

**Style, truth and imagination
in the short stories of Peter Carey:
A social-semiotic stylistic approach**

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Abstract

This thesis is an investigation into the style of one of Australia's greatest contemporary literary exports: Peter Carey. Carey is an acclaimed writer of fiction and is best known as an award-winning novelist, but before his first novel was published in the 1970s, he achieved international recognition as a writer of short stories. The stories were received well by critics, but were largely overshadowed by his subsequent novels. Although a considerable amount of critical attention has been paid to his stories over the years, there still remains much to say about their style and meaning: namely the ways in which their imaginative, anti-realist devices articulate fictional truth. Taking as my point of departure the insights and opinions of traditional literary critics, I argue that Carey's short stories, as seen through the lens of social-semiotic stylistics, articulate a special form of truth which provokes the reader to imagine new possibilities. This questioning of reality is shown to be a central preoccupation in his stories by using a variety of linguistic methods to make explicit their verbal texture.

Chapter 3 includes an analysis of clause combination and speech presentation in *Conversations with Unicorns*. Chapter 4 combines corpus methods and grammatical analysis to guide an interpretation of *Do You Love Me?*. Chapter 5 focuses on lexical cohesion and textual coherence in *The Last Days of a Famous Mime*. Chapter 6 looks mostly at the lexical colouring in *American Dreams*, taking as its predominant methodology the application of APPRAISAL categories. Chapter 7 draws heavily on TRANSITIVITY but also moves beyond grammar to investigate the semantics of time and habituality in *She Wakes*.

The analyses show how certain motifs recur in his stories, namely the constructedness of history and identity and the possibility of freedom. The stories deliver an important message about society and social change, suggesting that as individual

readers of fiction, we have the capacity to positively transform our lives through imagination. These broader concerns are viewed through the enabling lens of stylistics, offering deep, evidence-driven insights into the short stories of one of Australia's greatest contemporary authors. To date there has been no attempt to investigate the language of Carey's highly acclaimed prose with the degree of rigour presented in this thesis. The research makes an original contribution to the fields of Australian literary studies and literary linguistics, enabling a deeper appreciation of Carey's short fiction and paving the way for future research at the nexus of social-semiotic stylistics and Australian literature.

Statement of originality

This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university.

To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

Signed:

Date: December 14th 2019

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I must thank my family for their patience over the last five years. Thank you, Haley, Jay, and Rina. I would like to also thank my parents, Martin and Ruth, who, since I was very young, noticed and nurtured my academic proclivities to the best of their ability. I distinctly remember, as a preliterate child, asking to borrow mum's notebook. I proceeded to fill each ruled page with squiggly lines and proudly called the result "my writing". I suppose this thesis is the measure of how far I've come since that day, and stands as testament to my long-standing fascination with the magic of the written word.

SFL conventions for text analysis

Symbol	Meaning	Example
	clause complex/sentence boundary	The unicorns do not understand
	clause boundary	We have had long conversations but it is difficult for them
<< >>	interrupting clause	The string <<he explained>> is a prayer that I am always praying
[[]]	rank-shifted (embedded) clause	The string, he explained, is a prayer [[that I am always praying]] But it is not [[where we would rather be]] He finds it difficult [[to do his clownish antics]]...
^CAPS	ellipsis	She wakes but ^SHE doesn't try to touch him
x	expansion: enhancement	She doesn't try to touch him x although it is very cramped in this narrow bed
=	expansion: elaboration	This he will watch = still grinning
+	expansion: extension	When he wakes he will grin + and say hello
“	projection: locution	“Do you love me? she asks
‘	projection: idea	I wish ‘you could see the looks on your bloody silly faces
1, 2 etc.	parataxis	1 We have had long conversations 2 but it is difficult for them 1 Do you love me? 2 she asks
α , β etc.	α : dominant clause	She doesn't try to touch him although it is very cramped in this narrow bed This he will watch still grinning
	β : subordinate clause	She doesn't try to touch him although it is very cramped in this narrow bed This he will watch still grinning

Typographical conventions

Words as linguistic examples are indicated by *italics*.

Terminology is introduced with single inverted commas ‘ ’.

Quotes are indicated by double inverted commas “ ”.

SFL function labels begin with a capital letter (e.g. Actor, Subject, Theme).

SFL systems and Appraisal categories are indicated in SMALL CAPS.

1. Introduction

His imagination is soaring, his style beautifully disciplined, his eye for the truth unblinking. (Dutton 1979: 66)

Peter Carey is one of Australia's most important contemporary writers. In 2015, Carey's fictional back catalogue, including his collection of short stories, was reprinted by Penguin Books. The decision seems to suggest that Carey's fictional works – some that were written around four decades ago – still have wide appeal or relevance to contemporary readership. Carey's sustained popularity is also reflected in his critical reception. Bode's quantitative investigation into the most frequently mentioned authors in the Austlit database shows that Carey was among the top five authors in the 1990s and in the 2000s (Bode 2012: 160). Since Carey has not published any new short stories since 1979, it may be reasonable to assume that a sizeable proportion, if not the majority of the body of scholarly work about Carey relates to his novels, some of which have won prestigious literary awards. But these novelistic achievements should not be allowed to overshadow his short stories, which are amazing accomplishments in their own right: a view also held by Pons (2001: 407). In this thesis, I argue that Carey's short stories deserve to be revisited because the truths that they tell, in their unique styles and imaginative fictional worlds, are just as relevant today as they were in the 1970s.

The two volumes of short stories that kick-started Carey's literary career were *The Fat Man in History* (1974) and *War Crimes* (1979). Both volumes, minus a couple of stories, were republished in *Collected Stories* (1994). Proudly displayed on the dustjacket of the 1994 edition of Carey's *Collected Stories* is perhaps one of the greatest evaluations of Carey's stories that has ever been published. The quote, which comes from a 1979 review of Carey's stories in *The Bulletin*, reads: "His imagination is soaring [...], his style beautifully disciplined, his eye for the truth unblinking" (Dutton 1979: 66). This

statement, from esteemed Australian literature critic Geoffrey Dutton is accurate and succinct, gracefully identifying three important elements that make Carey's stories great. But however self-evident the quote may appear to anyone who has read Carey, it lacks empirical evidence. What is style? On what grounds can Carey's style be described as "beautifully disciplined"? And how can Carey's imaginative, often bizarre fictions, be said to convey "the truth"? Why do Carey's imaginative stories still appeal to contemporary readership? Can their literary value be made explicit? These are some of the questions that the present study aims to investigate.

1.1. Style

Dutton described Carey's writing style as "beautifully disciplined". What did he mean by this remark? Perhaps he was describing the unsettlingly calm way in which Carey's words convey the strange and the imaginative, in the same way that *The Oxford Companion to Australian Literature* refers to Carey's "controlled treatment of suggestive, seemingly bizarre detail" (Wilde, Hooton and Andrews 1985: 145). The description appears to be consistent with what other critics have said about the style of Carey's stories. Lamb (1992: 17-18) asserts that "Carey's flat, statement-like prose controls his chaotic and surreal fantasies with a measured calm and menace", while Gilbey (1977: 467) claims that "Beneath the matter-of-fact tonal surface of Peter Carey's prose [...] is a control sometimes deadly (if not horribly) serious and at other times crazily fantastical". Other critics note a kind of minimalism in Carey's style, with Legasse (1980: 123) claiming that "There is a horrifying razor-sharpness to this laconic style" and Clunies Ross (1981: 169) describing it as a "spare, exact style". Regardless of whether the focus is on the matter-of-fact tone or the precision and economy of words, the single common factor uniting

these descriptions of Carey's style is the fact that none of them is based on textual evidence.

Most critics would agree that Carey's stories have an unusual style. But a reasonable question to ask at this point is: what is "style", exactly? According to *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, style "has traditionally been defined as the manner of linguistic expression in prose or verse – as *how* speakers or writers say whatever it is that they say" (Abrams 1999: 303). Similarly, the authors of *Style in Fiction* state that style is "the way in which language is used in a given context" (Leech and Short 2007: 9). But as Nørgaard, Busse and Montoro (2010) point out in *Key Terms in Stylistics*, style is not simply the identification of a particular author, but rather the description of the unique verbal texture of a text. Moreover, given that style is the characteristic linguistic feature of a text, the description of a text's style may draw on techniques that examine "norm and deviation, stability and change, the conventional and the innovative or foreground and background" (Nørgaard, Busse and Montoro 2010: 156). The style of a particular text or author, then, is determined by the language that is used to craft the verbal artefact. Yet surprisingly, descriptions of Carey's style as quoted above make only general reference, if any at all, to the language that forms his works.

It would also be reasonable to question whether style is even necessary to acknowledge in the evaluation of a fictional text. That is to say, if it is generally accepted by literary critics that Carey's short stories display a discernible calmness that betrays the bizarre detail of his imagination, what more needs to be said? But underlying this view is the assumption that literary critics have an inherent authority to evaluate a style without reference to an enabling framework. If style is valued in the evaluation of literature, then it should be described objectively, and if style is to be described objectively, a linguistic approach is essential. As Hasan (1985a: 104) argues, "Without linguistics, the study of

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literature must remain a series of personal preferences, no matter how much the posture of objectivity is adopted: being objective implies knowing the nature of that which one is being objective about”.

In this thesis, linguistics is central not only in the evaluation, but also in the interpretation of literature. Style, or linguistic patterning, is seen as an integral part of a text’s literary meaning, not an empty vessel for it. From this perspective, imagination is not separate from style, and the often assumed dichotomy between form and content must be addressed. As will be argued throughout this thesis, the style of Carey’s stories is not, as some literary critics might suggest, simply a plain statement-like form which contains fantastical content. This is why Michael Wilding, a writer affiliated with Carey in the same anti-realist movement in Australian literature, said “I believed that in order to write about a new world, new formal strategies were required. You could not just repeat the old models, you had to innovate” (Wilding 1999: 44). Like Wilding, Carey was interested in finding new forms to construct new realities, or to convey new perceptions of reality. Judging from Wilding’s comment, it seems that Carey and his colleagues in the 1970s were well aware of the limitations of traditional realism and the potential of innovative style. They were probably conscious of the idea that style is inextricably connected to truth and imagination in literature: the very idea that this thesis sets out to investigate. Since style is a linguistic phenomenon, it is necessary to take a close look at the language of a text before judging its value: a dimension that is missing from the existing critical discussions of Carey’s stories. The linguistic, or stylistic (since in this thesis they are synonymous) examination of style can make visible the literary meaning of the text: the fictional truth that Hasan (1985a) refers to as ‘theme’ (see Chapter 1.2).

1.2. Truth

Carey's eye for the truth is unblinking, according to Dutton. Carey himself has said that when his stories are good, it is because they "reflect the truth of the real world" (Ikin 1977a: 33), and that "The writer has a responsibility to tell the truth" (Willbanks 1992: 51). However, Carey's stories are bizarre and imaginative, often taking place in impossibly fantastical settings or featuring decidedly anti-realist elements. It would seem that there is an unresolvable tension between the claim to truth in Carey's fictional stories and their anti-realist orientation. But this contradiction depends on the questionable assumption that realism is the most appropriate vehicle for conveying reality or truth: an idea that Carey and his Australian contemporaries rejected. A thorough discussion of the status of fictional truth goes well beyond the scope of this thesis: see, for instance, the centuries of philosophical thought beginning with Aristotle's *Poetics* (Aristotle 1902 [c.335 BC]). However, in this thesis, the notion of literary truth as the 'theme' of a text will be assumed. Hasan argues that "In its nature, the theme of verbal art is very close to a generalization, which can be viewed as a hypothesis about some aspect of the life of social man. I believe Aristotle had this aspect of verbal art in mind when he declared that art is truer than history" (Hasan 1985a: 97-98). In Hasan's view, even the most imaginative fiction can convey truth if truth is seen as a philosophical generalization or metaphor rather than literal fact. This is almost certainly what Carey had in mind when he spoke about the truth of his fiction. It also resonates with the motifs that are central to many of Carey's fictional works: the questioning of reality and the celebration of possibility. Hasan goes on to say that:

The nature of theme in literature raises serious doubts about the classification of verbal art as 'fiction' – something to which the concept of truth cannot be applied. The paradox to which Aristotle drew attention is precisely that while at one level, a literature text may be simply fictional – so not true in the literal sense – at another

level, it embodies precisely the kind of ‘truths’ that most communities are deeply concerned with. (Hasan 1985a: 99-100)

Hasan, as a linguist, seems to be making the same claim as Carey, a fiction writer: that fiction can give us a special kind of truth. This special kind of truth requires a special kind of semiosis, which occurs, according to Hasan (1985a: 100), “at another level” of abstraction. In other words, the truth of fiction happens at a semantic level beyond the literal meaning of the language. Hasan claims that only literature can articulate this special kind of truth, through a semiotic process of double abstraction (more will be said about this process in Chapter 1.6.3).

The fictional truth of Carey’s stories is apparently clear to non-linguists such as Dutton, so once again, one may be tempted to question the value of addressing style in literary studies. But since language is central to the articulation of a text’s theme, the stylistic analysis of literary text is essential if one intends to make an evidence-based claim about a text’s value. As Hasan claims, without linguistic analysis “it is meaningless to talk about evaluation, for what we are evaluating in the absence of such careful analysis is more likely to be our inexplicit impressions against our equally accidental preconceptions of what an artist should or should not do” (Hasan 1985a: 106).

Stylistic analysis allows the literary scholar to make more explicit and more replicable interpretations of literary texts than traditional methods that do not scrutinize the language of a work. This is because style, in addition to articulating fictional truth, involves motivated choices from linguistic conventions and contextual parameters (Nørgaard, Busse and Montoro 2010). Examining the linguistic choices that form a text can make visible its ‘semantic design’ (Butt 1988b): the unique linguistic patternings in which the theme of a fictional work is realized. Such patternings remain invisible unless revealed through linguistic analysis, which allows for a more rigorous and replicable

interpretation and evaluation. More details of the chosen linguistic method will be provided in Chapter 2.

1.3. Imagination

There is no doubt that Carey's short stories are imaginative. From the talking unicorns who reject the religious views of their human visitor in *Conversations with Unicorns* (1971) to the miniature replica of a town that reveals hidden secrets about its residents in *American Dreams* (1974), Carey's stories occupy the realm of imagination and possibility. They are often frighteningly bizarre, or at least unsettling. This is because Carey's stories usually take the form of hypothetical what-if situations (Morton-Evans 1984), forcing the reader¹ to consider new possibilities. The construction of new realities is indeed an important preoccupation in Carey's writing (Daniel 1988), and one that was often overlooked by his readers at the time of their release. In an interview, Carey recalled the reaction that *American Dreams*, a story set in a town that is loosely based on Carey's hometown, caused. According to Carey, his mother said that the story had made people in the town angry (Munro 1976), presumably because they had read it as a realistic story that had misrepresented or distorted reality. However, as Carey pointed out in a video documentary, to read the story in such a way was to miss the point. In Carey's words, "I find it really rather boring I think, reporting reality. I'd much rather construct my own [...] I steal bits and pieces of what's around me to build those fictions, I suppose" (Featherstone 1986). Carey's stories may bear a degree of familiarity to the physical

¹ Throughout this thesis "reader" refers to the 'implied reader' as established by Wolfgang Iser. According to the *Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* the 'implied reader' is "the hypothetical figure of the reader to whom a given work is designed to address itself" (Baldick 2001: 123).

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world in some regards, but the project for Carey certainly seems to have been the construction of new realities against a backdrop of traditional realism.

Carey began publishing stories in the late 1960s, about a decade after Patrick White famously denounced the Australian literary tradition as the “dreary, dun-coloured offspring of journalistic realism” (White 1989 [1958]: 16). It was in this context of a growing dissatisfaction with conventional realism that Carey and his contemporaries, a group of bohemian artists known as the “new writers”, subverted the status quo with their experimental fictions. The “new” writers were consciously experimenting with form in order to better express the social reality of the time, but significantly realism was the “moral intention” (Wilding 1999: 44). The fiction of Carey and his colleagues, although presenting as anti-realism, was actually a new form of realism that employed innovative forms and literary techniques. Editor Brian Kiernan, in his anthology of Australian “new” fiction, referred to the agenda of these writers as a self-conscious movement away from mimetic realism (Kiernan 1977). The “new” fiction leaned toward the postmodern (Wilding 1999) and was often experimental in form (Bennett 1976) and radical in content (Lever 1998). The combination of these factors often results in Carey’s stories being bizarre and perplexing. In fact, this strangeness and unconventionality became a trademark of Carey’s stories, with Hassall (1994: 7) describing them as “haunting fables which break taboos and confront the reader bluntly and forcefully with the unpleasant and indeed the repulsive”.

The imaginativeness of Carey’s strange stories and his treatment of reality have led certain critics such as Pons (2001) to label the writer a fabulator: a creator of fables which have no real-world counterpart. Indeed, “fabulator” seems to be a very suitable label for Carey, if fabulation is seen as the Borgesian problematization of the relationship between fiction and reality, as argued in Scholes (1979). Carey does not deny that his

writing was influenced by Borges: in Carey's words, Borges' presence "cannot not be there" (Ross 1990: 44). A good example is *Do You Love Me?* (1975), which explores ideas of representation and reality through the use of maps and cartography. However, to dismissively label Carey's stories as fables is to miss their status as visions of alternate realities, a feature that is significant for some critics. Ikin (1977b: 19) acknowledges Carey's strange fictional worlds as celebrations of possibility, labelling Carey's stories as "speculative fiction". Speculative fiction, according to Ikin, is essentially the same as science fiction except for one significant feature: the absence of rationalization of its fantastic elements. Indeed, some of Carey's short stories including *Conversations with Unicorns* have been anthologized in volumes of science fiction writing, but not all of his speculative stories would fit this description. For instance, Carey's story *She Wakes* (1967) is very ordinary in its setting but is about the possibility for change. It would seem, then, that stories as vastly different as *Conversations with Unicorns* and *She Wakes* are more similar than different because both are concerned with the potential for alternate realities. While *Conversations with Unicorns* takes a very bizarre situation and treats it as if it were normal, *She Wakes* takes a very normal situation and makes it strange and unsettling. In this sense, both stories are speculative. But perhaps neither "speculative fiction" nor "fabulation" is adequate for classifying Carey's short stories, as diverse as they are, and indeed there is no such consensus among literary critics.

A significant volume of criticism, especially from the 1990s, has rightly identified postmodernist and (post)colonial² elements in Carey's stories. The postmodernist and the postcolonial are related in the sense that they both entail a reimagining, or reinvention, of

² Parentheses around "post" indicate the recognition of the argument that Australia is still colonial, which would suggest that the prefix "post-" may not be appropriate. However, henceforth postcolonial will be spelled without parentheses.

the real in Carey's fiction (Kane 1993). But Carey is cautious of these categories because he seems to dislike the idea of being pigeonholed. When Carey was once asked about his work being described as postcolonial and postmodernist in an interview, he replied:

Well, I guess it is, by definition, postcolonial, and it is, by definition, postmodern. Are these the most important things about it? I don't know; I mean if you start to say things are postcolonial then are you creating a little literary ghetto for yourself? Do you want to live in that ghetto? (O'Reilly 2002: 164)

Related to postcolonial and postmodernist literature is the problematization of reality. Carey's preoccupation with reality is present in most of Carey's novels, but it was in his short stories that the idea started to become a recurring motif. In reading Carey's short stories, it is easy to see how they foreshadow the ideas that are developed in his later novels. *American Dreams*, for instance, is clearly about the Americanization of Australia: a theme central to Carey's critically acclaimed *Illywhacker* (1985), while *Conversations with Unicorns* carries on the theme of colonialism and raises other important questions such as the authority of history. The latter is an important foundation for the revision and rewriting of history that is the main premise of award-winning novels such as *True History of the Kelly Gang* (2001). Other stories such as *The Last Days of a Famous Mime* (1979) are about the interplay of art and reality: another motif taken up in novels such as *My Life as a Fake* (2003). One could draw a great number of other connections between the preoccupations in Carey's short fictions and novels. What these few examples show is the problematization of reality – particularly in the artistic reimagining of society, history, and identity – is a principle and recurring motif in Carey's stories, and one that has continued through his literary career.

Imagination is at the centre of Carey's quest for new realities. Imagination is related to the questioning of reality, which is a central concern of postmodernist and postcolonial fiction, and the magic realist fiction of Latin America. The postcolonial

dimension in Carey's short stories (Dunlop 2008, Dunlop 2011, Kušnir 2004) is not given as much attention as in his novels, which are well known for exploring the constructedness of history. Carey uses a variety of techniques to achieve this effect, including unreliable narration (*Illywhacker*) and the reimagining of received realities from alternative perspectives (*True History of the Kelly Gang*). These devices are also present in his stories, but in a more compressed form. One of the aims of this thesis is to examine the way in which Carey questions reality through the "soaring imagination" (Dutton 1979: 66) of his stories. Regardless of their generic classification, it is argued that a tendency toward anti-realism and the bizarre is one of the reasons why the stories have such a powerful effect, and why they still appeal to a contemporary readership, regardless of temporal or geographical distance.

While the postmodernist label is commonly applied to Carey's novels, due to their tendency for historical revision and political subversion, it is not often suggested for his short stories³. Surprisingly, scholars seem reluctant to place Carey's stories in the postmodernist category. If we take metafiction – a genre of fiction concerned with communicating the very nature of fiction – as a form of postmodernism, there are some fleeting references to it in scholarly discussions of Carey's stories. Ommundsen (1993: 43), following postmodern theorist Baudrillard, argues that *American Dreams* "traces the transition from representation to hyperreality". However, she supports the claim only with reference to the plot, without taking into account the verbal texture of the story, which, as will be discussed in Chapter 2.3, is an important component of the verbal artefact. Hassall makes a similarly unsubstantiated remark about *The Last Days of a Famous Mime*, asserting that it moves "metafictionally" between the protagonist's "inner art" and

³ But see for instance Yell (1990) and Ommundsen (1993).

“outer story” (Hassall 1994: 38). Another story for which could be viewed as metafiction is *Do You Love Me?*. Indeed, Gelder and Salzman (1989) read the story as a metaphor for the death of traditional realism in the 1970s in the context of Australian “new” writing. But again, the interpretation derives from a reading of the story’s imaginative plot and does not consider its unique and unusual style. It would seem that due to the general lack of textual evidence for the generic classification of Carey’s stories, as well as the apparent lack of consensus about such classification, a more thorough investigation into Carey’s style is warranted.

In this thesis, several attempts are made to classify Carey’s stories in terms of fictional genre. Some of these classifications are fairly obvious, such as the argument that *Conversations with Unicorns* is a postcolonial allegory. But while this may seem obvious at the level of the plot, an investigation into the style of the story shows that elements central to the motif of colonial contact – such as power relations – are realized in the style of the text. Other less imaginative and more realist stories such as *American Dreams* do not readily lend themselves to generic classification. *American Dreams*, for instance, is best read as modernist fiction, but it is only through rigorous stylistic analysis that its characteristically modernist traits can be laid bare. The same could be said of *She Wakes*, although the argument is not pursued for this particular story because its social context is less relevant to modernism.

Generic classification is important in the discussion of Carey’s short stories, but as has been suggested, classification is not as important as the unique stylistic fingerprint of each text. Indeed, even in the small set of texts studied in this thesis, the stylistic range is broad, demonstrating Carey’s ability to probe and explore reality using a diverse set of grammatical resources. For this reason, generic classification will be discussed throughout the thesis, but these discussions will not be given equal weight for each story.

Rather, when they appear, discussions about generic classification will serve as indicators of the craftsmanship of Carey as a unique writer. As the analyses will show, his demonstration of stylistic variety validates Carey's rejection of being pigeonholed into a single fictional genre.

Despite Carey's stylistic range, there is one common factor in each of the stories studied in this thesis, which is the anti-realist tendency for which the "new" writers were striving. If Carey's tendency is, as Daniel (1988) claims, to consciously craft lies that highlight their own fictionality, surely the purpose of this is to highlight the inadequacies of traditional realism. Perhaps the anti-realism and imaginative qualities of his stories are best interpreted as inspiration for renegotiating reality. It is for this reason, I would argue, that his style, and the truths articulated by it, are still so interesting and provoking for his contemporary consumers.

1.3.1. Imagination, innovation and the short story

Australian literature experienced a short story boom in the early 1970s. The increased production of short stories was evident in magazines, newspapers and anthologies, coupled with readings of short stories at universities and influences from emerging short story writers abroad (Moorhouse 1977: 181). One reason for this boom, according to Lever (1998), was the opportunity for publication afforded by the appearance of new magazines and journals. But more importantly, perhaps, was the form of the short story itself. As Lever explains, writers of the 1970s could experiment with their verbal art, free from the confines of the elaborate structure required of novels. Further, the relatively fragmentary nature of the short story necessarily denied what the "new" writers opposed the most: the imposition of a unifying order on reality (Lever 1998: 315).

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The short story subverted not only the traditions of the novel but also its own conventions. The 1970s boom was part of a reimagining of Australian “nationhood and culture which had evolved around the *Bulletin* in the 1890s” (Clunies Ross 1981: 167): this was particularly relevant for urban writers who were becoming disenchanted with the rural legend that had persisted for many decades (Clunies Ross 1981: 174). In terms of its formal properties the short story, according to Head (1992: x-xi), is quintessentially a modernist form, highlighting “disunifying devices” which resonate with the ideological innovations favoured not only by the Australian “new” writers but also by the high modernists. By describing the short story as “modernist” in essence, Head draws attention to the short story’s potential for revealing its own artifice: what the Russian Formalists referred to as ‘literariness’ (see Chapter 1.6.1). The short story has also been identified as a mode that is particularly suitable for postcolonial literature, due to its ability to synergize with the hybrid status of the genre and the practicality of it being published through the media of colonial print culture (Kuttainen 2016: 359-360). In terms of Carey’s more general anti-realist tendencies, the short story is an appropriate form for experimentation and the challenging of traditional notions of reality and fiction. While my analyses do not suggest that all of his stories are best categorized as modernist or postcolonial, they do indicate how reality, like the stories themselves itself, is constructed rather than reflected in language.

In this thesis, I draw on textual evidence to show that form and content are interdependent in Carey’s short stories. In particular, the imaginative fictional worlds that Carey creates are inextricably tied up in the linguistic style of his prose. Indeed, it is this very connection between form and content that give the stories their artistic meanings: a phenomenon which literary critics have touched on in terms the independent reality of a story based on its own internal logic (Torre 2009: 440). Other critics have interpreted

reality in Carey's strange stories as surreal, combining the fantastical with the everyday, or otherwise representing a bizarre and imaginative world that is somehow uncannily familiar to the so-called "real" world (Clunies Ross 1981: 179). In sum, the typical Carey story affords the reader an abstracted view of reality in spite of – or perhaps more accurately *due to* – its innovative form and subject matter. But while this vision of truth in imagination has been noted by literary critics such as Delys Bird, who claims that "Carey's vision is at its sharpest and most convincing in his short fiction" (Bird 2000: 191), an approach that systematically investigates form in his stories is missing from the critical literature.

The absence of stylistic reading is not exclusive to Carey's stories: it also applies to the short story in general, with some notable exceptions that include monographs about famous writers (particularly Joyce) from some leading stylisticians (Leech and Short 2007, Nørgaard 2003, Toolan 2009). There are also a number of shorter stylistic works within the tradition that focus on short stories (Behnam 1996, Fries 2003, Halliday 2002 [1977], Hasan 1985a, Lukin and Pagano 2016, Nguyen 2018, Toolan 2007, Yell 1990, Yell 1993), of which only three involve Australian writers. Of the three critical essays focusing on Australians (Nguyen 2018, Yell 1990, Yell 1993) it is only Yell who examines one of Carey's stories, and then only insofar as the story's status as uninterpretable can be qualified.

Carey's popularity as a short story writer in the 1970s was no accident. His imagination and formal experimentation inspire his readers to think about new possibilities. This idea has been reiterated by Carey himself, who once said about his novels that although he enjoys being playful and inventive with snippets of history, underlying this mischievous tendency is the serious question of whether the reader has imagined other possibilities (Gaile 2005: 8). By employing literary devices common to

modernist, postcolonial, and postmodernist fiction, Carey disturbs the reader's sense of reality in order to celebrate possibility and "the potential of the human spirit" (Willbanks 1992: 52). Another aim of this thesis is to explore how the defamiliarizing effect of Carey's fiction is realized linguistically, through an explicit evaluation of his style. Such an investigation would complement the existing critical literature on Carey's stories and potentially allow for new, richer, evidence-based interpretations.

1.4. Research questions

This thesis aims to investigate the connections that hold between style, truth, and imagination in the short stories of Peter Carey. In doing so, it aims to answer the following research questions:

- (i) How can an understanding of Carey's style enhance the existing evaluations of his stories?
- (ii) How do Carey's stories articulate truth, from a stylistic perspective?
- (iii) How does the imaginative or speculative nature of Carey's stories provoke the reader to renegotiate received reality?

In research question (i), the choice of the word 'enhance' is intended to mean the grounding of impressionistic observations made by literary critics in linguistic evidence.

In research question (ii), the notion of truth, or fictional truth, is assumed to be the literary meaning of a work and not truth in the literal sense (this idea of fictional truth is discussed in Chapter 1.6.3). In research question (iii), I refer to the implied reader. The research presented in this thesis does not involve any reader-response methodology, although this is certainly an interesting approach.

1.5. Selection of data

Carey published a total of 25 stories in two volumes: *The Fat Man in History* and *War Crimes*. All of these stories, except for two, were republished in *Collected Stories*, with the addition of three extra stories not previously published in book form. Of the 28 original stories, only five will be studied in this thesis. This is because in order to address the research questions, a detailed linguistic analysis of each story is required, which will necessarily result in a large amount of data and analysis for every text. As Halliday points out, “It takes many hours of talking to describe exhaustively even the language of one sonnet” (Halliday 2003 [1964]: 9). In three out of five stories (*Conversations with Unicorns*, *She Wakes*, *The Last Days of a Famous Mime*), the whole text will be analysed. The remaining texts, *American Dreams* and *Do You Love Me?* were considered too lengthy to be examined in their entirety, so a sample of text was selected for the analysis of each story, guided by motivated principles.

The five texts were chosen because collectively they represent a balance of similarity and variety in Carey’s style and literary imagination. Broadly, all five texts are concerned with the constructedness of reality at both social and individual levels. Chronologically, the stories represent a period of time starting with *She Wakes* in 1967 and ending with *The Last Days of a Famous Mime* in 1979. The stories also represent variety in TENSE, PERSON, and point of view.

Each of the five stories will be analysed using linguistic methods appropriate to the style and meaning of the text. The following section outlines some of the most important concepts in literary linguistics as a general discipline. It is necessarily selective, and not intended as an exhaustive review. A more detailed account of the specific methodology chosen for this thesis is provided in Chapter 2.

1.6. Key concepts in stylistic analysis

Stylistics, or the linguistic analysis of literature texts, has a long history. Since Classical times, language in literature has continued to be an important object of study and topic of philosophical interest (Aristotle 1902 [c.335 BC]). However, for the purposes of this thesis, the review of literature will begin in the early twentieth century because it was then that arguably the most significant contributions to modern stylistics were published. This section will begin with some important ideas from Russian Formalism and the Prague School of linguistics. In discussing the development of contemporary stylistics, the first key idea that needs to be mentioned is the Russian Formalist notion of ‘defamiliarization’.

1.6.1. Defamiliarization

In the early decades of the twentieth century, an influential group of scholars known as the Russian Formalists introduced the idea of ‘defamiliarization’ (*ostranenie*). The term literally means “to make strange”, which the Formalists believed to be the purpose of art. The Russian Formalists were modernist thinkers, and in part their ideas about literature were developed as a reaction against Romantic ideas which assumed a dichotomy between form and meaning. In contrast, the Russian Formalists argued that form is equivalent to meaning. In the essay *Art as Technique* (1917), Formalist Viktor Shklovsky argues that literature is said to defamiliarize by virtue of its unconventional or unexpected linguistic form (Shklovsky 1965 [1917]). Thus, in verbal art, it is the perceived strangeness of poetic devices (for instance rhyme, meter, alliteration, or assonance) that

draws attention to its own symbolic nature, what Jakobson (1960) recognized as the poetic function of language. The effect of this unexpected form is a slowing down of perception.

The purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known. The technique of art is to make objects unfamiliar, to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and length of perception because the process of perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged. (Shklovsky 1965 [1917]: 12)

The main assumption underlying defamiliarization is that linguistic signs become automatized through habitual use. As a result, people tend to recognize signs without properly perceiving them. The “palpability of form” (*‘oscutimost’*), or the “roughening of the surface” in poetic language brings about a heightened awareness to the process of perception.

In a later essay entitled *Sterne’s Tristram Shandy: Stylistic Commentary* (1921), Shklovsky (1965 [1921]) explored the idea of defamiliarization with regard to the Formalists’ distinction between ‘story’ (*‘fabula’*) and ‘plot’ (*‘sjuzhet’*)⁴. For Shklovsky, ‘story’ is the raw material of the tale, which is organized into a narrative by the ‘plot’. Since Shklovsky argued that our perceptions can be sharpened only through art (Shklovsky 1965 [1921]: 27), it was the defamiliarizing effect of plot manipulation that Shklovsky was most interested in. Taking Sterne’s *Tristram Shandy* as his example, Shklovsky argued that the plot’s exaggerated deviation from the expected conventions of the novel was itself the “aesthetic motivation” of the story (Shklovsky 1965 [1921]: 30). It is perhaps in this regard that the Russian Formalists argument for the continuity of form (‘plot’) and content (‘story’) in literature does not contradict itself.

⁴ See also Tomashevsky (1965 [1925]) and Propp (1968 [1928]).

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In this thesis, “plot” and “story” are not used as specific Formalist terms but in a more general sense, with “story” being synonymous with “text” or “work”. My use of “plot” refers to the surface-level narrative: in other words, the events that would be included in a synopsis of the work without regard to the verbal texture of the story.

