than he is, as he has 'stooped so low' as to engage in a duel with a friend, with Léonor as the contested object.

Ame vile & trompeuse, quelles expressions peuvent peindre l'horreur que m'ont donnée les preuves de tes noirceurs, de ta bassesse!...Est-il possible, bon Dieu! que ce fût à cette ame monstrueuse que je voulusse sacrifier mon honneur, ma famille, mon être tout entier? J'ai lu, je tiens les lettres que tu as ecrites à ta méprisable confidente, à Juliette. Je vois les ressorts que tu as fait jouer pour subjuguier ma raison...Quoi! dans mon agonie, dans ce tems où réduit par un amour funeste à deux doigts de la mort...tu ne regrettois que mon bien! Monstre affreux! Eloigne-toi pour jamais de ma vue, je ne pourrois retenir ma fureur: je vengerois sur toi le sang de mon ami. Miserable!...Quoi! c'est pour toi que j'ai pu verser ce sang précieux! Garde mes dons, comme autant de marques de ton infamie & de ma foiblesse... (Elie de Beaumont, 1765, p. 128-129)

In this letter, the Marquis' use of *tu* seems to arise from the continuing bond he feels toward Léonor despite discovering her betrayal, a usage not unlike Zilia's in *L/Péruvienne* when she addresses Aza, post-betrayal. That is, even if the Marquis wants, on one level, to disconnect from Léonor, at another level, he cannot. His language reflects his internal conflict.

The Marquis is involved in two other letterwriting exchanges that illustrate his competence in pronoun use. For example, in the Marquis' letters to his sister, Madame de

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<sup>75</sup> While *tu* may be used to emphasize social status distinctions, it seems unlikely this would be the Marquis' reason for doing so.

Saint-Sever, he uses *vous* only. This is true at the beginning of the collection, when the Marquis is defending his conduct and his right to see the world. It is also true toward the end of the collection, when he is devastated, post-Léonor, and no longer defiant of his sister. Therefore, despite the difference in both topic and attitude, *vous* is the pronoun of choice. His sister, throughout the exchanges, also uses only *vous* with the Marquis, which reflects the understood symmetry between these letterwriters, but also the good breeding and consequential good conduct of both the sister and the brother.

The Marquis' other addressee is his friend, Monsieur de Valville, who accepts the Marquis' liaison with Léonor but does not accept the Marquis' degree of engagement in the liaison. On this score, Valville offers extensive advice on how the Marquis should conduct this relationship. Their use of *tu* has a conspiratorial quality to it, of solidarity and alignment as friends. Of intimacy, in fact.

Que tu connois peu l'amour, cher Valville! Pardonne; ta lettre m'a revolté. Eh! qu'est-ce donc pour toi que ce sentiment, si tu peux ainsi l'assujettir aux circonstances! Ah! que mon coeur est différent du tien; je brûle, je meurs pour Léonor, & je chéris mes tourmens (Elie de Beaumont, p. 1765, p. 29-30).

Valville uses *tu* with the Marquis, and the Marquis uses *tu* with him except for Letter 32. In this letter, the Marquis not only rejects Valville's advice, but also his friendship, based on Valville's criticism of the Marquis' conduct. In this case, no longer conspiratorial over Léonor, the Marquis uses *vous* specifically to deny familiarity and to create distance. Once the Marquis has discovered Léonor's betrayal, and sees Valville's friendship for what it was, he resumes addressing him as *tu*. With Valville, then, the Marquis' emotional state plays some role in choosing pronouns, not because he is necessarily out-of-control with Valville himself (although he is quite angry with Valville), but equally because the Marquis feels alignment with Léonor and rejects alignment with Valville for her sake. Such usage is similar to the examples from L/Mistriss Fanni, as is the suggestion of something illicit being associated with 'T' use. However, in L/Roselle, it is a male adopting this usage and he only does so with one of his correspondents. The Marquis does not use *vous* to distance himself from Léonor, even when he might like to distance himself and even though he clearly understands that *vous* can perform this function. Furthermore, the Marquis does not assume an 'impolite' or 'status-declaring' use of *tu* with his sister, even when he is angry with her or when he is humiliated before her. Respect and decorum reign in that relationship, despite its private nature.

A further, intriguing aspect of the Marquis' pronoun usage occurs in the Marquis' last letter, to Valville, which comes very near the end of the novel. In this letter, the Marquis primarily uses *tu* but injects a very particular instance of *vous*, one which is not at all directed toward Valville. He writes:

Valville, je t'ennuye; cesse de me lire; c'est pour moi que j'écris. Vous autres gens aimables, qui fondez votre principal titre sur un mépris absolu de tout ce qui s'attiroit avant vous la vénération des pauvres humains, vous voudriez anéantir jusqu'au nom de *mœurs*. Ne vous en servez point: vos bouches profaneroient ce nom sacré (Elie de Beaumont, 1765, p. 154).

Such a switch is significant on several fronts, including that it characterizes the Marquis as someone who knows how to use his pronouns: he is aware someone other than Valville may read his letter and that, for that reason, it is not appropriate to address that other audience using *tu*. Furthermore, it emphasizes the collection of letters as being at least partially designed for an external reading audience: *vous* is more appropriate with the external reading audience not only on the simple basis of needing the plural choice but out of respect and decorum as well. The Marquis has already demonstrated his understanding of *vous* in this respect, so the switch is no accident.

In summary, the evidence provided by the French samples suggests a shift, over time, in the use of *tu*, and in the distinctions represented by use of *tu* or *vous*. At the most basic level, that the use of *tu* increases across the seven French novels is apparent: the novels initially reflect no *tu* usage but move toward *tu* usage for specific, largely sociolinguistic, effects. That is, when *tu* is chosen, it is not to indicate 'singular' rather than 'plural'. Perhaps this signals shifts in the language, post-Louis XIV, including both a broadening of *tu* distribution and its sociolinguistic implications. It may also reflect increased awareness of the sociolinguistic implications, especially if use is for fictional effect and the Communities of Practice can be relied upon to recognize it as such.

### 6.3 Samples: English T/V Pronoun Use in the Novels

A contrast between *thou* and *you* does present in the English novels. To some degree, the four types of solidarity apply to *thou* usage, but not so consistently as they do in the French samples. Intimacy as well as Emotional Distress are the most likely solidarity types when *thou* is used with 'people'. And that is the key: *thou* in the English samples is also consistently used to address the idealized abstract, to address concepts, rather than other 'people'. This regular use of *thou*, together with the distribution of *thou* in only the first and last English novels, suggests English usage is fictionally stylistic, rather than being an individually preferred choice for exchange-internal communicative reasons. Such a view is supported by the additional fact that the first and last English novels both purport to tell French stories, a situation which indicates the 'T' pronoun may be designed to enhance the 'French-ness' of these stories. Certainly, a diachronic trend in English usage is not suggested by the novels. Rather, these samples support a 'normalization' toward *you*. It does emerge that if a speaker is prone to using *thou* with intimates, that same speaker is likely to use *thou* in addressing the abstract as well, however.

The pronoun usage in the first English novel, *Love-Letters*, supports these conclusions. That is, mixing of the pronouns occurs and using *thou* to address the abstract

only occurs with those speakers who also use it with 'people'. For example, Sylvia, the heroine in *Love-Letters*, begins her letters to Philander using *you*. When she begins using *thou*, it presents as a sign of Intimacy, of a growing relationship, of a desire to confirm alignment as intimates. She switches to *thou* prior to this excerpt from Letter 14, but uses *thou* both toward the abstract and with 'people' in this particular letter. She writes:

...be kind, oh lovely night, and let the deity descend to his beloved Thetis's arms, and I to my Philander's; the sun and I must snatch our joys in the same happy hours; favour'd by thee, oh sacred, silent Night! See, see the enamour'd sun is hasting on apace to his expecting mistress, while thou dull Night art slowly lingering yet (Behn, n.d., p. 21).

These stylistic entreaties to the abstract are quickly followed by intimate addresses to Philander, intimate addresses which typically include a degree of Emotional Distress usage as well:

Oh Philander! a thousand things I have done to divert the tedious hours, but nothing can; all things are dull without thee, I am tir'd with every thing, impatient to end, as soon as I begin them; even the shades and solitary walks afford me now no ease, no satisfaction, and thought but afflicts me more, that us'd to relieve. And I at last have recourse to my kind pen: for while I write, methinks I am talking to thee; I tell thee thus my soul, while thou, methinks, art all the while smiling and listening by (Behn, n.d., p. 21).

Sylvia continues to mix *you* and *thou*, *thou* being the pronoun of choice when she writes in the spirit of Intimacy, in moments of Emotional Distress. These two combine, in fact, as Sylvia typically chooses *thou* (to a person) when she is seeking—rather than assuming—alignment as insiders. She seeks reassurance of their Intimacy. For example, she begins Letter 24, saying:

Ah! What have I done, Philander, and where shall I hide my guilty blushing face? Thou hast undone my eternal quiet: oh, thou hast ruin'd my everlasting repose, and I must never, never look abroad again: curse on my face that first debauched my virtue, and taught thee how to love (Behn, n.d., p. 40).

This letter continues with *thou*, as do most of Sylvia's letters to Philander, particularly in Part 1. However, this shifts in Part 2, when Sylvia begins mixing the pronouns when the potential betrayal of Philander enters the picture. Emotional Distress again plays a role, making avoidance of *thou* difficult for Sylvia. For example, Letter 65 includes:



Yes, Philander, I have received your letter, and but I found my name there, should have hoped it was not meant for Sylvia! Oh! It is all cold—short—short and cold as a dead winter's day. It chilled my blood, it shivered every vein. Where, oh where hast thou lavished out all those soft words so natural to thy soul, with which thou usedst to charm; so tuned to the dear music of thy voice? (Behn, n.d., p. 97)

This use, occurring in the midst of bewilderment and anger, both echoes and reinforces Sylvia's previously tender addresses to Philander in which she used *thou*, and reminds Philander (and the external reading audience) of Philander's formerly tender behaviour and speech, in which he, too, had used *thou*. In turn, Sylvia's use of *you* demonstrates reciprocity in the face of Philander's cold letter—a face-saving choice, in fact, as reciprocity of usage figures into the pronoun choices. However, it may be that Sylvia uses *you* initially in an effort to inject emotional distance into the relationship, but is unable to maintain both the emotional distance and the 'distant' pronoun. Perhaps as a reflection of Sylvia's turmoil on the matter, following this letter, Sylvia reverts to using *thou* with Philander, which may also suggest the relative permanence of a *thou* link, once that boundary has been crossed, similar to what has been seen with the French samples.

Philander, Sylvia's initial and primary love interest, also chooses *thou* when writing to Sylvia. Interestingly, however, in an embedded address—to his wife, in a letter to Sylvia—he actually chooses *thou* for his wife *before* he chooses it for Sylvia.<sup>76</sup> For example, in Letter 4, he says, 'One deprives me but of thee, Myrtilla, but the other entitles me to a beauty more surprising, renders thee no part of me' (Behn, n.d., p. 7). Not until Letter 5 does he address Sylvia with *thou*: 'time may render it less fair, less blooming in my arms, but never in my soul; I shall find thee there the same gay glorious creature that first surprised and enslaved me' (Behn, n.d., p. 7). Given that the two participants involved are his wife and his mistress, women with whom he would have intimate relationships, Intimate solidarity appears to govern Philander's usage. Emotional Distress is a factor, too, although the sincerity of Philander's distress is sometimes suspect.

That said, Philander, once he begins to address Sylvia with *thou*, does so very much in alignment with Sylvia's usage.<sup>77</sup> Again, Solidarity-Intimacy and Solidarity-Emotional Distress are significant. Initially, anyway, they are aligned within their liaison, and their pronoun use reflects it. In fact, Philander continues to address Sylvia with *thou* even when it is clear that he is pursuing a new love interest. In keeping with the multiple layers of 'T' pronoun usage, this could simply be to fool Sylvia or it could be the enduring bond of *thou*, once established. Sylvia also uses *thou* when she advises Philander she knows of his betrayal, a sign that intimacy is holding, even if she does not want to embrace it anymore. Eventually, both Philander and Sylvia return to using *you*, apparently having overcome the solidarity of their intimate alignment.

<sup>76</sup> I acknowledge that this may be interpreted as a poetic address of the abstract rather than an 'identity', as Philander does use both types.

<sup>77</sup> In fact, it is easy to interpret this as Philander teaching Sylvia 'love's language', which she readily employs.

Like Sylvia, Philander also addresses the abstract with *thou*, perhaps with more flair than Sylvia herself. For example:

Say, fond love, whither wilt thou lead me? Thou has brought me from the noisy hurries of the town, to charming solitude; from crowded cabals, where mighty things are resolving, to lonely groves; to thy own abodes where thou dwell'st; gay and pleas'd among the rural swains in shady homely cottages; thou hast brought me to a grove of flowers, to the brink of purling streams, where thou hast laid me down to contemplate on Sylvia, to think my tedious hours away in the softest imagination a soul inspir'd by love can conceive, to increase my passion by every thing I behold; for every sound that meets the sense is thy proper music, oh love, and every thing inspires thy dictates (Behn, n.d., p. 19).

Again, in Love-Letters, addressing the abstract as *thou* is done only by those who also use it with 'people'. Not everyone who uses *thou* with 'people' also uses it with the abstract, however.

An additional letterwriter in Love-Letters who uses *thou* is Octavio. He has sworn allegiance to Philander, but also falls in love with Sylvia. In the exchange where Octavio confesses his love for Sylvia to Philander, and Philander responds to him, both characters use *thou*. That is, in some distress, Octavio confesses using *thou*, and Philander responds, saying, 'alas, I know her power, and do not wonder at thy fate!' (Behn, n.d., p. 116). This is the only exchange where these two men use *thou* with one another, and while it occurs within a deeply personal relationship, it also occurs on a topic of some emotional import. Therefore, not only do Intimacy, Emotional Distress and Supportiveness (as solidarity types) play a role in the 'T' choice, so, too, does Marking Membership. They are sharing Personal Knowledge (as Van Dijk uses the term) that relates to a third party, and they are aligned as insiders, privy to that information.

Octavio, on the other hand, mixes the pronouns when he familiarizes Sylvia with his feelings. That Sylvia does not respond in kind—or by switching to exclusive *thou*—may be a sign she does not share Octavio's feelings, it may be that she is claiming status over him or it may be that Sylvia has changed, and is not extending herself to any man, emotionally. She is in control of what she does, now, including her pronoun use.

The final letterwriter in Love-Letters who uses *thou* is Sylvia's sister, the wife of Philander. The only letter from her is directed to Sylvia, one in which she implores Sylvia not to pursue her passion for Philander. In Letter 29, Myrtilla seeks alignment with Sylvia, banking on the intimacy of the sisterly relationship. Myrtilla insists she is warning Sylvia away from Philander for Sylvia's own benefit, and not for the sake of the married and officially endorsed couple of Philander and Myrtilla. In fact, Myrtilla makes a very specific switch from *you* to *thou* when she relates her concerns to Sylvia. Letter 29 reads, in part:

Long foreseeing the misery whereto you must arrive by this fatal correspondence with my unhappy lord, I have often, with tears and prayers, implored you to decline so dangerous a passion: I have never yet acquainted our parents with your misfortunes, but I fear I must at last make use of their authority for the prevention of your ruin. It is not, my dearest child, that part of this unhappy story that relates to me, but purely that of thine (Behn, n.d., p. 48-49).

In switching to *thou* in this way, Myrtila strengthens her attempt at solidarity with Sylvia, relying on a different kind of Intimacy than that shared by Philander and Sylvia and hoping to inspire Sylvia to acknowledge this other bond. In addition, both Emotional Distress and Supportiveness are reflected in Myrtila's *thou* choice as well: concern for Sylvia, for herself and for the family name.

The last English novel—the only other in which *thou* appears—is *Delicate Distress*. *Delicate Distress* includes four primary letterwriters as well as a few others who complete the ensemble cast. *Delicate Distress* also includes usage of both the stylistic and solidarity types. That said, it includes only one instance of addressing the idealized abstract and one exchange between characters using *thou*. The abstract address, in Letter 15, reads:

...thou first female vice, curiosity! I will not suffer thee to harbour, one moment longer, in my breast, thou inhospitable tenant! disturber of the peaceful mansion that receives thee! (Griffith, 1997, p. 49)

This usage comes from a letter written by Lady Woodville, the younger of the two sisters who are the primary letterwriters. Again, similar to Sylvia's address of the abstract, this usage is stylistic, even if an element of Emotional Distress prompts it. Beyond this, the two female letterwriters do not use *thou*. That is, none of the solidarity forms emerge, and this, despite a number of moments of Emotional Distress that might have reasonably prompted such a switch.

The only instance of *thou* in interactional usage between two characters comes between the two male characters. The first occurs in a letter written by Lord Woodville, husband to Lady Woodville, but addressed to his friend, Lord Seymour, on the announcement that Lord Woodville's continuing illicit love interest has married someone else. Lord Woodville initially uses *thou* in addressing Lord Seymour, who has revealed the information to Lord Woodville, writing:

How could my cruel friend attempt to jest, with misery like mine! It is impossible!—It must not, cannot be! The marchioness gone off with Ransford! By heaven, it is false, though thou, my dearest, truest friend, aver it! (Griffith, 1997, p. 155)

Although Lord Woodville switches to *you* for the remainder of the letter, Lord Seymour initially responds using *thou* in a reciprocal fashion before he, too, switches to *you* for the rest of his letter. Lord Seymour begins by saying:

Well mayest thou call thyself distracted, Woodville! and I, as such, can pity, and forgive thee.—Yet must I not become infected by thy folly, and treat thee like a wayward child, indeed (Griffith, 1997, p. 155).

Again, these are the only other instances of *thou* in the novel. As indicated, both letterwriters mix T/V usage in the one letter where *thou* is employed, *thou* being used for that part of the letters dealing with Woodville's distraught state of mind, a state that Seymour well understands and responds to in kind. That is, *thou* usage in *Delicate Distress* corresponds to Emotional Distress when Woodville uses it, but is employed by Seymour in connection to Supportiveness. Seymour, in fact, acknowledges this, saying, 'As you are not, at present, in a situation to receive any benefit from the admonition of friendship, I shall reserve my sentiments, for a fitter occasion' (Griffith, 1997, p. 156). Given that Seymour switches to *you* when he makes this observation, *thou* can be further viewed as emphasizing the need for direct language that suits the emotional intensity of the moment.

Further, because Lady Woodville writes to Lady Straffon in despair over the same topic, it is an interesting point that she never breaks with decorum to the point of losing control of her pronouns. Clearly, *thou* is available to Lady Woodville, because she makes it her stylistic choice early in the letter collection.<sup>78</sup> Equally clearly, in this novel, *thou* is an option in moments of Emotional Distress, as Lord Woodville has demonstrated such usage. That Lady Woodville never lapses into the Emotional Distress usage herself is noteworthy, as she experiences various crises that might warrant it. Perhaps the English novels demonstrate that emotional usage of *thou* simply does not have a place in the language of sensibility. Politeness is more important. Perhaps women can best maintain the control necessary to control emotional pronoun use. Or, at least, they are serving as models of this 'best' usage along with 'best' behaviour.

However, that both *Love-Letters* and *Delicate Distress* are presented as French stories raises some interesting questions in terms of how 'T' usage may be understood. For example, *Love-Letters* was published in 1684, which is well before any of the T-employing French novels in this study. *L/Péruienne* was the first in the French group to use 'T', and it appeared in 1747. While beyond the scope of this study to review 'T' usage in French novels appearing prior to 1670, it seems obvious that a perception of French 'T' use existed in England in 1684, if *Love-Letters* does indeed incorporate 'T' to enhance contextualization of the story as French. The other *thou*-utilizing English source, *Delicate Distress* (1769), appeared some five years after *L/Roselle*, so influence exerted by *L/Roselle* (and the other French novels as well) is possible. Particular similarities do exist between these two novels in terms of the ensemble-cast of letterwriters, as well as the thematic elements of the story

<sup>78</sup> This is, in fact, an interesting deviation from the previous pattern noted.

and the distribution of 'T' pronouns between male characters over illicit private subject matter.<sup>79</sup>

However, the real issue may be whether 'T' use in England, even in imitation of French, was less shocking because it lacked the social connotations that 'T' use might have carried 'on the page' in French at that time, given that the French sources in this study did not use 'T' until 1747.

#### 6.4 Findings: The Novels in Terms of T/V Pronouns

Given that the basic distinction between T/V pronouns—beyond singular and plural—is that of familiar and polite, the use of the 'V' pronoun in the first three French novels and the five middle English novels sits well with expectations. With the period's emphasis on politeness, it is not surprising that a pronoun came to be associated with it, as a sign of 'good manners'. More surprising perhaps is that an alternative pronoun, one not associated with politeness, not only persisted, but, at least in the French case, may have expanded in use.<sup>80</sup> These differences allow a means for considering certain societal shifts occurring in the countries at the time.

As has been discussed, in England, the focus was increasingly on civilizing English society, and politeness was a key feature of that civilized nature, a politeness that included language use. In language terms, the combined case of a more stylized choice of the 'T' pronoun, one that limits the appropriateness of its use, coupled with the increased use of a perceived polite form—the 'V' pronoun—becoming the norm, fits with a move toward social civility. France, on the other hand, was incorporating meritocracy, moving toward rather violent and anarchic *liberté, fraternité* and *égalité* as the Revolution approached. The manifestations of these ideals can reasonably be viewed as embracing egalitarian means of address, as they do provide a way to reinforce notions of meritocracy and equality via language. In addition, such usage could also indicate a move away from a focus on *politesse* as well as usage that may have been associated with Louis XIV, pre-1715, even if the only sure point is a shift in whether 'T' appeared in print.<sup>81</sup>

This apparent expansion and evolution of the range of 'T' usage in French bears a certain correlation to a society that was in flux and would continue to be for some time. Additionally, evolving use would correspond to an increasing awareness of appropriate usage based on its social implications, a situation noted by Ayres-Bennett and previously acknowledged. Given the time period, a desire to establish codification of that use would have also been in vogue, a somewhat difficult proposition if usage was evolving as well. This 'need' for modelling appropriate use would not only result in usage manuals but also in the usage being modelled in other writings (such as these novels). Particularly in the French sources, modelling appropriate use plays a role, simply because distinctions in T/V use still applied. However, the English novels appear to have modelled 'proper' language use also.

<sup>79</sup> That said, L/Roselle clearly uses 'T' pronouns more extensively.

<sup>80</sup> Although there is a certain logic to this as well.

<sup>81</sup> In fact, further diachronic comparisons of 'T' in print across the period would be interesting to pursue.

#### 6.4a Characteristics: 'T' Pronouns and Solidarity

In these examples, the need for solidarity, or for solidarity to be represented, governs much of the 'T' usage. Whether these samples represent an idealized usage or whether they depict actual usage is difficult to conclude. However, these samples suggest some valuable trends and possibilities.

In these samples, familiar or intimate relationships cluster at the private end of the private-public continuum. They arise from the domestic sphere even if they are not restricted to that physical location.<sup>82</sup> In these samples, the choice of 'T' pronouns may occur where Intimacy already exists, or as part of a desire to establish Intimacy. In addition, the nature of the Intimacy varies: 'T' usage occurs between lovers (but not married couples), close friends of both genders, and a mother and daughter. 'T' use between sisters occurs once. Additionally, lovers (or would-be lovers) do not always use the 'T' pronoun, particularly in the English novels. Nevertheless, without the intimacy factor, 'T' is not chosen.

The second category is Solidarity-Emotional Distress. In this case, at least in these samples, the 'T' pronoun choice operates, again, in the environment of an intimate relationship where lapsing into 'T' usage—that is, where not observing the societal decorum of the polite form—is not an issue in and of itself. The speaker knows the other party will not be offended by the choice. Emotional Distress usage requires the speaker to be so lost in the emotion of the moment that control over pronoun choice is impossible or irrelevant. Further, the loss of control generally involves requests for reassurance and support. It may include an element of desperation, of need—or it may involve being overwhelmed by the intensity of the emotion itself. *L/Mistriss Fanni* fits this category, but so too do the letters of Sylvia in *Love-Letters* (at least during Part 1), as well as the letters written by Octavio. In fact, the letters of the Marquis de Roselle to both Léonor and Valville, the previously-mentioned letter from Lord Woodville in *Delicate Distress*, and many of the letters from Zilia to Aza, include the 'overwhelmed by emotion' seeking of solidarity. This category involves relinquishing behavioural—including linguistic—restraint in an appropriately intimate relationship. The speaker knows s/he can 'let his/her hair down', and need not 'stand on ceremony'. Not only is there is no suggestion that the 'T' choice is socially wrong, but the choice also reinforces the emotional intensity of the moment and sometimes between the parties, or at least, on the part of one of them.

The third type of solidarity involves Supportiveness. It includes 'T' usage in exchanges offering support or reassurance, within the intimate relationship context. All of the novels employ this style of 'T' choice, although *L/Mistriss Fanni* provides the least convincing examples, possibly because Milord's letters to Mistriss Fanni are not visible. Nevertheless, she occasionally writes 'supportively' to him. Zilia, among the many topics and emotional strands she uses in writing to Aza, uses Solidarity-Supportiveness when she carefully explains her impressions of French culture to Aza. In both *L/Roselle* and *Delicate Distress*, strength and encouragement are offered to the wayward Marquis and Lord Woodville (respectively) by supportive male friends who use the 'T' form, although their encouragement does not

<sup>82</sup> I am specifically not addressing 'T' usage vis-à-vis the idealized abstract.

involve supporting what those wayward men want to do. In *Love-Letters*, Philander extends Solidarity-Supportiveness 'T' usage in writing to Octavio, and also to Sylvia, although his sincerity in his later letters is questionable. Finally, the most poignant example, from *L/Montier*, occurs when the mother offers encouragement and support to her daughter during the dark hours of serious illness and death in the family, family which concerns the mother personally and not merely as someone in the position of offering support.<sup>83</sup> Again, there is no suggestion that the 'T' choice is socially awkward or inappropriate; rather these relationships are adequately intimate and the moment of the exchange adequately intense to warrant using the 'T' pronoun. Possibly, the choice of 'T' renders the support offers more sincere, again, with the possible exception of Philander.

The final category that emerges, particularly but not only in *L/Roselle* and *Delicate Distress*, is that of Solidarity-Marking Membership. The uniting factor in Marking Membership in these samples is the sharing of Personal Knowledge. Specifically, as per Van Dijk, this involves personal information only known to another because one has specifically chosen to share it. This information is not generally known, may well be secret, and perhaps best kept that way.<sup>84</sup> Furthermore, in the samples, Personal Information typically involves a third party, who may not know that the information is being shared. In these samples, Marking Membership typically masks illicit business; these people have something to hide.

In both *L/Roselle* and *Delicate Distress*, for example, between the men, instances of 'T' pronouns are linked to illicit purposes, particularly by those who should know better than to be involved in such activities. In *Delicate Distress*, while Lord Woodville uses 'T' in an Emotional-Distress moment, that emotional distress arises because he is dabbling with illicit interests. A parallel situation occurs in *L/Roselle* between the Marquis and Valville, when the Marquis seeks support from his friend, only to reject him when the type of support the Marquis wanted is not forthcoming. Again, however, the Marquis' purposes are unwholesome. A weaker but comparable example comes from *Love-Letters*, between Philander and Octavio, when Octavio announces to Philander his own feelings for Sylvia, appropriately expecting that Philander may receive this information badly. Philander, however, is supportive—even empathetic—in his response to Octavio. This occurs unbeknownst to Sylvia, and at least partially 'marks' these men as insiders in the 'lovers of Sylvia' group. Marking Membership, then, need not be an 'official' group affiliation. In these samples, between these men, the first membership marked by the usage may be that of gender. An additional membership marked is that of intimate friends. Nevertheless, these memberships also involve private information.

Another variety of Marking Membership—one that particularly hinges on illicit purposes between intimate friends—occurs between Léonor and Juliette in *L/Roselle*. That Léonor and Juliette address one another with *tu* emphasizes not only their nefarious

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<sup>83</sup> Interestingly, the daughter never uses *tu* with her mother, a fact I would attribute to the 'respectful' tradition of children not addressing their elders with the familiar form, even within the family.

<sup>84</sup> In this sense, the illicit romances all involve Marking Membership, although this category is not the main one between those two parties.

purposes but also their low status: they are *filles*, not ladies.<sup>85</sup> For them, their reciprocal and consistent use of *tu* is simply due to the friendship between them, an appropriate choice based on the intimacy of their relationship and the alignment of their goals. It is the view from outside, of this particular insider commonality, that emphasizes the Membership Marking aspect of their 'T' choice. It is not that Léonor and Juliette would use 'T' in order to designate themselves as 'low class', but it is effective in providing the external reading audience an additional means for recognizing their 'badness'.

In this way, Solidarity-Membership Marking brings in the parallel situation of 'internal' usage between the participants and the 'external' usage as judged by a more public audience,<sup>86</sup> bringing in the matter of a writer creating the story and making these choices for the characters. Specifically, the author has chosen to affiliate *tu* with some characters, and not others. In the case of Léonor and Juliette, it helps label them. Because an external reading audience is involved in the exchange as 'outsider', interpretation and recognition of the usage also occurs externally. The external reading audience is in a position to judge those who use *tu*, particularly when it is made easy for them, as with Léonor and Juliette.

In L/Roselle, 'T' use is associated with 'baseness'. Reciprocal use of *tu* reinforces the low social status and questionable moral character of Léonor and Juliette in the eyes of an external reading audience. As suggested, the use of *tu* by the Marquis is associated with 'lowering himself' to Léonor's level. He distorts its 'proper' use, and further lowers himself, when he calls upon his friend to support him in his illicit pursuits, incorporating pronoun choice as part of that situation. That the Marquis consistently uses *vous* with his sister, for example, illustrates his ability to draw upon his sociolinguistic repertoire for an appropriate polite form when necessary, but *politesse* is not his goal when he addresses Valville as *vous*. Far from it, in fact. His social rank means the Marquis would be expected to associate himself with polite usage. Léonor and Juliette demonstrate that lower classes favour *tu*, can pull 'better' people down to their level using language,<sup>87</sup> and can 'act the part' and use polite forms when they wish. Using the polite forms, however, does not elevate them to the social rank to which they may aspire, which may be interpreted as a piece of social commentary on the 'corruption' of the upper social ranks by those who did not belong there, despite their attempts at affected language use to gain entry, particularly in the French context.

'T' use presents as highly nuanced in these examples. 'T' choice can reflect positive, intimate, support-related uses or negative, illicit, lowly uses. Even in the case of Philander and Sylvia, to cite one example, where 'T' use is associated with their love, it is also associated with the secrecy and inappropriateness of their conduct. These contrasting 'T' implications across the period further pose some interesting considerations, also relating to the experience being designed for the external reading audience. That is, that pronouns are

<sup>85</sup> While letters written by Lord Woodville's love interest are not viewed in *Delicate Distress*, letters discussing her explain her character clear to Audience B.

<sup>86</sup> This exemplifies the fictional relationships recognized by Halliday.

<sup>87</sup> Language as modelled also contributes to the 'warning' offered by the novel.



distributed the way they are suggests that the external reading audience was expected to appreciate the nuances of the usage. Otherwise, why bother?

Additionally, the particular contrasts in distribution serve the dual function of modelling usage worth emulating—or not. Again, ‘T’ is not always associated with undesirables. In *Love-Letters*, *L/Mistriss Fanni*, *L/Montier*, and *L/Péruvienne*, ‘T’ is used by respectable, admirable women in moments of emotional intensity.<sup>88</sup> This may have the potential effect of modelling acceptable language use for women. In fact, for the external reading audience, these are positive representations of ‘T’ choices, not affiliated with the behaviour of the lower class *filles*. Léonor and Juliette are not models of proper language use, just as they are not models of appropriate behaviour. For the external reading audience, ‘T’ usage that lowers a person’s moral or social quality or which is already associated with lower ranking people is presented more as a caution, something to avoid except in the most private relationships where one would not be mistaken as an undesirable, and where one is not behaving in a lowly manner.

#### 6.4b Trends: Connotations of Increasing French Usage and the Evolving Sensibility of English Style

The most important trend in T/V usage as indicated by these samples is, essentially, the contrast between French and English usage, and how those trends may correlate with those respective societies in the period. Simply put, while the English novels present a more stylistic choice of ‘T’ pronouns—one strongly linked to fictional effect—the French novels suggest diachronic progression in usage, even if fictional purposes are also indicated. A second consideration with the French novels is the range in distribution in the four novels where *tu* does occur. While the samples here are too limited to make definitive claims about French diachronic trending, there is progress from no usage to extensive usage. Samples from other documents in the period might help clarify distribution trends, but those found here merit discussion.

Certainly, it is not claimed that *tu* was not in use prior to these novels or that it would not be found in any other novels during the period. Simply, in the first three novels—*M/Henriette-Sylvie*, *R/Voyage* and *L/Deux Dames*—neither the intended letter recipient nor the external reading audience (in an ‘adopting the mantle’ role) is addressed using *tu*.<sup>89</sup> For two of these novels, *M/Henriette-Sylvie* and *L/Deux Dames*, this is not surprising. *Henriette-Sylvie*, for example, is writing to a social superior, consistently addressing her as ‘Votre Altesse’ and ‘Madame’, and one would not expect a familiar pronoun being directed toward her. Similarly, the ‘deux dames’ in *L/Deux Dames* write with a degree of social distance, also addressing one another as ‘Madame’, not giving any particular signs of a relationship beyond that of social acquaintances. However, in *R/Voyage d’Espagne*, *la comtesse* is writing to her *chère cousine*, whom she positions as sharing with her a fairly warm relationship. While the

<sup>88</sup> Albeit illicit love interests colour both *Love-Letters* and *L/Mistriss Fanni*, and also *L/Péruvienne* if the incestuous possibility of her relationship with Aza is included.

<sup>89</sup> I am not reporting on usage found in dialogue, as this would be a separate study.

*politesse* she maintains is not overly surprising, this is the one source (of these first three) where a different choice might have been possible.<sup>90</sup> That is, there might have been room for the private pronoun. That this did not occur indicates that maintaining *politesse* was of paramount importance during this period and whatever shift occurred in 'T' usage, it occurred after the publication of *R/Voyage d'Espagne*. Or, that an external reading audience was in mind all along.

In comparing English and French usage, the first trend is that French uses 'T' more than English. This distinction would arise from the direction polite language was taking in the two countries. In English, a clear preference for the polite form, *you*, is emerging.<sup>91</sup> This shift, to a polite form as the norm, corresponds with increasing concern with a more civilized, polite society. If, however, English was moving toward sensibility, the same cannot be said for French. In French, a sharper awareness of the contrasting pronouns seems to emerge, one that is reflected in increasing 'T' usage in the novels of the period. Further, the first three French novels correspond to the peak of the *politesse* time period, and they maintain the *vous* position. The remaining four novels, loosely clustering around mid 18<sup>th</sup> Century and pre-Revolution, not only use *tu* but also specifically use it to differentiate between types of relationships, emotional states, secret information and social ranks.

This can be viewed two ways. First and simplest is that, in a society that was becoming increasingly pro-democracy and anti-monarchy, it was not as requisite that everyone behave politely or mark social status with their pronouns. Instead, conveying solidarity and equality, including via language choices, became more important. However, language choices are not necessarily so straight forward. It is also possible that, in a society that was becoming increasingly pro-democracy and anti-monarchy, one that was increasingly moving toward a degree of 'levelling' as membership in social ranks became more fluid and open to new members, it was also increasingly important to use language to make distinctions that were 'disappearing' in the culture.<sup>92</sup> Pronouns could have provided a relatively subtle way of doing this.

*L/Roselle*, the last of the French novels, may particularly be viewed as associating social distinctions and distinctions in personal 'quality' with pronoun use. The samples from this source illustrate a more complete range of distribution as far as 'T' use is concerned. In fact, a trend is suggested here as well. That is, of the four French novels where 'T' use occurs, it is the first three that include positive usage while the last one includes the negative use (i.e., that associated with class marking and related 'bad' behaviour). As discussed, this especially applies to the usage between Léonor and Juliette, as part of their ongoing condition, but also of the Marquis with Léonor, during his 'mad' temporary state. In *L/Roselle*, even the Supportiveness 'T' use by Juliette and by Valville is associated with illicit purposes, and not Supportiveness of the sort supplied by the mother in *L/Montier*. This pattern is mirrored, although weakly, in the English novels. Of the two novels that use 'T'

<sup>90</sup> Admittedly, the idea of *la comtesse* writing in *tu* is unthinkable.

<sup>91</sup> Although the polite connotation does lose strength, in time.

<sup>92</sup> Especially for those worried about losing status.

pronouns, the first (Love-Letters) involves similarly positive usage to the three French novels, those relating to Emotional Distress and Supportiveness.<sup>93</sup> The other novel using 'T', *Delicate Distress*, is the last of the English novels and involves negative use—that relating to bad behaviour—although it also exemplifies Emotional Distress and Supportiveness usage.

An initial question regarding this finding is whether the negative usage accurately reflects who, within society, actually tended to use 'T' pronouns. Certainly, the lower classes were *perceived* as using it. Whether they truly did use it more often than they used 'V' or whether they used 'T' more than people of other social ranks, are different questions. Additionally, men's actual usage compared to its depiction in the novels is an interesting path of inquiry. Men using 'T' pronouns amongst themselves may well correlate to Solidarity in the sense of 'mateship', not necessarily used in connection to nefarious purposes. Finally, as previously mentioned, if the English samples' use of 'T' is designed to emulate French usage, it is again worth noting that it occurred in this set of English novels before it occurred in the French set. That is, French people were apparently perceived as using the 'T' pronoun by English people, even if the French were not depicting themselves as using it until later.

An additional strand of inquiry arises from the fact of these works being novels intended for an external reading audience, which has also been touched upon. In making the negative 'T' choices, the authors presumably understood their role in characterization, both of the characters and of their activities and emotional states. Certainly, it may simply be that these examples depicted usage in society, as the authors knew or perceived it. However, in stigmatizing their characters, they may well have been further stigmatizing the usage.<sup>94</sup> This last option becomes particularly interesting when juxtaposed against the usage of higher-ranked women, in both *L/Roselle* and *Delicate Distress*. In both cases, these ladies consistently use the 'V' form, and in both cases, they are portrayed as being right about what is right. *L/Roselle* is particularly noteworthy in this sense. For example, while not included in these samples—largely because *vous* is consistently maintained—the letters exchanged between the Marquis' sister, la Comtesse de Saint-Sever, and approximately half a dozen other 'individuals of quality', make the point. Throughout these exchanges, *vous* is the pronoun of choice, despite the two main topics being of the Emotional-Distress variety: her despair over the Marquis' conduct and her fear when his life is in danger. She is a particularly effective foil for the 'T' usage of the low-ranking *filles*, Léonor and Juliette. In terms of stigmatizing T/V usage, at least for women, *L/Roselle* does pair 'T' usage with the undesirable types and 'V' usage with the good role models.

A trend also relating to the external reading audience's experience *vis-à-vis* T/V pronouns is that of its reciprocity. Of the novels where 'T' occurs, only *L/Péruvienne* and *L/Mistriss Fanni* do not show the exchange of letters. Indeed, while the other side of the exchanges are not shown, there is reason to believe those recipients would return 'T'. This observation emphasizes the fact that, in these novels, 'T' usage is generally represented as a

<sup>93</sup> I do not really view the use of *thou* between Philander and Sylvia as marking them in a negative way for engaging in illicit behaviour, but I acknowledge this interpretation is possible.

<sup>94</sup> Again, this is the contrast between sociolinguistics and sociology of language.

reciprocal event, although L/Montier (i.e., the daughter does not use 'T' with the mother) and Love-Letters (i.e., Sylvia does not use 'T' with Octavio) are exceptions. On balance, the suggestion is that 'T' choice occurs as a mutual arrangement. Further, by primarily demonstrating the usage within reciprocal exchanges, the risk is reduced that the external reading audience would take offense at possibly being addressed inappropriately. That is, this audience will have a sense of being addressed with adequate respect and politeness since 'T' is aimed at a known, specific entity.

In summary, the increasing 'T' use in the French novels may reflect increasing 'T' use in French in general. As suggested, in the French case, that 'T' use was becoming more widespread in society is quite possible given the change to an environment that did not actively promote *politesse*, as it had previously. If *tu* was a means of conveying solidarity within the French Communities of Practice, its use may well have been more common among more people of different ranks across the period. Setting aside negative-positive interpretations of usage, it may well be that *tu* appearing on the pages of a novel became more socially acceptable (or, at least, less shocking) than it would have been in 1671, 1691 and 1719, when the first three French novels in this study appeared. If so, this also represents a shift in culture, and could at least partially account for the increase in the use of 'T' in these printed samples of the period. At least, it would have given writers license to employ 'T' pronouns for effect, a development that appears to have occurred during the century under question. In that sense, stylistic options were opening for the French as well as the English. English, on the other hand, in these samples, was establishing 'V' choice as the norm, with 'T' primarily stylistic, whether addressing the idealized abstract or whether creating a more authentic fictional French context for a story.

### 6.5 Effects of Choosing 'T' or 'V': Relationships and Audience Positioning

Although much of this chapter has reported on T/V use as represented in the samples, along with some interpretations of its significance, the most important point—in the context of this study—may well be that the external reading audience is never positioned as receiving 'T'. 'T' use is clearly depicted as occurring at the private end of the continuum, although not to an exclusion of 'V' in private relationships. The crucial point with 'T' use is that it is *depicted*. Use that could be viewed as 'aimed at' the external reading audience involves 'V'.

While 'T' is used to address parties in familiar relationships as well as the in the 'most familiar' relationships—those involving the Intimacy of illicit love affairs, the external reading audience is not positioned as a participant in those relationships. Simply put, while private relationships are depicted, these are not the sorts of relationship extended to the external reading audience. Instead, when 'T' is involved, the external reading audience is positioned as an outsider, observing the exchanges and the stories being shared. In this way, in both French and English, 'T' stands as a tool of fiction.

