

**María Fanlo Piniés**

**THE MIND STYLES AND SELF-CONCEPTS  
OF CHARACTERS IN PROSE FICTION**

**Submitted for the Award of  
Doctor of Philosophy**

**September 2005**

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**ABSTRACT**

The objective of this thesis is to offer an examination of the processes through which readers construct a mental representation of literary characters, regarding particularly characters' selves and cognitive activity. Various theories of pragmatics and theories of social cognition are used in my analysis of narrative texts, to investigate simultaneously the readers' cognitive processes during the reading act, and the characters' mental activity in relation to their self-concepts.

My study of how authors represent the workings of characters' minds throws light on issues of characterisation and mind style, given that most of the characters under examination have some type of mental condition, which is revealed through their usage of language. The language of characters is analysed at two levels: as narrator-characters in their narration of the novel, and as characters maintaining conversations with other characters. The analysis of social interaction between characters by means of pragmatic theories and socio-cognitive theories proves to be a new revealing method to examine mind style.

The first part of the thesis offers a general cognitive stylistic analysis of the minds and mental set-ups of three characters with various mental disorders. The second part of the thesis considers how authors construct and readers interpret various aspects of characters' mental selves. More particularly, I investigate characters' self-concepts, i.e. the conception characters have of themselves, possible selves, i.e. their hypothetical self-images, and self-presentation styles, i.e. the way in which they present their self-

concepts. Throughout this thesis, the notion of a character's self makes reference to the reader's mental representation of the character's self, which is ultimately composed of a mental representation of the character's self-concept, the further inferences readers may draw about that self-concept, and an opinion and evaluation of the character in question. In conclusion, this thesis shows how a socio-cognitive stylistic analysis of prose fiction throws light on how readers arrive at global mental representations of characters and on how characters' selves and cognitive activity are projected in the language of narratives.

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## **DECLARATION**

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iv
Declaration	vi
<b>1 Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.1 Research aims</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.2 Data</b>	<b>5</b>
1.2.1 Summary of <i>Fight Club</i>	6
1.2.2 Summary of <i>Bartleby</i>	7
1.2.3 Summary of <i>The Collector</i>	8
<b>1.3 Structure of this thesis</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>2 Literature review</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>2.1 Introduction</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>2.2 Pragmatic theories</b>	<b>14</b>
2.2.1 The social context	16
2.2.2 Grice's maxims	19
2.2.2.1 Implicature	19
2.2.2.2 Cooperative principle and conversational maxims	20
2.2.2.3 Non-observance of the maxims	21
2.2.3 Politeness theory	23
2.2.3.1 Face threatening acts	24
2.2.3.2 Strategies for performing FTAs	25
2.2.3.3 Weightiness of an FTA	26
<b>2.3 Cognitive theories</b>	<b>28</b>
2.3.1 Schema theory	29
2.3.1.1 Memories: episodic and semantic	29
2.3.1.2 Schemata	31
2.3.1.3 Types of schemata	34
2.3.1.4 Functions of schemata	37
2.3.1.5 Schema stability and change	39
2.3.1.6 Criticisms of schema theory	40
2.3.1.7 Schema theory and literature	41
2.3.2 Model theory	43
2.3.2.1 Situation and generalised models	44
2.3.2.2 Context models	45
2.3.2.3 Socially shared knowledge: schemata	46
2.3.2.4 Conclusion	46
<b>2.4 Stylistics</b>	<b>47</b>
2.4.1 Cognitive stylistics	51
2.4.2 Mind style	52
<b>2.5 Narratology</b>	<b>57</b>
2.5.1 Character	57
2.5.2 Characterisation	59

2.5.3	Fictional minds	61
<b>2.6</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>67</b>
 <b>PART I. CHARACTERS' MIND STYLES</b>		<b>68</b>
 <b>3</b>	 <b>Pahlaniuk's <i>Fight Club</i> and schizophrenia</b>	 <b>68</b>
<b>3.1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>3.2</b>	<b>Medical description of schizophrenia</b>	<b>70</b>
3.2.1	The language of schizophrenia and Grice	72
<b>3.3</b>	<b>Mind style of a schizophrenic character</b>	<b>76</b>
3.3.1	Discourse architectures	77
3.3.2	Narratological infringement of maxims	78
3.3.2.1	Failures to observe the maxims	79
3.3.2.2	Type of non-observance of maxims	85
3.3.3	Characters' non-observance of maxims	87
<b>3.4</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>98</b>
 <b>4</b>	 <b>Melville's <i>Bartleby</i> and autism</b>	 <b>100</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Autistic disorder</b>	<b>102</b>
<b>4.3</b>	<b>Bartleby's mind style</b>	<b>103</b>
4.3.1	Bartleby's autistic features	105
4.3.2	Politeness analysis	107
4.3.2.1	Sociological variables	108
4.3.2.2	Threats and redressive strategies	109
4.3.3	Transformation of models	113
4.3.3.1	Information contents of models	114
4.3.3.2	Sources of information	114
4.3.3.2	Situation model analysis	115
4.3.4	Negotiation of sociological variables and models	118
4.3.4.1	Negotiation of relative power	118
4.3.4.2	Negotiation of the ranking of the imposition	121
4.3.4.3	Negotiation of social distance	123
4.3.4.4	Conclusion	124
4.3.5	Total power loss / gain and schema development	125
4.3.6	Self-defeating behaviour	127
<b>4.4</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>129</b>
 <b>5</b>	 <b>Fowles's <i>The Collector</i> and the criminal mind</b>	 <b>130</b>
<b>5.1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>130</b>
<b>5.2</b>	<b>Ideologies, attitudes and opinions</b>	<b>130</b>
<b>5.3</b>	<b>Ideological point of view and ideology. Mind style and opinions</b>	<b>136</b>
<b>5.4</b>	<b><i>The Collector</i>: characters' sex attitudes and opinions about each other</b>	<b>139</b>

<b>5.5 Pragmatic analysis of attitudes and opinions in <i>The Collector</i></b>	142
5.5.1 Clegg's and Miranda's relationship	143
5.5.2 Evidence of the characters' SEX attitude schema	146
5.5.3 Mental conflict in Clegg	152
5.5.4 Change of opinion and of conversational behaviour	158
<b>5.6 Conclusion</b>	164
<b>5.7 Concluding remarks of part I</b>	164
<b>PART II. CHARACTERS' SELF-CONCEPTS</b>	166
<b>6 The self-concept and its expression by characters</b>	166
<b>6.1 Introduction</b>	166
<b>6.2 The self-concept: a view from cognitive psychology</b>	168
6.2.1 The self-concept	168
6.2.1.1 Self-schemata	170
6.2.1.2 Self-relevant information processing	172
6.2.1.3 Possible selves	173
6.2.2 Self-regulation	174
6.2.2.1 The working self-concept	174
6.2.2.2 Motivation and self-regulation	176
<b>6.3 Expression of characters' self-concepts</b>	180
6.3.1 Types of narrators	181
6.3.2 Characterisation and the self-concept	185
6.3.3 Explicit expressions	188
6.3.4 Implicit expressions	194
6.3.4.1 Content of verbal behaviour	196
6.3.4.2 Humbert Humbert: self-concept and information processing	199
6.3.4.3 Clegg: self-concept and self-regulation processes	206
<b>6.4 Conclusion</b>	216
<b>7 Possible worlds and the character self-concept</b>	217
<b>7.1 Introduction</b>	217
<b>7.2 Possible selves: related theories</b>	218
7.2.1 Possible selves and cognitive psychology	218
7.2.1.1 Self concept and possible selves	219
7.2.1.2 Possible selves: goals and motivation	220
7.2.1.3 Self-discrepancy theory	221
7.2.2 Multiple selves and cognitive linguistics	222
7.2.2.1 Cognitive linguistics and the self	223
7.2.2.2 Split selves	224
7.2.3 Possible worlds theory	228
7.2.3.1 Possible worlds and fictional worlds	229
7.2.3.2 Doležel's typology of fictional worlds	230
7.2.3.3 Structure of fictional worlds	231
7.2.3.4 Text worlds and schemata	232
7.2.4 Self-discrepancy theory and possible worlds theory	233

7.2.4.1	Conflict and private worlds	234
7.2.4.2	Possible selves and possible worlds: A comparison	237
<b>7.3</b>	<b>Systems of modality and the self-concept</b>	<b>241</b>
7.3.1	Clegg: deontic modality, world view and mind style	242
7.3.2	Miranda: axiological and deontic modality	245
<b>7.4</b>	<b>Summary note</b>	<b>248</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Possible selves in characterisation</b>	<b>249</b>
<b>8.1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>249</b>
<b>8.2</b>	<b>Worldview, mind style and possible selves</b>	<b>250</b>
<b>8.3</b>	<b>Clegg's alternative selves</b>	<b>252</b>
8.3.1	Ideal selves, fantasy universes	252
8.3.2	Not-me selves, negative (intention) worlds	254
8.3.3	Self-discrepancies during kidnap	263
<b>8.4</b>	<b>Miranda's alternative selves</b>	<b>270</b>
8.4.1	Inner life possible selves	270
8.4.2	Imprisonment-related possible selves	274
<b>8.5</b>	<b>The working self-concept and split selves</b>	<b>280</b>
8.5.1	<i>Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde</i> : mental / physical instantiation	282
8.5.2	Social role splits	287
<b>8.6</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>293</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Self-presentation in characterisation</b>	<b>295</b>
<b>9.1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>295</b>
<b>9.2</b>	<b>Self-presentation</b>	<b>296</b>
9.2.1	Definition	297
9.2.2	Types of self-presentation behaviours	299
9.2.3	Calculated and secondary impressions	302
9.2.4	Self-presentation styles	305
9.2.4.1	Defensive self-presentational tactics	307
9.2.4.2	Assertive self-presentational tactics	309
9.2.4.3	Defensive and assertive self-presentational strategies	310
<b>9.3</b>	<b>Self-presentation and politeness theory</b>	<b>311</b>
9.3.1	Assessment of two theories	311
9.3.2	Projection of self-images through facework strategies	314
9.3.3	Connected notions	317
<b>9.4</b>	<b>Literary characters: pragmatic analysis of self-presentation</b>	<b>321</b>
9.4.1	Narrator-characters self-presenting to readership	322
9.4.2	Assertive self-presentational style	325
9.4.3	Defensive self-presentational style	330
<b>9.5</b>	<b>Summary note</b>	<b>333</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Self-presentation in character interaction</b>	<b>334</b>
<b>10.1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>334</b>
<b>10.2</b>	<b>Politeness in assertive tactical vs. defensive strategical self-presentation</b>	<b>334</b>
10.2.1	First conversation after kidnapping	336

10.2.2	Global self-presentation patterns	338
10.2.3	Evidence for self-presentation styles: access to mental worlds	344
<b>10.3</b>	<b>Management of self-presentation of a cognitively impaired character</b>	<b>348</b>
10.3.1	First conversation: police interrogation	352
10.3.2	Awareness of conversational principles	360
<b>10.4</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>368</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>370</b>
11.1	Concluding remarks	370
11.2	Further directions	377
<b>12</b>	<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>380</b>

# **1 Introduction**

## **1.1 Research aims**

My thesis has two main objectives: (i) to theorise about how readers construct mental representations of fictional characters during the processing of a literary text, and (ii) to hypothesise about the cognitive activity of fictional characters, especially regarding their self-concepts.

On the one hand, I will provide analyses of how readers create cognitive representations of characters through the combination of the language of the narrative text and their inference work. On the other hand, I will investigate how the language of the text reveals the mental functioning of characters and more particularly, the various means through which characters project their self-concepts. My research is based on the assumption that characters' self-concepts influence the whole of their mental activity, given that the self-concept involves a variety of self-knowledge such as dispositions, emotions, intentions, opinions, or hypothetical self-images.

Within the textual storyworld, characters are contextually inscribed in a social setting in which they interact with other characters. For this reason, the analysis of the cognitive functioning of characters needs to take into account the social dimension and special attention has to be paid to the interaction between characters, to the language of their conversations. Moreover, it is the study of the language of the text that will reveal the mental processes through which readers arrive at conclusions about characters' personalities. For these reasons, a socio-cognitive stylistic approach is the most appropriate for the purposes of my thesis.

My research is embedded within the interdisciplinary field of cognitive stylistics (e.g. Semino and Culpeper 2002, Stockwell 2002, Gavins and Steen 2002) so I will be using concepts and theories from several interconnected research frameworks. Generally speaking, stylistics uses theories of linguistics to offer accounts of texts. Within stylistics, some authors have applied pragmatic theories to the analysis of dramatic texts, e.g. Culpeper et al. 1998, Carter and Simpson 1989, or Herman 1995. In my research, I will focus more particularly on the application of theories of pragmatics for the analysis of literary *narrative* texts. Within cognitive stylistics, researchers have typically applied cognitive frameworks to analysis of prose. Thus, my application of pragmatic theories in a cognitive stylistic study of *narrative* texts is part of my contribution to this field of research. Issues such as politeness theory and the cooperative principle and the conversational maxims will be utilised throughout my thesis, though other pragmatic conceptions will be employed when required.

The cognitive perspective of my research will be grounded on theories from social cognition, especially model theory, schema theory and self-presentation. A particular emphasis will be granted to the notion of the self-concept and other related structures and mental processes. Other theories will be expounded when they are required in each chapter of the thesis, such as possible worlds theory or notions from cognitive linguistics. From narratology, the recently developed notion of the ‘fictional mind’ will be expounded due to its relationship with the overall topic of my thesis.

Most research in cognitive stylistics has focused on the relationship between the language of the text and readers’ understanding of it (e.g. Cook 1994, Emmott 1997, Culpeper 2001, Semino 1997, Werth 1999). Therefore, the cognitive aspect of ‘cognitive stylistics’ makes reference almost exclusively to the readers’ mental processes during reading. However, within this tradition, little research has been

carried out to study the portrayal of characters' minds and mental processes. The aim of my investigation is to fill this gap by providing explanations about how authors represent the workings of characters' minds. In this way, the cognitive theories will serve to explicate and illustrate character's self-concepts and mental functioning. I will also take into account how readers arrive at a mental representation of characters' selves through the analysis of the language of the text and the mental processes taking place during the act of reading. Thus, one of my contributions to cognitive stylistics is to apply theories of social cognition at two levels: to hypothesise about readers' inferential processes and about characters' mental functioning.

The notion 'character's self' refers to the conception that characters have of themselves, which includes an array of information such as traits and dispositions, opinions, conceptualisations, beliefs, social norms, and so on. My aim is to analyse characters' self-concepts: the character's representation of his/her self, which includes actual self-schemata (chapter 6) and possible selves (chapters 7 and 8). I will also analyse the self-concept characters present to others, the 'presented self-concept' (chapters 9 and 10). These 'others' may be other characters within the textual world. Alternatively, the 'others' may refer to the narrator's addressee, and a variety of possibilities are open here: another character in the narrative text (in *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, Jekyll's account of his life consists of a letter sent to a friend of his); a narratee outside the text world (in *Lolita*, Humbert writes his novel as a confession about his life addressing, at times, the jury who is about to judge him for his paedophilia); or simply the implied reader of the novel (in *Bartleby*, the lawyer writes a biography of a scrivener and in *The Curious Incident...*, the protagonist sets out to write a detective novel). Therefore, when narrators demonstrate an awareness of narratees, they may choose to self-present certain images of themselves.

However, it always has to be born in mind that literary characters do not have an existence of their own: they exist in the minds of readers. Therefore, when I talk about characters' self-concepts throughout my thesis, I am in fact referring to the readers' mental representation of characters' self-concepts. In fact, every reading of a novel will lead to different representations of characters, because every reading act is contextually determined and readers' background knowledge also influences the reading process. In spite of this, I consider that readers' mental representations of characters will involve substantial overlap because of shared socio-cultural background.

So, my interest is in the reader's mental representation of characters, which is arrived at by the combination of the linguistic analysis of the literary text and the cognitive processes taking place during the reading act. My emphasis will be on the mental representation of a characters' self-concept, the self-image a character has of himself/herself, and also a character's projected self-concept, the self-image a character presents to others. On the basis of this self-concept, readers will make further inferences about the personality of characters, such as inferences of attributes characters are unaware of. The readers' mental representation of a character includes the character's self-concept, and the conception the reader has of the character (these two notions may coincide). And, on top of this, a reader will form an opinion and evaluation about the character, which involves another aspect of the mental representation (this is consistent with van Dijk (1987a)'s situation models, see 2.3.2.1). In conclusion, a reader's mental representation of a character includes the character's self-concept, the reader's conception of the character consisting of further inferences, and the reader's evaluation of the character. Although I consider these

three aspects as separate, sometimes it will be impossible to distinguish between them because of the implicit evaluative component of some attributes.

My study of characters' selves and the readers' construction of these selves is related to the field of characterisation (e.g. Rimmon-Kenan 1983, Culpeper 2001). As we will see further on, the term 'mind style' is used to refer to a character whose peculiar mind is portrayed by means of repetitive and idiosyncratic linguistic patterns (e.g. Semino 1997, 2002, Bockting 1994). Thus, this thesis deals with the issues of characterisation and mind style as far as it aims at hypothesising about how readers build representations of characters' personalities. This is a thesis about character, characterisation, and mind style.

## **1.2 Data**

The data I will analyse are literary narrative texts, both novels and short stories by British and American writers, written in English. The choice of data was restricted to texts which have first person narrators so that the whole narrative text affords information for the construction of the protagonist's self, although in some cases I will hypothesise about the mental functioning of characters who are not the narrators. This type of text offers two sources of information about characters' selves. On the one hand, I will provide analyses of characters' conversations with other characters; and on the other hand, I will investigate the language used by narrator-characters in the narrative text itself.

In addition to this, most of the texts have as protagonists characters who appear to suffer from some type of cognitive impairment (e.g. autism, schizophrenia) or they act as if they were mentally ill. The theories from social cognition and pragmatics will

serve to theorise about how these minds are portrayed by authors so that readers build a mental representation of the characters as being cognitively impaired. Moreover, the portrayal of the special mental conditions provides the grounds for the testing of the two analytical frameworks, as both cognitive and linguistic theories are aimed at the description of normal mental functioning and normal verbal behaviour.

The novel that will receive most attention in my thesis is *The Collector* (1963) by J. Fowles, because it provides evidence for all the issues that will be covered in the thesis. Apart from this text, other narratives that will be analysed are *Bartleby* (1853) by H. Melville, *Fight Club* (1997) by C. Palahniuk, *Lolita* (1959), by V. Nabokov, *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886) by R.L. Stevenson, *The Hours* (1999), by M. Cunningham, and *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* (2003), by M. Haddon. The appropriate explanations about the texts will be provided as they become necessary. In the following sub-sections, I offer the summaries of the three main texts that will be analysed in detail in the first part of the thesis, and at various sections of part II.

### **1.2.1 Summary of *Fight Club***

The protagonist of *Fight Club*, never referred to by his proper name, is a young man who works for a car firm and spends most of his time flying around the United States inspecting crashed and burned up cars. Since he is both the narrator and focaliser (Bal 1997) of the story, most of the narration is told from his point of view, so that we only have access to his thoughts. He suffers from insomnia, and he finds a remedy assisting in cancer support groups, without suffering from it, where he meets Marla Singer,

another faker. Simultaneously, he makes a new friend, Tyler Durden, and moves to his house when his flat explodes.

The first night the two men spend together, Tyler asks the protagonist to hit him, and that is the beginning of Fight Club, and of a new self-destructive lifestyle. Fight Club is an underworld organisation in which men hit each other every Friday night. The first rule about Fight Club is that you do not talk about Fight Club. At the same time, Tyler and Marla meet and start a sexual relationship not much approved of by the protagonist. When Fight Club is not destructive enough, Tyler creates Project Mayhem, for which they recruit men who have damaging assignments each week. At one point of the story, Tyler disappears and the protagonist looks for him everywhere and asks everybody about him. However, the last rule about Project Mayhem is you do not ask questions.

In Tyler's absence, Marla and the protagonist meet from time to time and develop a friendship. The climax of the story comes when the protagonist, in his search for Tyler, discovers that Tyler is himself: they are not two separate persons. While the protagonist is awake, he leads his life. But the moment he falls asleep, the Tyler's side of his split personality takes over and goes around causing damage. The protagonist decides that all that violence cannot continue, and after the unsuccessful attempt to end up with Project Mayhem, the only solution he finds to get rid of Tyler is committing suicide. *Fight club* is the story of a young man who suffers from a split personality disorder.

### **1.2.2 Summary of *Bartleby***

*Bartleby* is a short-story about the business and law world taking place at the middle of the 19th century in New York, and more precisely, at Wall Street. The first person narrator is a lawyer who owns an office of Master of Chancery, and has some copyists working for him. The lawyer is the focaliser of the story (Bal 1997), so that the narration is told from his point of view and the reader has access to his thoughts exclusively. He states that the purpose of his narration is to tell the story of a strange and enigmatic copyist who used to work for him, Bartleby, though the information he has about him is limited to what he saw of him with his own eyes.

The action of the story begins when, unexpectedly, this hard-working employee refuses to obey an order from his boss, and from that day onwards, he refuses to do an increasingly number of tasks. His shocking response ‘I would prefer not to’ is repeated after any command or question by the lawyer. Time after time, the lawyer tries to convince him to obey the orders using different strategies, but he never manages to and finishes having the work done by somebody else. At one point of the story, the lawyer decides to fire Bartleby and tries to do so unsuccessfully. After several failures and being afraid of his colleagues’ commentaries, he decides to move the office to some other building and leave the copyist there. Bartleby is finally arrested and taken to prison as a vagrant, and it is there where in the end he dies.

### **1.2.3 Summary of *The Collector***

Fowles’ first novel is the story of how a young clerk, Frederick Clegg, becomes fixated with art student Miranda. His obsession leads to kidnapping her in the basement of his house, with the intention of their falling in love together and forming a family. The novel is divided into four sections: the first one is Clegg’s narration of

the events until the beginning of Miranda's illness; the second part is Miranda's account of her daily experiences and thoughts during her imprisonment; and the third and fourth parts are again written by Clegg describing the events following the woman's fatal end.

Clegg and Miranda are two opposing characters, with completely different backgrounds and conflicting views about life and the world. Clegg was raised by his aunt in a lower-middle class family, with strong beliefs in Non-conformism and its implicit negative views about sexuality or alcohol. He works as a clerk at the Town Hall and, not having any friends, he dedicates his time to his exclusive hobby: to collect butterflies. Conversely, Miranda is a clever artistic young woman who, after winning a scholarship, is studying at the Slade School of Art at London. She was raised in a middle-class family and has an open mind and liberal attitudes towards art, sex, or class differences.

After winning a pool lottery, Clegg makes all the arrangements to kidnap the young woman and to attempt to make his dream about being with her come true. Clegg's narrative offers an account of the anecdotes and conversations held during the kidnapping, explained from the perspective of the knowledge of her fatal end, but keeping the suspense with intriguing flashforwards. On the contrary, Miranda's narrative reveals her fears and thoughts about her captor and her attempts to escape. But most importantly, writing offers Miranda a way to escape to the outside world, thinking about her close friend George Patson, speculating about her future life, and reflecting about topics such as art or politics. When Miranda attempts to escape by seducing Clegg, offering herself sexually to him, she falls from his grace and their relationship takes a new turn. For this reason, when she falls ill with pneumonia, he does not take any action to help her, until she dies in the end. Clegg's last section

explains how he starts observing another young woman and begins with the preparations for the new kidnapping.

### **1.3 Structure of this thesis**

After the introduction to my research, chapter 2 presents the theories I use as the theoretical background for the whole thesis. As my thesis is situated within the broad field of stylistics, I provide a brief introduction to this area of research and some more detailed explanations about the stylistic areas relevant for my analyses, e.g. cognitive stylistics and mind style. For the subsequent linguistic examination of the language of texts, I will first provide some background about context, especially the social context, which is given emphasis because fictional interaction takes place in a socio-cultural context that cannot be overlooked. I will also expound some pragmatic theories such as Grice's cooperative principle and conversational maxims, and Brown and Levinson's politeness theory. As for theories of social cognition, I will describe both model theory by van Dijk, and schema theory, which will serve to analyse both readers' and characters' mental processes. More specific cognitive notions will be provided in the theoretical sections of each chapter as they become relevant for textual analysis. Finally, given my contribution to characterisation, I will explain how this topic has been approached from the field of literary criticism. I will also mention the recently emerging area of 'fictional minds', which investigates characters' minds, though without the linguistic analysis offered in my work.

Part I of the thesis, 'Characters' mind styles' includes three chapters (3, 4, and 5), which aim at describing the mental set-ups of three characters from three different narrative texts: *Fight Club*, *Bartleby*, and *The Collector*. My claim is that the analysis

of the language of the text throws light on the mental functioning of these characters, who in addition seem to suffer from some type of mental condition (e.g. schizophrenia, autism, and a criminal mind respectively). Thus, after an introduction to their cognitive deviations, their mind styles will be discussed making use of the pragmatic theories and cognitive notions expounded in the previous chapter.

The second part of the thesis, 'Characters' self concepts', includes five chapters in which I theorise about characters' self-concepts (chapter 6), characters' possible selves (chapters 7 and 8), and characters' self-presentation styles (chapters 9 and 10). In Chapter 6, I begin explicating the self-concept, self-schemata and some related cognitive processes, as developed in the field of socio-cognitive psychology by Markus (1977). Then, I analyse the ways in which a character's self-concept is revealed in his/her language: how characters express their self-concepts, what self-schemata are important for them and how these condition information processing. I propose that characters may reveal their self-concepts explicitly or implicitly, and I suggest that information processing and self-regulation processes are to be considered implicit cues about characters' selves.

In a related fashion, chapter 7 expands the analysis of a character's self-concept taking into account future and hypothetical components of the self-system: possible selves (Markus and Nurius 1986). I will complement my analyses with other related frameworks such as possible worlds theory from literary semantics (Doležel 1976, Ryan 1991, Semino 1997), and the notion of the split self by Emmott (2002). After proposing some parallelisms between the notions of these related fields, I will offer an initial analysis of the language of the protagonists of *The Collector*, proving that a pragmatic analysis of their verbal behaviour is revealing about their self-concepts.

Chapter 8 continues with the analysis of the previous chapter. Here, I demonstrate that possible selves, which include ideal selves, ought selves and not-me selves, generate another characterisation tool to investigate characters' personalities, worldview, and mind style. The notions from cognitive psychology are linked with the notions from possible worlds theory offering a more illuminating analysis of characters' selves. This chapter also offers a cognitive stylistic approach to Emmott's split selves, providing a linguistic analysis of the expression of different facets of characters' selves.

Self-presentation theory is introduced in chapter 9, emphasising the self-presentation tactics and strategies available for characters to present their self-concepts. Self-presentation behaviour is regarded as goal-directed phenomena in the sense it is in the service of the actor's objectives. Characters' self-presentation styles will be investigated, especially the impressions they want to make on others and the aims they want to achieve. Politeness theory will be compared with self-presentation theory and some further developments for the former will be offered. The analytical section of this chapter offers an investigation on how narrator-characters self-present their self-concepts to different addressees by means of different styles.

Chapter 10 continues with the analysis of self-presentation applied at different data. Here, I will analyse character's conversations to arrive at conclusions about how they self-present their self-concepts in social interaction. Apart from self-presentation theory, I will make use of politeness theory and the cooperative principle to understand how readers arrive at a mental representation of characters through their conversational behaviour.

## 2 Literature review

### 2.1 Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to offer the theoretical background for my whole thesis. For this purpose, I will outline some general notions from pragmatic theories, theories of cognition, stylistics, and narratology. These broad areas will be referred to throughout my thesis. In addition, the relevant and more specific theories for each chapter will be explained in detail at the appropriate time.

My work is situated within the field of stylistics since my aim is the study of the language of literary texts. For this reason, I find it necessary to offer an account of what stylistics is and what kind of research has been carried out in this discipline<sup>1</sup>. In the same way, the pragmatic theories on which much of my analysis is based are expounded in this chapter. These theories offer the analytical tools to show the various ways in which characters use language and how conclusions about them can be drawn, owing to their usage of language. Pragmatic theories have been used widely for stylistic analysis of literary and non-literary texts. More pragmatic concepts will be elaborated in the analytical chapters as they become useful for my explanations.

The focus on the mental aspects of characters and readers' discourse processing makes the use of cognitive theories fundamental. Previous stylistic analyses (Cook 1994, Emmott 1997, Culpeper 2001, Semino 1997, Werth 1999) have almost exclusively applied schema theory to the relationship between the language of texts and readers' understanding of them. My use of theories of socio-cognitive psychology will expand this approach as far as I will also employ them to explore characters'

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<sup>1</sup> Stylistics will be dealt with in the last section of the chapter because the field of Cognitive Stylistics includes issues that will be explained under the section 'Cognitive theories'.

cognitive processing. Therefore, various socio-cognitive theories will be explained and used at different points in the thesis, according to the purpose and the analytical needs of each section.

Although my research is located within cognitive stylistics, the theoretical section on this field is relatively brief, compared with the sections on pragmatics and social cognition. This is due to the fact that cognitive stylistics has not concentrated on an analysis of character in the way I am proposing in this thesis. For this reason, in the last section, I offer some insight into the field of narratology because this literary perspective has tackled the topic of 'character'. I am especially interested in the emerging field of 'fictional minds', because of its cognitive approach to both the study of the mental functioning of characters and the reader's cognitive processing of the literary texts. Nevertheless, most narratologists are not interested in the linguistic analysis of the language of the text (an exception is research by Fludernik, Herman or Emmott). For these reasons, my research is grounded on both assumptions from cognitive stylistics and the narratological approach to fictional minds to a certain extent, as my analyses of narrative texts will demonstrate.

## **2.2 Pragmatic theories**

One of the most basic assumptions of all pragmatic theories is that discourse takes place in a context. When two people talk, the context in which their conversation takes place ranges from the physical situational context they find themselves in (e.g. the street, the cinema) to the socio-historical context (e.g. after the Vietnam war). All features of contexts influence communication. One relevant aspect of context is the *social context*, which plays a determining role in conversations between real life

people, as well as between characters from literary texts. When two fictional characters talk, they find themselves in a social context *within* the ‘narrative actual world’ (to be explained in section 7.2.3). Below, I will provide some explanation of the social context, which will be taken into consideration for all pragmatic analyses in my thesis.

One of the most influential theories within the field of pragmatics was proposed by Grice (1975). His theory of the *Cooperative Principle and conversational maxims* provides some assumptions for normal communication to take place efficiently. Even though the theory was put forward to account for real life communication, it has been effectively applied in the analysis of literary texts. It has been demonstrated that the way characters manage, either following or breaking, these communication principles proves revealing about their personalities (Culpeper 2001, Chen 1996). Thus, I will use this theory to show how characters’ mind styles are revealed in their particular ways to deal with the conversational maxims and their attempts to accomplish ‘normal communication’.

Another pragmatic theory of enormous influence within this field is *politeness theory*. Brown and Levinson (1987)’s account of politeness theory offers a revealing theoretical framework for the study of interpersonal communication. Generally speaking, politeness is about the strategic use of language to achieve particular goals. According to Leech (1983), politeness analysis explains why people use indirectness in conveying what they mean. Using this theory, conversations can be analysed to arrive at conclusions about the participants’ interactive styles and personalities. As for literary texts, its usefulness has been demonstrated, for example, in analysing the negotiation of the power status between characters, especially in drama and narrative texts (Simpson 1989). Power relationships and their manipulation, as well as other

sociological variables, play an important role in the relationships between characters in my data. Thus, politeness analyses of characters' use of language will throw light on their interpersonal behaviour and identities.

### **2.2.1 The social context**

Discourse does not take place in a vacuum. Participants of a conversation are social members embedded in a social context. Van Dijk, in his analysis of racism, defines the social context as 'the organized set of properties of the social situation that are relevant for the structures, strategies, and cognitive processing of discourse as social interaction' (1987b: 345). He also suggests that one of the tasks of the analysis of the properties of the social situation involves the social characterization of participants. This usually implies specifications about speaker and hearer: class and group membership, gender, age, religion, socio-economic status, institutional functions and other roles. However, these specifications are not to be taken as static characteristics of participants for each communicative event. Instead, van Dijk proposes as a more adequate approach a 'dynamic' view in which social dimensions are negotiated through strategic interaction (see also Thomas 1995). Van Dijk (1987b) states that the social identities of the participants and the negotiation of the social dimensions can be abstracted from the processes of self-presentation, impression management, categorisation or attribution, although he does not provide any analysis of how these processes work. This can be considered one of the weaknesses of van Dijk's work, since his application of his theoretical framework to social interaction is rather limited. I will attempt to fill this gap in his work by analysing how readers form a mental representation of characters' identities and of characters' mental representation

of each other and the social context, through their verbal behaviour. These mental representations will be revealed through the analysis of the processes van Dijk mentions, especially self-presentation which will be the topic of chapters 9 and 10.

Verschueren's research on pragmatics explains that the relationship between linguistic choices and the social world is regulated by 'some setting-, institution-, or community-specific communicative norms that have to be observed' (1999) by the participants of a conversation. These communicative norms involve assumptions about who can realise certain linguistic acts and the way these can be performed depending on the social situation and the relationship between speakers. Depending on their role within institutions or society, speakers are endowed with different degrees of power and it is this power that allows only certain people to perform specific speech acts in specific linguistic forms.

This last aspect of the social context as conceived by Verschueren is captured by the concept *activity type*. The notion of activity type was put forward by Levinson [1979 (1992)] as 'any culturally recognized activity', such as a job interview, a birthday party, or a football game, with restrictions on the acceptable contributions. He defines activity type as:

a fuzzy category whose focal members are goal-defined, socially constituted, bounded, events with constraints on participants, setting, and so on, but above all on the kinds of allowable contributions. ([1979] 1992: 69)

We can conclude that two factors are of extreme importance: the participants, and their social dimensions, and the contributions the situation allows them to make. Levinson has a cognitive view of the concept of activity types, as far as he also states the relevance of schematic processes, which is consistent with van Dijk's cognitive perspective of the social context. He writes:

to each and every clearly demarcated activity there is a corresponding set of inferential schemata. These schemata are tied to (derived from, if one likes) the structural properties of the activity in question. ([1979] 1992: 72)

Following this quotation, the structural properties of activity types generate some schemata: activity type schemata. These schemata include expectations set by the activity type about the kinds of contributions interactants are allowed to make.

If we take as an example of an activity type a job interview, the event has an easily recognizable goal: hiring a person for a job position. The participants are usually one interviewee and one interviewer (although there may be more), being the goal of the former to obtain the job position and the goal of the latter to check if the candidate is optimal for the job. As for the allowable contributions, the interviewer will usually ask questions relative to the interviewee's capacities for the job and the interviewee is supposed to provide answers to the requests. These would be the 'standard' components of a job interview since, as Levinson explains, it is a fuzzy category with border-line examples which do not fit completely in the activity type, e.g. an interview to hire an illegal immigrant for a one-day job.

Although an activity type implies some constraints relative to acceptable contributions, people may choose to break these principles to achieve a variety of objectives. If discourse participants do not observe communicative norms with the use of contextually inappropriate linguistic choices, they can bring about an unexpected social situation, which is to be negotiated in the interaction between speaker and hearer. Contexts, all kinds of contexts, are generated in language use, in the dynamic interaction between utterers and interpreters. Since linguistic choices are made from a vast range of possibilities for specific instances of language use, contexts can be said to be actively constructed, so that language users have the ability to modify them. In

various sections of this thesis, I will show how characters do manipulate the social context they find themselves in to attain a variety of goals, either successfully or unsuccessfully.

### **2.2.2 Grice's maxims**

Grice's work on the Cooperative Principle and the conversational maxims (1975) has been deeply influential for the development of pragmatics. As Thomas explains, 'Grice's theory is an attempt at explaining how a hearer gets from what is said to what is meant, from the level of expressed meaning to the level of the implied meaning.' (1995: 56). I will provide here a short introduction to Grice's theory which will be expanded in further chapters of the thesis, and applied to the analysis of characters' language.

#### **2.2.2.1 Implicature**

When the meaning of a sentence is not restricted to the meaning of the words employed but an additional meaning is conveyed, we have an example of an implicature. If, when I hear the telephone ringing, I say 'That is the telephone ringing!'. I may want my interlocutor to draw the implicature that I want him to answer the phone.

There are two types of implicatures. A *conventional implicature* is carried by the intrinsic meaning of some words like *but*, *even*, *therefore*, and *yet* (Levinson 1983: 127). For example, *but* carries the implicature that what comes next is unexpected. So in a sentence like 'She was forty but beautiful', *but* implicates that at that age, a woman is not usually beautiful (Thomas 1995: 57). On the other hand, a

*conversational implicature* does not depend on the meaning of words but on the particular context of usage of discourse, as it is explained in the following sections.

### 2.2.2.2 Cooperative Principle and conversational maxims

The Cooperative Principle was put forward by Grice (1975) to explain conversational implicature. His definition runs as follows:

Make your contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged. (1975: 45)

Grice's definition points out that there are certain principles that guide conversations, setting expectations about interaction procedures on both speaker and hearer. Not following these expectations will bring about some kind of implicature and an additional meaning will be drawn. I consider that Grice's theory shares some of the cognitive assumptions of schema theory in that it relies on expectations to infer further meanings. The kind of implicature the reader will draw depends on which of the maxims is not followed. The maxims are:

**Maxim of Quantity:** Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purpose of the exchange). Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

**Maxim of Quality:** Do not say what you believe to be false. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

**Maxim of Relation:** Be relevant.

**Maxim of Manner:** Avoid obscurity of expression. Avoid ambiguity. Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity). Be orderly. (1975: 45-46)

The cognitive assumption about the participants' expectations behind these maxims is captured by Antaki, who explains that:

For any utterance, the listener assumes that the speaker is abiding by the maxims and is saying something relevant, clear, informative and honest. Equally, the speaker knows that what he or she says will be treated by the listener as being relevant and so on. (...) The speaker can simply exploit the listener's expectation that what is coming is a relevant explanation. (1994: 36)

### **2.2.2.3 Non-observance of the maxims**

When somebody chooses not to observe a maxim, there are different ways of doing so.

#### *Flouting a maxim*

When speakers blatantly flout a maxim, they wish that the hearer look for another meaning, apart from the meaning of the utterance. That extra meaning is called the conversational implicature. Flouts can exploit all the maxims to achieve their implicature. For example, a flout to the maxim of quality involves saying something that is clearly not true, like in the case of irony; and a flout to the maxim of quantity would involve saying less than is necessary.

#### *Violating a maxim*

Grice defines the violation of a maxim as the 'unostentatious' non-observance of it, so that by breaking the maxim, the speaker 'will be liable to mislead' (1975: 49). In some activity types, like trials and politicians' speech, maxim violation abounds. In those cases, speakers may be able to mislead their audiences without saying something that is 'untrue'.

#### *Opting out of a maxim*

A speaker would opt out of a maxim when he does not want to cooperate with the conversation in the way the maxim requires. This takes place when, for example, in the public sphere, somebody cannot answer questions due to moral or legal reasons.

### *Infringing a maxim*

The speaker who infringes a maxim does not intend the audience to draw any conversational implicature. This non-observance is simply due to imperfect linguistic performance. The source of this type of non-observance is attributed to Grice (1981) in Thomas (1995). She provides her own definition of an infringement:

this type of non-observance could occur because the speaker has an imperfect command of the language (a young child or a foreign learner), because the speaker's performance is impaired in some way (nervousness, drunkenness, excitement), because of some cognitive impairment, or simply because the speaker is constitutionally incapable of speaking clearly, to the point, etc. (1995: 74)

In various parts of my thesis, I will demonstrate the special relevancy of this type of non-observance for my research on mind style. I will show how the infringement of maxims may reveal characters' self-concepts and, more particularly, their cognitive conditions, both to readers and to other characters interacting with them. In the case of conversations between characters, I will demonstrate how the conversational behaviour of mentally ill characters failing to observe maxims constitutes a source of self-presentation behaviour for other characters to draw inferences about them. Similarly, readers will be able to draw inferences about characters' mind styles from their infringement of maxims both in their conversations with other characters and in their roles as characters-narrators, in their narrations. I will also claim that the infringement of maxims by characters could be seen as a flout of the maxim at the

author-audience level, because the author flouts the maxim so that we draw an implicature about the character.

### *Suspending a maxim*

A maxim is suspended when there are no expectations that the maxim will be fulfilled and therefore, no implicature will be drawn. This last non-observance type was offered by some authors (see Thomas 1995: 72, 76-78) to account for culture-specific cases or particular events that were not accounted for with the other maxims. For example, at funeral prayers, only the good qualities of the deceased will be mentioned, even though everybody may know the negative qualities of the person, thus suspending the maxim of quantity.

Grice's theory offers an interesting framework to analyse the speech style of characters in narrative texts. What maxims characters fail to observe and what kind of non-observance they make use of will disclose aspects of their identities and ways of conceptualising the world. I will return to these issues at several stages in my thesis.

### **2.2.3 Politeness theory**

The approach to politeness theory that I will use in my thesis is the one proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987). I have chosen their work on politeness, rather than other theories (Leech 1980, or Fraser 1990), because it is the most influential and widely discussed among pragmaticists. For this reason, their work has also received much criticism, so I will also deal with the shortcomings of the theory and possible solutions during textual analysis. The general concern of politeness theory as outlined by Brown and Levinson is raising 'questions about the foundations of human social

life and interaction' (1987: 1), given their attempt at formulating universals of language usage. For this purpose, they take into consideration that 'patterns of message construction, or 'ways of putting things', or simply language usage, are part of the very stuff that social relationships are made of' (1987: 55), offering a link between linguistic behaviour and social variables. According to Thomas (1995), Brown and Levinson view politeness as a pragmatic phenomenon in which 'a strategy (or set of strategies) are used by a speaker to achieve a variety of goals, such as promoting or maintaining harmonious relations' (1995: 158).

The main concept of their theory is the individual's face, a concept they borrow from Goffman (1967), which is defined as the public social value or self-image an individual claims for himself within society (1987: 61). There are two facets of face: positive face refers to the speaker's claim that his image and wants be approved of by others, and negative face refers to the speaker's claim for freedom, the need not to be imposed upon:

**negative face:** the want of every 'competent adult member' that his actions be unimpeded by others.

**positive face:** the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others.  
(Brown and Levinson 1987: 62)

Brown and Levinson view face as an aspect that has to be attended to in conversation by interactants, since it can be lost, maintained or enhanced. Usually, everybody's face depends on everybody else's face being maintained, thus, in conversation, participants tend to maintain their faces as well as others'.

### **2.2.3.1 Face threatening acts**

Although in social interaction people attend to each other's face, there are some acts that are intrinsically threatening; these are called face threatening acts, or FTAs.

Brown and Levinson offer two distinctions regarding face threatening acts (1987: 65-68). The first distinction is between those acts that threaten positive face and those that threaten negative face; the second distinction would be between FTAs threatening the speaker's face and those threatening the hearer's face (1987: 65-68).

A threat to somebody's positive face implies that the image of that person is not approved of. Disapproving of somebody is an FTA to the hearer's positive face and an apology is a threat to the speaker's positive face, since he regrets doing a previous FTA. An act threatening somebody's negative face implies an imposition on his or her freedom of action. Thus, a request would be an FTA to the hearer's negative face and expressing thanks would threaten the speaker's negative face, by humbling his own face.

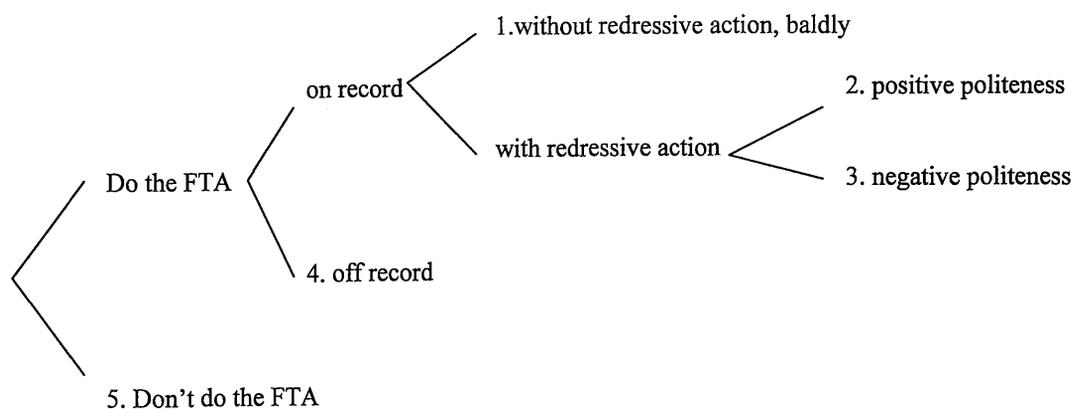
Brown and Levinson's theory presupposes that an FTA can only threaten either the speaker's or the hearer's face. However, it has been acknowledged that some acts may pose threats to both participants at the same time (Thomas 1995: 176). Simply asking somebody for a favour implies a threat to the hearer's negative face, since they have their freedom of action imposed upon, and the speaker's positive face, since they may not be approved of consequently. I will provide examples of this during the analysis of literary texts, proposing further developments of politeness theory.

### **2.2.3.2 Strategies for performing FTAs**

When performing an FTA, actors can use several strategies to minimise the threat (1987: 68-71). When a speaker foresees that some act may be an FTA and decides to go on record, he can choose between performing it bald-on-record or redressing the threat using some strategies. Performing the FTA baldly does not involve any redressive action, so that the act is done in the most direct and unambiguous way, e.g.

‘Open the window!’. On the other hand, the redressive action of FTAs counteracts the potential threat and damage to the interlocutor’s face, e.g. ‘Could you open the window, please?’ or ‘It’s too warm here’. The strategies to redress an FTA can be classified depending on the facet of face they attempt to redress. On the one hand, we can use *negative face strategies* to soften the imposition of an FTA by using polite conventional forms. On the other hand, we can use *positive face strategies* emphasising our high opinion of the hearer and showing solidarity.

Another option is to perform the FTA only indirectly (off-record strategies) so that the FTA is more ambiguous and the actors cannot be said to commit themselves to a particular intent. Instead of uttering the FTA, it is simply hinted at and it remains within the hearer to decide the intention of the utterance. And if the speaker prefers not to threaten the hearer’s face at all, there exists the option of not producing the FTA. The following diagram offers all the possible strategies to perform FTAs, as proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987: 69):



### 2.2.3.3 Weightiness of an FTA

The conversational strategies that the speakers select to produce FTAs are affected by factors from the social context in which the interaction takes place. According to

Brown and Levinson (1987: 74-6), these sociological factors are three: the relative power (P) between speaker and hearer, the social distance (D), and the absolute ranking (R) of the imposition in the particular culture. Thomas adds one more factor to this list, namely 'relative rights and obligations between the speaker and the hearer' (1995: 124). Although Brown and Levinson do mention rights and obligations in their work, they do not include it in the variables to calculate the weightiness of FTAs.

I consider that an important clarification is that actors in a conversation are aware and share the same values for these particular variables, so that their knowledge is mutual. Thus, actors need to be conscious of the power relation between them (boss-employee, peers), of the social distance (strangers, intimate friends), and the ranking of the particular threats (asking the time, asking for a ride). When the two actors are aware and share the weightiness of an FTA, Brown and Levinson predict that they will produce it using redressive strategies in such a way that communication takes place efficiently.

Regarding the power variable, Brown and Levinson suggest that 'P is an asymmetric social dimension of relative power' (1987: 82); the more power one of the actors has over the other, the greater the variable P will be. French and Raven (1959) pay especial attention to this factor and specify different types of power:

1. Reward power: the power one person has over another and that can lead to positive outcomes.
2. Coercive power: the power one person has over another and that can lead to negative outcomes.
3. Legitimate power: one person has the right to ask for certain things as a result from role, age or status.
4. Referent power: one person has power over another because the other admires and wants to be like him.

5. Expert power: one person has some knowledge or expertise the other person needs.

As for social distance, 'D is a symmetric social dimension of similarity / difference' (1987: 60), so that distance varies depending if S and H are strangers, acquaintances, friends, family, partners, and so on. The result of social closeness is the giving and receiving of positive face. R is a culturally and situationally determined variable that determines the size of a given threat in a particular culture. The ranking of the imposition is needed, according to Thomas, to account for speech acts that involve a great threat but are performed with minimal redress. For instance, a Spanish police officer asking for car documentation would simply say loudly: 'Car documentation please!' In these situations, it is usually the case that the speaker has the right to make a particular demand and the hearer has the obligation to comply.

The factors we just reviewed that define a social situation are not simply determined in advance by the intrinsic characteristics of participants just before an encounter takes place. In some situations, there are certain values assigned beforehand to the parameters: a sergeant has power over a soldier, social distance between strangers is greater than between close friends, the size of the imposition of a request for one pound is smaller than for a hundred pounds, a lawyer has the right to ask and the accused has the obligation to answer. However, it is only through discourse that speakers can fix and negotiate the values of these factors. In fact, it is usually the case that for a participant to reach his own goals, he will have to negotiate the power, social distance, etc. in order to change the other person's perception of these dimensions. This negotiation will be dealt with later in the analysis of my texts.

### **2.3 Cognitive theories**

This section will expound some theories of cognitive psychology because my thesis is part of the emerging field of cognitive stylistics, within the wider area of stylistics. Cognitive stylistics is a field that combines linguistic theories with theories of cognition for the systematic analysis of texts (see 2.4.1). As the two aims of my thesis are to study how the minds of characters function and how readers process texts to arrive at conclusions about characters, I need to make use of cognitive theories that explore and propose explanations for the working of human cognitive processing. My claim is that schema theory and model theory can be used to characterise the mental selves of literary characters, their self-concepts, and their conceptualisation of the world. Therefore, in this section I will outline the guidelines of these two theories, which will be used in the analytical sections of the rest of the thesis.

### **2.3.1 Schema theory**

In this section, I would like to offer some of the basic notions that define schema theory, a theory developed in cognitive psychology and artificial intelligence. The writings of Barlett [1932] (1995) are usually considered as the origin of this theory. Schema theory is a theory of knowledge held in long term memory, and offers a proposal of how information processing works. The notions provided below try to explain the mental processes necessary for cognitive acts such as understanding, processing, memorising, and retrieving information, among others.

#### **2.3.1.1 Memories: episodic and semantic**

The cognitive processes of the human mind rely on memory. It has become standard within discussions of cognition to distinguish between two different types of memory: short-term memory (STM) or working memory and long-term memory (LTM):

Long-term memory consists of the vast store of information one can potentially bring to mind. Short-term memory refers to the information about which one is thinking at any given moment. (Fiske and Taylor 1984: 299)

Short-term memory assigns structure and interpretation to incoming information from the sensory world. Long-term memory stores information processed in short-term memory. Given that short-term memory (STM) can only hold a certain quantity of information, that information is transferred to long-term memory (LTM) when it is given structure and interpretation. The structure given to information in STM serves to organise the representation of the same information in LTM. The more structured the information in LTM, the easier it will be to retrieve it for later use.

Long-term memory has also been divided between episodic memory (EM) and semantic memory (SM) (Tulving 1972). The information analysed in STM is provisionally stored in episodic memory as episodes. Such mental episodes are our unique personal experiences, our subjective interpretations of real world experiences. For example, when we read a poem or have a conversation, the information processed is held as an episode in EM. Conversely, the information contained in semantic memory is more general and abstract. SM contains information about the world, people, social interaction, language, etc. As much of this information is socially shared by the members of particular cultures, van Dijk (1987b) prefers to use the term *social memory*. Social memory includes, for example, my knowledge of how to behave and what to say in a job interview or a birthday party. Episodic memory is

more a personal memory that includes our subjective interpretation of social events we have witnessed.

By means of several mental processes, such as generalisation, abstraction, and decontextualisation, the information in episodic memory is transformed into its more general correlates in social memory. For instance, our repeated experiences with individual objects, such as tables, result in a general schema (in social memory) for the concept 'table'.

### **2.3.1.2 Schemata**

A schema is defined as a 'cognitive structure that represents knowledge about a concept or type of stimulus, including its attributes and the relations between those attributes' (Fiske and Taylor 1991: 98). Schemata are concerned with abstract generic knowledge that holds across many particular instances. Schemata facilitate top-down, conceptually driven, or theory-driven processes, which means, processes influenced by one's organised prior knowledge, as opposed to processes that are bottom-up or data-driven. A schema contains general expectations and knowledge of the world. For example, I have a schema for birthday parties that I have gathered from my experience of going to birthday parties and generalised into a socially-shared knowledge structure. This schema includes a variety of information and expectations about this type of situations: there is usually a birthday cake, people sing 'Happy birthday to you', or people give presents to the concerned person. Thus, if I am invited to a birthday party, my BIRTHDAY PARTY schema determines my expectations about such situations. Recently, cognitive psychologists (e.g. Fiske and Neuberg 1990) have stressed the interplay between data-driven processes and schema-driven processes.

## *Categorisation*

Before being able to apply a schema, it is necessary to classify the situation or person as belonging to a particular category. A schema cannot be applied without first categorising a stimulus. The categorisation process (e.g. Rosch 1975) is concerned with how to identify things and people as members of one category, similar to others in that category and different from items in other categories.

According to the prototype theory view of categories, 'instances range from being quite typical to atypical, with a most typical or prototypical instance best representing the category' (Fiske and Taylor 1991:106, Rosch 1978). The *prototype* is the 'central tendency' within a category. For example, the category 'fruit' may have as its prototype 'orange' or 'apple', while less typical instances would include 'avocado' or 'lychee'. When categorising, people decide if an instance fits within a category by comparing it to the category prototype. Category members are related by the criterion of *family resemblance*. Thus, belonging to a category is not a yes or no matter. Category members fall within fuzzy boundaries, so it is not always clear which instances belong in the category. Categorising objects, events and people allows us to simplify and structure the social world and to anticipate future behaviour and experiences.

Categories are thought to be organised hierarchically, at varying levels of inclusion (Rosch et al. 1976). Different levels of categories are used for different purposes, being the intermediate or basic level the most frequently used. Objects in basic-level categories possess characteristic features that distinguish them from objects in other related categories. The superordinate level encompasses more abstract categories that tend to be over-inclusive whilst the subordinate level includes lower-

level categories that are very detailed. For example, a car would belong to the basic level, the superordinate level would be a means of transportation, and in the subordinate level we could include a racing car, a dodgem car, a sports car, a hearse, or a taxi.

### *Application to social perception*

In the same way that we categorise objects and activities, we also categorise people, usually according to their personalities (Fiske and Taylor 1991: 107). When we are exposed to somebody's extrovert attributes such as outgoing and friendly, we may later assume other traits, such as energetic (Cantor and Mischel 1977). Social categories are also viewed as fuzzy sets centring on a prototype.

According to Cantor and Mischel (1979), social categories are also hierarchically organised, with categories becoming more inclusive as they become broader. This hierarchical organisation is also applied to people's scripts for common sequences of events, which may be arranged by upper-level acts, such as going to a restaurant, and lower-level acts, such as ordering a bottle of wine (Vallacher and Wegner 1987). Similarly, people's categories for their current behaviour are also organised hierarchically, as well as social situations (Schutte, Kenrik and Sadalla 1985).

Person categories and social situation categories are closely related. People belong to multiple categories, and people vary their behaviour to fit different contexts. For this reason, it is useful to categorise people as a compound of person-in-situation episode. It is easier to imagine a priest in a specific situation, for example, giving a mass, rather than in the abstract (Cantor and Kihlstrom 1987).

### *Exemplars*

An alternative to schema theory is the exemplars approach (see Smith and Medin 1981, for a review). This view suggests people remember instances or exemplars one has encountered rather than an abstract prototype. People categorise objects or people according to resemblance to remembered exemplars from a category. For example, if someone asserts all restaurants have waitresses, one may retrieve specific exemplars contradicting the statement. The exemplar view has some advantages over the prototype view because it accounts for people's knowledge of specific instances, variations within a category, correlated attributes, and easy category revision. Some researches, like Cantor and Kihlstrom (1987), have concluded that people use a combination of prototypes and exemplar-based representation, depending on the purposes for which the information is being processed.

#### **2.3.1.3 Types of schemata**

Social schema research has generated a typology of schemata. All types serve similar functions: they influence the encoding of new information, memory for old information and inferences about missing information.

### *Self-schema*

Markus defines self-schemata as 'cognitive generalisations about the self, derived from past experience, that organise and guide the processing of self-related information contained in the individual's social experiences' (1977: 64). An individual is said to be *self-schematic* in dimensions along which he has clear self-conceptions and *aschematic* if a given dimension is not central for his self-concept. For example, if you have a clear conception of yourself as sporty, you would be

classified as schematic on that particular dimension. But if you are unsure whether you would define yourself as sporty, you would be classified as aschematic in this dimension. Self-schemata form part of the self-concept, and are central to identity and self-definition. See 6.2.1 for a more detailed explanation of self-schemata and other related notions of the self-concept.

### *Person schema*

Person schemata deal with people's understanding of the personality traits of individuals, enabling people to categorise others and make inferences about them (Cantor and Mischel 1977). Person schemata serve the purpose of categorising individuals according to their dominant personality traits. Cantor and Mischel argue that personality traits may serve as prototypes people use to process information about others. Thus, if I classify a person as an extrovert, I will expect that person to act according to the knowledge stored in my EXTROVERT schema, for example, to be a talkative person, to be outgoing, to have an interesting social life, or to have many acquaintances. Moreover, this EXTROVERT schema would also influence the encoding of information about this person, my inferences and memory about him/her.

### *Role schema*

Role schemata refer to the knowledge people have of the expectations of specific role positions in society. A social role refers to the expected behaviours of a person in a particular social position, so role schemata are cognitive structures that organise knowledge about appropriate behaviours. Fiske and Taylor (1991) distinguish between two types of roles. There are *achieved roles*, the ones acquired by effort and training, e.g. the doctor role or the sports team leader role. Achieved roles include

expectations about the behaviour of individuals occupying certain positions. There are also *ascribed roles* that are acquired at birth or automatically, e.g. sex, age, race. Being male or female, young or old, black or white, carries certain role-based expectations for behaviour, so role schemas based on ascribed roles are one way of accounting for stereotypes. A stereotype can be defined as ‘a cognitive structural concept, referring to a set of expectations held by the perceiver regarding members of a social group’ (Hamilton 1979: 65). Ascribed roles tend to be highly visible and are usually processed prior to any other person categorisation. Other authors classify achieved roles as *social role schemata* and ascribed roles as *group membership schemata*, obtaining a three-level hierarchy (see Brewer *et al.* 1981, Andersen *et al.* 1990, and for its application in cognitive stylistics Culpeper 2001).

#### *Event schema or script*

Event schemata describe the appropriate sequential organisation of events in everyday and well-known activities (Schank and Abelson 1977). For example, we may have a culturally determined script for ‘going shopping’ which would contain information about sequentially ordered events, e.g. you go to a shop, choose some products, pay to the cashier... Scripts serve to organise people’s expectations regarding a likely sequence of events and predict the future. They are useful to set goals and plan strategies to achieve such goals. In order to predict the world around us, we need more than general scripts, we need to know people’s intentions and goals. Predicting other’s people and our own behaviour depends on knowing what goals motivate behaviour.

#### *Other schemata*

People may have schemata for almost anything, so many other kinds of schemata are plausible, e.g. place schemata. Moreover, different types of schemata overlap considerably: ascribed role schemata are related to person schemata, as when a group stereotype includes expected personality traits, e.g. 'blacks are lazy'.

#### **2.3.1.4 Functions of schemata**

Schemata influence the encoding of new information, memory for old information, and inferences where information is missing.

##### *Encoding*

Schemata lend organisation to experience. A schema is matched against incoming data and if the match is good, the schema is imposed upon the information. Then, the schema guides the identification of the elements of the incoming information, and it provides a context for its meaning, organisation, and internal representation. According to Fiske and Taylor (1991), visually prominent physical features often lead people to trigger social schemata. Some features like race, age, and sex are used to classify people into categories quickly (McCann et al. 1985). And when the person is categorised as white, young or female, the stereotypic content of the schema is likely to apply. Schematic encoding operates from the earliest moments of perceptions. So schemata affect how quickly we perceive, what we notice and how we interpret what we notice. People instantly use age, sex, attractiveness, job titles, etc. to form impressions. For instance, when you expect to meet a friend's grandfather, the stereotypic knowledge about grandfathers sets some expectations that may be met or not.

## *Memory*

Fiske and Taylor (1991) explain that schemata influence what social information will be encoded and retrieved from memory. Visually prominent social schemata (such as race and sex) influence what is encoded and later retrieved. A good match between incoming information and schema facilitates recall. Schema-consistent material, consistent with one's expectations, is better remembered than schema-inconsistent material, while irrelevant information is forgotten (Hastie 1981). However, people do not always favour schema-consistent information. Schemata that are weak, tentative or developing make social perceivers especially open to inconsistent information. For example, children's gender schemata show an advantage for remembering schema-inconsistent information (Ruble and Stangor 1986), and people also tend to remember schema-inconsistent information when forming a first impression (Higgins and Bargh 1987).

## *Inference and evaluation*

People make many judgments on line, while they encode information. In such cases, memory and judgments are unrelated because the judgment is not based on what is recalled. When a judgment is generated after encoding, people base the judgment on what they can remember, and their memory and judgment will correspond, leading to a memory-based judgement (Hastie and Park 1986). For example, subjects may be told they have to judge a person's suitability as a teacher before receiving any information, making the judgment on-line, or they may be told they have to make the judgment afterwards, making the judgment memory-based.

Fiske (1982) argues that some schemata are characterised by an affective / evaluative component, and if an instance fits the schema, the affect / evaluation is

cued in an automatic fashion. For example, we may experience automatic fear in the presence of a dentist or we may feel instant happiness at winning the lottery. Schema-triggered affect can be elicited by one's idiosyncratic schemata, the dentist example, or by culturally shared schemata, such as ethnic prejudice. The most fundamental type of categorisation that elicits affective or evaluative responses is 'us' vs. 'them'.

Although schema theory conceptualises social cognition as theory-driven, this view has been challenged. As Fiske and Neuberg (1990) explain, in some cases, people are influenced by the stimulus information itself and they do not apply a schema. So, when people interpret the data as supporting a schema, they do use the schema, but when they interpret data as undermining the schema, they rely more on the data. People seem to use a continuum of impression formation, ranging from theory-driven, category-based, or schematic processes to more data-driven, attribute-based, or individuating processes. These strategies will be adopted depending on the nature of the stimulus information. People initially categorise on the basis of noticeable physical cues and labels. Then, people try to confirm these initial categories. Category confirmation is usually successful, but if category confirmation fails, people recategorise, generating new categories, subcategories, or exemplars. Finally, when it is not easy to categorise, people will proceed piecemeal, attribute by attribute, through the data. In relation to characterisation, Culpeper (2001) suggests that the fact that characters are considered flat or round depends on whether readers use schematic processes or individuating processes to interpret them.

### **2.3.1.5 Schema stability and change**

The tendency towards schema stability is demonstrated by the fact that well-developed schemata usually resist change even in the face of disconfirming evidence,

as is the case with stereotypes (Augoustinos and Walker 1995). Moreover, people may ignore some exceptions to the schema or interpret the exception as proving the schema. Schemata become stronger over time simply by thinking about the concept in whatever direction they initially tended. People also continue using their schemata, failing to revise the original data on which it was based and even gathering new supporting evidence for the schemata. If you categorise a new acquaintance as having no sense of humour, it is unlikely that you rethink your judgment. Although schemata are difficult to change, there are also pressures towards change.

Having the wrong schema can be costly, so perceivers should be alert to the possibility of being wrong. Three possible models for schema change have been proposed. The *bookkeeping model* (Rumerhart and Norman 1981) suggests that people revise the schema with each new piece of information. Discrepant information will lead to gradual small changes and extreme deviations will lead to considerable changes. The *conversion model* suggests that schemata change massively and suddenly when salient instances contradict the schema (Rothbart 1981). The *subtyping model* suggests that cases disconfirming the schema are relegated to subcategories. This model confirms the hierarchical structure of schemata with general superordinate categories at the top and concrete specific subcategories at the bottom (Weber and Crocker 1983).

#### **2.3.1.6 Criticisms of schema theory**

Although schema theory has been the dominant perspective within social cognition research, it has been subject to a number of criticisms. The most common criticism is that it is a general and non-specific theory that lacks predictive power (Eysenk and Keane 1990). The schema concept is so unrestricted that it can account for

contradictory findings and is therefore unfalsifiable. The fact that information processing is always theory-driven, as schema theory implies, has also been challenged. Instead, a continuum model of information processing using data-driven processes was suggested as more appropriate (Fiske and Neuberg 1990).

Apart from schema theory's emphasis on perceived stability, the theory also carries the implicit message that schematic thinking is inevitable. Although research on stereotyping suggests this, people do have some control on their use of schemata. Depending on situational, individual and cultural factors, people may attempt to control their use of schematic processes.

Some aspects of schema theory will be further developed in other chapters of my thesis to serve analytical purposes. In particular, self-schemata will be used to demonstrate what characters think of themselves, their self-concepts, and how they project these identities. I will prove that self-schemata have ubiquitous consequences for the processing of information, entailing world views and mind styles peculiar to the protagonists of my narratives.

### **2.3.1.7 Schema theory and literature**

When schema theory has been applied to the study of literary texts, the emphasis has usually been on the reader's background knowledge and its influence in different interpretations of texts. Cook (1990, 1994) applies schema theory and, more particularly, schema change to the analysis of texts offering an approach to the definition of literariness. He argues that in the tradition of Russian Formalists the definition of literariness was founded on 'discourse deviation', based on the linguistic properties of texts (1994: 182). For him, discourse deviation occurs when the interaction between the linguistic structure of the text and the reader's schematic

representation of the world brings about a change in the reader's schemata. Therefore, the fundamental nature of literariness resides in the challenge to readers' schemata. Cook's theory of literariness is based on:

A dynamic interaction between linguistic and text-structural form on the one hand, and schematic representation of the world on the other, whose overall result is to bring about a change in the schemata of the reader. (Cook 1994: 182)

According to his definition, when literary texts challenge or modify the readers' existing schemata, the text can be considered as literary discourse. Thus, the two phenomena that define the essence of literariness are *schema disruption*, when the reader's schemata are challenged, and *schema refreshment*, when the reader's schemata are modified and changed. This view has been controversial and received much criticism because it implies that texts that confirm readers' schemata should not be considered literary texts. Thus, Cook's proposal of a link between schema refreshment and literary texts excludes many texts from being considered 'literature'. In objection to this argument, Semino (1997) adopts the view that literary texts 'range on a continuum from schema reinforcement at one end to schema refreshment at the other end.' (1997: 154).

The application of schema theory to the analysis of literary works has received much attention in the last years and a number of issues have been addressed. Narrative texts have been analysed using schema theory by authors such as Freundlieb (1982) in order to study Poe's tales, and Gladsky (1992) who explores world and language schemata in Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange*. Semino (1997) investigates how readers interpret poetic texts differently, according to the schemata instantiated during the reading process. As for drama, Culpeper (2001) examines the role of readers' schemata in the process of characterisation in Shakespearean plays.

In my thesis, schema theory, with a focus on self-schemata, will be used to reveal how readers create a mental representation of characters' self-concepts. Some of the aspects of characters' mental functioning I will discuss are: what are characters' self-schemata, how they express their self-concept, how it changes, how their self-schemata influence their processing of information, and how they project these self-schemata.

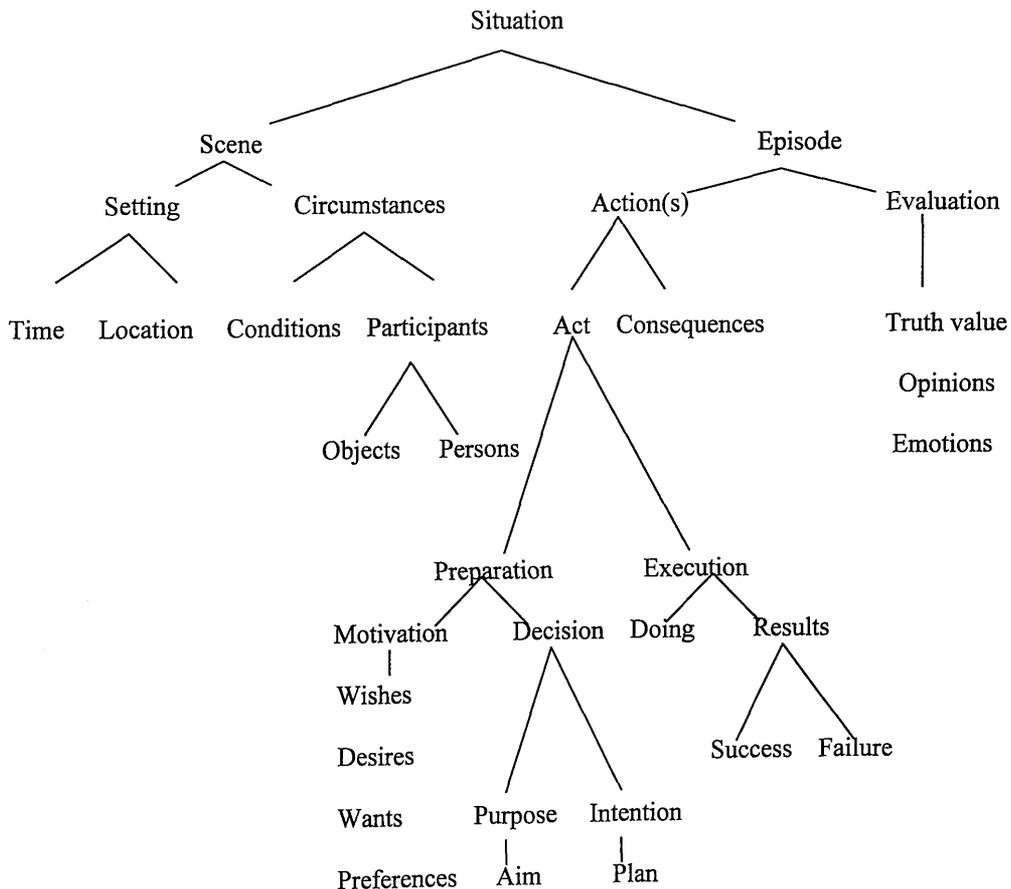
### **2.3.2 Model theory**

Van Dijk (1987a, 1987b, van Dijk and Kintsch 1983) proposes the need for a theory based on the creation of mental representations or models, as part of a cognitive theory of discourse processing. Van Dijk's explanation of the cognitive functioning of discourse processing shares its foundations with schema theory, but he specifies in more detail the various phases of the mental processes involved in information processing. I will call this theory *model theory*, even though van Dijk does not make use of this terminology, to be able to refer to it with a specific label.

