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Abstract

This thesis discusses the different levels of communication in two literary narratives of Henry Green. Although relatively little known today, Green is noted for his enigmatic writing style and stylistic idiosyncrasies: metaphorical language, extensive use of images and montage as well as elaborate narrative techniques.

Literary narrative communication comprises a complex interplay of different communicative levels. In this thesis I shall focus on three different types of literary narrative communication, based on the standard structure of fictional narrative communication defined by Manfred Jahn in *Narratology: A Guide to the Theory of Narrative*. Within the scope of my thesis I will consider: the communicative acts and strategies employed by the characters in the narrated story, the narrative discourse between narrator and narratee as well as, the literary conversation between author and implied or actual reader. The complex interplay of these levels of communication is a key concept in Green's writing.

A theory chapter shall offer an overview of the narratological framework in Green's texts, exploring literary techniques such as narrative situations (i.e., narrative voice and focalization), narrative modes (i.e., speech, report, description and comment), different types of the representation of consciousness in literary texts (i.e., interior monologue, narrated monologue, direct discourse, indirect discourse and psychonarration) and the different levels of literary communication (i.e., the level of nonfictional communication, the level of fictional mediation and the level of action). With the help of communication theory and formal communication models by David K. Berlo, Roman O. Jakobson, Paul Watzlawick and Herbert Paul Grice, I will show how communication is thought to work and what makes successful communication possible.

The main part of my thesis investigates in greater detail the respective levels of literary communication in two of Henry Green's texts: on the basis of the novels *Loving* and *Doting* I will analyse three different levels of communication: the level of action (character-speech-character), the level of fictional mediation (narrator-story-narratee) and the level of nonfictional communication (author-text-reader). My focus will be on questions such as: How is the narrative in the book constructed? Which types of discourse are used to fulfil which aim? What are the difficulties that threaten the success of the communication process? Where and how does communication turn into miscommunication? That is to say, I will mostly concentrate on the presentation of narrative forms and functions. The discourse analysis of the theory chapter will be used as the general foundation of this discussion. My main concern throughout will be on scenes of social intercourse between Green's characters in order to portray the prevalent failure to communicate successfully.

So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air. There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification.

1 Corinthians 14:9-10 KJV

Prologue

During my many years of study I have learned that the art of writing is not only very difficult as such but, compared to the act of speaking or communicating, a very solitary process, too. Writing, I believe, would not happen without the hope to accomplish communication. The conveyance or exchange of information is an act of partaking and sharing we make in order to transmit thoughts, ideas or knowledge. So many different kinds of thoughts, voiced in the most diverse languages, strive to be understood. They are passed on from person to person, from generation to generation in order to gain and maintain meaning. This process of sharing our thoughts, spreading our ideas and partaking in each others affairs is rooted in the etymological meaning of the Latin word *communicatio*. It is this dynamic interaction, whether in spoken or written communication, that cheers me on. The art of listening, thinking, speaking, learning, understanding, reading and writing are processes in which we eagerly take part on a daily basis, and in the end, they all fulfil just one aim: they are ample nourishments in our social quest for happiness and mutual understanding. The constant alternations of communicative action and reaction, like listening and speaking, are important textures of our lives, textures that weave themselves together, always anew. They weave themselves into an intricate web of experiences and knowledge, which form our social environment and eventually ourselves, a human being.

‘Communication’ is a rich tangle of intellectual and cultural strands that encodes our time’s confrontations with itself. To understand communication is to understand much more. An apparent answer to the painful divisions between self and other, private and public, and inner thought and outer word, the notion illustrates our strange lives at this point in history. It is a sink into which most of our hopes and fears seem to be poured.

(Peters 2)

Prose is not to be read aloud but to oneself at night, and it is not quick as poetry, but rather a gathering web of insinuations which go further than names however shared can ever go. Prose should be a long intimacy between strangers with no direct appeal to what both may have known. It should slowly appeal to feelings unexpressed, it should in the end draw tears out of the stone.

(Green, *Pack My Bag* 84)

1. Introduction

1.1 A short biography: the two faces of Henry Vincent Yorke (1905-1973)

Henry Vincent Yorke was born on 29 October 1905 in the English abbey town Tewkesbury in Gloucestershire to an upper-class family, the third son of Maud Wyndham and Vincent Yorke, managing director of the engineering firm H. Pontifex and Sons Ltd. He received the standard British upper-class education at Eton College and the University of Oxford. In 1926, still at Oxford, he published his first, partly autobiographical, novel *Blindness* under the lifelong pseudonym of Henry Green. One year later he decided to leave Oxford without taking a degree to join the paternal family business in Birmingham. 1929 was an eventful year for the twenty-four-year-old Henry: he published his second novel *Living*, agreed to a managing position at H. Pontifex and Sons Ltd. and married Mary Adelaide Biddulph. Five years later, in 1934, Sebastian Yorke, their only son, was born. During World War II Henry served in the Auxiliary Fire Service in London and published a number of books: *Party Going* (1939), *Pack My Bag* (1940), which is also partially autobiographical, his three war novels *Caught* (1943), *Loving* (1945) and *Back* (1946) as well as several short stories. After this very prolific phase his literary output slowly but surely seemed to wane: *Concluding* (1948), *Nothing* (1950) and *Doting* (1952) were the last three novels he ever published. In 1958 he retired from H. Pontifex and Sons Ltd. as a well-respected man of business and lived a rather quiet life as a sophisticated reader of several books a week with occasional contributions to periodicals and a number of short stories, which were not given to publication until 1992 by his grandson Matthew Yorke (*Surviving: The Uncollected Writings of Henry Green*). Henry Yorke died at the age of 68 on 13 December 1973 in London.¹

1.2 A bibliographical overview: the elusive writer Henry Green

Henry Vincent Yorke, the successful industrialist, wrote under the *nom de plume* of Henry Green. This self-chosen pseudonym granted him, among other things, the privacy he needed during his everyday life. In *Pack My Bag* he noted: “[n]ames distract, nicknames are too easy and if leaving both out make a book look blind then that to my mind is no disadvantage” (84). He disliked being a public figure and therefore never

¹ For Henry Vincent Yorke's biography consult Keith C. Odom's monograph *Henry Green* and Jeremy Treglown's *Romancing: The Life and Work of Henry Green*.

really was one. The separation of the life of the businessman Yorke and the life of the writer Green left him with two different sets of tasks, each with its own place in his daily schedule: he went to work from morning until noon and wrote “about a thousand words a day at work during his lunch hour and at home after dinner” (Odom 16). This arrangement led Nigel Dennis to remark that Henry Yorke’s dislike for lunch was quite advantageous for Henry Green: this “abstinence allows [him] to distill quite a flow of fiction before afternoon business summons him back to his essential trade” (84).

The following anecdote about Green’s first entry in the almanac *Who’s Who*² is taken from Jeremy Treglown’s *Romancing: The Life and Work of Henry Green*. “Henry Green first appeared in the 1948 volume, when he was forty-three and had already published seven of his ten books” (Treglown 4). His entry is not listed under his family name Yorke where some of his family members are mentioned (i.e., his father, uncle and cousin) nor is there any cross-reference from Henry Yorke to Henry Green. Green’s entry is “for the most part painstakingly uninformative” (Treglown 4) and shows quite clearly his propensity for secretiveness and anonymity but also reveals some of his humorous idiosyncrasies:

He is described as the managing director of an unnamed engineering company in Birmingham. He has been educated at a public school, also unnamed, and at an unidentified college at Oxford. He reveals that he married in 1929 but doesn’t say who his wife is. The address given is that of his publisher, not his home. The titles of his books, on the other hand, are listed in full. And, as if to make up for his earlier secretiveness, under the optional category ‘Recreation,’ where his father conventionally recorded ‘hunting and shooting’ and many others chose to say nothing, Green suddenly confessed, ‘romancing over the bottle, to a good band.’