In some cases, the external reading audience is positioned so as to easily 'adopt the mantle' of intended letter recipient and 'V' pronouns are instrumental in achieving this.<sup>95</sup> This effect is intensified in the French novels, especially in M/Henriette-Sylvie, R/Voyage d'Espagne and L/Deux Dames, because 'T' is an available choice specifically not chosen.<sup>96</sup> A parallel situation occurs in the English sources. Two English novels, L/Harriot Stuart and H/Ophelia, also position the external reading audience 'as if' participants and the 'V' pronoun is used. Further, in the two English novels where 'T' occurs, the external reading audience is positioned as outsider.<sup>97</sup> When 'V' is used in this way, the prospect of fictional writing being involved can be more easily overlooked and the 'tellings' can be received 'as if' real. That is, the external reading audience is not positioned as an outsider to the communication. A remarkable effect of this is that, although 'V' is more polite, more distant, more associated with public usage, in these sources, it can position the external reading audience as a participant in the exchange. In these cases, the external reading audience, in 'adopting the mantle' of recipient, becomes someone to whom the letters *could be* directed. After all, *participant* is a 'friendlier' position than *voyeur*.

Therefore, in both French and English sources, 'V' occurs in ways that enhance the external reading audience's ability to 'forget' fiction is being conducted, enabling them to interact 'as if' the writings are genuine. As a result, the external reading audience's experience may seem more 'individualized', fostering a pseudo-familiar relationship with the letterwriter because it offers the possibility of being a participant rather than an observer. However, it is not clear that 'V' use is solely responsible for this sense of privacy between novel and external reading audience. Rather, it can make 'adopting the mantle' of recipient easier, even if it also occurs in conjunction with other factors that produce the more private relationship.

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<sup>95</sup> When a non-letterwriting narrator is involved, first-person plural may be used to address the external reading audience, but this is another topic.

<sup>96</sup> This is true of L/Deux Dames because one letterwriter is the primary storyteller while the other is the 'listener', a role open to the external reading audience.

<sup>97</sup> Likewise, the external reading audience is an outsider in all four of the French novels that use 'T'.



## **Chapter 7—Samples and Findings, Part 2: Omission of Openings and Closings in the Letters**

This is the only chapter to examine interactional language at the level of genre. It considers the *lack* of openings and closings in the letters. This category was not anticipated; more so perhaps than the other categories, it emerged in the review. In the course of reading the novels, a noticeable and sometimes sharp contrast became apparent between those letters which provided thorough contextualization not only of a given letter, but often of the entire collection, and those letters that provided virtually none. Omission of these generic sections represents ellipsis, as Joos describes it, and has an impact on the sort of relationship offered to the named recipient as well as an external reading audience. Specifically, ellipsis of the generic sections reflects and promotes familiar and intimate relationships with the intended letter recipients, but leaves an external reading audience ‘on the outside’, in a less private position, similar to the contrasting positions seen in Chapter 6. Inclusion of the sections, while possibly signalling less familiar relationships with the intended recipient, allows the external reading audience to participate in a more familiar, a more ‘included’, fashion.

This chapter includes three main sections. The first discusses the matter of identifying ellipsis, in terms of defining it and finding it. Examples of openings and closings that do occur in the novels are offered, the indirect route to ellipsis being the most effective means for highlighting it. The second section of this chapter focuses on the inclusion rates and the trends they suggest. The inclusion rates, in fact, indicate contrasts between the French and English sources. While they are not exactly moving in opposite directions, a suggestion of such paths exists between the two sets of novels. The last section offers some interpretation of the findings.

### **7.1 Samples: Highlighting What Isn’t There**

The main difficulty in cataloguing examples of this type is the fact that ellipsis necessarily involves what is missing. Because it is difficult to offer examples of ‘the absent’, the approach here is to identify what constitutes the relevant generic sections and to track how often those sections are omitted. In this rather backhanded way, describing what *is there* may lead to an understanding of what is not. In turn, the ellipses events can be identified.

As Joos has emphasized, ellipsis is possible when the parties are able to assume common knowledge, experiences and understanding. These matters need not be fully explained in the instant communicative event, as they form part of the context that the parties bring to the exchange. As such, ellipsis is a main feature of interactional language at the ‘intimate’ and ‘casual’ end of Joos’ language use scales. These familiar styles of language are situated at the private end of the private-public continuum.

For this language category, ellipsis encompasses both the missing generic sections and the kind of contextualizing information typically contained in them. This information would include topic, purpose in writing, relationship between participants and associated common knowledge. When these sections are omitted, relationships between the parties are assumed and acted upon, rather than being described in some way. Because the parties are well-known to one another, excessive explanations—or, indeed, any explanations, in

some cases—are not needed. Topics are simply addressed, or triggered with minimal cues, but not introduced in a dedicated section. There is no ‘warm-up’ to the direction of the letter; there is no ‘wrap up’ of the discussion. To a reader ‘on the outside’, information may seem abruptly ‘blurted out’. The more prevalent the ellipsis, the less overt contextualization is on offer, and the more work is required by an external reading audience in order to understand. However, ellipsis of this nature also contributes to the sense of a private relationship between the letterwriter and the stated recipient.

The lack of openings in the letters was first observed due to the sense of ‘walking into the middle’ of a conversation experienced with some of the letters. It was this effect that pointed toward a difference in how the letters handled this relationship sign, prompting a more thorough tracking not only of openings but of closings as well. From a practical perspective, how to track this presented several issues. Simultaneous concerns included keeping track of the presence of openings and closings in every letter and defining—in a workable way—what ‘opening’ and ‘closing’ meant. Tracking inclusion of the sections involved keeping a tally of all the letters, but first required those definitions. To that end, ‘development’ was the key indicator. It was more than the ‘beginning’ or ‘end’ to a letter, it was how much ‘work’ the section did in terms of orienting an audience to the communicative exchange. Therefore, development criteria determined whether a letter was rated as ‘yes’ or ‘no’ *vis-à-vis* including the generic section.

An opening, for example, required more than ‘my dear cousin’ or someone’s name. Typically, the section would attempt to ‘set up’ the subject matter of the letter, to indicate the direction the letter would take. Commonly, developed openings mention that a letter is being written, often in response to a letter written by the other party, which also functions as an acknowledgement of the relationship between the parties. Often, there is a ‘because’ factor in the opening, indicating why the letter is being written or what the topic is going to be. This ‘because’ factor usually stresses that the recipient has specifically requested the information. A greeting of some sort is often involved, but not always.

On the other hand, other letters do not include these signs. In those letters that simply begin, other characteristics are typical: they respond to a topic previously mentioned (whether known to the external reading audience or not) without any particular introduction of that topic or they begin a discussion without providing any particular context. Absent contextual cues may involve topic, purpose in writing and/or information on the participants’ relationships (as mentioned). Again, in more private communication, these elements of context need not be stated as the participants can assume the other party understands—or, in the alternative, they may be briefly referenced and incorporated. Such letters, those that begin as if in the middle of a conversation, without introducing the topic or the letterwriter or without acknowledging the reason for the letter, have not been counted as including openings.

Like openings, closings required parameters in order to recognize them. A ‘developed’ closing required more than ‘adieu’ or ‘farewell’. While such words may well be included in the developed closing, they were only counted if more was involved. As with



openings, the ‘something more’ in the developed closing might involve an acknowledgement that a letter is being written—or terminated. A developed closing might indicate why the letterwriter must stop writing—the arrival of guests is a typical example. Another common element of a developed closing would be a request for advice or some other response from the addressee. It may involve a declaration regarding the quality of the relationship. In all cases, it involves more than simply ‘signing off’.

‘Grey area’ does exist. This is particularly true of closings. For example, letters that include ‘adieu’ or ‘farewell’ with a few additional words serve the purpose of a closing within the context of a certain letter or collection of letters. However, serving the purpose in a limited context does not necessarily satisfy the development requirement as laid out in this section. The point is to identify the level of attention applied to the generic sections; therefore, only those sections showing an adequate degree of development are ‘counted’ in the tally. This chapter seeks to shine light on the letters that do not develop these sections, albeit via a somewhat reverse-angle approach. Ultimately, the more private the letter and its language, the less likely a developed closing will be included.

### 7.1a Samples: Recognizing Developed Openings and Closings

Evaluating these sections is a somewhat subjective exercise relying upon a ‘feel’ for what constitutes a developed opening or closing. To that end, examples illustrating the generic sections are perhaps the most effective way of clarifying the point. As will be further elaborated, the French sources generally included more examples and this is reflected in the examples included here.

Openings, as mentioned, tend to explain why the letter is being written and give an indication of the relationship between the parties. Openings usually indicate the line of conversation to be pursued. The following examples of openings are also openings to the collections, as they are all from the first letter in the novels.

The first French novel, *M/Henriette-Sylvie*, includes a rather extensive opening. It explains the reason for the letters (the account has been requested) and the purpose in writing (setting straight the record of Henriette-Sylvie’s life while being entertaining), as well as setting up the rather thorough introduction of Henriette-Sylvie herself which immediately follows this opening. At the same time, it makes it clear that the ‘requester’ of the letters is a social superior, a rather nice option for the external reading audience willing to ‘adopt the mantle’ of recipient. *M/Henriette-Sylvie* begins:

Ce ne m’est pas une légère consolation, Madame, au milieu de tant de médisances qui déchirent ma réputation partout, que Votre Altesse désire que je me justifie. J’en ai les sentiments que je dois, et pour n’en être pas ingrate, j’obéirai volontiers au commandement qu’elle me fait de la divertir, par un récit fidèle de mes erreurs innocentes.

Non que j’espère jamais pouvoir arracher des esprits les cruelles impressions que la calomnie a données de ma conduite: le siècle ne permet pas que je me flatte de cette

pensée. Mais pour me servir des termes de Votre Altesse, il viendra un temps, où les hommes ne pourront plus juger si criminellement par eux-mêmes de leurs semblables; parce qu'ils n'auront plus les mœurs si corrompues ni si criminelles; et alors on ajoutera peut-être plus de foi à ce que j'aurai écrit de l'innocence de mes actions, qu'à ce qu'en auront pu dire mes ennemis.

Je ne cacherai rien, non pas même des plus folles aventures où j'aurai eu quelque part; afin que Votre Altesse en puisse rire, dans le même temps qu'elle me plaindra d'autre chose; et il me semble que quand elle ne m'en aurait pas donné la permission, je ne devrais pas laisser de le faire; car sans cela, Madame, vaudrais-je les moments que vous emploieriez à la lecture d'une si ennuyeuse histoire, que celle de ma vie? (Villedieu, 2003, p. 43).

R/Voyage d'Espagne, the second French novel, written to the 'chère cousine' of *la comtesse*, still adheres to the demands of *politesse* in terms of providing generic requirements and the contextualization that goes with them. Again, the recipient has requested the letters. The language used is interactional and includes referencing to Interpersonal Knowledge shared by the participants, especially with regard to apparent letters written by the cousin that the external reading audience never sees. Letter 1, and thus the volume, begins:

Puisque vous voulez être informée de tout ce qui m'arrive et de tout ce que je remarque dans mon voyage, il faut vous résoudre, ma chère cousine, de lire bien des choses inutiles, pour en trouver quelques-unes qui vous plaisent. Vous avez le goût si bon et si délicat, que vous ne voudriez que des aventures choisies et des particularités agréables. Je voudrais bien aussi ne vous en point raconter d'autres: mais quand on rapporte fidèlement les choses telles qu'elles se sont passées, il est difficile de les trouver toujours comme on les souhaite.

Je vous ai marquée par ma dernière lettre tout ce qui m'est arrivée jusqu'à Bayonne... (D'Aulnoy, 1874/2005, p. 1)

The third French novel, L/Deux Dames, 'feels' the most formal, mainly because the subject matter is public information and because the relationship between the two women appears to be 'public' as well. The first letter includes a fairly extensive developed opening. Rather than simply stating that the recipient has requested the information, this introduction probes her reasons for doing so. This opening acknowledges the information the writer is able to share, as well as how she came to have it. In addition, because this is the first letter, it is difficult to ascertain whether the tone is teasing or if it might be sarcastic or even critical. However, in the spirit of *politesse*, and taking into consideration the rest of the collection, 'conversational jousting' seems likely.

Quel intérêt prenez-vous tant à l'abbé de Bucquoy, pour me donner si peu de répit à vous instruire de son histoire? Y auroit-il eu quelque mystère de coeur entre vous deux? L'aimez-vous sur sa seule réputation? N'est-ce que la curiosité qui vous tient? Mais croyez-vous que je n'aie que son évocation de la Bastille en tête, et vous imaginez-vous que ce soit chose si facile que d'avoir un détail bien assuré d'un événement aussi rare, et que la plupart du monde regarde ici comme une fable? Sans ce que vous m'en dites en gros, je n'y ajouterais moi-même aucune foi. J'avois certainement besoin de votre témoignage pour m'engager à un plus ample éclaircissement. Je ne veux pas trop vous faire valoir mes soins. Ce sont des jugements différents à ne pas finir qu'on fait ici de votre abbé. Presque un chacun veut même que le vrai abbé de Bucquoy, accusé de soulèvement et arrêté en Bourgogne, soit toujours à la Bastille pour n'en jamais sortir. Ainsi fait-on d'ordinaire passer par l'étamine le pauvre étranger qui s'attire quelque attention. J'en ai eu ma part comme d'autres. Par bonheur qu'un de mes amis sort de chez moi, qui voit presque tous les jours chez les ministres cet ennemi irréconciliable du despotisme de la France. Comme il a eu le loisir de s'instruire de ses aventures, c'est pour satisfaire à votre impatience que je vous fais part de tout ce que j'en ai appris (Du Noyer, 1866/1989, p. 1-2).

The question of this opening's tone notwithstanding, the language itself is interactional, making it clear that another letter—written by the other party—preceded this one.<sup>98</sup> Despite this sign of Interpersonal Knowledge (as Van Dijk describes it), potential confusion that might be experienced by an external reading audience fades quickly, because the letterwriter refers back to the essential components of the subject matter almost immediately, naming names and so on. It is quickly apparent that this letter is not going to continue discussing the private relationship and experiences between these parties. Their relationship within the exchange of letters is defined by the fact that one letterwriter is the primary 'knower' of the story and the other is the 'requester' of information. This sets up an unequal status relationship, at least within this conversation, regardless of what their relationship external to the conversation may be. In doing so, it also establishes the more public nature of the exchange and reduces the likelihood of private language as a way of speaking to the audience.

Familiar Letters is the third of the English novels, and has some tendency toward including generic sections, possibly because they serve as models for familiar letters between men and women.<sup>99</sup> The first letter is an interesting exception to the openings patterns noted, in that it is written by the male and it is he who extends the invitation to engage in a letterwriting exchange. As models of familiar letters, perhaps this also models the male's 'proper' role as the initiator, with the woman's role to await the invitation and

<sup>98</sup> In fact, it is possible the request was face-to-face and not in a letter.

<sup>99</sup> Although the rates are low compared to the French figures.

respond as desired by the man. In any case, Letter 1, Artander's first letter, opens the collection and sets a certain tone for the exchange. He writes:

It is now six whole Days since I left the pleasures of the Town, and the more agreeable Amusement of Berina's Company, for a lonely Retreat into the dull Country where Solitude indulges Melancholy, and Time, that used to fly, goes only a Foot-pace. Thought is now my only Companion, and it often diverts me with the pleasing Remembrance of your Promise of an eternal Friendship; but, as human Nature is very frail, it may possibly want the Supports of Correspondence to keep it up: I therefore earnestly sue for a speedy Answer to every Letter I write (Davys, p. 1999, p. 93).

H/Ophelia comprises only one letter, but is careful about observing the generic conventions. This opening also opens the collection, resuming the roles more typical of the other openings. That is, a social superior has requested the recounting of a life story; this time, Ophelia's.

Your Ladyship had little Compassion either on yourself or me, when you desired me to write you an exact Account of every Circumstance of my Life, and even of my Thoughts, or you did not consider the long Detail into which this lead me; a Detail tedious for you to read, and difficult for me to write. You expressly desire to know the Impressions I received from the first View of Customs so unlike what I had ever seen, at a Time when they are become so familiar to me, that I almost forget many of them were ever otherwise. But your Commands can meet with nothing but an implicit Obedience from me; and when I mention the Difficulties which may occur in the Execution, it is not with a Design of disputing them, but to excuse my ill Performance of the Task.

You say I must first account for the Ignorance in which I was educated. This is obliging me to trouble your Ladyship with more Adventures than my own; and is scarcely in order, since it makes me begin with the Relation of Circumstances, with which I was not acquainted till a considerable Time after my History of myself will end (Fielding, 2004, p. 38).

The other half of this discussion focuses on closings. Like openings, developed closings also involve certain elements. As mentioned, these generally include 'wrapping up' the letter, usually with a focus on interaction with the other party.

The first example of a closing comes from M/Henriette-Sylvie. Closings appear in every letter in the collection, the only novel of the fourteen where this is the case. Closings, then, in M/Henriette-Sylvie carry more of the interactional workload than do the openings. Letter 1 ends as follows:

Enfin, Madame, j'y demeurerai deux ans au milieu des fleurettes espagnoles et flamandes; mais de peur d'importuner Votre Altesse par une trop longue lecture, et pour reprendre moi-même un peu d'haleine, je n'entreprendrai de vous faire le récit de ce qui m'arriva là de remarquable, non plus que celui du reste de mes aventures, qu'à la première occasion que j'aurai d'écrire à Votre Altesse. Je la supplie très humblement de me croire sa très humble servante (Villedieu, 2003, p. 76).

Another example of a closing in *R/Voyage d'Espagne* comes from Letter 15, which is the final letter in the collection. As such, it not only ends the letter but also this volume of letters. In addition, this closing tends to the various social requirements and would be as 'receivable' by the external reading audience as by the intended letter recipient.

Depuis que je suis en ce pays, il me semble que je n'ai rien omis à vous dire. Je vais à présent achever d'écrire mes Mémoires de la cour d'Espagne, puisque les premiers que je vous ai envoyés vous ont plu. Je vous les enverrai à mesure qu'il se présentera des événements dignes de votre curiosité. Je vous promets aussi la relation que vous me demandez. Mais pour tant de petites choses, accordez-m'en une bien considérable, ma chère cousine, c'est la continuation de votre amitié, dont je fais tout le cas que je dois (D'Aulnoy, 1874/2005, p. 535).

*L/Deux Dames*, as mentioned, also includes a consistent share of closings to its letters. Letter 1, in particular, has a developed and involved closing that would perhaps be appropriate for an 'actual' letter written for the purposes involved here, but which also opens the door for information to be provided that would clarify the situation for the external reading audience.

Je ne sais si vous ne vous ennuyez point d'entendre toujours parler de la même chose; mais je vous avoue que je me lasse de traiter toujours le même sujet, et qu'il a fallu un motif aussi puissant que celui de vous faire plaisir, pour m'engager à une narration aussi suivie, car j'aime la diversité en toutes choses. Cependant je me suis surpassée aujourd'hui, et jamais curé de village, en faisant le panégyrique du patron de sa paroisse, n'est entré dans un plus grand détail que celui que je viens de vous faire de la vie de l'abbé du Bucquoy, car je n'en ai pas laissé échapper la moindre circonstance qui m'ait été connue, je l'ai suivi dans tous ses différents états, même jusqu'à la Trappe. J'espère que vous me tiendrez compte de mon exactitude et attention sur tout ce que vous souhaitez.

Je voudrais pourtant bien savoir à propos de quoi vous me faites écrire cette légende, et à quoi une pareille histoire peut vous être bonne. Non, cette curiosité gâterait le mérite de ce que je viens de faire; la véritable complaisance ne doit rien examiner; je veux en suivre les lois, et, en ne me proposant pour but que le désir de

vous plaire, vous faire connaître combien je suis, madame, votre très-humble (Du Noyer, 1866/1989, p. 23-24).

This closing from L/Deux Dames wraps up the letter itself as well as that part of the story that has been related in that letter. In this case, 'wrapping up' the letter necessarily covers the obligatory social niceties of the genres of conversation, storytelling and letterwriting, and all are addressed.

Closings are noticeably less regular in the English novels than in the French. Familiar Letters is a good example. The following closing comes from one of only two letters in the collection that include developed closings.<sup>100</sup> Letter 15 closes:

I have dwelt a little longer upon this Subject than I shou'd have done, because I think and fear Artander seem'd in his last Letter to lean a little that way. When once we approve of a thing, we implicitly act it; and if you be brought to think a Man happy in a fine Wife, the next Work will be to get one yourself: which, if you do, poor Berina may say she had a Friend; for Artander is lost past Recovery. I desire, in your next, you will either make a generous Confession, or give me some Assurance my Thoughts are ill grounded. I own, I grow impatient to be satisfy'd; for as I make but few Friends, I wou'd not lose them I have. You seem not pleas'd I writ no more last time, but you forget Women always talk more than they write, as Men always write more than they think: Your Sex seldom complain for want of Impertinence from ours, it being one of your chiefest Plagues: However, I did design to have fill'd up the empty Space of this Paper, but am interrupted by two or three Ladies who are just come in, and my Correspondence must give place to the Tea-Table (Davys, 1999, p. 114).

H/Ophelia, having started rather formally, ends rather formally as well. Finally, and as with M/Henriette-Sylvie and R/Voyage d'Espagne, this ending could be easily received by an external reading audience 'adopting the mantle' of recipient. The closing serves well as the other 'bookend' framing the letter, as well as the collection.

Having obeyed your Ladyship's Commands, I shall now lay aside my Pen, without making any Apology for being so circumstantial, since Obedience to your Orders made me so; but shall grieve in Silence, that it was not in my Power to render this little Work more worthy of her who is to honour it with a Perusal. If I have in some Places repeated Compliments, which lay me under an Imputation of Vanity, I hope you will consider it as the unavoidable Consequence of telling one's own Story with the Sincerity you required; and as a necessary Thing, in order to keep up in my Reader such an Idea of my Person, as may represent me more worthy of her Attention, which you might have thought thrown away on a Dowdy... (Fielding, 2004, p. 277)

<sup>100</sup> Two others include 'grey zone' closings, where development is marginal but adequate.

These examples are indicative of ‘development’ *vis-à-vis* openings and closings in these novels’ letters. While not an exact science, and while some openings and closings are less developed than others while still being counted in the tally, this approach has allowed measurable classification.

## 7.2 Samples and Findings: The Perspective Offered by Inclusion Rates

Inclusion rates are valuable in establishing an initial road map of usage. The inclusion rates provide a means for organizing a comparison between those letters including openings and/or closings with those that do not.<sup>101</sup> They allow a quick ‘visual’ for comparing consistency within a given novel as well as across the range of novels. These inclusion rates relied upon the definitions and procedures already described, in terms of applying the definitions and keeping a tally. Again, one-word or otherwise minimal representations of interaction were not counted. These numbers were then plotted—as inclusion rates—looking for diachronic trending but also seeking to capture other aspects of their distribution. Inclusion rates, as indicated, offer a quick visual for observing how the novels’ letters manage openings and closings.

Of the categories of samples included in this study, openings and closings of letters are perhaps the most tempting to analyse in terms of quantitative numbers, rather than qualitatively. Indeed, offering inclusion rates moves in that direction. However, statistical analyses or other quantitative methods are not applied further at least partly to avoid inadvertently emphasizing inclusion rates within the ‘big picture’ of the study. Using inclusion rates even as minimally as this may artificially collapse important distinctions that exist between letters in a given source, especially in the case of the ‘ensemble cast’ where the same letterwriter may write differently when in communication with a number of different recipients.<sup>102</sup> However, inclusion rates are offered as part of the initial road map, perhaps something to be considered quantitatively in a subsequent study. As a final point of ‘housekeeping’, because H/Ophelia and L/Harriot Stuart comprise only one letter apiece, they are not included in the calculation of inclusion rates. To do so would artificially inflate the comparative ‘weight’ of these novels, as they either rate at one hundred percent or at zero percent.

### 7.2a Samples and Findings: Openings—Rates, Trends and Comparisons

This section presents the inclusion rates for openings in the letters. French and English results are depicted in charts, and those results will be further reviewed. Again, Joos’ notion of ellipsis has been extended to apply at the level of genre and is associated with more private language. Including the sections reflects—at least—an attention to generic form.

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<sup>101</sup> The charts in this section depict inclusion rates, rather than exclusion rates, in order to follow more naturally from the previous section, which described the nature of the included generic sections. I acknowledge, however, that because ellipsis is the topic, it would have been equally possible to show the rates of exclusion in these charts.

<sup>102</sup> In cases of ensemble-cast letterwriting, the multi-voiced nature of the novel—as Bakhtin discusses it—is particularly evident, and I am reluctant to homogenize that out of the discussion.

Consequently, this reflects as well a more public language. In general, that public language tends to matters of *politesse*-politeness in the social management of conversation and letterwriting. The first chart, Figure 7.1, reflects the inclusion rates for openings in the seven French novels' letters. They are listed chronologically. The particularly striking feature of the French openings chart is the wide variation between novels as far as whether developed openings are included in the letters. That is, the range is from one hundred percent in L/Deux Dames to less than ten percent in L/Roselle.

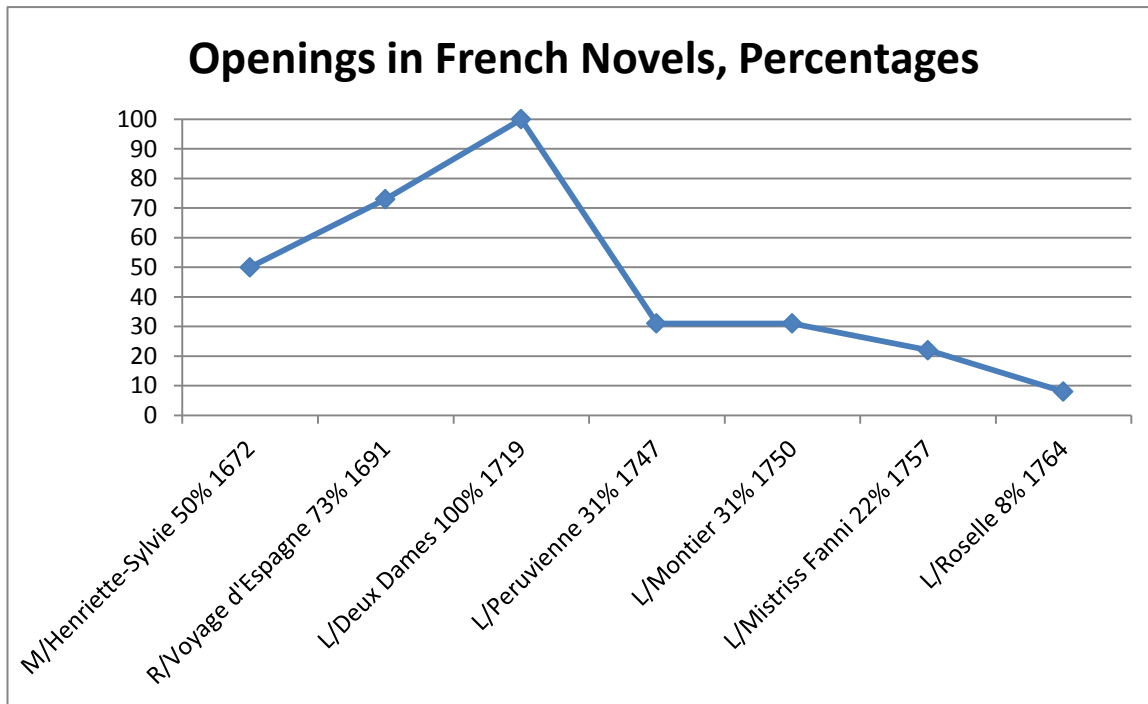


Figure 7.1 Inclusion Rates for Openings in French Novels' Letters

L/Deux Dames—the one source with a 100% opening inclusion rate—is also the only one in which the relationship between the letterwriters is not clear. These two correspondents never state their relationship, and it is not evident that they are more than social acquaintances. Further, they are discussing a public topic: whether the *Abbé* is a real or legendary figure, his story is treated as part of the public domain. Therefore, public information—of a Group, Cultural or National knowledge type,<sup>103</sup> to use Van Dijk's terms—is involved in this set of letters. These two factors—the non-clarified social relationship and the public nature of the information—combine to render social conventions, as they manifest in letters, as obligatory.

L/Roselle is at the opposite end of inclusion tendency, and presents a very different result as well as a very different style of novel. Given that L/Roselle is not the only novel discussing Personal and Interpersonal subject matter, it is remarkable that its opening

<sup>103</sup> I tend to favour viewing this as Cultural or National knowledge, as it appears to be part of a wider public domain than Group.



inclusion rate is not only lower than those of the other novels, but also that it is so low. Several possibilities are behind this, including L/Roselle's chronological placement in the latter part of period, the ensemble cast of letterwriters and other framing techniques. These framing conventions include numbering and labelling of letters, a fictional technique that will be further discussed.<sup>104</sup>

The other main feature reflected in the French novels' chart is that the variation in the inclusion rates does indicate a trend. While inclusion rates climb from the first to the third novel, where it peaks, after that, the inclusion rates drop off. As has been discussed, the culture of *politesse* was at its strongest at the beginning of the period in question, its influence tapering off as the century progressed. The first three novels appeared during this period of *politesse*.

In looking at these first three novels, it is actually surprising that M/Henriette-Sylvie—the first of the novels—has a relatively neutral inclusion rate for openings. Given that the letterwriter is corresponding with a social superior, a clearer adherence to the generic convention might be expected. Several explanations are possible. One is that the first opening—that of the first letter—is particularly lengthy and detailed,<sup>105</sup> and in fact, sets the stage for the rest of the letters. That is, the other letters are all written under the umbrella provided by that first opening. An additional explanation is that the letters are clearly separated by numbering, an artificial<sup>106</sup> framing technique that benefits the external reading audience. Consequently, the letters themselves do not have to work as hard in providing frames.<sup>107</sup> Further, M/Henriette-Sylvie is written as a memoir, recounting Henriette-Sylvie's personal version of information that may well be public, given that the woman who has requested the story already has some knowledge of it. In that sense, blending private and public information may blur the distinctions between private and public language as well. Additionally, despite the environment of *politesse*, M/Henriette-Sylvie is early in the *politesse* period and the incoming mood of other codifying distinctions—emphasizing genres other than 'proper' conversation—was perhaps less applicable.

R/Voyage d'Espagne also shows signs of the *politesse* culture in which it appeared, given its seventy-three percent openings inclusion rate, a rate achieved despite these letters purportedly being written to the 'chère cousine' of the *comtesse*. That is, addressing a family member—even a cousin—might produce less public language than that addressed to an obvious and non-related social superior. There might reasonably be a relaxing of adherence to generic expectations, given that relationship. However, despite these letters being numbered, the *comtesse* is very consistent about contextualizing the relationship between the parties as well as the reason she is writing. In this case, *politesse* culture, as well as the awareness of an external reading audience and the public nature of much of the

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<sup>104</sup> Goffman's terminology for marking boundaries applies throughout this chapter, having been introduced in Chapter 4.

<sup>105</sup> This opening is presented earlier in this chapter.

<sup>106</sup> Artificial in that it is an artefact of compiling the letters as a collection.

<sup>107</sup> Additionally, M/Henriette-Sylvie has a 100% inclusion rate for closings, and this no doubt bears much of the weight of the generic expectation.

information, contributes to this high rate of openings. Additionally, the *comtesse* in this novel would also be of higher social rank than Henriette-Sylvie, and her polite language could be a sign of this.

L/Deux Dames, as mentioned, shares the *politesse* environment as a metalinguistic context, and is also influenced by the more-than-private relationship shared by the parties and the public nature of the story. However, it may also be that the culture of codification was strengthening and began to contribute to a particular awareness of generic expectations. As discussed in earlier chapters, the culture of codification was developing and becoming more firmly entrenched across the period, thereby rendering it more important to convey distinctions between intimate or familiar communication and more formal, public communication. Therefore, it would have no longer been acceptable to simply represent *politesse*. Instead, it would have become more important to emphasize public language use where appropriate. Further, in this case, there is also a combination of storytelling—an oral genre heavily shaped by conversational traditions of the period—and the written genre of letters.<sup>108</sup> Attention to language, so that it addresses these customs, is also a factor.

After L/Deux Dames, the novels' letters tend to be more private, exchanged between private people within private relationships, regarding private matters. Consequently, a decrease in attention to generic conventions makes a great deal of sense. Working together, these two forces—the gradual fall of *politesse* and the rise of codification culture—could explain why attention to the generic conventions peaked so strongly with the third novel, the most formal and public of the entire set, and why the remaining four novels produce such different results.

Both of the next two French novels, L/Péruvienne and L/Montier, present opening inclusion rates of thirty-one percent, a noteworthy two-thirds drop from the one hundred percent of the previous novel, L/Deux Dames. L/Péruvienne and L/Montier are similar in that much of the information is Personal or Interpersonal in nature. They are similar in terms of the private relationships between the correspondents, although the specific forms of familiarity in the relationships are quite different. Additionally, they are different in that L/Péruvienne shows only one side of the correspondence: those letters written by Zilia to two different recipients. L/Montier, on the other hand, shows both sides of the exchange between mother and daughter. Both novels, however, appear mid-Eighteenth Century, which is late in the period under review. Based on these results, the mid-Eighteenth Century would mark the point—in France—when the influence of *politesse* was not only waning but when codification was strengthening. Competition for appropriate language was increasing. This combination of shifts may have increasingly allowed and required that private correspondence look like private correspondence. Omitting openings is one such signal.

L/Mistriss Fanni, with its opening inclusion rate of twenty-two percent, is the next French novel and it bears out these suspicions on several fronts. First, it appeared still later in the period (1757), and its opening inclusion rate is just that much lower than either L/Péruvienne or L/Montier. Structurally, it is most similar to L/Péruvienne, in that it shows

<sup>108</sup> In fact, the addition of epistolary novel represents another layer.

one side of correspondence involving intimates. Further, as would be expected, the subject matter is largely Personal or Interpersonal. Indeed, that Mistriss Fanni ‘takes it public’ sets this book apart from all the others, and is a discussion worthy of further consideration. Certainly, when the letters are written, they are not intended for public consumption. Taken together, these aspects of L/Mistriss Fanni combine to deliver a result that fits with private language.

The last French novel, L/Roselle, takes the opening inclusion rate to a new low of eight percent. One obvious reason that L/Roselle would have the low opening inclusion rate of eight percent lies in the topics involved. That is, these letters are not intended to be read *en famille*, as some letters might be. These letters are quite private, covering material that is Personal or Interpersonal, and are exchanged between participants involved in intimate or familiar relationships. For this reason, ‘cutting out’ generic conventions—in this case, openings—is rather logical. That said, these descriptions apply to the three previous novels as well. Therefore, for L/Roselle to achieve this low rate, something else must be involved.

Two other factors seem especially important in this notably low opening inclusion rate. One reason arises from L/Roselle’s chronological placement; it is furthest from the period of *politesse*. Additionally, it could be most influenced by codification knowledge as it began to play in the latter part of the period—and specifically, as it would apply to the distinctions between intimate and familiar letters. Another reason lies in L/Roselle’s structural difference from the other novels. The other novels primarily comprise the letters of one or two letterwriters, but L/Roselle shows a rather ‘round robin’ exchange between at least half a dozen letterwriters. This extended ensemble cast of letterwriters includes a range of intimate or familiar exchanges that might predictably exclude developed openings. Others, however, are between ‘role model’ letterwriters and could reasonably be expected to demonstrate generic conventions such as ‘proper’ openings—which is not really the case. Therefore, while the Personal-Interpersonal content may be having a particularly strong effect, ‘something else’ is affecting the numbers as well.

An additional issue in L/Roselle, as mentioned, is that framing is less performed by openings than by other conventions that separate and identify the letters. The ensemble cast in L/Roselle presents a particular problem in terms of arranging the material in a way that renders it accessible to an external reading audience. That is, another reason for the very low percentage of developed openings in L/Roselle may lie in the need to regulate the flow of communication taking place in this complicated collection of letters for the benefit of the external reading audience. Specifically, while many of the novels number their letters, L/Roselle consistently includes information about who is writing to whom at the beginning of each letter, thereby providing an artificial and external frame for the letters that reduces the need for the generic convention of openings, at least when the needs of an external reading audience are considered. Perhaps, in this scenario, the inclusion rate can be perceived as artificially low, being more extreme than what would be found in genuine correspondence.

The second chart, Figure 7.2, depicts the inclusion rates for openings in five of the

seven English novels, with H/Ophelia and L/Harriot Stuart omitted from the count, but otherwise shown in chronological order.

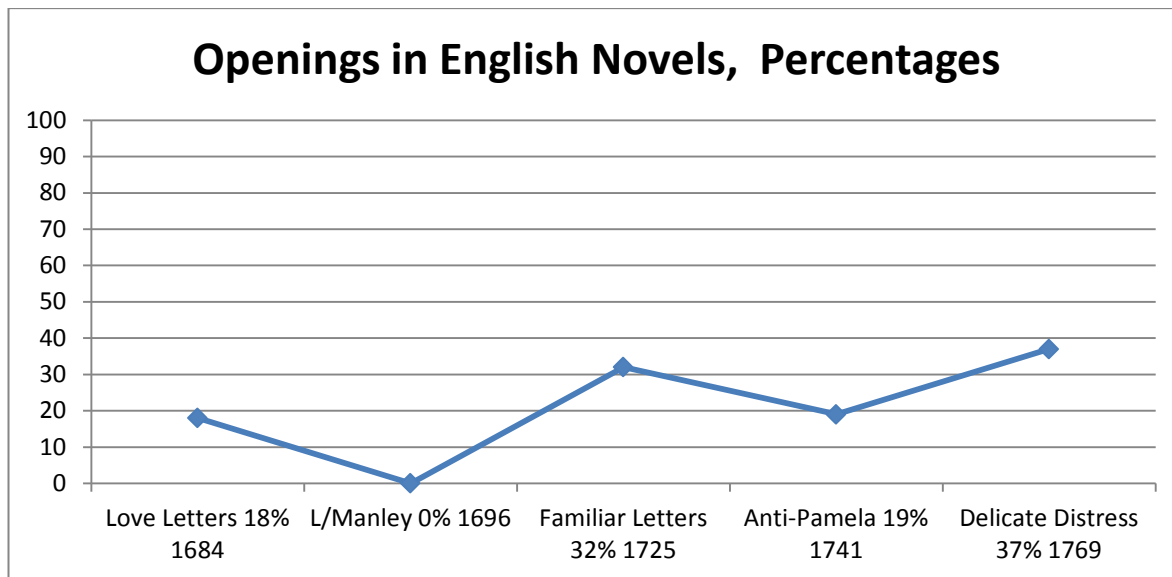


Figure 7.2 Inclusion Rates for Openings in English Novels' Letters

Several striking features present on the chart for the English novels' openings. First, the inclusion rates are generally low, particularly in comparison to the French results. Secondly, the overall curve is rather flat, with only a slight ascending trend. L/Manley is the most noteworthy individual source in that none of its letters contains a developed opening. In context, certain sentences function as openings, but they do not meet the established development criteria. Beyond that, the highest opening inclusion rate (37%) occurs with *Delicate Distress*, the last source in the English set. An overall remark, relating to the low inclusion rates across the English novels, is that even when the letters are not love letters, they do tend to be letters between intimate or familiar participants. Further, they largely discuss matters of Personal and Interpersonal knowledge (as Van Dijk uses the terms). This could influence letterwriters to overlook generic conventions, such as openings, as well as omit explanations of orienting background information. Ellipsis goes so far in some of the English novels (especially L/Manley) as to obscure meaning for an external reading audience. In letters such as those described above, this information would be unnecessary, especially if an external reading audience is not anticipated.

The first novel, *Love-Letters*, with an eighteen percent opening inclusion rate, is a good example. Not surprisingly, most of the letters in this collection are love letters. Those that are not generally involve long-standing friendships. In both cases, much of the information shared is Personal or Interpersonal, with an air of secrecy in some instances. In fact, the information type shifts toward the latter part of the novel, when the stories related tend to be more obviously stories and draw upon cultural or national events for contextualization. That said, even in the love letters, issues of war, and especially their impact on the relationship, present. In any case, regardless of the relationships between correspondents, these letters tend to 'launch into' the topic, rather than begin with an

introduction of the topic or the fact that a letter is being written. Parts 2 and 3 also utilize connective narrative for contextualization of letters, rather than using generic sections within the letters.

L/Manley, as mentioned, stands alone in that none of its letters include a developed opening. Again, within the context of the collection, an opening sentence often serves to situate the addressee—but only in context, with the other party already knowing a great deal. In fact, for the external reading audience, this collection is a bit unnerving to read when one concentrates on those parts of the letters that do not relate stories about the voyage and the other passengers. The external reading audience cannot be confident about understanding these ‘personal’ parts of the letters, as ellipsis blocks the full meaning of these references for that audience. The identity of the other party in this exchange is not entirely clear, other than that it is someone the letterwriter knows well. The other party is previously acquainted not only with the letterwriter’s intention of travelling but also the reasons behind it. It is clear that conversations between them took place before the trip, but exactly what was discussed is not. In Chapter 5, this novel was described as the most difficult to confidently assess as fictional. The ellipsis of openings is a primary factor.

Familiar Letters, with its thirty-two percent opening inclusion rate, is also an interesting case. These letters are between a man and a woman. These correspondents are ‘familiar’ and are presumably meant to demonstrate the proper way to conduct not only the familiar relationship (or to demonstrate that men and women cannot engage in such a relationship), but also the proper way to conduct an exchange of familiar letters. They are not, however, entirely convincing in demonstrating the maintenance of a familiar relationship. Much of their discussion involves Interpersonal knowledge: people they both know, opinionated debates they have been conducting for some time. Some of the content could be described as Personal, in that, while the parties involved are mutual acquaintances, a particular incident might have only been experienced by one. However, introducing these topics is not complex, a quick reference is adequate, and does not generally result in developed openings to set up the discussion. In fact, abrupt ‘start-ups’ of many of these letters contributes to the strong air of an undeclared flirtation underlying the exchange from the very first letter.

The next English novel, *Anti-Pamela*, has the low opening inclusion rate of nineteen percent. *Anti-Pamela* includes frank letters between mother and daughter as well as to the targets of their various schemes, all interspersed throughout the novel’s more traditional narrative. Most of the subject matter is Personal or Interpersonal, and absolutely demands secrecy. In fact, one twist in the plot relies on the very issue of the mail having gone astray due to a robbery: secrecy, thus, was also lost. Given the conspiratorial, conniving nature of most of the letters between Sylvia and her mother, a marked lack of attention to generic conventions in their letters, even when collapsed with the letters designated as written to the targets of their schemes, is a reasonable result.<sup>109</sup> In addition, the connective narrative

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<sup>109</sup> This is not unlike the letters between Léonor and Juliette in *L/Roselle*, where scheming and secrecy are the rule, as is a lack of generic sections.

provided by a non-letterwriting narrator also takes some of the burden off the letters in terms of the contextualization typically provided in generic sections.