Van Dijk assumes that each time we encounter an episode in real life, for example a car accident, we form a mental representation of that episode, a model. Discourse is always about some fragment of the world that we call a situation. A model is the cognitive representation of that situation in the mind of the participant, so van Dijk calls them *situational models*. Thus, when we witness a car accident we form a situational model, a cognitive representation, of that car accident in our mind. A situational model is the representation of a personal experience that is stored in episodic memory (see 2.3.1.1). Therefore, situational models can also be called episodic models.

### 2.3.2.1 Situation and generalised models

People continually employ *situational models* and make use of more or less stable categories for the kinds of things that should go into a model. In order to build situation models, people use (situation model) schemata. These schemata are filled with the information encountered in a concrete situation, or they could also be filled by more general knowledge schemata, i.e., people schemata or sequences of actions schemata (scripts, see section 2.3.1.3). Each event we witness, such as the car accident, may be characterized by a Setting (time and place of the accident), Participants (people and objects involved), the Action itself (the crash), its Consequences (damages), etc. Van Dijk (1987a) offers the following diagram specifying the schemata to be taken into account in a situation model:



(van Dijk 1987a: 175)

We can see that situation models not only represent experiences but also their associated opinions. For each situation people are involved in, they also construct an evaluation of it. Thus, in the car accident example, a driver's model may include his opinion about the other driver (e.g. a bad driver) or about the whole situation (e.g. bad luck), as well as related emotions (e.g. anger, sadness...).

A particular situational model is the unique representation of an individual experience and after understanding, the specific model is seldom used anymore, unless in retelling the event. However, in our daily lives we experience many episodes of the same kind. Particular situational models, e.g. going to a birthday party tonight, can be integrated and combined so that people form more general, but still personal, *generalized models* of their experiences, for instance, my going to birthday parties in general. A particular model is constructed out of the following kinds of information:

- (1) information from the present discourse / behaviours,
- (2) fragments of (personal) generalised models we already have, and
- (3) instantiated fragments of general shared semantic knowledge, or schemata.

#### **2.3.2.2 Context models**

Discourse understanding requires the formation of situational models as well as the formation of particular context models for the communicative situation people engage in. The context model is the model for the current context people create in each situation. In the same way that people construct a situation model for the situation they are involved in, they construct a context model for the communicative situation in which they are participating. Context models feature:

the actual (interpreted or intended) goals of the communicative interaction, representations (and evaluations) of self as a speaker (or hearer) and as social member, and of the hearer (speaker) in similar roles, of the type of social context being enacted (e.g. public speech, informal conversation with a friend, or reading the newspaper), as well as many other relevant contextual features. (van Dijk 1987b: 262)

As for the relationship between context models and situational models, van Dijk states that ‘the representation of the discourse itself (textbase and surface structure) is part of the context model, and this context model is systematically related to the particular situational model now being constructed’ (1987a: 183). Although we could say that the context model is part of the situation model, the link between the two types of models is vaguely defined.

#### **2.3.2.3 Socially shared knowledge: schemata**

Both particular and generalised models can be compared to those of other people. If the structures and contents that form our models are similar to those of others, we may abstract from our personal models and construct a more general, abstract and socially shared frame or script, e.g. car accidents. So, when we tell the story about the car accident, we do not need to specify all the details of our model, we can presuppose that the car accident script will be known to the hearer. Then, in order to understand a story we need to apply our general knowledge model for the construction of the appropriate particular model of the event.

#### **2.3.2.4 Conclusion**

Model theory provides a more detailed account of the functioning of information processing, compared with schema theory, so that it proves to have more explanatory power. One of its advantages, for my analytical purposes (see section 3.3) is that by conceptualising comprehension as the compound of information from situation

models, generalised models and schemata, it can account more specifically for processes like schema change. Van Dijk's view is, at the same time, comparable to that of Fiske and Neuberg (1990)'s idea of a continuum model of impression formation. Both proposals take into account data-driven processes or information from situation models, and theory-driven processes, or information from schemata.

In the analytical chapters of my thesis, I will put model theory into practice in whole narratives and assess it, a step that van Dijk does not take. Then, both its advantages and short-comings will become apparent. Although van Dijk provides the intermediate step between situation models and schemata, he does not account for how and when information from situation models is updated to general models and, more importantly, how and when information from general models is updated to schemata. This last aspect will be of particular relevance for section 3.3, and other parts of my thesis.

## **2.4 Stylistics**

My research is embedded within the field of stylistics, as I will analyse the language of literary texts, so I will begin this section with a brief introduction to the field. The more restricted area of cognitive stylistics is my field of inquiry as far as I deal with readers' processing of characters' mental functioning, analysed through theories such as schema theory and model theory. Thus I will briefly explicate the basic philosophy of cognitive stylistics, how it developed and what it is about. A common concern within both stylistics and cognitive stylistics has been the mind style of cognitively deviant characters. Given that the protagonists of my narratives suffer from mental illnesses, or act as if they suffered them, an analysis of their mind styles will reveal

their way of perceiving and making sense of the world. A clear definition of mind style and of other related notions becomes crucial for my research.

Stylistics is an approach to the analysis of texts, both literary and non-literary, using linguistic description. As Short puts it:

Stylistic analysis is a method of linking linguistic form, via reader inference, to interpretation in a detailed way and thereby providing as much explicit evidence as possible for and against particular interpretations of texts. (Short 1996: 27)

When stylistics emerged in the 1950s, linguistic analysis started to be applied to the study of literary texts. Then, stylistics claimed to offer an objective explanation, based on linguistic theories, of the subjective conclusions literary critics arrived at. And although such claims were abandoned, ‘stylisticians attribute the strength of their approach to the explicitness, systematicity and verifiability of their analytical procedures’ (Semino and Culpeper 1995: 514). Thus, describing a text in terms of its linguistic characteristics allows a more detailed and systematic analysis. Moreover, stylisticians are not so much concerned with providing new interpretations of texts, as is the aim of literary critics, but with supporting those interpretations with linguistic description. Non-literary texts have also received much attention within stylistics, since the 1960s. The focus in this field has been the characterisation of different styles and the contexts of language use.

Since the emergence of stylistics, many linguistic methodologies and theories have been developed influencing stylistics accordingly: formalism, Chomskyan linguistics, Halliday’s systemic functional approach of language, pragmatics, discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, and critical linguistics amongst others. Since the 1990s, stylistics has also benefited from work on psychological theories of cognition and statistical and computational methods. Stylisticians have been using these theories

and methodologies for the analysis of literary texts and, at the same time, these texts have been used as a testing ground for the linguistic theories (Semino and Culpeper 1995).

As I have already explained, of all the theories and methodologies used for stylistic analysis, I will make use of pragmatic and cognitive theories for my thesis. Previous research has already demonstrated the potential of theories of cognition (e.g. Black 1993, Cook 1994, Culpeper 2001, Emmott 1997, Semino 1997) and pragmatic theories (e.g. Carter and Simpson 1989, Culpeper et al. 1998, Culpeper 2001, Simpson 1989) for the analysis of literary and non-literary texts. And we should not forget that, within stylistics, linguistics and literary criticism converge to arrive at conclusions about both areas.

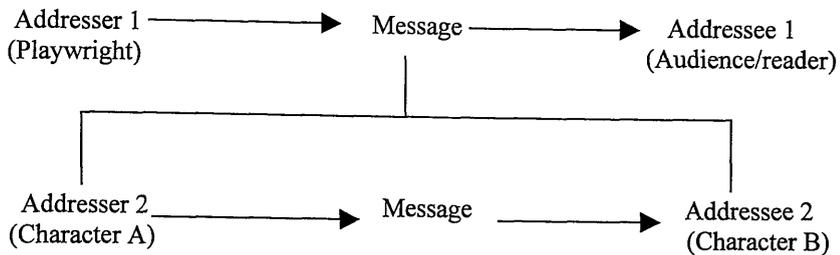
### *Discourse architectures*

For the purposes of my thesis, it is extremely relevant to take into account the distinction proposed by Leech and Short (1981) between the different levels of discourse. According to them, the most basic discourse situation is a conversation involving an addresser who talks, or transmits a message, to an addressee. This model allows many permutations, such as a model with various addressers (e.g. parents reprimanding their child), various addressees (e.g. a lecture), or an oral or written message (e.g. a conversation or a letter). Regarding literary discourse, much poetry can be accounted for in discourse terms with this basic discourse situation:

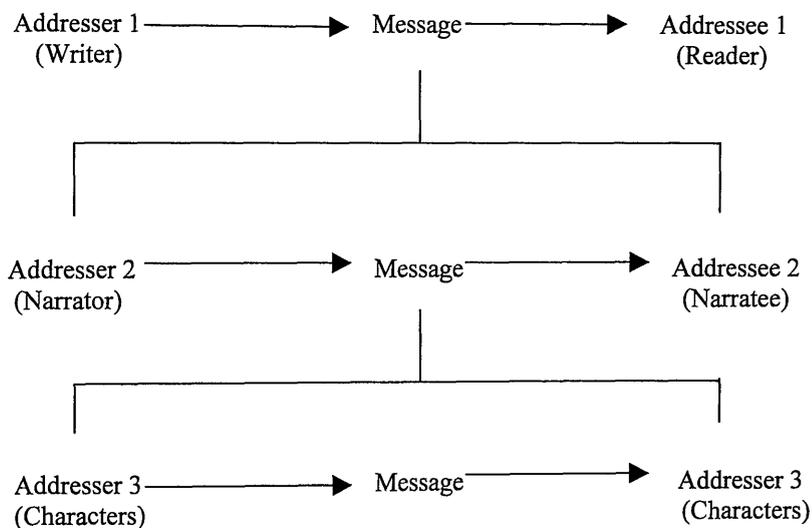


As for other genres, ‘prototypical drama is more complex discursively, having at least two levels of discourse, the author–audience/reader level and the character–

character level' (Short 1996: 169). In this case, the addresser is the playwright who transmits a message, the play, to an addressee: the audience/reader. Embedded in this discourse is the characters' discourse: what characters say to each other.



In prose, the discourse levels are usually three, including a narrator – narratee in the middle of the three level discourse structure:



This diagram accounts for novels and short stories in general, though any text may collapse some of the levels or multiply them. For example, the text may include a narrator but no narratee different from the readership, which is typical of first person narrators, so that levels 1 and 2 collapse on the right-hand side of the diagram. The

narrator may also be a character, so that levels 2 and 3 of the left-hand side of the diagram collapse sometimes (Short 1996: 256-257). However, in spite of Short's claim of the collapsing of levels here, we should not forget that narrator and character are two different entities, as far as there is usually a time gap between when the facts narrated happened and the actual narration and, consequently, a different level of knowledge.

### 2.4.1 Cognitive stylistics

Cognitive stylistics is a field in which theories from linguistics, cognitive linguistics and cognitive psychology are combined to arrive at conclusions about literary and non-literary texts. A more precise definition is provided by Semino and Culpeper in their preface to *Cognitive Stylistics*:

Cognitive stylistics combines the kind of explicit, rigorous and detailed linguistic analysis of literary texts that is typical of the stylistics tradition with a systematic and theoretically informed consideration of the cognitive structures and processes that underlie the production and reception of language. (Semino and Culpeper 2002: ix)

It is a multidisciplinary theoretical approach that aims at providing a cognitive framework to obtain 'greater explanatory power for literary texts' based on a 'firmer empirical basis' (Freeman 2002: 319). As Semino and Culpeper (2002) explain, in the traditional field of stylistics, linguistic theories were the tools used to predict and explain interpretations of texts. On the other hand, in cognitive stylistics, linguistic theories are complemented with cognitive theories that supply a link to mental processes: the linguistic choices of a text are related to cognitive structures and processes.

This discipline emerged during the 1990s as a result of the writings by Langacker (1987) and the work of authors such as Lakoff (1996) who have worked on cognitive metaphor theory since the 1980s. In her *Dictionary of Stylistics*, Wales (2001) states that another branch of cognitive linguistics is cognitive discourse analysis, or grammar, dealing specifically with frames and schemata. Schema theory ‘has been applied to reader’s comprehension and interpretation of literary and non-literary texts by Cook (1994), on poetry by Semino (1997), and narratives by Emmott (1997) and Werth (1999)’ (2001: 64). Cognitive stylistics is also closely related to the relatively new field of cognitive poetics, the application of cognitive linguistics to literature, with the research of authors such as Stockwell (2002), and Gavins and Steen (2002).

My thesis shares the assumption, adopted by cognitive stylistics, that linguistic patterns reflect cognitive processes, since my objective is to demonstrate how readers infer characters’ cognitive habits from the language of literary texts.

#### **2.4.2 Mind style**

The notion of mind style was put forward by Roger Fowler (1977, 1986, 1996) in order to account for the particular world view projected by a text. Fowler defines mind style as ‘any distinctive linguistic presentation of an individual mental self’ (1977: 103). Thus, his definition makes reference to consistent stylistic patterns that reflect an individual’s view of the world. Halliday (1971) was one of the first researchers to investigate how linguistic patterns reflected people’s view of the world in the novel *The Inheritors*, by W. Golding. In this text, the protagonist is characterised by not understanding relations of human agency and cause-effect

relationships. His particular way of comprehending and making sense of the world, his mind style, can be analysed linguistically in terms of the transitivity patterns of his language, which reflect his cognitive condition as a Neanderthal man.

As it was first proposed by Fowler, mind style is the ‘world view of an author, or a narrator, or a character, constituted by the ideational structure of the text’ (1996: 214). Nevertheless, most research has been carried out on the mind style of peculiar characters, or characters that are at the same time narrators. My research is also exclusively devoted to the mind style of literary characters (most of the times acting as narrators as well), since my ultimate purpose is to show that mind style reveals characterisation issues.

This thesis deals with the mind style of characters suffering from cognitive deviations. However, my analysis will also take into account the mind style of other characters interacting with them. Leech and Short propose a scale ranging from ‘natural and uncontrived’ mind styles to ‘those which clearly impose an unorthodox conception of the fictional world’ (1981: 189). Although most research has concentrated on characters with mental deviations, as will most of my thesis, I will also consider those more ‘natural’ mind styles to observe how they are affected by their interaction with ‘deviant’ mind styles.

Since Fowler coined the term ‘mind style’, several authors have provided their own definitions of the term with different emphasis depending on their goals. Moreover, related concepts like ‘point of view on the ideological plane’ (Uspensky 1973) simply ‘point of view’ or ‘world view’ have been utilised sometimes as complementary and sometimes as overlapping with the notion of mind style. For Fowler, the notions are equivalent (1986: 150). The result is we have a variety of

concepts that sometimes refer to the same phenomena and which need to be differentiated from each other.

Semino (2002) has provided a clearer explanation and differentiation of these concepts, which was already anticipated in Semino and Swindlehurst (1996). 'World view' is regarded by Semino as the most general term that refers to 'the overall view of reality or the 'text actual world' (Ryan 1991) conveyed by the language of a text' (2002: 97). Then, 'ideological point of view' is a narrower concept as far as it is defined as the 'aspects of the world views that are social, cultural, religious or political in origin, and which an individual is likely to share with other members belonging to similar social, cultural, religious or political groups' (2002: 97).

On the other hand, mind style is defined as the way in which 'language reflects the particular conceptual structures and cognitive habits that characterise an individual's world view' (Semino 2002: 95). Semino proposes that the way this phenomenon is best analysed is by combining linguistic theories with cognitive ones. In traditional stylistics, the study of mind style relied almost exclusively on linguistic analysis (Halliday 1971, Fowler 1977, 1986, 1996, Leech and Short 1981). However, the approach to mind style from cognitive stylistics makes use of both linguistic analysis and cognitive theories to analyse the language of the text (Black 1993, Semino and Swindlehurst 1996, Semino 2002). By relating linguistic features to theories of cognition (e.g. schema theory, cognitive metaphor) a more systematic and explanatory methodology is provided for the interpretation of mind style.

Semino's contribution in the differentiation between mind style and ideological point of view is that the former is defined as characterising (1) the particular cognitive habits of an individual or (2) of a group of people sharing the same cognitive aspects, such as mental illnesses (e.g. schizophrenia, autism), or (3) a given stage of cognitive

development (e.g. children or Golding's Neanderthal man). According to her, these aspects would include 'cognitive habits, abilities and limitations, and any beliefs and values that may arise from them' (2002: 97). In the chapters dedicated to textual analysis, I will pay special attention to the study of these cognitive habits, abilities and limitations as exemplified in people suffering from different cognitive deviations.

The analysis of mind style as part of characterisation has received little attention (Bockting 1993, 1994). With this particular goal in mind, Bockting includes in her definition of mind style not only 'the conceptualisation of the world achieved by the individual', but also 'the conceptualisation of the individual himself in this world' (1994: 171-2). This last aspect will acquire much relevance in my research because characters' conceptualisation of their reality is conditioned by their conceptualisation of themselves in their social context. In my approach to mind style, I claim that the cognitive habits of characters can also be observed in their conceptualisation of self, their self-concept: what and how they think about themselves.

Moreover, I will analyse the particular mind styles of characters in their interpersonal behaviour with other characters, how they behave and communicate with others. Both characters' self-concept and interpersonal behaviour will vary depending on contextual features: setting, participants, and goals among others. This is consistent with Bockting's view when she states that '[p]ersonality is a pragmatic issue: it is something that one does in relation to 'the other' rather than something one is, a strategy rather than an essence' (1994: 158) (see Culpeper 2001 for a similar view of characters as part of the pragmatic context). Bockting demonstrates how the general concept 'personality', applied to literary characters, is analysable in interaction. My claim is that mind style, character's conceptual structures and

cognitive habits, can also be analysed through interpersonal behaviour, in relation to other characters.

My usage of the term mind style is consistent with how it is used in the literature. The major difference between my work and previous work on mind style is the linguistic phenomena I select to exemplify it. Most research has used similar linguistic techniques for the analysis of mind style. For example, regarding lexicalisation, a character's level of vocabulary has been examined in terms of under- and over-lexicalisation, value-laden expressions, or hedges (Leech and Short 1981). Within syntax, transitivity patterns have received special attention (Halliday 1971, Black 1993) as well as various syntactic structures. And other areas such as phonology, morphology and deixis (Bockting 1993) have also been reported to influence mind style. Recently, within the cognitive stylistics approach, cognitive metaphor has been shown to play a part in the creation of mind style (Black 1993, Semino and Swindlehurst 1996, Semino 2002).

The linguistic phenomena I will be analysing is mostly the representation of conversation, the social interaction between characters. For this purpose, the linguistic theories I will use belong to the discipline of pragmatics, which was originally oriented towards the study of spoken interaction. In my thesis, I will apply pragmatic theories (e.g. Brown and Levinson's politeness theory, speech act theory, Grice's CP and maxims) to the conversations between characters, and to the narratives of narrator-characters, and complement it with theories of cognition to arrive at conclusions about characters' mind styles. Moreover, I will demonstrate that characters' cognitive structures and processes are also indicative of mind style. The construction of characters' self-concepts and possible selves, the related mental processes (e.g. inference or self-regulation), and their styles of self-presentation are

cognitive processes expressed in their use of language that reveal peculiar mind styles (see 6.3.4.2 and 6.3.4.3). Thus, characters' peculiar cognitive habits are another tool to study mind style.

## 2.5 Narratology

### 2.5.1 Character

Given that the objective of my thesis is to hypothesise about how readers form a mental representation of literary characters during the processing of a text, I consider it necessary to provide some notions on the issue of 'character' from the framework of narratology. The main difference between this theoretical approach and cognitive stylistics is that the former does not take into account the systematic linguistic analysis offered by stylistics, or provide an explicit cognitive account of mental processes through the use of theories of social cognition. Research on character within narratology has concentrated on an investigation on characters, especially on typologies of characters, classifying them as:

more or less textually prominent, dynamic or static, consistent or inconsistent, and simple, two-dimensional, and highly predictable or complex, multi-dimensional, and capable of surprising behaviour; they are classable not only in terms of their conformity to standard types (the braggart, the cuckold, the *femme fatale*) or their corresponding to certain spheres of action but also in terms of their acts, words, feelings, appearance, and so on; and their attributes can be directly and reliably stated (for example, in a set-piece presentation) or inferred from their (mental, emotional and physical) behaviour. (Prince 1982: 124)

Recently, Margolin (2003), one of the most famous narratologists, has provided a definition of 'character', from the new perspective of cognitive mental functioning (see 2.5.2):

‘Character’, when not used as synonymous with storyworld participant, is more or less synonymous with ‘individual personality’ as defined in psychology: a complex of enduring traits, attitudes, and dispositions. While mental information-processing operations, being internal actions, can be directly presented in literature, character features cannot, and must therefore either be explicitly attributed to a storyworld participant by others or by a narrator, or inferred by the reader from details of behaviour and setting. *Issues of the ‘self’ (or ‘I’, or ‘ego’) concern the self-reflexive capacities of the person as revealed in specific modes of self-awareness versus awareness of others, embodied in an exemplary fashion in spiritual autobiographies.* ‘The subject’, as the term is currently being used in literary theory, is the locus of one’s construction of one’s individual identity or self-image, for answering questions such as ‘Who am I?’ racially, sexually, socially, ethnically, and so on. (Margolin 2003: 283-4, my emphasis)

This quotation expounds some of the concepts I use in my research on character’s selves. In order to refer to the ‘character features’ of characters, Margolin uses notions from psychology such as the ‘subject’, ‘individual identity’, or ‘self-image’. Similarly, I will use the term ‘self-concept’, borrowing the notion from socio-cognitive psychology (Markus 1977). Thus, a character’s self-concept includes Margolin’s ‘traits, attitudes and dispositions’ as well as the answer to the question ‘‘Who am I?’ racially, sexually, socially...’ in the form of knowledge structures known as self-schemata and possible selves. Margolin also states that character features can be either explicitly attributed to a character or inferred by the reader. This distinction will be kept in my thesis, as I will distinguish between a character’s self-concept as directly stated in the narrative text, or as inferred by readers from character’s verbal and non-verbal behaviour. I will make a further distinction because readers may infer character’s attributes that the character is not aware of (e.g. being selfish or arrogant) and readers may also arrive at an evaluation and opinion about the personality of the character. These two types of inferences will form part of the reader’s mental representation of character, together with the character’s self-concept.

In addition to this, Margolin proposes a differentiation between several types of direct characterisation in narrative:

Speaker characterizes *himself* to himself (self-image) or to an interlocutor / correspondent (projected self-image); speaker characterizes *interlocutor / correspondent* to himself (image of other) or to interlocutor / correspondent (direct assessment and portrayal); speaker characterises *absent person* to himself (image of other) or to his interlocutor / correspondent (e.g., letters of reference). (Margolin 1986: 224)

Of these three types, my thesis concentrates on the first one: a character's characterisation of himself. Moreover, the two sub-types of characterisation, the self-image and the projected self-image, will be dealt with in my research. A character's self-image will be the topic of the chapters on characters' self-concepts and on characters' possible selves, and the projected self-image will be analysed in the chapters dedicated to self-presentation issues.

## 2.5.2 Characterisation

In this section, I want to concentrate on research on textual characterisation cues. For this purpose, I will explicate Rimmon-Kenan (1983)'s and Culpeper (2001)'s approaches to characterisation. Although these researchers come from different theoretical backgrounds, literary criticism and cognitive stylistics respectively, analyse different literary genres, narrative and drama, and use different terminology, the basic assumption of the distinction between explicit and implicit characterisation cues remains the same.

Rimmon-Kenan (1983) refers to explicit descriptions of characters as *direct definition*, which consists on the 'naming of a character's qualities' by 'the most authoritative voice in the text' (1983: 60). The implications in her definition are that

only an omniscient narrator can provide a direct definition of a character, while the role of a first person narrator is completely ignored or considered unqualified to provide explicit definitions. As it was explained before, in my account of characters' self-concepts, I will provide a thorough explanation of narrator-characters expressing their conceptions of themselves. As for *indirect representation*, Rimmon-Kenan proposes that it consists of, rather than mentioning traits, displaying and exemplifying them in various ways, such as through characters' actions, speech (conversation and thoughts), external appearance and environment (physical and human surrounding).

Culpeper (2001) observes that in *explicit* characterisation cues, 'we find characters explicitly presenting themselves to others', while in *implicit* characterisation cues, the reader infers 'character information from linguistic behaviour' (2001: 164). Culpeper claims that explicit characterisation cues in drama may serve self-presentational motives, when stated in the presence of other characters, or they may reveal characters' mental world (such as thoughts or mental conflict), when uttered in soliloquies. As for implicit cues, Culpeper produces a checklist including: 'conversational, lexical, grammatical, paralinguistic, non-verbal and contextual features, as well as accent and dialect' (2001: 172).

Thus, as I consider valid the general distinction between explicit or direct characterisation cues, and implicit or indirect cues as proposed by both authors, I will maintain the distinction in my analytical chapters so that explicit expressions of the self-concept will be studied in section 6.3.3 and implicit expressions in section 6.3.4. Culpeper's model will be used as the basis of my analysis, due to its more systematic character, as well as its focus on cognitive stylistics. However, I will make further

clarifications and different proposals to his theory wherever they are needed for my analysis.

### 2.5.3 Fictional Minds

There has recently been a surge within the field of narrative theory of an area of research with a similar object of investigation and comparable theoretical assumptions as my own work: *fictional minds*. The recent publication of *Narrative Theory and the Cognitive Sciences*, by Herman (2003), includes a whole section dedicated to the issue of fictional minds, with articles by recognised narratologists such as Uri Margolin, Catherine Emmott and Alan Palmer. Moreover, Palmer has published *Fictional Minds* (2004), where he develops his ideas about this new area of research.

These authors consider that previous analyses of fictional minds focused exclusively on a study of thought report, leaving aside other relevant frameworks which are revealing about characters' mental functioning. They work on the shared assumptions that notions from socio-cognitive psychology provide the grounds for a deeper analysis of the cognitive activity of both readers, in their reading processes, and characters, as representations of fictional mental functioning. Emmott (2003), in her analysis of the construction of social space, explicitly states the need for different methodologies including cognitive discourse analysis and linguistic theories, which play a major role in my research. Emmott is one of the few authors in this field who makes use of linguistic theories for her analysis, and I share her analytical methodology, focusing more exclusively on theories of pragmatics. I consider that the study of fictional minds would benefit from a cognitive stylistic approach, as the

systematic analysis of linguistic patterns is revealing about characters' mental worlds, as my thesis will demonstrate.

Uri Margolin (2003), in his proposal of a cognitive approach to fictional minds, suggests that cognitive mental functioning (CMF) has significance for the four levels of narrative communication: the author-reader level, the implied author-implied reader level, the narrator-narratee level, and the level of story-world participants<sup>2</sup>. The discourse levels that are most informative for my work are the first and the last one, so I will concentrate on these, though, of course, the others cannot be ignored. At the first level, the author's cognitive activity results in a text, whereas the reader's processing activity generates a mental representation of the text's storyworld. At the fourth level, the characters 'perceive the world around them, construct mental representations of it, form intentions (that is, goals plus plans), construct in their minds theories about their co-agents, draw inferences, solve problems, formulate generalizations, recollect past episodes and, in fact, engage in any conceivable cognitive activity.' (2003: 271). Margolin assumes that it is at this fourth level where the human cognitive activities can be portrayed or represented. Thus, readers need to make hypotheses about characters' minds and to attribute mental functioning to them, in order to make sense of characters in terms of human actions and interactions. According to him, the concepts of cognitive psychology to study mental processing can be utilised in the analysis of characters' cognitive activity:

the very utilization of the four basic categories [intake, internal representation, storage and retrieval, and transformation] still enables us, probably for the first time, to begin to map out systematically and coherently the myriad of kinds of cognitive mental functioning encountered in narrative fiction, and the kind of cognitive activities dominant in a particular narrative. Further, when sufficiently developed, cognitive concepts and categories will greatly increase our

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<sup>2</sup> Margolin's notion of levels is equivalent to Leech and Short's (1981) concept of the discourse architectures (see 2.4)

ability to identify, define, and describe individual mental states and episodes in storyworlds, whether we are interested in them per se, or for the degree of psychological reality they possess. (2003: 288)

In various sections of my thesis, I will analyse how characters' use of language reveals their cognitive processing, especially the processes of perception and inference, and most importantly, what these processes reveal about characters' self-concepts. We will see that a character may explicitly state a disposition of his self-concept, such as the protagonist of *Lolita*, Humbert, who declares himself to be a pederast. However, the systematic analysis of the language of a character's narration may implicitly reveal cognitive processing. For example, Humbert's erroneous inference that a shadow he sees belongs to a young girl reveals how his PAEDOPHILIA self-schema influences his inferencing processes (see 6.3.4.2).

Margolin also proposes that one of the best ways to become aware of characters' mental functioning is when their mental activity does not follow the readers' expectations of normal cognitive processes:

What is probably even more significant is the preference of much literature for nonstandard forms of cognitive functioning, be they rare and marginal, deviant, or involving a failure, breakdown, or lack of standard patterns. (2003: 287)

This consideration acquires great significance for the purposes of my thesis, because most of the characters I will deal with show signs of various types of mental deviations. In the same way that deviant mental processes become prominent because they differ from the standard, the linguistic presentation of these processes will violate pragmatic principles of communication, making characters' use of language prominent for its idiosyncrasy.

I would like now to explain in more detail some of Palmer's ideas, given that he is the first author to publish a whole volume on the issue of the fictional mind, as far as I am aware. Palmer (2004) proposes the need of a complete theory of fictional minds, so that he attempts to delimit the analytical tools and type of information to be dealt with in this theoretical framework. He recognises that although there are other narratological approaches from which the topic of fictional minds has been tackled, e.g. speech category approach, focalisation or point of view, story analysis, characterisation and possible worlds theory, this discipline should have its own place in literary studies. Drawing on assumptions from reader response theory, such as the power of readers in the creation of fictional minds, and other real-mind disciplines, such as cognitive science, psychology and psycholinguistics, Palmer's goal is the analysis of the presentation of fictional minds functioning or, in his own words, an analysis of 'the whole of the social mind in action' (2004: 7).

Apart from the direct access to characters' consciousness rendered through thought report, Palmer proposes that, given the social character of the mind, readers also infer the workings of fictional minds from the observation of characters' behaviour and speech. Consequently, Palmer chooses for his analyses narrative texts which include a balance of behaviour description and internal analysis of characters' minds. For this author, the construction of the minds of fictional characters by readers and narrators is the essence of narrative fiction: fictional mental functioning is 'central to our understanding of how novels work' (2004: 12). The essence of his objectives is captured in the following quotation:

In summary, *Fictional Minds* describes a theoretical framework that considers the whole of a particular fictional mind, thereby avoiding the fragmentation referred to earlier; views characters' minds, not just in terms of passive, private inner speech in the modes of direct or free indirect thought, but in terms of the narrator's positive linking role in presenting characters'

social engaged mental functioning, particularly in the mode of thought report; analyzes in functional and teleological terms the purposive nature of characters' thought: their motives, intentions, and the resulting behaviour and action; highlights the role of the reader in constructing characters' embedded narratives by means of a series of provisional conjectures and hypotheses about their mental functioning; and shows how readers read plots as the interaction of those embedded narratives. (2004: 16)

Palmer's choice of narrative texts for his analyses consists, almost exclusively, of third-person novels, proposing that readers construct the minds of fictional characters through the narrator's description of characters' behaviour and thought. He assumes that first-person novels work in a similar way, so that 'the variety of evidence that is available for the construction of character (action and behaviour as well as direct access to thoughts) would explain how first-person narrators construct other characters' (2004: 26). However, I consider that the distinction between narratives with first-person narrators and third-person narrators, as far as character construction is concerned, is more problematical than Palmer suggests. Most importantly, there is the problem of the reliability of the narrator. Whereas Palmer seems to assume that any information provided by an omniscient narrator about a character is objective, a first-person narrator's presentation of another character and of him/herself will be subjective. And moreover, Palmer does not deal with the complex issue of the reader's representation of the fictional mind of narrator-characters, given the lack of an external description of their actions and thoughts.

Palmer's preference for texts with third-person narrators is influenced by an assumption that underlies his whole work, regarding the difference between first-person and third-person ascription. In discussing first-person ascription, Palmer explains that when we ascribe motives or intentions to ourselves, we are often wrong about the nature of our mental functioning. Similarly, narratologists accept that fictional characters deceive themselves, so that readers cannot rely on the content of

their inner speech. For this reason, Palmer suggests that ‘it is such an important part of the role of the narrator to supplement the self-conscious, and possibly self-serving, flow of inner speech with analyses in thought report that can supply an *alternative and more reliable* account of the true motivation for characters’ actions’ (2004: 127, my emphasis). It seems then, that the omniscient narrator, through third-person ascription, provides true and objective information about the functioning of fictional minds by means of impartial commentaries about characters’ mental activity.

However, it follows from Palmer’s conclusion that texts with first-person narrators cannot provide reliable access to characters’ mental functioning. My question then is whether it is impossible for readers to construct characters’ fictional minds when there is not a third-person narrator who offers reliable insights into their cognitive processing. In contrast with Palmer, I consider that the information that narrator-characters provide about their motivations, and their general mental processes, may be right or wrong, but those are the characters’ thoughts, including their motivations, plans, dispositions, attitudes, etc. Thus, first-person narrators offer their self-images or self-concepts in their narrative texts, and it is the role of the reader to decide whether they have an accurate view of themselves or not. Moreover, different readers will construct different mental representations of fictional minds, so that a character’s mind is not an objective entity as Palmer implies, but it is the result of the reader’s processing of a text.

In this section, some of the basic notions and analytical methodologies of the new field of research of fictional minds have been explained. I have mentioned some of the correspondences and divergences between the research of these narratologists and my own work, though this will be better observed in the analytical chapters of my thesis. I consider that, in general terms, my work could be included within this

framework, although I place a great emphasis on the stylistic analysis of narratives by means of pragmatic theories.

## **2.6 Conclusion**

This chapter has outlined the most important theoretical concepts from the fields of research on which my thesis will be based. The cognitive stylistics field in which my thesis is situated encompasses theories from linguistics and socio-cognitive psychology. My contribution in this field will be the use of pragmatic theories in the analysis of literary narratives and the application of cognitive theories to the study of the cognitive processing relative to both character's mental functioning and reader's processing of texts. In the rest of the thesis, I will expand on each theory as it becomes necessary for the purposes of the various sections, applying them to the analysis of literary texts, in order to arrive at conclusions about both the theoretical frameworks and the literary texts.

## PART I. CHARACTERS' MIND STYLES

### 3 Palahniuk's *Fight Club* and schizophrenia

#### 3.1 Introduction

In the three chapters of this part of the thesis, I want to offer a cognitive stylistic analysis of three different literary texts. The narrative texts that I will analyse are: *Fight Club* (1997) by Chuck Palahniuk, *Bartleby* (1953) by Herman Melville, and *The Collector* (1963) by John Fowles. My aim is to throw light on the mind style of three characters of these texts by means of both pragmatic theories, e.g. Cooperative Principle and conversational maxims (Grice 1975), politeness theory (Brown and Levinson 1987), speech act theory (Searle 1969), and activity types (Levinson [1979] 1992) mainly; and theories of cognition, e.g. model theory (van Dijk 1987a, 1987b, 1988), and schema theory (Barlett, F.C. [1932] (1995), Schank and Abelson 1977, Weber and Crocker 1983).

I will concentrate on how readers arrive at mental representations of characters on the grounds of the analysis of the conversations between the protagonists of the stories and also on the grounds of the language used by the first person narrators in their narrations. The idiosyncratic and repetitive use of different pragmatic patterns will prove to be revealing about the cognitive habits and mental worlds of the characters involved. Cognitive notions will be used to reach conclusions about the use of mental models to interpret situations and make inferences about characters. These mental processes, interpretation and inference, will be applied at two levels: to analyse characters' mental functioning and readers' processing of the narrative text.

I will claim that the linguistic behaviour of the characters of these stories reveals some type of cognitive impairment, reflecting their peculiar mind styles. Although my hypotheses will be based on medical descriptions of the mental deviations, my intention is not to demonstrate that characters suffer from these actual illnesses, but rather that authors manage to create the impression of the illnesses through the characters' verbal and non-verbal behaviour.

The aim of this first chapter of part I is to provide some insight into the mind style of a character that, halfway through the narrative, realises that he suffers from a split personality disorder<sup>1</sup>. For this purpose, I will analyse interaction between this character and other characters by means of Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle and conversational maxims. Other pragmatic concepts, e.g. politeness theory, will also prove to be useful in the analysis of conversations. At the same time, a theory of cognition, model theory (van Dijk and Kintsch 1983; van Dijk 1987a, 1987b, 1988), will provide a link with the mental aspects of discourse understanding of both characters and readers. The combination of the analysis of language through pragmatic theories with theories of cognition about mental processes will be revealing about how readers create a cognitive representation of the characters' mental world.

The protagonist of the novel *Fight Club* (Palahniuk 1997) is the object of my analysis, and more particularly, his mind style: how the repetition of pragmatic patterns reflects his particular conceptual structures and cognitive habits, revealing his view of the world. First of all, I will describe the characteristic symptoms of schizophrenia, and how they have been related to language usage by means of Grice's theory. Then, I will

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<sup>1</sup> The term 'split personality disorder' is out of use in psychology and the new terminology recognized by the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* is 'multiple personality disorder' or 'dissociative identity disorder'. However, most readers of the novel and film watchers consider the protagonist to suffer from schizophrenia (see <http://www.louisville.edu/~lkharp02/paper2.html> or <http://www.divinevirus.com/fightclub.html>). Given that the author and readers confuse the two terms, that 'schizophrenia' is the most popular term, and that the general perception of this mental condition is rather vague and wide, I will consider the protagonist of *Fight Club* to suffer from schizophrenia.

propose a distinction between the failure to observe maxims at two levels: at the level of narration by the narrator-character, and in conversations between characters. Although the distinction between these levels is proposed by Leech and Short (1981), they do not take into consideration its implications for pragmatic analyses. In the analytical sections, I will examine the linguistic patterns of the novel that reflect the character's cognitive habits to arrive at conclusions about his mental state. Using van Dijk's model theory, I will also provide a cognitive account of how characters and readers form context models for various communicative situations, which are inconsistent with each other due to differences in knowledge about the textual actual world.

### **3.2 Medical description of schizophrenia**

In this first section, I will provide some medical accounts of the distinctive symptoms of schizophrenia. The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (1994: 274-289) lists the characteristic symptoms of this cognitive impairment. These symptoms involve a range of cognitive and emotional dysfunctions, which are also associated with social or occupational dysfunctions. The characteristic symptoms of this cognitive impairment fall within two broad categories: positive symptoms, which reflect an excess of normal functions, and negative symptoms, which reflect a loss of normal functions.

The positive symptoms include delusions, hallucinations, disorganised speech, and disorganised or catatonic behaviour. *Delusions* are erroneous beliefs that involve a misinterpretation of perceptions or experiences. For example, in a persecutory delusion, the person believes he is being followed and tormented, and in a referential delusion the person believes that passages from books or song lyrics are directed to him.

*Hallucinations* may occur in any sensory modality (e.g. auditory, visual, olfactory, gustatory, and tactile), but 'auditory hallucinations are by far the most common and characteristic of Schizophrenia' (1994: 275). These hallucinations are experienced as voices perceived as distinct from the person's own thoughts. *Disorganised speech* is one of the most important features of this mental disorder. The impairment in speech production may be manifested in a variety of ways:

The person may 'slip off the track' from one topic to another ('derailment' or 'loose associations'); answers to questions may be obliquely related or completely unrelated ('tangentiality'); and, rarely, speech may be so severely disorganized that it is nearly incomprehensible and resembles receptive aphasia in its linguistic organization ('incoherence' or 'speech salad'). (1994: 276)

The disorganised speech observed in schizophrenia has traditionally been labelled as 'thought disorder' (TD). However, 'we infer TD on the basis of disordered speech, but, when the patient's speech is disordered, we decide that the patient's thinking is disordered' (Thomas 1995: 287), so that the argument is circular. This problem remains a controversial issue in studies of schizophrenia. Since disorganised speech is concerned with language production, it will prove to be particularly relevant in my analysis. Moreover, some literary texts grant readers a privileged access to characters' mental worlds, so that 'thought disorder' does not exclusively need to be inferred from disorganised speech, but can be accessed directly through the report of characters' thoughts. *Disorganised behaviour* involves problems with any form of goal-directed behaviour, such as organising meals or maintaining hygiene. As for *catatonic behaviours*, they include keeping a rigid posture, resistance to attempts to be moved, or purposeless excessive motor activity.

The negative symptoms encompass affective flattening, alogia, and avolition. *Affective flattening* is reflected in the person's unresponsive face, avoidance of eye contact, and reduced body language. *Alogia*, poverty of speech, is manifested in brief

and empty replies. The diminution of thoughts causes a decreased fluency and productivity of speech. *Avolition* is characterised by an inability to initiate and persist in goal-directed activities.

Moreover, schizophrenia also involves social or occupational dysfunctions, affecting work or education, interpersonal relations, or self-care. For example, educational progress is frequently disrupted, many individuals are unable to hold a job for a long period of time, they do not usually marry, and have limited social contacts. As not all schizophrenic patients will show the same symptoms, 'schizophrenic states range from mild to severe (the latter including catatonic states which often involve speechlessness, and paranoid states)' (Crystal 1980: 69).

Although I will argue that the protagonist of *Fight Club* purports to suffer from schizophrenia, I will also argue that he does not show signs of all the characteristic symptoms listed here. He does suffer from hallucinations and his speech is disorganised (as I will demonstrate below), which are the two more common symptoms. In addition, he suffers from 'disturbances in sleep pattern (e.g. sleeping during the day, and night time activity or restlessness)', 'problems with focusing attention or distractibility due to preoccupation with internal stimuli' (1994: 279), and, in the end, he commits suicide, like 10% of individuals with schizophrenia.

### **3.2.1 The language of schizophrenia and Grice**

The language abnormalities of schizophrenia range from 'lower-level disturbances of word formation and syntax to higher level disturbances in discourse organisation and conversational behaviour' (Sanfilippo and Hoffman 1999). Due to the impairment at the level of discourse, the deviant language of schizophrenic patients lends itself to a

pragmatic analysis, especially one using Grice's theory of the CP and maxims (1975). This analysis has already been suggested by several authors in the field of psychology, such as Andreasen (1979), Frith (1995) or Thomas (1995). Frith (1995) borrows the essence of Grice's theory and uses it, though not systematically, to explain the communicative problems of schizophrenia. Following Grice, Frith considers that the main prerequisite for successful communication is that speakers have 'to take account of the knowledge, beliefs, and intentions of the person to whom we are speaking' (1995: 99), a prerequisite not met in schizophrenic language. His conclusion is the following:

Some schizophrenic 'thought disorder' reflects a disorder of communication, caused in part by a failure of the patient to take account of the listener's knowledge in formulating their speech. (1995: 100)

Thus, when the schizophrenic patient engages in conversation and forms a situational model (van Dijk 1987b) for the communicative event, the speaker's mental representation of the hearer is impaired. The speech is not modelled according to the hearer, his knowledge and beliefs, it is modelled after the speaker's own knowledge.

Another relevant aspect of schizophrenic language is the inability to understand indirectness. Frith (1995) argues that 'schizophrenic patients should have particular difficulty in understanding utterances in which there is a discrepancy between the literal and the intended meaning' (1995: 107), and these expressions include literary figures like metaphor and irony. Frith's example of a metaphoric use of language is the expression 'This room is a pigsty', whose intended meaning is 'I think that this room is very untidy' (1995: 108). In pragmatic terms, this example can be analysed as flouting the maxim of quality (Grice 1975): the speaker says something that is not literally true in the context of utterance, carrying the implicature that the speaker wants the hearer to arrange the room. Schizophrenic patients show a literal understanding of language, due

to an inability to draw inferences from indirect speech acts that fail to observe Grice's maxims during conversation.

Apart from these two general conclusions about schizophrenia, i.e. speaker's inability to take the hearer into account, and to understand indirectness and draw inferences, that have been related to Grice's theory of the CP and maxims, other characteristic symptoms of this mental deviation related to language use can also be analysed using this pragmatic methodology. Some authors (Thomas 1995) have provided links between types of deviant language used by schizophrenics and the maxims that they fail to observe. The following list presents the type of deviant language, what it consists of, the related maxim, and an example of language use by schizophrenic patients. The relation between the deviant language and the maxim is provided by Thomas (1995: 289) for the two first types of speech. I have associated the rest of the types of deviant uses of language to the maxims according to the definition of the type of language. Moreover, given that Thomas does not offer examples for the types of deviant language, I have included fragments from Frith (1995: 96) to exemplify them.

*Poverty of speech.* Restriction in the amount of spontaneous speech. Questions may remain unanswered. Maxim of quantity.

E You're feeling all right. Do you have any spells of feeling sad or miserable?

D No

E No? Nothing like that? That's good. Now tell me, Mr. D, do you have any special ideas about life in general?

D [shakes head]

E No? Just ordinary ideas just like the rest of us. No. Have you ever thought that you were a special person in any way?

D [shakes head]

E No. Do you feel people stare at you and talk about you in some way?

D [shakes head]

[same pattern repeated in 17 more turns]

*Poverty of content of speech.* Speech is adequate in amount but provides little information. Much repetition. Maxims of quantity, manner and relation.

‘Tell me what kind of a person you are’

‘Ah one hell of an odd thing to say perhaps in these particular circumstances. I happen to be quite pleased with who I am or how I am and many of the problems that I have and have been working on are difficult of me to handle or to work on because I am not aware of them as problems which upset me personally.’

*Tangentiality.* Oblique or irrelevant replies. Maxim of relation.

‘What city are you from?’

‘... I was born in Iowa, but I know that I’m white instead of black so apparently I came from the north somewhere and I don’t know where, you know, I really don’t know where my ancestors came from...’

*Derailment.* Lack of proper connection between phrases and ideas. Maxim of relation.

‘How are things at home?’

‘What I’m saying is my mother is too ill. No money. It all comes out of her pocket. My flat’s leaking. It’s ruined my mattress. It’s Lambeth council. I’d like to know what the caption in the motto under their coat of arms is. It’s in Latin...’

*Incoherence.* Unintelligible, lack of proper connection between words. Maxims of relation and manner.

Where did all this start could it possibly have started the possibility operates some of the time having the same decision as you and possibility that I must now reflect or wash out any doubts that that’s bothering me and one instant what’s bothering me an awful lot in my wisdom...

*Loss of goal.* Failure to follow a chain of thought. Maxims of relation and manner.

Then, I always liked geography. My last teacher in the subject was Professor August A. He was a man with black eyes. I also like black eyes. There are also blue and grey eyes and other sorts, too. I have heard it said that snakes have green eyes. All people have eyes. There are some, too, who are blind...

*Perseveration.* Persistent repetition of words or ideas. Maxim of manner.

[Dashes indicate pauses] Some – farm houses- in a farm yard – time- with a horse and horseman – time where – going across the field as if they’re ploughing the field – time – with ladies – or collecting crops – time work is – coming with another lady – time work is – and where – she’s holding a book...

It should be born in mind that when the schizophrenic person breaks these maxims, there is no intention to create an implicature. For this reason, the type of non-observance is an infringement (Thomas 1995), as we already saw in the literature review in section 2.2.2.3. The infringement of maxims is revealing about the cognitive impairment of the speaker, schizophrenia in this case.

### **3.3 Mind style of a schizophrenic character**

In this section, I will demonstrate how the mind style of the protagonist of *Fight Club* can be studied by analysing his stylistic choices which reveal his mental impairment. I will arrive at conclusions about his cognitive characteristics and schizophrenic symptoms by studying his use of language in social interaction with other characters and as narrator-character in the narration of the novel. The protagonist of the novel recognises that he suffers from a mental disorder, that he has created ‘Tyler’ (his ‘ideal self’, see section 7.2.1): ‘Tyler is a projection. He’s a disassociative personality disorder’ (p. 168) and ‘I’m not Tyler Durden. He’s the other side of my split personality’ (p. 196). When he informs his girlfriend, Marla, about the situation, she also becomes aware of his mental condition, stating: ‘Just like Tony Perkins’ mother in *Psycho*,’ or ‘This is so cool. Everybody has their little quirks.’ (p. 173). Since the protagonist of the novel recognises that he suffers from a split personality disorder, and its wide readership (and film audience) recognises that he suffers from schizophrenia, I will also interpret him as suffering from this mental disorder, as I have explained at the beginning of this chapter.

As I explained in section 3.2.1, when a person suffers from a mental illness like schizophrenia, their cognitive processing is conditioned by that impairment, as well as their use of language. However, my aim is not to prove that this character is mentally impaired, but rather that the types of deviant language he uses are shared by those suffering from schizophrenia. In order for readers to interpret a character as cognitively impaired, it is only necessary for the author to create the *impression* of the mental disorder, not to endow characters with every symptom of it. Actually, part of the protagonist's behaviour contradicts the symptoms of schizophrenia: he does not suffer from *alogia* because he speaks for long stretches of text, or *avolition* since he is capable of organising Fight Club and Project Mayhem. Thus, my aim is not to prove that the character is schizophrenic, by exemplifying *all* the symptoms of the mental deviation, but rather to show how his language use reflects that he shares some of the characteristics of the impairment.

### **3.3.1 Discourse architectures**

It is important to keep in mind the discourse architecture of the novel (Leech and Short 1981, Short 1996), see section 2.4, for the analytical sections of the thesis. In *Fight Club*, the particular discourse structure converges at the level narrator – character, because the narrator is the protagonist who tells the story about his life. There is no explicit narratee, so that this level converges with that of the readership. At the level character-character, we have to take into account that, at some point in the narrative, the reader realises that Tyler and the protagonist are the same person. This means that, when they maintain a conversation, addresser and addressee are the same character, because the protagonist is talking to the other side of his personality.

The distinction between levels is also particularly relevant because communication takes place at two levels: what readers understand about the facts narrated and about the characters by reading the novel and what characters understand about each other in their interaction. Although the second level forms part of the first one, because what characters understand about each other is what readers understand that characters understand about each other, it is important to keep the two levels apart for analytical purposes.

### **3.3.2 Narratological infringement of maxims**

By narratological infringement of maxims I refer to cases in which maxims are not followed in relation to the narration itself. Such non-observance of maxims is distinguished from non-observance of maxims by the protagonist because the latter take place in conversations with other characters in the novel and the former in relation to the act of narration, where the narrator-character fulfills his role as narrator. The distinction between these two levels at which maxims can be not observed is an original proposal of my thesis. This distinction will be reaffirmed in the analysis of other narrator-characters in several sections of this thesis, demonstrating its usefulness for characterisation issues (especially in 10.3).

It is important to remember that, given that in this case narrator and protagonist are the same individual, the conclusions we arrive at due to both types of non-observances will be revealing about the identity of the character. All this is best understood taking into account the discourse architecture for the novel explained in the previous section. The reader can arrive at conclusions about the failure to observe maxims at level 2, in relation to the narrator's speech, and at level 3, within the

character-character discourse, whilst bearing in mind that narrator and character are the same person. Moreover, levels 2 and 3 are contained within level 1, which consists of the author's message to the reader. Thus, the readers' inferences about characters and narrators from their use of language may be part of the message intended by the author in the first place.

### 3.3.2.1 Failures to observe maxims

I will start the analysis by providing the first lines of the story:

TYLER GETS ME a job as a waiter, after that Tyler's pushing a gun in my mouth and saying, the first step to eternal life is you have to die. For a long time, though, Tyler and I were best friends. People are always asking, did I know about Tyler Durden.  
The barrel of the gun pressed against the back of my throat, Tyler says 'We really won't die.'  
(*Fight Club*, p. 11-12)

The *in medias res* (see, for example, Short 1996) beginning of the novel does not provide the reader with a general view of the characters and facts to be narrated, but introduces the reader in the middle of the action. This can be considered the first non-observance of the *maxims of quantity* and *relation* in the novel: readers receive less information than necessary, e.g. who is 'me', to form a complete mental representation of the situation. The scarcity of information will be a characteristic of the whole narrative, so that the insufficient knowledge about the narrator and his actions leads readers to hypothesise about him.

However, after reading the first paragraph, the reader needs to form a mental model of the situation: the participants are the narrator and Tyler; Tyler's goal is to kill the protagonist, although they used to be friends, and the activity type appears to be a murder. The 'allowed' conversational turns for this activity type are not well defined, but given that the murderer is in the power position and the victim is powerless, speech

-if uttered at all- in this type of situation might reflect this power difference (e.g. commands for the murderer, Tyler), though there are no orders nor violence in the whole chapter.

The first chapter ends before Tyler shoots the gun, and in the subsequent chapters the narrator tells the story about his life up to the moment of the murder. In this way, the reader has to go on reading until the end of the novel to discover what really happened in the end. By changing the order of telling the events, the narrator does not observe the *maxim of manner*, he is not orderly. This technique is frequently utilised by authors in order to create suspense and invite the reader to continue reading to discover what happens in the end.

In a similar way, the beginning of many chapters of the novel includes an anecdote unconnected with the previous narration. Thus, we have an ‘in medias res’-like beginning in some of the chapters. For example, as I said before, chapter 1 finishes before Tyler commits the murder, and the beginning of chapter 2 is the following:

Bob’s big arms were closed around to hold me inside, and I was squeezed in the dark between Bob’s new sweating tits that hang enormous, the way we think of God’s as big. Going around the church basement full of men, each night we met... (*Fight Club*, p. 16)

The narrator breaks the *maxim of relation* because he does not provide any indication of the relevance that Bob and the church basement have in relation to the previous attempted murder. This failure to observe the maxim of relation, repeated in other chapters, may lead the reader to infer that the narrator is mentally odd, as his train of thoughts changes quickly. Whereas in the previous paragraph I have claimed that the maxim of manner is not followed for suspense reasons, this is not simply the case here, because the maxim of relation is not observed *repeatedly* at the beginning of most chapters, so that readers may arrive at inferences concerning the characters’ identity.

Moreover, one of the symptoms of schizophrenia is disorganised speech, which includes ‘derailment’, lack of connection between ideas, and ‘loss of goal’, failure to follow a train of thought, symptoms that were related in 3.2.1 to the failure to observe the maxim of relation. The character’s systematic breaking of the maxim in these cases can be taken as revealing his schizophrenia and his peculiar mind style.

There is another way in which the narrator fails to observe the *maxim of manner* which requires special attention: it is the case of the repetition of exact sentences, or sentences with little variation, which occurs frequently at different points of the narration. When readers realise that a sentence has already been encountered before, they may get the impression that the narrator is cognitively unusual. Moreover, one of the symptoms of schizophrenia is ‘perseveration’, which consists of the repetition of words or ideas (see 3.2.1) and is connected with the infringement of the maxim of manner. So, when the protagonist repeats in his narration a sentence with the same wording, the breaking of the maxim of manner is a sign of one of the symptoms of this mental condition.

For example, the reproduction of the sentence ‘I know this because Tyler knows this’ is one of the earliest and most recurrent cases, as it occurs on pages 12, 26, 112 and 185. The repetition of this sentence makes it a foregrounded parallelism, so that readers may look for an explanation for it. The reader may infer that Tyler and the protagonist are very close friends, and for this reason, Tyler tells the protagonist many things he knows. Only in the last mention of the sentence, the reader already possesses the knowledge that the two characters are the same person so that then, that inference is blocked. Therefore, the three first mentions of the sentence involve the non-observance of the maxim of manner, because of the prolixity in conveying the same amount of information. However, the last mention does not fail to observe the maxim because

readers can interpret it differently: the protagonist knows what Tyler knows because they are the same person. And moreover, after the last repetition, the other three mentions can be re-contextualised and reinterpreted in the light of the reader's updated mental representation of the protagonist.

Following this previous example of repetitions of a sentence within a few pages or with a great difference within the text, the rest of instances of repetitions can be classified into two groups. The classification depends on how close the two sentences appear within the narrative text and how the readers' background knowledge varies from the first to the second mention:

1. *Repetition within a few pages.* The second mention fails to observe the maxim of manner because the same words are repeated again with little variation and the reader does not have new information to interpret it differently. Thus, the reader may form an impression about the protagonist's cognitive state and his mind style.

I never give my real name. (*Fight Club*, p. 19)

I never give my real name at support groups. (*Fight Club*, p. 23)

Tyler said, 'I want you to hit me as hard as you can'. (*Fight Club*, p. 46)

So Tyler said, 'I want you to do me a favour. I want you to hit me as hard as you can' (*Fight Club*, p.52)

One morning, there's the dead jellyfish of a used condom floating in the toilet. (*Fight Club*, p. 56)

and now there's a used condom. (*Fight Club*, p. 57)

and there's a used condom in the toilet. (*Fight Club*, p.57)

2. *Distant repetition.* In these examples, the first mention occurs at the beginning of the novel while the second mention occurs towards the end (except the last example). When readers encounter the repeated sentence, they have more background knowledge about the characters (i.e. that Tyler and the protagonist are the same person) to interpret it and, at the same time, reinterpret the first mention. The issue here is that when the

repetition is distant from the former mention and readers have more information to interpret it in another light there is not a not-observance of the maxims, despite the repetition of words.

You do the little job you're trained to do. Pull a lever. Push a button. You don't understand any of it, and then you just die. (*Fight Club*, p. 12)

You just do your little job. Pull a lever. Push a button. You don't really understand any of it. (*Fight Club*, p. 193)

The three ways to make napalm. (*Fight Club*, p. 13)

The three ways to make napalm. (*Fight Club*, p. 185)

That old saying, how you always kill the one you love, well, look, it works both ways. (*Fight Club*, p.13)

That old saying, about how you always kill the thing you love, well, it works both ways. (*Fight Club*, p. 184)

He showed me a wallet photo of himself huge and naked at first glance, in a posing strap at some contest. (*Fight Club*, p.21)

In his pocket was a wallet photo of himself huge and naked at first glance in a posing strap at some contest. (*Fight Club*, p.177)

Nothing is static. Even the Mona Lisa is falling apart (*Fight Club*, p. 49)

Nothing is static. Everything is falling apart. (*Fight Club*, p. 112)

Finally, I would like to provide one more instance in which the narrator fails to observe two maxims at the same time, the *maxims of relation* and *manner*, rambling from one topic to another without connection. Again, the breaking of the maxims reveals symptoms of schizophrenia: disorganised speech, derailment, and perseveration, so that his linguistic behaviour reveals his mental condition. In the whole of chapter 3, the protagonist simultaneously explains his obsession with travelling by plane and Tyler's job:

You wake up at Air Harbor International

Every takeoff and landing, when the plane banked too much to one side, I prayed for a crash. That moment cures my insomnia with narcolepsy when we might die helpless and packed human tobacco in the fuselage.

This is how I met Tyler Durden.

You wake up at O'Hare.

You wake up at LaGuardia.

You wake up at Logan.

Tyler worked part-time as a movie projectionist. Because of his nature, Tyler could only work night jobs. If a projectionist called in sick, the union called Tyler.

Some people are night people. Some people are day people. I could only work a day job.

You wake up at Dulles.

Life insurance pays off triple if you die on a business rip. I prayed for wind shear effect. I prayed for pelicans sucked into the turbines and loose bolts and ice on the wings. On takeoff, as the plane pushed down the runway and the flaps tilted up, with our seats in their full upright position and our tray tables towed and all personal carry-on baggage in the overhead compartment, as the end of the runway ran up to meet us with our smoking materials extinguished, I prayed for a crash.

You wake up at Love Field.

In a projection booth, Tyler did changeovers if the theatre was old enough. With changeovers, you have two projectors in the booth, and one projector is running. (*Fight Club*, p. 25–26)

Breaking the maxim of relation and manner by shifting from topic to topic is a constant feature of the protagonist's speech. This example is the first time he does this for a considerable stretch of text, and these shifts might seem astonishing to the reader. Through these topic changes the reader may infer that there is something wrong with the protagonist: that he lacks concentration, or that his train of thought varies quickly. The transition in the topic change is always indicated by a sentence starting 'You wake up at', so that the only connection between the two topics is the mention of sleeping and waking up. This seems to work as a cohesive device (Halliday and Hasan 1976) between the two distinct themes. However, the relevance of the cohesive sentence will become apparent later in the novel. Only when readers discover the protagonist's schizophrenia, can they understand that the linking sentence is the moment of becoming one person or the other: himself while awake and Tyler while sleeping.

### 3.3.2.2 Type of non-observance of maxims

It is important to establish what type of non-observance of the maxims the narrator makes use of because this will be telling about his personality. My hypothesis is that when he fails to observe the maxims, he does not intend to produce any implicature. One of the characteristic symptoms of schizophrenia is ‘disorganised speech and thought’, which corresponds, in language use, to the non-observance of maxims. Due to the recognised cognitive state of the narrator, his intention in the non-observance of the maxims of manner, relation and quantity may not be to produce implicatures.

Following Short’s discourse architecture, I would like to argue that at level 1 the author wants the reader to draw implicatures about the personality of the character in order to reach an interpretation of him, so that at this level maxims are flouted. But at level 2, the narrator does not intend the reader to draw implicatures about himself: the breaking of the maxims forms part of his style of language production and communication. Then, if no implicature is intended, the narrator is *infringing* the maxims. According to Thomas (see section 2.2.2.3), an infringement may be due to several causes, including the speaker’s cognitive impairment or his inability to speak clearly or to the point (1995: 74), being the former cause the one applicable here. The issue of the infringement of maxims at level 3, in conversations between characters, will be dealt with in the next section.

However, we should take into account that although the narrator’s intention is not to produce implicatures, the reader may still draw them (Culpeper 2001: 143). Thus, after the realisation of these infringements, the reader may draw the inference that the narrator’s style of presenting facts is quite peculiar. As the novel progresses, the protagonist also fails to observe maxims in his conversations with other characters, so

that the reader receives more information about him and may attribute his non-observances to his cognitive oddity.

In principle, the narrator's infringement of the maxims is part of the linguistic manifestation of his schizophrenia, so that his verbal behaviour reveals his cognitive condition. Thus, we could argue that his cognitive impairment involves an understanding of the CP and maxims that differs from Grice's definition. I agree with Thomas (1995) in her argument that two of the shortcomings of Grice's theory are that (i) 'the requirement of the Cooperative Principle to 'make your contribution such as is required...' may well be different for speaker and hearer' (1995: 92), and (ii) that while the maxim of quality is a matter of yes or no, the maxims of quantity and manner 'can be observed to a greater or lesser degree' (1995: 91). Following her suggestion, the protagonist of *Fight Club* may have a different conception of the maxims: excessive prolixity and shifting topics do not cause him any communicative problem of which he is aware.

Therefore, my proposal is that in cases in which narrator-characters' cognitive impairment leads them to infringe the maxims, their mental illness may imply a different conception of the normal functioning of the CP and maxims. Then, they would not consider that they are infringing maxims because their understanding of them differs from 'normal' people<sup>2</sup>. In conclusion, from the readers' point of view, the infringement of the maxims characterises the narrator's mind style so that his linguistic patterns reflect his special cognitive habits even though, as a cognitively-impaired narrator, the protagonist's presentation of information shows a different understanding of the CP and maxims.

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<sup>2</sup> In 10.3, I will analyse the management of the CP and maxims of a cognitively impaired character who overtly claims to have a different conception of the observance of the maxims, but is at the same time aware of the 'normal' functioning of conversational behaviour, trying to abide by it with different degrees of success.

### 3.3.3 Characters' non-observance of maxims

Throughout the novel, the narrator reports some of the conversations he, as a character, maintains with other characters. These interactions are characterised by the non-observance of the conversational maxims by the participants. The failure to observe the maxims and the type of non-observance is revealing about the personality traits of the characters involved in the interaction. At the same time, I will claim that the protagonist's non-observance reveals to the reader his schizophrenia. Whereas Culpeper (1996) made a particular claim for the role of infringement in characterisation in drama, my contribution is demonstrating the point in prose fiction. The conversations in which this phenomenon takes place are held with Marla.

Before starting with the analysis, it is worth noting that various interpretations of the management of the maxims are possible given that the reader is not granted access to Marla's mental world and the protagonist's reported thoughts are often vague. Thus, there are various possibilities to interpret the failure to observe maxims differently depending on readers: maxims may be interpreted as being opted out of, violated or infringed. My purpose is to propose here one possible interpretation, the most plausible one in my own opinion, but I always take into account that other readers may arrive at different conclusions about the characters through their conversational behaviour, and those interpretations might be as adequate as mine.

We need first to remember the reader's knowledge of the relationship between the characters, based on the protagonist's narration and knowledge, in order to make sense of these fragments: Marla and Tyler are lovers; Tyler and the protagonist are best friends and they live together; and the protagonist does not get along with Marla

because she is going out with his best friend. On the other hand, Marla's understanding of the same relationship varies: Marla has a sexual relationship with Tyler, which is the name that the protagonist gave himself when he met her. So, Marla has a relationship with the protagonist, but she does not know he suffers from schizophrenia. In addition, the reader is only granted access to Marla's perspective when the protagonist's schizophrenia is discovered, so that until that moment, the reader shares the protagonist's conceptualisation of his relationships with the other characters.

*First fragment.*

Given the problematic relationship between Marla and the protagonist, the reader may be first shocked when the following interaction between them takes place:

She says, 'I let myself in. I didn't think anyone was home. Your front door doesn't lock.'

I don't say anything.

'You know, the condom is the glass slipper of our generation. You slip it on when you meet a stranger. You dance all night, then you throw it away. The condom, I mean. Not the stranger.'

I'm not talking to Marla. She can horn in on the support groups and Tyler, but there's no way she can be my friend.

'I've been waiting here all morning for you.'

Flowers bloom and die

Wind brings butterflies or snow

A stone won't notice. (*Fight Club*, p. 66-7)

Marla's turns are commentaries which would expect a comment back from the protagonist, but he either reports that he remains silent: 'I don't say anything' and 'I'm not talking to Marla', or implies by lack of direct speech that he remains silent. These silences involve the non-observance of the maxim of quantity, although in this case the

type of non-observance is not an infringement but rather an opting-out<sup>3</sup>. A speaker opts out of a maxim when he does not cooperate in the conversation as it is required. In opting out of the maxim of quantity by lack of cooperation, the protagonist wants Marla to infer that he is not interested in conversing with her and he wants her to leave. He states it clearly in his narration: 'I just want her out of here' (p. 67).

If we consider these turns in politeness terms, I would argue that the protagonist's non-observance of the maxim can be related with redressing Marla's face to a certain extent. Instead of requesting/ordering her to leave, which would imply a great FTA to her negative face, he opts for the option 'Do not to utter the FTA' (Brown and Levinson 1987). However, in this particular case, not performing the FTA would still involve a threat to her positive face: by not cooperating in the conversation he wants her to draw the inference that he does not want to talk with her. It should be stressed here, although I will expand on this point in chapter 9 and 10, that people's conversational styles can be analysed in terms of politeness to arrive at conclusions about their identities, even though their use of politeness strategies is not conscious or strategic. Face concerns are intrinsic to human nature, so that people's management of their face needs and others' can always be analysed in their linguistic behaviour and claimed to be revealing about their cognitive styles. Therefore, even though the protagonist may not be consciously managing Marla's or his own face, the politeness analysis reflects his communicative behaviour and cognitive style.

Tanaka (1993) provides an explanation for Brown and Levinson's strategy 'Do not utter the FTA', referring to it as the 'Opting Out Choice (OOC)'. She claims that there are two types of OOC: *genuine*, when the speaker does not perform the FTA and lets the matter drop; and *strategic*, when the speaker 'does not perform a speech act, but

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<sup>3</sup> The fact that schizophrenic patients frequently infringe maxims does not necessarily prevent them from failing to observe them in any other way (e.g., opting out, flouting, violating) generating implicatures.

expects A to infer her / his wish to achieve the perlocutionary effect' (1995: 50-51). The protagonist's silences would fit in the category OOC strategic because, as the protagonist does not want Marla to be with him, his silence may aim at her drawing the inference that he wants her to leave. The point of this argument is that the protagonist implicates that he wants Marla to leave by opting out of the maxim of quantity, instead of ordering her to do so. Thus, the character may understand that no reciprocal interaction is required to achieve his own goals, and this lack of contributions in the conversation over the long period of time that the conversation lasts may involve a sign of cognitive oddity.

The most crucial aspect of this fragment is Marla's last turn, 'I've been waiting here all morning for you', and the protagonist's lack of response and reported thoughts. In order to account for this passage, we need to bear in mind the different context models created by Marla, the protagonist, and the reader. More precisely, we need to consider the characters' mental representations of each other, the reader's representations of them, and the goals of the situation, according to each participant.

Regarding Marla's context model for this communicative event, her mental representation of the protagonist is that he is her boyfriend and her goal is to talk with him. For her, the content of her last turn follows the expectations set by their relationship: partners spend time together and that is the reason for her waiting for him. Although each of Marla's conversational turns fails to receive an answer, she does not react in any remarkable sense to her boyfriend's silences. In terms of adjacency pairs, she produces the first parts of adjacency pairs that never receive their second-pair parts. The reader may infer, from her lack of reaction or remark about this fact, that this is the conversational style that characterises their relationship.

As for the protagonist's context model, his mental representation of Marla is that she is a mere acquaintance, and he has a negative opinion of her ('there's no way she can be my friend'); and his goal in the whole situation is to 'have her out of here'. Whereas after Marla's first two turns, the character reported to remain silent, her last turn produces a different reaction in him because it clashes with the expectations of their relationship: since they are simply acquaintances, she should have no reason to wait for him. His reaction is to think up a three-line poem ('Flowers bloom and die / Wind brings butterflies or snow / A stone won't notice') and continue with the narration without providing any further explanation. The poem would involve a narratological infringement of the maxim of relation because the reported thoughts of the narrator are not connected with the previous reported dialogue. Again, this failure to observe the maxim of relation can be linked with one of the symptoms of schizophrenia, 'derailment', because of the apparent lack of connection between his ideas.