Although the ‘story’/‘plot’ distinction has stylistic potential, especially for longer works of prose such as novels, this thesis is more concerned with the various ways in which defamiliarization is realized. An example of defamiliarization in prose fiction is presented by Selden (1989), who cites an excerpt from William Golding’s *The Inheritors* (1955). In the passage, a Neanderthal man named Lok observes for the first time a man from a more technologically-advanced race drawing a bow and arrow. The action is thus described: “A stick rose upright and there was a lump of bone in the middle [...] The stick began to grow shorter at both ends. Then it shot out to full length again” (Golding, 1955, cited in Selden, 1989: 44). Instead of using the conventional, automatized wording for firing an arrow with a bow, Golding defamiliarizes the process and objects using a set of unusual or unexpected linguistic forms. According to Formalist theory, it is not the bow and arrow that are important, but rather the hindered process of perception. The artistic effect is the defamiliarization of shooting the bow and arrow, which the reader – like Lok – perceives as if for the first time. From a Formalist perspective, the purpose of such defamiliarization is to present a renewed vision of reality: a principle that would have resonated with Carey and the Australian “new” writers of the 1970s.

For the Formalists, the process of redefining our reality through art can only occur when we become aware of the process of perception because the attention to language reminds us that reality, like language itself, is construed in symbolic structures. As Butt argues:

The way we construe experience is not given by perception or reference; it is under constant re-negotiation by the repeated choices of community and culture. But this kind of re-negotiation is difficult: one has to be able to sense the consequences, especially the limits, in the symbolic structures we currently use. (Butt 2007b: 90)

In this way, verbal art may have an impact on the world by altering people's perceptions.⁵ As has been noted, changing people's perceptions was one of the driving forces behind Carey's stories. Despite awareness of the general strangeness of Carey's stories, no literary critic to date has examined the form, or style, of his short stories in terms of their defamiliarizing effects. Carey's defamiliarization of reality, according to Russian Formalist theory, brings a heightened awareness of the symbolic nature of reality and of the relativity of signs. This may help to explain why Carey's stories are reported to have a powerful and provocative effect on the reader (Adami 2009, Rubik 2005, Ryan-Fazilleau 1991). The concept of defamiliarization is also closely connected to Structuralist thinking of the modernist era.

1.6.2. Deautomatization and foregrounding

Inspired by the Russian Formalists and the linguistics of Ferdinand de Saussure, a group of Structuralist linguists in Prague came up with a notion similar to defamiliarization, which they called 'deautomatization'. Their guiding principle was that the conventionalization, or automatization, of the literary text compels a necessity for change, otherwise known as the 'actualization' of change (Doležel 1995: 55). For the Prague School linguists, the aesthetic effect of a literary text is determined by the extent to which the language deviates from an established norm. Whereas standard language is

⁵ See for instance Butt's demonstration of figure/ground reversal in English translations of Japanese poetry in Butt (1996).

automatized through convention, literary language is characterized by its “actualized” deviation from the norm. Thus the term Czech term ‘*aktualisace*’ (‘actualization’) was coined by Prague School linguist Jan Mukařovský, and was translated to English by Paul Garvin as ‘foregrounding’ (Garvin 1964). Although the notion of foregrounding has been interpreted in various ways over the years, it largely remains an important concept in contemporary stylistics.

Foregrounding occurs when a stimulus is not culturally expected in its social context: the object thus draws attention to itself rather than its practical function (Garvin 1964). For the Prague School linguists, foregrounding was the defining characteristic of poetic language, which they saw as the “intentional violation of the norm of the standard” (Mukařovský 1964 [1932]: 18). According to the Prague School linguists, foregrounded and conventional language are constantly in a dialectical struggle for dominance in a literature text. Foregrounding is present in standard language also, but is subordinate, according to Mukařovský, to the efficacy of communication. When foregrounding becomes dominant, the language is said to be poetic. For Mukařovský (1964 [1932]), the higher the level of foregrounding, the more conscious the object becomes in the mind of the reader. In other words, the intensity of the literary or defamiliarizing effect increases with the degree of deviation.

The underlying assumption of Prague School foregrounding is that language has multiple and simultaneous functions. The idea is an important one for literary theory and stylistics, and was perhaps most famously put forward by the influential Russian Formalist and Prague School linguist Roman Jakobson. In a widely cited stylistics paper, Jakobson (1960) argues that language has six functions: referential, emotive, conative, phatic, metalingual, and poetic. In any given utterance, one or more functions can be present simultaneously, but it is only when the poetic function (the focus on the message

for its own sake) is dominant that foregrounding (or deautomatization/defamiliarization) occurs. In Jakobson's words, "The poetic function projects the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection into the axis of combination" (Jakobson 1960: 358). Jakobson describes the same phenomenon as "the projection of the equational principle into the sequence" (Jakobson 1960: 367) and "similarity [...] imposed on contiguity" (Jakobson 1960: 371). In each of these descriptions of the poetic function, Jakobson is referring to the way in which formal repetition draws attention to itself as a deviant or 'marked' choice, in contrast with conventional usage which does not use repetition. For Jakobson, it is the unexpected repetition of linguistic form that is responsible for the poetic function of language.

To exemplify the poetic function, Jakobson discusses US politician Dwight "Ike" Eisenhower's election campaign from 1951. Eisenhower's slogan "I like Ike" deautomatizes and defamiliarizes through its use of assonance. The repetition of the vowel sound /aɪ/ has an aesthetic effect because it draws attention to the rhyming scheme over the pragmatic function of the message. The effectiveness of the slogan would be lost if a more conventional paraphrase such as "I value Ike" or "I prefer Eisenhower" were used. Thus, the poetic function in the phrase involves "the projection of the equational principle" – in other words, repetition – into the sequence of linguistic selection. Here the repetition occurs at the phonemic level, but the repetition can also be realized at the morphological, syntactic, semantic, and discursive levels: see, for example, Jakobson (1966) and Leech (2008 [1965]). Although the phrase "I like Ike" presents a deviation from an assumed norm, this norm is not objectively defined, which poses a problem for replicability. In addition, Jakobson's poetic function of language is easily identified in the parallelism and repetitions of poetry but is less pronounced in prose text. For this reason, a functional approach to deautomatization and foregrounding can be useful.

1.6.3. Functional approaches to deautomatization and foregrounding

When Jakobson was part of the Russian Formalist group *Opojaz*, he and colleague Jurij Tynjanov published an essay entitled *Problems of Research in Literature and Language* (1928). Inspired by Saussure's linguistics and ideas from Formalism, Jakobson and Tynjanov recognized that in the study of poetic language, the diachronic dimension of language, including literary history, should not be ignored because, according to the authors, history itself is a system. Jakobson and Tynjanov asserted that the individual utterance (Saussure's '*parole*') cannot be considered without reference to the linguistic system (Saussure's '*langue*'). As such, Jakobson and Tynjanov argued for a functional approach to the study of literature, stating that the material used in literature can only be examined scientifically if it is approached from a functional point of view (Jakobson and Tynjanov 1980 [1928]: 29).

Building on the linguistic traditions of Formalism and Structuralism, the school of linguistics known as Systemic Functional Linguistics (henceforth SFL) took up a functional view of foregrounding. In 1971, Halliday distinguished foregrounding from mere linguistic prominence, arguing that prominence is foregrounded "only if it relates to the meaning of the text as a whole" (Halliday 2003 [1971]: 98). This principle is most likely the very same idea as the Formalists' concept of 'motivation'⁶, but Halliday develops it further by elaborating the nature of the relationship between part and whole: "If a particular feature of the language contributes, by its prominence, to the total meaning of the work, it does so by virtue of and through the medium of its own value in the

⁶ Tomashevsky (1965 [1925]: 78) defines 'motivation' as "the network of devices" that justifies motifs in literature: the unifying element that gives artistic unity to a text. Tomashevsky (1965 [1925]: 85) considers defamiliarization to be a form of artistic motivation, similar to Mukařovský's consistency of foregrounding (which was refined in SFL especially by Hasan).

language – through the linguistic function from which its meaning is derived” (Halliday 2003 [1971]: 98). Following Jakobson and Tynjanov, Halliday, insisted that the norm against which a linguistic form is foregrounded must acknowledge both system and text⁷.

Halliday’s functional approach to stylistics overcame the Prague School’s problem of defining the linguistic norm. In his study of Golding’s *The Inheritors*, Halliday shows the prominence of ‘middle’ voices⁸ as construing the world-view of the protagonist Lok and his Neanderthal tribe. Later in the novel, when the tribe comes into contact with the more advanced Cro-Magnon people, there is a clear shift in the style as ‘effective’ agency becomes the dominant. In contrast with Selden’s exemplification of defamiliarization taken from the same novel, which looks only at the isolated instance of firing the bow and arrow (Selden 1989), Halliday goes beyond the surface-level events and describes the verbal texture of the novel. By looking at particular linguistic choices, he arrives at a generalized interpretation of the novel: a fictional truth about “man’s (sic) interpretation of his experience of the world, his understanding of its processes and of his own participation in them” (Halliday 2003 [1971]: 119-120).

As Halliday demonstrates in the paper, prominence is a matter of perspective, since it can be realized as either the departure from or the attainment of a norm. He also differentiates ‘prominence’ from ‘foregrounding’, arguing that prominence can only be said to be foregrounded if it is artistically ‘motivated’. Halliday concludes that the theme of *The Inheritors* is not its subject matter nor the literary devices that it employs, but rather the very functions of language itself. So for Halliday, a grammatical system can be the source of a text’s aesthetic effect, which is consistent with Jakobson’s idea that the

⁷ In Hallidayan linguistics, system is viewed as meaning potential and text is conceived as an instance of the system. But system and text are seen as poles on a continuum (see Chapter 2.1).

⁸ According to Halliday, a clause is described as ‘middle’ if it does not impact on another grammatical entity: cf ‘effective’ in Halliday and Matthiessen (2014: 338).

poetic function of language is located in language's self-referentiality: the "set" toward the message for its own sake (Jakobson 1960: 356). Halliday's notion that grammar itself can be a literary device. Another advantage of the Hallidayan approach to literature is that the functions of language are described systematically, which means that the linguistic features of a text can be analysed with a degree of reliability and replicability not afforded to most other forms of textual analysis. Such a description usually requires some degree of quantification, as in proportions of certain types of processes in a text.

This type of systematic description also allows for better replicability and a more objective comparison of author's styles (Halliday 2003 [1964]). Halliday's functional approach to literature builds on the Formalists ideas of defamiliarization and motivation as well as the theory of foregrounding put forward by the Prague School. It should also be noted that Halliday's conception of foregrounding is not the only one to appear in the years following the English translation of Mukařovský's work. The notion of foregrounding has become an important concept in a wide range of stylistic work, although its interpretation varies considerably (Halliday 2003 [1971], Halliday 2003 [1982], Hasan 1985a, Leech 1969, Leech 2008 [1965], Van Peer 1986).

Another important SFL linguist, Ruqaiya Hasan, developed an alternative theory of prominence. Like Halliday, Hasan argued that the poetic function of language is dominant when various formal realizations of foregrounding contribute to the artistic meaning of a work. However, Hasan's version of foregrounding includes the additional criterion that motivated foregrounding generally occurs at a particular textual location (Hasan 1985a: 95) The consistently foregrounded language undergoes a second-order semiosis, through which the theme of the work is construed. In this process, which Hasan (1985a) calls 'symbolic articulation', the highest semantic level of automatized language becomes the lowest semantic level in the act of deautomatization (see Figure 1.1).

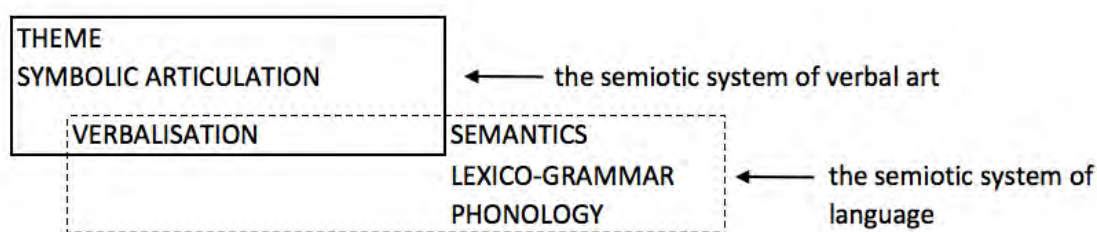


Figure 1.1 Symbolic articulation (Hasan 1985a: 99)

To demonstrate symbolic articulation, Hasan shows how various systems such as TENSE, FINITENESS, and TRANSITIVITY work together to construe a sense of the isolation and ineffectuality of a lonely widower in Les Murray's poem *Widower in the Country* (1964). Removed from the particulars of the poem, the theme of the work is said to be about the necessity of relationships in maintaining a sense of humanity. Ultimately, these meanings contribute to a message about individuality and community. Hasan (1985a) also analyses a short story and shows how the author blurs the boundary between reality and fantasy in the mind of the child protagonist. The child's reality, irrespective of its truth value, is mediated through talk. It is shown that the child of necessity in Angus Wilson's *Necessity's Child* (1951) is not the boy but rather his tendency to tell lies. The theme of the story is interpreted as the role of talking in the formation of self.

Since the deautomatized theme is not bound to the conventional semantics of the linguistic system, the truth it conveys exists as a kind of hypothesis. The theme of a work may not be intended by the author, since meaning is often communicated – both encoded and decoded – below the level of consciousness. The interpretation of a work's theme necessarily varies between individual readers, which is to say that there is no absolute meaning, or truth, to a work of literature. But in order to say just what that meaning could

be, we need a detailed linguistic analysis if it is agreed that some degree of objectivity is necessary or desirable for the interpretation.

In the stylistic analysis of a literature text, if the consistency of foregrounding is to be identified then the foregrounding must be identified consistently. Such an analysis is not possible if foregrounding is seen merely by as a deviation from an intuitive norm, as Mukařovský had suggested. Conventions change over time, which is why foregrounding in text or '*parole*' needs to be determined in relation to the linguistic system itself: '*langue*'. But if *langue* is the norm – the static and synchronic background against which the dynamic and diachronic *parole* is to be defined – then the variation of *langue* over time cannot be accounted for. This irreconcilability of *langue* and *parole* is a common but misguided criticism of Saussurian Structuralism. The separation of *langue* and *parole* in Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics* has been overstated and misrepresented, according to (Lukin 2019). In other lesser-known writings, Saussure has claimed that *langue* is defined socially and is fluid in nature (Lukin 2019: 66).

Halliday's social-semiotic linguistic framework – namely SFL – reconciles *langue* and *parole* and has the capacity to define norms and deviations by virtue of SFL's detailed and systematic description of language systems. Through the application of SFL-based descriptions of texts, detailed and explicit description of literature texts from which a reasoned interpretation can be drawn. The value of SFL stylistics can be seen in work studies that investigate poetry (Benson, Greaves and Stillar 1995, Burton 1982, Butt 1983, Butt 1988a, Butt 1988b, Butt 2007b, Butt 2009, Butt and Lukin 2009, Halliday 2003 [1964], Halliday 2003 [1987], Hasan 1971, Hasan 1985a, Hasan 1988, Huisman 2016, Lin 2016, Lukin 2008, Lukin and Webster 2005), prose (Fries 2003, Goatly 2008, Halliday 2003 [1971], Hasan 1967, Hasan 1985a, Kennedy 1982, Lukin and Pagano 2016, Nørgaard 2003, Thibault 1991, Toolan 1990), drama (Butt 2015, Halliday 2003

[1982], Hasan 2007), and literary history (Huisman 2013a). For concise and comprehensive summaries of the contributions of Halliday and Hasan to stylistics, see Lukin's overviews (Lukin 2015, Lukin 2018).

This discussion has shown some of the ways in which stylistics has evolved over the decades since the early 20th century. Despite this significant tradition of stylistic research, it is disappointing to note that, as Hasan (1985a: 106) points out, the evaluation of literature is often not supported by linguistic interpretation, which in turn is not supported by textual evidence. Hasan's remarks are over 30 years old now, but they still hold true of literature in general, and Carey's fiction in particular.

Carey's short stories, like all good literature, are important because they deal with social concerns that transcend spatial and temporal boundaries. Although art is not the only medium for addressing the problems in a culture, it is the only one which allows for a truth to be created from fiction (Hasan 1985a). In order to investigate Dutton's claim that Carey's verbal art conveys truth, a linguistic approach is needed: one that can show how the language, or 'style' of a text articulates its themes.

1.7. Conclusion

As has been argued above, stylistics is a necessary lens through which to view the short stories of Peter Carey, because it can make visible the style and meaning of the texts in a way that enhances traditional literary criticism. Both the Australian "new" writers and the Russian Formalist theorists opposed the assumptions of conventional realism, arguing that verbal art should reveal its own constructedness. The literature text can achieve this effect through formal manipulation that draws attention to the deautomatization of signs.

INTRODUCTION

This process, as will be argued throughout the thesis, has a powerful literary effect, and can potentially alter the way we construct reality.

The experience of reading Carey's short stories is a liberating one, celebrating possibility over actuality. It is a special form of knowledge, of philosophical truth that only literature can convey, as pointed out by Aristotle (1902 [c.335 BC]) many centuries ago. If Carey's bizarre anti-realist short stories tell the truth, or more precisely, *a* truth, then the process of conveying this truth through language could be understood as the semiotic process of symbolic articulation.

Carey was inspired by modernist and postmodernist writers from Europe and America, and he wrote short stories during a time when the social reality in Australia was being redefined in a climate of rapid social and political change. It was the time of political transition, in which Australian troops were removed from Vietnam, and various liberalizing social changes were introduced, including increased funding for the arts (Bird 2000). Australian fiction, especially the short story form, flourished during this period (Bennett 2002, Moorhouse 1977), as writers explored the complex relations between fiction and reality through experimental forms (Bennett 1976, Gelder and Salzman 1989, Lever 1998, Webby 1980). These contextual factors, along with Australia's colonial past, the anti-realist influence of artistic movements from abroad, and Carey's personal ambitions to alter people's perceptions of reality all coalesce in a wonderful manifestation of literary style, which is best viewed through a methodological approach called 'social-semiotic' stylistics.

2. Social-semiotic stylistics

A social reality (or a ‘culture’) is itself an edifice of meanings – a semiotic construct. In this perspective, language is one of the semiotic systems that constitute a culture [...] This in summary terms is what is intended by the formulation ‘language as social semiotic’. It means interpreting language within a sociocultural context, in which the culture itself is interpreted in semiotic terms – as an information system, if that terminology is preferred. (Halliday 1978: 2)

‘Social semiotics’ refers to the production and interpretation of semiotic resources within specific cultural contexts. In social semiotics, semiotic resources are “signifiers, observable actions and objects that have been drawn into the domain of social communication” (Leeuwen 2005: xi). Social-semiotic stylistics thus views language as a particular semiotic resource that takes into account meaning potential. It is not, as Leeuwen (2005: 2) points out, a “pure theory”, but rather an eclectic array of methods that can be applied to specific texts and problems. Since stylistics as a general discipline has roots in Formalism and Structuralism (Sotirova 2016b), particularly Jakobson’s parallelism and Mukařovský’s foregrounding (Miller 2017), it is not surprising that the same schools of thought have also influenced social-semiotic linguistics to a considerable degree. For instance Tynjanov, a Russian Formalist, was a key figure in the development of SFL, linking Firthian and Hallidayan linguistics (Butt 2009: 371). In this thesis, linguistic methods developed in the Hallidayan and Hasanian tradition comprise a major part of the social-semiotic stylistic toolkit that is adopted for the analysis of Carey’s stories. These stylistic approaches at times bear resemblance to the Formalist and Structuralist ideas emerging from the early twentieth century, which eventually evolved into contemporary stylistics.

Some of the most influential stylistics work in the past several decades has drawn on social-semiotic linguistics. Leech and Short (2007: 31), although not subscribing to a

single theory, take a ‘pluralistic’⁹ stylistic approach to the text, arguing that “Style consists in choices made from the repertoire of the language”. To illustrate the value of pluralistic reading, Leech and Short (2007: 25-29) refer to Halliday’s discussion of Golding’s *The Inheritors*. Halliday’s framework is also adopted in Toolan’s study of Faulkner’s style (Toolan 1990), as well as many of the chapters collected in the influential stylistics volume *Language and Literature* (Carter 1982). More recently, in the *Bloomsbury Companion to Stylistics* (Sotirova 2016a), the value of social-semiotic stylistics and its antecedents for contemporary methods is acknowledged. Within the general stylistic tradition since Russian Formalism, one of the main questions has been, as Sotirova (2016b: 16) points out, concerned with how a text is made. Social-semiotic stylistics addresses this question directly by explicitly showing how the author’s choices construct style and meaning in literature texts.

This thesis assumes Hasan’s model of symbolic articulation (see Figure 1.1) and draws on a range of social-semiotic stylistic methods, including speech presentation categories (Leech and Short 2007), evaluative language (Martin and White 2005), coherence (Hasan 1984, Hasan 1985b), and corpus methods. Significantly, recent work has demonstrated the complementarity of corpus-assisted stylistics and symbolic articulation (Miller 2010, Miller and Luporini 2015, Miller and Luporini 2018). For each of Carey’s stories examined in the thesis, a bespoke combination of stylistic approaches is applied. However, the main linguistic framework chosen for the analysis of Carey’s stories is SFL, which views language as a social semiotic: that is to say, a system of

⁹ Leech and Short pay considerable attention to Halliday’s conception of language, arguing for the value of viewing all linguistic choices as both meaningful and stylistic (Leech and Short 2007: 27). Since Halliday sees a single instance of text as being the result of choices in more than one linguistic system, Leech and Short refer to this approach as ‘pluralistic’, in contrast with a ‘monistic’ approach that assumes a single correlation between form and meaning.

meaning potential from which choices are made to construe a semiotic reality. The following sections outline some of the most fundamental concepts in SFL, providing some important theoretical background for the analyses that will follow.

2.1. Language and context

The meaning of an utterance largely depends on the context in which it is produced. In SFL, the connection between language and context is conceptualized in terms of ‘stratification’ (see Figure 2.1). Each level or ‘stratum’ in the model is represented by a concentric circle, which becomes increasingly abstract as the circles increase in size. The relationship between strata is bi-directional and complex. As a somewhat simplified explanation: moving up (from smaller to larger circles), the process is a ‘construal’, i.e. a construction in the mind, while moving down (from larger to smaller circles), the process is an ‘enactment’, which is akin to the preselection or increased probability that certain linguistic choices will be made. Both construal and enactment are contained in the term ‘realization’.

Importantly, a single stratum does not simply construe or enact its neighbouring stratum: this would be a mere causal relation. Rather, a stratum interacts – in Halliday’s words “redounds” – with the interaction, or ‘redundancy’, between its neighbouring strata. This process Halliday calls ‘metaredundancy’. In other words, with reference to Figure 2.1 and to quote Halliday, “It is not that (i) meaning is realized by wording and wording is realized by sound, but that (ii) meaning is realized by the realization of wording in sound” (Halliday 2002 [1992]: 357).

All of the choices comprising a text are meaningful and are made in context, which explains why the likelihood of certain wordings depends on the context of situation or text type (e.g. imperatives are likely to appear in recipes and complex noun groups are

probable in scientific discourse). Specific text types, or registers, are thus seen to be a product of their contextual pressures while at the same time creating and reshaping their contexts as the text unfolds. This means that in a fictional text, the style constructs the fictional world, or reality, while at the same time the fictional reality shapes the style. A remarkable feature of prose fiction is that unlike registers such as recipes or scientific reports, particular grammatical structures are not so predictable. There is no such thing as “the language of the short story”, after all. Rather, there is a great deal of freedom in the choices of wording and an unlimited potential for construing imaginative contexts.

The relationship between language and context, which parallels the connection between style and fictional reality, is of great interest in the imaginative stories of Peter Carey. This is another reason why it is important to examine the style of a fictional text to access its unique meaning, which I have equated with its fictional truth.

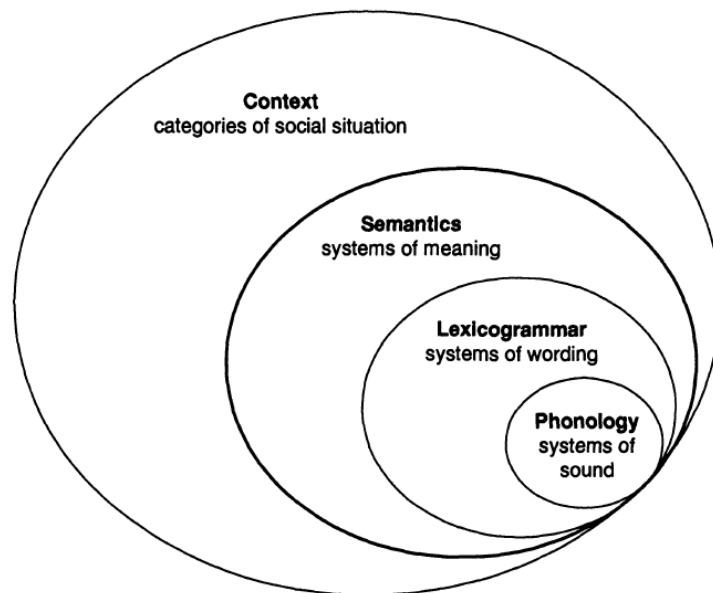
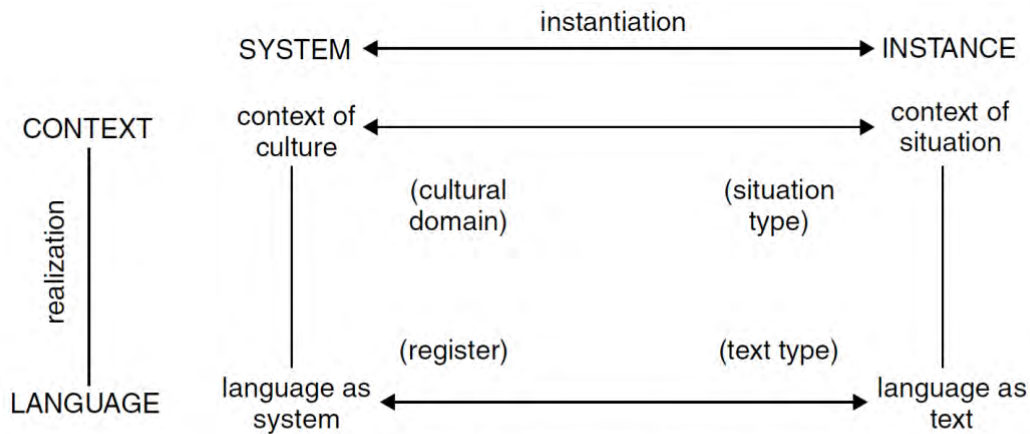


Figure 2.1 Stratification in the SFL model (Hasan 1996: 105)

Since complete texts belong to the semantic stratum of the SFL language model (see Figure 2.1), they construe an immediate context. In prose fiction, this context construed by the text is the fictional world or semiotic reality. In fact, all texts, fiction or non-fiction, construe this kind of symbolic reality. Texts “construct” a world in the mind; they do not “reflect” the physical world, as we know from Saussure’s famous dictum: “The linguistic sign unites, not a thing and a name, but a concept and a sound-image” (Saussure 1959 [1916]: 66). This constructivist view of reality is most likely what Carey had in mind when he said he would rather construct his own reality than report a pre-existing one (Featherstone 1986). By treating Carey’s stories as texts that construct realities, one can read and interpret the stories on their own terms, without the constraints of physical reality or historical accuracy. Saussure’s view of the interplay of language and reality is relevant to the fictional worlds of Carey’s short stories, which can be explored using social-semiotic stylistics.

In SFL, language is seen as both system and text at once. The difference between linguistic system and textual process is a matter of perspective, analogous to the distinction between climate and weather. Weather is akin to the instantiation of the climate from a local perspective, while the climate, viewed from a global perspective, is like the system from which local weather patterns are derived (see Figure 2.2).



Note: Culture instantiated in situation, as system instantiated in text.
 Culture realized in/construed by language; same relation as that holding between linguistic strata (semantics: lexicogrammar: phonology: phonetics).
 Cultural domain and register are 'sub-systems': likeness viewed from 'system' end.
 Situation type and text type are 'instance types': likeness viewed from 'instance' end.

Figure 2.2 Instantiation in the SFL model (Halliday 2007 [1991]: 275)

It should also be noted that with reference to Figure 2.2, literature is a special type of register. As hypothesized in Hasan's model of symbolic articulation (see Figure 1.1), the meaning of a literature text goes through a double process of semiosis, which distinguishes it from non-literature registers. To access this abstract literary meaning, language choices need to be described, so that the patterning can be interpreted in light of the story's main preoccupations. Such linguistic descriptions require an understanding of the grammatical units that make up a text.

2.2. Grammatical units

The stratum that will be examined most closely when analysing Carey's stories is the stratum of 'lexicogrammar'¹⁰, in which the main unit of analysis is the clause. In SFL,

¹⁰ Lexis + grammar (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014: 64). In SFL, lexis and grammar are viewed as poles on a cline, ranging from lexical sets that are specific in meaning and collocational to closed grammatical

there is a hierarchy of language units, from word to ‘clause complex’ (see Figure 2.3). A ‘clause complex’ is made up of one or more clauses, which are made up of one or more groups, which in turn are made up of one or more words. A clause complex is usually co-extensive with a sentence in written text and thus the two terms will be used somewhat interchangeably in this thesis. However, it is important to note that there is a difference between them: a ‘sentence’ by definition begins with a capital letter and ends with a period. Sentences therefore are not grammatical units but structural ones. When it is necessary to make this distinction, the precise term will be chosen.

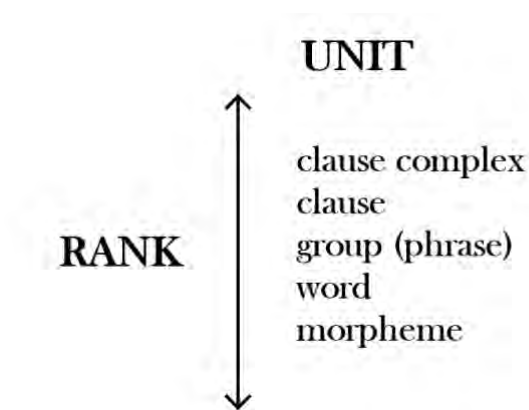


Figure 2.3 Rank scale in the SFL model adapted from Halliday (2002 [1961]: 78)

It is important to note that the concept of rank is separate from class, or what is traditionally referred to as ‘parts of speech’. Whereas rank describes the lexicogrammatical units of text, class describes the types of words or groups, such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, and determiners. Thus in Figure 2.4 it can be seen that the first clause complex of the children’s rhyme *Little Miss Muffet* is made up of two clauses. The first clause comprises a noun group (*Little Miss Muffet*), a verb

systems that are general in meaning. Assuming the unity of lexis and grammar, the terms ‘lexicogrammar’ and ‘grammar’ will be used interchangeably in this thesis.

(*sat*), a preposition (*on*), and a noun group (*a tuffet*). It should also be pointed out that for most analytical purposes, the instance of a preposition and noun group is often and most usefully analysed as a single unit known in SFL terms as a ‘prepositional phrase’, because this combination realizes the experiential function of Circumstance¹¹. In other words, there is no functional reason for analysing a preposition as separate from the nominal group with which it co-occurs.

		word group	word group	word group	word group
clause complex	clause	<i>little miss muppet</i>	<i>sat</i>	<i>on</i>	<i>a tuffet</i>
	clause	<i>eating</i>	<i>her curds and whey</i>		
clause complex	clause	<i>there</i>	<i>came</i>	<i>a big spider</i>	
	clause	<i>which</i>	<i>sat down</i>	<i>beside</i>	<i>her</i>
	clause	<i>and</i>	<i>frightened</i>	<i>miss muppet</i>	<i>away</i>

Figure 2.4 Grammatical constituency in the SFL model (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014: 8)

The stylistic study of a text begins with analysing the constituents of each clause. Using the descriptive labels of SFL, the analyst can identify linguistic patterns that contribute to the theme of a story. This is because a close examination of the grammar of the clause reveals important clues about characterization, narrative viewpoint, and literary motifs, as will be demonstrated in later chapters.

¹¹ A semantic category belonging to the ‘ideational metafunction’ (see Chapter 2.4) which expresses circumstantial information about the process, i.e. ‘extent’, ‘location’, ‘manner’, ‘cause’, ‘contingency’, ‘accompaniment’, ‘role’, ‘matter’, and ‘angle’ (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014: 313-314).

2.3. Text from a social-semiotic perspective

In social semiotics a text is viewed as a social process that “continually modifies the system that engenders it, which is the paradigmatic environment of the text” (Halliday 1978: 139). Texts are thus viewed as ‘instantiations’ (see Figure 2.2), that is to say, choices made from linguistic systems. Social-semiotic stylistics examines the choices comprising a literature text and relates them to the meaning potential of the linguistic system and the text as a whole. Following the Russian Formalists, stylistic choices must be motivated if they are to be taken as significant to the theme of the story. In order to interpret the meaning of the stories, each story text must be analysed at a particular rank, chiefly that of the clause.

According to Halliday and Hasan (1976) text is a semantic unit. It is not “composed of” clauses: rather, it is “realized in” clauses (Halliday and Hasan 1976). This distinction highlights the fact that simply combining unrelated clauses will not result in a coherent text. For a text to be coherent, it must have semantic connections between the clauses and clause complexes. The function and meaning of clauses, as well as the relations that hold between them, can be described in the SFL framework. The point of entry to the meaning of a text is through its constituent clauses, which are examined with regard to Halliday’s theory of ‘metafunctions’.

2.4. Metafunctions

From the view of SFL, language has two basic functions: “making sense of our experience, and acting out our social relationships” (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014: 30). Additionally, in order to enact both of these functions, a third linguistic function is required so that coherent texts or sequences of discourse can be created. In SFL the three functions of language are named ‘metafunctions’. Here, the prefix “meta-” denotes the

idea that function is “an integral component within the overall theory” (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014: 31) and not merely a way of using language that has no significance for its analysis. In this thesis, I will use the terms ‘function’ and ‘metafunction’ somewhat interchangeably, but with ‘function’ being used when the more general meaning of the term is required.