*Delicate Distress* is composed entirely of letters, mostly between two sisters but also between two male friends.<sup>110</sup> The relatively high opening inclusion rate (37%) is noteworthy in a novel where most of the content is Personal—it is information known only to another party because the letterwriter has chosen to share it. Further, these topics require delicate handling within private relationships. Only a portion of the sisters' discussion might be shared *en famille*. The sisters enjoy philosophical debate as well as 'news' dealing with mutual friends and acquaintances, along with their family. Such information, as also demonstrated in *Familiar Letters*, can be referenced quickly and without the fanfare of generic structural maintenance. *Delicate Distress* does tend to openings more than any of the other English sources.

*Delicate Distress*, then, presents an opening inclusion rate that is only relatively high, but nevertheless higher than other English sources. Two main factors contribute. The first of these is a practical artefact of the 'round robin' composition of the novel, similar to what was seen with *L/Roselle* in the French sources. However, *Delicate Distress* develops differently than *L/Roselle*. For one, *Delicate Distress* uses openings as one of the orienting devices while *L/Roselle* does not. While both collections of letters incorporate certain techniques to help an external reading audience to follow, *Delicate Distress* relies more on openings carrying part of that load. That is, with an ensemble cast of letterwriters, a range of techniques are helpful to an external reading audience in order to distinguish one letterwriter from another. Numbering the letters helps, as do framing notations regarding the location in which the letter was written or with signatures of the letterwriters.<sup>111</sup> However, including an opening adds to the orienting devices available to the external reading audience. This factor may reflect the influence of strengthening codification relative to the genre of epistolary novel, or it may simply be a strengthening influence of codification in general.

Another factor possibly shaping this opening inclusion rate is that *Delicate Distress* comes late in the period under review (1769). In England, this corresponds to an increasingly polite society, one emphasizing sensibility, as reflected in language. In the bigger picture, it is important to remember that—despite being the highest opening inclusion rate for the English sources—the inclusion rate in *Delicate Distress* is still only thirty-seven percent. It is 'high' only relative to the rates for the other English novels. Nevertheless, if politeness was increasing in England throughout the century, and it is reasonable to contend that it was, then it is also reasonable that novels later in the period would be more likely to observe the polite convention of including developed openings in letters regardless of the relationships between the participants and the 'formality' of the subject matter. Politeness was increasingly codified in such ways, but the English novels do not excessively reflect this.

<sup>110</sup> One additional letterwriter participates as well.

<sup>111</sup> Again, these constitute the sorts of framing conventions Goffman has discussed.

In comparing Figures 7.1 and 7.2, the charts for opening inclusion rates for the French and English samples, two contrasts are immediately evident. These involve the variation between the sources and the direction of the opening inclusion rate trends. For example, the variation between the French novels' opening rates is much wider than for the English. Specifically, the French rates range from one hundred percent in L/Deux Dames down to eight percent in L/Roselle. By comparison, while the English novels' opening rates range from zero in L/Manley to thirty-seven percent in Delicate Distress, the highest English rate is barely above one-third—nowhere near the one hundred percent found in the French samples. Further, the contrast between the French and English charts suggests movement in opposite directions. That is, the lowest opening inclusion rates occur toward opposite ends of the time period: French in 1764, English in 1696. Equally, the highest opening inclusion rates are similarly separated: French in 1719, English in 1769. Or, another way to say it, the lowest French opening rate (1764) occurs at the same end of the time period as the highest English rating (1769). Openings in the French sources, as discussed, peak at the third novel in 1719, following a steady rise, only to drop not only abruptly but also dramatically. The English rates, on the other hand, at worst indicate a flat curve; at best, the curve is gently rising. Therefore, French opening rates decrease across the period, while English rates increase. The French rates also show more volatility and perhaps more sensitivity to societal currents regarding language use.

In conclusion, two cultural forces—*politesse*-politeness and codification—were operating in both countries, but these cultural movements were having different ramifications in terms of language use, at least as evidenced by openings in these letters. These different effects likely correspond to the different impact of these cultural movements in the two countries during the one-hundred year block of time. An examination of the next fifty years might shed light on this possibility, as sensibility took tighter hold in England and France experienced further societal upheaval and disarray relative to former models. In addition, based on these results, it may be that the codification of epistolary novels—as opposed to actual correspondence—allowed and required variations from letters as a genre, including issues of epistolary conventions.

### 7.2b Samples: Closings—Rates, Trends and Comparisons

The other set of tallies reflects closings. Again, closings required more than a person's name or a one-word sign of finishing. Development or 'wrapping up' was needed. The French closing rates are shown in Figure 7.3, with the novels presented chronologically. Figure 7.3 presents several noteworthy considerations. These include the very high inclusion rates of the first three novels, the dramatic drop between the third and fourth novels and the continuation of that relatively lower level.

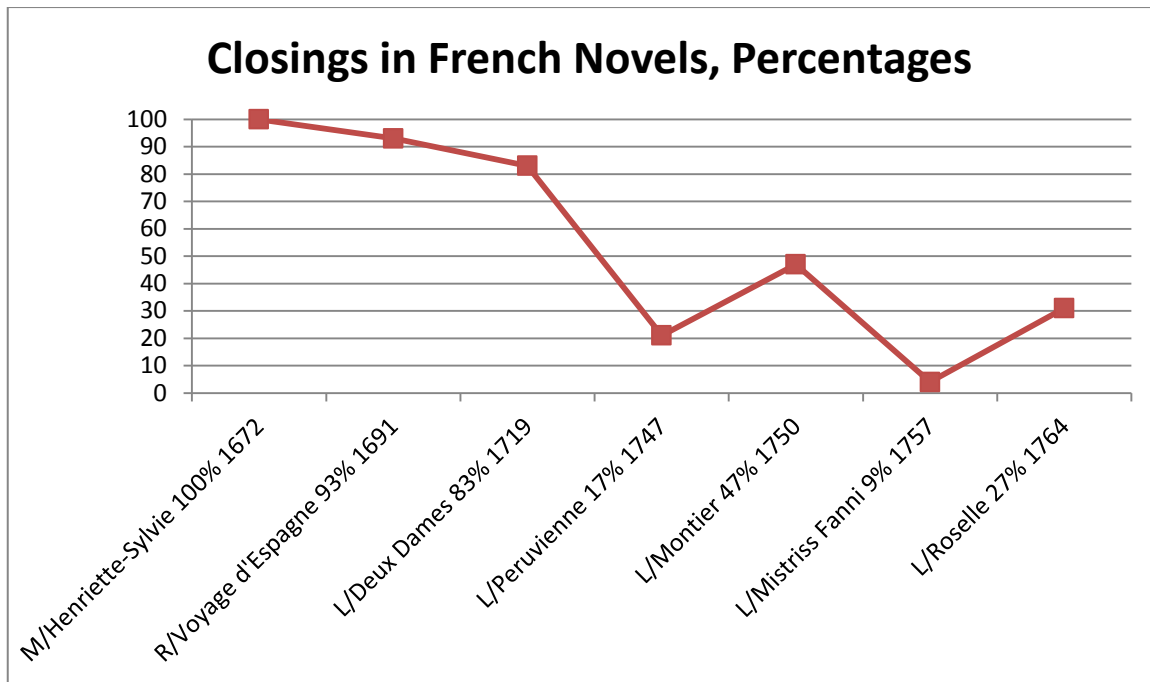


Figure 7.3 Inclusion Rates for Closings in French Novels' Letters

The letters in the first three novels include developed closings nearly all of the time. These novels are from the more intense period of *politesse*. In the case of M/Henriette-Sylvie, the memoirs written to a social superior at that superior's request, every letter includes a developed closing. This is twice the rate for openings in M/Henriette-Sylvie, suggesting that closings are doing a great deal of the work in framing each letter in the collection. In addition, closings are fulfilling much of the social responsibility 'required' of the communication; more of it than openings, in any case. R/Voyage d'Espagne, the travelogue written to a cousin, comes in with ninety-three percent developed closings. In this case, closings (93%) are more consistently included than openings (73%), although the rate for openings is still quite high. L/Deux Dames, the exchange between two apparent social acquaintances regarding a public topic, includes eighty-three percent developed closings in its letters. Interestingly, L/Deux Dames more consistently includes openings, in that every letter included an opening. Although eighty-three percent represents a drop in inclusion rate when compared to the openings' rate, eighty-three percent is nevertheless a particularly consistent use of this generic section. Therefore, while the openings perform more of the generic and social expectations than the closings in L/Deux Dames, closings are by no means neglected. In the end, the significant common point across the letters in these first three novels is that they are largely framed by openings and closings. That they are also separated by numbering—an additional and effective framing tool—has not reduced the observance of generic conventions.

The next four novels present consistently low inclusion rates for closings, a result corresponding not only to their consistently low rates for openings but also to the time when *politesse* would have been losing its power. Again, rather than this shift from *politesse* representing a broad cultural relaxation of the 'rules' for language, it meant an increased



awareness of *appropriate* language use, including *appropriate adherence* to generic expectations. Codification, as an increasingly powerful cultural discourse, at least partly explains this. The influence of codification, in the case of letters to ‘intimates’, allowed and even encouraged a focus on the communication and the relationship within which it was conducted. This effect was more evident in the rates for openings in these four novels, but its influence is still apparent with the closings. It was increasingly possible and perhaps necessary, socially, to make distinctions using language.

The fourth novel, representing a very low closing inclusion rate of seventeen percent, is *L/Péruienne*, that collection of letters comprising mainly intimate correspondence written by Zilia to her betrothed. This novel’s rate for openings was thirty-one percent, also fairly low, so there is some consistency within this novel as far as omitting generic sections. Given the nature of the letters in this collection—to either a lover or an intimate friend, and concerning the most Personal and Interpersonal of topics—the relaxing of social and generic rules within private communication is hardly surprising. This suggests codification forces ‘authorized’ the omission of generic sections in private letters.

*L/Montier*, the next novel, is fairly consistent in terms of generic conventions, with a forty-seven percent inclusion rate for closings, as compared to the thirty-one percent inclusion rate for openings. This is a relatively neutral position, mainly significant because it occurs in the descending-trend portion of the chart, and because it is higher than the openings’ rate. However, this apparent neutrality becomes curious when viewed as taking place between mother and daughter. In this context, the usage takes on a relatively formal air—although by no means as formal as that of *L/Deux Dames*. The most likely reason for this is that the women in *L/Montier* are ‘good models’ of language use, and would have been adhering to *politesse* even when others no longer were. That is, their social status would have inclined them toward using generic sections even within a familiar context because that is how they used language. These particular letterwriters would have been privileged enough—in term of access to education and an understanding of ‘proper’ writing—to know something of the genre and to know they ‘should’ adhere to certain conventions. That said, these inclusion rates cannot be viewed as particularly high when compared to the earlier French novels. As a result, these inclusion rates may well be affected by the familial tie after all, a tie that could have relaxed somewhat the rules governing genre.

Equally, the private subject matter involved in *L/Montier* likely affects the inclusion rates. Most of the discussion involves domestic matters, primarily issues of family life. Therefore, these topics involve people known to both parties—that is, interpersonal relationships that would give rise to Interpersonal knowledge—even if the specific events involved may be Personal, in that they are only experienced firsthand by one of the parties. For example, those matters relating to the daughter’s insecurities *vis-à-vis* her husband or her married life, in foreign lands, would be Personal knowledge—known firsthand only by the daughter—and are not experiences and feelings the daughter would necessarily reveal to just anyone, or want her mother to read aloud *en famille*. In turn, the advice offered by the mother is also rather private, largely because it relates so directly to problems aired by

the daughter. Even allowing the possibility that the mother might be a 'busybody' who would offer advice to everyone—and the external reading audience cannot know whether she is—the nature of the advice extended to her daughter is private. Another factor could be that of 'genre of epistolary novel', as framing via letter numbering and labelling also plays a role.

L/Mistriss Fanni, the sixth novel, is most comparable to L/Péruvienne in terms of the letters involved, a similarity already noted. L/Mistriss Fanni, with its intimate letters exchanged with a lover, presents the lowest closing inclusion rate of nine percent. With an opening inclusion rate of twenty-two percent, it is evident that generic sections, by and large, are not emphasized in L/Mistriss Fanni. Further, the similarities with L/Péruvienne continue, in that these two novels represent the lowest inclusion rates for closings in the entire set of French sources. Their opening rates compare similarly. The similarities in these two novels include the 'invisible' recipients and the intimate nature of the relationships extended by the letterwriters<sup>112</sup>, relationships which allow the exchange of mainly Personal and Interpersonal information. These parallels between the two novels are reflected in these similar results, in terms of how the letters tend to open and close.

Finally, L/Roselle, with its ensemble cast of letterwriters and blend of familiar and intimate letters, includes closings in twenty-seven percent of its letters. Given the particularly low rate of openings (8%), this result seems relatively high. One possibility is that this extremely low opening inclusion rate increased the need for closings. It may also be that the labelling of the letters, framing each individual letter and already mentioned in relation to openings in these samples, distorts somewhat the inclusion of generic sections, as compared to what might occur in actual correspondence. In the larger context, this result is reasonably consistent with the other three post-1719 novels, while being substantially lower than the rates of the first three French sources. Therefore, it does contribute to the overall descending slope of the closings chart.

The rates for developed closings in the English novels' letters are reflected in Figure 7.4. As with the previous charts, these five novels are listed in chronological order. The closings' results are fairly consistent with those for openings. The slope illustrated in this chart is again rather flat, and the overall picture shows a tendency for low closing inclusion rates (i.e., the highest inclusion rate is only 50%). Additionally, the first and last novels present the same low closing inclusion rate of twenty-four percent. In short, closings in the English novels do not reflect a strong tendency toward inclusion, the results notable mainly for the contrast with French results.

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<sup>112</sup> As mentioned, I view Zilia's letters to Déterville as being intimate in their way, given their content.

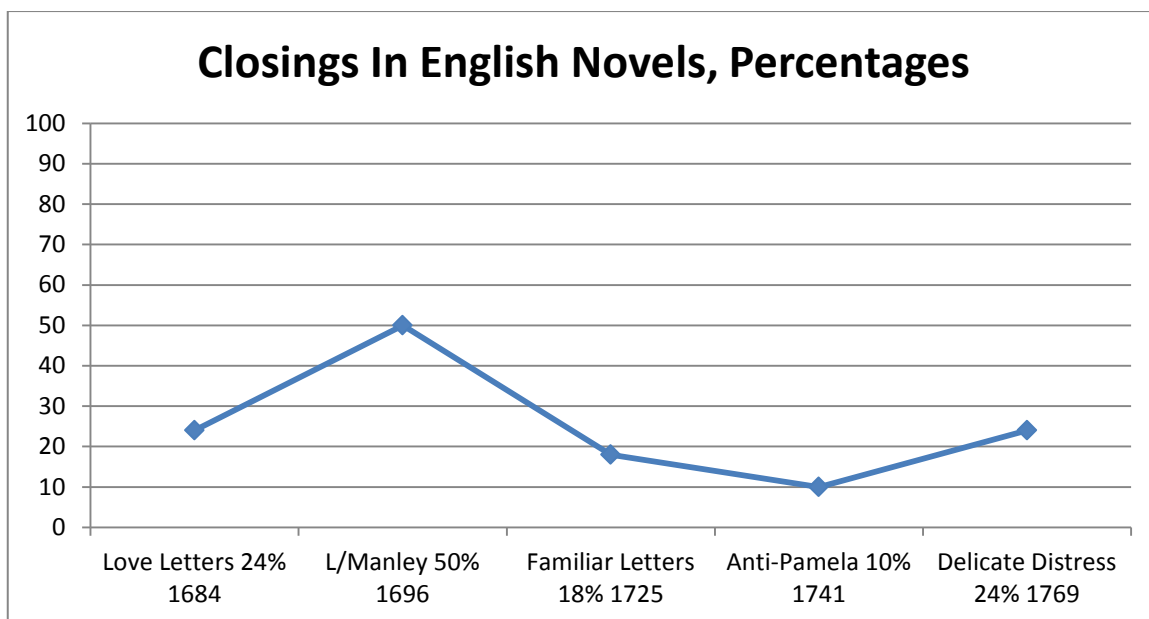


Figure 7.4 Inclusion Rates for Closings in English Novels' Letters

Given that Love-Letters, the first English source, comprises love letters and letters between other intimate parties, the relatively low closing inclusion rate of twenty-four percent is consistent with expectations. While higher than its opening inclusion rate of eighteen percent, the difference between these results is not extreme and suggests some level of consistency regarding generic conventions within the novel, although not a consistency toward inclusion. Again, connective narrative influences this result.

L/Manley's fifty percent closing inclusion rate, on the other hand, suggests that closings are doing a great deal more orientation work than the openings, given that no letter in this source includes a developed opening. While closings perform some of the orientation work, it is primarily aimed at the supposed recipient. The closings tend to be 'personalized' as far as commenting on the friendship and the continuing exchange of letters, remarks not particularly beneficial to an external reading audience. Overall, very little (if any) orientation work for the external reading audience occurs in this novel, which is part of the reason its fictional status is questionable. In fact, this relatively high closing inclusion rate mainly provides the external reading audience with a frame that indicates a stopping point of specific letters, and not a lot more, although the closings may be more meaningful to the intended recipient.

Familiar Letters, one of the middle novels, has the second-lowest inclusion rate for closings (18%), which is somewhat unexpected, as familiar letters might reasonably be expected to tend to the 'social niceties' aspect of generic conventions. Perhaps, because both sides of the exchange are visible, as an artefact of the epistolary novel genre, closings were less obligatory than if the generic expectations for the genre of letter were governing. However, because Familiar Letters has a relatively high inclusion rate for openings (32%), which is the second highest of the English sources, it may be that openings are doing more of the generic convention workload than the closings. There is, perhaps, room to relax *vis-à-vis* closings, since these matters are tended to by the openings. As

mentioned in the openings discussion, much of the subject matter is Personal or Interpersonal, which would support a less rigid approach to including closings. In addition, a low closing inclusion rate also contributes to the air of flirtation evident in this source, as it emphasizes the privacy within their familiarity. Again, these inclusion rates are only relatively high; in the bigger picture, they are still low.

Anti-Pamela has the lowest inclusion rate for closings (10%) among the English sources. While its opening inclusion rate is nearly twice this number, it is still a very low nineteen percent. Given that most of these letters are between a mother and daughter who are specifically of low social status, low rates regarding these conventions are not unpredictable. Further, much of the content of these letters is secret and conspiratorial, factors that correspond to private communication, where emphasizing generic sections would not be a priority.

On the other hand, the social position of these two characters also suggests the possibility of less respect for 'social niceties' as well as less thorough command of their usage.<sup>113</sup> While these two factors are important in this result, the format of this particular novel makes a difference as well. That is, these letters are not only dispersed throughout the novel's narrative, but—particularly those between mother and daughter—tend to be clustered together, perhaps six or seven at a time. Within these groupings, the letters tend to be numbered or otherwise set off from that narrative. For example, the novel's narrative often introduces the letter, another kind of framing. These factors, arising from the genre 'epistolary novel', would further lessen the need for openings and closings in these letters, as the novel's narrative and visible structure perform some of the functions normally fulfilled by openings and closings in letters.

Finally, *Delicate Distress*, the last English novel listed in the chart, has a closing inclusion rate of twenty-four percent. Again, this is the second-highest closing inclusion rate, one shared with the first novel in the English collection. While this figure is well below the inclusion rate for openings (37%), it also means that *Delicate Distress* is more consistent about including both openings and closings than any other English novel. While this indication is not enough to constitute proof of a trend, that it is the last novel in the English set—at the latest date in the period—may suggest a shift toward increasing politeness and sensibility in England, and the particular impact of the cultural mood on letterwriting. At the same time, this may be another indication that the ensemble cast of letterwriters involved in this source required additional signals to frame each individual letter for the external reading audience's benefit. While the letters are numbered and labelled with 'to' and 'from' information at the beginning, they also generally include the 'signing' of a name at the end. This lightens the load in terms of generic conventions, but is not a thorough explanation across all the English novels.

In comparing the French and English charts for closings (Figures 7.3 and 7.4), similar general trends as with opening rates emerge. Specifically, the French results show not only a

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<sup>113</sup> In fact, this represents another similarity to letters between Léonor and Juliette in *L/Roselle*, in addition to their shared low social status and secret schemes.

sharper curve than the English, but the directions of those curves contrast as well. First, regarding the sharper and generally descending French curve for closings, the closing inclusion rate chart reflects a descent that is more marked than that for openings in that its high point is a one hundred percent inclusion rate in its first source. It then drops steadily across the next three novels, maintaining a primarily descending slope through all remaining French novels. The low point for closings in the French sources is L/Mistriss Fanni, the second to last in the set. L/Mistriss Fanni is also second to last on the openings chart, which indicates some consistency within the novel as well as lending credence to its place in the chronology contributing to a downward trend.

The chart for closing inclusion rates in the English novels is similar to the English opening inclusion rates in several respects. Most apparent is the flat slope in both instances, reflecting the limited variation in the range of differences across the English novels. Perhaps this tendency is most graphically captured by the first and last sources in English having the same closing inclusion rate. The other result reflected in the English closings chart is that inclusion rates are fairly low across the board. While the opening inclusion rate for the English novels can be cautiously described as ‘ascending’, this is not true for the closing inclusion rates. The highest rate for any English source is fifty percent and the other four novels are noticeably below that figure. Nevertheless, the fifty percent figure for closings is also higher than the highest rate for openings (37%). The main result from the English charts is a tendency toward ellipsis.

Simply put, both French charts reflect more volatility than both English charts, a situation likely linked to the varying influences of *politesse*-politeness and codification in the two countries across the period. While this initial road map is inadequate for drawing definitive conclusions, some intriguing possibilities for deeper analysis are suggested.

### 7.3 Effects of Absent Generic Sections: Relationships Promoted and the Emerging Issue of Fiction

The main intent of this chapter was to consider ellipsis, as it is represented by ‘missing’ generic sections, against the question of private and public communication in this collections of ‘letters’. Examination of the letters has raised some points in this regard, but has also raised the role of fiction in these collections because different relationships are promoted between participants, depending on the audience’s position. That is, links between omission of the generic sections and the private or public nature of the relationship and/or given letters are indicated. Knowledge type—as described by Van Dijk—influences this as well. However, because the relationship extended to the audience can be so different, due to the lack of context caused by omission of openings and closings, a distinction emerges between the genres of letterwriting and epistolary novel.

To begin, the proposition that attention to generic sections would correspond to less private, more public, exchanges is generally supported. In particular, the first three French novels and the English, H/Ophelia, support it. These four novels also suggest that ‘more public’ topics play a role. L/Deux Dames exemplifies this, in the telling of a story that does

not require secrecy. In turn, R/Voyage d'Espagne relates information about Spain that could largely be obtained in the public domain. In addition, experiences related in R/Voyage d'Espagne that purport to be those of *la comtesse*, are not so private that they cannot be shared *en famille*. As for the other two novels mentioned, M/Henriette-Sylvie and H/Ophelia both relate personal accounts of 'adventures' supposedly known to the story-requester, thereby implying that these stories are known, even if only by reputation. In terms of Knowledge type, these four works are not focused on personal matters requiring secrecy or otherwise delicate handling, as are most of the other novels. L/Deux Dames and R/Voyage d'Espagne may be reasonably viewed as relating Cultural or National information, and the content of M/Henriette-Sylvie and H/Ophelia is perhaps Group knowledge due to its apparent availability, to a lesser extent, in the public domain.

In this light, that all four of these novels tend to openings and closings emphasizes the link between the 'public' aspects of these novels. The three French novels present the highest inclusion rates for openings and closings, while H/Ophelia includes both components in its one long letter. They contain the 'most public' of content, and are the most 'carefully' public in including the generic sections. They are also the 'friendliest' for an external reading audience as far as providing sufficient context via generic sections, context also provided to the named recipient. This context allows the external reading audience to 'participate' in the exchange by 'adopting the mantle' of recipient. In other words, including the generic sections in these four novels promotes comparable relationships with the intended recipients as with the external reading audiences. The sense of participation in the exchange would be similar. This, in fact, creates the 'blended' audience that falls outside Halliday's discussion of fictional relationships.

The rest of the novels emphasize Personal and Interpersonal information. They also tend to omit openings and closings. To the named recipients, the bulk of these letters extend private—intimate or familiar—relationships, which usually do not include anecdotes for the ears of others.<sup>114</sup> The external reading audience remains on the outside, while the relationships extended to the named recipients include the most private and 'secret' of relationships. The external reading audience cannot 'home in' on these relationships, relegated instead to observing them. Taken together, these findings support the proposition that there is a link between inclusion of generic sections, knowledge type and the privacy level of the relationships promoted between characters.

As stated, however, the low inclusion rates presented by most of the novels may have another explanation. As has been mentioned, generic sections are not the only means for framing letters in these collections. Other conventional systems—as Goffman calls them—can also provide framing. In these novels, this has included such systems as letter numbering and other letter-labelling techniques. Framing can also be provided by connective narrative between letters. Critically, however, these framing techniques do not belong to the genre of letterwriting. Instead, they belong to the genre of epistolary novel.

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<sup>114</sup> Familiar Letters would be a possible exception, at least, with regard to some of the information related. Some could be related in conversation at a salon.

This shift is especially noticeable in the English novels, in that all of the novels make use of these framing conventions, while not tending to incorporate generic sections for that purpose. In fact, L/Harriot Stuart uses a technique quite obviously linked to the genre of epistolary novel: it is divided into volumes, with letter breaks not marked in any particular way. That said, the French novels also make use of these other framing options. In the case of L/Mistriss Fanni, the gradual omission of these 'external' framing devices coincides with the unravelling of Mistriss Fanni herself. As a device of fiction, this is a noteworthy use of framing options, one utilizing considerable artistic license and revealing an awareness of 'conducting an epistolary novel'. However, the three French novels with the high inclusion rates also utilize letter numbering, and so on, to frame their letters. They include openings and closings regardless, as does H/Ophelia.<sup>115</sup> Therefore, 'something else' contributes to these novels' use of framing and generic sections, and the resulting relationships with their audiences.

In the case of the three French novels, a relationship exists between including generic sections and the period of *politesse*. In turn, a different kind of fictional experience for the external reading audience is created. While the letters are less 'private', the external reading audience is able to receive them in a position similar to the one offered to the named recipient. While more evidence would be needed to reach more conclusive statements, with regard to the French novels, 1719 (the date of L/Deux Dames) may represent a turning point in fiction writing in France, as well as in language use, post Louis XIV. L/Péruienne, the next novel after L/Deux Dames, reflects a major shift away from the 'polite' way of directly 'speaking to' an external reading audience 'as if' the intended letter recipient. This new trend continues with the remaining French novels. In the English case, however, such developments in fiction appear to have already taken hold by the beginning of the period under review. H/Ophelia applies this approach because it is one available approach for creating fiction, one among many.

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<sup>115</sup> H/Ophelia, in fact, inserts 'chapter' breaks throughout the novel, which do not necessarily correspond to 'letter frames' and certainly do not correspond to the genre of letterwriting.





## **Chapter 8—Samples and Findings, Part 3: Activating Common Ground**

This chapter considers how Common Ground is identified and referenced in the ‘conversations’ conducted via this collection of novels, whether they occur between characters within a collection as letterwriters, between a non-letterwriting narrator and the external reading audience, or between a letterwriter and the ‘blended’ audience of stated letter recipient and the external reading audience. Regardless of which of these relationships is being conducted, the interactional aspect of the communication—that which is responsible for negotiating Common Ground—cannot be performed in the same manner possible in oral communication. That is, while negotiating Common Ground is a fundamental component of communication, in written form—and certainly in the case of novels—Common Ground cannot be acknowledged by the audience(s) in real time. The speaker—or, more accurately, the letterwriter—must utilize other mechanisms for establishing ‘conversational’ Common Ground because written communication is asynchronous.

Because numerous mechanisms emerged, a choice was made to review only two of them: Overtly Tagging Relationships and the Dialogue Effect. The first is more directly focused on the relationships between the parties, using a ‘reminder’ to do so, while the Dialogue Effect is more involved in ‘parlaying’ information between the parties, a technique that also provides a window for the external reading audience to engage with the *information* as an ‘insider’, at least to an extent.

### **8.1 Negotiating Common Ground in Written Interactional Language**

Throughout this study, the need for negotiation has underpinned the assumptions about communication and how this factor, in turn, shapes interactional language choices. Nowhere is this negotiation aspect more significant and influential than in Activating Common Ground. Indeed, Grice’s Cooperative Principles and Joos’ language use scales rely upon negotiation as a component, as does the Matrix of Communicative Context. While every participant ‘brings something’ to the exchange, equally, every participant ‘assumes something’ about the other participant(s) in the exchange. While coordinating the informing background experiences is crucial to the communication, it is not necessarily simple. Van Dijk proposes context models as key to understanding the process, saying ‘different participants may have different interpretations and hence different models of the current situation, and these different context models will also have different effects on what they say or write or on what they understand’ (Van Dijk, 2005, p. 75). Participants, then, must negotiate which of the communicative components they bring to an exchange can be assumed as ‘in common’, and, which of them will be relevant in that particular exchange.

These negotiation attempts involve a certain amount of guesswork. ‘Presupposition’ and ‘Reminding’ are two aspects identified by Van Dijk:

...many aspects of discourse depend on what the speaker assumes the hearer to know or not to know. Indeed, whenever the speaker assumes that the hearer knows something, the speaker no longer needs to assert such knowledge, but may tacitly or

explicitly presuppose it, or perhaps remind it when it might have been forgotten or when it is not easily accessible (Van Dijk, 2005, p. 76).

In a sense, not only are participants drawing upon their own Communities of Practice, they are also creating a new Community of Practice, one that reflects the Common Ground negotiated in order to conduct the exchange. Context models contain 'the crucial interface between actual discourse and the surrounding communicative situation, including the way participants represent themselves and the others as speakers and hearers' (Van Dijk, 2005, p. 75), identifying responsibilities borne by the participants in any given exchange.

In a novel, however, only one party bears this responsibility. In a novel, the writer manages responsibility for both sides of the communication. Because the 'hearer' cannot actively negotiate, the writer must provide enough Common Ground to enhance the likelihood of intersecting context models for the duration of the novel. The writer must have a strong sense of what to presuppose and what to remind in order to engage the intended audience. The writer needs alternate means for providing information 'as it is needed' (paraphrasing Joos), given that the writer is responsible for judging and for providing what will be 'adequate'.

As mentioned, numerous mechanisms have been observed in these samples, too many to include within the scope of this study. Three of these, however, deserve brief mention. One may be described as Upfront Assertions of the 'facts' governing the exchange. Those novels involving a non-letterwriting narrator are especially effective at utilizing this means for establishing Common Ground knowledge. Two other types are linked to this first one, while also related to one another. Both are forms of Reminder: Reminders of Shared Knowledge (often used to reference the 'facts' provided upfront) and Reminders of Long-Term Understanding (usually more relationship-oriented). Again, further discussion is beyond the scope possible here.

Instead, this chapter considers two categories: Overtly Tagging Relationships and the Dialogue Effect. Both are prevalent in the sources and are related to the categories described above. These two types of mechanism are also representative of how relationships and knowledge may be incorporated in the 'conversations'. This information is new to the external reading audience, and cannot always be presupposed as the result would be too vague and confusing for that audience. However, both mechanisms have a 'natural' feel to them, seemingly less contrived to suit the genre of epistolary novel. Rather, they are recognizable as ways interactional language is used in letters.

## 8.2 Samples and Findings: Overtly Tagging Relationships

The most obvious indicator of relationships comes via the relationship markers used by letterwriters. That is: what do they call their correspondents? Three basic but not entirely separate categories emerged: titles, given names and terms of endearment. These are listed roughly from 'most public' to 'most intimate', but overlap between them can be substantial.

Titles generally mark more ‘public’ relationships. Even if the communication is friendly, the use of titles implies some sort of distance between the participants, whether this is emotional distance, contrasting social ranks or signs of *politesse*-politeness. In both M/Henriette-Sylvie and H/Ophelia, a distinction between social ranks is indicated, despite rather friendly communication taking place. Politeness customs are also evident. For example, M/Henriette-Sylvie begins as follows:

Ce ne m’est pas une légère consolation, Madame, au milieu de tant de médisances qui déchirent ma réputation partout, que Votre Altesse désire que je me justifie (Villedieu, 2003, p. 43).

These titles, ‘madame’ and ‘votre altesse’, are used throughout the letters in this collection. Their polite aspects render the collection open to ‘adopting the mantle’ of recipient, partly because they do not suggest a private, ‘closed’ relationship between letterwriter and letter recipient.

H/Ophelia is very similar in how it uses relationship markers. H/Ophelia opens by acknowledging the request from ‘your Ladyship’ that Ophelia recount her life story. She writes:

Your Ladyship had little compassion either on yourself or me, when you desired me to write you an exact Account of every Circumstance of my Life (Fielding, 2004, p. 38).

The relationship tag, ‘your Ladyship’, continues to be used regularly throughout the story. Similar to M/Henriette-Sylvie, this choice of title re-engages the ‘official’ other participant, while allowing the external reading audience—especially women readers—to engage as ladies, politely and respectfully addressed by the letterwriter, ‘adopting’ her Ladyship’s mantle as letter recipient.

L/Deux Dames uses similar relationship tags. However, in this case, the effect relates more to reciprocal status and *politesse*. The first letter begins simply with, ‘Madame’, a title which continues to be used throughout the exchange. In all the other letters in L/Deux Dames, the letterwriter uses ‘madame’ in the first sentence. For example:

Il n’y a rien de plus obligeant que votre procédé, madame...(Du Noyer, 1866/1989, p. 24)  
 Je ne puis que vous remercier de vos bontés, madame...(Du Noyer, 1866/1989, p. 39)  
 J’ai reçu la lettre, madame, que vous avez pris la peine de m’écrire (Du Noyer, 1866/1989, p. 84).

While these examples specifically tend to the social niceties of conversation, and by extension, of letterwriting, they do not reflect the deference in either M/Henriette-Sylvia or

H/Ophelia. In addition, by re-engaging the recipient of each letter by the somewhat generic ‘madame’, the niceties are managed for the external reading audience as well.

The next point on the continuum involves given names; these are, admittedly, not frequent, at least not on their own. Instead, given names are often coupled with terms of endearment.

Familiar Letters consistently utilizes the given names of the participants. All of the letters begin with either ‘to Berina’ or ‘to Artander’, and are signed with the appropriate given name. Additionally, given names are used throughout the letters, albeit in two distinct ways. At times, it is as part of a direct address: ‘I Doubt, *Berina*, you and I shall do as the whole nation has done’ (Davys, 1999, p. 101). However, given names are also used in a third-person manner, despite being, in truth, addressed to the person named. For example, Artander writes:

I think nothing a greater Enemy to Friendship, than Disputes: and mine is so firm for *Berina*, that I wou’d not give way to any thing that could shake it. If yours be so, as I have no reason to doubt, you will comply, when I beg of you to put a stop to this sort of Correspondence (Davys, 1999, p. 101).

Berina, in turn, writes:

If *Artander’s* Heart were not as hard as the Rock he has been scrutinizing into, he wou’d never have laid such strict Injunctions on my Pen (Davys, 1999, p. 102).

This usage would be consistent with the increasing sociability and politeness ‘required’ of interactional language in England during the period. This usage seems polite but not unfriendly or off-putting. Indeed, this usage would point to the shifting language of the time, where friendly—or *familiar*, given the title of the collection—language use was, in fact, marked by this particular type of polite usage.<sup>116</sup>

The third type of relationship marker typically used in these sources is terms of endearment. These are often combined with names (or, indeed, titles), but generally add an additional layer of familiarity to the relationship. Some sources, on the other hand, use terms of endearment exclusively.

In R/Voyage d’Espagne, the relationship between the participants is marked as a familial connection. The letter recipient is addressed as ‘ma chère cousine’, and no given name is added. Nearly every letter opens and closes with ‘ma chère cousine’ worked into the paragraph. For example, Letter 2 begins:

Je reprends sans compliment la suite de mon voyage, ma chère cousine (D’Aulnoy, 1874/2005, p. 35).

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<sup>116</sup> This example is also representative of the Dialogue Effect.

And, Letter 2 then ends with:

Croyez au moins, ma chère cousine, que ce n'est pas manque d'avoir bien des choses à vous dire; votre coeur m'en sera caution s'il est encore à mon égard ce que vous m'avez promis (D'Aulnoy, 1874/2005, p. 66).

In addition, 'ma chère cousine' recurs throughout the letters. As noted, such re-insertion of the term of address serves to re-engage the listener as a participant in the 'conversation'. Audiences are treated as insiders at least to the storytelling act, if not the experiences themselves. Similarly, particularly in writing, re-inserting the term of address also anticipates and responds to the listener assertions that cannot happen when the 'conversation' is written. It gives the illusion of conversational interaction. For example:

Que ce mot ne vous embarrasse pas, ma chère cousine; *guap* veut dire, en espagnol, brave, galant, et même fanfaron (D'Aulnoy, 1874/2005, p. 194-195).

In this case, the 'chère cousine' may have wondered about this word, but the letterwriter could not actually hear her as she wondered. Instead, the letterwriter anticipates a listener query and provides the information needed.<sup>117</sup> By re-inserting the term of address, the letterwriter allays confusion on the part of the reader, whether this is the letter recipient or the external reading audience.

L/Montier consistently uses salutations to flag the personal nature of the relationship between the letterwriters, again a familial tie. The daughter's letters always begin, 'ma chere mere', set apart from the body of the letter. However, this term of address is scattered throughout her letters, re-engaging her mother in the exchange and creating a sense of conversational to-and-fro.

Ah! ma chere mere, est-il possible que les passions nous défigurent à un tel point? (LePrince de Beaumont, 1762, p. 12).

The mother's letters usually begin with, 'ma chere fille' set apart from the body of the letter; however, sometimes the salutation is omitted. When it is, the first sentence includes the relationship marker:

Vous avez raison, ma chere fille, d'être scandalisée de l'étrange abus qui regne en Italie (Leprince de Beaumont, 1762, p. 67).

However, while the daughter uses 'ma chere mere', the mother employs a few variations on 'ma chere fille'. These variations include 'ma chere enfant' and 'ma pauvre enfant', among others. It is worth noting that, despite having several options for addressing the daughter, a

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<sup>117</sup> In fact, Chapter 10 focuses more exclusively in this sort of response anticipation.

given name for the daughter is not one of them. While this may be a sign of *politesse*, it also allows an avenue for the external reading audience to don the role of either letterwriter in experiencing the collection, since an individual's name is not attached to either of them.<sup>118</sup> Instead, it is their bond that is emphasized, the role they play for one another, and the external reading audience is free to 'share' those roles.

In contrast, the relationship between the letterwriters in L/Manley is not stated, despite allusion to a warm friendship. The letters suggest very little on the specifics of the relationship, although Letter 8 (the last letter) finally includes hints of friendship.

I am sorry and I can't make good my Promise to so indearing a Friend as your Self  
(Manley, 1696/2006, p. 63).

...'tis only to such a particular Friend as your Self, that I dare complain (Manley,  
1696/2006, p. 64).

This is not enough for the external reading audience to 'join' the relationship.

Delicate Distress names the familial tie in the first sentence of the first letter: 'Tell me, my dear philosophic, wise sister' (Griffith, 1997, p. 7). Further to this, in Letter 2, Lady Straffon replies in a way that confirms the sisters are close, while pointing out a particular imbalance in their relationship. Lady Frances writes, 'as I have ever acted as a mother to my dearest Emily' (Griffith, 1997, p. 8). In this case, Lady Straffon also demonstrates combining the term of endearment with the given name. This blending occurs regularly. In fact, Lady Woodville even uses the informal 'Fanny' in addressing her sister, rather than Frances. Additionally, these given names are sometimes utilized in the third-person direct address already identified in Familiar Letters. In contrast, when the men in Delicate Distress write to one another, they use Woodville and Seymour as terms of address and for identifying themselves. Occasionally, they include 'my friend' as well. This may be a sign of men using different terms of address as part of a 'male' register or perhaps the closeness of the sisters is being especially emphasized as different from the bond between the men.

L/Harriot Stuart also names the letter recipient immediately, in the first sentence: 'You ask me, my dear Amanda' (Lennox, 1995, p. 63). Clearly, this combines the given name with a term of endearment. 'My dear Amanda' is, in fact, repeated throughout the story. At least two variations occur: 'dear Amanda' and 'my Amanda'. Despite this sign of familiarity, the exact relationship is never clarified, and it does not stand in the way of the external reading audience 'adopting the mantle' of recipient.

Mixed relationship markers are also common in sources where 'state of relationship' is a factor. It occurs as well when more than two letterwriters are corresponding.

L/Mistriss Fanni presents only one side of an exchange with only one person, but demonstrates mixed relationship markers because 'state of relationship' as well as 'state of mind' influence the letters. As has been mentioned in regard to L/Mistriss Fanni, her mood and also her health have a considerable influence on the letters she writes. While swings in

<sup>118</sup> Despite names being in the novel's title.

tone occur within letters and from one letter to the next, there is also a slide within the larger context of the collection that roughly corresponds to the gradual deterioration of the relationship itself. The terms of address Mistriss Fanni uses toward her recipient, Milord Charles Alfred, slide as well. The three 'titles' she tends to use are 'Sire Charles', 'Milord', and usually, 'mon cher Alfred'. Of these, 'Milord' and 'mon cher Alfred' tend to be associated with the intimacy they share. 'Sire Charles', on the other hand, is more of an abstract term, a third-person label she uses 'to' him but not so much in the intimacy of 'speaking to' him. Sire Charles carries the distance of third-person politeness.

'Milord' is the preferred term for Mistriss Fanni at the beginning of the collection. In fact, it is included in the opening sentence:

Après avoir bien réfléchi sur votre songe, je vous felicite, Milord, de cette vivacité d'imagination qui vous fait rêver de si jolies choses (Riccoboni, 1759, p. 3).

