

Good Morning, Midnight

Narrative Representation of a Narrating Mind

Fredrik Seiness



Master Thesis
The Department of Literature, Area Studies and
European Languages
The Faculty of Humanities
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Fredrik Seiness

Supervisor Tone Selboe

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Fredrik Seiness

<http://www.duo.uio.no/>

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Abstract

This thesis discusses the narrative representation of mind in Jean Rhys' *Good Morning, Midnight* (1939). The most important theoretical foundation is David Herman's re-formulation of "the inward turn" of modernism, where he discards the underlying Cartesian dualistic view of the human mind in favor of newer models with a monist perspective, derived in a large part from the cognitive sciences as well as other "post-Cartesian" understandings of the mind – among others Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological view of perception and its reciprocal relationship with the world. These are frameworks that foreground the mind's interdependent relationship with its "social and material environment." Such a position questions Dorrit Cohn's postulation of written fiction's exceptional ability to make a mind or "I-originarity" accessible to a second person. The thesis further explores the consequences of such a shift by contrasting Sylvie Maurel's reading of the novel, which has a strong emphasis on intertextuality and narrative distance reliant on a Cartesian understanding of the mind, with Alan Palmer's intratextual approach that negates the premise of a homogenous mind. The thesis also discusses the role of self-narration as something intrinsic to the construction and maintaining of an identity. Based around these three main points the impact of incorporating more current views of the mind in the analysis of fictional minds, in first person present tense narration, is investigated through a new reading of the novel.

Preface

When I began my masters degree the two very first subjects I took were British and American Modernism, and Reception Studies. Reception Studies opened me up to a field of interpretation that was even wider than I had viewed it before. I already knew that the author had been declared dead and that you could argue pretty much anything about a novel as long as you could back it up with actual arguments, but I was in some cases struck by how one and the same novel could receive such widely different reception. That the act of interpreting a story is highly subjective is obvious, but studying reception in a more historical, social and cultural context revealed just how arbitrarily bound we are to our own situations though we might think us entirely free within our own experiences. Constructing history after the fact can be suspiciously easy, as we look back and see every little piece of the puzzle fall into exactly the place we need it to. Obviously such perspectives must be taken into account when looking for social and cultural factors that contributed to the – in my case – reading of Alice in Wonderland as promoting the psychedelics culture, but sure enough, once I started looking there were features of western – specifically American – society in the sixties that could help explain why a story that had earlier been seen in very different ways was now suddenly read in support of taking LSD. A substance it is highly questionable that the author Louis Carrol was even aware of existed.

In my other subject, British and American Modernism, there was one book in particular that struck me: Jean Rhys' *Good Morning, Midnight*. The class discussions of the novel were almost exclusively centered on feminist reception of the work, which I had no problem with as it is a book that addresses many issues related to gender; Rhys herself no doubt felt this in both body and mind throughout her life, and I remember the impression it made on me to learn that while her male counterparts were celebrated for their stories of tough lives with drugs and alcohol Rhys was forgotten; it was after all unbecoming of a woman to write of such things. Furthermore I consider feminism an important and relevant cause, and so I never spoke up in class about the fact that what touched me the most about Rhys' novel were none of the things we discussed. Irrespective of gender the narrative gave me a convincing feeling, or aesthetic experience, of a mind and I began thinking about how the novel could be read from that focal point instead. This turned out to be the beginning of my thesis.

I would like to especially thank my supervisor Tone Selboe for her constructive criticism, her good advice and invaluable encouragement during the writing process.

I am also grateful to my family and friends for their love and support.

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1 Introduction

Narrative theory is no small field to navigate. Always in motion, the many-faceted theories regarding narrative will soon leave you lost and confused if you do not keep up – though probably even *if* you keep up – but then, that is the way it *should* be. The traditional canon of literary narrative theory has undoubtedly left some distinct marks on how we think and talk about literature today, but even though we have gained valuable new insights into literary fiction and its "workings", the conclusions that have been made are rarely final, and will continue to be challenged by new theorists and theories. When new theoretical frameworks for investigating narrative fiction emerge, as a reaction against or as an embellishment of previous theories, they too are but another branch or root on an ever-growing tree; bearing all kinds of strange fruits. The versatility of narrative theory seems never-ending, because even though all narrative theory operates on an empirical foundation – the text¹ – it is a highly subjective exercise. One need only look at the vastly different outcomes the analysis of one and the same novel might have, depending on the methodology and theoretical orientation of the critics. Even within the same school of thought many theorists disagree passionately, some even disagree with themselves it sometimes seems. But therein lies some of the appeal of the exercise: there is a freedom in this wilderness of fluctuating and changing rules for reading and understanding narrative fiction, a lack of absolutes that in some respects lessen the weight of the task at hand when one knows that whatever comes out of the book for *me* personally, it cannot – in the strictest sense – be taken away by another's differing interpretation. That is not to say that debates on the subject are not constructive and narrative theory is neither a *wide open* field where you can claim whatever you want regarding narratives. Although they change there *are* rules, but you are still operating with a large degree of freedom in your own interpretation of a novel. That, in part, is the reason it can be *as* rewarding – or even more so – to receive someone else's perspective on a novel you love, even if that interpretation flies right in the face of what you yourself found in it. It is this richness of meaning that is one of the reasons literature is such a fun thing to engage with.

A narrative analysis of *Good Morning, Midnight* seems to me the most suitable approach to the novel. The vast amount of potential approaches to any novel makes it necessary to limit one's concerns with the subject matter, especially in a thesis of this length,

¹ "The text" in this particular case is of course *the written text*, but here it refers to the wider meaning which encompasses auditive and visual mediums as well.

as well as making it impossible not to overlook or leave out aspects of it that others might find more important. Starting from the traditional differentiation between story and narrative such as it is outlined by Gerard Genette² – in other words *story* designates the *what*, the contents, "the totality of the narrated events," while *narrative (discourse)* designates the *how*, "the discourse, oral or written, that narrates them" – the importance of the distinction between *narrative* and *story* is made apparent through my reading of *Good Morning, Midnight*: If we, for a moment, ignore the narrative discourse and attempt paraphrasing the contents, the story alone, or rather the events alone without regard for the narrative representation of those events, we would end up with the story of a woman held down by male-dominated society in one variation or another, something so many critics have chosen to make their focal point in their analysis of this novel, but the theme that caught my interest would most likely be lost. The complete disregard for the narrative form is of course a straw man of sorts but when reading the novel it is perfectly possible to accept the narrative perspective as incidental, a means to an end of relating a story. I suspect that this is the approach many "lay" people have to literature, it is at least my own experience as I think back to how I read fiction before I became interested in what literature offered beyond entertaining me with stories. Like many modernist novels it can be quite difficult to determine exactly "what the story is about" in *Good Morning, Midnight*, and the narrative discourse can at times confuse or even sabotage attempts at defining what the story is. However, in the narrative discourse itself that in this case is what confuses the *story* lies other layers of meaning to be extrapolated. Through the narrative first-person-present-tense perspective and the narrative technique Jean Rhys employs, a major theme of *mind* is foregrounded.

A relatively recent tendency in the field of narrative theory is the inclusion and application of knowledge gained through the cognitive sciences. When Herman Hesse wrote condescendingly about his *Steppenwolf*³ that his simple-minded view of his *self* consisted only of two personalities – the man and the wolf – while in reality each person has many many more, he foreshadowed an aspect of our minds that neuroscience only relatively recently has gotten empirical evidence for, and which has become a core problem in the scientific investigation of *the self*. I see *Good Morning, Midnight* as another example of literature from the twenties and thirties that through their treatment of themes related to mind converge with descriptions of the mind as it stands in contemporary cognitive sciences.

² Genette, Gerard *Narrative Discourse Revisited* (Ithaca and New York: Cornell University Press, 1988) 13

³ Hesse, Herman *Steppenwolf* (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1984)

Psychology has been an important part of various literary theories for decades but our physical understanding of the brain has changed dramatically the past twenty-something years. This new knowledge has provided perspectives that were not available to the old giants of narrative theory, and represents yet another shift in our view on narrative fiction. History tells us that it is reasonable to assume that the findings in neuroscience, as they stand today, will be re-formulated, if not completely discarded in favor of new models. Very few theories, whatever discipline they fall within, have been left untouched through the years, but if we were to wait for "that final one that gets everything right" before applying it to, in this instance, narrative theory, we would get very little done of anything; *ever*. Psychoanalysis is one example of a theoretic field that has served literature and the investigation of it well, although its therapeutic worth has long since been called into question, at least in the form that Freud conceived of it, but that does not take anything away from the rich and highly rewarding catalogue of literary theory grounded in psychoanalytical approaches (nor to Freud's significance in other areas.) Even though I will implicitly make the case, through my chosen theoretical foundation for this thesis, that narrative analysis of written fiction can not only be informed by new knowledge from science and psychology but also, in turn, contribute to that knowledge, it is with this in mind that I investigate the narrative in *Good Morning, Midnight*.

Theorists such as David Herman and Alan Palmer have applied new aspects of this knowledge to construct the outlines of an as yet unfinished narrative theory that at its center is concerned with the human mind, and how narratives can be understood in relation to that focal point. "By connecting consciousness representation in narrative with other discourses of mind, a unified picture of this sort can prevent the cordoning off of fictional discourse as an anomalous case, incapable of illuminating the nature of conscious experience more broadly."⁴ Alan Palmer problematizes the sometimes strict division of different branches of narrative theory; divisions which, though understandable and necessary, have lost some of their usefulness in a discipline he sees as having come to a point of maturation where "the heuristic and pedagogic tools that have been historically useful have to be reconsidered and, if necessary, remolded."⁵ Claiming that this division, which for a long time was held as self-evident, has obscured the issue of fictional minds, and further that even though each

⁴ Herman, David "Introduction" in Herman, David (ed) *The Emergence of Mind: Representations of Consciousness in Narrative Discourse in English*, 1-43 (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2011)

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⁵ Palmer, Alan *Fictional Minds* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2004) 28

individual approach to narratives has its own unique value, the rewards would be all the greater if we recognized that they in fact are all concerned with fictional minds. Herman has, among other "sins", attacked the very catch phrase of literary modernism: "the inward turn". Having begun to work out a new theoretical framework for understanding narrative based in both the sciences and post-Cartesian philosophy and psychology, Herman has proposed a new way of understanding literary modernism and its most prominent feature of the fragmented *interior monologue* or *stream-of-consciousness*.⁶ Grounded in a monist perspective he alters the vocabulary of a discourse that, at its heart, relies on the inside/outside dichotomy of body and mind. Herman himself defines it as "post-Cartesian", referring to Descartes' substance-dualism. His approach has philosophical as well as literary implications, and as a representative of such post-Cartesian theoretical frameworks I will make use of Merleau-Ponty's philosophy for my reading of *Good Morning, Midnight*, whose work *Eye and Mind*⁷ was in part a direct attack on Descartes' dualism; more specifically his work *Dioptrics*.

At the "opposite end" – a false and misleading dichotomy I admit – I will draw on Dorrit Cohn and Sylvie Maurel to exemplify theory and interpretation grounded in what Herman refers to as a Cartesian understanding of the world. Descartes' philosophy is in no way done justice by the way in which it is employed here, neither by Herman nor me. By "Cartesian" is simply meant the most simplified rudimentary point in his philosophy: that *mind* and *body* are substantially different, hence "substance dualism." An implication of this is that the human mind – I purposefully avoid the word "soul" due to its religious connotations that do not belong in this thesis, though it was likely something closer to "soul" Descartes was thinking of – is something completely sealed off and autonomous from the body and the physical world. Any discussion of *the mind* informed by this perspective will have to operate with two separate and fundamentally irreconcilable sizes: the "internal" mind and the "external" world. As a consequence *your* mind and *my* mind are always at a distance to each other; sealed in the interior domain of our bodies. In our isolation we cannot gain any direct access to the other's subjectivity (nor to physical reality for that matter.) This in turn puts fiction in the privileged position of being our only direct access to other subjectivities,

⁶ H. Porter Abbott, makes a helpful distinction between the two terms that sporadically have been used interchangeably, in Porter, Abbott H. *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative, second edition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) 78 However for my purposes this distinction matters less, as I am only interested in them as foregrounded representations of human mind(s).

⁷ Merleau-Ponty, Maurice "Eye and Mind" in Baldwin, Thomas (ed) *Maurice Merleau-Ponty: basic writings*, 290-325 (London and New York: Routledge, 2004)

something Dorrit Cohn stresses in *Transparent Minds*.⁸ Neither Cohn nor Maurel concern themselves directly with Descartes' philosophy but Herman sees this as an underlying premise for the proposed exceptionality of written fiction that Cohn has argued. I agree with his assessment and see the same Cartesian grounding in arguments put forth by Maurel in her analysis of *Good Morning, Midnight*.

These two "sides" and the friction between them will inform my own analysis of *Good Morning, Midnight*, which I will attempt to view from within the context of Herman's revised account of modernism. An important argument regards the claim that written fiction provides privileged access to other minds; that it is the only real access we can hope for into the "I-originary" of someone other than ourselves. But when Herman argues for a re-formulation of the modernist inward turn – from the representation of our *inner, sealed-off* mental life, to the representation of minds integrated with their social and material context, never sealed off, always changing interdependently with the surrounding situation – one might almost suspect that the difference is mostly a semantic one.

The upshot of modernist experimentation was not to plumb psychological depths, but to spread the mind abroad – to suggest that human psychology has the profile it does because of the extent to which it is interwoven with worldly circumstances. The mind does not reside within; instead, it emerges through humans' dynamic interdependencies with the social and material environment they seek to navigate.⁹

In our everyday language, most people would likely talk about Herman's "dynamic interdependencies" – or any kind of matter relating to the mind – by using words that designate those matters as "internal". Even if we fundamentally reject the Cartesian division of mind and body – inner and outer – we would find it problematic to discuss it without falling into old habits of referring to the mental realm as "Internal". It is a notion that is very well established in our collective vocabulary to the point that we would be at a lack for words without it. So what are the merits of Herman's "re-minding" of modernism? Does it contribute anything more than different ways of discussing more or less the same thing; a rose by any other name? By applying his new account of modernism and "mind-narration" to *Good Morning, Midnight* and compare it to Maurel's analysis, which I have found to fall within the

⁸ Cohn, Dorrit *Transparent Minds: Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction* (Princeton and New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1978) 7

⁹ Herman, David "8. 1880-1945 Re-minding Modernism" Herman, David (ed) *The Emergence of Mind: Representations of Consciousness in Narrative Discourse in English*, 243-273 (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2011) 254

Cartesian camp, I hope to at least partly answer those questions and provide my own take on the novel from the focal point of narrative representation of mind.

2 Theoretical background

2.1 *Good Morning, Midnight*

Jean Rhys' *Good Morning, Midnight*,¹⁰ published in 1939, is the story of Sasha Jansen, a middle aged, single woman leading a turbulent, alcohol-ridden existence in the not-so-glamorous parts of Paris in the thirties. Having been unable to keep a steady job, she maintains herself on a small weekly allowance inherited by some unknown – to the reader – relative. We learn that the circumstances of her being in Paris are unhappy ones, and Sasha's day-to-day existence in large part consists of busying herself through an almost ritual-like way of life that is spelled out for the reader on the very first page: "I have decided on a place to eat in at midday, a place to eat in at night, a place to have my drink in after dinner. I have arranged my little life."¹¹ The importance of this planning-out of her daily routine is something she stresses herself on several occasions: "The thing is to have a programme, not to leave anything to chance – no gaps."¹² The strict control she keeps over her own life serves as a way of keeping her sorrows at a distance; of dealing with an emotional pain which it turns out is substantial. The drink after dinner she mentions so innocently is in fact a lot more than one drink: she is a full-blown alcoholic. The alcohol allows her to escape into brief moments of happiness, or at least the illusion of it; feelings of "fire and wings". In an otherwise insufferable day-to-day existence where, up to the point when she gets drunk, she can hope for little more than successfully keeping her inner demons at bay.

We learn that she at one time got married and had a baby but their child died and her husband left her. In fragments of memory we learn of events back in London where she, upon meeting with her family, presumably her father though that is speculation on my part, is asked why she did not drown herself in the Seine. There are several memories of her family in the book, and they are all short, and particularly scarce in detail, so we only get a vague sensation of something having gone terribly wrong between them somewhere in the past. It is after describing this meeting that Sasha tells us of her decision to drink herself to death, so it stands to reason that the meeting must have been even more brutal than what little information on it we are given access to reveals. "I did try it, too. I've had enough of these streets that sweat a

¹⁰ Rhys, Jean *Good Morning, Midnight* (London: Penguin Books, 2000)

¹¹ GMM, 9

¹² GMM, 14

cold, yellow slime, of hostile people, of crying myself to sleep every night. I've had enough of thinking, enough of remembering. Now whisky, rum, gin, sherry ..."¹³ Failing to kill herself in this manner, she settles for pursuing a kind of death *in* life, a life devoid of emotion – to the best of her ability – so she can exist but not much more. "People talk about the happy life, but that's the happy life when you don't care any longer if you live or die."¹⁴

The fact that she does not kill herself suggests that despite her spoken desire for a life in physical and psychological isolation, and her clearly stated disallowance for any situation that might instill in her hope or joy that is not alcohol-induced, she does have a hint of hope hidden away somewhere in herself. Her meetings with "the Russians", the painter, and most of all the gigolo Rene proves her unable to resist what little hope she has left escaping her isolation and become reintegrated into life; social life and love. However her numbing fear of being wounded once again, left by all the emotional scars she has suffered, ultimately sabotages any chance of being rescued.

2.2 Reception

The reception of Jean Rhys' works has grown far and wide since the dead silence before she was lifted out of obscurity at the end of her life, just in time to finish *Wide Sargasso Sea* which was published in 1966. There are however recurring themes that most critics have focused on in one way or another. "Apart from early approaches which considered her fiction as thinly disguised autobiography," Maurel divides academic criticism of Rhys' fiction into three main trends.¹⁵ One reading of her works characterizes her as a Caribbean writer, "voicing the 'terrified consciousness' of the dispossessed colonizer". V. S. Naipaul, for example, focuses on Rhys as an exiled Caribbean writer.¹⁶ Having been brought up in the West Indies, Jean Rhys spent most of her life in Europe, most of all Britain, and even though *Voyage in the Dark* and *Wide Sargasso Sea* fit well with the "Caribbean label", Maurel points out the problematic fact that none of Rhys' other novels make any reference to her home island.

The second critical response Maurel points to is the view of Rhys as a modernist writer. Most critics have placed Rhys' body of work within the modernist tradition in one way

¹³ GMM, 37

¹⁴ GMM, 75

¹⁵ Maurel, Sylvie *Jean Rhys*, (London: MacMillan Press LTD, 1998) 5

¹⁶ Naipaul, V. S. "Review of *After Leaving Mr. Mackenzie* by Jean Rhys," *New York Review of Books*, 18 May 1972, 29-31

or another, both concerning form and themes. *Good Morning, Midnight* deals with typical modernist themes such as alienation and existential anxiety communicated through a structurally neurotic narrative that leaps back and forth in space and time in a stream-of-consciousness-like technique that often omits clear signs of the temporal shifts that would aid the reader; always going where Sasha's mind goes, whether she wants to go there or not. The homodiegetic narration in *Good Morning, Midnight* especially fits the bill of literary modernism's concern with human consciousness and the representation of it. Peter Nicholls' account of "The Narratives of High Modernism" correlates well with the reading of *Good Morning, Midnight* as a modernist novel:

At least two main lines of development now begin to appear in twenties modernism: one which makes [the] interplay of historical times the means by which to ensure a certain authorial 'impersonality'; the other (perhaps best represented by Virginia Woolf) is characterized by an interest in the contents of consciousness and the self's labile existence in time. Belatedness, we might say, defines the first, and stream of consciousness the second. The two forms are not, of course, mutually exclusive...¹⁷

His use of the term "belatedness" refers to "...Freud's sense of the deferred action by which a traumatic experience takes on its full meaning only at a later stage ... since the shock of the first event is not felt directly by the subject but only through its later representation in memory,"¹⁸ This narrative device is seen in context with certain tendencies of "modern society" – of mass-production and consumerism, and the following advertisement-society that led to a depth-less "one-day world" – as he calls it – of hollow style without content, and the overtaking of politics "by a hegemony of fashion and advertising." – experienced by such heavyweights of literary modernism as Pound, Eliot, Joyce and Lewis, who "now set out to redefine the self as the narrator of [what he calls] a 'belated story'." Seeking to re-invent constructive social narratives to "save history from being dissolved in mere style," to save the self "from the passive mimesis of modernity by imitation of a higher order."¹⁹ Writing becomes re-writing, the self is cast "as the bearer of a troubled history and makes writing a medium in which different temporalities intersect. Writing now comes to occupy a space between historical memory and imaginative construction," something Nicholls relates to "Freud's account of trauma, since in each case it is the articulation of past and present together which promises release from a merely repetitive history and from a perpetual present lacking

¹⁷ Nicholls, Peter *Modernisms: a Literary Guide* (London: Macmillan Press LTD, 1995) 253-254

¹⁸ *ibid*, 178

¹⁹ *ibid*, 253

any hope of transformation."²⁰ Regardless of the reasons, this narrative device became prevalent with high modernism and the two main features discussed here are both central to the narrative in *Good Morning, Midnight*.

Returning to Maurel: she admits Rhys a place within the modernist category but deems her "a marginal modernist", citing Helen Carr and Thomas F. Staley, among others, to show deviations in Rhys' work compared to "hard-line" modernism; pointing out that even though her writing shared many features of literary modernism "she was unaware of or removed from many of its preoccupations."²¹ Nevertheless, keeping such objections in mind, I find sufficient evidence in the text to treat it as a modernist novel, at the very least the novel converges with prevalent tendencies in modernist fiction, not to mention the vast amount of criticism that *does* place her within the modernist tradition. A tradition that in itself is rather opaquely delineated in literary history and theory but that is not a discussion for this thesis.