(Treglown 4)

Secrecy was one of the virtues to which he pledged loyalty both in real life and in his writing. Edward Stokes described Green as “one of the most elusive, tantalising and enigmatic of novelists, whose work is extremely difficult to define or categorize” (7). Categorisation is indeed an unsuitable notion for the upper-class adolescent who left his university education behind to choose, if only for a limited period of time, the life of a hard-working factory man. Interestingly enough, his upper-class upbringing had less influence on his writing than one might assume: his enthusiasm for depicting working-

² The almanac *Who’s Who* is an annual British publication that contains biographical information about noted people of the time. Each person is asked to write his or her own entry.

class lives and struggles is evident in many of his novels (i.e., *Living, Caught, Loving, Back* and *Concluding*).

Another characteristic, relevant to his writing, is Yorke's personal experience of sensual impairment. In 1958 during his interview with Terry Southern he mishears a word which also shows his passion for contrived scheming in favour of achieving vagueness and uncertainty, not only in his literature, but also in real life situations. He takes the interviewer's question away from his literary works to make leeway for comic relief:

INTERVIEWER And how about "subtle"?

MR GREEN I don't follow, Suttee, as I understand it, is the suicide – now forbidden – of a Hindu wife on her husband's flaming bier. I don't want my wife to do that when my time comes – and with great respect, as I know her, she won't...

INTERVIEWER I'm sorry, you misheard me; I said "subtle" – that the message was too subtle.

MR GREEN Oh, subtle. How dull!

INTERVIEWER ... yes, well now...

(*Surviving* 237-8)

In all fairness it has to be mentioned that it cannot be taken for granted that Green really followed any scheme for ambiguity and vagueness. He might have indeed 'misheard' the question. Nevertheless, the whole incidence fits his personality perfectly, with or without the author's intent. The increasing decline of his hearing abilities was a constant source of challenging ideas which were implemented in quite a few of his novels. The old Nanny Swift in *Loving*, for example, seems to use her sensual impairments as a kind of protection against the inconveniences she faces. Ensuing misunderstandings and miscommunication due to sensual impairment is a common theme in Green's texts.

One more important point to mention is the fact that Henry Vincent Yorke was a child of a war generation who was fortunately too young for the World War I and fortunate enough not to serve actively in World War II. In *Pack My Bag* he even mentions another war between the British Empire and the two Boer republics, the Second Boer War (1899-1902), which was over just a few years before he was born. Being in his early thirties, he writes in anguish of despair:

I was born a mouth breather with a silver spoon in 1905, three years after one war and nine before another, too late for both. But not too late for the war which seems to be coming upon us now and that is a

reason to put down what comes to mind before one is killed, and surely it would be asking much to pretend one had a chance to live.

(*Pack My Bag* 5)

The repeated threat of war in Henry Vincent Yorke's life left a constant presence in many of Henry Green's novels: in *Caught* (1943) Green processes parts of his threatening experiences as a wartime fire fighter in London. *Loving* (1945) is an attempt to escape war-torn Britain and show the influences it nonetheless has on an upper-class English household and its mostly lower middle-class English servants in Ireland. *Back* (1946) conjures up the aftermath of war with homecoming soldiers and a weakened and socially unstable United Kingdom. Finally, *Pack My Bag* (1940), another partially autobiographical novel, incorporates the author's personal anxieties experienced during the war.³

During his lifetime Green did not have a large readership; he was not really regarded as a 'reader's writer' but occasionally was referred to as a 'writer's writer' or even a 'writer's writer's writer' (cf. Treglown 2). This peculiarity is primarily due to his writing style, which is demanding, evasive and symbolical. From his first novels up to his last two, *Nothing* and *Doting*, his idiosyncratic way of writing underwent quite dramatic changes: the amount of dialogue nearly doubled whilst descriptive scenes and authorial commentary were reduced to a minimum. One of Green's earlier novels and his very last one may serve as two extremes to exemplify this point: while *Party Going* (1939) consists of about 62 percent direct and indirect speech scenes and only 38 percent description, authorial commentary or summary, *Doting* (1952) exhibits 97 percent direct and indirect speech scenes and only 3 percent description and summary with the narrator's commentary being dropped completely (cf. Stokes 75).⁴

Green's predilection for non-representation and anonymity, it seems, does not only apply to himself as a person but is also prevalent in his novels. His narrators are not allowed to interfere much with the story they tell. Most of the time, they are hardly noticeable at all. Green sometimes uses a camera-eye narration, a "purely external or 'behaviorist' representation of events; a text that reads like a transcript of a recording made by a camera" (Jahn N3.3.11.) in order to achieve various possible interpretations.

³ See Michael North's *Henry Green and the Writing of His Generation* for a more detailed analysis on the dramatising effects of the war on Green and the writing of his generation.

⁴ See Edward Stokes' *The Novels of Henry Green* for a detailed analysis and a structuralist approach to Green's methods and techniques.

Green's specific way of writing seeks attention by employing playful images, manifold symbols and a skilful use of language. Obliqueness and ambiguity are the principle components of the way stories are being told or jokes are made; conversations are held but, in the end, many things remain unsaid. Clearly, it cannot be regarded as one of Green's aims to lead the way and instruct the readers while giving them elaborate explanations of characters or the story. So what then is the aspiration of the artist Henry Green? In his first broadcast talk in 1950 "A Novelist to His Readers: I: Communication without Speech", Green has his personal answer ready at hand:

All artists mean to create a life which is not. That is to say, a life which does not eat, procreate or drink, but which can live in people who are alive. [...] But, if [art] exists to create life, of a kind, in the reader – as far as words are concerned, what is the best way in which this can be done? Of course by dialogue. And why? Because we do not write letters any more, we ring on the telephone instead. The communication between human beings has now come to be almost entirely conducted by conversation. [...] it is only by an aggregate of words over a period followed by an action that we obtain, in life, a glimmering of what is going on in someone, or even in ourselves.

(*Surviving* 136-141)

Time is moving on, change is happening and conversation is changing. It is the work of the writer to capture that process, to write and create life "which can live in people who are alive" (*Surviving* 136). Green's affinity for language games and his avoidance of concrete meanings and explanations enable the reader to take a very active part in the communication process. Without doubt, this imaginative participation of each reader is exactly what Henry Green intends. His texts do not reveal only one single meaning; on the contrary, there will always exist more than one: for Green, art is there "to create life in the reader, [and therefore] it will be necessary for the dialogue to mean different things to different readers at one and the same time" (*Surviving* 140). As a result, we encounter in Green's novels narratorial and authorial disengagement comprising a lack of authorial explanation or commentary, an excess of the characters' idiosyncratic speech patterns as well as mundane themes and endings with no resolutions. Jeremy Treglown summarises Green's peculiar art of writing as follows:

Green's is an intuitive, oblique, often wayward kind of art. In the 1920s, when his publisher wanted "society" novels, Green wrote about industrial Birmingham. In the 1950s, when working-class topics became popular, he set his books in the exclusive, fast-fading milieu depicted by Ivy Compton-Burnett and Noël Coward. All of his novels

are electric with sex, but he never comes near to describing the act. [...] He sees life in terms of bathos, at its most surprising and poetic when it is most mundane, and partly for this reason the novels are, among much else, exceptionally funny. And while they can make you laugh out loud when you least expect to, they also exhibit a gratuitous stylistic bravura, splashing on color as in fauvist paintings. The novels' refusal of congruity or appropriateness has a lot to do with instincts —; the instincts of characters and also Green's writerly instincts about truth and about effect —; overriding any preconceived notions of what should happen in a novel, or in life.