The reader's context model for the conversation shares most of its content with the protagonist's because we only have access to his point of view: the relationship between the two characters is that they are mere acquaintances; Marla's goal is to talk with the protagonist while his goal is to force her to leave; and whereas the protagonist dislikes Marla, we cannot know what she feels towards him because her point of view is not provided. For the reader, Marla's last turn also clashes with the expectations set by their relationship: there is no reason why she should wait for him. The reader may interpret that Marla is failing to observe the maxim of quantity, by providing less information than is necessary, in not offering the reasons for her waiting. On the other hand, the protagonist's lack of answer may be interpreted by the reader as opting out of the maxim of quantity again. Moreover, his reported thoughts include a poem about a stone's insensitivity that, by analogy, may be interpreted as referring to his own

insensitivity to Marla's remarks. The linguistic behaviour of both characters during this short interaction reveals their bizarre relationship and suggests some type of mental oddity.

*Second fragment.*

The next fragment in which a similar pattern is repeated, the protagonist breaks again the maxim of quantity by not responding to Marla's turns. In this case, we find a question by Marla that clashes with the reader's and the protagonist's expectations about the type of questions she can ask him. The fragment is the following (sentences are numbered for ease of reference):

'At the store, they have one-hundred-percent-recycled toilet paper,' Marla says. 'The worst job in the whole world must be recycling toilet paper.' (1)

I take the canister of lye and put it on the table. I don't say anything. (2)

'Can I stay over, tonight?' Marla says. (3)

I don't answer. I count in my head: five syllables, seven, five.

A tiger can smile

A snake will say it loves you

Lies make us evil (4) (*Fight Club*, p. 71)

Marla starts this conversation with a joke (1) which does not receive any feedback from the protagonist (2). For her, his silence might entail his opting out of the maxim of quantity, with the implicature that he does not want to talk to her. However, the failure to understand jokes is symptomatic of schizophrenic patients who, as we saw, cannot understand indirectness and cannot infer implicated meanings. It may be the case here that the protagonist's impossibility to understand the joke leads him to remain silent, in which case he is infringing the maxim of quantity without the intention to generate implicatures. In this case, the character's linguistic behaviour reveals a symptom of schizophrenia and can be taken as indicative of his cognitive state.

In her next turn, Marla's question (3) clashes again, for the reader and protagonist, with the expectations set by their distant relationship: her request about spending the night with the protagonist is quite unusual. If in the previous fragment, the clash was produced by a comment requiring another comment, now the clash is produced by a question requiring an answer. The protagonist's reaction (4) is not to produce any response, which may be interpreted by Marla as opting out of the maxim of quantity and relation: he does not want her to stay and he does not want to talk about it.

However, the reader may not understand the protagonist's silence as opting out of the maxims but rather as an infringement. Since Marla's request clashes with the expectations of their relationship, and he may not comprehend why she poses that question, it is possible that he does not want to implicate anything with his silence. In relation to the characteristic symptoms of schizophrenia, the protagonist's silences after Marla's turns could be 'diagnosed' as 'poverty of speech'; the symptom predicts that questions may remain unanswered, infringing the maxim of quantity. Thus, his lack of responses after questions can be interpreted as revealing his schizophrenic mental condition. In addition to this, the reader has access to the protagonist's mind, which again, creates a haiku poem about lies that make people evil. Similarly to the previous fragment, the poem involves a narratological infringement of the maxim of relation which is connected with the schizophrenic symptom of 'derailment'. The protagonist's confused state of mind is transmitted to the reader, who can only try to guess who is telling lies.

In the previous section about narratological non-observance of maxims, I already suggested that the protagonist may have a different conception of the CP and maxims due to his cognitive state. His 'relaxed' understanding of the maxims allows him to remain silent when he does not comprehend something or when something clashes with

his expectations. Therefore, the protagonist may not consider he is not breaking the maxims at all, neither flouting nor infringing them, with his silences. In his conversational style, marked by his cognitive deviation, he may choose not to produce any utterance when expected and not be aware that this might involve a communicative problem.

Thus, there could be three different understandings of the protagonist's silence. For himself, he is not breaking the maxims because he sticks to his own conversational style. For Marla, if she draws the implicature that he does not want to be with her, he is opting out of the maxims. And for the reader, the silence may be an infringement of the maxims because the protagonist cannot make sense of Marla's turn, and therefore, does not intend to generate any implicature. These three interpretations of the same turn are possible because Marla, the protagonist, and the reader form different context models about the same situation: these variations are based on different mental representations of the participants.

Moreover, in forming the context model for this situation, the reader can count on some contextual factors, background knowledge based on what has been read before, that he can use to arrive at conclusions about the characters and their personalities. At this point, and due to their bizarre conversations, the reader may start having doubts about the true nature of the relationship between Marla and the protagonist. A few pages before this fragment, the protagonist reports his thoughts about the relationship between Marla and Tyler:

*I'm starting to wonder if Tyler and Marla are the same person. Except for their humping, every night in Marla's room.*

*Doing it.*

*Doing it.*

Doing it.<sup>4</sup>

Tyler and Marla are never in the same room. I never see them together.

Still, you never see me and Zsa Zsa Gabor together, and this doesn't mean we're the same person.

Tyler just doesn't come out when Marla's around. (*Fight Club*, p. 65)

The protagonist makes reference to two people being the same person, so that the physical split schema (see 7.2.2) is activated in the reader. Fiske and Taylor (1991: 145-6) argue that when a schema has been recently activated, it is more accessible. Now, some contextual factors, e.g. Marla's previous commentary and this question, might activate this schema again in respect to the protagonist and Tyler. Thus, we may assume that the reader may start wondering about Tyler and the protagonist being the same person.

### *Third fragment.*

The following is the last conversation between the protagonist and Marla I will analyse. Once more, the reader, Marla and the protagonist arrive at a different understanding of these conversational turns because they form different context models. Each of them comprehends the turns differently in terms of Grice's maxims, and the reader can finally conclude that Tyler and the protagonist are the same person.

Marla yells, 'Tyler. Can I come in? Are you home?' (1)

I yell, Tyler's not home. (2)

Marla yells, 'Don't be mean.' (3)

By now, I'm at the front door. Marla's standing in the foyer with a Federal Express overnight package, and says, 'I needed to put something in your freezer.' (4) (*Fight Club*, p. 90)

For the protagonist, Marla's first turn is a straightforward question that receives a straightforward response: he cooperates in the conversation following the cooperative

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<sup>4</sup> The narrator repeats three times the same sentence, infringing the maxim of manner. This pattern of repeating three times short sentences is reiterated at various points in the narration, e.g. 'Faker. / Faker. / Faker.' (p. 18).

principle. Marla's second turn, however, cannot be understood by him because he supposes himself not to be the addressee, so that he remains silent without commenting on it. Since he remains silent, Marla cannot be aware that their communication is not working efficiently.

For Marla, the protagonist's answer (2) to her question blatantly flouts the maxim of quality: he is telling a lie, and she draws an implicature from it. After Marla asks whether Tyler is at home, the mere fact that the protagonist answers, and presumably she recognises his voice, indicates that he (that is, Tyler) is at home. Thus, Marla draws the inference that although he negates that fact, he *is* there, and maybe she also infers that he does not want to talk to her. Hence, she utters her recrimination.

For the reader, this conversation may reveal the protagonist's cognitive problem, resolving the complexity of the situation. Since the protagonist is the narrator of the story, the reader has only access to the facts he narrates and, more specifically, to his particular view of those facts. Still, readers can draw their own conclusions about the protagonist considering his conversations and his thoughts. For the reader, the characters' two first turns are perfectly allowable, they do not clash with the relationship expectations, but the meaning of Marla's turn (3) needs to be worked out. In order to interpret Marla's turn, the reader has to draw an inference from it, something the protagonist is unable to do, as he seems not understand indirectness probably due to his cognitive problem. Marla's turn is a request for him not to be unpleasant, and after it, she enters the house and maintains a conversation with the protagonist. From this, added to the suspicion from the previous fragment, the reader may now be able to infer that Tyler and the protagonist are the same person, although he himself does not know.

When the reader comprehends the true state of affairs, the context model for this situation needs to be updated. The reader's cognitive representation of the protagonist is

transformed: he suffers from schizophrenia because he invented Tyler, the ideal side of his personality (see 7.2.1). Van Dijk explains the process of model updating:

Understanding, thus, means that people are able to build a possible model of a situation. Often, building such a model involves the updating of 'old' models, e.g., when we read the newspaper about political events we have read about before. (1988: 139)

Van Dijk's exemplification of model updating in the reading of the newspaper can be applied to the reading of a literary text. As *Fight Club* progresses, the reader receives more information about the characters and models need to be updated to incorporate new information that clashes with old models. Van Dijk also argues that it is not only the situation model that can be updated, but also the context model (for the difference between situation and context models see section 2.3.2.2):

People not only build models of the situations they perceive, participate in or read and hear about, but also of the communicative situation itself. That is, in conversational interaction, people activate, build or update models about themselves and other speech participants, about their actual goals and interests, about the social norms, values and rules that apply in the communicative situation. (1988: 139)

The reader needs to update the context model of a situation they are reading about, in relation to one of the participants: the protagonist of the novel. Moreover, in updating the current situation model, the reader has to take into account this update to reinterpret previous and subsequent situations. For example, when Tyler is on scene, e.g. talking to Marla, or working at the cinema, he is the protagonist himself. Thus, the opening scene of the novel in which Tyler is about to kill the protagonist needs to be reinterpreted. In the updated context model, the only participant is the protagonist, who maintains a conversation with himself, and his goal is to commit suicide.

Although readers may have updated their representation of the protagonist by now, neither the protagonist himself nor Marla are aware of the situation. The

protagonist does not know yet that he suffers from this mental disorder and neither does Marla. This circumstance is possible because of the protagonist's own understanding of the CP and maxims, and especially because of his silences after Marla's incomprehensible turns. This state of affairs results in dramatic irony, a common phenomenon in dramatic texts.

Dramatic irony takes place because sometimes, implicatures 'can be worked out by the characters on stage as well as the audience, but at other times they can only be worked out by the audience' (Culpeper 2001: 180). The particular discourse architecture of drama allows the double perspective (the existence of levels 1 and 2) necessary for dramatic irony. The reader/audience may draw an inference from the characters' conversation that they cannot draw. Novels and short stories can also make use of this phenomenon because they share the discourse architecture of drama, sometimes adding one more level of narrator-narratee.

In *Fight Club*, dramatic irony results from the fact that the reader can draw the inference that the protagonist and Tyler are the same person, but the characters cannot draw it until later in the novel. The reader receives more information than the protagonist has. As schizophrenic patients are characterised by their inability to understand indirectness the protagonist cannot draw the inference from Marla's incomprehensible turns. Thus, he will not discover that Tyler and he are the same person until another character tells him directly. Only then, will he tell Marla about the true situation.

### **3.4 Conclusion**

In this section, I have explained the protagonist's conversational behaviour by means of linguistic analysis, especially Grice's CP and the maxims, while my cognitive hypotheses about the character have offered an explanatory account of that behaviour, relating it to a cognitive illness. More specifically, his linguistic patterns have revealed that he suffers from some of the symptoms of schizophrenia, portraying a particular mind style which may be characteristic of schizophrenic patients. I have also contributed to demonstrate how characters' infringement of maxims in their conversation with other characters is revealing about characterisation.

To begin with, I have discussed the connection between the symptoms of schizophrenia with language usage, and I have provided an analysis of schizophrenic patients' language by means of Grice's theory. Then, the Gricean analysis of the protagonist's language has made apparent some of these characteristic symptoms. In particular, the protagonist's disorganised speech can be characterised by derailment, perseveration, loss of goal, and difficulty in understanding indirectness, e.g. jokes. Thus, the narrator-character's use of language portrays him as sharing some of the typical traits of schizophrenic people.

Simultaneously, I have offered a cognitive explanation of the creation of context models for the communicative situations by each character and the reader, in order to study how differences in the models lead to differences in the understanding of the non-observance of the maxims and even to dramatic irony. Moreover, I have proposed that characters who suffer some mental illness may have a different conceptualisation of the conversational maxims because they can be considered as not infringing maxims, even though they do so from the perspective of 'normal' conversational behaviour.

#### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will follow cognitive stylistic assumptions to arrive at conclusions about the mind style of a character by combining pragmatic theories with theories of cognition. In this case, the main pragmatic tool I will utilise is politeness theory (Brown and Levinson 1987), complementing it with other pragmatic concepts such as speech acts (Searle 1969) and activity types (Levinson [1979] 1992). As for the theories of cognition, I will use again model theory (van Dijk 1987a, 1987b), complementing it with schema theory (Barlett, F.C. [1932] (1995), Schank and Abelson 1977, Weber and Crocker 1983).

The character that I will analyse here is the protagonist of the short story *Bartleby* (Melville 1953), a copyist named Bartleby who, I propose, displays some of the symptoms of autism, and consequently, an autistic mind style. My claim is *not* that Bartleby suffers from autism but that this character's verbal and non-verbal behaviour is similar in some respects to that of autistic people, sharing the same cognitive habits reflected in speech. Some literary critics have also proposed that this character suffers from autism, such as Murray (2004) and Sullivan (1976). However, this is not necessarily the only possible interpretation of the character, as he can be interpreted as suffering from depression (Hassoun 1997), being awkward, retarded, or he could simply be pretending to be autistic.

An important aspect of the analysis of Bartleby's mind style is that the first person narrator of the short-story is his employer, the lawyer, and readers are never granted access to the copyist's point of view. Readers do not have access to his mental

world because his thoughts are never reported, so that conclusions about his cognitive characteristics cannot be conclusive. Most studies of mind style deal with characters who are the focalisers of the story or, at least, readers are offered their point of view on certain occasions. The complete lack of access to Bartleby's mind situates him on the other end of the scale, as to the accessibility to his mental world. This can be considered one of the attractions of the story and an original feature of my analysis, as the evidence I will use to study his mind style, his conversational behaviour, has not been considered as revealing mind style in previous studies.

In addition, the character offers a reduced linguistic repertoire, as he usually repeats the same sentence with little variation, which will be analysed in his conversations with the lawyer. For this reason, the lawyer's role in their conversations will be of primary importance and the analysis of Bartleby's social interaction will be heavily based on the lawyer's participation in their conversations and his reported thoughts. My objective is to demonstrate that an analysis of the character's social interaction and verbal behaviour, especially through several theories of pragmatics and cognition, offers a feasible approach to propose interpretations of this character's mind style. As I said before, this analysis and the conclusions I will arrive at are tentative, given the lack of access to his thoughts, the fact that the character only produces direct speech and, basically, a single restricted sentence. As I specified in section 2.4.2, although I exemplify mind style using linguistic phenomena different from previous studies, my usage of the term 'mind style' is consistent with its use in the literature.

I will begin providing a medical explanation of autism to take into account the symptoms of this mental disorder during the analysis. Then, I will analyse the language in the short story combining politeness theory and model theory to show

how through interaction, there is a change in the power relationship between employer and employee, and how the protagonist's cognitive deviation can be observed in his use of language. My aim is to demonstrate how the mind style of this particular character can be studied by means of his interpersonal relationship with his boss.

## **4.2 Autistic disorder**

In the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (1994: 66-71), autism is described essentially as consisting of an impaired development of social interaction and communication, and a restricted repertoire of activities and interests.

The impairment in social interaction is fundamental. The person suffering from autism may have an impairment in the use of multiple non-verbal behaviours (e.g. avoidance of eye contact, facial expression, bodily postures) that regulate social interaction. Among young children, there may be failure to develop peer relationships, and older individuals with an interest in friendship may still lack understanding of the conventions of social interaction. Very important is also the lack of emotional reciprocity with others, since an individual's awareness of others is often impaired.

The impairment in communication may affect both verbal and non-verbal interaction. First of all, there may be a delay or total lack of development of spoken language. A relevant point for my discussion is that when autistic people do acquire language,

there may be marked impairment in the ability to initiate or sustain a conversation with others (Criterion A2b), or a stereotyped and repetitive use of language or idiosyncratic language (Criterion A2c). (...) Grammatical structures are often immature and include stereotyped and repetitive use of language (e.g., repetition of words or phrases regardless of meaning; repeating

jingles or commercials) or metaphorical language (i.e., language that can only be understood clearly by those familiar with the individual's communication style). (1994: 66)

The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* also includes other aspects of language which may be abnormal: pitch, intonation, rate, rhythm, or stress. As for comprehension, the disturbance may be evidenced in an inability to understand simple questions, directions, or jokes.

Individuals suffering from autism show restricted, repetitive, and stereotyped patterns of behaviour. They are preoccupied with stereotyped and restricted patterns of interest (e.g. amassing facts about meteorology). They display an inflexible adherence to specific, non-functional routines or rituals, so they may insist on sameness and show resistance to or distress over trivial changes (e.g. taking the same route to work every day). There may be abnormalities of eating (e.g. limiting diet to a few foods) or sleeping; abnormalities of mood or affect (e.g. apparent absence of emotional reaction); there may be a lack of response to real dangers and excessive fearfulness in response to harmless objects; and even a variety of self-injurious behaviours may be present (e.g. head banging).

The impairment in social interaction may change over time, depending on the level of development of the individual. However, only a small percentage of individuals with the disorder live and work independently as adults. Although older individuals' long-term memory may be excellent 'the information tends to be repeated over and over again, regardless of the appropriateness of the information to the social context' (1994: 68). Even the highest functioning adults exhibit problems in social interaction and communication along with markedly restricted interests and activities.

### **4.3 Bartleby's mind style**

Bartleby's mind style will be studied by analysing his social interaction, and in particular, by analysing the transformation of the power relationship with his boss and the simultaneous negotiation of his own and his employer's context models for various situations in the story. Due to the lack of access to Bartleby's point of view, his mind style will be analysed relying exclusively on his restricted linguistic repertoire, his direct speech. Therefore, the communicative interaction between the two characters will be the grounds on which to study his mind style by means of politeness theory and model theory.

The mind style of characters and narrators has been analysed through their use of lexical, syntactic and transitivity patterns (Fowler 1977, 1986). Only recently, other theories relating linguistic patterns and cognitive theories, such as cognitive metaphor theory, have been used in the study of mind style (Black 1993; Semino and Swindlehurst 1996; Semino 2002). My analysis of mind style will follow these studies relating linguistic patterns with theories of cognition, although I will be analysing different linguistic phenomena by means of different linguistic theories.

In this short story, there is a development in the relationship between the lawyer and the copyist, involving a change in their power positions, which can be observed in their use of language. By means of politeness theory, I will discover the strategies used by the employee to alter the pre-established power relationship, how the employer copes with the situation, and how the combination of the linguistic style of the two characters can lead to the transformation of their relationship. The linguistic analysis of characters' verbal behaviour by means of politeness theory will be revealing about the process of negotiation of power.

At the same time, characters' language may be interpreted to reflect their cognitive processes, which will be analysed through model theory. By means of model theory, I will propose hypotheses about the cognitive mechanisms of discourse production and comprehension that can be imagined to go on in characters' heads, as reflected in the language they use. Through social interaction the speakers form and transform models and, consequently, their mental representations of each other and their relationship. My claim is that the characters' cognitive processes reflected in their usage of language are revealing about their identities and mental worlds, and especially about Bartleby's autistic traits and his peculiar mind style.

#### **4.3.1 Bartleby's autistic features**

The impairment in Bartleby's social interaction is marked mainly by his lack of understanding of the conventions that regulate social interaction, which corresponds, in his speech, to a lack of understanding of politeness conventions. This is demonstrated by the lack of the necessary redressive action in the performance of his face threatening acts and also the unawareness of the face work addressed to him, as we will see in the next sections. His lack of concern for his own positive face contrasts with the high value that he places on his negative face, as his rejections to work imply an unreasonable need not to be imposed upon. The protagonist's lack of emotional reciprocity, a characteristic of autism, also leads him to avoid developing a friendship with the lawyer and ignoring the face threat his refusals to work produce to the lawyer and the other employees, who have to do his work.

Bartleby's use of language is restricted to repeating the same sentence, 'I would prefer not to...', with little variation, in any context. His stereotyped and repetitive

use of language is ubiquitous from the first to the last conversation reported, which starts with 'I prefer not to dine today'. He uses his response almost automatically, regardless of its appropriateness in the context of utterance, as we will see in subsequent sections. The fact that he exclusively repeats this response and that we do not have access to his thoughts complicates the study of his mind style and for this reason, the lawyer's turns in their conversations will acquire special relevancy. Bartleby's inability to start and maintain a conversation is obvious, and the lawyer recognises it: 'he never spoke but to answer' (p. 121).

As for comprehension, we cannot assert a complete impairment in his abilities to understand directions or jokes, although it seems probable that such impairment may exist. For instance, once the lawyer has moved his office and Bartleby remains living at the staircase of the building, the lawyer tries to find out why he is still there: 'What are you doing here, Bartleby' said I. 'Sitting upon the banister' (p. 29). In this particular case, Bartleby's answer does not provide enough information for the lawyer, so that he fails to observe Grice (1975)'s maxim of quantity. As it seems that the copyist does not want to generate any implicature, his non-observance can be considered as infringement of the maxim. According to Thomas (1995), the infringement of a maxim may be due to a cognitive impairment (see section 2.2.2.3), so this seems to support my interpretation of Bartleby's mental condition and autistic mind style.

As for Bartleby's autistic behaviour, the lawyer explains some deviant conduct that he performs. Regarding his restricted patterns of interests and adherence to specific routines, there is little to say: the lawyer's characterisation of him consists of the things he does *not* do rather than what he does:

I had never seen him reading... for long periods he would stand looking out, at his pale window behind the screen, upon the dead brick wall... he never visited any refectory or eating house... he never drank beer like Turkey, or tea and coffee... he never went anywhere in particular... never went out for a walk... he had declined telling who he was. (*Bartleby*, p. 17)

Moreover, even though at the beginning of the story he used to work industriously, he finishes up always standing in front of the window ‘in one of those dead-wall reveries of his’ (p. 17), a daily routine not much approved of in the office. His abnormality on eating is based on his habit of exclusively eating gingernuts (p. 12). And his absolute abnormality of mood and affect is demonstrated in his lack of adequate politeness strategies and his general behaviour towards others.

In conclusion, *Bartleby* does show some of the main symptoms characteristic of people suffering from autism. I am particularly interested here in how his verbal behaviour may reveal his cognitive condition, so in the next sections I will demonstrate how the linguistic analysis of the interaction between the characters reveals his peculiar mind style.

#### **4.3.2 Politeness analysis**

I will start the analytical section with a fragment which represents the first time in the story in which the lawyer asks *Bartleby* to do a specific task and the employee refuses to do it.

In this very attitude did I sit when I called to him, rapidly stating what it was I wanted him to do – namely, to examine a small paper with me (1). Imagine my surprise, nay, my consternation, when, without moving from his privacy, *Bartleby*, in a singularly mild, firm voice, replied ‘I would prefer not to’ (2).

I sat awhile in perfect silence, rallying my stunned faculties (3). Immediately it occurred to me that my ears had deceived me, or *Bartleby* had entirely misunderstood my meaning (4). I

repeated my request in the clearest tone I could assume (5); but in quite as clear a one came the previous reply, 'I would prefer not to' (6).

'Prefer not to' echoed I, rising in high excitement and crossing the room with a stride. 'What do you mean? Are you moon-struck? I want you to help me compare this sheet here – take it,' and I thrust it towards him (7).

'I would prefer not to,' said he (8). (...)

This is very strange, thought I. What had one best do? But my business hurried me. I concluded to forget the matter for the present, reserving it for my future leisure. So calling Nippers from the other room, the paper was speedily examined (9). (*Bartleby*, p. 10)

The politeness analysis in this text will focus on who poses threats to whom and the strategies used to redress them. I will pay special attention to the weightiness of threats and to the allowable contributions as defined by the activity type.

#### **4.3.2.1 Sociological variables**

The first step is to establish the values of the sociological variables -social distance, relative power, ranking of the imposition (Brown and Levinson 1987), and rights and obligations (Thomas 1995) - in order to calculate the weightiness of the face threatening acts characters perform. Only by knowing what is acceptable in a social context will we know which linguistic acts are and are not appropriate for a given situation and why.

The two characters in *Bartleby* met each other due to their business relationship, so we could say that they are mere acquaintances and the social distance between them is neither big nor small. Although the characters belong to different social classes, which can be inferred from their jobs, this fact is only relevant because it is part of their employer-employee relationship.

As for the power variable, their relationship is clearly asymmetrical as far as the lawyer is the employer and the scrivener the employee. The rights and obligations variable (Thomas 1995), related to a great extent to the power variable, grants the

boss certain rights and the copyist certain obligations. The lawyer has the power to perform linguistic acts like orders and commands while the copyist's typical linguistic acts would be to ask and to request.

As for the ranking of the imposition in the particular culture, we need to take into account the location and time of the story as well as the labour relations between the participants. By and large, their situation is comparable with a contemporary western employer-employee relationship. The ranking of each imposition will vary depending on who poses the threat and its content. Bearing these facts in mind, whenever the value of the distance, power, or ranking becomes relevant for a particular face threatening act, there will be some comment on it.

#### **4.3.2.2 Threats and redressive strategies**

The lawyer's first command (1) to Bartleby to do a specific job, which is reported as indirect speech rather than with his actual words, is a threat to his negative face because it is an imposition. However, due to the institutional relation, the lawyer's power makes this FTA small enough to be admissible with little or no redressive action. The lawyer's description of the paper as 'small' minimises the size of the imposition to the copyist, showing concern for his negative face. However, this adjective is part of the lawyer's indirect speech, so that readers do not know whether he really used that word in producing the FTA. What is relevant, though, is that the lawyer does conceptualise the paper as 'small', so that readers create a mental representation of the lawyer as being concerned with his employee's face needs.

Bartleby's unexpected and straightforward answer (2) refusing to work surprises the lawyer because it clashes with the employee's obligations, so that, for the copyist, the ranking of this imposition is big and so is the weightiness of this FTA. If a high

number of redressive strategies to the lawyer's positive and negative faces were used, the threat might be acceptable. However, the threat contains one unique redressive strategy: he is conventionally indirect since he uses 'would prefer not' instead of uttering directly 'no'. Brown and Levinson (1987) do not include this grammatical structure in their explanation of this redressive strategy because they only deal with commands, questions, or criticisms and not with refusals. I do not consider Bartleby's strategy as 'off-record' because in using that strategy, speakers can deny the intention of producing the FTA, and Bartleby repeats the same FTA after the lawyer's misunderstanding.

According to Searle (1975), 'one can perform any illocutionary act by asserting (though not by questioning) the satisfaction of the sincerity condition for that act' (1975: 71). The sincerity condition for a refusal would be 'S does not wish to do A'. Thus, Bartleby is asserting the sincerity condition to achieve the illocutionary force of the utterance as a refusal, so that, in politeness terms, he is being conventionally indirect. In conclusion, the lawyer's negative face is minimally redressed with this negative politeness strategy and, at the same time, the response threatens the copyist's own positive face, since he runs the risk of not being approved of for this answer.

In the lawyer's narration of his response to Bartleby, again in indirect speech (5), he provides a clue about the force he concedes to his utterance, a 'request', rather than an 'order' or 'command'. Brown and Levinson (1987) explain the process of redefinition of speech acts with the purpose of changing the damage to the hearer's face. The speaker may redefine something that he wants, e.g. a request such as 'Would you like to come to the cinema with me tonight?', which involves an FTA to the hearer's negative face, into something that the hearer would really want, e.g. an offer such as 'Let's go to the cinema tonight', which removes the previous threat. An

offer is less imposing than a request, and the consequent threat to the hearer's face is reduced. The lawyer's definition of his command as 'request' instead of 'command' implies his intention to minimise the threat to Bartleby's face. Still, the illocutionary force of the linguistic structure is that of a command under the definition of a 'request'. If it were really a request, the hearer would have the opportunity to choose to do or not to do what he is being asked, and that is not the lawyer's intention, although it becomes the copyist's interpretation.

After a second refusal (6), the lawyer's next turn contains the first words we hear from his mouth: 'Prefer not to (...) What do you mean? Are you moonstruck?'. The last question is a rhetorical question which Brown and Levinson would classify as an off-record FTA whose 'meaning is to some degree negotiable' (1987: 69). Contrary to this, I would agree with Quirk et al. (1985) who claim that rhetorical questions function as strong assertions, so that there is no negotiability in them. Thus, in this case, we would have a strong assertion of an impolite belief: that Bartleby is moonstruck.

The intention of the lawyer with this turn is that of being offensive, which is not included within Brown and Levinson's understanding of politeness, because for them politeness is conceived as a means of maintaining social equilibrium and minimising confrontation. Culpeper (2001) analyses this phenomenon describing it as a means of *attacking face* and provides an account of the impoliteness strategies used for this purpose, on the basis of Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies. The lawyer attacks Bartleby's face showing disapproval of his behaviour using the parallel of Brown and Levinson's off-record strategy, which is, according to Culpeper, sarcasm. Sarcasm takes place when 'an FTA is performed with the use of politeness strategies that are obviously insincere' (1996: 356), so that the hearer can arrive 'at the

offensive point of your remark indirectly, by way of an implicature' (Leech 1983: 82). 'Are you moonstruck?' implicates that the hearer *is* moonstruck; under the polite appearance of a request for information, there is the implicature of an insult.

The lawyer's turn continues with a change from impoliteness strategies to a negative politeness strategy redressing the copyist's negative face by being conventionally indirect: 'I want you to...'. Nonetheless, the utterance ends with an imperative, a bald-on-record FTA whose force is supported by the kinesic movement of the lawyer: 'Take it'. Brown and Levinson (1987) argue that one of the most frequent cases of this type of bald-on-record threat occurs when the power differential is great. As in this case, no indirectness is employed when the institutional setting allows this type of linguistic act. Thus, this turn compromises a mixture of politeness strategies: the impoliteness strategy of sarcasm, the negative politeness strategy of being conventionally indirect, and a bald-on-record FTA.

Amazingly, considering the norms of social interaction, the only response the narrator receives back from Bartleby is the same words repeated again in the calmest way (8). This repetition suggests that Bartleby's concern for his own negative face, his desire not to be imposed upon, seems to be his unique preoccupation. This concern makes him threaten the lawyer's negative face, with insufficiently redressed FTAs, because it is him and the other employees who have to do his work. At the same time, the copyist would seem to be ultimately threatening his own positive face because the effect of his utterance is the lawyer's disapproval. However, he does not seem worried about this because maintaining his negative face and achieving his goals appear to be more important for him, as will be seen repeatedly throughout the story. The scrivener's FTA is repeated three times in this episode and throughout the story when he prefers not to work (see section 4.3.4). It has become apparent by now that

Bartleby's behaviour is not fulfilling the lawyer's, and the reader's, expectations of an employee and is very much revealing about the personality of this character.

### 4.3.3 Transformation of models

My next step in the textual analysis of *Bartleby* will be studying the construction of context and situation models by the participants. When I use the term *context model*, I will refer to the individual's model for the communicative situation including mainly representations of speaker and hearer, the type of social context, and the goals of the interaction. The notion of *situation model* includes the context model as well as other situation model schemata, such as time, location, actions, intentions, evaluation, etc. (see 2.3.2.1 and 2.3.2.2).

We might hypothesise that every time in the story the employer and the employee have a conversation, each of them constructs a situation model for the communicative situation they find themselves in. Through the study of the linguistic patterns used by the two characters we will be able to see the strategies used by them in order to create and manipulate context models, especially the representations of each other. One of the shortcomings of van Dijk's (1987a, 1987b) model theory is the scarce detailed linguistic analysis of texts to show how models might be formed and transformed. It is my aim to provide a thorough description of the use of linguistic structures, by means of politeness theory, to demonstrate the creation of models and the eventual manipulation of the social context in this story.

My aim is not to specify the context model each of the characters forms in his mind for every single conversation between them. Rather, I would like to explicate how some features of each context model might be transformed, leading to changes as

far as the mental representation of speaker and hearer is concerned. I will demonstrate, using fragments of the text, how the use of language suggests these little modifications which transform models.

#### **4.3.3.1 Information contents of models**

In order for participants to make relevant contributions in a communicative situation, they must have an adequate cognitive representation of the context model (see section 2.3.2.2). Thus, in a communicative situation the lawyer's model will probably consist of the following contents: (a) himself and his role as employer, (b) Bartleby and his role as employee, (c) the type of communicative situation and context type: a job context, (d) the overall goals of the context, and (e) other relevant contextual features. In the same way, Bartleby's context model will probably include his own mental representation of the same factors.

#### **4.3.3.2 Sources of information**

As we saw in the literature review of model theory, the information to fill a situation model comes from several sources: (1) information from the store of general semantic knowledge (schemata), (2) from personal generalised models, and (3) from the communicative situation itself. Therefore, on the one hand, the situation model is partly derived top-down from the expectations set up by previous similar experiences, and bottom-up from the information from the turns uttered in the communicative event.

Both the JOB schema and the personal general model for the job situation each character has - based on previous experience between them - form a source of information for the building of each context and situation model. On the one hand,

regarding the JOB schema, the two required participants are an employer and an employee, who works for the former and receives a salary in exchange. The JOB schema also contains information about the activity type (Levinson [1979] 1992) for a job situation, see section 2.2.1. At the same time, the activity type contains socially shared information about the expectations of the types of speech acts that are allowable in that situation, i.e. commands and responses to commands.

On the other hand, both Bartleby and the lawyer share a general model for their own job relationship derived from their experience in particular models, that is, previous situations in which Bartleby worked normally. At the beginning of their relationship, this general model features the same contents as the socially shared schema for job. This can be inferred from the lawyer's comments, such as 'At first, Bartleby did an extraordinary quantity of writing' (p. 9), which implies that their job relationship was a standard one, and even that Bartleby used to work more than average compared to other copyists.

The characters' situation and context models are also derived bottom-up from their conversational turns. Thus, models are continually being built up. In the first fragment analysed from the short story, the linguistic strategies used in relation to the activity type contradict both the expectations from the JOB schema and the generalised models, as I will explain below.

#### **4.3.3.3 Situation model analysis**

In this first fragment analysed, we find a clash between the development of the conversational turns and the expectations set by the activity type. The JOB schema dictates that an employer has the right to command and an employee has the obligation to obey his employer. And as I stated before, the general model for the two

characters for their job relationship follows the JOB schema. However, in the story we find the following: the employer 'requests', rather than commands, his employee to work; the employee blatantly refuses to work; and finally, the employer does not take any action against this situation.

As for the lawyer's creation of a situation model for that conversation, Bartleby's refusal to work forms a clash with the expectations from the JOB schema and the general model for their professional relationship. As for Bartleby's creation of a model, we can only suggest that the clash between the JOB schema, the general model, and the situation model must have taken place, as he is the one responsible for the clash due to his unusual responses. However, considering that the result of the conversation is that he has managed not to work and that he has reached his objective, the clash should not be very problematic for him. Finally, as for readers' creation of a situation model, it is both the employee's refusal to obey his boss *and* the employer's lack of resolution that form a clash with the expectations of the JOB schema.

Another factor to take into account is that the goals each character has in this communicative situation also clash. Apparently, Bartleby's goal was not to perform the command he was ordered, while the lawyer's was to get the copyist help him to compare a document. Since the goals of the participants are in conflict, they have to negotiate who will manage to fulfil his objective. The solution is that the lawyer opts for altering his own goal to a similar one: to have another employee help him compare the document. The lawyer solves the situation in a way that both participants have managed to achieve their purposes.

According to van Dijk (1987b), each participant can count on various strategies to reach his own objectives and block the other participant's. The first step for this purpose is to form an impression of the other actors, and take into account that they

will do the same with us. In their context models, characters can be assumed to form a cognitive representation of their own characteristics and of the other participant's, and attempt to negotiate these representations through their use of language. This negotiation can be analysed as reflected in linguistic behaviour, though van Dijk does not offer the analytical tools for this purpose.

Conversely, Brown and Levinson's politeness theory does offer the link between the mental representation of one's interlocutor and its expression through verbal behaviour by relating the use of linguistic strategies of politeness with social dimensions of the interlocutors. Brown and Levinson assert that speakers take into account the social dimension of participants, both social distance and power, to calculate the weightiness of FTAs and choose the appropriate redressive strategies in order to achieve their goals. These social dimensions may thus be manipulated with the use of inappropriate redressive strategies to alter the power relation or the social distance between the interactants, or the ranking of the imposition.

In *Bartleby*, characters form a mental representation of each other taking into account the sociological variables, reflected in their use of redressive strategies for their threats. As the episode develops, their representations seem to undergo little variations reflected in their changing redressive strategies. Thus, when Bartleby decides to ignore the social dimensions producing inappropriate threats to achieve his goals, the lawyer will most likely form a different cognitive representation of him, for instance, that he behaves improperly. With a new negative impression of the copyist, the lawyer changes his redressive strategies from redressing his negative face, (1) and (5), to using positive impoliteness and bald-on-record commands (7). On the other hand, the lawyer's change of redressive strategies may also affect the copyist's representation of him because both his language and the final outcome of the episode

reveal his weakness of character. However, not having access to the copyist's thoughts does not allow us to arrive at firm conclusions about his context models.

The conclusion is that Bartleby has handled the situation in such a way that he may have challenged part of the expectations for this situation model, he has transformed his employer's goal for this situation, and the employer's mental representation of him. We may also hypothesise that Bartleby's context model has been transformed because, in reaching his objective not to work, his mental representation of both the lawyer and himself has undergone a subtle power modification. According to van Dijk, once a model has been processed, it may be used in the retelling of the situation or to update a general model of the same situation. Thus, the manipulations that have taken place in the lawyer's and Bartleby's context models for this situation may influence subsequent models of similar situations.

#### **4.3.4 Negotiation of sociological variables and models**

In this section, I will demonstrate how the three variables used to calculate the weightiness of FTAs are transformed in three different situations leading to changes in each context model. This transformation takes place due to the repetition of the same sentence by the copyist refusing to work and the attempts by the lawyer to convince him to work again. The negotiation of the sociological variables may lead to a change in the two characters' mental representation of each other and to subsequent alterations for the formation of situation and generalised models.

##### **4.3.4.1 Negotiation of relative power**

This fragment represents the second time the lawyer asks Bartleby to do something and he refuses. Bartleby had just finished some copies and the lawyer and the other employees are waiting for him to compare them. (Turns are numbered for ease of reference.)

‘The copies, the copies,’ said I, hurriedly. ‘We are going to examine them. There’ – and I held towards him the fourth quadruplicate. (1)

‘I would prefer not to,’ he said and gently disappeared behind the screen. (2) (...)

‘Why do you refuse?’ (3)

‘I would prefer not to.’ (4) (...)

‘These are your own copies we are about to examine. It is labour saving to you, because one examination will answer for your four papers. It is common usage. Every copyist is bound to help examine his copy. Is it not so? Will you not speak? Answer!’ (5)

‘I prefer not to,’ he replied in a flutelike tone. (6) (...)

‘You are decided, then, not to comply with my request – a request made according to common usage and common sense?’ (7)

He briefly gave me to understand that on that point my judgment was sound. Yes: his decision was irreversible. (8) (*Bartleby*, p. 11)

The lawyer opts for various strategies to command his employee to work, but they always obtain the same answer. First, he produces the FTA off-record (1); second, he asks for the reasons for not working (3) and offers the reasons himself (5); and third, states his ‘request’ (7). Uttering his threats with so much redressive action, as we are going to see, seems unnecessary given their relationship. The lawyer’s use of an excessive number of redressive strategies demonstrates the possible transformation in their power relation.

The first command is uttered off-record because, one might assume, the lawyer has several competing goals: his goal to have his employee do a task, his desire not to impose on him, and his desire to save his own positive face (by being indirect, the lawyer projects an image of himself as not imposing thus saving his positive face). After two refusals to work in (2) and (4), the lawyer’s next try offers the reasons why

he should do the work (5). Following Goffman (1971) on remedial face work, the lawyer can be analysed as offering an account which consists in transferring the responsibility for the offence to the job situation, minimising the threat to employee and employer.

After the subsequent refusal (6) the lawyer just asks the employee whether he is going to comply with his 'request' (7). The lawyer's turn implies that his request forms part of the allowable contributions an employer has the right to perform in this activity type ('a request made according to common usage and common sense'): he offers a justification for his behaviour. The pragmatic force the lawyer concedes to his own utterance is that of a request. According to Searle's (1969) explanation of speech acts (see Thomas 1995: 96) 'order and command have the additional preparatory rule that S must be in a position of authority over H'. In contrast, when requesting, the speaker does not have authority over the hearer, their relationship being one of equals. If the speaker has the power to command, the hearer has the obligation to comply, whereas if the speaker can only request, the hearer can reject the request. So, if the lawyer chooses to produce 'requests' rather than 'commands', Bartleby can choose to reject the request.

The power relationship between the two characters is in the process of being negotiated. For this reason, the lawyer will still utter some bald-on-record FTAs at later moments in the story. Not because he has requested Bartleby to work, does he lose all his power to command. What is important, though, is the tension between the lawyer's desire not to threaten his employee and his need to have the work done. The lawyer's desire is reflected in his unlikely redressed commands, which may be interpreted by Bartleby as an allowance not to work, and it is then when their relationship alters.

The conclusion of this episode is likely to be that the lawyer forms a context model that is transformed and such transformation is acknowledged by the two characters. First, he has to discard his goal of having Bartleby compare a document, as will happen in every situation that he refuses to work. Second, the excessive redressive action to the employee's face reveals an accepted decrease in the boss' power over him, to be confirmed in later interaction. And, if the lawyer has lost some of his power, it has been gained by Bartleby. This interaction leads to the lawyer's probable modification of his cognitive representation of himself and Bartleby, but we may hypothesise that the same happens with Bartleby's mental representation of the two interlocutors. Given the result of the conversation, Bartleby's creation of a context model also changes because, in reaching his goal not to work, the conception of himself and his employer is transformed as far as their power relation is concerned.

I would like to reiterate here that when I talk about the characters' mental representation of each other, I am in fact referring to the reader's interpretation of the characters' mental representation of each other. Apart from this, readers form their own mental representation of characters which is also altered as their own relationship develops. As my analysis demonstrates, through character's conversational behaviour, readers may infer that Bartleby is likely to suffer from some type of cognitive impairment, and that the lawyer's improper use of politeness strategies reveals his weak personality and lack of imposition over his employee.

#### **4.3.4.2 Negotiation of the ranking of the imposition**

The next analysis deals with an episode in which the lawyer makes three consecutive requests to Bartleby, involving a decreasing size in the imposition of the FTA. First,

the lawyer asks him to compare some papers; second, he asks him to go to the Post Office; and third, to call another employee.

(1) 'Bartleby,' said I, 'when those papers are all copied I will compare them with you.'  
'I would prefer not to.'

(2) 'Bartleby,' said I, 'Ginger Nut is away; just step around to the Post Office, won't you? (it was but a three minutes' walk), and see if there is anything for me.'  
'I would prefer not to.'

(3) 'Go to the next room, and tell Nippers to come to me'  
'I prefer not to,' he respectfully and slowly said, and mildly disappeared. (*Bartleby*, p. 13-14)

The first fragment involves a linguistic presupposition ('when...') by which the lawyer presupposes that Bartleby will copy the papers. The request is produced off-record, since Bartleby has to infer that he will be doing the copies. The indirect speech act is literally a statement about what the lawyer will do, and what Bartleby is supposed to have done by then. The lawyer tries to recuperate his lost power asking his employee to copy some papers, but the copyist repeats his typical answer.

The second request (2) contains more face work. First, an apology (Goffman 1971: 114), which consists on offering reasons: 'Ginger Nut is away'; second, minimising the rating of the imposition: '*just* step around'; and third, hedging: 'won't you?', where the use of the negative expresses permission since it does not assume the interlocutor will comply. In order to command Bartleby to go to the Post Office, a lot of redressive action is used because the lawyer understands it is not his obligation (it was Ginger Nut's). However, the lawyer, as employer, has it in his right to ask him, and moreover, the ranking of the imposition is not very big. Bartleby refuses as usual.

Lastly, the third request is again a bald-on-record threat with the verb in the imperative form. In spite of the fact that the size of this imposition is very small,

simply calling another employee, Bartleby prefers not to do it. Taking into account Brown and Levinson's (1987) last sociological dimension, the rankings of the three impositions are less and less imposing and the general weightiness of the threats is also smaller. For this reason, the lawyer's last request uses a minimal degree of indirectness compared with the first one. In spite of this, Bartleby does not obey any of the requests, so that all the impositions can be thought to be very imposing for him. In refusing to comply with the three requests with his unchangeable response, Bartleby seems disposed to provide the same answer to anything the lawyer may ask of him.

#### 4.3.4.3 Negotiation of social distance

In this fragment of text, the lawyer tries to negotiate the social distance dimension. He tries to get closer to Bartleby, showing a renewed concern for his face.

'Bartleby,' said I, in a still gentler tone (1), 'come here, I am not going to ask you to do anything you would prefer not to do –I simply wish to speak to you.' (2)

Upon this he noiselessly slid into view.(3)

'Will you tell me, Bartleby, where you were born?' (4)

'I would prefer not to.' (5)

'Will you tell me *anything* about yourself?' (6)

'I would prefer not to.' (7)

'But what reasonable objection can you have to speak to me? I feel friendly towards you.' (...)  
(8)

'At present I prefer to give no answer,' he said, and retired into his hermitage. (9) (*Bartleby*, p.19)

In this fragment, the paralinguistic comments regarding the tone of the lawyer's voice when calling his employee provide extra information about the weightiness intended for the FTA (1). The tone of his voice minimises the threat, as the subsequent strategies corroborate. The lawyer's new strategy involves the positive politeness

strategy of giving gifts to the hearer, not material but related to human relations, his friendship (4), (6) and (8). However, the scrivener prefers not to talk about anything concerning himself (5), (7), and (9), this trait being consistent with the ‘lack of emotional reciprocity with others’ characteristic of autism (see section 4.2).

If until now the power and ranking of the imposition variables had been altered, the narrator-character now seems to try to modify the value of the social distance variable in order to get closer to Bartleby. The result of this episode is that the affective relationship is one-sided: while Bartleby maintains the social distance, due to his asocial character, the lawyer’s interest in establishing a friendship lasts until the end of the story when he still visits him in prison.

#### **4.3.4.4 Conclusion**

The politeness analysis of these fragments has allowed us to see how the three variables were negotiated by the characters. In transforming the variables, the characters are transforming the image they have of one another, their cognitive representation in the context model and their relationship. Brown and Levinson (1987)’s account of the manipulation of variables is in fact founded on the changing cognitive representation of participants, in the same way as model theory:

A speaker can use a bald-on-record FTA to claim (by implicature) that he is powerful over H, and does not fear his retaliation. This is risky, but if he gets away with it (H doesn’t retaliate, for whatever reason), S succeeds in actually altering the public definition of his relationship to H: that is, his successful exploitation becomes part of the history of interaction, and thereby alters the agreed values of D or P. (1987: 228)

In each situation, the linguistic behaviour of both the lawyer and Bartleby leads to a gradual transformation in their cognitive representation of each other, as demonstrated through the manipulation of the three sociological variables. The

mental representation of participants is part of the context model and of the wider situational model for a communicative event. The continuous transformation of the participants' mental representation of each other in subsequent situational models leads to a deeper transformation in the generalised model for a job situation involving the interaction between the lawyer and Bartleby *exclusively*. Thus, at this moment, the general model for *their* job relation includes a representation of the lawyer as not much able to command and a representation of Bartleby as capable of refusing to obey. And we have to remember that this general model, together with the information from the present discourse and from the JOB schema, provide the grounds to construct situational models for future communicative situations.

In these fragments of texts, we have been able to observe some characteristics of Bartleby's mind style. His most shocking trait is his indifference to the facework addressed to him and his not following social conventions, which was considered one of the main symptoms of autism. The peculiarity in his use of language consists on the repetition of the same sentence 'I would prefer not' continuously, even as the senseless response to the question 'Why do you refuse?'. The lawyer's inability to handle the situation can be observed in the unnecessary facework addressed to his employee and its consequences, which may be interpreted as a sign of his weakness of character. Although the lawyer's mind style is 'natural and uncontrived' (Leech and Short 1981), in opposition to Bartleby's 'unorthodox' mind style, it illustrates his feeble personality.

#### **4.3.5 Total power loss / gain and schema development**

Of all the other occasions in which the pattern of request-refusal is repeated, two more deserve mentioning.

‘Let me entreat you, as a friend, to comply as far as may be with the usages of this office. Say now, you will help to examine papers tomorrow or next day: in short, say now, that in a day or two you will begin to be a little reasonable: -say so, Bartleby.’ (*Bartleby*, p. 19)

The speech act in ‘Let me entreat you...to comply’ is neither a command nor a request, it involves a supplicant tone which clearly indicates the power is on the side of the copyist. In this case, the verbal construction is very indicative of the lawyer’s context model for the situation. The lawyer’s goal is to *implore* his employee to fulfil his obligations. In both the employer and the employee’s general models for their job relationship, the employer has no longer the right to make requests and the employee has no longer the obligation to comply with them. The situation has been reversed: the employer has the obligation to beg his employee to work, and he has the right to reject.

And the turning point in their relationship comes when the lawyer discovers Bartleby not working at all: ‘Upon asking him why he did not write, he said that he had decided upon doing no more writing’ (p. 21). The copyist has managed to succeed in not working and he even lives at the office (he eats, sleeps, and spends the weekends there). Although the lawyer tries to fire him, the copyist also prefers not to leave. At that point in the story, the other employees working at the office and the visiting lawyers are aware of the unconventional job relationship between them. In the end, afraid of his colleagues’ comments about his peculiar behaviour, the lawyer decides to move his office in order to leave Bartleby there.

In the previous section I claimed that the lawyer’s and Bartleby’s mental representation of each other and themselves was transformed, affecting the

generalised model for their job relationship. Here, I would like to claim that the lawyer goes one step further and develops a new schema for INTERACTING WITH BARTLEBY. Throughout the characters' encounters, the lawyer develops new expectations about Bartleby, as well as about his verbal and non-verbal behaviour. These expectations about how to interact with Bartleby are developed gradually: the lawyer is really surprised the first time his employee refuses to work but, as the situation is repeated continuously, he gets used to it and is less and less surprised.

The lawyer's development of a schema for interacting with Bartleby does not involve a schema change, because there is no modification of the lawyer's JOB schema, but a development of another schema for working with him. Van Dijk's suggestion of the existence of generalised models as an intermediate stage between situational models and schemata has served to demonstrate how a new schema can be created gradually. The INTERACTING WITH BARTLEBY schema differs from the general JOB schema in that Bartleby receives a salary for not working and can live at the office, among other peculiarities. Although the exact process through which a general model updates or creates a new schema is not specified by neither Weber and Crocker (1983) nor van Dijk (1987a, 1987b), I consider this point in the short story (after the lawyer's acceptance of the situation and his final decision to move the office as the only solution to get rid of Bartleby) the moment at which schema development takes place.

#### **4.3.6 Self-defeating behaviour**

Despite the facework used by the lawyer to mitigate his threats throughout the story, Bartleby always feels his negative face threatened and ignores the concern shown for

his face. At the same time, his monotonous response threatens his own positive face because the lawyer and the other copyists do not approve of him. Bartleby's immunity to threats comes from his obstinacy in obtaining his goals and saving his own negative face without worrying about the damage to his own and others' faces.

In self-presentational terms, the copyist seems to be engaging in self-handicapping behaviour, a type of self-defeating behaviour. According to Fiske and Taylor, an individual who engages in self-handicapping behaviour 'appears to be avoiding attributions of low ability for performance and replacing them with other, less threatening situations' (1991: 235-236), such as being drunk or stoned, anxious, depressed, etc. Bartleby self-handicaps as far as he stops working, but there is no low ability attribution to avoid and he does not offer any excuse for not working. Since his behaviour does not intend to minimise the damage to his social representation, it can be interpreted simply as self-destructive behaviour.

Fiske and Taylor recognise that 'sometimes when people engage in self-defeating behaviour, they have exchanged long-term costs and risks for short-term benefits' (1991: 238). The copyist may think of the short-term benefits of refusing to work but cannot think of the long-term risk that this implies: the possibility of being fired. Bartleby rejects immediate damage to himself, produced by the lawyer's commands and his own response, without pondering a long-term social strategy. Fiske and Taylor consider that deliberate destructive behaviour is not common among normal individuals, so maybe Bartleby is not so normal.

In other cases, such counterproductive strategies seem to derive from systematic misjudgements about the self and the world, such as misjudging contingencies, which implicate cognitive errors or malfunctions in self-destructive behaviour. Deliberate self-destructiveness among normal individuals appears to be rare. (1991: 238)

As we saw in chapter 2, mind style conveys the personal and cognitive aspects of world views, which may be peculiar of a person or of a group of people sharing the same cognitive characteristics (e.g. children, people suffering the same mental illness). After the analysis of Bartleby's behaviour and speech, we can conclude that his mind style shares some of the characteristics of autistic people. Bartleby's peculiar use of language in his interaction with his employer reflects his idiosyncratic cognitive habits.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

In this section, I have demonstrated how the mind style of characters can be analysed by means of their social interaction. In particular, the combination of pragmatic theories and cognitive theories has led to conclusions about the autistic mind style of Bartleby and the weak personality of the lawyer.

Bartleby's mental condition, as the analysis of his persistent response demonstrates, is illustrated by a lack of understanding of the social conventions of the society he lives in. Thus, his mind style is characterised by a lack of understanding of politeness conventions and a particular conception of face and face needs which is realised linguistically in the inappropriate use of politeness strategies. The conversations between the two characters have revealed both Bartleby's special conception of social and politeness conventions, and the lawyer's concern to save the face of his employee. The copyist's idiosyncratic linguistic patterns in his interaction with his boss has caused the transformation of the two characters' cognitive representation of both context models and generalised models. Such transformation has led, in the end, to the lawyer's development of a new schema for interacting with

Bartleby, in which the employer does not have the authority to command and the employee has the power to disobey his boss.

By juxtaposing the linguistic analysis of politeness strategies and the cognitive analysis of model formation, I have demonstrated how change in the power relationship between two characters can take place, revealing at the same time the autistic mind style of the protagonist.

## **5 Fowles's *The Collector* and the criminal mind**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The aim of this chapter is the analysis of the mind style and ideological point of view of Frederic Clegg, the kidnapper protagonist of the novel *The Collector* (1963), as reflected in his communicative behaviour with her prisoner Miranda. I will also demonstrate that Semino (2002)'s concepts of ideological point of view and mind style, as defined from a cognitive stylistic perspective, correspond to van Dijk (1995, 1997)'s notions of ideology and personal opinions, as defined from a critical discourse analysis perspective.

My claim is that various pragmatic features of the character's speech, mainly his use of politeness, implicatures, speech acts and his general conversational behaviour, are revealing about his Nonconformist ideology and his personal opinion about Miranda. I will also claim that mind style and ideological point of view are very close concepts because both refer to how language can reflect a character's idiosyncratic conceptualisations and cognitive habits, as these can be considered unconventional from the point of view of a different ideology. The difference between the two concepts resides in the origin of the opinions expressed, either socially-shared, in the case of ideology and ideological point of view, or personal, in the case of personal opinions and mind style, but the same linguistic phenomena is revealing about the two concepts.

### **5.2 Ideologies, attitudes, and opinions**

Van Dijk's recent work (1995, 1997) offers a theory of ideology, including attitudes and opinions, in relation to discourse, approached from the framework of critical discourse analysis. He analyses the discursive side of ideologies, that is, 'the ways ideologies articulate themselves at the level of discourse meaning' (1995: 243), claiming that discourse structures 'are monitored by underlying ideologies' (1995: 243). In his analysis of the relation between cognitive structures and discursive structures of texts, he pays special attention to written language (newspaper articles) or spoken language (congress speeches), but not to conversation, so that dialogic structures of discourse, which are the object of my study, are not analysed in his research.

In van Dijk's view, *ideologies* are systems of social cognitions, shared by social groups, that are evaluative: 'they provide the basis for judgements about what is good or bad, right or wrong, and thus also provide basic guidelines for social perception and interaction' (1995: 248). Thus, a racist ideology is shared by members of a social group, e.g. the Nazis, and their negative values towards the Jews influence how these people are perceived and how interaction with them is monitored.

As many ideologies categorise people as Us vs. Them (whites vs. blacks, Protestants vs. Catholics), ideologies may be conceived as a *group self-schema* consisting of categories that organise the evaluative propositions defining the group. These categories would include identity/membership (origin, appearance, ethnicity, gender, language, religion), tasks/activities, goals, norms/values, position (in relation to other groups), and resources (to employments, health, housing, welfare, income, knowledge, public discourse...). It should be emphasised that these categories reflect the self-image of a social group, not social reality. According to van Dijk, we also 'develop ideologies about work, education, the relationships between men and

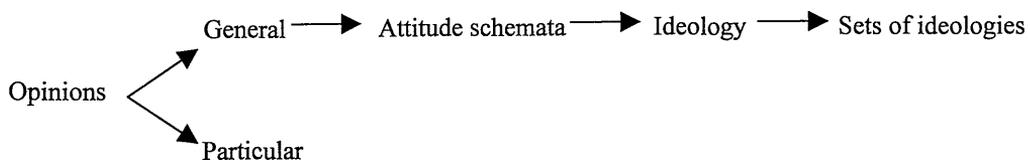
women, or social structure' (1987b: 194). Moreover, sets of ideologies may be further organised at higher levels and characterised in general terms such as 'liberal' or 'conservative', depending on the goals and values of the social members sharing them.

One of the functions of ideologies is 'to organise more specific clusters of socially shared opinion-schemata about social issues' (1995: 253), that is, *attitudes*. As part of ideologies, attitudes are socially shared evaluative cognitions schematically organised, so that they can be effectively searched, activated, or applied. People develop *attitude schemata* in order to deal with their social life: other people, groups, and socially relevant objects or episode types (e.g. nuclear plants). As general knowledge, attitudes are not ad hoc beliefs about particular persons and events but are context-free, general and abstract. This implies that attitudes, as scripts and schemata, are organised in schematic clusters and are stored in social or semantic memory.

The link between attitude schemata and *opinions* is formed by situational models. A situational model, see 2.3.2, is the speech participant's mental representation of a specific situation, including both knowledge and opinions about that situation. In a given communicative situation, participants create situational models which include opinions about each other, about the actual text or talk, or about other contextual features (e.g. time, place, circumstances). For example, a group of people may share a negative attitude schema towards nuclear plants in general. But more particularly, a member of the group may have a specific situational model about the construction of *this* nuclear plant, including his negative opinion about it, which, in this case, is the instantiation of his attitude schema.

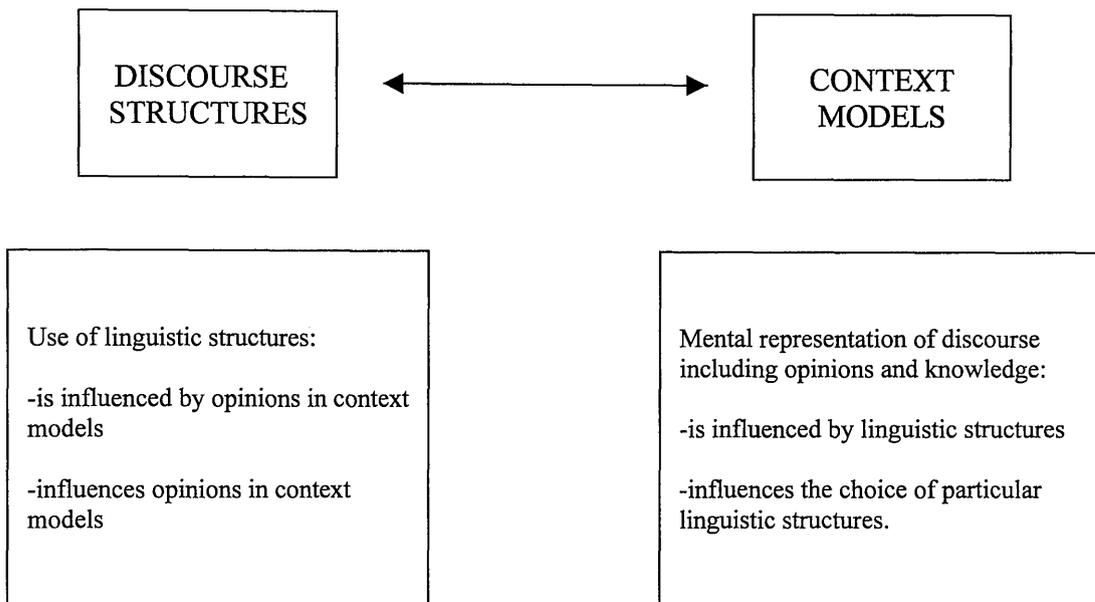
In *Communicating Racism* (1987b), van Dijk makes a distinction within opinions, distinguishing between *general* and *particular* opinions. Opinions may be

strictly particular, as my particular opinion of this apple or of my neighbour, or they may be general, as in the instantiation of socially shared attitudes, such as a negative attitude towards blacks in a racist ideology. General opinions are the discursive realisation of attitudes, since ‘attitude application takes place through the instantiation of general opinions in situation models’ (1987b: 191). Particular opinions are not further analysed in van Dijk’s work, and they are not even dealt with in his later research (1995, 1997), since his goal is the analysis of general opinions as the actualisation of attitude schemata in context models. An added difficulty is that, in more recent work, ‘general’ opinions are recalled ‘personal’ opinions, increasing the confusion between them. As the only distinction between general and particular opinions is their origin, either socially shared or individual, I consider that their linguistic realisation does not differ so that particular opinions will be revealed in the same discursive structures listed above as reflecting general opinions. In conclusion, context models feature opinions, which may be particular or general. General opinions are the realisation of attitude schemata, which at the same time are the components of ideologies and sets of ideologies:



Van Dijk states that opinions, as well as other functions of context models (intentions, purposes, goals, perspectives, expectations), ‘affect the structures of text and talk, and *vice versa*, structures of discourse may in turn affect the structure or contents of context models’ (1997: 198). Hence, major discourse levels (pragmatic, semantic, syntactic) are influenced by the information in context models. For

example, stylistic variation of lexical choice may be a function of opinions represented in context models. Conversely, discourse levels will influence the contents of context models, including opinions. The two-way influence of the relationship between discourse structures and context models is represented in the following diagram:



As far as the use of vocabulary is concerned, lexical items encode knowledge as well as opinions, as in the triplet ‘freedom fighter’, ‘guerrilla’, and ‘terrorist’ (1997: 209), which suggests a more or less positive evaluation by the speaker. Therefore, speech participants express their opinions from their own social position (i.e. Left, Right, feminist), and these positions are expressed in context models through self-presentation and choice of lexical items: ‘the context model defines the ways language users socially self-define themselves and other participants *in the present communicative situation*’ (1997: 209). Van Dijk considers that, apart from the choice of lexical items, there are several discourse structures that are affected by context models, so that they reveal opinions and ideologies indirectly:

- (i) semantic structures: topic, focus, propositional structure, local coherence, level of description, implications and macrostructures (van Dijk 1995)
- (ii) syntactic structures: agency, responsibility, causality
- (iii) rhetorical structures: metaphor, alliteration, litotes, mitigation and irony
- (iv) expression structures: sound structures (intonation, stress, standard language, sociolectal/dialectal pronunciation), graphical structures (layout, print size, photographs), non-verbal structures (gestures, proximity) (see van Dijk 1997: 208-213).

Van Dijk does also mention that information in context models, participant's knowledge and opinions, play a role in the production and interpretation of the pragmatic properties of discourse, so that pragmatic structures may be considered the fifth group of the above list:

Context models are crucial in the planning and understanding of a large number of discourse properties, usually summarized in 'pragmatic' terms, such as speech acts, politeness and self-presentation. However, they also play a role in the monitoring and interpretation of style variation, since lexical choice and word order may be a function of the communicative context, or rather of our (possibly biased) mental representation of the communicative situation in context models. An 'informal' context, as represented in a model, will thus influence the choice of 'informal' lexical variants in the expression of meaning. That is, the information (knowledge and opinions) organized in context models monitors the ways the models of events and actions, as discussed above, will be 'formulated' in actual discourse. Context models also define the point of view and perspective and their associated opinions, from which the events of a model will be described in discourse, and hence explain the crucially ideological implications of social position. (van Dijk 1995: 253)

Following van Dijk's example of an 'informal' context influencing the choice of 'informal' lexical variants, I propose that, in pragmatic terms, the 'informal' context will also influence the participant's choice of politeness strategies (i.e. less polite

forms and redressive strategies) and speech acts (i.e. commands instead of requests) and consequently, the participant’s self-presentation style. This point is particularly relevant for the rest of this section because I will analyse how pragmatic properties of the characters’ conversations are influenced by their ideologies and particular opinions about each other.

The emphasis in this section will be in the linguistic analysis of particular opinions as the counterpart of character’s particular mind styles and of general opinions as the counterpart of ideological point of view:

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Van Dijk’s notions</b> from critical discourse analysis</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Semino’s notions</b> from cognitive stylistics</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Particular opinions</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Mind style</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">General opinions (Attitude schemata)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Ideological point of view</p>

### 5.3 Ideological point of view & ideology. Mind style & opinions

As we saw in 2.4.2, Semino uses the general notion ‘world view’ to refer to the overall view of reality conveyed by the language of a text. Then, she distinguishes between two aspects of world view: ideological point of view and mind style, claiming that it is ‘possible and useful to distinguish those aspects of world-views that are shared and culture-dependent from those that are personal and dependent on individual experience and cognition’ (Semino 2002: 97). Semino’s distinction has also its counterpart in van Dijk’s theory. The aspects of world views that are shared

and culture-dependent can be related to van Dijk's ideologies and attitude schemata whereas the aspects of world-views that are personal correspond to van Dijk's opinions.

In the previous section we saw that, for van Dijk, an ideology consists of a cluster of 'socially relevant attitudes' through which people 'position' themselves within social structure. Ideologies are not individual but group based, and are about gender, class, race, politics, religion, etc. Similarly, for Semino, ideological point of view refers to 'those aspects of world views that are social, cultural, religious, or political in origin, and which an individual is likely to share with others belonging to similar social, cultural, religious or political groups' (Semino 2002: 97). The analytical difference in the work of these two authors is that van Dijk applies the notion of ideology to analyse newspaper articles, congress speeches and, more generally, prejudiced speech, whereas Semino applies the notion of ideological point of view to the analysis of literary fictional characters.

Semino's explanation of mind style (2002: 97) refers to aspects of world views that are personal, including 'an individual's characteristic cognitive habits, abilities and limitations, and any *beliefs and values* that may arise from them' (my emphasis). These values are strictly personal, that is, they are particular opinions, since if they were socially shared, Semino would classify them within ideological point of view.

Semino illustrates her two concepts with an example from *The Collector*:

In discussing Fowles's *The Collector*, for example, I will point out that Clegg's world view includes a moralistic condemnation of sex and a tendency to view women as butterflies. I will argue that the two are related, but that the former is part of his ideological point of view, while the latter is part of his mind style. (Semino 2002: 97)

Reconsidering Semino's example taking into account van Dijk's terminology, Clegg shares with other members of his family his Nonconformist religion, that is to say, his

Nonconformist ideology. This ideology includes a series of attitude schemata towards certain objects and episodes, featuring, for example, a condemnation of sex. Clegg's negative attitude schema towards sex applies in context models through the instantiation of his general opinion about sex. On the other hand, when Clegg in a given context model views a woman as a butterfly, as Semino suggests, that is his particular opinion about that woman expressed through a metaphor. His particular opinion is generalised as far as he usually perceives women as butterflies, though his opinion is not socially shared but individual.

While the theoretical notions of ideological point of view and ideology, as defined by van Dijk, match completely, the notions of mind style and particular opinions differ to some extent. There exist two main differences. First, van Dijk's particular opinions make reference to all opinions in context models that are not socially shared. On the other hand, the analysis of a character's mind style involves how language reflects a character's opinions *as well as* other cognitive processing habits not related to opinions (e.g. cognitive impairments). And second, mind style makes reference to foregrounded particular opinions that reveal idiosyncratic world views or some cognitive characteristics (i.e. drunkenness, young children stage of development) of characters. Thus, only when character's particular opinions are revealing about their idiosyncratic world views, they will be analysed under mind style. Semino and Swindlehurst recognise that 'although in theory mind style applies to all texts, in practice its relevance is limited to cases where a text's view of reality is perceived by the reader to suggest a particularly striking, idiosyncratic, or deviant understanding of the world.' (1996: 145). Despite these two differences, I consider that the two notions are similar enough to be treated as analogous for my analytical purposes.

Moreover, the discourse structures reflecting opinions and mind style coincide. Researchers have exemplified mind style using the linguistic phenomena (see 2.4.2) which van Dijk also uses in his analysis of opinions, both socially shared and particular opinions. Lexicalisation, value-laden expressions, syntactic structures, transitivity patterns, morphology, deixis and metaphor are some of the linguistic characteristics of texts that have been shown to reflect mind style that van Dijk also lists as expressing opinions (see previous section).

In conclusion, the notions of ideological point of view and ideology and mind style and particular opinions have been shown to refer to the same phenomena from different theoretical backgrounds. However, the expression of all particular opinions cannot be considered mind style because, as Semino and Swindlehurst state, only deviant understandings of the world make mind style a relevant feature of a literary text. In the following sections, I will claim that in the same way that mind style is the realization of particular opinions by means of unusual, deviant linguistic choices, ideological point of view can also be reflected in peculiar pragmatic phenomena.

#### **5.4 *The Collector*: Characters' sex attitudes and opinions about each other**

The ideologies of the protagonists of this novel are composed of very different values due to their social, cultural, religious and political background. Here, my interest is analysing (1) how the character's ideologies influence their attitudes towards sex and (2) what their personal opinions about each other are. The two characters' different attitudes towards sex will be the cause of the conflict between them that will lead to the fatal outcome of the novel. I will now provide a brief account of both characters' attitudes and opinions.