The third trend within critical reception that Maurel lists is perhaps the most well-known: feminist criticism. The representation of women and the power dynamics between the genders have been the focus of a larger part of the investigations of her fiction, in many variations of the subject, that in several cases blend into modernist themes of alienation and anxiety through the treatment of "the disempowerment of women at the hands of male oppressors"²². Jessica Gildersleeve's analysis of *Good Morning, Midnight* for example, sees women in Britain in the 1920s and 1930s trapped in a sort of societal "no-place" after the war, which had brought belief in progress and emancipation through the war-time employment, not to mention the fact that women had achieved voting rights. She sees Rhys as exploring the frustration of the women whose optimism was arrested by the realization that they were still kept from "participation in public life" while now being unable to go back to "a naïve and docile role" as well.²³ Rhys' female protagonists seem always at odds with a society run and defined by men, her writing focusing on "male exploitation of women, on women's resistance to and collusion with that exploitation, on marginalized, exiled figures from the Third World, on class antagonisms and conflicts."²⁴ The fact that Rhys' work so often is looked at from a feminist/gender perspective is not surprising considering the recurring motif of the estranged

²⁰ *ibid*

²¹ Maurel, 6

²² *ibid*, 7-8

²³ Gildersleeve, Jessica "Muddy Death: Fate, Femininity, and Mourning in Jean Rhys's *Good Morning, Midnight*" in Dodgson-Katiyo, Pauline and Gina Wisker, (eds) *Rites of Passage in Postcolonial Women's Writing*, 227-244 (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2010) 228

²⁴ Malcolm, Cheryl Alexander David Malcolm, *Jean Rhys: a Study of the Short Fiction* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1996) xi

female protagonist. The latest tendency Maurel traces – and what I have found in several examples – is the *combination* of gender, colonialism and modernist approaches to her works.²⁵ All three to which the "outsider" motif fits well. Maurel herself reads *Good Morning, Midnight* from a feminist point of view and though my analysis in part will be polemical in nature towards Maurel's reading, it is only to demonstrate the potentially different ways one can understand the text by applying a different framework for interpretation; not to take anything away from her thorough analysis nor to contest its validity.

2.3 Re-minding modernism

In *The Emergence of Mind* David Herman disputes the claim he refers to as the "Exceptionality Thesis", set forth by Dorrit Cohn among others (Cohn building on Kate Hamburger), that "the representation of characters' inner lives is the touchstone that simultaneously sets fiction apart from reality and builds the semblance (Schein) of another, non-real reality."²⁶ She proclaims narrative fiction to be the only literary genre, and kind of narrative, where "the unspoken thoughts, feelings, perceptions of a person other than the speaker can be portrayed." In light of this Cohn declares the "inward turn" of modernist fiction to "signify a gradual unfolding of the genre's most distinctive potential."²⁷ I mention this to underline the Cartesian anchoring in Cohn's argumentation as well as its significance for the term "inward turn". Again, it is not a matter of Cohn or anyone else explicitly advocating dualism of the Cartesian kind:

A prominent conception of mental phenomena is buttressed by a Cartesian geography of the mental, whereby the mind constitutes an interior space separated off from the world at large. In turn, frameworks for studying narrative representations of mind have inherited this Cartesian geography of the mind.²⁸

So although few are championing *Cartesian* dualism today, the mental geography it entails has become embedded in our "collective vocabulary." As I have pointed out the internal/external dichotomy that underlines our way of talking about the mental is strongly rooted in "our" world view (dare I say in our *narrative* of the world). This almost instinctive division of categories we are all guilty of might not be something Cohn has meant to advocate

²⁵ An example would be Coral Ann Howell's acclaimed study *Jean Rhys* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991) to which several works on Rhys refer.

²⁶ Cohn, 7

²⁷ Ibid, 8

²⁸ Herman, (2011) 254

but it is an inescapable premise for her account of the "exceptionality" of narrative fiction when it comes to representing "the I-originary" of another subject. Herman outlines two underpinning assumptions from this:

First, that because the mind is "inside" and the world is "outside," in contexts of everyday interaction others' minds remain sealed off from me in a separate, interior domain; and second, that this sealed-off-ness of actual minds means that it is only in fictional contexts that I can gain access to the subjectivity of another²⁹.

I would like to add my own third assumption which I see as fundamental to the "Cartesian-grounded" discussion of fiction: that there is a unity to the sealed-off interior mind. It is a complete and static size that never *really* changes; the notion of our mind – *the self* – that most people nourish; a notion that my all too brief account of *the self* in this thesis, from a scientific viewpoint, negates.

Herman clarifies that his objection is not to the claim that “certain language patterns, or collocations of discourse features, are unique to or distinctive of narrative fiction”³⁰, only the implication he sees from the claimed singular excellence of fiction-specific techniques: that “readers’ experiences of fictional minds are different in kind from their experiences of the minds they encounter outside the domain of narrative fiction.”³¹ In other words it is not the "secret" information we are given access to, such as a verbalized rendition of a character's inner thoughts, that is the subject of Herman's critique. "Instead, my focus is on how narratively organized discourse prompts interpreters to populate storyworlds with minds."³² The narrative in *Good Morning, Midnight* does provide the reader with information about Sasha's thoughts, her interior monologue, that would not be available to me was I, for arguments sake, to meet her in real life: "Unable to stop crying, I went into the lavabo [...] I stayed there, staring at myself in the glass. What do I want to cry about? ... on the contrary, it's when I am quite sane like this, when I have had a couple of extra drinks and am quite sane, that I realize how lucky I am."³³ These are the "inner", private thoughts of Sasha. There are textual clues in the narrative that suggest the statement cannot be trusted, beyond the fact of the narrative perspective which is considered the least trustworthy, both at the lack of any authorial agent – omnipotent third-person narrator – that works as a guarantor for the contents in the narrative and from the known fallibility of our own subjective experience, both

²⁹ Ibid, 8

³⁰ Ibid, 9

³¹ Ibid, 8

³² Ibid, 10

³³ GMM, 10

of which will be embellished further bellow. The textual clues as well will be returned to, but for now it suffices to say that the "privileged information" the reader is given in the above quote can and should be doubted. "[F]ictional narratives do not provide wholly direct or immediate views of others' minds, and on the other hand [...] experiencing someone else's I-originary is not limited to the domain of fiction."³⁴

Drawing on "recent" work in the sciences of mind Herman also calls attention to the "rough-and-ready heuristics" we use in our daily lives for interacting with each other (something that requires a minimum level of empathy and understanding.) Simply put it is "what people use to characterize their own and others' reasons for acting in the ways that they do." Arguments such as Cohn's are underlined by Cartesian dualism, presupposing that the "inner" mind and the "outer" world are sealed off from each other. This would mean that in the real world other people's minds would be inaccessible to me, leaving narrative fiction as my only way of gaining direct access to another's subjectivity. Post-Cartesian research has moved away from the concept of the mental as interior and immaterial (for example phenomenology, or enactivism), showing how a consciousness is in a reciprocal relationship to contexts "outside" itself for actions and interactions, meaning that a mind is not a closed off, sealed unit, and access to it, in various forms, is enabled outside of narrative fiction. We detect intentionality in others all the time, and that, posits Herman, is to have some knowledge of another's mind, and acquiring that knowledge requires theoretization about that other mind. This can be done on the basis of physical cues such as body language, facial expressions, tone of voice and so forth. "Affective and emotional states are not simply qualities of subjective experience, rather they are given *in* expressive phenomena, i.e., they are expressed in bodily gestures and actions, and thereby become visible to others,"³⁵ as well as the inclusion of knowledge about the other person's "situation" – which naturally will vary – that can contextualize the actions and behavior. These are ways we *can* gain access to another's subjectivity, though the methods can never give us complete access. The fallacy of the Exceptionality Thesis is the claim that narrative fiction *can* provide *complete* access to another mind. The information about Shasa's mindstate that is made available in the narrative does provide information that would not be available to me in real life, thus the novel tells me things that would not be apparent from merely observing Sasha crying. Although her body language and other cues might provide more information than one might first assume. The

³⁴ Herman, (2011) 9

³⁵ Ibid, 15

point is that my experience of that information and the construction of a fictional mind that I undertake at the same moment is nevertheless limited to the same heuristics that apply in real life; leaving the *exceptional* ability of written fiction to provide access to other "I-originarities" less exceptional than one might first assume. Herman's critique of the so-called Exceptionality Thesis questions both the contained assumptions. We are neither, really, isolated from the minds of others, nor does narrative fiction *really* provide a magic lens – to borrow an image from Cohn – into the hidden subjectivity of others.

A concrete example of how we "access" other minds from the scientific camp is the infamous *mirror neurons* that for a while became the pop stars of neuroscience. What was discovered by accident in brain scans of chimpanzees, and later confirmed in humans, was that when you observe someone else doing something, neurons in your brain fire in a mimetic pattern of the action you observed; as if you yourself performed it. Your mind, in a sense, mimics the actions of the other in neural activity.³⁶ Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological account of body and mind converges with the scientific findings and goes even further in suggesting a widespread distribution of our minds as opposed to a sealed-off, whole and perpetual mind.

Things are an annex or prolongation of itself [the body]; they are encrusted into its flesh, they are part of its full definition; *the world is made of the same stuff as the body*. This way of turning things around [ces renversements], these antinomies, are different ways of saying that vision happens among, or is caught in, things – in that place where something visible undertakes to see, becomes visible for itself by virtue of the sight of things; in that place where there persists, like the mother water in crystal, the undividedness [l'indivision] of the sensing and the sensed.³⁷

This both lends itself to the non-dualist account of the mind and grants the mind a much more active engagement with the world than passive, distanced observation. This view problematizes the "inward turn" of literary modernism, for which the "Cartesian division" between inner and outer "realms" is a premise. Herman seeks post-Cartesian frameworks for interpretation of modernist works:

Specifically, I seek to replace the internal-external scale with a continuum stretching between, at one pole, a tight coupling between an intelligent agent and that agent's surrounding environment, and, at the other pole, a looser coupling between agent and environment. From this perspective, rather than being interpreted as signs of an inward turn or a probing of

³⁶ A more detailed account of mirror neurons than what wikipedia offers can be found in Ramachandran, Vilayanur S. *The Tell-Tale Brain: Unlocking the Mystery of Human Nature* (London: Windmill Books, 2012) 117-135

³⁷ Merleau-Ponty, (2004) 295

psychological depths segregated from the material world, *modernist techniques for representing consciousness can be seen as an attempt to highlight how minds at once shape and are shaped by larger experiential environments, via the particular affordances of opportunities for action that those environments provide.* Modernist narratives, in other words, stage *the moment-by-moment construction of worlds-as-experienced through an interplay between agent and environment.*³⁸ (my italics)

2.4 Analyzing literary minds: The speech category approach

Starting with Cohn, Herman outlines a strategy for beginning to make sense of the mind of a fictional character in a written text. Cohn, drawing on theories of speech representation, used the basic categories of indirect discourse, direct discourse and free indirect discourse to coin analogous terms for thought representation: psycho narration, quoted monologue and narrated monologue. For the particular case of first person narratives she writes that “the same basic types of presentation appear, the same basic terms can apply, modified by prefixes to signal the modified relationship of the narrator to the subject of his narration.”³⁹ In the same order she names them as follows: self-narration, self-quoted and self-narrated. Subsequent theorists (such as Alan Palmer) have – underlining the analogy between modes of speech and thought representation even more clearly – renamed Cohn’s terms as *direct thought* (quoted monologue/self-quoted), *indirect thought* (psycho narration/self narration) and *free indirect thought* (narrated monologue/self narrated).⁴⁰

Although Cohn names three alternative modes specifically aimed at first person narrative, I will take a page out of her book and use the three terms suggested by Herman because they are simpler.⁴¹ I will use the following short passage from Rhys' novel to exemplify: “Squeezing the rind of an orange and smelling the oil. A lot of oil – they must be pretty fresh. ... I think: ‘What’s going to happen?’ After all, I don’t much care what happens.”⁴² It can be classified in the following way: “I think: What’s going to happen?” is direct thought; a direct quotation of Sasha's internalized speech; verbalized thought. “After all, I don’t much care what happens.” Is indirect thought and could have been written as direct thought “I thought: ‘I don’t much care what happens’”. Instead, at the lack of quotation marks,

³⁸ Herman, (2011) 249-250

³⁹ Cohn, 14

⁴⁰ Herman, (2011) 5

⁴¹ Cohn renames Genette’s terms homodiegetic and heterodiegetic as first-person and third-person in order to simplify things.

⁴² GMM, 107

it reads as *psycho narration*, which I have chosen to replace with the *indirect thought* category. This example does cast some doubt on my choice, as the term *psycho narration* seems more embracing of an important feature of this category, namely the narration of non-verbal thought; emotions, intentions and other aspects of our mental life that does not manifest itself in verbalized thought. The word *thought* strongly connotes the private words and sentences we *think* to ourselves, and a more appropriate term could perhaps have been indirect consciousness or mind, but, again, I will stick to the basic terms for simplicity. The third mode: “Squeezing the rind of an orange and smelling the oil. *A lot of oil – they must be pretty fresh.*” (my italics) exemplifies (*self*)narrated monologue (*free indirect thought*): the emphasized sentence, which could be said to simply state the objective fact that there is a lot of oil, has a subjective, evaluative quality (“they *must be pretty fresh*”) that leads the reader to interpret it as an expression of Sasha’s subjective experience of the situation. However the homodiegetic narration in *Good Morning, Midnight* prevents us from reading the final emphasized sentence as free indirect thought. We cannot get away from our knowledge of the fact that the entire narrative is focalized through Sasha, so in this instance we know that the unattributed quote stems from Sasha, as there is no distanced third-person narrator. Like the preceding sentence we have to read it as indirect thought, because the entirety of the narrative is anchored in Sasha; there is no “outside” of Sasha in *Good Morning, Midnight*. Gerard Genette has objected to the division between first and third-person that Cohn undertakes. He disagrees with the

radical separation Dorrit Cohn makes between “third-person” and “first-person” narratives and from the prime strategic importance she attributes to that separation [...] formally the encompassing narrative situation has no effect on the status of either the discourse or the psychic state evoked. I scarcely see what (other than the grammatical person, of course) distinguishes, for example, *auto-(psycho)narration* from *psycho-narration*. *Auto-narrated monologue* from (*hetero*)narrated monologue⁴³

There is some controversy surrounding these categories in other words, and note how Genette uses a slightly different term (*auto-narration*). It seems that every theorist feels the need to – in some small way – alter previous definitions to have them encompass exactly the traits she or he wishes to bring to the foreground. This is another reason I will limit my own terminology mainly to *direct thought* and *indirect thought*, as the main distinction to be made in this novel with respect to the speech-category-approach to the narrative representation of minds is between direct quotes of internalized speech and the narration of thought, both

⁴³ Genette, 59-60

verbal and non-verbal, as well as between *direct thought* and *direct speech*, as the two are not always clearly delineated.

Herman uses the speech category approach as a starting point in his account of the analysis of minds in narrative fiction and I will follow his example. However, the narrative representation of minds extends far beyond the encompassing reach of the terms discussed here.

Because the speech category approach of classical narratology is based on the assumption that the categories that are applied to fictional speech can be unproblematically applied to fictional thought, it is concerned primarily with the part of the mind known as *inner speech*, the highly verbalized flow of self-conscious thought. For this reason, it does not do justice to the complexity of the types of evidence for the workings of fictional minds that are available in narrative discourse; it pays little attention to states of mind such as beliefs, intentions, purposes, and dispositions; and it does not analyze the whole of the social mind in action.⁴⁴

Palmer, who does make use of the terms analogous to spoken discourse himself, does so in part because it is a useful tool for analysis, to a limit, but does it as much to illustrate the limitations of those terms. I will quickly transgress the area of thought representation that deals solely with inner speech, but the reduction of the totality of our mental life into verbalized expressions of other states such as feelings, beliefs, dispositions etcetera – though lacking in giving a full picture of our minds – is nonetheless something intrinsic to our identities and self-awareness as human beings. The fact that our minds are both verbalized thought and the more elusive spectrum of other mental phenomena, that in a sense could be said to be simplified when converted into words whether spoken or internal, is central to my interpretation of the narrative in *Good Morning, Midnight*.

2.5 First-person narration in the present tense

The first-person, present tense narration, or FPPT,⁴⁵ in written fiction is a narrative technique closely associated with modernist fiction; the term “inward turn” having become one of its hallmarks. The preoccupation with subjective experience rather than a distanced description of a character’s mental state becomes prevalent. A reader is given direct access to a “live feed” from the character’s own mind – or a representation of it at least – “unfolding the display of events simultaneously with the particular manner in which these events pass

⁴⁴ Palmer, 53

⁴⁵ Hansen, Per Krogh "First Person, Present Tense. Authorial Presence and Unreliable Narration in Simultaneous Narration" in D'hoker, Elke Gunther Martens (eds), *Narrative Unreliability in the Twentieth-Century First-Person Novel*, 317-336 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2008) 318

through the consciousness and feelings, the associations and emotions of [the character].”⁴⁶; an attempt to give the reader *the* experience of the character, rather than a description of that experience⁴⁷. This “simultaneous narration” that Rhys uses in *Good Morning, Midnight* presents some problems when it comes to interpretation. Hansen points out that it does not constitute a ‘natural’ narrative situation as it lacks spatial and temporal distance to the events narrated, leading some to consider FPPT a “non-narrative form of fiction.” Some theorists have however undermined this problem by extending the discussion of narrative analysis beyond the written text, but also by linking the emergence of this written form with a new narrative medium that was more or less contemporary with the emergence of modernism: the film medium. James Joyce, the man credited with the invention of perhaps the most characteristic feature of literary modernism, stream-of-consciousness, has been suspected of letting film narratives inspire his writing style but as this Eisenstein quote shows it may well have been the other way around: “What Joyce does with literature ... is quite close to what we’re doing with the new cinematography, and even closer to what we’re going to do.”⁴⁸ The problem of “naturalizing” the narrative can thus be avoided but only through ignoring the medium of the narrative: the written text. I, however, see the possibility of Joyce's technique predating cinematography as an expression of an awareness of and concern with narrating authentic movements of the mind; necessitating a removal from "natural" narrative forms while still belonging to the act of narration. The issue of ‘a *natural* narratology’ as discussed by Hansen, drawing on Monika Fludernik, is not a discussion for this thesis, but the FPPT-narration’s divergence from the natural narrative state, as a something that *has* happened being communicated (originally verbally) to others after the fact, implies something of FPPT’s special status. Cohn describes it as "a meeting-place, or, better, a vanishing-point, for anti-narrative tendencies of all sorts contained within narration itself."⁴⁹

Hansen, drawing on Cohn, lists three main characteristics for the "simultaneous narration technique." The *first* is the problem FPPT causes for the reader when it comes to accepting the narrative situation as “true” (natural.) *Second*, the juxtaposition of imagination and observation from the narrator constitutes a problem when it comes to assessing the authenticity of what is being reported by the narrator. *Third*, “the absolute focalization of its

⁴⁶ Eisenstein, Sergei *Film Form: Essays in Film Theory* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1949) 185

⁴⁷ This description belongs within a Cartesian framework, but still applies to Herman’s alternative view on the modernistic “inwards turn”. It is simply the premise for and understanding of this experience that changes.

⁴⁸ Trotter, David *Cinema and Modernism* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007) 87

⁴⁹ Cohn, 174

narrated experience' rests on the analogy between action, thought and narration."⁵⁰ In addition Hansen adds his own, *fourth* characteristic: that FPPT erases any sign of an authorial agent, the omniscient author/narrator, beyond the first person narrator. In other words the reader is left with little or no help in establishing what is true and what is untrue in a story written in FPPT. "One should not overlook the fact that the constant attempt to find reasons and systems is a part of the general game one enters when reading a FPPT-narrated text,"⁵¹ Hansen reminds us, adding that in most cases our attempts at interpretation will remain ultimately unresolved, if not rejected by the text itself. The "intimacy" between narrative and narrator in *Good Morning, Midnight* – the absolute focalization – leaves it up to the reader, at the lack of a distanced authorial source of information, to explain acts and events. When we are given descriptions of situations and other character's feelings', usually towards Sasha, it is Sasha's own imperfect perception of the situation we are given, rather than the irrefutable truth handed down from some omnipotent third-person narrator.

The narrative point of view in *Good Morning, Midnight*, as has been shown above, creates problems of authentication in terms of the narrative reports of events and intentions/inclinations, and so forth, in the story. The argumentation against the reliability of the homodiegetic or self-narrator brings to mind the demon Descartes envisioned as he discussed the second substance; the material world given in extension. In this constellation the omnipotent third-person narrator is of course God, who authenticates the information our minds perceive. The first-person narrator on the other hand, being just one subjective perspective out of many, becomes less trustworthy for lack of "oversight" and secondly that the information given by a subjective agent is subject to his or her whim. There is not the same level of postulated reliability or authenticity in first-person narration because a third-person narrator most often – though with plenty of exceptions – is outside the storyworld, creating the framework which the reader from *within* that framework will interpret the story out of. The first-person narrator on the other hand is someone actively involved; she has stakes in the goings-on in the storyworld and can therefore be evaluated as more likely to lie, either out of self interest or for "the heck of it", granting the first-person narrator the potential character of "...some malicious demon of the utmost power and cunning [who] has employed all his energies in order to deceive me."⁵²

⁵⁰ Hansen, 320

⁵¹ *ibid*, 335

⁵² Descartes' quote taken from Carriero, John *Between Two Worlds: a Reading of Descartes's Meditations*, (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2009) 58

This notion of the first-person narrator is of course oversimplified and is in particular negated by Hansen's second characterization: the juxtaposition of imagination and observation. The hint of the "demonic jester" does however reside in the first-person narrator in many discussions of it, in my opinion. My discussion regarding the questionable reliability of FPPT-narration will rely much on the fallibility of the subjective experience grounded in accounts of how the human mind actually works, presupposing Herman's premise: that *fictional* and *actual* minds are equal in terms of our access to – and evaluation of – them. But even though the narrative "erases any sign of an authorial agent" and bears no signs of being addressed to others that cannot be accounted for in such a way as to again confine it to silent self-communion, it will eventually be made clear that Sasha bears some traits of this dishonest demon in her self-narration, though not for any malevolent reasons.