(*Romancing* 3)

Treglown describes Green's way of writing as quite distinctive and places his books "among the outstanding romantic (as well as modernist) novels of his century, though not in a way that easily fits the stereotypes of romance" (ibid). Green once said that "[n]arrative prose in future must be as diffuse and variously interpretable as life itself." (Russell 36). In his novels he definitely tries to live up to this notion of ambiguousness. Interestingly, Green has no intention of indulging in any kind of philosophical, political, religious or economical discourse⁵. Instead, he concentrates on mundane themes and problems such as love and friendship, conflicts within and between different generations, dreadful war experiences, financial struggles, various illnesses or approaching death. These ordinary but important themes tend to get weakened by the characters' tendency for – or inclination towards – miscommunication, small talk or non-communication. Green's rendering of speech, nevertheless, comes close to real life and to authentic conversation patterns. I would like to close this section with another quote by Green, which eloquently reinforces these points:

⁵ Green once stated: "Conversation is the principal way of learning anything about life, and so it is absurd to waste good talk on topics, such as art, that come after life, not before it. It is ridiculous for people who talk mainly about the arts to call themselves 'intellectuals'. How can they be, when they haven't the smallest interest in the principal material of intellect – *people*. No, the *real* intellectual is the workingman" (qtd. in Dennis 86). His admiration for the working class remains unchallenged today.

[...] the mere exchange between two human beings in conversation is a mysterious thing enough. The mere fact that we talk to one another is man's greatest asset. That we talk to one another in novels, that is, between complete strangers and perhaps, in different countries, is nothing less than miraculous if you once realise how much common experience can be shared. My plea is that we should not underestimate this and that between writer and reader we should try to create life, a life of interest, entertainment and solace, without the appeal to the heights of morals or the depths of politics, neither of which have a proper place in narrative.

(qtd. in Russell 26)

How Henry Green's texts endeavour to interact with the reader in particular and how they create "a life of interest, entertainment and solace" will be analysed in section four. But before commencing with a detailed discourse analysis I would like to give an overview of the narratological framework on which my thesis relies.

2. Theoretical background

2.1 Narratological framework

2.1.1 Narratology, story & discourse

Classical narratology, the systematic study of narrative texts, is a relatively recent field of research which started out in the 1960s. The first acknowledged definition of the term **narratology** was proposed by Tzvetan Todorov in 1969, who describes it as: “The theory of the structures of narrative. To investigate a structure, or to present a ‘structural description’, the narratologist dissects the narrative phenomena into their component parts and then attempts to determine functions and relationships” (qtd. in Jahn 2.1.1).

Each narrative text is a complex artefact which can be divided into several components; it is an amalgam of different narrative levels. The method of narratological division employed by this thesis mainly complies with the structuralist Seymour B. Chatman’s approach. In his book *Story and Discourse*, published in 1978, Chatman combines the views of the ancient Greek philosophers (Plato and his disciple Aristotle), Russian formalists (e.g., Vladimir Y. Propp, Viktor B. Shklovsky and Boris Tomasevsky) and French structuralists (e.g., Roland Barthes, Gérard Genette and Tzvetan Todorov) to describe the following components of a narrative text:

[...] each narrative has two parts: a *story* (*histoire*), the content or chain of events (actions, happenings), plus what may be called the existents (characters and settings), the objects and persons performing, undergoing, or acting as a background for them; and a *discourse* (*discours*), that is, the expression, the means by which the content is communicated, the set of actual narrative ‘statements.’

The theory then is dualistic: story is the *what* that is depicted: discourse is the *how*.

(*Story and Discourse* 19)

Fundamentally, many structuralists view a narrative text as consisting of only two major components, namely the **story** – ‘what is told in the narrative?’ – and **discourse** – ‘how is the narrative told?’ (see Chatman, *Story and Discourse* 19). Figure 2.1.1 on page 13 offers a detailed list of possible components and elements a literary narrative typically includes and is partly based on Chatman’s *Story and Discourse* as well as Lethbridge and Mildorf’s introductory *Basics of English Studies* with further components added. Please note that this amalgam of various literary elements is just one possible model and does

not claim to be complete, especially because narratologists themselves have yet to agree on clear boundaries or exact definitions of narratological categories.

narrative		events (what happens?)	actions & happenings	
	story (what is told?)			
		existents (what characters are involved & where does it happen?)	characters & space/setting	
	discourse (how is it told?)	plot (how is the story structured?)	linear or non-linear	
		time (when, how long, how often?)	order, duration & frequency	
		tense (which narrative tense is used?)	narrative past, narrative present or narrative future	
	narrative modes (how is the narrative conveyed?)	mimesis & diegesis		
	narrative situation (who speaks & who sees?)	narrative voice & focalization	homo- or heterodiegetic; first-person, authorial or figural	
	representation of consciousness (how are thoughts represented?)	direct & indirect discourse, interior monologue, psychonarration & narrated monologue		

Figure 2.1.1 Literary narrative components
(adapted from Chatman, *Story and Discourse* 26 & Lethbridge and Mildorf 43)

Figure 2.1.1 on page 13 includes basic literary narrative components relevant for my thesis. The main part of this paper will consider questions like: How is the narrative constructed in the texts of Henry Green? Where and how does miscommunication take place? Basically, my thesis focuses on an analysis of the discourse level, the presentation

of narrative forms and functions (how is it told?). However, some parts of the story level – action, events, characters and setting – will of course play into my study, too. I will summarise the narrative elements of discourse which are most relevant for my thesis namely: narrative situation, narrative modes and representation of consciousness, models of communication; I will generally refrain from elaborating on plot, time and tense and shall only go into further detail when the situation demands it. The following abstract addresses the narrative modes, that is to say the different modes of conveying a narrative.

2.1.2 Diegesis & mimesis

Plato's and Aristotle's formal distinction between **diegesis** and **mimesis** is still present today. The relation between both terms is explained inter alia in Plato's *The Republic* (around 380 BC). The first part of the subsequent dialogue between Socrates and Adeimantus discusses the strategies of a reporting poet (diegesis) and the second that of an imitating poet (mimesis):

[...] the poet is speaking in his own person; he never leads us to suppose that he is any one else. But in what follows he takes the person of Chryses, and then he does all that he can to make us believe that the speaker is not Homer, but the aged priest himself. And in this double form he has cast the entire narrative of the events which occurred at Troy and in Ithaca and throughout the Odyssey.

Yes.

And a narrative it remains both in the speeches which the poet recites from time to time and in the intermediate passages?

Quite true.

But when the poet speaks in the person of another, may we not say that he assimilates his style to that of the person who, as he informs you, is going to speak?

Certainly.

And this assimilation of himself to another, either by the use of voice or gesture, is the imitation of the person whose character he assumes?

Of course.

Then in this case the narrative of the poet may be said to proceed by way of imitation?

Very true.

Or, if the poet everywhere appears and never conceals himself, then

again the imitation is dropped, and his poetry becomes simple narration.

(Book III, 394)

The poet, or the narrator in a wider context, has two representational modes of presenting the story's events: either through narrative description, that is narration and report (diegesis) or through direct imitation, that is representation (mimesis). This differentiation still persists today. Although it has been further modified by more contemporary researchers and literary scholars (e.g., Gérard Genette and Seymour B. Chatman). One variation of this distinction that is common at present in literary studies is as follows: *diegesis* is the narrator's mediated representation of the story's speech acts and events, in a word, diegesis is narration. The narrator communicates by making comments, reporting events or describing the scene. Diegesis is the mode of *telling*: the telling of the story as it unfolds (see Lethbridge and Mildorf 63). *Mimesis*, on the other hand, is a character's verbal presentation of the events via direct speech. Here, the narrator shows the action with the help of the characters' speech acts. Mimesis is therefore the mode of *showing*: the showing of the story through direct presentation (see Lethbridge and Mildorf 63). Chatman creates his own terms and definitions for similar concepts. He differentiates between 'narration' and 'enactment' and offers a straightforward example of each type:

The difference between narration, the recounting of an event, and enactment, its unmediated presentation, corresponds to the classical distinction between diegesis and mimesis (in Plato's sense of the word), or, in more modern terms, between telling and showing. Dialogue, of course, is the preeminent enactment; a good contrast between narration proper and enactment is demonstrated in the two forms of depicting a character's speech – indirect vs. direct speech: "John said that he was tired" vs. "I'm tired' [said John]." The first necessarily entails a person telling what John said, while the second simply has John saying something – in the audience's presence, so to speak.