In SFL, specific labels are given for the three metafunctions of language. The way that language construes experience is called the ‘ideational metafunction’, which includes two sub-types: the experiential and the logical. The ‘experiential metafunction’ refers to the linguistic construal of events (which are realized in processes), the participants involved in those processes, and the circumstantial information surrounding the processes, such as time, place, manner, and cause/condition. The ‘logical metafunction’ refers to the connections that hold between events, such as when an event enhances another event by construing a relationship of time, place, manner, or cause/condition; or when an event provides elaborating information about another event through restatement. The way in which language enacts social relationships is labelled as the ‘interpersonal metafunction’, which includes grammatical systems that orient the language to the users (such as TENSE, POLARITY, and FINITENESS) as well as assessments of probability and obligation (known in SFL as ‘MODALITY’). Linguistic systems must also manage information to facilitate communication: this functional category is known as the ‘textual metafunction’, which includes systems that orient the text to the communicative context and manage the flow of discourse.

Halliday’s theory of metafunctions is arguably one of his greatest contributions to contemporary linguistics. At the time of its development in the 1970s, it was an original idea, which as Hasan notes, supported the view that language was not only capable of representing reality, but also “creating, changing and maintaining it” (Hasan 2015: 123).

Since SFL acknowledges the continuity of form and meaning, Halliday's metafunctions allow the stylistician to approach a literature text pluralistically, to look at three distinct and intrinsic types of formal relations each realizing a different kind of meaning at the same time (Hasan 2015). In practical terms, the concept of metafunctions enables an explicit description of "meaning-wording patterns" (Hasan 2015: 124) which can make visible the unique meanings and styles of Carey's fiction.

In this thesis, the predominant methodology chosen for the analysis of text is SFL but other approaches used in the thesis, including speech presentation (Leech and Short 2007, Sotirova 2011, Sotirova 2013), can also be considered as social-semiotic methods because they are based on the assumption that meaning-making is a social practice.

2.5. Social-semiotic stylistic methodology

In the most general of terms, the stylistic methodology applied in this thesis bears some resemblance to Spitzer's philological circle (Spitzer 1962 [1948])¹². According to this framework (see Figure 2.1) linguistic evidence leads to a description of linguistic patterns, which must be interpreted for consistency of foregrounding, which in turn leads to literary "appreciation". Here appreciation is taken to mean both evaluation and interpretation with an emphasis on the latter, following Leech and Short (2007: 11-12). At the interpretation stage, the need for more linguistic evidence may arise.

¹² The figure is credited to Spitzer's *Linguistics and Literary History* (1948), but has been taken from Leech and Short (2007: 12). The reprinted edition of Spitzer's book that I accessed (Spitzer 1962 [1948]) did not include an image of the philological circle.

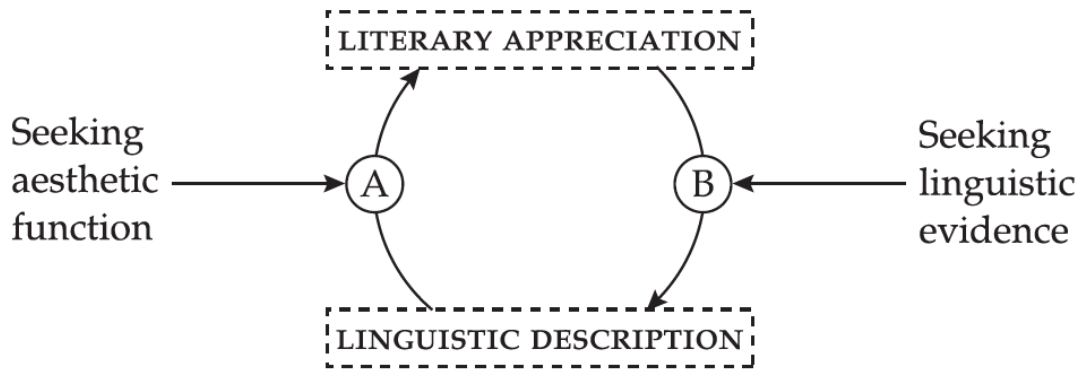


Figure 2.5 Spitzer's philological circle (Leech and Short 2007: 12)

In terms of linguistic description, it is mostly the descriptive power of SFL that provides the evidence for interpretation. The social-semiotic methodology adopted in this thesis is, as has been mentioned, not a single approach but a combination of linguistic methods that are suitable for the text. Appropriateness of fit is based on impressions and revelations located within the literary appreciation stage. In this regard, Spitzer's insistence on the impossibility of following a rigid step-wise procedure (Spitzer 1962 [1948]) is true, for the analyst must make choices from his or her repertoire of methods. However, Spitzer's remark that the mere reading and rereading of the text will eventually reveal a key detail (Spitzer 1962 [1948]) in the text is only partially consistent with my own methodological approach. In this thesis, key details are revealed through linguistic patterns that are the result of patient and painstaking linguistic description. An important first step in setting up a robust and replicable analysis involves breaking down a text into its constituent clauses.

2.5.1. Rank-shifting

In the process of analysing a text for constituency, special attention needs to be paid to the status of the clause as ranking or 'rank-shifted'. 'Rank-shifting' is the linguistic

phenomenon whereby a clause is downgraded to a lower rank: most typically that of group or phrase (see Figure 2.3). Typical examples of rank-shifting include defining relative clauses, which are embedded within the nominal group (e.g. *the wall* [[*that Gleason built*]]), and whole clauses acting as grammatical participants or modifying adjectives (e.g. *we saw* [[*them push their bicycles up the hill*]]; *it was impossible* [[*to see* [[*what it was*]]]]). As these examples show, rank-shifted clauses are indicated with double square brackets.

2.5.2. Clause identification

The clause identification convention adopted in this thesis uses numbers to identify, in sequence, the following constituents: clause complex, ranking clause, rank-shifted clause. These constituents by numbers and separated using periods. The convention is illustrated here, with two sentences taken from one of Carey's stories.

- | | | |
|------|------|---|
| (19) | 19.1 | She does nothing [[19.1.1 that will indicate 19.1.2 that she expects anything from him.]] |
| (20) | 20.1 | Tossing back the blankets |
| | 20.2 | he swings his legs out of the bed |
| | 20.3 | so that he sits on it, his tanned back towards her. |

In clause complex 19 there is one ranking clause (19.1) and two rank-shifted clauses (19.1.1 and 19.1.2). In clause complex 20, there are three ranking clauses. Note that the clause complexes numbers are indicated in round parentheses. This convention is intended to make reading easier when referring to examples because often a reference to the whole clause complex is sufficient. If italicization is present in the example, it indicates emphasis which has been added for the reader's attention. Note that since the presentation of data is organized around the point being made, the selected clauses and clause complexes may not always be contiguous. However, the full co-text of each

linguistic example is provided in the Appendix, which includes the complete constituency analysis for each text studied in the thesis. Also note that when invented examples are provided, or when data is used merely for contrastive or generic purposes, the identifier is enclosed by single guillemets (< >), following a sequential alphanumeric numbering system starting from number 1.

2.5.3. Function and rank

Following the analysis of a text into its constituents, the next step was to analyse the elements of each clause according to their functions at a particular rank. The specific type of analysis carried out varied between individual texts, depending on their unique characteristics. Each type of analysis can be located in the function-rank matrix (see Figure 2.6). The function-rank matrix was first published in Halliday's highly influential stylistics paper from 1971 (Halliday 2003 [1971]: 94) and later in other iterations, including, more recently, Halliday (2009: 85) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014: 87). From these three versions, which are essentially the same, was derived the matrix presented in Figure 2.6. The matrix was reconstructed in order to represent a version that would be best suited to the purposes of this thesis. The matrix shows the various linguistic systems (capitalized), located within the linguistic rank, along with its primary class, and the three metafunctions of language. The matrix serves as a map showing the 'semiotic address' (Butt 2007a: 103) of the particular linguistic system. To quote Halliday and Matthiessen:

Systems at every rank are located in their metafunctional context; this means, therefore, that every system has its address in some cell of a metafunction-rank matrix [...] For example, the system of MOOD [...] is an interpersonal system of the clause; so it is located in the 'clause' row, 'interpersonal' column in the matrix. (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014: 49)

Due to its descriptive power, SFL, can be used to analyse any text, regardless of its register. However, every text is unique, and, especially in the case of prose fiction, a literature text may thus require an analysis that focuses on specific linguistic systems: that is to say, specific locations in the function-rank matrix. Carey's stories, as previously mentioned, demonstrate considerable variation in style, which is why the analysis of each story draws on different systems to best show the unique style and semantic design of the text.

metafunction		ideational				interpersonal	textual		(cohesive)
		logical		experiential					
rank	class								
		INTER-DEPENDENCY (parataxis & hypotaxis) & LOGICO-SEMANTIC RELATION (expansion & projection)		–	TRANSITIVITY (process type) THING TYPE CLASSIFICATION EVENT TYPE, ASPECT (non-finite) QUALITY (circumstance type) minor TRANSITIVITY (circumstance type)	MOOD	THEME	COHESIVE RELATIONS ("above the sentence": non-structural relations) REFERENCE, SUBSTITUTION & ELLIPSIS, CONJUNCTION, LEXICAL COHESION	
group/phrase	nominal			MODIFICATION		PERSON	DETERMINATION		
	verbal			TENSE		POLARITY, MODALITY	VOICE (active, passive, middle)		
	adverbial			MODIFICATION		COMMENT (adjunct type) minor MOOD (adjunct type)	CONJUNCTION		
	prepositional phrase			–			CONJUNCTION		
word				DERIVATION	(DENOTATION)	(CONNOTATION)			
information unit				–		KEY	INFORMATION		
		complexes				simplexes			

Figure 2.6 Function-rank matrix

2.5.4. Transitivity

Despite the fact that each story text was analysed with a slightly different focus, most of them were analysed for ‘TRANSITIVITY’. ‘TRANSITIVITY’, to quote Halliday, is “the set of options whereby the speaker encodes his experience of the processes of the external world, and of the internal world of his own consciousness, together with the participants in these processes and their attendant circumstances” (Halliday 2003 [1971]: 119). Located within the experiential metafunction of language, TRANSITIVITY plays a major role in construing the story world, including the characters and events contained within it. For this reason, the fundamental concepts of TRANSITIVITY will be outlined here, with any additional theoretical explanations provided in the relevant body chapters.

The analysis of TRANSITIVITY in prose fiction is a well-known technique in stylistics (Halliday 2003 [1971], Hasan 1985a, Ji and Shen 2004, Lukin and Pagano 2016, Nørgaard 2003, O’Toole 2018, Thibault 1991, Toolan 1990). From the perspective of the experiential metafunction, TRANSITIVITY allows us to see who is doing what to whom and under what circumstances. As such, SFL offers descriptive labels for each of the functions in TRANSITIVITY.

In TRANSITIVITY, process types are labelled according to their experiential function, such as ‘mental’ (thinking and feeling), ‘behavioural’ (behaving), ‘material’ (doing and happening), ‘existential’ (existing), ‘relational’ (being), and ‘verbal’ (saying). The boundaries between process types are fuzzy: they blend into one another like colours on a spectrum (see Figure 2.7).

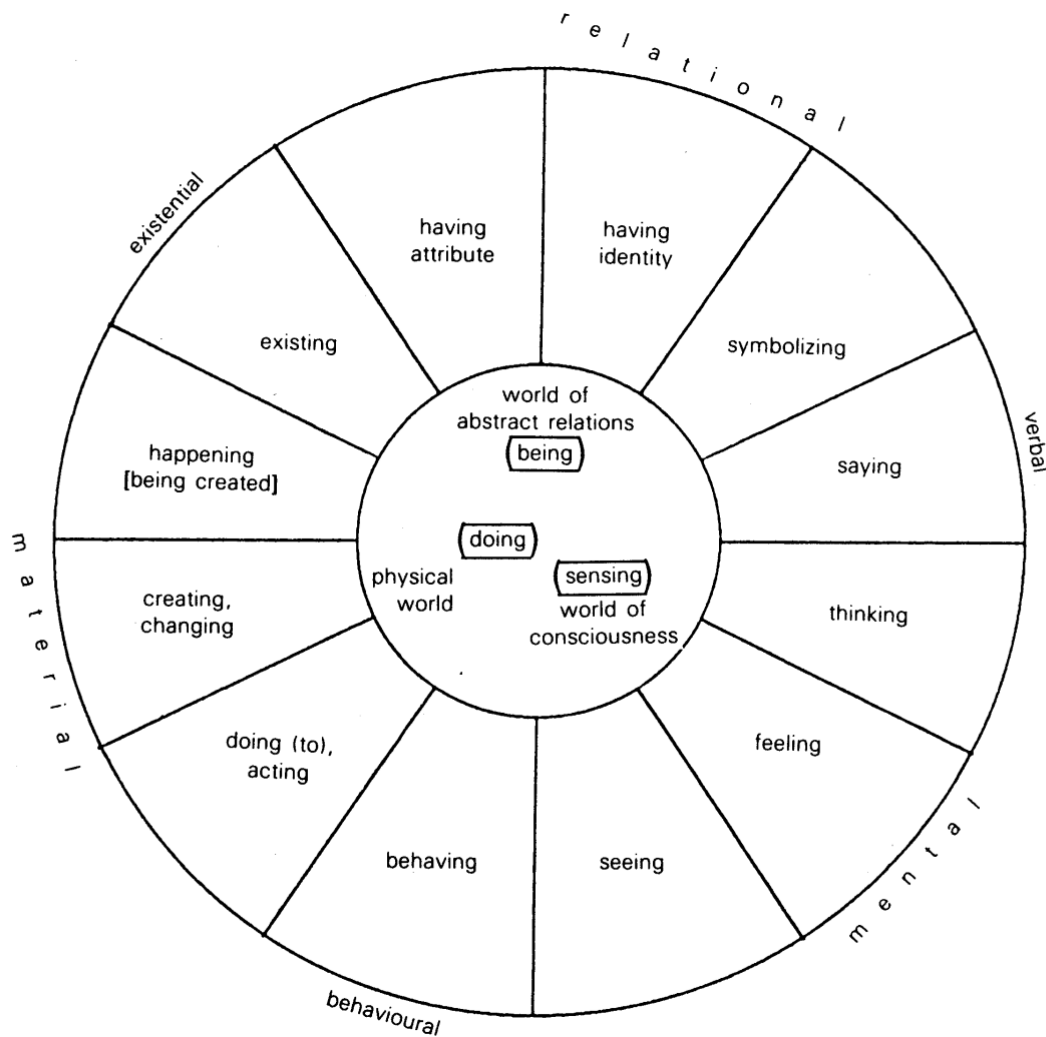


Figure 2.7 Circle of process types (Halliday 1994: 108)

The specific labels for each participant role in a clause depend on the process type. Most processes have both an -er role and an -ed role, depending on whether the grammatical entity is the doer of the process or the entity affected by the process. Instead of naming and describing each participant role in the running text, a summary table is provided for convenience (see Table 2.1).

Table 2.1 Summary of process types and participant roles (Butt, Fahey, Feez, Spinks and Yallop 2000: 62-63)

Process type	Domain	Restrictions	Participants
Material Function: to construe the material world of doing	outside activities: doing something	none: anyone/thing can do	Actor = doer Goal = affected Range = not affected Beneficiary = to/for
Behavioural Function: to construe conscious behaviour	physiological and psychological behaviour: the doing version of mental or verbal processes	needs consciousness	Behaver = doer Behaviour/Range = done
Mental Function: to construe and may project the world of inner consciousness	inside activities: thinking, knowing, liking, wanting, perceiving	needs consciousness and human characteristics	Senser = doer Phenomenon = thing known, liked/disliked, wanted, perceived
Verbal Function: to construe saying; may project	bringing the inside outside: saying something	restrictions: none: anyone/thing can say NB: inanimate saying is close to identifying	Sayer = doer Verbiage = said Receiver = said to Target = said about
Existential Function: to construe existence	introduce existence of new Participants	none	Existent
Relational Attributive Function: to construe relationships of description	to characterize or assign membership to a class	none	Carrier = thing described Attribute = description/possession
Relational Identifying Function: to construe relationships of identification and equation	to decode known meanings and encode new meanings	none	Identified = that which is to be identified Identifier = the new identity Token = form Value = function or role Token represents Value Value is represented by Token

As Table 2.1 shows, the SFL model of TRANSITIVITY provides a systematic categorization of processes according to various domains of human experience. Processes are central to

construing experience and are realized in verbs and verbal groups. By examining the types of processes selected in a text, one can gain an understanding of characterization because the types of processes that an author assigns to a character constructs that character's experience in the fictional world.

Another SFL convention that should be noted is that participant roles (e.g. 'Actor', 'Goal', 'Senser', etc. in TRANSITIVITY) are capitalized in order to denote that the word is a specific linguistic label. This convention extends to grammatical entities belonging to other metafunctions (e.g. 'Subject', 'Finite', 'Theme', 'Rheme', etc.) and will be adhered to throughout the thesis.

2.6. Choice of methodology

Most of the texts studied in this thesis pay at least some attention to TRANSITIVITY, but as has been mentioned, each text entails a combination of different methodological approaches. Any additional theoretical or methodological explanations will be provided with the relevant analyses. Since the choice of methodology in most cases can be located at particular intersections of the function-rank matrix, reference to the specific semiotic address of each analysis will be provided at the beginning of each body chapter.

2.7. Outline of thesis chapters

This thesis was written as a thesis-by-publication. As such, some of the body chapters have been either published or prepared for publication as individual articles. Although these body chapters remain mostly unchanged from their published iterations, some modifications have been made in order to improve the overall coherence of the thesis, including the addition of an orienting abstract at the beginning of each body chapter. A brief overview of each chapter is also provided here.

The inquiry into style, truth, and imagination in Carey's short stories begins with an examination of his postcolonial allegory *Conversations with Unicorns* in Chapter 3. The chapter begins with textual evidence for the previously unsupported claim that Carey writes with a matter-of-fact tone (Gilbey 1977, Pons 2001, Wilde, Hooton and Andrews 1985), arguing that this effect is achieved through a combination of elements including sentence length, sentence structure, and lack of modality. It is argued that the theme of the story is the habitualization of the horrors of colonization, as well as the constructed nature of reality. The tale is a highly imaginative story which celebrates possibility through the defamiliarizing effect of its exaggerated anti-realism. Central to the theme is the related idea of conflicting worldviews: a concept that is highlighted further in the following chapter.

Chapter 4 presents an analysis of *Do You Love Me?*. The story, like *Conversations with Unicorns*, is an imaginative allegory in which two contradictory versions of reality are juxtaposed in an unusual fictional society. Existing literary criticism tends to focus on the postcolonial dimension of the story, which is related to the central leitmotif of cartography. However, a stylistic analysis suggests a more general theme. It is argued, through collocation and grammatical analysis, that the narrator's father embodies a self-contradiction which is related to the anxiety felt by the people in the story. The story defamiliarizes reality through the presentation of an imaginative world and provokes the reader to think about how realities are constructed, as well as the role of social and emotional validation in this process.

Validation and reality are also at the centre of *The Last Days of a Famous Mime*, which is examined in Chapter 5. The link between style and fictional truth is made explicit in this analysis, in which the gradual loss of textual coherence realizes the disintegration of the protagonist's fictional reality. The chapter begins with an analysis of cohesive

chains, which reveal the main semantic domains of the text. Then, drawing on Hasan's notion of 'cohesive harmony' (Hasan 1984, Hasan 1985b), the ways in which the chains interact grammatically are examined. This coherence analysis is complemented by an investigation into marked grammatical Themes before concluding that the story is about the constructed nature of identity. It is also suggested that this exploration of coherence may be the first social-semiotic demonstration of metafiction: a label often applied to Carey's fiction without the support of textual evidence. In the story, understanding is central to the construction of reality: an idea that is also fundamental to the story analysed in the following chapter.

Chapter 6 focuses on lexical meaning in *American Dreams*. Following McHale's definition of modernist fiction (McHale 1987), the analysis reveals that style is central to meaning in this highly imaginative story. The main preoccupation in the story, which I refer to as "delayed understanding", is realized mostly in the connotative meaning of certain lexical items, as demonstrated in an analysis of evaluative language. Based on this textual evidence, along with some findings from TRANSITIVITY, it is argued that the story is best classified as an instance of modernist literature: a literary category not previously suggested for Carey's works. Compared with the stories of previous chapters, the anti-realism of *American Dreams* is less exaggerated. Instead, the story gains a powerful effect from its exploration of possibility and actuality.

The problematic relation between the possible and the actual is also fundamental to the story of Chapter 7. The chapter examines the complex meanings construed in *She Wakes*. Grammatical realizations of time, habituality, and negation are shown to be central to the story's meaning. First, an examination of TRANSITIVITY in the text is shown to realize important meanings related to the emptiness and passivity of the main character and focalizer. Following this, the contradictory forces of certainty and uncertainty are

revealed in a semantic analysis of TENSE and MODALITY. The language of the text is shown to construe an absence of inner life, in which ambiguity and contradiction feature as foregrounded patterns. The literary effect is a modernist kind of realism in which the complexity of the inner world of experience is expressed through a seemingly unremarkable style. In this investigation, it is demonstrated how an apparently simple fictional reality belies a complex theme.

In Chapter 8, I conclude the thesis by comparing my findings and interpretations with those previously offered by traditional literary critics. A summary of the analyses, along with their chosen methodologies, is presented. The interdependencies of style, truth, and imagination are discussed, concluding that in combination, the three elements function to highlight the constructedness of reality. The implications for this are discussed, as well as the value of stylistics in its broader context of Australian literary studies.

2.8. Conclusion

This chapter has outlined some of the key methodological concepts in social-semiotic stylistics. It has focused mostly on grammatical functions within the SFL tradition because these form a significant part of the analyses presented in this thesis. However, the investigation of Carey's style does not exclusively use systemic functional grammar, drawing also on categories of speech presentation, semantics in various forms, coherence, and corpus methods. In sum, a wide variety of methods have been employed in order to enable a description of style and an interpretation of meaning in Carey's short stories within the framework of symbolic articulation. The stories are often difficult to interpret. They tend to pose a challenge to the reader, which surely is related to their powerful aesthetic effect. On the journey of finding meaning in these wildly imaginative stories,

the stylistician is compelled to draw on a range of analytic methods, just as the author has used a diverse mixture of semiotic resources to demonstrate, in the words of Dutton (1979), an unblinking eye for the truth.

3. Foregrounding and defamiliarization in 'Conversations with unicorns'

Abstract

A version of this chapter was first published in *Verbal Art: Essays in Honour of Ruqaiya Hasan* (Tilney 2018b). In this chapter, I examine various types of foregrounding in *Conversations with Unicorns*, arguing that its principle of consistency is its defamiliarizing effect. The chapter orients the reader to a variety of stylistic techniques, some of which are applied in more detailed textual analyses in subsequent chapters. It also gives an explicit description of Carey's style and suggests that the style plays a central role in articulating the story's theme, which is the defamiliarization of reality and history. I conclude that the defamiliarizing effect of the text may provoke the reader to question his or her own reality and consider new possibilities.

The methodology chosen for this text covers a range of linguistic systems, including inter-dependency, DEICTICITY, and MODALITY. With reference to the function-rank matrix (see Figure 2.6), inter-dependency is located at the nexus of clause complex and the logical metafunction. It was chosen as a stylistic point of focus because it, along with the presentation of speech through logico-semantic relations, reveals the degree to which one social group is discursively subjugated. The systems of MODALITY and COMMENT are located at the intersections of verbal group/interpersonal metafunction and adverbial group/interpersonal metafunction respectively. Both systems reveal important details about the narrator's tone and point of view, which are central to the theme of the story. Another system that is explored in this text is DEICTICITY, which is best described in this instance as a subset of determination, at the intersection of the nominal group and the textual metafunction. DEICTICITY is significant because it contributes to the construal of context, or the fictional world, which is also central to the allegorical theme of the story.

The full text of Chapter 3 (pp.55-79) has been due to copyright restriction. Please refer to the following citation for details of the article contained in these pages.

M. J. Tilney (2018). Foregrounding and defamiliarization in Peter Carey's 'Conversations with Unicorns'. In R. Wegener, S. Neumann, A. Oesterle (Eds), *On Verbal Art - Essays in Honour of Ruqaiya Hasan - Rebekah Wegener* (pp.109-131). Equinox Publishing Ltd. <https://www.equinoxpub.com/home/view-chapter/?id=29806>

4. Reality and perception in ‘Do you love me?’

Abstract

This article examines the presentation of reality in Peter Carey’s short story *Do You Love Me?*. The story juxtaposes two opposing versions of reality realized in different linguistic styles, foregrounding their irreconcilability. In the story, Carey’s treatment of reality is clearly very anti-realist: a contradiction that serves its own purpose of drawing the reader’s attention to the world outside of the text, or in other words, of conveying truth through imagination. The story is another instance of Carey’s defamiliarization of reality, utilizing an allegorical mode similar to that of *Conversations with Unicorns*. Textual evidence supports a contradiction which is embodied in the narrator’s father, who is a central character and authority figure in the story.

Corpus methods are employed to identify key ideas, while a closer examination of particular meanings realized in the lexicogrammar confirms that contradiction is key to the story’s interpretation. Corpus methods focus on DENOTATION and CONNOTATION, which relate to the experiential and interpersonal metafunctions respectively at the word rank (see Figure 2.6). Corpus insights such as collocation are ‘prosodic’²⁰, building up meaning through a quantifiable view of foregrounding. This analysis also draws on TRANSITIVITY, which is located at the nexus of experiential metafunction and clause rank. The results of the analysis show Carey’s ability to articulate a complex message about the nature of reality through an imaginative tale about an unusual fictional society. Like *Conversations with Unicorns*, the story *Do You Love Me?* articulates a complex truth through its unique style and at times unusual linguistic choices.

4.1. Introduction

In 1975 Peter Carey’s short story *Do You Love Me?* was published in an Australian literary journal. Since then, it has been anthologized in various forms and has received a small amount of critical attention. Most of this criticism addresses the story’s obvious postcolonial aspects, wherein the act of mapping is viewed as a form of oppression. While not ruling out this important interpretation, I argue in this paper that the story articulates through its unique linguistic style a more general message about reality and perception. By applying corpus methods and a close stylistic reading of key sections, it is

²⁰ ‘Prosody’ refers to the accrual of meaning spanning long stretches of discourse and realized in various linguistic forms. Prosody is typically phonological but is not confined to spoken language: see for instance Halliday (2002 [1979]: 205-206).

demonstrated how various linguistic features contribute to the articulation of a theme concerned with conflicting realities within an imaginative fictional world.

The story begins with an explanation of the importance of cartographers in a fictional society. The cartographers are highly valued because they provide, through their maps and reports, what the people desire: an exact description of their nationhood. The cartographers' work is related to that of the census takers, who are responsible not only for counting people, but also for stock-taking the complete inventory of personal possessions belonging to the citizens. The annual cartographer's report determines the nature of the culture's traditional festival: a strange celebration with an ancient connection to corn. The cartographers' report is the people's authoritative source of reality and it maintains social stability. But when places, buildings, and people begin to dematerialize inexplicably, social order breaks down. Speculation ensues, as the importance of the cartographers continues to diminish and the "official reality"²¹ constructed by the cartographers is undermined. When it becomes known that even cartographers are prone to dematerializing, the narrator's vain and arrogant cartographer father becomes depressed, eventually dematerializing in his own living room.

The premise of the story is wonderfully imaginative, but what does the story mean? For Corbett (2015) it is a statement about Australia. Corbett points out that before Australia was explored by Europeans, it was a site of speculation and imagination. She claims that in this way the map preceded the land, and that the land is still in the process of becoming real but at the same time threatened by environmentally harmful industries. A similar idea is echoed by Hassall (1994: 34), who claims that "The Great South Land began life as the invention of Northern Hemisphere cartographers, who believed that it

²¹ In this chapter, by "official reality" I mean the version of reality construed through official documents and reports in the fictional world. The idea is more fully developed in Chapter 4.2.

would have to exist to balance the world". Both of these interpretations are interesting, but given the fantastic quality of the story and Carey's general disdain for literal interpretations (Maddocks 1981), the story's significance potentially extends beyond a particular geographic location in the physical world. As Bliss (1995: 98) points out, *Do You Love Me?* is best read as an allegory because it takes place "in a country that may or may not be Australia, in a time that may or may not be now or the future".

Other critics take a more postcolonial approach to the story. Dunlop (2011), for one, acknowledges the assertion of power and authority that is involved in the act of map-making. For Dunlop (2011) and Kušnir (2004), dematerialization in the story amounts to an undermining of colonial authority, which is interpreted as a form of postcolonial resistance. Adam (1989) approaches the story in a more abstract way, highlighting what he sees as a breakdown of referentiality and arguing that the story is best read as a comment on the insufficiency of cultural signing systems. Adam's reading is perhaps related to the idea that the literary tradition of exploration in Australian literature is tied to "a land without an absolute centre and in which meaning is shifting and elusive" (Genoni 2004: 245). Genoni (2004) also acknowledges the reality-building potential of cartographers when he points out that European explorers in Australia contributed to the nation's imaginative construction in their journals.

Only two critics refer directly to the style of Carey's writing, and neither of them provides any linguistic insight. Turner (1988: 18) claims that Carey writes "in simple language as though it is all perfectly true; he makes little effort to convince, simply assumes that you believe him". Just how Carey's language can be said to be "simple" is uncertain, and no textual evidence is provided for the claim. As this discussion will show, there is in fact grammatical evidence supporting the assumption of knowledge at the beginning of story. However, the style is significantly different at the story's end, which

forms the basis for my interpretation of the story's theme. Bennett (2002: 199) also alludes to a "social dimension" in the story, which is expressed through a "reportorial tone". It is not clear precisely what Bennett means by these descriptions, but in my own reading it will be argued that the so-called official version of reality is constructed at the generalized level of society and presents factual information as if it needed no justification. To illustrate this version of reality I now turn to the role of the cartographers in the story.

4.2. The role of the cartographers

The opening of *Do You Love Me?* (see Appendix) constructs a world in which certain ideas are construed as inherently true: one of which, significantly, is the social role of the cartographers. In the first section of the story entitled *1. The Role of the Cartographers*, there are a variety of instances of knowing. In (3.1), the process *understand* is related to the yearly census, which is an official count not only of the population but also all of their physical possessions. The census, according to the text, reflects the people's desire and craving (3.1, 12.2) for knowing exactly "where [they] stand". It is interesting to note here the double meaning that is implied in this wording: at the metaphorical level, it means the current state of affairs and at the literal level it means the ground, the physical land beneath one's feet. This double interpretation is significant because it foreshadows the two versions of reality that are later contrasted in the story, which could be glossed as the societal and the individual.

- (3) 3.1 To begin with one must *understand* the nature of the yearly census, a manifestation of our desire [[3.1.1 to *know*, *always*, *exactly* ||3.1.2 where we stand.]]
- (12) 12.1 And in all this the role of the Cartographers is perhaps the most important,
- 12.2 For our people crave, more than anything else, [[12.2.1 to *know* the extent of the nation, ||12.2.2 to *know*, *exactly*, the shape of the coastline, ||12.2.3 to *hear* [[12.2.3.1 what land may have been lost to the sea,]] ||12.2.4 to *know* ||12.2.5 what has been reclaimed ||12.2.6 and ^TO KNOW ||12.2.7 what is still in doubt.]]
- (22) 22.1 These were the stories of the nether regions
- 22.2 and I doubt
- 22.3 if they were *known* outside a very small circle of Cartographers and government officials.

The people depend on official reports such as the yearly census and the cartographers' report to make sense of their world. It is suggested later in this first section of the story that if this official version of reality were compromised, their society would break down.

The people of Carey's fictional world also expect their knowledge to be complete and comprehensive (3.1.1, 12.2, 12.2.2). The process of "knowing" refers to the shape and extent of the nation, including the so-called nether regions (12.2.1, 12.2.2, 12.2.5, 22.3). The nether regions are nebulous areas of land on the margins of the nation which are prone to disappearing. According to the story, only the cartographers and certain elite members of society are aware of these regions. For this reason, the cartographers occupy a central position in society, which is implicit in the people's strong desire for knowing their country. Evidence for this can be seen in the use of homophoric reference.

4.3. Assumed knowledge

It has been shown in Chapter 3.3.2 how the definite article may function as a homophoric referrer. A nominal group preceded by the definite article has the potential to point outward from the text toward its context, which in this case is the fictional world. By its very nature, the definiteness of *the* means that the reader is expected or assumed to be

able to identify the referent in the context of the story. By referring to cartographers as *the Cartographers*, from the beginning, the narrator gives them a special status, which is reinforced by the fact that “Cartographers” is always capitalized. The centrality of the cartographers perhaps can be seen most clearly when the use of definite reference is contrasted with the use of indefinite reference.

- <1> a. 1. The Role of *the Cartographers*
 Perhaps a few words about the role of *the Cartographers* in our
 present society are warranted.
- b. 1. The Role of Cartographers
 Perhaps a few words about the role of Cartographers in our present
 society are warranted.

In <1a> the cartographers are construed as known or knowable right from their first mention in the text. In effect, the text constructs a particular type of relationship between the narrator and the reader. The reader is constructed as someone to whom the fictional world need not be justified in terms of the physical world. The world of *Do You Love Me?* is indeed an unsettling one, with the contemporariness of bureaucracy coexisting with the ancient and supernatural ideas associated with the festival of the corn – which as an aside is also construed as given and shared, via the use of homophoric reference.

Another interesting point to note is that because *cartographers* appears as postmodifier to the nominal head *role*, the very idea that the cartographers have a function in society is not negotiable: it is simply assumed to be so. Halliday argues that through nominalization, the semantic relations that hold between two items (in this case *role* and *cartographers*) may be lost, assuming that nominalization is a kind of semantic packaging

in which “clausal patterns are replaced by nominal ones” (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014: 730)²².