2.6 A broader definition of self-narration

Returning briefly to the question of the status of self-narration we have Fludernik, in the company of quite a few others, who will not admit FPPT into the company of other accepted forms of narrative. The inauthentic narrative situation of a person narrating their own life, their own present to themselves as they live it has made others dismiss it as improper narrative. The unreliability of the narrator is at its strongest in FPPT-forms of narrative and must be kept in mind, while the question of whether or not it is narrative – at all – can be countered by the following quote from H. Porter Abbott; discussing narrative at the existential level:

Narrative capability shows up in infants some time in their third or fourth year, when they start putting verbs together with nouns. Its appearance coincides, roughly, with the first memories that are retained by adults of their infancy, a conjunction that has led some to propose that memory itself is dependent on the capacity for narrative. In other words, we do not have any mental record of who we are until narrative is present as a kind of armature, giving shape to that record. If this is so then "Our very definition as human beings," as Peter Brooks has written, "is very much bound up with the stories we tell about our own lives and the world in which we live. We cannot, in our dreams, our daydreams, our ambitious fantasies, avoid the imaginative imposition of form on life."⁵³

He suggests that the act of self-narration is fundamental to our sense of self, that our own identity at least in part hinges on the act of narration: we each narrate our own "story",

⁵³ Abbott, 3

something that on the one side takes away from the multifarious chaos that is *all of reality*, but on the other hand allows us to delineate our *selves* within that chaos. The FPPT-narrative's status is, to me, at least partially redeemed as "natural" through this type of reasoning, though many still disagree.

Cohn divides *self-narration* into two main categories. The first is *dissonant self-narration*, which is a distanced kind of self-narration in first-person *past tense* narratives. She compares the relationship between the narrating present self and the narrated past self to that of a third-person narrator and the narrated protagonist⁵⁴. At one end of the scale you have the first-person narrator that is very much like the omnipotent third-person narrator. This type of narrator often makes use of the knowledge of the events he recounts and displays an uncannily detailed memory of his past. Somewhere in the middle of this imagined scale you have the first-person narrator that – realistically – reveals the limitations of human memory, sometimes even commenting on the inaccuracy of their own narration of past events. At the opposite end of the scale the narrating self identifies so closely with his past self that he betrays no superior knowledge of himself or the situation(s). It is important here to separate Cohn's scalar description of degrees of distance between narrator and narratee from the continuum Herman speaks of regarding degrees of distance or intimacy between "agent" and "environment." Herman's focus lies always within the narrative, and the scale ranging from tight to weak couplings between the two are not directly affected by a shift from first to third-person narration. It is still the mind and mindstate of the character (agent) that is the issue, regardless of whether the narrator is distanced third-person or intimate first-person (such as Sasha.)

The second category Cohn operates with is *consonant self-narration*, and it would be to this category that *Good Morning, Midnight* belongs. The division between narrating and experiencing self becomes erased in *simultaneous narration*,⁵⁵ the narration becomes a representation of real-time experience. Various versions of the form can be found: self-quoted or self-narrated monologue. As an example of self-narrated monologue she quotes a passage from Henry James, where the narrator renders "not his present, long since confirmed, interpretation of the past events, but the exact rhetoric of his past wondermet,"⁵⁶ but without the use of direct quotation. In other words it is the kind of narration where the distance between narrator and narratee is completely dissolved. In the free-indirect form, Cohn

⁵⁴ Cohn, 143

⁵⁵ Ibid 153

⁵⁶ Ibid 167

describes it as a first-person variant of "the third technique for rendering consciousness in third-person fiction: the narrated monologue." In Cohn's account of self-narration the "self" in self-narration in large part serves as a designator of first-person narration as opposed to third – and very rarely second – person narration. It is no doubt useful with this kind of close examination and thorough division of terms but I wish for *self-narration* to embody a greater significance as I discuss it in this thesis. Beyond designating the narrative perspective I see *the act* of self-narration as a constructive action such as Abbott describes above: a mechanism embedded in us that has us construct narratives not only about events but about ourselves; *our selves*. Herman, too, touches on this in *Narrative Theory: Core Concepts and Critical Debates*⁵⁷, where he indirectly ties the view of the mind as something "embedded in contexts for action" – rather than sealed off and so on – to the broader understanding of self-narration which I advocate here when he discusses narratives in relation to mind representation: "A self is in part constituted by what it perceives, and when and where such acts of perception take place – with narrative being one of the principal means for situating selves, or persons, in evolving sets of space-time coordinates."⁵⁸ I have not seen Herman explicitly express the same view of self-narration that I hold in this thesis, but as Herman has been a constant champion of the claim that narrative fiction – again, when it comes to representing minds – can not only *be* informed by our scientific knowledge of the mind, but can in turn also contribute to that knowledge, I dare take him into account for this aspect of my thesis; slightly on the side of Herman's own main point.

2.6.1 The self

If the claimed active construction of narratives about ourselves seems somewhat strange and counter-intuitive – "surely I know my own self," one might think – the science problematizes our relationship to our *selves*, and goes on to show the need for such a mental feature.

Although most of us – with a few highly interesting exceptions reported in psychology and neuro-science – go through our lives feeling very much like our *self* the entire time, recent research indicates that the perpetual *you*, that never-changing essence that is at the proverbial "heart and soul" of *you* as an individual no matter how much your physical body changes, is

⁵⁷ Herman, David James Phelan, Peter J. Rabinowitz, Brian Richardson, Robin Warhol (eds), *Narrative Theory: Core Concepts and Critical Debates* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2012)

⁵⁸ Herman, David James Phelan, Peter J. Rabinowitz, Brian Richardson, Robin Warhol "Narrative Worlds: Space, Setting, Perspective" in Herman, David James Phelan, Peter J. Rabinowitz, Brian Richardson, Robin Warhol (eds), *Narrative Theory: Core Concepts and Critical Debates*, 84-111 (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2012)102

an illusion. From a neuro-physiological perspective Jan Westerhoff gives two simplified models for describing the self: one is the pearls-on-a-string model, where our self is the string running through the totality of our mental properties represented by the pearls. The problem according to those who have studied these separable "features" of our minds, compared to a whole unchanging and continuous self, is that if you remove any changeable feature that you consider part of the sum of what makes up *you*, you are left with a self so small and insignificant that it could hardly constitute a self at all. The second model is the rope-model: a rope holds together even though no single fiber runs the entirety of its length. Just as a rope consists of a series of shorter, overlapping fibers, so too our self might be made up of countless overlapping mental events.

It seems then as if we are left with the unattractive choice between a continuous self so far removed from everything constituting us that its absence would scarcely be noticeable, and a self that actually consists of components of our mental life, but contains no constant part we could identify with. The empirical evidence we have so far points towards the rope view, but it is by no means settled.⁵⁹

David Lodge sees the apparent paradox between the scattered nature of our minds and our experience of a unified self as a problem – at least partially – related to fiction; to narrative:

"the self in our stream of consciousness changes continuously as it moves forward in time, even as we retain a sense that the self remains the same while our existence continues." Damasio calls the self that is constantly modified the "core" self, and the self that seems to have some kind of continuous existence the "autobiographical" self, suggesting that it is like a literary production.⁶⁰

"Literary production" connotes fiction, which again connotes "making things up," downright lies, or at best an arbitrary relationship with truth. To suggest that it is our capacity for narrating that makes us who we are is perhaps a strong claim, and yet we cannot imagine ourselves without it; so strongly has it influenced our way of thinking and being in the world. Regardless of the controversy, this is how I have chosen to view *Good Morning, Midnight's* narrative discourse; a perspective that coincides in a sense not only with Herman's re-formulation of literary modernism, but also with Nicholls' concept of "belatedness" in modernist fiction described in the section on reception.

⁵⁹ Westerhoff, Jan "The Self: the One and Only You", *New Scientist* magazine issue 2905, 01 March, 2013 (<http://www.newscientist.com/article/mg21729052.300-the-self-the-one-and-only-you.html>)

⁶⁰ Lodge, David *Consciousness and the Novel* (London: Penguin Books, 2003) 14-15

The elusive nature of our minds resists attempts at theoretical analysis because of the sheer complexity of the system that makes up a human brain, both physically and psychologically. A phenomenological notion of my own mind or my own self – in other words the straight-forward, no-questions-asked assumption that since I experience a "self" I must have one, and this self is as I experience it to be; something perpetual like a soul – is negated by the inconsistencies revealed by the above mentioned researchers, leaving the object, or should I say *subject*, of investigation unclear in many ways. Throughout this thesis I employ different terms such as "mind", "consciousness" and "self" interchangeably. Several other terms would fit as well into this grouping of mind-related terms ("brain", "the mental", "perception", "thinking", "feeling"; the list goes on) but they each embody different connotations regarding mental functioning. For example, "consciousness" usually appears in a pair with "subconsciousness" or "the unconscious" which signifies the part of our mental life that we do not seem to control; a kind of automatic hardware for the software of our consciousness to run on. This kind of allegoric description of the human mind stems from research into AI (Artificial Intelligence) where our mental activity is seen exactly as a computer system, which theoretically should be replicable in a computer with a high enough work-capacity. Of course the division is perhaps best known from the "grand old man" of psychoanalysis Sigmund Freud, while presently it has become common within certain fields to speak of "system 1" and "system 2" instead (these are vastly different from what Freud's terms denote mind you, but the general division of the mind into a part we are aware of and a part we are not invites the comparison.) Although he did not coin the terms himself, I refer to Daniel Kahneman's brief descriptions of the two systems:

System 1 operates automatically and quickly, with little or no effort and no sense of voluntary control.

System 2 allocates attention to the effortful mental activities that demand it, including complex computations. The operations of System 2 are often associated with the subjective experience of agency, choice, and concentration⁶¹.

The "two-systems-view" (my own wording) is one that complicates things even further. In this view the evolutionary process we assume led up to what we *are* today has created new neurological connections on top of "the old brain"; the primitive animal brain that runs the basic operations of a living body (System 1). This includes, but is not limited to, the very *very* basic things such as breathing air and pumping blood, to basic cognition such as registering

⁶¹ Kahneman, Daniel *Thinking, Fast and Slow* (London: Penguin Books, 2011) 20-21

motion, spatial orientation, recognizing patterns etc. The new neurological connections have at some point created new functions in addition to those of System 1, and it is believed that what we label "our consciousness" arose from those new connections that "run on" and interact with the older system. In this sense it is very similar to the "computer-allegory" but what is important here is that System 1, the old, animalistic machinery, does not simply run the physical processes in your body while staying out of your consciousness but interacts with System 2 in very direct ways. For instance, solving a mathematical problem would at first glance seem to belong to the conscious, logical part of your brain, but evidence tells us that the two separate parts are not as separate as one might at first think, and it turns out that the act of solving a math problem takes place in both System 1 and System 2⁶²; they are interdependent, assuming the division between them in the first place is justified and not just a construction resulting from a scientific modeling of them. The point here being that the empirical sciences tells us that a significant part of our mental life is outside our conscious control. I will mostly stick to the terms "thought", "mind" and "consciousness", though other terms will be used for variation and where necessary. "Consciousness", as I have shown, belongs primarily to the part of our mind that deals with *thought*; our self – and probably the accessible part of our mind that Descartes ended up with through his methodological doubt – while "mind" signifies the entirety of the two systems; however dubious such a distinction may be revealed to be. Finally there is "perception" which denotes the subjective experience our minds affords us of the world; something that within the postulated parameters for "mind" in this thesis would be said to take place interdependently between system 1 and system 2.

Another example of the complex relationship between System 1 and System 2 can be felt simply by stretching out your hand and touching something. It would be System 1 that is the dominating side in this case, sending "operational signals" to make your arm move, and then register and interpret the sensory data received from the touch. No matter how objectively this event can be described in terms of physics, your own perception of the event will unavoidably involve System 2 in the endeavor, making the feel of the touch much more than simple materialistic information about the qualities of the surface and so on. The sensation can bring about certain mood-changes in you, perhaps the feel or smell of the touched object will ignite a memory, the involuntary kind that here would be contextualized with system 1, or just an association from the experience, perhaps the surface is rough and creates a sense of displeasure that goes beyond simply registering that the surface is uneven;

⁶² Ibid, 20

we are entering the problematic terrain of *qualia*. The issue of qualia could fill volumes and volumes on its own and has therefore been almost entirely omitted from this thesis as I found it only skewed away from the mental feature that became my main focus, in spite of the fact that it is a vital part of the discussion of mind and perception one must limit the contents of a thesis of this length. To mention it now serves to exemplify the complexity we have to deal with when we attempt to investigate our *mind(s)*, pointing to one way in which the reliability of FPPT must be questioned irrespective of the technical lack of an authorial third-person narrator; or rather it suggests reasons for why exactly a first-person narrator cannot be trusted. A final point about the human mind to underline the unfathomable complexity we are dealing with is a fun fact that pops up in most popular-science accounts of the brain. I will let Vilayanur Ramachandran describe it:

The human brain, it has been said, is the most complexly organized structure in the universe and to appreciate this you just have to look at some numbers. The brain is made up of one hundred billion nerve cells or 'neurons', which form the basic structural and functional units of the nervous system [...] Each neuron makes something like one thousand to ten thousand contacts with other neurons and these points of contact are called synapses. It is here that exchange of information occurs. Based on this information, it has been calculated that the number of possible permutations and combinations of brain activity, in other words the numbers of brain states, exceeds the number of elementary particles in the known universe.⁶³

The human mind is an inconceivable size to investigate, that much has been established but why this account of it that is more suitable for popular science than aesthetics and narrative analysis? First, the physical foundation through which the mind emerges – the brain – must be properly established as it is that physical behavior that forms the basis for a lot of the new science on the subject. Second, in my account of the narrative representation of mind in *Good Morning, Midnight* it is important to establish the parameters of various units that could be said to constitute the mind with its "material and social environment." Third, In what is *arguably* "the most complexly organized structure in the universe" the role of self-narration I have accounted for above is made much clearer. It seems inevitably necessary with this sort of mechanism in order to be able to grasp any kind of identity and hold on to it in a structure that can be said to exceed the known universe in complexity. Herman refutes the dichotomization of fictional and actual minds in his criticism of the purported exceptionality of written fiction when it comes to granting access to minds; to give us access to a subjectivity that is not our own, claiming that "readers' knowledge of fictional minds is mediated by the same kinds of

⁶³ Ramachandran, Vilayanur S. *The Emerging Mind* (London: Profile Books Ltd, 2003) 3-4

reasoning protocols [...] that mediate encounters with everyday minds."⁶⁴ Although most of us do not apply very scientific approaches in our "encounters with everyday minds" – just like Freud's "consciousness" and "unconsciousness" have long since entered our collective vocabulary and therefore our way of seeing and understanding ourselves – the science is part of the heuristics we knowingly and unknowingly employ in our encounters with other minds.

The science and the new paradigms that have been formulated through new findings as a result of it plays a significant role in Herman's post-Cartesian investigations of mind-representation in written fiction. The empirical evidence we have today suggests that previous models – such as substance-dualism – are wrong, and though we will certainly make new discoveries that once again will shift the paradigms for investigating and understanding our physical brain – and whatever *this* is that comes with it – it would be a mistake to ignore the findings as they stand today and not attempt expressing an adapted framework of thought for any area, including the humanities, that in any form engages with problems related to the human mind and its functioning. The mind's organizing of information from the vast and unknown chaos that is the totality of our minds and the input they receive into simplified (narrative) structures for easier access and processing is a fundamental one according to recent research, and it is via this research I read *Good Morning, Midnight* in this thesis. I will therefore briefly suggest underlying evolutionary mind mechanisms that I suspect play a part in the self-narration such as I account for it; to better support my claims regarding its function in the human mind and therefore in Sasha's mind as Herman has done away with any substantial differentiation between actual and fictional minds.

2.6.2 The narration

Research I have seen on this has emphasized our tendency to simplify perception "outwards" such as the evolutionary use of forming the following narrative taken from Michael Shermer:⁶⁵ Walking the savanna I hear something. There is rustling in the grass, so a predator must lie in wait, so I must flee or avoid the grass. This is an example of a simplified narrative created from a vastly more complex reality. (For instance the properties and behaviors of the atoms making up the individual leaves, how temperature changes in air-molecules cause them to move, thus moving the leaves whose surface properties causes friction as they are moved

⁶⁴ Ibid, 11

⁶⁵ Shermer, Michael *The Believing Brain: From Ghosts and Gods to Politics and Conspiracies – How We Construct Beliefs and Reinforce them as Truths* (New York: Times Books Henry Holt and Company, 2011) 70

against each other which causes vibrations resulting in sound waves traveling through the air until it reaches us and so on; seemingly endlessly.) Or the fact that though objectively a circle with two dots and a curved line inside is nothing like a human face we all instantly recognize a smiley emoticon as a face, and although that does not constitute a narrative it illustrates well how our minds seem wired to simplify, to take shortcuts, in perceiving the world. Shermer has researched the human mind's tendency to simplify information – presumably for better evaluation and implementation of that information – under the headline "patternicity", in various forms, saying that on a very fundamental level our minds have come to disregard the deeply detailed visual information in a human face in favor of "two dots and a line". This is of course the initial mental event in facial recognition, or scenarios such as the one described above, other and more elaborate functions come into play immediately afterwards: for example whether or not it is the face of someone you know, and what kind of emotions and mindstates it expresses⁶⁶.

I propose – with support from Abbott and Palmer among others – that the same kind of simplification is just as important in regards to delimiting a self within a much larger field of mental activity, both when it comes to creating a narrative that stands for one's self; one's identity, and to further maintain that narrative in the face of new events; events that might contradict the self as it stands. This is a perspective I wish to incorporate in my treatment of *Good Morning, Midnight*; the "yin and yang" of the act of narrating, so to speak, connoting both features of creation in a positive sense where it enables you to make sense of and function properly in a very chaotic and senseless world, and its "dark side" of divergence from the *total-of-reality* – from truth – by necessarily limiting your own perception and experience of that reality through creating – in a broad sense – narratives that represent the larger reality in its place.

Abbott, who explores *broad* definitions of narrative – for example he argues that one event is sufficient for something to be categorized as narrative, while others would accept nothing less than a series of causally connected events as narrative proper – subdivides the concept of *story* into two components: "the *events* and the *entities* (sometimes referred to as "existents.")⁶⁷ Put abstractly an event is a change *in* or caused by an entity. You can have entities without events, but you cannot have events without entities. However, as Abbott points out himself, the term entity feels cold and abstract when used on Winnie the Pooh.

⁶⁶ Ibid

⁶⁷ Abbott, 19

When we talk about entities in narrative fiction, even if it is some kind of anthropomorphic object like the tea pot in the Disney adaptation of *Beauty and the Beast*, we are talking about characters. The reason for Abbott's insistence on *entities* is the fact that *narrative*, in its strictest sense, applies to a much wider field:

When scientists give accounts of the behavior of an atom or the interaction of chemical elements or the history of shifting landmasses or the evolution of planetary systems it would be misleading to speak of them as involving characters yet these scientists are nonetheless deploying our narrative gift, that is, telling stories about the physical world.⁶⁸

This broad understanding of narrative is a premise for my account of the self-narration in *Good Morning, Midnight*. I will not be applying the term entity to Sasha, but I will employ the notion of narrative as something more than the technical ascription of it as the – in this case written – discourse of a story.

This kind of "story-telling" about the physical world is a project of objectifying that world in order to – ideally – avoid subjective mistakes in perception and interpretation. Merleau-Ponty discusses this as part of his critique against Descartes and his substance-dualism, as the Cartesian dichotomy of mind and body leaves the mind isolated in the body, thus allowing only indirect access to the world through internally constructed representations of that actual world. Although the subject is scientific models it is the mind, as in the *self*, that Merleau-Ponty is concerned with as well; what he and other phenomenologists call *Being*. When Descartes doubted everything except his own mind, everything was reduced to that isolated point, thus subsequent investigations and explanations of everything became grounded in the mind rather than in physical reality, leading to a kind of dislodging from truth via *constructed* representations of that truth, in the way that scientific models are constructed model representations whose relationship with reality is ambiguous:

Science Manipulates things and gives up living in them. It makes its own limited models of things; operating upon these indices or variables to effect whatever transformations are permitted by their definition, it comes face to face with the real world only at rare intervals. Science is and always has been that admirably active, ingenious, and bold way of thinking whose fundamental bias is to treat everything as though it were an object-in-general – as though it meant nothing to us and yet was predestined for our own use.⁶⁹

When a scientist, by creating abstracted model-representations of the actual physical world, could be said to create *narratives* about the world and the things in it as a way of enabling productive discourse about those things, for instance an atom, she will unavoidably be at risk

⁶⁸ Ibid, 19

⁶⁹ Merleau-Ponty, (2004) 291

of creating definitions – and in turn narratives from those definitions – that in some way either does not capture every aspect of an atom and its behavior, due to the – ultimately – arbitrary relationship between language and ideas – who are intrinsically linked to each other – which leads to the danger of false denominations via imprecise definitions. Not only is it likely to leave something important out, but you risk finding incorrect results by working from the definitions of the model rather than the *actual thing* that predates language, or even perception. To use a term from narrative theory you risk *over or under-reading*, and I posit that this problem is as valid for our minds. Not only in the sense of our scientific explanatory models of our minds which falls under the upper category, but our actual minds connoting *identity* or *self*, and our experience of both our selves and our general perception, which, due to the opaque nature of subjective experience – for example qualia – is much harder to exemplify, thus perhaps better informed by comparison with scientific models as analogies which are designed to address this very problem (they mean to reduce everything to their simplest components to attempt finding some clarity in the chaos; as well as the fact that we know more about the physical world than our own minds.) In reference to my account of the human mind's complexity the same kind of "simplifying" seen in scientific reductionism seems intrinsic to the creation and maintaining of a *self*, or self-narration in its wider sense. The inherent intentionality in our perception – such as phenomenology accounts for it, for instance – means that *there* as well will be some degree of mismatch between the total sum of sensory impressions available to us at any given time, and what we are actually able to process at any given time. In this constellation perception, lived experience, becomes highly problematic to define and describe concretely due to the high risk of over or under-reading through the juxtaposition of imagination and observation that Hansen highlights as one of four main characteristics of narration in first-person-present-tense.