(*Story and Discourse* 312)

Irrespectively of the different terms used, it seems to be inevitable that there are two different representational modes of presenting a story. There are also different forms these representational modes can take.

2.1.3 Narrative modes

In his book *The Narrative Modes: Techniques of the Short Story* (1982) Helmut Bonheim distinguishes between four primary **narrative modes** which all possess a different degree of mimesis and diegesis. Narrative modes are considered to be different kinds of methods to present an episode in the narrative (see Jahn N5.3.1.). Thus, narrative modes are concerned with the ways the narrative is conveyed to the reader. Bonheim's four major narrative modes are *speech*, *report*, *description* and *comment* (see Bonheim 1). In addition to the four major narrative modes, *scenic presentation* and *summary* are regarded as prominent features in narrative texts (see Jahn N5.3.1.). An author's narrative often comprises a great variety of narrative modes. They either alternate (e.g., a character's speech act is followed by the narrator's description) or are combined (e.g., report and comment are often intermingled). Interestingly enough, Green's writing style progressively moves, over the course of his career, from the presentational mode of telling – including descriptions and commentaries by the narrator – to the “showing mode of presentation [where] there is little or no narratorial mediation, overtiness, or presence” (Jahn N.5.3.1.). The conversation between two or more characters, the literary dialogue, became Green's favourite tool towards the end of his writing career (see *Nothing* and *Doting*).

Leaving the narrative modes for the time being I would now like to concentrate on the *narrative situation*, which deals with the narrative perspectives in a text and covers the questions of who speaks and who sees.

2.1.4 Narrative situation

The act of narration is a form of transmission of information; the narrator functions as the mediator in this process. As a consequence the narrator holds a key position and operates either as a character in the story or as an external entity (see Stanzel 248). To clarify the function of the so called storyteller further I shall refer to Jahn's definition of a narrator:

A **narrator** is the speaker or ‘voice’ of the narrative discourse (Genette 1980 [1972]: 186). He or she is the agent who establishes communicative contact with an addressee (the ‘narratee’), who manages the exposition, who decides *what* is to be told, *how* it is to be told (especially, from what point of view, and in what sequence), and *what is to be left out*. If necessary, the narrator will defend the

‘tellability’ [...] of the story (Labov 1972) and comment on its lesson, purpose, or message.

(N3.1.1.)

The establishment of “communicative contact” as well as the various choices of how something is revealed and what is left out, will be analysed on the basis of examples taken from Green’s text in chapter four.

To answer the two questions mentioned previously – that is, ‘who speaks?’ and ‘who sees?’ – I will need to refer to the narrative situation as a form of literary mediation. The narrative situation of a text can be analysed by means of two aspects: **narrative voice**, the voice of the entity that reveals the story (i.e., who speaks or narrates the story?); and **focalization**, the perspective from or through which the story is presented (i.e., who sees or perceives the events?) (see Jahn N3.1. and N3.2.). At the end of the 1970s, Franz K. Stanzel and Gérard Genette were among the first to offer a reasonable classification of the aspect of narrative voice. In “Second Thoughts on ‘Narrative Situations in the Novel’” Stanzel suggests that:

Narration, in the traditional (not the semiotic) sense, is always mediated, indirect, presupposes the presence of a transmitter or mediator, a narrator who may be personalized, visible, or unpersonalized, practically invisible to the reader. This was the main theoretical basis of my original definition of three narrative situations: *first-person narration*, whose narrator is personalized, visible as a character within the fictional world; *authorial narration* [...], where the narrator is personalized, visible and outside the fictional world; and finally *figural narration*, where, [...] the narrator has become invisible and his or her place is taken by a figural medium or reflector-character [...].

(248, my italics)

While Stanzel mentions three narrative situations (two of them limited: first-person and figural narration; and one omniscient: authorial narration), Genette proposes only two different narrative types:

We will therefore distinguish here two types of narrative: one with the narrator absent from the story he tells [...], the other with the narrator present as a character in the story he tells [...]. I call the first type, for obvious reasons, heterodiegetic, and the second type homodiegetic.

(*Narrative Discourse* 244-245)

In other words, a heterodiegetic narrator does not take an active part in the story he or she relates, while a homodiegetic narrator appears as a character in the story. Genette’s

homodiegetic and heterodiegetic narrative voices are similar to Stanzel's first-person and authorial narrative situation, respectively.

Leaving the first question of 'who is the narrative voice of the story?' behind, I will turn to the second question: 'through whom do we perceive the events of the story?' While in a homodiegetic and first-person narrative situation the narrative voice and narrative perspective are mostly the same, heterodiegetic, authorial and figural narration can have two different entities. In Stanzel's figural narrative, for example, the perspective of the focalizer differs from the narrative voice revealing the story: "The narrator of a figural narrative is a covert heterodiegetic narrator presenting an internal focalizer's consciousness, especially his/her perceptions and thoughts" (Jahn N1.18.). That is to say, the entity who narrates the story's events does not necessarily have to be the focalizer whose narrative perspective is revealed, hence the narrator and the focalizer are two different 'agents'.

The issue of focalization was introduced by Genette in 1972 as a kind of replacement for less fitting terms: "To avoid the too specifically visual connotations of the terms *vision*, *field* and *point of view*, I will take up here the slightly more abstract term *focalization*" (*Narrative Discourse* 189). Sixteen years later, however, in 1988 Genette published his book *Narrative Discourse Revisited* with a completely revised definition of focalization:

So by focalization I certainly mean a restriction of 'field' – actually, that is a selection of narrative information with respect to what was traditionally called *omniscience*. In pure fiction that term is, literally, absurd (the author has nothing to 'know', since he invents everything), and we would be better off replacing it with *completeness of information* – which, when supplied to a reader, makes him 'omniscient'. The instrument of this possible selection is a *situated focus*, a sort of information-conveying pipe that allows passage only of information that is authorized by the situation [...].

(*Narrative Discourse Revisited* 74)

To put it another way, the question now is no longer 'who sees or perceives in the story?' but 'how complete is the information the reader gets?' The concept of focalization was modified even further, however, so that, at present, a *focalizer* is understood as:

the agent whose point of view orients the narrative text. A text is anchored on a focalizer's point of view when it presents (and does not transcend) the focalizer's thoughts, reflections and knowledge, his/her actual and imaginary perceptions, as well as his/her cultural and ideological orientation. While Genette and Chatman prefer to restrict

focalization to 'focal characters' only, most narratologists today follow Bal's and Rimmon-Kenan's proposal that a focalizer can be either 'external' (a narrator) or 'internal' (a character). External focalizers are also called 'narrator-focalizers'; internal focalizers are variously termed 'focal characters', 'character-focalizers', 'reflectors', or 'filter characters'.

(Jahn N3.2.2.)

The most obvious field of perception is that of the narrator's, the *external focalizer* who takes no part in the story and is not character-bound. In external focalization the events of the story are presented through the narrator's point of view. Conversely, in *internal focalization* the narrative perspective is that of a character in the story (see Jahn N3.2.1.). Mieke Bal emphasises that focalization is "the most important, most penetrating, and most subtle means of manipulation" (*Narratology* 171) in a narrative text. The possibility of manipulating the reader with the help of the narrator leads to another crucial narrative point worthwhile to consider: the direct and indirect manipulation of the story's events and existents through the narrator's representation of speech and thought processes, in short: the degree of the narrator's reliability or correspondingly his or her unreliability.