On the one hand, Clegg was brought up in a repressive Nonconformist moral and a lower middle class environment in which his Aunt inculcated him with negative attitudes towards sex and alcohol. Clegg's repressive SEX attitude schema is reflected in his language in the avoidance of the word 'sex', and the use of euphemisms to refer to sex and sex-related activities. As for lexical structures, Tsapadikou (2001) demonstrates Clegg's underlexicalisation in this field by listing the terms he uses to refer to the sexual act: 'the other thing' and 'the obvious' (p. 38); sexual impotence: 'being different old-fashioned' (p. 95); or pornographic photographs: 'just photos you wouldn't want to get published' and 'art photographs'. While Tsapadikou claims that these lexical structures characterise Clegg's mind style, I consider that they reflect the protagonist's ideological point of view, since his sex attitude is socially shared with other members of Nonconformism.

Clegg's negative attitude towards sex is related to other attitudes such as his attitude towards women. As he considers sex to be wrong, he disapproves of women who maintain sexual relationships or who try to look beautiful in men's eyes (wearing makeup or high heels). His description of a girl at the beginning of the novel limits itself to a comparison with Miranda: 'She was all Miranda wasn't. I always hated vulgar women, especially girls' (p. 12). Clegg's VULGAR WOMAN attitude schema makes him view all women (except his aunt) in negative terms in comparison with Miranda: 'She was not like some woman you don't respect so you don't care what you do, you respected her and you had to be very careful' (p. 38). The VULGAR WOMAN attitude schema, which involves the evaluative belief 'disrespectful', does not apply to Miranda because he has a positive particular opinion about her: he is in love with her.

Semino (2002) shows that the protagonist's mind style is characterised by his use of the BUTTERFLY metaphor, a nonconventional and idiosyncratic conceptual metaphor, in relation to Miranda. Following the similarity between Semino's mind style and van Dijk's opinions, my claim is that Semino's analysis, based on cognitive metaphor theory and blending theory, of the character's mind style can be seen as revealing about his particular opinion about Miranda. The first time Clegg uses the BUTTERFLY metaphor in relation to Miranda is the following: 'I watched the back of her head and her hair in a long pigtail. It was very pale, silky, like burnet cocoons' (p. 9). Clegg's description of her hair includes positive lexical choices and a comparison with 'burnet cocoons', with positive connotations given his passion for butterflies, reinforcing his positive particular opinion about her. However, the last time Clegg uses the BUTTERFLY metaphor, a change in his particular opinion about Miranda is already observable, revealing the beginning of the application of the VULGAR WOMAN attitude schema to her. As Semino herself suggests: 'Miranda begins to be constructed as someone unworthy of respect and not to be taken seriously. This change in Clegg's view of Miranda will contribute to his inaction in the face of her illness' (2002: 119).

On the other hand, Miranda's attitudes towards sex and class differ to a great extent from her captor's. Although Miranda was educated in a public school, Ladymont, with traditional Victorian values, and in a middle-class family, her open-minded attitude towards sexuality contrasts with that of Clegg. Her diary reflects how her SEX schema is activated from the beginning of her kidnap because she considered sex the reason for her capture: 'Thinking I was going to be pulled into some thicket and raped and murdered' (p. 118). Although the RAPE schema involves a negative attitude towards this type of sex, her SEX attitude schema is a positive one. Even

though Miranda is a virgin by choice, her sexuality is an important part of her self-concept (see chapter 6), and she narrates her refusals to various sexual proposals before her seclusion. In spite of being open to sex, she is conscious that her conservative attitude towards virginity, from the Ladymont days, distresses her: 'All this Vestal Virgin talk about 'saving yourself up' for the right man. I've always despised it. Yet I've always held back. I'm mean with my body. I've got to get this meanness out of the way.' (p. 237). The conflict between her conservative attitude towards virginity and her open and liberal attitude towards sex is resolved when she decides to offer herself sexually to her captor to secure her release. Her positive sex attitude is overtly stated in her commentaries about sexuality as an integral part of her personality: 'Sex is just an activity, like anything else. It's not dirty, it's just two people playing with each other's bodies. Like dancing. Like a game' (p. 101).

Miranda's particular opinion of Clegg is expressed in her narrative: 'he's a victim of a miserable non-conformist suburban world and a miserable social class, the horrid timid copycatting genteel in-between class.' (p. 161). For this reason, she feels superior to him, although she feels she has to improve him: 'I'm so superior to him. I know this sounds wickedly conceited. But I *am*... I feel I've got to show him how decent human beings live and behave' (p. 130). Miranda also describes Clegg physically, and within that description, her commentary 'Absolutely sexless (he looks).' (p. 122), reveals that sex appearance is an important aspect in her perception of people. She believes he suffers from 'sexual neurosis' (p. 195) because of his obsession with her and his desire to be with her without having sexual intercourse.

## **5.5 Pragmatic analysis of attitudes and opinions in *The Collector***

My aim here is to analyse Clegg's and Miranda's stylistic choices in their conversations, especially dealing with sex, before, during and after the seduction scene. I will argue that their conversational style is influenced by their sex attitude, as well as by their mental representations of each other. Clegg's stylistic choices will portray the peculiar mind style and ideological point of view of this character.

I will show how Miranda's sexual offering brings about a change in Clegg's particular opinion about her. After the failed sexual encounter, Clegg's opinion about Miranda is transformed so that the negative VULGAR WOMAN attitude schema applies to her as well. This will be reflected linguistically in his conversational style, with a new 'bossy' attitude towards her, and also in his new conception of her, as explained in his narrative.

### **5.5.1 Clegg's and Miranda's relationship**

My first step in the pragmatic analysis of conversational behaviour between the protagonists is to show the type of relationship, concerning power and social distance, that is established between them from the very beginning. After the kidnapping, this is the beginning of their first conversation when they are already in the cellar, as narrated by Clegg in first person narration:

I said, I hope you slept well.

'Where is this, who are you and why have you brought me here?' She said it very coldly, not at all violent.

I can't tell you.

She said, 'I demand to be released at once. This is monstrous.' (*The Collector*, p. 31)

The relationship between Clegg and Miranda is a conflicting one. Clegg, as kidnapper, is in a powerful position, while Miranda is powerless in this sense.

However, from the very beginning, Clegg wants Miranda to be his 'guest', so he gives her anything she wants except her freedom. Clegg's criminal action creates a conflict situation which, nonetheless, does not fit into Miranda's nor the reader's KIDNAPPING schema.

The protagonist's verbal behaviour reflects his desire to please her, as his first turn addressed to her shows, so that his positive opinion about her is revealed from the very beginning. His utterance makes use of Brown and Levinson's positive politeness in order to enhance Miranda's positive face, by showing his concern for her. Clegg seeks agreement by starting their conversation with a safe topic which is 'commonly raised as a way of doing the FTA of initiating an encounter with a stranger' (Brown and Levinson 1987: 112). This remark also enhances Clegg's positive face, since he wants to self-present in the best possible manner.

On the other hand, Miranda's confident personality is revealed in her first turn that consists of a question, including three requests for information. First of all, she does not provide the preferred second pair part to Clegg's comment, which, in normal circumstances would not be considered polite. In this case, the lack of response and the question may function as an indication of the power she wants to claim for herself<sup>1</sup>. Her question does not include any of the redressive strategies listed by Brown and Levinson, so it can be considered a bald-on-record threat to the negative face of Clegg, since he has to provide the required information.

However, her kidnapper claims not to be able to provide an answer to her questions, opting out of the whole CP, as he will repeatedly do when dealing with the sex topic. Moreover, Miranda's last turn is also a sign of the powerful position she is claiming for herself. Her utterance can be considered a bald-on-record threat without

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<sup>1</sup> Miranda repeatedly recognises that she has a 'bossy' attitude in life in general, and she applies it especially to Clegg, as she considers him inferior to her.

any redressive action to mitigate the face damage to her interlocutor. In speech act terms, she utters a command, which includes the illocutionary verb 'demand', and an evaluative adjective indicating her opinion about the situation: 'monstrous'. While Clegg's behaviour and use of language is not consistent with the KIDNAPPING schema (both the girl's and the reader's), Miranda's interactive style does not follow either the assumptions of the kidnapped-captor relationship nor does it fit Clegg's expectations about her.

Following Thomas (1995, cf. French and Raven 1959)'s list of types of power, Clegg has coercive power over Miranda: 'the power one person has over another and that can lead to negative outcomes' (1995: 125). Clegg is the kidnapper in spite of the fact that, by now, he does not talk nor behave accordingly. Conversely, the type of power Miranda effects over Clegg is difficult to classify. It may be a mixture of reward power, 'the power one person has over another and that can lead to positive outcomes' and referent power, 'one person has power over another because the other admires and wants to be like him' (see section 2.2.3). Of course, in relation to referent power, Clegg admires Miranda but he does not aim at being like her, he wants to be with her. As for reward power, the positive outcome that may be achieved, in Clegg's mind, is simply their being together.

The other sociological variable that needs to be taken into account is the social distance, which influences deeply their relationship. Although this variable cannot be determined from this short extract, a few turns later Miranda recognises Clegg as a civil servant, so that the social distance between them is clear from the beginning. The fact that Miranda belongs to a higher social class than Clegg is an ever-present motive of conflict between them. Clegg recognises that 'There was always class between us' (p. 41), while Miranda talks about his 'class neurosis' (p. 195). As a result of her

superiority, Miranda imposes herself the task of teaching Clegg: not only does she correct his language, but she also tries to educate him. And it is when she tries to teach him about sexual matters that their relationship starts changing.

Hence, in the context model each of the characters forms for the previous conversation, they form a mental representation of the other which includes the sociological variables of power and social distance, revealed through their use of politeness strategies. Moreover, this mental representation also includes their opinion about each other, which is at the same time revealed indirectly in the same linguistic behaviour. Consequently, Clegg holds a positive particular opinion of Miranda, as is reflected in his use of positive politeness strategies, whereas Miranda holds a negative particular opinion of Clegg, revealed in her lack of redressive action to mitigate her threats to Clegg's face.

### 5.5.2 Evidence of the characters' SEX attitude schemata

Miranda's main preoccupation during her captivity is the reason why she is being kidnapped, and her only speculation is that the motives are sexual. Thus, she keeps asking Clegg what he wants to do with her. Here, I analyse two short conversations that exemplify this. (Turns are numbered for ease of reference)

'Don't you feel this has gone on long enough?' (1)

No, I said. (2)

'Won't you let me go now?' (3)

No. (4)

'You could gag me and tie me up and drive me back to London. I'd not tell a soul.' (5)

No. (6)

'But there must be something you want to do with me?' (7)

I just want to be with you. All the time. (8)

'In bed?' (9)

I've told you, no. (10)

'But you want to?' (11)

I'd rather not speak about it. (12)

She shut up then. (13)

I don't allow myself to think of what I know is wrong, I said. I don't consider it nice. (14) (*The Collector*, p. 70-1)

Miranda's two first turns, (1) and (3), are presuppositions about Clegg's feelings and future action. Brown and Levinson explain that 'the manipulation of such presuppositions where something that is not mutually assumed to be the case, but S speaks as if it were mutually assumed, can be turned to positive-face redress' (1987: 122). Thus, although her turns, as requests, involve negative politeness, the negative questions, starting with 'Don't' and 'Won't', assume 'yes' as an answer, presupposing that Miranda knows Clegg's feelings and intentions, and partially redressing the FTA.

Her first three requests are uttered indirectly, though the size of the imposition increases with each turn: in (1) she asks about his feelings; in (3) she addresses the topic of the release; and in (5) she offers the instructions to be set free and promises not to tell anybody. In this case, the promise functions as a positive politeness strategy because she is promising something that is advantageous to him but not to her, that is, not telling anybody about him. On the other hand, Clegg limits himself to follow Grice's CP strictly and, since Miranda's questions allow a yes/no answer, that is what he provides.

Given that Clegg is not to let her go, her next strategy is asking him what he wants to do with her (7). Here, at least, he does provide a longer response (8), telling his wishes. But Miranda cannot understand that her captor simply wants to spend time with her, so she brings in the sex topic (9), to which he answers negatively: his intention is not to have sex with her. Here, he sticks to the CP again, without providing any reasons or explanations about the sex topic. Miranda's next turn (11)

insists on asking if he wants to have sex with her, and upon this perseverance on the topic and her failure to observe the maxim of quantity, Clegg's conversational style is modified.

Clegg's repressive attitude schema towards sex has its linguistic realisation in his answer: 'I'd rather not speak about it.' (12). In Grice's terms, he is opting out of the whole CP because he is not cooperating in the conversation. Thomas (1995) argues that this type of non-observance of maxims usually occurs when, in 'the public sphere, somebody cannot answer questions due to moral or legal reasons'. I would argue that Clegg does have moral reasons not to answer the question. His Nonconformist morality and his suppressive SEX attitude schema lead him not to speak about this subject. Surprisingly, Clegg elaborates on his response explaining to Miranda the motive for his opting out of the whole CP: if he does not speak about the topic, it is because he does not allow himself to think about it. This turn demonstrates the influence of the Nonconformist ideology in what he considers to be allowed or prohibited, wrong or right, nice or not nice in his speech.

Through this conversation we have been able to observe a change in Miranda's conversational behaviour in terms of politeness strategies, compared with the first fragment analysed. Here, she produces requests redressing to some extent Clegg's face. As the conversation is narrated by Clegg, we do not have access to Miranda's mind and cannot arrive at firm conclusions about a possible change in her opinion about her captor. Thus, readers may infer either that Miranda's language reflects her improved opinion of her captor, or that she manipulates her conversational behaviour to achieve her objective of being released. Conversely, the fact that Clegg opts out of the CP when Miranda brings up the topic of sex demonstrates that he holds a negative and repressive SEX attitude schema. In conclusion, Miranda's use of politeness

strategies is indicative of her opinion of Clegg whereas the protagonist's management of the CP reveals his Nonconformist ideology.

In the next fragment, Miranda still tries to find out if Clegg wants to have sex with her, but this time, she introduces the topic differently.

'If I went to bed with you?' (1)

She'd stopped drawing. I wouldn't answer. (2)

'Well?' (3)

I didn't think you were that sort, I said. (4)

(Five lines omitted of similar conversation)

'Oh, God. Look. Just answer yes or no. Do you want to go to bed with me?' (5)

Not like we are now. (6)

'What are we like now?' (7)

I thought you were supposed to be the clever one. (8)

She took a deep breath. I liked having her on a bit. (9) 'You feel I'm only looking for a way to escape? Whatever I did would be just for that? Is that it?' (10)

I said yes. (11)

'If you felt I was doing it for some other reason. Because I liked you. Just for fun. You would like it then?' (12)

I can buy what you're talking about in London any time I want, I said. (13) (*The Collector*, p. 94-5)

In this conversation, Miranda brings in again the topic of sex, which, as she already knows, is a taboo topic for Clegg. Brown and Levinson consider a threat to the hearer's positive face the mention of taboo words and topics, 'including those that are inappropriate in the context (S indicates that he doesn't value H's values and doesn't fear H's fears)' (1987: 67). Miranda is conscious of Clegg's negative attitude towards sex, but she introduces the topic because she believes that by having sexual intercourse, she will be set free. However, on this occasion, instead of asking if Clegg wants to have sex with her, Miranda herself offers to have sex with him, though in a hypothetical utterance (1). By putting herself in the subject position of the sentence, Miranda is in an active role in the sexual business, a role Clegg does not approve of.

The protagonist's reaction is to remain silent (2), opting out of the whole CP, so that he may want Miranda to draw the inference that he prefers not to talk about that topic he disapproves of. Nevertheless, he does offer a response later (4): 'I didn't think you were that sort'. His answer flouts the maxim of relation because it does not answer the first question posed to him strictly, with the intended implicature of his desire to avoid the topic. At the same time, he is saving his own negative face, because he is not providing an answer to her question. Moreover, his utterance attacks Miranda's positive face, because he insults her by including her in 'that sort' of women who have sex, that is, vulgar and disrespectful women. In the same way as in the previous conversation, he manages not to talk about sex by flouting the maxim of relation.

Miranda reiterates her question about 'going to bed', in turn (5), returning to its previous and safer formulation about Clegg's wants. Moreover, in this turn, although her request just needs as an answer either a 'yes' or a 'no', Clegg's reply (6) employs more information. However, at the same time, his answer ('Not like we are now') is not informative enough because he does not say what they are now. So, he flouts the maxim of quantity because he is less informative than necessary, but at least, Miranda has managed to get him to talk about the subject.

Turns (7) and (8) follow the same pattern as the beginning of the conversation. Miranda requests some information, Clegg flouts the maxim of relation by not answering with the relevant information simultaneously saving his negative face, and attacking Miranda's positive face insulting her. Since Clegg's conversational pattern is characterised by consistently opting out of the CP and flouting the maxim of relation, Miranda's turn (10) provides an answer to her own previous question (7).

Her last turn (12) poses once again the question about his desire to have sex with her, in the hypothetical situation that she liked him. His answer (13) flouts again the maxim of relation because it does not offer the appropriate information. But this time, he does not avoid the topic of sex altogether: 'I can buy what you're talking about in London any time I want'. He uses the euphemistic phrase 'what you're talking about' to refer to sex, flouting the maxim of manner and revealing his negative attitude towards the theme. He also relates the topic of sex with the world of prostitution, emphasising its negative connotations. However, it is not very clear what the implicature he wants to generate is, apart from implying that he would not like to have sex with Miranda.

It is also worth noting that, after the last fragment of text analysed, Clegg uses the BUTTERFLY metaphor in relation to Miranda for the last time: 'She was like some caterpillar that takes three months to feed up trying to do it in a few days. I knew nothing good would come out of it, she was always in such a hurry.' (p. 95). The BUTTERFLY metaphor had been previously used for its positive connotations: it did not contain negative associations. Therefore, when the protagonist's positive opinion about Miranda is transformed, the BUTTERFLY metaphor is abandoned.

The characters' conversational behaviour in these two fragments reflects their opinions about each other and differing attitudes towards sex. Whereas at the beginning of their relationship Miranda produces unredressed requests and commands, here she already mitigates her threats using politeness strategies, either revealing her more positive opinion of her captor or indicating a manipulation in her self-presentation strategies to achieve her freedom. Moreover, she produces all the first parts of adjacency pairs questioning Clegg about sex, in order to gain information

about him and claim a powerful position over him. Her conversational behaviour in relation to the topic of sex reveals that she has a positive attitude schema towards it.

On the other hand, Clegg avoids the sex topic by opting out of the CP and flouting the maxims of relation, quantity and manner. He also uses an euphemism to avoid the use of the word 'sex'. At the same time, his politeness strategies consist in attacking Miranda's positive face when she mentions the sex topic and saving his negative face by not answering her questions. All these features of Clegg's interaction style are indicative of his repressive attitude schema towards sex.

The awkward interaction observed in these fragments of the novel reveals the lack of shared knowledge between the protagonists. Miranda's assumptions about the sexual component of the kidnapping situation are not unreasonable. The fact that her assumptions appear to be far from the truth of Clegg's mind begins to suggest that his cognitive condition may be far from being 'normal'.

### 5.5.3 Mental conflict in Clegg

A few pages after Clegg narrates Miranda's previous sexual proposal, he explains how she offered herself sexually to him in the following seduction scene. The two characters are in the living room, after Miranda's bath, when this conversation takes place.

'Sit down,' she said (1), so I sat down on the sofa where she pointed. For a moment she watched me sitting there. Then she stood in front of me, very funny, looking down at me, moving from foot to foot. Then she came, twist, bang she sat on my knees. It took me by surprise. Somehow she got her arms right round my head and the next thing she was kissing me at the mouth. Then laying her head on my shoulder. (2)

'Don't be so stiff,' she said. (3)

I was like stunned. It was the last thing. (4)

'Put your arm around me,' she said. 'There. Isn't that nice? Am I heavy?' (5) And she leant her head again on my shoulder, while I had my hand on her waist. She was all warm and perfumed

and I have to say that her housecoat was open very low and fell apart to above the knees, but she didn't seem to care, she just stretched her legs along the sofa. (6)

What's up? I said. (7)

'You're so unrelaxed. Just relax. There is nothing to worry about.' (8) Well, I tried, she lay still, but I knew there was something wrong in the situation. (9)

'Why don't you kiss me?' (10)

I knew something was really on then. I didn't know what to do, I kissed the top of her head. (11)

'Not like that.' (12)

I don't want to, I said. (13)

'You don't want to?' (14)

I looked away, it was difficult with her tied hands round my neck, I didn't know what to say to stop her. (15)

'Why not?' (16)

I might go too far, I said. (17)

'So might I.' (18)

I knew she was laughing, making fun of me again. (19)

I know what I am, I said. (20)

'What are you?' (21)

Not the sort you like. (22)

'Don't you know there are times when every man is attractive? Eh?' (23) She sort of gave my head a bit of a jerk, like I was being stupid. (24)

I didn't, I said. (25)

'Well, then.' (26)

It's what it could lead to. (27)

'I don't care what it leads to. You are slow' (28) And then, all of a sudden, she was kissing me again, I even felt her tongue. (29)

'Isn't that nice?' (30)

Of course I had to say, yes it was. (31) I didn't know what her real game was, it made me nervous, quite apart from me being very nervous anyhow about kissing and all the other business. (32)

'Come on, then. Try.' (33)

Well she pulled my head round. I had to do it and her mouth was very nice. Very soft. (34)

I know I was weak. I should have told her straight out not to be disgusting. I was very weak. It was like I was drawn against my will. (35) (*The Collector*, p. 96-8)

During the analysis of this fragment, I want to pay particular attention to the difference between Clegg's opinion about the kissing situation and his opinion about Miranda. My claim is that the character has a negative opinion about the seduction

scene, as the realisation of his negative SEX attitude schema. In contrast, he has a positive particular opinion about Miranda because he is physically attracted to her. The diverging nature of these opinions creates a mental conflict in Clegg, as I am going to demonstrate below.

At the beginning of this fragment, Miranda utters three consecutive turns, (1), (3), and (5), which include bald-on-record commands directed to Clegg, without receiving any commentary back from him. Miranda's orders threaten Clegg's negative face, because they are impositions about what he has to do, and in fact, he follows her commands. After the first order to sit down, Miranda sits down on his lap and starts kissing him. Assuming that the relationship is appropriate, this non-verbal behaviour would be considered a positive politeness strategy: offering gifts. Miranda offers herself, her kisses, to enhance Clegg's positive face, to meet a desire she assumes he has. Thus, though the commands threaten Clegg's negative face, the goal of Miranda's behaviour is to enhance his positive face by kissing him.

Apart from her commands, Miranda poses two questions, 'Isn't that nice? Am I heavy?' (5), that remain unanswered. With his silence, Clegg is opting out of the CP, failing to provide his opinion about her kisses. Although Clegg recognises that he is 'stunned' (4), his narration includes some positive evaluative vocabulary about her: 'She was all warm and perfumed' (6). These two terms, with positive connotations, make reference to the physical side of Miranda, so that his positive opinion about her relies on external physical properties, i.e. being warm and perfumed. Moreover, in 'I had my hand on her waist', the description of the position of his body reveals his compliance and his lack of agency (cf. 'I *put* my hand') reflects his conceptualisation of himself as not taking an active part in the action.

As for the transitivity patterns in the whole passage, Miranda acts mainly as the subject of sentences indicating material processes of doing, i.e. 'she pointed', 'she came', 'she sat' (Halliday 1994: 109), some of which have Clegg as the patient, i.e. 'she was kissing me', 'she pulled my head'. Conversely, Clegg occupies, mostly, the subject position in sentences indicating mental processes, i.e. 'I knew', 'I didn't know', 'I know', 'I don't know', and relational processes, i.e. 'I was like stunned', 'I was being stupid', 'I was weak', while his only material processes take place after Miranda's commands, i.e. 'I sat down', 'I kissed the top of her head'. Thus, Clegg's report of the whole seduction scene shows his own conceptualisation of this context model, featuring Miranda as the agent of the action, and himself as the passive recipient of her kisses. In this way, he can maintain a negative opinion of the situation without being blamed for it or having any responsibility, because he did not take an active part in the action.

On several occasions, Clegg reports his thoughts so that readers have access to his mental processes. In turn (9), he states 'I knew there was something wrong in the situation', which overtly states his negative opinion about the kissing situation, as influenced by his negative SEX attitude schema. Clegg's explicit declaration of his opinion is a reported thought expressed through the verb of cognition 'knew'. The protagonist's negative attitude towards this event is often revealed through verbs of cognition which contrast with his positive opinion of the physical side of Miranda, showing the conflict in his head.

The protagonist's negative attitude towards the kissing situation is reflected on other discourse structures, such as his modality patterns that indicate his way of conceptualising the two characters. When Miranda kisses him later on and repeats her question 'Isn't that nice?' (30), it does receive an answer this time, though in reported

speech: 'Of course I had to say, yes it was' (31). Clegg uses the modal verb 'have to' suggesting that he was forced to produce that response, and that it is not his true opinion about the kiss. Hence, he is violating the maxim of quality by saying something that is not true, though Miranda cannot be conscious of this. This use of modality is repeated at several points in the conversation: 'I have to say that...' (6); 'I had to do it' (34); and 'I should have told her' (35). Similarly to the transitivity patterns, these modality patterns suggest that Clegg conceptualises himself as being forced to act the way he does, so that his volition in the seduction scene is reduced because he simply obeys Miranda. His passive role and Miranda's leading role are reinforced so that his negative attitude towards the situation does not conflict with his behaviour but with Miranda's, and an opinion change about her becomes increasingly feasible.

In addition, turn (34) offers a contrast between Clegg's statement about his obligation 'I had to do it' (and people are usually forced to do negative things) and the positive aspects of Miranda's mouth, which is syntactically reinforced by the use of the coordinating conjunction 'and'. When Clegg describes Miranda's mouth, he uses the terms 'very nice' and 'very soft'. The use of this evaluative vocabulary demonstrates again that his particular opinion of Miranda's mouth (and, by extension, of Miranda and her physiology in general) is positive.

Another example of the report of Clegg's mental processes is the sentence 'I know I was weak' (35), which entails his realisation of his weakness in yielding to the situation and to Miranda's kisses. He is 'weak' because, according to his SEX schema, sex is wrong and the kissing situation may lead to their having sex. Only on the basis of this interpretation, his next utterance makes sense: 'I should have told her straight out not to be disgusting' (36). Clegg's SEX attitude schema finally influences

his opinion about Miranda, making him view her as 'disgusting'. The contrast of the previous positive terms with this negative adjective shows a conflict between Clegg's particular opinion about Miranda and his repressive attitude towards sex. This conflict leads to a transformation of Clegg's particular opinion about Miranda, influenced by his negative attitude towards sex, so that at the end of this fragment, she is viewed as 'disgusting'.

There are other discursive features that indirectly reflect Clegg's initial positive opinion about Miranda and his repressive attitude towards sex. Miranda holds the floor for most of the conversation with 15 turns, out of which five are bald-on-record commands, one an indirect command, and seven are questions. On the other hand, Clegg speaks eight times (including a turn in reported speech), all of which, except one question, are second parts of adjacency pairs. The uneven number of turns for each character shows Miranda's powerful position over Clegg, a position achieved due to the protagonist's admiration and positive opinion towards her. At the same time, Clegg's scarce number of turns may reflect his embarrassment and lack of approval of the topic of sex, preferring not to talk about it, as in the previous fragments. In this case, the characters' conversational behaviour, concerning number of turns, production of adjacency pairs and speech acts, may be considered to reveal both Clegg's particular opinion about Miranda and his SEX attitude schema, as I suggested at the beginning of this analysis.

All things considered, on the one hand, Clegg's particular opinion about Miranda's physical appearance may be reflected in his use of positive terms describing her, his silent obedience after her commands, and his exclusive production of second pair part of adjacency pairs obeying or agreeing with her. On the other hand, his negative attitude schema about sex is stated overtly in his reported thoughts

and revealed through his opting out of the CP and non-observance of several maxims, and his transitivity and modality patterns. The fact that Miranda, of whom he has a positive opinion, seduces him, acting in a way he disapproves of because of his SEX attitude schema, creates a conflicting dilemma in Clegg's head. The result of this conflict is that the negative SEX attitude schema is finally applied to her as well, so that his new negative opinion of Miranda is the instantiation of the VULGAR WOMAN attitude schema.

The conclusion of the analysis of this fragment is that the same pragmatic phenomena that are revealing about mind style also reveal ideological point of view, and more particularly, Clegg's negative SEX attitude schema as instantiated in his negative opinion of the kissing situation. Then, if ideological point of view and mind style can be analysed using the same linguistic structures, the only differing aspect between the two concepts is the origin of the opinions expressed: socially-shared vs. personal.

#### **5.5.4 Change of opinion and of conversational behaviour**

After Miranda's unsuccessful attempt to have sex with Clegg to secure her release, she makes a little speech:

'Shall I tell you?' She stood up. 'You must realize that I've sacrificed all my principles tonight. Oh, yes, to escape. I was thinking of that. But I do want to help you. You must believe that. To try to show you that sex – sex is just an activity, like anything else. It's not dirty, it's just two people playing with each other's bodies. Like dancing. Like a game.' (*The Collector*, p. 101)

Miranda, in her teacher role, tries to change Clegg's attitude schema towards sex. In this turn, she makes evident her own SEX schema and her attitude towards it. Although she admits to having considered the seduction scene as an attempt to escape,

another of her aims is to help him changing his attitude towards sex, so that he views it as a positive ‘activity’, like a ‘game’.

However, neither Miranda’s sexual offer nor her speech changes at all his SEX attitude schema. Quite on the contrary, the result of the previous episode is that his particular positive opinion about Miranda is transformed. She is no longer viewed as an ideal woman, but as a vulgar woman because of her interest in sex: ‘She was like all women, she had a one-track mind. I never respected her again. It left me angry for days’ (p. 102). Thus, the negative Nonconformist attitude towards vulgar women is applied to Miranda, and it will be reflected, from now onwards, in the interaction between the two characters.

Clegg has a new mental representation of Miranda and, consequently, his representation of his own person is also transformed, being reflected in his linguistic behaviour. Clegg now claims a new powerful position in their relationship, as a true kidnapper, which will be realised in his overt assertions of his power and in his new conversational style. For example, he stops breaking maxims in his previous manner, no longer opting out of the CP, or flouting the maxims of quantity and relation. As a consequence, Miranda’s language will also change because she is in a less powerful position, having fallen from his captor’s grace. The day after the sexual offer, they maintain the following conversation:

That evening it was different. (1)

‘I want to talk to you.’ (2)

Yes, I said. (3)

‘I’ve tried everything. There’s only one thing left for me to try. I’m going to fast again. I shan’t eat until you let me go.’ (4)

Thanks for the warning, I said. (5)

‘Unless...’ (6)

Oh, so there’s an unless, I said. (7)

‘Unless we come to an agreement.’ (8)

She seemed to wait. I haven't heard it yet, I said. (9)

'I'm prepared to accept that you won't let me go at once. But I'm not prepared to stay any longer down here. I want to be a prisoner upstairs. I want day light and some fresh air.' (10)

Just like that, I said. (11)

'Just like that.' (12)

As from this evening, I suppose, I said. (13)

'Very soon.' (14)

I suppose I get a carpenter in, and the decorators and all. (15)

She sighed then, she began to get the message. (16)

'Don't be like this. Please don't be like this.' She gave me a funny look. 'All this sarcasm. I didn't mean to hurt you.' (17)

It was no good, she had killed all the romance, she had made herself like any other woman, I didn't respect her any more, there was nothing left to respect. I knew her lark, no sooner she was up out of the room she was as good as gone. (18)

*[9 lines omitted in which they talk about the agreement]*

'I'd rather starve to death than stay down here. Keep me in chains upstairs. Anything. But let me have some fresh air and daylight' (19)

I'll think about it, I said. (20)

'No. Now.' (21)

You're forgetting who's the boss. (22)

'Now.' (23)

I can't say now. It needs thinking. (24)

'Very well. Tomorrow morning. Either you tell me I can come up or I don't touch any food. And that will be murder.' (25) Really fierce and nasty she looked. I just turned and went. (26) (*The Collector*, p. 103-104)

Clegg's particular opinion about the situation model he forms for this conversation is expressed in turn (1): he finds their interaction 'different'. The first differentiating characteristic of Clegg's interactional style is that, while he previously only participated in conversation with brief responses to Miranda's questions, he now produces longer turns, essentially commentaries, even though they are not required by the conversation. In this way, after Miranda warns him of her intention to fast (4), a threat to his positive face, he expresses thanks for the warning (5). Expressing thanks is considered by Brown and Levinson a threat to the positive face of the speaker, because he is humbling his own face. However, in this case, the turn can be

interpreted as sarcasm, an impoliteness strategy (Culpeper 2001) through which Clegg attacks Miranda's positive face. The politeness strategy of expressing thanks is not sincere, so that Miranda has to arrive at its true meaning through an implicature.

In her next turn (6), Miranda starts offering the conditions that would avoid her fasting, but after pronouncing the word 'unless', the following three dots ('...') indicate that she does not continue with her utterance, remaining silent. She is flouting the maxim of quantity by not providing enough information. Her intention, apparently, may be that Clegg asks what her conditions are. So, in Clegg's next turn (7), his request for information is carried out indirectly by means of an ironic commentary, which is again another threat to her positive face. The same pattern is repeated in the next adjacency pair, (8) and (9), in which Miranda mentions an agreement but does not provide it, and then she remains silent (as Clegg's narration describes) breaking the maxim of quantity. Clegg's response is an indirect request for information, and at the same time an ironic commentary threatening her positive face. Clegg's ironic commentaries and indirect questions are first part of adjacency pairs that expect a response. Clegg now produces a first pair part (9), a new feature in his speech, and holds the floor for longer stretches of text, given his commentaries instead of his previous yes/no responses.

After Miranda has explained her agreement (10), Clegg produces again three more turns, (11), (13) and (15), that may be considered ironic commentaries about the agreement itself. In doing this, he continues threatening Miranda's positive face, showing he does not approve of her conditions. Her reaction to his comments comes in turn (17), where she produces an FTA to Clegg's negative face, telling him not to behave like that. She produces a command in imperative form, a bald-on-record FTA without redressive action, followed by the same command preceded by the word

'please', a negative politeness strategy. Although the use of bald-on-record commands is usually related to powerful speakers, I consider that Miranda is not claiming for herself any power with her turn. First, because the ranking of her imposition is not very big: she does not command Clegg to do something, she requests him to stop talking with 'sarcasm' (her own description). And second, because in the last utterance of her turn, she recognises her responsibility for his behaviour even though she denies intentionality. Miranda realises that her sexual offer is the cause of his change of behaviour towards her.

In turn (18), Clegg's narration states his new opinion towards her, which does no longer include positive vocabulary as in previous fragments. Instead, his new opinion is influenced by his attitude schema towards vulgar women. The reason for the opinion change is that 'she had killed all the romance'. Clegg's evaluative belief about the situation model is reflected in his use of vocabulary. Miranda's sexual offer is conceived as having 'killed' (death connotations) the 'romance' (love connotations) between them. For Clegg, the word 'romance' reflects his particular evaluative belief about their relationship until the sexual offer.

Moreover, the fact that now Clegg conceives of Miranda 'as any other woman' reveals that his VULGAR WOMAN attitude schema is applied to her. And the result of this is that Clegg does not 'respect her any more, there was nothing left to respect'. The verb 'respect' is used repeatedly by Clegg in reference to women: the VULGAR WOMAN schema includes the evaluative belief 'not respectful', whereas the DECENT WOMAN schema includes the contrary opinion, 'respectful'. As Clegg does not respect Miranda anymore, the VULGAR WOMAN attitude schema applies to her from now until the end of the novel. Thus, Clegg starts using negative evaluative terms in his descriptions of Miranda: 'really fierce' and 'nasty' in turn (26).

As Clegg's opinion of Miranda has been transformed, so has his mental representation of her, which will be taken into account in the formation of future context models. The new evaluative belief towards Miranda, not respectful, casts away her power privileges over him. The previous mixture of reward and referent power that Miranda had over Clegg has disappeared after the seduction scene. So Clegg's power over her will influence their conversational interaction from now onwards. This will be realised in his turns in FTAs to Miranda's positive and negative faces and in his explicit declaration of his power, for example, in turn (22) 'You're forgetting who's the boss'. In later conversations, similar turns take place: 'You talk too much, I said. You forget who's boss. I could just forget you. Nobody'd know.' (p. 109) and 'All right, I said. Get out of bed. Go on, get up. From now on I give the orders.' (p. 110).

In this last fragment, Clegg states directly his new negative opinion about Miranda, as the instantiation of the negative attitude schema about vulgar women. His new attitude towards her can also be deduced indirectly from his modified linguistic behaviour in their interaction. The protagonist produces longer responses to Miranda's turns, holding the floor for longer stretches of text, and he even produces a first pair part of an adjacency pair. His responses include sarcasm and ironic commentaries, which function as indirect requests for information. These FTAs attack and threaten Miranda's positive face without using any redressive strategy, so that Clegg's objective is to show his disapproval of Miranda. In addition, Clegg stops opting out of the CP and breaking the maxims, responding to each of Miranda's turns. All these pragmatic features reveal Clegg's new powerful position as a consequence of his change of opinion towards Miranda, and general modification of his mental representation of her.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

In this section, I have demonstrated that Semino's notions of mind style and ideological point of view correspond to van Dijk's concepts of particular opinions and attitude schemata. I have shown how the pragmatic phenomena (e.g. politeness strategies, management of the CP and maxims, speech acts, transitivity and modality patterns) used to reveal characters' mind style can also be indicative of ideological point of view. This fact suggests that the two notions are hermeneutically close, or that we could consider a continuum between the expression of particular opinions and general opinions, given that the distinction between their origin (personal vs. socially shared) can be difficult to establish.

This has been particularly the case of my analysis, because I have studied how a character's particular opinion was modified through the influence of an attitude schema, leading to a general opinion. Clegg's change of opinion reveals a dilemma in his representation of Miranda but more importantly, it reveals his mental conflict due to his Nonconformist ideology. The pragmatic analysis of the character's speech has proved revealing about this mental conflict, his peculiar mind style and ideology.

## **5.7 Concluding remarks of part I**

This first part of my thesis has offered a cognitive stylistic analysis of the mind style of three characters whose common feature is their unusual mental condition: schizophrenia, autism, and criminality. The analysis of the language of the narrative texts by means of theories of pragmatics and theories of cognition has thrown light on

the structure and functioning of the characters' minds. At the same time, particular attention has been paid to the processes through which readers arrive at mental representations of characters.

I have shown how the protagonist's idiosyncratic pragmatic patterns reveal their peculiar conceptual structures and cognitive habits, which are indicative of their mind styles. My objective was not to claim that characters suffer from their corresponding mental disorders but to show how their linguistic behaviour is indicative of the cognitive processes that go on in their minds.

## **PART II. CHARACTERS' SELF-CONCEPTS**

### **6 The self-concept and its expression by characters**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter of my thesis analyses the way language reflects characters' self-concepts, that is to say, the conception characters have of themselves, what they think they are like. I will postulate how readers arrive at mental representations of characters' self-concepts through the language of the narrative text and through their inference work. I will use research in socio-cognitive psychology on the notions of the self-concept and self-regulation in my analysis of the construction of characters' self-concepts to show to what extent it accounts for how their self-conceptions are expressed and their behaviours enacted in the way the theory suggests. I will conclude by proposing that the analysis of the structures, i.e. self-schemata, and processes, i.e. interpretation and inference, of characters' self-concepts as reflected in the language of the text provide another way of studying characterisation and mind style.

In the section on narratology of the literature review chapter (2.5), I offered the term 'self-concept' as my alternative to narratologists' use of the concepts 'character' or 'character personality'. There, I explained that previous studies on characterisation, Rimmon-Kenan (1983) and Culpeper (2001), have provided checklists of linguistic features through which characters' personalities are expressed in texts, either explicitly by means of descriptions by the same character or other characters, or implicitly in the language used by the particular character. In my thesis, I will also distinguish between explicit and implicit

cues, offering further considerations about the two types of characterisation indicators. However, narratology has not paid much attention to the distinction between characters' 'self-concepts' and the self-image characters want to present to others, their 'presented self-concept'. This distinction is offered by Margolin (1986) in his enumeration of different possibilities of characterisation using the terms 'self-image' and 'projected self-image' (see 2.5.1), but he does not provide further analysis of it. One of my objectives is to demonstrate that certain textual cues can lead to the reader's awareness of the self-conception of a character, leaving aside self-presentation issues to be considered in chapters 9 and 10. In spite of this, I acknowledge the fact that characters' self-conceptions may coincide with the image they may present of themselves to others.

In section 6.2, I will explain the notion of the self-concept as conceived in the field of cognitive psychology. Applying the notion of the schema to the self, self-schemata are proposed as cognitive generalisations about the self which guide our encoding, memory and inferences of information about ourselves (Markus 1977). I will also be dealing with self-regulation: the mental and behavioural processes through which people enact their self-conceptions, revise their behaviour or alter the environment to bring about outcomes in line with their self-perceptions (Fiske and Taylor 1991: 181). Although the topic of the self-concept concerns real people, I will apply the notion of self-schemata and the process of self-regulation to the analysis of the self-concepts of literary characters. Other researchers, in the field of stylistics, who have applied schema theory to the analysis of literary texts include Cook (1990), Gladsky (1992), Freundlieb (1982), and Semino (1997), although with purposes different from mine.

Thus, in section 6.3, these concepts will be used as the tools to provide an account of the construction of various characters' self-concepts and how they enact their self-

conceptions through self-regulation processes. I will provide examples of characters' self-concepts as revealed through explicit and implicit expressions found in their use of language. Moreover, I will propose that implicit characterisation can be studied in characters' perception and inference processes, as influenced by their self-schemata, and in the analysis of self-regulation, which will throw light on how characters are shown to strive to enhance their view of self, or to maintain consistency with pre-existing self-conceptions. My aim will be to demonstrate the advantages of the application of these notions from cognitive psychology to the analysis of characters in narrative texts and to examine to what extent they provide new insights in the areas of characterisation and mind style. Where applicable, I will make links to related concepts discussed in other fields (e.g. possible world theory) or to other parts of the thesis.

## **6.2 The self-concept: a view from cognitive psychology**

In this section I will provide a cognitive analysis of the self, taking into account both its structure and functioning, following the research initiated by Hazel Markus (1977, Markus and Kunda 1986, Markus and Nurius 1986). Firstly, I will explain the notion of the self-concept: I will begin with an account of the structural components of the self, and how these self-structures guide the processing of self-relevant information. And secondly, I will describe the process of self-regulation as influenced by self-perceptions and personal goals, considering the motives that underlie self-regulation: the need for accuracy, self-enhancement, and self-consistency.

### **6.2.1 The self-concept**

Much research within the field of social cognition has been devoted to the conceptual self. The self-concept has been defined as ‘the person’s mental representation of his or her own personality attributes, social roles, past experience, future goals, and the like’ (Fiske and Taylor 1991: 181-2). We know ourselves by our social roles, such as doctor, mother, daughter, or spouse; and we also have an impression of our attributes and personal qualities, such as extrovert, egoist, clever, disorganised, or responsible.

Most researchers agree that the mental representation of self consists of a hierarchy of context specific self-concepts, each concept representing one’s beliefs about oneself in different contexts (see Markus and Sentis 1982). Thus, for example, in a medical situation a doctor may have a conception of herself which may include being skilled, whereas in a sporting situation her self-concept may include not-skilled. The aspect of the self-concept accessed for a particular situation has been called the *working self-concept*, which will be explained in more detail in 6.2.2.1. So, it is the working self-concept that guides social behaviour and is at the same time influenced by the situation.

Markus and Wurf (1987)’s work on the self-concept aims at stressing its dynamic character, proposing a distinction between two types of processes it regulates. They define the self-concept as:

a dynamic and interpretive structure that mediates most significant *intrapersonal* processes (including information processing, affect, and motivation) and a wide variety of *interpersonal* processes (including social perception; choice of situation, partner, and interaction strategy; and reaction to feedback). (Markus and Wurf 1987: 300)

These authors emphasise the distinction between *intrapersonal processes*, those concerning the role of the self-concept in the processing of self-relevant information, and *interpersonal*

*processes*, those concerning how the self-concept influences social interaction. For example, my INDEPENDENCE self-schema influences my behaviour so that I consider I will always act independently, and it influences my perception of other people, noticing whether they are independent or not. Although these processes take place simultaneously, as the authors recognise, the distinction will also be maintained in my thesis for analytical purposes: the focus of this chapter, as well as that of chapters 7 and 8, is on the intrapersonal processes mediated by the self-concept, while the interpersonal processes, especially the influence of the self-concept in social interaction, will be dealt with in chapter 10.

#### **6.2.1.1 Self-schemata**

Markus (1977) introduced the notion of the self-schema as a cognitive structure that represents one's experience in a given domain: 'Self-schemata are cognitive generalisations about the self, derived from past experience, that organise and guide the processing of the self-related information in the individual's social experience' (1977: 64). When someone has a self-schema for a particular domain, for example, creativity, they consider it to be personally important and they have well-developed conceptions of themselves in the creativity domain.

Self-schemata contain behavioural evidence supporting the content of the self-schema and provide the basis for the prediction of behaviour in self-schema related dimensions. They facilitate, organise, and direct the processing of information about the self, that is, judgements and decisions about the self. Thus, following with the CREATIVITY self-schema example, people who consider themselves to have a self-schema for creativity

would be able to remember past creative behaviour supporting their self-schema, and would expect to be creative in the future as well.

According to Markus (1977), self-schemata become more resistant to inconsistent or contradictory information as people gather experience supporting one's self-schemata. Thus, self-schemata make individuals more resistant to counter-schematic information. As Markus explains, the concept of self-schemata implies information about the self that has been categorised and organised in cognitive structures, and which may be used as a basis for future inferences, judgements and predictions about the self.

Markus (1977) proposed that when individuals consider a given dimension of particular importance for their self-concept, they are said to be *schematic* on that trait. Being schematic on a trait means to hold a self-schema for it. For example, individuals are schematic on CREATIVITY if they hold a self-schema for CREATIVITY. People are schematic on dimensions that are important to them, dimensions on which they consider themselves as extreme, or dimensions on which they are certain that the opposite does not hold.

On the other hand, when individuals do not have a well-developed notion of themselves in relation to a trait, they have no schema for it and are said to be *aschematic* on that trait. If you are not sure if you have a self-schema for a domain, you are aschematic on it. For example, if you are ambivalent about creativity, you are aschematic on that particular attribute. Aschematics are not involved in a given domain and do not consider it self-descriptive. People are aschematic on some traits and schematic on other traits, as everyone has some dimension of the self-concept which is considered salient. In the next section, I explain how people's self-schemata regulate the intrapersonal processes of perception, memory and inference.

### **6.2.1.2 Self-relevant information processing**

#### *Perception*

When a person is schematic on a particular dimension, the person filters information about that dimension in the same way that having a schema for other people guides information processing about them (Markus and Sentis 1982). Being schematic on a dimension influences the content and the speed of judgements about the self. Markus (1977)'s experiments showed that people who are schematic on INDEPENDENCE (called INDEPENDENCE schematics) respond quickly and consistently 'that's me' on traits related to independence. This is due to the fact that they have a well-organised and accessible store of knowledge about that trait. On the contrary, aschematics on INDEPENDENCE do not differ in the speed of their response to independent and dependent adjectives. This means that being schematic on a trait involves being a quick judge of oneself on that domain.

#### *Memory*

Self-schemata help people to remember schema-related information, so that they can easily gather evidence to support their self-concept (Fiske and Taylor 1991: 185). INDEPENDENCE schematics remember examples of past independent behaviour, expect to behave independently in the future, and resist counter evidence to their being independent. For this reason, self-schemata are difficult to change. In general, self-schemata are stored in memory and function as schemata about other people.

#### *Inference*

According to Markus (1977), when people predict their own behaviour, they usually make predictions according to their self-schemata. Hence, self-schematics on PUNCTUALITY consider they are punctual now and will always be. Moreover, individuals make self-schematic judgements rapidly, though there is some evidence to the contrary (Markus 1977). Research also suggests that since self-schemata contain enormous quantities of knowledge, it may take longer to respond to stimuli when the judgements involve complexity and novelty (Kuiper 1981). The discrepancy between the efficiency of self-schemata on familiar judgements and the enormous quantity of knowledge contained in self-schemata has been called the paradox of the expert (Smith, Adams and Schorr 1978).

### *Perception of others*

When people hold a particular self-schema, they also notice it in other people. WEIGHT schematics will notice that a friend eats little and conclude that that person is dieting, while someone aschematic on WEIGHT might not arrive at that conclusion (Fong and Markus 1982). Self-schemata will also be used to organise information about others in schema-related domains, especially when drawing inferences about others beyond the information provided (Catrambone and Markus 1987). Research (Markus, Smith and Moreland 1985) has demonstrated that self-schemata provide frameworks to interpret both individual's own behaviour as well as others' schema-related behaviours.

### **6.2.1.3 Possible selves**

One of the functions of the self is to motivate people, to move them to action. This area of research concerns how goals, aspirations, motives, fears and threats are represented in the self-concept. Markus and Nurius (1986) define possible selves as self-conceptions of the

person's feared or desired potential, and they can be viewed as the cognitive component of motivation. Possible selves are hypothetical self-schemata which will be analysed in depth in the next two chapters.

## **6.2.2 Self-regulation**

According to Markus and Wurf (1987), self-regulation refers to the ways in which people control and direct their own actions in order to regulate their self-concepts. The notion of self-regulation derives from psychological research on goal-directed and self-corrective quality of behaviour (Carver and Scheier 1981). Self-regulation researchers are concerned with 'the individual's involvement in controlling his or her own behaviour' (Markus and Wurf 1987: 307), as opposed to the environment controlling behaviour. Apart from the self-concept there are other factors that affect behaviour, including culture, the social environment, individual needs or states, and non-self-relevant cognitions. However, researchers agree in that self-representations of what individuals think, feel, or believe about themselves influence powerfully many relevant behaviours.

### **6.2.2.1 The working self-concept**

While the self-concept is a collection of self-representations, the working self-concept is the collection of self-representations accessible at a given moment. As not all the self-schemata, or self-representations, of the complete self-concept are accessible at one time, the working self-concept is viewed as 'a continually active, shifting array of accessible self-knowledge' (Markus and Wurf 1987). The working self-concept is drawn from the repertoire of self-representations, current or possible, that there is available (Markus and

Kunda 1986, Markus and Nurius 1986) and it is continually active and changing in response to personal needs and situational contingencies (McGuire and McGuire 1986). Which features of the self-concept are represented in one's working self-concept at any one time is important because it is the working self-concept that regulates behaviour.

Context plays a decisive role in the activation of one self-schema or another. When people describe themselves, they mention the attributes that make them distinctive in a given context (McGuire et al 1978). For example, if in a group consisting of black people there is only one white person, the white would provide a self-description in terms of race. Aspects of the self-concept that have been recently activated will also influence which aspects of the self-concept are accessed in a given situation (Markus and Nurius 1986).

Changes in self-descriptions due to context do not mean changes in fundamental self-concept (Damon and Hart 1986), but one's most frequent contexts may shape self-concept. Thus, a child who grows as the smartest boy in the neighbourhood is likely to be self-schematic on INTELLIGENCE. In contrast, another smart boy who grows in a neighbourhood where a lot of boys are smart may not develop the INTELLIGENCE self-schema. Consequently, if people are most likely to be schematic on traits that distinguish them from others, they will be schematic on traits on which they fall at one extreme or another.

However, the dependence of self-schemata on context implies difficulties in determining their accuracy as self-descriptors. If self-schemata arise as a function of context, they are not necessarily based on the person's actual personality: 'There is no necessary correlation between being schematic on a trait and it being true of oneself, nor is there any necessary correlation between being aschematic on a trait and it not being true of

oneself' (Fiske and Taylor 1991: 197). Self-schematic dimensions are subjective perceptions partly determined by context.

This formulation of the self-concept allows at once both its stability and malleability (Markus and Zunda 1986). Core aspects of the self may be unresponsive to changes in one's social circumstances, because of their importance in defining the self. Other self conceptions may vary in accessibility depending on the individual's motivational state or social circumstances. However, the self-concept's malleability is to be distinguished from change of a more enduring nature, such as when self-conceptions change in meaning.

#### **6.2.2.2 Motivation and self-regulation**

The self-regulation process is guided by motivational factors, that is, by the desire to further some goals and avoid others. The underlying motivations that may lead people to regulate their mental and behavioural life are:

- (i) the need for accuracy: the desire to have accurate knowledge about self;
- (ii) self-enhancement: maintaining the most favourable conception possible; and
- (iii) self-consistency: maintaining and confirming pre-existing conceptions of the self.

##### *Need for accuracy*

Trope (1983) suggests that people need to assess their abilities accurately in order to make future outcomes predictable. For this purpose, there are certain achievement situations which will provide people with feedback to gain ability information. Trope (1979) maintains that here are some diagnostic tasks on which differences in abilities lead to performance difference. Thus, people may choose these tasks because they provide a lot of ability-related information. For example, individuals who want to know about their spatial

abilities would not choose as a task a child's puzzle or Rubik's Cube, but some other medium-difficulty task. Trope's research suggests that self-assessment is a determinant of task-selection, especially when knowledge of an ability is uncertain. Moreover, individuals who have an accurate self-assessment of their abilities are able to anticipate and control future performance.

### *Self-enhancement*

When there is no challenge or threat to the self-concept, people are generally self-enhancing: they prefer and seek out positive information about themselves. People's self-regulation processes are thus influenced by the need to feel good about themselves and maintain high-esteem (Greenwald, Bellezza and Banaji 1988). The equivalent in conversation of this behavioural pattern of 'the need to feel good' is covered in the field of pragmatics by Politeness Theory (Brown and Levinson 1987) under the concept of face, as explained in chapter 2.

Moreover, the impressions people hold about themselves may be falsely positive and exaggerated in comparison with their actual abilities or social skills. Fiske and Taylor (1991: 213) point out that research on the self-serving bias in causal attribution demonstrates that people are more likely to attribute themselves positive outcomes than negative ones. When negative aspects of the self are acknowledged, they are perceived as common, while one's favoured activities are seen as rare and distinctive (Campbell 1986).

Taylor and Brown (1988) argue that people are so self-enhancing in their self-perceptions because it promotes mental health. Their research proposes that the positive distortions of the self, the world, and the future are related to the ability to be happy, the ability to care about others, and the ability to engage in productive, creative work. People

can maintain the false assessment of their abilities by, for example, engaging in self-serving causal attributions, that is, taking credit for good things that happen to them but not for bad things. In the same way, people usually choose activities which enhance the probability that they will receive positive feedback. When feedback is negative, they will interpret the information in such a way to minimise the threat to their positive self-conceptions (Greenwald 1980). Information that does not fit with previous self-conceptions may be ignored, forgotten or reinterpreted, or even assimilated with pre-existing positive self-schemata. Negative attributes which are undeniable may be maintained in the self-concept in as positive a fashion as possible by means of negative self-schemata (Taylor and Brown 1988). For example, a person may acknowledge a lack of mathematical skill, but she may make the skill such a small part of her life, that the lack of competence matters little. Taylor and Brown's analysis demonstrates with substantial evidence that people's self-perceptions are biased in a falsely positive direction.

People may also be self-enhancing through the selective interpretation of events. People selectively remember their successes and revise their memories to support positive self-conceptions (Greenwald 1980). Another strategy, called 'compensatory self-inflation' (Greenberg and Pyszczynski 1985) or 'self-affirmation' (Steele and Liu 1983), for handling challenges is to bolster the self in another domain: 'I may not be smart, but I am nice'.

### *Self-consistency*

Apart from the need of having accurate self-knowledge and maintaining a positive view of self, people strive to maintain consistency with their self-conceptions. People try to maintain consistency in their self-impressions by interpreting situations and adopting behavioural strategies that confirm existing self-schemata and by avoiding situations

yielding information at odds with their self-schemata. Fiske and Taylor (1991: 219) suggests that, for example, at a party I may want to project the image of a fun-loving person, so I will avoid the company of that person who makes me look boring in favour of the company of other high-spirited friends.

When individuals receive information challenging their conception of self, the structure of the self-concept is threatened and their affective state is disturbed. Maintaining the stability and consistency of the self-concept is one way of regulating affect. Hence, when individuals are told they are not as intelligent as they thought, they will try to reaffirm the self by recruiting self-conceptions that verify the prevailing conception (Markus and Kunda 1986), or by interacting with others who provide feedback for the prevailing self-conception (Swann 1985). Selective interaction with people who see you as you see yourself is one way of maintaining consistency.

Another strategy when encountering self-inconsistent information is that the individual, rather than denying it, may attempt to integrate the new self-conception with already existing ones (Kulik et al. 1986). Research has demonstrated that people see more self-confirmatory evidence than there actually is (Swann 1987), they attend to self-confirmatory feedback more, they encode it and recall it preferentially, and they interpret feedback in a consistent manner (Swann and Read 1981).

However, there may be circumstances in which people may have to change the way they view themselves. Research suggests that people need to believe these new self-views, and interaction partners need to provide feedback supporting the new self-views (Swann 1987). These changes may occur when people change roles (i.e. new job position), alter their status (i.e. getting married, having a baby), or suffer a life-threatening event (Taylor 1983).

In conclusion, although people may have to consider information inconsistent with their self-concept, the self-image usually maintains consistency with previous impressions of self.

### **6.3 Expression of characters' self-concepts**

My interest in this section is the analysis how characters' self-concepts are constructed through the language of the narrative text. I will propose that characters' use of language reflects the structures and processes of their self-concept as well as the motivations underlying the regulation of their mental and behavioural life. I will take into account both the textual features of characters' language as well as the inferences readers may draw from them to arrive at conclusions about how the reader creates a mental representation of characters' self-concepts. This analysis will prove to be revealing about aspects of characterisation and characters' peculiar mind styles.

As it was explained in the introduction to this chapter, the emphasis is on characters' conceptions of themselves, which influences the characters' perception processes, both intrapersonal and interpersonal processes (Markus and Wurf 1987), as well as the perception of the world around them (Schlenker 1985). Here, my aim is to analyse characters' self-concepts as revealed through the narrative parts of the texts. This implies that characters' conversations will not be dealt with in this chapter because the self-concept expressed in them may either reveal their actual self-concept, or it may answer to self-presentational motives, for example, creating a particular impression on another character for the achievement of a goal. Thus, in this chapter I will analyse characters' self-

conceptions as expressed exclusively in narrations, while chapters 9 and 10 will analyse the issues of the self-concept and self-presentation.

### 6.3.1 Types of narrators

Before providing my analysis of self-conceptions, I find it necessary to explain the different types of narrators who can tell a story, as it will affect the expression of a character's self-concept. Short (1996) suggests that there are two types of narrators: third-person narrators and first-person narrators. A third-person narrator is not a character in the story, and s/he refers to all the characters using third person pronouns: 'he', 'she', 'it' or 'they'. Third person narrators are usually omniscient, as they know everything in the fictional world. On the other hand, a first-person narrator, also called I-narrator or narrator-character, is a character in the fictional world, and s/he usually tells a story after the events have occurred. Short proposes that narrator-characters are 'limited', as they do not know all the facts in the story because they tell it as if it was happening for the first time, or 'unreliable', as they may withhold information or tell untruths, for example, in mystery or murder stories.

The issue of narrators being reliable or unreliable, which applies exclusively to first-person narrators, is an important one in my analysis of characters. According to Rimmon-Kenan (1983: 100) a reliable narrator is supposed to give an authoritative account of the fictional truth, whereas an unreliable narrator's account of a story or commentary on it is more doubtful. A much utilised example of an unreliable narrator is Chief Bromden in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (Kesey 1962), who is an inmate in an asylum. Short (1996) claims that he is an unreliable narrator because he is cognitively impaired: 'We are constantly reminded that he is the inmate of an asylum and so he is not entirely to be trusted

in his views' (1996: 257). One of the problems of unreliable narrators, Rimmon-Kenan (1983: 103) suggests, is for the reader to decide if the narrator is reliable or unreliable, and to what extent the reader may trust him.

A different approach to the problem of the narrator's unreliability is offered by Ryan (1991) in her account of possible world theory, which will be explained in detail in the next two chapters. Ryan proposes a distinction between our actual world (AW) and the world that texts project, the textual actual world (TAW). When a story is told by an omniscient narrator, his or her discourse is to be taken as the textual actual world. But when a narrator-character tells a story, the reader 'does not perceive the narrative actual world directly, but apprehends it through its reflection in a subjective world' (1991: 113), so that the reader has to decide which of the narrator's assertions are objective facts and which reflect the narrator-character's subjective world. Again, she offers an explanation of the unreliable narrator Chief Bromden:

When, for instance the narrator of *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* declares that the orderlies of the mental hospital where he is a patient have sensitive equipment to detect his fear, we regard this belief as hallucination. But we accept as fact the statement that there are orderlies mopping the floor in the hallway. The existence of unreliable narrators in fiction demonstrates a possible gap between the world projected by the narrator's declarations (what could be called narratorial actual world, or NAW) and the facts of TAW. (Ryan 1991: 113)

Facts in the narratorial actual world are indeed subjective, but they represent the character's perception of himself, others, and the world around him. Thus, in Bromden's world the orderlies *do* have sensitive equipment to detect fear. But the reader is able, through textual cues, to detect these facts as belonging to his NAW, and interpret them, in this particular case, as proving the narrator's cognitive impairment. In fact, as Chief Bromden sets out to explain his story, he addresses the reader commenting about his act of narration:

I been silent so long now it's gonna roar out of me like floodwaters and you think the guy telling this ranting and raving my *God*; you think this is too horrible to have really happened, this is too awful to be the truth! But, please. It's still hard for me to have a clear mind thinking on it. *But it's the truth even if it didn't happen.* (*One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*, p. 8, my emphasis)

Bromden does acknowledge he is about to tell his truth, his own version of events, the facts in his narratorial actual world, even if these facts did not happen in the text actual world.

In terms of characters' self-concepts, the notion of unreliable narrators becomes extremely relevant. Throughout a text, narrator-characters may offer us descriptions of their self-concept, from their subjective position as unreliable narrators. My claim is that characters' subjective self-descriptions are part of their NAW, and so they are 'true' for the characters in question. This is precisely the issue with the self-concept: the self-concept is people's subjective impression of their own attributes, not an objective and external account of them. Thus, the self-concept expressed by narrator-characters, reliable<sup>1</sup> or unreliable, is always true in their NAW.

For example, the protagonist of *Fight Club* is an unreliable narrator-character because, as he recognises, he suffers from schizophrenia. Thus, at the beginning of the novel, he presents the reader with a self-concept which is true in his NAW, though later in the text he realises it was not accurate, as he was unaware of his split personality. However, the character's unawareness of his cognitive impairment is not an obstacle for him in constructing a self-concept which is his true self-concept at a given point in time, in his NAW. Hussey (1982), dealing with Shakespearean soliloquies, which are comparable to narrator-characters providing self-descriptions in the narrative text, claims that what characters say in a soliloquy is sincere 'within the limits of his own self-knowledge' (1982:

182), so that characters' self-concepts may not be necessarily correct, in terms of TAW, due to a limitation in self-awareness. In conclusion, a narrator-character's self-concept is always 'true' in NAW, although it may not be 'correct' in TAW. Moreover, the reader will only be aware of this 'incorrectness' if s/he is granted access to TAW or is able to draw the appropriate inferences from textual information. In the analysis of *Fight Club* (chapter 3), readers are able to infer the protagonist has an inaccurate self-concept from his conversations with Marla, before the character himself realises that he suffers from a split personality disorder.

Socio-cognitive research on the working self-concept suggests that there is no correlation between being schematic on a trait and it being true of oneself (see section 6.2.2.1). Thus, not having an accurate perception of one's self-concept does not imply that the self-concept is wrong, because it will still guide both perception processes and self-regulation. This notion from cognitive psychology supports my claim that characters' self-concepts are true in their NAW, so that the narrator's unreliability is not an obstacle for the reader's construction of a narrator-character's self-concept. In conclusion, the problem of unreliable narrators does not impede the analysis of characters' self-concepts.

Moreover, as we saw in the literature review, in spite of the stability of the self-concept, throughout the years, there may be changes in one's self-conception, especially changes in social roles, such as becoming a father, or suffering a life-threatening event (see 6.2.2.2). Thus, another relevant factor when dealing with character's personalities is that they are dynamic entities, capable of change. As the action in narratives progresses, the personalities of characters may be developed and thus, the reader's mental representation of

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<sup>1</sup> My claim is that reliable characters offer their subjective self-concepts as well because, by definition, self-concepts are impressionistic.

characters is constantly being updated as new information is encountered (Emmott 1997: 15).

In the next sections, I will describe and analyse textual cues suggesting characters' self-schemata, how the self-concept influences characters' perception and inference processes, and how some self-regulation processes are indicative of their self-conceptions. My claim is that the way characters' self-concepts are constructed as influencing both the perception of themselves and of the social world, and their self-regulation processes can be indicative of their peculiar mind styles.

### **6.3.2 Characterisation and the self-concept**

Taking into account the literature review about characterisation in chapter 2, in this section, I would like to suggest some new areas to be taken into account in a theory of characterisation. First, I want to propose a distinction between the reader's mental representation of characters' self-concepts, the reader's conception of them, and the reader's opinion about them. And second, I will distinguish between the different sources of character description according to the type of narrator who tells the story.

Research on characterisation proposes that characters' self-concepts can be revealed through the propositional content of explicit cues or by inference from implicit cues (see 2.5.2). Moreover, these characterisation cues may lead the reader to draw further inferences about the personality of the character, e.g. attributes the character is unaware of, which will form part of the reader's conception of the character. For example, if a character repeatedly states 'I am very clever', the character shows, unless it is a lie and the reader realises it is a lie, that s/he holds a self-schema for CLEVERNESS. So, the direct information uttered by

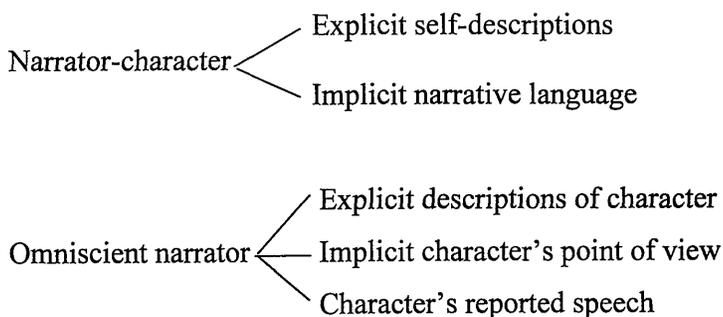
the character provides the reader with an explicit cue about his/her self-concept. However, the repetition of the statement may lead the reader, via the infringement of the maxim of manner, to infer that either the character is not so clever, or, for example, that he is socially insecure. Then, the reader is drawing an inference from the character's language which does not add to the self-concept, but is part of the reader's conception of the character, with an evaluative component.

Similarly, the implicit cues in the language of the narrative text allow the reader to draw inferences about characters' self-concepts and, at the same time, may also lead to inferences that will add to the reader's conception of and opinion about the character. For example, Humbert Humbert, the French narrator-character in *Lolita*, uses many French expressions throughout his narration. These expressions constitute an implicit cue of his self-concept, as they reveal that his origin is an important part of his self-conception. However, the abuse rather than use of the foreign terms, infringing the maxim of quantity, at certain points of the text may lead the reader to infer a certain snobbism, a trait that forms part of the reader's opinion about the character and not the character's self-concept.

What I am suggesting here is a distinction between reader's mental representation of characters' self-concepts and reader's mental representation of their conception and evaluation of characters, which are two different aspects of characterisation to be exemplified in the next sections. These aspects of readers' mental representation of characters are related to van Dijk's suggestion that situation models consist of situation model schemata, filled with the knowledge about the participants, the setting, the action, the goals, etc., and the associated opinions about each of these aspects (see 2.3.2.1). Moreover, this opinion can be a particular opinion or a general opinion, which would be the instantiation of an attitude schemata related to stereotypes (see 5.2). Of course, the reader's

view of characters will also depend on factors such as readers' background knowledge or expectations, which I do not have the space here to consider. For this reason, I will provide my own interpretation of the feasible opinions readers may arrive at, through an explanation of the inference process.

Moreover, I consider that we can establish a further distinction between the characters' self-concepts being revealed through the narrative language employed by a narrator-character or that of an omniscient narrator. Thus, the combination of type of narrator (narrator-character vs. omniscient narrator) and the nature of the information (explicit vs. implicit) yields several possibilities. Self-concepts can be revealed through narrator-character's explicit self-descriptions and through an omniscient narrator's description of characters. Moreover, readers will be able to infer self-concepts from the implicit language used by a narrator-character in the narration of events, or from the omniscient narrator's language reflecting a character's point of view, in relation to the character's conception of himself. Finally, self-concept can be accessed through the omniscient narrator's representation of a character's direct speech, in which the character describes himself or herself. The following chart offers a clear account of the types of evidence of the self-concept, depending on the type of narrator:



In my thesis, I will concentrate on the analysis of narratives with narrator-characters. I do not have the space here to consider characterisation by omniscient narrators, though some of my explanations would be applicable to that type of narrator as well.

### **6.3.3 Explicit expressions**

In this section, I will analyse instances of language in which characters' self-concepts are expressed overtly, giving details about their social roles, personality attributes, past experience and future goals, that is to say, describing their self-concepts, following Fiske and Taylor (1991: 181)'s definition. In his research on characterisation, Culpeper (2001) states that, in drama, characters may describe themselves explicitly in the presence of other characters or in the absence of other characters, through soliloquies or asides. In soliloquies, characters are alone on stage and can provide information about their personalities, among other things. This would be comparable to first person narrators providing information about their self-concepts in the narration itself, rather than in conversation with other characters, which may involve self-presentation issues.