The inclusion of Merleau-Ponty's critique of physical science in this thesis is then both meant to inform the subject of mind and to serve as an analogy for the arbitrary relationship between perception and objective reality. Further the physical reality constitutes an important parameter in Herman's view on fictional minds because unlike the Cartesian mind Herman grants existence to the material world as something inherently engaging with the very core of our selves that can seem so autonomous at times; something that also intersects with the phenomenological viewpoint. If Sasha was merely a mind or soul, independent of the physical world, nothing much could really be said about the self-narration in terms of questioning its reliability, every word would be infallible, but having objective reality as a countermeasure is

one way that allows for investigation of the narrative as the claimed movements of an actual mind by potentially revealing discrepancies between the perception and the (story)world as something independent of a particular perceiving subject.

3 Narrative analysis

Herman claims that "modernist narratives figures post-Cartesian geography of the mental not only by thematizing the extended or distributed nature of mind but also by developing techniques for emulating the mind's moment-by-moment experiences of and engagement with the world."⁷⁰ This is must be kept in mind when I now move into a closer look at the narration as it functions in *Good Morning, Midnight*; presupposing a high degree of ambiguity in the narrative discourse for the reasons discussed above. Further, the interdependency between Sasha's mind and her social and material context as both shaping and being shaped by that context should be a discernible feature of the narrative. These are some of the features I will be looking at in my reading of this novel through the main theme of mind, identifying ways in which the narrative converges with the features of our mental life which I have discussed above.

3.1 The speech category approach

As I have stated already with respect to the speech-category approach to fictional minds, the main distinction to be made in this novel is between direct and indirect thought, and further differentiating direct discourse as either direct thought or direct speech; and the speech-categories' approach to mind representation are as good a place as any to begin, as instances of both direct and indirect variants early on reveal irregularities in forms consistent with the kind of "mind evoking" narration I have accounted for. Actual direct speech is to a large extent designated by quotation marks in the text, so the identification of speech as opposed to thought is not – for the most part – very problematic; at least at first glance. It is mostly in the passages closest to interior monologue that things can become unclear, but there are instances of direct quotes in the text that directly oppose our reading of them as that: "'Quite like old times,' the room says. 'Yes? No?'"⁷¹ the novel begins. Her room, an inanimate object, has direct quotes attributed to it several times in the course of the narrative: "The room welcomes me back. 'There you are,' it says. 'You didn't go off, then?' 'No, no. I thought better of it. Here I belong and here I'll stay.'"⁷² Here the direct quotation becomes a destabilizing factor for the entire narrative because it relativizes the instances of direct quotes thus

⁷⁰ Herman, 258

⁷¹ GMM, 9

⁷² GMM, 34

ultimately relativizing the entire text, in line with the established "trust issues" that FPPT narration brings with it by definition. Since the entirety of the narrative is anchored in Sasha's mind and lacks any "realistic motivation" it could all be called thought, though we can still formally identify *direct speech*, as *that* is what it is presented *as* in the narrative discourse. This potential for relativism in FPPT narration is intrinsic to the Cartesian side of the discussion, where an inwards turn into the depths of the human mind at the same time amounts to a removal from the objective world and any discernible measurements of *truth*. There is more to be said about this, but for now let us move on to an instance of *indirect thought*.

In the following scene Sasha has gone to another hotel than the one she is staying in, towards which she has had a sudden fit of aversion. Having asked for a nice light room, the receptionist has recommended room 219 to her, only to be contradicted by another man behind the counter who insists the room is already taken:

I listen anxiously to this conversation. Suddenly I feel that I must have number 219, with bath - number 219, with rose-coloured curtains, carpet and bath. I shall exist on a different plane at once if I can get this room, if only for a couple of nights. It will be an omen. Who says you can't escape your fate? I'll escape from mine, into room number 219. Just try me, just give me a chance.⁷³

The *interior monologue* form is prevalent, and the passage ends in *direct thought* but as a whole this quotation shows an example of narrating Sasha's mindstate(s) rather than quoting. From the perspective of the perceiving consciousness the (speech)categories for mind-representation becomes destabilized literally at once; the very first sentence in the novel is the first direct quote, attributed to the inanimate room, and there are no extended passages of pure *indirect thought* in the novel. The quote here is representative for how *indirect thought* (*psycho-narration*) performs in the text; with a sort of free direct discourse that can function both as direct thought (or speech) while contributing to the narration of mind(states). It is clear that we will not be dealing with pure forms of thought and speech categories in this novel, but a strange mix nearing the stream-of-consciousness technique, though it is not fully that either. Rather than proclaiming exact quoting of thoughts and feelings the narrative discourse through its presentation relativizes such an assumption, or rather – at the danger of over-reading – the notion that this is at all possible to do. Instead it "opens up" in its vicinity to stream-of-consciousness which "focus[es] on the random flow of thought and stress[es] its

⁷³ GMM, 32

illogical, 'ungrammatical,' associative nature."⁷⁴ This impure and rather chaotic form is well suited for *representing* an actual mind, and is ripe with information which enables rich psycho-narration beyond what is explicitly quoted or narrated. In this example we learn that she is anxious while directing her attention at the conversation taking place – while simultaneously contradicting the claim that she is focused on the conversation since she instead gets lost in her own thoughts about it – that she experiences sudden feelings of need: she has to have that room and we are given three features that stand out in Sasha's head: the rose-colored curtains, the carpet and the bath. This tells us that the physical features of the room are very important to her: "I shall exist on a different plane at once if I can get this room..." Note, by the way, how this sentence as well reads like *direct thought* but of the kind that is assignable to that category formally while the context indicates that it belongs to the (psycho) narration taking place in the passage. The room, which she has not even seen yet, has taken on such enormous proportions in her mind that she believes it will be nothing less than life-altering to stay there just a night or two; "it will be an *omen*." In the short quote above there are many cues for the reader to make use of in gaining an understanding of Sasha's mindstate and subjective experience of the situation; the subjective nature of it highlighted by the contrast between the undramatic *reality* of the event, and her dramatic experience of it.

3.2 Over and understatement

In the example above the very mundane nature of enquiring about a room takes on immense existential importance in Sasha's perception, in stark contrast to the reality of the situation. Action is at other times presented in an understated sort of way. The narration of events is distanced, contrary to the point-of-view of the novel which one would think should merit a more intimate, personalized perception of events. "The action is often marked by triviality, by its banal and sordid qualities ... complexities of plot, exciting crises, complications, and denouements are almost entirely lacking."⁷⁵ Even the novel's dramatic ending is never violent in spite of the violence inherent in the event: a fellow guest at the hotel where she is staying, known only as the man in the dressing gown or "the commis", has been making advances at her. Drunk and emotionally broken down Sasha leaves the door to her room open after her love interest Rene has left, hoping he will return to her. Instead it is the man in the dressing

⁷⁴ Herman, (2011) 247

⁷⁵ Malcolm, 11-12

gown that enters. Although Sasha, in her deranged state, embraces the man and pulls him down on the bed, what happens in this final scene has "rape" written all over it. Sasha, in the capacity of both victim and narrator of this shocking episode is more concerned with the man's attire than the unfolding ugly event. Note that these three sentences are a miniature paragraph of their own in the novel, formally accentuating their importance for the experiencing subject: "I think: 'Is it the blue dressing-gown, or the white one? That's very important. I must find that out – it's very important.'"⁷⁶ Most readers will likely wonder about such an "odd" choice of focus for the dramatic conclusion of the novel but this kind of disjunction from the action of an integrated first-person narrator, in the case of *Good Morning, Midnight*, serves to enliven the feeling of subjective experience and foregrounds it as the actual dimension in which the narrative unfolds. Malcolm points out that even though the action in the traditional sense is limited, "trivial or sordid or banal", it is far from trivial in a wider psychological or social sense.⁷⁷ The whole of *Good Morning, Midnight* is characteristically lacking in major dramatic episodes, in favor of objectively unimportant events that never the less take on immense weight on Sasha's psyche. The contrast between the low intensity of actual events and the high intensity of Sasha's experience of those events (or vice versa in the event quoted above) again foregrounds the theme of mind and ascribes the narrative to the *interior* mental domain.

3.3 Gaps

The narrative focalizes Sasha's *subjective* psychological experience⁷⁸ and because the narrative is anchored in Sasha's mind, the interrelationship between different parts and fragments makes for an overarching thread through the "chaotic" narrative. The novel's four parts, all separated by a new title page, always connect narratively with their adjacent parts, while connecting paragraphs within each part even when the narrative remains in the narration-present, can break abruptly away from the progression the reader might expect the narrative to make, creating a sense of bewilderment in the reader. These narrative *gaps* are vital to the effect the narration creates and even when it does not cut to something else

⁷⁶ GMM, 159

⁷⁷ Malcolm, 12

⁷⁸ I use the term 'focalization' as Genette uses it (G rard Genette. *Narrative Discourse Revisited* (Cornell University Press 1988) 73), as something applied to the narrative itself and/or its narrator, leading to 'absolute focalization' in the case of first person present tense narratives.

entirely; when Sasha's narration remains within the same narrative time and space, the discourse is riddled with gaps, omitting much information about the current situation:

I stare back at him. Well, and what about it, you damned old goop? Are you as blameless as all that? Are you? I shouldn't think so. I don't criticize you, so don't you criticize me. See?

He walks away in a dignified manner. 'Tous piques,' he is thinking, 'tous dingo, tous, tous, tous. ...'

All the same, this conversation is becoming a bit of a strain. What is it leading up to? ... Ah! Here it comes.⁷⁹

Narrative gaps such as this are typically highlighted as facilitating leaps in narrative space and time, or in this particular case, where time and space remains the same, as interstices in the narrative where the readers can themselves fill in the blanks as a way of connecting and engaging with the narrative. George Butte, another contemporary theorist studying narrative representation of mindstates from a post-Cartesian perspective, invokes the philosophical writings of Merleau-Ponty on intersubjectivity to facilitate a new *deep* intersubjectivity in literature.⁸⁰ This will be briefly returned to in the next chapter, and will be treated direly insufficiently here to suggest the kind of – non-exceptional – intersubjective experience the narrative technique affords the reader. "Gaps" play an important part in Merleau-Ponty's account of intersubjectivity. Narrative gaps serve several different functions, but regarding the matter of intersubjectivity the most obvious function might be that such gaps allows the reader or viewer to fill in those gaps with his own "subjectivity." In *Eye and Mind* Merleau-Ponty writes of "inadequacies" and "lacks" rather than "gaps" when giving his phenomenological account of intersubjective experience, and how two different subjects can attain a sort of intersubjective connection by "filling in" those gaps with their own "inspection" of the world;⁸¹ in other words it is never a complete intersubjectivity, while on the other hand a subjectivity is *always* also intersubjective by way of the intertwining with the world Merleau-Ponty describes, or by the mirror neurons described in neuro-science, or by the interdependency between a mind and its context such as Herman accounts for it and the way we access others' subjectivity or mindstates through the "everyday heuristics" detailed in psychology. The "gaps" and the filling in of those gaps such as it stands here now lends itself

⁷⁹ GMM, 133

⁸⁰ Butte, George *I Know That You Know That I Know: Narrating Subjects from Moll Flanders to Marnie* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2004)

⁸¹ Merleau-Ponty, (2004) 298-299

to the kind of intersubjective experience of a text I suggested above, but mainly the inadequacies Merleau-Ponty wrote of are not literal gaps, but part of his at times rather inaccessible vocabulary for phenomenological description rather than explanation through models. In *The Visible and the Invisible* he corrects any notion of his intersubjectivity being a matter of simply filling in gaps with whatever one would want to:

It is said that the colors, the tactile reliefs given to the other, are for me an absolute mystery, forever inaccessible. This is not completely true; for me to have [...] the imminent experience of them, it suffices that I look at a landscape, that I speak of it with someone. Then, through the concordant operation of his body and my own, what I see passes into him, this individual green of the meadow under my eyes invades his vision without quitting my own...⁸²

The fact that he attaches importance to the act of speaking about it suggests that something is exchanged rather than just the one subjectivity invading another with its own perspective. Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological style of writing indicates that we must consider the specifically mentioned act of speaking in a broader sense that includes other means of exchange between subjects.

Returning to the last quote from *Good Morning, Midnight* then, the gaps in the narration – a feature that permeates the entire novel – are not an invitation to make up one's own story to fill such gaps. Rather, although the sense of confusion and frustration in any reader might not be too strong, the fragmented structure of the narrative necessitates a stronger focus and impedes the act of reading compared to a more linear text. I would argue that this sense of confusion is part of the mind representation of the novel. Not only is the fragmentary style mimetic of the movements of actual minds (in various states of stress) but the way the narration is constructed enables a certain degree of intersubjective experience of her mind through the narrative technique.

The very short paragraphs quoted here are characteristic of Rhys' style. Her attention to style is well documented and though it naturally differs in an authorship spanning five decades there are recurring tendencies in her writing. "Her vocabulary is, except in one striking way, consistently simple and accessible. Vocabulary is usually neither very elevated nor formal nor abstruse. The only substantial exception is in the author's use of French vocabulary and syntax in several stories."⁸³ Malcolm suggests that Rhys' writing style in this respect often serves to create a sense of intense subjectivity. "These short paragraphs and fragmented utterances convincingly suggest the emotional responses and impressions of

⁸² Merleau-Ponty, Maurice *The Visible and the Invisible* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968) 142

⁸³ Malcolm, 8

narrators and characters."⁸⁴ This is in keeping with the narrative perspective in *Good Morning, Midnight* where the narrative discourse is not one aimed at objective description for the benefit of a third party, but the private consciousness of Sasha. Any embellishment on the descriptive side or overly explanatory narration would counter the effect of being witness to somebody's subjective experience. These are passages where sentences are often formally assignable to the direct thought category, while simultaneously functioning as indirect thought as they convey information about Sasha's mindstate, both in the direct gesture of the sentence and from what can be inferred from it about her thoughts and feelings. The insertion of French words and sentences has been seen as part of a larger tendency of *intertextuality* in Rhys' work. Maurel's reading of *Good Morning, Midnight* relies heavily on such an understanding in her treatment of 'voice' in the novel. I will draw on Maurel's analysis to further enlighten some aspects of the narration I find the most significant.

3.4 Narrative distance?

Sylvie Maurel places *Good Morning, Midnight* within the feminist bulk of reception when she reads it as voicing dissent towards a male-dominated society and its master discourse that is created and controlled by men, although she draws on other fields as well – as one unavoidably does when talking about literature; it is inescapably an cross-disciplinary field – and so it could, from my perspective, be argued that in terms of defining the novel's main concern her reading begins from a *story*-point-of-view, and then investigates the *narrative discourse* from the vantage point the *story* provides her with, at least following the logic of my account of the differentiation between *story* and *narrative* regarding this particular work. Maurel thoroughly examines the narrative looking for signs of distance which she identifies through investigating how *voice* works in the novel. Having identified "Sasha's voice" she points to inconsistencies in the voice as indicators of intertextuality. She refers to Genette rather than Cohn, and although the two theorists had some disagreements amongst themselves, they both share an underlying Cartesian-dualistic premise. Maurel argues that Sasha's voice is ambiguous in *Good Morning, Midnight*. The text is strewn with direct quotes of other people in the story, but also quotations from outside the storyworld like recognizable references to other texts, for instance the title of the novel is a quote from a Emily Dickinson poem. Maurel sees this as a highlighting of the intertextual reliance of the novel, accentuating

⁸⁴ *ibid*, 10

not only the text's relationship to other texts, but to language itself. Maurel – from a feminist point of view – sees language as something predominantly male which estranges the female as an “other”. The active quoting of dialogues and monologues in the text then serves as a response to the alienation of the female speaking subject.

Story and narrative are simultaneous; colliding the narrating “I” and the narrated “I”. Therefore, says Maurel, we should expect a strongly homogenous text. Yet the text is riddled with other literary texts. She mentions Rimbaud, Keats, Racine and Oscar Wilde specifically, and also points to less direct allusions to other texts.⁸⁵ Gardiner is another theorist who has focused on the intertextual reliance of the novel: “She [Rhys] is a far more literary author than has previously been recognized: *Good Morning, Midnight* begins with an epigraph from Emily Dickinson and ends with an epitaph for James Joyce's *Ulysses*. In passing, it alludes to Keats, Rimbaud, Verlaine, Wilde, Anatole France, Colette, and perhaps Virginia Woolf.”⁸⁶ The importance of “the postulated unity” of the narrative because of the “narrating instance” is convergent with the *Exceptionality Thesis* of literary access to minds: that a literary mind can be known beyond the limits of possibility in real life, and in FPPT *must* be known impossibly intimately, thus seemingly necessitating an understanding of any narrative deviations of this kind as a distancing from the narrator due to the, at times, strong intertextual reliance.

For the novel, written in first person and in the present tense, is at times close to interior monologue, so that the reader may expect to become acquainted with the intricacies of one particular self, with its most intimate thoughts, through a spontaneous stream of consciousness. Auto-diegetic narrative or interior monologue necessarily foreground the subject, whose voice, vision and psychology originate the text. Although Sasha, as the almighty centre of consciousness controlling the narrative, might have produced a highly integrated text, *her voice is constantly interfered with by heterogeneous voices or discourses*.⁸⁷ (my italics)

In addition to identifiable references to other texts another feature of the text that disrupts the unity Maurel expects from its narrative perspective is Rhys' use of direct quotes. Direct quotes appear in two main forms: attributed quotes: “‘Life is difficult,’ the Arab says. ‘Yes, life isn't easy,’ the girl says.” and unattributed quotes:

⁸⁵ Maurel, 103

⁸⁶ Gardiner, Judith Kegan "Good Morning, Midnight; Good Night, Modernism" *boundary 2*, Vol. 11, No. 1/2, *Engagements: Postmodernism, Marxism, Politics*, 233-251 (Autumn, 1982 – Winter, 1983) Published by: [Duke University Press](http://www.dukeupress.edu) Article Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/303027>

⁸⁷ Maurel, 104.

Alfred smiles, bows, twists his hands nervously and departs. 'He's nice,' I say. 'Yes, *he's a nice boy. He's a Turk.*' 'Oh, I thought he was French.' 'No, *he's a Turk.*' How much money has he got? No, don't ask. I don't want to know. Tell me later on, tell me tomorrow. Let me be happy just for now.⁸⁸ (my italics)

The emphasized line shows unattributed quoting in the form "closest" to attributed quoting, where we can easily deduce who is saying what from the preceding "'He's nice,' *I say*".

Knowing that the first sentence has been uttered by Sasha who is now alone with Enno, since Alfred just left, it is a matter of simple math to keep track of who is speaking. What follows is written in the form of direct quotation, but lacks the quotation marks to identify them as such, as well as any reference to their origin, however in this example it is quite unproblematic to identify Sasha as that origin. The FPPT perspective in the novel makes it reasonable to assume she is their source. However, there are textual cues that destabilizes and mystifies direct quotes, like *the room*, as well as the narrative perspective in itself which must be considered unreliable by definition. This unreliability is only made more prevalent by introducing a theoretical framework of cognitive science to inform the nature and features of a *mind* as a premise for the investigation of this particular fictional representation of it. For Maurel however, it is the act of quoting external sources that is the problem; that Sasha's own voice is drowned out by discourse that is not her own but is instead ascribable to sources external to her subjectivity, or at the very least with ambiguous origins.

Then there are more erratic examples of unattributed quoting: "A room? A nice room? A beautiful room? A beautiful room with a bath? Swing high, swing low, swing to and fro. ... This happened and that happened. ... And then came the days when I was alone."⁸⁹ This short paragraph has its lack of origin accentuated by being formally separated from the rest of the text by extra spacing and a kind of asterix between the adjacent paragraphs. The FPPT form of the narrative suggests this paragraph can be understood as a form of direct thought from Sasha, while the rather absurd repetition of "the room" with the increase in the evaluation of it – from "a room?" to "a *nice* room?" to "a *beautiful* room" to "a beautiful room *with a bath?*" – gives it the flavor of *parodic mimicry* which Maurel highlights as a central feature of the narrative, suggesting the act of quoting from external sources or rather *voices*. Maurel's attention to the intertextual nature of the narrative makes for a compelling argument in favor of a large degree of narrative distance, but can it be accounted for differently? Maurel sees the "interior" and "autonomous" character of the discourse as

⁸⁸ GMM, 104

⁸⁹ GMM, 118

fundamental for identifying instances of intertextuality that breaks with the posited homogenous character of the self, this stance purports a Cartesian mind; isolated, whole and continuous.

The novel, with its characteristic style of literary modernism, comes close to *interior monologue*, more specifically autonomous monologue:

The vast majority of first-person novels [...] present themselves as written memoirs (like *David Copperfield* or *Felix Krull*), or as spoken discourse subsequently recorded by a listener (i.e. framed, like Joseph Conrad's novels, or *The Immoralist*). In autonomous monologues this realistic motivation for the text's origin is canceled out by the very nature of the genre: it can create the illusion that it renders an unrolling thought only if it effaces the illusion of a causal link between this language and a written text.⁹⁰

In *Good Morning, Midnight* there is no apparent "realistic motivation." There are no references to the narrative act itself, neither as written nor spoken discourse of the type "dear reader," "as I write this," or "you must listen carefully as I tell you this." Instead the narrative discourse comes close to both sides, but only stylistically; there are never any indications in the text of an "outside" from where one can follow it. The following quote is in oral style with lots of gaps characteristic of internal monologue directed at no one but oneself, thus rendering excess information unnecessary: "Last night and today – it makes a pretty good sentence. ... qu'est-ce qu'elle fout ici, la vieille? What the devil (translating it politely) is she doing here, the stranger, the alien, the old one? ... I quite agree too, quite."⁹¹ The incomplete sentences and incoherent combination of them gives them the distinct feel of simultaneous oral discourse, where the speaker "channels" speech in real time, without planning ahead the verbal presentation; the kind of spontaneous manifestation of words and sentences in our heads we all have experienced in some form. Of course the narrative perspective dictates that the discourse must be seen as *internal*, making it *direct thought*. In context the reader understands that Sasha here refers to an earlier episode where people were talking about her, or at least *she thought they were*. All that information is on a previous page, making it, not inaccessible, but definitively less accessible. The quote does not appear together with the context I accounted for in the novel, but appears suddenly in another situation the day after. In a narrative that proclaims itself as being directed to a listener or reader the gaps in this passage would be filled in one way or another.