Mistriss Fanni uses 'Milord' to finish that letter, as well as Letters 2, 3 and 4. Further, she uses 'Milord' in numerous other letters, sometimes with an edge of extreme emotion. When Mistriss Fanni begins using 'Sire Charles', she mixes it with the other terms. For example, Letter 4 ends:

Ah! Sire Charles, si elles étoient un pressentiment...Je ne veux plus vous voir, je ne veux plus vous entendre...Est-il bien vrai que je ne le veux plus? Je ne sçais...Mon Dieu, Milord, pourquoi m'aimez-vous? (Riccoboni, 1759, p. 6)

'Mon cher Alfred' increases in use until it is liberally included in most of the letters. The following examples also reflect the connection to emotional state:

Je suis triste, mon cher Alfred...(Riccoboni, 1759, p. 24)

Oui, mon cher Alfred, je suis contente...(Riccoboni, 1759, p. 45)

Quelle différence, mon cher Alfred! Mon bonheur n'est pas détruit... (Riccoboni, 1759, p. 65)

As further proof of the intimacy Mistriss Fanni feels for Milord, she uses a number of terms of endearment for him, expressions that flag their close connection. Additionally, despite this range of relationship terms, in letters written after the demise of their romance, she does not replace these terms with angry labels that would match those feelings. Likewise, she does not continue with the intimate terms of endearment she has been using. That is, the terms of endearment and intimate relationship labels are significant by their absence. The mixing of these markers corresponds to the state of the relationship. This pattern would help the external reading audience in trying to keep pace with Mistriss Fanni's many moods.

With L/Péruvienne, markers of relationships are associated with two different sorts of close connections. On the one hand, between Aza and Zilia, the relationship includes intimacy both due to the bond of their engagement and their sibling connections. However, they are also bonded because they are ‘countrymen’, a connection emphasized further by being countrymen removed from their country. With Déterville, Zilia cannot share the same degree of connection as she has with Aza. However, while not sharing those bonds, their relationship is warm and friendly—and he has been a party to her utter humiliation, which forges a different and special bond between them.

With Aza, the bond Zilia feels is indicated, on the one hand, because she uses his given name, often incorporated as part of a term of endearment. ‘Mon cher Aza’ is the most frequent, often as part of a salutation. Other times, this expression is distributed throughout the letters, reminding of the bond between them. In addition, a range of other terms of endearment are also applied to Aza. While they are ‘flowery’, they also reflect intimacy with the person addressed. Zilia typically uses expressions like *chère âme de ma vie*, *délices de mon coeur*, *cher soutien de ma vie*, *lumière de ma vie*, and *chère lumière de mes jours*. For the external reading audience, increasingly aware of the earnestness of Zilia, these terms of endearment mark Zilia’s belief that she and Aza are destined to be partners. Zilia is sincere in her attachment to Aza and these relationship markers reflect the depth of that emotional bond, as well as her commitment to Aza and all that he represents.

When Zilia writes to Déterville at the end of L/Péruvienne, the letters are friendly and demonstrate a personal, warm relationship in which—out of necessity—nothing is hidden. While a different sort of relationship than she shared with Aza, the growing friendship with Déterville is quite special to her. Nevertheless, Zilia uses ‘Monsieur’ in the salutations with Déterville, when she uses them at all. She calls him Déterville, not attaching any sort of title. If Zilia wanted to emphasize social or emotional distance, using a title in the term of address would certainly perform that for her. Given that she has not grown up ‘sharing a soul’ with Déterville, Zilia goes a long way in acknowledging the relationship they do share:

Rassurez-vous, trop généreux ami, je n’ai pas voulu vous écrire que mes jours ne fussent en sûreté, et que moins agitée je ne puisse calmer vos inquiétudes (Grafigny, 1983, p. 359).

Relationship markers in L/Roselle are complex not only because numerous letterwriters are participating but also because their social ranks vary along with the nature of the relationships they share. At the center of the correspondence circle are the Marquis de Roselle and his sister, the Comtesse de Saint-Sever. They are the only parties whose formal titles are used. The Comtesse writes to her brother, the Marquis, and to her friend, Madame de Narton. The Marquis writes to his sister, to his love interest and to his male



friend.<sup>119</sup> The relationship markers between these participants are the ones to be considered.

The Comtesse, who initiates the exchange with her brother, uses the fairly predictable 'mon cher frere'. She addresses him this way and speaks of the friendship they share. The Marquis addresses her in a reciprocal fashion: *ma chere soeur*. Between them, despite the distress of the story to come, the familial bond is acknowledged and respected, it is reasonably warm and supportive, even if it is also polite. However, the Comtesse also addresses her brother as, 'mon ami, mon frere, mon fils' (Elie de Beaumont, 1765, p. 2), revealing the nurturing and responsibility-laden aspects she feels their relationship comprises.<sup>120</sup>

When the Comtesse writes to her friend, Madame de Narton, terms of address are polite. She does, however, use a number of relationship markers that flag the closeness of their friendship rather than formality or social ranking. These generally include *ma chere amie*, *ma chere*, *ma tendre amie*. However, when Madame de Narton writes to the Comtesse, she nearly always includes the 'comtesse' title in the expressions she uses, at least once in a given letter. She is most consistent about using it in the openings:

J'entre dans vos peines, ma chere Comtesse...(Elie de Beaumont, 1765, p. 6)

Vous ne devez être, ni découragée, ni surprise, ma chere Comtesse... (Elie de Beaumont, 1765, p. 13)

Votre douleur est juste & naturelle, ma chere Comtesse... (Elie de Beaumont, 1765, p. 45)

Once Madame de Narton has acknowledged this distinction of social rank, she tends to address the Comtesse as 'ma chere amie', and once, as 'tendre & sage amie' (Elie de Beaumont, 1765, p. 110). Between these two women, relationship markers suggest some difference in social rank, but do not suggest that this difference hinders the very close and long-standing friendship the women share.

The Marquis displays more variation in the relationship markers he chooses. Of course, his relationships are quite varied, and he is perhaps less in control of his emotions than his sister. Anger and 'state of relationship' can affect the relationship markers he chooses. This is not so when addressing his sister. However, in his letters to Léonor and Valville, different sorts of relationship markers are evident.

The Marquis' intimate relationship with Léonor is emphasized by relationship marker: he uses her given name. Then again, the range of terms of endearment he uses speaks of intimacy as well. These include *fille adorable*, *fille divine*, *chere Amante*, as well as *ma chere*, *chere Léonor* and *ma Léonor*. From the Marquis' perspective, the passion and intensity of the relationship is well flagged. Léonor is less forthcoming with intimate

<sup>119</sup> There are, in fact, several other letterwriters participating in this exchange. They include several members of a family and an additional 'fille d'Opéra'. Their inclusion here would excessively complicate the discussion.

<sup>120</sup> This is not unlike the relationship between Lady Frances and Lady Emily in *Delicate Distress*.

relationship markers. In fact, she almost always addresses him with a variation of 'cher Marquis'. While it is tempting to assume this is simply marking her awareness of his superior rank, given her game plan, it is more likely she chooses the 'respectful' form of address as part of her affected polite language. Indeed, she does eventually add 'trop cher & trop tendre ami' and 'Monsieur' to her terms of address, culminating eventually in the use of 'mon cher Roselle'. This appears to be the most familiar of the terms she uses, mainly when she is afraid her hold on the Marquis may be slipping.

The Marquis' letters to Valville present another set of relationship markers. The Marquis generally uses some form of 'Valville' in addressing his friend; sometimes this is 'Valville' on its own, sometimes it is 'cher Valville'. Additionally, the Marquis calls him 'cher ami' at times. Only when the Marquis realizes that Valville does not support his passion for Léonor does the Marquis address him as 'Monsieur'. He demands distance in his relationship with Valville:

C'en est trop, Monsieur, vous me poussez à bout. Joindre la colomnie à l'outrage...Vous ignorez ce que c'est que l'amour. Je croyois que vous respecteriez l'amitié. Votre coeur n'est pas fait pour les sentimens tendres; j'en exige dans mes amis. Ce seul titre vous a pu donner le droit de m'accabler de conseils superflus & d'avertissemens importuns. Supprimez-les, & oubliez-moi (Elie de Beaumont, 1765, p. 52).

Once his adventures draw to a close and the Marquis realizes the error of his ways, he resumes addressing Valville by name and as 'ami'. For his part, Valville usually uses 'Marquis' in his terms of address: as 'mon cher Marquis', for example, but also as 'mon ami'.

These varying markers capture a range of, sometimes nuanced, distinctions between these characters' relationships. They have also been used to help in characterizing the letterwriters. Importantly, this technique works because an external reading audience can be presupposed to recognize the sociolinguistic associations that correspond to these usage choices. At a simple level, these distinctions assist that audience in keeping track of the characters. More than that, however, the external reading audience is able to more easily recognize social rank, true friendship, bad judgment and inappropriate relationships.

Anti-Pamela also involves mixed or shifting terms of address. The terms of address are properly affiliated with the mother-daughter bond, but also reflect a shift in their relationship. In addition, Anti-Pamela adds a narrator that addresses the fact that an external reading audience is participating.

The primary letterwriting exchange between Syrena and her mother offers a parent-offspring bond. To that end, Mrs Tricky addresses her daughter by name and often uses the salutation 'Dear Child'. She generally signs her letters as 'your affectionate Mother' or 'your loving Mother', although she also uses 'your most discontented Mother' (Haywood, 2004, p. 71) and 'your indulgent Mother' (Haywood, 2004, p. 183). Syrena, however, exhibits a subtle shift in the way she addresses her mother. She starts by writing letters with the salutation

‘Dear Mamma’, signing herself as ‘your dutiful Daughter’ or, sometimes, as ‘your obedient Daughter’. In approximately the latter third of the letters she writes, however, Syrena uses the salutation ‘Dear Mother’. Importantly, this occurs following a good number of disappointments in terms of their schemes, disappointments which inspire Syrena to dabble more frequently in her personal interests. ‘Mamma’ to ‘Mother’ coincides with Syrena’s more assertive stance *vis-à-vis* her mother’s advice. In the following example, while Syrena refers to herself as the daughter, she uses ‘my dear Mother’ as she announces happy news that focuses, as Syrena tells it, on herself.

Congratulate me, my dear Mother, congratulate your happy Daughter—all my Fears and my Suspence are over—Mr. W—has at last brought himself to confess an honourable Passion for me—He will soon come to acquaint you with it, and then make me his Wife—O! how I shall roll in Riches and Plenty—How I shall indulge every Wish—enjoy every Pleasure (Haywood, 2004, p. 190).

Anti-Pamela also involves a narrator who addresses the ‘Reader’ directly, even if this is done as a third-person address. This occurs approximately half a dozen times in the second half of the novel.

The Reader will perceive she was here acting the Coquette (Haywood, 2004, p. 125).  
I do not doubt but many of my fair Readers will be highly disoblged at this Nobleman’s Behaviour (Haywood, 2004, p. 150).  
The Reader will doubtless be at a loss for the meaning of this Epistle; but never had Syrena given a greater Proof of her Cunning (Haywood, 2004, p. 185).

In each of these cases, the ‘Reader’ is acknowledged as a participant in creating the story. This technique will be further discussed in Chapter 9.

Finally, Love-Letters includes mixed relationship markers. Partly, this is because there are a number of letterwriters. This is also because the two main letterwriters, Philander and Sylvia, undergo a shift in their love affair in the course of the novel. Most importantly, perhaps, is the structure of this particular novel. Part 1 is exclusively letters. Parts 2 and 3 are increasingly less epistolary; this change coincides with the shifts in the characters’ relationships as well. While Philander and Sylvia use given names with one another throughout, there are fewer letters between them and those that are between them, are no longer love letters.

In Part 1, consisting primarily of love letters exchanged between Philander and Sylvia, interestingly, it is mainly Philander who addresses Sylvia with terms of endearment. These include such terms as ‘charming Sylvia’, ‘adorable Sylvia’, ‘divine Sylvia’ but also ‘cruel Sylvia’ and ‘unreasonable Sylvia’. In addition, Philander employs other terms of endearment: ‘my fair charmer’ and ‘my dear angel’, for example. He also addresses her with, ‘Oh thou most charming of thy sex! Thou lovely dear delight of my transported soul! thou everlasting

treasure of my heart!’ (Behn, n.d., p. 45). While this is not to say that Sylvia never uses ‘special’ terms of endearment—she does use ‘charming Philander’ and ‘adorable Philander’ as well as ‘lovely brother’—she seems to apply more restraint both in their frequency and their extravagance. Whether this is an inadvertent imbalance, or whether relationship markers used by a courting male would be expected to be more numerous than the courted female would merit further consideration. Certainly, though, the intimacy of the relationship is marked.

A more thorough review of the hierarchical significance of these various terms of address—from private to public—would shed more light on the implications of relationship markers as used in the novels. That said, there is a very rough correlation, at times, between titles and ‘less familiar’ language. M/Henriette-Sylvie and H/Ophelia, for example, in using titles with some social distance associated with them, extend a comparable relationship to their named recipients as to the external reading audiences. Given names and terms of endearment tend to mark the more private relationships and ‘block’ the external reading audiences from engaging as insiders. However, not always. L/Montier is one example: the external reading audience has the possibility of engaging in the role of participant because the terms of address are adequately non-specific. Equally, the external reading audience might identify with the role of Madame de Narton in L/Roselle, as she is also addressed with friendly and polite, but adequately non-specific, terms of address. Likewise, ‘my dear Amanda’ as used in L/Harriot Stuart does not stand in the way of ‘private’ engagement by the external reading audience. Despite the presence of a given name, this expression is oddly non-specific. These examples represent a variation on ‘adopting the mantle’ that allows identifying with a character’s role, without necessarily assuming the role of participant.

### 8.3 Samples and Findings: The Dialogue Effect

Another way of activating Common Ground involves the Dialogue Effect. The Dialogue Effect has a ‘natural’ feel to it, in that it closely resembles the interactional language of conversation, to the extent it can be recreated in writing. It ‘feels’ less like a technique directed at benefiting external readers. While the conversational ‘to-and-fro’ of the Dialogue Effect is well-suited to paired closings and openings of letters, and often occurs in these sections, it is not limited to these sections. The technique may be used at any point in a letter—or in fact, throughout a letter, from paragraph to paragraph. In general, in these sources, the Dialogue Effect is marked either by the initiation of a topic that invites a response or by a response that, minus a ‘preamble’ that reintroduces the topic, responds abruptly. Further, the ideas may be reinforced because of the double-mention they receive.

L/Deux Dames offers an example. The first citation is an excerpt from Letter 2, written by the letterwriter who has requested the story. This example shows how one letter’s closing may link to the opening of another. She writes:

J'espère qu'après avoir conduit les choses aussi loin, vous voudrez bien ne pas être obligeante à demi et que vous reprendrez le fil de votre narration où vous l'avez laissée. L'époque en est trop bien marquée pour ne pas vous en souvenir, puisque c'est au For-l'Evêque que vous avez laissé l'abbé de Bucquoy. Toutes les scènes ennuyeuses sont passées, et comme nous approchons du dénouement, le bel endroit va sans doute venir. Je l'attends avec impatience (Du Noyer, 1866/1989, p. 26-27).

In response, Letter 3, from the other *dame*, begins:

Vous avez raison, madame, il ne faut pas rester en si beau chemin, et je n'ai garde de laisser plus longtemps l'abbé au For-l'Evêque, où je l'ai conduit dans ma précédente: nous allons tâcher de l'en tirer, ou plutôt de voir comment il s'en tirera lui-même. Mais nous ne sommes pas encore si près du dénouement que vous pensez. Il faudra encore le mener à la Bastille, et nous avons bien du chemin à faire. Il faudra aller pied à pied. Je ne sais point si toutes les scènes ennuyeuses sont passées; en tout cas, nous les essuierons de moitié, et comme vous voyez, c'est moi qui fais les avances, puisqu'il faut que je les écrive avant que vous les lisiez (Du Noyer, 1866/1989, p. 27-28).

In this response, the letterwriter agrees with what was previously said, adds her own 'take' on it, confirms where the story needs to go and comments on how that will be done. Further, the letterwriter also addresses the matter of 'boring scenes' as well as the recipient's perspective on the subject of the story, again adding her own comments. In addition to content, both examples tend to the rapport side of the communication. Therefore, both letterwriters demonstrate the common knowledge governing social conduct in a letter as well as the more immediate 'message' common knowledge represented by the story.

Familiar Letters displays the to-and-fro of conversation in several ways, and covering different topics. Their first to-and-fro exchange involves politics. It starts in Letter 2, where Berina is writing about their reactions to the recent birth of a prince, and includes a poem sent to her on the topic. She teases Artander about his own views, then writes:

Why shou'd a Man of *Artander's* Reason and Goodness, be bypass'd by a parcel of Monsters? who have nothing in view, but the Subversion of their Religion and Laws, and the letter Rein of their native Land (Davys, 1999, p. 95).

Artander's next letter begins:

I always told *Berina*, her greatest, nay, her only Weakness, lay in being a *Whig*. Methinks the very Name, so hated and despis'd, should give your Inclination a turn:

then do but look back our *English Annals*, and see the Practice of those Men, from whom the Name first took its Rise (Davys, 1999, p. 96).

In the next paragraph, he abruptly switches topics to address the matter of the poem: 'I thank you for the Poetry you sent me' (Davys, 1999, p. 96). In response to Artander's letter, Berina's Letter 4 begins:

You sent me to the *English Annals* for a Cure of *Whiggism*, and (as if Heaven had design'd me for what I am) I insensibly found myself in Queen *Mary's* Reign, where I had so many Objects of Cruelty presented to my view, that I was ready to creep into my-self at the dreadful Reflection (Davys, 1999, p. 97).

Berina's response in this particular letter continues, as does the to-and-fro exchange, until Artander requests a 'cease-fire' on the subject in Letter 7. In the meantime, however, they also trade stories regarding adventures they are each having as well as re-addressing their views on friendship between men and women.

L/Roselle also demonstrates the Dialogue Effect. This example begins after the Comtesse shares with her friend, Madame de Narton, her concerns regarding her brother. Madame de Narton offers sympathy without preamble, thereafter constructing an entire letter around advice. She writes:

Je crois que vous ferez bien de surprimer les conseils, à moins que le Marquis ne vous en demande (Elie de Beaumont, 1765, p. 8-9).

This advice-filled paragraph is followed by one that begins as follows:

Je ne vous conseille point non plus de parler de mariage à votre frere; vous voyez ce qu'il vous dit. Se résistance ne me surprend pas; c'est une suite du goût pour l'indépendance (Elie de Beaumont, 1765, p. 9).

She begins wrapping up her advice in another paragraph:

Ce que je ne puis me lasser de vous recommander, ma chere, c'est de ne pas lui témoigner de la curiosité sur sa conduite (Elie de Beaumont, 1765, p. 10).

In her next letter, the Comtesse responds without preamble, continuing her side of the Dialogue Effect:

La justesse de vos reflexions, ma tendre amie, a rectifié mes idées. Je sentois la nécessité de procurer des plaisirs à mon frere; mais vous m'avez fait envisager le

danger de mes conseils, je me rends. Je les supprimerai. Il m'en coûtera; mais je m'observerai désormais. J'ai déjà commencé (Elie de Beaumont, 1765, p. 11).

In fact, there are numerous Dialogue-Effect examples in *L/Roselle*, largely because developed openings to letters are not really a feature of the novel. Instead, these characters 'converse', insofar as possible on the page, and the Dialogue Effect is a consistent means of doing so.

*Anti-Pamela* also offers examples of the Dialogue Effect. The non-letterwriting narrator provides contextualization, as do the accumulated letters between Syrena and her mother. Although the following letter recounts Syrena's most recent endeavours, with an implied request for advice involved, it draws upon understandings already established, for both the external reading audience and for Mrs Tricky. Syrena writes:

I thought of you then, Mamma, and how lucky it was for me, that I had not set my Heart upon him.—I took no Notice however of the Baulk it was to me, but seem'd very civil and obliging.—He press'd me again to go and take a Glass of Wine with him, but I absolutely refused that; however, being afraid somebody might happen to come through the Churchyard that might know me, we cross'd, at my Request, the Garden, and struck down Southampton-street, and so into the Savoy, where we walk'd about an Hour: he all the time entertaining me with Praises of my Beauty, and the Impression it had made on him. Indeed I staid with him more to accustom myself to hear fine things said to me, and to practice an agreeable manner of receiving them, than any thing else—for as you say, Mamma, he is neither fit to make either Husband or Gallant to one in my Circumstances (Haywood, 2004, p. 68-69).

Her mother responds, offering support perhaps of a flavour not welcomed by Syrena and not anticipated by the external reading audience:

Ah, Syrena!—Syrena! I am afraid you like this poor idle Fellow, more than it may be you are yet sensible of yourself—why else are you sorry he has not an Estate?—If he has not an Estate others have, that, perhaps, may find you as agreeable as he has done.—You have a very great Opinion too of his Wit, and of his Love; suppose you are not mistaken, he is only the more dangerous, and you ought the less to trust yourself with him.—I charge you, therefore, to shun him henceforward—be as industrious to avoid all Opportunities of seeing him, as 'tis probable he will be in seeking them.—You already believe all the fine Things (as you call them) that he says to you; and knowing by Experience, how susceptible the Heart is at your Years, I tremble lest all the Counsel I have given you, should not be sufficient to guard you from the Temptation.—Don't think Child, that I want to lay you under any unreasonable Restraints.—No, if we were rich and above Censure, I should be far from putting any curb to Nature; but as all our Hopes depend on your making your

Fortune, either by Marriage or a Settlement equal to it, you must be extremely cautious of your Character till that Point is gain'd, and when once it is, you may freely indulge your Inclinations with this, or any other Man.—You see, I do not like most Parents, want to deprive you of the Pleasures of Life; I would only have you first attain, that which alone can give them a true Relish; for Love in Rags Syrena, is a most despicable Thing (Haywood, 2004, p. 70).

In this response, Mrs Tricksy not only re-incorporates remarks made by Syrena, she also re-incorporates long-term understanding the two women share, clarifying 'lessons' she offers her daughter. For the external reading audience, there can be no doubt about these two characters and their motives.

Beyond these paired instances of the Dialogue Effect, there are also examples from one side only. For example, initiating the Dialogue Effect appears in *L/Péruvienne* and *L/Mistriss Fanni*, two novels that show only one side of the exchange, but which employ interactional language nevertheless.

In *L/Péruvienne*, for example, Zilia frequently writes to Aza explaining her impressions of French society. She does so as if already involved in a discussion, using Aza's name and second-person pronouns that emphasize that she is speaking to someone, to him, and not writing an essay on French society. She initiates her explanations as if 'speaking to' Aza.

Quoique je te dise la verité avec toute la sincérité de mon coeur, mon cher Aza, garde-toi bien de croire qu'il n'y ait point ici de femmes de mérite (Grafigny, 1983, p. 344).

With *L/Mistriss Fanni*, the Dialogue Effect often seems an extension of an on-going conversation, whether a recent face-to-face encounter or whether in keeping with their letterwriting habits. Certainly, Mistriss Fanni expects her recipient to know what she is talking about when she writes:

Je ne prierai point le Ciel avec vous, mon aimable ami; les voeux que nous lui adressons sont trop différens (Riccoboni, 1759, p. 8).

The other side of the Dialogue Effect is the abrupt response. The abrupt response is well-illustrated by *L/Montier* as well as *Delicate Distress*. Significantly, these responses are just that: they respond to something previously said, they expand on those comments, without re-introducing them. There is an assumption that the other party will be able to connect the response to the appropriate previous comment. In both *L/Montier* and *Delicate Distress*, abrupt responses are a way of achieving turn-taking, on the page.

Numerous examples of the 'abrupt response' occur in *L/Montier*. The daughter, in her letters, usually requests her mother's advice or opinion. In turn, most of the letters



written by the mother are labelled as 'response to the preceding' or something similar, signalling that they will address whatever the daughter has previously related. Therefore, the foundation is set for increased likelihood of the abrupt response. The samples below occur in one letter, written by the mother. They demonstrate not only the abrupt response but also how it can be used throughout a letter. Every paragraph in the letter responds to something the daughter has written in her previous letter.

Je suis aussi surprise de votre disgrâce, ma chère fille, qu'édifiée de vos sentiments par rapport aux grandeurs & aux vanités de ce monde...

Vous aviez bien peu appris à connaître la Cour, puisque vous comptiez sur des amis après votre chute...

Je ne suis point surprise de la générosité du Comte...

Ce que vous me mandez de votre soeur, me surprend...

Je ne doute point que la Marquise de Saint G... n'ait beaucoup de part à votre exil...

Vous me parlez dans votre lettre de la prison du père du Roi; marquez-moi ce que vous en savez...

Le parallèle de l'état de ce pauvre Prince, avec celui de ces pauvres gens qu'une légère augmentation de gain transporte de joie, est bien propre à faire comprendre... (LePrince de Beaumont, 1762, p. 184-187)

In addition, the abrupt responses in L/Montier are as likely to emphasize message-oriented considerations as they are to perform rapport-conveying functions. They generally offer support.

This example from Letter 10 in *Delicate Distress* also utilizes the abrupt response to chronologically address the matters of the previous letter, before switching to 'fresh' information. Below are the first sentences of the first six paragraphs, with Paragraph 1 acting as an introduction that performs the social nicety of acknowledging receipt of a letter. These initial sentences are as follows:

I cannot tell my dearest Fanny how much her last letter affected me...

How happy is it for your poor weak Emily, that she has nothing to struggle with!

I have no sort of doubt but you are eased of all a mother's fears, by this time...

I have very uneasy apprehensions, for poor Lucy...

I detest Sir James Miller...

Our family party has received some very agreeable additions... (Griffith, 1997, p. 23)

While turntaking must necessarily be different in letters than in conversation, given that letterwriting communicators are not face-to-face, this example demonstrates how the abrupt response can acknowledge the other party's 'turn' before commencing one's own turn. The change of topic also emphasizes the shift in turn.

An additional abrupt response from Delicate Distress occurs in Letter 13, when Lady Woodville responds rather feistily to news her sister has provided in a previous letter, without any introductory preamble:

I am so violently provoked, at the insolent baseness of that abominable Miller, that I cannot find words to express my resentment. I do not think you seem sufficiently rejoiced at Lucy's escape, from such a monster. For my part, I am delighted at the thoughts of his being married to such a woman as miss Nelson.—May she render him just as miserable, as he deserves to be (Griffith, 1997, p. 28).

In this case, Lady Straffon has reported information, and Lady Woodville responds by advising how appalled she is over the issue. This does not seem far from words she might choose in person, but more importantly, it also reflects how she might interject her view into the conversation. Further, the external reading audience may well be responding in kind, even if 'invisibly'.

#### 8.4 Written Common Ground: A Matter of Information Management

Activating Common Ground as it occurs in these sources is more about (letter)writers managing information, rather than negotiating information. (Letter)writers control the information and the information flow. The writer establishes the Common Ground, providing enough to fulfil the maxims of the Cooperative Principle, allowing the communication to proceed. As has been the case throughout this study, depending on how interactional language delivers information relevant to the stories, different experiences are offered to the audiences. Again, the interactional language and the degree of familiarity in the relationships fall along the private-public continuum, as do the audience experiences. Two representative categories, Overtly Tagging Relationships and the Dialogue Effect, have been emphasized. Both suggest patterns between method of Activating Common Ground and the degree of familiarity in the exchange, although these patterns are not definitive and need further investigation.

Relationship markers perform 'dual duties' in that they 'name' relationship links not only between the identified participants but also the links that bring the external reading audience into the exchange. Every novel uses them. In some cases, a parallel exists between the relationship promoted to each of these audiences via the relationship tags, and in other cases, the relationships promoted are distinctly separate. The relationship markers, in fact, operate similarly to the T/V contrasts, except that they are far more widespread, and, therefore, provide potentially more governance throughout the stories. Again, a more detailed evaluation of the hierarchy of titles would clarify this category further, but it does seem clear that the more 'generic' and respectful titles (i.e., Madame, Votre Altesse, Your Ladyship, as used in M/Henriette-Sylvie, L/Deux Dames and H/Ophelia) allow room for the external reading audience to 'receive' the address as if they are the intended recipient or to 'adopt the mantle' of a letterwriter requesting the story. In effect, the external reading

audience has an opportunity to assume the relationship role extended to that intended recipient. While this represents a certain kind of parity between audiences, it also means these 'relationships' tend to be familiar relationships, although falling in the middle of the private-public continuum.

On the other hand, terms of address like 'ma chère cousine' and 'my dear Amanda' offer a variation on 'adopting the mantle' to the external reading audience, although the experience may be more familiar than those offered by titles. Perhaps not, however. That is, in the contexts of these novels, 'ma chère cousine' is rather generic, given that no name or further clarification of the family tie is offered. Similarly, 'my dear Amanda' can be overlooked, possibly because that relationship is never clarified and because input from Amanda is not available. In fact, neither of these novels offers much variation or expansion regarding these terms of address. Further, in context, the content is no more personal than in the novels that use female titles. As a result, these novels also fall in the familiar, but not intimate, range on the private-public continuum. The terms of address do not, by themselves, create familiarity, despite the relatively familiar nature of the relationship tags.

The rest of the novels emphasize relationships that do not allow the external reading audience to participate. Rather, the external reading audience is the observer in these cases. However, it is not strictly clear that relationship tags are responsible for this. For example, a novel like *Delicate Distress*, where the female letterwriters use given names and make it clear they are sisters, depicts a relationship at the private end of the continuum that does not make insiders of the external reading audience. Even if that audience agrees with some of the commentary, the private nature of the stories precludes a simpler 'adoption of the mantle'. This is true of novels like *L/Montier* and *L/Roselle*, as well as Myrtille's letter to Sylvia in *Love-Letters*. At the same time, *L/Mistriss Fanni*—representing a different kind of private relationship—employs titles and terms of endearment, absolutely positioning the external reading audience as 'outsider'.

Therefore, some alignment does exist between terms of address and whether the external reading audience is able to 'adopt the mantle' or whether participant-audiences are limited to named letterwriters. Some alignment exists between what may be viewed as 'social' titles addressed to a recipient and the external reading audience's ability to wear the title for themselves. *L/Mistriss Fanni* demonstrates that use of titles does not guarantee the external reading audience will 'adopt the mantle', however. Further, given names and terms of endearment tend to mark the communication as private, rendering it less likely the external reading audience will don insider status vis-à-vis the communication or story. However, 'my dear Amanda' from *Harriot Stuart* demonstrates the possibility of exceptions to this generalization as well.

The Dialogue Effect is important in this study for several reasons, not least because it represents a turning point in the language use categories, even more than relationship tags. With the Dialogue Effect, a particular kind of convergence between the audiences begins to emerge. Specifically, the audiences—whether the named recipients or external reading audiences—encounter similar experiences when interacting with the Dialogue Effect,

despite the external reading audience not being able to contribute to either side of the dialogue for themselves. That is, the novel's interactional language still carries the workload.

The Dialogue Effect is associated with a familiar manner of writing in that it does reflect conversation, albeit conversation with delay. It does involve necessarily modified turn-taking. In addition, the Dialogue Effect tends to occur in novels that omit Openings and Closings (as discussed in Chapter 7). These choices tend to create a familiar air to the communication. However, because the Dialogue Effect includes an 'initiation' of content, it is less likely to position the external reading audience as 'having walked into the middle of a conversation', thereby needing to scramble to piece together the paths of discussion. Instead, the Dialogue Effect can be particularly user-friendly for the external reading audience in this sense. For example, in *Familiar Letters*, Berina writes to Artander, saying:

Last night I accidentally fell into the Company of one of those modern Creatures call'd a Prude, who seem'd extremely fond of the instructive Part of Conversation, and being the oldest Lady in the room, took upon her to read us Lectures of Behaviour (Davys, 1999, p. 94).

Berina is sharing Personal Knowledge—this is a recount of something she, herself, has experienced—and it is new information to both Artander and to the external reading audience. The audiences receive this Knowledge together.

In this way, the Dialogue Effect tends to position the external reading audience quite similarly to the intended recipient in terms of receiving the topic. Knowledge type, as discussed in Chapter 4, is not treated differently for the contrasting audiences—despite most Dialogue-Effect content being Personal or Interpersonal Knowledge. This is significant because it means similar information is being revealed in similar ways to both audiences. As a result, the external reading audience becomes a kind of participant. The external reading audience becomes an insider where the Knowledge is concerned because it is offered to that audience very much 'the same' as it is offered to the intended recipient. This means that while the external reading audience may well remain an outsider to the relationship on offer—because that relationship is not more 'open' to the external reading audience—the external reading audience is nevertheless an insider to the communication itself because distinctions in how Knowledge is revealed do not separate the audiences when the Dialogue Effect is involved. In this way, the Dialogue Effect brings the external reading audience into the story on a more familiar basis simply because of this experience with the Knowledge, and not because the external reading audience is adopting the mantle of recipient. The external reading audience will not be participating in the activities described; rather that audience is receiving information similarly to the intended recipient. A kind of alignment between the audiences emerges. The Common Ground is the Knowledge being provided by the letterwriter.

Again, these are only two means observed for Activating Common Ground. The other three mentioned previously—Upfront Assertions, Reminders of Shared Knowledge and

Reminders of Long-Term Understanding—merit further consideration, as do the two categories considered here. The other three means would help complete the picture of Activating Common Ground, particularly the provision of knowledge as well as how Common Ground is reminded. In turn, this would complete the private-public continuum where both language and relationships are concerned. However, what these two categories suggest is that writer not only knows what information to provide, but in making choices in this regard, the writer establishes the context models relevant for the given novel. The writer establishes the Community of Practice. The writer provides the relevant knowledge base, whether this is the tagging of relationships or incorporating content into ‘conversation’, choices that contribute to the *vraisemblance*-verisimilitude required for the epistolary novel because they rely on letterwriting mechanisms known to the reading audiences—as letterwriters.

Activating Common Ground introduces new dimensions into the matter of audience position. The two mechanisms discussed here offer similar positions to the various audiences, at least in some ways, some of the time. As indicated, the Dialogue Effect does this via the treatment of content: the Dialogue Effect presents information in a conversational, familiar manner, regardless of whether the audience is the named recipient or the external reading audience. As such, the external reading audience has ‘personal’ access to the information, even if not the relationship in which it is delivered. Terms of address are somewhat more complicated: the relationships extended do not necessarily have straightforward connections to the terms themselves. For example, titles do not ‘guarantee’ parity of audience experience, just as given names and terms of endearment do not—even if there is some suggestion of the degree of familiarity these terms may offer. Instead, the key feature is the degree of ‘non-specificity’ attached to a term of address. While some terms of address in some novels encourage ‘adopting the mantle’, others only allow the external reading audience to identify with a given letterwriter or recipient—enough so that Common Ground as a participant in the relationship is possible, even if not in the form of ‘adopting the mantle’ of participant.<sup>121</sup> While this does not occur with all of the relationship tags, just as the Dialogue Effect only characterizes some of the novels, this effect of Activating Common Ground—this blending of audience position—is a new result of interactional language.

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<sup>121</sup> In fact, some letterwriters depict this sort of engagement with characters in the various stories embedded in some of the letters.



### **Chapter 9—Samples, Part 4: Signalling Storytelling**

This category, Signalling Storytelling, is perhaps the most closely aligned with the focus areas of Interactional Sociolinguistics, given the emphasis on ‘cues’ involved in discourse organization. As with the other categories, this one emerged via a review of the sources. All of these sources ‘tell tales’ to some degree, but they initiate the inclusion of these tales in different ways. Specifically, however, the cues involved in Signalling Storytelling alert audiences about changes to the upcoming narrative, whether in storyline, ‘speaker’ or both. These cues are not particularly subtle. They are reminiscent of oral storytelling—and of conversational organization—in their visibility and purpose. Further, audiences are again ‘blended’, as the cues would benefit any audience reading the stories.

The cues in question are not discussed as literary techniques, although the overlap is evident (i.e., foreshadowing). Instead, these cues are interpreted and discussed in terms of their contribution to the flow of the discourse. These cues act as markers of a shift in the communication itself. They are conversational markers, or interaction facilitators. They are polite gestures, inserted to aid the audience in following the discussion. These cues reduce the risk of ambiguity for the audience, a goal cited by the Cooperative Principle. More specifically, these cues function as frame differentiators, providing a means for separating one part of the narrative from another, in the spirit of Goffman’s notion of frames. These signals do, in fact, set off ‘what will come’ from the ‘ongoing flow of surrounding events’ using a kind of conventionalized boundary marker to achieve this purpose, as Goffman describes (1974, p. 251). While these signals are neither as conventionalized nor as obvious as the visible demarcations separating individual letters, within the context of the narratives, they do nevertheless alert the audience to a shift in frame.

In this study, three main distinctions emerge within the overall category. One of these involves cues that allow the storyteller to retain the floor while indicating a shift in the line of storytelling, while the second allows the storyteller to temporarily relinquish the floor to another narrator, for a sometimes extensive and sometimes directly-quoted relation of events. Further, an additional category includes cues that acknowledge the co-construction of the story, a co-construction between a non-letterwriting narrator and an external reading audience.

All of these categories qualify as forms of ‘direct address’ as Goffman uses the term, in that they are instances of a character ‘stepping slightly out of frame’ (1974, p. 231) to deliver an ‘aside’. When storytelling is signalled, the narrator (in these sources, usually the letterwriter) is implicitly acknowledging a story is being told. However briefly, this ‘voice’ steps out of the ongoing story to do this. It is possibly more obvious when a non-letterwriting narrator ‘steps out’ of the story for a moment of direct storytelling address, and has a slightly different impact as well. A further point about story co-construction is that these asides are only addressed to an external reading audience, not to a character within the story.

### 9.1 Samples: Retaining the Floor

As mentioned, this category involves ‘claiming the floor’ in order to relate a story. It is often evident at the beginning of a letter, when the letterwriter declares, upfront, the topic of the letter. Equally, however, it may occur in the middle of a letter, when a topic shift is desired. The key part of this category is that the voice remains that of the identified letterwriter.

Signalling Storytelling of the Retaining the Floor variety is perhaps most evident in M/Henriette-Sylvie. Again, in this source, the signals may well occur anywhere in a letter. Further, in M/Henriette-Sylvie, these signals tend to be reflections, often reminders of the ‘*aventure*’ nature of the overall story being told. They often include a direct address of the letter recipient, by title if not by name.

C’est ici, Madame, que je me dispenserais volontiers de la loi que je me suis faite, de dire beaucoup de choses en peu de mots, pour étendre le récit de cet amour qui est encore cher à mon souvenir (Villedieu, 2003, p. 57).

Henriette-Sylvie further reminds ‘Madame’ that things must be told in their proper order, acknowledging in this way that a story is being told.

Mais, Madame, il vous faut raconter toutes ces choses dans leur ordre, et commencer comme je vous l’ai promis, par les aventures de notre voyage (Villedieu, 2003, p. 221).

In some cases, Henriette-Sylvie acknowledges a divergence from the main story, regardless of the ‘need’ to tell things in their proper order.

Mais cette petite histoire n’est pas seulement faite en passant, et pour vous divertir, elle a relation avec la mienne, comme Votre Altesse va le savoir (Villedieu, 2003, p. 178).

Also related to the ‘proper order of relating things’, Henriette-Sylvie further signals when something is being left out of the story.

Je faisais un plaisant usage de ses avis; et si j’osais le dire à Votre Altesse, elle le trouverait divertissant; mais elle me trouverait en même temps bien folle. Il n’importe, il faut que je lui fasse deviner ce que je n’ai pas l’assurance de lui dire (Villedieu, 2003, p. 156).

Storytelling in L/Montier is signalled primarily by the daughter. As she is the main initiator of the communication—writing as a young wife and mother, relating her experiences as they travel through Europe—this is not especially surprising. She is, after all, the one with the tales to tell and signals her position at the beginning of the first letter.



Que ne m'est-il possible de vous découvrir mes allarmes & mes craintes! vous frémiriez sans doute, si vous pouviez connoître la terrible situation où je me trouve (Leprince de Beaumont, 1762, p. 1).

This particular letter also sets up the overriding story strand that governs the entire collection of letters, but it allows the daughter to claim the floor for this individual letter as well. In fact, the daughter often opens letters with Retaining the Floor cues:

Nous sommes ici dans un embarras qu'il ne m'est pas possible de vous exprimer (Leprince de Beaumont, 1762, p. 141).

However, she uses this technique throughout the letters as well. She often establishes the conversational flow and introduces new topics by announcing a distressing, upsetting story is to follow. For example:

Je n'entreprendrai point de vous décrire mes divers mouvements à la lecture de votre Lettre: je demeurai abymée dans une confusion qui m'anéantissoit en quelque sorte (Leprince de Beaumont, 1762, p. 151).

However, the daughter also signals storytelling within a letter when she wants to shift topic to something more 'agreeable'. For example:

Je me suis hâtée de finir ce qui regarde cette malheureuse affaire, pour vous entretenir d'une autre plus agréable, & qui me donne beaucoup de joye (Leprince de Beaumont, 1762, p. 135).

R/Voyage d'Espagne involves a great deal of reporting: the Comtesse details what she sees, who she meets and what they tell her, and so on. An important aspect of the stories embedded in R/Voyage d'Espagne is that they are often designed to add authenticity to the narrative. Again, storytelling signals may well occur in the first paragraph of the letters, although they are not restricted to this. For example, Letter 9 begins:

J'appréhende que vous ne soyez fâchée de ce que j'ai laissé passer un ordinaire sans vous écrire; mais, ma chère cousine, je voulais être informée de plusieurs choses dont je vais vous rendre compte (D'Aulnoy, 1874/2005, p. 293).

This reference to 'someone' informing her is common and usually sets up a shift in narrative, often a particularly long explanation.

J'ai appris qu'elles passent la première année de leur deuil dans une chambre toute tendue de noir (D'Aulnoy, 1874/2005, p. 120).

As will be discussed in the next section, the letterwriter employs a similar technique when relinquishing the floor, but these examples (and numerous others) illustrate how the Comtesse supports her reporting with the aid of others telling her things. She is purportedly telling stories that she, herself, has previously received as a listener and is passing them on to another audience.

When the Comtesse doubts the accuracy of information, she tends to point it out, specifically signalling this aspect of repeating stories.

Bien que je n'aie rien cru de tout ce que l'on me dit à Gargançon de Mira et de Nios, je ne laissai pas de prendre plaisir au récit de ce conte dont j'omets mille particularités, dans la crainte de vous ennuyer par sa longueur (D'Aulnoy, 1874/2005, p. 70).

This, too, is helpful in guiding the audience through the narrative, as it helps distinguish between 'entertainment' and that which is intended to be received as true.

Signalling Storytelling in *Delicate Distress* is primarily via Retaining the Floor. It follows similar patterns as those mentioned, in that it is typically found at the beginning of a letter, although Signalling Storytelling is not as widespread as in *R/Voyage d'Espagne*. For example, Lady Straffon writes:

As I am perfectly convinced that, in the account of our correspondence, I am much your debtor, on the article of entertainment, I am pleased at having a little adventure to relate to you, though I cannot hope that the recital will afford you as much pleasure, as the action gave me; but you must make the same allowance as you do for a play, in your closet, and furnish out all the scenery, decorations, &c. from the store-house of your own imagination.