4.3.1. Evidence from collocation

Since cartographers play an important role in the fictional world, as well as an important textual role in the first section of the story, it may be useful to further investigate the semantic significance of cartographers in the text. To this end, a corpus linguistic approach was adopted to identify latent linguistic patterns of potential significance. As an application of quantitative methods to the study of literature, corpus linguistic analysis may be interpreted as a form of ‘distant reading’, which as Bode (2012: 10) points out, has been criticized by some literary critics as being too reductive, abstract, and pretentiously objective. Further, Bode (2012: 12) argues that recognizing the limitations and potentially negative implications of using quantitative and computational methods in the study of literature should not be a basis for exclusion, especially if they are supplemented by qualitative methods, which may include ‘close readings’²³ of the text. In this chapter, I use both qualitative and quantitative methods. First, a word frequency list was created using the concordance program *AntConc* (Anthony 2019). The results show that the most common ‘lexical items’²⁴ are *father* and *cartographers* (see Table 4.1).

²² Halliday refers to this phenomenon of semantic reconstrual as ‘grammatical metaphor’, of which nominalization is just one type.

²³ ‘Close reading’ is a text-centred approach to reading literature coined by the New Critics, who were influenced in large measure by the Formalist and Structuralist antecedents of social-semiotic stylistics. Although social-semiotic stylistics and close reading both give value to the form of a work, the two are distinct practices.

²⁴ Following Halliday, ‘lexical items’ are defined as “content words”, as opposed to ‘grammatical items’, which are “those that function in closed systems in the language: in English, determiners, pronouns, most prepositions, conjunctions, some classes of adverb, and finite verbs” (Halliday 1985: 61).

Table 4.1 Word frequencies in ‘Do you love me?’

Rank	Freq	Word
1	219	the
2	106	and
3	106	i
4	100	of
5	90	to
6	71	a
7	61	my
8	58	in
9	54	he
10	45	that
11	42	is
12	42	it
13	42	was
14	38	<i>father</i>
15	34	they
16	33	me
17	29	had
18	29	were
19	29	you
20	24	<i>cartographers</i>

The fact that *father* and *cartographers* are the most frequently occurring lexical items warrants a closer inspection of how these words behave in the text. Such an investigation requires corpus methods. Corpus linguistics complements social-semiotic stylistics, offering profound insights into the meaning of text (Thompsons and Hunston 2006). Biber (2011: 16) points out that corpus-assisted studies of literature texts should combine quantitative and qualitative methods. In particular, the synergy of corpus methods and Hasan’s symbolic articulation has been noted (Miller 2016, Miller and Luporini 2015, Miller and Luporini 2018). A particularly useful corpus method is the study of ‘collocation’, or the co-occurrence of particular lexical items. Louw (2007b) argues that collocations are the building blocks of fictional worlds, so an analysis of the collocates of the frequently occurring lexical items could provide a window to the unusual world of Carey’s story.

The examination of collocation in the text was also carried out using AntConc. The collocation window selected was three words to the left and three words to the right of the node (3L-3R), following Louw (2007b). The default statistic for the method of collocation measure in AntConc is mutual information. Mutual information measures “the amount of non-randomness present when two words co-occur” (Hunston 2002: 71) based on “the independent relative frequency of the two words” (Hunston 2002: 72). However, Carey’s single story text comprises a very small self-contained corpus, which means that the statistical method requires consideration. It is important to know whether there is sufficient evidence to confirm that the association between collocates is, as Hunston (2002: 72) puts it, “the result of more than the vagaries of a particular corpus”. For this reason, an alternative statistical measure was chosen. T-score was considered a more suitable option because, following Hunston, it is able to give information about how an item behaves grammatically in a corpus, whereas mutual information is more concerned with collocates which are more or less fixed in idiomatic co-occurrence.

The difference between mutual information and t-score is also mentioned by Brezina (2018), who differentiates the methods in terms of frequency and exclusivity. Here “exclusivity” refers to the tendency for words to co-occur only with each other, as in the example *okee* and *dokey* in Figure 4.1. On the other hand, collocates such as *new idea* are non-exclusive, since both *new* and *idea* may individually collocate with a wide range of different items.

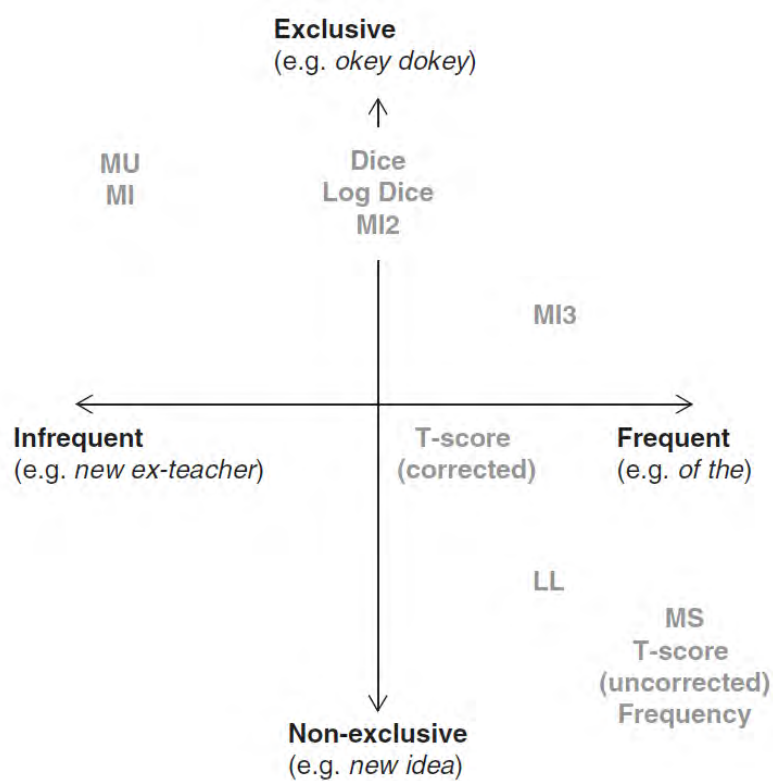


Figure 4.1 Frequency and exclusivity scale (Brezina 2018: 74)

The search term was entered with a wildcard (*) to capture all of its relevant forms such as plurals. The results were then sorted according to statistic, again due to the small size of the corpus (see Figure 4.2).

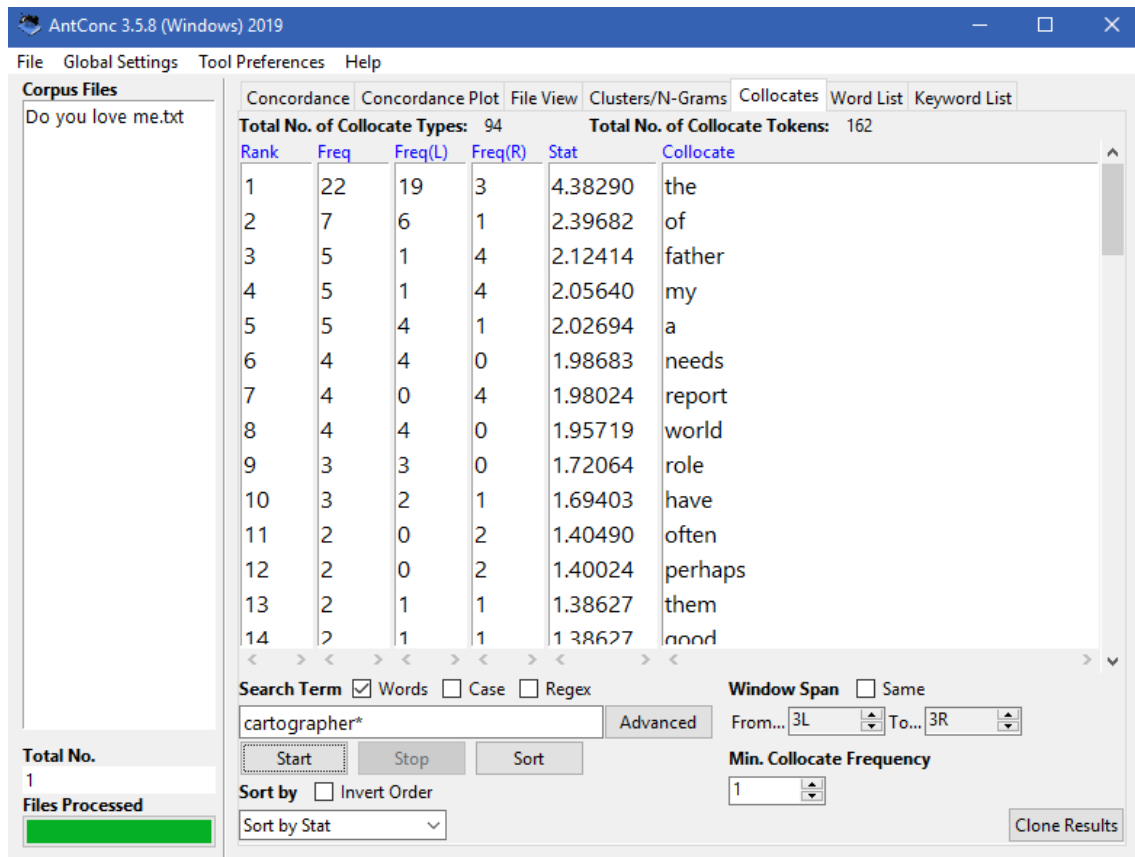


Figure 4.2. Collocation search settings in AntConc

Table 4.2 shows that of the top ten collocates²⁵ of *cartographer**, the only lexical items are *father*, *world*, *report*, *needs*, and *role*. The *Stat* column lists the t-scores²⁶ for each collocation, indicating the degree of confidence that association is not due to chance. Hunston (2002: 72) points out that the t-score is generally considered significant if it has a minimum value of 2. According to this criterion, only the collocate *father* passes the test for statistical significance, closely followed by *needs* and *report*. For this reason, care must be taken not to overstate the results. But within the constraints of a small corpus size, the most important collocates are shown.

²⁵ Although the list continues, the remaining data was not considered to be helpful to the discussion. The same principle will be applied in the presentation of other computer-assisted results in this chapter.

²⁶ Similar rankings were obtained when the results were sorted by frequency. The relationship between t-score and frequency can be observed in Table 4.2, Table 4.3, and Table 4.4, which descending t-score and descending word frequency display a correlation.

Although only the top ten results were included in Table 4.2, the selection adequately illustrates the range of relative features. Similar results were obtained for the same search term using different collocation windows (4L-4R, 2L-2R, 1L-1R), whereby the ranking turned out to be different but the main lexical items generally remained within the list of the top ten collocates.

Leaving aside the top lexical collocate *father* for now, the results confirm the general idea that the cartographers and their *reports* occupy a central *role* in the fictional *world*. The fact that the cartographers are *needed* seems to be well established in the textual makeup of the story.

Table 4.2 Collocates of *cartographer**

Rank	Freq	Freq (L)	Freq (R)	Stat	Collocate
1	22	19	3	4.38290	the
2	7	6	1	2.39682	of
3	5	1	4	2.12414	<i>father</i>
4	5	1	4	2.05640	my
5	5	4	1	2.02694	a
6	4	4	0	1.98683	<i>needs</i>
7	4	0	4	1.98024	<i>report</i>
8	4	4	0	1.95719	<i>world</i>
9	3	3	0	1.72064	<i>role</i>
10	3	2	1	1.69403	have

In addition to the tendency for *cartographers* to collocate with lexical items related to their importance in society, further evidence can be found in a keyword analysis. A ‘keyword’ is a word that occurs significantly more frequently in a particular corpus. Again, AntConc was used to execute the search, using as the reference corpus a wordlist derived from the British National Corpus (combined spoken and written), which was

downloaded from the AntConc homepage²⁷. The choice of reference corpora is an important consideration in corpus stylistics (Louw 2007a, Mahlberg 2012), so the keyword analysis was repeated with the BE06 and AM06 corpus wordlists which were also downloaded from the AntConc homepage. Although slightly different results were obtained each time, the top four keywords (*cartographers*, *father*, *my*, *i*) remained the same regardless of the reference corpus used.

The default keyness values in AntConc were retained for the search (see Figure 4.3), namely log-likelihood as the statistical measure at a confidence threshold of $p < 0.05$. Log-likelihood is a common measure for keyness even though alternative methods have also been shown to be effective measures (Brezina 2018). Log-likelihood is an appropriate method for the present investigation because, like t-score, it is located in the frequent/non-exclusive quadrant of the frequency and exclusivity scale (see Figure 4.1).

Another dimension of the keyword search is keyword effect size. With regard to keywords, effect size measures the statistical significance of the difference between word distributions in two corpora. The default keyword effect size measure is dice coefficient (see Figure 4.3), and despite the fact that AntConc offers nine additional keyword effect size measures, no noticeable difference was observed in the results when the other methods were applied.

²⁷ <http://www.laurenceanthony.net/software/antconc/>

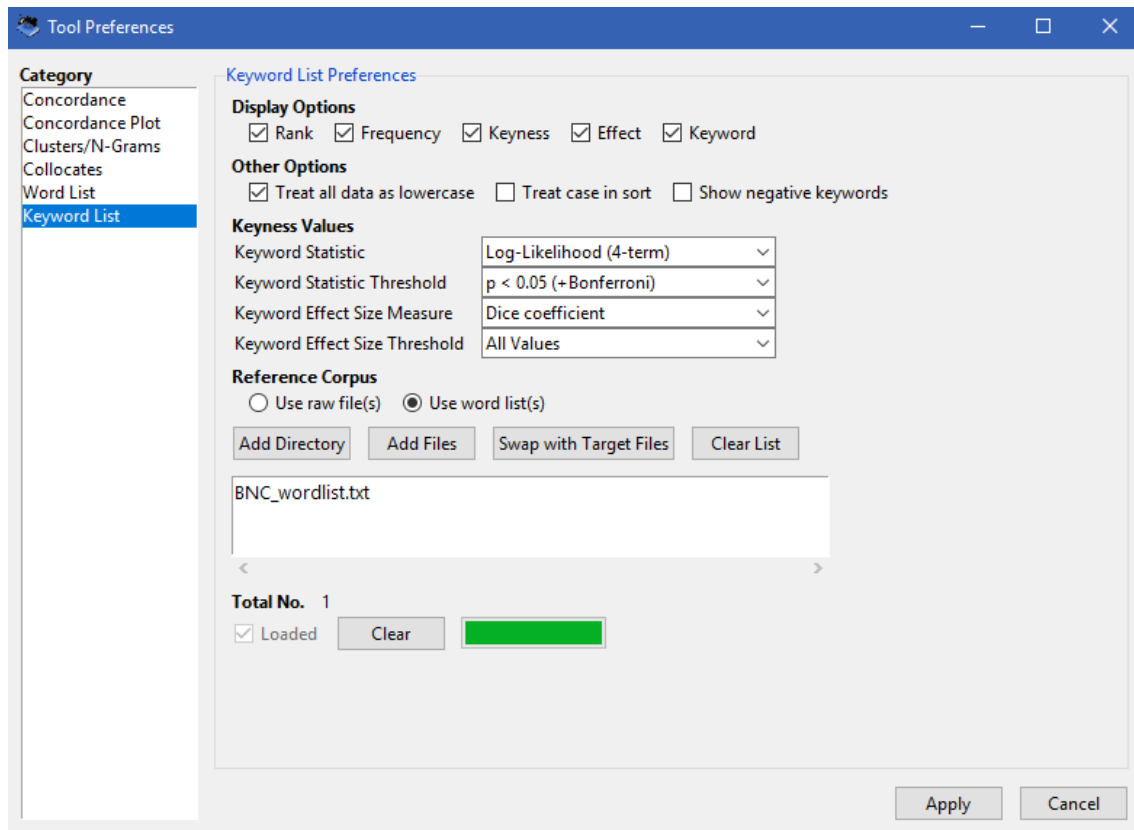


Figure 4.3 Keyword settings in AntConc

The result in Figure 4.4 shows that the top keyword is *cartographers*. Toolan (2009) has demonstrated that the top keyword plays a central role in the development of a short story's narrative. Given the importance of the top keyword, it is not surprising that the textual significance of *cartographers* is consistent with the idea that the cartographers of the story are vitally important to their society.

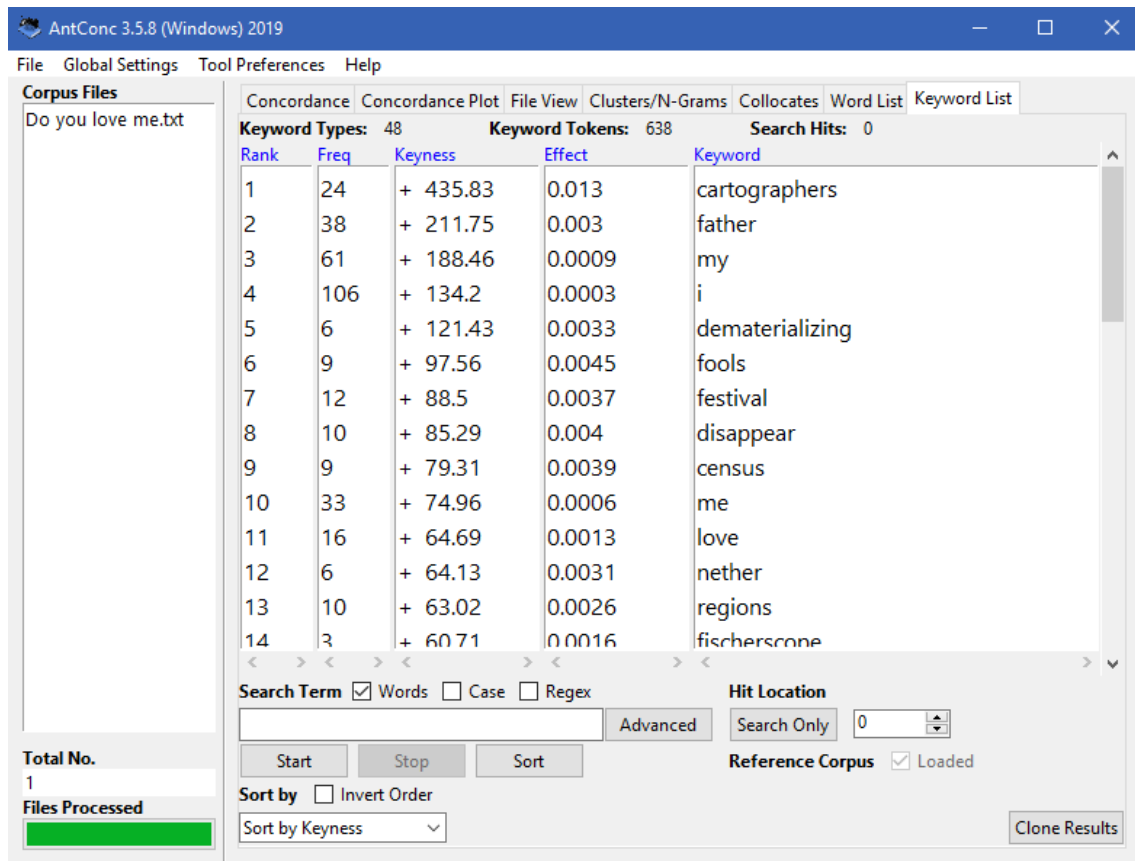


Figure 4.4. Top keywords in ‘Do you love me?’

Until now I have argued that the cartographers occupy a central place in the fictional society of *Do You Love Me?*, and that their significance is assumed to be uncritically accepted. The cartographers provide the general populace with detailed information about the boundaries of their land. Generally, such boundaries remain fairly stable, but if they do happen to be contested, it is usually within a violent and chaotic context such as war or political turmoil, neither of which are evident in the story. However, the annual cartographers’ report changes from year to year, which suggests that what the reader might assume to be fixed is in fact in a state of flux. As the narrator clearly states, the cartographers are important because people want to know *what has been reclaimed* (12.2.5) and *what is still in doubt* (12.2.7). It is the cartographers who see this shifting state of the land, and who report back to the people. In effect, the cartographers make visible the invisible. But it is only an abstract kind of seeing: what people can perceive

on a map, or in a report, is an abstraction or representation of reality. When people begin to see buildings and eventually people disappearing with their own eyes, they react strongly. As the next part of the discussion will show, the unexplained disappearance of physical things shows that seeing conflicts with believing, and this idea is closely connected to the story's theme.

4.3.2. Significance of dematerialization

As seen in Figure 4.4, the top three keywords, discounting non-lexical items, are *cartographers*, *father*, and *dematerializing*. The item *cartographers* has been discussed, and *father* will be considered in Chapter 4.5.1. In the story, the act of dematerializing begins with sections of land and is only known by the cartographers. Eventually, the general public begin to witness the dematerialization of buildings.

The first building to dematerialize is the I.C.I. building, which is an actual building in Melbourne. Completed in 1958, the I.C.I. building is now called Orica House and is on the state heritage register. The I.C.I. building of Melbourne, according to Corbett (2015), was a symbol of modernization in the 1960s, as well as being architecturally progressive. Since its construction began, it has been highly valued in Australia. Although the I.C.I. building of the story must be taken as fictional, it is interesting to note what it may potentially evoke. If the fictional I.C.I. building is also considered to be valuable, then it is not surprising that the people were angry and felt as if they had been robbed, as in (78) and (81).

- (77) 77.1 5. Behaviour when Confronted with Dematerialization
- (78) 78.1 The anger of our people <<78.2 when confronted with acts of theft>> has always been legendary
- 78.3 and was certainly highlighted by the incidents [[78.3.1 which occurred on the night of the festival.]]
- (79) 79.1 But the fury exhibited on this famous night could not compare with the intensity of emotion [[79.1.1 displayed by those [[79.1.1.1 who witnessed the earliest scenes of dematerialization.]]]]
- (80) 80.1 The silent crowd [[80.1.1 who watched the I.C.I. building]] erupted into hysteria
- 80.2 when they realized
- 80.3 that it had finally gone
- 80.4 and wasn't likely to come back.
- (81) 81.1 It was like some monstrous theft [[81.1.1 for which punishment must be meted out.]]

As this excerpt from the text shows, people react to the disappearance of buildings not with surprise, but rather with anger (78.1, 79.1, 80.1). The people's reaction suggests that they live in a reality in which the observed disappearance of a building is, despite being unpopular, somehow normal. The reason for this may have something to do with the cartographers' role of making sure that the nation remains, at least physically, intact. Toward the end of the story, the narrator's father, talking about the nether regions, says:

- (151) 151.1 These regions, <<151.2 I'm sure you know,>> are seldom visited by men and only then by people like me
- 151.3 whose sole job it is [[151.3.1 to make sure [[151.3.1.1 that they're still there.]]]]

More importantly, the people's anger suggests that lived experience is at odds with the official version of reality. This is because the dematerialization of buildings occurred in the wake of a good cartographers' report, which is supposed to guarantee a good festival and, presumably, general stability for the year. But when the people see their world dematerializing, they feel betrayed and react in an unexpected way. Their behaviour is significant to the story in this way, and this significance is reflected in the collocates of *dematerializ**.

Table 4.3. Collocates of *dematerializ**

Rank	Freq	Freq (L)	Freq (R)	Stat	Collocate
1	5	4	1	2.16243	of
2	4	3	1	1.95554	he
3	3	2	1	1.72825	first
4	3	0	3	1.52386	the
5	2	1	1	1.41305	<i>reports</i>
6	2	2	0	1.36531	is
7	2	0	2	1.29080	i
8	1	0	1	0.99835	<i>stared</i>
9	1	0	1	0.99835	<i>silent</i>
10	1	0	1	0.99835	<i>rapidly</i>

Table 4.3 shows that of the lexical items, the top collocate of *dematerializ** is *reports*. The results suggest that the phenomenon of dematerialization is associated with the official reality-constructing reports of the cartographers (*reports*) and the ensuing reactions (*stared*, *silent*). Although the statistical association is below the conventional cut-off point of 2, the data still show the ranking of lexical collocates in the text. Another way that dematerialization is construed in the text is through the word *disappear*. Taken as roughly synonymous terms, there may not be a significant semantic differentiation between the two items. But if there were a distinction, it would be made visible through a collocation analysis.

Table 4.4. Collocates of *disappear**

Rank	Freq	Freq (L)	Freq (R)	Stat	Collocate
1	10	6	4	3.01024	the
2	7	6	1	2.63413	will
3	4	2	2	1.89023	of
4	3	1	2	1.72825	<i>completely</i>
5	3	2	1	1.71811	not
6	3	2	1	1.71684	we
7	3	3	0	1.71557	<i>world</i>
8	3	2	1	1.67882	it
9	3	1	2	1.67882	is
10	3	0	3	1.65854	in

As Table 4.4 shows, the top lexical collocates for *disappear** are *completely* and *world*. Despite showing a fairly weak association with lexical items, the analyses in Table 4.3 and Table 4.4 rank the top collocations for each node. Comparing the collocations of *disappear** and *dematerializ**, it seems that *disappear** is associated with the physical reality of the world, while *dematerializ** is associated with the semiotic reality of reports and maps. Indeed, the two search items represent contradictory versions of reality, with the official and authoritative reality of the cartographers conflicting with the lived experience of people in the physical world. This clash of worldviews, as has been suggested, is evident in the peculiar way in which people respond to the dematerialization of buildings and people that, according to the official version of reality, are not supposed to do so.

Another interesting point is that taken on their own terms, *dematerialize* is inherently more concerned with physicality, while *disappear* collocates more frequently with perception. The fact that *dematerialize* does not collocate with the *world*, which has a greater implication of physicality, could be considered as a form of foregrounding because it implies a deviance from an expected norm.

4.4. Types of seeing

An interim interpretation of the story's theme is that reality can contradict itself, or perhaps more accurately, there exists an irreconcilability between the authoritative social reality of generalization and the concrete and individualized reality of personal experience. To further explore this idea, the analysis now turns to the final section of the story entitled *14. One Final Scene*. The fact that the subheading contains the word *scene* immediately evokes the visual, and indeed the process of seeing is repeated throughout

the section in various construals. The opening of the final section of the story is provided here for reference.

- (204) 204.1 14. One Final *Scene*
 (205) 205.1 Let me describe a final *scene* to you:
 205.2 I am sitting on the sofa [[205.2.1 my father brought home ||205.2.2
 when I was five years old.]]
 (206) 206.1 I *am watching* television.
 (207) 207.1 My father is sitting in a leather armchair [[207.1.1 that once
 belonged to his father ||207.1.2 and which has always been
 exclusively his.]]
 (208) 208.1 My mother is sitting in the dining alcove with her cards spread
 across the table,
 208.2 playing one more interminable game of patience.
 (209) 209.1 I *glance casually across at* my father
 209.2 *to see* [[209.2.1 if he is doing anything more [[209.2.1.1 than
stare into space,]]]]
 209.3 and I *notice*, with a terrible shock, [[209.3.1 that he *is showing*
the first signs of dematerializing.]]
 (210) 210.1 “What are you *staring at*?”
 (211) 211.1 My father, in fact, *has been staring* at me.
 (212) 212.1 “Nothing.”
 (213) 213.1 “Well, don’t.”
 (214) 214.1 Nervously I *return my eyes* to the inanity of the television.

Before discussing types of seeing, it is immediately apparent that this section depicts a family isolated from each other. The father is sitting in a chair which *has always been exclusively his*, the narrator is watching television, and the mother is sitting in an *alcove* playing the solitary game of *patience*. The sense of dislocation is enhanced by the brief and brusque exchange between the narrator and his father (210-213).

The scene begins with the narrator directly addressing the reader for the first and only time. The opening line *Let me describe a final scene to you* begins with an interpersonal comment *Let me*, and the narration switches to the present progressive, which lacks the sense of timelessness or habituality conveyed by the simple present tense of the story’s opening section entitled *1. The Role of the Cartographers*. In Chapter 4.3 it was argued that there is an assumption of shared knowledge that exists between the

narrator and the reader in the story's beginning. But here at the story's ending, no such assumption exists. The narrator proceeds to describe the scene to the reader, giving no indication of the official reality presented at the beginning of the story.

In this final section there are some noteworthy instances of seeing, of which all but a few are unusual. One such instance is *I glance casually across at my father* (209.1). By definition, a glance is a quick or cursory look, which in this instance is further enfeebled by the circumstantial adjunct *casually*. Further, the word *glance* collocates in this instance with *across at*, which occurs no more than twice in the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA): a multi-register corpus containing over 560 million words. The unusual wording implies a disconnection between the process of gazing and the object of the gaze, as if the gazer does not really see anything.

The following clause (209.2) contains the non-finite process *to see*, but it is an irrealis process of purpose. The clause (209.2.1.1) is also a non-finite process of staring. But it is an empty kind of staring, realized circumstantially as *into space*. Neither *to see* nor *stare into space* implies that the Sensors of these processes perceive anything at all.

An interesting instance in which the narrator does in fact see something is (209.3), in which he sees his father beginning to dematerialize. What makes it interesting is the fact that this seeing is realized non-congruently, with Carey instead choosing *notice*: a near-mental process of perception. The clause is immediately followed by another clause containing a non-congruent realization of seeing. In (209.3.1), the father is *showing the first signs of dematerialization*. The results of a search in COCA reveal that *showing the first signs of* usually expresses something that is normally difficult to detect or perceive such as the gradual change from darkness to light in the early morning. The choice of wording in *he is showing the first signs of dematerializing* is thus considerably less certain than a congruent wording such as *he is starting to dematerialize*.

Yet another kind of seeing – staring – appears in the brief exchange between the narrator and his father in (210-213). But more significant is the following clause (214.1), when the narrator says *I return my eyes to the inanity of the TV*. The wording may strike the reader as unusual and incongruent. To return one's eyes to something is much less direct than *watching* it, and in any case it is not the TV that is being watched but the *inanity* of the TV: a non-seeable abstraction. In the context of the story it is understandable that the narrator, having witnessed his father beginning to dematerialize and not wishing to reveal it, would probably be distracted and thus unable to process a great deal of what is showing on the television. However, it certainly adds to the overall feeling that the lookers are not seeing, which is further supported by six more instances in the following text.

- | | | |
|-------|-------|--|
| (225) | 225.1 | I stare determinedly at the television |
| | 225.2 | and feel <i>my father's eyes</i> on me. |
| (232) | 232.1 | My mother <i>looks up</i> sharply from her cards |
| | 232.2 | and lets out a surprised cry. |
| (233) | 233.1 | I <i>turn to</i> my father. |
| (234) | 234.1 | He has almost disappeared. |
| (235) | 235.1 | I <i>can see</i> the leather of the chair through his stomach. |
| (237) | 237.2 | "You bloody fools," |
| | 237.3 | he gasps, |
| | 237.4 | "I wish you <i>could see</i> the looks on your bloody silly faces." |
| (239) | 239.1 | My mother <i>looks across</i> at me nervously, a card still in her hand. |

In (232) his mother *looks up sharply from* her cards. When she looks up there is no mention of her seeing the father dematerializing, even though her surprised cry proves that she has indeed seen it. The narrator then *turns to his father* (233), which is an indirect way of saying that he looks at his father, to notice that the father is so insubstantial that the narrator *can see the leather of the chair through his stomach* (235). So although the narrator perceives inanimate objects such as the furniture directly and congruently, the same cannot be said of the human being with whom the narrator is supposed to share an

intimate interpersonal connection. The father's inability to be seen is realized in various linguistic choices which construe a kind of looking without seeing.

The idea of not seeing plays out further in (237), with the father's last loveless words (*I wish you could see the looks on your bloody silly faces*) and the mother looking *across at* her son (239). Both instances construe a kind of non-seeing. When the father says *I wish you could see*, it is an irrealis sentence, and when the mother *looks across at* her son, she is not looking across any physical object, so the wording construes the process of looking as oblique.

4.5. Contradictory realities

The analysis presented here shows that there are two very different kinds of reality in the story world of *Do You Love Me?*. The first, shown at the beginning of the story, is authoritative and it generalizes about human behaviour within that society. It is the reality constructed in the reports of cartographers and other officials such as the census takers, and it assumes that the important role of cartographers is a given. This is the reality that has served the people since ancient times, and traditionally it has never been wrong as a predictor of fortune. For this reason, the cartographers' reports are accepted by the people as knowledge despite the fact that they are incapable of seeing what the cartographers can see.

The ending of the story depicts a very different kind of reality. It is a reality based on perception at the most local level: the family unit. This version of reality is described to the reader as a scene, which appears to play out in real-time narration. The narrator assumes no shared knowledge with the reader, for this is an individualist kind of reality that varies according to one's perspective. It is characterized by a certain preoccupation with types of looking, but it is generally an unusual kind of looking which does not

guarantee visual perception. In this way it is opposite to the official kind of reality of the beginning. Rather than knowing without seeing, people at the end of the story are seeing without knowing.

In effect, the juxtaposition of these two conflicting realities serves to problematize the very nature of reality itself. Through his skilful writing style and his vivid imagination, Carey conveys the idea that reality is self-contradictory. This interpretation has been enabled by the application of stylistic methods including quantitative corpus methods. But to complement these findings and interpretations, the discussion now turns briefly to the narrator's father, who should not be ignored as he plays a key role in the development of the narrative.

4.5.1. Significance of the father

It has been demonstrated that *father* is the second top keyword in the story and also the top lexical collocate of *cartographer**, which is not surprising given that the father is a cartographer. As a corollary, the father embodies the abstraction of the cartographers' social role. As such, he stands for authority at two social levels: society in general and the family unit. It has been argued that the text construes reality differently at these two social levels and that a tension exists between them. The narrator's father, then, could also be seen as the embodiment of this tension.

First, it is necessary to mention the father's theory of dematerialization. When the unexplained disappearance of buildings and people begins in the story, a number of theories arise. The first theory is religious, positing that the world is a god's dream, and that when the god is fully awake, the world will completely disappear. A more apparently scientific theory supposes that the world has become sensitive to light, of which its dematerialization is a symptom.

Yet another theory is that the census takers did a poor job, and that objects and people disappeared as a result of being overlooked in their stocktake. However, the theory that is given the most weight in the story is the father's theory that the disappearances are caused by not being loved.