⁹⁰ Cohn, 175

⁹¹ GMM, 46

The narrative distance Maurel accounts for necessitates a homogenous text as a "default state" of the narrating subject. Considering the implied status of the text as the representation of direct – subjective – experience in this kind of FPPT narration, the oral style seems to most appropriately affirm that assumption but there are as many cases of "written style":

There are two beds, a big one for madame and a smaller one on the opposite side for monsieur. The wash-basin is shut off by a curtain. It is a large room, the smell of cheap hotels faint, almost imperceptible. The street outside is narrow, cobble-stoned, going sharply uphill and ending in a flight of stairs. What they call an impasse.⁹²

The frantic oral style of the previous quote is here replaced with more orderly matter-of-fact description. Again there are no references to the narrative as a written text but the passage has an aura of written rather than oral discourse, especially in comparison to distinctly verbal – immediate – representations such as the previous quote. Furthermore, while the former quote accentuates the subjective experience, in other words a "tight coupling" between agent (Sasha) and the situation, the latter quote is more distanced and objective, signifying a weaker coupling. While the former quote gives us fragmented sentences of half-remembered talks the night before with little or no information, again underlining their function as private thought where any embellishment is unnecessary, the latter quote seems strange if thought privately to oneself. Sasha is in her own hotel room and she knows what is there; she merely needs to look at it, making the description out of place unless it is meant for someone else; a reader or listener who cannot see what she sees, an inference which is immediately countered by the complete absence of any admittance of doing so by the text itself, by either referring to itself as that or by referring to an external audience.

Cohn writes of interior monologues that "the ambiguity between written and oral language is compounded by a second one, between self-address and audience-address."⁹³ There are many examples where Sasha could be suspected of addressing an outside party, a second-person, a *you*, reminiscent of an actor on stage breaking out of the play's action to talk directly to the audience:

Please, please, monsieur et madame, mister, missis and miss, I am trying so hard to be like you. I know I don't succeed, but look how hard I try. Three hours to choose a hat; every morning an hour and a half trying to make myself look like everybody else. Every word I say has chains round its ankles; every thought I think is weighted with heavy weights. Since I was born, hasn't every word I've said, every thought I've thought, everything I've done, been tied

⁹² GMM, 9

⁹³ Cohn, 176

up, weighted, chained? And, mind you, I know that with all this I don't succeed. Or I succeed in flashes only too damned well. ... But think how hard I try and how seldom I dare. Think – and have a bit of pity. That is, if you ever think, you apes, which I doubt.⁹⁴

Apart from the meta-commentary on writing contained in this passage, as well as accentuating the theme of estrangement or "outsiderness", it can be read as Sasha's communicating inner feelings to an *outside* audience. However, the narrative perspective – seen in context with the many features of the narrative that corroborate a main theme of *mind* – and the general context of the situation demands a reading of it as *direct thought* regarding the situation Sasha finds herself in: She is in a bar, drinking. The social stigma against a single, "older" woman drinking alone borders on becoming unbearable for her, as we see from her own perception of the situation as she orders her first drink:

He looks at me in a sly, amused way when he brings it. God, it's funny, being a woman! And the other one – the one behind the bar – is she going to giggle or to say something about me in a voice loud enough for me to hear? That's the way she's feeling. No, she says nothing. ... But she says it all.⁹⁵

It is at times difficult to differentiate between direct and indirect discourse in the novel. In its proximity to and convergence with the interior monologue form, it does not always clearly mark what is speech and what is thought and as this latter quote shows the direct and indirect forms often intertwine in more or less complex variants that can contribute to the psycho narration in more ways than what is directly stated. The latter passage creates an understanding of Sasha's mindstate (as paranoid and uneasy) that contextualizes the former monologue. For now the former quote can stand as an example of direct thought; aimed at the people in the bar she feels threatened by, with the fact that she perceives them as threatening being a key to understanding the interior monologue as that. I base this assumption on the context of how Sasha functions with other people in the novel as a whole.

As I have briefly accounted for already there is a tension between Sasha and her surroundings. Where there is doubt as to whether direct discourse in the novel is speech or thought the tendency of "antagonistic" and confrontative utterances is frequently ascribable to interior speech; to thought. In a memory of her last job, and how she lost it, she berates her unpleasant boss Mr. Blank:

Well, let's argue this out Mr Blank. You, who represent Society [...] Let's say that you have this mystical right to cut my legs off. But the right to ridicule me afterwards because I am a

⁹⁴ GMM, 88

⁹⁵ GMM, 87

cripple – no, that I think you haven't got. And that's the right you hold most dearly, isn't it? You must be able to despise the people you exploit. But I wish you a lot of trouble, Mr Blank, And just to start off with, your damned shop's going bust. Alleluia!⁹⁶

Save the lack of quotation marks this passage could well be understood as direct discourse where Sasha actually tells her boss off. The end of the paragraph corrects such an assumption: "Did I say all this? Of course I didn't. I didn't even think it." The long speech – most of it was omitted here – is revealed to have taken place in her mind, and what she actually tells him is that she is feeling ill and must go – her work history and reaction in this scene indicates that she knows this will cost her her job, it is really an absolute surrender – so "externally" she is meek and submissive in her meeting with him; a threatening *other*. In the Bar-scene the same phenomena occurs, my point being that one cue for the reading of these passages in direct discourse form as direct thought rather than speech is the confrontative nature of the discourse. What happens *externally* in the bar scene is that Sasha tips the waiter well and orders another Pernod; in contrast to her antagonistic mindstate at the very same moment.

This repeating tendency to express herself freely only in thought is actually directly commented on by Sasha herself:

I finish the coffee, pay the bill and walk out. I would give all that's left of my life to be able to put out my tongue and say: 'One word to you,' as I pass that girl's table. I would give all the rest of my life to be able even to stare coldly at her. I just walk out.

Never mind. ... one day, quite suddenly, when you're not expecting it, I'll take a hammer from the folds of my dark cloak and crack your little skull like an egg-shell. Crack it will go, the egg-shell; out they will stream, the blood, the brains. One day, one day. ... One day the fierce wolf that walks by my side will spring on you and rip your abominable guts out. One day, one day. ... Now, now, gently, quietly, quietly. ...⁹⁷

Here the inner aggression really comes to light with scenes of brains pouring from a smashed skull, guts from a shredded stomach. Again Sasha addresses a second person, again it is made clear that she only thinks these things as she walks out of the bar. The episode does not result in the brutal violence threatened in the interior monologue but with a smile to the bartender as she exits the bar. Again we have textual cues to support the theory that where there is doubt concerning the ascription of direct discourse to either external speech or internal thought, the antagonistic and confrontative nature of the discourse prompts us to view it as *direct thought* because by her own admission she is unable to actually say these things aloud to people. One

⁹⁶ GMM, 25-26

⁹⁷ GMM, 45

can also infer from the above quote that this tendency to keep locked up in herself the anger, fear and sorrow caused by these meetings with other people is something that troubles her, which further informs her mind or subjectivity for the reader.

In Cohn's discussion of monologues she writes about Dostoevsky's *Notes From the Underground* in a way that I find helpful for assessing the interior monologue-like narration in *Good Morning, Midnight*:

The narrative presentation in this story thus consists of at least three superimposed layers: a written record in its alleged format; a spoken and audience-directed discourse in its pervasive speech patterns; a silent self-address in the true meaning of its verbal gesture. The underground man writes as if he were addressing others. The other-directedness of his thought, far from being "an empty form" is actually a form filled with significance: shaping self-communion into a social posture, it suggests that sincerity is no longer available in a discourse addressed to the self than it is in a discourse addressed to others. Since such inner splits often attend autonomous monologues, pervading them with forms of second-person address.⁹⁸

All three layers are not valid for *Good Morning, Midnight* but as we have seen there are plenty of examples of "other-directedness" of Sasha's thoughts. Unlike "the underground man" the *other* or audience-address in Rhys' novel is never explicit but lies implicitly in passages such as the one exemplifying written style in that there is "superfluous" information considering the narrative perspective as well as in instances of more apparent second-person-address. The point I wish to take from Cohn here is the relativization of reliability or "sincerity" in self-narration, which through the shaping of self-narration as monologue directed at someone else reveals itself as unreliable. This converges with the bigger question of reliability or truth in real minds narrating themselves but for now let us keep in mind the more subtle cases of second-person address in *Good Morning, Midnight*. Because, as has already been pointed out, there is no direct reference to any reader or listener in the narrative, and because of the novel's FPPT-perspective, free of any "realistic motivation", it is more like a soliloquy where "a first-person compulsively buttonholes a second person who seems to be simultaneously inside and outside the fictional scene, inside and outside the speaking self," to borrow a formulation from Cohn.⁹⁹ The other as entity becomes mystified; inconcrete.

As my examples show, "the second-person addresses" in the narrative can often be assigned as being directed to specific persons in the story but since the discourse belongs to direct *thought* rather than speech, it becomes an empty, or perhaps rather "free" gesture. Since

⁹⁸ Cohn, 177

⁹⁹ Cohn, 178

direct thought by definition does not *actually* point out to the second-person she is (to put it awkwardly:) "thinking these things at or about", the discourse can also point outwards to the reader in its "pervasive speech patterns", involving the reader in the society at large that Sasha finds herself in conflict with. This is merely an implication of the form and not a point in my analysis of the novel as the outsider motif within the context of gender issues and societal norms has been widely covered by others. Rather, my point is that whether the second-person in the examples of "other-directedness" is designated as inside or outside the storyworld is unimportant for my reading of it. I posit that the only significant division of person in *my case* is between first-person and the rest; between the *simultaneous self-narrator* Sasha and *the other(s)* by way of the post-Cartesian account(s) of the mind. The postulated distance Maurel argues for through highlighting the intertextual reliance of the novel and the ambiguous form of the narrative I have commented on through Cohn's account of interior monologues, is dependent on a Cartesian premise for the understanding of what and how a mind is. Herman, Palmer and other proponents of post-Cartesian understandings of the mind can through the annulment of *that* premise provide us with a quite different understanding of how we must interpret the narrative, and thus facilitate my reading of *Good Morning, Midnight* through them.

3.5 The intratextual approach

When Herman replaces the Cartesian internal/external dichotomy with a scalar model ranging from a tight to a weak coupling between agent and environment one consequence is that the absolute divide between external world and internal mind is torn down. There is no complete "sealing-off from the world" that lies implicit in Cartesian dualism. Regarding the purported narrative distance through detectable references to other – external – texts in both the narrow and broad meaning, such a stance can ultimately only be maintained by a notion of the mind as sealed off and unchanging. However, if the mind is in fact not this isolated unit, but rather a dynamic and reciprocal entity that, as Herman says, both shapes and becomes shaped by social and material contexts, then identifiable references to other literary works – from *this* perspective – does *not* constitute narrative distance, instead they are part of a wider context in which an inherent perceiving subject always finds itself in a reciprocal relationship with whatever social and physical situation applies; in other words all the factors in life that in any way can affect you. Palmer discusses how intertextual approaches to narrative, although

very useful, have been given too much attention compared to what he calls *intratextual* approaches¹⁰⁰, focusing on "how the cues included in a given text prompt readers to ascribe to characters reasons for acting, rather than on how that text draws on (or relates to) wider repertoires of mind-indicating cues,"¹⁰¹ as Herman phrases it. Palmer concedes that an absolute distinction between the two is an oversimplification. One will almost always make use of both approaches in combination, but he still maintains that the division of the two is valid and useful for investigating reasons for characters' mindstates within storyworlds.

Like Herman and myself, Palmer is interested in investigating narrative representations of mind with the premise that fictional and actual minds are analogous, not in representation but in our access to them, so he too applies cognitive science and philosophy as "parallel discourses [that in effect functions as] intertextual models"¹⁰² to inform his reading of narratives. In the case of *Good Morning, Midnight's* narrative perspective we are firmly grounded in Sasha's mind, and if we take this mind seriously nothing in the text can disturb that perspective. If Sasha is found to directly quote or refer to other literary texts Maurel sees it as disruption of Sasha's own voice, that she, as a female outsider has so little leeway in society that she must rely on other people's discourse to express herself. "Because of this tendency to quote all the time, one is tempted to see her text as sheer repetition of other texts, this mimicry [reflects] her inability to coin her own words within masculine discourse."¹⁰³ If we on the other hand treat Sasha's mind with the utmost seriousness as a real mind we necessarily have to see those references as intrinsic parts of Sasha's *self* rather than some invasion by outside voices. Human beings are fundamentally intertextual beings in the sense that all words and concepts we employ have been obtained from someone other than ourselves. This is commented on in a wide variety of theories, and Butte also discusses this in his account of Merleau-Ponty's theory of intersubjectivity by drawing on Bakhtin: "we always (and only) find words in the mouths of others, from whom we appropriate them for our own purposes, but without cleansing them of all traces of their source."¹⁰⁴ Taking Sasha at face value as a real human being then, the traceable intertextual elements in the narrative instead provides information about her mind rather than taking us momentarily *outside* that mind. It is here worth noting exactly how Cohn phrased the "realm" of impossibly intimate knowledge of another mind that literature gives us access to via the Exceptionality Thesis: it is "another,

¹⁰⁰ Palmer, 41-43

¹⁰¹ Herman, (2012) 125

¹⁰² Palmer, 42

¹⁰³ Maurel, 115

¹⁰⁴ Butte, 4

non-real reality,"(my italics.) By equating fictional and actual minds the intertextual aspect first and foremost figures as a second-degree discourse outside of the primary one, informing the ways in which the evidence available within the narrative is interpreted, but not allowing any apparent disruptions of voice to constitute a removal from the perceiving and narrating consciousness; as far as FPPT narration goes.

Following this reasoning the instances of intertextuality Maurel points to must instead be examined intratextually for what information they can reveal about Sasha. Drawing on the scientific knowledge we have today of the human mind I argue that the apparent deviations from Sasha's voice through the implementation of "external" *texts* – literary and other – must instead be considered the expression of an inherent "literary-mindedness" in Sasha. It is not an invasion of Sasha's isolated and continuous self by external voices but Sasha's dynamic self that extends out in a reciprocal meeting with her environment; in this case the literature she has read through her life, from which she has assimilated not only direct quotes from books, but also ways of thinking, for instance. Can we find other evidence for such an assumption in the narrative? We have already seen some of it: in the quote exemplifying direct thought we have Sasha thinking: : "Last night and today – *it makes a pretty good sentence*,"(my italics.) This shows that Sasha is concerned with language and sentence structure, suggesting a literary interest. So does the phrase "every word has chains around it's ankles." There is mention of Sasha and her former lover attending the funeral of a writer, though at his insistence rather than hers. Never the less the fact that they go points to an interest in literature, an assumption that is fortified by Sasha herself quoting literature: "'At first I was afraid they would let the gates bang on my hindquarters, and I used to be nervous of unknown people and places.' Quotation from *The Autobiography of a Mare* – one of my favourite books."¹⁰⁵ There are several such allusions to literature and "literary-mindedness" and I see the instances of written style discussed above as part of that. The fact that in the face of "threats" she will often go into the kind of interior monologue form exemplified above could arguably be taken into account for the claim that she mimics a literary form and thereby arises a narrative distance to her as narrator. However such a conclusion necessitates a pre-established boundary that, for example, defines any recognizable reference to another literary text, or identifiable quotation of someone or something external to the consciousness the narrative discourse is postulated as interior to, as irreconcilable with the narrating subject; Sasha. The insincerity inherent in those monologues through the "other-directedness" *could*

¹⁰⁵ GMM, 37

also be considered distancing because of the ambiguity they create concerning what is true, drawing the discourse towards literary fiction rather than actual – simultaneously-narrated – experience, but such a claim can be countered by implementing the known plasticity of our minds into the equation. Like before, it is not an invasion from the outside, but Sasha's mind, which is always in a reciprocal relationship with her environment, has taken up in her that particular form of rhetoric, and now employs it privately in her own thought-patterns as a way of making sense of and dealing with the world. If it is not by conscious intention that Sasha goes into those monologues, it is neither involuntary nor unconscious. In a scene where Rene the gigolo has called Sasha stupid we do not get access to the monologue like in the above examples but we are informed that it takes place by way of indirect thought: "Do I? I wonder. ... Oh well, stupid. ... An extremely funny monologue is going on in my head – or it seems to me extremely funny."¹⁰⁶ Sasha is well aware of her tendency to resort to interior monologues occasionally. I will quickly point out that this quote brings with it another instance of insincerity that destabilizes the narrative as the postulated narrative perspective would have the reader fully inside Sasha's subjective experience, while here we are suddenly excluded from the monologue; we are merely told it has taken place. This, incidentally, *does seem to* constitute a form of narrative distance. The heavy presence of "insincerity" and paradox in the narrative has important implications for my account of the narrative representation in this novel as the representation of a post-Cartesian mind through written narrative "emulation" of the fickle workings of actual minds.

As we have seen, distance through intertextuality such as Maurel accounts for it cannot work in my intratextual reading of the novel and this is due to the altered premise for what constitutes a mind, fictional or not; which is what validates the intratextual approach to begin with. The instances of discourse in the novel that have a distinct written style such as the description of the hotel room, with its superfluous information, make it seem inauthentic with respect to the narrative perspective and can thus be redeemed by my claim that Sasha has a "literary mind"; she thinks as if she is writing because that is part of her personality or *self*. At other times she thinks much more verbally and chaotic, in line with the established incoherent nature of *real minds*. The inauthenticity of the former kind of narration can be "justified" as a way of structuring thoughts in the larger picture of the type of self-narration I have accounted for; a way of enacting the kind of "narrowing-in" from multifarious mental phenomena into an established self. The "other-directedness" of some of her direct thought

¹⁰⁶ GMM, 135

can also be viewed in this way. The counter argument being that it is a form of learned rhetoric she employs; it is simply how she talks and thinks due to the specific influences that has played an important part in the shaping of her *self*. It is not a sign of distance, rather it is part of the *intratextual* play that contributes to the narration of her "I-originary". The intertextuality is still as clearly present, the fallacy lies in purporting that it constitutes an exterior or alien influence that suppresses and dilutes a pure, whole Cartesian mind that – such as it is – has any kind of existence without an intertextual frame of reference from which to construct and maintain itself.

The techniques Rhys employs in *Good Morning, Midnight* are reconcilable with the altered premises by which Herman discusses modernist techniques. "Through these techniques, modernists put characters' mental states and dispositions into circulation with the possibilities for action and interaction that, from a postcognitivist perspective, help constitute the mind in the first place."¹⁰⁷ A very simple example would be the way you can catch yourself using a phrase from a book or a film that made an impression on you: when you use that phrase yourself it is no longer a complete and external size that you simply mechanistically repeat. It will by then be assimilated to your *self* connoting meaning that is significant to *you*, *not* the source of the phrase, although it will likely function as a merger between the meaning from the original source and the one you assign it. The evidence suggests that much rather than sitting idle and uninterrupted in our "skull-compartments", our minds are not only inconsistent but constantly at play with all the sensory "data" within our perception's reach, making a mind as a continuous static size impossible to narrow down in its totality (recall the potentially astronomical number of neural connections that a human brain can manage).

This *relatively* new understanding of the human mind that accentuates the contextual reliance of consciousness coincides with Herman's reformulation of the modernist project of "foregrounding [...] the nature and scope of the experiences falling within the domain of the mental,"¹⁰⁸ *from* a movement inward *to* the fluidity of experience in an open and actively engaging mind.

Arguably, instead of moving inward, or shifting their focus from public environments for action to a private, interior domain of cognition and contemplation, modernist writers pointed to the inseparability of perceiving and thinking from acting and interacting. What modernist narratives suggest, on this reading, is that mental states have the character they do because of

¹⁰⁷ Herman, (2011) 258

¹⁰⁸ Herman, (2011) 243

the world in which they arise, as a way of responding to possibilities (and exigencies) for acting afforded by that world.¹⁰⁹

A mind or a self then, as an autonomous and constant unit, is an illusion; a misconception derived from faulty premises that has become lodged in our collective vocabulary, in part probably due to its intuitive appeal. It is instead shown to be subject to continuous change via its own internal processes in the brain, as well as the influence the external world has on those processes. Yet by absolutely denying any and all "other-originated" voices' existence within a certain subjectivity we aim too high, do a 360 degree spin and fall back down into the isolated artificially constructed Cartesian mind. It is just harder to identify such voices as separate from our selves than what might intuitively be assumed. It is neither the ambition of this thesis to advocate some sort of holistic new-age "we-are-all-one" world view, merely to give some attention to the fact that the more we learn about the human mind, the harder it becomes to clearly delineate it from its "extramental" context, the more we learn about the human brain the harder it becomes to account for the mind as a complete and continuous unit¹¹⁰, and the narrated material and social circumstances can instead be read as constituents in the (grand) self-narrative; in other words how those constituents contribute to our experience and understanding of the narrating subject.

Another form of quoting with ambiguous origins in the novel that illustrates this is the insertion of direct quotes in parenthesis that have a distinct character of forcing themselves in on the narrative. These quotes appear to have two main functions. The first one is as Sasha's "inner" voice talking to herself, for instance commenting in some way on the present situation: "'A pity,' he says, indifferently, 'a pity. It would have been so nice. You wouldn't have been disappointed in me.' (But supposing you were disappointed in me.)"¹¹¹ My objection to Maurel's account of intertextuality and its consequences in *Good Morning, Midnight* relies on the claim that the reader is placed fully in the mind of Sasha and that verifiable intertexts therefore cannot constitute narrative distance but must instead be regarded as part of the total sum of Sasha's mind as *intratextual* cues for the reader to employ in gaining "non-exceptional" access to her subjective experience. If we fully accept the narrative discourse as "exceptional" access into her subjective perspective; as narrative representation of the actual and hidden "movements" of her cognition, the quote with the bracketed sentence

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 253

¹¹⁰ V. S. Ramachandran discusses several cases he has researched where patients due to accidents or disease have suffered damage to particular parts of the brain that has resulted in fundamental alterations in their personalities according to loved ones: Ramachandran (2003)

¹¹¹ GMM, 134

I take as expressing a sudden imposition of spontaneous thought collapses on itself by way of having already – by definition – assigned the preceding speech to her mental domain. Not actual vocal speech uttered by Rene, but a Cartesian mind's indirect experience of it through an internally *constructed* representation of it. At this point the interjection "(But supposing you were disappointed in me,)" becomes meaningless as we are already *in* Sasha's mind, constituting something like "thought within thought", which by its own logical fallacy falls apart. The narrative perspective is "from within" Sasha but by discarding the Cartesian inner/outer dichotomy in favor of Herman's scalar model such delineations of what falls within and without the mind become vague. It is still formally inauthentic, provided one expects a consistent narrative, which one usually would, but the FPPT narration cannot be held to such expectations if it is to be successful in converging with prevalent scientific accounts of the mind.