When a narrator-character uses a narrative style in which a reflexive style predominates (explaining feelings or thoughts rather than actions), the narrative language offers richer grounds for the analysis of the self-concept. Thus, narrative styles that can be characterised as a diary or a confession are more fruitful for the analysis of the explicit expression of the self-concept. For example, in *The Collector*, Miranda's part consists of a diary in which she reflects her deepest thoughts while in Clegg's parts there is more description of action than reflection. Therefore, it is easier to find examples of overt self-descriptions in Miranda's narrative than in Clegg's. Rimmon-Kenan (1981) offers a similar

distinction between narratives in which character predominates, and narratives in which action does, terming them ‘psychological narratives’ and ‘a-psychological narratives’ respectively (Rimmon-Kenan 1981: 35-6).

In my exemplification, I will mainly describe the self-concept of the male first-person narrator of *Lolita*, since his narration offers a detailed account of his character. The reader can create a rich mental representation of Humbert’s self-concept, as he explicitly specifies attributes such as his age, origin, physical appearance, profession, personality attributes, past experience, and sexual likes, all of which are relevant for his self-conception:

(1) I was born in 1910, in Paris. (*Lolita*, p. 9)

(2) At first, I planned a degree in psychiatry as many manqué talents do; but I was even more manqué than that; a peculiar exhaustion, I am so oppressed, doctor, set in; and I switched to English literature, where so many frustrated poets end as pipe-smoking teachers in tweeds. (*Lolita*, p. 15)

With the information from these self-descriptions, and from other fragments not included here, the reader creates a detailed mental representation of Humbert Humbert as a middle-aged man, of French origin, from a middle-high social class, with a university degree, and whose job is teaching English literature. Quotation number (2), moreover, combines explicit and implicit cues, so that the reader may infer more information about the character’s self-concept from the presuppositions included in the text. Although this section is dedicated to the expression of explicit self-conceptions, I will also pay attention to implicit cues whenever they enrich the readers’ mental representation of the character’s self-concept.

The first clause contains the presupposition that planning a degree in psychiatry is what ‘many manqué talents do’, and the last clause presupposes that English literature

departments are the place where ‘many frustrated poets’ end. I treat these clauses as presuppositions because it could be argued that they survive even if the main clause to which they are attached is negated (see Levinson 1983). Moreover, the reader may infer, through the maxim of relation (Grice 1975), that these descriptions, ‘manqué talent’ and ‘frustrated poet’, are descriptive of the narrator-character, so that they reveal aspects of his self-concept. But the reader’s inference process may go further than this. Humbert’s declaration of his lack of talent and frustration as a poet contrasts with the complex style of his narration (complex syntax, rich vocabulary, use of foreign expressions, Latinate lexis). Therefore, the reader may infer that he flouts the maxim of quality, so that what he is saying is not true. Humbert is thus being self-ironic about his abilities as a narrator, because he is really talented as story-teller, so that readers may conclude that he is schematic on TALENT, an attribute that forms part of his self-concept.

The character’s self-concept also includes some physical features, such as considering himself as an extremely attractive man, and some personality attributes, such as having self-control:

(3) I was, and still am, despite *mes malheurs*, an exceptionally handsome male; slow-moving, tall, with soft dark hair and a gloomy but all the more seductive cast of demeanor. (*Lolita*, p. 25)

(4) Years of secret sufferings had taught me superhuman self-control. (*Lolita*, p. 27)

From his explicit references to these attributes, we can conclude that he is schematic on ATTRACTIVENESS and on SELF-CONTROL and that these self-schemata will guide his processing processes. Thus, for example, his ATTRACTIVENESS self-schema will guide his perception and inference processes about self-related information, so that we can find other fragments in the novel where he reiterates his own attractiveness:

- (5) I have all the characteristics which, according to writers on the sex interests of children, start the responses stirring in a little girl: clean-cut jaw, muscular hand, deep sonorous voice, broad shoulder. Moreover, I am said to resemble some crooner or actor chap on whom Lo has a crush. (*Lolita*, p. 43)
- (6) I watched dark-and-handsome, not un-Celtic, probably high-church, possibly very high-church, Dr. Humbert see his daughter off to school. (*Lolita*, p. 188)

Similarly, as attractiveness is important to his self-concept, this self-schema will also influence his perception about other people, especially women and girls. In the following fragment, Humbert introduces Mrs. Haze, Lolita's mother, after seeing her for the first time:

- (7) The poor lady was in her middle thirties, she had a shiny forehead, plucked eyebrows and quite simple but not unattractive features of a type that may be defined as a weak solution of Marlene Dietrich. (*Lolita*, p. 37)

Humbert's ATTRACTIVENESS self-schema makes him pay particular attention to the woman's physical appearance, offering his rather apathetic opinion about her. The adjectives used in his description, 'poor woman' or 'simple' features, reveal the little interest that the woman awakens in him. In the next fragment, his perception of young girls whom he does not consider nymphets is expressed in physical terms:

- (8) As I have once remarked in the course of these confessions, there are few physiques I loathe more than the heavy low-slung pelvis, thick calves and deplorable complexion of the average coed (in whom I see, maybe, the coffin of coarse female flesh within which my nymphets are buried alive) (*Lolita*, p. 175)

It is clear that physical appearance is an extremely relevant trait in his perception of people, and this is due to the fact that he is schematic on ATTRACTIVENESS.

Moreover, Humbert's expression of his self-concept may lead readers to draw further inferences about his conceptions and to create their own evaluation of the character. For example, in quotation number (3), Humbert's use of evaluative language, 'exceptionally handsome', 'tall', 'soft dark hair', and 'more seductive', is an infringement of Leech's maxim of modesty: 'Minimise praise of self. Maximise dispraise of self' (1983: 136). The infringement of this maxim may lead the reader to infer that he is not modest or that he has an extremely high self-esteem, as far as his physical charm is concerned. Another possibility is that, via the infringement of the maxim of quantity (Grice 1975) due to the repetition of positive self-descriptions, the reader may infer that he is not as attractive as he considers himself to be. This clash between the character's self-concept and the reader's perceptions does not affect the reader's mental representation of characters' self-concepts, but adds to the readers' mental representation of their evaluation of the character.

The following fragment from Miranda's narration in *The Collector* offers a contrast with Humbert's lack of modesty. Miranda's self-schemata on INTELLIGENCE and BEAUTY are expressed overtly as the statement of some facts of which she feels proud, but not vain:

(9) Knowing I am intelligent, knowing that I am beginning to understand life much better than most people of my age. Even knowing that I shall never be so stupid as to be vain about it, but be grateful, be terribly glad (especially after this) to be alive, to be who I am – Miranda, and unique.

I shall never let anyone see this. Even if it is the truth, it must *sound* vain.

Just as I never never let other girls see that I know I am pretty; nobody knows how I've fallen over myself not to take that unfair advantage. Wandering male eyes, even the nicest, I've snubbed.  
(*The Collector*, p. 145-6)

Miranda's recognition of the vanity of her remarks blocks the reader's negative evaluative inference that she is vain. Miranda is schematic on INTELLIGENCE and BEAUTY, but

she does not boast about it so that she does not violate the maxim of modesty. Thus, in this context, the reader's evaluation of Miranda is positive due to the recognition of her vanity, whereas the reader's evaluation of Humbert is negative due to his lack of modesty. But let us return to Humbert Humbert's self-concept:

(10) In my sanitary relations with women I was practical, ironical and brisk. While a college student, in London and Paris, paid ladies sufficed me. (*Lolita*, p. 15)

(11) What drives me insane is the twofold nature of this nymphet –of every nymphet, perhaps; this mixture in my *Lolita* of tender dreamy childishness and a kind of eerie vulgarity. (*Lolita*, p. 44)

With regard to his past experience, his sexual encounters ('sanitary relations' with prostitutes, 'paid ladies') as a university student are revealing about his SEX self-schema. Sex is a core conception for Humbert, and he shows to have accumulated knowledge on this dimension. The reader can infer from the use of the phrase 'sanitary relations with women' some implicit aspects of Humbert's self-concept, such as his opinion about his sexual relationships with adult women. The collocation of the adjective 'sanitary' modifying the noun 'relations' is quite unusual, since 'sanitary' usually relates to health issues. Thus, Humbert describes his sexual relationship with women in terms of their healthiness, maybe in contrast with his sexual relationships with nymphets, which would then be not-sanitary and not-healthy.

In fact, as fragment (10) shows, his sexuality turns out to be a core aspect of his self-concept, especially his extreme sexual desire for young girls, whom he calls 'nymphets'. Thus, Humbert can be said to be schematic on SEX and on NYMPHETS, in fact, this self-schema on PAEDOPHILIA (paedophilia 'is sexual activity with children or the condition of being sexually attracted to children', see *Collins Cobuild English Dictionary*) may be

said to be the most relevant self-conception that guides his behaviour throughout the novel and that keeps the action in motion. Again, the reader may draw evaluative inferences from the explicit expression of the narrator-character's SEX self-schema. In this case, it is the immoral nature of Humbert's thoughts that may contrast with the reader's values and norms, so that the reader may form an evaluation of the character as a sexual pervert.

#### **6.3.4 Implicit expressions**

The analysis of explicit expressions in the last section was based on the assumption that narrator-characters' explicit cues about their self-concepts yield correct information about those self-conceptions. But, what happens when readers encounter implicit information about a character? Is implicit information, to be inferred by readers, part of the characters' self-concepts? If self-schemata are *conscious* self-knowledge mental structures, can implicit characterisation be related to the *conscious* self-concept?

Social cognition predicts that the self-concept influences people's information processing and the regulation of their mental world and behaviour, as we saw in 6.2.1.2 and 6.2.2.2. Thus, for example, if I am schematic on CATHOLICISM, my self-schema influences the interpretation of self-information. Thus, after having sinned, I may interpret a fortuitous accident as a punishment from God for my past evil action. In the same way, my CATHOLICISM self-schema guides my behaviour because I go to mass every Sunday or because I pray at the table before eating. Moreover, the self-schema also regulates my mental world, so that I maintain consistency with my self-schema by interpreting various everyday situations in religious terms. Moreover, Fiske and Taylor (1991: 226) recognise that 'we are not aware of the self-knowledge that guides our thoughts and behaviours. It

appears to operate at a pre-conscious level'. Therefore, people do not need to be conscious of their self-concepts to hold a certain self-schema or for that schema to influence information processing. In simple terms, the conclusion is that what people say, think, and do is influenced, in part, by their self-concepts. So, my claim is that implicit cues in the narrator's language about characters' self-concepts are as valid as explicit cues.

Most research about the self within social cognition is based on experiments in which subjects attribute themselves explicit traits related to their self-concept. However, very little research has paid attention to the implicit expression of the self-concept. An exception is McGuire et al (1978), who analyse how different types of verbs used to describe the self reveal how social context influences the self-concept. In their research, they analysed children's three minute descriptions of their family and school and concluded that the self is perceived in terms of state verbs in the family context, and in terms of action verbs in the school context. Therefore, children's working self-concept in the school involves a dynamic self-schema whereas in the family, the self-concept is characterised by a more passive self-schema. This type of experiment supports my view that implicit cues about the self-concept are as valid as explicit cues, so that they can provide useful insights in the analysis of characters' self-conceptions.

As for the implicit cues in characterisation, Rimmon-Kenan's list of indicators includes characters' actions, either one-time actions or habitual actions, and their speech, either in conversation or their thoughts (1983: 61). Taking into account that characters' actions and thoughts have already been considered as implicit characterisation cues, and using some socio-cognitive notions explained in the literature review in section 6.2, I will provide an analysis of how characters' thoughts and actions imply self-concept issues.

My claim is that readers are able to construct characters' self-concepts from implicit textual cues about the characters' processing of information, as influenced by their self-schemata. And in the same way, some characters' actions, specifically those in which the self-concept is regulating their behaviour, can implicitly reveal self-concepts. My aim is then to propose the textual analysis of these processes from social cognition, information processing and self-regulation, as implicit indicators of characters' self-concepts. In other words, I consider that readers can create a mental representation of characters' self-concept through textual implicit cues revealing their mental world and behaviour, that is, their thoughts and actions (see Palmer 2004 for a similar view).

In the next sections I will analyse fragments of narrative texts in which the self-concept is implicit in the language used by a narrator-character. In the first section, I will concentrate on traditional implicit cues, offering two new indirect indicators of self-concept: topics of conversation and mental conceptualisations. In the next section, I will study how the reader can infer characters' self-schemata from how the language of the text might reflect their information processing, in both perception and inference processes. In the last section, the focus will be on how the self-regulation processes of characters' mental world and behaviour imply aspects of their self-concept.

#### **6.3.4.1 Content of verbal behaviour**

In my study of the implicit cues revealing a character's self-concept, my aim is not to exemplify each possible cue with examples from narratives, as this has already been done by Rimmon-Kenan (1983) and Culpeper (2001), but rather to provide a view of how different types of selves can be constructed implicitly by the language of a text. In the

following fragment of *Lolita*, Humbert Humbert's narration includes some implicit cues that reveal his self-concept:

(12) How smugly would I marvel that she was mine, mine, mine, and revise the recent matitudinal swoon to the moan of the mourning doves, and devise the late afternoon one, and slitting my sun-speared eyes, compare Lolita to whatever other nymphets parsimonious chance collected around her for my anthological delectation and judgment; and today, putting my hand on my ailing heart, I really do not think that any of them ever surpassed her in desirability, or if they did, it was so two or three times at the most, in a certain light, with certain perfumes blended in the air – once in the hopeless case of a pale Spanish child, the daughter of a heavy-jawed nobleman, and another time – *mais je divague*. (*Lolita*, p. 161)

I will analyse this fragment using Culpeper's implicit cues (2001: 172-228). As for Humbert's lexis, he has a tendency to use very formal vocabulary, especially Latinate lexis such as 'matitudinal', 'parsimonious', and 'delectation'. Latin words, Culpeper claims, are rarer than words of Germanic origin in the English language, and they tend to be used in formal, public occasions (see Adamson 1989 for the correlation of degrees of formality with Germanic, French and Latinate lexis). Humbert also makes use of an expression in French, a very common feature throughout his narration, which reveals his French origin. But above all, the lexical richness of this quotation and the proliferation of adjectives are two prominent features to be noticed by readers. In a similar way, the extreme complexity of his syntax, the whole paragraph consisting of one unique sentence, is a marked feature of his speech. All of these linguistic features carry implications regarding Humbert's self-schemata about his origin, social class, education, and preoccupation with language use. As narrator-character, Humbert can express his self-concept overtly, as we saw in the previous section, or non-overtly simply through his use of language. My proposal is to treat these implicit cues as revealing about the narrator-character's self-concept specifically, not

simply as characterisation cues. In this manner, the notion of characterisation can be considered an umbrella term which covers wider areas of research, i.e. literary criticism, while my more specific research on characters' self-concepts adds the cognitive and linguistic dimension which is inherent in cognitive stylistics research.

Apart from the *form* of characters' speech, Rimmon-Kenan (1983) mentions that *content* also reveals characterisation, but she does not develop this notion. I will show here how two aspects of the content of characters' speech involve implicit cues about their self-concepts. First, I will deal with the topics characters usually talk about, and second, with how their use of certain words reveals their conceptualisation of themselves, others, and the world in general.

The topics characters talk about present the themes that may be relevant for them, and those are areas in which they may be schematic. Holtgraves (2002) makes a similar claim for real people: 'What people talk about is obviously informative as to the nature of their personality' (2002: 73), supporting his assertion with evidence from psychological research. The fact that a character holds a strong opinion, either positive or negative, about a topic, may make that topic a recurrent theme of conversation and imply that it is part of their self-concept. Therefore, the reader can draw the inference that Humbert is schematic on PAEDOPHILIA because nymphets constitute a recurrent topic of conversation, and he explicitly asserts that they are the object of his sexual desire. The protagonist himself recognises at some points that he has a certain sexual problem, calling it a 'certain singularity' (p. 13), a 'forerunner of insanity' (p. 18), and even more explicitly 'my life of pederosis' (p. 55). A similar case occurs with Miranda and the topic of the H-bomb, which she mentions on the first page of her narration ('I know the H-bomb is wrong', p. 117), and throughout.

Another type of implicit cue through which the reader infers self-concept is the character's mental conceptualisations, that is to say, the way characters cognitively represent certain situations, actions, or other characters, which is one of the indicators of mind style. On the very first page of *The Collector*, for example, Clegg informs the reader of some events that took place before Miranda 'came to be my guest here' (p. 9). Both the verb 'came' and the noun 'guest' imply a voluntary action on the part of Miranda, without any mention of Clegg's kidnapping her. In Clegg's conceptualisation of this event, he does not take an active part, as Miranda is the subject of the sentence and he does not carry any action. In fact, if Miranda is his 'guest', he presupposes he has invited her to his house, so that he acts as her 'host'. Thus, the reader may infer from these words that Clegg's impression of himself does not include the negative attributes characteristic of a kidnapper, but rather the positive connotations of a guest-host relationship. Clegg's conceptualisation of this action suggests his self-concept as a kind person, not as an evil man capable of kidnapping a woman and letting her die, revealing his perturbed mental condition and a particular mind style.

#### **6.3.4.2 Humbert Humbert: self-concept and information processing**

The aim of this section is to demonstrate that implicit cues about a character's self-conceptions can be inferred from assumptions about how a character's information processing is influenced by his self-concept. I will focus on how readers construct the character Humbert Humbert, and specifically, on how his use of language reflects his perception and inference processes. As for his perception, I suggest that the repeated use, at various points of the novel, of the PEOPLE ARE ANIMALS metaphor is revealing about his ANIMAL self-schema and, at the same time, his peculiar mind style. On the other hand,

I will provide textual evidence showing how his inference processes are influenced by his PAEDOPHILIA self-schema, revealing this self-conception implicitly.

*Perception: PEOPLE ARE ANIMALS metaphor implies the ANIMAL self-schema*

In his narration, Humbert Humbert perceives himself as different animals, and as having animal-like qualities, and he also perceives his sexual partners in similar terms. I want to propose then that the author of *Lolita* exploits the metaphor PEOPLE ARE ANIMALS, and that the protagonist's consistent use of this non-conventional metaphor implies aspects of his self-concept indicative of his particular mind style (see Semino and Swindlehurst 1996 for the link between cognitive metaphor and mind style).

Cognitive metaphor theory proposes that metaphors are used to talk about abstract and unfamiliar domains (target domain of the metaphor), such as love or life, in terms of more concrete and familiar domains (source domain), such as containers and journeys (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, Lakoff and Turner 1989). Conventional uses of metaphors, such as LIFE IS A JOURNEY or UP IS GOOD, are conceived as a part of the world view of a culture or linguistic community, whereas nonconventional uses of metaphors provide new ways of perceiving and making sense of reality. Semino and Swindlehurst (1996) demonstrate that 'consistent and metaphorical patterns can be employed to project a characteristic and partly deviant mind style' (1996), which I will argue to be the case of Humbert Humbert.

The identification of metaphors with schemata has been proposed by several authors (Searle 1979, Semino 1997). Schank (1982)'s version of schema theory proposes that reminding is essential to comprehension, as it involves 'finding the correct memory structure to process an input' (Schank 1982: 79, in Semino 1997: 210). So, being in a

restaurant reminds us of previous experiences and knowledge about restaurants, which will be stored in a memory structure, the schema, and which will facilitate the processing of information about the current restaurant. Self-schemata function in the same way as schemata: they are cognitive structures that contain knowledge about past experiences about the self and help to process self-related information. Moreover, metaphors have also been conceived as reminding experiences: 'metaphors can be described as the result of reminding experiences across different domains, which interpreters of metaphorical expressions are somehow forced to reconstruct' (Semino 1997: 211). In conclusion, metaphors and schemata, including self-schemata, are based on the need of making 'sense of one type of experience in terms of another' (Semino 1997: 211).

My claim then is that the consistent use of the metaphor PEOPLE ARE ANIMALS projects part of Humbert's self-concept: he perceives himself as having animal-like attributes. The use of this metaphor in reference to the protagonist himself and his sexual partners reveals that his ANIMAL self-schema guides his perception of himself and of other people. The repetition and elaboration of the non-conventional metaphor at different points of the text suggests that the animal metaphor influences his cognitive processing, especially his perception, and thus reflects his particular mind style. Therefore, the use of animal metaphors and similes conveys implicitly the protagonist's ANIMAL self-schema, so that the reader may draw the inference that Humbert's self-concept includes some animal traits.

Throughout Humbert's narration, he identifies his whole person with different animals: 'Humbert the wounded spider' (p. 54), or 'Humbert the Hound' (p. 60). In the same way, some parts of his body are also animalised: 'ape-ear' (p. 48), 'My awkward, aching timid claws' (p. 56), 'sad-eyed degenerate cur' (p. 60), 'dark male jaws' (p.66),

‘clatter downstairs’ (p. 60), ‘my tentacles’ (p. 130) and even his bedroom is referred to as ‘my lair’ (p. 64). In cognitive metaphors terms, the target domain of the metaphor is Humbert and the source domain is the particular animal. The protagonist’s use of these metaphors, in which he talks about himself in terms of concrete animals, suggests new insights into his self-concept. Thus, ‘My awkward, aching timid claws’ contrasts with ‘my tentacles’, so that on each occasion, a different working self-conception is revealed through using different ANIMAL metaphors. For example, in the latter he implies a possessive attitude while in the former, he implicates a more passive attitude, even though the common feature is that they are predatory creatures.

As the ANIMAL metaphor is also applied to the description of Lolita, Humbert’s ANIMAL self-schema influences his perception of his nymphet, supporting cognitive psychology’s view that self-schemata influence other perception (see 6.2.1.2). In her case, the ANIMAL metaphor is used to refer to parts of her body or physical attributes: ‘monkeyish feet’, ‘little hot paw’ (p. 51), and ‘the monkeyish nimbleness’ (p. 58).

Humbert’s application of the ANIMAL metaphor to himself and to Lolita demonstrates the influence of his self-conception in his perception processes. But apart from this, Humbert views their relationship in similar terms: as one of hunter and prey: ‘the enchanted prey was about to meet halfway the enchanted hunter’ (p. 131). In this case, the ANIMAL metaphor applies in the following way: Lolita is the prey while Humbert is conceptualised as the hunter, granting him a more powerful position in the relation, in accord with his identification with predatory animals. On the other hand, the hunter-prey relationship can be associated with the name of the first hotel where they stayed and where their incestuous relationship began: ‘The Enchanted Hunters’.

Moreover, the way Humbert perceives his own actions and those of his sexual partners is also influenced by his ANIMAL self-schema, as reflected in his sustained ANIMAL metaphor. In his first attempt at a sexual encounter, when he and his partner were young children, his perception of his movements is narrated using animal-related verbs such as ‘unable even to *mate* as slum children’, ‘her hand would *creep* towards me’, ‘to *graze* each other’s salty lips’, ‘we still *clawed* at each other’ (my emphasis, p. 12). The use of these verbs related to animals to describe their movements reveals Humbert’s perception of the sexual act as if they were wild animals following a physical and primitive instinct.

In the following fragment of text, the adult protagonist is staying as a guest at Lolita’s mother’s house before their relationship begins. In this case, Humbert constructs the whole paragraph on the basis of a simile, the comparison of his person with a spider, and moreover, the metaphor influences his perception of his perception of Lolita:

(13) I am like one of those inflated pale spiders you see in old gardens. Sitting in the middle of a luminous web and giving little jerks to this or that strand. My web is spread all over the house as I listen from my chair where I sit like a wily wizard. Is Lo in her room? Gently I tug on the silk. She is not. (...) The bathroom door has just slammed, so one has to feel elsewhere about the house for the beautiful warm-colored prey. Let us have a strand of silk descend the stairs. (...) So my nymphet is not in the house at all! Gone! What I thought was a prismatic weave turns out to be but an old grey cobweb, the house is empty, is dead. (*Lolita*, p. 49-50)

From the simile in which he compares his person with an ‘inflated pale spider’, Humbert constructs the perception of his search: in order to locate Lolita he constructs a ‘web’ which is spread through the whole house. Moreover, his nymphet is also perceived as a ‘beautiful warm-colored prey’, which is the objective to be captured. This fragment demonstrates that the protagonist perceives himself as a spider so that his self-concept contains attributes related to the SPIDER metaphor, such as the patient and stalking hunting attitude.

Furthermore, his self-concept influences the way he perceives his position, 'sitting in the middle of a luminous web', his movements, 'giving little jerks to this or that strand', his listening attitude, 'my web is spread all over the house as I listen...', and Lolita herself.

In this example, Humbert makes use, as narrator-character, of Free Direct Thought in sentences such as 'Is Lo in her room?' and 'So my nymphet is not in the house at all! Gone!'. Leech and Short (1981: 337-338) state that in this type of thought presentation, in which the narrator-character explains his thoughts, there is no introductory reporting clause (for example, 'I *wondered*, 'Is Lo in her room?'), and there is no backshift of the tenses or conversion of the pronouns (for example, 'I wondered if Lo *was* in her room') (indirect features), but the question and the exclamation marks are maintained (direct feature). Leech and Short also comment that 'thought presentation has come to be inextricably linked with what is usually known and 'stream of consciousness writing'' (1981: 337), and this passage could be considered as stream of consciousness or, more precisely, as interior monologue, as the latter refers to the exclusive use of one technique, free direct thought, without overt sign of an omniscient narrator (Wales 2001: 368). In this case, Humbert's use of free direct thought offers a more vivid account of his search, reporting his thoughts and immediate consciousness.

Although the ANIMAL metaphor is not used by the protagonist through all his narration, I have demonstrated that it reveals his working self-concept at several moments of the novel. The use of this metaphor shows that Humbert's perception processes are influenced by his ANIMAL self-schema so that his self-conception is implied in his use of language. Moreover, I have shown how the consistent use of this idiosyncratic metaphor suggests the protagonist's deviant mind style.

*Inference: the PAEDOPHILIA self-schema*

In the same way that self-schemata guide the processing of information about oneself, others, and the social world, self-schemata are also used to predict how one will behave in the future. Therefore, the projection through the narrative text of characters' inference processes, i.e. how they interpret situations and make predictions about the future, which are guided by their self-schemata, may be used by readers to form a mental representation of their self-concepts.

In the following scene from *Lolita*, the account of Humbert's inference process reveals his PAEDOPHILIA self-schema:

(14) It happened for instance that from my balcony I would notice a lighted window across the street and what looked like a nymphet in the act of undressing before a co-operative mirror. Thus isolated, thus removed, the vision acquired an especially keen charm that made me race with all speed toward my lone gratification. But abruptly, fiendishly, the tender pattern of nudity I had adored would be transformed into the disgusting lamp-lit bare arm of a man in his underclothes reading his paper by the open window in the hot, damp, hopeless summer night. (*Lolita*, p. 20)

When seeing a figure undressing in a window, Humbert infers that it is a nymphet, or rather, 'what looked like a nymphet'. His inference process is thus consistent with his PAEDOPHILIA self-schema, as he draws the conclusion that what he is seeing is a young girl, although he has no evidence supporting it. Thus, he seems to self-regulate his behaviour according to his activated self-schema, and his subsequent behaviour to 'race with all speed towards my lone gratification'. The protagonist's surprise and disgust comes when the figure comes into light and instead of a nymphet, Humbert sees the figure of a man, so that his previous inference is demonstrated to be wrong. The protagonist's PAEDOPHILIA self-schema is so powerful that it influences his inference process, leading

him to wrong conclusions due to the lack of evidence. (This example can also be analysed in terms of event coding or point of view, see Leech and Short 1981).

#### **6.3.4.3 Frederick Clegg: self-concept and self-regulation processes**

My aim here is to demonstrate, as in the previous section, that the reader may infer characters' self-concepts from both their behaviour and their mental processes. Social cognition proposes that people are motivated to enhance their self-concept whenever possible and to maintain consistency with their previous self-conceptions (see 6.2.2.2). My claim is that these two self-regulation processes offer implicit cues about the self-concept, through access to characters' mental worlds, and their behaviour.

##### *Enhancing Clegg's GOOD PERSON self-schema*

As we saw in the literature review, people seek out positive information about themselves to enhance their self-concepts because of the need to feel good and to maintain high self-esteem. Therefore, people's impressions of themselves tend to be falsely positive in comparison with their actual abilities. Even when people receive negative feedback, they interpret information in such a way to minimise the threat to their positive self-conceptions.

The narrative of the male protagonist of *The Collector* offers several examples of the representation of self-enhancement processes of a character. The first fragment I will analyse shows his concern to enhance his self-concept through the regulation of his behaviour.

(15) Another thing I began to do was read the classy newspapers, for the same reason I went to the National Gallery and the Tate Gallery. I didn't enjoy them much, it was like the cabinets of foreign species in the Entomology Room at the Natural History Museum, you could see they were beautiful

but you didn't know them, I mean I didn't know them like I knew the British. But I went so as I could talk to her, so I wouldn't seem ignorant. (*The Collector*, p. 19)

Clegg believes that his WORKING-CLASS self-schema is an obstacle in his future relationship with Miranda, who is more educated than him. In order to reduce that difference, he enhances his self-concept by reading newspapers and visiting museums, that is to say, doing activities characteristic of a higher social class. Even though he does not enjoy these pastimes, he needs to enhance his self-concept to avoid seeming 'ignorant', as he states. He regulates his behaviour to enhance his self-concept so that he can feel good talking to Miranda. The reader infers from Clegg's process of self-regulation part of his self-concept: his self-regulation confirms his WORKING-CLASS self-schema and even his inferiority complex, and is indicative of his desire to please Miranda, who is the ultimate reason for his self-enhancement. In the same way that I consider Clegg's self-regulatory behaviour as projecting his self-concept, Palmer (2003) would consider his actions as indicative of his fictional mind and mental functioning.

Furthermore, Clegg has a tendency to enhance his self-concept whenever possible, comparing himself with people in general and looking down on them:

(16) If you are on the grab and immoral like most nowadays, I suppose you can have a good time with a lot of money when it comes to you. But I may say I have never been like that, I was never once punished at school. (*The Collector*, p. 13)

In this example, which occurs on the first pages of Clegg's narration, he enhances his positive self-concept through social comparison, as he stresses he has never been 'on the grab and immoral like most'. Thus, the reader can infer that he is schematic on MORALITY, and that he cannot knowingly commit evil actions. Through self-

enhancement, Clegg's impression of himself as a good person is revealed, so that his GOOD PERSON self-schema is made evident from the beginning. It is noticeable that he relates being a good person with not being punished at school, revealing the strictness he was brought up in.

Related to this example, at the end of the novel, there is another exemplification of how he self-enhances his self-concept comparing his abilities with those of other people. This fragment takes place after Miranda's death, when he prepares her burial in his garden.

(17) It took me three days to dig the hole. I thought I would go mad the night I did it (went down and got her in the box I made and outside). I don't think many could have done it. (*The Collector*, p. 282)

Clegg considers himself special because he was able to go down to the basement where her corpse was, put it in the wooden box he had made himself, and take her outside. As he did not go mad after so many preparations, he believes he is mentally strong and concludes he is better than other people because he was able to do it. The irony resides in the fact that he does not consider himself going mad when he lets Miranda die, and that not many people could have done that either. Clegg's self-enhancement of his self-concept, considering himself mentally strong for carrying out the burial preparations without considering the immorality of having let Miranda die, reflects some kind of mental illness of the character. In fact, the contradiction between his being schematic on MORALITY, as I have argued in the previous paragraph, and his actual immoral behaviour reveals that his concept of morality varies from that of the average reader. In relation to this, next chapter will deal with Clegg's ought self and his own self-imposed obligations and moral values.

In the next two fragments, the narrative representation of the self-enhancement process is related to Clegg's SEX self-schema, which I have already shown to be quite

problematic for him in other parts of the thesis. The first example demonstrates how he perceives his lack of success with women, in comparison with his job colleagues, as a positive characteristic.

(18) I never thought about women much before Miranda. I know I don't have what it is girls look for; I know chaps like Crutchley who just seem plain coarse to me get on well with them. Some of the girls in the Annexe, it was really disgusting, the looks they'd give him. It's some crude animal thing I was born without. (And I'm glad I was, if more people were like me, in my opinion, the world would be better.) (*The Collector*, p. 13)

In this case, his self-enhancement process works in the following way. First, in an explicit self-description, he recognises he is schematic on UNATTRACTIVENESS, 'I don't have what it is girls look for', which would usually be considered a negative self-schema. Then, he considers being attractive and having sexual appeal as a negative attribute: 'a crude animal thing I was born without'. The consequence is that being schematic on UNATTRACTIVENESS becomes a positive self-schema, so that the negative feedback that Clegg receives is interpreted in the best way possible, to the point of enhancing his self-concept. Moreover, his self-enhancement reaches its climax when he states that the world would be better if more people were like him. The enhancement process in this case consists in recognising his unattractiveness but conceiving it as a good quality of his personality, to be shared by other people. This fragment (18) follows a similar pattern to the previous one (17), in which he enhances his self-concept even in the face of negative feedback.

After winning the pools, one day the protagonist decides to have sex with a prostitute.

(19) I won't say what happened, except that I was no good. I was too nervous, I tried to be as if I knew all about it and of course she saw, she was old and she was horrible, horrible. I mean, both the filthy

way she behaved and in looks. She was worn, common. Like a specimen you'd turn away from, out collecting. I thought of Miranda seeing me there like that. As I said, I tried to do it but it was no good and I didn't try hardly. (*The Collector*, p. 14-5)

Clegg's attempt to have sex for the first time in his life with a prostitute turns out to be a disaster. Euphemistically, he recognises his impotence, 'I was no good', so that we could say he is schematic on SEXUAL IMPOTENCE, which is a negative self-schema. At the end of the narration of the anecdote, however, he perceives the situation differently, enhancing his self-concept in order to feel good about himself. His blame is now reduced as he states '*it* was no good', without specifying *what* was no good, instead of the previous '*I* was no good' (my emphasis), so that he is not responsible for the negative outcome. And finally, he states that he 'didn't try hardly', so that he diminishes the relevancy of this particular occasion. The reader may consider that Clegg's last statement violates the maxim of quality, so that what he is saying is not the truth. Readers may infer then that the character is simply trying to justify his impotence, and they can form an evaluation of him which conflicts with the image he has of himself. In conclusion, although Clegg recognises to be schematic on IMPOTENCE, he finally perceives the situation removing his responsibility and claiming the relativity of his goal, in order to maintain his high self-esteem and not to have his self-concept threatened.

In this section, I have demonstrated how readers can arrive at conclusions about a character's self-concept through the implicit cues of the regulation of his behaviour and mental life. Authors construct characters in such a way that readers can infer their self-conceptions from their actions and thoughts, as revealed in the language of their narrations.

*Self-consistency with the ENTOMOLOGIST self-schema*

As was previously explained, people need to have accurate self-knowledge, to have a positive sense of self, and to maintain consistency with their self-concept. Thus, the need for consistency with the self-concept leads people to interpret situations and to adopt behavioural strategies that confirm their current self-conceptions. At the same time, people also try to avoid people or situations which provide information contradicting their self-concept.

Throughout *The Collector*, the narration of Frederick Clegg offers a great example of the self-regulation processes of a character who needs to maintain consistency with his self-schemata. Clegg's only hobby is to collect butterflies, so that when Miranda asks him about himself he responds: 'I'm an entomologist. I collect butterflies' (p. 44). Clegg explicitly expresses his ENTOMOLOGIST self-schema, which is confirmed through his behaviour: he likes to collect butterflies and to arrange them himself ('I showed her a drawer of Chalkhill and Adonis Blues...', p. 54), to buy pictures of butterflies ('She saw some old pictures of butterflies I bought in an antique shop', p. 53), to take photographs of them ('I got a camera... the main idea was to take butterflies living', p. 15), to attend to Bug Section meetings ('once in a Bug Section meeting', p. 9), to keep an observations diary ('my observations diary', p. 9), and to visit the Natural History Museum (p. 9, 19). Clegg's ENTOMOLOGIST self-schema is his most relevant core conception: it influences his perception processes, the way he interprets situations, and the regulation of his behaviour in a self-consistent manner even in domains not related to butterflies or butterfly collecting.

Semino (2002: 107) claims that Clegg's reliance on BUTTERFLY metaphors in relation to women, and more particularly in relation to Miranda, can be considered as a feature of his peculiar mind style. As was explained in section 2.4.2, mind style has to do with how language reflects the conceptual structures and cognitive habits of a character.

Semino (2002: 110) suggests that the systematic correspondence between the butterfly domain and the Miranda domain, or the domain of women in general, is part of Clegg's conceptual structure. Moreover, Clegg 'has a more general cognitive tendency to conceive of his experiences in terms of butterflies and butterfly collecting' (2002: 112), so that the BUTTERFLY metaphor guides his actions and behaviour.

From my self-concept theoretical framework, I want to propose an analysis of Clegg's mind style with some variations from Semino's work. In my approach, Clegg's mind style is characterised by his idiosyncratic use of the BUTTERFLY metaphor, which reveals part of his self-concept and the process of regulation of his behaviour in a self-consistent manner. According to cognitive psychology, Markus (1977) would argue that, for example, INDEPENDENCE schematics would interpret situations and would behave in a way confirming their INDEPENDENCE self-schema. In a similar way, Clegg, as an ENTOMOLOGIST schematic, interprets situations and behaves in accord with his self-concept, though his ENTOMOLOGIST self-schema influences his perception and behaviour towards women, revealing a peculiar mind with some cognitive problem. Thus, Clegg's mind style is linguistically constructed through the repetition of the BUTTERFLY metaphor, which reveals part of his conceptual structure: his ENTOMOLOGIST self-schema. Moreover, this self-conception influences his cognitive habits: his perception of people and situations and his behaviour consistently with the ENTOMOLOGIST self-schema. In the next paragraphs, I will provide some examples from the text which support my interpretation.

Clegg's ENTOMOLOGIST self-schema influences his perception of Miranda, of himself and, at the same time, it influences the perception of his own actions in relation to her. Miranda's hair is described using words related to butterflies, such as 'very pale, silky,

like burnet cocoons', and when Clegg sees her from his window before kidnapping her, he writes it down in his 'observations diary' (p. 9). Following Clegg's self-schema, his perception process is influenced in such a way that he plays the role of collector (although only Miranda refers to him using the word) and Miranda the role of a butterfly he has to collect:

(20) Seeing her always made me feel like I was catching a rarity, going up to it very careful, heart-in-mouth as they say. A Pale Clouded Yellow, for instance. I always thought of her like that, I mean words like elusive and sporadic, and very refined – not like the others, even the pretty ones. More for the real connoisseur. (*The Collector*, p. 9)

In this fragment of text, Clegg perceives the action of seeing Miranda as catching a rare butterfly. The protagonist's perception process is overtly expressed when he asserts that he 'thought of' Miranda as a 'Pale Clouded Yellow'. Moreover, the adjectives that describe her, 'elusive' and 'sporadic', belong to the entomologist vocabulary, and at other points of the novel, she is perceived as other types of rare butterflies: a 'Mazarine Blue' or a 'Queen of Spain Fritillary' (p. 31). Clegg himself is identified with 'the real connoisseur' because he can admire her rarity, so that he puts himself in the role of the butterfly collector.

If Clegg's language reflects his perception processes influenced by his entomologist self-conception, he can also be said to regulate his own behaviour according to it. His actions are consistent with his harmless and positive ENTOMOLOGIST self-schema because in the same way that he collects butterflies, he collects Miranda.

(21) To sum up, that night was the best thing I ever did in my life (bar winning the pools in the first place). It was like catching the Mazarine Blue again or a Queen of Spain Fritillary. (*The Collector*, p. 31)

The night Clegg makes reference to in this fragment is the night when he kidnaps Miranda. Never in his whole narration, does the protagonist use the expression *kidnap*, because it has criminal connotations which would contradict his GOOD PERSON self-schema. His positive and moral self-conception can remain invulnerable to challenging information as far as he chooses to interpret situations and to behave in a consistent manner with his ENTOMOLOGIST self-schema. For this reason, Clegg behaves towards Miranda in the same way he behaves towards butterflies: he *collects* her as he would *collect* a butterfly. This is consistent with Semino (2002)'s view that the BUTTERFLY metaphor reflects Clegg's conceptual structure, but it also guides his actions. Semino makes the point that 'it is the fact that Clegg *acts* on his idiosyncratic BUTTERFLY metaphor that has criminal and disastrous consequences' (2002: 111). To sum up, Clegg's ENTOMOLOGIST self-schema guides his behaviour so that his actions (e.g. catching Miranda) are consistent with his self-concept. Thus, my contribution is to describe the cognitive link between a character's actions and his self-schemata, which gives rise to the BUTTERFLY metaphor in this particular case.

These fragments have shown that Clegg perceives situations and behaves in a way consistent with his ENTOMOLOGIST self-schema, but there is still another aspect of his self-regulation processes to maintain self-consistency with his self-concept. As Fiske and Taylor (1991) claim, people can also maintain consistency avoiding situations which provide information contradicting their self-schemata in order to regulate their affective state. In this way, Clegg also avoids situations yielding information at odds his self-concept.

The episode of the seduction scene<sup>2</sup> poses a threat to Clegg's SEX self-schema, another core conception of his self-concept, because of the immorality of the sexual act according to his religious beliefs. As he does not have sex with Miranda, he acts consistently with his self-schema, but he also needs to avoid having his self-concept threatened by her sexual offer, so that he changes his opinion towards her, applying his VULGAR WOMAN schema to her. Therefore, from that episode onwards, the protagonist does not use the BUTTERFLY metaphor in relation to Miranda again so that the positive features of the BUTTERFLY schema do not apply to her anymore.

Given that one way to maintain consistency with self-conceptions is selective interaction (Swann and Pelham 1990), we could argue that, Miranda's threat to Clegg's SEX self-schema leads him to diminish his interaction with her until, in the end, he lets her die because of inaction. Moreover, the last sentences of the novel explain how Clegg has been observing another girl who could be his new 'guest'. The new girl is 'only an ordinary common shop-girl' (p. 282), who does not share Miranda's 'la-di-da ideas and clever tricks', so that she may offer more consistent feedback to his self-concept than Miranda.

In conclusion, I have demonstrated how the mind style of a character can be observed in how his language implicitly reflects his self-concept and self-consistency processes. Clegg's use of the BUTTERFLY metaphor reflects the pervasive nature of his ENTOMOLOGIST self-schema, which influences his behaviour to the extent of capturing Miranda as he would catch a butterfly. The perturbed mind of this character is revealed through his self-concept and self-regulation processes, which compromise another implicit cue to study characterisation.

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<sup>2</sup> Section 5.5.3 offers a detailed linguistic analysis of this episode

## 6.4 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated the advantages of the notion of the self-concept, and its structures and processes, from the theoretical field of cognitive psychology, for the purposes of analysing characterisation and mind style in narrative texts. After providing a detailed account of the theoretical framework, I have provided instances in which the self-concept of a character was expressed both explicitly and implicitly, taking into account the reader's processing work to arrive at a mental representation of characters' self-concepts. Moreover, I have also proposed a distinction between characters' self-concepts and the conceptions readers form about them through inferences from their use of language, which can be considered as two different aspects of characterisation.

I proposed that the cognitive link between characters' self-concepts, their behaviour, and mental life provides another method of implicit characterisation. I have demonstrated how characters' self-schemata guide their processing of information, paying special attention to the connection between Humbert's perception processes and their implicit expression through cognitive metaphor. Finally, I have analysed another character's self-regulation processes to self-enhance and to maintain consistency with his self-conceptions. These analyses have provided evidence of how the study of the processes related to a character's self-concept reveals aspects of their particular mind styles, in particular their perception of themselves, others, and the world surrounding them.

## 7 Possible worlds and the character self-concept

### 7.1 Introduction

In the same way that people, in real life, show different facets of their self-concepts depending on contextual factors, in fictional narratives, characters are also endowed with various selves. When processing a literary text, readers encounter characters who display a variety of selves, current selves or imagined selves, which are an intrinsic component of their self-concepts.

The aim of this chapter, as well as that of chapter 8, is the analysis of how, through the language of a text, characters' different selves are constructed by the reader. Several variants of the notion of possible selves have been analysed using different theoretical backgrounds, ranging from cognitive psychology's research on possible selves, to cognitive linguistic analysis of multiple selves, or literary semantics' study of possible worlds. As my thesis has as its background theories from social cognition, I have chosen the term 'possible selves' in favour of other terminologies, so that this is the term I will employ subsequently. The objective of this chapter is to provide an account of the construction of literary characters' possible selves by combining notions from the three theoretical backgrounds to see to what extent they can shed light on a cognitive stylistic analysis of self.

First, I will provide a theoretical section, 7.2, explaining the basic tenets of cognitive psychology, cognitive linguistics and possible worlds theory, relative to their approach to possible selves and possible worlds. These theories will be contrasted to note their similarities and their potential for the study of the topic of this chapter. Then, section 7.3 will focus on the applicability of Doležel's classification of stories according

to their systems of modality to an analysis of characters' self-concepts. I will claim that characters' mental worlds can be characterised by means of these modality systems. The analytical application of cognitive linguistics and possible worlds theory to possible selves will be the topic of the next chapter. In conclusion, this chapter, together with the next one, will hypothesise about how, during the processing of a narrative text, the reader's construction of characters takes into consideration possible selves, as part of their self-concepts, and the implications of possible selves for a theory of characterisation and mind style.

## **7.2 Possible selves: related theories**

My aim in this section is to provide an account of three different disciplines which deal with the topic of possible selves from different perspectives: cognitive psychology, cognitive linguistics and possible worlds theory. These theoretical backgrounds will be related in the last sub-section, 7.2.4, and in the subsequent analytical sections.

### **7.2.1 Possible selves and cognitive psychology**

In the previous chapter, the notion of possible selves in cognitive psychology was introduced as a motivational function of the self-concept. In this section, I will offer a more systematic account of this area of research. As we have seen, people's self-schemata are about their current attributes and they are abstracted from past or ongoing behaviour. But people may also have self-conceptions that are hypothetical, that do not describe the current self, but may describe it in the future: possible selves.

### 7.2.1.1 Self-concept and possible selves

According to Markus and Nurius (1986), the concept of possible selves complements current conceptions of self-knowledge because they are future-oriented components of the self representing ‘individuals’ ideas of what they might become, what they would like to become, and what they are afraid of becoming, and thus provide a conceptual link between cognition and motivation’ (1986: 954). Moreover, possible selves are important for the self-concept because first, they can function as incentives for future behaviour, providing images of the self to be approached or avoided, and second, they provide an evaluative and interpretive context for the current view of the self.

As part of an individual’s self-concept, possible selves are personalised or individualised, but they are distinctly social. Many possible selves are the result of previous social comparison, in which one’s thoughts, characteristics or behaviour have been contrasted to those of salient others. The array of possible selves an individual may create is influenced by the sociocultural and historical context, as well as the individual’s immediate social experiences.

Markus and Nurius (1986) propose, like Fiske and Taylor (1991: 189), that among the array of possible selves we can find ideal selves we would like to become, selves that we could become, selves we are afraid of becoming, or ought selves one thinks ought to become. Some examples of the possible selves that people may hope for include the successful self, the creative self, the rich self, the thin self, the loved self, or the admired self. As for the dreaded possible selves, they could be the alone self, the depressed self, the incompetent self, the alcoholic self, or the unemployed self. Ought selves make reference to the selves one feels one ought to become or the selves one feels others consider that one ought to become, such as a teenager’s recognition that his parents expect him to be an excellent student.

### **7.2.1.2 Possible selves: goals and motivation**

Markus and Ruvolo (1989) propose to conceptualise personalised goals in terms of possible selves, as they are fundamental elements of the self-system. Most goals lead individuals to the construction of a possible self, in which one is different from the now self, and in which one realises the goal. Goals have impact on behaviour to the extent that the individual personalises the goal by building a bridge of self-representations between the current state and the desired state. Thus, the ability to create and maintain possible selves that allow people to appropriate a desired state determines whether a given goal will guide behaviour.

Possible selves are specific representations of one's self in the future that serve to organise one's actions. These images of the self in the future state are viewed by Markus and Ruvolo as the 'individualised carriers of motivation' (1989: 212). Thus, possible selves are representations of one's goals, aspirations, motives, fears, or threats. People will feel motivated or unmotivated depending on whether the working self-concept is configured of positive or negative possible selves. Sometimes, individuals can actively construct possible selves in order to regulate behaviour. Moreover, information processing will also be influenced by the activated possible self.

One of the consequences of linking the self-concept to motivation is that possible selves also relate self-cognitions to self-feelings or affect. Thus, when a negative possible self is activated, the associated negative affect is also activated, influencing the person's subsequent behaviour. Furthermore, affect is also derived from discrepancies or conflicts within the self-concept. Depending on whether individuals can or cannot achieve certain self-conceptions, they will either have positive or negative self-feelings.

Furthermore, possible selves guide our behaviour not only in relevant aspects of our life, in the long run, like an ideal father self, but they also motivate people in short-term goals such as an ought self whereby one studies for an exam or an ideal self whereby one wakes up early in the morning. Markus and Ruvolo put it this way: 'Most goals, whether relatively mundane like getting dressed in the morning, or more complex as gaining tenure in a profession, occasion the construction of a 'possible self' in which one is different from the now self and in which one realises the goal' (Markus and Ruvolo, 1989).

### **7.2.1.3 Self-discrepancy theory**

Self-discrepancy theory was proposed by Tory Higgins (1987, 1989) as another approach to how people think they are and how they might be. Higgins proposes that people think about themselves in terms of their actual self, how they are now, their ideal self, how they would like to be, and their 'ought' self, what they think they should be. Discrepancies between the actual self and the ideal or the ought self are affectively involving. Thus, the theory offers an analysis of 'how different types of discrepancies between self-representations are related to different kinds of emotional vulnerabilities' (Higgins 1987: 319). As a consequence, the existence of self-discrepancies motivates people to take constructive action and diminish the discrepancy sometimes (Higgins et al. 1986). The theory proposes that when the actual-ideal discrepancy remains unresolved, the result is dejection-related emotions, such as disappointment or sadness. On the other hand, discrepancies between one's actual self and what one ought to be are associated with agitation-related emotions, such as fear, threat or anxiety.

Higgins (1987) suggests that each type of self-state representation is constituted by two factors: the domain of the self (actual, ideal, or ought), and the standpoint on the

self (own, or significant other). Higgins deals exclusively with these three domains of the self (in contrast with other authors, Markus and Nurius (1986), who include other domains, e.g. the not-me self, the undesired self, the afraid self...), but also considers whose perspective on the self is involved, an aspect which is not taken into account by Markus. A standpoint on the self is defined as ‘a point of view from which you can be judged that reflects a set of attitudes or values (see Turner 1956): (a) your *own* personal standpoint, and (b) the standpoint of some significant *other* (e.g. mother, father, sibling, spouse, closest friend)’ (Higgins 1987: 321). Combining the domains of the self with each of the standpoints on the self, Higgins proposes six types of self-state representations: actual/own, actual/other, ideal/own, ideal/other, ought/own and ought/other. The first two self-representations, especially the actual/own, are the person’s self-concept, while the four remaining self-representations constitute self-guides. Not every individual possesses the same self-guides, some people possess only ideal self-guides, while others possess only ought self-guides. Self-discrepancy theory proposes that people will be motivated to reach a condition in which the self-concept matches the self-guide they possess. Moreover, the greater the magnitude and accessibility of the individual’s self-discrepancies, the more the person will experience the types of discomfort associated with that type of self-discrepancy.

### **7.2.2 Multiple selves and cognitive linguistics**

In this section, I am going to concentrate on the work by Catherine Emmott (2002) on the ‘split self’, which can be situated within the field of cognitive stylistics. For Emmott, the term split self refers to ‘all cases of a character or a real life individual being divided and/or duplicated in any way in a narrative’ (2002: 154). In this work, the

author offers a descriptive account of split selves and discusses the ability of cognitive linguistics to deal with this type of phenomena found in narratives. Research in the field of cognitive linguistics considers examples of different versions of individuals juxtaposed together, and, within this discipline, Lakoff's (1996) work discusses the notion of the divided / scattered / split self more particularly, whereas Fauconnier's interest is on mental spaces and, more recently, blending theory.

### **7.2.2.1 Cognitive linguistics and the self**

Among the different topics dealt with within cognitive linguistics, this field of research is well known for its approach to metaphor analysis (Lakoff and Johnson 1980), and also for its interest in reference phenomena (Fauconnier 1994). Cognitive linguistics research on co-referentiality analyzes different versions of the same entity, even though the term 'split self' is rarely used. In the rest of this section, I will expand on some relevant notions from cognitive linguistics in relation to the topic of the 'split self'.

Lakoff's (1996) work on metaphor and co-referential phenomena includes a survey of 'self' phrases offering important insights into how the self is conceptualised and referred to linguistically. His objective is to explain that an expression such as 'Sorry, I'm not myself today' (1996: 9) does not contain a contradiction, but it means that the speaker feels differently from his usual self. Thus, Lakoff argues that co-referential terms such as 'I', 'me' and 'myself', 'denote different sets of properties rather than signalling identical notions' (Emmott 2002: 156). Lakoff uses the term 'split selves' to refer to different intellectual or social aspects of the self, such as the scientific or the religious self. Another aspect of his work on the self focuses on CONTAINER metaphors. Some of the phrases Lakoff (1996) discusses refer to an 'inner' or 'outer' self, even though he recognises that these metaphors are not always consistent in terms

of how the self is conceptualised in terms of containers. I will provide some examples of the CONTAINER metaphor in relation to the analysis of *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*.

Emmott suggests that although cognitive linguistic theory can offer useful insights into a study of the ‘split self’, it is limited by its origins outside narrative theory. Thus, the analysis of split selves in extended narratives needs to be complemented with other frameworks.

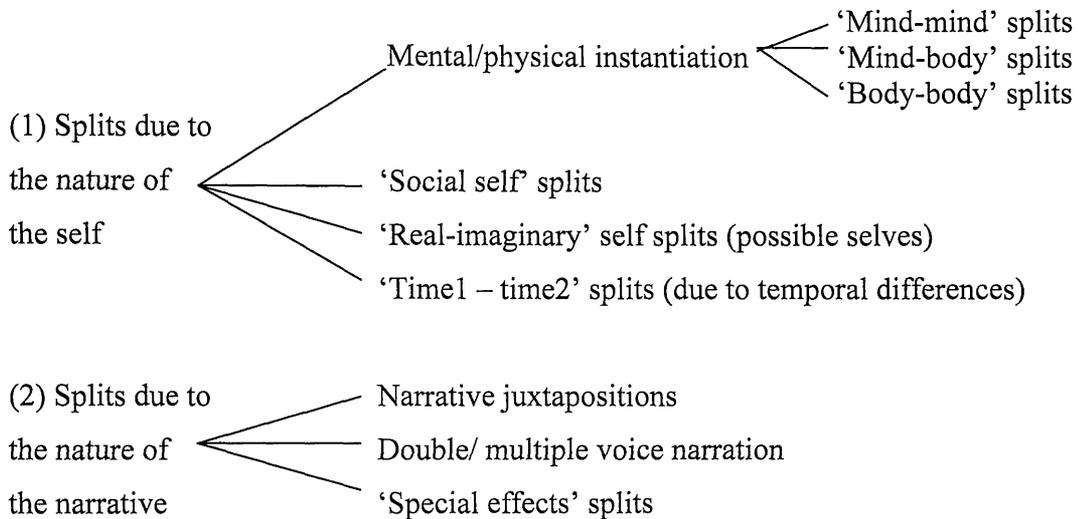
### 7.2.2.2 Split selves

Emmott (2002) produces a preliminary framework for the categorisation of ‘split selves’ in narrative texts and assesses the contribution of cognitive linguistics to the analysis of these phenomena. The notion ‘split self’ refers to ‘all cases of a character or real life individual being divided and/or duplicated in any way in a narrative’ (2002: 154). In her research, Emmott takes a bottom-up approach analysing instances of divided/duplicated selves in fictional and non-fictional<sup>1</sup> texts and examining why these different versions of characters ‘arise naturally from the nature of the human self and from the nature of narrative’ (2002: 161). Emmott’s analysis of split selves puts into practice research on cognitive linguistics by authors such as Lakoff (1996) and Fauconnier (1994). Due to the limitations of cognitive linguistics for an analysis of the split self, she proposes the need of other theoretical frameworks such as narratology or social psychology to be applied to narrative analysis for the study of the dynamic representation of character. In the analytical section devoted to the split self of this chapter, I will use notions from cognitive psychology about the self-concept and possible selves to demonstrate the efficacy of this theoretical framework to analyse characters’ selves.

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<sup>1</sup> Emmott analyses autobiographical ‘paralysis narratives’, which describe the psychological and physical effects after sudden paralysis.

On the basis of the typology of split selves proposed by Emmott (2002), I have drawn the following diagram, in which I divide her splits into two categories. The first type of split has its origin in the nature of the human self, or of the character's self, whereas the second type of split derives from the nature of the narrative text:



The types of split selves that I find more illuminating for my work belong to those that arise from the nature of the self, because the splits due to the nature of the narrative do not deal with characters' self-concepts. I will provide a short explanation of Emmott's account of these splits, using her own examples when necessary.

Following Lakoff (1996), Emmott suggests that sometimes people conceptualise different aspects of their identities as people in conflict. This can be exemplified in narratives in which the mind is conceptualised as being split. The 'mind-mind' splits usually take place in moments of great crisis in which the mind is perceived as split, but there is only one body entity: 'It was as if there were two minds within me arguing the toss' (Simpson 1988: 12, mentioned in Emmott 2002). 'Mind-body' splits are often accompanied by CONTAINER metaphors, and they can be used to express self-

alienation: 'I hated Joe Lampton, but he looked and sounded very sure of himself sitting at my desk in my skin' (Braine 1959: 219, mentioned in Emmott 2002). A 'body-body' split is common in paralysis narratives in which there is a split between the still functioning body and a paralysed part of it.

In fictional texts, characters sometimes apply different names to different aspects of their personalities, reflecting different social roles. These 'social split' selves represent identities linked to how characters perceive themselves or how other characters perceive them. In the following example, the first person narrator refers to her various identities:

(1) And down there with them, now left behind, were Miss Coventry Lambert, my parents' daughter; Mrs Derek Dakin, my husband's wife; Margaret Dakin, my son's invention; Lauren McSkye, Bradford Keynes's student; and Jaffa, Dodo's friend.' (Townsend 1989: 150, mentioned in Emmott 2002)

There are also different future versions of the self created in the imagination of characters related to their fears, hopes, threats, etc. According to Emmott, these 'real-imaginary' self splits can motivate action, add to suspense and encourage empathy. For example, when Simpson thinks 'I'm dead' (p. 64) after his accident, he predicts a possible future self showing the potential danger that he faces. Most of the analytical sections of this chapter will be dedicated to this type of split self, as I consider it to be extremely relevant in an analysis of characters' possible selves in my data.

The fact that the self changes means that a new version of self is formed with every narrative action. Thus, readers need to create mental representations of characters and update them when changes occur. Then, a 'time1-time2' split occurs when a character undergoes a change, specially a traumatic change. Instances of this split self abound in 'paralysis narratives', for example McCrum (1998, mentioned in Emmott

2002) refers to his 'old self' or his 'lost self' in contrast with his 'new life' after the accident (1998: 151, 128).

When the act of narration juxtaposes descriptions of different versions of an individual, corresponding to the second type of the classification, the individual does not have a sense of being 'split'. The narrative text may put together different versions of a character who is performing actions in past and present contexts. Elsewhere, Emmott has termed these 'narrative enactors' (1997: 180), which are past and present versions of characters. Sometimes, it may be possible for a reader to be unsure about which enactor is being referred to, but the character has not a sense of being split.

As for the double/multiple selves of first person narrator, narratologists (Genette 1980, Bal 1997) have observed that first person narration involves different voices of an individual: a narrator (self 1) who looks back in time to an earlier version of the self (self 2). This split is very obvious in 'paralysis narratives', in which narrators refer back to their accident/injury, or their previous life. The use of the notation self 1 and self 2 to refer to the different selves of the narrator signals the fact that these narratives are double-voiced (Bakhtin 1973). However, in paralysis narratives, Emmott exemplifies the case of multiple selves when the narrator (self 1) looks back at his convalescent self (self 2), who at the same time thinks about himself at some moment before the accident (self 3).

As for the 'special effects' split self, Emmott mentions it as a possibility in science fiction or fantasy genres. This type of split consists of an individual being duplicated in the same physical space, such as in Rowling's (1999) *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, in which two characters co-exist with a past version of themselves. Usually, 'special effects' split selves contribute to the plot of a story but provide no comment on the nature of the human self.

In conclusion, after reviewing cognitive linguistic theories and providing a typology of the 'split selves', Emmott proposes the need for a combination of approaches for the analysis of the split self in extended narratives. She stresses the need of a framework which accounts for characters' development throughout a text, and for the processes through which readers update their mental representations of characters. Moreover, she suggests that the analysis of first person 'life story' narratives may gain from an analysis using social psychology notions (2002: 176), as Culpeper (2001) does in relation with drama. In this respect, in my thesis I address the issues Emmott refers to by emphasizing characters' self-concepts (who are usually first person narrators) and my use of the theoretical frameworks of socio-cognitive psychology.

### **7.2.3 Possible worlds theory**

The notion of possible worlds was developed by philosophers and logicians to solve several issues in logical theory. Literary semantics applied the notions of the actual world and possible worlds to the study of fiction, embracing the analysis of the logical properties of sentences, the ontological status of fictional entities, the nature of the world projected by different types of literary texts, and even the definition of fiction (Semino 1997: 57). Possible worlds theory, PWT, has been used in the analysis of narrative, drama, and poetry to analyse the relationship between the reader's actual world and the worlds projected by the literary text, and to describe the internal structure of text worlds. I will provide an overview of the work of the main authors working on this field, namely Ryan (1991), Doležel (1976), and Semino (1997).

In my research, my aim is to explore how characters' possible selves, which are part of their self-concepts, can be analysed as reflected in the construction of alternative

possible worlds, so that the application of possible worlds theory to literary texts will be used for characterisation purposes.

### 7.2.3.1 Possible worlds and fictional worlds

In modal logic, the notion of the actual world provides a frame of reference to assign a truth-value to all propositions. Moreover, this notion allows to assign truth-value to propositions beyond the constraints of the actual world, and to define the concepts of possibility and necessity. Let us consider the following sentences:

(2) The US invaded Iraq in 2003

(3) The US invaded Iraq in 2003 and the US did not invade Iraq in 2003.

Sentence (2) is true in the actual world, whereas sentence (3) is necessarily false and would be necessarily false given any possible state of affairs, because it implies a contradiction. In order to account for notions such as necessary falsity, we need to take into account the actual world and other states of affairs, that is, sets of hypothetical alternatives to the actual world, which have been called ‘possible worlds’. Extrapolating these notions to literary semantics, a fictional text projects a possible world so that propositions about that world can be assigned truth-value (Doležel 1988). Thus, the sentence ‘Miranda dies’ is true in the possible world projected by *The Collector*, whereas ‘Clegg dies’ is not true.

The worlds of fiction, as Semino (1997: 63) suggests, are cultural and artistic constructs, and they differ from the worlds of logic in some respects: (1) they are ‘furnished’ worlds, they deal with specific entities and situations; (2) they are ‘parasitical’, they rely on the receivers’ knowledge of the actual world for their interpretation; (3) they are incomplete, they do not assign truth-values to all conceivable propositions; and (4) they are not always consistent, they may include logical

contradictions. In conclusion, the application of the logical notion of possible worlds to the semantics of fictionality requires some adjustments, although it offers a useful tool for the analysis of literary texts.

### **7.2.3.2 Doležel's typology of fictional worlds**

Doležel (1976) developed a theory of narrative semantics in which he identified some constraints in the formation of stories. These constraints are the four modal systems of deontic, axiological, epistemic, and alethic modality. Deontic modality consists of the concepts of permission, obligation, and necessity. Axiological modality consists of the concepts of goodness, badness and indifference. Epistemic modality consists of the concepts of knowledge, ignorance, and belief. And finally, alethic modality consists of the concepts of possibility, impossibility and necessity (Doležel 1976: 7).

Following these distinctions, stories are classified according to the modal system by which they are governed. Deontic stories project worlds governed by rules of prohibition and obligation. Axiological stories project worlds characterised by the degree of desirability that different characters attribute to entities or states of affairs. Epistemic stories project worlds built around some knowledge gap that needs to be filled. Alethic stories project worlds governed by different laws of possibility from the actual world, i.e. alternative possible worlds. Doležel suggests that stories may be 'atomic', when they are formed by one modal system, or 'molecular', when several modal systems are in operation.

Doležel's system has been applied to the description of the internal structure of fictional universes (Weber 1992). In fact, Ryan's typology of worlds, including knowledge worlds, wish worlds, obligation worlds, and fantasy worlds, draws on Doležel's suggestion that the four modality systems can act as world-building

constraints. In the analytical sections of this chapter, my goal is to broaden Doležel's approach to possible worlds theory so that the four modal systems, rather than characterise whole narratives, will be used to analyse the fictional characters of literary texts.

### 7.2.3.3 Structure of fictional worlds

Fictional worlds are seen as universes made up of one or more worlds, or sub-worlds. Most fictional worlds projected by narratives possess a modal structure: there is an actual world, the textual actual world, TAW, and a variety of possible worlds functioning as non-actualised alternatives of the actual domain. The non-actualised alternatives are represented by the beliefs, wishes, intentions and fantasies of the characters that inhabit the actual domain. The following is the catalogue of alternative possible worlds offered by Semino (1997: 72), on the basis of Ryan's (1991), that may be included in a fictional universe:

- (a) Epistemic or Knowledge Worlds, represented by what characters know or believe to be the case in the actual domain;
- (b) Hypothetical Extensions of Knowledge Worlds, represented by the characters' hypotheses about future developments in the actual domain;
- (c) Intention Worlds, represented by the characters' plans to cause changes in the actual domain;
- (d) Wish Worlds, represented by alternative states of the actual domain that are desirable or undesirable for a particular character or group;
- (e) Obligation Worlds, represented by alternative states of the actual domain that are good or bad according to the moral principles of a certain character or group;
- (f) Alternate or Fantasy Universes, represented by the characters' dreams, fantasies, hallucinations, or by the fictions composed by the characters themselves. (Semino 1997: 72-3)

Within a fictional universe, there may exist various types of relationships between the textual actual world and the alternative worlds projected by the text, as well as between the various alternative worlds. According to Ryan (1985, 1991), when there is

correspondence between the actual world and all the possible worlds, the situation is one of equilibrium: wishes are realised, moral obligations fulfilled, etc. When there is no perfect correspondence, the situation is one of conflict, which may lead characters to take some action to solve the disharmony. On the one hand, there may be conflict between the actual domain and the private worlds of characters. And on the other hand, the conflict may exist between the private worlds of a particular character, e.g. conflict between a wish world and a moral world; inside a character's private world, e.g. inconsistent desires or contradictory moral laws; or between the private worlds of different characters, e.g. a character's wishes which clash against another character's wishes (see section 7.2.4.1 for a further analysis of this typology).

#### **7.2.3.4 Text worlds and schemata**

Semino (1997) considers the limitations of an approach to literary texts from possible worlds theory due to the origin in logic of some of its concepts. For example, she regards the notion of the 'actual world' not as an absolute notion but as dependent on historical, cultural, and ideological factors. And most important, she claims that fictional worlds are constructed through the interaction of the reader's background knowledge and the language of the text, though possible-world frameworks are not concerned with the readers' cognitive processes in constructing texts worlds.

Semino's proposal is that text worlds cannot be defined in absolute terms, but vary depending on the background knowledge and interpretative decisions of readers. Therefore, possible worlds theory has to be complemented with a more cognitive approach to the description of text worlds. Moreover, in her analysis of poetry, she demonstrates that some poems may not achieve their significance by creative alternative possible worlds but by proposing particular world-views: Semino considers 'text worlds

as views of reality, rather than as alternatives to the actual world' (1997: 253). As the notion of the actual world is a cultural construct (Eco 1979), Semino proposes an alternative approach that 'focuses on the world-views projected by different texts, rather than on the degree of possibility of fictional worlds in relation to a world that is taken as actual'. These different perspectives can be explained by considering different configurations of schemata activated by different texts during the process of reading. So, it is important to consider the role of linguistic choices and patterns in the reader's activation, instantiation and potential modification of schemata.

From a schema theory perspective, text worlds are cognitive constructs that arise from the interaction between readers and the language of texts. A text corresponds to a configuration of schemata that are activated by a reader during the processing of a text. Furthermore, the reader's existing schemata make up that person's model of reality, the 'actual' world, which serves as a frame of reference in the construction and evaluation of text worlds. Readers will perceive text worlds differently due to how the instantiated schemata interact with one another, and to whether the reader's current model of the world is reinforced or challenged in the comprehension process. Schema theory can account for the fact that different people have different views of the world of reality, and therefore may construct different worlds from the same text. Similarly, I will later propose that readers' self-concepts influence their representation of characters' self-concepts and their opinion and evaluation about them.

#### **7.2.4 Self-discrepancy theory and possible worlds theory**

My aim in this section is to suggest a parallelism between the notions of possible selves proposed by social cognition (Markus and Nurius 1986, Higgins 1989), as applied to

literary characters, and the notion of the fictional worlds projected by a text, and more specifically characters' sub-worlds (Doležel 1979, Ryan 1991, Semino 1997, Werth 1999). Extrapolating the concept of possible selves, especially ideal self and ought self, to cognitive stylistic analysis, I want to offer a study of how readers create a mental representation of the construction and transformation of characters' possible selves. The analysis of these possible selves will be revealing about characters' self-concepts and, consequently, about characterisation. I will examine how the discrepancies between the possible selves of a particular character and between the possible selves of different characters bring about conflicts between characters' selves, so that the action of the narrative is kept in motion. I will at the same time analyse the construction of characters' sub-worlds, and more specifically, the conflicts between the actual world and their wish worlds and obligation worlds, which I claim are counterparts of the possible selves notion from social cognition. My ultimate goal is to prove that the notion of possible selves, which represents a significant part of the self-concept, and possible worlds theory complement each other and constitute a valuable analytical tool to approach the study of characterisation and mind style.