My tale runs simply thus (Griffith, 1997, p. 101).

As the next example from *Delicate Distress* illustrates, storytelling signals may also occur in the middle of a letter, marking a shift in the direction of that letter, similar to what was observed in *L/Montier*.

The subjects of this letter, have sunk my spirits, so much, that I fear I shall rather increase, than lessen your depression, if I pursue them farther. I will, therefore, change to one that ought to give me pleasure, and will, I hope, afford you some (Griffith, 1997, p. 146).

H/Ophelia uses Retaining the Floor storytelling cues in some similar ways to M/Henriette-Sylvie. Given the similarity in the way these stories are told—recount requested by and addressed to a social superior, presented after-the-fact and, despite somewhat arbitrary divisions into ‘letter’ chapters, still reading very much as one volume written by one person—that storytelling is signalled in similar ways is not surprising. In H/Ophelia, the signals often relate to reflections being interlaced with the ‘factual’ recount of the tale. That is, it is not a ‘pure’ account as it was experienced, but one that includes perspective after-the-fact.

I have related this Affair, as it was then told me; but I shall now give your Ladyship an exact Account of some Circumstances, which were concealed from me, till Secrecy was of no longer Use (Fielding. 2004, p. 95).

Signalling Storytelling is, however, also used to introduce simpler lines of narration.

As I had, for a considerable Time, no Employ but gazing at Fellow Traveller’s outward Form, I will make your Ladyship my companion in it, by describing her to you (Fielding, 2004, p. 163).

Storytelling signals of the Retaining the Floor variety are less evident in Love-Letters. Particularly in Part 1, where letters tell the story without an additional narrator, Signalling Storytelling plays only a very minor role. In Part 2, other adventures are signalled and related in a series of letters written by Philander to Octavio. This begins with Letter 9, Part 2.

I doubt not but you will wonder that all this time you have not heard of me, or indeed can well excuse it, since I have been in a place whence with ease I could have sent every post; but a new affair of gallantry has engaged my thoughtful hours... (Behn, n.d., p. 101).

In fact, three further letters from Philander to Octavio continue to signal the telling of Philander’s story to Octavio, weaving a tale set off from the main flow not only because visibly separate letters provide a boundary but also because a different story strand is delivered in these letters. These three letters signal this parallel storyline ‘upfront’, as follows:

Perhaps, my friend, you are wondering now, what this discourse, this odd discovery of my own inconstancy leads to? (Behn, n.d., p. 117)

In my last, my dear Octavio, you left me pursuing, like a knight-errant, a beauty enchanted within some invisible tree, or castle, or lake, or any thing inaccessible... (Behn, n.d., p. 163).

Sure of your friendship, my dear Octavio, I venture to lay before you the history of my misfortunes, as well as those of my joys, equally extreme.  
In my last, I gave you an account how triumphing a lover I was, in the possession of the adorable Calista (Behn, n.d., p. 219).

Another storytelling signal—one that is a switch of topic and apparently also of narrator—occurs toward the end of Part 3. In this instance, the narrator that has been telling this story from the ‘Argument’ can be viewed as ‘taking over’. The scene involves a character ‘putting himself’ into a monastery, specifically occurring at a ceremony being attended by Sylvia and the ‘Prince of Mechlenburgh’. The scene begins with the prince describing his understanding of these ceremonies, until a pronoun shift suggests that the narrator has assumed the telling of the tale.

I myself went among the rest to this ceremony, having, in all the time I lived in Flanders, never been so curious to see any such thing (Behn, n.d., p. 274).

The rest of the ceremony is then described by this voice, the rest of the novel being related through it as well, and it seems unlikely the Prince would have assumed this role. Instead, as suggested, it seems that the narrator responsible for the ‘Argument’ and for linking the letters throughout Parts 2 and 3, is the same narrator assuming first-person control at this late stage in the story.

L/Harriot Stuart does not make extensive use of Retaining the Floor storytelling signals. When it does occur, it is generally in the first part of the novel, where the story is still being set up. These are generally brief signals, ‘spoken to’ an audience.

As I shall have frequent occasion to speak of my brother and sisters in the course of my history, permit me to give you a short sketch of their characters (Lennox, 1995, p. 63).

Familiar Letters also rarely signals storytelling. When it does, the cue is brief and rather abrupt.

I am now going to divert you with something of a different kind (Davys, 1999, p. 101).

That Familiar Letters does not tend to use signalling is in line with the conversational feel of this novel, in that topic strands are usually picked up from whatever was said in the previous letter, as discussed in the section on the Dialogue Effect.

Anti-Pamela includes some instances of storytelling in the letters that retain the floor. In general, these are the letters written by Syrena, the daughter.

...indeed I long to see you; and the more, because an Adventure has happened to me, which I don't know but may come to something, if I manage right—I'll tell you exactly how it was (Haywood, 2004, p. 60).

Similar to what was seen in L/Montier, it is the daughter who has gone off to have adventures, so it follows that she would be the one tending to set up the storytelling.

L/Manley signals storytelling when the letterwriter intends to retain the floor, discussing her own experiences and observations even if other people often figure in her descriptions. This particular sample is similar to one from H/Ophelia.

They have a tollerable Cook; and I was glad to find something I cou'd eat at Three-a-Clock, for we came in here at Two, and I can give you a little better Account of my Fellow Travellers (Manley, 1696/2006, p. 8).

## 9.2 Samples: Relinquishing the Floor

The most obvious examples of Relinquishing the Floor storytelling signals tend to introduce letters. These cues clearly set off 'what follows' from 'the ongoing flow of storytelling', as Goffman describes. In addition, this type of Relinquishing the Floor occurs with letters embedded within letters, and not just when an external narrator is linking letters. Further, 'relinquishing' occurs with other sorts of embedded stories, which may be a direct quotation from that person, similar to the switch of narrator involved when a letter appears.

Relinquishing the Floor is common in R/Voyage d'Espagne, as numerous friends and acquaintances of the Comtesse relate their own stories. In fact, some of these accounts go on at length and it is surprising that these 'interruptions' are not more thoroughly marked as someone else's words.<sup>122</sup> That said, a range of storytelling signals involving Relinquishing the Floor does occur. Sometimes it involves the direct relation of a story or adventure, and other times, the conversations may be paraphrased.

Après les avoir examinés, je passai vers le brasier et Don Frédéric s'y plaça près de moi; il me demanda en quel état étaient les affaires lorsque j'étais partie de Paris; qu'il m'avouait que les grandes qualités du roi de France faisaient bien souvent le sujet de ses plus agréables réflexions... (D'Aulnoy, 1874/2005, p. 71-72).

Following this cue to the audience, Don Frédéric goes on to explain his 'reflexions'.

In addition to Signalling Storytelling by paraphrasing conversations in this way, another habit of the Comtesse is to overtly ask for information, then re-present the response. This frames the new narrative and also sets off the new voice, adhering to the basic structure of consultative style as Joos' defines it. For example:

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<sup>122</sup> I acknowledge that conventions for marking quotations would not have been standardized when this novel appeared; for this very reason, Signalling Storytelling via other markers would have been especially important.

Vous me feriez un plaisir singulier, lui dis-je en l'interrompant, de m'apprendre quelques particularités de ce prince; il est naturel d'avoir de la curiosité pour les personnes de son caractère; et quand on se trouve dans une Cour où l'on n'a jamais été, pour n'y paraître pas trop neuve, on a besoin d'être un peu instruite. Il me témoigna que ce serait avec plaisir qu'il me dirait les choses qui étaient venues à sa connaissance, et il commença ainsi... (D'Aulnoy, 1874/2005, p. 79).

This example illustrates how the 'front' frame may be managed by the Comtesse. However, she also tends to frame the ending, alerting her audiences that she is resuming control of the floor.

Don Frédéric aurait continué de parler, et j'avais tant de plaisir à l'entendre que je ne l'aurais point interrompu; mais il s'interrompit lui-même (D'Aulnoy, 1874/2005, p. 90).

This technique of framing both ends of Relinquishing the Floor has a particularly conversational flavour to it, and in particular as conversation was conducted under the 'rules' of *politesse*. Inviting someone else to speak corresponds to allowing someone else to shine, which has already been discussed as an aspect of conversation under *politesse*. Further, the Comtesse expresses her pleasure at hearing someone else's story, and mentions thanking one storyteller 'autant que je devais' (D'Aulnoy, 1874/2005, p. 133), which is also reminiscent of the traditions of *salon* culture and *politesse*. Therefore, while this manner of signalling does 'wrap up' someone else's account for a reading audience, it does so in a particular style of communicative interaction. Of all the sources, this care for one's 'listener', and demonstration of *politesse*, is perhaps most evident in the Comtesse's letterwriting.

Another means of Signalling Storytelling in R/Voyage d'Espagne, as mentioned in the section on 'Retaining the Floor', involves the Comtesse stating that 'someone' has told her something. In some cases, the Comtesse's account more closely reflects the words of that 'someone' and continues for a fair number of pages, creating a passage that is indeed 'set off' from the flow before and after it. Her prompts, however, look similar to the sort already cited. For example, in this case, the 'informant' explains why providing the information is justified before the Comtesse announces the information will, in fact, be provided:

...comme vous êtes étrangère, je crois que vous serez bien aise que je vous informe. Voici ce que j'en ai appris (D'Aulnoy, 1874/2005, p. 126).

Again, these requests typically provide information in a way that adds authenticity to her account.

Finally, the Comtesse tends to signal when the narrative is being interrupted by a letter or other document from another source.

Il lut la lettre et voulut bien me la montrer, sans vouloir me dire ni de qui elle venait, ni pour qui elle était, mais il me promit de m'en informer à Madrid. Comme je la trouvai bien écrite, il me vint dans l'esprit que vous seriez peut-être bien aise de voir le style d'une Espagnole quand elle écrit à ce qu'elle aime; je priai le chevalier de m'en laisser prendre une copie, mais il est vrai que la traduction ôte beaucoup d'agrément à cette lettre; la voici (D'Aulnoy, 1874/2005, p. 193).

While she has translated the letter, the Comtesse clearly views the letter as relating someone else's story.

L/Deux Dames signals storytelling mainly in a Relinquishing the Floor sense because the purpose of the exchange of letters is to relate the story of the Abbé-Comte du Bucquoy. Therefore, it is his story being told, and in this sense, the floor is being relinquished, even though it is not the *abbé* himself doing the 'talking'. Furthermore, while each segment of his story is framed, beginning and ending, it is not only the 'storyteller' who does this. That is, both letterwriters frame the sections of the account, in a cooperative manner that points toward the co-construction of the storytelling. One effect of this technique is to separate the story of the *abbé* from the 'banter' between the letterwriters, or more specifically, to 'set off' the *abbé's* story from the surrounding flow, paraphrasing Goffman. For example, the first section of the story is framed as follows:

Par bonheur qu'un de mes amis sort de chez moi, qui voit presque tous les jours chez les ministres cet ennemi irréconciliable du despotisme de la France. Comme il a eu le loisir de s'instruire de ses aventures, c'est pour satisfaire à votre impatience que je vous fais part de tout ce que j'en ai appris (Du Noyer, 1866/1989, p. 2).

Again, however, the 'story-requester' also contributes to the framing of the story.

Je ne puis que vous remercier de vos bontés, madame, et de l'assurance que vous me donnez de vouloir bien me les continuer jusqu'au bout, en finissant l'histoire des aventures de l'abbé de Bucquoy. Elles me paroissent assez extraordinaires jusqu'ici, et j'attends sa sortie de la Bastille, avec impatience. Il me semble que c'est la fin qui doit couronner l'oeuvre, et qu'elle est effectivement le chef-d'oeuvre de sa prudence et de sa résolution.

Mais quelque empressement que j'aie d'en venir à ce dénouement, je ne saurois trouver mauvais que vous repreniez de temps en temps haleine: une trop longue narration sentiroit plus le livre que la lettre, si elle n'étoit pas interrompue à propos...(Du Noyer, 1866/1989, p. 39-40).

The storyteller then continues the framing:

Votre dernière lettre est si courte, qu'on voit bien, madame, que vous vous êtes dépêchée de la finir, afin de m'obliger à me hâter de vous répondre. Vous seriez bien attrapée, si j'allois vous écrire aussi succinctement, et vous brocher en quatre mots une aventure que vous souhaitez sans doute qu'on vous circonstancie un peu mieux; mais ne craignez rien, je suis bonne princesse, et je m'en vais vous servir à votre mode.

Je reprends donc l'abbé de Bucquoy où nous l'avons laissé, sur le point d'entrer à la Bastille (Du Noyer, 1866/1989, p. 41).

In addition to the *abbé's* story, a purportedly genuine document—which effectively enhances authenticity of the story—is similarly framed. It is first introduced. Then, following the document, the letterwriter states:

Voilà, madame, tout ce que je puis vous dire sur le chapitre de l'abbé de Bucquoy (Du Noyer, 1866/1989, p. 80).

Again, every segment of the story of the *abbé* is framed on each side, and that, equally, framing is tended to by both letterwriting parties. This reflects both storytelling and conversation under the 'umbrella' of *politesse*.

H/Ophelia frames letters embedded in the main letter with storytelling signals, typically at both ends of the embedded letter.

In this Temper of Mind she opened the only Letter he had not communicated to her; already prepared to acquaint him with the Effects of a Curiosity, which if ever it can be, was so in this Case, laudable; and to shew her Affection by her Courage and Composure; but, what was her Surprise, when she read the following Words (Fielding, 2004, p. 41).

However, it is also used upon occasion to signal that someone else is going to 'speak'.

I had no Chance of being heard. Before I could make an attempt to speak, she began (Fielding, 2004, p. 85).

In another instance, a story is signalled and gradually turned over to another speaker.

It was usual with Lord *Dorchester* and myself to take a Morning Walk, whenever the Weather would permit it, in the Fields leading to *Chelsea*, which gave Rise to an Adventure so interesting, that I cannot forbear communicating it to your Ladyship, tho' it is foreign to the History I have engaged to give you of myself (Fielding, 2004, p. 142).



Although it takes several pages, the storytelling is eventually relinquished to the man at the heart of the 'interesting adventure'. Eventually, return to the regular storyteller is signalled as well: 'Here the poor Man ended his story' (Fielding, 2004, p. 151).

L/Harriot Stuart signals storytelling when an embedded letter, piece of poetry or a song is involved. Usually, both ends of the different narrative are framed. These examples frame a letter.

I opened my father's letter with a mixture of hope and fear, and read as follows (Lennox, 1995, p. 119).

When I had read this letter, I kissed the dear name at the bottom with the utmost reverence and affection (Lennox, 1995, p. 119).

L/Manley, as mentioned, includes a few storytelling signals of the Retaining the Floor variety, but more clearly includes Relinquishing the Floor cues. For example:

Mrs. Stanhope went with me to my Chamber; and after much Discourse, offer'd Friendship, and mutual Knowledge of each other; she gave me this Account of her last Adventures (Manley, 1696/2006, p. 36).

However, does she not 'wrap up' the storytelling; she simply resumes her own line of discussion.

The remaining sources primarily signal Relinquishing the Floor when letters are involved, but the signals tend to be brief. Delicate Distress, for example, makes frequent use of quotations and embedded stories and letters, but they are not particularly signalled. They are generally acknowledged and incorporated, although storytelling signals occur more often in the second half of the novel. These signals are, nevertheless, still brief.

In less than half an hour, I received the following billet, with the aforesaid letter, inclosed (Griffith, 1997, p. 148).

In M/Henriette-Sylvie, as mentioned, the majority of storytelling signals occur when Henriette-Sylvie retains the floor. However, there are a handful of occasions when the floor is relinquished. This particular example introduces a letter:

Une de ces lettres parvint jusqu'à moi, et Votre Altesse ne sera peut-être point fâchée de voir comme on écrit quand on aime beaucoup, et que cet amour n'ayant qu'un but légitime, ne contraint point les désirs du coeur. Voici une copie de la lettre dont je parle (Villedieu, 2003, p. 192).

Relinquishing the Floor is rare in L/Montier, and is noticeable when it occurs. On one occasion, the Marquis takes over the letter his wife is writing, and she signals it.

Mais le Marquis me surprend à cet endroit de ma Lettre: il se défie, dit-il, de l'habilité de mon pinceau, pour vous tracer une scene où je jouois sans doute un pénible & ridicule personnage; il m'ôte la plume, & veut continuer mon récit (LePrince de Beaumont, 1762, p. 21).

The reader can easily picture the writing instruments being lifted from her hands.

The mother in L/Montier also provides one example, relating a story told to her. She frames the moment on both sides. The 'front' frame is:

Je me trouvai l'année passée à la campagne, avec un bon Religieux qui a plus de quatre-vingt ans, & voici ce qu'il me raconta (LePrince de Beaumont, 1762, p. 68).

The closing frame is:

Voilà, ma chere fille, un exemple propre à justifier notre foiblesse (LePrince de Beaumont, 1762, p. 71).

The letters in Parts 2 and 3 of Love-Letters tend to be framed by the narrator. Therefore, it is the narrator who is Relinquishing the Floor. Many letters are involved, and the nature of the signals is fairly consistent.

The page hastening to Sylvia, finds her in all the disquiet of an expecting lover; and snatching the papers from his hand, the first she saw was that from Philander, at which she trembled with fear and joy, for hope, love and despair, at once seized her, and hardly able to make a sign with her hand, for the boy to withdraw, she sank down into her chair, all pale, and almost fainting; but re-assuming her courage, she opened it, and read this (Behn, n.d., p. 124).

Following this letter, the narrator writes:

If Sylvia's fears were great before she opened the letter, what were her pains when all those fears were confirmed (Behn, n.d., p. 126).

Anti-Pamela signals storytelling mainly by Relinquishing the Floor, particularly when letters are being introduced. Similar to Love-Letters, Relinquishing the Floor occurs when the narrator frames letters. This example is typical:

Thus was she enter'd on a new Stage of Life; but in what Manner she was used, and her Behaviour in it, can be no way so well represented, as by her own Letters to her Mother; the first of which was wrote three Days after their Separation (Haywood, 2004, p. 58).

Further, the framing provided by the narrator injects perspective useful to the reader. For example:

Syrena could not imagine the reason of her Mother's writing again, when she expected to see her so soon, and as she thought had no farther Advice to give her, concerning the Lieutenant; being full of Impatience to see what it contain'd, she soon made a pretence for going out of the Room, and read these Lines (Haywood, 2004, p. 70).

Rather typically, an end-frame is also provided, again providing insight into the character of Syrena.

Syrena was not very well pleas'd at the Contents of this Letter: She thought there was no Occasion for this Caution; and that she had said enough to convince her Mother, that she had no regard for any Thing in Competition with her Interest (Haywood, 2004, p. 71).

Interestingly, of those novels that regularly use Retaining the Floor cues, only Familiar Letters does not also use Relinquishing the Floor cues. Perhaps this is because these letters are devoted to 'to-and-fro', while also being relatively short: there is no room to bring others into the 'conversation', at least not in their own words or at length. L/Péruvienne, L/Mistriss Fanni and L/Roselle do not tend to use either type of storytelling signal.

### 9.3 Cues of Co-Construction

Co-Construction cues are mainly delivered via pronouns. They occur in the three novels that involve a non-letterwriting narrator. In L/Péruvienne, they occur exclusively in the *introduction historique*. In Love-Letters, they occur in the 'Argument' found at the beginning of the collection, but also at the beginning of the remaining 'Parts', when re-orienting the external reading audience to the story. In Anti-Pamela, they begin the novel and are then scattered throughout the story, linking together the letters as well as the letters and the narrative.

L/Péruvienne, as mentioned, signals storytelling in the *introduction historique*. The overt signals are few, but because the *introduction historique* stands outside the collection of letters, it serves as a visible frame, providing upfront the knowledge the external reading audience will need to navigate the letters. For example, a transitional paragraph occurs approximately halfway through the *introduction historique*, one that introduces a subject switch between the two halves of the *introduction historique*.<sup>123</sup> That is, the first part deals with 'factual' history of events, while the second part focuses on the morals and the 'culture'.

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<sup>123</sup> The halves are not marked; in fact, this paragraph really represents a divider, a boundary line, in the spirit of framing the two halves without other conventional markers.

Une analyse aussi courte des mœurs de ces peuples malheureux que celle qu'on vient de faire de leurs infortunes, terminera l'introduction qu'on a crue nécessaire aux Lettres qui vont suivre (Grafigny, 1983, p. 253).

In another case, second-person pronouns suggest an awareness of who will be reading the letter collection. This example emphasizes the audience's ability to link knowledge of French culture to the newly-provided information about Peru. The *introduction* includes:

Les Péruviens avaient moins de lumières, moins de connaissances, moins d'arts que nous, et cependant ils en avaient assez pour ne manquer d'aucune chose nécessaire (Grafigny, 1983, p. 255).

This use of 'nous' puts the external reading audience 'on side' in the construction of the story, preparing them for the comparisons and critiques Zilia will later offer.

Love-Letters is somewhat similar to *L/Péruvienne* in that it provides an upfront statement incorporating the external reading audience in the construction of the story. Love-Letters also addresses that audience at other points in the narrative, similar to *Anti-Pamela*. That said, in the 'Argument' which precedes the collection of letters, the narrator uses pronouns in asides that include the reading audience in the design of the story.

...whom we will call Cesario... (Behn, n.d., n.p.)  
 ...whom we will call Myrtila... (Behn, n.d., n.p.)  
 ...so we call our amorous hero... (Behn, n.d., n.p.)  
 ...so we shall call the noble maid... (Behn, n.d., n.p.)

These conspiratorial asides offer the external reading audience the opportunity to co-construct the story with the narrator. They are reminders that a story is underway. Part 2 also incorporates this sort of co-construction. It begins:

At the end of the first part of these letters, we left Philander impatiently waiting on the sea-shore for the approach of the lovely Sylvia (Behn, n.d., 81).

As the narrator takes over the telling of the story, and the number of letters lessens, these asides fall away.

*Anti-Pamela* acknowledges storytelling via pronouns as well, usually with overt references to the 'Reader'. In the following example, insightful understanding of the story by the external reading audience is presupposed and acknowledged by the storyteller.

...tho' we cannot suppose there are many, who like the Mother of Syrena, breed their Children up with no other Intent than to make them the Slaves of Vice, yet if we

look into the World, and consider the number of unfortunate Women (as they justly call themselves) I believe we shall find the Miseries these poor Creatures undergo, and frequently involve others in, less owing to their own Inclinations, than to the too great Indulgence and false Tenderness of their Parents (Haywood, 2004, p. 56-57).

Anti-Pamela also regularly incorporates co-construction of the story through the use of 'our', further shaping understanding of the two main characters, if that clarification were necessary. These characters are 'our' creations.

...our young Hypocrite so well acted her Part... (Haywood, 2004, p. 58)

...our young Deceiver and her mother had a little recovered... (Haywood, 2004, p. 122)

...our young Deluder was of a quite different Opinion... (Haywood, 2004, p. 149)

Finally, Anti-Pamela specifically and overtly addresses the 'Reader'. As with the previous examples, these moments of address usually presuppose and acknowledge judgmental alignment: 'The Reader will perceive she was here acting the Coquette' (Haywood, 2004, p. 125).

Anti-Pamela, then, does presuppose certain types of understanding on the part of the external reading audience, incorporating the understanding in the course of the narrative. However, these understandings tend to be subjective rather than factual and are not directly based on 'facts' provided, as they are in *L/Péruienne*. Nevertheless, they remind the external reading audience that a story is underway. This re-engages that audience as participant in the storytelling, and the proper noun, 'Reader', works as an acknowledgement to potential interjections by the 'listener'.<sup>124</sup>

#### 9.4 Storytelling Signals and Positioning the Audiences

In the context of this study, the most significant aspect of Signalling Storytelling is that it treats audiences equally—or, at least, it *positions* them rather equally relative to the flow of communication. Simply, providing cues for the audience is polite. It facilitates understanding as well as being a means of 'looking after' the audience, of supporting the audience in following the communication. Framing aids the audience's comprehension and enhances the experience because time is not wasted in wondering about meaning, content, character identity and so on. This is true whether the communication is oral or written. Furthermore, these techniques are beneficial to the audience, whether this is the intended letter recipient or the external reading audience. Particularly in the cases of *Retaining the Floor* or *Relinquishing the Floor*, there is a kind of equality in audience position, allowing varying degrees of 'adopting the mantle' for the external reading audience, at least insofar as

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<sup>124</sup> Assumptions of response on the part of the external reading audience are addressed in the next chapter.

following the narrative. In this sense, the external reading audience joins with the named letter recipient as a 'listener', being guided through the story.

While blending audiences in this way was observed with *Activating Common Ground*, *Signalling Storytelling* develops the effect further. Particularly with *Retaining the Floor* and *Relinquishing the Floor*, the signals offer similar benefits to an audience, regardless of whether this is the intended recipient or the external reading audience. *Signalling Storytelling* is 'good practice' when a writer has concern for the audience's needs. As important, however, is that the two audiences are treated similarly in the role of 'reader', as insiders in terms of the communication, having comparable needs in terms of being able to follow the storyline. This specifically does not mean that the two audiences can 'automatically' claim the same relationship with the letterwriter, a result again similar to what was seen with *Activating Common Ground*.

Audience positioning that treats both audiences as readers first is a particular mechanism for creating a Community of Practice, one that includes knowledge about storytelling. It presupposes the ability to make use of the cues presented. In addition, because this manner of storytelling arises from oral storytelling and the conversation that couches it, this new 'common reader' Community of Practice would share membership in Communities of Practice that 'specialise' in that sort of knowledge as well. This does not necessarily mean the external reading audience is able to 'adopt the mantle' of letter recipient, although this option is not completely closed. However, more importantly for this study, the external reading audience is able to claim membership in the Community of Practice nurtured by this attention to storytelling manners.

*R/Voyage d'Espagne* and *L/Deux Dames* most clearly position the external reading audiences as participants who understand 'genre' (in the linguistic sense) as it functions in the Community of Practice regulated by *politesse*. In the case of *R/Voyage d'Espagne*, the extensive and consistent storytelling signals represent one valuable way of positioning the external reading audience as sharing a certain social status with the Comtesse and the world in which she moves—even if that audience is not accompanying her to Spain. Obviously, the 'chère cousine' letter recipient has likewise been left at home. The Comtesse addresses her reader with cues that direct that reader through the various strands of storytelling, demonstrating her awareness and prowess as to how these cues should function and drawing attention to that awareness and prowess when she so desires.

As has been discussed, *R/Voyage d'Espagne* orchestrates interaction with those in the novel so that these 'individuals' are able to participate, 'to shine', in the spirit of *salon* conversation. Whether through *Relinquishing the Floor* or *Retaining the Floor* techniques, these contributions are 'packaged' for the Comtesse's reading audiences. The contributions of others as well as substantial shifts in her own narrative are set off from the conversational flow, tending to the needs of the letter reader and the external reading audience, by extension. In addition, the Comtesse's expressions of gratitude (for receiving the additional stories) are included, ensuring that these audiences are aware that the Comtesse is fulfilling the communicative niceties in both directions. She treats with respect the storytellers who

take the time to relate their tales to her. She allows these 'speakers' to shine and acknowledges their input, regardless of whether she is relaying their contributions as the truth. This is a gracious approach to storytelling.

L/Deux Dames functions similarly, although it provides a character whose mantle may be adopted and who is able to *perform* the essential cues of *politesse* in framing the overall story. This secondary letterwriter functions as an audience surrogate, which aids the external reading audience in 'adopting the mantle', if so desired. It makes possible an alignment with the text that more closely corresponds to the position of the secondary letterwriting character. L/Deux Dames also reflects 'how *politesse* is done' through the interactional discourse of the two letterwriters, discourse that includes storytelling signals that set off the story of the *abbé* from the conversation between the two women, as much as it set off their conversation from the story. Adjacency pairs of the conversation ritual are also visible. In this case, components of the conversation ritual include how to request the telling of a story, how to accept the invitation, how to pause in the telling of the story, how to clarify one's continuing interest in hearing the story and how to graciously thank the storyteller for sharing it. Both letterwriters allow 'down time' to the other, even if 'down time' is not an expression they use. Together, these are social niceties that the external reading audience is presupposed to appreciate and recognize, as they are requisite in a particular and prestigious Community of Practice.

The story itself is further set off from the conversational flow within the storyteller's letter: it is labelled as a story, the *abbé*'s story. It is related as a possible legend that she is repeating, rather than 'owning' it as her story. Of course, this particular source makes it clear in the title that it is someone else's story and that the telling of the story is the point of the correspondence. It is, then, framed as storytelling from the outside, before the letters begin. L/Deux Dames and R/Voyage d'Espagne, therefore, both offer egalitarian positions to readers, as well as allowing alignment with the relationships in an 'adopting the mantle' way.

To varying degrees, all of the novels that use Signalling Storytelling to facilitate story flow collapse the audiences together as readers relating to a text. Therefore, they also can be viewed as creating Communities of Practice based on a common understanding of 'readership'. Some of the novels also extend, through Signalling Storytelling, the possibility of 'adopting the mantle'. These are M/Henriette-Sylvie, L/Montier, L/Manley, H/Ophelia and Harriot Stuart. Again, 'degree' is crucial to the end result.

These dual experiences are most evident in M/Henriette-Sylvie and H/Ophelia, where 'adopting the mantle' and the benefits of Signalling Storytelling are least complicated. The external reading audience is already positioned for 'adopting the mantle', so sharing reader position via Signalling Storytelling falls into place relatively easily with these two novels. L/Montier, similar to L/Deux Dames, includes an audience surrogate: based on responding to storytelling signals, this would be the advice-giving mother. L/Manley and Harriot Stuart offer similar experiences with the texts, via similar brief storytelling signals, but those brief storytelling signals do not forge a more familiar engagement that would necessarily place

the audiences in the 'same' relationships with the letter recipient. This middle group of novels opens the stories to the external reading audience via Signalling Storytelling, presenting the content to the audiences equally as readers, while also allowing the external reading audience to share—to a degree—the relationship.

Beyond this group, there is *Delicate Distress* and, to a lesser extent, *Familiar Letters*.<sup>125</sup> *Delicate Distress* uses storytelling signals enough to level the external reading audience's experience of the text with that of the intended recipient. While *Delicate Distress* does not offer a clear relationship in the 'adopting the mantle' role, it does have limited and perhaps alternating potential for audience surrogate positions. Nevertheless, this is not to the extent offered in *L/Deux Dames*. *Familiar Letters* represents, yet again, a more removed model of both audience positions. Signalling Storytelling appears in *Familiar Letters*—briefly. An audience surrogate exists in these letterwriters, but not consistently and not in a firm 'adopting the mantle' form. However, storytelling signals do facilitate engagement for readers, whether the intended recipient or the external reading audience.

In contrast to these are *Love-Letters* and *Anti-Pamela*. With both of these sources, the non-letterwriting narrator frames letters that 'interrupt' the narrative. Certainly, these storytelling signals facilitate understanding of the letters. This communication, however, aligns the external reading audience with the narrator, rather than with the intended recipients of the letters. They facilitate a different potential relationship altogether. Therefore, while these storytelling signals do relinquish the floor, they point toward the type of Signalling Storytelling provided by Co-Construction of Story cues.

Co-Construction cues are somewhat different from Retaining the Floor and Relinquishing the Floor cues. Rather than merely offering egalitarian positions for the audiences as readers, Co-Construction Cues hint instead at egalitarian 'creator of fiction' positions. In *L/Péruvienne*, *Love-Letters* and *Anti-Pamela*, the cues offered by the non-letterwriting narrators can only help the external reading audience, and not only as reader. Instead, these cues offer subtle acknowledgement that the external reading audience and the narrator are engaging in the creation and relation of a story. They offer an illusion of creating the story together—that the external reading audience is 'in on it' and from both sides. In turn, this positions the audience as an outsider to, rather than a participant, in the letter exchanges—but as an insider to the meta-communication relayed via the novel, a meta-communication that frames the stories in the novel. Cues that reduce ambiguity for the audience—in the spirit of Grice's Cooperative Principle and Joos' language scales in terms of providing information as fast as it is needed—also align with understandings of conversation, or interactional discourse, as it is discussed today. However, they are not restricted to this. Instead, these particular Co-Construction Cues, in a sense, mirror salon habits, depicting through alternate written means a higher level of conversational 'to-and-

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<sup>125</sup> The examples from *Love-Letters*, involving Philander writing to Octavio, do not put the audience 'on side' as letter recipient, although information is being equally and simultaneously revealed to the external reading audience and to Octavio.



fro' that frames embedded stories, similar in particular to that depicted in *R/Voyage d'Espagne* and *L/Deux Dames*.

As this review indicates, most of these sources signal storytelling to the audience in some way, to some degree, whether this is through Retaining the floor, Relinquishing the Floor or Co-Constructing the Story. In terms of storytelling signals and 'speaking to' audiences, the crucial factor is not necessarily the type of storytelling signal that is instructive. Rather, the key is that storytelling signals are offered, and that they contribute to the audience's degree of familiarity in relating to the stories. That is, Signalling Storytelling offers the external reading audience the opportunity to engage with the story—with the communication—on an equal footing with the intended letter recipient, even if it does not necessarily include 'adopting the mantle' as an equal in the relationship. Even if not sharing the relationship, the egalitarian receipt of the story allows for a broader inclusion as reader than was seen with T/V pronoun distribution or omission of openings and closings. It also further extends the 'blending' of audiences that occurred with Activating Common Ground. While the relationship may remain private—the relationship is still between the letterwriters—the experience of reading the stories, of receiving the information they offer, is levelled. The letter recipient and the external reading audience are on a par as readers, following cues that in turn facilitate following the narrative. Signalling Storytelling 'speaks to' the audiences together. It helps make them insiders to the reading experience, even if not the relationship.



## **Chapter 10—Samples, Part 5: Invitations to Engage**

This chapter looks at Invitations to Engage, a category more easily recognized than described. They may be used by a letterwriter or by a non-letterwriting narrator. They may be addressed to a letter recipient, to the external reading audience, or to that external reading audience in an ‘adopting the mantle’ position. Invitations to Engage may prompt a response from the ‘listener’, they may suggest a particular response is occurring on the listener’s part or they may proceed as if the ‘listener’ has actually responded. Invitations to Engage encourage conversational interaction from the other participant, but they are not halves of conversational to-and-fro.

In fact, Invitations to Engage may be viewed as encouraging or acknowledging the sorts of listener interruptions Joos has discussed, and which have been discussed as a feature of familiar language. Such listener interruptions tend to ‘pepper’ real-time conversation, and can be viewed as ‘keeping up’ one’s end of the conversation. They confirm for the speaker that the listener is engaging with what is being said. Listener assertions are granted this role throughout many of these novels—even though they are not actually heard—and are incorporated as an ‘understood’ act by the letterwriters (and in some cases, non-letterwriting narrators). Invitations to Engage also highlight relationship-promoting language, not because they exclude content-bearing language, but because they very specifically include something of the personal that ‘speaks to’ the audience involved. In fact, similar to Signalling Storytelling, they may level the experiences of the reading audiences in terms of connecting with the stories. They are mainly recognizable because they ‘speak to’ audiences, as if interacting.

Invitations to Engage cluster into five basic types: Questions, Commands, Assurances, Presuppositions of Engagement, and Longer Passages inviting Engagement. These invitations generally involve a term of address that personalizes the invitation for the audience. However, terms of address alone are not sufficient to distinguish a passage as an Invitation to Engage. While titles and names certainly contribute to the personalization of the passages, Invitations to Engage involve more. Personalization, in these cases, is also tied to the common understanding implicitly marked as shared between the parties, hinting at membership in common Communities of Practice. That is, the ‘speaker’ seems authorized, by virtue of common ground, to make conjectures about the nature of the listener’s engagement. Further, Invitations to Engage seem tailored to match the reader.

The first four categories may act as discourse markers because they tend to ‘flag’ certain points in the narrative. Typically, this may be at a point of summary or reflection. The first four types of Invitations to Engage—especially within a given work—also tend to use fairly consistent language. That is, certain expressions tend to recur, as one speaker would tend to do, according to personal style. The fifth type is organized more by purpose of the passage: the passage is designed for a particular effect on the audience, not just any effect. As a final point, the examples cited are intended to illustrate tendencies of usage. That is, when one work is discussed as using certain techniques, it means use is consistent or regular. Likewise, a few works do not exhibit ‘tendencies’.

‘Conversational to-and-fro’ is an important concept for this discussion. As mentioned, Invitations to Engage encourage conversational interaction, but they are not part of conversational to-and-fro. Therefore, Invitations to Engage that occur in the environment of conversational to-and-fro are not considered here. Instead, the focus here is on ways in which audiences are encouraged to engage with the ‘speaker’. Invitations to Engage, as they occur in these sources, tend to assume listener assertions have or are likely to occur. How that audience actually responds—as in visible conversational to-and-fro—is not the issue. Therefore, Invitations to Engage that occur as part of conversational to-and-fro are not included in this chapter.

As a final administrative point, in an attempt to capture the prevalence of some of these Invitations to Engage, particularly in certain sources, a good number of examples may be included. The goal is to adequately represent the contribution made by Invitations to Engage, and the number of examples is intended to reinforce their prevalence.

### 10.1 Questions as Invitations to Engage

Questions are fairly prevalent throughout these sources, but not all of them act as Invitations to Engage. Rather, the sociolinguistic perspective applied here allows distinctions between rhetorical questions or questions addressed to the abstract, on the one hand, and those that may be viewed as performing a communicative or interactional role with another participant, on the other hand. The questions identified as Invitations to Engage generally fall into two main categories: those that directly and specifically ask the other participant about something, or to do something, etc., and those that ‘pull’ the other participant into the interaction. However, these two categories are not always distinctly separate.

M/Henriette-Sylvie makes particularly consistent use of the conversational ‘what can I tell you?’ question type. For example:

Que vous dirai-je? ses cinquante mille livres de rente et ses pierreries, m’ouvrirent les yeux (Villedieu, 2003, p. 78).

Que vous dirai-je, Madame, nous eûmes la conversation du monde la plus agréable et le plus rare (Villedieu, 2003, p. 158).

Que vous dirai-je, Madame? Cette pauvre fille épousa le beau-fils de son oncle au lieu de l’homme qu’elle croyait épouser (Villedieu, 2003, p. 233).

Although their appearance is not identical with each occurrence, they do consistently ‘sum up’ what has been said and also re-engage the ‘listener’ to the direction of the narrative. In fact, they appear at points where—face-to-face—a listener might very well interject. These questions respond to those perceived moments of potential listener interjection.

M/Henriette-Sylvie uses other question types as well. These generally invite ‘Madame’ to reflect on her opinion, often as if an oral response is being encouraged. The first example is an aside, asides being consistent through the novel, and marked visibly as such. In this case, parentheses are used, an approach that is relatively common in

M/Henriette-Sylvie. She writes, for example: '(que dira Votre Altesse de cet effet de ma beauté?)' (Villedieu, 2003, p. 127). Not all asides are signalled so overtly, but some of them are very clearly marked.

Questions in L/Péruvienne, even when addressed to Aza, may often be perceived as addressed to the abstract. This is especially true when Zilia is bemoaning her circumstances. However, other questions cluster into three categories which may be interpreted as directed more toward specific letter recipients. The first type, to Aza, involve Zilia's attempts to understand what has happened. They occur early in the collection.

Qu'as tu fait dans ce tumulte affreux, chère âme de ma vie? Ton courage t'a-t-il été funeste ou inutile? (Grafigny, 1983, p. 257)

Aza! comment échapperas-tu à leur fureur? où es-tu? que fais-tu? (Grafigny, 1983, p. 258)

Hélas! si tu m'aimes encore pourquoi suis-je dans l'esclavage? (Grafigny, 1983, p. 261)

Of course, while this questioning of Aza reflects the relationship between them and reveals to him something of Zilia's experiences, the content also moves the story along.

The second type of question used by Zilia and also directed at Aza, arises as Zilia reflects upon and tries to understand the new culture, the French culture, she is discovering. Many questions on this topic may be considered rhetorical, but some are constructed as if being asked of Aza and are included in this discussion as a result.

Pourrait-on croire, mon cher Aza, qu'un peuple entier, dont les dehors sont si humains, se plaise à la représentation des malheurs ou des crimes qui ont autrefois avili, ou accablé ses semblables? (Grafigny, 1983, p. 297)

The third category of Zilia's questions, directed at Déterville, reflects their different, less intimate relationship, while nevertheless focusing on highly intimate content. In this first example, it is almost as if Zilia is avoiding the real issue, asking instead about something more confined to Déterville's own acts.

Avez-vous pu, Monsieur, prévoir sans remords le chagrin mortel que vous devez joindre au bonheur que vous me préparez? Comment avez-vous eu la cruauté de faire précéder votre départ par des circonstances si agréables, par des motifs de reconnaissance si pressants, à moins que ce ne fût pour me rendre plus sensible à votre désespoir et à votre absence? (Grafigny, 1983, p. 354)

This is followed by an even more intimate admission to the same recipient: his knowledge of her humiliation at the hands of Aza, and his managing of that knowledge.

Vous saviez mon malheur, pourquoi ne me l'avez-vous éclairci qu'à demi? Pourquoi ne me laissâtes-vous entrevoir que des soupçons qui me rendirent injuste à votre égard? (Grafigny, 1983, p. 357)

Of course, the external reading audience will remember that Déterville did try to tell her. It eventually seems Zilia realizes it, too.

Questions feature regularly in *L/Mistriss Fanni* when Mistriss Fanni is happy in the relationship—that is, the earlier part of the collection. Her questions are generally 'to the point', quickly inserted in longer passages. Although reflective, they involve a sense of immediacy, as if a real-time answer is possible.

Seroit-il possible que vous ne puissiez-vous éloigner de moi, sans que votre absence ne me causât de la tristesse? (Riccoboni, 1759, p. 13)

Ne m'avez-vous pas promis une éternelle amitié? (Riccoboni, 1759, p. 15)

Savez-vous que rien n'est plus aimable que cet air de confiance et d'intimité avec lequel vous m'avez parlé? (Riccoboni, 1759, p. 38)

In some cases, Mistriss Fanni's questions do feature as part of a longer musing. While they are a bit fanciful, within the context of the collection, there seems little doubt she would not say these things in person. Therefore, they function as questions directed at the letter recipient, to which a response could reasonably be expected.