I mentioned two functions for the interjections, the first functioning on behalf of Sasha, whereas the second kind will appear on behalf of another person. "...Mrs Jansen? I've just thought of a story. You can take it down in shorthand, can't you?' 'No, I'm afraid I can't.' (Cheated! For what I'm paying she ought to know shorthand.)"¹¹² The imposing of these bracketed quotes on the text gives them the feel of a sudden association, inclination, idea or memory suddenly appearing in Sasha's consciousness, like the way something can just "pop into your head". Sometimes they express Sasha's feelings regarding a situation, sometimes they appear to be a direct quote of a sentence she remembers from a certain situation, or, in the latter example here, she seems to imagine – to narrate – other people's thoughts, always expecting some kind of judgment or negative reaction towards herself. This kind of "Projection" of other people's reaction to her takes on another form – and another form of distancing that Maurel points to – in Sasha's social encounters. When she meets "the Russians" the whole scene is paraphrased rather than quoted. Maurel writes that "it is as if Sasha were an eye-witness to the conversation rather than a participant in it."¹¹³ This kind of distancing from the "here-and-now" in social settings occurs often in the novel as if Sasha "steps out" and observes at a safe distance, often anticipating conversations ahead of themselves as a way of protecting herself. In a non-literal sense this could be deemed as temporal distance – slightly – into the future. From this point of view the former bracketed sentence "(but supposing you were disappointed in me,)" can also be viewed as demonstrating

¹¹² GMM, 139

¹¹³ Maurel, 112

Sasha's concern for the immediate future, only expressed in the first-person this time. Although "the act" has not taken place yet she mentally reaches into the immediate future – albeit an unreal future grounded in imaginary rather than observable phenomena – and concludes that the risk of exposing herself is too great to chance it. This is my claim and is not stated directly in the narrative but as before I find it implied through an intratextual reading where the whole of the narrative prompts me to place this self-referential sentence in the same category as the latter one, with a purely formal difference of ascription. However one accounts for it this device – according to Maurel – it causes a split in the speaking subject and undermines the relative feeling of immediacy. It "comes as a surprise within the framework of dialogue" because the narrative perspective leads one to expect a homogenous text.

3.6 Memories

This expectation is broken through the reintroduction of distance between narrating “I” and narrated “I” created by the frequent, and sometimes very long, retrospective sections of the novel. For example the entirety of part three of the novel is retrospective save the last one and a half pages where we are returned to the narration-present. “These long, embedded sequences of retrospective narrating come to disrupt the postulated unity of the narrative on the one hand and of the narrating instance on the other.”¹¹⁴ The narrative is further disrupted by the fact that the retrospective passages often fluctuate between the past and present tense:

The lavatory at the station – that was the next time I cried. I had just been sick. I was so afraid I might be going to have a baby. ...

Although I have been so sick, I don't feel any better. I lean up against the wall, icy cold and sweating. Someone tries the door, and I pull myself together, stop crying and powder my face.¹¹⁵

This is another way in which Sasha's *voice* (Herman would perhaps call it *mindstyle*) is disrupted. Cohn proposes that this kind of running-together of past and present tense can suggest a perpetuation of a character's feelings and ideas on a certain issue from the narrated past to the present of narration; merging the past and present selves into a “gnomic present tense of the reflections”.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ *ibid*, 105

¹¹⁵ GMM 101

¹¹⁶ Cohn, 165

This view fits well with the previously quoted scene after Enno has got some money from Alfred: "No, don't ask. I don't want to know. Tell me later on, tell me tomorrow. Let me be happy just for now." This appears as *direct thought* in the retrospective Part Three of the novel but the narration is in *present* tense. A possible way of looking at this from Cohn's perspective is to view the four last sentences as narrative in the form of direct thought (self quoted monologue): the operation of integrating narration into direct thought mode, creating "the language peculiar to an autonomous monologue, the genre in which all events are translated into the interior language of a perceiving consciousness."¹¹⁷ As an alternative to, for instance, "I was curious about how much money he'd gotten from Alfred, but I was afraid to ask him because the answer might disappoint me." However the reader's knowledge of the setting of this scene in past tense "forces us to understand it as a stylistic transposition in which events that are known to be past are merely told *as if* they were present." But nothing in this quote or any of the other retrospective passages narrated in present tense betrays the fact that this is all remembered by Sasha. Her stopping herself from asking how much money Enno has got out of fear for having her momentary happiness ruined tells us that she is not a distanced narrator of her past from a privileged position of hindsight, in which case she would know very well how much or how little money Alfred gave Enno, rendering her concern for the matter redundant; she is fully immersed in the memory. The "smearing" of tenses in the novel's retrospective passages can thus be understood, not as a "gimmick" of narrating "as if they were present" used by the narrator but as the narrator's actual experience of a memory that becomes so vivid that she relives it. The fact that the retrospection is narrated both in past and present tense is to me an expression of the varying degree of intensity in Sasha's experience of these memories. When narration is in the past tense she narrates from a certain emotional distance suggesting less intensity – or a weaker coupling – in her experience of the memory. In her memory of giving birth the tense fluctuates back and forth. Here in the memory, after having given birth, the narration is in past tense: "Afterwards I couldn't sleep. I would sleep for an hour or two, and then wake up and think about money, money, money for my son ..." the strong emotions she experienced at the time the event took place takes a hold of her, pulling her deeper into the memory until she is completely immersed in it, re-living it: "Money, money for my son, my beautiful son. ... I can't sleep. My breasts dry up, my mouth is dry. I can't sleep. Money, money. ..." ¹¹⁸ The narration shifts to present tense.

¹¹⁷ Cohn, 203

¹¹⁸ GMM, 50

In addition to the fact that the retrospective passages fluctuate between past and present tense narration, they are presented a-chronologically through the novel. Cohn writes that when it comes to retrospection in monologues – of any kind – adherence to chronology

counteracts the illusion of an unrolling thought process [...] As long as a narrator writes or speaks, he fashions a language based on communication: he presents, explains, links cause and effect – and thereby inevitably falls back on temporal order. The private associations that determine mnemonic thought-sequences only prevail in first-person forms when the fiction of written or oral communication gives way to the fiction of self-communion, i.e., when narrative chronology and narrative presentation are simultaneously abandoned.¹¹⁹

The retrospection in *Good Morning, Midnight* comes and goes sporadically and with no apparent chronological order between them. The abandonment of "natural" narrative presentation through the simultaneous narration in the novel along with the "de-chronologization" of the retrospective passages both underscore the narrative technique's foregrounding of "fictional-worlds-as-experienced", of actual, simultaneous experience channeled directly into silent self-communion without temporal distance that allows the narrator to structure her thoughts into a more orderly narrative style. In the story present this is natural in an FPPT narrative but the absence of any structuring of past memories as well as the shifts into present tense narration "inside" those memories could arguably point to the involuntary character of these "flashes of memory". Is there any intratextual evidence to support this assumption?

When Sasha agrees to have Delmar, "the Russian", take her to see the painter Serge they are walking through a certain area "to the music of L'Arlésienne." Suddenly we are transported from the present scene into a memory that goes on for several pages, turning progressively unpleasant and ending with the depressing conclusion that "When you are dead to the world, the world often rescues you, if only to make a figure of fun out of you." The next paragraph begins: "Walking to the music of L'Arlésienne. ... I feel for the pockets of the check coat, and I am surprised when I touch the fur coat of the one I am wearing."¹²⁰ The way this retrospective passage is framed by "the music of L'Arlésienne" and Sasha's surprise at suddenly finding herself back in the present underlines the involuntary nature of the flashback she just experienced and her surprise along with the narration of the memory turning from past to present tense accentuates the intensity and vividness with which Sasha experiences it. At one point she warns herself: "My film-mind. ... (For God's sake watch out for your film-

¹¹⁹ Ibid, 182-183

¹²⁰ This retrospective begins at page 72 and ends on page 76.

mind. ...)"¹²¹ underscoring – again – the automatism with which the mind sometimes behaves. The sudden lapses into memory, the sudden injection of a seemingly dislocated quote, the drifting off from a conversation into fantasy: these are all compatible with the known workings of the human mind.¹²² The involuntary drifting off from the “here-and-now” of our consciousnesses into both related and unrelated matters are completely compatible with one single mind and does not have to signify an “outside presence” in a closed unit of experience. The automatism with which our minds operate in the interplay with changing contexts that Herman speaks of, could be said to be expressed through the repetition of the image of a “gramophone record” churning on in Sasha’s head: "The gramophone record is going strong in my head: 'Here this happened, here that happened. ...'"¹²³

To see the intratextual significance of the music which transports Sasha into a memory the *scientific* knowledge of the "workings of the human mind" is not a prerequisite. The everyday-heuristics Herman discusses with the denotation "folk psychology"¹²⁴ is more or less a "common-sense-approach" to reasoning about other people's mindstates. The ability of sensory perceptions – such as music (sound), smell, taste and so on – to trigger memories is well known to most. We can all intentionally recall things – we can at least try – but other times memories force themselves in. In the case of bad memories that you would prefer not to re-live you will sometimes find yourself unable to abort the stream of memories once it has begun, but rather be carried along automatically. Memories, in *Good Morning, Midnight*, appear suddenly and without any warning or signs of intention on Sasha's part. Instead they are consequently assignable to experiences or perceptions as triggers; again, not as identifiable forewarnings of memories, but after the fact of the memory one can go back and find intratextual causal connections; or in a few cases the "trigger" will be made clear only after the memory. The very first instance of retrospection appears already on the first page: Sasha is musing on the importance of taking care when choosing "The place to have my drink in after dinner. ... Wait, I must be careful about that. These things are very important."¹²⁵ This pulls her into a memory of the previous night when she was out getting drunk and began crying in front of someone else which embarrassed her greatly. The most obvious reason for the importance Sasha ties to the choice of bar is to avoid going back to places where she feels

¹²¹ GMM, 147

¹²² Disalvo, David *What Makes Your Brain Happy and Why You Should Do the Opposite* (New York: Prometheus Books, 2011) 69-73

¹²³ GMM, 15

¹²⁴ Herman, (2011) 8

¹²⁵ GMM, 9

she has made a fool out of herself. In this case the memory is not caused by a sudden sight or sound that reminds her of something particular in her past but is instead revealed to be a concern of hers bordering well on obsession, as is later confirmed by the recurrence of it through the novel. The issue is so fundamentally important to her that for the most part she cannot even contemplate going into a bar without first searching her memories to make sure it is a place she – feels she – can show herself. Arguably this does not constitute the invasion of involuntary memory, however, the obsession with it does appear involuntary through the narrative representation that consequently relates the inner conflict associated with the objectively mundane act of going into a bar for a drink whenever the thought arises in Sasha; or someone else makes the suggestion. Because it has an air of compulsion rather than control I see it as affirming rather than contradicting the thematization of memory and its dependency on "triggers" that suggests its involuntary character. Her obsession with this correlates with accounts of consciousness as supervenient on a more primal and unconscious system (system 1), giving it the character of automatism or unintentionality within her consciousness, destabilizing any assumption that we can know ourselves, our own selves, completely; in fact when prompted most people will likely admit that they cannot account for the motivations for or intentions of all of their actions. Palmer asks rhetorically if we do not surely know directly and immediately our mental states. "...we are often wrong about the nature of our mental functioning. Errors of very different sorts occur – from hallucinations right through to inabilities to understand our true motivations," he writes, and points to the fact that "unconscious motivation" has become a part of our "everyday commonsense" view of the mind¹²⁶ (much thanks to Freud); the everyday or folk-psychological heuristics Herman highlights in his work as a counterargument against the Exceptionality Thesis.

Another memory she has is of her last job – and here the gramophone record in her head is explicitly mentioned¹²⁷ – as she walks the street she used to work off of. The three memories I have mentioned so far can all be ascribed to "triggers" then, rather than intentional recall on Sasha's part; first the music, then the arguably involuntary thinking of one thing leading to another and finally the "material surroundings", mostly a visual trigger, starts the "gramophone record" in her head. Thus the temporal variations in the narrative are redeemed as authentic for (internal/mental)FPPT narration – although not for other kinds – because

¹²⁶ Palmer, 125

¹²⁷ GMM, 15

they are always attributable to something that through her perception triggers an immersive memory that is experienced rather than recalled, negating any real distance from Sasha.

By this reasoning, the inconsistent temporality in the novel can be upheld to thematize memory and perception and the interdependent relationship between the two. Story-wise the memories does provide some useful information for interpretation. There are gleams of light in the memories, such as the event prior to Sasha stopping herself from asking how much money Enno has got from Alfred, quoted above, where they go out to eat and drink without regard for how much or how little money they actually have: "I've never been so happy in my life. I'm alive, eating ravioli and drinking wine. I've escaped. A door has opened and let me out into the sun."¹²⁸ However it turns out to be but a brief moment of happiness before things turn dark again. Their relationship turns progressively worse and ends with Enno leaving for good, not to mention the death of their child. In fact the memories are always negatively laden: She remembers making a fool of herself in bars or the death of her child and the consequent end of her relationship, which was not all that good to begin with; she remembers how she got fired and the emotional pain that came with it, unpleasant episodes where she has experienced other people as hostile or at least passive-aggressive. During one of many bar visits Sasha overhears "a party of three" presumably talking about her: "This is as I thought and worse than I thought. ... A mad old Englishwoman, wandering around Montparnasse. ' A Paris il y a des Anglaises, oah, yes, oah, yes, Aussi plat's comm' des punaises, Oah, yes, oah, yes. ...' This is indeed worse than I thought." The discussion seems to be about her presence there in France, negatively connoted by the word "punaises" (which means "bugs.") This *does* raise the question of her presence in Paris for the reader and from the narrative's assumed position as Sasha's experience it raises the issue in her mind, transporting her into another memory both by the question of her being in Paris, and by the phrase "This is indeed worse than I thought," which echoes an event that lead up to her current situation: "*This is indeed worse than I thought.* That's what I was told when I came back to London that famous winter five years ago. 'Why didn't you drown yourself,' the old devil said, 'in the Seine?'"¹²⁹ The italics in this quote are Rhys', formally accentuating the memory-invoking effect of the phrase interdependently with the questioning of the "mad old Englishwoman's" presence in Paris.

It is never explained who "the old devil" is but it is made clear that it is family and apart from the rather intuitive assumption that it is probably her father – "the old man", "the

¹²⁸ GMM, 104

¹²⁹ GMM, 36

old devil" – there are intratextual indications of that assumption as well: Early on in the novel Sasha has a dream, and as a brief digression it is interesting to note the narrative representation of that dream; not as remembered the next day when she is awake again: "last night I had a dream about...", but as real-time experience: "I take some more luminal, put out the lights and sleep at once. I am in a passage of a tube station in London. Many people are in front of me; many people are behind me..."¹³⁰ The transition is immediate and unaccounted for in the narrative. The flow of experience is uninterrupted, making it "difficult" upon the first reading because of the lack of information. This is an example of when the narrative converges the most with actual private experience, where there is no need to state that it is a dream because she is not telling anybody about the dream she had, she *is having* the dream. But returning to the memory, in the dream a man begins talking to her:

'I am your father,' he says. 'remember that I am your father.' But blood is streaming from a wound in his forehead. 'Murder,' he shouts, 'murder, murder.' Helplessly I watch the blood streaming. At last my voice tears itself loose from my chest. I too shout: 'Murder, murder, help, help,' and the sound fills the room. I wake up. ...¹³¹

Like so many things in the novel the history with her father – and the rest of her family – remains unresolved. This dream could be taken literally as meaning that Sasha has killed her own father but I do not necessarily think that is the case. What this dream-narration tells us together with the memory from London is that Sasha's relationship with her family is bad to put it mildly. Although no specific episodes are mentioned explicitly, there are intratextual insinuations through the dream that, if not murder, suggests ugly events in the family's past, perhaps due to Sasha's drinking, or perhaps her drinking is a result of her past, we are never told. The fact that the unidentified family member I presume to be the father asks the malevolent question of why she did not just drown herself as well indicates a more "violent" – though not necessarily physically violent – past than Sasha will admit to in the narrative

The memories in *Good Morning, Midnight* are all unpleasant as I have already pointed out. The memory of her deceased child, for instance, hardly needs further commentary as to its negative character and consequent, detrimental effect on Sasha. The pervasive role of the memories in the novel does create a background or context for the present misery she finds herself in but they also perform a narrative function which emphasizes the posited "experientiality" of the narrative. Palmer investigates "how [...] actions, event-lines and so on

¹³⁰ GMM, 12
¹³¹ GMM, 13

can be understood [...] in terms of the experientiality of the characters involved in those actions and events."¹³² The special case of FPPT narration necessitates a reading of *all* events, and discourse that initially appears to be pure narratorial report, not as objective events, but as subjective experience of those events, with all the causal implications that has on the perceiving consciousness. Apply this to the "Hermanian" constellation of subject (the agent) and object (the context – in the widest sense – that the agent finds herself in) as interdependent on each other from the perspective of the subject – how perception both shapes and is shaped by material and social surroundings, and so on – and the narrative discourse provides us with intratextual cause-and-effect that converges the thematization of memory with a rather widely commented on theme: the room(s), and consequently Sasha's delimiting of space.

3.7 Perception and the physical

The novel begins and ends with the hotel room. It is a recurring setting in the story and a recurring subject in the narration. The obsession about bars in Sasha's self-narration commented on above extends to all space. Gardiner is one theorist who has examined the function of the room(s) in the novel. The first paragraphs of the novel are both emphasized as destabilizing to the narrative instance, again an example of argued distance in the narrative discourse. I have already pointed out the disruptive function of the direct quote attributed to the room which begins the novel: "Quite like old times,' the room says." Gardiner writes that "We do not know whom the room addresses. We are eavesdropping in a vacant space to a speech that may or may not be intended directly out of the text to us."¹³³ Although I agree that the initiating quote in the novel is highly ambiguous and relativizes the narrative through the impossibility of what has just been stated as having happened, my perspective in this matter, via Palmer, is that what the narrator reports to the reader is not the objective event of the room talking, but the subjective experience of it happening. Further, within the "realm of subjective experience" the "juxtaposition of imagination and observation" is so significant that although it could be read as actual experience on Sasha's part, with the alcohol and luminal in mind that could possibly cause her to hallucinate, I read it as Sasha's "inner" discourse in a reflecting or musing manner as she contemplates the room and her relationship with the room and so many

¹³² Palmer, 32

¹³³ Gardiner, 4

others like it, which leads me to a different view of the rooms in the novel than Gardiner, who accounts for them as denoting feminist concerns of gender issues:

The room is polarized by gender and by sexual tension. Unlike the room Goldilocks found, papa bear's bed is not the biggest. Here the woman's bed is bigger, presumably so that the man can come to her, collapsing the distance between them. In the public world, we will see repeatedly in the novel, almost all space is male space; women enter at risk and are expelled by male choice.¹³⁴

As I have already mentioned I do not disagree with this kind of reading; there are good reasons why feminist criticism is so prevalent regarding all of Rhys' works. But through the focal point of the mental and mental functioning in subjective experience the male/female friction becomes secondary to the movements of the mind; movements that can be traced through intratextual examinations of the whole of the narrative. A two-way perspective that both signifies the mind as an autonomous size and its inescapable interdependence on its experiential environment which immediately reveals the concept of *completely* autonomous minds as constructed and false.

Traumatized by past events she has entered into the ritual-like way of life described in my brief summary of the story – the constellation of hotel rooms and bars, and the ladies lavatories – as a way of protecting herself, and one way she does so is by, to the best of her ability, avoiding places that can trigger painful memories. A sight, sound or smell for instance is all it takes to bring on a memory associated with that sensory impression. By narrowing her “material and social environments” the way she does, she limits the possible interplay that gives rise to conscious experience. The interchangeable rooms, as “boxed-off” units from the world at large appear all through the novel as a place to seek refuge from the world: “Saved, rescued and with my place to hide in – what more did I want? I crept in and hid. The lid of the coffin shut down with a bang.”¹³⁵ Images of darkness and drowning – a death-like calm – are repeated through the novel; a calmness she seeks that stands in stark contrast to the turmoil of her conscious experience that is shown through the fragmented and fluctuating narrative. After having visited the painter she has become uplifted, and, against her “better judgment” agrees to meet him the next day, only to get stood up. The disappointment she seeks to avoid seeps in and she reminds herself that this is a consequence of breaking her own resolve quoted earlier.¹³⁶ “That’s what you get for being exalted,”¹³⁷ “I have no pride – no

¹³⁴ Ibid, 4

¹³⁵ GMM, 37

¹³⁶ GMM, 14

pride, no name, no face, no country. I don't belong anywhere,"¹³⁸ Sasha laments while remembering the time she tried drinking herself to death, making it unclear whether this is being uttered or thought by her at the time, or whether it is being thought in the story time present. Juxtaposed against the image of her walking home drunk, singing loudly in the streets "You don't like me, but I don't like you either" it becomes unclear whether the above quoted sentence is an expression of Sasha's self-pity, or whether it too is like a song; a chant reminding her of how and what she must be in order to protect herself from harm. The rooms: the hotel room, the bar, the ladies lavatory; all small, confined places, and the only space Sasha has left, become more than physical spaces. They are an integral part of Sasha by way of her attempt to control self-narration in the wider sense, to delimit her *self* within the confines of the few spaces she still has some degree of control over, thus potentially cleansing herself – her *self* – of the parts of herself that she wishes to escape or erase.