#### **7.2.4.1 Conflict and private worlds**

In her account of possible worlds theory, Ryan (1991) proposes that in the textual universe there has to be some type of conflict for the plot to start or for a move to occur. This is possible because for characters 'the goal of the narrative game – which is for them the game of life – is to make TAW coincide with as many as possible of their private worlds' (1991: 119). Thus, she claims that conflict is a permanent condition of narrative universes, since conflict leads characters to take action towards its resolution and this keeps the action of a story going. Ryan establishes a typology of narrative

conflicts and narrative situations depending on the relationships between a character's sub-worlds and the TAW or the relations within a character's domain. According to the type of conflict, narratives will be characterised by different themes, so that a typology of conflicts leads to a typology of plots.

Ryan uses Doležel's typology (1976) as the basis for her own typology, and expands it offering different levels of conflict. On the primary level, there is 'conflict between TAW and one of the worlds of a private domain', whereas the secondary level includes three types of conflict: 'conflict between the worlds of a character's domain; conflict inherent to one of these worlds; and conflict between the private worlds of different characters' (Ryan 1991: 120). The following chart provides a clear account of the typology:

Level	Conflict between	
<i>Primary</i>	TAW	character's private world
<i>Secondary</i>	character's private world A character's private world A character A's private world	character's private world B character's private world A character B's private world

Conflict between TAW and the private world of a character may involve a wish world, W-world, in which the search of a desire gives rise to the theme of the quest; an obligation world, O-world, in which moral norms generate sequences of the type prohibition-violation-punishment; or a knowledge world, K-world, in which knowledge gaps may result in tragedies, comedies, or mystery stories. At the secondary level, conflict between different worlds of a character's domain occurs when there is incompatibility between two private worlds. For example, conflict between a W-world,

and an O-world, such as when the accomplishment of a desire involves the violation of a moral norm. Conflict within a private world of a character results from an internal inconsistency: contradictory norms of conduct or O-worlds, or contradictory desires or W-worlds. For example, Lancelot's desire to be faithful to King Arthur and his desire for Geneve. And lastly, conflict between the private worlds of different characters occurs when the realisation of a character's private world conflicts with, usually, the same domain of another character, such as two incompatible desires of two characters, which would define interpersonal relations. An example from my data would be, in *The Collector*, Clegg's desire to be with Miranda, realised after her kidnapping, and her opposing desire to be free and escape from her captor.

Ryan (1991) also offers an analysis of how conflict comes into being in the narrative text and how it is resolved, that is to say, she is concerned with the management of worlds and the development of the plot. She states that narratives represent a sequence of *states* and *events* which are part of the history of the textual universe. Usually, states are semantically realised in descriptive elements which flesh the narrative universe, while events are realised in plot-functional elements which contribute to the plot. Transitions between different states of TAW are caused by events, which can be divided in two types: (i) *happenings*, which are unpredictable events such as an earthquake or getting sick, and (ii) *actions*, which have a human agent, that is to say, a character performing them. Our concern will be with actions, which, according to Ryan,

are physical events motivated by two mental events: the setting of a goal and the elaboration of a plan. Goals are established by selecting one of the propositions through which some private world departs from the actual world: a desire to fulfil, an obligation to satisfy, an enigma to solve. Plans are constructed by computing a causal sequence of states and events leading from the present state to the goal-fulfilling state. (Ryan 1991: 130)

Ryan proposes that there are some mental constructs of characters which cause the movement of worlds, namely, intensional worlds, whose components are goals and plans. A character's goal involves the construction of a W-world, an O-world, or a K-world, and the character's plans to achieve the goal refer to the imagined course of action, including states and events, which lead to the fulfilment of the private world. Ryan's account of the movement of worlds has its counterpart in social cognition. The setting of a goal, that is, the formation of a private world, would correspond to a character's creation of a possible self, whereas the elaboration of a plan corresponds to the self-regulation of behaviour in order to achieve the possible self-conception. In the next sections, I will deal with the analysis of these concepts in comparison with the analogous notions from social cognition, as applied to the fictional universe of *The Collector*.

#### **7.2.4.2 Possible selves and possible worlds: A comparison**

Given that possible worlds theory enables us to account for the internal structure of the fictional universe and the development of the plot in terms of conflict between private worlds, it offers a narrative-based counterpart to possible selves theory for the analysis of character's possible selves. I would like to compare both theories in this section to see how they may complement each other, the areas in which they overlap and the areas in which they could benefit from each other. I will provide examples from the creation of possible selves of the characters in *The Collector* in order to illustrate my explanation.

I should begin this section by acknowledging the first great difference between these two approaches which I apply to my analysis of character. Possible selves theory is a more restricted theory than possible worlds theory in the sense that it analyses

possible selves, mainly actual, ideal, and ought selves, as part of the study of individuals' self-concepts. The aim of the theory, which is to hypothesize about the cognitive processes involved in the construction of a person's self-conception, restricts its methodological research tools and scope, when compared with similar notions from PWT. On the other hand, possible worlds theory analyses the textual projection of characters' private domains, including a variety of private worlds which exceeds the field of a possible selves account of character. Thus, the concept of possible selves restricts the characters' alternative worlds to cases in which, for example, their desires or obligations concern their own selves exclusively, because alternative worlds have to be constrained to the self-concept. In spite of these restrictions, my claim is that the motivation for the comparison of the notions of the two theories is markedly evident, and I will demonstrate that their application to textual analysis of character is to benefit both of them.

One of the clearest correspondences between the two theories is the comparison between Higgins (1987)'s notion of self-discrepancy and Ryan (1991)'s notion of conflict. Higgins's suggestion that there may be a self-discrepancy between an individual's actual self and the ideal or ought selves would correspond to Ryan's conflict on the primary level: TAW in conflict with a character's private world (see chart in the previous section). So, for example, the self-concepts of both protagonists of *The Collector* include possible future self-conceptions which they wish to achieve or they consider they ought to become, contrasting with their actual selves. Clegg's ideal self at the beginning of the novel is to be married to Miranda, and one of his ought selves involves his sexual abstinence. As for Miranda, one of her ideal selves refers to her freedom from her captivity, while one of her ought selves is concerned with her being a good artist. The existence of these possible selves involves a discrepancy

between the characters' different self-guides (ideal self, ought self) and their actual selves, which corresponds to a conflict between the TAW and their wish worlds and obligation worlds.

Moreover, a self-discrepancy may also exist between two self-guides of an individual, for example, between an ideal self and an ought self, corresponding to conflict between two private worlds of a character's domain, in the secondary level of Ryan's typology. In Miranda's case, her ideal self of being a virgin until the right man appears conflicts with her ought self in which she offers herself sexually to Clegg to secure her release. And there also may be self-discrepancies within a person's self-guide, such as a discrepancy between two ideal selves, which is again described in literary semantics as conflict within a private world of a character. This self-discrepancy is exemplified in Miranda's ideal self of being a wife and mother and her ideal self of being a famous artist, which involves a conflict between two of her wish worlds, as she overtly states.

The types of self-discrepancies reviewed so far have their counterparts in possible worlds terms, as I have exemplified, but Ryan's last type of conflict is not covered by Higgins's theory. Due to the fact that self-discrepancy theory is interested in the individual's cognitive processes concerning the self-concept, the discrepancy between the self-guides of two different people is not an object of research. Yet, for my analytical purposes, it is feasible to extrapolate the theoretical assumptions of self-discrepancy theory and postulate that there may be discrepancy, though not self-discrepancy, between the self-guides of two different characters, when, for example, the ideal self of a character clashes with another character's ideal self of himself or herself. Nevertheless, this discrepancy will not reveal aspects of a character's self-concept, but rather will illuminate interpersonal relationships between characters. Thus, for example,

the discrepancy between Clegg's ideal self which involves living with Miranda and Miranda's ideal self which involves being free from her captor does not provide additional information about the possible selves of each character but rather illuminates the type of relationship established between the two characters.

As we saw in section 7.2.1.3, Higgins's self-discrepancy theory takes into account, apart from the domains of the self (actual, ideal, and ought selves), whose perspective on the self is considered. Thus, it proposes further types of self-discrepancies as far as it distinguishes between an individual's own self-guide and the individual's conception of a relevant other's guide for himself or herself: ideal/other self and ought/other self. Taking into account perspective in self-discrepancy theory, a greater typology of discrepancies ensues. This is due to the fact that an ideal/other or an ought/other self-representation may produce a self-discrepancy with the actual self, but also with other self-guides, ideal/own self or ought/own self. Although Higgins does not analyse all the possibilities of discrepancy in detail, the number of self-discrepancies increases considerably, as well as the analytical possibilities for the study of character's self-concepts. If we take into consideration Higgins' notion of perspective in relation to the table of Ryan's typology of conflict in section 7.2.4.1, the possibilities of conflict are doubled. This is the case because characters' private worlds, wish worlds or obligation worlds, may consist of, for example, the character's own obligations or what the character considers another character considers are his/her obligations.

As an illustration, in *The Collector*, Clegg suffers from a self-discrepancy between his actual self and an ideal/other self: his idea of what Miranda's ideal conception for him is. Then, as we saw in the previous chapter, he regulates his behaviour by reading classy newspapers and going to museums in order to attain the ideal/other self-representation. Possible worlds theory does not explicitly consider this possibility of

conflict, but its equivalent would be a character's private world in which the goal to be achieved is the character's idea of another character's ideal or ought conception for him or herself. So, in Clegg's case, there is a conflict between TAW and his wish world in which he becomes the type of person he believes Miranda would like him to be.

The comparison between the ideas about possible selves from self-discrepancy theory and possible worlds from possible worlds theory suggests that there are many similarities between the two fields. However, there are also some areas covered by each theory exclusively, so each theoretical framework could benefit from ideas from the other. I will now use these concepts in my analysis of the selves of the protagonists of a narrative universe to see to what extent they throw light on an analysis of character.

### **7.3 Systems of modality and the self-concept**

My goal in this section is to apply Doležel's classification of stories according to their modality systems to an analysis of character, and more particularly, to their self-concepts. My intention is to demonstrate that characters' self-concepts may be governed by different modality systems and that this will be revealed in their use of language, so that a linguistic analysis of their narrations may prove informative about the relationship between modal systems and the self-concept. I will pay special attention to the linguistic expression of deontic and axiological modality in the narrations of the two protagonists of *The Collector*, as I consider these notions offer a characterisation tool that can throw light on an analysis of character (see Weber 1989, for an application of the modal systems to the analysis of the characters of a literary text).

As explained in section 7.2.3.2, Doležel (1976)'s work proposes a classification of stories according to the modal system that characterises them: axiological, deontic,

epistemic or alethic modality. Thus, we can find axiological stories, in which actions and states are turned into values or disvalues; deontic stories, which are governed by norms of prohibition and obligation; epistemic stories, in which ignorance or false beliefs are turned into knowledge; and alethic stories, which entail alternative possible worlds. However, most stories are molecular stories, in the sense that they comprise different systems of modality.

### 7.3.1 Clegg: deontic modality, world view, and mind style

The contrast between the characters of Clegg and Miranda has been the topic of much literary criticism, and here I want to concentrate on their distinct manifestation of the systems of deontic and axiological modality, as reflected in their expression of obligations and wishes. As Miranda gets to know her captor, she offers several descriptions of him which illustrate the great dissimilarities between them. One of their contrasting traits, according to her, is his obsession with what is 'right' and her fascination for what is 'beautiful':

(4) Why do you keep on using these stupid words –nasty, nice, proper, right? Why are you so worried about what's proper? (*The Collector*, p. 75)

(5) He's got to be correct, he's got to do whatever was 'right' or 'nice' before either of us was born. (*The Collector*, p.161)

(6) 'I just think of things as beautiful or not. Can't you understand? I don't think of good or bad. Just of beautiful or ugly. I think a lot of nice things are ugly and a lot of nasty things are beautiful.'  
(*The Collector*, p. 84)

In terms of Doležel's modality systems, and according to Miranda, Clegg is characterised by deontic modality so that his thoughts and actions follow moral norms

of what is right or wrong. In contrast, Miranda thinks of herself in terms of axiological modality, as she considers beauty and ugliness as important values and disvalues.

Literary critics (Wolfe 1976, Salami 1992) observe, in accord with Miranda, that Clegg's morality system governs this character's self-concept. Given that Clegg was brought up as a Non-conformist and belongs to 'the horrid timid genteel in-between class', he abides by certain religious conventions and social norms, e.g. the disapproval of sex, so that most of his values are collective (Wolfe 1976: 59). Moreover, throughout his narrative, he constantly defends being a 'highly moral person' (Salami 1992: 54), as he does not take advantage of Miranda, as others might have done. Thus, he justifies his actions and thoughts through his own dubious value-scheme, which Salami (1992) claims to be a sign of his mental instability. And furthermore, his obsession with 'superficial correctness' (Semino 2002: 106) is reflected even in his narrative style, as he tries to follow grammatical rules unsuccessfully (Wolfe 1976: 78). In conclusion, literary critics agree that Clegg claims to abide by the collective norms and values of his religion and social class, and he also possesses his own system of morality, through which he justifies his actions.

In terms of Doležel's modalities, Clegg's mental world is characterised by deontic modality, as his self-concept is governed by norms of obligation, prohibition and allowance. This trait of his self-concept is revealed in his use of language, both in his narrative style and in his conversational style with Miranda. I consider the following linguistic patterns repeated in his narration to exemplify this aspect of his self-concept:

(a) *His obsession with not telling lies:*

(7) The chap wanted to know if it [the house] was just for myself. I said it was for an aunt. *I told the truth*, I said I wanted it to be a surprise for her, when she came back from Australia and so on. (*The Collector*, p. 20, my emphasis)

(8) I made out I wanted to do carpentry and photography and that would be my workroom. *It wasn't a lie*, there was carpentry to do all right. (*The Collector*, p. 22, my emphasis)

In pragmatic terms, Clegg violates Grice's (1975) maxim of quantity because what he says is true, but he is not saying everything: he is economical with the truth. In the first case, it is true that his aunt is in Australia and that she may come back at some point, but he does not say his true aim about the acquisition of the house. In the second case, the 'workroom' refers to the cellar where he would later keep Miranda kidnapped, though he needs to do some carpentry to fit the room for her. Clegg's obsession with not telling lies, which can be related with his superficial correctness, shows his concern with deontic modality. However, at other points of the novel, this concern becomes less and less important, as lying to Miranda on more relevant matters (e.g. announcing a false departure date) does not cause him any trouble. All this suggests a development in his character and a shift in his belief system. Moreover, the triviality of the lies in these examples contrasts with the gravity of the lies he tells Miranda, indicating his deviant criminal mind and a special mind style.

(b) *His use of modal verbs of obligation:*

(9) I *made myself* do it [put a cloth on her mouth] because I knew it was for the best in the end. (*The Collector*, p. 29, my emphasis)

(10) I *was obliged* to say that if she did not keep quiet I *would have to* resort to more of the chloro. (*The Collector*, p. 30, my emphasis)

(11) I *don't allow myself* to think about what I know is wrong. (*The Collector*, p. 71, my emphasis)

Clegg's use of modal verbs reveals the way he conceptualises himself and his obligations. For this character, there exists a set of self-imposed moral principles which

he is obliged to follow, so that his actions are imposed on him and he cannot be held responsible for them.

(c) *His use of transitivity patterns:*

(12) I said, this is your room. If you do what I say, *you won't be hurt*. (*The Collector*, p. 30, my emphasis)

(13) I said, you can't go yet. Please, *don't oblige me* to use force again. (*The Collector*, p. 31, my emphasis)

In these examples, Clegg has a passive role either because his role is not specified, as in the first case, or because Miranda forces him to act the way he does. Again, Clegg's conceptualisation of himself in his passive role reveals a justification of his self-imposed obligations, in this particular case to hurt Miranda using force, together with the lack of responsibility for his actions.

As these linguistic patterns show, I would like to propose that Clegg's mental world is ruled by deontic modality: both a system of values defined by an external authority, religion and social class, and a personal and strange value-scheme defined by the character himself, which reveals a moral deviation. Following Semino (2002), the linguistic structures which reveal Clegg's deontic modality can be considered as a sign of both his world view, when revealing his religious and social norms, and his peculiar mind style, when revealing his idiosyncratic system of moral norms (though I have concentrated exclusively on the latter in this section).

### **7.3.2 Miranda: axiological and deontic modality**

The character of Miranda, on the other hand, claims to be concerned with what is 'beautiful or ugly' rather than with what is 'good or bad'. Thus, her narration offers linguistic examples of the expression of axiological modality, which seems to regulate her mental world. Miranda has strong opinions about a range of topics, from her disapproval of nuclear weapons to her praise of art. In her passionate discussions with Clegg, she demonstrates her hatred or love for a range of issues, which contrast sharply with Clegg's indifference and lack of opinion towards any topic raised by her. Particularly, as an art student, Miranda considers 'feeling as the admirable and dominant quality that epitomises art' (Salami 1992: 65). 'Feeling' is the key word in this fragment, as she feels passionately: either loving or hating.

(14) I hate the uneducated and the ignorant. I hate the phoney. I hate the jealous and the resentful. I hate the crabbed and the mean and the petty. I hate all ordinary dull little people who aren't ashamed of being dull and little. I hate what G.P. calls the New People, the new-class people with their cars and their money and their tellies and their stupid vulgarities and their stupid crawling imitation of the bourgeoisie.

I love honesty and freedom and giving. I love making, I love doing, I love being to the full, I love everything which is not sitting and watching and copying and dead at heart. (*The Collector*, p. 207)

The focus of literary criticism on the contrast between the personalities of the characters, concentrating on Clegg's obligations and Miranda's wishes, leads to the lack of attention to another aspect of Miranda's mental world. In spite of Miranda's claim of the relevancy of axiological modality, during her kidnap, she also develops her own ideas relating to her moral obligations, so that deontic modality also characterises her. However, as I will demonstrate, there exists a great dissimilarity between the morality systems of each character.

First of all, Miranda needs to create her own self-imposed obligations in order to deal with Clegg:

(15) To begin with I thought I *must force myself* to be matter-of-fact, not let his abnormality take control of the situation. (*The Collector*, p. 129)

(16) I feel *I've got to* show him how decent human beings live and behave. (*The Collector*, p. 130)

Furthermore, Miranda rejects the social conventions imposed by the upper-middle class, as represented in Ladymont's norms, her former school, in favour of her own moral principles defined by herself:

(17) There's only one way to do things. The right way. Not what they meant by 'the Right Way' at Ladymont. But the way you feel is right. My own right way.

I am a moral person. I am not ashamed of being moral. (*The Collector*, p.228)

Moreover, the influence of her friend the artist George Patson as regards the moral duties of the Few is reflected in her diary. In a sense, axiological and epistemic modality are intertwined as far as her 'hatred for working-class society' (Salami 1992: 64) involves a series of moral principles and obligations through which the Few, to which she belongs, *must* teach the Many, to which Clegg belongs, about life:

(18) But it's a battle. It's like being in a city and being besieged. They're all around us. And *we've got to* hold out.

It's a battle between Caliban and myself. He is the New People and I am the Few.

I *must* fight with my weapons. Not his. Not selfishness and brutality and shame and resentment. (*The Collector*, p. 231, my emphasis)

Bearing all this in mind, I would like to propose three different aspects of Miranda's deontic modality: first, her own self-imposed obligations to deal with Clegg; second, her 'own right morality', which contrasts with Ladymont's Right way; and third, her duties, as member of the Few, to deal with the Many.

In conclusion, I have shown in this section that Doležel's systems of modality may be used to typify character's self-concepts depending on the modality system that

characterises the language they use in their narrations. In this sense, Miranda's mental world is regulated by both axiological modality and an idealistic and personal deontic modality, though 'her moral idealism' does not win in her moral battle against Clegg because, in the end, she 'sticks to her principles and dies' (Wolfe 1976). Clegg's mental world is characterised by deontic modality, both the social norms of the working-class and the religious values of Non-Conformism, which are revealing about his world view, and his own dubious moral principles through which he justifies his criminal actions, which are symptomatic of a deviant mind style.

#### **7.4 Summary note**

This chapter has provided the theoretical background for the analysis of possible selves as well as an analysis of the self-concept of the protagonists of *The Collector*, using Doležel's systems of modality. In the next chapter, I will provide a detailed analysis of the possible selves of these two characters, drawing parallelisms with notions from possible worlds theory. There, I will demonstrate how characters' possible selves can be projected in a variety of possible worlds, with different linguistic realisations. Moreover, I will also draw on Emmott's work on the split self to analyse other narratives which portray characters whose self-concept includes various types of split selves.

## 8 Possible selves in characterisation

### 8.1 Introduction

In possible selves terms, the construction of the two characters of *The Collector* can be characterised by their expression of future alternative selves which form part of their self-concepts. As we have seen in the previous chapter, characters' possible selves may stand in a variety of relationships with the actual self and with other self-guides, including both own/self-guides and other/self-guides. The fact that a character's self-concept includes a possible self involves a goal to be achieved, or to be avoided. For this purpose, the character is supposed to self-regulate his/her behaviour and mental life in order to achieve the possible self.

My claim in this chapter is that the construction of characters' possible selves, their self-regulation processes, and the subsequent attainment of the possible self or the permanence of the self-discrepancy can be considered as analytical tools which throw light on the topics of characterisation and mind style. In the next sections, I will study both Clegg's and Miranda's possible selves alternatively, complementing my analysis with notions from possible worlds theory, and paying particular attention to how self-guides are projected in the characters' possible worlds.

In addition to this, I will also analyse the self-concept of the protagonists of some narratives who display various actual possible selves as different realisations of their working self-concepts. For this purpose, I will base my analyses on the work by Emmott (2002) on split selves, complementing it with a linguistic analysis of my data. Moreover, my purpose is also to investigate how readers arrive at a mental representation of a character who displays multiple selves.

## 8.2 Worldview, mind style and possible selves

Throughout the next sections, I will bear in mind Semino's (2002) notions about worldview and mind style to demonstrate how the linguistic expression of characters' possible selves, and self-schemata in general, reveal their differing views of the world and mind styles, and how the reader's mental representation of character is influenced by their own schemata. Following Semino, I would like to argue that in the same way that a reader's existing schemata make up that person's model of reality, characters' existing schemata make up their models of reality. Therefore, the language that characters use reveals, through the projection of schemata and self-schemata, the character's view of the world and, when applicable, their deviant mind styles. Similarly, and as I explained in 2.4.2, Bockting's definition of mind style includes both the conceptualisation of the world by an individual as well as the conceptualisation of the individual himself/herself in that world. Thus, self-schemata and possible selves, as the cognitive structures consisting of knowledge about an individual's self-image, can also be considered as indicative of characters' more or less idiosyncratic mind styles.

Moreover, cognitive psychology assumptions about the social nature of the individual self-guides support the view that worldview is closely related to characters' systematic expression of possible selves as well as the patterns of projection of possible worlds. Markus and Nurius (1986) point out that possible selves, in spite of being individual, are distinctly social, as they are the result of previous social comparison: 'what others are now, I could become'. Thus, the creation of possible selves is influenced by both the individual's socio-cultural and historical context, and by the individual's social experiences. For these reasons, the linguistic expression of

characters' possible selves, as part of their self-concepts, can be considered to be revealing about their view of the world.

Semino (1997) proposes that text worlds are to be considered as configurations of schemata instantiated by the reader during the act of reading. Consequently, certain text worlds may be perceived as strange not because they project, for example, fantasy universes, but because their configuration of schemata goes against the reader's expectations and assumptions. Text worlds that present different views of the world do so by activating different or unexpected configurations of schemata. In addition to this, the readers' existing schemata play an active role in the construction of text worlds, so that different readers may arrive at different interpretations of texts. In relation to narrative texts, Semino (1997: 227) suggests the possibility of analysing how characters' world views and mind styles can be accounted through the interaction between the linguistic features of the text and the reader's existing schemata.

Following Semino, I would like to propose that readers' construction of a mental representation of characters, which includes a representation of their self-concepts and the readers' opinion about them, is influenced by the readers' existing schemata and self-schemata. Given that readers have different models of reality, their representation of characters may vary, though I assume that there is significant overlap. For example, Clegg's negative attitude in both his SEX self-schema and his VULGAR WOMAN schema are indicative of his particular view of the world, due to his Non-Conformism. Thus, a reader who shares his religion or who shares the same attitude schema towards sex would conform to the characters' view of the world. In contrast, a reader whose SEX schema involves a positive attitude may find Clegg's worldview unfamiliar and may form an opinion about the character as strange or traditional, due to the contrast in their models of reality.

In conclusion, readers' schemata and self-schemata influence their construction of a mental representation of characters' self-concepts, world views and mind styles. This is especially remarkable when the reader's worldview contrasts with a character's, because the reader will become aware of his own assumptions about his view of the world and of the new perspective offered by the text.

### **8.3 Clegg's alternative selves**

In this section I want to propose an analysis of the male character of *The Collector* on the basis of the possible selves that form part of his self-concept. I will demonstrate that, at the beginning of the text, Clegg constructs a series of ideal selves, which set his objectives for the whole novel, and not-me selves, through which he self-defines himself. After kidnapping Miranda, I propose that his construction of possible selves does not involve the necessary self-regulation for their achievement, revealing his unbalanced mental condition. The cognitive psychology notions will be complemented with concepts from possible worlds theory, relevant to the projection of the character's sub-worlds. Moreover, I will pay attention to the linguistic patterns of the text and the reader's inferential work to arrive at conclusions about the character's self-concept.

#### **8.3.1 Ideal selves, fantasy universes**

At the beginning of *The Collector*, the reader is presented with a narrative universe in which the male protagonist suffers from a self-discrepancy between his actual self and his ideal self. Clegg's ideal self is to be married to Miranda, although the current situation is that they do not know each other. This self-discrepancy leads the protagonist

to regulate his behaviour to diminish the discrepancy and to achieve his ideal self-representation. Following Ryan, the conflict between TAW and the character's wish world can be considered the state that sets the action of the novel in motion. Clegg's wish world is his *goal*, and he needs to make a *plan* to achieve his objective, so that most of the action of the novel is based on the resolution of this conflict.

Following the theoretical explanations provided so far, I would like to propose that a character's ideal self is *projected* in a variety of wish worlds or fantasy universes expressed by the character. Thus, the linguistic analysis of these sub-worlds will prove revealing about the character's possible selves. Clegg's ideal self is not only revealed in wish worlds, but, for example, he builds a fantasy universe in which he imagines how his ideal self with Miranda would be:

(19) I can't say what it was, the very first time I saw her, I knew she was the only one. Of course I'm not mad, I knew it was just a dream and it always would have been if it hadn't been for the money. I used to have daydreams about her, I used to think of stories where I met her, did things she admired, married her and all that. Nothing nasty, that was never until what I'll explain later.

She drew pictures and I looked after my collection (in my dreams). It was always she loving me and my collection, drawing and colouring them; working together in a beautiful modern house in a big room with one of those huge glass windows; meetings there of the Bug Section, where instead of saying almost nothing in case I made mistakes we were the popular host and hostess. She all pretty with her pale blonde hair and grey eyes and of course the other men all green around the gills. (*The Collector*, p. 10)

As Ryan suggests, an alternate or fantasy universe is 'formed by the mind's creations: dreams, hallucinations, fantasies, and fictional stories told to or composed by the characters' (Ryan 1991: 119). Thus, we can consider that, in this case, Clegg creates in his mind a fantasy, or a dream as he calls it, about his future. This fantasy universe is linguistically triggered by the clauses 'I used to have daydreams' and 'I used to think of stories', which introduce the elements of the fantasy he creates as a representation of his desires. Ryan also recognises that 'while F-universes offer escapes from TAW, they

may fulfil metaphorically the function of K-worlds or W-worlds with respect to the primary narrative system' (Ryan 1991: 119). Thus, Clegg's fantasy universe realizes the function of a wish world, confirming the hypothesis that his ideal self can be realised in a variety of private worlds, apart from wish worlds.

In the first paragraph of the above extract, a fantasy universe is built in which Clegg, in his imagination, thinks of the steps of his self-regulation process which would lead to the achievement of his ideal self. These steps to arrive at his ideal self from his actual self are clearly stated: first meeting Miranda, then doing things she admires (attaining an ideal/other self), and finally marrying her. Moreover, the whole of the second paragraph also comprises other aspects of the end-state of the fantasy universe, which is triggered by the clause added between parentheses '(in my dreams)'. Thus, the reader can infer, from all the events and actions described in that paragraph, part of Clegg's ideal self, as the reader has access to his creation of a fantasy universe which functions as the realisation of a wish world. The elements that form part of this fantasy universe are revealing about Clegg's self-concept because they reveal hypothetical aspects of his self-conception that are relevant for him: Miranda loving him, both of them working together, Miranda drawing and Clegg looking after his butterfly collection, living in a beautiful modern house, holding meetings of the Bug Section and being a popular host. In conclusion, Clegg's ideal self, part of his self-concept, is projected in the fantasy universe he creates in his mental world, and to which readers have access, as he is the narrator-character, so that they can create a mental representation of the character's self-concept.

### **8.3.2 Not-me selves, negative (intention) worlds**

After winning the pools, a *happening* in Ryan's terminology, Clegg has the time and money to make a series of decisions about his new life. Thus, he narrates a number of past intention worlds which he carried out, most of them related to his hobby of collecting butterflies, as he is an ENTOMOLOGIST schematic (see section 6.3.4.3). Intention worlds represent characters' plans to change the actual world, so that Clegg's past intention worlds narrate the actions he schemed and accomplished, in a past time. Some of these plans include taking driving lessons, buying a van or purchasing a house, in order to catch butterflies. On each occasion, he also projects a series of negations of intention worlds, in which he denies that his ultimate purpose was to kidnap Miranda.

The following quotation offers the first example of an intention world and the subsequent negation of another intention world:

(20) What I thought I would do (I already, in preparation, bought the best equipment in London) was to go to some of the localities where there were rare species and aberrations and get proper series. I mean turn up and stay somewhere for as long as I liked, and go out and collect and photograph. I had driving lessons before they [his aunt and cousin] went and I got a special van. (...)

What I'm trying to say is that having her as my guest happened suddenly, it wasn't something I planned the moment the money came. (*The Collector*, p. 16)

The past intention world in the first paragraph is linguistically triggered by its first words: 'What I thought I would do...'. In social cognition terms, Clegg's private world projects an ideal self in which he realises some activities (e.g. catching rare butterflies, taking photographs) related to his hobby. Furthermore, the last sentence of the paragraph describes some of the actions he carried out later in the TAW (e.g. having driving lessons, buying a van), offering a description of the self-regulation of his behaviour in order to achieve his ideal self. Thus, this paragraph presents an exemplification of a character's construction of an ideal self, as projected in an intention world, and the self-regulation of his behaviour in order to achieve his self-guide.

In the last two lines of the quotation, Clegg's assertion, 'having her as my guest happened suddenly, *it wasn't something I planned* the moment the money came' (my emphasis), stresses that his intention was *not* to have Miranda as his guest, when he won the money. In the same way that in the first intention world he projects an ideal self to be achieved, in this negation of an intention world, he states a 'not-me self': being Miranda's host. Although Markus and Nurius (1986) propose a list of types of feasible possible selves (see 7.2.1), they do not offer definitions for them, as the names they provide are relatively self-explanatory. For this reason, I will use the term 'not-me self' to refer to cases of future selves which characters try to avoid, or have no intention to become, without the dread connotations of 'feared selves' or the wish connotations of the 'undesired self'.

In terms of the projection of sub-worlds, Clegg's negative sentence affords a deeper analysis. In his account of text world theory, Werth (1999: 248-257) analyses negation in discourse proposing that negative sentences create negative sub-worlds, which are a type of sub-world. These negative possible worlds may have two functions: (a) to defeat expectations in the reader's common ground, or (b) to introduce entities and assumptions without asserting them. Werth calls the first phenomenon *defeated expectation*, since the reader's expectation that something was the case in the text world is denied. The latter phenomenon is termed *negative accommodation*, which is a device that 'allows the recipient to deduce the expectation which the negation itself defeats or removes' (Werth 1999: 254). Werth exemplifies the latter phenomenon with the following fragment: 'There are no bathing steps on the river front, as the Ganges happens not to be holy here' (E.M. Forster 1924). Whether or not the reader knows that the Ganges is a holy river, that its holiness is somehow selective, and that some towns

on the Ganges have bathing steps does not matter because the text suggests these expectations by the very fact of negating them.

Thus, applying Werth's notions, we can argue that Clegg's negative statement introduces new information that was not present in the previous discourse by denying it; the new information is the fact that his plan was not to have Miranda as his guest. So, we have a case of negative accommodation in which the text suggests an expectation, i.e. that Clegg's plan was to kidnap Miranda, by negating it. Moreover, the expectation involves an intention, so that we have a negative sub-world denying an intention world. A negative sub-world fulfils a specific function, as Werth suggests: a 'negated proposition introduces a sort of delayed-action information bomb into the world' and only later in the text, the information included within 'the dormant proposition will suddenly gain full significance' (Werth 1999: 256). The fact that Clegg denies information that was not present in previous discourse makes the reader aware of this information, which may achieve further significance at a later point in the narrative.

In conclusion, the negative intention world implies that Clegg's intention when winning the lottery could have been to kidnap Miranda, but this was not the case. Whether or not the reader had made a hypothesis about Clegg planning the kidnapping after he won the lottery, the negative intention world introduces this idea by negating it. Moreover, the mere fact of mentioning this idea may lead the reader to question Clegg's sincerity and to infer that he *did* plan to kidnap the woman after winning the lottery. In such case, readers would interpret the negative intention world as an infringement of the maxim of quality, because Clegg is not saying the truth. In any case, the negative intention world is indicative of the character's cognitive processes and extraordinary mental world.

Contrasting the two quotations analysed so far, we can see that whereas fragment (19) projects a fantasy universe in which Clegg's ideal self is to be Miranda's husband, fragment (20) projects a denial of an intention world, proposing a not-me self in which he is not Miranda's host. Thus, there exists a relative contradiction in Clegg's construction of alternative selves, as he wishes to be Miranda's husband but he does not intend to be her host. At the same time, however, Clegg's not-me self would support his passive self, an aspect of his self-concept demonstrated through his use of transitivity patterns in section 7.3.1. Taking into account the readers' interpretation of the character, they may form a mental representation of Clegg as having a conflicting self-concept, due to his clashing hypothetical selves. The alternative interpretation, in which readers infer Clegg's violation of the maxim of quality, would not involve the clash between the ideal self and the not-me self, so that the consistency of the character's self-concept would be preserved.

Before Miranda's capture, Clegg repeats on several occasions the pattern of negating an intention world, so that the ensuing negative sub-world introduces expectations which are new information for the reader. In the next quotation, the protagonist explains his purchase of a van, specifying an intention world and negating another intention world, that is to say, constructing a negative world:

(21) The van was the one really big luxury I gave myself. It had special fitting in the back compartment, a camp bed you could let down and sleep in; *I bought it to carry my equipment* for when I moved around the country, and also I thought if I got a van I wouldn't always have to be taking Aunt Annie and Mabel around when they came back. *I didn't buy it for the reason I did use it for* [kidnapping Miranda]. The whole idea was sudden, like a stroke of genius almost. (*The Collector*, p. 17, my emphasis)

The first clause in italics highlights Clegg's intention world, offering a reason for buying the van. This private world implies an ideal self in which Clegg's hypothetical

image of himself involves travelling to places carrying his equipment. The second clause in italics, however, is a negative world, in which Clegg claims that the reason why he bought the van was *not* what he used it for later, i.e. to kidnap Miranda. Here again, we have a case of negative accommodation in which new information is added as a negative sub-world. Once more, whether or not the reader had inferred that Clegg bought the van with the intention to kidnap Miranda, the protagonist introduces the idea by negating it. Then, the reader may also assume that he is violating the maxim of quality, so that the true objective when buying the van would be to kidnap the woman.

Clegg's private world implies a not-me self, in which his image of himself does not involve the purchase of the van in order to kidnap Miranda. This not-me self, as a hypothetical self-image of Clegg, defines part of his self-concept and adds to the reader's mental representation of the character. As it was explained in the previous chapter, through the language of the text, readers form a mental representation of character which includes a representation of their self-concept and a representation of their own opinion of the character in question. Thus, if readers have inferred that the character violates the maxim of quality, they may construct a mental representation of the character which includes a disapproving opinion about him, e.g. that he is a liar.

And another negative world is projected in the next fragment, which narrates the idea of acquiring the house where Clegg will later keep Miranda kidnapped:

(22) In one of the Sunday papers I saw an advert in capitals in a page of houses for sale. I wasn't looking for them, this just seemed to catch my eye as I was turning the page. 'FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD?' it said. Just like that. Then it went on-  
Old cottage, charming secluded situation, large garden, 1 hr by car London, two miles from nearest village...  
and so on. The next morning I was driving to see it (...)

I still say *I didn't go there with the intention of seeing whether there was anywhere to have a secret guest*. I can't really say what intention I had. (*The Collector*, p. 19-20, my emphasis)

In this negative sub-world Clegg states that his intention was not going to the house to check if he could have a 'secret guest' in it. Thus, he projects a not-me self in which he buys a house to kidnap a woman. The new expectation introduced with this negative world provides more information in which Clegg denies the relationship between his actions and the intention of kidnapping Miranda. Readers have already encountered three occasions in which Clegg introduces the expectation that his plan was not to have her as his guest by means of a not-me self projected through negative intention worlds.

Taking into account the fragments analysed in this section, the pattern Clegg follows is to construct an ideal self, related to his ENTOMOLOGIST self-schema, realised in several intention worlds. But most importantly, Clegg also constructs a not-me self realised in different negative worlds involving the negation of intention worlds, so that his intention is *not* to kidnap Miranda or, as he would say, to have her as his 'guest'. Due to this repetition of negative worlds, the reader may infer that Clegg is infringing Grice's (1975) maxim of quantity, as he repeats the same idea at different times. Thus, Werth's action-delayed information bomb may consist in the reader's inference that the negated intention worlds are in fact the true intention worlds which led Clegg to have driving lessons, buy the van, etc. Alternatively, Clegg's not-me selves reveal his attempt to solve the discrepancy between his passive self-schema and the self-regulation of his behaviour, that is, all the actions he took in order to kidnap the woman.

I would like to finish this section analysing another fantasy world, which has some parallelisms with the first private world included in this section, example (19), and its subsequent ideal self:

(23) That was the day I first gave myself the dream that came true. It began where she was being attacked by a man and I ran up and rescued her. Then somehow I was the man that attacked her, only I didn't hurt her; I captured her and drove her off in the van to a remote house and there I kept

her captive in a nice way. Gradually she came to know me and like me and the dream grew into the one about our living in a nice modern house, married, with kids and everything.

It haunted me. It kept me awake at nights, it made me forget what I was doing during the day. I stayed on and on at the Cremorne. It stopped being a dream, it began to be what I pretended was really going to happen (of course, I thought it was only pretending) so I thought of ways and means – all the things I would have to arrange and think about how I'd do it and all. (*The Collector*, p. 18-19)

The linguistic trigger of this fantasy universe is found in the first sentence: 'I first gave myself the dream that came true'. It is worth noting the transitivity patterns of this clause, as Clegg recognises an active part in the construction of the private world, 'I first gave myself', but he assigns himself no active role in the achievement of the desired state, 'the dream that came true'. Clegg's private world consists of a sequence of events which comprise attacking Miranda, capturing her, driving her in his van to a house, keeping her captive, their getting to know each other, her liking him, and their living together and forming a family. The end state in this fantasy world would be the achievement of Clegg's ideal self, as was proposed in fragment (19): being married to Miranda. In the second paragraph, moreover, the protagonist explains his obsession with his fantasy world, which gradually becomes a 'pretended' intention world. Although Clegg claims to be 'pretending', he specifies that he thought of how to self-regulate his behaviour to arrive at his ideal self, or in Ryan's terms, he made the appropriate plans for the achievement of his intention world.

Through the analysis of these fragments, I have demonstrated how the language of the novel projects a character whose self-concept includes an ideal self in which he is married to Miranda. This ideal self is constructed in the text through the projection of fantasy universes in which Clegg specifies the contents of his desired goal-state, for example, living and working together in a house. Apart from this, the language of the text also projects another ideal self, related to the protagonist's ENTOMOLOGIST self-

schema. In this particular case, the ideal self is inferred from a number of intention worlds in which Clegg's goals (buying the van, visiting the house...) are directly related to his hobby of collecting butterflies. The construction of the ideal self is simultaneous with the construction of a not-me self of the protagonist, in which he is not Miranda's host. This not-me self can be inferred from a series of negative worlds, involving the negation of intention worlds, in which Clegg denies that being host to Miranda was his objective when he bought the van, visited the house, etc. I have provided in this section three examples of this type of negative sub-world, demonstrating a certain repeated pattern in the construction of the protagonist's mental world.

Bearing in mind the linguistic realisation of the character's possible selves and the projection of possible worlds, I would like to consider how readers infer information and arrive at evaluations about the character, which would form part of the reader's mental representation of Clegg. As I have demonstrated, Clegg's possible selves as projected in his fantasy universe (19), his intention and negative worlds (20-22), and the last fantasy universe (23) involve some contradictory information. I would like to propose two alternatives, related to Grice's maxims (1975), to account for the reader's interpretation of the character. My claim is that the reader can interpret the character's construction of the not-me self as either a violation or an infringement of the maxim of quality.

On the one hand, in case that the character *violates* the maxim, he is consciously saying an untruth about his not-me self of not being Miranda's host, so that he intends to kidnap Miranda but lies about it. If this lie is discovered by readers, they would draw the subsequent inferences about him, such as that being her host, in other words, kidnapping her, was his ideal self from the very beginning. Then, the reader's

evaluation of the character would involve negative features such as his conducting an immoral and criminal behaviour.

On the other hand, the character may be *infringing* the maxim of quality, in which case, the character's speech is not intended to produce an inference, though the reader may draw it. The reader may infer that the character invents a not-me self, which was never a self-guide of his behaviour, but was to justify his conduct and keep his morality untainted by guilt. In such case, the construction of the not-me self may be due to a special mental condition and to his peculiar mind style, influenced by his NON-CONFORMISM self-schema and his personal morality system. Clegg's possible selves (both ideal selves and not-me selves) together with his construction of alternative worlds (intention worlds, negative worlds, and fantasy universes) reveal certain idiosyncratic aspects of his self-concept, which can be inferred by readers from his narration.

### **8.3.3 Self-discrepancies during kidnap**

In this section, I will show that once Clegg has achieved one of the steps of the self-regulation process, having Miranda in his house, in order to achieve his ideal self, being Miranda's husband, he becomes inactive in relation to the attainment of this ideal self, revealing a peculiar feature of his self-concept. My goal is to prove how the concepts from cognitive psychology, together with those from possible worlds theory and linguistic analysis, support my claim, revealing the peculiar mental functioning of the character.

Clegg constructs a series of ideal selves which consist in performing various immediate physical actions, involving Miranda to a certain extent, which he does not

carry out in the end. Thus, the self-discrepancy between his actual self and his ideal selves remains unresolved, creating a succession of conflicts in his self-concept. These ideal selves are projected in a variety of sub-worlds:

(24) I wanted to look at her face, at her lovely hair, all of her all small and pretty, but I couldn't, she stared so at me. (*The Collector*, p. 32)

(25) I really would have liked to take her in my arms and kiss her, as a matter of fact I was trembling. I had to say something or I'd have lost my head. (*The Collector*, p.62)

(26) I wish I had words to describe it [Miranda's hair] like a poet would or an artist. She had a way of throwing it back when it had fallen too much forward, it was just a simple natural movement. Sometimes I wanted to say to her, please do it again, please let your hair fall forward and toss it back. Only of course it would have been stupid. (*The Collector*, p. 64)

(27) Beautiful, I said. I didn't know what to say, I wanted to look at her all the time and I couldn't. I felt sort of frightened, too. (*The Collector*, p. 80)

In these passages, Clegg's ideal self refers to his desire to do something to Miranda, e.g. to look at her, to kiss her, to say something to her. Only in one of the examples, (25), the ideal self implies some action by Clegg, holding and kissing her, while the others simply involve looking at her, in (24) and (27), or saying something to her in (26). As the self-discrepancies between the ideal selves and the actual self remains, because none of these alternatives selves is attained, the internal conflict of this character is not solved in successive situations, and the self-discrepancy remains.

Moreover, apart from these immediate experiences, Clegg also suffers from another self-discrepancy between his actual self and his long-term ideal self of being Miranda's husband, as projected in his fantasy universes:

(28) She always seemed to get me on the defensive. In my dreams, it was always the other way round. (*The Collector*, p. 36)

(29) I know it's old-fashioned to say you love a woman, I never meant to do it then. In my dreams, it was always we looked into each other's eyes one day and then we kissed and nothing was said until after. (...) But when I had her there my head went round and I often said things I didn't mean to. (*The Collector*, p. 37)

The protagonist's fantasy universes, linguistically triggered by the clause 'In my dreams', involve an ideal self in which he and Miranda are together. The self-discrepancy in (28) is due to the fact that Clegg's actual self involves Miranda getting him 'on the defensive', while his ideal self was 'the other way round'. In addition, in (29), Clegg's ideal self involves a fantasy universe in which they look into each other's eyes, kiss, and do not say anything, whereas in his actual self, he says things to her he does not intend.

Higgins (1987, 1989) proposes that self-discrepancies are affectively involving, and more particularly, discrepancies between actual and ideal selves produce dejection emotions, such as disappointment and dissatisfaction. In a similar way, Markus and Nurius (1986) propose that discrepancies within the self-concept derive in negative affect, so that if individuals cannot achieve possible selves, they will have negative self-feelings. As the fragments analysed show, the negative psychological situations are not resolved by Clegg, so that the self-discrepancies remain in his self-concept.

Apart from these ideal selves, Clegg also formulates several not-me selves which, as hypothetical images of himself, describe his self-concept for what it is not. After an episode in which Miranda writes a note asking for help which read 'D.M. Kidnapped by madman. F. Clegg...' (p. 68), the protagonist feels accused of being a madman and responds to her angrily, denying that he is mad:

(30) And mad, I said. Do you think a madman would have treated you the way I have? I'll tell you what a madman would have done. He'd have killed you by now. Like that fellow Christie. I suppose you think I'm going for you with a carving knife or something. (*The Collector*, p. 69)

Clegg disassociates himself from this not-me self in order to provide a good image of himself in comparison with other men, so that he projects this alternative negative self as a way of self-enhancing his self-concept (see section 6.2.2.2). It is important to bear in mind that Clegg's rejection of Miranda's description of himself as a madman involves a conflict between his actual self and his not-me self as a madman. For Clegg, a madman is exclusively a murderer who kills women, and as such, his MADMAN schema does not fit in his actual self. Thus, being a madman becomes a not-me self, because a madman's behaviour towards women contrasts with how Clegg treats Miranda.

Whereas Clegg's MADMAN schema involves being a murderer, Miranda's MADMAN schema involves, at least, also a kidnapper. The fact that the two characters have different MADMAN schemata suggests that they have different views of the world. It can be expected that the reader's schema for a madman includes a variety of criminal activities and mental conditions, such as being a murderer, a kidnapper, a sexual abuser, or a schizophrenic, so that the reader's MADMAN schema may be closer to Miranda's rather than Clegg's. Therefore, I want to argue that, when the reader becomes aware of Clegg's schema for a MADMAN, there is potential for schema refreshment, as defined by Semino (1997) on the basis of Cook (1990, 1994).

Semino's notion of schema refreshment deviates from Cook's in the sense that, for her, it does not necessarily involve schema change with the subsequent destruction of old schemata and the creation of new ones. Instead, she proposes different degrees of potential of schema refreshment:

I would want to partially redefine the notion of schema refreshment in order to include not only schema change, but also less dramatic and less permanent experiences, such as connecting normally separate schemata in unusual ways in the processing of a particular text, becoming aware

of one's own schematic assumptions, questioning the validity of one's schemata in the light of new experiences and so on. (Semino 1997: 251)

For Semino, schema refreshment is a characteristic of texts which, through the evocation of atypical combinations of schemata, offer a view of the world which contrasts with that of the reader. Then, readers become aware of their assumptions about the world which contrast with those offered by the literary text, without the requirement for schema change to occur. Schema refreshment is then a matter of the readers' realisation of their own view of the world which contrasts with that offered by the literary text.

In the particular case of *The Collector*, the clash between Clegg's MADMAN schema and the reader's makes the reader aware of his/her view of the world and, most importantly, brings to light the idiosyncratic view of the world of the character. Thus, this case of schema refreshment draws attention to the character's particular worldview and self-concept, as he does not consider himself or his behaviour typical of madmen. Bearing in mind Clegg's view of the world, readers may arrive at an evaluation of him, such as that he suffers from some type of cognitive problem. It is then when we can start talking about 'mind style' rather than 'worldview', following Semino's (2002) distinction.

Apart from the frustrated ideal selves and the not-me self analysed so far, Clegg's 'long-term' ideal self during Miranda's kidnap continues being one about them living together in his house, as he declares on different occasions:

(31) Something I thought a lot about was how I would like her to see my house and all the furnishings. It was partly I wanted to see her there in it, naturally when I had dreams she was upstairs with me, not down in the cellar. (*The Collector*, p. 48)

Clegg's ideal self consists of a state in which he simply lives with Miranda, and no particular action is involved. In this fragment, the ideal self, and the wish world, are linguistically realised through the phrase 'I wanted to see her...', so that Clegg's self-guide consists simply in *seeing* Miranda in his house. Clegg's ideal state is a state of inaction, in which nothing is done, as the types of verbs and the transitivity patterns he uses demonstrate. In this fragment, Clegg occupies the subject position of four verbs which involve mental processes: 'thought', 'would like her', 'wanted' and 'had dreams'. The analysis of the seduction scene, in section 5.5.3, already showed his repeated use of verbs indicating mental and relational processes, but no material processes, revealing his conceptualisation of the situation in which he was the passive recipient of Miranda's actions. For this reason, sometimes his ideal self is formulated through what he wants from Miranda, rather than through what Clegg has to do to achieve his ideal self-guide:

(32) Then I said, I don't expect you to understand me, I don't expect you to love me like most people, I just want you to try and understand me as much as you can and like me a little if you can.  
(*The Collector*, p. 46)

Given Clegg's passivity, Miranda becomes responsible for the attainment of his ideal self, so that only through her actions the protagonist would be able to achieve his ideal self. Thus, for example, when she demands to have a bath in the house and she wants to stay upstairs and see the house, she is unconsciously reducing the discrepancy between Clegg's actual self and ideal self, as the latter begins to become true:

(33) It was suddenly as I always hoped, we were getting to know each other, she was beginning to see me for what I really was. (*The Collector*, p. 53)

The problem involved with Clegg's ideal self is that he considers that, once Miranda is in the house, there exists no self-regulatory behaviour that he can carry out in order to

achieve his alternative self-conception. Clegg conceives his role in the attainment of his ideal self as completely passive, so that the reduction of the self-discrepancy depends exclusively on Miranda.

(34) What she never understood was that with me it was having. Having her was enough. Nothing needed doing. I just wanted to have her, and safe at last. (*The Collector*, p. 95)

The self-discrepancy between Clegg's actual self and his ideal self, in which he simply lives with Miranda, remains in the protagonist's self-concept creating a conflict which he never solves.

According to cognitive psychology, one of the main functions of possible selves is to provide an evaluative context for the current view of self. In this sense, it can be proposed that Clegg's unattainable ideal self will lead to a negative evaluation of himself, together with the subsequent negative self-feelings. Another function of possible selves is to motivate individuals to take action to reduce the discrepancies between the actual self and the self-guides. However, Clegg does not self-regulate his behaviour because he considers that only Miranda can reduce the self-discrepancy. One of the ways in which Clegg attempts to reduce the discrepancy between his actual self, in which he is Miranda's kidnapper, and his ideal self, in which he is Miranda's husband, is to create a mental self as passive and as acting unintentionally. Clegg's passive self-schema is linguistically triggered through his use of transitivity patterns and in his projection of negative sub-worlds and not-me selves. In spite of this, the self-discrepancy between his actual self and his ideal self-guide remains unsolved. In conclusion, the protagonist's self-regulation processes do not follow the theoretical assumptions of Higgins' self-discrepancy theory because, after the kidnap, he does not take action to achieve his ideal self, suggesting the special mental condition of the character.

## **8.4 Miranda's alternative selves**

Miranda's narration, her personal diary, reflects her thoughts and feelings providing an excellent source of information about her self-concept and, more particularly, about her self-guides and sub-worlds. By means of self-discrepancy theory, I will demonstrate in this section that Miranda is a more mature and balanced character than her captor, due to her construction of possible selves in order to self-regulate.

From the beginning of her imprisonment, Miranda suffers from a self-discrepancy between her actual self and her ideal self, being free from her captor. This conflict is developed as her narration progresses and it becomes her obsession as her death approaches. However, she also suffers from self-discrepancies in various fields of her personal life, such as her personal relationships or her aspirations about art. Miranda's processes of self-regulation to diminish the discrepancies related to her 'outside' life motivate her as incentives to try to escape from Clegg, that is to say, to diminish the discrepancy between her 'imprisoned' actual self and her 'freed' ideal self. Thus, Miranda's conflicts revolve around two themes: her outside life and her imprisonment, bringing about a little mental stability, as I will demonstrate in the subsequent sections.

### **8.4.1 Inner life possible selves**

Miranda's diary reflects her awareness of the conflicts about her inner life, describing her ideal selves and ought selves, and even the self-regulation processes which are necessary to reduce her self-discrepancies. Miranda possesses a valuable knowledge of

her self-concept, especially of the gaps between her actual self and her ideal selves, as the following example demonstrates:

(35) How can I ever become a good painter when I know so little geometry and mathematics? I'm going to make Caliban buy me books. I shall become a geometrician. Shattering doubts about modern art. (...)

I want to paint like Berthe Morisot, I don't mean with her colours or forms or anything physical, but with her simplicity and light. I don't want to be clever or great or 'significant' or given all that clumsy masculine analysis. I want to paint sunlight on children's faces, or flowers in a hedge or a street after April rain. (...) I'm so far from everything. From normality. From light. From what I want to be. (*The Collector*, p. 130-1)

At the beginning of this fragment, Miranda projects a 'good painter' ideal self, which contrasts with her actual self, in which she knows 'little geometry and mathematics'. She also provides one of the steps of her self-regulation to achieve her ideal self, which is an intention world in which she makes Caliban buy her books. The next sentence is again an affirmation of her ideal self, now projected in a wish world: 'I shall become a geometrician'. Moreover, the second paragraph provides another ideal self related to becoming a 'good painter': painting like Berthe Morisot. On this occasion, she also describes a not-me self: 'I don't want to be clever or great or 'significant'...', and finishes by contrasting her actual self with her self-guide: 'I'm so far from everything... From what I want to be'. In general terms, this fragment shows how Miranda creates an ideal self, being a good painter, which contrasts with a not-me self and, most importantly, differs from her actual self. The ideal selves are projected in wish worlds, the not-me self in a negative wish world, and the self-regulation in an intention world.

Miranda has a wide repertoire of ideal self-guides, in different spheres of her life, which she aspires to become. Thus, in a similar manner, Miranda constructs a 'wife' ideal self and the related 'mother' ideal self, which also imply afraid selves involving what Miranda is afraid of becoming:

(36) When I get away. What shall I do? I want to marry, I want to have children, I want to prove to myself that all marriages needn't be like D and M's. I know exactly the sort of person I want to marry, someone with a mind like G.P.'s, only much nearer my own age, and with the looks I like. And without his one horrid weakness. But then I want to use my feeling about life. I don't want to use my skill vainly, for its own sake. But I want to make beauty. And marriage and being a mother terrifies me for that reason. Getting sucked down into the house and the house things and the baby-world and the child-world and the cooking-world and the shopping-world. I have a feeling a lazy-cow me would welcome it, would forget what I once wanted to do, and I would just become a Great Female Cabbage. Or I would have to do miserable work like illustrating, or even commercial stuff, to keep the home going. Or turn into a bitchy ginny misery like M (no, I couldn't be like her). (*The Collector*, p. 142)

In cognitive psychology terms, this paragraph reveals Miranda's ideal selves related to marriage and motherhood, but an analysis in terms of literary semantics proves more complex. Given that there is no strict correlation between linguistic phenomena and the projection of character's sub-worlds, sometimes it becomes difficult to distinguish the kind of alternative world the character is creating. Thus, the beginning of this paragraph, 'When I get away', may suggest a fantasy universe, whereas the second sentence, 'What shall I do?', is a question about an intention world. Moreover, the third sentence, 'I want to...', projects a wish world, which is the topic elaborated in the rest of the paragraph. Possible selves may help to reduce the complexity of this analysis as Miranda's sub-worlds are all related to her ideal selves: being free, being a wife, and being a mother.

In the middle of the fragment, however, the sentence 'And marriage and being a mother terrifies me for that reason' projects an afraid self, a self-guide that Miranda is afraid of becoming. Thus, in the following sentences, she develops the image of a mother and a wife she is 'terrified' about. Moreover, this negative self activates more afraid selves: 'Or I would have to do miserable work...', which are the opposite of her 'good artist' ideal self, as analysed in the previous example. Markus and Nurius (1986)

propose that when a negative possible self is activated, it influences the person's subsequent behaviour. This follows from the fact that the working self-concept, which includes the activated possible selves, influences information processing. Then, as in Miranda's case, an afraid self activates another interconnected afraid self.

However, Miranda's self-guides related to her inner life are not restricted to ideal selves to which she aspires or afraid selves she fears. She also constructs ought selves to guide her behaviour, imposing on herself obligations to fulfil. The equivalent of these ought selves in literary semantics would be the projection of obligation worlds:

(37) I sent him away after supper and I've been finishing Emma. I am Emma Woodhouse. I feel for her, of her and in her. (...) Her faults are my faults: her virtues I must make my virtues. (*The Collector*, p. 157)

(38) I'm reading *Sense and Sensibility* and I must find out what happens to Marianne. Marianne is me; Eleanor is me as I ought to be. (*The Collector*, p. 201)

These two fragments provide examples in which Miranda compares her actual self with an ought self, which is linguistically triggered by the modal verbs 'must' and 'ought to'. An ought self, as was previously explained, is your representation of the attributes you believe you should or ought to possess. Thus, Miranda believes her obligation or responsibility is to have Emma's virtues and to be like Eleanor, her two literary heroines.

A common characteristic of all the fragments analysed so far is Miranda's consciousness of the self-discrepancy between her actual self and her self-guides as well as the consciousness of her responsibility in the attainment of the ideal and ought selves. Moreover, a constant feature when she constructs an ideal self is the construction of a not-me self or an afraid self, which involves the opposite state from her ideal self. Thus, her 'good painter' ideal self involves a not-me self in which she does not want to be

‘clever or great or significant’. And her ‘wife’ and ‘mother’ ideal selves also entail the equivalent ‘wife’ and ‘mother’ afraid selves, with their negative connotations.

Markus and Ruvolo (1989) argue that the sense of one’s self in an undesired state, that is, a negative possible self such as a not-me self, undesired self, or afraid self, can be motivationally significant. If this negative possible self absolutely dominates the working self-concept, it can produce inaction or stopping one’s self-regulatory behaviour. In contrast, when a possible self is balanced with a countervailing possible self in the same domain, it will have maximal motivational effectiveness:

A feared possible self will be most effective as a motivational resource when it is balanced with a self-relevant positive expected or hoped for possible self that provides the outlines of what one might do to avoid the feared state. (Oyserman and Markus 1988)

Miranda’s construction of ideal selves which are balanced with negative possible selves act as a motivational force for the attainment of the self-guide and bring her balance in her working self-concept. Even though the self-discrepancy remains because she does not have a chance to reduce it, as she dies before she can become a ‘good artist’, a ‘wife’ and a ‘mother’, her motivation turns into the most relevant characteristic of her working self-concept, which will be necessary in her attempt to achieve another of her ideal selves: the ‘freed’ self.

#### **8.4.2 Imprisonment-related possible selves**

One of the topics most frequently dealt with in Miranda’s narrative is that of imprisonment and the related and unsuccessful escape attempts. Miranda’s diary gives rise to a series of possible selves which regulate her mental life and provide her the necessary psychological balance to cope with a situation as distressing as a kidnap. In

general terms, Miranda creates 'freed' ideal selves as a motivational resource; she suffers from a self-discrepancy between her actual self and various self-guides; and she projects ought selves in relation to her escape attempts to impose on herself the obligation to go against her principles of no violence to achieve freedom.

Cognitive psychology proposes that an individual's ability to create and maintain possible selves determines whether a given goal will guide behaviour. That is certainly the case of Miranda, who possesses the ability to create 'freed' ideal selves to motivate herself to scheme her getaway from Clegg. The construction of these self-guides, which are projected in intention worlds in literary semantics terms, afford the reader information about the character's plans for her future once she is released. In addition, I want to claim that the language employed by the character to project her possible selves is also a source of information about how she conceptualises her self-guides and consequently, a source of information about her self-concept:

(39) I think of paintings I shall do. (*The Collector*, p. 248)

(40) I've been making sketches for a painting I shall do when I'm free. (*The Collector*, p. 157)

(41) I shan't go on keeping a diary when I leave here. (*The Collector*, p. 250)

Example (39) involves an ideal self projected in an intention world which is linguistically triggered by the temporal operator 'shall'. In this case, Miranda's ideal state consists of doing paintings, in an indeterminate future after escaping from her captor, as determined by the previous context though not stated in this sentence. In this respect, this example contrasts with (40), in which the future time in which the ideal self will become true is specified: 'when I'm free'. This phrase contains a presupposition (see Levinson 1983) which presupposes Miranda's belief in her escape. Example (41) also uses the same type of presupposition, 'when I leave here', which presupposes her

belief in her escape. In this case, Miranda constructs a not-me self in which she does not keep a diary, projected again in an intention world. In examples (40) and (41), Miranda's presuppositions about her future show that she conceptualises her 'freed' ideal self as more probable than in the projected ideal self of example (39).

The following example presents another perspective of the protagonist's certainty of her attainment of the possible selves:

(42) If I get out of this, I shall never be the same. (*The Collector*, p. 118)

Fragment (42) offers the construction of an ideal self, a wish world in possible worlds terms, in which Miranda wishes not to be as she is at present: 'I shall never be the same'<sup>1</sup>. This 'different' ideal self will take place in a future time specified in the phrase 'If I get out of this', which is a conditional sentence that projects a fantasy universe: Miranda's dream about escaping. This fantasy universe projects another ideal self, in which Miranda is free: her 'freed' ideal self. The conditional sentence conceptualises the escape as more remote than the presuppositions of examples (40) and (41), so that the 'freed' ideal self is conceptualised as less accessible. Moreover, the 'different' ideal self and its equivalent wish world are embedded within the 'freed' ideal self and its equivalent fantasy universe, conceptualising the 'different' self as even further from the protagonist's reach.

Although in cognitive psychology terms, fragments (38), (39), (40) and (41) are analysed as the construction of ideal selves, the linguistic analysis of how the character constructs them allows the reader to arrive at more conclusions about Miranda's conceptualisation of her self-guides. In this particular case, the linguistic realisation of the ideal selves reveals that they range from more to less attainable, due to the presence

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<sup>1</sup> As in other cases, I offer my own interpretation of this sentence as a wish world, although readers may also interpret it simply as a statement, i.e. that she will not be the same as before she was imprisoned.

of presuppositions and an if-clause. In conclusion, the fact that Miranda articulates her self-guides using various linguistic patterns reveals a difference in her mental conceptualisations of the ideal selves, varying from more to less accessible, depending on contextual factors.

As it was previously explained, individuals may choose to consciously create possible selves which regulate their behaviour in order to achieve certain goals. Following this assumption, Miranda does create an ought self in which she escapes from Clegg in order to impose on herself the obligation to try to flee from him. She needs to create an ought self because she has sometimes to fight against her non-violence principles to attempt her escape. On the first occasion Miranda writes about her plans to escape she already conceptualises the situation as an ought self: 'I must, must, must escape.' (*The Collector*, p. 151). 'Must' is a high value deontic modal verb, so that Miranda has a strong obligation to achieve this ought self. For this reason, she needs to meditate about the self-regulation, the attempts to escape, that will lead to the achievement of her ought self, being free:

(43) It's absurd, it's diabolical – but there is no way to escape. I've been trying to find loose stones again. I could dig a tunnel round the door. I could dig a tunnel right out. But it would have to be at least twenty feet long. All the earth. Being trapped inside it. I could never do it. I'd rather die. So it must be a tunnel round the door. But to do that I must have time. I must be sure he is away for at least six hours. Three for the tunnel, two to break through the outer door. I feel it is my best chance, I mustn't waste it, spoil it through lack of preparation.

I can't sleep.

I must do something. (*The Collector*, p. 151)

Miranda considers the attempt to escape by digging a tunnel as a possible future self: 'I *could* dig a tunnel'. According to Halliday (1994), 'could' is a low value epistemic modal verb, so that it reflects the speaker's opinions that the probability of digging the tunnel is weak. But as Miranda creates this possible future self, she imagines a negative

possible self ('Being trapped inside it. I could never do it') which momentarily stops her train of thoughts. However, she activates again the self-regulation process through the statement of an ought self: 'it *must* be a tunnel...'. She uses now a high value epistemic modal verb, so that her ought self is conceptualised granting it a high probability of achievement. From this point in the text, Miranda uses this modal verb repeatedly, creating an ought self in which she escapes from her captor.

The creation of this type of possible self to guide her behaviour is used by Miranda to think about different methods to escape until the end of the novel. Other examples proving this are:

(44) I must must must escape.

I spent hours and hours today thinking about it. (*The Collector*, p.165)

(45) The tunnel round the door is my best bet. I feel I *must* try it soon. (*The Collector*, p. 172, her emphasis)

(46) I decided it must be done. I had to catch up the axe and hit him with the blunt end, knock him out. I hadn't the least idea where on the head was the best place to hit or how hard it had to be. (...) I wasn't nervous, I picked the axe up very neatly, I didn't scrape the blade and it was the blunt end. But then... it was like waking up out of a bad dream. I had to hit him and I couldn't but I had to. (*The Collector*, p. 226)

(47) I'll never escape. It drives me mad. I must must must do something. (*The Collector*, p. 236)

In a similar way, Miranda's most daring attempt to escape, the seduction scene, follows the same pattern of the construction of an ought self in order to motivate herself, though with some differences from the previous examples:

(48) Perhaps I should be his dream girl. Put my arms around him and kiss him. Praise him, pat him, stroke him. Kiss him.

I didn't mean that. But it's made me think.

Perhaps I really should kiss him. More than kiss him. Love him. Make Prince Charming step out.

I'm thinking hours between each sentence I write.

I've got to make him feel that finally I've been touched by his chivalry and so on and so on... (*The Collector*, p. 236)

For this escape attempt, Miranda imposes herself the ought self of being Clegg's 'dream girl'. The fragment begins with the adverb 'perhaps', which is an epistemic modal adjunct indicating low probability, so that Miranda's opinion about the rest of her statement involves some uncertainty. Then, she uses the median value modal 'should', which also indicates less obligation than the modal verb 'must', which she had previously utilised in the construction of ought selves. Thus, readers may infer that this tentative obligation is repugnant to her, because of what she is imposing herself, seducing Clegg. The linguistic evidence indicates that Miranda constructs an ought self in which her obligation in its achievement is weaker than in the previous examples. This may demonstrate the existence of a scale of obligation, following Halliday's account of modal operators, so that depending on the linguistic formulation of ought selves, they involve more or less obligation of fulfilment. This fact is supported by the analysis of fragment (43) in which two modals with different values, 'could' and 'must', were used in the construction of a possible future self and an ought self, with different degrees of obligation.

Another important aspect of the construction of this ought self is that Miranda's goal is an ideal/other self-guide: Miranda's representation of what she thinks Clegg would like her to be. The problem with an individual's construction of other self-guides (vs. own self-guides) is that they may not correspond with the true ideal concept the relevant other has of the individual. Thus, Miranda considers that Clegg would like to have sexual relationships with her and she turns this into an ought self which, when attained, not only does not secure her release but has terrible consequences for her.

In this section, I have tried to demonstrate how the reader's construction of characters' self-concepts is enriched if we take into consideration possible selves. I have shown that the type of possible selves characters construct are informative about their self-concepts, world view and mind style, and when possible, I have drawn parallelisms with possible worlds theory to see how the two theories are interconnected. Moreover, I have demonstrated the importance of language in the construction of possible selves, as a linguistic analysis provides more detail of a character's conceptualisation of his/her possible selves than a mere enumeration of self-guides or possible worlds.

### **8.5 The working self-concept and split selves**

In this section, I want to use the notion of the 'split self' from Catherine Emmott (2002), together with some concepts from the field of cognitive linguistics, in order to analyse how characters' multiple selves are revealed in the language of narrative texts and how they are mentally constructed by readers. According to Emmott, split selves refer to the different versions of a character, who appears divided or duplicated, in a narrative.

In section 7.2.2.2, I examined Emmott's classification of selves and I explicitly drew a distinction, which Emmott suggests, between the splits that arise from the nature of the character and the splits that arise from the nature of the narrative. The latter class included cases in which the character is not aware of being divided because the split is due to narrative conventions, such as in the case of narrative juxtapositions or the double/multiple voice narration. Thus, I will not deal with those instances as my interest in characters' self-concepts implies an awareness of the split self.

Within the splits due to character, there are some further considerations that arise from cognitive psychology assumptions about the self-concept that I want to take into

account for my analysis. The cases of mental/physical split selves and social split selves refer to characters whose working self-concept is divided. For instance, Emmott offers an example (see example (1) in section 7.2.2.2), in which a female character's social selves are referred to using different proper names, depending on whose perspective is adopted: 'Miss Coventry Lambert' for her parents, 'Mrs Derek Dakin' for her husband, 'Margaret Dakin' for her son, 'Lauren McSkye' for her students, and 'Jaffa' for her friend. In this particular case, the different names correspond to social self-schemata that co-exist in the character's self-concept. Emmott's claim that the character has a split self is based on her conflicting social role self-schemata, which describe her self-concept at the present time. Thus, characters' mental/physical splits and social splits are due to differing self-schemata that characterise the working self-concept at present.