Mais vous, mon cher Alfred, ne changerez vous point? Cet empire que vous avez sur moi qui vous flatte à présent, qui vous paroît si doux, ne vous lassera-t'il point un jour? (Riccoboni, 1759, p. 43)

Vous en souvient-il, mon cher Alfred? ... Ce moment est-il aussi présent à votre idée, qu'il l'est à mon coeur? (Riccoboni, 1759, p. 76)

Questioning as Invitation to Engage is not typical of the rest of the French novels. Further, Questioning as Invitation to Engage is equally less prevalent in most of the English novels, occurring primarily in *Love-Letters*. Many of the questions in *Love-Letters* are either addressed to the abstract or are part of a conversational to-and-fro not being considered here. While the examples included below can also be viewed as these types of questions, they are presented here because they occur very early in the collection and go a long way toward introducing the topics, as well as establishing the relationship between Sylvia and Philander. In addition, they are presented as being directed toward specific letter recipients and answers to these questions are possible. Most of the Questions as Invitation to Engage are between Sylvia and Philander, although other characters use the technique to some degree. First is this example from Sylvia to Philander.

Is it not enough, oh Philander, for my eternal unquiet, and undoing, to know that you are married and cannot therefore be entirely mine; is not this enough, oh cruel Philander? (Behn, n.d., p. 22)

The first example sets up Sylvia's perspective on their relationship, identifying the first and primary obstacle as she sees it. The next example presents the other main obstacle between them, again from Sylvia's perspective.

Is it to make Cesario king? Oh what is Cesario to my Philander? If a monarchy you design, then why not this king, this great, this good, this royal forgiver? This, who was born a king, and born your king; and holds his crown by right of nature, by right of law, by right of heaven itself; heaven who has preserved him, and confirmed him ours, by a thousand miraculous escapes and sufferings, and indulged him ours by ten thousand acts of mercy, and endeared him to us by his wondrous care and conduct, by securing of peace, plenty, ease and luxurious happiness, over all the fortunate limits of his blessed kingdoms: and will you? Would you destroy this wondrous gift of heaven? This god-like king, this real good we now possess, for a more uncertain one; and with it the repose of all the happy nation? (Behn, n.d., p. 24)

Any of these questions could lead to answers, answers either supplied by the letter recipient or by the external reading audience, if engaging 'personally' with the topic. Because the obstacles identified by Sylvia do impact upon her, she would be reasonably entitled to answers. Philander, however, has other ideas. He responds, but with questions of his own:

How comes my charming Sylvia so skilled in the mysteries of State? Where learnt her tender heart the notions of rigid business? Where her soft tongue, formed only for the dear language of love, to talk of the concerns of nations and kingdoms? (Behn, n.d., p. 25)

In other words, Philander resists answering Sylvia's questions, a most uncooperative act, conversationally-speaking. His answer resists conversational to-and-fro.

### 10.2 Commands as Invitations to Engage

The most common use of Commands as Invitations to Engage is to encourage the other participant to judge, imagine or otherwise consider what the 'speaker' is experiencing or feeling.

M/Henriette-Sylvie makes extensive use of this technique. 'Judging' is one of the most common.

Jugez, Madame, quel dut être mon étonnement lorsque je m’y entendis mêler, et lorsque cet écuyer ajouta, qu’elle était venue exprès de Bruxelles pour m’adopter et pour m’emmener en Flandre (Villedieu, 2003, p. 74)

Jugez, Madame, quelle honte pour moi, quand malgré mes résistances, mes larmes et mes protestations de faire connaître à ce jaloux, que je n’avais jamais été capable de lui faire le tort qu’il s’était imaginé (Villedieu, 2003, p. 104)

Et jugez, Madame, de ce que pouvaient penser les passants, de m’entendre prononcer ces cruelles paroles dans un grand trouble (Villedieu, 2003, p. 140)

Next, in urging ‘Madame’ to examine the evidence, visual attention is commonly encouraged.

Voyez, s’il vous plaît, Madame, de quel caractère était l’amour que cet homme avait pour moi (Villedieu, 2003, p. 150).

Voyez, Madame, s’ils n’étaient pas bien raisonnables de me faire cette demande; et supposé que j’eusse été ce qu’ils pensaient, jugez si je leur eusse été dire? (Villedieu, 2003, p. 215)<sup>126</sup>

Voyez, je vous prie, Madame, si cela était bien pensé à moi, et si je n’étais pas plaisante de m’imaginer faire agir cet homme contre lui-même (Villedieu, 2003, p. 227)

However, commands are issued in several other forms as well.

(disons cependant, Madame, que si tous ceux qui ont la même réputation, ne le sont pas à plus juste titre, c’est grande pitié) (Villedieu, 2003, p. 98)<sup>127</sup>

N’admirez-vous pas aussi la manie de la plupart de ses jeunes gens, de nous déchirer de la sorte, quand pour l’ordinaire ils ne savent pas seulement de quelle couleur nous sommes (Villedieu, 2003, p. 122)

Figurez-vous s’il vous plaît, Madame, la rage de cette femme (Villedieu, 2003, p. 146). Imaginez-vous, s’il vous plaît, Madame, combien je fus étonnée de lui entendre tenir ce discours (Villedieu, 2003, p. 229).

Although different in exact expression, each of these example types encourages engagement by the audiences.

Mistriss Fanni uses Commands as Invitations to Engage rather extensively throughout *L/Mistriss Fanni*. They are generally fairly emotional comments, at least during the ‘happy’ phase of the relationship.

<sup>126</sup> This example clearly combines types of Invitation to Engage.

<sup>127</sup> The parentheses are from the original text. This marking technique is relatively common in *M/Henriette-Sylvie*.



Voyez, cherchez, examinez les preuves que vous m'avez données de votre tendresse; & quand vous aurez trouvé celle qui vous paroîtra la plus forte, osez la comparer à l'aveu que je vous ai fait de mes sentiments... (Riccoboni, 1759, p. 17-18)

Félicitez-moi, mon cher Amant, j'ai un ami véritable, un ami que rien n'égale; & vous, mon tendre ami, partagez ma joie... (Riccoboni, 1759, p. 38)

Vous qui êtes mon ami, mon plus tendre ami, partagez donc ma peine; souffrez que je vous la confie (Riccoboni, 1759, p. 85).

Commands as Invitations to Engage continue throughout the relationship's demise, but are more concrete and no longer fanciful as the relationship sours.

Rendez-moi mes Lettres; ne me forcez pas de vous les demander encore (Riccoboni, 1759, p. 176).

L/Roselle contains a great deal of advice, advice that is not necessarily desired, and Commands as Invitations to Engage are not an uncommon way to deliver it. For example, Madame de Narton uses Commands as Invitations to Engage when advising Madame de Saint-Sever.

Ne vous alarmez point avant le tems; tranquillisez-vous, ma chere Comtesse, j'espère vous apprendre bientôt de ses nouvelles: en attendant tachez de l'attirer chez vous; procurez-lui des plaisirs honnêtes, c'est le seul moyen de le dégoûter de ceux qui ne le sont pas. Amusez-le, montrez-lui toute votre tendresse, qu'elle prenne vis-à-vis de lui le ton de la confiance. Marquez-lui toujours de l'estime, c'est un bon moyen pour éloigner les cœurs bien faits de ce qui pourroit les en rendre indignes. Ne lui faites point appercevoir sur ses démarches une inquiétude & une curiosité fatigantes; paroissez ignorer, & ne point chercher à savoir, tout ce qu'il ne veut pas que vous sachiez (Elie de Beaumont, 1765, p. 7-8).<sup>128</sup>

The Marquis uses Commands as Invitations to Engage when sharing his secrets with Valville.

Juge, cher ami, d'après les projets de ma soeur, quels assauts j'aurois à soutenir, si elle savoit ce qui se passe dans mon coeur! Vois combien je dois m'observer! (Elie de Beaumont, 1765, p. 20)

That he shares this information with Valville indicates the intimate nature of their friendship, as does the nature of Valville's advice. Valville is free to offer real advice to the Marquis, rather than simply endorsing the Marquis' choices. Valville's responses do not constitute the conciliatory support the Marquis might have sought or expected; they resist conversational

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<sup>128</sup> Of course, this also qualifies as a Longer Passages.

cooperation. For example, he is quite clear about how the Marquis needs to conduct himself.

Prends le ton du monde, de ces gens que ta soeur appelle libertins; ne parois estimer ni une femme, ni ses faveurs; tire sur les bégueules à sentimens; familiarise-toi avec elle, libre, hardi, entreprenant, & le reste. Fais ce que je te dis, la syrène se jettera dans tes filets, si tu fais autrement, tu t'empêtreras dans les siens à ne pas t'en tirer le coeur net. Je te le prédis, tu seras la fable du public (Elie de Beaumont, 1765, p. 23)

Valville, in fact, often delivers advice that is contrary to what the Marquis might have preferred. At one point, he reminds the Marquis:

De grace, ne fais tes confidences qu'à moi (Elie de Beaumont, 1765, p. 31).

R/Voyage d'Espagne uses Commands as Invitations to Engage, although less extensively than either M/Henriette-Sylvie or L/Mistriss Fanni. Commands in R/Voyage d'Espagne also discourage certain paths of thinking.

Au reste, ne pensez pas, ma chère cousine, que ces comédiens, pour être dans une petite ville, soient fort différents de ceux de Madrid (D'Aulnoy, 1874/2005, p. 42).

In fact, because the second example above does not include term-of-address personalization, it is especially open to receipt by the external reading audience as if 'adopting the mantle' of intended recipient.

L/Montier, as previously mentioned, involves numerous requests for advice from the daughter to the mother, requests which are always answered. Thus, they are part of conversational to-and-fro, and not considered here. However, Letter 1 opens the collection and establishes the requesting, using a Command form. For example:

...tout m'annonce que vous ne pouvez me donner que des conseils trop rares pour mes besoins. Ne me les refusez pas, ma chere Mere, dictez-moi le chemin dans lequel je dois marcher (LePrince de Beaumont, 1762, p. 3).

Commands as Invitations to Engage are not used consistently across the English novels. The best examples come from L/Harriot Stuart and Love-Letters. This sort of Command is scattered through L/Harriot Stuart, and tends to involve 'guessing'.

Guess, if you can, my dear Amanda, the joy I felt at this news! (Lennox, 1995, p. 157)

Commands as Invitations to Engage are scattered throughout Love-Letters, but, as with L/Harriot Stuart, 'big picture' patterns are less evident. The most notable example

comes from the one letter written by the sister, Myrtille. The letter is rather long, and this citation is only an excerpt from it. In fact, it could have been included in the Longer Passages section; however, because this letter relies so heavily on Commands, it is included here. In this letter, each command is followed by supports for Myrtille's argument, and the supports have been excluded, in order to highlight the commands.

Consider, oh young maid, the infamy of being a prostitute!...consider this, oh fond heedless girl! And suffer not a momentary joy to rob thee of thy eternal fame...Alas, consider, after an action so shameful, thou must observe thyself in some remote corner of the world...but, child, remember and believe me, there is no lasting faith in sin...Think, my child, what your victorious beauty merits...think, think of this, my child, and yet retire from ruin (Behn, n.d., p. 49-50).

Sylvia does not respond to her sister. Instead, she reports her sister's letter to Philander and states her intentions to abide by the advice. Of course, Sylvia also fails to follow through on those intentions.

### 10.3 Assurances as Invitations to Engage

Assurances as Invitations to Engage tend to be offered when the 'speaker' perceives the potential for 'ruffled feathers' or misunderstandings on the audience's part. This possible audience response tends to relate to the speaker's behaviour or choices—or more importantly, to the speaker's motivations or feelings about behaviour and choices. It may typically involve affirming that the 'speaker' had the feelings she 'should have', sometimes in a moral sense. Certain language recurs, functioning as discourse markers. In a sense, Assurances as Invitations to Engage presuppose a reaction from the 'listener', but they emphasize the speaker's 'true' feelings or impressions.

M/Henriette-Sylvie achieves this effect using a range of expressions, rather than using one or two particular expressions, as happens with Questions and Commands in this work.

Et à vous dire la vérité, cela ne contribua point au retour de ma réputation (Villedieu, 2003, p. 119).

...je vous jure, Madame, que ce prince de Salmes ne m'avait jamais vue (Villedieu, 2003, p. 122).

Je vous confesse, Madame, que l'artifice était bien concerté (Villedieu, 2003, p. 139).

J'avoue, Madame, que ma patience pensa m'abandonner (Villedieu, 2003, p. 214).

In addition to these, another variation emerges. This involves Henriette-Sylvie's ability to 'tell':

Je ne puis vous exprimer combien il avait réussi à me mettre en colère (Villedieu, 2003, p. 142).

In *R/Voyage d'Espagne*, 'assuring' is actually the preferred form.

...mais je vous assure que je n'ai jamais rien vu de plus cher que ces sortes d'équipages (D'Aulnoy, 1874/2005, p. 6).

Je vous assure que l'indiscret Gascon fut si cruellement battu, qu'il en était tout en sang (D'Aulnoy, 1874/2005, p. 16).

...je vous assure, ma chère cousine, que, dans toute notre route, je n'ai pas vu une maison qui plaise ni un beau château (D'Aulnoy, 1874/2005, p. 215).

L/Péruvienne also uses *Assurances*, although with a different French word: *avouer*. In addition, while *Voyage d'Espagne* maintains *vous*, thereby indicating not only a certain relationship with the audience but also demonstrating the comportment of *politesse*, L/Péruvienne reflects a far more intimate and private relationship with the letter recipient. Terms of endearment figure: 'Te l'avouerai-je, chère idole de mon Coeur...' (Grafigny, 1983, p. 267).

H/Ophelia offers a variation of *Assurances*. Largely as a result of English grammar, where the indirect object is not necessarily part of the expression, 'confessions' are the main form of *Assurance* used in this novel.

I confess, I was shocked at this distinction of Ranks... (Fielding, 2004, p. 65)  
 ...but I confess I blushed to think how low I was fallen (Fielding, 2004, p. 200).  
 I confess, it was not immediately I could depend on my own Happiness (Fielding, 2004, p. 276).

*Assurances* are not common across the sources, but they are popular in those sources that do use them.

#### 10.4 Presuppositions of Engagement

This type of Invitation to Engage acknowledges reactions the 'speaker' believes the audience is having—or, perhaps, hopes the audience is having. In fact, this type of Presupposition is a variation on Presuppositions as they have been discussed thus far. These Presuppositions rely on what the participants bring to the exchange, or at least, what the writer presupposes the other participant brings to the exchange. Presuppositions of Engagement in particular are based on notions of shared knowledge between writer and audience. Such shared knowledge allows the writer to anticipate opinions and responses from the audience, relative to the stories. They are phrased in a number of ways, but within a work, tend to take certain consistent forms.

Presuppositions also tend to add a conversational ‘feel’ to the writing. They become a noticeable way of engaging the listener, perhaps because they so obviously hinge upon the assumption of listener interruptions or reactions. Three novels—M/Henriette-Sylvie, L/Harriot Stuart and H/Ophelia—make extensive use of this technique. All three of them have a particularly conversational ‘feel’ to the narrative, and this technique helps explain that effect. Without this re-engagement with the listener, they would read far more as monologues, rather than consultative<sup>129</sup> interactional exchanges with other participants. A few other novels also use this technique.

As indicated, M/Henriette-Sylvie offers numerous examples of this technique. The audience is encouraged to have certain reactions. One example urges judgment.

Si je dus être confuse et bien étonnée en apprenant ces nouvelles, Votre Altesse en sera le juge (Villedieu, 2003, p., 49).

Votre Altesse jugera cette description criminelle, lorsqu’elle apprendra par la suite de ce discours, que cette même dame m’a fait de grands biens (Villedieu, 2003, p. 71).

Je laisse à juger à Votre Altesse combien elles me surprendent (Villedieu, 2003, p. 161).

While variations on ‘judging’ are especially prevalent in M/Henriette-Sylvie, other expressions describing potential audience engagement feature as well.

...avec une telle soeur, Votre Altesse s’imagine bien qu’il pourrait être encore arriver des choses assez curieuses... (Villedieu, 2003, p. 76)

Devineriez-vous bien, Madame, quelle lettre je portai? (Villedieu, 2003, p. 177)<sup>130</sup>

Vous ne sauriez croire, Madame, le bruit que cette affaire fit à Bruxelles (Villedieu, 2003, p. 241).

Among the other reactions Madame is assumed or encouraged to have, laughter is also typical: ‘Vous auriez trop ri, Madame, si vous aviez vu comme ce pauvre mari écoutait le portrait qu’on fait de sa femme’ (Villedieu, 2003, p. 198).

Finally, some of the Presuppositions of Engagement in M/Henriette-Sylvie are longer, even if not as long as those in the Longer Passages section. For example, commentary of this type is also common:

Ces imaginations me tiraient quelquefois les larmes des yeux, et vous auriez été touchée de trop de pitié, Madame, si vous aviez vu, comment cette pauvre enfant prenait part à mes petites tristesses et tâchait à les faire cesser (Villedieu, 2003, p. 261).

<sup>129</sup> Per Joos’ language use scales.

<sup>130</sup> This example is also obviously a question.

L/Harriot Stuart also makes frequent use of Presuppositions. Almost all of the instances in this work involve the word 'imagine'. There are a good number of examples.

You may imagine, my dear friend, that I did not offer so great a violence to my inclinations without feeling a sensible pain (Lennox, 1995, p. 131).

You must not imagine, my dear Amanda, that I was so intoxicated with the gallantry and homage I received (Lennox, 1995, p.147).

You may imagine perhaps, my dear Amanda, that the lover I speak of was a nobleman of the first rank (Lennox, 1995, p. 186).

You may easily imagine, dear Amanda, how unpleasing such discourse must be to poor lady Louisa! (Lennox, 1995, p. 191)

In addition, L/Harriot Stuart includes a number of Presuppositions that Amanda may be 'wondering'.

You may possibly wonder, dear Amanda, that I was committed to the care of Mrs Villars (Lennox, 1995, p. 98).

You may possibly wonder, my dear Amanda, that my heart, after being touched with a sincere tenderness for captain Belmein, should easily admit of another inclination (Lennox, 1995, p. 126).

Finally, there is also an instance of 'methinks I see you smile, Amanda' (Lennox, 1995, p. 66) that focuses on Amanda's engagement with the narrative.

While not as prevalent as in L/Harriot Stuart, among the Presuppositions in H/Ophelia, 'imagining' is also a popular choice. In fact, because no other Invitation to Engage types are significant in H/Ophelia, Presuppositions are particularly noticeable. Presuppositions do most of the work as far as 'speaking to' the audience.

I would not have your Ladyship imagine that I am aiming to be thought humble (Fielding, 2004, p. 67).

Your Ladyship may imagine, I did not give her a very cordial Reception (Fielding, 2004, p. 260).

Additionally, the following 'take' on imagining involves an additional conclusion based on that Presupposition. Further, this example is not 'personalized' for her 'Ladyship', rendering it particularly accessible to the external reading audience, even if this example assumes an error of judgment.

You may imagine that our Situation was better suited to the Dark, than to the Day; but, in this, you are mistaken (Fielding, 2004, p. 171).

A few other types occur in *H/Ophelia*, adding to the interactional element in this work. For example:

Your Ladyship will easily believe that no Distress could exceed what my Aunt felt at the perusal of this fatal Letter (Fielding, 2004, 41).<sup>131</sup>

Your Ladyship perhaps begins to wonder that Lord Dorchester with the views which you will suppose he had, would introduce me to a Woman of Fashion (Fielding, 2004, p. 108).

A final example from *H/Ophelia* also opens a section, although not necessarily a letter, because *H/Ophelia* is not framed as a collection of letters.

Though the Relation of a Journey is often more tedious than the Journey itself, yet I will suppose your Ladyship's mental Fatigue to have been of no longer Duration than my bodily Weariness, and that after a short Rest, you are ready to proceed with me on my Journey (Fielding, 2004, p. 57).

Delicate Distress also uses this technique, although a wide range of expressions are involved. Because Delicate Distress is primarily conducted within the confines of conversational to-and-fro, the Presuppositions that occur outside that framework are particularly noticeable.

You will, perhaps, tell me, that Lady Woodville is a very different kind of woman, from those I hint at (Griffith, 1997, p. 17).

You may see, by this disposition, that I think worse of the captain (Griffith, 1997, p. 47).

You may suppose our visit was not a very long one (Griffith, 1997, p. 131).

You will, perhaps, be surprized, at my writing to you, in this strain (Griffith, 1997, p. 160).

You are, doubtless, impatient to hear what has wrought this happy change (Griffith, 1997, p. 213).

These Presuppositions also involve 'weak' forms that allow the audience not to share the suggested reaction. 'Perhaps', for example, is one such softener.<sup>132</sup>

The two English novels that involve non-letterwriting narrators use Presuppositions in speaking to the external reading audience. *Love-Letters* is one of these. Because the narrator's role increases in Parts 2 and 3 of *Love-Letters*, this technique emerges there. In some cases, 'believing' is the response addressed.

<sup>131</sup> This examples follows an embedded letter, also serving as an example of Signalling Storytelling.

<sup>132</sup> These 'weaker' forms can be considered polite, and also more typical of women, but a full evaluation is beyond the scope here.

And that you may believe that all the arts of gallantry, and graces of good management were more peculiarly his than another's (Behn, n.d., p. 84)  
 Brilliard (who of a servant was become a rival) you may believe, gave him such advice as might remove him from the object he adored (Behn, n.d., p. 90).

'Knowing' and 'imagining' are also fairly common in Love-Letters.

You may easily imagine how transported the poor Octavio was (Behn, n.d., p. 215).  
 You must know, that for Sylvia's honour, she had lodgings by herself... (Behn, n.d., p. 227).

In fact, the last example may be viewed as a form of assurance as well.

Anti-Pamela involves Presuppositions from the narrator to the audience. These involve not only engagement, but in particular 'arguments' the reader might put forth. For example:

But, methinks, I hear many of my fair Readers cry out, that no Punishment could be too severe for the Inconstancy of Mr. D---, and that the least inflicted on him, ought to be the everlasting Contempt of the Woman to whom he was false (Haywood, 2004, p. 135).

These 'arguments' are, in fact, deflected.

### 10.5 Longer Passages Inviting Engagement

A final type of Invitation to Engage is a longer passage that may draw upon and combine the other types already discussed, but which tends to be more tightly linked to performing a function. It may deliver, for example, advice. Passages of this type generally include a degree of 'summarizing with perspective' with regard to a particular phase or aspect of the story.

L/Roselle offers good examples of the longer passage focusing on advice, specifically addressed to a particular letter recipient. The first example comes from Letter 4, from Madame de Narton to Madame de Saint-Sever, regarding how to handle the misbehaviour of the Marquis, Madame de Saint Sever's brother. While this letter is quite long, and much of it may be considered Commands as Invitations to Engage, much of it engages the recipient differently.

Vous avez raison, on ne se cache point quand on n'a pas besoin de se cacher.  
 Craignez, & ne vous effrayez pas. Il ne faut pas se flatter que votre frere ne donne point dans les erreurs de son âge: tant d'exemples l'y entraîneront! Et c'est en vain que votre sagesse se révolte de tout ce qui n'est pas aussi pur que vous même; mais il a l'ame honnête, il en reviendra. Vous l'avez jusqu'à présent gardé à vûe, il n'est



plus enfant, il ne faut plus le traiter comme s'il l'étoit. Observez le; mais ayez l'air de vous reposer de sa conduite sur lui-même (Elie de Beaumont, 1765, p. 6-7).

While Madame de Narton's letter involves advice, it is also meant to soothe Madame de Saint-Sever. The next example, also full of advice, nevertheless offers criticism rather than the support the Marquis might have preferred from Valville.

J'abhorre le rôle de Censeur, mon cher, mais je ne puis m'empêcher de le devenir pour toi. Tes folies sont publiques, elles rejaillissent sur moi. Tu t'affiches, tu vends des terres; tu te brouilles avec ta famille, tu choques toutes bienséances; je dois t'en avertir. Il n'est pas nécessaire d'aimer ses parens; mais il faut vivre décemment avec eux, les voir rarement, mais les voir. Les ruptures & les éclats sont un tort; c'est se manquer à soi-même. Il y auroit de la sottise à se refuser les plaisirs, mais il faut conserver les dehors. On n'a plus d'hypocrisie aujourd'hui, mais on a de la décence. Tu n'en conserves point; tu vas donner tête baissée dans une passion ridicule (Elie de Beaumont, 1765, p. 50).

The next example, from L/Harriot Stuart, expresses concern that 'dear Amanda' will judge Harriot when she reveals her secrets.

It is possible, my dear Amanda, by thus laying open my heart, with all its weaknesses and foibles, I may hazard the loss of your esteem. You have often rallied me upon my extreme fondness for applause; yet, perhaps, you have never observed this inclination in me in its full extent: and when, in the course of my history, you find it introducing me into many inconveniences, I shall not be surprised, if you are more inclined to blame than pity me (Lennox, 1995, p. 73).

Another example comes from L/Mistriss Fanni, toward the end of the collection, when Mistriss Fanni is accepting the end of the relationship.

Je souhaite, Milord, & je souhaite sincèrement que rien ne vous porte à regretter la vie paisible & tranquille que vous quittez, & qu'un peu moins d'ambition, pour me servir de vos termes, vous eût peut-être fait préférer, si le plus fort penchant de votre coeur n'eût emporté la balance. Vous allez briser tous les liens qui m'attachent à vous. Trop délicate pour vous partager, trop fière pour remplir vos momens perdues, & trop équitable pour vouloir garder un bien sur lequel un autre acquier de justes droits, je reprends tous ceux que ma tendresse vous avoit donnés sur moi. Je ne vous promets point de l'amitié (Riccoboni, 1759, p. 173-174).

The next example from L/Mistriss Fanni illustrates how Longer Passages may emphasize reflection but still encourage engagement from the letter recipient. This example comes from the 'happier' period of the relationship, but reflects Mistriss Fanni's typical angst.

Oh! comme vous vous endettez! Combien vous m'en devez, de baisers! Régions un peu nos comptes. En mettant année commune, qu'il ne m'en revins que cent par jour, quel fond cela fait déjà! Je vous avertis que vous trouverez en moi un créancier un peu dur; j'exige intérêt & principal: pas la moindre remise. Dès que je vous voie, je vous arrête dans mes bras; vous y serez détenu, vous n'en sortirez point que vous n'ayez tout payé (Riccoboni, 1759, p. 82).

H/Ophelia also uses Longer Passages as a means of engaging the letter recipient. The following example demonstrates how the categories may be combined:

I have already observed, that Mr. South's Visits were agreeable, and your Ladyship will not think this so improbably, as to require any farther Assurance of it; but what will you say, if I own, that the Love of Talking rendered other Company eligible, who had no other Recommendation than taking the Embargo off my Speech, and suffering me to export a few Thoughts, with which I was overstocked? (Fielding, 2004, p. 173)

The following example also comes from H/Ophelia, again combining some of the types of Invitation to Engage already discussed.

I cannot help thinking your Ladyship lulled into a sweet Slumber, by my moralizing on this Scene; but, indeed, you must excuse me, for it made so deep an Impression on my Mind, that I can never recollect it without falling back into the same Train of Reflections (Fielding, 2004, p. 208).

Finally, two comparable Longer Passages come from M/Henriette-Sylvie and R/Voyage d'Espagne. Both are, in fact, closings, but both also reflect interactional 'concern' for the other party in a way that resembles the Presuppositions considered in this chapter. The first example is from M/Henriette-Sylvie:

...de peur d'importuner Votre Altesse par une trop longue lecture, et pour reprendre moi-même un peu d'haleine, je n'entreprendrai de vous faire le récit de ce qui m'arriva là de remarquable, non plus que celui du reste de mes aventures, qu'à la première occasion que j'aurai d'écrire à Votre Altesse. Je la supplie très humblement de me croire sa très humble servante (Villedieu, 2003, p. 76).

The next example is that from R/Voyage d'Espagne:

Il est temps que je finisse, me chère cousine, je craindrais de vous fatiguer par une plus longue letter. Je vous supplie de faire rendre toutes celles que je vous envoie et de me pardonner la liberté que je prends. Adieu, je vous embrasse et je vous aime toujours de tout mon Coeur (D'Aulnoy, 1874/2005, p. 323).

Again, most of the sources, at times, include longer passages.

#### 10.5a The Special Case of Anti-Pamela: Preaching to the Audience

As has been pointed out, the non-letterwriting narrator in Anti-Pamela regularly 'speaks to' the audience. This narrator goes beyond reporting or commenting, however. In Anti-Pamela, moral views are expressed by the narrator in such a way that it is evident the audience shares—or should share—the narrator's opinions. Aside from considerations relating to membership in a Community of Practice where these judgments would have been the 'rule' and subject to discussion, shared moral perspective increases the likelihood of appreciating the choices available to Syrena and her mother as well as the likelihood of judging the choices they make 'properly'. This, in fact, is nothing short of 'correct' interpretation of the story. 'Speaking to' the audience on these matters raises their profile as the external reading audience experiences the novel. The approach used in these longer passages is something close to preaching, although it still encourages alignment with the audience. For example:

How ought, therefore, the Fair-Sex to beware of indulging even the very Temptation of a Vice, which I am sorry to say is at present too prevalent among them. I need not say I mean that of Drinking, which indeed opens the way to all others; the Example before us of a Girl train'd up in Precepts directly opposite, to giving way to any tender Inclinations, and taught that the only thing she had to avoid was the bestowing any Favours but where Interest directed; now, by the meer force of Liquor, betray'd to yield to the Impulse of Nature, and resign that Jewel, on which all her Hopes of living great in the World depended, to a Person from whom she could have no Expectations, and for whom what she felt could not justly be called Love; this, I say, may be a Warning to all of what Principles and Station whatever; since there are Dangers arising from this pernicious Custom (Haywood, 2004, p. 75-76).

This sort of extended passage occurs regularly, perhaps six or eight times, steering the external reading audience down the 'correct' path of moral judgments, those belonging to the Community of Practice promoted by the non-letterwriting narrator. This 'sermon' improves the likelihood of the desired interpretation of the novel as well. These longer passages are supported and reminded via numerous shorter comments woven throughout the narrative.

### 10.6 Characterizing the Impact of Invitations to Engage

Invitations to Engage go a long way not only toward characterizing the relationship-promoting language in these novels, but also toward explaining the conversational ‘feel’ that is particularly difficult to pinpoint when formal titles are also so prevalent. In working with the Invitation types, a distinction emerges between the first four and the last type. The first four—Questions, Commands, Assurances and Presuppositions—tend to be quick interjections into the exchange, sometimes functioning as discourse markers. Longer Passages, on the other hand, may be less specifically interactional and more open to relaying content. They may also combine the first four types, in varying degrees. However, it is not the specific type of Invitation to Engage that makes a difference to audience position in these sources. Rather, it is that this type of interactional language is used on a regular basis, repositioning the audience relative to the narrative, if not necessarily the writer.

Invitations to Engage, similar to Activating Common Ground and Signalling Storytelling, have a way of levelling the audiences in terms of offering opportunities to engage with the exchange. Invitations to Engage represent a furthering of the trends that began in the two previous categories of ‘speaking to’ interactional language. Activating Common Ground is the most abstract of them, in terms of the position it offers to audiences, and Signalling Storytelling is ‘generic’ in that it can be extended to all audiences (whether ‘listeners’ or ‘readers’) as a means of smoothing comprehension, and improving ability to follow the storyline. Invitations to Engage are similar to Activating Common Ground in that offering positions governed by Communities of Practice is a way of activating common ground. Invitations to Engage are similar to Signalling Storytelling in that different audiences may receive them ‘equally’ in terms of experiencing the narrative. However, Invitations to Engage go beyond this.

At the simplest level, Invitations to Engage are able to reclaim the audience’s attention at points in the story when their focus may be wandering, and doing it in a manner that seems personalized regardless of the audience. The illusion of personalization, and the universality of that illusion, furthers the dual interactional effect of Invitations to Engage. Invitations to Engage promote relationships between letters and audiences (as well as novel and audience) but also encourage a parallel link between the audiences and the narrative more thoroughly than the other ‘speaking to’ language categories. The main effect of Invitations to Engage is to open the narrative to both intended recipients and to the external reading audience by encouraging or assuming personal interactional responses on the part of that audience. These samples indicate that this effect plays out in three primary ways.

The first of these effects occurs where the external reading audience may already be inclined to ‘adopt the mantle’, with the result that Invitations to Engage may further enhance the relationship available with the letterwriter. The relationships promoted with the letter recipients by these novels are not intimate, rather they emphasize polite familiarity. They are located toward the centre of the private-public continuum, and the external reading audience would not find the mantle of such relationships awkward to adopt. Invitations to Engage offer the most personal form of ‘speaking to’ language

identified in this study,<sup>133</sup> but in these cases, they are offered equally to both letter recipients and external reading audiences.

M/Henriette-Sylvie stands out among the group of novels in which this occurs. M/Henriette-Sylvie not only uses all of the first four types of Invitations to Engage, it uses them extensively. Neither 'Madame' the letter recipient, nor the external reading audience would be able to let attention stray for very long, as Henriette-Sylvie persistently reminds them to engage with the story at hand. The sheer volume of Invitations to Engage reaches out to the audience, demanding attention in the friendliest of ways. In fact, the 'chatty' feel to this novel is largely explained by the extensive use of Invitations to Engage. Given the apparently substantial status difference between Henriette-Sylvie and the stated letter recipient, that 'chattiness' can be achieved is remarkable. Invitations to Engage are instrumental in achieving the air of conversation offered in this novel.

In addition to M/Henriette-Sylvie, R/Voyage d'Espagne, H/Ophelia and L/Harriot Stuart similarly align audiences using Invitations to Engage. Of these, R/Voyage d'Espagne is consistent about incorporating these Invitations into the narrative while letting them subtly hint at the warmth of the relationship between the Comtesse and the 'chère cousine', albeit within the confines of *politesse*. The external reading audience is able to bask in this radiated relationship because the Invitations to Engage are open to 'adoption'. L/Harriot Stuart uses 'quick' Invitations to Engage, which may contribute to the rushed, sometimes breathless, feel to this narrative. L/Harriot Stuart may respond to 'listener assertions' before the 'listener' realizes she might have interrupted. In fact, although the Invitations to Engage in L/Harriot Stuart tend to be brief, they are also widespread. Further, L/Harriot Stuart approaches the 'chatty' feel of M/Henriette-Sylvie due to the Invitations to Engage. H/Ophelia mainly uses Presuppositions of Engagement. These Presuppositions often serve as discourse markers, tending to distinguish structural moments in the narrative (i.e., reflective summarizing). In all four of these novels, however, Invitations to Engage can be viewed as leading readers through the story as equals, as well as 'personally' engaging the readers, whether this is the named recipient or the external reading audience. While 'polite familiarity' is still the most appropriate label for the relationships extended to the reader, this relationship is equally available to the two types of audience.

The second effect of Invitations to Engage is that, despite the possibly enhanced interaction with the storyline, the relationship experienced by the external reading audience may not be subsumed into the one experienced by the intended recipients. That is, the distinctions remain between 'private' correspondence that can only be observed by the external reading audience and correspondence that allows 'adopting the mantle' of intended recipient. In fact, sometimes the 'privacy' of the exchanges is enhanced because of what the letterwriter is able to assume about the recipient's engagement tendencies. However, despite that, it is nevertheless possible that Invitations to Engage will benefit the external reading audience's experiences with the storyline.

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<sup>133</sup> As discussed, they imply common background knowledge that includes understanding how the reader is likely to feel, to think and to respond.

Invitations to Engage do not foster closer relationships with the external reading audience in *L/Péruvienne*, *L/Mistriss Fanni*, *L/Montier*, *L/Roselle*, *Love-Letters* and *Delicate Distress*. In all of these novels, although Invitations to Engage ‘personalize’ the narrative, that personalization is aimed at the intended recipients. Generally, even if the external reading audience is responding as assumed by the Invitation to Engage and consequently is experiencing an enhanced connection with the story, a sense of ‘becoming’ one of the intended recipients is not enhanced. The external reading audience is positioned as voyeur, and the private nature of the relationships between the letterwriters and the recipients is emphasized.

The third effect of Invitations to Engage occurs with *Love-Letters* and *Anti-Pamela*, where the non-letterwriting narrator forges a relationship with the external reading audience.<sup>134</sup> In fact, despite Invitations to Engage being included in the letters in these sources, the external reading audience’s relationship with those letters continues to be an ‘outsider’ mode. However, because of Invitations to Engage extended by the non-letterwriting narrator, these novels offer instead a degree of insider status in terms of participating in telling a story. In both *Love-Letters* and *Anti-Pamela*, the narrator acts more as a conduit, perhaps as a *salonnière*, ensuring the external reading audience is both following and engaged in the story. The potential listener interruptions of the external reading audience are being managed, but it is done as if the narrator and the external reading audience are ‘on the same team’. The teamwork involved brings about the telling of the story, and the external reading audience has a place in that storytelling team, even if that audience is still listening to the story. The external reading audience is in a ‘closer’ relationship with the narrators in these novels, but not with the letters or the letterwriters.

Finally, three novels—*L/Deux Dames*, *L/Manley* and *Familiar Letters*—do not reflect tendencies to use Invitations to Engage as identified in the other novels. Again, this is not to say examples of Invitations to Engage never occur, only that the kinds of tendencies discussed here are not dominant. In addition, as stated, Invitations to Engage that occur within conversational to-and-fro have not been included. Both *L/Deux Dames* and *Familiar Letters* include both sides to the communication and tend to use the Dialogue Effect; therefore, Invitations to Engage would generally occur within that environment. Invitations to Engage, then, are not responsible for relationships between the novels and the external reading audiences in these works.

*L/Manley* is different from the two other novels, first because it only shows one side of the exchange. Further, *L/Manley* does not really reflect techniques that reach the external reading audience. The ‘closed’ nature of the novel arises from the limited amount of information, including a lack of Invitations to Engage. Even those that do occur are within a conversational to-and-fro environment that is still ‘closed’ to the external reading audience. Because background information is limited and references are not necessarily expanded

<sup>134</sup> Interestingly, the non-letterwriting narrator in *L/Péruvienne* does not tend to use Invitations to Engage. Despite this, the external reading audience may still feel aligned as story creator; however, it is not Invitations to Engage producing this result. Further, the Invitations to Engage that do occur emphasize Zilia’s relationships with the letter recipients.

upon, the external reading audience is barred from an insider position. As private correspondence, expansion is not necessary because the intended recipient already knows and needs only an adequate 'trigger' for the intended recipient to access the information. The external reading audience, however, would benefit from more complete information as well as more complete triggers.

In general, then, Invitations to Engage have the power to forge a closer link between reader and story because this technique re-engages the reader as participant in the exchange, as well as acknowledging the role of these 'listeners' in the conversation. However, only in the sources where the external reading audience is likely to 'adopt the mantle' of intended recipient—M/Henriette-Sylvie, R/Voyage d'Espagne, H/Ophelia and L/Harriot Stuart—and those in which the non-letterwriting narrator engages directly with the external reading audience via Invitations to Engage—Love-Letters and Anti-Pamela—is the relationship enhanced. These six novels offer insider roles, whether as letter recipients or as co-constructors of the story. At the same time, the degree of privacy depicted in the relationships is enhanced in the other novels. By default, the external reading audience is positioned more as outsider.





## **Chapter 11: Conclusions: The Novels, ‘Speaking to’ Language, Women and Other ‘Big Picture’ Considerations**

One question motivated this study: how does a particular set of novels ‘speak to’ its audiences? A time period was identified, novels were selected—that choice limited to epistolary novels by French and English women, from 1670 to 1770. The question relies upon perspectives from interactional sociolinguistics, and seeks to identify signs of interaction that could only be conveyed through language due to the written medium. Sociohistorical linguistics presented as a useful source for principles governing the approach, including the Uniformitarian Principle, advocating the application of current sociolinguistics understandings to historical language use, particularly the matter of assuming languages in the past varied in patterned ways because languages do so today.

Other related disciplines—conversation analysis, discourse analysis, systemic functional linguistics, pragmatics—exerted influence, some theories proving especially relevant. One of these was Joos’ language use scales, helping to establish a means for discussing the significance of different interactional cues ‘in action’ in terms of how those cues reflect the relationship status of the participants. Another relevant theory relates to the contrast between relationship-promoting language and content-bearing language, concepts initially explored by Tannen. Halliday’s view on relationships in fiction was instructive. Grice’s Co-operative Principle, Goffman’s frames analysis, Van Dijk’s knowledge types, Schiffren’s discourse markers—all contributed to the investigation. The Matrix of Communicative Context was developed in an effort to capture the range of factors potentially shaping the interaction under review in these novels. An outline of the sociohistorical linguistic context was provided, as were the directions of interim theoretical developments. While some of these points helped primarily in the evaluation of the samples, others pointed toward connections between the findings and two particular language research paths. One of these is a link to Bakhtin, especially his theory of a multi-voiced novel, and the appropriacy of studying it as such. The other link is to Habermas’ theories on private and public spheres, as these relate to language and women in particular. These will be discussed further.

Five categories of ‘speaking to’ interactional language emerged and have been discussed in some detail. However, certain ‘big picture’ findings highlight some interesting and valuable points for the novels as a group, even if definitive generalizations are not yet appropriate. However, the five categories do shed light on how language was used to speak to audiences, while simultaneously promoting certain kinds of relationships between the participants. Specifically, intimate and familiar relationships are represented and fostered in various ways across the set of novels. Language encouraging interaction was readily identified.

Chapters 2 and 3 presented the initial framework and background for the study, while Chapter 4 introduced in-progress developments arising in the course of evaluating the language samples. The current chapter, in identifying links between this approach and the

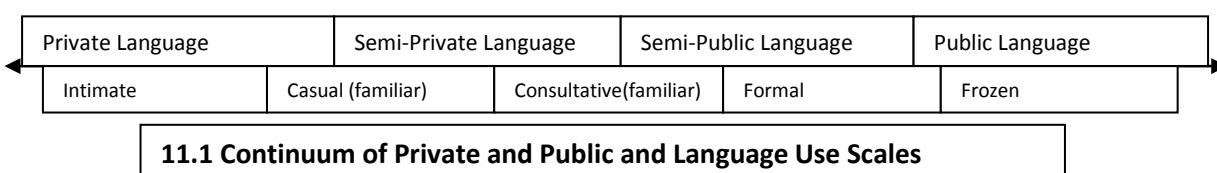
results gained, will seek to encourage the benefits of the ‘interillumination’<sup>135</sup> possible when links are sought with broader theories of the novel and of society in the period, namely, those of Bakhtin and Habermas, respectively. As stated at the beginning, the hope is to suggest a kind of ‘new tool’ for understanding women’s language and writing, to help place them within a wider, more informed context. This chapter, then, will first summarize the results from each ‘speaking to’ language category as they correspond to a ‘bigger picture’ of private and public language. Applicability of Bakhtin’s and Habermas’ theories will be further considered, as will additional ‘unmapped terrain’ that would help develop this line of research.