The importance of controlling her surroundings in order to limit her own perception as a way of avoiding painful memories comes to the foreground several places in the narrative. The final short paragraph of the second part of the novel, leading to part three which is almost entirely retrospective, casts light on the reason why she has limited her life to these few selected spaces: "This damned room – it's saturated with the past. . . ."¹³⁹ She is aware of how perception can trigger memories, and her past is so full of painful memories that she would rather avoid any and all places that she views as likely to remind her of anything she would rather forget. Because of this she does not only limit her surroundings to the rooms listed above, but she also puts great effort into the act itself, both because it is so important to her, and because busying herself in that way also keeps her mind occupied. As long as she can manage that she is less likely to wander into places she does want it go; both physically and psychologically. "The thing is to have a programme, not to leave anything to chance – no gaps. No trailing around aimlessly with cheap gramophone records starting up in your head, no 'Here this happened, here that happened'."¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ GMM, 84

¹³⁸ GMM 38

¹³⁹ GMM, 91

¹⁴⁰ GMM, 14

3.8 The duality of perception

So far I have outlined the way in which Sasha's perception of her surroundings can function in regards to memories. But my account of this "mechanism" as it stands now still more or less maintains Sasha's mind as a continuous entity that becomes affected by external stimuli. However the relationship between environment and perception is decidedly not one-sided. Herman's main point is how minds "at once *shape*, and *are shaped* by larger experiential environments." The perceiving consciousness is not simply receiving objective information through sensory and intellectual perception, she is also engaging in a *shaping of* the environment through her perception, which is also accentuated in the narrative. It is not an intentional shaping of her perception, it happens subconsciously depending on her current mindstate, and an intratextual investigation once again reveals causal connections to support my claim, as well as revealing cases of "altered" perception: "They step forward, the waiting houses, to frown and crush. No hospitable doors, no lit windows, just frowning darkness. Frowning and leering and sneering, the houses, one after another. Tall cubes of darkness, with two lighted eyes at the top to sneer. *And they know who to frown at,*" (my italics.)¹⁴¹ This passage can be contrasted by another description Sasha gives: "The street outside is narrow, cobble-stoned, going sharply uphill and ending in a flight of steps. What they call an impasse."¹⁴² The material world, calm and dead in the latter quote, has suddenly come to life with vicious antagonism aimed directly at Sasha, because "they know who to frown at". This dramatic experience takes place after she has re-lived the memory of how she was fired from her last job after being scolded by the manager, a long lasting and unpleasant episode that takes a large toll on Sasha. The houses have no consciousness of their own that allows them to single out Sasha. Rather, what is narrated here is the "moment-by-moment construction of worlds-as-experienced"; in this case her "social environment" has affected her mindstate which in turn is "coloring" her experience of the material environment; which are not really two separate units but always interdependent on one another.

The quoted description of the frowning houses is yet another example of a destabilization of the narration through the inauthentic character of reported events but as has been underscored already the events in this novel are never objective, but presented as being narrated through the experiencing subject Sasha. Like the other examples that have been dealt with in this thesis we can once again turn to the text and trace the intratextual causality which

¹⁴¹ GMM, 28

¹⁴² GMM, 9

can explain the experience. The objective description of the street I chose to contrast the "frowning house" with appears with the objective description of the hotel room I used to exemplify "written style" with implicit "other-directedness". I justified the contradiction between the narrative discourse in that paragraph and the posited, subjective, silent self-communion in the narrative as a whole by claiming that the superfluous information contained therein was not actually directed at someone else but was in fact an indication of Sasha's mind or self. Being concerned with literature and its preoccupations causes her to, sporadically, express herself more artificially in her interior monologue. Gardiner seems to advocate the same kind of narrative distance as Maurel when she ascertains that "a traditional third person narrative voice explains the room with the simplicity of a fairy tale."¹⁴³ It is "a third-person narrative voice" and *not* Sasha who is speaking here. The question of voice in this paragraph can be reconciled with my account of the way perception both is "shaped" by "external" factors and in turn shapes those factors through the very act of perceiving them; bringing the two "sides" together in a kind of post-Cartesian "middle ground." Accepting my argument that Sasha delimits her space as a way to limit her perception, because of the memory-invoking potential in the meeting of the two, the seemingly "third person narrative voice" can be an expression of the fact that Sasha at the moment of the (simultaneous) narration is in her room, which is her safe haven from "the wolves" outside; "the wolves" denoting first and foremost other people, her "social context," but also the material environments that can trigger the kind of involuntary memories discussed above. What I mean by my claim that the third-person-like narration has to do with Sasha being in her safe haven can be illustrated by comparing the narration from the hotel room with narration elsewhere in the novel where she is out of her comfort zone; exposed, away from the spaces she has indicated as "safe." In the memory of her last job the manager calls her up to his office where the owner of the entire branch, Mr Blank, is visiting (note that the narration here is in the present tense, which I take to indicate emotional intensity and immersion into the memory; the two features mutually reinforcing each other.) "I at once make up my mind that he wants to find out if I can speak German. All the little German I know flies out of my head. Jesus, help me! Ja, ja, nein, nein, was kostet es, Wien ist eine sehr schöne Stadt.." It turns into an absurd flow of German words that seize to make sense before she abandons language all together and ends in meaningless sounds often used for scales in singing lessons: "aus meinen

¹⁴³ Gardiner, 4

grossen Schmerzen homo hominid oh re mi fah soh la ti doh. ..."¹⁴⁴ The narration becomes completely chaotic to the point that meaning itself becomes dissolved, in stark contrast to the description of the room that the novel begins with. The calm and coldly objective narration is therefore arguably connected with the calm mindstate she is in when she is in her own space, her hotel room; perhaps further calmed by engaging herself in planning out her day which allows her to focus on something relatively safe.

The frowning houses appear for her when she is out walking, away from her safe space, and most importantly against the backdrop of the intense experience of Mr Blank which has made her emotionally unstable. I call it "experience" rather than memory because of the way I argue that memories function in the novel and because the narration here fluctuates between the story present and the past in a way that makes it very difficult to determine whether the episode with the houses is a memory or not. After the rather long memory of this last job of hers she drifts into further memories of other jobs: "Thinking of my jobs. ..."¹⁴⁵ Sasha remembers when she tried working as a tourist guide. Then she reflects on her bad luck with work in general before the black dress that was in Mr Blank's store, which she wanted so bad, enters her mind: "I try, but they always see through me [...] Then I start thinking about the black dress,"¹⁴⁶ and then begins the paragraph with the frowning houses. As everything is narrated in the present tense it thus becomes highly problematic to ascertain whether the houses appear in the story present or if that too is a memory. The narrative discourse here is therefore strongly convergent with subjective self-communion; not intended for anyone else.

I posit that within an intratextual framework the passage with the calm, objective narration (in the hotel room) can stand – not as a default state, because my account of the human mind negates any kinds of static mindstates, but – as a more or less measureable state of being calm, indicated by the "calmness" of the narration. This contextualizes the German "babble" and the following experience of the houses where the narrative provides identifiable causes for the alteration in her mindstate. It might be a simple and obvious point but chaotic narration indicates chaotic mindstates and vice versa, something that can be felt to a certain extent by the reader in a way that ties together the kind of "everyday-heuristics" that Herman discusses in combination with the type of phenomenological – and therefore monist or post-Cartesian – intersubjective experience I accounted for via Merleau-Ponty early in this

¹⁴⁴ GMM, 21

¹⁴⁵ GMM, 26

¹⁴⁶ GMM, 28

chapter.¹⁴⁷ The distance is then rather a distance from primal unfiltered thought, into controlled structured expression as a way of attempting to control her own experience, keeping her from falling into one of the many painful memories lurking at the edge of her conscious cognition. The ambiguity of perception is prevalent throughout the novel. The example of the houses is quite striking, other instances range from brief experiences narrated seemingly without any real significance for the story to longer episodes, that both reveal the fluid and transient nature of mindstates. An example of the brief kind appears after Sasha has had one of her many memory-experiences – that always leave her shaken in some way – in her hotel room: "There are some black specks on the wall. I stare at them, certain they are moving [...] I get up and look closely. Only splashes of dirt. It's not the time of year for bugs, anyway."¹⁴⁸ What she was so certain she saw, turned out to be false.

An example of the longer kind is the episode when she goes to find another hotel. The urge arises after an unpleasant meeting with the man in the white dressing gown: as Sasha is walking towards her room he obstructs her "He doesn't answer or move. He stands in the doorway, smiling. (Now then, you and I understand each other, don't we? Let's stop pretending.)" She pushes him out of the way and escapes into her room. "And there I am in this dim room with the bed for madame and the bed for monsieur and the narrow street outside (what they call an impasse), thinking of that white dressing-gown, like a priest's robes. Frightened as hell. A nightmare feeling. ..."¹⁴⁹ The calm description of the room at the beginning of the novel is here echoed to the extent that it invites the comparison. The physically exact same room is no longer the calm and safe place to hide in, which tells us the change is entirely psychological. It is the next morning that Sasha decides she must find a different hotel, although her experience the night before is not mentioned as a factor. Instead she experiences the whole place as unpleasant now:

This morning the hall smells like a very cheap Turkish bath in London – the sort of place that is got up to look respectable and clean outside, the passage very antiseptic and the woman who meets you a cross between a prison-wardress and a deaconess, and everybody speaking in whispering voices with lowered eyes [...] and then you go down into the Turkish bath itself and into a fog of stale sweat – ten, twenty years old. The patron, the patronne and the two maids are having their meal in a room behind the bureau [...] I've got to find another hotel. I feel ill and giddy...¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁷ Pages 34-35

¹⁴⁸ GMM, 12

¹⁴⁹ GMM, 31

¹⁵⁰ GMM, 31

She goes to another hotel and finds that the rates are much higher than what she can afford and the room she is shown turns out to not be the wonderful room she has imagined beforehand. Despite the immense importance she has just attached to changing her room, she then reasons that the changeable features of any room – the "rose-coloured curtains, carpet and bath" – are in fact irrelevant: "A room is a place where you hide from the wolves outside and that's all any room is. Why should I worry about changing my room?" The impermanence, not only of our perception but of the self that is partly constructed and maintained through it, is again accentuated, as the reader can see Sasha answer her own question of "why" by going only two pages back in the novel. The narrative makes that unnecessary however, as Sasha herself goes on to spell it out explicitly: "When I get back to the hotel after I have had something to eat, it looks all right and smells as respectable as you please. *I imagined it all, I imagined everything. ...*"¹⁵¹ (my italics.) Later we are given the exact cause for the discrepancy between objective reality and her experience of it. Sitting in a bar as she so often does she feels the strain of the presence of the others: "These people all fling themselves at me. *Because I am uneasy and sad* they all fling themselves at me larger than life."¹⁵² (my italics.) The correlation between "social and material environments" and Sasha's perception is here directly commented on in the narrative. Recalling Hansen's second characterization of FPPT narrative – the problematic juxtaposition of imagination and observation that is as relevant a problem for the philosophy of mind – one might say that observation is encumbered by imagination in Sasha's perception.

¹⁵¹ GMM, 33

¹⁵² GMM, 43

4 Final perspectives

As I hope to have shown, there are in fact many features of *Good Morning, Midnight* that support a reading of it informed by post-Cartesian concepts of what and how the human mind is. The re-formulated concept of modernism which Herman advocates, as representing, or at least thematizing, the mind as a dynamic and interdependent entity rather than as something isolated and static, as such seems particularly appropriate to apply here. The vital role of perception and memory, as well as their reciprocal relationship with factors "external" to the perceiving mind, are foregrounded by the narrative discourse; mimetic of actual conscious experience. Sasha even names herself a "cérébrale" – something like "a brain" – in the novel,¹⁵³ and expresses that this is at the heart of her problems – something my interpretation is perfectly in agreement with: that the focalized narrative is compatible with the features of the mind I have highlighted in this thesis – and she concludes that a cérébrale or brain is "in fact, a monster." Her active distancing from "social and material environments" by the strict control she tries to keep over her surroundings as well as her perception of them and her own emotional states, are conscious attempts at taming this monster; at escaping the chaos of sensory perception and mental activity that life unavoidably leads to, in a desperate struggle to find peace from the pain of her past. This pain is still readily available for her to experience over and over again in the memories that keep bombarding her, shedding further light on her own delimiting of her social and physical space. Her personal history has taught her that new experiences – new perceptions – are likely just new painful memories waiting to be made. The fragmented and at times confusing narrative form of the novel seems to emphasize Sasha's mind-as-experienced in a moment-by-moment-construction, thus, I would argue, drawing us closer to her subjective consciousness rather than distancing us from it. In addition the influence on her mind from "external" factors is recurrent throughout the narrative, negating the Cartesian dichotomy of mind and matter.

The narrative also provides commentary on itself, on the narrative technique, that supports this assumption through Sasha's condemning description of a woman she once worked for:

They explain people like that by saying that their minds are in water-tight compartments, but it never seemed so to me. It's all washing about, like the bilge in the hold of a ship, all washing around in the same hold – no water-tight compartments. ... Fairies, red roses, the sense of propriety – of course they don't feel things like we do – Lillies in the moonlight – I

¹⁵³ GMM, 135

believe in survival after death. I've had personal proof of it. And we'll find our dear, familiar bodies on the other side – Samuel has forgotten to buy his suppositories – Pity would be out of place in this instance – I never take people like that to expensive restaurants. Quite unnecessary and puts ideas into their heads. It's not *kind*, really – Nevertheless, all the little birdies sing – psycho-analysis might help. Adler is more wholesome than Freud, don't you think? – English judges never make a mistake – The piano is quite Egyptian in feeling. ... All washing around in the same hold. No water-tight compartments.¹⁵⁴

The passage fits perfectly as a micro-version of the whole novel: an incoherent stream-of-consciousness-like paragraph that more than any passage in the book converges with pure and proper stream-of-consciousness, perhaps save the punctuation, and echoes Sasha's own episodes where she loses controls and becomes "exhalted." The assumption that the quoted passage is referential to herself – beyond the correlation with the overall narration and the conflict between the "water-tight compartments" and the "washing about" – is further supported by the function of the old women in the novel. Older women appear several places throughout the narrative, which has been commented on by Gardiner, among others, discussing Sasha's identity as simultaneously old woman and desiring woman:

The first is a category others can't bear to see; the second, a category in which they don't wish to believe. Repeatedly Sasha sees herself mirrored and foreshadowed by older women with their covered-up and made-over gaps and wounds, and she is constantly engaged in rejecting and remaking their images.¹⁵⁵

There is a mirroring of Sasha in the figure of *the old woman* in the novel in general. Sasha's description of the old woman, quoted above, is framed by a repetition of "it's all washing around .. No water-tight compartments." This is the nature of Sasha's own mind, and what she wants to achieve by her ritual-like way of life and the at times over exaggerated control she exerts on her perception, is the safety and calm order of "a water-tight compartment".

The narrative placement of this episode in the novel contributes to its significance: this happens prior to, and leads up to, the novel's climax. Sasha and Rene are having their "good-night drink" at the Deux Magots. Rene has been making advances at her ever since they first met, and Sasha, though she really wants him, has been pushing him back for fear of being hurt again. The familiar trope of the protagonist rejecting love and happiness, or at least the chance for happiness out of fear of being abandoned and thus made unhappy, is so widely used that it has become cliché. Seen in light of my account of intertextuality versus intratextuality¹⁵⁶ as parallel discourses that inform the interpretation of the narrative, rather than as the intrusion

¹⁵⁴ GMM, 140-141

¹⁵⁵ Gardiner, 237

¹⁵⁶ See 3.5

of foreign voices, this cliché can be taken as a cue for understanding the narrative structure as a whole regarding the theme of mind, with its emphasis on the interdependence between perception and the context of the perceiving consciousness that the narrative places us "within." The ambivalent relationship between Sasha and Rene becomes central to the novel, and to me it is one way in which the narrative could, arguably, prompt the reader to extend the above mentioned cliché beyond the specific event to reveal Sasha's larger tendency to limit her surroundings as a way of limiting the potential for perception. Sasha is afraid to live freely because it might cause her hurt. As they sit together in the bar Sasha's control weakens: "And he doesn't look like a gigolo, not at all like a gigolo,"¹⁵⁷ only to catch herself in the act: "suddenly I feel shy and self-conscious. (How ridiculous! Don't let him see it, for God's sake.)" This is what prompts her eventually to go into the nonsensical rant quoted above, illustrating how, again, there is a consistent intratextual causality to trace in the narrative discourse regarding the narrative form and consequently Sasha's mindstate, which interdependently informs a reading of the quoted passage as commentary on the nature of Sasha's mind. Both due to the intense dissolving of meaning and control in the passage – due to the significance I have accounted for with respect to this kind of "frantic" narration – and because this loss of control regarding her perception of Rene could arguably be seen as a crucial catalyst for Sasha going as far as she later does with him, which forces the final confrontation of the sexual and romantic tension between them, that is, she takes him back to her hotel room in spite of her previous resolve not to:

Here we are. Nothing to stop us. Four walls, a roof, a bed, a bidet, a spotlight that goes on first over the bidet and then over the bed – nothing to stop us. Anything you like; anything you like. ... no past to make us sentimental, no future to embarrass us. ... a difficult moment when you are out of practice – a moment that makes you go cold, cold and wary.¹⁵⁸

The way she again lists up physical features of the room makes it seem like Sasha tries to regain control by resorting to the kind of calm and distanced narration found in the first description of her hotel room. This time of no avail as she cannot gain control and make it stop, underscored by the repetition of "nothing to stop us," as if that is what she is really looking for. Notice as well that references to both the past and the future as something problematic to memory and perception are present in this quote.

The features of mind representation I have highlighted in this thesis are convergent with Herman's claim that modernist narratives did in fact not entail an inwards movement to

¹⁵⁷ GMM, 138

¹⁵⁸ GMM, 149

secret and hidden depths of the human mind, but rather brought to the foreground the dynamic interdependency between the "human psychological profile" and the "worldly circumstances" out of which it arises while simultaneously – to some extent – shaping that environment through the act of perception. Herman is not alone in pointing out that this constitutes, rather than an abandonment of realism, a new kind of realism in narrative representation aimed at representation of minds. Lodge, for example, is in agreement that the "mental realism" of modernist narration "paradoxically entailed an abandonment of the traditional properties and strategies of literary realism."¹⁵⁹ But Lodge, less concerned with newer scientific models of the human mind, then goes in the opposite direction from Herman: "The traditional plot, which demonstrates that all effects have their logical causes, is discarded or destabilized, and poetic devices of symbolism and leitmotif and intertextual allusion are used instead to give formal unity to the representation of experience, which is itself seen as essentially chaotic."¹⁶⁰ The strong convergence of Lodge's account of modernist narratives with Herman's version illustrates well the difference it makes to invoke scientific knowledge of the mind as a premise for interpretation. The latter quote from Lodge with its emphasis on the "essentially chaotic" nature of the human mind fits well with my own description, but Lodge nonetheless comes closer to Maurel's account of the narrative in *Good Morning, Midnight* in his description of modernist narratives; negating the kind of intratextual causality that can be found in a chaotic narrative. What is left out by Lodge is the other side of the coin, so to say; the fact that it is never just the – chaotic – mind extending out into the world, but that the world also reaches in and affects the perceiving mind. This seems to me to be one fundamental difference that Herman's post-Cartesian framework(s) for interpreting minds contributes to the field.

In my analysis I have mainly looked at a few of the ways in which the narrative discourse creates distance according to Cohn and then refuted her claims by contesting the notion of the mind as something interiorly sealed-off and consistent. Instead I have drawn upon more current understandings of the mind as it more or less stands in scientific circles, as well as selected variants of other disciplines that are in accordance with the post-Cartesian concept of mind, like phenomenology, to inform my own understanding of the narrative. The findings from various research indicate that a mind is a much more complex entity, that in turn is much more complex to delineate, making statements of the kind relating to what falls

¹⁵⁹ Lodge, 61

¹⁶⁰ *ibid*

within the mental realm and what falls without it problematic. The extent of the problem might seem exaggerated, especially when discussing "real minds" as opposed to fictional ones. Keep in mind that it is the claim that the reader's – or "the other's" – access to the mind in question that is the underlying concern, where the fictional mind is held to be equally obscure as a real mind, in spite of the "extra" information about it that is available to the reader. This leads to another point to be made about the mind and human consciousness. It concerns the other and equally important side of Herman's refutation of the Exceptionality Thesis, which has in large part been kept in the background until now. My emphasis so far has been on the fact that others' minds or subjectivities are not as inaccessible as the conventions would have us think. The other side being, as Herman also stresses but which Palmer goes even further in underscoring in the work cited, that our own minds are not as accessible to ourselves as we believe they are.

The "everyday-heuristics" or the folk-psychological approach that Herman advocates alongside the scientific approach to other minds can hardly be denied as a way of actually getting some degree of insight into another's mindstate. Although anecdotal in nature we can all relate to situations such as this example made by Palmer: Supposing you are feeling depressed, but cannot quite put your finger on the reason for the feeling.

You have immediate access to that feeling and no one else has. To that extent it is inaccessible to others and infallible. However, someone who knows you well might know that it is caused by anxiety about something unpleasant coming up. You might then say, "Yes, I suppose it is because of that!"¹⁶¹

The other person, in addition to picking up on the fact that you were feeling depressed, could know something about you that you did not know yourself. We constantly evaluate the mindstates of people around us, even if we are not directly conscious of doing so, we will notice whether the person we are talking to is happy, sad or angry for example. This assessment is based on cues such as body-language, facial expressions and various other "phenomena," as well as on the context you are able to place them in, depending on how well you know the person. However, as has already been pointed out, the folk-psychology that we all apply will have firmly embedded in it the notion of minds of a Cartesian variant: internal, continuous and isolated, and furthermore that we all have complete access to and knowledge of our own selves; this in spite of our experiences to the contrary. In Palmer's example it is just as important that the depressed "you" did not in fact know what the other person knew

¹⁶¹ Palmer, 125

about "your" own mindstate. "We are often wrong about the nature of our mental functioning. Errors of very different sorts occur – from hallucinations right through to inability to understand our true motivations."¹⁶² Reality and narrative theory converges here in another way, as the favoring of third-person ascription over first-person ascription regarding reliability has at least some validity in real life as well. Lodge, citing Ramachandran, writes that "Freud's most valuable contribution was his discovery that your conscious mind is simply a façade and that you are completely unaware of what really goes on in your brain,"¹⁶³ and that, contrary to the posited exceptionality of written fiction regarding mind-access, many "I" narrators are used to problematize "[...] a narrative rather than, as in the classic confessional novel, make it fluidly transparent."¹⁶⁴ Cohn and Maurel are of course no less aware of the unreliability of first-person narrators. My strong focus on this point is meant to underline the changed premise Herman and Palmer advocate, as well as the relevance of such a shift. As I stated in the introduction the dichotomy between them, and Herman and the others is ultimately a false one, or at least an exaggerated one, that none the less demonstrates some effects of the underlying premise of Cartesianism. This premise lies irrevocably at the bottom of their argumentation, and one can suspect that they are both, perhaps unconsciously, partial to the folk-psychological notion of the self.