As for Emmott's 'real-imaginary' self split, it refers to cases in which characters create future hypothetical selves in relation to, for example, their hopes or fears<sup>2</sup>. Following Markus and Nurius (1986), these split selves correspond to possible selves, the hypothetical dimension of the self-concept, which I have been analysing in the rest of this chapter. There is a relevant distinction between the nature of the 'real-imaginary' split and that of the 'mental/physical' or 'social' split. The former split is caused by hypothetical self-schemata that may describe the self in the future, whereas the latter type originates from self-schemata that describe the character's current self-concept. I consider that this difference is extremely significant for characterisation purposes, because of its implications for the analysis of the self-concept.

Finally, the category 'time 1- time 2' splits refers to a character changing his/her self-concept as the narrative evolves, so that readers need to update their mental representations for them. However, I consider that these different past and present

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<sup>2</sup> I treat 'imaginary selves' as hypothetical images of the self to be attained in the future. However, a character may project a past 'imaginary self', which would refer to a hypothetical image conceived in a past time.

versions of a character, which Emmott terms ‘narrative enactors’ (1997: 180), would not be conceptualised by readers as split selves, since the development of a character’s self-concept (for example, from young to adult or from sane to insane) does not imply that the character is divided. For this reason, I assume that ‘time 1 – time 2’ splits would fit into the category of splits due to the nature of the narrative, because the development of the plot usually involves a development of the characters, rather than to the category of splits due to the nature of character.

In conclusion, in this section my emphasis will be on cases of split selves which define characters’ current self-schemata, instead of splits which derive from hypothetical self-schemata, which was the topic of the previous sections<sup>3</sup>. Within Emmott’s classification, these selves correspond to the mental / physical instantiation and to ‘social self’ splits. Some of the notions from cognitive linguistics which were expounded in the theoretical section (7.2.2), especially Lakoff’s analysis of metaphor, will be applied to my choice of narratives when necessary.

### **8.5.1 *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*: mental / physical instantiation**

Emmott (2002) considers Robert Louis Stevenson’s (1886) *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* as one of the exponent narratives which depicts the split self as the main theme of the text, though she does not analyse it. In this classic story, Dr Jekyll concocts a potion which turns him into a different man, Mr Hyde, with a different physical appearance and an evil personality. It is only the last chapter of the story that presents a first person narration by Dr Jekyll (the rest of the text is a narration by another character), so that his confession provides the linguistic basis for a study of his

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<sup>3</sup>Although the emphasis is on current self-schemata, it will be necessary to deal with hypothetical self-schemata when the character’s self-concept contains both types of splits simultaneously.

split self. This story serves as exemplification for different types of split selves distinguished by Emmott (2002): mind-mind split, mind-body split and body-body split. I will provide thus an analysis of each of these splits, bearing in mind their interdependence in this particular case.

In his confession, the protagonist of the novel states overtly that there is a good side of him and an evil one, so that he suffers from a mind-mind split. Numerous examples of this split abound in his narrative: 'I stood already committed to a profound duplicity of life' (p. 42); 'both sides of me' (p. 42); 'the two natures' (p. 42, p. 48); 'the good' and 'the bad side of my nature' (p. 44); 'my second character' (p. 46, p. 51); 'my double' (p. 47); 'my second self' (p. 48); 'my double existence' (p. 48); 'my original and better self' and 'my second and worse' (p. 48); 'my original character' (p. 51). In fact, Jekyll predicts that the nature of mankind is, at least, twofold, as every individual is divided between good and evil: 'man is not truly one, but truly two' (p. 43); 'all human beings, as we meet them, are commingled out of good and evil' (p. 45).

Moreover, Jekyll puts in plain words some current notions from cognitive psychology regarding the dynamic nature of the self-concept (Markus and Wurf 1987), when he ventures: 'I hazard that man will be ultimately known for a mere policy of multifarious, incongruous and independent denizes' (p. 43). Being conscious of the duality of mankind and of the limitations of his knowledge, Jekyll foresees that man's nature may include different personalities, or 'denizes', as he calls them. These considerations are in line with theories about the self-concept which proclaim its multifacetedness, accounted for in terms of the working self-concept, which is context-specific (see section 6.2). Therefore, in cognitive psychology terms, mind-mind splits would correspond to the contextual activation of different aspects of the self-concept, which would regulate subsequent behaviour. In Jekyll's case, his mind-mind split

corresponds to the alternating activation of a GOOD-PERSON self-schema and an EVIL-PERSON self-schema.

The language used in Jekyll's narration reveals that the mental split between his good and evil sides is conceptualised in terms of the PEOPLE IN CONFLICT metaphor (Lakoff 1996): 'these polar twins would be continuously *struggling*' (p. 43). Moreover, he also uses vocabulary related to warfare to refer to his double nature. Thus, there is a 'deeper *trench* than the majority of men' (p. 42) between his good and ill sides; and he makes reference to 'the perennial *war* among my members' (p. 42), 'the *field* of my consciousness' (p. 43), '*fortress* of identity' (p. 44), 'in the *ranks* of mankind' (p. 45); '[I] *conquered* my aversions' (p. 45). When readers encounter these words in the text, their WAR schema gets activated, as well as its entailing combative associations which, together with the PEOPLE IN CONFLICT metaphor, provide the reader information to form a mental representation of Jekyll's conflicting self-concept.

Jekyll's goal in the development of the potion is to create another identity for himself, that is, another physical appearance which would contain his evil side so that he could not be blamed for his immoral acts. Thus, his objective can be reformulated as reproducing his mind-mind split into a body-body split, so that he could be two different persons both morally and physically: 'I had now two characters as well as two appearances' (p. 45). The fact that each man embodies a different morality is conceptualised by Jekyll through his use of the CONTAINER metaphor: his two sides 'could be *housed* in separate identities' (p. 43). Therefore, the body is the container of the 'identity' or 'character' so that the body-body split contains a mind-mind split.

However, Jekyll uses the CONTAINER metaphor in an idiosyncratic way, to refer to the fact that his body contains the person of Dr Jekyll, without distinguishing his physical appearance from his evil identity. This can be observed in the following

examples: ‘my devil had long been *caged*, and he *came out* roaring’ (p. 49), ‘the animal *within* me’ (p. 51); ‘the brute that slept *within* me’ (p. 52). The words ‘the devil’, ‘the animal’, and ‘the brute’ make reference to Mr Hyde as a whole, so that in this case, the metaphor projects Dr Jekyll as the container of Mr Hyde.

Moreover, the CONTAINER metaphor is further particularised when Jekyll refers to people’s bodies as the ‘clothes’ of identity. I would like to call this phenomenon the DRESS metaphor, as exemplified in: ‘body in which we walk *attired*’ (p. 43) or ‘fleshy *vestment*’ (p. 43). But, following the argument of the previous paragraph, some of the narrator’s metaphors refer to the fact that Dr Jekyll *puts on* the person of Mr Hyde: ‘a thick *cloak*’ (p. 46); ‘my impenetrable *mantle*’ (p. 46), ‘my *disguise*’ (p. 46); ‘when I *wore* that form’ (p. 48). The following fragment is an illustrative example of the dress as CONTAINER metaphor:

(50) I was the first [man] that could thus plod in the public eye with a load of genial respectability, and in a moment, like a schoolboy, *strip off these lendings* and *spring* headlong into the sea of liberty. (*The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, p. 46)

In this case, rather than putting on, Jekyll takes off his ‘lendings’, his own appearance, so what remains within is Hyde, who can ‘spring’ and act freely.

According to Emmott (2002), the split self can also be signalled linguistically by the narrator’s choice of referring expressions. Thus, although Jekyll refers to himself as ‘I’ most of the time, when he is contrasting the two men, he uses the referents ‘Henry Jekyll’ and ‘Edward Hyde’, for clarity of expression. However, at certain moments, Jekyll expresses his alienation from his other side and refers to it using the third person neuter pronoun ‘it’ rather than ‘he’, objectifying his other nature:

(51) ‘*This*, too, was myself. *It* seemed natural and human. In my eyes *it* bore a livelier image of the spirit, *it* seemed more express and single’ (*The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, p. 45, my emphasis).

Significantly, at the end of the narration, the moment of greatest crisis, the character refers to himself using his proper name and a distant deictic, ‘that unhappy Henry Jekyll’ (p. 54), without overt contrast with Hyde, in order to express self-alienation. Moreover, the protagonist also uses third person pronouns to refer to his own person so as to express the feeling of lost of identity, because Hyde takes possession of his body. In the following quotations, the pronouns in italics refer to Hyde:

(52) That insurgent horror [Mr. Hyde] was knit to *him* closer than a wife, closer than an eye; lay caged in *his* flesh, where *he* heard it mutter and felt it struggle to be born, and in the confidence of slumber, prevailed against *him*, and deposed *him* out of life. (*The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, p. 53)

I would like to end this section simply pointing out a last example of a body-body split found in the *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* story. This type of example abound in the paralysis texts chosen by Emmott (2002), but are rarer elsewhere. In this case, the split between Jekyll’s body and his hand is relevant because it reveals the fact that he has been turned into Hyde without drinking the potion for the first time:

(53) Now, the hand of Henry Jekyll (as you have often remarked) was professional in shape and size; it was large, firm, white and comely. But the hand which I now saw, clearly enough in the yellow light of a mid-London morning, lying half shut on the bedclothes, was lean, corded, knuckly, of a dusky pallor and thickly shaded with a swart growth of hair. It was the hand of Edward Hyde. (*The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, p. 47)

Conclusively, I consider that the linguistic analysis of these fragments has thrown light on how Jekyll conceptualises his own duality. Dr Jekyll, who has a specific physical appearance and an essentially good personality *contains* Mr Hyde, who has a rather deformed body and an utterly evil nature. Moreover, Jekyll is in *conflict* with

Hyde not only because of their conflicting natures, but because the latter is increasingly in control of Jekyll's body until the fatal end of the novel. The Jekyll and Hyde text provides evidence of how different aspects of the working self-concept are conceptualised and how the reader can create a mental representation of the character's self-concept through his use of metaphors and referring expressions.

### **8.5.2 Social role splits**

According to cognitive psychology, the self-concept includes an individual's mental representation of his or her social roles, amongst other self-schemata (see section 6.2.1). These social roles may be varied, so that a person may activate a SIBLING self-schema, a PARTNER self-schema, a BUSINESSMAN self-schema, a CHINESE-LEARNER self-schema, a NEIGHBOUR self-schema, etc., depending on contextual factors. These self-schemata will further influence the person's processing of self-relevant information as well as social interaction. Thus, the person's linguistic acts will vary depending on the social role activated in the working self-concept in any communicative situation (see section 2.2.1 on the social context).

In literary narratives, characters are usually immersed in social contexts and may be attributed several social roles. Emmott (2002) analyses the split social self as characters' *sense of fragmentation* relative to their social identities. She points out that a character's use of different proper names may sometimes correspond to different aspects of identity, as perceived by the same character or by others. Texts in which a character suffers from a crisis of identity or Emmott's paralysis narratives provide good grounds for the analysis of the social role split self. On other occasions, it may be a matter of the reader's interpretation to decide whether a given character simply activates

different social role self-schemata or whether s/he suffers from a split self. An illustrative example is found in the novel *Lolita*.

The first person narrator Humbert Humbert offers, in the second paragraph of the novel, a description of Lolita's social identities providing different proper names for her different social roles (highlighted in italics).

(54) She was *Lo*, plain *Lo*, in the morning, standing four feet ten in one sock. She was *Lola* in slacks. She was *Dolly* at school. She was *Dolores* on the dotted line. But in my arms she was always *Lolita*. (*Lolita*, p. 9)

Although readers do not have access to Lolita's mental world and self-concept, as the novel is told from Humbert's point of view, there is no indication in the text that the nymphet feels her self to be split. Neither does Humbert convey the idea that she has a divided self in terms of social identity. Rather, I consider that the juxtaposition of the girl's identity as a child with her identity as his lover is used by Humbert to put an emphasis on his own cognitive condition as a pederast. Therefore, his perception of Lolita's various selves is revealing about his own self-concept.

As for Humbert's own self, I consider that the different aspects of his social identities do not involve a split self either, given that he uses these identities as a cover to his love affair:

(55) The *child therapist* in me (a fake, as most of them are – but no matter) re-gurgitated neo-Freudian hash and conjured up a dreaming and exaggerating *Dolly* in the 'latency' period of girlhood. Finally, the *sensualist* in me (a great and insane monster) had no objection to some depravity in his prey. (*Lolita*, p. 124)

(56) I was such a thoughtful *friend*, such a passionate *father*, such a good *pediatrician*, attending to all the wants of my little auburn brunette's body! (*Lolita*, p. 165)

Thus, Humbert's different social identities related to his relationship with Lolita involve, among others, being a 'child therapist', a 'sensualist', a 'friend', a 'father', and

a 'pediatrician'. However, I would not propose that his use of language reveals a social self split as there exists no conflict in his identity. Thus, a simple enumeration of social selves is not enough to consider that a character suffers from a social split self, because if the character has no feeling of fragmentation, the various social role self-schemata may co-exist harmoniously.

On the contrary, the novel *The Hours* by Michael Cunningham (1998) includes a character who suffers from a social split self, revealing a crisis of identity. In this novel, Cunningham utilises Virginia Woolf's working title for her novel *Mrs Dalloway*, and he echoes this text as the link among the parallel stories about three women living in different places and at different periods of time. Laura Brown, one of the female protagonists, is a woman in her mid-thirties living in Los Angeles, in 1949. She is a married housewife, who has a four-year son and is pregnant again. The first piece of information readers encounter about her is that Laura enjoys reading as an 'entry into a parallel world' (p. 37), and she is currently reading *Mrs Dalloway*. However, reading provokes in her feelings of guilt for not carrying out her duties with her family. The novel narrates a single day in her life, the day of her husband's birthday, in which she wants to bake a perfect cake for him. Although the whole narrative text is told by a third person omniscient narrator, readers have access to the mental world of characters as each narration is told from each protagonist's point of view.

As for the split self, readers encounter fragments in which Laura is referred to using different referring expressions, depending on which social self is denoted :

(57) So now she is Laura Brown. Laura Zielski, the solitary girl, the incessant reader, is gone, and here in her place is Laura Brown. (*The Hours*, p. 40)

Laura's past social self as a single woman, Laura Zielski, contrasts with her current social self, Laura Brown, as a wife and mother. In fact, she stresses the break and lack

of continuity between her two social selves as Laura Brown is in 'place' of Laura Zielski. The attributes of her single woman self, 'solitary' and 'incessant reader', seem to have no place in her family woman self, so that the latter self has to substitute the former. In section 6.2.2.2, I explained that social cognition theories propose that individuals need to assume new self-views after a change in status, such as getting married or having a child, which implies a change in the self-concept. However, the theory emphasises that the self-concept also needs to maintain consistency with previous views of self as a way of regulating affect. Thus, assuming a PARENT self-schema involves a change in some aspects of the self-concept, while other core aspects need to remain intact. Bearing this in mind, we could foretell that Laura's substitution of one self for another may lead to negative affect and a crisis of identity due to the lack of continuity in core aspects of her self-concept, such as her hobby of reading.

Apart from the contrast between her social selves, the single woman versus the family woman, Laura also expresses future alternative selves which are related to her social roles:

(58) She wants to be a competent mother reading calmly to her child; she wants to be a wife who sets a perfect table. She does not want, not at all, to be the strange woman, the pathetic creature, full of quirks and rages, solitary, sulking, tolerated but not loved. (*The Hours*, p. 101)

In this fragment, Laura imagines a future version of herself as she wants to become, and a future self she wants to avoid being. These alternative future conceptions of a character would be classified by Emmott (2002) as 'imagined selves', which are 'different versions of the self' 'created in the imagination in line with fears, hopes, predictions, etc. about the future' (2002: 167). In narratives, the function of these imagined selves, which I prefer to call 'possible selves', may be to motivate characters to take future action.

Following the line of argument of the previous sections, the expression of Laura's desired image of herself reveals two possible selves: her ideal mother self and her ideal wife self. The projection of ideal selves reveals a conflict, a self-discrepancy, with her actual self, because there are some aspects of her self-concept that she wishes to change. Laura feels guilty for not carrying out properly her duties as mother and wife, and considers that she lacks what other mothers have: 'an ongoing mother-self to guide them in negotiating the days spent alone with a child' (47). Interestingly, the notion 'ongoing mother-self' refers to the social role self-schema Laura thinks she lacks. Thus, she is *schematic* on the MOTHER self-schema, though she thinks she lacks the appropriate self-schema (see section 2.3.1.3).

Moreover, apart from her ideal selves, Laura expresses an undesired self: an image of herself she wishes to avoid becoming. She does not want to be 'strange', 'pathetic', 'full of quirks and rages, solitary, sulking, tolerated but not loved'. Undesired selves act as sources of motivation for individuals to regulate their behaviour and avoid becoming what they do not want to be. Both Laura's ideal selves and undesired self contrast with her actual self, and they provide images of herself to be attained and images of herself to be avoided simultaneously.

The fragments analysed so far have demonstrated that Laura's crisis of identity is due to the conflict between different aspects of her self-concept. On the one hand, she suffers from a conflict due to the discrepancy between her past single woman social role and her family woman social role. This is due to the fact that some of her self-schemata belonging to her former self (e.g. solitary, reader) are not compatible with her duties as mother and wife. On the other hand, the self-discrepancy between her actual self and her possible selves reinforces the conflict regarding her social selves. Laura suffers both from a discrepancy between her actual self and the ideal self as the 'family woman' she

wants to become, and from a discrepancy between her actual self and the undesired self as a 'strange woman' she wishes to avoid becoming. This situation leads to the moment of greatest crisis in her story when she spends some time at a hotel room considering committing suicide.

At the hotel room, Laura continues with her reading of *Mrs Dalloway*, and her thoughts about death vanish when she thinks of her future baby, her son, and her husband. The following fragment, in which she drives back home, provides access to her mental world, revealing an acceptance of her self-concept and a new harmony between her social roles.

(59) Laura occupies a twilight zone of sorts; a world composed of London in the twenties, of a turquoise hotel room, and of this car, driving down this familiar street. She is herself and not herself. She is a woman in London, an aristocrat, pale and charming, a little false; she is Virginia Woolf; and she is this other, the inchoate, tumbling thing known as herself, a mother, a driver, a swirling streak of pure life like the Milky Way, a friend of Kitty (whom she's kissed, who may be dying), a pair of hands with coral-colored fingernails (one chipped) and a diamond wedding band gripping the wheel of a Chevrolet. (*The Hours*, p. 187-8)

Laura's working self-concept at this point is influenced by the context in which she finds herself. Having been reading *Mrs Dalloway*, she thinks of herself as Virginia Woolf, so we could say that she activates a WOOLF self-schema. At the same time, the thought of her own death and its dismissal has led her to a new awareness of her self-concept, which includes a variety of self-schemata, such as the MOTHER self-schema, the FRIEND OF KITTY self-schema, and the WIFE self-schema. Her working self-concept is an amalgam of these social roles self-schemata, the WOOLF self-schema, and even a DRIVER self-schema activated by the immediate situation. Her new perception of her self-concept and her acceptance of her social roles is reiterated in the text on several occasions, 'She knows herself as a wife and mother, pregnant again,

driving home, as veils of water are tossed up into the air.' (p. 191), so that I would like to propose that her working self-concept is no longer split.

The analysis of Laura's mental world has thrown light on a character who suffers from a split relative to her social roles and the resolution of the split self. The social role split is revealed in the conflict between her past and present social roles, as expressed through her different names, and in the conflict between alternative future selves, relative to her social roles, and her actual self. The resolution of her crisis of identity, and the disappearance of the split self, arrives when she accepts her various social role self-schemata and expresses them as the harmonious parts of her working self-concept.

In conclusion, in this section I have used Emmott's work on the split self to analyse characters' self-concepts, paying particular attention to mental/physical splits and social self splits. For this purpose, I have used cognitive psychology assumptions about the self-concept which were expounded in the theoretical sections. Through this analysis, I have demonstrated the potential of this theory as an analytical tool for the analysis of the split self, as a complement to notions from cognitive linguistics.

## **8.6 Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have provided a study of how readers construct characters' possible selves on the basis of an analysis of the language of narratives, with an emphasis on cognitive notions about the functioning of the self-concept. I have combined notions from three interrelated theoretical backgrounds, socio-cognitive psychology, possible worlds theory, and cognitive linguistics, together with a pragmatic analysis of the narrative texts, to arrive at a deeper understanding of how the possible selves of characters are inferred during the processing of narrative texts. I have proposed that

readers create a mental representation of characters' possible selves as part of their self-concept and, at the same time, this mental representation includes the readers' conception and opinion about characters, which is influenced by the readers' existing schemata.

I have particularly focused on the parallelisms between psychological notions about possible selves, as the hypothetical component of characters' self-concepts, and the narrative realisation of characters' possible worlds. I have demonstrated how characters' possible selves, especially ideal, ought and not-me selves, can be projected in various sub-worlds, mainly wish worlds, fantasy universes, obligation worlds, intention worlds, and negative worlds. Apart from hypothetical possible selves, I have also analysed characters who presented various actual possible selves, which were due to a mental/physical instantiation or to a social role split. I have proposed that it is ultimately the reader who interprets the characters' multiple selves as different manifestations of their working self-concepts.

My research in this chapter presents an informative and innovative area to study how readers build a mental representation of characters through the type of possible selves that characters construct and their processes of self-regulation to achieve them, e.g. an ideal self, not to achieve them, e.g. an undesired self, or their lack of self-regulation. For this purpose, I have proposed a pragmatic analysis of the linguistic expression of these self-guides and their corresponding possible worlds using, for example, modality and transitivity patterns, or Grice's conversational principles and CP. More generally, I have hypothesised about the role of possible selves as indicators of world view, given the social component of ought or ideal selves in relation to socially shared obligations and values, and as indicators of mind style, as revealed in the

expression of peculiar or even criminal possible selves and atypical processes of self-regulation.

## 9 Self-presentation in characterisation

### 9.1 Introduction

In this chapter, my aim is to hypothesise about how readers might arrive at mental representations of characters through the way they self-present to others. Margolin states that characters may characterise themselves to an interlocutor/correspondent, and this characterisation is referred to as the 'projected self-image' (1986: 224). Using the terminology of this thesis, I would refer to the same phenomenon as the 'presented self-concept'. I will offer here a linguistic analysis of characters' use of language for self-presentational purposes, complemented with theories from socio-cognitive psychology relating to self-presentation issues, in order to throw light on how readers represent the workings of characters' mental worlds. Thus, the objectives of the chapter are (1) to provide a pragmatic analysis of characters' styles in projecting self-images and managing the impressions others form of them, and (2) to study how readers use information about characters' self-presentations to form a cognitive representation of their self-concepts, including further inferences about their personalities and a subjective evaluation of them. Moreover, I will claim that characters' self-presentations can be analysed at two levels. First, a narrator-character may project a self-concept in the narrative text, involving the second level of the discourse architecture proposed by Leech and Short (see 2.4), the level of narrator-narratee. And second, a character may present a given self-image to others in social interaction: the conversations between characters held at the third level. This second level will be the topic of chapter 10.

For these purposes, I will use the notion of self-presentation from social cognition, in order to analyse the styles available to communicate particular identities, focusing

especially on verbal self-presentations (Fiske and Taylor 1984, Arkin and Shepperd 1990, Schlenker 1980). The linguistic behaviour of characters will be studied using various theories from pragmatics, especially politeness theory (Brown and Levinson 1987), as the concept of facework has been widely related to social interaction, and Grice's (1975) cooperative principle and conversational maxims.

In the first section of this chapter, I will offer the theoretical background from cognitive theories of self-presentation. Then, I will relate the various self-presentation styles to politeness strategies of face management in order to suggest some developments of politeness theory. In the last section, I will apply the notions from the theoretical sections to an analysis of the linguistic behaviour of various characters. My general objective for this chapter is to offer new paths for investigating mind style and characterisation through the pragmatic analysis of characters' self-presentations.

## **9.2 Self-presentation**

First of all, this section will begin with a definition of the notion of self-presentation, given that it is a new concept which has not be analysed before in this thesis. I will then describe a wide range of behaviours which may convey information about self-presentations, although verbal self-presentations have been the main topic of research. Moreover, as I will be analysing characters' linguistic behaviour, I will pay special attention to research in this area. Finally, I will also expound a classification of self-presentation behaviours, offering two distinctions, assertive vs. defensive self-presentation, and tactical vs. strategic self-presentation, which will be related to politeness concerns in subsequent sections.

### 9.2.1 Definition

As we saw in chapter 6, individuals attempt to self-regulate their behaviour and mental world in order to test and alter their self-concepts. Thus, I suggested that self-regulation processes are influenced by three motives: the desire for accuracy, consistency and self-enhancement. Apart from these intrapersonal motives, another aspect of self-regulation involves social interaction with others, responding to interpersonal motives (Fiske and Taylor 1984). People are usually concerned with the image of self that they present to others: we are concerned with self-presentation issues. This image may be temporary, as the image of competence one presents in a job interview to a potential employer, or it can be permanent, as when one wants to convey to others the image of a successful or fun-loving person. Usually, people try to cause a good impression on others, but there may be cases in which an ambiguous or poor impression may be one's goal. In a similar way, in social interactions people also develop a conception of others' identities which, in concert with their own identities, provides the basis for regulating interpersonal conduct and developing relationships (Schlenker 1984, McGuire and McGuire 1986).

As Holtgraves (2002) suggests, people's speech constitutes a relevant source of information to infer traits and motives, as well as to evaluate others. Thus, accent may be indicative of origin or social class; a high speech rate may lead to inferences of speaker's nervousness; the recognition of violations of the maxim of quality leads hearers to infer that the speaker is a liar; the absence of a response to a greeting, a second pair part of an adjacency pair, may indicate a cognitive problem in the hearer, or that the person is deaf, or that s/he simply has a bad day. But, although speech is informative about speakers, the meaning of any linguistic variable will depend on contextual factors, regarding the characteristics of the interlocutors and the setting. The

fact that there exists no one-to-one relationship between linguistic variables and personality traits does not invalidate the linguistic analysis of speech for self-presentation purposes, but it demonstrates the need to take context into account in any analysis of language, and the capacity of language to manipulate contextual variables and the relationships between interlocutors.

As language variables are associated with social categories and personality characteristics, language use is a rich source of information for forming impressions of others. On the basis of this premise, self-presentation considers the ways in which speakers convey an image of self to others through their use of language as the most informative type of behaviour about self-presentational styles. Self-presentation may be strategic, as when we vary our talk to achieve a particular effect in the hearer. For example, at a job interview, the interviewee may fail to observe the modesty maxim (Leech 1983) in order to convey an image of expertise, or s/he may use Received Pronunciation in order to cause an impression of education and higher social class. Therefore, attempts at impression management<sup>1</sup> may either have the goal to create specific impressions on the hearer (e.g. status, likeability) or may attempt a re-negotiation of the relationship between the two participants (e.g. power). We have to take into account that language is both shaped by the social context and that it may also create and modify that very context.

Although various fields of research have studied self-presentation strategies, such as psychology, sociology, communication or anthropology, I will concentrate on the research undertaken within the field of psychology complementing it with a more in depth study of the linguistic realisation of self-presentation. For this reason, politeness theory and the conversational maxims will be a useful tool in the linguistic analysis of

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<sup>1</sup> Authors use either of these two terms 'self-presentation' or 'impression management' to refer to the same phenomenon (see, for example, Arkin and Shepperd 1990). My choice of the term 'self-presentation' stems from its association with the speaker's 'self'.

self-presentation, given that these theories study how interpersonal concerns motivate many aspects of language use (Holtgraves 2002).

### 9.2.2 Types of self-presentation behaviours

Most research concerning self-presentation has concentrated on verbal claims about the self. However, both verbal and non-verbal behaviours may potentially convey information about self and thus, may be used as a self-presentation strategy. Schneider (1981) provides a classification of self-presentational strategies distinguishing between four classes, which will be explained below: (a) non-verbal and expressive behaviours; (b) artifactual displays; (c) purposive behaviours; and (d) verbal presentations. It is noticeable that this list resembles the characterisation checklists mentioned in 2.5.2, by Rimmon-Kennan and Culpeper, whose work is based on attribution theories from the socio-cognitive framework. Even though my analysis will concentrate on characters' use of language for self-presentational purposes, I consider it necessary to contemplate the possibility of other behaviours available for self-presentation.

As for *expressive behaviours*, such as smiles, frowns, yawns, eye contact or firmness of handshake, they may be taken as indicative of the actor's momentary moods and feelings, though they may also reflect more enduring states. A yawn may indicate a transitory state of boredom, but it may indirectly reveal a more enduring set of behaviours. Non-verbal and expressive behaviours are useful in creating impressions about interpersonal style traits, such as warmth, intensity, modesty or sincerity, and impressions about emotional states, such as happiness. However, expressive behaviours usually interact with other types of behaviours (usually verbal) to modify their meaning.

By *artifactual displays*, Schneider refers to the use of appearance cues or possessions for self-presentation purposes. Research has demonstrated that physical appearance cues (e.g. dress) and situational contexts for behaviour (e.g. ostentation of wealth in a low-class environment) affect perceptions of people (Schneider et al. 1979). Schneider (1981: 27) also claims that the concern with dress, cosmetics, status-possessions, the ability to know the right people and to be associated with successful others, or to live in the right neighbourhood indicate that artifactual displays do affect impressions.

*Purposive behaviours* are potentially useful as self-presentation tactics because intentions and purposes convey information about the personality of the actor. Some ingratiation tactics such as conformity, other enhancement, or gift giving, as well as other interpersonal behaviours such as aggression, requests for help or moral condemnation, have a self-presentational component influencing impression formation. Purposive behaviours may or may not be enacted to elicit some response from others, but they are potential sources of information about the actor and may thus be manipulated for strategic self-presentation.

Although *verbal presentation* has been the main area of research within self-presentation, Schneider suggests that it is the mix of all strategies mentioned so far that constitutes a person's self-presentation style. All types of behaviours interact with one another so that, for example, as Schneider puts it, 'non-verbal behaviours may be used to suggest that the actor does not intend to have his verbal statements taken at face value; he is only kidding or is being falsely modest or bragging' (1981: 28). Although the basis for my analytical sections will be the linguistic study of characters' language, I will consider any narratological commentary about characters' behaviours that may

denote self-presentation issues which may influence the reader's mental representation of the character's self-concept.

Regarding verbal presentation, Holtgraves (2002) considers self-presentation from a social-psychological perspective taking into account pragmatic aspects of language use. He provides a general overview of how three aspects of linguistic behaviour, that is, social variation, stylistic variation, and the management of conversational rules, can be related to self-presentation issues. He analyses *social variation* in language claiming that language variables are related to social variables (e.g. ethnicity, social class or group membership), as studied in the field of sociolinguistics. Thus, the speaker's language may activate a social category for the perceiver and, consequently, the perceiver's evaluation of speaker may be influenced by that very category, which may be connected with stereotypes. Language styles or registers (e.g. powerful vs. powerless styles) can reflect social variation and be associated with certain social groups (e.g. men's speech vs. women's speech). Apart from these linguistic features, certain extra-linguistic variables which can be used for self-presentation purposes include lexical diversity, associated with competence, control, high status or low anxiety; utterance length, related to competence; and speech rate, indicative of credibility, persuasiveness or competence. Moreover, content variables, what people talk about, is also informative about their personalities, being an area which may be used strategically.

As for *stylistic variation*, Holtgraves considers the linguistic variables which are related to social variation in relation with other speech participants, such as linguistic differences of register or code-switching within a person. This author proposes 'accommodation theory' as an analytical tool that may throw light on self-presentation issues. He analyses how conversational partners sample each other's speech and alter various aspects of their language use in order to achieve similarity with each other. This

convergence would lead to likeability and approval from one's conversational partner. Thus, the final purpose of the accommodation of one's language is to strategically self-present in a positive light in order to elicit a positive evaluation from our interlocutors. Most importantly, Holtgraves considers that politeness concerns allow for linguistic variation which reflects the strategic negotiation of the interpersonal context. In the analytical sections of this chapter, I will pay special attention to the analysis of the management of facework, due to its correlation with self-presentation issues.

Finally, the last resource to manage one's impressions, according to Holtgraves, depends on the extent to which speakers conform or violate *conversational rules*. The violation of rules regarding issues such as turn-taking, adjacency pairs, or topic change, leads to language-based impressions which are context-dependent. I consider that the observance of Grice's (1975) conversational maxims and the cooperative principle is another relevant issue which leads to the same type of impressions, and I will hypothesise about this point later in this chapter. The violation of a conversational rule is foregrounded and leads hearers to formulate hypotheses regarding the reasons for the violation. Thus, when observing unexpected linguistic behaviour, participants may engage in attributional processing, making inferences about speakers' personalities.

As I have previously explained, in the analytical sections of this chapter, I will concentrate on verbal presentations covering some of the areas proposed by Holtgraves, especially politeness issues and the management of conversational rules. The other types of self-presentation behaviour will be taken into account when necessary because, as Schneider (1981) suggests, all types of behaviour interact with one another and, depending on contextual factors, may lead to the inference of different impressions.

### **9.2.3 Calculated and secondary impressions**

When actors engage in strategical self-presentation, they intend the target to make certain inferences about their identities. However, behaviours may have multiple meanings and interpretations, so that the target's inferences may be different from what the actor had intended. On the one hand, the *calculated impression* refers to 'the organized sum total of the inferences the actor wants the target to draw from his self-presentation' (Schneider 1981: 33). This calculated impression may be as narrow as 'competent driver' or as broad as a general evaluation of likeability. On the other hand, the *secondary impression* refers to 'target inferences that were not specifically intended or desired by the actor' (Schneider 1981: 33). Secondary impressions may not always be undesirable, although they usually are from the actor's point of view. In general, the relevance of secondary impressions is crucial, as they may have the effect of altering the meaning of the calculated impressions.

According to Schneider, secondary impressions are affected by three major factors. First of all, the *credibility of the calculated impression* will affect the creation of a secondary impression. Thus, if the calculated impression is not believed by the target, a secondary impression will be inferred. An actor may provide a false self-presentation, so that s/he is lying about himself/herself, or it may be the case that an actor presents a noncredible self because s/he is self-deceived. In any case, perceptions of lying or self-deception will lead to undesirable secondary impressions.

Second, self-presentations do not only have a content but also a *sense of propriety* (Goffman 1963), so that the context in which a self-presentation is made may influence the secondary impression. For example, claiming to be wealthy or displaying high-status possessions in the inappropriate context may lead to inferences of being vulgar or tactless.

The last factor to take into account is the *style* in which a statement is made. Different styles can convey a number of messages depending on how the message is said and the accompanying behavioural support (non-verbal behaviours mentioned in section 9.2.2). Schneider exemplifies this last factor in the following manner. A person may say directly ‘I am a kind person’, or may use a more indirect presentation ‘I’m always in trouble because of time; I just can’t seem to say no to a friend’. Although the two statements make the same claim the style is different, so that the latter seems safer and more credible.

The essential dilemma of self-presentation concerns the actor’s ability to create a calculated impression without ruining it with an undesired secondary impression. The success of a self-presentation depends then on the ability of the actor to control a wide range of behaviours, those behaviours designed to create the calculated impression and complementary behaviours that support direct claims. As Schneider puts it, ‘the successful actor takes what are normally uncontrolled cues for a secondary impression and makes them ingredients for his calculated impression’ (1981: 38).

In the next chapter, I will use these notions to arrive at conclusions about how characters form what type of impressions about each other from the language used in their conversations, and the consequences for their relationships. Moreover, extrapolating the dichotomy of calculated and secondary impressions to the act of reading, I will also hypothesise about how readers form calculated impressions of characters, which would fit with the desired image they want to project, and secondary impressions, which would correspond to the reader’s further inferences about them, when not consistent with their desired image. One further issue I want to propose is the fact that the reader’s inference of a secondary impression about a character may be considered as a desired primary impression the author wants to convey about that

character. Bearing in mind Leech and Short's (1981) discourse architecture for prose, the reader's inference of a secondary impression about a character ensuing, for example, from a conversation between two characters, can be considered as part of the message that the author of the text aims at transmitting to the reader.

#### 9.2.4 Self-presentational styles

Many researchers, Schlenker (1980), Arkin (1981), Arkin and Shepperd (1990), Tedeschi and Norman (1985), have proposed a distinction between two types of self-presentation: *defensive* and *assertive* self-presentational styles. In general terms, a defensive style occurs when actors believe others may attribute some negative or undesirable attribute to them, a situation usually referred to as a predicament (Schlenker 1980). As Tedeschi and Norman put it, 'actions taken to restore a positive identity or to remove or avoid negative typifications (or transcend them) may be considered defensive impression management and are sometimes referred to as face work (Goffman, 1967)' (1985: 295). An assertive self-presentational style refers to behaviours initiated by an actor to establish particular identities or attributes to others. These behaviours do not intend to defend a particular view of self in the eyes of others but are acquisitive or offensive in nature. Arkin and Shepperd (1990: 184-5) recognise that most attempts at self-presentation involve an intermixing of both assertive and defensive self-presentation styles (they use the terms 'acquisitive' and 'protective' styles, respectively). Thus, they propose that, although the two styles can be distinguished for analytical reasons, most self-presentations are taken for reasons of both promotion as well as self-defence.

A second distinction between self-presentational styles is proposed by Tedeschi and Melburg (1984), who distinguish between *tactical* and *strategic self-presentational behaviours*. In general terms, tactics are actions taken for short-term goals whereas strategic actions are directed to a long-term goal. Thus, tactical self-presentations have short-term objectives, such as to cause a good impression in a job interview to obtain a job. Strategic self-presentation behaviours may help to achieve some short-term objectives too, but their aim is to establish a long-term identity. Strategic self-presentation involves a variety of tactical behaviours that accumulate to establish a particular identity in the eyes of others. Sometimes, behaviours directed towards tactical outcomes may have strategic implications for long-term identities, such as when a person is perceived as alcoholic or mentally ill (Tedeschi and Norman 1985: 296).

On the one hand, behaviours that can be classified both as tactical, designed for short-term objectives, and defensive, intended to avoid a negative impression by others, 'tend to lock the person into a life style characterised by defensive, avoidance, and escape reactions at the expense of assertive, approach, and acquisitive patterns of behaviour' (Tedeschi and Norman 1985: 296). Undesired long-term identities are usually the result of defensive tactical behaviours, so that in those cases, the tactical actions become self-defeating. On the other hand, assertive strategic behaviours are undertaken to establish a long-term identity or reputation. These identities, sometimes referred to as dispositions, traits, character, or personality, are functional for different audiences, are effective across situations, and may influence the effectiveness of short-term tactics.

A classification of self-presentation behaviours into the defensive-assertive and the tactical-strategic categories can be represented by a 2 x 2 matrix, in which we can classify self-presentation behaviours as defensive-tactical, defensive-strategic, assertive-

tactical, or assertive-strategic. Tedeschi and Norman offer the following taxonomy which includes the specific behaviours typical of each category, which will be developed later. These behaviours sometimes fit into more than one category, as the limit between tactical and strategic behaviours may be ambiguous sometimes.

	<b>Tactical</b>	<b>Strategic</b>
<b>Defensive</b>	Accounts Excuses Justifications Disclaimers Self-handicapping Apologies Prosocial behaviour	Alcoholism Drug abuse Phobias Hypochondria Mental Illness Learned helplessness
<b>Assertive</b>	Ingratiation Exemplification Intimidation Supplication Self-promotion Entitlements Enhancements	Attraction Esteem Prestige Status Credibility Trustworthiness

#### 9.2.4.1 Defensive self-presentational tactics

When individuals are faced with a predicament, they feel embarrassment or shame. According to Goffman (1967), embarrassment ensues when ‘the facts at hand threaten to discredit the assumptions a participant finds he has projected about his identity’ (1967: 107-8). So, when individuals consider they are in a situation, a predicament, which threatens their positive self-image because others may infer negative traits about them, they feel embarrassed and may attempt to defend themselves from the undesired

attributes. Individuals have at their disposal a variety of defensive self-presentational tactics to extricate themselves from predicaments and from a spoiled identity, such as accounts, self-handicapping, apologies, and prosocial behaviour, which are explained below.

When an individual has done something that appears strange, immoral or inexplicable, s/he may offer an explanation of their behaviour: an *account*. Accounts are thus offered to avoid our interlocutors making a negative attribution about us. The most important types of accounts are excuses, justifications and disclaimers. An *excuse* is a statement that denies responsibility for negative events. Individuals may negate intention, through excuses such as mental illness, physical disability or pharmaceutical addictions, or they may deny the negative consequences of an event. *Justifications* are statements that provide the reasons for considering a negative behaviour as justified, moral, and even good. Through justifications, actors accept their responsibility for an action but claim that their behaviour abides by established norms and values. Both excuses and justifications are offered after the actor experiences a predicament, but *disclaimers* are explanations for a potentially embarrassing action provided before the action has taken place. Disclaimers may deny responsibility, as excuses, or claim the moral worth of an action, as justifications.

Sometimes, people create impediments to make it difficult or impossible to achieve their objectives. *Self-handicapping* behaviour, such as alcoholism, provides the excuse for poor performance and the avoidance of a negative attribution by observers (see section 4.3.6). Tedeschi and Norman (1985: 299) consider self-handicapping as similar to disclaimers, because it offers a ready-made excuse for failure. *Apologies* are defined by Goffman (1971) as confessions of responsibility for negative actions which contain some expression of remorse. Apologies seek to realign the individual with the

standards of the audience, as they recognise the immoral character of a previous action. The goal of an apology is to gain a pardon or a more positive identity. Finally, actors may engage in *prosocial behaviour* after a predicament in order to claim more positive identities for themselves. By engaging in behaviours that benefit others, actors may compensate for a transgression.

#### **9.2.4.2 Assertive self-presentational tactics**

Actors may choose to present identities aimed at gaining immediate rewards from their audience, such as being liked. Assertive tactics are meant to cause some emotion in the hearer, such as fear, respect, sympathy or liking, so that the target is motivated to do something beneficial for the speaker. The most widely investigated tactic is ingratiation, but other tactics include exemplification, intimidation, supplication, self-promotion, entitlements, and enhancements.

According to Jones (1964), *ingratiation* consists of 'behaviours illicitly designed to influence a particular other person concerning the attractiveness of one's personal qualities'. The goal of ingratiation tactics is thus to gain immediate approval and liking from one's audience. This tactic includes four different behaviours: (1) self-enhancing statements about one's positive characteristics; (2) flattery, that is, positive statements about others; (3) opinion conformity with others; and (4) doing favours.

The other assertive tactics proposed by Jones and Pittman (1982) have in common that the actor engages in the tactic to manipulate others and achieve a short-term reward or avoid a punishment. It is important to bear in mind that if the use of these tactics becomes habitual, they may have implications for long-term identities. Through *exemplification* behaviour, actors self-present as morally worthy, and may wish to elicit imitation by others so that they gain some objective. For example, employers may

always arrive at work on time and never exceed break times so that their employees imitate their behaviour and their ultimate goal, higher productivity, is achieved. The aim of *intimidation* tactics is to produce fear in the hearer so that the believability of the speaker's threats is increased, as well as the hearer's compliance. Through *supplication* behaviour, the actor self-presents as a weak, needy or dependent person in order to induce prosocial or socially responsible behaviour from others. The tactic of *self-promotion* consists on positive statements about self with the goal of creating an image of competence, such as intelligence or knowledge skills at a job interview. Finally, through *entitlements and enhancements*, which are the opposite of excuses, actors seek to associate self with positive events in order to get approbation and rewards for such positive behaviour.

#### **9.2.4.3 Defensive and assertive self-presentational strategies**

The habitual use of defensive tactics across situations and time may lead the hearer to infer a secondary impression (see section 9.2.3) involving an undesired identity. According to Tedeschi and Norman (1985), when these negative identities result from tactical behaviour, the behaviour is considered strategic in its implications. Some examples of these undesired identities created through the secondary impressions of defensive tactics include mental illness, addiction, alcoholism, helplessness and anxiety. These categories represent strategic forms of self-handicapping which excuse almost any kind of unwonted behaviour by the actor.

As for assertive strategies, not much research has been carried out regarding the positive images of self people try to establish for themselves in the long run. Generally, it has been assumed that a positive identity includes the attributes of competence and likeability. A power-oriented view of self-presentation suggests that a positive identity

possesses the potential of influencing others. Thus, actors aim at creating identities which maintain and increase their power over other people. When assertive behaviours are directed towards constructing a long-term identity rather than achieving short-term advantages in immediate interactions, the behaviours are considered strategic.

### **9.3 Self-presentation and politeness theory**

In this section, I will contrast various facets of self-presentation theory and politeness theory to provide the theoretical foundation for part of the cognitive stylistic analysis of the last part of the chapter. First, I will compare the two theories to analyse three divergent points and establish my position in those respects. Then, I will account for my proposal of a relationship between the linguistic realisation of facework strategies and the projection of self-images in self-presentational verbal behaviours. Finally, I will hypothesise about the parallelisms between the notions of positive and negative politeness and assertive and defensive self-presentation styles, which have a common origin in Goffman's research (1967).

#### **9.3.1 Assessment of two theories**

I would like to offer a comparison between self-presentation theory, as it has been expounded in the previous section, and Brown and Levison's politeness theory, which was explained and used as an analytical tool in previous chapters. Both theories have their origin in Goffman's approach to face and facework (1959, 1961, 1971), but their different theoretical assumptions and analytical methodologies confer each of them with their own advantages and shortcomings. My objective then is to consider the positive

and negative aspects of each theory in order to hypothesise about new directions for politeness theory. These new insights into politeness will be taken into consideration in an analysis of literary characters' use of language, with the ultimate aim of arriving at conclusions about mind style and characterisation.

First of all, some self-presentation theorists propose self-presentation as the actor's *strategic* manipulation of information about self in order to cause a specific impression on the receiver. In this respect, Tedeschi and Norman propose that 'impression management is concerned with public displays of identities, *sincere or not*' (1985: 315, my emphasis), so that 'self-presentations may be sincere in terms of the actor's own self-image or may represent dissembling' (1985: 293). Self-presentation research assumes that there exists a true or private self and a non-true, strategic self, each of them being manifested in different social interactions (Tracy 1990: 215). Thus, one of the concerns of this tradition is to distinguish when people are presenting their private self and when they manifest their public selves.

In relation to politeness theory, there exists the assumption that the analysis of linguistic behaviour in social interaction reveals face concerns, which at the same time may be revealing about personality aspects, without questioning the truthfulness of these concerns or personality traits. Moreover, the strategic manipulation of the social variables of power, distance and rating of the imposition throws light on the identities people claim and attempt to negotiate in social interaction, without considering whether such identities are true or false. My position in relation to the topic of the sincerity of the self-image being projected conforms to the view taken by politeness theory. I will consider any self-image projected by a character as forming part of their self-concepts, either as self-schemata or as own / other possible selves. For example, if a character projects a self-image of power, I will consider that it forms part of his/her self-concept.

If the character is negotiating his/her power position, the powerful self-image may form part of his/her ideal self, that still forms part of the working self-concept.

Secondly, self-presentation, although occurring in social interaction, is studied as a one-way phenomenon, paying attention to the speaker almost exclusively. In spite of the fact that some authors recognise the relevancy of the role of the receiver of the self-presentation (i.e. Schneider's (1981) consideration of secondary impressions), the shortcoming involved in its being a speaker-oriented theory can also be observed on its analytical tools. Instead of analysing people's behaviour in social interaction, the analysis of data restricts itself to laboratory experiments in which subjects fill out questionnaires about hypothetical situations dealing with self-presentation topics.

Conversely, politeness theory is supposed to take into account the speaker's and the hearer's face concerns to a certain extent. Due to the origin of Brown and Levinson's theory in speech act theory, politeness theory was originally designed for the study of interaction, so that its focus was on the communication between a speaker and a hearer who changed roles in each conversational turn. After criticisms about the restrictions of an analysis of pairs of sentences, the theory was applied to longer stretches of social interaction to prove its applicability. Thus, for example, within stylistics, politeness theory has been utilised to analyse character's linguistic behaviour throughout a literary text to arrive at conclusions about characterisation (Bennison 1997, Simpson 1989).

In spite of this, Brown and Levinson's theory is biased towards speakers because it deals with speakers' intentions. But this bias is different from the speaker-oriented character of self-presentation theory because politeness theory deals almost exclusively with the speaker's management of the hearer's face. Thus, one of my criticisms of politeness theory is its limitation due to its focus on the speaker's management of the

hearer's face, without paying enough attention to the speaker's management of his/her own face. I consider then that this drawback of politeness theory may be complemented with the more speaker-oriented perspective of self-presentation to arrive at a more comprehensive understanding of the workings of face management in social interaction.

Third and finally, self-presentation deals with the management of a range of identity claims which are not covered in politeness theory. Although most research on self-presentation deals with ingratiation, the desire to be seen as likeable, the theory also investigates people's desire to be seen as intimidating, competent, needy, or dependent (Jones and Pittman 1982). On the contrary, the exclusive concern of politeness theory is the analysis of the management of face with the main objective of maintaining harmonious social relationships (see Thomas 1995: 158). Thus, if we want to offer a politeness analysis of intimidating self-presentation behaviour, we need to consider aggravating strategies which analyse how face can be attacked rather than saved. There has already been some research on this topic, such as Culpeper's (1996) work on impoliteness theory. Furthermore, some aspects of the ingratiation tactic of self-presentation, such as self-disclosures, cannot be analysed through Brown and Levinson's framework, as they do not pay special attention to speaker-oriented politeness strategies, such as the enhancement of face (see Craig, Tracy and Spisak 1986), though Leech (1980) does take this into consideration. In conclusion, the application of self-presentation notions to politeness theory would imply then a widening of its goals, apart from the desire to maintain good social relations, because politeness strategies may be utilised to analyse the presentation of different aspects of identities.

### **9.3.2 Projection of self-images through facework strategies**

Having so far considered some of the advantages and shortcomings of self-presentation and politeness theory, I want to suggest some issues about the functioning of the linguistic analysis of facework strategies as revealing identity claims and self-presentational styles. Moreover, these facework concerns and self-images are ultimately connected with the individual's working self-concept, which is contextually dependent.

As I have already explained before, my research is based on the assumption that the analysis of speech through politeness theory may reveal personality aspects of the interactants, as researchers within stylistics have proved with politeness studies of characterisation of literary characters. Thus, if face concerns are related to personality traits, the analysis of the use of facework strategies will be revealing about the identities claimed by speakers in specific contexts of social interaction. As Tracy puts it: 'Facework refers to the ways particular communicative needs speak to the identity claims of self and other in specific social situations' (Tracy 1990: 217). For example, an interactant who uses facework strategies demonstrating or claiming a higher power status over the interlocutor may be using an intimidating strategy of self-presentation which, at the same time, may reveal an authoritarian personality.

Tracy also points out that the face wants to which people orient are dependent on situation and personality (1990: 218). Taking into account the theoretical assumptions about the self-concept (see chapter 6), face needs vary depending on contextual factors because people's working self-concept varies in each social situation. In addition, as the working self-concept influences information processing, linguistic behaviour will be consequently affected. Tracy argues that face wants, as identity claims, are situationally influenced in the sense that, for example, a professor's face wants in a work situation will vary from her face wants in a family situation. This is due to the fact that the

professor's salient self-schemata in a work situation are not the same as her self-schemata in a family context. Then, while in the former context, her use of politeness strategies may aim at creating particular power relationships with her colleagues, in the latter context, her facework strategies may be directed at generating closeness and solidarity with other family members. In sum, the activation of different working self-concepts brings about different identity claims and the subsequent face wants, which will be reflected in the facework strategies of the language used in a given communicative context.

The identity claims people present to others involve facework strategies which may be directed to the hearer's face, to the speaker's, or both at the same time. For example, if somebody wants to self-present as a kind person, s/he may use both positive politeness strategies, e.g. offering a seat to an old person, and negative politeness strategies, e.g. being conventionally indirect in formulating a request, which are addressed to the interlocutor's positive and negative face. But if a person wants to self-present as intelligent, s/he may choose to enhance his/her own positive face with statements such as 'I am an intelligent person, I obtained the highest grades in my school'. This type of positive self-disclosure can be considered as a positive politeness strategy which enhances the speaker's positive face, with the objective that the hearer infers a positive impression about the speaker. (However, this positive self-disclosure could clash with the maxim of modesty and lead to an undesired secondary impression which would ruin the intended calculated impression). Therefore, politeness strategies directed to the speaker's and to the hearer's face needs may be used in the self-presentation of particular aspects of one's personality. Brown and Levinson (1987) recognised, in the second edition of their book, the fact that politeness strategies can be addressed to both the speaker's and the hearer's face. However, the emphasis of their

work is still on the speaker's attempts to mitigate threat to the hearer's face concerns, rather than speaker's managing of his or her own face.

Finally, Tracy (1990: 219-220) states that social interactions involve tensions between different aspects of face. For example, a simple request for a favour involves focusing on the other's want not to be imposed upon, the hearer's negative face concern, and the speaker's want not to be seen as a needy person, the speaker's positive face concern. Thus, most social interactions involve situations in which supporting the hearer's face raises threats to one's own face and, the other way round, situations in which supporting self brings about threats to the interlocutor's face. Moreover, tension between different aspects of face does not necessarily involve a speaker and a hearer, as conflict may arise within a person. People may have conflicting wants, as the desire to be independent, a negative face concern, and the desire to be connected and liked by others, a positive face concern. In addition, there may be tension with the projection of different identity claims, related to positive politeness: the desire to appear as both strong and trustworthy. Tension between different facets of face is a common feature of social interaction, both conflict between speaker's and hearer's face, or between different aspects of one's face. The management of this tension can be studied through the linguistic analysis of the use of politeness strategies, which would reveal how individuals handle clashing face concerns and identity claims. This point will be further developed and exemplified in the analytical sections of this chapter, when I will explain character's management of face needs.

### **9.3.3 Connected notions**

As the title of Brown and Levinson's work suggests, '*Politeness. Some Universals in Language Usage*' (1987), one of the main objectives of the authors is to demonstrate the universality of politeness theory. They want to hypothesise about the nature of social interaction and communication and, for this purpose, they propose some principles of language usage related to universal politeness strategies. Conversely, in this chapter, my research on characterisation and mind style focuses on characters' use of self-presentation strategies, as revealed through their politeness strategies. Thus, my claim is that the usage of politeness strategies reveals different face concerns which reflect different personality traits, that is, people's particular idiosyncrasies. It is relevant to bear in mind the difference between Brown and Levinson's approach and mine because while their perspective consists in looking for generalities of language usage, my approach is to search for peculiarities in characters' particularized use of politeness strategies.

As explained previously (see 2.2.3), Brown and Levinson's work is based on the assumption that all members of a society have

- (i) 'face', the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself, consisting of two related aspects:
  - (a) negative face: the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction – i.e. to freedom of action and freedom from imposition
  - (b) positive face: the positive consistent self-image or 'personality' (crucially including the desire that this image be appreciated and approved of) claimed by interactants. (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 61)

Thus, the concept of negative face is related to issues of freedom of action and non-imposition, whereas the notion of positive face is related to the desire that one's self-image is approved of, liked or admired. Brown and Levinson's notions of positive and negative face are developed from Goffman's (1967, 1971) concepts of presentational and avoidance rituals respectively. Avoidance rituals refer to behaviour which avoids

impinging upon another, whereas presentational rituals consist of the presentation of appreciation for and solidarity with another.

Although Goffman's work, as well as Brown and Levinson's, considers face in terms of the speaker's management of the hearer's face, self-presentation theory stems from this line of research taking a rather speaker-oriented perspective of the notion of face. In general terms, the two basic self-presentation styles, i.e. assertive and defensive styles, also stem from the notions of presentational and avoidance rituals, and the concepts of positive and negative face. An assertive self-presentational style intends to establish particular identities or self-images in the eyes of the interlocutors. A defensive self-presentational style consists of trying to defend oneself from others, to avoid being imposed upon with an undesired identity. However, the parallelism between the notions of positive politeness and assertive self-presentation and negative politeness and defensive self-presentation is not without problems.

The association of the basic notions of the theories of politeness and self-presentation works in general terms, as it has been expounded, but the fact that self-presentation styles and strategies cover a wider range of behaviour than politeness strategies makes the comparison problematical. For example, a defensive style of self-presentation may involve the management of both positive and negative face, because a person may feel either facet of face threatened. In the same way, an assertive style of self-presentation may be aimed at presenting an image of self as likeable, a positive face concern, or as independent, a negative face concern. The following table offers an illustration of the various combinations of politeness concerns and strategies of self-presentation:

	ASSERTIVE SELF-PRESENTATION STYLE	DEFENSIVE SELF-PRESENTATION STYLE
POSITIVE FACE	<p><b>asserting / enhancing positive face</b></p> <p>image of self as likeable, intelligent, kind...</p>	<p>after the desire to be liked is threatened</p> <p><b>defending / saving positive face</b></p>
NEGATIVE FACE	<p><b>asserting / enhancing negative face</b></p> <p>image of self as independent, powerful...</p>	<p>after the desire to be independent is threatened</p> <p><b>defending / saving negative face</b></p>

However, I consider that, in general terms, the association between positive face, defined as the person's self-image claimed in an interaction, with an assertive self-presentation style, defined as the presentation of a positive self-image is more than obvious. I would also like to point out here the relationship of these notions with the ideal self, as explained in 7.2.1, which is part of the working self-concept. The ideal self is an image of self that an individual desires to become, ranging from a child's dream to become a fire-fighter, or a person's ideal self in which s/he eats a chocolate. Thus, an ideal self may be a man's desire to impress a woman on a first date, i.e., the desire to be liked, a positive face concern, which usually involves assertive self-presentation. In section 7.2.1, I also defined the notion of 'not-me selves' as images of self to be avoided, which included feared selves or undesired selves among other. Not-me selves may be related with defensive styles of self-presentation as far as individuals attempt to avoid that their interlocutors infer an undesired image of them. Thus, when I consider that my interlocutor may infer that I am a weak person and I want to avoid that

inference because it involves a not-me self, I may engage in defensive self-presentation to prevent being imposed upon with an undesired self-image.

Having established the dichotomy between positive and negative politeness and assertive and defensive self-presentation styles, there is one further point that needs to be highlighted. On the one hand, defensive self-presentation style is associated with saving face: when an individual's face is threatened, the person usually feels the urge to save face. On the other hand, an assertive style of self-presentation is associated with enhancing face: an individual simply presents a particular image of self, usually positive, to his/her interlocutors in order to create an identity for him/herself. Then, the difference between defensive and assertive styles lies in the fact that the former consists of redressive facework while the latter simply aims at enhancing face. The linguistic analysis of the management of face together with the use of self-presentation strategies in social interaction will be revealing about the self-image being projected and, consequently, the individual's self-concept.

#### **9.4 Literary characters: pragmatic analysis of self-presentation**

The objective of the last section of this chapter is to offer a cognitive stylistic analysis of characters' self-presentations. Characters' use of language will be analysed through pragmatic and socio-cognitive theories with the purpose of arriving at conclusions about the characters' styles of presentation of self-images, their mental world, and the readers' construction of a mental representation of them. First of all, I propose a necessary distinction between the self-presentations of characters as first person narrators in their narrative texts, and characters' self-presentations as analysed through their verbal behaviour in social interaction with other characters of the textual world. I will then

hypothesise about how characters may be characterised by their use of various self-presentation strategies and their linguistic realisation. At the end of the section, I will have demonstrated that the issues of characterisation and mind style can be approached through the pragmatic analysis of characters' self-presentations.

#### **9.4.1 Narrator-characters self-presenting to readership**

In the same way that the language used by people in social interaction is considered as the main strategy of self-presentation, the language used by literary characters to present different aspects of their identities can be studied to throw light on characters' self-presentation patterns and self-concepts. Different literary genres, especially drama and narrative, provide literary texts which offer the possibility of analysing conversations between characters. However, I want to propose that, within literature, self-presentation is not limited to characters' dialogues exclusively, but may be analysed in narrative sections of texts as well, when the text has a narrator-character.

Thus, first person narrators who offer a description of themselves choose to self-present in particular ways. This is specially the case for literary texts such as confessions or memoirs because, in many cases, narrators write a text being conscious that it has an addressee, be it another character, a concrete narratee, or an indeterminate reader. For example, as for the texts of my data, in *The Collector*, Miranda's narrative is addressed to her sister; in *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, the protagonist's statement about the events of his life is a letter addressed to another character; in *Lolita*, Humbert addresses directly, at different moments, the jury of his trial, his readership, and even Lolita; in *Bartleby*, the lawyer's goal is to write the biography of the copyist to make a contribution to literature; and in *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time*,

Christopher's aim is to write a detective novel. In this section, I want to mention a few examples of self-presentation styles as found in narrative sections of texts, whereas the next chapter will be devoted to the analysis of characters' linguistic behaviour in social interaction.

When a narrator offers a confession or memoir or a first-person narrator displays an awareness of the act of writing, a self-presentation of their own person becomes normalised to a certain extent, usually at the beginning of their narratives. This type of general self-description offers insights into the self-image characters want to disclose and, consequently, their self-concepts. The first pieces of information offered about oneself are usually extremely revealing about one's personality, so that they form part of the core aspects of the self-concept, the characters' self-schemata. In fact, Margolin supports this claim when he explains characters' direct characterisations of themselves or of other characters:

It is the only way of providing the reader with undeniable information about the beliefs, intentions, and sincerity of Narrative Agents. It provides the reader with an immediate initial orientation towards any newly introduced NA: a perspective for viewing him, interpreting his doings, assessing his acts and predicting his future course of actions. (1986: 223)

Therefore, narrator-characters' self-presentations offer readers information whereby they can form a mental representation of the character's self-image being offered<sup>2</sup>. Moreover, readers may draw further inferences from this information which would contribute to the readers' mental representation of the character. These further inferences would correspond to the secondary impressions (vs. calculated impressions) mentioned in 9.2.3.

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<sup>2</sup> As I explained before, I will not be concerned with the truthfulness of the information presented as part of characters' self-concept, as my objective is to analyse the self-image the character aims to transmit.

Interestingly, we will see that the self-presentational styles of characters suffering from some type of mental disorder, such as Clegg (a criminal mind) and Christopher (a boy with Asperger's syndrome), have proved to lead to the reader's inference of secondary impressions which spoil, to a certain extent, the calculated impressions. The lack of success of the self-presentations of these characters does not depend on the style of self-presentation, as Christopher uses assertive whereas Clegg uses defensive self-presentation mostly, but rather on their contextual inappropriateness and style which leads to the inference of secondary impressions.

Thus, when readers build a mental representation of a character, I consider that there are three aspects to be taken into account: (1) the self-image presented by the character, which corresponds to the calculated impressions; (2) further interpretations inferred from characters' speech and behaviour, which correspond to secondary impressions, which may or may not ruin the calculated impressions; and (3) the readers' evaluation and opinion about the character. Some further points need to be taken into account. When in (1) I refer to the character's self-concept, it should be clear by now that I refer to the reader's mental representation of the character's self-concept, and it may vary from reader to reader. As for point (3), this dimension is subjective in nature, because the evaluation of a character will depend on information from (1) and (2), as well as factors concerning the reader's model of reality, e.g. cultural background, social norms, moral obligations, religion, etc.

It is important to bear in mind that readers may start inferring information about the narrator, or any character, from the very first word on the page attributed to them or written about them, or even the title of the book, e.g. *The Collector*. Thus, it is not necessary to read a self-description (or a description from the narrator or any other character) to start forming an impression of a character. In fact, many authors, Faulkner

for example, provide scarce character description, but this does not restrain readers from forming mental representations of them. In these particular cases, readers are not granted access to characters' mental world, but the characters' verbal and non-verbal behaviour constitutes a source of information for forming a mental representation of them<sup>3</sup>. Palmer (2003, 2004) also explains that although behaviourist narratives, such as Faulkner's, do not grant access to characters' inner thoughts, readers are still able to form a representation of the characters' fictional minds.

#### 9.4.2 Assertive self-presentational style

In this sub-section, I will provide several examples of narrator-characters whose self-presentation style can be characterised as assertive, as far as they present a particular image of themselves to the narratee or reader. Although socio-cognitive psychologists claim that people usually rely on a mixture of assertive and defensive tactics, the predominance of one of these styles by literary characters can be considered as informative about their personalities and mind styles. The first example I want to examine comes from *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, by Stevenson. The section entitled 'Henry Jekyll's Full Statement of the Case' offers a first-person narrative in which Jekyll writes a letter to a friend of his consisting of a confession about various facts in his life. In his narrative, he includes some description of his own person in an assertive self-presentation style, as he engages actively in the creation of a positive identity.

I was born in the year of 18— to a large fortune, endowed besides with excellent parts, inclined by nature to industry, fond of the respect of the wise and good among my fellow-men, and thus as

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<sup>3</sup> In my analysis of *Bartleby* (chapter 4) I offered an analysis of a character's mind style without having access to his mental world.

might be supposed, with every guarantee of an honourable and distinguished future. (*The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, p. 42)

The information that Jekyll conveys in the first lines of his narration makes reference to his age (although he leaves it indeterminate), his high social class origins and ‘excellent parts’, his hard-working disposition, his attachment to his friends, and his belief in an ideal future self characterised by honour and distinction. The general and basic nature of these characteristics enumerated in Jekyll’s self-disclosure suggests that the self-image he transmits corresponds to his core self-schemata. Of the assertive self-presentation tactics expounded in section 9.2.4.2, this type of self-presentation consists of *ingratiation*, because its aim is to associate self with attractive personal qualities to influence his addressee positively towards him. This is especially the case here because Jekyll is about to explain the conflict between the two sides of his personality, and his original virtuous nature has to be presented as eminently good to contrast with his immoral nature. Thus, within ingratiation, this self-disclosure consists of *self-enhancement statements* which project a positive self-image aimed at the creation of a positive representation of himself (see Margolin 1986: 223).

When characters present a positive self-image through the tactic of ingratiation, especially by means of self-enhancing statements, the self-presentation may run the risk of clashing with the maxim of modesty. When Jekyll self-presents as wealthy, his objective is presumably to project this self-schema so that his addressee infers the calculated impression. However, the reader may consider that he infringes the maxim of modesty, and draw a secondary impression, e.g. that he is pompous or vulgar. In such case, when readers consider that a self-enhancing statement involves the non-observance of a maxim and the subsequent inference of a secondary impression, the self-presentation is unsuccessful. I consider that this is not usually the case when

narrator-characters self-present for the first time in their narratives, such as in Jekyll's case, because readers need to start building a mental representation of the character with the information offered.

Another example of a narrator-character who offers self-descriptions is Humbert Humbert in *Lolita*, given that his narrative is a confession, as explained in the foreword of the novel (p. 3). In chapter 6, see section 6.3.3, I already provided a detailed analysis of his expression of his self-concept through an assertive self-presentation style using the tactic of ingratiation to gain approval from the readership and the members of the jury of his trial<sup>4</sup>. Interestingly, Humbert's narration includes other less common tactics, apart from self-enhancing statements, to influence his addressee's mental representation of himself.

Humbert Humbert addresses the reader and his jury directly through phrases like 'Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, exhibit number one is...' (p. 9) or 'Knowing me by now, the reader can easily imagine...' (p. 32). In some cases, he uses the ingratiation tactic of *opinion conformity* to gain approval, for example:

I want my *learned readers to participate in the scene* I am about to replay; I want them to examine its every detail and *see for themselves* how careful, how chaste, the whole wine-sweet event is *viewed* with what my lawyer has called, in a private talk we have had, 'impartial sympathy'. (*Lolita*, p. 57, my emphasis)

Humbert invites the reader to agree with his own opinion about a scene he is just going to explain, which he describes as 'careful', 'chaste', and 'wine-sweet', requesting the reader to view it in the same terms. Opinion conformity usually implies the self-presenter agreeing with his/her interlocutor, but given the written nature of the novel, the narrator cunningly takes advantage of this tactic by inviting the reader to agree with

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<sup>4</sup> The foreword of the novel explains the narrative is written by Humbert in legal captivity and that he died a few days before his trial began.

him. Interestingly, the goal of his self-presentation may be to gain opinion conformity, but whether he achieves it or not is another matter. In fact, it is rather dubious that readers share the protagonist's perspective in his paedophilic acts, but, as Leech and Short (1981:275) suggest, Humbert manages to achieve readers' sympathy.

Moreover, another ingratiation tactic he makes use of, in the previous quotation, is *flattery*, as he characterises his readers as 'learned'. As the theory suggests, see 9.2.4.2, the use of positive statements about others is a tactic to gain approval and liking from one's interlocutors, the readership in this case. Humbert's use of the tactic of flattery is repeated at several points in his narrative, for example, with the following request addressing the jury: 'Allow me to take just a tiny bit of your precious time!' (p. 123). Here, the narrator describes the jury's time as 'precious', using the negative politeness strategy of giving deference, and he will take 'just a tiny bit' of it, using another negative politeness strategy to minimise the imposition. In this particular case, the assertive strategy of flattery is linguistically realised through negative politeness addressed to the hearers, demonstrating that assertive self-presentation will not always be linked with positive politeness, as I explained before.

Returning to the previous quotation, from a self-presentation perspective, it reveals an assertive style and the ingratiation tactic of opinion conformity and flattery. From a politeness theory perspective, the narrator uses various positive politeness strategies to enhance the reader's positive face: attending to the hearer, his positive quality of being 'learned', (strategy number 1); and, seeking agreement, by means of opinion conformity (strategy number 5) (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 102). Humbert enhances his own positive face indirectly through the enhancement of the readers' positive face. These strategies reveal the character's assertive tactics to achieve

ingratiating and to project a self-image of likeability which forms part of his self-concept.