2.1.5 The narrator's spectrum from reliability to unreliability

The literary concept of a narrator's reliability was formalised by Wayne Booth in *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, published in 1961. Booth calls "a narrator reliable when he speaks for or acts in accordance with the norms of the work [...], unreliable when he does not" (158-9). As this definition is rather vague, it requires further elaboration. The origin of **unreliability** lies in the fact that the narrator's given information do not have to be conclusively reliable. Therefore the reader has to question the revelation of the story and thus the degree of the narrative situation's **reliability**. Narrators might be completely reliable or utterly unreliable but mostly they "exist along a wide spectrum from reliability to unreliability" (Phelan and Martin 96). In *Living to Tell about It* James Phelan identifies three main roles of narrators: "reporting, interpreting, and evaluating; sometimes they perform the roles simultaneously and sometimes sequentially" (50). The narrator's spectrum from reliability to unreliability differs due to the individual combination of mere report, personal interpretation and evaluation. One narrator, for example, may purposely choose to mislead the readers by not telling the truth, hence the narrator *misreports* and disregards the story's events by telling (nothing but) lies; another type of narrator may intentionally leave out crucial information or omit important hints to

deprive readers of an 'accurate account' and cause them to indulge in speculations about the various possible interpretations of the text which these narrative 'gaps' afford. That is to say, the narrator is '*underreporting*' – the report is not unreliable in what is being narrated (i.e., the narrator does not explicitly tell lies) but it is unreliable due to the degree of information withheld or shrewdly manipulated, so that this information is, ultimately, rendered void and unreliable. In "Reconsidering Unreliability: Fallible and Untrustworthy Narrators" Greta Olson summarises quite nicely Phelan and Martin's classification of six different types of unreliability:

The first three types of unreliability are grouped together on the basis of how the reader responds to them, namely by replacing the narrator's story with a less contradictory account of fictional events, and the second three on the reader's need to amplify on the narrator's incomplete tale. Regarding the first group, narrators may falsely report fictional events ("misreporting"), or make mistakes of perception ("misreading"), or falsely evaluate events ("misregarding"). In the second group narrators may evidence unreliability in their not telling enough about what is happening ("underreporting"), their failing to grasp events completely ("underreading"), or their making incomplete value judgments ("underregarding"). Phelan and Martin's categorization of six types of unreliability is based on (1) the axes of the narrator's faulty factual, ethical, and epistemological evaluations, and (2) on the reader's response to these evaluations.

(Olson 101-102)

The readers are misled in any of the cases mentioned above due to the narrator's conscious or unconscious misconceptions. Thus unreliable narration uses as a mode of presentation the alteration of the story's events. Alteration can be caused either by **paralepsis** (narrator tells too much) or **paralipsis** (narrator tells too little) (cf. Jahn 40). To tell more than there is by 'misreporting', 'misreading' or 'misregarding' is as fateful to successful communication as to omit or suppress crucial information by 'underreporting', 'underreading' or 'underregarding'. I will come back to this argument in my literary analysis of Green's texts in chapter four.

Another issue I would like to raise at this point is a question pertaining to the author's reason or motivation for the use of an unreliable narrative. Booth regards unreliable narration as a means of achieving distance for those who do not understand or as establishing a kind of secret communion between author and those readers who do grasp the point. He states that the main concept behind such unreliability is irony:

All of the great uses of unreliable narration depend for their success on far more subtle effects than merely flattering the reader or making him work. Whenever an author conveys to his reader an unspoken point, he creates a sense of collusion against all those, whether in the story or out of it, who do not get that point. Irony is always thus in part a device for excluding as well as for including, and those who are included, those who happen to have the necessary information to grasp the irony, cannot but derive at least a part of their pleasure from a sense that others are excluded. In the irony with which we are concerned, the speaker is himself the butt of the ironic point. The author and reader are secretly in collusion, behind the speaker's back, agreeing upon the standard by which he is found wanting.

(304)

Both, the intention to mislead and a touch of irony are definitely present in Green's novels, too. In addition to Booth's speculation, however, another possible purpose unreliable narration may serve in a text is ambivalence. After all, unreliability is one way to open up a story to more than one interpretation; Green asserts as much, when he says that "to create life in the reader, it will be necessary for the dialogue to mean different things to different readers at one and the same time" (*Surviving* 140). Green's claim that his texts should have more than one meaning protrudes into the realm of polysemy. Booth, however, implicitly ignores this possibility by assuming that the author's intention is overt to his or her readers when he speaks of the "author and reader [being] secretly in collusion, behind the speaker's back" (304). Ansgar Nünning, on the other hand, states that the "construction of an unreliable narrator can be seen as an interpretative strategy by which the reader naturalizes textual inconsistencies that might otherwise remain unassimilable" (69). Hence, the concept of a narrator's unreliability can lend assistance and guide readers along, so that every reader finds his or her own meaning or range of meanings. That is to say, the author's intentions are covert so that all readers are forced to ponder for themselves; this in turn, does not correspond to Booth's suggestion of the author's overt intention. Nünning elucidates that "[t]he narrative not only informs the reader of the narrator's version of events but it also provides him or her with indirect information about what presumably 'really happened' and about the narrator's frame of mind" (58). Thus, the readers are quite often left to find their own meanings in the text while applying personal interpretations and what Nünning calls 'referential frameworks' in order to arrive at a coherent solution. Nünning identifies the following referential frameworks "in order to gauge a narrator's possible unreliability" (69):

1. general world-knowledge,
2. historical world-model or cultural codes,
3. explicit theories of personality or implicit models of psychological coherence and human behaviour,
4. knowledge of social, moral or linguistic norms relevant for the period in which a text was written and published,
5. and individual perspective, that is the reader's or critic's knowledge, psychological disposition, and system of norms and values
(“Unreliable, compared to what?” 68)

Next to the reader's empirical frameworks, a frame of literary conventions is taken into consideration. Nünning states parameters such as: “general literary conventions”, “the respective generic and stylistic framework” of the text, “intertextual frames of reference”, “stereotyped models of characters” and “last but not least the structure and norms established by the retrospective work itself” (68). The reader tries to combine as many of these parameters as necessary in order to find meaning(s) and coherence in the text. The concept of unreliable narration is, thus, not only a challenge for the reader's preexisting value schemes and the literary conventions of which he or she is knowledgeable but also an intricate narrative technique: it could be regarded as a written enigma, always demanding for the reader's co-operation for unravelling its mysteries. The narrator seems to almost relish leaving the reader in the dark and plays deliberately with the story's interpretative options and the character's feasible possibilities. The reader is forced to read carefully and observingly, in order to figure out the narrator's intentions, each time anew, and unravel some of the narrator's ‘artfully placed mystifications’.

In order to analyse Green's different ways of communication in his texts I will turn to the penultimate point of my theoretical analysis – the various levels of narrative communication.

2.2 Discourse analysis I: levels of literary communication

Discourse is defined as “the means by which the content is communicated” (Chatman, *Story and Discourse* 19). The content in literature is communicated by writing: everything is presented by the author to the reader by means of the written word. While it is perfectly plausible, today, to say that the narrative text serves as a direct medium of **communication** (e.g., see Holmesland 25), the written word was regarded as inferior to spoken language until the middle of the twentieth century (e.g., in the concept of

logocentrism the central principle of language is speech and not writing). A famous example which discusses this very attitude, is Jacques Derrida's deconstruction of Ferdinand de Saussure's distinction between speech and writing. In the lecture notes to his *Course in General Linguistics* (1916) Saussure claims that the written word is merely the representation of the spoken word, which implies that writing is subordinate to speaking: "language and writing are two distinct systems of signs; the second *exists for the sole purpose of representing* the first" (qtd. in Derrida 30, italics added by the author). In *Of Grammatology* (1967) Derrida deconstructs this traditional idea of speech over writing and shows that:

[...] when Saussure tries to explain the innermost workings of spoken language, he resorts to an analogy with written language, using the banished and secondary term to explain the nature of the privileged and prior term. The inversion of the hierarchy is therefore not proposed by Derrida from the outside, but is located within the argument that exactly seeks to establish that hierarchy.