The lack of transparency in our own minds belongs to the account I gave of the human mind as a chaotic and bewildering field of mental phenomena – grounded in physical phenomena; the mind-boggling number of potential neurological connections – meant to, first, underscore the incomprehensiveness of our own minds to ourselves, and secondly, argue the sheer necessity of the kind of self-narration I accounted for in the same section, as we have a limited capacity for attention we simply cannot access and employ all the possible information available at the same time. The fact that we do simplify information into more manageable chunks by, for example, structuring it in narrative forms, may be a core reason for why we tend to think that we can get a clear and complete understanding of things, including ourselves. Dan Zahavi writes that

we need to distinguish between merely being conscious or sentient, and being a self. The requirements that must be met in order to qualify for the latter are higher. More precisely, being a self is an achievement rather than a given. How is selfhood achieved? In and through narrative self-interpretation. Some creatures weave stories of their lives, they organize their

¹⁶² *ibid*

¹⁶³ Lodge, 61

¹⁶⁴ *ibid*, 57

experiences and actions according to narrative structures thereby situating them in the context of a unifying story, and this is what constitutes them as selves.¹⁶⁵

He shares the notion of the self as something like a (literary) production, likening it to an artwork. He does however feel it necessary to contest this understanding of self-narration as an absolute: "we need to operate with a more primitive and fundamental notion of self; a notion of self that cannot be captured in terms of narrative structures."¹⁶⁶ Reducing the human self to this narrative construction to the point that no room is granted a self independent of words and concepts and a literal kind of story-telling about ourselves is going too far. I give Zahavi right in this point, but I feel perhaps that he in turn exaggerates the role of narrative in our identity and sense of self in his critique against it. The accounts I give in this thesis regarding the mind – in which I include the broad sense of self-narration – are not intended to give a full picture of the human mind. I am merely foregrounding some aspects of a larger picture, nor do I know of anyone who wholeheartedly advocate any kind of absolute stance that says we are all *only* the narratives we create about ourselves. That being said, we have enough evidence beyond the field of narrative theory to conclude that this is an actual process in our minds.

In the cortex of our brains there is a neural network that neuroscientists call the *left-hemisphere interpreter*. It is, in a manner of speaking, the brain's storytelling apparatus that reconstructs events into a logical sequence and weaves them together into a meaningful story that makes sense. The process is especially potent when it comes to biography and autobiography: once you know how a life turns out it is easy to go back and reconstruct how one arrived at that particular destination.¹⁶⁷

Shermer, who has spent 30 years researching beliefs from a psychological perspective in combination with neuroscience provides further support for my reading of *Good Morning, Midnight* regarding this kind of self-narration. Concerning beliefs and how we form them, and then keep them, he writes:

What happens is that the facts of the world are filtered by our brains through the colored lenses of worldviews, paradigms, theories, hypotheses, conjectures, hunches, biases, and prejudices we have accumulated through living. We then sort through the facts and select

¹⁶⁵ Zahavi, Dan "Self and other: The limits of narrative understanding" Hutto, D.D. (ed): *Narrative and Understanding Persons. Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement 60*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) 179-201 (http://cfs.ku.dk/staff/zahavi-publications/self_and_other.pdf/RIP.pdf/) 1

¹⁶⁶ *ibid*

¹⁶⁷ Shermer, 37

those that confirm what we already believe and ignore or rationalize away those that contradict our beliefs.¹⁶⁸

With the emphasis on "belief" this can easily be dismissed as religious criticism but it is the behavior of our minds that is Shermer's subject, where "belief" connotes a much larger field than what we most immediately associate with the term. Applied to identity and self this can be illustrated by the image of a man with many roads stretching out in front of him but with only one single, straight road behind him when he looks back. That single road, for my purposes, symbolizes the narrowing down from complex reality that self-narration is – the other roads still go on behind him, but the single visible road is his constructed self. Further, Shermer's account of beliefs tells us something useful in that, just as the believer will adapt information and experience to suit his belief, the construction of self through self-narration is not without prejudice, without intention and motivations. Lying in bed after a bad day where I, for example, feel like I made a fool out of myself in some way – thus establishing a different self than the one I would like to have in the eyes of others – I recount the experiences of the day and arguably I might then "adjust" the recall of my perception to rectify my sense of self as I would like it to be; in a sense I re-write my self-narrative, so to speak.

4.1 Self-narration as self-deception

Beyond the known unreliability of FPPT narration, the pervading ambiguity and unreliability in *Good Morning, Midnight* can be expressed through two main aspects in relation to the theoretical framework I have chosen to view it from. The first is that we do not really know ourselves and our own dispositions and motivations as fully as we like to think we do, and that our minds are in fact not transparent to ourselves. In this regard the ambiguity and "insincerity" in the narration does not constitute a distance from or unrealistic representation of simultaneous narration of subjective experience, but in fact supports a reading of it as exactly that. The second is that not all unreliability in the narrative can be assigned to the arbitrary relationship between the *self* and the *mind*, that is, between the totality of mental activity and the much simplified version of that which we could be said to be aware of, the single road, to which belongs that sense of self that is highly contingent on self-narration. Although we may not always know the underlying reasons for our actions and feelings, there

¹⁶⁸ Ibid, 36

is simultaneously the other side of *intentional* insincerity in the construction of one's own identity. Palmer lists three ways, taken from John Searle, in which we can be mistaken about our own mental events: the first two are misinterpretation and inattention, both unintentional in nature which leads me to group them with the – in my own terms – arbitrariness of what "select" features of a larger number that become defining for our *selves* and our experiences of them. The third is self-deception: "when the agent has a motive or reason for not admitting to himself or herself that he or she is in a certain mental state."¹⁶⁹ The examples I have given from the novel of ways in which "environment" shapes perception and vice versa are in large part assignable to the unconscious part of the mind, but there are also indications of more or less deliberate insincerity in Sasha's self-narration, which correlates to the kind of intentionality Shermer and Palmer discusses regarding the forming of our self-image.

I am neither the first person to point out the desire Sasha displays for creating, or perhaps rather *re*-creating, herself in a better image; to mold herself – her *self* – into an identity that is accepted or even admired by others, as opposed to the way "the old devil" or various barkeepers see her. This is expressed, for example, in Sasha's deep concern with appearances through the novel. She obsesses over new clothes or changing her hair, or the scene where she feels she *must* change her hotel room discussed above,¹⁷⁰ these factors can all be taken into account for an active attempt to re-construct a self separate from her painful history. Sasha is not even her real name, she "names herself for us as Sasha, the name she gave herself, and so enters her narrative as a self-created character,"¹⁷¹ as Gardiner puts it. From my point of view the "us" is a secondary layer and it is really only for herself Sasha creates herself. The ambiguous statement of asking herself what she has to cry about, when it is all too clear what reasons she has to cry,¹⁷² must then be seen more as the active attempt to change her *self* through self-narration than an expression of the irregularity of our mindstates. Throughout the novel this kind of questioning – "why should I worry? Why should I be sad?" – almost always takes place in internal speech, rather than being directed at someone, which is one example of intentional insincerity in her self-narration. The contrast between calm, objective narration and the more frantic variants I have commented on also belong to this line of reasoning, where the calm narration could constitute intentional effort on Sasha's part to, in a sense, re-construct reality through her narration of it. Her ambiguous past with her family is

¹⁶⁹ Palmer, 125

¹⁷⁰ See 3.8

¹⁷¹ Gardiner, 237

¹⁷² See 2.3

never claimed to be happy, but is noticeably omitted save a couple of brief involuntary memories hinting at a painful history like the memory of "the old devil," which in turn is what makes it noticeable that this part of her story is left out. The way the narrative hints at much more – seen in context with the dream of her father – in her family history suggests that Sasha would rather exclude it from her self-narration altogether, in other words she is intentionally dishonest with herself in her narrative self-creation. There is another episode that perhaps more than anything leads me to think in this direction. After the death of their child and Enno's disappearance she is staying at an hotel near the Place de la Madeleine

there's an English valet de chambre at the hotel who tells the patron that whatever I call myself now he had known me very well in London and that I had come to Paris with a friend of his, a jockey, and that I had treated his friend very badly and that I was the dirtiest bitch he had ever struck, which was saying something. Useless to deny all this – quite useless. ... was it hysteria, or a case of hate at first sight, or did he really mistake me for that other girl? I shall never know.¹⁷³

The fact that she does not deny the accusation is suspicious, made even more so by the implausible explanations she "narrates to herself" for why a perfect stranger would say something like that about her. I am of course at the risk of over-reading this but the passage never the less plants the notion that perhaps Sasha is much more dishonest in her self-narration than one would first think. This is convergent with Jakob Lothe's second characteristic for narrative unreliability: that the narrator has a strong personal involvement or stake in the situation.¹⁷⁴ The explanations of "hysteria" or "hate at first sight" does strike me as dishonest self-narration to maintain her *self* as she has constructed *it*, which brings me, finally, to the main meaning I find in *Good Morning, Midnight's* narrative.

During the walk when she first meets the two Russians she walks along in silence, thinking to herself, or rather narrating her *self*: "I am not sad at all [...] No, I am not sad." Then the Russians appear and asks her why she looks so sad, interrupting her intentional self-narration for a moment to reveal the truth: "Yes, I am sad, sad as a circus-lioness, sad as an eagle without wings, sad as a violin with only one string and that one broken, sad as a woman who is growing old. Sad, sad, sad. ..." This is not spoken aloud to the Russians however, she takes a moment to regain control and then answers: "But I'm not sad. Why should you think I'm sad?"¹⁷⁵ All through the novel there are indications of the mutual influence between Sasha's perception and her surroundings, and I have briefly mentioned "that the only significant division of person in *my case* is between first-person and the rest; between the

¹⁷³ GMM, 119

¹⁷⁴ Lothe, Jacob Narrative in Fiction and Film: An Introduction (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) 26

¹⁷⁵ GMM, 39

simultaneous self-narrator Sasha and *the other(s)* by way of the post-Cartesian account(s) of the mind."¹⁷⁶ To further enlighten this stance I must one final time draw upon Merleau-Ponty, whom I have already referred to in outlining the constellation of an impermanent perceiving subject inherent in a – to a certain extent permanent – physical reality, which enables the discussion of the interdependence between the two from the point of the perceiving subject, Sasha. As the whole of the narrative is simultaneous self-narration one could easily fall for the temptation to relativize everything because it is "internal" to her subjective experience; it is all "infallible" as Palmer says about subjective experience without the dimension of the other. This is exactly the problem Merleau-Ponty sees with Cartesianism.

4.2 Perception and the social: Liberation from the Cartesian nightmare

Because the Cartesian mind is isolated and can only access the world through internally constructed representations of actual reality, thus relativizing it, we would enter “into a cultural regimen where there is neither truth nor falsity concerning man and history, into a sleep, or a nightmare, from which there is no awakening.”¹⁷⁷ This is what I mean when I say that observation is encumbered by imagination in Sasha's perception.¹⁷⁸ Because the control of self-narration has become a matter of life or death for her, imagination or her subjectivity has got the upper hand, destroying the equilibrium between subject and object, between her plastic perception and the static physical reality, allowing her to "override" that reality with her imagination, to some degree. Because of the interdependence between our minds and the world she is still subject to influence from that physical world, such as the triggering of memories from a specific place, but her experience is still more strongly rooted in subjective imagination. In addition to these two layers of the subjective and the objective there is a third layer: the other. Unlike the passive physical reality the other, or second-person, is another constructing consciousness like Sasha herself, and can thus pose an even greater threat to her – dishonest – self-narration. Merleau-Ponty describes it like this: "the "others," not merely as my congeners, as the zoologist says, but the others who haunt me and whom I haunt; the "others" along *with* whom I haunt a single, present, and actual Being."¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁶ See 3.4

¹⁷⁷ Merleau-Ponty, (2004) 292

¹⁷⁸ See 3.8

¹⁷⁹ Merleau-Ponty, (2004) 293

His use of the word "haunt" is no doubt *not* meant literally, but is typical of his phenomenological description rather than attempted objective explanation. It denotes the inescapable intersubjectivity he sees as a consequence of the refusal of Cartesianism in favor of a worldview closer to the one Herman advocates, where a mind is always actively engaged interdependently with its surroundings. However in Sasha's case the word "haunt" is indeed appropriate, as others can take on the guise of the troublesome poltergeist in their ability to force their way into her perception and disturb her self-narration. This is the dimension of the "social circumstances" which Herman grants an equally important part in the reciprocal relationship between mind and environment, and it is what happens when the two Russians interrupt her on her walk back to the hotel. For a moment they disrupt her self-narration and impose *their experience* – their perception – on her; they have gained enough access into her mindstate to be able to tell that she is unhappy, contrary to her own self-narration, and by doing so they confront Sasha with the insincerity of her self-narration. This is also the reason why she attaches so much importance to the choice of bars. She seeks to avoid places where she has got too drunk and embarrassed herself, because the people working there might remember and therefore pose a threat to her self-constructed identity where such incidents have been left out. It is "the other's" equal ability to construct and narrate that makes "the other" dangerous to Sasha. This, more than anything, is the problem of the "wolves" she fears and hides from. A room may be saturated with the past, but another person, another *mind*, can potentially *actively* oppose her constructed self which she has constructed as a protective armor against the cruel realities of her life.

This puts the curious sentence "an extremely funny monologue is going on in my head," in a different light, suggesting that the apparent narrative distance it could be said to constitute – on account of its disharmony with the narrative perspective¹⁸⁰ – must be re-evaluated. It is not a shift in narration away from the narrating subject, it is simply Sasha once again self-narrating insincerely. It happens in a situation that affects Sasha's mindstate, both because it is part of the episode leading up to the novel's climax and because Rene has just called her stupid, further disturbing her mindstate. The "extremely funny monologue" is an attempt to save face within her own self-narration, to keep her identity or self-image from taking damage from the meeting with the other narrating subject, which in this case "creates Sasha" in a way that is detrimental to her own self-construction, by calling her stupid. When she then narrates that an extremely funny monologue is going on inside her head it is not a

¹⁸⁰ See 3.5

matter of narrative distance where the actual contents of the monologue is kept hidden, it is pure narrative *fiction* in the context of self-narration. The Sasha she wishes to be, to create, would have come up with something funny to say at the expense of Rene to rectify herself. The problem is that she cannot think of anything, so instead she narrates that she did, thus saving face, but only within her own self-narration. Exactly like her aggressive interior monologues where she stands up to people only in her own mind¹⁸¹ and much like the way Shermer argues that we defend beliefs by constructing the argumentation for them after the fact of having formed them. Another instance of fictional narration Sasha engages in, regarding Rene, is that she continually maintains the image – the construction – of Rene as a "no-good-gigolo" who is only after money, thus giving her a reason to keep him at a distance. Although he is a gigolo he is revealed to be genuinely interested in Sasha, who in turn is interested in him. Because of her fear of the consequences of letting herself love him, she constructs a false representation of him in her self-narration; in her "Cartesian nightmare" to borrow a term from Merleau-Ponty. This underscores the importance of her momentary loss of control during this meeting where she admits to herself, briefly, that "he does not look like a gigolo at all."

It is only when Sasha and Rene are finally together in her hotel room that we see Sasha going so far into fictional narration that she fully reveals her own tendency to override reality in her narratives. The room which the novel begins and ends with has served as a safe haven where Sasha can self-narrate undisturbed, a function accentuated by the calm and literary-like narration attached to it from the very first page. The safety of the room gradually declines as the narrative progresses. The unpleasant meeting with "the man in the dressing-gown" that causes her to look for a different hotel, is an event that refers to the first objective description of her room via its formal similarity, thus highlighting the negative development of her mental state. When she has now allowed herself to let her guard down with Rene, the safe, "calm compartment" is completely invaded by an *other*. Palmer reminds us of something we can all relate to when he writes: "When does a negative remark sting, cut deep, hit a nerve? When some part of us knows it to be true. If every part knew it was true, the remark would not sting; it would be old news."¹⁸² It is unpleasant because it is something we are dishonest about to ourselves; it is covered up in insincere self-narration, and that could be the real reason it stings so bad, rather than its negative contents in itself. It invades and disturbs

¹⁸¹ See 3.4

¹⁸² Palmer, 126

one's self-narration, revealing the *self* to be not quite as you would like it to be. This is what I perceive to be happening in the final pages of *Good Morning, Midnight*. The narrative is rich with indications of there being quite a bit that Sasha wishes to keep hidden from herself, *about her self*. Now that her last safe space has been invaded by Rene – an *other* – there is a breach in her protection which puts her whole self-narrative at risk of exposure, thus forcing her to confront sides of herself and her life that she wants to escape.

After a moment of happiness with Rene Sasha relapses into her old ways and his visit ends with him leaving angrily. It is as if a split appears in Sasha here, between the constructed Sasha and another Sasha seeking freedom from her self-constructed prison – her Cartesian nightmare. "Externally" she insults Rene by insisting on his being there just to get money out of her, but while she is saying these things to him she is thinking: "Don't listen, that's not me speaking. Don't listen. Nothing to do with me – I swear it. ..." ¹⁸³ He finally gives up and leaves, angry, and her final words insulting him for personal things he earlier confided to her. Then follows a paragraph that accentuates the theme of identity even more:

When he has gone I turn over on my side and huddle up, making myself as small as possible, my knees almost touching my chin. I cry in the way that hurts right down, that hurts your heart and your stomach. Who is this crying? The same one who laughed on the landing, kissed him and was happy. This is me, this is myself, who is crying. The other – how do I know who the other is? She isn't me. ¹⁸⁴

Then she lapses fully into the "Cartesian nightmare," losing all touch with the real world as imagination takes completely over as she narrates: She can see Rene in her mind and begins speaking to him, begging him to return. At first he cannot hear her, but then he begins walking back to the hotel.

Now he has come up to the hotel. He presses the button and the door opens. He is coming up the stairs. Now the door is moving, the door is opening wide. I put my arm over my eyes. He comes in. he shuts the door after him. I lie very still, with my arm over my eyes. As still as if I were dead. ... ¹⁸⁵

Here the paragraph ends. All this is revealed to be Sasha's imagination. Her self-narration is so strong now that it completely overrides objective reality. She has neither actually seen him nor has he come back for her, she has chased him off for good this time, and her fictional narration cannot alter that. All this is made clear by a final passage separated from the rest of

¹⁸³ GMM, 153

¹⁸⁴ GMM, 154

¹⁸⁵ GMM, 158-159

the text, as if an appendix or an alternate ending, since the narrative could well have ended with "As still as if I were dead. ..." The final passage goes:

I don't need to look. I know. I think: 'is it the blue dressing-gown, or the white one? That's very important. I must find that out – it's very important.' I take my arm away from my eyes it is the white dressing-gown. He stands there, looking down at me. Not sure of himself, his mean eyes flickering. He doesn't say anything. Thank God, he doesn't say anything. I look straight into his eyes and despise another poor devil of a human being for the last time. For the last time. ... Then I put my arms around him and pull him down on to the bed, saying: 'Yes – yes -yes. ...'¹⁸⁶

There has been a tension between her constructed self and other people throughout the entire novel because other people are a potential threat to her self-creation, a tension that increases towards the end. At the point where her self-narration has reached its most intense level and lost all contact with reality, it is as if the split in her *self* becomes finalized. The separation of the final passage from the rest of the text mirrors that of the novel's first passage, also separated, with the calm, objective description of the very same room the narrative ends in, now without a single reference to the physical room save the mention of the bed. Now it is the man in the dressing-gown, another person, an *other*, that is the focus of her attention. It is as if the previous passage was the end – the death of the self Sasha constructed through her dishonest self-narration. Now this odd man who has been a threatening presence – a threatening other – throughout the narrative, who first destabilized her safe haven and made her attempt flight to another hotel room, has fully invaded that space of calm but insincere self-narration. With the death of the fictionally constructed – and therefore ultimately false – *self* in the prior paragraph, the threat of the other disappears since the self-narrative she has tried to protect has died with the *self* it belonged to. The other, who in every form has been something Sasha has feared through the novel, now becomes "another poor devil of a human being" rather than a "wolf". She now embraces the other and self-narration, at least of the intentionally insincere kind, and thus the narrative of the novel, seizes.

This is my interpretation of *the meaning* of the narrative in *Good Morning, Midnight*, and is not an unavoidable conclusion from the paradigm shift I have suggested. It is however derived from that shift, and such an interpretation would not have been possible with the old mind/body dichotomy, and hence the Exceptionality Thesis, as a premise. Although not all seem to agree with the grouping of this novel within the modernist category I find sufficient

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

"family resemblance" for doing so. My account of the narrative representation of mind in *Good Morning, Midnight* thus makes it an apt advocate for Herman's claims that

modernist modes of narration, when placed in dialogue with recent research in the sciences of mind, suggest the need to rethink the scope and validity of [...] models linked to an internalist conception of mind that is arguably called into question, rather than reinforced, by early twentieth-century narratives,¹⁸⁷

FPPT narration of this kind does shift a lot of the narrative focus away from the "external" world and "into" the mind of the narrator; necessarily so due to the posited narrative perspective. The absence of the physical world in terms of descriptions of that physical world in the narrative does not, however, constitute an actual removal from it into another and separate realm of the mental. The physical world as well as other people – other minds – figure strongly throughout the novel via the discernible effects they have on the perceiving mind being narrated, to the point where Sasha, at times, seems more at the mercy of such "external" influences than of her own mind and will. A fact that negates the notion of the mind as a completely autonomous size, and instead foregrounds human consciousness as something that arises and exists in a kind of symbiosis with ever changing material and social contexts.

¹⁸⁷ Herman, 255

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