- (112) 112.1 People [[112.1.1 who are not loved]] will disappear.
 (113) 113.1 Everything [[113.1.1 that is not loved]] will disappear from the face of the earth.

The father's theory is the idea from which the story's title is derived: the narrator asks his girlfriend Karen whether she loves him after first witnessing a man disappear in public. The narrator's mother also asks her son whether he loves her at the very end of the story, after having witnessed the father's dematerialization. There is explicit evidence to prove that the narrator's father was no longer loved by the end of the story.

- (230) 230.1 I realize, with a flush of panic and guilt,
 230.2 that I don't love him.

But there is another element of the father's theory, which states that dematerialization will occur when someone or something is either harmful or irrelevant.

- (104) 104.1 8. My Father's Theory
 (105) 105.1 The world, according to my father, was exactly like the human body
 105.2 and had its own defence mechanisms [[105.2.1 with which it defended itself against anything [[105.2.1.1 that either *threatened it* ||105.2.1.2 or was *unnecessary to it*.]]]]
 (106) 106.1 The I.C.I building and the I.C.I company had obviously constituted some *threat to the world*
 106.2 or had simply *been irrelevant*.
 (107) 107.1 That's [[107.1.1 why it had disappeared]]
 107.2 and not because some damn fool god was waking up
 107.3 and rubbing his eyes.

As the extract shows, dematerialization does not result simply from a lack of love. Rather, the place, object, or person must be a threat or irrelevant (105, 106). Corbett (2015: 52) interprets the disappearance of the I.C.I. and Shell buildings in this way, claiming that both companies pose a threat to Australia because they capitalize from its natural resources. Similarly, Dunlop (2011: 28) suggests that the death of the narrator's father symbolizes a contest to the authority of the map, which constitutes a form of postcolonial resistance.

In my own reading, if it can be shown that the father is indeed harmful or irrelevant, it will confirm his theory of dematerialization. At the same time, if the father's theory is confirmed, it would also confirm that as a cartographer, he knows important truths that average people do not know, in turn suggesting that he is not irrelevant. In other words, if the father's theory can be shown to be correct, this would itself be self-contradictory, in the same way that the two presented versions of reality, both of which the father represents, are irreconcilable.

4.5.2. Evidence from transitivity

Since harm is generally carried out by the actor of a material process, it may be useful to get an overview of the Actors in the complete text.

Table 4.5. Actors in 'Do you love me?'

Actor	Specific examples	Count	%
buildings	a large house, the I.C.I. building, the Shell building	5	3.76
cartographers		3	2.26
family	we, Karen, mother	9	6.77
<i>father</i>		25	18.80
misc.	everything..., father's depression, help, something, the census, the Festival..., the lights, the pressure of his hand..., the sloppy work..., these things, [[to have returned...]], scene	15	11.28
narrator		13	9.77
news	the news, the media	3	2.26
<i>people</i>	a family..., a man..., a very beautiful woman, caretaker, census officials, citizens, householders, maidens, men, my friend James Bray, people, strangers, the crowd, taxi drivers	54	40.60
world		6	4.51
Total		133	100

Table 4.5 shows that the highest proportion of Actors in the story are *people* (around 40%), which refers to the general populace as well as background characters such as the

woman and man who dematerialize. This figure confirms that the story has much to do with the people in the fictional world. The second highest proportion of Actors is the miscellaneous category at around 11%, which will be discounted here since it includes all of the actors which did not fit in to a particular group identity. The third highest proportion of actors is comprised by the narrator's father at almost 19% of the total number of actors. By contrast, the narrator makes up only around 10%. These figures further confirm that cartographers, embodied in the narrator's father, are central to the textual and narrative development of the story.

Since the overview of Actors reveals the father as the most prominent individual character, a closer look will be given to his material processes. The processes selected are the ones in which the narrator is adversely affected in some way by his father's material process.

- (42) 42.1 As was usual in these circumstances my father addressed all his remarks to Karen.
- (44) 44.1 I always had the uncomfortable feeling
44.2 that he was flirting with my girlfriends
44.3 and I never knew
44.4 what to do about it.
- (164) 164.1 I sighed, a little too loudly,
164.2 and my father *narrowed his eyes*.
- (199) 199.1 My father *woke me* at 3.00 a.m.
199.2 to tell me
199.3 why the world needed Cartographers.
- (192) 192.1 He seemed more kindly now
192.2 and he placed his hand on my knee
192.3 and patted it.
- (195) 195.1 The pressure of his hand on my knee increased
195.2 until I yelped with pain
195.3 and still he held on,
195.4 *hurting me terribly*.
- (221) 222.1 He will *blame me*.
- (223) 223.1 He will *attack me*.
- (224) 224.1 Old as he is,
224.2 he is still considerably stronger [[224.2.1 than I am]]
224.3 and he could *hurt me badly*.
- (229) 229.1 Because I can only remember
229.2 how he has *hit me*,
229.3 *hurt me*,
229.4 *humiliated me*
229.5 and flirted with my girlfriends.

As this list shows, many of the instances construe the father as physically harming his son (195, 223, 224, 229). Clause complex (229) is particularly significant because it involves no less than four instances of negative impact (*hit*, *hurt*, *humiliated*, and *flirted*). While *hit* and *hurt* are clearly physical, there are other non-physical forms of harm or disruption that are construed including humiliation (229.4), blame (222.1), disturbance (199.1), and insulting interactions with the narrator's girlfriends (42, 44, 229.5). Also, in (164) the narrowing of the father's eyes frightens the narrator. The single exception in this subset is a positive action in (192), in which the father kindly touches his son. But in the context of the story, this warm gesture is immediately followed by a painful squeeze when the

father is angered by his son's suggestion to change his job (195). The contrast is a humorous rejection of the idea that the father is capable of showing kindness to his son.

There are no other examples in the text of the father's kindness, except for one line in which the father, presumably nervous about not being loved, reminds his son that he has looked after him since the narrator was young. However, due the fact that the father does not even know his son's age, which is shown just fifteen sentences prior, the truth of the father's remark seems dubious. At twenty years of age, the narrator is now a young adult, and probably has little need for the authority figure that he is no longer capable of loving.

The remaining material processes with the father as Actor are not included here. They are mostly non-effective actions such as standing, sitting, and dematerializing. What all this evidence suggests is that the father, at least in terms of his actions from the narrator's point of view, is construed as either harmful or ineffectual. This grammatical evidence confirms the father's theory of dematerialization: that anything which poses a threat or which is otherwise irrelevant will disappear. The paradox is that the truth of his theory also validates his status as an important member of society due to his valuable knowledge and insight as a cartographer. The father is thus at odds with himself, which suggests that theme of the story is about the self-contradictory nature of reality, or the irreconcilability of conflicting versions of reality.

This interpretation of *Do You Love Me?* presented here has the potential to accommodate more specifically postcolonial readings (Dunlop 2011, Kušnir 2004), which focus on the irreconcilable worldviews of colonizer and colonized. However, as has been argued, the tension between opposing realities is not a simple idea, and certainly not one that can be argued without mapping the elusive meanings hidden in Carey's unique linguistic style.

4.6. Conclusion

In this analysis, two different styles construing two different versions of reality have been examined. The evidence suggests that the story is about contradiction, that contradiction is central to the story's meaning. Carey has stated that as a writer he was influenced by the way in which Faulkner problematizes reality (Maddocks 1981), an idea which is also a recurring motif in the works of Carey's other literary heroes García Márquez and Borges. One of Carey's readers²⁸ even claims that *Do You Love Me?* is a rewriting of Borges' *On Exactitude in Science* (1946) (Guardian 2013), presumably because both texts are concerned with cartography and reality. However, as has been shown in this discussion, Carey develops his theme through stylistic contrast and an imaginative fictional world, in a way that is distinctly different from Borges' parable.

The title of Carey's story is *Do You Love Me?*, but the theme could be said to have a more generalized concern. It seems that the uncertainty of being loved represents the general anxiety of having one's assumed truths challenged. The question *Do You Love Me?* is asked just twice in the story, and both times it is spoken in the context of two people in an intimate relationship. In the first instance, it is a romantic relationship, and the second instance it is a familial one. In either case, one would reasonably assume that there is love, in some form, that exists between the people.

But as the story suggests, this is not always the case. At the end of the story, the narrator tries to love his father, knowing that family members are supposed to love one

²⁸ In one episode of *The Guardian Books Podcast* series, writer and critic Will Self reads Borges' *On Exactitude in Science* and gives a commentary. Self's comments in this podcast are inaccurate. The story is *Do You Love Me?*, not *Exotic Pleasures*; from the second volume of stories *War Crimes*, not the first volume *The Fat Man in History*.

another. But the mutual lack of love between the narrator and his father represents not only an estrangement from authority in the family unit, but also at the broader level of society. In the context of the story, the authoritative version of reality is compromised to the extent that nothing can be taken as certain any longer, not even the things upon which people depend, or that they take for granted. The very status of reality is shown to be unstable, and the apprehension and anxiety that this causes provokes the characters in the story to ask a question that under normal circumstances would generally be considered unnecessary. So the theme of the story, in this reading, is more fundamental than the particular relationships that may exist in a family or a society. By articulating this theme, Carey provokes the reader to question his or her own assumptions, even the ones most fundamental to our view of the world.

5. Cohesive harmony and Theme in 'The last days of a famous mime'

Abstract

This chapter was first published in the journal *Language and Literature* (Tilney 2018a). It examines one of Carey's best-known stories: *The Last Days of a Famous Mime*, which is a cryptic and interpretatively challenging text. In this chapter, I demonstrate how the text's perplexity mirrors the perplexity experienced by the main character within the story world. I argue that the relative lack of textual coherence is the central meaning of the story. The analysis not only offers a new interpretation of the story, but also shows that the style of the text is inextricably bound to its truth. The analysis suggests, with textual evidence, that the story may be considered an instance of metafiction.

The methodology chosen for this text is concentrated in the textual column of the function-rank matrix (see Figure 2.6). A major part of the analysis draws on the system of Theme, which is located at the intersection of the textual metafunction and the clause. Theme is significant in this analysis because it orients the clause to the unfolding of the text: a process which by which this particular text gradually loses cohesion and coherence. The interpretative challenges of this text seem to operate not within but outside of the clause level: in other words at the cohesive relations which hold the text together (the far-right column of the function-rank matrix). For this reason, the analysis takes as its predominant methodology the notion of coherence as described as 'cohesive harmony' (Hasan 1984, Hasan 1985b), which deals specifically with cohesive systems such as reference, substitution/ellipsis, and lexical cohesion. The analysis shows how Carey constructs a fictional world that gradually disintegrates along with the textual coherence that realizes it. In doing so, it highlights the interdependency of style and truth.

5.1. Introduction

Carey's short story *The Last Days of a Famous Mime* (Carey 1994) was first published in 1979 and later republished in Carey's *Collected Stories*. It features a well-known but unnamed mime artist from Europe, who arrives in an unidentified place. The artist is not named: he is referred to only as "the Mime": a title that is always capitalized as if it were his name. In other words, the Mime is only identified by his social role (thanks to Rosemary Huisman, personal communication, for this insight). This highlights an important aspect of the story's meaning: the Mime is never validated at a personal level.

After some initial success miming terror (his "forte"), one of his concerts receives a poor review in a newspaper. The Mime's career begins to fail, along with his personal

relationships. Eventually, he decides to quit doing concerts, making his artistic services available to the general public. However, his responses to their requests are too obscure to be understood. Finally, when requested to “describe a river”, the Mime drowns himself. It is the only performance recorded on film and ironically, this final and least impressive show overshadows his former success.

The story has been anthologized in various collections but has received surprisingly little critical attention. Hassall (1994: 38) calls it a “self-reflexive narrative, exploring the nature and function of art” and claims that it is enigmatic “even by Carey’s standards”. Hassall (1994: 39) correctly points out that “the sparseness of its writing leaves the reader with more work than usual to do to fashion an interpretation of its meaning”. In my reading, it is the ambiguity of the text itself which appears to be the central meaning, and this ambiguity is realized through its unique textual cohesion. After providing some background to my approach, I outline the theoretical framework of my analysis and finally develop an interpretation of the story’s meaning through a linguistic analysis.

5.2. Linguistic analysis and literary interpretation

If we accept the general notion that coherence is the quality of a text that enables it to make sense, then linguistic analysis is a useful approach to literary interpretation because it helps us to see how the linguistic system “enables speakers and writers to produce and process coherent meaning” (Bloor and Bloor 2004: 6). In order to achieve coherence, rather than simply being a collection of unrelated sentences, a text requires cohesion, and a linguistic analysis of a text’s cohesion may support its literary interpretation. The existing literary criticism of Carey’s story does not draw on linguistics, and tends to focus on the social role of the Mime (Carey 1981, Hassall 1994, Ryan-Fazilleau 1991,

Snodgrass 2010). Hassall (1994) and Ryan-Fazilleau (1991) see the story as an autobiographical fiction about Carey’s verbal artistry. Ryan-Fazilleau (1991: 52) equates the Mime’s so-called “stupid audience” with Carey’s so-called “stupid reader”, and similarly Snodgrass (2010: 87) attributes the Mime’s death to the fact that his audience are “unschooled” and unappreciative of art. In my interpretation, which emerged only after a linguistic analysis of the text, there is no evidence to suggest that the story is an autobiography, nor that meaning is only available to those educated in artistic interpretation. My own interpretation is that the Mime depends on social and emotional validation, but he is denied this important affirmation because he is not understood by others. This interpretation is derived from a linguistic analysis, beginning with one necessary requirement for coherence: ‘cohesion’.

5.3. Principles of cohesion

‘Cohesion’ is the name given to the semantic relations that exist between elements within a text. Without these ties, the text would not hang together as a semantic unit. Arguably, the most comprehensive attempt to describe textual cohesion can be found in the work of Hasan (1985b). Building on previous studies in cohesion (Halliday and Hasan 1976, Hasan 1984), Hasan (1985b) proposes a descriptive framework of cohesive devices, exemplified in Table 5.1. According to the framework, there are two kinds of cohesion: grammatical and lexical. Grammatical cohesion is achieved through the semantic relations of ‘co-reference’ (e.g. pronominal reference) and ‘co-classification’, which can be achieved through substitution (e.g. *those* for *eyes*) or ellipsis (e.g. the omission of *The string is for*). Lexical cohesion is achieved through the semantic tie of ‘co-extension’, which is typically realized through one of four cohesive devices: ‘repetition’, ‘synonymy’

(similarity), ‘antonymy’ (oppositeness), ‘hyponymy’ (relation between general class and sub-class) and ‘meronymy’ (relation between whole and part).

Table 5.1 Cohesive devices based on Hasan (1985b: 82)

Type of cohesion	Semantic tie	Cohesive device	Example from text
Grammatical cohesion	Co-reference	Reference	...the Mime _i was pleased when the reporters laughed. Inducing laughter was not his _i forte.
	Co-classification	Substitution	His skin seemed sallow but his eyes _i seemed as bright as those _i on a nodding fur mascot [...]
		Ellipsis	Asked what the string was for he replied: “^THE STRING IS FOR Tying up bigger parcels.”
Lexical cohesion	Co-extension	Repetition	...the Mime was pleased when the reporters laughed _i . Inducing laughter _i was not his forte.
		Synonymy	performance, concert
		Antonymy	Wrongly accused of imitating love _i in his private life he was somewhat surprised to be confronted with hatred _i .
		Hyponymy	emotions, terror
		Meronymy	He steps into the river _i , which at the bank _i , is already quite deep.

* The caret and capitalization together indicate the elision of four words. This is an instance of cohesive ‘ellipsis’.

5.4. Reference

A significant element of cohesion in *The Last Days of a Famous Mime* is reference. At this point, it would be useful to exemplify the concept of reference before moving on to a discussion of the text’s cohesive patterning. Compare the first and final sentences of the story.

- | | | |
|------|------|--|
| (1) | 1.1 | <i>The Mime</i> arrived on Alitalia with very little luggage: a brown paper bag and [[1.1.1 what looked like a woman’s handbag.]] |
| (84) | 84.1 | Watching this last performance |
| | 84.2 | it is difficult [[84.2.1 to imagine 84.2.2 how <i>this man</i> stirred such emotions in the hearts [[84.2.2.1 of those who saw him.]]]] |

In (1.1) *The Mime* is an instance of definite reference, which gives him a sense of familiarity, as if the reader already knows which mime is being referred. Significantly, in the final sentence, he is referred to only as *this man*. The determiner *this* in (84.2.2) refers back to an earlier mention of the mime five sentences prior, in which the mime is construed differently.

- | | | |
|------|------|---|
| (78) | 78.1 | A small, neat man [[78.1.1 dressed in a grey suit]] picks his way through some children |
| | 78.2 | who seem more interested in the large plastic toy dog [[78.2.1 they are playing with.]] |

In (78.1), the Mime is no longer *the Mime* but rather *a small neat man*. Here, the indefinite reference construes the Mime as unknown, as if he is being mentioned or introduced for the very first time. It is an unusual choice, since one would normally expect indefinite reference in the first sentence of the story rather than the last. In this story, the foregrounded use of reference represents the Mime’s transition from fame to obscurity. Regardless of this irregular textual development, once the main character has been introduced, he is followed through the text using the referencing system: namely repetition (e.g. *the Mime*) and pronominal reference (e.g. *he*, *him*, *his*). This string of lexical tokens can be conceptualized as links in a chain, which is why the phenomenon is called a ‘cohesive chain’ (Halliday and Hasan, 1976; Hasan, 1984; Hasan, 1985b).

5.5. Cohesive chains

Following Hasan (1984; 1985b), ‘cohesive chains’ are fundamental to the analysis of a text’s coherence. In this section, I briefly explain cohesive chains before moving on to an analysis of cohesion in the text. A cohesive chain is a string of semantic ties in a text, such as the “*Mime*” chain previously mentioned. A semantic tie can also be established through any of the cohesive devices outlined in Table 5.1. Each lexical item in the chain is known as a ‘relevant token’ (Hasan, 1984; Hasan, 1985b) because it is semantically relevant to the other tokens in its chain. In the short excerpt from the story’s opening below, the beginning of the *Mime* chain is shown to have six relevant tokens.

- | | | |
|-----|-------|--|
| (1) | 1.1 | <i>The Mime</i> arrived on Alitalia with very little luggage: a brown paper parcel and [[1.1.1 what looked like a woman’s handbag.]] |
| (2) | 2.1 | Asked the contents of the brown paper parcel |
| | 2.2 | <i>he</i> said, |
| | 2.3 | “String.” |
| (3) | 3.1 | Asked |
| | 3.1.1 | what the string was for |
| | 3.2 | <i>he</i> replied: |
| | 3.3 | “Tying up bigger parcels.” |
| (4) | 4.1 | It had not been intended as a joke |
| | 4.2 | but <i>the Mime</i> was pleased |
| | 4.3 | when the reporters laughed. |
| (5) | 5.1 | Inducing laughter was not <i>his</i> forte. |
| (6) | 6.1 | <i>He</i> was famous for terror. |

In addition to the *Mime* chain, other cohesive chains begin to emerge in the opening section through the echoing of tokens through various cohesive devices. Other chains that can be seen in this excerpt are summarized in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2 Relevant tokens

Chain	Relevant tokens	Cohesive devices
Mime	The Mime, he, he, the Mime, his, He	Reference, repetition
Size	little, bigger	Synonymy
Physical items	luggage, handbag	Synonymy
Colour	brown, brown	Repetition
Material	paper, paper	Repetition
Parcel	parcel, parcel	Repetition
Communication	Asked, said, Asked, replied	Synonymy
String	String, the string	Repetition

Other tokens that are not echoed in the excerpt above may reveal themselves as chain-forming relevant tokens later in the text. For instance, the token *woman's* in the first sentence is echoed 21 sentences later with its synonym *women*, forming a cohesive chain about women. Relevant tokens contrast with ‘peripheral tokens’ (Hasan 1984, Hasan 1985b), which do not enter into ties. In other words, peripheral tokens are never repeated or echoed within the textual environment through the cohesive devices in Table 5.1.

The longest cohesive chain in the text is the Mime chain, with a total of 105 relevant tokens. The Mime chain is thus responsible for much of the text’s cohesion: it is text-exhaustive, running through the entire text and effectively holding it together. In addition to the Mime’s chain, there are three other cohesive chains that stand out from the rest. These chains are concerned with “emotions” (47 tokens), “people” (42 tokens) and “general actions” (33 tokens). Here I distinguish between actions that specifically affect physical objects and general actions in order to represent the Mime’s passivity.

The four longest cohesive chains (*Mime*, *emotions*, *people*, *actions*) are foregrounded against the remaining 54 chains, which are relatively short. The average mean number of tokens per chain is 12, with over 68% of all chains comprising 10 tokens or fewer. Figure 5.1 presents a visualization of the length of cohesive chains in the text. It is clear from the graph that the Mime is fundamental to the cohesion of the text. Since the *emotions* and *people* chains are also highly prominent, it is reasonable to assume that

emotional and social meanings are important in the text. The implications of this claim will be discussed in the final stage of the analysis.

5.6. Cohesion in ‘The last days of a famous mime’

Carey’s text demonstrates unusual cohesion: the lexical spectrum is very broad, but the development of each lexical domain tends to be minimal. The proportion of peripheral tokens – those that do not form chains – is low, making up only 28 of the total 692 tokens (4%). This means that 96% of all the total tokens form ties, indicating a high degree of lexical relatedness. However, these ties tend to form relatively short chains. For instance, 10 chains consist of only 2 tokens (see Figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1 also shows the ‘logogenetic’ unfolding of meanings in the text. Halliday and Matthiessen (2014: 63) state that “As the text unfolds, patterns emerge, some of which acquire added value through resonating with other patterns in the text [...] We refer to this ongoing creation of meaning in the unfolding of text as logogenesis”. The cohesive chains are visualized in cumulative textual sequence, showing how the text loses cohesion towards the end of the story. This decline in textual cohesion coincides with the disintegration of the Mime’s world. The most prominent chains are labelled with the number in the sequence and the semantic domain. For example, the *Mime* chain is the fourth and the *emotions* chain is the nineteenth.

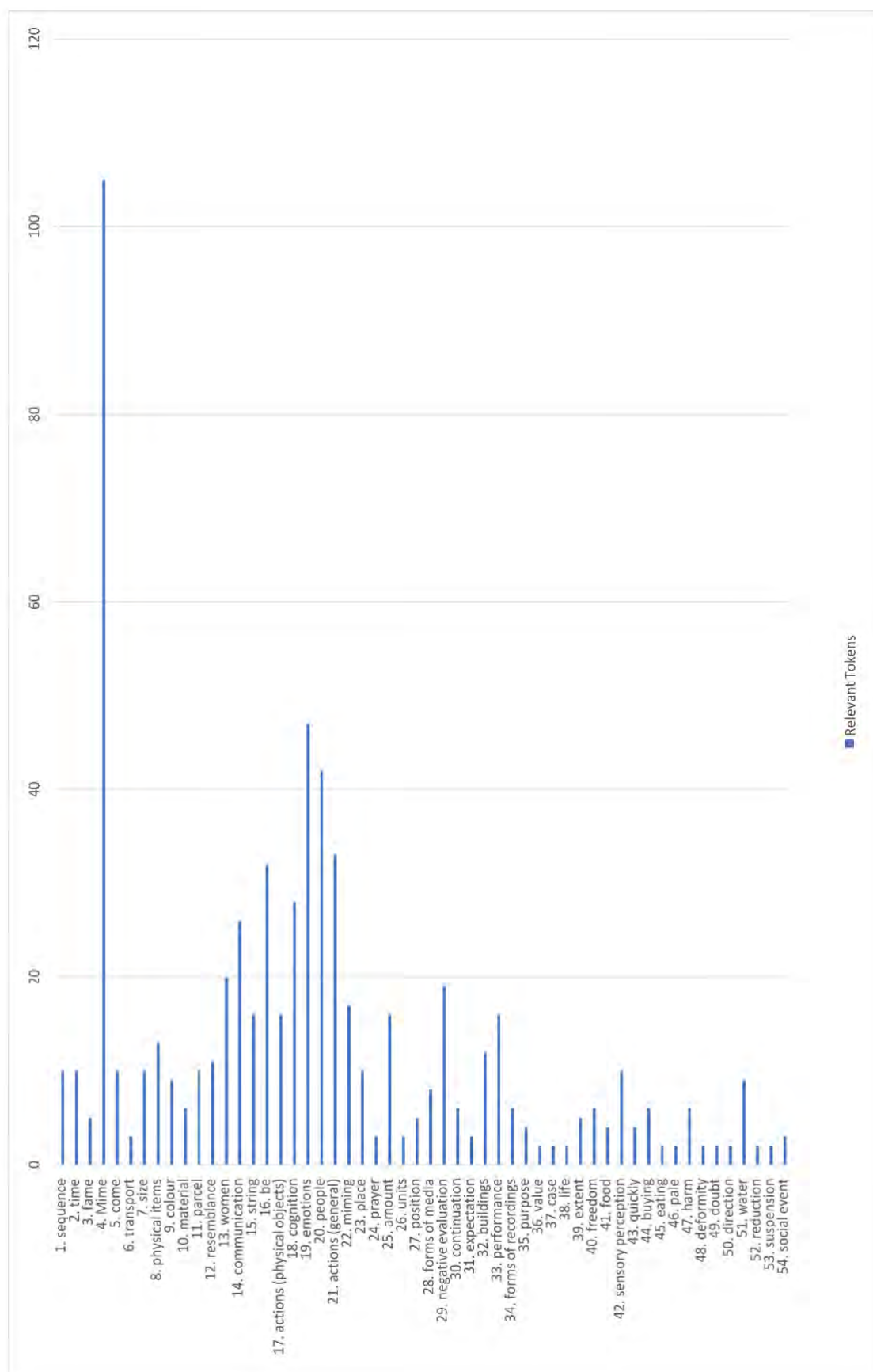


Figure 5.1 Cohesive chains in ‘The last days of a famous mime’

5.7. Coherence and cohesive harmony

While cohesion in a text is represented by cohesive chains, coherence is realized by the interaction between chains: what Hasan (1984; 1985b) calls ‘cohesive harmony’. Hasan (1984: 94) asserts that for coherence to exist, there needs to be interaction between chains. The author goes on to specify that chain interaction occurs “only if two or more members of a chain stand in the same functional relation *vis a vis* two or more members of some one specific chain” (Hasan 1984: 214). This functional relation is viewed in terms of the systemic functional model of TRANSITIVITY (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014). For instance, in Figure 5.2, 12 relevant tokens are represented in 4 different chains: *Mime*, *come*, *communication*, and *emotions*. The Actor-Process relation of 1 (represented by single dashes) is echoed in 6, the Sayer-Process relation of 2 (represented by double dashes) is echoed in 3, and the nominal group relation of 4 (represented by asterisks) is echoed in 5.

	Mime	Come	Communication	Emotions
1	Mime- - - - -			
2	he= = = = =			
3	he= = = = =			
4	his* * * * *			
5	his* * * * *			
6	Mime- - - - -			

Figure 5.2 Visualization of chain interaction

Since all of the tokens here are involved in chain interaction, they are called ‘central tokens’ (Hasan 1984, Hasan 1985b). Other relevant tokens that do not interact are labelled

‘non-central tokens’ (Hasan 1984, Hasan 1985b). When the whole text is analysed for chain interaction as visualized in Figure 5.2, a “picture” of chain interaction (Hasan 1984, Hasan 1985b) emerges. This picture is a conceptualization of the continuity of chain interaction. For instance, a single cluster of interacting chains may not interact with another cluster. In such a case, there is a break in the continuity of chain interaction. This overall continuity, along with an account of central and peripheral tokens, allows the analyst to measure the cohesive harmony of the text.

There are two hypotheses of cohesive harmony developed in Hasan (1984) and Hasan (1985b), which are summarized in Table 5.3. A text is likely to be more coherent according to the conditions outlined in the table. The results of a cohesive harmony analysis of Carey’s story (summarized in Table 5.3) reveal that the text does not achieve a high measure of coherence in either version of the theory.

Table 5.3 Cohesive harmony in ‘The last days of a famous mime’

Version of cohesive harmony	Requirements	Yes/No	Result (rounded)
1984	Central tokens (involved in chain interaction) form at least 50% of the total tokens	No	33% (232/692)
	The number of breaks in the continuity of chain interaction is low	Yes	No breaks
	The proportion of central tokens to peripheral tokens (not entering into chains) is high	Yes	33% / 4%
1985	The proportion of peripheral tokens to relevant tokens (entering into chains) is low	Yes	4% / 96%
	The proportion of central tokens to non-central tokens (entering into chains but not involved in chain interaction) is high	No	33% / 62%
	The number of breaks in the continuity of chain interaction is low	Yes	No breaks

5.8. Cohesive harmony in ‘The last days of a famous mime’

The results of the cohesive harmony analysis reveal a low measure of coherence. There is a total of just 232 central tokens out of a total of 692 (33%), which is lower than Hasan’s (1984) initially proposed minimum of 50% for coherent text. Moreover, the proportion of central tokens is higher than the proportion of peripheral tokens, but lower than the proportion of non-central tokens. The texts in Hasan’s (1984) study are short narratives produced by children aged 6 to 7 years. In her analysis, she found that measures of cohesive harmony confirmed the perceived coherence of the chosen texts. In Hasan’s (1984) corpus, the text labelled “A10” was shown to have the highest proportion of central tokens (over 72%) and no gaps in the pattern of chain interaction. In terms of cohesive harmony, text A10 is more coherent than Carey’s text. It is reasonable to assume that the lack of coherence in the child’s text may be due to limited linguistic resource, but for a professional writer like Peter Carey, the low measure of cohesive harmony is most likely the result of specific aesthetic choices, made either consciously or unconsciously. Although Carey’s text is in many ways different from the texts analysed by Hasan, the comparison nevertheless reveals that if Carey’s text is coherent, it is not due to a high measure of cohesive harmony. This lack of coherence could at least partly explain its interpretative demands.

In both the 1984 and 1985 theories of cohesive harmony, Hasan argues that a text is more likely to be coherent if there are few or no breaks in the pattern of interaction. As is shown in Figure 5.3, the visual representation of chain interaction in Carey’s text does not demonstrate any isolated instances; all of the ovals (each representing a chain) is connected either directly or indirectly to the central chain of the Mime. A break in the

continuity of chain interaction would look like a pair or cluster of nodes floating free from the main cluster. Figure 5.3 shows the size of the chains, the number of interactions between chains, and the types of TRANSITIVITY relations through which chains interact. The solid lines represent Actor-Process or Process-Goal relations, as in *John* (Actor) *ate* (Process) *the apple* (Goal). The small dotted lines represent Senser-Process or Process-Phenomenon relations, as in *John* (Senser) *saw* (Process) *the apple* (Phenomenon). The large dotted lines represent Carrier-Process/Process-Attribute or Token-Process/Process-Value relations as in *John* (Carrier) *was* (Process) *hungry* (Attribute) or *John* (Token) *is* (Process) *the leader* (Value). The solid lines with small arrowheads represent Sayer-Process relations, as in *John* (Sayer) *said* (Process). The solid lines with large arrowheads represent Behaver-Process relations, as in *John* (Behaver) *dreamed* (Process). Finally, the dotted lines with small arrowheads represent the connection between elements within a nominal group, as in *the red apple*.

The analysis has shown that the text has unusual cohesion and coherence. It involves a large number of cohesive chains but many of these chains do not become woven into the fabric of the story. Those chains that do get woven in are few in number (20/54 or 37%) are held together by the protagonist's chain. Just as the Mime is responsible for holding together the text linguistically, there is an expectation for the character to hold together a broad spectrum of various elements in his life. He succeeds in holding on to a small cluster of them (represented in Figure 5.2) but there is a great amount of pressure caused by the weight of the many other aspects of his life that he is not able to bring together. In addition to the *Mime* chain, the other key chains that hold the text together are *people*, *emotions*, and *actions*. This suggests that people, emotions, and actions are important factors that bring coherence not only to the text but also to the Mime's world. By implication, aspects of the Mime's social, emotional, and physical

CHAPTER 5

reality should be revealing in the interpretation of the story, especially if they are foregrounded in other ways.