(Currie 51)

As a result, Saussure's claims for speech are arguably equally true of writing. The greatest advantage writing might have over speech is that it is more permanent and allows "language to circulate without the person or the referent any longer being present" (Currie 51). If a book survives decades, its language, its knowledge and its message will be preserved as well, even though the author is already dead, its signifying intention absent. In order to understand how this is possible, it is worthwhile to look at communication based on the written word in detail.

Literary narrative communication comprises a complex interplay of different communicative levels. At this juncture, I shall focus on three different types of literary narrative communication: these are based on the standard structure of fictional narrative communication given in Jahn's *Narratology: A Guide to the Theory of Narrative*:

Basically, communicative contact is possible between (1) author and reader on the level of nonfictional communication, (2) narrator and audience or addressee(s) on the level of fictional mediation, and (3) characters on the level of action. The first level is an 'extratextual level'; levels two and three are 'intratextual'.

(N1.7.)

This distinction is illustrated by the literary communication model in figure 2.2.1 on page 24:

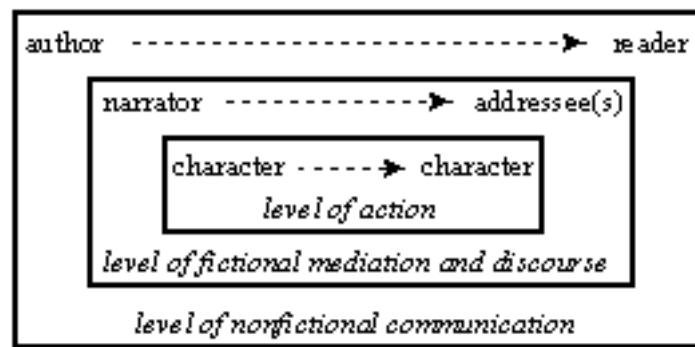


Figure 2.2.1 Literary narrative communication model (Jahn N2.3.1.)

In order to briefly elaborate on this model, I shall first consider the so called ‘**level of nonfictional communication**’. That is where the written communication between author and implied and/or actual reader takes place.⁶ The author sends messages in order to convey ideas or attitudes, to share information and concepts or sometimes ‘simply’ to entertain the reader. The reader, then, is the one who unwraps the author’s “gathering web of insinuations” (Green, *Pack My Bag* 84) to eventually find some meaning. Prose therefore can be regarded as a means of written communication that transmits meaning from one entity to another. Since the encoding process potentially (and commonly) takes place within a different historical and cultural context than the decoding process, the act of communication may be more difficult. That is to say, the author writes his or her text most likely in another time period than the reader actually reads it. As a result, moral, social and cultural values are expected to be different. Moreover, the act of writing is a unique process of encoding ‘a message’ (the message also could be changed by re-writing it), while the decoding process, the act of reading may be repetitive, it can take place again and again and at different periods of time. Within this decoding process the reading might even change every time the text is read (multiple readings are possible). And yet, the communication on this ‘extratextual’ level appears to be onesided. The decoder of the messages, the reader, is only a silent recipient who seems to have no opportunity to respond, certainly not to an author of the past; in the case of contemporary authors, readers are also seldom in a position which affords

⁶ This thesis does not take into consideration the level of implied fictional communication between implied author and implied reader (cf. Booth (1961) and Chatman (1990)). Especially the implied author is left out as I agree with Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan “that if [the implied author] is to be consistently distinguished from the real author and the narrator, the notion of the implied author must be de-personified, and is best considered as a set of implicit norms rather than as a speaker or a voice (i.e., a subject). It follows, therefore, that the implied author cannot literally be a participant in the narrative communication situation” (89).

them the opportunity of a direct reply. Consequently, the reader cannot rely on the author to clarify any problems that emerge. This is where other literary genres can take over: for instance, the writer- and readership of fan-fiction (a common phenomenon on the internet) or, on a more academic level, the works of literary scholars in articles, reviews and secondary books. Another interesting case is Julia Kristeva's concept of intertextuality, where one author relates to another within his or her own text so that texts are linked with each other. These genres or varieties of texts are instances where the actual reader becomes the writer. The reader writing back also suggests that the production and reception processes are alternated or else that the act of communication comes full circle.

The second type of communication, is the **'level of fictional mediation and discourse'**: it inquires into the communication process between narrator and narratee. The narratee⁷ is the narrator's imaginary personage towards whom the narration is directed. "Every narrative text T is a concatenation and alternation of DN [narrator's discourse] and DC [character's discourse]" (Doležel 4). Whereby the narrator's discourse comprises the diegetic representational mode of narrative description, that is narration and report of non-verbal events; and the character's discourse consists of the mimetic representational mode of direct imitation, namely the narrative of all verbal events in the story.⁸ The 'level of fictional mediation' is an intratextual level where the narrator transmits a story to the narratee. The technique of mediation, however, relies completely on the narrator, which grants the narratee only a passive role. The 'extratextual level of nonfictional communication', discussed in the previous paragraph, happens through the narrative as well. The difference is that it does not happen within the narrative (see Jahn N2.3.1.). Hence, the written text, or else the story, is the basis for both types of communication.

⁷ At this juncture it might be worthwhile to call into question whether or not the addressee could have two different 'partitions'? That is to say, is it possible that the addressee is the narratee for the narrator on a fictional level as well as the implied reader for the writer on a nonfictional level? Both, narratee and implied reader, are imaginary subjects (just like the addressee) at whom the narration is aimed. The narrator has the narratee in mind while telling his story and the writer might have (or might not have) some kind of reader in mind while writing. In short, I am suggesting that the addressee is the narratee is the implied reader.

⁸ For a precise classification of the terms mimesis and diegesis consult pages 14 and 15 of this thesis.

Last but not least in this distinction of literary narrative communication is the **'level of action'**⁹. Here, the communication takes place between the characters in the narrative of the story. For instance, characters in a novel may engage in a conversation to exchange information and ideas, or to verify common ground or, alternatively, they may just talk for the sake of talking; they contribute actively or passively to conversations: through *verbal actions* like speeches or dialogues where intonation, pitch, speed, voice volume, tone of voice (vocalics) and *sounds* such as mumbling or grunting play a role; they may also communicate through *non-verbal actions* such as body posture and motions, facial expressions or gestures (kinesics), eye contact (oculesics), sense of touch and smell (haptics and olfactics), signs and symbols, use of space (proxemics), use of time, (i.e., by waiting or pausing; chronemics), and by their choice of clothing or hairstyle (adornment). These exchanges of information and ideas through verbal and non-verbal communication tend to provide the listener or reader with manifold information and implications. The success of identifying, understanding and interpreting all these messages depends on many parameters and is a difficult process for every communicator.

The last point of this theory chapter portrays some of the communication theory of four quite different theorists. David K. Berlo, Roman O. Jakobson, Paul Watzlawick and Herbert Paul Grice each have a different perspective on communication which helps me to define and illustrate what successful communication is and when it occurs.