Finally, because this study has been approached as a ‘mapping of terrain’ project, much has been omitted or over-simplified, in an attempt to produce a survey-level answer to the original question.

### 11.1 Summarizing and Characterizing the ‘Speaking to’ Language of the Novels

This section summarizes the ‘speaking to’ language found in these novels according to each of the five categories, while also revisiting the links between Habermas’ private and public spheres and Joos’ language use scales in terms of how ‘speaking to’ language might be characterized along a continuum of private-to-public based on the features identified. As has been discussed, private and public language should not be equated with spoken and written; this is not the distinction. Designation as ‘private’ or ‘public’ language has more to do with the intended audience; that is, whether it is ‘fit for the ears’ of others who are not specifically identified as intended letter recipient. In this section, the novels are summarized with an eye toward characterizing the sort of interaction being assumed or promoted. In turn, the novels will be discussed within the context provided by that combined continuum. ‘Averaging together’ the results is not a straight-forward matter. While the effort is made in order to reach some level of generalization, there is equally an effort to preserve some of the distinctions in what is being characterized.

In Chapter 4, where in-progress theoretical developments were introduced, Joos’ language use scales were juxtaposed against Habermas’ private and public spheres, creating a continuum of private-to-public language. In addition, ‘grey zones’ were added as links between the two opposing ends of private and public, these zones being labelled as ‘semi-private’ and ‘semi-public’. Figure 11.1, first presented in Chapter 4, illustrates how these two measures—Joos’ language scales and Habermas’ private-public dichotomy—might correspond.



<sup>135</sup> Bakhtin’s word.

Although the language use scales refer to language, they also imply relationships corresponding to the language use label. As indicated on the continuum, three of Joos' categories—Intimate, Casual and Consultative—are degrees of familiarity, with Intimate the most private of the three.

These three categories have been especially useful in characterizing interactional language as well as the relationships involved in these novels. These three categories correspond to the private and semi-private end of the continuum, where personal relationships—or at least, intimate and familiar relationships—tend to sit. Consultative may extend into the semi-public zone, while Formal and Frozen are the most public of the categories. Formal and Frozen language have not been evaluated in these works.

As stated, Intimate Style is the most 'private' of the language categories. It is marked by the type and prevalence of 'shorthand' expressions used without inhibiting communication between the parties, although it may well inhibit others' ability to follow. Joos describes Intimate Style as including 'private' slang or jargon, as well as ellipsis. Not only does this include what can be left out because it is assumed to be understood, but it also means that very little need be explicitly stated in order to trigger that common understanding. Intimate language, marked by 'insider speak' and ellipsis, may well be only fully meaningful to the participants. Intimate Style corresponds with intimate relationships.

Again, the other two categories, Casual Style and Consultative Style, are also types of familiar usage, corresponding to the zones of semi-private and semi-public. Casual Style, per Joos' scale, allows to-and-fro interaction between participants even if there is still a primary 'speaker' and a primary 'listener'. In Casual Style, background information is provided as it is needed, typically following a signal from the listener. A high level of common knowledge is assumed. Or, as Joos' describes it, participants become 'insiders' simply because they are treated as such. Consultative Style, on the other hand, takes responsibility for providing background knowledge, even if it is amenable to the 'listener' communicating with the speaker, requesting clarification or acknowledging understanding, and so on. In Consultative Style, the speaker may provide appropriate moments for the 'listener' to interject.

These basic descriptions of language have informed both the identification and discussion of the 'speaking to' language in these novels. Again, the five language categories include Addressing Audiences with T/V Personal Pronouns, Omission of Openings and Closings of Letters, Activating Common Ground, Signalling Storytelling, and Invitations to Engage. As discussed, the first two categories suggest distinctions between French and English use, particularly in relation to diachronic tendencies. The last three categories do not indicate such patterning. Instead, the particular epistolary format—and how it positions audiences—emerged as influential. Specifically, whether those one-sided exchanges allowed the audience to 'adopt the mantle' of letter recipient was a factor, as was the presence of a non-letterwriting narrator 'speaking to' an audience. Specific epistolary format was not a sure predictor of usage, but it did matter.

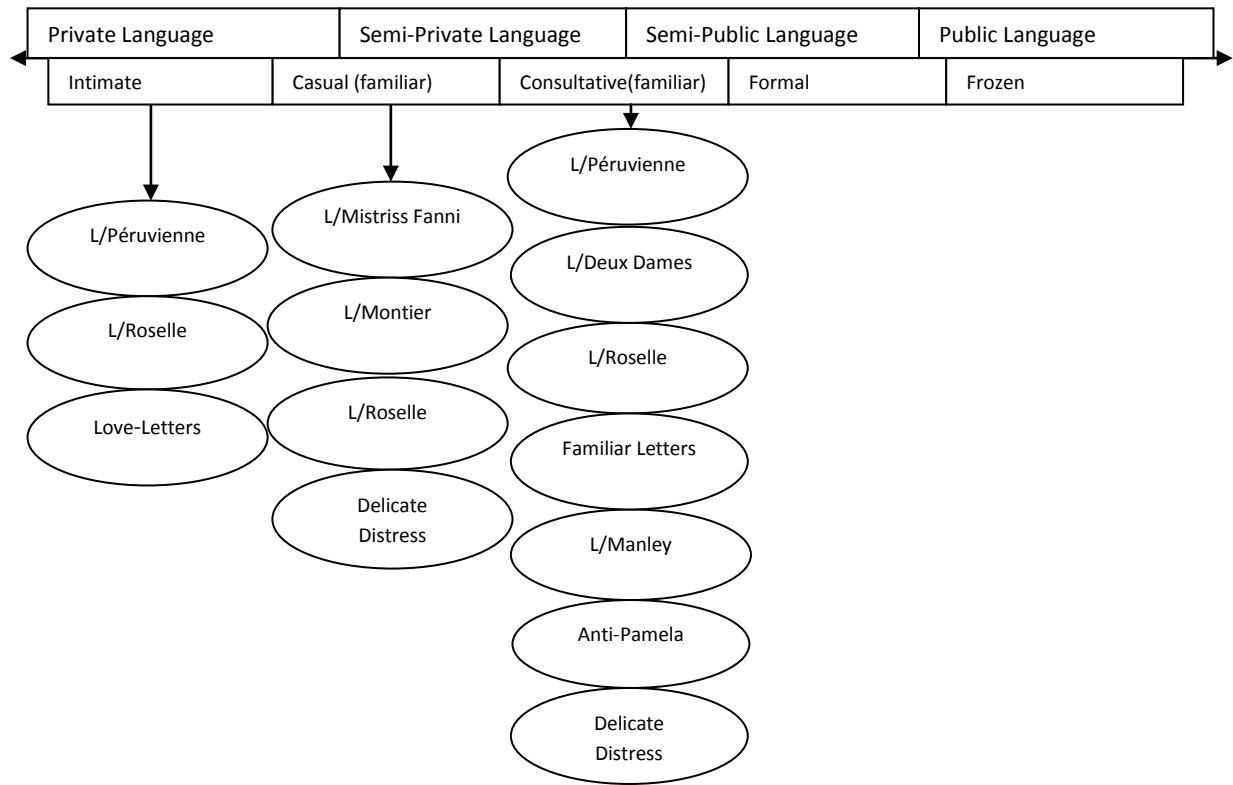
The first category is Addressing Audiences with T/V Personal Pronouns. In reviewing the novels, it became apparent that all four T/V personal pronouns were used to address

audiences, and, therefore, their distribution merited consideration. The ‘T’ pronoun is used in four of the seven French novels and two of the seven English novels. While a range of sometimes subtle factors colour ‘T’ choice, in general, ‘T’ use in these sources does support its link to familiar relationships. In addition, because ‘T’ usage is clustered in the last four of the French novels, a tendency toward a diachronic shift in use is suggested. That ‘T’ choice occurs only in the first and last of the English novels—and only in novels that purport to tell ‘French’ stories—contrasts to French usage. This does not suggest a diachronic trend in the English novels, indicating instead that fictional license is significant—although fictional purposes play a role in the French novels, too.

All told, seven of the total fourteen novels involve ‘T’ pronoun use. Five of these portray dual-sided exchanges. The two novels that only show one side of the exchange both involve love affairs, where the man is a letter recipient whose contribution to the exchange is not available to the external reading audience. Therefore, not only is ‘T’ choice portrayed as used in close relationships, it is also only used when its intended target is very clear and can be assumed as likely to reciprocate ‘T’ use. ‘T’ pronouns are not directed at the external reading audience. The external reading audience, instead, is allowed to observe ‘T’ exchanges without actually partaking in them because ‘T’ use is confined to ‘character-to-character’ use, even when the recipient’s responses are not part of the letter collection. ‘Character-to-character’ relationships, based on ‘T’ use, are depicted as being decidedly private. The external reading audience, however, is on the receiving end of ‘V’ pronouns, a more polite choice for relationships involving more distance.

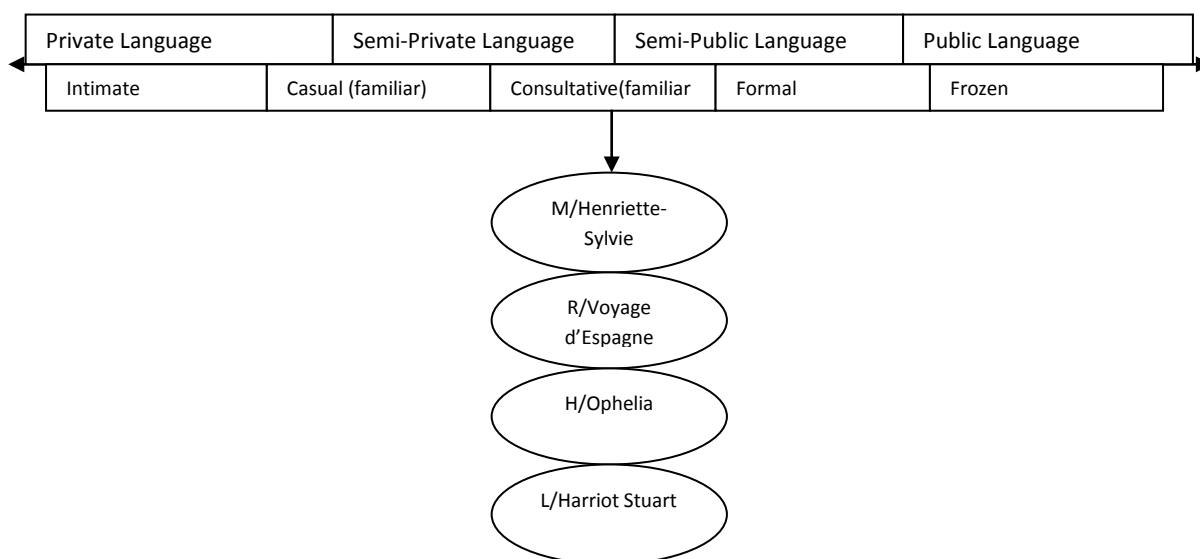
Based on these T/V findings, these novels can be ‘mapped’ against the language use scales and private-public continuum. Characterizing T/V usage according to these measures requires two separate charts because relationships are fostered—at a minimum—both within the novels among characters, and between the novel and the external reading audience, approximating Halliday’s characterization of fictional relationships.

Figure 11.2 reflects use among characters. Some novels are shown in more than one column because of multiple relationships or other multiplicity of pronoun use in those novels. This is one example of the complexity of ‘averaging together’ the languages of the novels. Specifically, the first column lists the novels that use the ‘T’ pronoun, while the second column lists those novels that show the same speaker using both ‘T’ and ‘V’ to the same recipient. The third column indicates those that use ‘V’, sometimes exclusively and sometimes in unmarked ways, meaning it is the dominant pronoun of address. This is especially true of the English novels, although *L/Montier* might have been included here given that ‘T’ is only used in one passage. On the other hand, *L/Péruvienne* directs ‘T’ toward one recipient only and V toward one recipient only, while *L/Mistriss Fanni* mixes ‘T’ and ‘V’ liberally with only one letter recipient. *L/Roselle* includes reciprocal ‘T’ use, while also including pronoun mixing. *Delicate Distress* also shows pronoun mixing.



### 11.2 Characterizing Novels by T/V Pronoun Use Between Characters

Four of the novels address the audience using second person pronouns in such ways that 'adopting the mantle' of intended recipient is not only possible, but also a simple matter. These novels simultaneously address both the named letter recipient—an invisible character—and the external reading audience. These four novels appear in both Figures 11.2 and 11.3. Interestingly, in the case of non-letterwriting narrators, first-person plural pronouns—not second person pronouns—are typically used to engage the external reading audience.



### 11.3 Characterizing Novels by T/V Personal Pronouns 'Adopting the Mantle' with 'V' Only

The second language use category is Omission of Openings and Closings in the Letters. The key to this category is the development of these sections; one sentence was not sufficient, even if, in context, the one sentence served the purpose. The intent was to determine whether development of generic sections was a priority in the letters comprising these collections. While classification in this way is admittedly subjective, the question was whether omitting 'formal' sections could be linked to familiar or intimate writing. The French and English sources again demonstrate contrasts.

The first three French novels tend to include 'openings'—the third, in fact, includes an opening in every letter. These three are situated within the period most closely corresponding to the time of the French *salons*. After these three, openings drop off dramatically, going from one-third to eight percent in the last of them. Closings in the French novels show a similar pattern. The first novel includes a closing in every letter; the next two rank at ninety-three percent and eighty-three percent. The final four drop dramatically: the highest among them is forty-seven percent and the lowest is nine percent. Results with the English novels provide a contrast due to their relative consistency at the lower end of inclusion rates. Openings, for example, go from zero in one novel to a high of thirty-seven percent. Closings peak at fifty percent and drop to a low of ten percent.

That the three French novels that tend to include openings and closings are also those that exclusively use 'V' strengthens the argument that these three novels—while cordial, friendly and polite—are not overly familiar and certainly not intimate in addressing the audiences. The other four French novels are less likely to include openings and closings, and also promote different relationships at least between characters. Character-to-character relationships can be viewed as familiar and intimate, based on omission of openings and closings as a manifestation of Joos' theory of ellipsis. Such ellipsis, however, does not forge a familiar or intimate relationship with the external reading audience. Instead, that audience is

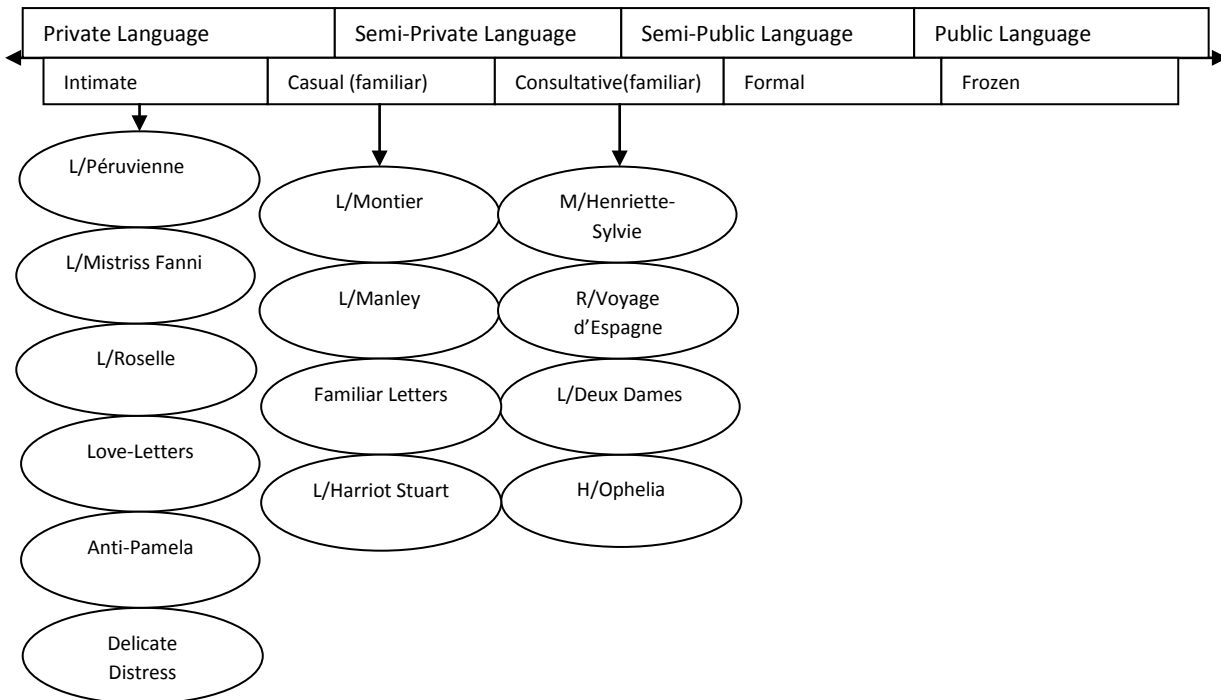
positioned as voyeur, relying on other contextual clues to link the letters—and their story—together. A sense of observing fiction is introduced, although perhaps not as strongly as with the English novels.

As mentioned, the English novels are more consistent in terms of the range of inclusion rates, all of them at fifty percent or lower. Three English novels show only one side of the exchange. Of these, two were not included in the count because they each comprise only one letter, and this would have skewed the results. Of these two novels, one included both sections, while the other included only an opening. The presence of an opening is particularly advantageous to an audience, whether this is the intended recipient or an external reading audience, because an opening tends to offer contextualization that allows the audience to ‘make the leaps’ necessary to follow the story. This is more difficult when the opening is not provided, but may be mitigated by the closeness of the relationship—and the shared knowledge—between the participants. These two novels—omitted from the rankings charts—reflect a tone similar to that mentioned in the French one-sided exchange novels: cordial, friendly and polite.

The third English novel is different. This third novel includes no openings, and this makes a real difference to an external reading audience trying to participate in the exchange. The lack of openings leaves an external reading audience ‘wondering’. It positions the external reading audience as voyeur, as an outsider not privy to the ‘understood’ information that might have otherwise been included in the opening. At the same time, a close relationship—possibly an intimate relationship—between the letterwriters is suggested by this use of ellipsis.

All the other English novels show both sides of the exchanges; two of them have the support of an additional narrator providing the contextualization that so benefits an external reading audience when openings and closings are not there. In all of these cases, however, the external reading audience is offered an outsider role, even if the relationships between characters may be familiar or intimate. The difference with these is that a sense of reading fiction also enters the picture.

Figure 11.4 reflects the relationships promoted to intended letter recipients, not to external reading audiences. For the external reading audience, whether openings and closings are present produces a different result. Because M/Henriette-Sylvie, R/Voyage d’Espagne, L/Deux Dames, and H/Ophelia are consistent about including generic sections, the audience benefits whether this is the intended recipient or the external reading audience. Therefore, these four novels again reflect Consultative style.



#### 11.4 Characterizing Novels by Generic Conventions, Relationships between Characters

The omission of openings and closings does not necessarily promote relationships with external reading audiences that are comparable to those offered to 'character' audiences. For example, L/Péruienne<sup>136</sup> and L/Mistriss Fanni—as well as L/Manley—leave the external reading audience somewhat disoriented in that the contextual cues often provided by openings and closings are largely absent. This emphasizes the outsider position of the external reading audience, and does not promote an intimate relationship, sitting in stark contrast to the insider positioning enjoyed by the named recipient. This promotion of oppositional relationships will also be seen in other language use categories as well.

As has been discussed, the remaining 'speaking to' categories more closely relate to what Goffman has described as 'direct addresses' that occur when a character or narrator 'steps out' of the flow of the story in order to deliver an aside or other commentary directly to the audience. The first of these involves Activating Common Ground, and, specifically, the 'cues' that allow these asides to be included and to attach 'understood' information to the current conversation. Further, Van Dijk's work regarding knowledge types and the role he suggests for presuppositions of common knowledge that participants bring to an exchange play a role in these categories. In turn, these presuppositions—if correct—go a long way toward enacting Grice's Cooperative Principle for conducting conversations.

Additionally, these three categories are especially difficult to collapse together and rate on the private-public continuum. For example, the sub-categories may also 'speak' differently to characters than to the external reading audience. In the spirit of 'mapping the terrain', however, these language categories—Activating Common Ground, Signalling Storytelling and Invitations to Engage—will be taken as general ways to smooth the audience

<sup>136</sup> If L/Peruvienne's letters are considered without the helpful *introduction historique*.



experience. That is, these techniques are especially important in guiding the audience through the story (or letters); they cater to a user-friendly experience. They are geared toward building rapport with the communication, tending to also foster a more personal relationship that falls toward the private end of the continuum, even if this may not be a relationship with the writer *per se*. Therefore, while the various sub-categories will be summarized, they will be represented on the continuum as functioning more homogeneously than they do.

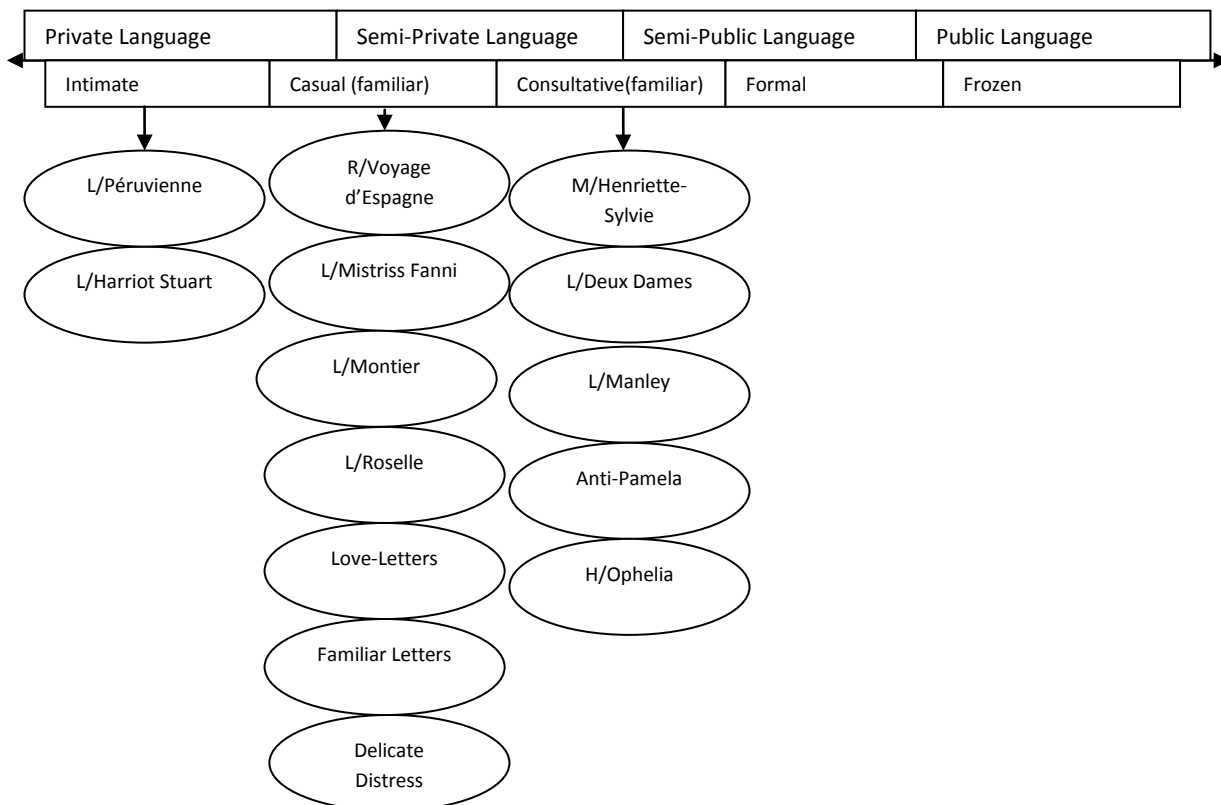
As far as Activating Common Ground, a handful of categories emerged, but only two representative types were reviewed. The first of these is Overtly Tagging Relationships. These markers generally include titles, given names and terms of endearment, although these terms of address may also be combined. As mentioned, a more thorough mapping of the hierarchical significance of these relationship markers would be useful. However, the rough correlations between relationship markers and relationships available to the audiences are evident. Titles are generally used within polite relationships that involve social distance, while given names and terms of endearment mark more private relationships between characters. The relationship markers are influential in determining the relationship available to the external reading audience. Titles, for example, may foster similar relationships between story and intended recipient and story and external reading audience, but not always. L/Mistriss Fanni demonstrates how the opposite may be true. On the other hand, while the more private terms of address are associated with relationships between characters, in which the external reading audience is unlikely to 'adopt the mantle', this is not always the case. R/Voyage d'Espagne demonstrates this, but also demonstrates the more important conclusion: the more vague a relationship marker, the more possible 'adopting the mantle' may be for the external reading audience. Or, to say it another way, the more specific a term of address, the more awkward it is for an external reading audience to overlook and adopt the mantle of recipient.

The other category reviewed as part of Activating Common Ground is the 'Dialogue Effect', which primarily involves the volleying of information back and forth between letterwriters, usually in novels where dual or multiple sides to exchanges are visible. In addition, these often occur in openings and closings, but may well occur throughout a letter. The Dialogue Effect reflects the immediacy of conversation, at least insofar as this is possible in asynchronous written communication. However, it is also an effective way of establishing the common ground of content, while also demonstrating the common ground of 'how to do things with language' that a common Community of Practice would comprise. The ability to convey written conversation suggests relationships of familiarity, based on matching understandings between participants. It does not tend to embrace the external reading audience as participant, but it does enhance the 'naturalness' of the exchange.

As previously mentioned, distinctions of usage become increasingly difficult to capture on the continuum of private-public and language use scales largely because audience position becomes increasingly difficult to map. Although only two types of Activating Common Ground have been evaluated, averaging them together is not simple.

The question becomes, whose common ground is being activated via these techniques? The answer to this question emphasizes not only the potential distinctions between audiences as represented by intended recipient and external reading audience, but also the increasingly evident situation of blended audiences. In these cases, where audiences are blended, the relationship offered to intended recipients and external reading audiences may be quite different even if the same ‘triggers’ for common ground are available to them.

R/Voyage d’Espagne presents a good example in Figure 11.5. The usual relationship tag used in R/Voyage d’Espagne suggests an intimate or perhaps Casual-Familiar relationship with the audiences—both audiences—but the lack of Dialogue Effect produces a more Consultative style. In turn, this promotes polite social distance to both audiences, even if this is by default. As a result, R/Voyage d’Espagne is ‘averaged’ as Casual-Familiar for Activating Common Ground. Familiar Letters and Delicate Distress sit rather cleanly, on both counts, as Casual-Familiar. L/Péruvienne and L/Harriot Stuart both reflect more intimate terms of address and strong signs of the Dialogue Effect, while L/Mistriss Fanni uses a full range of terms of address, along with the Dialogue Effect. L/Deux Dames is ‘non-specific polite’ with terms of address, with displays strong Dialogue Effect, which, nevertheless demonstrates polite turntaking in this case, rather than simple conversational to-and-fro.



**Figure 11.5 Characterizing Novels by Activating Common Ground for External Reading Audience**

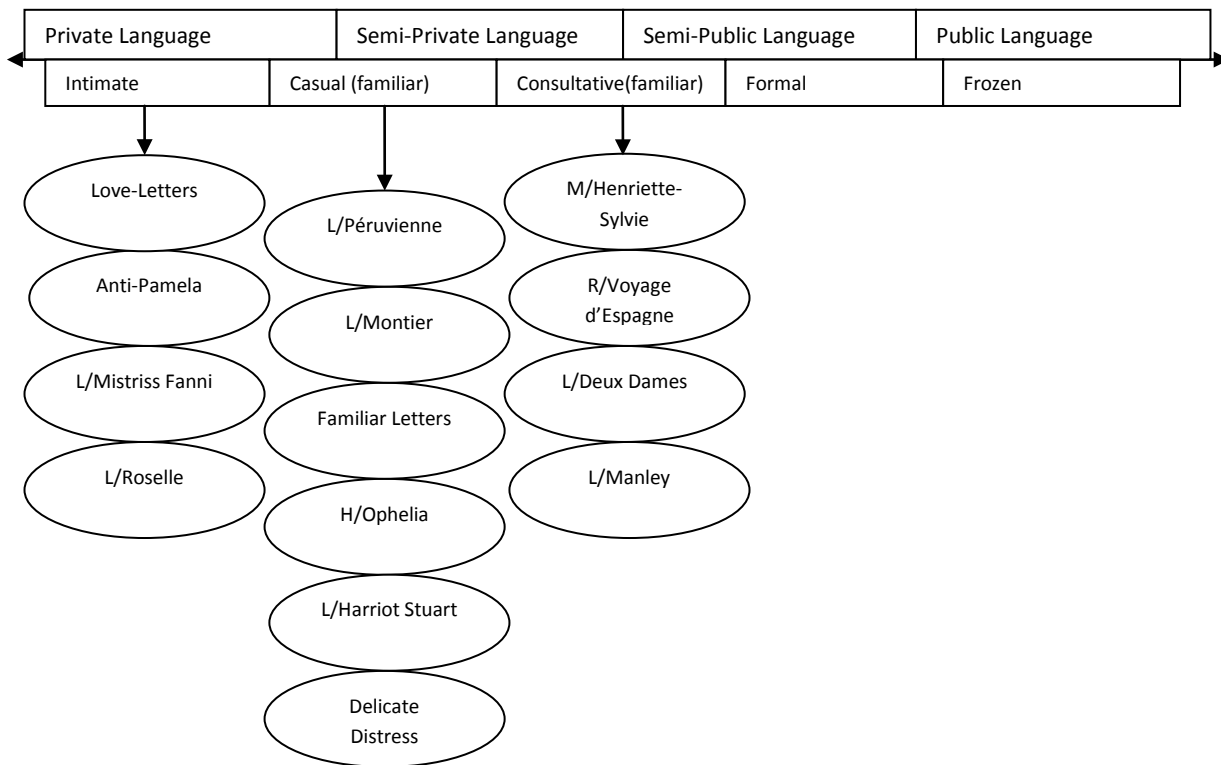
Figure 11.5 mainly illustrates the consideration offered to the external reading audience by offering triggers of shared background knowledge. It seeks to capture whether the letterwriter goes out of his or her way to smooth and minimize the comprehension

effort required by the audience. In other words, Figure 11.5 is a 'best attempt' to capture these distinctions, and may more accurately demonstrate the open avenues for further terrain-mapping of this category. In fact, further clarification of the comparisons between audience position, not to mention Upfront Assertions and the various Reminder types omitted from this category, would be worthwhile.

The next category, Signalling Storytelling, comprises three main sub-categories: Retaining the Floor, Relinquishing the Floor and Cues of Story Co-Construction. All of these sub-categories mark points when an aside alerts the audience to a shift in speaker, storyline or both. Retaining the Floor does not involve a shift in narrative voice and is often signalled by language like, 'I will tell you what I saw' or 'this is what happened'. In turn, the return to the main story line may be signalled with language as overt as, 'I will now resume, having wandered from the main story'.

Relinquishing the Floor involves a new narrative voice 'taking over'. This shift may or may not be overtly flagged. For example, 'and this is what he told me' may be followed by a dozen pages of 'story' being related by a different 'speaker'. However, Relinquishing the Floor also occurs when letters are introduced. This includes letters embedded within letters or letters flagged by a narrator, as occurs in two of the novels, typically with language like, 'she read the following lines'. These two types of storytelling signals facilitate audience comprehension, regardless of whether this is the intended letter recipient or an external reading audience. They promote reasonably cordial, polite relationships, because they may make the audience more comfortable in following the narrative. This, in turn, introduces the complication that audiences may have a 'relationship' with the story itself, that being a different relationship from the one with the writer.

Figure 11.6 illustrates the relationships promoted by Signalling Storytelling, either Relinquishing the Floor or Retaining the Floor.



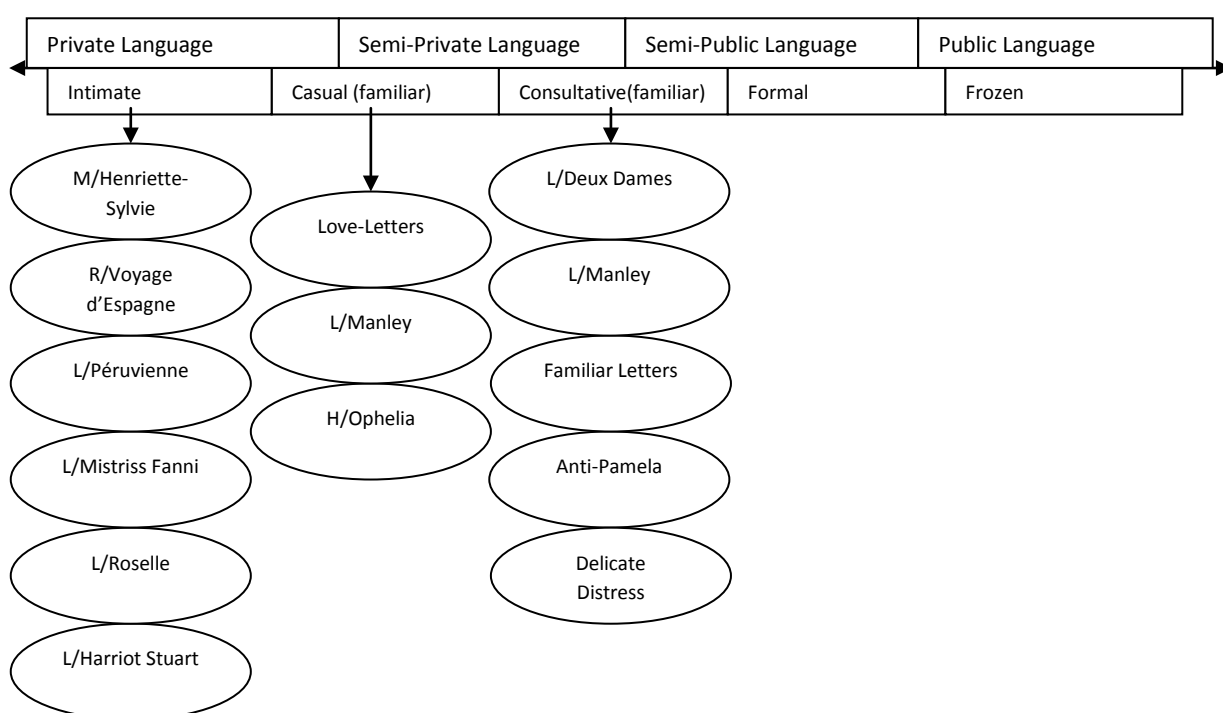
**Figure 11.6 Characterizing Novels by Signalling Storytelling**

The third sub-category of Signalling Storytelling—Cues of Co-Construction—is a particular type of aside that promotes a relationship with the external reading audience outside the letters. Not only does it acknowledge the existence of a reading audience, it also acknowledges that fiction is being conducted. Specifically, this type of storytelling signal acknowledges to the external reading audience that, in fact, that external reading audience is participating in the process of fiction—not simply as a ‘listener’ but also as a ‘creator’ of the story. This occurs in two novels—Love-Letters and Anti-Pamela—where narrators directly address the reading audience. L/Péruvienne, with a narrator in the preface only, works differently: it provides common ground but treats the letter collection as real, acknowledging that the background information is necessary context for the letter collection but leaving the external reading audience to make the rest of the necessary connections without assistance. All three sources, however, create an Equality of Intimacy because the audience is aligned with the storyteller in the act of storytelling.

The final language use category is Invitations to Engage. While five sub-categories emerged, the first four are similar in terms of being quick asides or insertions, often marked by specific and similar language, possibly functioning as discourse markers. These four are Questions, Commands, Assurances and Presuppositions. The fifth category involves Longer Passages that may well blend elements of the first four but which tend to be marked by a purpose, such as doling out advice or criticism.

Invitations to Engage were mainly observed in novels showing only one side of the exchange, primarily because the Dialogue Effect accounts for much of the interaction

depicted between multiple parties. Further, these Invitations tend to encourage or anticipate the sorts of ‘listener interjections’ Joos describes as marking language that caters for interaction between participants. In turn, these Invitations render listeners ‘insiders’, again to paraphrase Joos, simply by treating them as such. Because most of these Invitations relate to responses the listener is having or is likely to have, there is a suggestion of familiarity—personally but also as part of a Community of Practice that adheres to particular shared perspectives and reactions based on those perspectives. Either way, in those novels that use Invitations to Engage to address an audience whose written response is not available, a familiar relationship with that audience is promoted, even if polite restraint is also exhibited. Figure 11.7 seeks to capture the relationships promoted in this way.



**Figure 11.7 Characterizing Novels by Invitations to Engage**

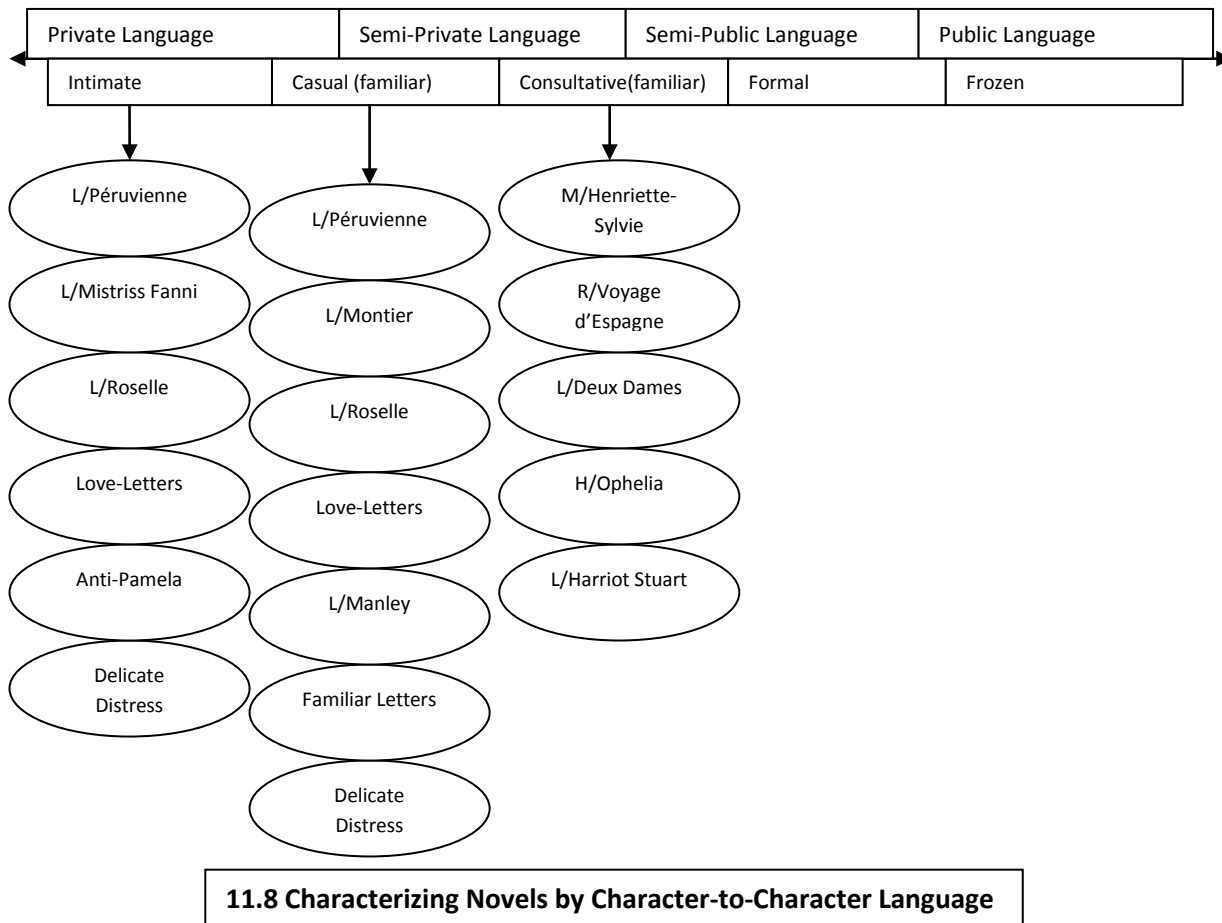
Invitations to Engage as mapped in Figure 11.7 apply to the relationships promoted with the stated letter recipients. By extension, the external reading audience benefits from the ‘welcome’ these Invitations extend, even though ‘adopting the mantle’ is less associated with this language use category than some of the others.

To summarize, overall, conclusions regarding the five categories of international language use can be further ‘wrapped up’ by averaging together all of their results, despite this not being the most desirable approach.<sup>137</sup> As with the individual categories of language use, the combined continuum of private-public and the language use scales is the device for delivering these pictures. They reveal three different summarizing figures, again drawing

<sup>137</sup> This will further addressed in the section dealing with Bakhtin.