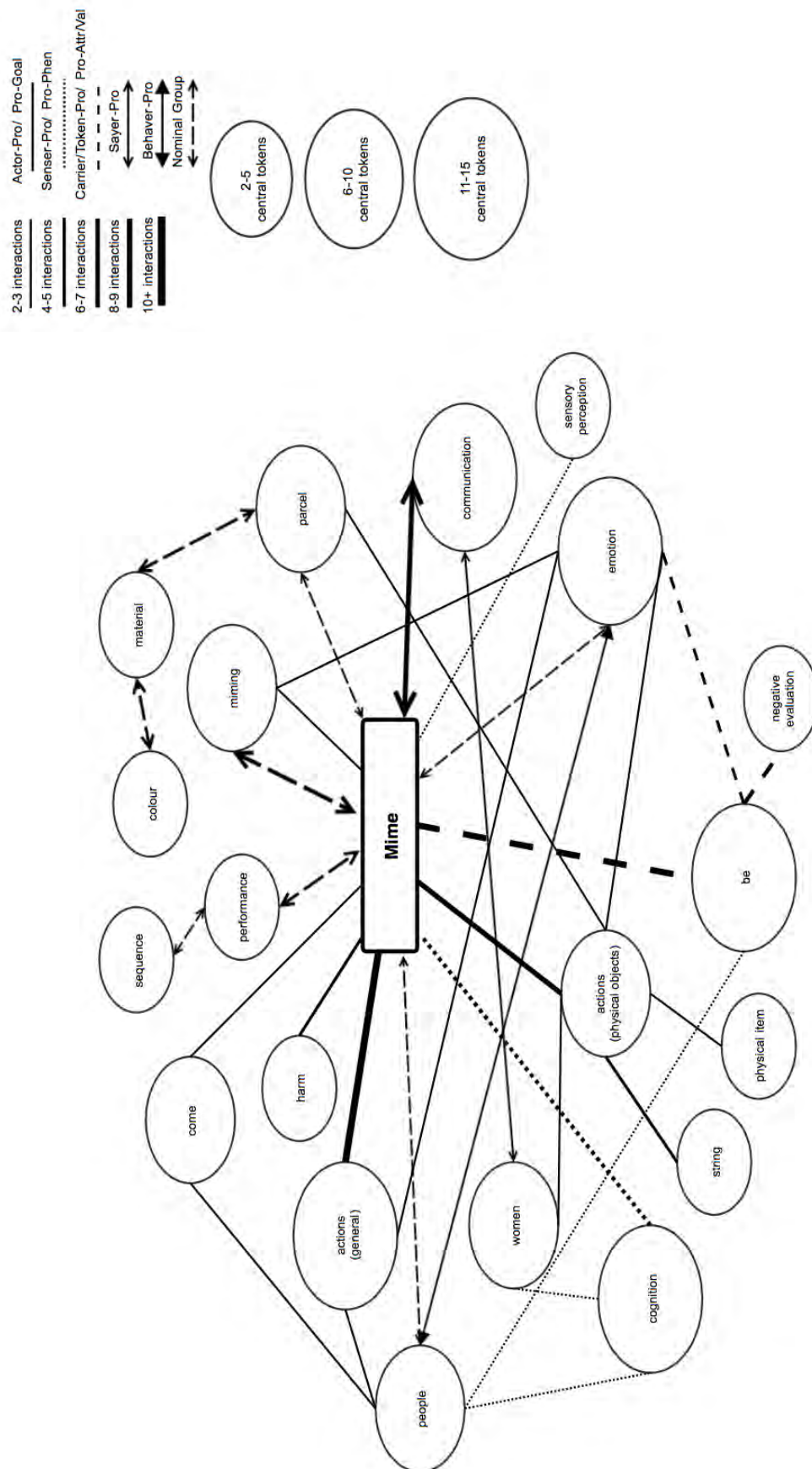


Figure 5.3 Chain interaction in 'The last days of a famous mime'

5.9. The role of Theme in textual meaning

Following my analysis of cohesion and cohesive harmony in the text, I now turn to another aspect of textual meaning. Specifically, I am interested in whether the prominent cohesive chains are foregrounded through other linguistic systems. If they are, the result may guide an interpretation of the story by highlighting the elements that give meaning to the Mime's fragmented world, because as I have argued, coherence of the text seems to indicate coherence of the Mime's experience. The textual component of grammar is realized through semantic contribution (cohesion) and structural elements, including Theme (Bloor and Bloor 2004). In the systemic functional model of language, the Theme is "the element that serves as the point of departure of the message; it is that which locates and orients the clause within its context" (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014: 89). It is also the linguistic element in initial position which orients the reader to the message (Fries 1981). For example, in the following clauses, the Themes are *The Mime* (1), *Reluctantly* (9), and *Books* (17).

- | | | |
|------|------|---|
| (1) | 1.1 | <i>The Mime</i> arrived on Alitalia with very little luggage: [...] |
| (9) | 9.1 | <i>Reluctantly</i> he untied his parcel [...] |
| (17) | 17.1 | <i>Books</i> had been written about him. |

The formal definition of Theme and its exact function are contentious, causing considerable disagreement among linguists (see for example the discussion in Hasan and Fries, 1995). In Halliday's view, Theme is taken to be all constituents leading up to and including the first experiential element in the clause: most typically the first participant in the clause. The remaining constituents of the clause constitute what is referred to as the Rheme. Within the *Mime* chain, the Mime is thematized 55 times, thus it is reasonable to assume that thematic continuity is responsible for the coherent topical development of the

text: this phenomenon is discussed elsewhere as “text-strategic continuity” (Björklund and Virtanen 1991) and “thematic development” (Fries 1981).

I have already discussed the significance of the Mime’s cohesive chain. It is the longest and most important chain in the text, connecting other cohesive chains and as a result, establishing a degree of coherence in the text. In many instances within the chain, the Mime is the Theme of the clause. For this reason, the Mime makes a significant contribution to the cohesive and structural elements of the story’s textual meaning. In the same way, the Mime is the deictic centre of the fictional world, drawing together various strands of meaning, especially the actions, emotions, and people in his life. Even though the text’s cohesive harmony has been shown to be relatively low, an interpretation of the story’s artistic meaning still seems some way off. For this reason, I now turn to Theme as a linguistic resource for making meaning in Carey’s text. Following an analysis of thematic choices, aspects of the text’s cohesive and structural aspects will be considered together in order to gain a better view of textual meanings in the story.

5.10. Dependent clause as Theme

In addition to the standard definition of Theme as clause constituent, hypotactically dependent clauses occurring in initial position may also serve as Theme in the clause nexus. Indeed, such an analysis may be able to more clearly signal textual development (Thompson 2004). As Thompson (2004) points out, analysing Theme in this way amounts to viewing the dependent clause as the thematic constituent orienting the reader to the message of the dominant clause. This orienting function is either obscured or missed altogether when the Theme is analysed at the traditional intraclausal level (see Table 5.4).

Table 5.4 Theme analysis with dependent clause in first position

	Dependent Clause β		Independent Clause α	
	Although his state of despair	was famous throughout Europe,	few	guessed at his hope for the future.
Intraclausal analysis ²⁹	Theme 1	Rheme 1	Theme 2	Rheme 2
Interclausal analysis ³⁰	Theme		Rheme	

In the context of discourse analysis, this ‘regressive sequence’ ($\beta^{\wedge}\alpha$) clause structure (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014: 549) has the potential for foregrounding in literature (Leech and Short 2007: 182, Toolan 1990: 208). As has been suggested, Theme is a complex system that is still in need of further research and clarification, but in this analysis, initial-position dependent clauses will be interpreted as Theme because such an analysis demonstrates a consistency of foregrounding.

5.11. Thematic foregrounding in ‘The last days of a famous mime’

Out of a total of 84 sentences, only 15 have dependent clauses as Theme, as summarized in Table 5.5. As shown in Chapter 3.3.1, the periodic structure of a dependent clause preceding its superordinate clause ($\beta^{\wedge}\alpha$) is potentially significant in fictional prose. The 15 instances of periodic structure in *The Last Days of a Famous Mime* draw attention to themselves as meaningful linguistic choices that may help to guide interpretation.

²⁹ Following Halliday and Matthiessen (2014)

³⁰ Following Thompson (2004)

Table 5.5 Dependent clause as Theme in 'The last days of a famous mime'

Clause complex ID	Theme	Rheme
(2)	Asked the contents of the brown paper parcel	he said, "String."
(3)	Asked what the string was for	he replied: "Tying up bigger parcels."
(7)	Although his state of despair was famous throughout Europe,	few guessed at his hope for the future.
(26)	Wrongly accused of merely miming love in his private life	he was somewhat surprised to be confronted with hatred.
(32)	But later when he untied the parcel	he found that she had opened it to check on his story.
(48)	Wishing to hurt him,	she slapped his face.
(49)	Wishing to hurt her,	he smiled brilliantly.
(52)	Standing on stage	he could hear the packages being noisily unwrapped.
(54)	Exhausted and weakened by the heavy schedule	he fell prey to the doubts that had pricked at him insistently for years.
(60)	When the torrent of white water subsided	they [pieces of string] remained floating there like flotsam from a disaster at sea.
(68)	Asked to describe death	he busied himself taking Polaroid photographs of his questioners.
(69)	Asked to described marriage	he handed out small cheap mirrors with MADE IN TUNISIA written on the back
(74)	Asked to describe an aeroplane	he flew three times around the city, only injuring himself slightly on landing.
(75)	Asked to describe a river,	he drowned himself.
(84)	Watching this last performance	it is difficult to imagine how this man stirred such emotions in the hearts of those who saw him.

As Table 5.5 shows, the structure “Asked [...] he [...]” occurs six times near the beginning and end of the story. The fact that the structure appears in pairs also realizes a syntactic parallelism, which is a further marker of textual foregrounding. This repetition is significant because it draws attention to the Mime’s reactive tendency. His obscure words and actions are provoked by nameless people from the public. The omission of agency through non-finiteness in (2, 3, 68, 69, 74, 75) further highlights the Mime’s disconnection from people.

It can also be seen from Table 5.5 that the sentences involving the foregrounded Themes often draw attention to the inability to understand: *few guessed at* (7), *wrongly accused* (26), *it is difficult to understand* (84). The difficulty of understanding is also highlighted in (68, 69, 74) in which the Mime’s actions are highly cryptic. In other instances, the foregrounded sentences refer to the mysterious string that is apparently an important possession, but one whose meaning can also only be guessed at: *string* (2, 3), *parcel* (2, 3, 32), *packages* (52), *they* (60). One final point to make here is that within the Rhemes, the Mime is not often the doer of action processes, but when he is (68, 69, 74, 75, 84), those actions do not have an impact on anything except for himself (11, 13, 14). By the end of the story, the Mime has lost the ability to make any kind of impression on the people around him, and as the narrator says, it is difficult to imagine that he was once able to impress his audience as a successful mime artist.

5.12. Consistency of foregrounding: Chain interaction and Theme

In the final stage of my analysis, I focus on the instances in which foregrounded thematic choices coincide with chain interaction within sentences. This approach combines a view

of the prominent structural and cohesive textual meanings. It has been suggested above that certain cohesive chains, namely the *Mime*, *emotions*, *people*, and *actions* chains could be important clues to interpretation because they contribute to two levels of coherence: discourse and the Mime’s reality in the story world. It has also been demonstrated how certain thematic choices contribute to textual meaning. A reasonable assumption is that if these two kinds of foregrounding co-occur in the same textual location (e.g. in the same sentences), then these sentences will be of high semantic importance. Systemic functional stylistic theory has described this consistency of foregrounding as ‘symbolic articulation’ (Hasan 1985a) and ‘semantic drift’ (Butt 1983).

Table 5.6 Consistent foregrounding in ‘The last days of a famous mime’

Clause complex ID	Theme	Rheme
(7)	Although his (M) state of despair (E) was famous throughout Europe,	<i>few guessed at his (M) hope (E)</i> for the future.
(26)	<i>Wrongly accused</i> of merely miming love in his private life	he (M) was somewhat surprised (E) to be confronted with hatred.
(32)	But later when he (M) untied (A) the parcel	he found that she had opened it to check on his story.
(68)	Asked to describe death	he (M) busied (A) himself taking Polaroid photographs of his (M) questioners (P) .
(69)	Asked to described marriage	he (M) handed out (A) small cheap mirrors with MADE IN TUNISIA written on the back
(74)	Asked to describe an aeroplane	he (M) flew (A) three times around the city, only injuring himself slightly on landing.
(84)	Watching this last performance	<i>it is difficult to imagine</i> how this man (M) stirred (A) such emotions (E) in the hearts of those who saw him.

Table 5.6 shows the most prominent sentences in the text according to my analysis. Here one may get a sense of the essence of the story distilled into a handful of sentences that are arguably the most significant for interpretation. The italicized text indicates a repeated motif: the difficulty of understanding the Mime. The bold type denotes prominent chain interaction representing the *Mime* chain (M), the *emotions* chain (E), the *people* chain (P), and the *actions* chain (A). Interestingly, in these foregrounded instances, the *Mime* chain connects to the *people* chain only once (68), further suggesting social disconnection.

This analysis, combining foregrounded elements from cohesive harmony and marked thematic choices, reveal seven sentences which are arguably the most significant to the story's meaning. The analysis of cohesive harmony has already shown that the Mime is under pressure to hold his world together, because he only connects to a very small proportion of cohesive chains. There are many other chains representing aspects of the Mime's reality that are not integrated into a coherent whole, as has been shown in the cohesion analysis above. This general lack of coherence is reinforced by the foregrounded thematic choices that point to the Mime's inability to be understood in both his professional and private lives. Also captured in the consistently foregrounded sentences is the mysterious string, which appears to be a metaphor for the ties that hold together important aspects of the Mime's world. Interestingly, it is after his supposed lover cuts the string into pieces "like spaghetti in a lousy restaurant" (Carey 1994: 12) that the Mime really begins to fall apart.

In Table 5.6, the highly foregrounded sentences (68), (69), and (74) relate lexical items that would normally not be related, i.e. *death*, *marriage*, and, *aeroplanes*. One important feature of a literary text is its potential for 'instantial cohesion' (Hasan 1984: 202), which is a type of cohesion realized through cohesive ties that are unique to the text. For example, death and marriage could never be semantically related through synonymy,

antonymy, hyponymy, or meronymy, yet in this textual instance, parallelism ties the two unlikely tokens together³¹. Towards the end of the story, as the Mime’s world begins to unravel, it becomes obvious that the Mime struggles to hold together his reality, which in turn is reflected in other people’s perception of him. Indeed, the unreasonable expectations of the public are manifest in the unlikely conjunction of death, marriage, and aeroplanes.

Table 5.6 also highlights the inability of people to understand the Mime. For instance, sentence (7) shows a parallelism of nominal group structure with *his state of despair* and *his hope for the future*. This parallel structure has a foregrounding effect, foreshadowing the significance of the Mime’s future obscurity. In (7), only a few people *guessed at* his hope for the future, but being “guessed at”, does not equate to being understood. In (26), the Mime is misunderstood by his apparent lover, who distrusts him: she had even opened the parcel to check on his story in (32). In (68), (69), and (74), the Mime is desperate to serve the public, responding to their requests but unable to make an impression with his indecipherable actions. The final sentence in the text is (84), which is also shown to be the most foregrounded sentence in the story. It involves three of the most prominent cohesive chains in interaction (*Mime – actions – emotions*) and explicitly states the key issue: the Mime’s descent into obscurity and death. Sentence (84) is also marked by its unique structure – its Rheme is framed by the clause *it is difficult*, which is a ‘thematized comment’ (Thompson 2004: 152). The comment reveals the author-narrator’s attitude, which, until the final section of the text, has been withheld. The comment is an explicit evaluation of the Mime; a remark about the difficulty of understanding him by watching his recorded performance.

³¹ Thanks to Annabelle Lukin (personal communication) for this insight.

All of these foregrounded sentences consistently point to the passivity of the Mime and his failure to be understood. This analysis has shown the Mime to be, in Carey's (1981: 92) own words, unable "to take the right steps to achieving his aim". Thus the Mime depends on the social and emotional validation of others, but since he is denied this gratification, he (literally) ceases to exist. For if he is defined by his social purpose, he cannot continue to be "the Mime" without being validated as such by other people, and this validation can only be achieved through successful mime performances which are meaningful to his audience. There is a great deal of pressure on the Mime to hold together the various, sometimes conflicting elements in his life, and in the end he fails to make himself understood in his public life and similarly in his relationships.

5.13. Conclusion

The Last Days of a Famous Mime presents a high level of interpretative difficulty by pushing the boundaries of coherence, yet as I have tried to demonstrate in this analysis, there is also meaning in the madness. It is the lack of coherence that is the central meaning: the textual patterning at the level of discourse reflects the fragmented nature of the Mime's world and ultimately his inability to hold together all the chains of meaning that are present in his environment. The analysis presented here is mostly consistent with traditional literary critical readings which view the story as a comment on the nature of art. Literary critics (Hassall 1994, Ryan-Fazilleau 1991, Snodgrass 2010) tend to attribute the Mime's death to his audience's inability to appreciate his art, and my analysis provides linguistic evidence for this claim by revealing the consistent foregrounding of misunderstanding. In this way the story may be said to be "self-reflexive" (Hassall 1994), and in addition could be said to exemplify the genre of metafiction.

In this chapter I have demonstrated how the linguistic analysis of cohesive harmony and Theme in a short story can guide literary interpretation. In doing so, I have also shown how consistency of foregrounding, especially the patterning of linguistic patterns in the textual metafunction of language, construes meanings in a literature text.

The Last Days of a Famous Mime is one of Carey's better-known stories. It is a fine example of verbal artistry because it self-reflexively demonstrates the Russian Formalists' notion that form and meaning are inseparable. Like *Conversations with Unicorns* and *Do You Love Me?* it defamiliarizes, in large part due to the unusual subversion of a typical *sjuzet*: instead of witnessing the progressive development of an unknown character, we instead see the gradual deterioration of fames and familiarity. The mime artist, like the cartographers in *Do You Love Me?*, is shown to exist only as a social construction, compelling the reader to confront his or her own notion of identity.

One could argue that Carey's treatment of identity is similar to that of reality itself. In the story, the notion of identity is not a stable entity. Rather, identity depends largely on the actions of individuals, and how successfully they are able to reinvent themselves in the face of adversity. Carey seems to be warning us about the risk of succumbing to the social pressures exerted against us. By articulating this message in a wonderfully imaginative story, Carey tells us a truth about the world through the aesthetic mode of his style, reinforced with a generous dose of irony. It is surely for this reason that stories such as this remain relevant and compelling to the readers of today.

6. Delayed understanding in ‘American dreams’

Abstract

This chapter was first published in the journal of *Language, Context and Text* (Tilney 2019). In the chapter, I analyse the grammar and lexis in *American Dreams*. The style of the text foregrounds epistemological concerns by demonstrating a clear tendency toward what I refer to as “delayed understanding”. I argue that due to its epistemological dominant, the story can be considered as an instance of modernist fiction: a label not previously applied to Carey’s stories by literary critics. More importantly, the analysis shows how the theme of the imaginative story is connected to its social context in the real world, making explicit the ways in which the style conveys social truth.

The main methodology chosen for the analysis of the text is APPRAISAL³², which is a group of interpersonal categories for lexical items of various classes. The APPRAISAL analysis used in this chapter focuses on ATTITUDE, which, at the rank of word, occupies the interpersonal column in the function-rank matrix (see Figure 2.6). The analysis in this chapter takes a holistic approach to the examination of lexical colouring, as described in Martin and White (2005). The chosen method is appropriate because the connotation of selected lexical items gives an indication of narrative viewpoint and consciousness: an element that is central to the interpretation of the story. In addition to APPRAISAL, I use TRANSITIVITY (located at the nexus of the clause and the experiential metafunction) to complement the analysis. TRANSITIVITY is important in this text because it reveals the degree to which epistemological concerns are dominant.

³² In this chapter, I use small caps to indicate that the word refers to the APPRAISAL framework and its categories rather than the general meaning of the word.

The full text Chapter 6 (pp.137-173) has been due to copyright restriction.
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7. Grammar and semantics in 'She wakes'

Abstract

In this chapter, I argue that in *She Wakes*, nothing much happens in the plot. However, a detailed linguistic analysis reveals an important statement about the power to redefine one's reality. I analyse the text at the levels of grammar (TRANSITIVITY) and semantics (time, habituality). The analysis leads to an original interpretation of the story, which is the tension between inevitability and its opposite: the possibility for change. This theme, made visible only through rigorous linguistic analysis, explicitly shows the ambiguity in Carey's style. It shows how, from a stylistic perspective, Carey's unassuming story articulates a complex truth.

The methodology chosen for this text is located at both the grammatical and semantic strata. In terms of lexicogrammar, the analysis begins with TRANSITIVITY, at the intersection of clause and experiential metafunction (see Figure 2.6). The discussion also draws heavily on the analysis of TENSE, MODALITY, and POLARITY, all of which are examined at the rank of verbal group, with TENSE in the logical metafunction and MODALITY and POLARITY in the interpersonal metafunction. The ambiguity that exists between TENSE and MODALITY which is exploited for literary effect in this story, along with interesting choices in the system of PERSON (where the nominal group meets the interpersonal metafunction). Overall, it is a very subjective story, in which some very ordinary events in the physical world become defamiliarized. For this reason, there is a strong focus on various interpersonal functions, which are central to the meanings realized at the semantic level.

7.1. Introduction

Often credited as Carey's first story³⁶, *She Wakes*, was published in *Australian Letters* in 1967 and was republished in his first collection of stories *The Fat Man in History* (Carey 1994 [1974]). *She Wakes* is a work that has somehow managed to avoid attention from literary scholars until now. Possibly it is because it lacks the absurdity for which his stories are best known. *She Wakes* has been referred to as a "sketch" (Ahearne 1980: 13), a "tense vignette" (Snodgrass 2010: 10) and "a slight piece" that "shows Carey confidently handling an uncharacteristically realist mode" (Bliss 1996: 757). While the

³⁶ Although Carey published a piece entitled *Contacts* in 1966, he identifies *She Wakes* as his first publication (Lacken 2010a: 67).

story is very short (only 581 words), it should not be dismissed as merely a sketch or vignette, and there is certainly more to it than its atypical style. In 581 words, Carey manages to say something profound about relationships and change, going much further than merely “explor[ing] different facets of sexual relationships” (Lacken 2010b: 63). The claim that the story is about an “emotional awakening to short-changing by a one-response male” (Snodgrass 2010: 93) also seems to be a misinterpretation, because, as will later be discussed, the central character is represented as lacking an interior self.

In my reading of the story, theme is a generalization about potentiality and actuality. A contradiction exists between, on the one hand, the inevitability of ongoing confinement, and on the other hand, the possibility of ending it. Contradiction is a strong preoccupation in Carey’s fiction (Huggan 1996, Woodcock 2003), which has been demonstrated in the analysis of *Do You Love Me?* in Chapter 4. Carey also explores the paradoxical complexities of colonization in *American Dreams* and *Conversations with Unicorns*, as well as in a number of his novels. According to the *Oxford Companion to Australian Literature*, Carey’s fictions present “a keen sense of what he sees as the absurd paradoxes and contradictions of contemporary life, of the problematic nature of ordinary reality” (Wilde, Hooton and Andrews 1985: 145). This notion is precisely what is demonstrated in *She Wakes*, which examines the complex interplay of confinement and freedom in the context of a very ordinary and unremarkable event. These contradictory ideas are foregrounded in the text.

7.2. Temporal frames

In terms of the plot, nothing much happens in the story. An unnamed female character wakes up and thinks about her relationship with the unnamed male character lying beside her. Since neither of the characters is named, I shall herewith refer to the female character

as *She/Her* and to the male character as *He/Him* for convenience. *She* then predicts what her housemates would say about the relationship: namely that *He* is taking advantage of *Her*. He wakes up and dresses himself in the way that *She* had predicted. They do not speak to each other nor do they touch each other. *He* leaves *Her* alone to reflect some more. That is the end of the story.

The narrative can be roughly divided into five sections. The main principle for this division was the movement between present and future time, although the temporal boundaries are somewhat fuzzy so a degree of subjectivity was also present in the process of demarcation. The sections are presented in Figure 7.1 to give an overview of how time appears to drift.

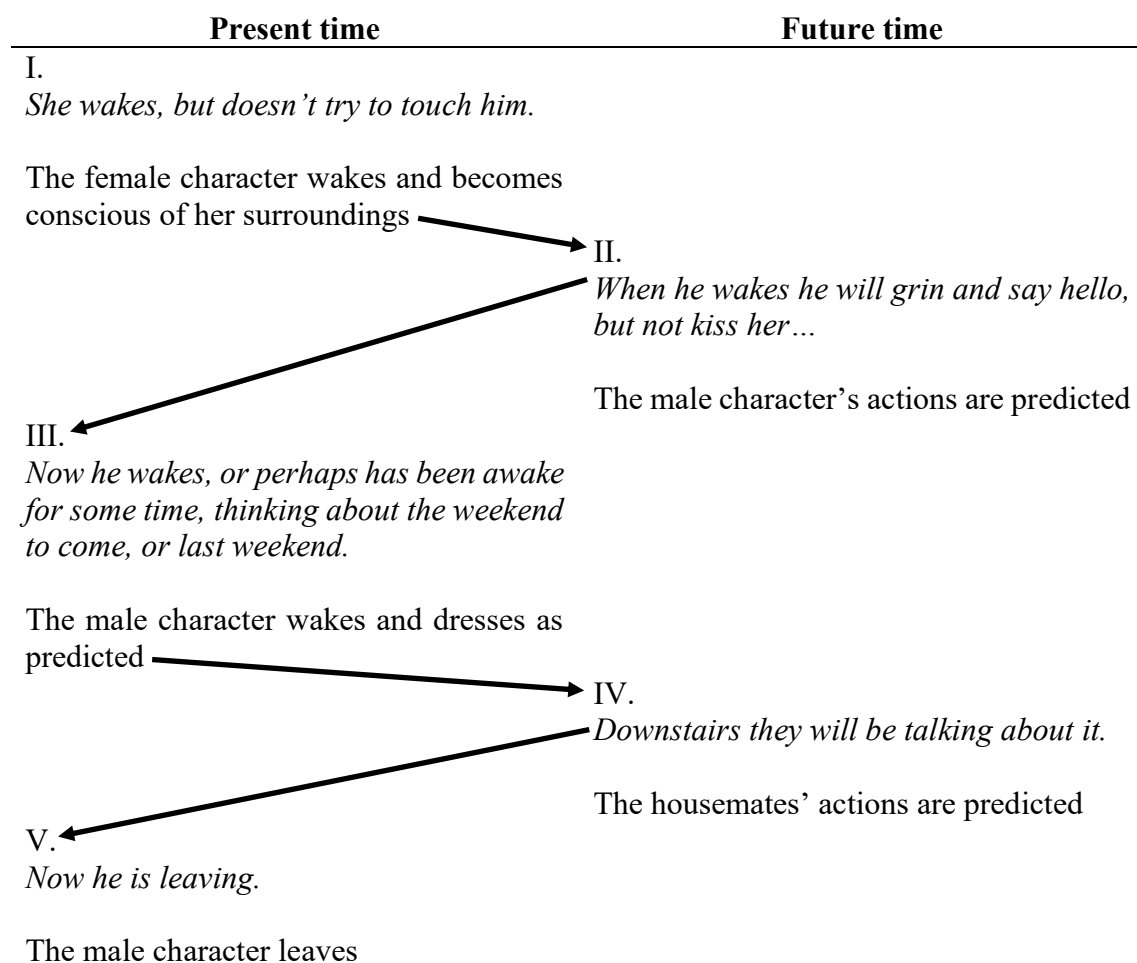


Figure 7.1 Temporal drift in 'She wakes'

Figure 7.1 gives a sense of how the narrator's consciousness alternates between the temporal reality of the present moment and speculative future time. A short excerpt here suggests a connection between the two temporal frames.

When he wakes he will grin and say hello, but not kiss her, and then jump with sudden energy from the bed, probably leaving the bedclothes so part of her body is exposed. This he will watch, still grinning, while he dresses in his particularly boyish way, half crouched in morning shyness.

[...] Now he wakes [...]

He turns now, grinning. She smiles at him, but not too warmly, not too softly. She does nothing to indicate that she expects anything from him.

Tossing back the blankets he swings his legs out of the bed so that he sits on it, his tanned back towards her. She does not touch his back [...]

[...] Now he dresses [...]

The blankets, still where he has thrown them, show a diagonal half of her body. He stands there looking at her, grinning again, then comes to rub her belly. (Carey 1994 [1974]: 26-27)

She accurately predicts what *He* will do. Presumably, *She* knows all that will happen because the situation is a familiar and repeated one. In one sense, being trapped in a predictable relationship is what the story is about. Hassall (1994: 17) echoes this reading in his claim that the story “depicts the sexual knot of a Friday night and Saturday morning in which the woman is trapped by her unwillingness to expect anything from the lover who takes advantage of her”. However, as will be shown, the story is also about the potential for freedom. In this chapter I argue that the text construes both of these phenomena simultaneously. To arrive at this interpretation, one must analyse the semantics of time, habituality, and TRANSITIVITY.

7.3. Negation of self: Evidence from transitivity

Analysing TRANSITIVITY in the text, the protagonist is shown to be a passive character.

Table 7.1 shows an overview of key entities in the text with respect to process types along

with the relevant –er participant roles. As can be seen in Table 7.1, the most common entity in the text is Actor (45%). Looking down the column of Actors, *He* accounts for 23/38 (about 60%) of all instances while *She* accounts for only 9/38 (about 23%). Looking across the rows, we can see that the male character has a higher proportion of participant roles: about 42% of the total. For *Him*, there is less diversity of roles and a much higher relative proportion of Actor (23/36 or about 64%). In contrast, her participant roles account for around 35% of the total count. Within this spread, there is a more even distribution across Senser, Behaver, Actor, Carrier, and Sayer (8, 5, 9, 3, and 5 respectively). Significantly, *She* is Actor in only 9/30 (30%) of instances. What this shows, generally speaking, is that *He* is more effectual than *Her*. *He* is the predominant –er participant and his agency has a relatively greater quantitative value.

Table 7.1 Participant overview in ‘She wakes’

Entity	Senser	Behaver	Actor	Existent	Carrier	Sayer	Total	%
He	3	9	23			1	36	42.35
She	38	5	9		3	5	30	35.29
They		1	4		1	4	10	11.76
empty <i>it</i>					3		3	3.53
body					2		2	2.35
days			1		1		2	2.35
blankets					1		1	1.18
none			1				1	1.18
Total	11	15	38	0	11	10	85	100
%	12.94	17.65	44.71	0	12.94	11.76	100	

As can be seen in Table 7.2, all except two of her material processes are negated through *not* or *nothing*. There are just two unnegated instances, the first of which (13.2) refers to the effective process of smoking. Smoking is one of only two material processes that contains a physical object as Goal. But smoking is a private kind of process in the context of the story: it does not require another person and it does not have a direct effect on her partner. In the second instance (31.1), *She* partially covers her naked body with a blanket,

but the manner in which *She* does so is *unobtrusive*. The unobtrusiveness of the process suggests that somehow her actions are not autonomous, but dependent on her male partner's preferences.

Table 7.2 Material processes of central character in 'She wakes'

Clause ID	Clause (Material)	POLARITY
2.2	but she doesn't try to touch him	neg
5.1	She doesn't try to touch him	neg
11.1	This morning she will not go downstairs	neg
13.2	and perhaps ^SHE WILL smoke cigarettes	pos
19.1	She does nothing that will indicate that she expects anything from him	neg
21.1	She does not touch his back	neg
22.2	or ^SHE does nothing to indicate that she expects anything from him	neg
31.1	She covers her left breast <i>unobtrusively</i>	pos
34.1	If she doesn't go down to them	neg

More evidence for her self-negation can be seen in the choice of mental processes attributed to *Her*. Table 7.3 shows that all mental perceptive processes including *hear* and *see* are either downgraded to an ability (realized through the modal verb *can*) or negated.

Table 7.3 Mental processes of central character in ‘She wakes’

Clause ID	Clause (Mental)	Process sub-type	Additional features
3.1	Through the wall she can hear the sound of the shower	Perception	ability
3.2	and, from downstairs, ^SHE CAN HEAR more sounds	Perception	ability
6.1	His hair, black and curly, is all she can see and also a little of his hand	Perception	ability
8.1	In the street outside she can hear cars and occasionally voices	Perception	ability
12.1	She will not hear them tell her that he is taking advantage of her [...]	Perception	negated
15.1	She knows	Cognition	
32.1	She wants nothing to indicate to him that she expects anything	Desideration	negated
37.1	She will hate him then	Emotion	
44.3	how she hates him	Emotion	

The semantic difference between ability and actuality in mental clauses of perception is subtle. The following examples exemplify the point.


- <1> a. Through the wall she can hear the sound of the shower.
 b. Through the wall she hears the sound of the shower.

Halliday and Matthiessen (2014: 246-247) point out that this use of *can* is a modulation of ‘readiness’, which includes the semantic domains of inclination and ability. The acute difference between <1a> and <1b> reflects what I see as the main preoccupation of the story: a blurring of the boundary between the actual and the potential. The character’s intention is unclear: is *She* inclined to hear the sounds of the outside world, or does *She* perceive them passively? The character is represented as having only potential intention or none at all. Intention and inclination come from within a person, and are expressed outwardly in actions. The female character of the story appears to lack this aspect of interiority, responding instead to environmental stimuli.

7.3.1. Dynamism

Perception is a passive type of mental process because it does not require a large degree of wilfulness. Hearing and seeing are more or less automatic and they can occur without a great deal of conscious effort. Processes of perception, and more generally mental processes, are less dynamic than material ones because they are confined to the inner world of consciousness. Behavioural processes, which Halliday conceptualizes as outward expressions of inner states, occupy the semantic space between mental and material processes in this regard. Thus the selection of processes and their corresponding participants can be ranked in terms of dynamism along a cline. This cline of dynamism (Hasan 1985a: 46) is reproduced in Table 7.4. It represents the TRANSITIVITY participant roles in terms of more and less dynamic configurations, along with Hasan's generic examples in the right-hand column.

Table 7.4 Cline of dynamism (Hasan 1985a: 46)

Dynamic	Participant configuration	Example (from Hasan)
	Actor + Animate Goal	<u>John</u> took Harry to London.
	Actor + Inanimate Goal	<u>John</u> took the books with him.
	Sayer + Recipient	<u>John</u> told Harry.
	Sayer + Target	<u>John</u> praised the system.
	Sayer	<u>John</u> talked.
	Phenomenon + Senser	<u>John</u> /the picture attracted her.
	Senser	<u>John</u> recognised the house./ Mary was attracted by it/him.
	Actor – Goal	<u>John</u> went away.
	Behaver	<u>John</u> woke up.
	Carrier	<u>John</u> was sleepy.
	Goal/Target	John took <u>Harry</u> with him.
	Range	I watched <u>the house</u> .
	Circumstance	I have a <u>sister</u> .
Passive		

If we accept Hasan’s cline of dynamism as a valid analytical framework for interpreting characterization, an interesting contrast between *Her* and *Him* is made visible (see Table 7.5).

Table 7.5 Dynamism of ‘She’ and ‘He’ in ‘She wakes’

Participant configuration	She	He
Actor + Animate Goal	3	2
Actor + Inanimate Goal	3	10
Sayer + Recipient	0	0
Sayer + Target	0	0
Sayer	5	1
Phenomenon + Senser	0	0
Senser	8	3
Actor – Goal	4	11
Behaver	5	9
Carrier	2	4
Goal/Target	2	2
Range	0	1
Circumstance	0	1
Total	32	44

As seen in Table 7.5, the male character takes more participant roles than *She* does (ratio 44:32). Additionally, despite some variation, *He* takes a higher number of individual participant roles across most categories, most notably the highly dynamic role of Actor + Inanimate Goal (ratio 10:3) but also in the less dynamic role of Actor without Goal (ratio 11:4). Such choices in TRANSITIVITY contribute to the sense that *She* is a passive kind of character.