2.3 Discourse analysis II: models/forms of verbal and literary communication

2.3.1 David K. Berlo's model of communication

There are various influencing parameters in the process of communication and also possible ways of manipulating information during the transmission and reception

⁹ One thing I would like to add at this point is my assumption that there is another level of literary communication: namely that of the reader and the narrator. Since the author cannot be equated with the narrator, it seems to be necessary to make this distinction. The narrator might have a fictional addressee/narratee to whom he or she is talking and thus is fine operating only within the level of fictional mediation. The actual reader (mark: not the implied reader!), however, does not only operate within the level of nonfictional communication (i.e., author communicates with reader); the reader also reads the story which the narrator tells (i.e., reader tries to decipher the narrator's narrative). That is to say, the reader communicates with the narrator which would then make this an intersecting level of communication (mark: it is not the same situation as that which fictional implied communication offers with its implied author and implied reader!).

process of a message. In this section, I shall briefly introduce David K. Berlo's **model of communication** proposed in *The Process of Communication: An Introduction to Theory and Practice* (1960). Berlo's model is primarily designed for spoken communication, but it is of use for written communication processes, too. Clearly based on the Shannon-Weaver model of 1949 in *The Mathematical Theory of Communication*, Berlo's model shares four of the six main parameters of communication suggested by Shannon and Weaver: source, message, channel and receiver. The **source** (sender person/speaker/writer) encodes a **message** and transmits it along the **channel** (five senses) to the **receiver** (recipient/hearer/reader) who eventually decodes the message. Each of these four main parameters has a number of influencing parameters; they are my main reason for actually mentioning the model at this stage. A message leaves from a *source*, which, in turn, is an amalgam of all communication skills the person possesses, the person's knowledge and attitudes as well as his or her inherited cultural and social background. These parameters are quite influential in the communication process. The *message* comprises the code, treatment and elements that are used, as well as the structure and content of which it is composed. All these components together control the message's importance and severity. The *channel* consists of the human's sensory skills of perception (i.e., hearing, seeing, touching, smelling and tasting). Any degree of sensual impairment can have an effect on the decoding process of the message. The last entity in the communication chain, the *receiver*, has the same influencing parameters as the source: communication skills, attitudes, knowledge, social system and culture. I will return to these parameters and their possible ways of manipulating information during my discourse analysis of Green's texts in chapter four. The table in figure 2.3.1 on page 28 visually depicts Berlo's main parameters of communication as well as their determining components:

Source encodes	Message	Channel decodes	Receiver
communication skills	content	hearing	communication skills
attitudes	elements	seeing	attitudes
knowledge	treatment	touching	knowledge
social system	structure	smelling	social system
culture	code	tasting	culture

Figure 2.3.1 Model of communication adapted from David K. Berlo

This person-to-person communication model, however, does contain some weaknesses. The most obvious flaw might be that the answering process of the receiver, the delivery of the reaction or feedback, is not assessed within the scopes of this model. It is a very linear and message-centred model which primarily stresses the transmission and reception process. Hence, the interactive mode of the communication process, the social context, gets lost.

And yet, it is the co-operation and interaction in the communication process that has a major impact on communicative success. In *one-way communication* the speaker is granted the active part, while speaking he or she is able to share information with the passive receiver (the receiver's feedback or interaction evidently is absent). This onesided approach is useful for the transmission of valid and precise information or specific orders. However, it can be a source of various misunderstandings. The receiver, not being able to ask questions or to clarify his or her point of view, is likely to have difficulties understanding the message. The speaker, on the other hand, cannot confirm that the receiver understood his or her message correctly; there always remains the chance of the message's misinterpretation. That, in turn, can make it more difficult to bring the intended message across without any misconceptions. In *two-way communication*, by contrast, information is shared back and forth. Typically, there exists a lively interaction between the conversational partners: questions are asked, positions are clarified, feedback is given or a reaction is shown. Two-way communication can be a way to avoid conflicts between the dialogue partners, it is a vital means for promoting mutual understanding and maintaining mutual respect.

However, any kind of communication is vulnerable to malfunctions in all three communicational phases – generation, transmission and reception/comprehension of the message. Figure 2.3.2 on page 29 portrays the stages of two-way communication in greater detail. The conversation goes full circle, showing all communicative interactive phases: from the speaker's generation of the message, over the message's transmission, to the reception of the message by the receiver, who in turn understands the message and hence generates feedback, which is transmitted and received by the former speaker, the present receiver.

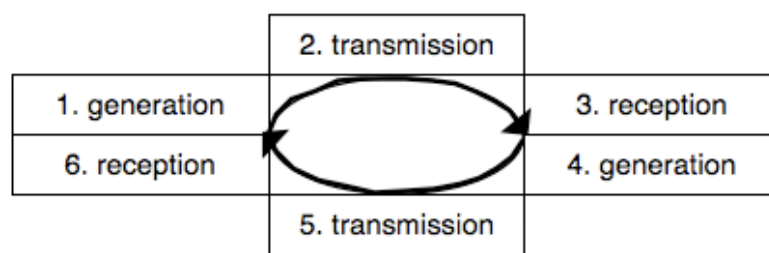


Figure 2.3.2 Model of communicative interactive phases

Having clarified some parameters in a communication process as well as the advantages and disadvantages of one-way and two-way communication, I would like to turn to Roman O. Jakobson's basic factors and corresponding functions of communication in order to broaden the concept of co-operative communication in literature.

2.3.2 Roman O. Jakobson's model of communication

About the same time as David K. Berlo suggested his linear transmission model in America, the Russian linguist and literary theorist Roman O. Jakobson developed his version of a communication model, based on Karl Bühler's Organon model, which was first published in "Closing Statements: Linguistics and Poetics" (1960). Along with his proposed model, consisting of **six constitutive factors**, Jakobson defined **six basic functions of verbal communication**. Each of these six functions rests upon one of the six factors of the communication model, that is to say, there exists a dynamics between Jakobson's factors and functions of verbal communication. His model, unlike Berlo's, stresses interpersonal verbal communication, and therefore includes social contexts. Although, it also represents spoken rather than written communication processes, Jakobson's model is frequently used for the analysis of written communication, too.

Jakobson argues that each speech act entails the following six communicational factors shown in figure 2.3.3 on page 30:

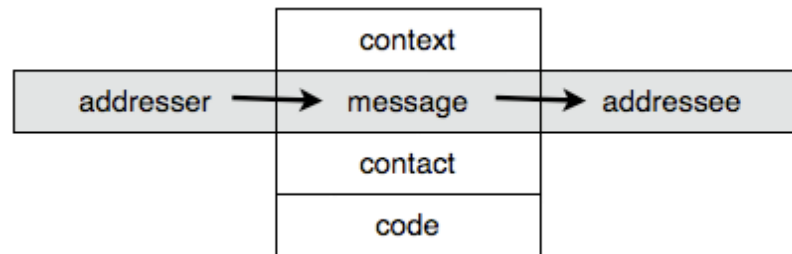


Figure 2.3.3 Model of communicational factors adapted from Roman O. Jakobson (cf. Jakobson 353)

Again we can identify the *addresser* (source), the *message* and the *addressee* (receiver) as the central units of a speech act. The channel is not included in this model as a separate element as such. However, there are three other factors grouped around the most central element, the message: *context* (the social, cultural and historical referent/context in which the message is uttered), *contact* (the physical channel/medium and psychological connection between addresser and addressee) and *code* (lexical code, verbal and non-verbal actions common to both interlocutors, e.g., a common language, facial expressions or fashion) (cf. Jakobson 353).