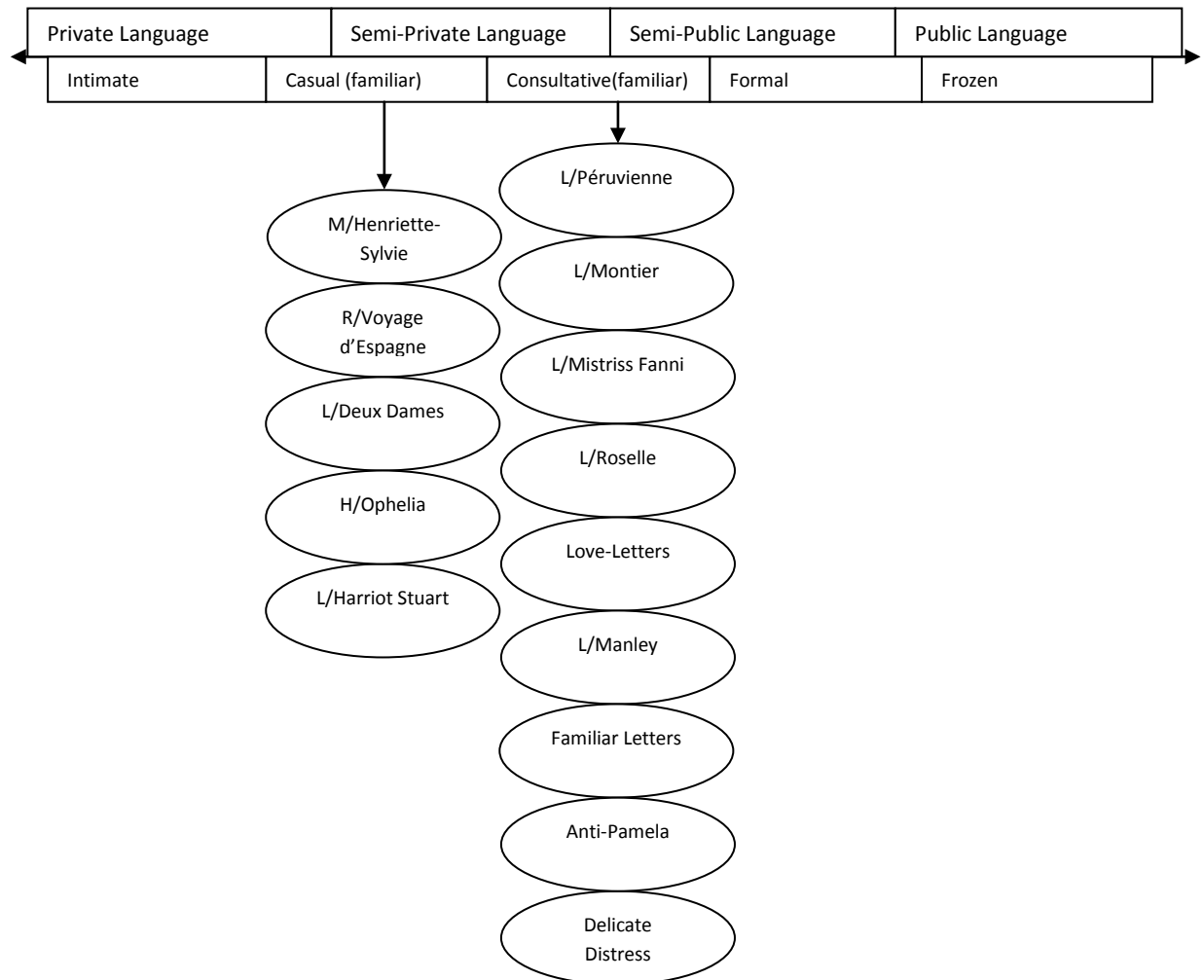
attention to the challenge of attempting ‘big picture’ commentary but illustrating something of a ‘big picture’ nevertheless.

The first, Figure 11.8, reflects character-to-character language use, even when the character’s words do not appear as part of the collection. Additionally, more than one type of relationship is promoted in some of the novels, meaning the novels may appear in more than one column in Figure 11.8.



In contrast, Figure 11.9 represents the relationships offered, overall, to the external reading audience. As has been hinted at with the single categories, there is a shift in some of the novels because different relationships are extended to the external reading audience than are promoted between characters, one of the complications revealed in the course of the study. While Figure 11.9 does not reflect a perfect reversal of the relationships pictured in Figure 11.8, a shift is nevertheless clear. This suggests that what promotes closer familiarity or intimacy between characters does not promote the same degree of familiarity with the external reading audience. Conducting fiction, including the particular element of voyeurism already cited, is likely a factor in this. On the other hand, those novels that do not overstep the familiarity promoted toward the intended recipient, which typically involve

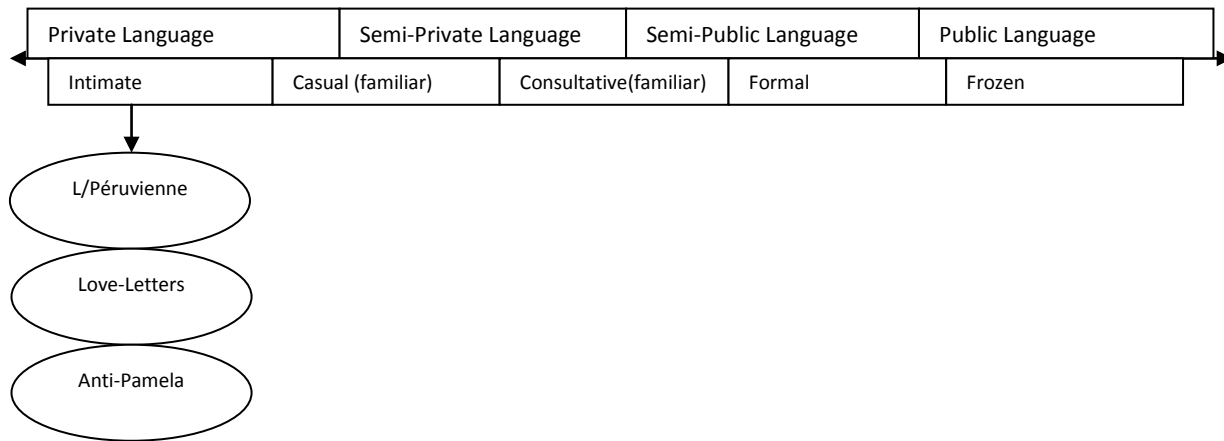
‘adopting the mantle’ opportunities,<sup>138</sup> actually embrace the external reading audience in a closer form of familiarity than might immediately be evident.



**Figure 11.9 Characterizing Novels by Novel-to-External-Reading-Audience Language**

A third set of relationships also emerged, the one created when the external reading audience is overtly included in the creation of fiction. This is a particular type of Intimate relationship, standing outside the storyline and treating the external reading audience as the ultimate equal. This is an Intimacy of Equality.

<sup>138</sup> Because *Deux Dames* is presented as one letterwriter primarily asking for the story and the other letterwriter as telling the story, it is not outrageous to suppose that an external reading audience would ‘adopt the mantle’ with this novel as well, even if that ‘mantle’ belongs to one of the letterwriters.



**Figure 11.10 Novels that Promote Intimacy of Equality with External Reading Audience via Co-Construction of Story**

In short, because *L/Péruvienne*, *Love-Letters* and *Anti-Pamela* include language strands that directly 'bond' with the external reading audience, one of their languages is Intimate. While the entire novel is not written to the external reading audience in this way, one communicative strand is.

Finally, an additional unexpected category emerged, this one emphasizing the relationship with the story. The relationship with the story is promoted primarily by the last three language use categories, and is not the same thing as the relationship with the writer. That is, because some of the interactional language smoothes the path of the story, fostering comprehension and so on, these techniques 'speak to' the audience, regardless of whether this is the intended recipient or the external reading audience. These techniques 'speak to' audiences in a way that tends to audience needs as 'listeners' or readers. Very simply, these techniques make the story easier to read, easier to understand, easier to follow. The storyteller is tending to the process of storytelling, and all audiences benefit. The novels that manage this best are *M/Henriette-Sylvie*, *L/Deux Dames*, *H/Ophelia*. *L/Harriot Stuart*, *Anti-Pamela*, and to a lesser extent, *R/Voyage d'Espagne*. This is an additional path meriting further inquiry.

### 11.2 Language that 'Speaks to' Audiences and Bakhtin's Theories

One problem encountered almost immediately and subsequently juggled throughout the examination of the language in these sources arises from the notion of the *novels* speaking to audiences. This notion is least abstract when the narrator speaks to readers, and somewhat more literal when a letterwriter positions the letter recipient such that the external reading audience can 'adopt the mantle' of letter recipient. However, when letterwriters are depicted as corresponding with one another, or the 'invisible' recipient is not an identity easily assumed by a typical (female) reader, the novel in part or in whole is still 'speaking to' an external reading audience, even if that conversation is much more abstract. Different characters will be 'heard' differently, different relationships will result.



This conundrum was somewhat accommodated in the previous section, when the novels and their language were placed on the continuum of private-public and language use scales. However, it remains a difficulty requiring further unpacking. Bakhtin's views on the novel provide a perspective that at least begins to do so, in that it emphasizes the nature of the languages in the novel as a genre. Bakhtin's views are comprehensive and complex and far beyond the scope of this study, but, in relation to the novel, his views provide another way to 'reach' the language strands offered in the novels under review in this study.

Bakhtin was introduced in Chapter 4, mainly relating to his views of 18<sup>th</sup> Century Europe as the volatile backdrop for developments in the novel as genre. He sees it as a time of 'interillumination', of languages in contact, advocating an exploration of what that contact produces. Bakhtin sees this period (approximately the 18<sup>th</sup> Century) as a time when 'the world' became truly polyglot, when national languages 'coexisting but closed and deaf to each other, comes to an end' and the peaceful 'co-existence of languages within a given national language' ceases (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 12). Rather, there is contact and there is change, which:

...set into motion a process of active, mutual cause-and-effect and interillumination. Words and language began to have a different feel to them; objectively they ceased to be what they had once been. Under these conditions of external and internal interillumination, each given language is, as it were, reborn, becoming qualitatively a different thing (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 12).

In addition, per Bakhtin, the changes in the novel make particular sense against this cultural backdrop.<sup>139</sup> He states that the 'novel as a whole is a phenomenon multiform in style and variform in speech and voice' (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 261), a view that fits particularly well with the approach taken here.

He is highly critical of approaches that 'artificially' collapse the novel into a kind of singularity of forms or voices, inappropriately insisting on finding 'unity in diversity' (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 274). He states there is a history of 'orientation toward unity' that 'ignore[s] all the verbal genres that were the carriers of the decentralizing tendencies in the life of language' which has led to a focus on the 'most stable, least changeable and most mono-semantic aspects of discourse' (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 274). Approaches thus oriented, in Bakhtin's view, are utterly misaligned with study of the novel. He describes such approaches as being '...remote from those 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' (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 42). He argues against approaches that isolate aspects of novelistic style declaring that they are the 'most characteristic' of a given literary work (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 265). The approach here, arising from interactional sociolinguistics and sociohistorical linguistics, has tried to avoid both artificially collapsing distinctions and singling out any one aspect as being the 'most characteristic'. For example, the claim has not been made that content-relaying language

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<sup>139</sup> As indicated, these aspects of Bakhtin's theories were introduced in Chapter 4.

does not occur in these novels along with the relationship-promoting language. The effort to better understand relationship-promoting language, in fact, has led to Bakhtin's theories about language and especially the languages of the novel.

Bakhtin speaks of heteroglossia within language, describing something very similar to register as 'owned' by any given individual as well as a range of other dialects (ie., social, regional, professional and so on) within a language that encounter one another, rather than being isolated from one another. He states:

... all languages of heteroglossia, whatever the principle underlying them and making each unique, are specific points of view on the world, forms for conceptualizing the world in words, specific world views, each characterized by its own objects, meanings and values. As such they all may be juxtaposed to one another, mutually supplement one another, contradict one another and be interrelated dialogically. As such they encounter one another and co-exist in the consciousness of real people—first and foremost, in the creative consciousness of people who write novels. As such, these languages live a real life, they struggle and evolve in an environment of social heteroglossia. Therefore they are all able to enter into the unitary plane of the novel (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 291-292).

This is the sort of knowledge understood within Communities of Practice, that unifies Communities of Practice, and which has been discussed throughout this study.<sup>140</sup>

In discussing the value of contact between these language varieties, Bakhtin states that these "languages" of heteroglossia intersect each other in a variety of ways, forming new socially typifying "languages" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 291), further stating that 'crossed' languages relate 'to each other as do rejoinders in a dialogue' (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 76). In fact, this perspective assists understanding of the approach of this study as it has pursued 'evidence' of interactional language offered through the languages of the novels under review. This point helps explain why homogenous 'mapping' of the novels' languages is less than straightforward.

Bakhtin also sees stratified languages in contact as a crucial component of the novel. Bakhtin repeatedly discusses the novel as a multi-linguaged genre, as a polyglot genre. He speaks of heteroglossia also existing within the novel, especially in the sense of stratification within languages. He states:

The novel can be defined as a diversity of speech types (sometimes even diversity of languages) and a diversity of individual voices, artistically organized. The internal stratification of any single national language into social dialects, characteristic group behaviour, professional jargons, generic language, languages of generations and age groups, tendentious languages, languages of the authorities, of various circles and of

<sup>140</sup> In fact, Bakhtin's characterization of language's aspects also corresponds to the components in the Matrix of Communicative Context developed for this study and introduced in Chapter 2.

passing fashions, languages that serve the specific socio-political purposes of the day, even of the hour—this internal stratification present in every language at any given moment of its historical existence is the indispensable prerequisite for the novel as a genre (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 262-263).

Furthermore, Bakhtin takes the specific communicative situation of the novel as a genre and defines it by these components. He packages them as ‘compositional-stylistic unities’, categorizing them as follows:

1. Direct authorial literary-artistic narration...
  2. Stylization of the various forms of oral everyday narration...
  3. Stylization of the various forms of semi-literary (written) everyday narration (the letter, the diary, etc...)
  4. Various forms of literary but extra-artistic authorial speech (moral, philosophical, or scientific statements...)
  5. The stylistically individualized speech of characters
- (Adapted from Bakhtin, 1981, p. 262)

That the novels in this case are epistolary complicates the application of these compositional-stylistic descriptions. That is, the separation of author/narrator/narrating character is by nature a difficult thing to manage, although Bakhtin offers some theory in that regard. In these novels, the letterwriting narrator/character adds another layer to tease apart. Under closer examination, it might be possible to argue that the letterwriters in these novels are simultaneously providing language from ‘unity’ numbers 1, 2 and 3. These letterwriters alternate styles to such an extent that it becomes difficult to know which role is most purely being fulfilled at a given moment<sup>141</sup>.

Leaving aside number 1 (because identifying the author’s voice is another issue), every novel exhibits the ‘sub-narration’ variety of number 2 because letterwriting involves a great deal of ‘everyday narration’ in a style approximating speech<sup>142</sup>. Certainly, number 3 is represented because the epistolary genre, by nature, involves everyday narration as depicted in letters or diaries. Further, a good number of these novels also involve embedded letters that do the same, although in a different character voice from the main letterwriting voice.

Number 4 is especially noticeable in those novels where it occurs. This ‘unity’ is most obvious in *Anti-Pamela*, when the narrator veers off into philosophizing about drinking and other vices, clearly stepping outside the main narrative. To a lesser extent, the narrators in *Love-Letters* and *L/Péruvienne* do this, although both of these strive for more objective,

<sup>141</sup> There is, however, no particular reason to believe Bakhtin would advocate one single separate function for any of these ‘unities’. That would seem to be in conflict with the idea of dialogic interplay, which he does advocate.

<sup>142</sup> Further, this study does not examine the further embedded storytelling or dialogue that occurs within that storytelling, but that would seem to be another location for this type of language.

'reporting' language. Zilia, also from *L/Péruvienne*, slips into moralizing at times when she describes her impressions of French culture; she does this as an outsider, in a stylized attempt at objectivity. The sisters in *Delicate Distress* as well as the letterwriters in *Familiar Letters* also debate popular theories in 'official' voices that are different from their other interactional ways of using language. The mother in *L/Montier* moralizes a great deal, using 'religious' language as she quotes scripture and monks she has visited, while the Marquis in *L/Roselle* philosophizes in the one enlightened letter he writes to Valville. Madame de Narton (also in *L/Roselle*), in writing to the Comtesse, also uses a moralizing voice, an advisory voice, but that is nearly her primary voice, rather than something she falls into—at least, when she writes to the Comtesse. Finally, the Comtesse of *R/Voyage d'Espagne* uses an 'official' voice for many of the 'facts' she reports, although a more official tone would still be possible.

Number 5 can also be identified as affiliated with every letterwriter. Every letterwriter can be viewed as delivering language in his/her own 'individualized character' style. The voices of the letterwriters characterize them to a very large extent. This is, in fact, one of the signs of 'conducting fiction' that has been discussed previously. Further, for the most part, these voices are of those of higher social rank. That is, when Bakhtin refers to the inclusion of common language in comprising these voices, 'common language' being 'the average norm of spoken and written language for a given social group' (1981, p. 301), in these novels, that common language usually belongs to the higher social ranks. A few exceptions exist, most obviously Léonor and Juliette from *L/Roselle*. Between them, they reveal their true characters as much from their language as their subject matter; but Léonor shines an even brighter light on herself when she affects 'better' language as part of her ruse to capture the Marquis. Interestingly, in *Anti-Pamela*, the other novel that clearly includes women of lower social rank, the main distinction in their voices—that is, in the private communication between mother and daughter and the language they use in pursuing their various schemes—also involves the affectation of politeness.

Other novels also illustrate the number 5 'unity' but it depends less on the audience or their purposes. As mentioned, Zilia in *L/Péruvienne*, is an outsider to French society even as she assimilates to the extent possible or desirable. However, she is portrayed as 'naturally noble', which enables her to use French in a 'naturally noble' way, even though she writes of her despair at learning to understand French and at her slow progress in learning to write it. Mistriss Fanni offers at least three shades to her character voice: the in-love but reasonably in-control voice, the wildly-in-love and not-in-control voice, and the falling-out-of-love and learning-to-live-with-it voice. In fact, these varying facets of voice belonging to one individual character constitute, in Bakhtin's view, different languages, languages that all belong to the novel and define the individual work. These are initial examples of the dialogic interplay that Bakhtin sees as crucial to the novel as a genre, and in fact to language, in general.

He further identifies stratification within what he calls literary language, including authorial speech, speech of narrators and characters, but again emphasizes that it is not

simply the presence of this range of ways to use language but also of their interaction—their interillumination, their dialogic state—that characterizes the novel. He also describes the author as being part of that dialogic interplay.

When heteroglossia enters the novel it becomes subject to an artistic reworking. The social and historical voices populating language, all its words and all its forms, which provide language with its particular concrete conceptualizations, are organized in the novel into a structured stylistic system that expresses the differentiated socio-ideological position of the author amid the heteroglossia of his epoch (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 300).

Thus, theoretically, 'unity' number 1 could be further explored for each or any of the voices/languages in the novels. Detailed analyses of this sort might not only allow access to the authors' voices but also might highlight valuable facets and understandings of those authors' voices. Bakhtin states that:

Heteroglossia, once incorporated into the novel, is *another's speech in another's language*, serving to express authorial intentions but in a refracted way. Such speech constitutes a special type of *double-voiced discourse*. It serves two speakers at the same time and expresses simultaneously two different intentions: the direct intention of the character who is speaking, and the refracted intention of the author. In such discourse there are two voices, two meanings and two expressions. And all the while these two voices are dialogically interrelated, they—as it were—know about each other...it is as if they actually hold a conversation with each other (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 324).

To analyse each of the voices and the languages in these works to find the author's voice and language would be a separate endeavour.

These perspectives lead to Bakhtin's point about languages being dialogic, including those languages of the novel. He states that the 'dialogic orientation of discourse is a phenomenon that is, of course, a property of *any* discourse' (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 279). Language use is not a one-sided venture, a position that goes to the foundation of this study. Bakhtin explains that, in a dialogic situation,

...primacy belongs to the response, as the activating principle: it creates the ground for understanding, it prepares the ground for an active and engaged understanding. Understanding comes to fruition only in the response. Understanding and response are dialectically merged and mutually condition each other; one is impossible without the other (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 282).

That is, the remaining component arising from the dialogic nature of languages within the novel is the matter of the 'listener'. In this study, the 'listener' has been the audience, whether that is the intended recipient or the external reading audience. Both sorts of listener have influenced what was written on that page. Similar to points previously made in this study about interactional language, Bakhtin states:

The listener and his response are regularly taken into account when it comes to everyday dialogue and rhetoric, but every other sort of discourse as well is oriented toward an understanding that is 'responsive' (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 280).

Ultimately, this means that the various 'unities' already mentioned also contain dialogic strands, in that each of the 'unities' would speak differently to different 'listeners' if a 'responsive' statement is made in the first place. Responses would differ.<sup>143</sup> Bakhtin's model not only provides a means for speaking about these various strands, but also for discussing the dialogic interplay between them, the interactional aspect which has generally been associated with 'relationships promoted' throughout this study.

Finally, as was introduced in Chapter 4, Bakhtin's idea of the novel also includes the position that it arises naturally from the time period under review. In his view:

...the novelistic word arose and developed not as the result of a narrowly literary struggle among tendencies, styles, abstract world views—but rather in a complex and centuries-long struggle of cultures and languages. It is connected with the major shifts and crises in the fates of various European languages, and of the speech life of peoples (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 83).

The site of those struggles would necessarily involve the private and public spheres, and would have involved the very encounter of the 'myth of a language that presumes to be the only language, and the myth of a language that presumes to be completely unified' (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 68), in realms that were shifting. As discussed, these 'myths' were active issues in the language context of the period, and their discussion permeated the private and public spheres. The range of language—and language users—could not be artificially contained within 'appropriate' spheres. They appeared together in life, just as they do in the novels.

### 11.3 Private and Public Space, Language, Women and their Novels

Bakhtin's goal of highlighting, of interilluminating, the effects of language interplay in producing the novel as genre has also been the goal of this study. The approach, here, has attempted to preserve distinctions while striving to reach some degree of generalization. The objective has been to map the terrain, so that relevant aspects can be further investigated. That there are important links to the societal context has also been suggested,

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<sup>143</sup> This particularly plays a role in the last category, *Invitations to Engage*, where responses by the audience are specifically assumed and addressed in turn.

a position that Bakhtin also favours. Some of those connections have been introduced, of course, mainly in Chapters 3 and 4, and revisited in the previous section. This perspective, the connection to societal context, is the reason behind the continuum of private-public and language use scales. However, the matter of private-to-public has significance in other ways as well, in particular with regard to women's language and their novels.

The set of women's novels examined here can be said to confuse the division of private and public, both in terms of language use and societal space. Simply by virtue of being published—or otherwise circulated in the public sphere—these novels should be conveyors of frozen language: the words do not change in their reading, and quoting them without changing the words, is possible. They are 'frozen' in the public space. Therein lies the rub: these novels speak to audiences in non-public ways despite being in the public sphere. They speak publicly 'as if' speaking privately, promoting familiar relationships and depicting intimate ones. They illustrate Bakhtin's contention that languages 'bump into' one another, 'interilluminating' one another in meaningful ways. These novels, their language and their writers were not fitting neatly into private and public categories.

This returns the discussion to Habermas, whose theories were introduced in Chapter 4. Another aspect of his theory, one that sheds light on how the private-public distinctions were 'confused', deals with the rise and role of a commodity-exchange economy, one in which language itself was transformed into a commodity. Habermas was previously mentioned in connection to, among other things, his position regarding the difference between literary and political public spheres. In fact, it is the blending of these two theoretical aspects which applies to this study. Language-as-commodity can be viewed as instrumental in transforming the literary public sphere, changing where women could say what to whom, because the rules for exchanging language shifted when linked to a monetary value. If language was for sale, it needed to be 'good' language according to the codification efforts underway at the time, as this would render it fit for the public sphere in which it was now a commodity.

As stated, Habermas emphasizes the development of news as a commodity. He acknowledges that trade itself had existed long before the Enlightenment time period. However, Habermas states that new long-distance commercial relationships arose, resulting in a different trafficking in both commodities and news (1962, p. 15), shifts that were decidedly linked. He states:

With the expansion of trade, merchants' market-oriented calculations required more frequent and more exact information about distant events...The merchants organized the first mail routes, the so-called ordinary mail, departing on assigned days...Almost simultaneously with the origin of stock markets, postal services and the press institutionalized regular contacts and regular communication (Habermas, 1962, p. 16).

This, in fact, effectively illustrates Gumperz' theory of 'novel communication situations', as these are shifts in traffic pattern as well as means of communication. Parties who may not have previously had contact, began to have contact. They began to communicate, and necessarily differently than had occurred before. This, in fact, corresponds to Bakhtin's descriptions of what happened to language as well: it was a period of language change because of new language contact.

When Habermas says 'the news itself became a commodity' (1962, p. 21), it means words themselves came to have monetary value. Language itself came to have monetary value. In turn, works of literature became associated with money as well in a different way, one specifically connected to this era of print culture. That is, with advances in printing and shifts in the economy, publishing literature as an industry became connected to creating literature as art form. Book production 'soared' during the period, although not necessarily resulting in monetary benefits to the authors (Darnton, 1982, p. 16). Publishers began to take the place of patrons in 'commissioning' works, and in organizing their commercial distribution as well (Habermas, 1962, p. 38). Literature-as-commodity for commercial trade certainly introduces monetary value into this picture, attaching a price to language, particularly to the *exchange* of language.

This backdrop muddled the waters considerably as far as language's value and appropriateness *vis-à-vis* the physical location of its exchange. As a physical site, the coffeehouse is clearly more related to the exchange of money than the *salon*. That is, while 'semi-private' could be associated with the salons, and 'semi-public' might be associated with the coffeehouse-*café*, societal shifts in the period meant that even these do not provide a full description of the potential connections. For example, with literature evolving into a commodity just as news was, literature was no longer automatically removed from the 'grubbiness' of monetary exchange, a shift that the salon could not easily absorb into its literary public sphere. While the coffeehouse was undoubtedly already questionable as a place for women to participate in the exchange of language, the salon was increasingly tied to issues not deemed appropriate for women (ie., monetary and/or political). Because actual delineations between the private and public societal spaces are necessarily blurred, and certainly were in this era, 'rightful' places become obscured and difficult to identify. In fact, this would have been particularly difficult to reconcile in an era striving for codification, where achieving 'unity from disunity' was so very much a goal.

An example of this comes from the French *café*, which has not been discussed up to this point. The 'elite' *cafés* of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century were men-only establishments, and although Louis XIV suspected their political influence (Haine, 1996, p. 7), they are not discussed as having 'real' social and political influence until the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. During the latter part of the period, the French *cafés* were viewed as 'the antithesis of the salon' (Darnton, 1982, p. 23), catering to the lower echelons of society. As the Revolution neared, *cafés* became increasingly associated with the working class. However, they were 'open to everyone' (Darnton, 1982, p. 23), and represented a particularly curious institution in terms of private or public societal spaces.



The ambiguous cultural place of the French *café* largely arises from the *café's* status being 'at once private property and a public place; a commercial establishment and a community center' (Haine, 1996, p. 14), a summation that sheds considerable light on the conflict between public and private spheres. Without taking a strong form of Habermas' theory as to what constitutes private and public, it bears repeating that the coffeehouse-*café* tended to be semi-public, and that the exchange of money within its walls tips it further toward the public side. Specifically, active commercial exchange was affiliated with conversation, both playing visible and vital roles, confusing the sense of private, even if the physical location was private property and quite possibly connected to the domestic space of the proprietors. Ultimately, this blended physical space where the exchange of money was an integral part of the goings-on contributes to the perception of coffee-woman as prostitute. In these environments, something was being sold and a woman was involved.

The salons, in both countries, on the other hand, were situated in a semi-private location, partly because:

...the nobility was by definition a social class whose private actions had public consequences for the whole nation. Their living quarters were less a private retreat than a semi-public household whose codes of behaviour, dress, personal comportment, forms of pleasure, and social attitudes were mimed by other social groups (Landes, 1988, p. 19-20).

Similar to the coffeehouse-*café* situation, the physical locations of the salons would have been private property, probably part of the domestic space of the hostess. Women were the organizers, responsible for opening this space to the attendees. These women were respected, if reluctantly, and despite often being mocked and downplayed. Importantly, a monetary 'cover charge' was not a feature of salon culture. Equally, exchanging money for goods in a purchasing sort of transaction was not a feature of salon culture.<sup>144</sup> In this sense, and in contrast to the coffeehouse-*café*, the salon leans toward the private side.

Nevertheless, 'semi' is appropriately attached to 'private', as literature became more commercially dispersed, more directly linked to the purchasing act. It became more challenging to recognize 'art for art's sake', in a period when it was increasingly important to draw such distinctions. Therefore, although money was not exchanged within the salon, the literary realm became less of a private sphere, more of a public sphere, and thus, a more confusing and ambiguous place for women to use language. 'Paying for the right to speak', a distinction of the coffeehouse-*café*, would correspond to 'selling one's words' in both salon culture and in the literary public sphere, conduct simply not considered appropriate for women.

Manoeuvring through appropriate language use would have been ambiguous as well, by no means an easy feat. Using private language—that is, intimate and familiar language—

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<sup>144</sup> I acknowledge gambling and games of chance as part of salon culture; I would not offer them as evidence of a commodity-exchange economy.

in a public environment could have been received differently than delivering a more public-style rhetoric that would have been perceived as matching the public environment, even without the questions of monetary value and the grey area of 'semi' zones reflected in the continuum of private-public and the language use scales. These women faced all of the various conflicts of language use in these circumstances, not only those that would be typical decisions for any 'unmarked' exchange but also those fraught with the tensions of this time period. Women—or, at least, this group of women writers—expressed themselves in a way that allowed them to maintain control over their words, insofar as this was possible when words could be sold.

One technique this group of women chose was to write, specifically choosing the epistolary form. They wrote, publicly, for a wider public (i.e., paying) audience, 'as if' writing privately between private individuals. This aspect of the 'bigger picture' sits within Style of Language Use, as shown on the Matrix of Communicative Context. Further, the use of a private style language is most evident in those books that comprise collections of letters, but it exists as well in those novels where a non-letterwriting narrator directly addresses an audience in a certain sort of one-person to one-person communication. That is, where interactional language is concerned, even these passages are written as if they are private communications, to someone, in particular.

In an environment where codifying 'proper' language for literary purposes as well as the codifying of genres would have been matters of public discussion, 'private' language written on the pages of a novel would have resisted such codification. Private language, as published writing in a public domain, would have been open to judgment and criticism. Women writing in fictional epistolary forms nevertheless made their words public without adopting a clearly public genre or clearly public language.

Women—especially women writers—were facing the 'damned if they do, damned if they don't' scenario one would face when expectations are wilfully breached. In a social environment that increasingly focused on codification, on creating 'unity from disunity', and demanding adherence to these supposed 'norms', women writers were in violation if they 'spoke out' publicly, even when this language included a good deal of the private language that should have been acceptable for their use. That is, they were not 'forbidden' from using intimate and familiar language; in fact, they were celebrated for it in the salon world. However, using it 'officially', in a clearly public forum was something else again, something even worse than just speaking out. These women writers were, in fact, rather daring and resourceful in 'using what they knew' in terms of language style, while nevertheless pushing the boundaries of social space by making that language utterly public.

Habermas does acknowledge that private and public spheres were not magically and distinctly separated overnight. He further acknowledges that each needed the other in order to define itself, even if grey area tended to emerge. He acknowledges also that these shifts had an impact on literature. He states:

The spheres of the public arose in the broader strata of the bourgeoisie as an expansion and at the same time completion of the intimate sphere of the conjugal family. Living room and salon were under the same roof; and just as the privacy of the one was oriented toward the public nature of the other and as the subjectivity of the privatized individual was related from the very start to publicity, so both were conjoined in literature that become 'fiction' (Habermas, 1962, p. 50).

Habermas is describing something very similar to the interillumination Bakhtin advocates. He also acknowledges the shift in literature type, signs of which were seen in the language samples of this study. Further, although not speaking of individual language strands that communicate with an audience, Habermas is in effect acknowledging that the relationships between literature and the reading audience was also shifting, saying that the 'relations between author, work and public changed. They became intimate mutual relationships between privatized individuals...' (Habermas, 1962, p. 50). This new development, in fact, helps explain why women writers were able to choose the epistolary genre and languages appropriate to it, all the while presenting them in the public forum of the external reading audience. Certainly, the extent of Intimate and Familiar language in these novels fosters a sense of 'intimate mutual relationships'.

In a final illustration of 'dialogic interillumination', to combine two of Bakhtin's terms, is the role of consumption—consumerism, in a sense—in this commodity-oriented public space that increasingly included the novel and language. The range of strands discussed in this study come together in particularly interdependent ways, with consumption in that commodity-oriented public space representing an essential strand that helps unite the big-picture. The following, rather lengthy, observation brings together many of the strands developed in this study, including their interdependency.

Yet another and ultimately more interesting and important part of the private sphere was the realm of personal life and affection, into which an eager voyeuristic reading 'public' was fictitiously transported by the growing number of novels. Epistolary novels and those based on concocted diaries purported to reveal some of [sic] most sacredly protected of all 'private' realms, the secret letters that passed between friends and relatives and personal diaries and memoirs. These novels must have been wonderfully exciting to their eighteenth-century readers, for part of their entertainment was the taboos they broke. Not only did they cross the bounds into the normally hidden world of personal privacy, they usually hinted at sexual promiscuity, often centered on women, and frequently dealt with the profligacy if not outright debauchery of members of the upper class.

So conceived, the novel was one of the leading forces of the growth of 'consumption' in the eighteenth century, a process in which it played an ambiguous and ironic—if not contradictory—role. Apart from itself as a consumable item—storytelling, of course, had a long history—this form of the novel turned the private into a

commodity which has the effect of rendering it 'public' by making it available for consumption. In the process—as is always the case with successful consumables—the market (or audience) was encouraged to increase itself by the availability of desirable reading material in the form of the boundary-crossing novel. Thus, at the same time that the production of novels was helping to intensify a notion of a private realm that had to be sustained in order for novels to continue to flourish as marketable and eventually consumed commodities, it was 'transgressing' the boundary on which its existence depended (Schochet, 1996, p. 251).

In effect, the point of this study has been to observe these various societal strands, to follow them and unite them, first, by examining the strands offered by the languages in the novels under review. The very points made here—the extent of boundary-crossing, the adaptation of storytelling to a written form, the increasing role of the novel (and language) as commodity, an audience for purportedly 'private' collections of letters, the general confusion of private and public—have been reviewed from the perspective of the languages, in a bottom-up rather than top-down approach. Looking 'upwards', from the position of the language strands, it is possible to see where they tie in together and how they inform one another. In fact, the Matrix of Communicative Context is really only one section of the larger matrix it would take to capture, visually, the other strands involved. The languages comprise the novels, and the novels and their writers take a particular place in the societal spaces that allow their creation. Women's use of Intimate and Familiar language in their novels looks very much like the key that activated the other strands in the matrix.

#### 11.4 Additional Terrain to Map

One big-picture goal of this study was to 'map the terrain', as Romaine describes it, of a certain type of language use in a particular time period as used by a particular group of people. That time period—1670-1770—is variously described as part of the Enlightenment period, the Early Modern period and the 'long' 18<sup>th</sup> Century. During this volatile and revolutionary time, woman's place was supposedly specific and well-defined as well as much debated and changing. Language's experience was similar, including who could say what to whom—when, where and how. The 'map' in this case has attempted to mark some ways in which certain kinds of language were used—by women's novels—to 'speak to' audiences. While that intention seemed clear enough, certain difficulties were encountered and new questions, resulting in additional paths of inquiry, arose.

While extending investigation beyond the time period beckons, this is not the most obvious path to follow. In fact, this time period is excellent for pursuing at least two other paths, two paths which are not necessarily mutually exclusive. The first relates to Bakhtin's model of the multi-voiced novel, as has been described. This path would highlight the development and state of the novel during the period, as well as expanding understanding of the relationships promoted in fiction. The other focuses more on extending understanding

of language use, with a particular emphasis on gender concerns as well as the comparison between fictional depictions of correspondence and ‘real’ correspondence.

Specifically, an additional path more completely brings together the range of sociohistorical linguistic factors that have coursed through this study: language and gender, interactional sociolinguistic customs in the period, the contrast of the private and public spheres. This study, of course, drew upon the language in epistolary novels by women, a choice made largely so that findings could be considered according to potential distinctions in gender use. In fact, Tannen’s pioneering work on relationship-promoting language—rapport talk—was useful for this study not only because it provided a means for discussing such distinctions in language use but also because Tannen holds that women ‘are more likely’ to tend to the rapport (ie., relationship-promoting) aspects of language than are men.<sup>145</sup> In this context, women’s novels represented one logical place to begin testing the theory.

At the same time, Tannen’s work often attracts debates of the ‘nature-nurture’ variety in terms of whether these distinctions fall along gender lines due to ‘natural inclinations’ or more as a result of social conditioning. While those debates are interesting, they are not the point in this study. During the time period in question, there is little doubt that women were indeed socialized toward particular manners of language use and that the relationship-promoting aspects of those language manners were particularly emphasized. As has been discussed, woman’s responsibility in *politesse* specifically involved ‘allowing others to shine’ and orchestrating conversation so that this occurred. For a woman to deliver content-bearing aspects of conversation was secondary in this environment. Equally, woman’s ‘natural inclination’ toward these aspects of communication was largely assumed, which, in turn, positioned women in both France and England as the ideal means for socializing men—or at least, for socializing men’s language.<sup>146</sup> Therefore, whether ‘nature or nurture’ is more influential as far as developing prowess in relationship-promoting or content-bearing language is not the issue. Instead, Tannen’s work provides a means for discussing these distinctions in language use as well as a theory regarding potential gender-based distinctions in language use.

The first goal of this study was to determine whether relationship-promoting language shapes interaction in these novels. This goal has been reasonably successful in that five general categories for such language have been identified, regardless of the variations in use across the novels. However, this determination was always only ‘Part A’ of the research agenda. Against this backdrop, another reasonable stage in the research path is to consider men’s epistolary novels from the period, looking to gain evidence that would characterize their interactional language. Would men’s novels reveal similar methods? Would different methods be found that ‘speak to’ the audiences? Would it be difficult to find examples of interactional language? These answers would be intriguing, especially given that men of the

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<sup>145</sup> Tannen has been previously cited, but has also conducted significant and ongoing research in this area.

<sup>146</sup> This, of course, was discussed in some detail in earlier chapters.

period were largely viewed as being 'socialized' in language arts by women—a 'fact' variously interpreted as good or bad. These results would suggest whether men really absorbed their lessons, whether men's style manifested itself in different specific forms—or whether men simply wrote differently.

Following from this, an additional unmapped path deals with the comparison between fictional depictions of correspondence and actual correspondence. In the case of these women writers, a sizeable stock of actual correspondence has been left, if not analysed for interactional language.<sup>147</sup> Further, another comparative study involving men's actual correspondence would logically follow the evaluation of a set of men's epistolary novels, as mentioned above. A comparison of these bodies of writing would allow for conclusions about differences and similarities between actual interactional language use in the period—thereby, supplying additional understanding of the histories of French and English—and language as used for fictional purposes. This, in turn, would shed light on the development of the novel. However, an additional level of comparison between women's and men's language use would continue to shed light on gender-based similarities and differences.

That is, if Tannen's views were to hold, men writers would be expected to exhibit fewer examples of Intimate and Casual interactional language, while exhibiting examples of Formal and perhaps even Frozen language.<sup>148</sup> If Tannen's theory holds true, Consultative language would be the main way men writers would seek to establish personal relationships via their writing. Or, at least, perhaps it would be the most common category of familiar language use on offer. Interestingly, the two sets of male characters in these novels—in *L/Roselle* and *Delicate Distress*—do not limit themselves to the consultative level. These two sets of characters are written by women, however. Therefore, whether the depiction of use is accurate or not is another question. On the other hand, men's interactional language may well involve as many Intimate or Casual examples—perhaps just not the same sorts of markers as women.<sup>149</sup> Whether men include their most Intimate or Casual styles in novels for public consumption is a question worth asking; in fact, a comparison of women's fictional writing and actual correspondence would shed light on this same question.

A final level of hypothesis extension concerns potential correlations between interactional language use and the continuum of private and public spheres. Women's fictional depictions of correspondence, at least in this study, tend to involve a fair amount of interactional language that would fall at the private end of that continuum, intruding into the public sphere of published novels. Would women's actual correspondence reveal a different distribution? How would men's writing, fictional as well as actual correspondence, rank on that continuum? If men's writing always (or nearly always) includes fewer Intimate

<sup>147</sup> Anni Sairio, for example, has been analysing letters of the *Bluestockings* using social network theory. This type of work is, in a sense, asking similar questions but approaching from the other side.

<sup>148</sup> These, of course, are Joos' terms.

<sup>149</sup> A contemporary study, for example, could very likely include men's 'locker room' talk, which is not necessarily considered as 'women's territory' but which would seem to rate as casual, per Joos' language use scales.

or Casual examples of interactional language and instead includes more Consultative as well as Formal or Frozen language examples, then men's writing would fall toward the public end of that continuum. Such a distribution might point toward an explanation of why women's writing from the period has largely been overlooked as part of the literary canon, if the language itself was specifically judged as inappropriate for publication. The sort of investigation initiated in this study would determine whether the extent and nature of interactional language was a contributing factor in that judgment. Further, if there are distinctions in interactional language in writing that fall along gender lines in the period, then the argument for different evaluative tools for women's writing gains strength. It would constitute a different way of using language.

Regardless of the specific outcomes further research might reveal, it is also a worthwhile pursuit if it helps develop an additional approach to looking at novels. This would allow further exploration of theories such as those of Bakhtin, but might also shine light on the possibility of women writing from a different societal position than men, during the period. An 'anti-society' interpretation of their writings might allow further deconstruction of the assumption these writings were focused 'merely' on self-subjectivity, as Habermas has called it.

### 11.5 Final Points

In this study, it has been possible to identify language in these novels that 'speaks to' audiences in ways that tend to the relationships between the participants. These ways of 'speaking to' audiences build rapport, at least during the exchange at hand. Certainly, a larger sample size or examination of dialogues—or exploring the other paths already discussed—would provide a more complete 'big picture'. Ultimately, comparisons of gender use on these aspects of language would add to current understanding of the state of language—and of variation and change—during a period itself marked by change in so many ways. That said, of course, these findings are not definitive in all respects. Nevertheless, they point toward a potentially rich source period that, together with a somewhat unusual approach, may provide information on interactional language not previously understood. It may also allow access to support for such theories as those of Bakhtin and Habermas.

In turn, this approach may offer something of a new tool for considering women's writing, especially if women use interactional language differently from men in similar language-use situations, as observed in similar research. Certainly, these novels include enough interactional language to indicate a conversational model in print, one that allows and encourages engagement and participation of the audience. As quoted in Chapter 1:

In the context of seventeenth-century upper-class women's material and social circumstances, Madeleine de Scudéry develops a rhetorical theory for new female consumers by modelling discourse on conversation rather than on public speaking. This new rhetoric requires new standards for judging women's speech and writings (Donawerth, 1997, p. 307).

All of these novels exist under the umbrella Donawerth describes. While this study only begins to 'map terrain' that reflects a 'new standard' for examining novels by women, it has also uncovered some intriguing patterns of language use that, in turn, open other avenues worth mapping. These women writers had indeed transferred the interactional language of conversation to the page, a 'page' available in the rapidly shifting public sphere of the era, even if the discourse on those pages was not only comprised of 'public' language. How do they speak to their audiences? As if engaged in personal relationships, as if creating or experiencing fiction together, as if involved in a sort of conversation. As if tending to the interaction is as important as delivering content. In short, using language that positions audiences as insiders is very effective in making audiences feel like insiders, even if they are actually still on the outside, looking in.



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