7.3.2. Emptiness of character: Behavioural and mental construal

It was shown in Table 7.1 that the proportion of behavioural processes in *She Wakes* is around 17%. This is a relatively high figure. According to a study examining the probability of process types in 8,769 clauses across various registers, the average proportion of behavioural process was shown to be just 3.4% (Matthiessen 2015: 214). At a much higher proportion of 17%, the behavioural processes in *She Wakes* are worthy of attention. In referring to the results of Matthiessen’s large multi-register study, I do not wish to overstate their significance or imply that such un-normalized statistics can be

compared with the text-internal statistics of the analysis. Rather, I wish to point out that as an external benchmark backed by large corpora, Matthiessen's research helps to identify potentially significant patterns within Carey's text.

Behavioural processes, in the SFL model, are an outward manifestation of an inner state. The male character is Behaver in a total of 9 behavioural processes: 5 instances of grinning, 2 instances of looking/watching, and 2 instances of waking. We can assume that the man's grinning is an outward sign of satisfaction or pleasure, and the connotation of *grin* as opposed to *smile* suggests some kind of secret or withheld knowledge. By contrast, the female character is only assigned 5 behavioural processes: *wake*, *smile*, *laugh*, *(not) smile*, *(may even) cry*. These processes suggest certain emotions such as happiness and sadness. It is through their outward expression that we infer the nature of the characters. The author of any story, particularly in third-person narration, has the available option of stating, explicitly and non-ambiguously, the emotional state of the characters. In *She Wakes*, there is no such telling, only the evidence from behavioural processes and contextual features.

The text does present two single instances of direct emotion: hate. The directness is foregrounded, suggesting that her hate is a significant element. Both instances of hate occur toward the end of the story.

- | | | |
|------|------|-------------------------|
| (37) | 37.1 | She will hate him then, |
| | 37.2 | to make them happy. |
| (44) | 44.1 | She may even cry then, |
| | 44.2 | saying |
| | 44.3 | how she hates him. |

In (37), her hate serves the purpose of making her housemates happy. The housemates clearly do not like *Him*, and the suggestion is that her hate for *Him* will be a response to their expectations. In other words, *She* does not seem to own her emotions. In (44), her

hate is expressed through behavioural (*cry*) and verbal (*saying*) processes. The act of crying is only a probability (realized in *may*) and it is also unexpected (realized in *even*). Both saying and crying are outward expressions of her inner feelings. But they both occur in the immediate vicinity of a specific purpose which has nothing to do with the woman herself. The character could be viewed as lacking emotional integrity.

7.4. Confinement

Other grammatical choices in the text construe the central character as being confined in her relationship. By “confinement”, I mean both the restriction of physical movement and restriction of choice within a love relationship. It has already been suggested through a TRANSITIVITY analysis that *She* is emotionally hollow and that in relation to the male character, *She* is passive in her unfulfilling relationship. Her limitations are also realized in other external ways. Take for instance the story’s opening:

- | | | |
|-----|-----|--|
| (2) | 2.1 | She wakes, |
| | 2.2 | but <i>doesn't try</i> to touch him. |
| (3) | 3.1 | Through the wall she <i>can hear</i> the sound of the shower, |
| | 3.2 | and, from downstairs, more sounds. |
| (4) | 4.1 | The other girls are up. |
| (5) | 5.1 | She <i>doesn't try</i> to touch him, |
| | 5.2 | although <i>it is very cramped in this narrow bed</i> . |
| (6) | 6.1 | His hair, black and curly, is [[6.1.1 <i>all she can see</i> ,]] and also <i>a little of</i> his hand, |
| | 6.2 | because he is holding the blanket, |
| | 6.3 | as if he were frightened [[6.3.1 of it <i>being taken</i> from him.]] |
| (7) | 7.1 | It is Saturday morning. |
| (8) | 8.1 | In the street outside she <i>can hear</i> cars and <i>occasionally</i> voices |
| | 8.2 | as people walk past under the window. |

First, the bed is *narrow* and *very cramped* (5.2), so her potential movements are limited. Also, as has already been mentioned, many of her material actions are negated. Not only this, but the actions themselves are downgraded to “trying”. In the same way, her mental

processes are reduced to abilities, which are limited (6.1, 6.1.1, 8.1). Her lack of agency is also reinforced by the use of the passive voice (6.3.1). Since the only person potentially capable of taking the blanket is *Her*, it is significant that *She* is not construed as the taker. Rather, *She* lies in her bed and perceives her surrounding environment but does not interact with it. Later in the story, her future events are narrated:

- | | | |
|------|------|--|
| (11) | 11.1 | This morning she <i>will not go</i> downstairs |
| | 11.2 | until the others have left |
| | 11.3 | to go shopping. |
| (12) | 12.1 | She <i>will not hear</i> [[12.1.1 them tell her [[12.1.2 that he is taking |
| | | advantage of her 12.1.3 or that he is a funny little man 12.1.4 or |
| | | that he is a rat or anything else.]]]] |
| (13) | 13.1 | She <i>will stay in bed</i> |
| | 13.2 | and <i>perhaps</i> smoke cigarettes. |

This excerpt is important because it signifies a disruption to the typical routine. The suggestion is that typically *She* would go downstairs and hear her housemates (11, 12), but today will be different. The sense of routine can be inferred from the narrative: although *She* will not hear her housemates talking, *She* nevertheless seems to know exactly what they will talk about, which is their disdain for *Him* (12). This is presumably because they have talked about the same topic, perhaps many times, in the past. In the single instance of unnegated agency (13.1), *She* chooses to stay in her bed. She may also smoke cigarettes, which is an effective process. The act of smoking does not have a grammatical impact on *Him* or her relationship. It is, however, a significant event because it signals a fleeting moment of free will. More will be said about this in the following section. As this discussion has shown, there is a considerable amount of textual evidence for *Her* being unable to exert herself.

7.5. Exposure and vulnerability

The discussion will turn briefly to symbolic imagery that is relevant to the developing theme. The analysis so far has revealed a discernible imbalance of power in the relationship. This discrepancy is reinforced symbolically in the story through imagery of exposure and vulnerability. Returning to the story's opening, we are reminded that *He* is almost completely covered by the blanket:

- (6) 6.1 *His hair, black and curly, is [[6.1.1 all she can see,]] and also a
 6.2 little of his hand,*
 6.3 because he is holding the blanket,
 6.3 as if he were frightened [[6.3.1 of it being taken from him.]]

The blanket covers all but a small section of his head. Given that the bed is narrow and cramped, the implication is that the blanket is not large enough for both people to use. This does not only suggest that *He* is a selfish lover or that *He* ought not to be occupying her intimate space. The fact that *He* is covered and that *She* is presumably naked symbolizes asymmetry in the relationship. The blanket gives comfort or protection to the user: indeed *He* is holding it *as if he were frightened of it being taken from him* (6.3). And it is not only the blanket that is significant to the idea of being protected or clothed. The following passage, cited earlier, contributes to this idea:

- (9) 9.1 When he wakes
 9.2 he will grin
 9.3 and say hello,
 9.4 but not kiss her,
 9.5 and then jump with sudden energy from the bed,
 9.6 *probably leaving the bedclothes*
 9.7 *so part of her body is exposed.*
(10) 10.1 This he will watch,
 10.2 still grinning,
 10.3 *while he dresses* in his peculiarly boyish way, half crouched in
 morning shyness.

This excerpt presents a future prediction in which *She* is exposed by *Him* moving the bedclothes. While *She* remains exposed, *He* will dress himself. Again, *He* is the only participant with agency. The prediction turns out to be very accurate. Later in the story:

- | | | |
|------|------|--|
| (25) | 25.1 | Now he dresses, |
| | 25.2 | pulling on first his underpants and then his jeans. |
| (26) | 26.1 | As always he does up his jeans. |
| (27) | 27.1 | Then he takes his shirt |
| | 27.2 | and pulls it over his shoulders. |
| (28) | 28.1 | Now it is time [[28.1.1 for him to unbutton his jeans, 28.1.2 tuck the shirt into them, 28.1.3 and rebutton.]] |
| (29) | 29.1 | The blankets, <<29.2 still where he has thrown them,>> <i>show a diagonal half of her body.</i> |
| (30) | 30.1 | He stands there |
| | 30.2 | looking at her, |
| | 30.3 | grinning again, |
| | 30.4 | then comes |
| | 30.5 | <i>to rub her belly.</i> |
| (31) | 31.1 | <i>She covers her exposed left breast, unobtrusively.</i> |

This second passage shows that her prediction turns out to be correct. *He* does indeed dress in a peculiar way (28), and the blankets that *He* has moved expose her body (29.1). After that, *He* comes to rub her belly (30.5), which is a vulnerable part of her body. Perhaps covering herself symbolizes an attempt to break contact with *Him*, an attempt that seems to be completely ineffectual.

It would appear that the state of being naked is a metaphor for vulnerability, while being clothed represents being protected. The interpretation is consistent with the developing theme of asymmetry in the relationship. Thus the interim conclusion that can be drawn here is that *She* is confined in a harmful relationship but *She* is incapable of freeing herself. Although her partner seems to be exploiting *Her*, *She* will probably not do anything about it. It is not necessarily because *She* likes being treated this way: rather it seems that, given her passive character, *She* is simply incapable of dealing with it. The protagonist's passivity has been shown in the TRANSITIVITY of her actions. And indeed,

apart from a small number of perceptual and behavioural processes, *She* is only very rarely afforded an intentional act:

- | | | |
|------|------|--|
| (13) | 13.1 | She will stay in bed |
| | 13.2 | and perhaps smoke cigarettes. |
| (31) | 31.1 | She covers her exposed left breast, unobtrusively. |
| (36) | 36.1 | She will laugh at him then, |
| | 36.2 | and be angry |
| | 36.3 | and say |
| | 36.4 | he is a rat and a sneak and a silly little man. |
| (44) | 44.1 | She may even cry, then, |
| | 44.2 | saying |
| | 44.3 | how she hates him. |

One must remember that (36) and (44) are responses to the expectations of others, which means further represent the woman as lacking free will. In the same way, (31) seems to be at least partially influenced by her subjection to the male character, due to the unobtrusive manner in which *She* carries out the action. The only genuinely intentional act, then, is (13), which suggests that this morning *She* will not follow the expected routine: instead of going downstairs, *She* will stay in bed and smoke. But this isolated idea that *She* will take some self-appointed action is only hypothetical, and quickly dissipates. In other words, the possibility for positive change exists, but it is ephemeral and not easily spotted. It is precisely this notion that is articulated in an abstract way, through the semantics of habituality and time.

7.6. Future certainty and ambiguity

In addition to the construed passivity, vulnerability, and confinement in the story is an ambiguity of future events. The story is narrated almost entirely in the simple present and the simple future tenses, which together suggest an ongoing habituality as if the events are not only expected but certain. Whenever future time is realized in the story, it is always

through the verb *will*. Both *will* and *going to* can construe future time but only *will* is used in this story. According to Halliday’s system of TENSE (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014: 399), the difference between *will* and *going to* is the realization of primary and secondary tense. Compare the following sentences:

- <1> a. He will grin. (simple future tense)
 b. He is going to grin. (future-in-present tense)

According to Halliday’s system of TENSE, <1a> has only one primary tense: the simple future. But in <1b> the primary tense is present (expressed in the verb *is*) and the additional secondary tense is future (expressed in the verb *going to*). The primary tense in <1b> orients the time of the process to the present moment of narration in the same way that the grammatical Theme orients the clause to its context. In other words, in the sentence *He is going to grin*, the process of grinning is a future action viewed from the perspective of the present time. The future event thus has some bearing on the present, and may be connected to the present moment by some visible evidence in the present moment, such as the presence of dark clouds informing the statement *It is going to rain*.

It is perhaps for this reason that some English grammar books describe *going to* as more certain than *will*. For instance Swan (2005: 213) states that “When future events are already decided, or when we can “see them coming”, we often prefer... *going to*”. Leech and Svartvik (2002: 54-55) also note that *going to* indicates the future as ‘the fulfilment of the present’, which suggests that the event is expected to happen soon. This may be true, but there is more to consider. The certainty inherent in the simple future tense is made more tentative by the multi-functionality of *will*, which realizes both future time and the speaker’s assessment (MODALITY). The debate over whether *will* is rightly temporal or modal (Bache 2008, Bybee, Perkins and Pagliuca 1994, Leech 1987, Palmer 1987, Salkie 2010) is outside the scope of this paper. Here I take *will* to express both

meanings, and indeed, it is precisely this double function of *will* that contributes to the speculative quality of the story. An example of this effect of *will* is presented below.

- | | | |
|------|------|--|
| (11) | 11.1 | This morning she will not go downstairs |
| | 11.2 | until the others have left |
| | 11.3 | to go shopping. |
| (12) | 12.1 | She will not hear [[12.1.1 them tell her [[12.1.2 that he is taking |
| | | advantage of her 12.1.3 or that he is a funny little man 12.1.4 or |
| | | that he is a rat or anything else.]]]] |
| (13) | 13.1 | She will stay in bed |
| | 13.2 | and perhaps smoke cigarettes. |

The uses of *will* in (11) and (12) realize future statements that are predictions. But the verb *will* can also construe the speaker's assessment of probability. Indeed, all future events are inherently probable. We have already seen that the accuracy of predictions, as well as the use of the simple present and future tenses, gives the events in the narrative a sense of the inevitable. Without the modal adjunct *perhaps* in (13.1), the probability of the future events is high. But even if the narrator were omniscient, which does not seem likely based on the discussion thus far, the degree of objective certainty would not be absolute. As Leech (1987: 57) points out, "Even the most confident prognostication must indicate something of the speaker's attitude and so be tinged with modality". So the use of *will* in the text, realizing both time and assessment, presents an aesthetic effect of ambiguity, which is relevant to the theme of the story. An example of such ambiguity is given in the following sentence:

- | | | |
|------|------|---|
| (33) | 33.1 | Downstairs they will be talking about it. |
|------|------|---|

The future event in (33) may seem fairly certain. But underlying this apparent certainty is the possibility for a different outcome if *will* is viewed as modal rather than temporal.

It has already been suggested that the woman in Carey’s story is a weak character. *She* is aware of her predicament but, like the Mime in *The Last Days of a Famous Mime*, seems unable to take the necessary steps to escape from it. Is it truly impossible for her to take control of her reality? The remainder of this chapter now turns to the degree to which positive change is possible. We will see that the line dividing potentiality and actuality is blurred in a number of ways.

7.7. Time and habituality

In Chapter 7.6, the idea that the simple future tense presents a degree of ambiguity was discussed. In a similar way, the simple present tense has the double function of construing both time and timelessness. The use of the simple present tense in narration is a marked choice (Fleischman 1990: 32, Leech 1987: 65) that has become particularly commonplace in short stories (Fludernik 2003: 125) and modernist literature (Fleischman 1990: 11, Huber 2016: 10-11). The simple present tense also serves the representation of direct perceptions and timeless narration, among other functions, including the blurring of events and descriptions (Fleischman 1990: 289).

In terms of timeless narration, the simple present tense construes both the narrative speaker-now and a more general time that extends both into the past and into the future. The latter will be referred to as the “habitual” present tense, as exemplified below:

- <2> a. John eats breakfast.
 b. John is eating breakfast.

Both sentences refer to a present action. The difference is that while sentence <2b> refers only to the speaker-now, sentence <2a> refers to a broader timeframe including,

presumably, the past and the future. Sentence <2a> is an example of the habitual present tense. The difference in meaning is accounted for in SFL with relation to process type. Material processes such as eating have the present progressive³⁷ as their unmarked or default present tense (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014: 254), while the marked option is the simple present (see Table 7.6). This is because the co-selection of material process and simple present tense realizes the habitual present. In fact, the simple present is the habitual tense for all process types (see Table 7.6), which may give the reader a sense of normality in present tense narration.

Table 7.6 Unmarked present tenses by process type (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014: 354)

Process type	Example	Unmarked present tense	Habitual present tense
material	<i>eat, hold, take, go, leave</i>	progressive	simple
behavioural	<i>wake, grin, smile, talk, laugh</i>	progressive	simple
mental	<i>hear, see, feel, want, hate</i>	simple	simple
verbal	<i>say, ask</i>	simple	simple
relational	<i>is, stay, stand</i>	simple	simple
existential	<i>there is</i>	simple	simple

TENSE selection is often supplemented with other time markers to reinforce the temporal orientation of an event:

- <3> a. John eats breakfast *at 7:00*. (habitual)
 b. *Now* John is eating breakfast. (non-habitual)

³⁷ The preferred term for the form “be + Ving” in systemic functional theory is ‘present-in-present’. This label is consistent with Halliday’s recursive TENSE system in which aspect is considered to be separate from TENSE.

The semantics of time and habituality are unambiguous in the invented examples <3a> and <3b>, but they are not always so clear in the wild. Consider the following contiguous sentences from the story:

- | | | |
|-----|-----|--|
| (2) | 2.1 | She wakes, |
| | 2.2 | but doesn't try to touch him. |
| (3) | 3.1 | Through the wall she can hear the sound of the shower, |
| | 3.2 | and, from downstairs, more sounds. |
| (4) | 4.1 | The other girls are up. |

Sentence (2) appears to be habitual at first glance because both *wakes* (behavioural) and *doesn't try to touch* (material) are expressed in the marked simple present tense. The ambiguity is reinforced by the fact that behavioural processes such as *wake* in the simple present tense can also be unmarked/non-habitual. For instance, there is little difference between "Why do you laugh?" and "Why are you laughing?", which suggests that behavioural process such as laughing bear a resemblance to mental processes (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014: 301).

But in sentence (3), the spatial markers *through the wall* and *from downstairs* situate the events in a confined spatiotemporal location. This context of temporal confinement extends to sentence (4), in which the housemates are awake in the here-and-now of the moment of speaking. The choice of the simple present in this narrative gives it a sense of immediacy, which Huber (2016: 16) refers to as "narrator commentary". But perhaps the most significant effect of the simple present tense is the association with fixed or scheduled events. Thus the choice of tense in the narrative effectively gives the text a perceivable but indefinite sense of habituality, as future time can be realized in both the simple present and the simple future tenses.

Habituality can also be realized in rank-shifted clauses³⁸, since they include a notion of time even in the absence of TENSE:

- (28) 28.1 Now it is time [[28.1.1 for him to unbutton his jeans, ||28.1.2 tuck them shirt into them, ||28.1.3 and rebutton.]]

In (28.1), the temporal adjunct *now* situates the first clause in the narrative speaker-now. However, the following rank-shifted clauses are non-finite³⁹, meaning they are not selected for primary tense. Regardless, the events *unbutton*, *tuck*, and *rebutton* all serve to imbue the main noun *time* with a sense of routine or habituality, which may also be due, in part, to the fact that both dressing and eating are daily activities. But the main semantic thrust of the clause comes from the finite clause *Now it is time*. Here, the habituality is present in the rank-shifted clause but it is downgraded by virtue of its grammatical status.

7.8. Habituality analysis

In Figure 7.1 a subjective division of the story was suggested. The following habituality analysis will be organized according to these sections. Focusing on various realizations of habituality, the following analysis examines it in the five sections of the story as outlined in Figure 7.1. The main argument is that habituality is grammatically downgraded various ways, one of which is rank-shifting. When a clause is rank-shifted, it becomes subordinated to a lower rank, by which the semantic weight of the clause is

³⁸ The rank-shifted clauses function as postmodifier to the main noun *time*, which means they are effectively downgraded from the rank of clause to that of group (see Chapter 2.5.1)

³⁹ According to Halliday's theory of TENSE, the Finite element of a verbal group is responsible for carrying its primary tense. Infinitives such as *to eat* are viewed as having no TENSE, while participles such as *eating* and *eaten* are said to have secondary tense only (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014: 399).

typically subsumed into a nominal group. A nominal group does not by itself amount to the degree of semantic power afforded by a ranking clause. The remainder of this analysis is located within the stratum of semantics, although it is of course through the lexicogrammar that the modulation of habituality is visible.

7.8.1. Sections I and II

Earlier in Chapter 7.4, I argued that the size of the protagonist's bed is semantically significant because it is a physical constraint. The same clause is also significant with regard to habituality, because the status of habituality is ambiguous:

- (5) 5.1 She doesn't try to touch him,
 5.2 *although it is very cramped in this narrow bed.*

The process type is relational: attributive. Most of the time, such processes are inherently habitual, as in *the sky is blue*. However in the story, it is not clear whether the bed is cramped simply because it is habitually narrow or because it is temporarily currently accommodating a second body. Since there is an absence of conclusive evidence, I take the process to be tentatively habitual. The notion that the bed is too narrow for two people also suggests that *He* should not be occupying her intimate space. But this conclusion, like the status of habituality itself, is indefinite.

The following sentence from section II of the text also demonstrates a speculative kind of habituality.

- (12) 12.1 She will not hear [[12.1.1 them tell her [[12.1.2 *that he is taking advantage of her* ||12.1.3 *or that he is a funny little man* ||12.1.4 *or that he is a rat or anything else.*]]]]

Despite the fact that her predictions are accurate, the mental process *She will not hear* does not seem to be habitual. However, the projected clauses⁴⁰ *he is a funny little man* and *he is a rat* are timeless attributes (cf *he is being a rat*). The clause *he is taking advantage of her* also has a problematic status. The process *taking advantage of* is material, so one would expect it to be expressed in the simple present tense if it is habitual. However, due to the fact that the relationship has been going on for some time, it is reasonable to assume that it is a habitual process even though it is expressed in the present progressive tense. This analysis suggests that habituality is both instated and questioned. It is this complex articulation of the possibility for change that is most meaningful in the story.

7.8.2. Section III

Section III of the text includes a number of instances of indeterminate habituality. The following passage is quoted at length to show all eight instances of habituality in context:

- | | | |
|------|------|--|
| (14) | 14.1 | Now he wakes, |
| | 14.2 | or perhaps has been awake for some time, |
| | 14.3 | thinking about the weekend to come, or last weekend. |
| (15) | 15.1 | <i>She knows</i> |
| | 15.2 | <i>he isn't thinking about Friday night,</i> |
| | 15.3 | <i>that he only thinks of Friday nights</i> |
| | 15.4 | <i>when they are happening.</i> |
| (16) | 16.1 | <i>And then, perhaps, only with his body.</i> |
| (17) | 17.1 | He turns now, |
| | 17.2 | grinning. |
| (18) | 18.1 | She smiles at him, but not too warmly, not too softly. |
| (19) | 19.1 | <i>She does nothing</i> [[19.1.1 <i>to indicate</i> 19.1.2 <i>that she expects</i> |
| | | <i>anything from him.</i>]] |
| (20) | 20.1 | Tossing back the blankets |

⁴⁰ According to Cloran (1994: 150), both the projecting and projected clause in combination are required to realize a semantic unit. Thus, the content of the rank-shifted clause alone has only partial semantic value of the unit.

- 20.2 he swings his legs out of the bed
 20.3 so that he sits on it, his tanned back towards her.
 (21) 21.1 She does not touch his back.
 (22) 22.1 *She says nothing*
 22.2 *or does nothing* [[22.2.1 to indicate ||22.2.2 that she expects
anything from him.]]
 (23) 23.1 *She does not ask him*
 23.2 *what he will do today, or tomorrow,*
 23.3 *has never asked him*
 23.4 *what he will do ever.*
 (24) 24.1 Downstairs they are probably talking about him,
 24.2 feeling sorry for her.
 (25) 25.1 *Now he dresses,*
 25.2 *pulling on first his underpants and then his jeans.*
 (26) 26.1 *As always he does up his jeans.*
 (27) 27.1 Then he takes his shirt
 27.2 and pulls it over his shoulders.
 (28) 28.1 *Now it is time* [[28.1.1 for him to unbutton his jeans, ||28.1.2 tuck
the shirt into them, ||28.1.3 and rebutton.]]
 (31) 31.1 She covers her exposed left breast, unobtrusively.
 (32) 32.1 *She wants nothing* [[32.1.1 to indicate to him ||32.1.2 that she
expects anything.]]

Two of the instances (16, 28) relate simply to his act of dressing, which I have argued, is both habitual and a symbol of power imbalance in the relationship. In (26), habituality is realized in the comment adjunct *As always* and the marked simple present tense. In (28), as suggested above, the habituality realized in the form *Now it is time for him to [...]* is indeterminate due to its embedded status.

Other instances of habituality (15, 16) suggest that *He* is only interested in the physical benefits of the relationship. In (15), the adverbial *only* signals counter-expectancy. Counter-expectancy necessarily implies an assumption about the reader's knowledge, and in this instance the assumption is that *He* ought to be more interested in his weekly meetings with her. Further, (16) is a sentence which is not a finite clause. The semantic weight is reduced by its non-finite grammatical status, while the sentence itself is simultaneously foregrounded by virtue of its deviation. Both (15) and (16) are also

projections, which following Cloran (1994: 150), means that they are only one part of a semantic unit.

She knows what *He* wants from the relationship, yet her own expectations are never openly stated. Her intentions are kept guarded, and this idea occurs three times (19, 22, 28). The habituality in all three of these instances is downgraded by their rank-shifted status. Finally in (23), the habituality is indicated by the adverbials *never* and *ever*, both of which span a general timeframe broader than the speaker-now. This last instance of habituality does not appear to be lessened in any way, but it does contribute to the idea that the woman is an unusually empty kind of person. After all, what kind of person has never asked their lover such a basic question?

Overall, the habituality examined here in section III of the story draws attention to certain key ideas, namely (i) the purely physical act of dressing, which is symbolic of (ii) inequality in the relationship, (iii) the contrast in expectations about the relationship, and (iv) a lack of communication. All four of these ideas construe the relationship as being harmful, which is consistent with the TRANSITIVITY analysis. But although her fate may appear to be fixed, a significant amount of evidence also points to the speculative or indeterminate status of habituality, which suggests that change is possible.

7.8.3. Sections IV-V

The final sections of the story further contribute to the interpretation developed until now. Four instances are contained in this list:

- (34) 34.1 *If she doesn't go down to them [...]*
 34.2 *they will come upstairs to her, with her breakfast [...]*
 34.5 *or just to talk.*
- (35) 35.1 *About being taken advantage of.*
- (36) 36.1 *She will laugh at him then,*
 36.2 *and be angry*
 36.3 *and say*
 36.4 *he is a rat and a sneak and a silly little man.*
- (37) 37.1 *She will hate him then,*
 37.2 *to make them happy.*
- (38) 38.1 *Now he is leaving.*
- (39) 39.1 *Some mornings he kisses her.*
- (40) 40.1 *This morning is not one of them,*
 40.2 *but he waves.*
- (41) 41.1 *And grins once more.*
- (42) 42.1 *She doesn't smile.*
- (43) 43.1 *In a few moments, when he has left the house,*
 43.2 *the others will come up.*
- (44) 44.1 *She may even cry, then,*
 44.2 *saying*
 44.3 *how she hates him.*

In (35), the sentence *About being taken advantage of* is a non-finite clause. It is foregrounded in the same way as sentence (16) mentioned above: clause (35) is downgraded from the status of a finite clause but is also foregrounded by its having the weight of a sentence. The habituality of “being a rat” is clear in (36), but this proposition is downgraded by the non-habitual projecting clause *She (^WILL) say*.

Her emotional responses to talking about his exploitation are all rounded off, significantly, in sentence (37): *She will hate him then, to make them happy*. Her hate is the reaction that her housemates expect from her, which reinforces the idea that *She* has no power in her own relationship; her emotional response depends on outsiders. The same kind of hate is presented in (44), where the habituality of her hate for *Him* is also uncertain because it is projected by the non-habitual and non-finite clause *saying*.

The final example (39) shows that *He* sometimes kisses *Her*. The habituality of this clause resides in the present simple tense. It does not appear to be downgraded in any way, but it does add to the semantic consistency that has been building up to this point.

As one might expect, *She* is not construed as the kisser, but as the receiver of the kiss. Passively, *She* does not take action. *She* will not even go downstairs: her friends will come upstairs to *Her*. Confined to her bedroom, all *She* seems to be able to do is speculate.

7.9. Habituality in narrative progression

What I have attempted to demonstrate in this analysis is that the key to the meaning of the story could be its own irreconcilability. On the one hand, the text builds up, through characterization, the expectation that life will go on as predicted. On the other hand, grammatical choices undermine the certainty of this expectation. By focusing on TRANSITIVITY, TENSE, and habituality, some of the most significant events in the story reveal themselves. Singling them out, one can begin to see the essence of the story: certain events stand out from the others in a narrative in which nothing really happens. By drawing attention to these significant events, the reader's attention may be directed to certain textual locations that can help to guide an interpretation. These textual locations, Hasan (1985a) argues, are a necessary component in her conceptualization of foregrounding.

The tension between confinement and possibility are not necessarily conscious in the minds of the author or the reader. But they are, nonetheless, present in the covert organization of the text, and can be drawn out by paying attention to linguistic features such as TRANSITIVITY and TENSE. Table 7.7 shows that each event, made significant by virtue of its downgraded habituality, gives a sense of the main narrative progression. Disregarding the man's purely physical actions of dressing and kissing, the narrative begins with the idea of the woman's physical confinement (5), which as I have argued before is also symbolic of her emotional confinement. Then, the idea that *She* is being exploited is explored (12, 15, 16), which is contrasted with her passiveness regarding the

situation (19, 22, 23, 32). Her exploitation is explored further (34, 36) and then the narrative closes with the possibility of the woman crying. Apart from the intrusive events in which the man is agentive, the tabulated habitual events, read in sequence, give a surprisingly coherent abridgement of the story. Habituality, then, seems to function as an organizing principle in the plot, in which a potentially coherent journey into the mind of the woman is disrupted by the man.

It follows that it is not the particulars of the plot, but habituality itself, which seems to be both the aesthetic motivation and the central meaning of the story. But eleven of the fourteen habitual events in Table 7.7 (79%) involve some form of grammatical downgrading, or semantic dilution of themselves. In this way, the significant events represented in Table 7.7 realize a kind of self-contradictory habituality. In other words, it is the very instability of certainty that is most significant in the story. The anxiety and tension created by this self-contradiction is what gives the story its speculative quality, weaving in and out of present and future time and blurring the boundary between reality and imagination. Once again, Carey succeeds in conveying a complex statement about reality – this time in the form of an unassuming narrative – and compels his readers to reflect on what may be holding them back from realizing their full potential.

Table 7.7 Habitual events in ‘She wakes’

Clause complex ID	Habitual event	Paraphrase of event	Habituality downgrade
(5)	She doesn’t try to touch him, <i>although it is very cramped in this narrow bed.</i>	The bed is cramped (He does not fit in her intimate space)	ambiguity
(12)	She will not hear them tell <i>her that he is taking advantage of her or that he is a funny little man or that he is a rat or anything else.</i>	(They say) He exploits Her	rank-shift, projection
(15)	<i>^SHE KNOWS that he only thinks of Friday nights when they are happening.</i>	(She knows) He exploits her	projection
(16)	<i>And then, perhaps, only with his body.</i>	(She knows) He exploits Her	(projection)
(19)	<i>She does nothing to indicate that she expects anything from him.</i>	She does nothing	rank-shift
(22)	She says nothing or <i>^SHE does nothing that will indicate that she expects anything from him.</i>	She says nothing	rank-shift
(23)	<i>^SHE has never asked him</i> what he will do <i>ever.</i>	She asks nothing	none
(26)	<i>As always he does up his jeans.</i>	He dresses	none
(28)	<i>Now it is time for him to unbutton his jeans, tuck the shirt into them, and rebutton.</i>	He dresses	rank-shift
(32)	<i>She wants nothing to indicate that she expects anything.</i>	She wants nothing	rank-shift
(34)	If she doesn’t go down to them...they will come upstairs to her, with her breakfast...or just to talk. <i>About being taken advantage of.</i>	(They say) He exploits Her	rank-shift
(36)	She will laugh at him then, and be angry and <i>^SHE WILL say he is a rat and a sneak and a silly little man.</i>	(She says) He exploits Her	projection
(39)	<i>Some mornings he kisses her.</i>	He kisses Her	none
(44)	She may even cry, then, <i>saying how she hates him.</i>	(She says) She hates Him	projection

7.10. Conclusion

Despite being a relatively short and atypical story for Carey, *She Wakes* articulates a complex statement about relationships, power, and change. It is less stylistically experimental than his better-known stories, but as one of his first publications, *She Wakes* established a theme that he would continue to explore in his later stories and novels. So

although I agree with Bliss (1996: 757) that Carey demonstrates a “realist mode” of storytelling in *She Wakes*, I do not agree that the work should be considered as less valuable than his more experimental pieces.

Carey once said that if his stories are good, it is because they reflect the truth of the real world (Ikin 1977a: 33), which is a complicated kind of truth. *She Wakes* presents such truth in all its complexity and contradiction through its semantic design, for it is precisely this kind of abstract articulation that is required to convey such complex truths. In this context, it is through the symbolic articulation of a text rather than its automatized linguistic meaning, that *She Wakes* should be considered a “realist” text. Through certain linguistic choices in TRANSITIVITY and TENSE, Carey defamiliarizes a seemingly ordinary and predictable event, presenting a striking contrast between confinement and freedom. The approach taken in this analysis shows the mastery of Carey’s craft, through the power of language in the short story, readers may recognize that the necessity to take charge of their realities, so that they can avoid the emptiness of self which is clearly obvious in the character of *She Wakes*, but not necessarily so in ourselves.

8. Conclusion: Linking style, truth and imagination

One point of departure for this thesis was the question of how the style in Peter Carey's stories is able to convey truth. To investigate this question I used Hasan's framework of symbolic articulation, a two-step process of semiosis occurs, by which motivated linguistic patterns form a semantic consistency. This semiotic process can only be made visible through rigorous linguistic analysis, which as has been shown, not only allows for the interpretation of the theme, but also makes explicit the linguistic style, or verbal texture of the text. In these analyses a number of original insights have been uncovered, insights that complement traditional literary criticism with an unprecedented level of linguistic detail not previously afforded by scholars of Carey's literature. Table 8.1 shows a summary overview of the analyses that were carried out.