My last example of assertive self-presentation comes from the novel *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, by Mark Haddon. The protagonist's first self-presentation takes place on the second page of the book, when readers do not still have much information about the narrator-character:

My name is Christopher John Francis Boone. I know all the countries of the world and their capital cities and every prime number up to 7,507. (*The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, p. 2)

This self-presentation is assertive in the sense that the character wants to establish a self-image of knowledge about himself. Christopher makes use of the assertive tactic of *self-promotion* to create in the reader the positive image of possessing certain knowledge skills. This tactic is habitually utilised in contexts where the demonstration of one's skills or intelligence is under consideration, such as at a job interview. The peculiarity of this self-presentation is due to its being uttered in an inappropriate context. As Goffman (1963) suggests (see section 9.2.3), self-presentations have a sense of propriety, and if they are contextually inappropriate, addressees will draw inferences which will be considered secondary impressions. Thus, Christopher's use of the self-promotion tactic as a first introduction to his person may infringe the maxim of relation and lead readers to infer other aspects of his self-concept as well. It is also worth noting the disparity and uncommonness of his store of knowledge, as knowledge about all the countries and their capital cities and all prime numbers up to 7,507 is not widely shared. Bearing all this in mind, the reader may form a mental representation of Christopher which includes the calculated impression the protagonist wants to convey, a self-image of knowledge, and a secondary impression, the possible interpretation that his

personality is somehow strange (only later the reader is informed that he suffers from Asperger's syndrome, a mild form of autism).

### 9.4.3 Defensive self-presentational style

In this sub-section, I will provide examples of narrator-characters whose self-presentations aim at defending themselves from negative attributions. The next passage comes from the short-story *Bartleby*, in which the lawyer, who offers a biography of his scrivener Bartleby, provides a description of his own person first:

Ere introducing the scrivener as he first appeared to me, it is fit I make some mention of myself, my employees, my business, my chambers and general surroundings, because some such description is indispensable to an adequate understanding of the chief character about to be presented. *Imprimis*: I am a man who, from his youth upwards, has been filled with a profound conviction that the easiest way of life is the best. (*Bartleby*, p. 3)

The lawyer's initial self-presentation transmits his most vital maxim: 'the easiest way of life is the best'. In self-presentational terms, the expression of the maxim is an assertive strategy of self-presentation, as it provides direct commentary on the self-image he wants to convey. However, the maxim itself suggests a *defensive self-presentational style*, as the lawyer's concern 'to live and let live' entails his wish not to be imposed upon, as well as his desire not to impose on others. Thus, although a direct self-presentation is an assertive tactic, in this particular case, it conveys a personality trait that reveals a general defensive style of self-presentation. The lawyer's tenet conveys the self-image of a person concerned with the management of face, especially negative face, so that a great emphasis is placed on defensive self-presentation. This suggestion is confirmed by the evidence I proposed in chapter 4, where, through linguistic analysis of his conversations, I demonstrated that the lawyer's concern with the management of

his face and Bartleby's led to the manipulation of politeness strategies which concluded in the transformation of their power relationship. This quotation also includes a number of oddly formal and archaic lexis and grammatical constructions, for example: 'Ere', 'it is fit', 'some such', 'indispensable', or 'Imprimis'. The use of these linguistic constructions can be considered as assertive self-presentation because they attempt to create a given self-image to the reader, for example, of conventionality or erudition.

In *The Collector*, Clegg's narrative style provides a few examples of self-presentation tactics different from the ones analysed so far. Clegg never offers a self-presentation in the style of Dr. Jekyll or the lawyer in *Bartleby*, stating personal information such as age, origin, or personality traits. In spite of this, his verbal behaviour in narrative sections still yields information about the self-image he projects. The reason why I consider these fragments as self-presentation is because here, as in other parts of his text, Clegg is conscious of the act of writing a narration ('what I'll explain later'), so that his awareness of an addressee involves considerations about self-presentation matters.

The following passage contains self-defensive verbal behaviour, in the sense that Clegg's aim is to defend himself from the reader's inference of an undesired self-image about him:

I used to have daydreams about her, I used to think of stories where I met her, did things she admired, married her and all that. *Nothing nasty*, that was never until what I'll explain later. (*The Collector*, p. 10)

This extract can be considered as an *account*, which consists in offering an explanation of one's behaviour because it can be considered strange or immoral, to avoid the reader's inference of a negative self-image. After explaining that he dreamt stories about Miranda, Clegg alleges that those daydreams were not 'nasty', though he

announces that there will be ‘nasty’ events related to Miranda, which will be explained later. In 8.3.2, I introduced Werth’s (1999) notion that negative phrases create ‘negative sub-worlds’, which may have two functions: defeated expectation or negative accommodation (explained and exemplified in detail there). A *defeated expectation* entails the denial of the reader’s expectation that something is the case in the text world. Thus, Clegg’s phrase ‘Nothing nasty’ implies the denial of what he expects the reader to infer, that is, that his daydreams were nasty. In self-presentational terms, Clegg’s self-defensive style, in trying to avoid the inference of a negative self-image, introduces it in the text, so that readers may now infer that his daydreams were in fact nasty. In conclusion, Clegg’s phrase suggests a self-defensive style of self-presentation, in which he projects a self-image having daydreams, which are not nasty, about Miranda. This type of defensive self-presentation may be interpreted by readers as infringing the maxim of relation, as the character provides more information than is needed. Thus, readers may make a variety of inferences about Clegg, for example, that he is a liar and he did have nasty daydreams about her, or simply that he has a strange personality. The inference of these impressions is part of the secondary impression, which constitutes part of the reader’s mental representation of the character and, most probably, the reader’s opinion about Clegg will also be influenced.

The analyses of these short extracts from different narrative texts with first person narrators have thrown light on both assertive and defensive self-presentation styles and tactics. When possible, I have related the self-presentational tactics with the management of face concerns and the use of politeness strategies. In general, I have demonstrated that characters with assertive self-presentational styles are concerned with the enhancement of positive face and the projection of a self-image of likeability or knowledge (Dr Jekyll, Humbert and Christopher). On the contrary, characters with a

defensive self-presentational style are concerned with defending their negative face (lawyer) or their positive face (Clegg).

### **9.5 Summary note**

The aim of this chapter was to provide the theoretical background of the psychological theory of self-presentation, and to suggest a link with the linguistic theory of politeness, in order to offer another tool for the cognitive stylistic analysis of characters' self-concepts. In addition to this, the analytical section has focused on the investigation of the self-presentation styles of narrator-characters. The following chapter extends this line of research by considering the processes of characters' self-presentations in conversations with other characters. I will make use of self-presentation theory, politeness theory and the Cooperative Principle in order to study how readers arrive at an interpretation of characters on the basis of their self-presentations to other characters in the novel.

## **10 Self-presentation in character interaction**

### **10.1 Introduction**

As it was explained in the theoretical section of the previous chapter, research on self-presentation has basically used laboratory questionnaires as the methodological tool to arrive at conclusions about individuals' behaviour relative to self-presentation issues. Authors interested in a more interdisciplinary approach, such as Holtgraves (2001), have proposed the linguistic analysis of real social interaction through pragmatic theories, in order to throw light on people's use of language for self-presentation purposes.

In this chapter, my objective is to analyse characters' conversations to observe the presentation of self-images to others in social interaction. For this purpose, I will simultaneously use notions from self-presentation theory and from two theories of pragmatics: politeness theory and the Cooperative Principle with its conversational maxims. My ultimate goal is to achieve an understanding of how readers form a mental representation of characters' self-concepts and how they infer further impressions from these self-images. In the next sections, I will analyse the self-presentation style of characters from two texts: *The Collector*, and *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time*. In each of these narratives, one of the protagonists suffers from some type of cognitive oddity, which is reflected in their conversational behaviour and their self-presentation patterns.

### **10.2 Politeness in assertive tactical vs. defensive strategical self-presentation**

In the previous chapter, it was explained that individuals' self-presentational styles are composed of a mixture of strategies from both assertive and defensive styles. However, I want to demonstrate that different characters may be characterised by the preponderance of one of these styles, in the same way that some politeness strategies may be preferred rather than others. This fact can be easily observed when, in a narrative, two characters with contrasting self-presentation styles interact with one another for long stretches of text. In *The Collector*, Clegg and Miranda offer a clear example of two characters whose self-presentational styles differ widely, revealing aspects of their contrasting personalities. In this section, I want to propose that Miranda uses a series of *assertive tactics* of self-presentation to portray a powerful self-image and achieve liberation, whereas Clegg uses a limited number of *defensive tactics* which become his *defensive strategy* to protect himself from the inference of negative impressions by Miranda and the reader. I will provide several fragments of the text to demonstrate how characters may project various self-images and the tactics used for these purposes, including some considerations about the use of politeness strategies and other pragmatic issues.

Before starting to analyse the conversations held between Miranda and Clegg, it is extremely relevant to consider the context in which their relationship develops. The fact that Clegg kidnaps Miranda is an anti-social act against law and against any morality system. Kidnapping somebody can be considered as a behaviour that implies one of the greatest threats to a person's negative face, given that their freedom of action is completely denied. Thus, the fact that Clegg kidnaps Miranda and the time she spends in imprisonment until her death is a threat to her negative face. However, as it has previously been pointed out, when Clegg refers to the kidnap, he never uses this term but refers to Miranda as his 'guest': 'before she came to be my guest here' (p. 9),

‘having her as my guest happened suddenly, it wasn’t something I planned’ (p. 16), ‘I want you to be my guest’ (p. 36). My claim is that Clegg’s use of the euphemism ‘guest’ to avoid the word ‘kidnap’ is part of his defensive self-presentational style. He finds himself in a *predicament* given that the kidnap may lead to the inference of negative attributes about him by Miranda and also by the reader. By referring to his prisoner as his ‘guest’, Clegg offers a *justification* of his behaviour: he accepts his role and responsibility in the (imposed and illegal) host-guest relationship, but negates that it goes against established norms and values. In conclusion, the threat to Miranda’s negative face persists throughout the whole text in the same way that Clegg’s defensive style persists in order to avoid negative impressions.

### 10.2.1 First conversation after kidnapping

In 5.5.1, I already analysed the first turns of the first conversation held between Miranda and Clegg the morning after the kidnapping. I consider that the analysis of this piece of conversation is very illuminating about the self-image the characters claim for themselves, the face concerns and the politeness strategies they use, and the general self-presentation style that will prevail in the rest of their conversations:

I said, I hope you slept well.

‘Where is this, who are you and why have you brought me here?’ She said it very coldly, not at all violent.

I can’t tell you.

She said, ‘I demand to be released at once. This is monstrous.’ (*The Collector*, p. 31)

I have already argued that Clegg’s first turn, his greeting, aims at enhancing Miranda’s positive face and, in turn, his own positive face. On the one hand, in politeness terms, Clegg uses Brown and Levinson’s (1987: 102) positive politeness strategy number 1:

attending to H (his interests, wants, needs, goals). On the other hand, the turn is an example of the assertive tactic of ingratiation, related to *flattery*, because Clegg's aim is to be liked by Miranda. In fact, Clegg addresses Miranda as if she were his guest rather than his prisoner, wishing she slept well. Given the situation, Miranda and the reader might be surprised with Clegg's greeting, and its contextual inappropriateness (see Goffman's 'sense of propriety' of self-presentations in 9.2.3) may lead to inferences about the oddity of the character and of the situation. This negative inference is a secondary impression that contrasts with Clegg's calculated impression, a self-image of likeability and kindness. The reason why there exists this tension between the calculated and the secondary impression is because, given that Clegg's purpose in kidnapping Miranda is that they get married, he has to self-present a positive image of himself so as to be liked. Thus, the character uses the assertive tactic of ingratiation to convey a positive image of himself and be able to achieve his goal. However, Clegg's assertive style is simply a part of the general defensive style he has to adopt, given the kidnapping context, to avoid a negative and undesired (secondary) impression which, from the very beginning, he is incapable of eluding.

Miranda's two turns, consisting of several requests, a command, and a negative commentary about the immediate situation, are FTAs to Clegg's negative and positive face. Her disapproving comment about the situation, 'This is monstrous', is an attack to Clegg's positive face; she uses an impoliteness strategy with the intention of attacking him. In politeness terms, at the same time that she produces unredressed threats and attacks Clegg's face, she is enhancing her own face. Her facework strategies reveal that she is asserting her right to ask questions, produce orders, and criticise her interlocutor, and establishing her power over him. In self-presentational terms, Miranda's assertive style consists of *intimidation*: she wants to intimidate Clegg in order to achieve her goal,

to be released. She projects a self-image of a strong personality (a positive face concern) and she also communicates her right not to be imposed upon by being retained against her will (a negative face concern). To sum up, Miranda enhances her positive and negative face at the same time that she produces FTAs to Clegg's negative face and a direct attack to his positive face, in an assertive tactic of self-presentation, through intimidation.

In conclusion, the common point of the self-presentations of the two characters is their intention to enhance their own faces to communicate a given self-image: Clegg wants to be liked, and Miranda wants to establish her power and be released. Two points distinguish their styles. First, Miranda attacks Clegg's face to establish a self-image of power and thus enhance her own face, establishing a conflicting relationship from the beginning. And second, Clegg's ingratiation tactic is aimed at having Miranda like him and, most importantly, at avoiding a negative impression caused by the predicament he put himself in with the kidnapping. Taking this last point into consideration, as I explained before, Clegg's ingratiation is in the end part of his defensive self-presentational style that governs their relationship during her imprisonment.

### **10.2.2 Global self-presentational patterns**

The conclusions of the analysis of the previous passage can be generalised to the characters' self-presentation style throughout the novel, so that Miranda is characterised by an assertive self-presentational style, whereas Clegg typically uses a defensive self-presentation to protect himself from undesired and negative impressions.

Miranda's assertive tactics include mainly *intimidation*, consisting of requests, commands and criticisms directed to Clegg in an attempt to establish a powerful self-image enhancing her own face. These are two examples of some more direct criticisms of his personality and his behaviour:

'How many butterflies have you killed?'

You can see.

'No, I can't. I'm thinking of all the butterflies that would have come from these if you'd let them live. I'm thinking of all the beauty you've ended.'

You can't tell.

'You don't even share it. Who sees these? You're like a miser, you hoard up all the beauty in these drawers.' (*The Collector*, p. 54-55)

'You're the most perfect specimen of petit bourgeois squareness I've ever met' (*The Collector*, p. 75)

Her negative commentaries about his personality ('a miser', 'specimen of petit bourgeois squareness') are threats through which she attacks his positive face without using redressive facework, by means of positive impoliteness in the first example and sarcasm in the second, as the statement is polite on the surface. The objective of the use of aggravating strategies and the tactic of intimidation is the enhancement of her own face through the projection of a powerful self-image.

However, Miranda is conscious that intimidating Clegg may not lead to her freedom, and for this reason, she sometimes produces a few attempts at *flattery*, to enhance Clegg's positive face and maintain a good relationship with him. Given Miranda's general negative attitude towards Clegg, a request to see his house becomes an ingratiation tactic of flattery, through which Miranda shows interest in Clegg, enhancing his positive face and her own positive face simultaneously.

'Aren't you going to show me your house?'

She had a real smile on, the first I ever saw; I couldn't do anything but smile back. (*The Collector*, p. 52)

In this example, a politeness analysis would suggest that Miranda's turn consists of a question, which would be analysed as an FTA to Clegg's negative face. This threat is redressed with a negative politeness strategy, be conventionally indirect, linguistically realised in the negation of the question. The question could be interpreted as an indirect speech act of a command, or it can be taken simply as a suggestion for a tour of the house. But if we take into account self-presentation concerns and the wider context of the characters' relationship, Miranda's question is aimed at enhancing Clegg's face, rather than at threatening it. In fact, Leech (1983) points out that in the expression of polite beliefs (as here, an interest in someone's house), more directness is politer than the use of indirectness. So, Miranda's question may also attempt a re-negotiation of the social distance variable, making their relationship friendlier. And through the enhancement of his face, she tries to enhance her own face and achieves it, because her turn has an immediate result on Clegg. In the following example, her flattery is more subtle:

She saw some old pictures of butterflies I bought in an antique shop. I chose them, I said.

'They're the only decent things here.'

Well, there we were, she was making compliments and I admit I was pleased. (*The Collector*, p. 52-53)

Miranda's comment about Clegg's pictures could be interpreted as ironic, due to her use of the word 'only' and the adjective 'decent'. However, and as I said before, the mere fact that Miranda recognises that there is something decent in the house can be considered as flattery and, in addition, Clegg does take it as a compliment so that her self-presentation is successful.

Finally, when Miranda is ill in bed, she uses the tactic of *supplication*, in order to convey an image of weakness, and get Clegg help her calling a doctor or taking her to hospital.

Then she changed, she said, 'I feel so afraid. I'm going to die.' She didn't speak quickly, there were pauses.

She said, 'I've tried to help you. You must try to help me now.' I said of course I would, I sponged her face again and she seemed to be dropping off, which was what I wanted, but she spoke up again.

She said in a loud voice, 'Daddy? Daddy?'

Go to sleep, I said. You'll be recovered tomorrow. (*The Collector*, p. 264-5)

These three examples have shown that Miranda uses different assertive tactics of self-presentation, depending on the immediate goal to be achieved. She uses intimidation, attacking Clegg's face, to project a powerful image; she uses flattery, enhancing Clegg's face, to project an image of likeability; and she uses supplication, to project an image of weakness and induce pro-social behaviour in Clegg. In chapters 7 and 8, we saw that Miranda's wide array of possible selves led to a balance in her self-concept. Similarly, here, we see that she uses a range of self-presentational tactics to project different self-images and have more possibilities to achieve freedom. The ultimate goal of Miranda's self-presentational tactics is to be released, but this is the objective that she does not attain.

As for Clegg, his use of defensive tactics consists mainly of *accounts*, both excuses and justifications, offering explanations for his immoral behaviour. The fragment below is an example of his defensive self-presentational style:

I said, if you went, I think I'd do myself in.

'You need a doctor.'

I just made a noise.

'I'd like to help you.'

*You think I'm mad because of what I've done. I'm not mad. It's just, well, I've got no one else. There's never been anyone but you I've ever wanted to know.*  
*'That's the worst kind of illness,' she said. She turned round then, all this was while I was tying. She looked down. I feel sorry for you.'* (*The Collector*, p. 51-2, my emphasis)

Clegg's last turn of this quotation demonstrates that, after the predicament that the kidnapping situation involves, he considers that Miranda has inferred a secondary undesired impression about him: that he is mad. Thus, his defensive self-presentation consists in stating that he is not mad, to avoid the imposition of this negative attribute, which involves a not-me self. Moreover, his justification offers the reasons for the kidnapping, referred to with the euphemism 'of what I've done': that he has nobody else and that she is the only person he has ever wanted to know.

In this other passage, Clegg offers a *justification* of his behaviour as a defensive tactic, after he finds Miranda's help letter calling him a madman:

She turned half away. 'I want to see the last of this house. Not of you.'  
And mad, I said. Do you think a madman would have treated you the way I have? I'll tell you what a madman would have done. He'd have killed you by now. Like that fellow Christie. I suppose you think I'm going for you with a carving-knife or something. (I was really fed up with her that day.) How daft can you get? All right, you think I'm not normal keeping you here like this. Perhaps I'm not. But I can tell you there'd be a blooming lot more of this if more people had the money and the time to do it. Anyway there's more of it now than anyone knows. The police know, I said, the figures are so big they don't dare say them. (*The Collector*, p. 70)

First of all, Clegg denies again Miranda's impression that he is mad. The account offered to negate his madness is a justification: given that a madman would not have treated her the way he has, his behaviour is considered as good and justified. Moreover, the explanation that other people would act like him if they had the money, and the fact that the police try to hide these cases make his behaviour normalised and thus, justified. In some circumstances, Clegg also makes use of *pro-social behaviour*, offering to buy any gift to Miranda, after a predicament:

It really did things to me when she cried, I couldn't bear to see her so unhappy. I went up close and said, tell me what you want, I'll buy you anything. (*The Collector*, p. 90)

As it has been explained in 5.5.3, the seduction scene is a turning point in the novel because Clegg changes his attitude towards Miranda. The change in his opinion about the woman is also reflected in a change in his self-presentation style. A defensive style was predominant in all their conversations, but from the seduction scene, he adopts a new *assertive tactic of intimidation*.

She just said, 'Ferdinand.' Like she was appealing. Another of her tricks.

Don't you Ferdinand me, I said.

'You promised. You can't break your promise.'

I can do what I like.

'But I don't know what you want of me. How can I prove I'm your friend if you never give me a chance of doing so?'

Shut up, I said. (*The Collector*, p. 86)

Clegg produces commands which consist of unredressed threats to Miranda's negative face (see the detailed pragmatic analysis in 5.5.3). The aim of these threats is to threaten Miranda's face and to enhance Clegg's positive and negative face, through the projection of a powerful image, which is a new facet of his personality. However, at the end of his narrative, when Miranda falls sick, he returns to his defensive style, especially to *excuses* in which he denies he is responsible for his own acts, and he blames Miranda for them.

'Do you think I could speak to you if I wasn't terribly ill? After what you've done.'

You asked for what I did, I said. (*The Collector*, p. 111)

The ultimate conversion to the defensive self-presentation style suggests that his defensive tactics predominate in his self-presentational style, revealing the vulnerability and self-protecting nature of his self-concept.

Through these examples I have demonstrated that Clegg uses, predominantly, a defensive self-presentation style in his conversations with Miranda. These fragments do not abound in the text because during most of their conversations, Clegg's conversational behaviour is usually limited to answers to Miranda's questions or commentaries. It is his *narrative text* which is full of accounts, excuses, justifications and disclaimers, in which he offers readers explanations about his immoral behaviour. The following two quotations include accounts in which Clegg offers a justification for his behaviour.

It was like when I had to take Mabel out in her chair. I could always find a dozen reasons to put it off. (...) But *it's in my character, it's how I was made*. I can't help it. (*The Collector*, p. 271, my emphasis)

This example, which takes place while Miranda is extremely ill, involves a general commentary about the actual situation: that Miranda is ill and that he has not called a doctor. The statement 'it's in my character, it's how I was made' offers a *justification* for the character's inaction, attributing his lack of action to his personality, to his self-concept. According to his value system, holding an INACTIVE self-schema is his justification for his negative behaviour.

I also thought that I was acting as if I killed her, but she died after all. A doctor probably could have done little good, in my opinion. (*The Collector*, p. 281)

In this last fragment, the defensive tactic consists of an *excuse*, because Clegg denies his responsibility for the negative event of Miranda's death. He even goes further to claim that not even a doctor could have saved her, so that he reinforces his absolute lack of blame for her death.

### 10.2.3 Evidence for self-presentation styles: access to mental worlds

Narrative texts, like *The Collector*, offer the possibility of analysing characters' conversations and narrative passages for self-presentational purposes with the advantage that, in this literary genre, readers may have access to characters' mental worlds through the report of their thoughts and feelings. In this way, my hypothesis that Clegg uses a defensive self-presentation style is confirmed through the report of his own thoughts, in passages such as the following. In the first example, he maintains a conversation with Miranda and finishes with some narrative commentary; the second example is part of his narrative.

'You admit that the Mr Singleton story is not true?

I wanted to break it gently, I said.

'Break what?' she asked. 'Rape? Murder?'

I never said that, I answered. She always seemed to get me *on the defensive*. In my dreams it was the other way round. (*The Collector*, p. 36, my emphasis)

I was smiling. I used to smile when she attacked me as a sort of *defence*. (*The Collector*, p. 67, my emphasis)

If Clegg recognizes that Miranda gets him 'on the defence' and he smiles as a defence from her, it is because he is schematic on DEFENSIVENESS: this is a trait of his self-concept. Such personality trait will influence information processing and his behaviour, including his verbal behaviour and, more particularly, his self-presentation style. Moreover, Clegg also feels that Miranda is always criticising different aspects of his personality. Clegg's recognition and complaint about Miranda's criticisms of his person reveals that he is conscious of her assertive tactics of intimidation, through which she attacks his positive face:

She was always *criticizing* my way of speaking. One day I remember she said, 'You know what you do? You know how rain takes the colour out of everything? That's what you do to the English language. You blur it every time you open your mouth.'

*That is just one sample of many, of the way she treated me. (The Collector, p. 67, my emphasis)*

In a similar way, Miranda's narrative also includes her opinion about her captor confirming that his defensive self-presentational style is characterised by the use of accounts:

He always has to *justify himself* at the same time. (*The Collector*, p. 122, my emphasis)

These passages in which the characters comment on their own behaviour and thoughts and on how they perceive each other prove that my hypotheses about their divergent self-presentation styles are correct.

Finally, I would also like to point out a peculiarity about Clegg's self-presentation in the narrative parts of his narration. In contrast with Miranda's narration, which is written in present tense because it is a diary composed during her imprisonment, Clegg's narration is written in past tense because he reports the events looking back on them, when the story is already finished. Telling the story with the knowledge of its ending, the author constructs Clegg as a narrator capable of anticipating some indeterminate future events, thereby producing enough suspense for readers to continue with the act of reading. The following two fragments provide examples of Clegg's defensive self-presentation through the use of an account, in the narrative text. In this case, the type of account is a *disclaimer*, because Clegg provides an explanation of a negative event before it has taken place, anticipating future events. Therefore, readers know Clegg has performed a negative act but cannot know what it is, though they may start making hypotheses about it.

*It was not my fault.* How was I going to know she was iller than she looked? She just looked like she had a cold. (*The Collector*, p. 110, my emphasis)

The disclaimer in this example functions as an excuse because Clegg denies his responsibility. However, readers do not know yet what he claims not to be responsible for, because they are not still aware of Miranda's end. Thus, the disclaimer serves as a suspense tool because it predicts a negative event, without specifying it. The next example is also a disclaimer:

What I am trying to say is that it all came unexpected. *I know what I did next day was a mistake*, but up to that day *I thought I was acting for the best* and within my rights. (*The Collector*, p. 113, my emphasis)

Here, Clegg admits he is responsible for what happened the following day but he claims that he thought that he acted 'for the best', so that he denies his intention of producing the negative outcome. This disclaimer, then, functions as an excuse, involving the negation of intention. Still, readers cannot know what Clegg's excuse makes reference to, though they may start making inferences about his actions and, in consequence, about his personality.

Finally, I would like to observe that Clegg's use of defensive tactics to explain his behaviour and avoid negative attributions becomes a constant throughout his narrative. His habitual use of defensive tactics, together with the contextual situation of the kidnapping, leads Miranda to infer a secondary impression, involving a negative identity: that he is mad. As this negative identity is in part the result from the accumulation of tactical self-presentations, Clegg's behaviour can be considered as *strategic defensive self-presentation*. The final outcome of Clegg's self-presentation is the establishment of an undesired long-term identity as a mentally ill character, which is supported with his criminal behaviour.

I have related in this section the use of self-presentation styles with issues about the characters' face concerns. It is clear by now that Brown and Levinson's politeness theory needs a widening of its scope to be able to cover areas such as self-presentation, due to its limitation to the study of face threatening acts and its other-oriented perspective. The most significant areas that need to be taken into account for a more complete theory of politeness are the enhancement of face and the attack of face. Both enhancing and attacking face are connected with threatening face, so that a more profound study of the interconnections between these issues is needed. I would also like to propose the requirement of a more self-oriented perspective, especially in the case of enhancement of one's own face. The tension between attending to one's own face and to our interlocutor's face is evident in FTAs, but it is even more so in cases of self-disclosure or ingratiation.

The analysis of the self-presentation styles of the two character of *The Collector* has thrown light on some issues about the self-images characters aim to convey, the various tactics and styles used for these purposes, and their linguistic realisation. My hypotheses were based on the study of examples from characters' conversations and from the narrative sections, in which they act as first person narrators. The former passages have provided the grounds to analyse how characters self-present to each other and, consequently, their mutual perceptions. In addition to these extracts, readers have access to characters' self-presentations included in their narrations, where they project specific self-images. In general, the projection of characters' self-images can be considered as an analytical tool to study characterisation and, in cases of characters with odd personalities such as Clegg's, mind style.

### **10.3 Management of self-presentation of a cognitively impaired character**

Throughout this thesis, I have demonstrated that the analysis of the linguistic behaviour of characters who are cognitively impaired is revealing about their mental condition. This type of character does not usually follow general principles of normal linguistic behaviour, as described by researchers in their theories about language usage, e.g. politeness theory, the cooperative principle and conversational maxims, or adjacency pairs. In addition, some of the cognitive processes of normal human mental functioning, as regards the self-concept, are not followed either. In fact, Margolin (2003: 287) considers that the clash between readers' expectations about normal mental functioning and the verbal and non-verbal behaviour of cognitively impaired characters proves to be very revealing about the character's mind.

In this section, I want to hypothesise about the self-presentation style of the protagonist of the novel *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, by Mark Haddon, or rather, about the dichotomy between an assertive self-presentational style and an insensitivity towards self-presentation. I will pay special attention to a linguistic analysis of this cognitively impaired character's use of language, both in his role as character, in conversations with other characters, and in his role as narrator-character, to see how various pragmatic principles are managed and what this reveals about his self-presentation style, face concerns, self-concept, and mind style.

Christopher, the narrator-character of the novel, suffers from Asperger's syndrome, a mild form of autism. According to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (1994), children with Asperger's syndrome do not have delays in the area of communication and language, they have normal language development as well as normal intelligence. The criteria in this manual for Asperger syndrome is that the individual must have 'severe and sustained impairment in social interaction, and the

development of restricted, repetitive patterns of behaviour, interests and activities' that must 'cause clinically significant impairment in social occupation or other important areas of functioning' (1994). According to the Autism Society of America<sup>1</sup>, children with this disorder have good cognitive skills, they usually want to fit in and have interaction with others, but they do not know how to do it. These children are usually regarded as socially awkward as they lack understanding of conventional social rules and may also show lack of empathy. As regards their linguistic competence, children with Asperger's Disorder 'frequently have good language skills; they simply use language in different ways' and they 'may not understand the subtleties of language, such as irony and humour, or may not understand the give and take nature of a conversation' (see footnote 5). Children with Asperger's syndrome may initiate communication and are able to produce long and complicated sentences, though their literal responses to questions make them often inappropriate. The core symptoms of autism (see 4.3.1) such as the lack of understanding of social conventions (linguistically revealed in a particular management of face needs), repetitive use of language, difficulties to understand simple questions, directions, or jokes, are found in this syndrome, though the severity of the symptoms may vary significantly from patient to patient. The protagonist of this novel suffers from all the general symptoms of Asperger's syndrome, though he is portrayed as suffering from a mild mental problem, and he is in fact an intelligent child, as his passing the Maths A level at the end of the text demonstrates, and his skill in writing a novel.

Before starting with the analysis, there are some comments that need to be remembered from the theoretical section of this chapter. Although some authors consider that self-presentation is always strategical and that an individual may present

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<sup>1</sup> See <http://www.autism-society.org>

images of self which are not true, it is generally agreed that all social behaviour is self-presentation in a general sense (see Craig, Tracy, and Spisak 1986). I am not in a position to claim that all types of behaviour can be considered as self-presentation, as this field of research must have some limits, but I do consider that most social behaviour, especially verbal behaviour, is revealing about self-presentation issues. As most research on self-presentation has concentrated on verbal self-presentation, it seems reasonable to use theories of pragmatics, which investigate language in use, to analyse the speech of real people and of fictional characters and to arrive at conclusions about their self-presentation styles.

I would also like to propose that the pragmatic analysis of verbal behaviour throws light on the self-image that real-life people and fictional characters present of themselves to others either intentionally or unintentionally. For example, at a bar I may address a waiter in a variety of ways: 'Bring me a beer!' or 'Could I have a beer, please?'. These statements are different speech acts (e.g. command, request) and have different politeness connotations regarding the management of the speaker's and hearer's face. Although I may utter these statements without the intention to self-present in a given way, I would still be self-presenting different images of myself with each of them. The point is that, even if I am unaware that through my speech I present a 'rude' or 'well-mannered' image of myself, my addressee is able to infer this trait of my personality.

For this reason, the study of self-presentation is closely related to the study of theories of attribution, which explain how the social perceiver uses information to infer causal explanations for events, or more specifically, aspects of personality (Fiske and Taylor 1984: 23). The two fields examine similar data from different perspectives: the speaker's or the hearer's. In my thesis, I have chosen to analyse the speaker's

perspective because it has received less attention than attribution theory in previous research on characters' minds (see, for example, Gerrig and Allbritton 1990). However, I consider that further research could concentrate on the simultaneous application of the two theories to the same data.

Bearing all this in mind, I will proceed to the analysis of a character whose cognitive condition involves a lack of understanding of social conventions, with the subsequent impairment in his social skills as revealed in his use of language. Christopher's language can be analysed at two levels: as narrator-character, the whole text is his mystery detective novel, and as character, in his conversations with other characters. The fact that he is the first-person narrator allows readers access to his mental world through his report of his thoughts, which will be enlightening in my analysis. As I will demonstrate, the author constructs a character whose non-verbal behaviour is sometimes uncontrollable (e.g. violent reactions when people touch him) and whose skill in the contextually appropriate use of language is often impaired (e.g. he responds to the literal meaning of questions without considering face needs). Consciously or unconsciously, Christopher's language presents himself, and it is used both by other characters interacting with him and by the reader to construct a mental representation of his mind.

### **10.3.1 First conversation: police interrogation**

Here, I will provide an analysis of the first conversation reported by the narrator between himself and a policeman. Before this fragment takes place, Christopher discovers the dead dog of his neighbour, Mrs Shears, with a garden fork sticking out of it, on the lawn of her house. Christopher goes close to the dog and holds it in his arms,

because he likes dogs. When Mrs Shears goes out of her house and sees Christopher with the dead dog in his arms, she panics and phones the police, who arrive there and start interrogating the boy. (Numbering has been added for ease of reference):

The policeman squatted down beside me and said, 'Would you like to tell me what's going on here, young man?' (1)

I sat up and said, 'The dog is dead.' (2)

'I'd got that far,' he said. (3)

I said, 'I think someone killed the dog.' (4)

'How old are you?' he asked. (5)

I replied, 'I am 15 years and 3 months and 2 days.' (6)

'And what, precisely, were you doing in the garden?' he asked. (7)

'I was holding the dog,' I replied. (8)

'And why were you holding the dog?' he asked. (9)

This was a difficult question. It was something I wanted to do. I like dogs. It made me sad to see that the dog was dead. (10)

I like policemen, too, and I wanted to answer the question properly, but the policeman did not give me enough time to work out the correct answer. (11)

'Why were you holding the dog?' he asked again. (12)

'I like dogs,' I said. (13)

'Did you kill the dog?' he asked. (14)

I said, 'I did not kill the dog.' (15)

'Is this your fork?' he asked. (16)

I said, 'No.' (17)

'You seem very upset about this,' he said. (18)

He was asking too many questions and he was asking them too quickly (19). They were stacking up in my head like loaves in the factory where Uncle Terry works. The factory is a bakery and he operates the slicing machines. And sometimes the slicer is not working fast enough but the bread keeps coming and there is a blockage. I sometimes think of my mind as a machine, but not always as a bread-slicing machine. It makes it easier to explain to other people what is going on inside it. (20)

The policeman said, 'I am going to ask you once again...' (21)

I rolled back onto the lawn and pressed my forehead on the ground again and made the noise that Father calls groaning. I make this noise when there is too much information coming into my head from the outside world. It is like when you are upset and you hold the radio against your ear and you tune it halfway between two stations so that all you get is white noise and then you turn the volume right up so that this is all you can hear and then you know you are safe because you cannot hear anything else. (22)

The policeman took hold of my arm and lifted me onto my feet. (23)

I didn't like him touching me like this. (24)

And this is when I hit him. (24) (*The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, p. 7-8)

The conversation between the two characters begins with the policeman's question (1), asking for an explanation of the strange situation, and Christopher's literal explanation of the circumstances (2). Given that the policeman's commentary in (3) asks for further information, it is clear that Christopher's answer (2) does not fulfil the man's expectations about a contextually appropriate response. For the policeman, Christopher's answer involves the non-observance of the maxim of quantity: the answer is not informative enough because he can already see that the dog is dead and he was expecting an account of the facts that led to this situation. Christopher's second answer (4) continues not observing the maxim because, although it adds new information, it is not informative enough yet. The failure to observe the maxim of quantity would reveal Christopher's difficulty in understanding questions and indirectness in general, a symptom of his mental condition.

The policeman's next question about his age (5) demonstrates that the strange conversational behaviour of the boy leads to the man's inference that there is something peculiar about him: maybe that he is younger than he appears, so that he is not fully cognitively developed. Furthermore, Christopher's response about his age also fails to observe the maxim of quantity though, in this case, he provides more information than necessary. Through the excess of information about his age ('15 years, 3 months, and 2 days'), Christopher reveals that his age is an important fact for him. The obsession with giving the exact amount of time of a period (e.g. the exact time since you do not see your loved one) reveals the importance attributed to that phase of time. Thus, Christopher may attempt to portray the image of being older than he appears, what could be considered an assertive tactic of self-presentation: a *self-enhancement*.

Alternatively, the exactitude about his age may reveal his obsession with numbers, quantities and figures, revealing one of his hobbies (e.g. counting things), which is part of his self-concept<sup>2</sup>. In this case, the inference about his self-concept would be that he is schematic on ARITHMETICAL ABILITY. Whatever the inference drawn from his non-observance of the maxim, his use of language has consequences for his self-presentation.

The difficulty in the first turns of the conversation reflects the fact that Christopher is constructed as having a different understanding of the CP and of the functioning of the conversational maxims. Thus, my proposal is that for autistic people the values of the conversational maxims are different than for normal people because, in general, autistic people respond to the strict literal meaning of questions, do not understand indirectness and do not comprehend the social nature of conversation. Children with Asperger's syndrome may not provide the appropriate response to a question, especially when any indirectness is involved, failing to observe the conversational maxims. In such cases, they do not have the intention to produce an implicature, though their addressee may interpret an infringement of the maxims and draw an inference. This is the case for Christopher and the policeman who, after the boy's answers, may infer that he is younger than he appears and asks about his age. As we saw in 2.2.2.3, the infringement of a maxim is related to the hearer's interpretation rather than the speaker's intention: the addressee draws an inference, not intended by the speaker, about, for example, the speaker's imperfect command of language or a cognitive impairment (Thomas 1995). When a hearer understands that there has been an infringement of a maxim, s/he may draw an inference about the speaker which, in self-presentational terms, will be considered a secondary and often undesired impression.

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<sup>2</sup> Christopher's fixation with numbers is observable from the beginning of the novel: 'It was 7 minutes after midnight' (p. 1), 'I had been hugging the dog for 4 minutes' (p. 4), '[I] moved back 2 meters' (p. 4), 'shoes that have approximately 60 tiny circular holes' (p. 5).

As the conversation progresses, the policeman continues with the interrogation attempting to ask more specific questions, but the boy continues having problems in formulating his responses. When the policeman asks the boy what he was doing (7), his answer (8) is another infringement of the maxim of quantity. Then, the policeman reformulates his question (9) asking for the reasons why the boy was holding the dog, in order to obtain a more complete answer. After this question, and before its repetition in (12), the reader is offered some narratological commentary so that we have access to Christopher's mental world. Christopher reasons that he holds the dog because he likes dogs (10), and then, he explains that he likes policemen too and that he 'wanted to answer the question properly' (11).

In this last utterance, by means of the use of the verb 'wanted', Christopher projects an *ideal future self*: his self-image answering correctly the policeman's question. This ideal hypothetical self, as part of Christopher's self-concept, also reveals an awareness of his problem to fully comprehend questions and to provide the adequate responses. The boy's attempt to achieve his ideal self shows a concern for projecting a good self-image to the policeman, what could be regarded as the assertive tactic of *ingratiation*. Moreover, the last part of turn (11), 'but the policeman did not give me enough time to work out the correct answer', functions as a *defensive tactic* of self-presentation: Christopher offers readers an *excuse*, making the policeman responsible for his inability to answer the question, so as to avoid that readers infer a negative image of himself.

Klein, Chan, and Loftus (1999) have investigated the mental processes of autistic individuals from a socio-cognitive perspective. Their research concludes that children with autism have accurate self-knowledge about their traits, that is, about their self-concepts: 'a high-functioning autistic individual can reflect with considerable accuracy

on what he is like (despite the fact that he can recall little of the specific actions on which that knowledge is based)' (1999: 429). In their research, the self-concept of a child with autism corresponded with the conception that the parents and teachers had of him. Apart from this, it should be remembered that according to the Autism Society of America, children with Asperger's syndrome do not understand conventional social rules but, in contrast with autistic children, they try to interact with others although they do not know how. Thus, given the awareness of the self-concept and the desire to interact with others, we could conclude that children with Asperger's disorder may attempt self-presentational tactics. Bearing all this in mind, it seems then reasonable that Christopher is conscious of his self-concept and that he may attempt to self-present a positive image of himself and to avoid that readers of his novel infer a negative image of him.

After a few more turns, the policeman utters a commentary about the situation: 'You seem very upset about this' (18). Given the activity type of this conversation (an informal police interrogation), this commentary is not simply an assertion, the policeman wants Christopher to explain why he is upset. However, once again, the boy remains silent and, in his narration, offers another *excuse* blaming the policeman for his way of interrogating him as a defensive tactic: 'He was asking too many questions and he was asking them too quickly' (19). After that, he provides some narratological description of his problems in processing the questions being put to him, and comments on the MIND IS A MACHINE metaphor (see Semino and Swindlehurst 1996 for the relation between the MACHINE metaphor and mind style), as a rationalization of his mental condition and his information processing limitations (20). Although children with autism use metaphorical and idiosyncratic language, Christopher is constructed as

capable of inventing complex metaphors which explain his mental functioning, which seems dubious in terms of realism.

The policeman's last turn in this passage (21), attempting to reiterate his question, triggers Christopher's uncontrolled violent reaction: he rolls on the ground while he groans. Christopher does not allow the policeman to finish his question and does not produce the appropriate second pair part of the adjacency pair of the question: a response. However, it is his non-verbal violent behaviour that is most striking. Considering the non-verbal behaviour from a politeness theory perspective, the boy is threatening his own positive face because he presents a negative self-image, though unintentionally. What is unquestionable is that observers of this behaviour may draw the causal inference that there is something wrong about the boy's mental condition or that he has a behavioural problem. In addition, the boy's violent behaviour towards the policeman described in (24) involves a threat to the man's negative face, as the incident threatens his freedom of action, and his positive face, because he is not approved of. Christopher's non-verbal defensive behaviour is motivated by his need not to be touched, or not to be imposed upon. Thus, hitting the policeman is his reaction to save his negative face which at the same time threatens his own positive face, because of the subsequent negative self-image he presents. Christopher's concern for his negative face, his desire not to be imposed upon, is curiously shared by the autistic protagonist of *Bartleby*, so that the relevance of negative face seems to be a shared characteristic of individuals with autistic mental disorders.

Self-presentation theory assumes that individuals wish to present a positive self-image or to defend themselves from the hearer's inference of negative self-images, but it does not consider the presentation of negative self-images. For example, your self-concept may include the SELFISH self-schema, which is usually considered a negative

attribute. Thus, when your behaviour, verbal or non-verbal, projects this self-schema, you would be self-presenting a negative self-image. Self-presentation theory does not cover the area of the presentation and management of negative self-images, but this theoretical framework could benefit from an extension of its analytical methodology to deal with this topic. Very similarly, politeness theory was enriched with contributions such as impoliteness theory, in which issues like face attacks, rather than simply face management, were considered. In fact, the previous violence episode could be considered a case of impoliteness, i.e. an attack to face, because the boy's aggression of the policeman does not involve face management but face attack. And, as far as Christopher's face is concerned, the threat to his own positive self and the presentation of a negative self-image would also involve *face self-attack*. This is certainly an atypical case of politeness management, but it may be revealing about individuals who suffer from this type of cognitive impairment.

At the beginning of this conversation, Christopher attempts to answer questions correctly, so that he uses the assertive tactic of ingratiation to project a self-image of likeability, which is his calculated impression: Christopher tries to 'answer the question properly' and to 'work out the correct answer'. In his narrative text, he also uses excuses as a defensive tactic to blame the policeman for his way of questioning him and to avoid a negative inference by the readers of his novel. Whereas Christopher thinks he is projecting a positive self-image, the policeman, unaware of his cognitive condition, considers that his inappropriate responses infringe the maxim of quantity and draws a negative secondary impression: perhaps that he is not cognitively developed. Only readers, who are already aware that the boy has Asperger's syndrome, consider the non-observance of the maxim as an infringement due to his mental condition and only they

can understand the conflict between calculated and secondary impressions, leading to a situation of dramatic irony (see Culpeper 2001: 180-1).

### 10.3.2 Awareness of conversational principles

Christopher's self-concept includes an awareness of his mental condition and behavioural problems, which are listed and commented on at several stages of his narrative (see pp. 59-60, for example). Moreover, I will show that the boy is conscious of the linguistic conventions that regulate social interaction and of the fact that he lacks an understanding of them, e.g. that chatting is not an innate skill for him. In order to appear 'normal', Christopher tries to abide by the general principles of conversation, with different degrees of success. This demonstrates that he makes attempts at self-presentation because he attempts to project a 'sociable' image of himself, which forms part of his self-concept as an ideal / *other* self, because social conventions assume people are 'sociable'. Holtgraves (2002) proposes that people can manage their self-presentations depending on the extent to which conversational rules (e.g. turn taking or adjacency pairs) are conformed or violated, leading to the inference of impressions (see section 9.2.2). In this sub-section, I will study Christopher's use of language by means of several conversational principles to throw light on this character's self-presentation and mental functioning.

Christopher's awareness of the socially acceptable use of language and of his own limitations to maintain social interaction are commented on by him in his narration:

And she said, 'It's very nice of you to come and say hello.'

I didn't reply to this either because *Mrs Alexander was doing what is called chatting where people say things to each other which aren't questions and answers and aren't connected.*

Then she said, 'Even if it's only because you're doing detective work.'

And I said, 'Thank you', again.

And I was about to turn and walk away when she said, 'I have a grandson your age.'

*I tried to do chatting by saying, 'My age is 15 years and 3 months and 3 days.'*

And she said, 'Well, almost your age.' (*The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, p. 50, my emphasis)

In the first sentence in italics the boy puts into simple words his understanding of general principles of conversation such as *adjacency pairs*: he understands that there is a connection between questions and answers. However, Christopher explains that he does not reply to Mrs Alexander's turn because in chatting people say things which are not connected, in opposition to questions and answers, and he cannot do chatting. The boy does not see an apparent direct link between two commentaries due to the rambling nature of conversation. For him, Mrs Alexander's comment is not the first part of an adjacency pair so that he does not need to reply to her. Christopher does not understand that in chatting, a commentary requires another commentary in the same way that a question requires an answer. It is the unpredictability of conversation that Christopher cannot comprehend, which is linked to his lack of social abilities.

The second clause in italics demonstrates that although Christopher will not converse spontaneously, he has learnt the mechanisms of conversation and is able *to try to chat*. This is especially the case in this conversation because he has an objective to reach: to do detective work and obtain information from Mrs Alexander. Christopher has a short-term *ideal self* in which he obtains information about who killed the dog, and the self-regulation to achieve it consists in conversing with the woman. The boy's attempt to chat functions, at the same time, as his assertive self-presentation: he uses an *ingratiation* tactic in order to be liked by his interlocutor and have an opportunity to ask her more questions. It should be born in mind that readers may infer Christopher's ingratiation tactic because we are granted access to the character's mental world and

inner thoughts through the narrative texts. Possibly, if access to his mind was not granted, the inference about his use of the ingratiation tactic would not be drawn.

In contrast, after the woman's first commentary in this fragment, Christopher's silence showed his lack of awareness of face concerns (threat to positive face of both of them) and his infringement of the maxim of quantity, possibly leading to a negative inference about him. Therefore, despite his awareness of some conversational principles, the boy is not always conscious of the self-presentational consequences of his verbal behaviour. Although Christopher does not realise that he is involuntarily self-presenting a negative self-image, his interlocutor may still form a negative impression of him. In conclusion, Christopher is sometimes unaware of the self-image he presents with his management of conversational principles, but at other times he is able to attempt self-presentation of a positive self-image, when an ideal self is involved.

Another peculiarity regarding Christopher's linguistic behaviour is that he cannot tell lies and, consequently, he always tells the truth. In pragmatic terms, the boy always abides by the *maxim of quality*: 'Do not say what you believe to be false' (Grice 1975: 45). As we will see, his strict observance of this maxim will clash with other pragmatic principles, such as politeness, revealing his particular mind style. The boy provides an explanation about his inability to say things that he knows are false:

I do not tell lies. Mother used to say that this was because I was a good person. But it is not because I am a good person. It is because I can't tell lies.

A lie is when you say something happened which didn't happen. (...) And if I think about something which didn't happen I start thinking about all the other things which didn't happen. (*The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, p. 24)

Saying a lie implies saying that something happened which in fact did not happen, and this makes him feel 'shaky and scared' (p. 24). Thus, Christopher's problem lies in the

fact that he cannot imagine an alternative to past events. In possible world terms (see 7.2.3.2), the boy is unable to create alternate universes<sup>3</sup> which took place in the past, because it is not possible to change the past.

And sometimes, when someone has died, like Mother died, people say, 'What would you want to say to your mother if she was here now?' or 'What would your mother think about that?', which is stupid because Mother is dead and you can't say anything to people who are dead and dead people can't think. (*The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, p. 99)

In contrast, he can imagine future fantasy universes, 'I wondered how I would escape [from the police office] if I was in a story.' (p. 17), and future wish worlds: 'I think I would make a very good astronaut.' (p. 65), which reveal ideal selves and which do not involve the violation of the maxim of quality. Christopher's ideal selves, which abound in his narration, demonstrate that the character is constructed as having an awareness of his self-concept.

One of Christopher's behavioural problems related to his linguistic abilities is 'Saying things that other people think are rude' (p. 60). This problem derives from the combination of two facts: (1) that he always observes the maxim of quality, and (2) that he lacks an awareness of face concerns. Therefore, in cases when the observance of the maxim of quality, i.e. saying the truth, clashes with the politeness principle (Leech 1983), i.e. being polite, Christopher will invariably say the truth.

People say that you always have to tell the truth. But they do not mean this because you are not allowed to tell old people that they are old and you are not allowed to tell people if they smell funny or if a grown-up has made a fart. And you are not allowed to say, 'I don't like you,' unless that person has been horrible to you. (*The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, p. 60)

In this fragment, Christopher expounds the conflict between the obligation to tell the truth, that is, the observance of the maxim of quality, and the obligation not to be rude,

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<sup>3</sup> Semino (1997: 73) describes alternate or fantasy universes as the character's dreams, fantasies, hallucinations or fictions composed by themselves.

that is, the observance of the politeness principle. In the cases described in the quotation, social conventions dictate that politeness concerns should override the observance of the maxim of quality. However, this solution is not very satisfactory for Christopher because abiding by the maxim of quality is a must for him, and he does not understand that people's face needs may lead to its suspension.

In possible selves terms, in this quotation Christopher projects an *ought / other self* in which he is obliged to tell the truth: 'People say that you always *have to* tell the truth'. This *ought / other self* does not cause him any problem because 'being sincere' is already part of his self-concept: 'I can't tell lies' (p. 24). The boy also projects another *ought / other self* related to politeness concerns: 'you *are not allowed* to tell people...' or 'you *are not allowed* to say 'I don't like you''. This *ought self* is more difficult to attain for the boy, as it involves not saying things that are true because of face concerns. It is worth noticing that the first *ought self* is constructed by the modal verb 'have to', which denotes strong obligation, whereas the second *ought self* is constructed by the verb '(not) to be allowed to', which simply denotes permission. Thus, the boy's linguistic realisation of the two *ought selves* indicates that the obligation to fulfil the first one is much stronger than the second one.

Christopher has learnt that he is not allowed to say things which are true because of politeness concerns. Whereas observing the maxim of quality is innate for him, politeness issues are not so logical. His lack of understanding of people's face needs and general politeness conventions reflects his inability to understand social conventions, a common symptom of Asperger's syndrome (see *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* 1994). Several examples throughout the novel show how Siobhan, his teacher at the special needs school, has taught him to be aware of his 'behavioural problem', so that he avoids offending people, threatening their positive face. In this

particular example, Christopher is economical with the truth, suspending the maxim of quantity:

Steve, for example, who comes to school on Thursdays, needs help to eat his food and could not even fetch a stick. Siobhan asked me not to say this to Steve's mother. (*The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, p. 6)

Most of the fragments considered so far have consisted of stretches of narrative texts in which I analysed Christopher's verbal behaviour as first person narrator. Now, I want to offer one last example in which Christopher maintains a conversation with Mrs Alexander. Here, we can observe his linguistic behaviour and self-presentational patterns in his role as character. In this conversation, Christopher also states his inability to tell lies so that he observes the maxim of quality:

And I said, 'I am going to do my A level Maths next month. And I'm going to get an A grade.' (1)

And Mrs Alexander said, 'Really? A level Maths?' (2)

I replied, 'Yes, *I don't tell lies.*' (3)

And she said, 'I apologise. I didn't mean to suggest that you were lying. I just wondered if I heard you correctly. I'm a little deaf sometimes.' (4)

And I said, 'I remember. You told me.' And then I said, 'I'm the first person to do an A level from my school because it's a special school.' (5)

And she said, 'Well, I'm very impressed. And I hope you do get an A.' (6)

And I said, 'I will.' (7) (*The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, p. 71)

Christopher's first turn of this fragment of his conversation with Mrs Alexander explains that he is going to do his A level and that he is going to get an A grade. The boy's assertion of his confidence in getting an A grade violates the maxim of modesty, which Leech defined as 'Minimise praise of self. Maximise dispraise of self' (1983: 136). The non-observance of this maxim, that is, praising oneself, inherently conveys self-presentational information, through the tactic of self-enhancements. Therefore,

Christopher's violation of the maxim of modesty entails an assertive tactic of self-presentation.

Mrs Alexander's turn (2) is a compliment aimed at enhancing her interlocutor's positive face, but the boy's inability to understand indirectness makes him take the questions at face value, interpreting them as a doubt about the truth of his statement. Thus, Christopher's answer (3) responds to the literal meaning of her questions and adds another assertive tactic of self-enhancement: he does not tell lies. Christopher is self-schematic on SINCERITY and finds this attribute a valuable personality trait. As the lady infers that the boy felt his positive face threatened, she offers an apology (4) to redress the damage to his positive face, threatening her own positive face at the same time. Christopher seems not to realise of the lady's management of his face, enhancing (turn 2) and redressing (turn 4) his positive face, and of how he threatens her positive face (turn 3).

In the second part of turn (5), 'I'm the first person to do an A level...', Christopher makes a commentary which is not related to the lady's previous turn but returns to the topic he had previously introduced: the A level Maths. To a certain extent, we could say that Christopher is able 'to do chatting' here, although at other points of his narration he recognises he lacks the skill to converse. Again, his statement violates the maxim of modesty and functions as an assertive tactic, through which the boy enhances his positive face and conveys a positive self-image, in order to be liked. And the same analysis can be offered for Christopher's response (7) to Mrs Alexander's direct compliment (6).

In this fragment, Christopher presents an *ideal self* in which he passes his A level Maths. Interestingly, the boy's ideal self is not projected into a *wish world*, e.g. 'I want to pass my A level Maths'. The linguistic realisation of the future possible world, 'I'm

*going to get an A grade* and *'I will [get an A]'*, shows that the boy conceptualises this future event as definite, not as hypothetical. Christopher's assertion of his conviction that he will pass the exam is certainly an *assertive tactic of self-enhancement*: he wants to present an 'intelligent' self-image. At the same time, his failure to observe the maxim of modesty shows his lack of understanding of social conventions regarding the management of his own positive face. In addition, his lack of awareness of his threat to Mrs Alexander's face and of the woman's management of his positive face reveal an insensitivity towards face and politeness concerns in general. Thus, the character is constructed as being able to self-present a positive self-image, implying a certain awareness of his positive face, but as unable to understand social conventions related to face management in conversation with other characters. My assumption is that Christopher's self-knowledge about his self-concept, including self-schemata and ideal selves, makes it possible for him to be concerned about the presentation of a positive self-image. Conversely, the fact that social norms and politeness conventions are not innate for him, due to his mental condition, leads to an insensitivity towards face: he is not aware of threatening other people's faces and he is not concerned about other people managing his own face.

The analysis in this section of a cognitively impaired character's language has thrown light on the workings of various self-presentation issues related to pragmatic concepts. On the one hand, the protagonist, as narrator-character, uses various assertive tactics of ingratiation in order to project a positive self-image: ingratiation, self-enhancements and self-promotion, and he also uses the defensive tactic of offering excuses to avoid that readers infer a negative impression of him. On the other hand, in Christopher's conversations with other characters, he enhances his positive face through ingratiation, but also shows an indifference towards self-presentation, revealed in his

failure to observe principles of conversation: infringement of the maxim of quantity, special conception of the maxim of quality, lack of understanding of indirectness and the related impossibility to draw inferences, lack of understanding of adjacency pairs of commentary-commentary, and general indifference towards face management, except for the enhancement of his own positive face. It is the conflict between his desire to present a positive self-image and his indifference towards social conventions and face management that reveals his particular mind style.

#### **10.4 Conclusion**

In this chapter of my thesis, I have provided an analysis of how characters' self-presentation styles can be studied in their use of language through various pragmatic theories. The goals of the chapter were to hypothesise about (1) how readers arrive at mental representations of the characters' projection of self-images, (2) how they infer further impressions about them, and (3) how they arrive at an evaluation of them. For these purposes, I have provided a detailed analysis of the self-presentation styles of various characters, paying special attention to the management of politeness issues and conversational maxims. As for politeness theory, I have proposed some theoretical developments, such as the analysis of the enhancement and attack of face and the suggestion of a more speaker-oriented perspective. These developments have proved to be revealing for the investigation of characters' self-presentations, as my politeness analysis has thrown light on aspects of characterisation and mind style that were not covered by Brown and Levinson's theory. Moreover, the analysis of the management of general conversational principles (i.e. conversational maxims and cooperative principle, adjacency pairs, turn taking, theory of politeness) has proved to be extremely

enlightening for the study of characters' self-presentation and projection of self-images, especially for those characters suffering from some type of cognitive impairment.

## 11 Conclusion

### 11.1 Concluding remarks

The objective of my thesis has been to theorise about how readers construct a mental representation of characters' minds and selves during the reading of a literary text. My work is based on the assumption that the creation, in the reader's head, of an image of a character stems from the reader's mental processing of the language of the text. On the basis of a cognitive stylistic framework, I have provided a linguistic analysis of the language of narrative texts, paying special attention to the pragmatic characteristics of characters' verbal behaviour. I have used concepts from socio-cognitive psychology to investigate various aspects of characters' mental functioning and of readers' processing of the literary text. On the one hand, the structures and processes of characters' minds, as reflected in their use of language, reveal their personalities in the way that socio-cognitive psychology predicts for real people. On the other hand, the reader's processing of literary texts is accounted for in terms of how information is interpreted and inferences are drawn, from the very words on the page. My proposal was to consider the construction of characters' selves as a tool to examine characterisation issues and mind style, when characters' idiosyncratic and repetitive use of linguistic patterns portrays them having a particular mental condition.

In this thesis, I have concentrated on narratives with first person narrators because this type of narration allows the analysis of the projection of selves at two levels. First, at the character level, the characters as storyworld participants maintain conversations with other characters that allow the study of their self-conceptions. And second, at the narrator-character level, in the language used by characters as first person narrators in

their narrative texts. Therefore, I assumed a distinction between the portrayal of self in the narrative text by the narrator-character, and in the conversation with other characters, covering these issues in different chapters of the thesis. One of the weaknesses of the study of characterisation within narratology is the little attention paid to characters who also act as first person narrators, probably due to the issue of their reliability. However, I do not consider the fact that a narrator-character is unreliable as an impediment to analysing that character's self and mental functioning. My claim is that a first person narrator's narration offers direct access to that character's mind, to the self-concept, to the conception of others, and to the view of the world of that character in general. So, an unreliable narrator may portray a self-concept which is not accurate, but it will still be that character's true, though incorrect, self-concept. It depends then on the reader to decide whether the characters' self-concept or worldview is not accurate and draw the subsequent inferences about the character's self.

The term 'self' has been proposed to refer to a character's image of self. Given the socio-cognitive theoretical framework on which my work is based, I have borrowed the notion 'self-concept' to designate the self-image of a character. So, the terms 'self' and 'self-concept' have been used in this thesis as synonymous. A character's self includes self-knowledge such as personality attributes, affective states, social roles, past experiences, future goals, interests, opinions, attitudes, or emotions. Therefore, my analysis of characters' self-concepts has covered a wide array of information about different conceptions, such as their traits (e.g. Miranda's intelligence), plans (e.g. Clegg's desire to marry Miranda), or conflicts due to social roles (e.g. Jekyll's split personality).

In order to throw light on the self, I have hypothesised about characters' mental functioning in general and about their particular cognitive conditions, when they are

constructed as being cognitively impaired. I have proposed to identify and investigate the mind style of characters with a mental condition (e.g. autism or schizophrenia) through the pragmatic analysis of their conversations with other characters, suggesting a new tool to analyse mind style. Characters' idiosyncratic pragmatic patterns relative to the adherence to conversational maxims and management of face concerns has proved to be revealing about their mind styles. In addition to this, the analysis of characters' minds by means of model theory (especially in relation to characters' creation and manipulation of mental representations of themselves and other characters) and other concepts such as attitudes and opinions has thrown light on their peculiar cognitive habits, offering another tool for the investigation of mind style.

The analysis of characters' mental functioning has concentrated on the investigation of the linguistic expression of self-knowledge structures, which can be systematically related to the characters' imagined information processing, and can account for behaviours as a matter of imagined self-regulation. I have claimed that authors may explicitly reveal characters' self-concepts, or alternatively, their conceptions may be inferred by readers from implicit cues. I have proposed that the cognitive processes of information processing and self-regulation can be considered as implicit cues about a character's self-concept, so that readers may draw inferences from them to construct a mental representation of the character.

As for information processing, I have claimed that the reader's construction of a character's self-concept is influenced by the way that character arrives at interpretations and draws inferences about him/herself, others, and the world in general. Regarding self-regulation, I demonstrated that the reader's representation of a character is influenced by the character's attempts to regulate behaviour in order to enhance self or to maintain consistency with previous self-conceptions. For example, we understand

that Clegg interprets that almost all women are vulgar because they maintain sexual relationships. This mental process of interpretation reveals that he holds a schema for 'vulgar women' associated with a negative opinion towards them. The process of interpretation, the schema for 'vulgar women' and his opinion are cues which reveal his part of his self-concept, e.g. his religious background.

I have suggested that when readers form a mental representation of a character, this representation contains two differentiated aspects: the mental representation of the reader's conception of the character, which may include a different mental representation of the character's self-concept, and the mental representation of the reader's opinion about the character. These aspects are treated as separate but are in fact completely interconnected and may even overlap to a great extent. However, and most interestingly, I have offered analyses of cases in which readers arrive at a conception of a character which contrasts with the character's self-concept. For example, Humbert's use of French vocabulary and sentences reveals his French origin and high education, but the repetition of that foreign lexis may lead readers to infer a certain snobbishness. In this particular case, moreover, Humbert's self-schemata about his origin and education contain positive connotations which also contrast with the negative evaluation implicit in being a snob.

Another aspect of characters' self-concepts which has served to throw light on characterisation has been the characters' projection of possible and hypothetical future self-images. Basically, the general assumption is that possible selves, a notion also borrowed from social cognition, express selves that characters want to become, i.e. ideal selves, selves that characters think they have to become, i.e. ought selves, or selves that characters do not want to become, i.e. not-me selves, among others. I have proposed that characters' construction of possible selves and the processes of self-regulation to

achieve them can be considered as another characterisation tool. I also offered a comparison of possible selves with similar notions from other theoretical frameworks, such as possible worlds theory and the notion of multiple selves from cognitive linguistics.

Doležel's suggestion that texts can be classified according to the governing modality system (axiological, deontic, epistemic modality) has been applied to a characterisation of characters' self-concepts. A linguistic analysis of characters' language, by means of the study of modality and transitivity patterns mainly, has revealed that the protagonists of *The Collector* can be characterised by the predominance of different modality systems. Moreover, regarding deontic modality, I have proposed that it may be revealing about worldview and mind style, depending on whether the obligation characters imposed upon themselves were socially shared or their individual impositions.

I have proposed that characters' possible selves, which are projected into possible worlds, and their processes of self-regulation for their achievement are revealing about character's selves and mental functioning. Through examples from narrative texts, I have shown that narrator-characters grant access to their mental worlds so that readers may infer the self-guides that characterise their selves. The linguistic analysis of the expression of possible selves has proved to indicate the character's mental conceptualisation of their self-guides relative to the probability of their attainment, especially in terms of the degrees of obligation involved to achieve ought selves. Moreover, I have suggested that the differences in the determination to self-regulate behaviour to achieve the possible self (e.g. the contrast between Clegg's lack of self-regulation to marry his guest and Miranda's processes of self-regulation to be free) are also indicative of character's selves. The linguistic analysis of the repeated patterns used

for the projection of characters' possible selves and self-regulation processes that characterise their mental functioning has proved to be revealing about characterisation and mind style.

I have considered the notion of the 'split self' proposed by Emmott, accounting for it in terms of social cognition and providing a linguistic analysis of its expression by literary characters. I have proposed that split selves, both mental/physical instantiation and social role splits, are the result of the activation of different self-schemata in characters' working self-concepts, which are revealed through the use of metaphors and referring expressions mainly. As for the social role splits, I believe that it is necessary for the character to express a sense of fragmentation, because the mere enumeration of one's social role schemata does not involve a social role split. Moreover, it is the reader who has the last word in the interpretation of the character as suffering from a crisis of identity.

The last new path I have proposed for the analysis of characterisation and mind style consists in the self-presentational styles of characters. On the basis of a pragmatic analysis of verbal self-presentations, I have hypothesised about how readers arrive at a mental representation of characters' presented self-concepts. The nature of my data allows the investigation of self-presentation at two distinct levels: first, in the narrator-character's narrative text, and second, in the characters' conversations with other characters. Prior to the analysis itself, I have compared self-presentation theory with politeness theory to propose some further developments of the latter, such as an increased concern for the speaker's management of their own face, related to the fact that one of the objectives of self-presentation is to enhance one's face. Moreover, I have offered a connection, not without problems, between the notions of positive and negative face, assertive and defensive self-presentation styles, and ideal and not-me

selves. The pragmatic analysis of characters' face concerns, self-presentation tactics and possible selves has revealed issues about their self-concepts and about the processes through which readers create a representation of them.

The analytical sections of chapters 9 and 10 have proved that self-presentation can be considered a characterisation tool which throws light on characters' presented self-concepts and on how readers arrive at a global mental representation of characters. I suggested that assertive and defensive self-presentation styles may serve to illustrate characters' personalities, which are usually characterised by the preponderance of one of these styles. Moreover, I explained how the contrast between the personalities of two characters of a novel can be emphasised through differing self-presentational styles, as the analysis of Clegg and Miranda's linguistic behaviour demonstrated. I also showed how readers construct representations of characters on the basis of the calculated impressions they project in their conversations and in their narrative texts. In addition to this, in most of my examples, readers might also infer further secondary and undesired impressions about them, which sometimes ruin the desired presented self-concept. These further impressions, which comprise the reader's conception of the character, do not derive from the choice of certain self-presentational strategies or styles, but rather from their inappropriateness in the context of utterance. In most cases, readers may consider that characters infringe conversational maxims, mainly the maxims of quantity (when their self-presentations are repetitive) and quality (when readers do not believe their self-presentational tactics), the modesty maxim (when characters boast about their positive qualities), and politeness principles (when characters manage face concerns in non-standard ways). Consequently, the infringement of maxims becomes one of the most informative pragmatic notions through which we can analyse how readers arrive at their own conceptions of characters' minds, from their verbal behaviour.

## 11.2 Further directions

Throughout the chapters of this thesis, I have made proposals concerning interesting areas of further investigation both at theoretical and analytical levels. I will offer here a summary of the most important ones, which were not covered in my research due to the space limitations.

In the literature review chapter, I explained that my thesis was situated in the field of cognitive stylistics because my analytical tools consist of theories of linguistics, especially pragmatics, and social cognition and the data I investigate are literary narrative texts. More particularly, my thesis attempts to hypothesise about how characters' mental functioning is projected through the language of the text, and how readers arrive at interpretations of those characters. The simple choice of data for my thesis has imposed some restrictions on my analysis. I have exclusively chosen narrative texts with first person narrators, because I have analysed their mental functioning at two levels: as narrators and as characters. Further research could concentrate on the analysis of characters' mental functioning in texts with omniscient narrators. In those cases, it would be interesting to analyse the means available to that type of narrator to provide information about characters' self-concepts. I consider that the issues of point of view and speech and thought presentation would acquire great relevancy in such analysis. Moreover, it would be interesting to provide analyses of texts ranging from behaviourist narratives such as Faulkner's, in which characters' minds are exclusively accessed through action, and texts characterised by stream of consciousness such as Woolf's, in which direct access is provided to characters' mental functioning. The linguistic means through which characters' self-concepts are portrayed in these two types of texts vary

significantly, so that they may provide a good ground for the analysis of characters' mental functioning.

As for the theoretical background of my research, I consider that there exist other frameworks which could add to my analysis of the construction of characters' selves. As for social cognition and in relation to the self-concept, I have proposed that self-schemata influence 'other perception', but I have not offered an analysis of this area of research. The cognitive processes involved in person perception, and the related area of stereotypes, could present a new perspective in the area of characterisation and mind style. Similarly, in chapter 6, I proposed that the application of attribution theories together with concepts from self-presentation to the same data could benefit the analysis of characters' mental functioning. The fact that self-presentation studies the speaker's attempts to present certain self-images and that attribution theory studies the hearer's inferences about the speaker's personality traits means that the two theories can be considered as complementary.

Furthermore, I have also proposed some developments to various linguistic theories, due to the needs which arose from the analytical sections. Mainly, I have proposed that politeness theory could benefit from a widening of its scope, especially to include a more speaker-oriented perspective, so that it would cover other issues apart from the redress of face threatening acts. I consider that speakers' management of their own face, especially the enhancement of one's face, is an extremely relevant issue which cannot be overlooked by this theory. Moreover, speakers may attempt to attack or enhance the interlocutors' face, involving a variety of goals apart from maintaining harmonious social relations. The variety of possible goals includes enhancing one's self-image, attacking the hearer's image to bring about conflict, or enhancing the hearer's positive face so that speaker is approved of. Therefore, if politeness theory

offered the tools to analyse these subjects, its potential as an analytical tool to study characterisation would be improved.

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