8.1. Reflection on methodology

This thesis has taken a social-semiotic stylistic approach, especially SFL. Each of Carey's stories is unique in style and meaning, which is why different analytical methods were chosen for each text. One of the problems identified at the beginning of the thesis was the fact that Carey is difficult to categorize in terms of literary genre. Some of his stories have been shown to be metafictional, such as *The Last Days of a Famous Mime*. Other stories are more modernist, such as *American Dreams*, and, to a lesser extent, *She Wakes*. *Conversations with Unicorns* is clearly some kind of colonial allegory, but there is very little about its style which suggests a particular genre, although its heavy use of 'free indirect speech' gives it some family resemblance to modernist fiction. *Do You Love Me?* is also allegorical but is more postmodern in the sense of McHale's definition since its main concern is the status of reality.

The results of the social-semiotic text analysis that was used in this thesis confirms the difficulty of generically labelling Carey's fiction. The analysis shows a richness to his style that has been overlooked by the literary critics who do not venture far beyond describing a "matter-of-fact" tone (Gilbey 1977, Wilde, Hooton and Andrews 1985). The voice in *Conversations with Unicorns* does indeed seem cool and report-like in this regard, which I have argued is partly due to a distinct lack of modality. Yet in other stories, the tone is warm and very personal, as in the nostalgic timbre of *American Dreams*. I would argue that much of this nostalgia comes from the high number of lexical items from the ATTITUDE categories of AFFECT and APPRECIATION, as well as a general sense of loss that manifests as delayed understanding in the grammar of the text. But the nostalgia is also mixed with regret, which gives the text an uneasy tension targeting the contradictory nature of Americanization.

Contradiction also features as a central idea in *She Wakes*, which seems fairly unremarkable at first glance, but a closer examination reveals the subtle calibration of ambiguity related to time and certainty in construing the protagonist's consciousness, while *The Last Days of a Famous Mime* creates a sense of confusion and anxiety through a marked lack of connections or unusual instantial relations between lexical items such as marriage and mirrors, or death and photographs. Like *Do You Love Me?* it is concerned with existential anxiety, tracking the gradual disappearance of a man whose social role is no longer important.

It is only through detailed and rigorous linguistic analysis that such evaluations of Carey's style can be made, targeting specific grammatical systems that are appropriate to the unique style of each text. In each case, a consistency in foregrounding was discerned, which helped to guide the interpretation of the story's theme, especially by focusing attention on specific sections of text. These sections of text were assumed to have

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semantic importance, and from this important foundation, a more detailed interpretation could proceed. In Hasan's theory of verbal art, symbolic articulation requires both a consistency in the direction of the semantic flow of foregrounded patterns, as well as a consistency in the textual location of foregrounded instances. The analyses in this thesis have been demonstrated to be consistent with this hypothesis, although it remains unknown to what degree confirmation bias has affected the results.

In any case, I would argue that such bias is largely unimportant because reading literature is necessarily a subjective experience. The social-semiotic methods applied in the thesis cannot get inside the heads of human readers, but they can provide a sketch of the 'implied reader' as a discursive construction. Most importantly, social-semiotic stylistics effectively addresses the question of how a text is made, which as (Sotirova 2016b: 16) reminds us, has been fundamental to stylistics since Russian Formalism.

The effectiveness of symbolic articulation as a guiding framework may be due to the fact that it guides the interpretation process by forcing the reader to pay close attention to certain details and identify their artistic motivation. In this way, symbolic articulation would certainly be, to use Hasan's words, an "enabling framework" (Hasan 1985a: 90), one that solves the problem of replicability in Spitzer's philological circle.

Table 8.1 Overview of stylistic analyses

	Analysis type	<i>Conversations with Unicorns</i>	<i>Do You Love Me?</i>	<i>The Last Days of a Famous Mime</i>	<i>American Dreams</i>	<i>She Wakes</i>
Grammar	Cline of dynamism					✓
	Clause relations	✓				
	Counter-expectancy	✓				
	Logico-semantics	✓				
	MODALITY	✓				
	Projection	✓				✓
	TENSE					✓
	Theme	✓		✓	✓	
	TRANSITIVITY		✓	✓	✓	✓
Lexis	Coherence			✓		
	Collocation		✓			
	Connotation			✓	✓	
	Lexical cohesion			✓		
	Keyword analysis		✓			
	Word frequency		✓			
Semantics	Appraisal (ATTITUDE)				✓	
	Habituality					✓
	Speech presentation	✓				
	Time					✓

The level of complexity involved in an SFL analysis of a literary text is not inconsequential. A firm understanding of SFL's grammatical categories, as well as sufficient resources for collecting and analysing data are essential for such a reading to

proceed. But language is a highly complex phenomenon, and especially so in literature, where the theme will remain invisible or at least implicit unless the linguistic forensics are carried out.

If all that is required were a subjective response to a literature text, based on nothing more than intuition, then traditional critical techniques for reading literature should suffice. But the reality is, as Lukin (2002) points out, that reading literature requires certain knowledge to be done well. The problem is that the knowledge remains arcane in most teaching contexts. But if the reading of literature has any value at all – and apparently it has, since students are still tested on it in school – then it should be taught as practical knowledge (Lukin 2002, Lukin 2008). Here “practical knowledge” means the kind of criticism that can be explicitly learned. Social-semiotic stylistic methods such as the ones demonstrated in this thesis can turn the interpretation of a fictional text into practical knowledge. To quote Lukin (2002: 302), such knowledge “is practical because it can be transferred not just to the study of literary texts, but to the study of the broad range of texts with which students need to be able to engage”. It is also practical in the sense that it enables a deeper appreciation for verbal art: one that has the power to show the metaphysical power of language to shape reality.

8.2. Style and aesthetic effect

One of the questions guiding this thesis is how the imaginative quality of Carey’s stories may provoke readers to recalibrate their realities. The answer, I would suggest, has much to do with the power of language to construe experience. In Carey’s stories, the language is used in interesting and unusual ways. This is surely what the early critics of Carey’s stories were attending to when they mentioned the ways in which Carey’s experimental forms question and probe reality, in a manner comparable to the so-called fabulators

(Scholes 1979) or the magic realists (Ross 1990) of America. Sometimes the imaginative quality of Carey's stories is manifest in the fictional setting of the tale (*Conversations with Unicorns, Do You Love Me?*). In other instances the imaginative quality is more akin to speculation, as a character introspectively considers regular day-to-day events in the mind (*She Wakes*). In either case a signal is sent to the reader to consider his or her own reality, and to imagine an alternative reality to the one that they have.

I would argue that the power of such a message is amplified by its artistic mode. The power of Carey's stories is a phenomenon that has been raised by non-linguistic critics, and the results of my analyses suggest why the stories might have this kind of effect. A notable attempt at exploring the potency of Carey's stories in terms of literary devices is in Rubik (2005). Rubik sets out from the assumption that Carey's stories are provocative and haunting, claiming that they "lodge in the imagination long after the reader has put the book down" (Rubik 2005: 169). Indeed, Carey himself once admitted that this is precisely the effect that he wished his stories to have, stating that the best possible outcome would be to affect the reader's perception of the world (Ikin 1977a). It is my view that they are successful in this regard. But where does the power of the stories come from? How can they be accounted for in terms of style?

Rubik argues that the nature of Carey's literary effect derives from his manipulation of "cognitive schema", resulting in ambiguity and interpretative difficulty. Rubik does not define cognitive schema in her paper, but according to *Key Terms in Stylistics*, a schema can be described as "a series of knowledge structures that determine how mental activity takes place" (Nørgaard, Busse and Montoro 2010: 147). Although cognitive approaches to literature may be useful interpretative frameworks (Burke 2014, Sotirova 2016a, Stockwell and Whiteley 2014), they are based on an assumption that there are universal schemata for all individual readers regardless of specific contextual

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and cultural factors. A comprehensive discussion of the problematic nature of the cognitive approach is outside the scope of this chapter (but see for instance Lukin and Pagano, 2016). Rather than taking issue with cognitively-oriented criticism in general terms, I will instead contrast Rubik's analysis of *American Dreams* with my own approach.

Rubik's position is that Carey's stories, including *American Dreams*, achieve their provocative effect through either the reversal or the abandonment of established cognitive frames. Rubik claims that *American Dreams* is framed as a thriller, citing the story's opening and referring to the mysteriousness of Gleason. The assertion is tenuous at best, because the question of how the frame is classified as none other than a "thriller" remains unexplained. Perhaps an analysis focusing on the narrative structure of a standard genre (O'Toole 1975) could provide some evidence, but this is not attempted. My own interpretation suggests that the mysteriousness with which the story begins is an important element of a literary technique that foregrounds epistemological concerns.

Rubik then goes on to suggest that the "hypothesis of the 'thriller' text frame" is somehow disconfirmed when Gleason's model becomes known to the reader, and that what follows is a reversal of the cognitive parameters of 'figure' and 'ground'. According to Rubik, Gleason is presumably the figure, or "agent"⁴¹, while the model of the town is the ground. When Gleason dies, the model displaces him as figure because it becomes the entity that dictates action. This so-called reversal of figure and ground signals the negation of an assumed text frame, which for Rubik presumably accounts for the story's powerful effect. Underlying this interpretation is an assumption that the figure is determined by its agency, its power to effect change. However, no supporting evidence

⁴¹ It seems, from Rubik's discussion, that the role of figure is attributed to the agentive entity in a situation, in contrast with a non-agentive entity, although this distinction is not explicitly stated.

is provided for this claim. One way of closing this gap in the interpretation is to analyse the language of the text using a descriptive grammar that accounts for the grammatical agency of entities: in other words, to conduct a TRANSITIVITY analysis. In my own TRANSITIVITY analysis, what was revealed was not a reversal in agency but rather a preoccupation with perception and, in conjunction with an analysis of grammatical Theme and APPRAISAL, the various ways in which immediate perception contrasts with understanding.

Cognitive approaches to literary texts require close attention to language, but there is nothing cognitive nor linguistic about Rubik's reading of the story. Although a couple of passages from the text are quoted, there is no close reading of the language therein, and further, the terms 'cognitive frame' and 'figure'/'ground' are neither adequately defined nor exemplified with textual evidence. The concept of figure/ground reversal in literature is potentially enlightening if used correctly. Butt (1996) argues that figure/ground reversal in the context of a poem could be viewed as a shift not only in perception but also in cultural values. For instance, a literary text may force its reader to notice something that challenges what is conventionally valued, which is encoded in the culture. Alternative values may be presented either consciously or unconsciously through the semantic design, or linguistic patterning of the text. But for a shift in perception to occur, it must occur through the object of perception, which is the language of the text. In Rubik's reading of *American Dreams*, there is no real engagement with the language, which is necessary in order for cognitive approaches to be effective.

In my own reading of *American Dreams*, I have taken a language-focused approach, analysing the wording of the text at both the grammatical and semantic levels. This analysis has revealed that the power of the story may not come from a sudden cognitive backflip, but from a unique stylistic element: the text's tendency to delay the

cognizance of meaning: what I have referred to as “delayed understanding”. Rather than assuming a particular cognitive framing and assuming a reversal of perception, I have demonstrated that the phenomenon of realizing the true significance of a particular figure or event cannot be cognized without the perspective of distance, and often this becomes available only when it is too late. It has been noted that Carey’s novels are often nostalgic in their yearning for the past (Huggan 1996, Staniforth 2017). This is certainly a feature that is linguistically foregrounded in *American Dreams*, not to mention its more obvious ideas, often mentioned by literary critics, regarding the complex nature of cultural hegemony (Hassall 1994, Huggan 1996, Lamb 1992, Turner 1986) and the representational nature of art itself (Adami 2009, Ommundsen 1993).

In my view, *American Dreams* is a wakeup call. It is a warning to the reader that the world is changing – probably for the worse – and right in front of our eyes, so we should be aware. The story itself is wonderfully imaginative, but the message is directly relevant to the reader’s reality. In any case, if Carey’s stories are indeed able to change the worldview of the reader, they will do so through the leveraging of language’s metaphysical power. Language of a particular style has the power to alter our perception of the world. Perhaps this phenomenon is what the Russian Formalists described as defamiliarization: the slowing down of perception that lets us see reality differently.

8.3. Style and literary interpretation

Rubik’s interpretation is not the only one that I wish to take issue with, because there are a number of other authoritative criticisms that are compromised by their failure to pay attention to style. Of the five monographs that have been published on the topic of Peter Carey’s fiction (Hassall 1994, Huggan 1996, Lamb 1992, Snodgrass 2010, Woodcock 2003) it is arguably Hassall’s book which is best known in the Australian literature

community. Hassall dedicates one whole chapter to Carey's first collection of stories, *The Fat Man in History* and another to the second collection, *War Crimes*. Although Hassall ensures that each and every short story in both collections is discussed, his criticisms are often limited to plot summaries and sketchy evaluations made with reference to just a few short excerpts. This kind of glossing over does not do justice to Carey's compelling stories. As Toolan (2007) points out in his stylistic analysis of Joyce's *Two Gallants* (1914), a synopsis does nothing to indicate the substance of a good story. What is needed is close attention to the language that gives a story its so-called texture. Here the word "texture" is used in a general sense, meaning unique textual quality, rather than the specific term relating to linguistic coherence. To quote Toolan:

Linguistic descriptions may not always be able to *explain* what it is in a passage of literary narrative that makes it particularly effective or striking or moving, but such descriptions can help to make us more aware of the kinds of distinct, even unique, verbal texture a text may have, and more aware of how if a story was narrated – worded – otherwise, it would have created a very different effect. It would, in fact, be a different story. (Toolan 2007: 231) [original emphasis]

If we accept that the unique texture of a story is synonymous with its style, then style can and should be acknowledged in the appreciation and evaluation of verbal art. The style of a story also contributes to its theme as has been shown in the analyses presented in this thesis. What is needed are tools that can describe a story's style, and that provide a valid and reliable framework within which an interpretation can be developed, based on the language of the text. Stylistics allows us to make visible the text's abstract linguistic patterns and literary meanings and thus to enhance literary criticism with textual evidence.

Despite the significance of Carey in the Australia literary landscape, there has been no published literary criticism that attempts to explore the style of his stories using

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applied linguistics. Even Yell's analysis of exchange structure in Carey's story *Peeling* (1972), Yell (1993) does not go very far beyond describing the unusual dialogue structure. She argues that the exchange structure is postmodernist because the configuration has no apparent significance. Yell (1993) provides a comprehensive and detailed linguistic analysis of a passage in *Peeling*, which shows, among other things, how the two fictional characters involved in the dialogue position themselves in relation to knowledge and to each other. Ultimately, however, the analysis serves as evidence for Yell's illustration of the interdependency of social actions and social relations in conversational exchange, rather than as a means of evaluating Carey's writing style. Indeed, none of the available literary criticism to date adequately describes the unique texture that gives Carey's stories their special character. The analyses that have been presented in this thesis have addressed this gap, suggesting that the style of the stories is what makes them so provocative, what potentially makes the reader confront his or her own assumptions about reality.

Without explicit consideration of the wording of a literary text, critics can make subjective claims without providing evidence. Hassall's commentary on *She Wakes* is an example of this problem. Hassall (1994: 17) claims that the story "depicts the sexual knot of a Friday night and Saturday morning in which the woman is trapped by her unwillingness to expect anything from the lover who takes advantage of her". While it is true that the female protagonist does not expect anything from her partner (this idea is repeated throughout the text), there is much more to the nature of her entrapment. As has been demonstrated in my analysis, the negation of expectation is connected to a larger issue: the absence of inner life. My own TRANSITIVITY analysis shows that the character is little more than an empty shell: an outward manifestation lacking internal substance. She has no agency of her own; she is only capable of perception and prediction even though she is the focalizer and the main character in the story. It is an idea that is directly

relevant to the questioning of social and national identity that is evident in other stories (*The Last Days of a Famous Mime*, *Do You Love Me?*), although set in very different fictional worlds.

Snodgrass's monograph about Carey's fiction similarly provides interpretation without textual description. Discussing the female protagonist in *She Wakes*, Snodgrass claims that "the likelihood of tears epitomizes her emotional awakening to short-changing by a one-response male" (Snodgrass 2010: 93). In my own reading of the story, there is no emotional awakening. On the contrary, the use of the simple present and simple future tenses, among other linguistic clues, suggests that the woman knows exactly how the relationship will play out. Thus, in Huggan's words, it is the "fear of repetition, of entrapment in a self-perpetuating structure" (Huggan 1996: 53) that is being foregrounded. The only emotion that the woman expresses is hate, and this hate is shown to be the fulfilment of other people's expectations rather than her own genuine feelings. The woman's likelihood of tears is also a manifestation of the expectations of others. Like the mime artist in *The Last Days of a Famous Mime* and the father in *Do You Love Me?*, the woman in *She Wakes* is determined by other people's perceptions. She has no identity of her own, which is reflected in the TRANSITIVITY analysis showing the negation of all her actions.

My analysis of *She Wakes* shows that the protagonist does not expect, or say, or do anything with regard to the relationship in which she is trapped. It also turns out that what appears to be inevitable (the continuation of the restrictive relationship that perpetuates her self-negation) is indeed renegotiable, even if the possibility for change is hidden deep below the surface of perceivable habituality. But the probability of making the necessary changes seems low, given that the only sign of exerting her own will is the possibility, passing briefly through her mind, of smoking cigarettes in bed. It is not a very

effectual action, and moreover, it exists only as a potentiality in the mind. *She Wakes*, then, is much more than merely “the depiction of a sexual knot” and something other than “an emotional awakening”. In fact, the physical aspect of the relationship, foregrounding a lack of action and agency, draws attention to a more profound aspect: the woman’s perception of her relationship, which causes, or results in, a sheer emptiness of character.

She Wakes is considered to be Carey’s first publication. Except for Hassall’s and Snodgrass’s criticism, the story has been largely ignored by literary critics, but a stylistic analysis reveals important themes that recur in Carey’s later work. In terms of its style, the language of the text appears quite conventional and lacking narrative evaluation. The ordinariness of the realistic physical setting contrasts with the greater and more abstract ideas with which the story grapples in the realm of semantics. Indeed, it is these big ideas that Carey was most interested in, and not the trivialities of time and place that are often considered to be more important in traditional realism.

8.4. Truth through imagination

In Carey’s stories, the theme, which I have equated with fictional truth, is often exaggerated by its anti-realist, often defamiliarizing devices. A prime example of Carey’s tendency to favour the philosophical over the actual is *Conversations with Unicorns*. Compared with *She Wakes*, *Conversations with Unicorns* has attracted more literary criticism, but most critics do not examine the story in great depth. The most developed criticism of the story is an unpublished manuscript written by Coste (2003). But whereas Coste uses Carey’s absence of rationalization to argue that the text avoids a single interpretation, my own reading focuses more on the characterization of the narrator through linguistic choices in TAXIS and MODALITY. Coste (2003) begins by

acknowledging the story's interpretative indeterminacy, but he does so by probing the rationality of the story world, which I believe is largely to miss the point. The absence of rationalization is the particular feature that, according to Ikin (1977b), identifies the story as speculative fiction (as opposed to science fiction), and that directs the reader's attention away from a realistic interpretation toward an allegorical one. The allegory defies a one-to-one correlation with a specific real-world referent. It is akin to a thought experiment, belonging to the philosophical realm of speculation and possibility. To achieve this transcendence of realism, Carey defamiliarizes the real world through the bizarre and the irrational, which are both taken for granted and narrated in a deadpan tone.

Coste (2003) points out that there is a significant amount of information that is assumed to be shared between the narrator and the reader, and so it is. But there are other ways in which the two interpretations differ. In my own reading, Coste's claim is supported with an analysis of deictic reference. The use of definite reference implies that the reader knows just what the narrator is referring to despite the strangeness of the circumstances. Coste then rightly points out the absence of direct speech and the corollary that dialogue between the unicorns and the narrator is impossible, but he does not support his claim that this absence of dialogue, culminating in the violent silencing of the unicorns, is the "metafictional self-denunciations of the art of fiction" (Coste 2003: 7). Indeed, it is not clear what he even means by this cryptic term.

Coste's point about the one-sided conversation is validated in my analysis of tactic relations, which shows the narrator's oppression of the unicorns through narrative control. However, an important detail that Coste seems to have missed is the fact that there is a single instance of 'free direct speech', in which the unicorn leader Moorav, attempting to prove that the narrator's rifle cannot cause death, insists that he be shot. This particular instance gives an insight into the narrator's mind: he justifies his actions by linguistically

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negating his accountability for the silencing of the unicorns. The narrator appears on the surface to be a neutral reporter of reality, but a focus on the language of the report reveals the ideological positioning of the character that is hidden from view. Further support for this reading is evident in the language of MODALITY and counter-expectancy. Like in *She Wakes*, the surface telling of the story hides a depth of characterization related to the character's internal world. All this is revealed in the texture of the story as it is made visible through linguistic analysis, which foregrounds the constructedness of reality, in turn provoking us to question our own beliefs.

The main contention I have with Coste's reading of *Conversations with Unicorns* is the final stage of his argument, in which he suggests that metafictional and allegorical elements of the story engage in a non-resolvable dialectic, which ultimately leads to Coste's conclusion that the story should be read as a parable about interpretation. It has already been mentioned that the story's claim to metafictional status is not supported by Coste, and the generic differences between metafiction, allegory, and parable are not convincingly articulated. The story certainly does present as an allegory of colonial contact, though to suggest that the unicorns represent indigenous Australians simply because Carey identifies as an Australian writer is inadequate. On the contrary, the unicorns are archetypal creatures, rightly belonging to the realm of mythology, transcending the confines of history and, as Hassall (1994) points out, conventional realism. The unicorns' mythological status contributes to the idea that the theme of the story is the generalized concept of colonialism itself, rather than a specific historical reality. Further, the defamiliarizing use of unicorns in the story reminds us that all histories are constructions: they necessarily include certain elements while overlooking others. No matter how objective our histories may appear on the surface, they represent

only a particular version of reality, which we often accept, at our peril, as self-evidently true.

8.5. Style and generic classification

An issue that was raised at the beginning of this thesis is that there is a general lack of consensus regarding the literary classification of Carey's stories. One label that has been suggested for Carey's stories in this thesis is "metafiction" (Scholes 1979, Waugh 1984). If any of Carey's stories examined in this thesis has a right to the title metafiction, it is *The Last Days of a Famous Mime*. It is easy to see why certain critics draw a parallel between the mime and the writer (Hassall 1994, Ryan-Fazilleau 1991) but this observation alone is insufficient to claim that it is a work of metafiction. The assertion that the artist is intellectually superior to his audience (Ryan-Fazilleau 1991, Snodgrass 2010) is also questionable. It is intelligibility, not intelligence, which is crucial to the story's interpretation. It is equally misguided to claim that the mime is supposed to represent Carey himself, just as the town in *American Dreams* is not the author's hometown of Bacchus Marsh, despite any resemblances that may be observed. Hassall (1994: 38) contends that the story moves "metafictionally between the inner art of the mime's performances, the outer story of his personal doubt, disintegration and death, and the implications for both", but then he moves on to his next comment without explaining just how the story is metafictional.

It is correct to draw a connection between the mime's performance and his disintegration, because it is the audience's failure to understand his increasingly obscure performances that threatens his very existence. However, if metafiction is predominantly concerned with the conventions of fiction itself (Waugh 1984) and fiction is crafted self-

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consciously from language, then a text's metafictionality must be visible in its linguistic makeup. After all, to quote Waugh (1984: 3), "If our knowledge of this world is now seen to be mediated through language, then literary fiction (worlds constructed entirely of language) becomes a useful model for learning about the construction of 'reality' itself". This idea is present in all of Carey's stories, but perhaps most explicitly in *The Last Days of a Famous Mime*.

In my own interpretation, I have shown how the difficulty of understanding the mime in the fictional world is reflected in the low level of linguistic coherence in the text itself. The reader of the fictional text perceives it in the same way that the audience perceive the mime's art, and this lack of coherence, as articulated in the semantic design of the text, can be made visible through linguistic analysis. In other words, the linguistic analysis demonstrates how the difficulty of understanding the mime is not only a surface feature of the plot, but also ingrained in the texture of the story. It confirms, in this instance, the Russian Formalist notion that form and meaning in verbal art are not separate entities; or as Hasan (1985a: 91) puts it, the role of language in literature is not analogous to clothing for the body; rather, language is analogous to the body itself. The central role that language plays in literature is foregrounded in metafictional stories such as *The Last Days of a Famous Mime*.

Discussing the death of the mime, some critics claim that the mime kills himself because his audience are unappreciative (Hassall 1994, Snodgrass 2010: 265). In these readings, the mime's audience lack the capacity to understand the mime's obscure art, which results in his suicide. It is true that the audience fail to understand the mime's performances but the assumption that the mime willingly takes his life as a result is debatable. My own reading suggests that social pressure is the real killer. The mime finds himself struggling to hold his world together. The many different domains of meaning in

his life are realized in the variety of lexical chains that do not cohere very well. After his lover cuts his precious string, it is as if the strained threads holding his world together are severed, along with the connections to the people around him. No longer validated socially or emotionally, the mime is cut loose from the people who define his existence. The ensuing chaos is too much for him to take, resulting in the negation of his identity and his death. His death thus seems more a result of the immense pressures he faces, which can also be seen in the loss of cohesion that occurs as the text unfolds. The interpretative difficulty of the text mirrors the interpretative difficulty of the mime's art, which goes beyond the idea of authorship and autobiography to the bigger idea of the importance of social roles. Our identities, like our histories, are shown to be constructions, just as the metafictional story shows off its own constructedness as a verbal artefact.

8.6. Style and reality

All of Carey's stories are concerned with reality, but the story which best exemplifies his preoccupation is *Do You Love Me?*. Surprisingly, reality is not often the main concern of existing criticism. Snodgrass (2010: 201) calls it "a sci-fi chiller that describes the dissolution of people and places because they inspire no love". The reasoning behind Snodgrass's categorization of the story is a mystery, and if the story has any connection at all with science, it is surely one of parody. Snodgrass (2010: 275) insists that it is a morality tale about the importance of love and human virtues, but as my stylistic analysis has shown, the story is less about love than the anxiety of having one's world turned upside-down. By contrasting two opposite versions of reality, Carey reminds us that reality is a construct, and should be viewed critically. A very similar message runs through *Conversations with Unicorns*, in which the unicorns come to understand that the official version of their reality is a lie.

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Critics have noted the story's connection to Borges, who was deeply fascinated by the nature of reality, but none has explored reality in *Do You Love Me?* on its own terms. Borges often wrote about maps and mirrors, both of which hint at a preoccupation with simulation. But the notion of reality in *Do You Love Me?* is about the instability of reality as a construct, which again may cause the reader to reflect on his or her own beliefs. By creating an imaginative world in which physical objects simply dematerialize, Carey asks the reader to challenge even the most fundamental assumptions that hold up the reader's view of the world.

The point is that Carey's worlds are semiotic realities and must be recognised as such. Often critics assume that the story is in some way about Australia (Corbett 2015, Gelder and Salzman 1989, Hassall 1994), presumably because Carey identifies as an Australian writer. But Carey's fictional settings should not be confused with actual places: this point was emphasized in my discussion of *American Dreams*. In fact, Carey most wanted to distance himself from the so-called "trivialities" of geography and history, while at the same time insisting that his stories were about the real world (Ikin 1977a). To resolve this contradiction, the reader of Carey's stories must understand that reality is a flexible concept, and pay close attention to the language that construes it.

Moreover, the true nature of reality is complex and contradictory, which is probably what the Australian "new" writers were reacting to. The complexity of reality which forms a central part of *Do You Love Me?* can be identified in *American Dreams*, in which the status of Americanization is constantly shifting between positive and negative evaluation. It is also present in *She Wakes*, with a character whose confinement contradicts itself.

By highlighting contradiction in the style of his short stories, Carey reminds us that reality is constructed. He shows us exaggerated examples of the constructedness of

fictional realities, and this has the potential to be applied to the individual lives of his readers. He makes us see the world differently by “defamiliarizing and estranging it; examining how our ‘normal’ lives are sabotaged by our dreams and secrets [...] and showing us that the lives we lead are above all intensely mediated” (Huggan 1996: 21). Here Huggan provides an apt description of truth and imagination in Carey’s stories. What this thesis has attempted to do is to complement such insights from literary criticism with rigorous and replicable evidence-based interpretations by analysing his literary style.

8.7. Literary style and practical knowledge

The investigation into style, truth, and imagination in this thesis has made explicit one of Carey’s main preoccupations: the constructedness of identity and of history. Carey has said that his stories are explorations of the question of whether people need to continue living as they do (Ikin 1977a). When Carey uses imaginative anti-realist techniques, he suggests that if one’s received reality is first acknowledged as a construction, it can be also be reconstructed. This is the very idea that Carey was referring to when he remarked that reporting reality is boring; he would rather make up his own (Featherstone 1986). It is also the message that he seems to be articulating consistently in his stories, and possibly one that had a greater impact when the stories began to be published in the 1960s. This is because it was during the 1960s that the Australian short story really began to challenge the conventions of the realist novel, which was still largely considered the norm in Australian literature.

Carey shows us the constructed nature of reality by presenting us with strange realities that seem to emphasize their own constructedness. I would argue that the perception of this constructedness is, along with his unique style and fevered imagination, responsible for the provocative and unsettling effect of his stories. Through the clever and

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at times experimental semantic design of his texts, he forces the reader to look beyond the confines of realism and reality to see the potential for change. In this sense, Carey's stories are liberating for the reader, often by depicting characters that are hopelessly trapped. But as Carey has said, "The page is still blank. We really can make ourselves up" (Wachtel 1993: 104). Perhaps the perception of constructedness in Carey's fiction is an important element in their compelling literary effect, operating right at the edge of conscious perception. The author and the reader may not be completely aware of the effect that a literature text may have, and the reader may interpret or evaluate a text without the aid of linguistics. But it is only through a rigorous analysis of style that the criticism is transformed, to use Lukin's words, into "practical knowledge" (Lukin 2002).

Carey thought that it was important to show the reader how realities are made, and the message is clear in his short stories. Understanding constructedness in literature is also something that is valued in Australian schools. According to Thomas (2016: 21), "A significant role for English teachers is to teach students about the constructedness of texts. Constructedness refers to the ways in which any form of textual representation is not neutral, but inherently underpinned with ideology: the attitudes, beliefs and values of culture". The year 10 Australian curriculum for English mentions "representation" at least twice (see Table 8.2).

Table 8.2 "Representation" in the Year 10 Australian Curriculum (ACARA 2019)

Code	Description
ACELT1639	Compare and evaluate a range of representations of individuals and groups in different historical, social and cultural contexts
ACELT1812	Evaluate the social, moral and ethical positions represented in texts

As Table 8.2 shows, the textual representations of people and worldviews is considered to be important for secondary students, for whom stylistics provides a useful toolkit. A linguistic approach to literature can teach students how all texts are representations – and

not necessarily reflections – of reality, and that all texts are constructed from a particular point of view.

If our school students are expected to understand how constructedness works in literary texts, they need an enabling conceptual framework to do so. Some of these tools may come from literary criticism and narratology, but it also makes sense that students are equipped with the means to make accurate descriptions and evidence-based claims with some degree of objectivity. Also, the study of literary style can potentially enhance the teaching of creative writing and composition: two phenomena that are often treated, perhaps misguidedly as Carter and Nash (1991: 175) point out, as discreet entities. An understanding of style can make creativity more accessible, and thus more teachable, as Carter and Nash (1991: 205) demonstrate in their suggestions for practical class exercises. Most importantly, stylistics can provide the reader with resources to complement and enhance more traditional practices in the study of literature. The significance of teaching stylistics is clear: it provides students with the tools to explore, question, and redefine reality, which is precisely what Carey's stories invite us to do.

8.8. Conclusion

Linguistics is not and will never be the whole of literary analysis [...] But if a text is to be described at all, then it should be described properly; and this means by the theories and methods developed in linguistics, the subject whose task is precisely to show how language works. (Halliday 2003 [1964]: 19)

As insightful as Halliday's comment was over 50 years ago, it would seem that linguistics still has much to offer literary studies today, particularly in Australian literature. As has been argued throughout this thesis, language plays a central role in verbal art and should be acknowledged in its description and evaluation. It is probably fair to say that linguistics has not yet been accepted as a legitimate analytical tool by the community of Australian

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literary scholars. It is hoped that my research has made a significant contribution to bridging that gulf.

The research that forms this thesis occupies the space where social semiotics, particularly systemic functional linguistics, meets Australian literary studies. It builds on a relatively small corpus of works that at least partially focus on Australian writers including Kenneth Slessor (Butt 2007b, Hasan forthcoming), Bruce Dawe (Butt and Lukin 2009, Lukin 2002), Les Murray (Hasan 1985a), Geoff Lemon and Judith Beveridge (Huisman 2016), Olga Masters (Nguyen 2018) and Peter Carey (Yell 1990, Yell 1993). Of these writers mentioned, all but the last two are poets. But prose fiction, including the short story, has a special place in the Australian literary tradition, from the early settler writers such as Henry Lawson in the late 1800s to contemporary writers of today. Peter Carey still remains one of Australia's most influential writers today, and although his style and subject matter may have changed over the years, many of the preoccupations in his more recent novels can still be identified in his earliest short stories. As the stories deal with very general themes, they remain relevant to the contemporary reader and still have much to offer.

Given the prominence of Carey as a literary figure, an interesting direction for further research would be to examine some of Carey's more recent works using the linguistic methods demonstrated here, to find out how and to what extent his style has changed over time. There is also wide scope for the application of other complementary research methods including but of course not limited to reader response, and narratology. In addition to Carey there are a great many Australian writers whose work deserves to be described and evaluated with the depth and richness that linguistics can offer. I hope that my research into the style of Peter Carey's short stories will pave the way for further

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linguistic research in Australian literature, with the aim of enabling a constructive dialogue between two disciplines which, in my view, have been polarized for too long.

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