The six basic functions of verbal communication corresponding to the communicational factors are: (1) the *referential* function or the informative, denotive, cognitive purpose of the message (e.g., ‘the sun is shining’), (2) the *emotive* function or the emotive, expressive purpose (e.g., ‘thank goodness, the sun is shining again’), (3) the *conative* function or the impact purpose, influencing behaviour, usage of vocative or imperative (e.g., ‘sit down and let the sun warm you up a little’), (4) the *phatic* function which is used for social or emotive purposes to establish or maintain social relationship (e.g., ‘isn’t it a very beautiful day today? Even the sun is shining brightly’), (5) the *metalinguistic* function or the information about the lexical and verbal code, referring to the interaction as such (e.g., ‘today’s weather prediction is quite accurate, isn’t it?’) and, last but not least, (6) the *poetic* function or the use of language, aesthetic purpose (e.g., ‘brightly glowing sunbeams are striking the earth’). The dynamics between factors and functions is visually depicted by figures 2.3.3 and 2.3.4 on pages 30 and 31. Each related pair can be found in the same position of the otherwise identical model:

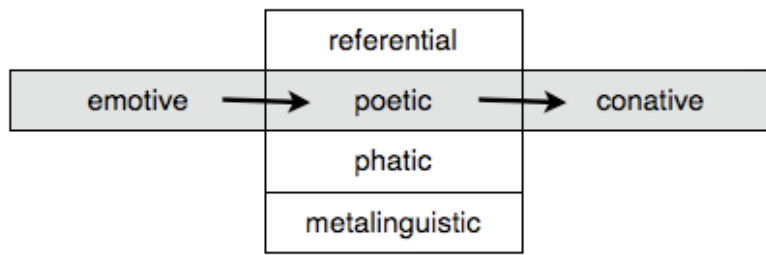


Figure 2.3.4 Model of communicational functions adapted from Roman O. Jakobson (cf. Jakobson 357)

Let me take a moment to explain the dynamics between communicational factor and function in greater detail: (1) the communicational factor ‘context’ relates to the *referential function* of communication. Hence, the referential function’s emphasis is on the context of the message: the message’s informative, denotive and cognitive purpose. It stresses what the message is about: which information and which facts are revealed in which context. (2) The *emotive function* focuses on the emotions of the ‘addresser’ of the message, therefore it is also known as the expressive function (cf. Jakobson 354). It expresses the speaker’s attitudes, feelings and experiences and produces an impression of a certain emotion in the addressee. “The emotive function, laid bare in the interjections, flavors to some extent all our utterances, on their phonic, grammatical, and lexical level” (Jakobson 354). (3) The stress of the *poetic function* is on the form of the ‘message’ as such. The prevalent question here is: which kind of language is used in which way? The message is delivered in a specific way, with an individual use of language, creating a particular aesthetic purpose. (4) The *conative function* is oriented towards the ‘addressee’. It refers to the effect of the utterance on the addressee and intends to affect him or her emotionally. A direct impact upon the receiver of the message can be achieved with the help of imperatives (e.g., the speaker could ask the hearer to sit down, which the hearer in turn is morally obliged to do). (5) The communicational factor ‘contact’ relates to the *phatic function*, which establishes contact between the conversational partners and sustains their physical and psychological connection. After a certain period of time, it helps to either prolong or discontinue the act of communication, depending on several influencing parameters. The phatic function “may be displayed by a profuse exchange of ritualized formulas, by entire dialogues with the mere purport of prolonging communication” (Jakobson 355). (6) Finally, there is the *metalinguistic/metalingual function* which is combined with the communicational factor ‘code’. “Whenever the addresser and/or addressee need to check up whether they use the same code, speech is

focused on the CODE: it performs a METALINGUAL (i.e., glossing) function.” (Jakobson 356). Information is exchanged only about the lexical code of the speech act so that the communication partners’ mutual understanding is secured. While one function is of paramount importance, the others either play along or are to a greater or lesser extent suppressed, hence, the stress is mostly just on one function at a time.

One of Jakobson’s intentions was the better understanding of speech acts. Eager to find out more about general principles in poetics, the theory of poetry, his main focus was on the poetic function. Yet, I would like to concentrate on the theory of literary discourse per se and utilise Jakobson’s as well as Berlo’s models as an aid to analyse failures in the process of communication. Berlo’s linear model of communication depicting the transmission process of a message with all its different parameters and Jakobson’s various communicational factors with their corresponding language functions are just one possible starting point. In order to enhance that perspective I would like to outline Paul Watzlawick’s five axioms of communication. These axioms correspond to a more complex model of communication with more interactive and dialogic qualities. They help to provide further insight into the various functions of communication.

2.3.3 Paul Watzlawick’s five axioms of communication

In 1976 the book *Pragmatics of Human Communication: A Study of Interactional Patterns, Pathologies, and Paradoxes* was published by Paul Watzlawick, Janet H. Beavin and Don D. Jackson. The book tackles the way human communication functions and stresses the pragmatic issue of human communication, concentrating on the effects or reception of communicational messages and the interdependency between communication and behaviour: many clinical observations of behavioural disorders and various examples of schizophrenic test persons are shown. Watzlawick defined five basic axioms, a frame of reference helping to understand why and how specific interaction patterns evolve in human communication. In their book Watzlawick, Beavin and Jackson identify the following five communicational axioms:

1. One cannot not communicate.
2. Every communication has a content and a relationship aspect such that the latter classifies the former and is therefore a meta-communication.

3. The nature of a relationship is contingent upon the punctuation of the communicational sequences between the communicants.
4. Human beings communicate both digitally and analogically. Digital language has a highly complex and powerful logical syntax but lacks adequate semantics in the field of relationship, while analogic language possesses the semantics but has no adequate syntax for the unambiguous definition of the nature of relationships.
5. All communicational interchanges are either symmetrical or complementary, depending on whether they are based on equality or difference.

(Watzlawick et al. 51-70)

The first axiom seems to be a paradoxical statement, and a quite interesting one as such. It addresses the *impossibility to not communicate*. In other words, it states that every kind of behaviour (verbal or non-verbal) in an interactional setting is somehow communication (direct or indirect). Any absence of action, that is, not paying attention to or ignoring your conversational partner, has nevertheless the potential to gain some meaning through the conversational partner's interpretation: ignorance may be interpreted as dislike or disapproval. Hence, the axiom "one cannot not communicate" suggests that we are constantly interacting and communicating with each other, consciously or subconsciously. In 1992 Janet Beavin Bavelas, co-author of Watzlawick's book *Pragmatics of Human Communication*, revised her stance on some of the axioms. In her article "Research into the *Pragmatics of Human Communication*" she challenges the first axiom and argues that "communicative nonverbal acts are a subset of all nonverbal acts (i.e., all behaviour is not communication)" (18-19). Her justification is the following:

An act that is only nonverbal behaviour occurs for noncommunicative reasons. An observer can make inferences from such a behaviour, but there is (1) no sender-receiver relationship and (2) no encoding and decoding by means of shared code. [...] if someone coughs, you as observer may infer she is ill, but she did not encode this as a message to you; the cough is an informative nonverbal behaviour but not a nonverbal communication. On the other hand, if someone enacts a cough to get your attention, he has established a sender-receiver relationship and used an understood code to convey a message; the stylized cough is a nonverbal communication.

("Research" 19)

I find Bavelas' explanation inconclusive. Bavelas does not seem to take into account the high level of abstraction on which Watzlawick's five axioms are based on: they are five

axioms of communication in general. Let me reconsider her example with the cough, which refers to a lower level of abstraction: the person who coughs, might not deliberately send a message, and yet, the person's cough (acoustical signal) is sent out, transmitted and picked up by a receiver person. There might not be a calculated 'sender-receiver relationship' but there still exists some kind of indirect communication, which she names 'informative nonverbal behaviour'. Even if the encoding process does not happen deliberately, decoding may take place consciously or subconsciously. The cough as an informative non-verbal behaviour is a kind of non-verbal indirect communication because information is transmitted (even though without any intention of actual communication), regardless of whether or not the code is shared or understood. I would even argue that a cough without any deliberate intention can be regarded as a shared code in our society: it is a sound made by a person's throat with the help of the lungs in order to clear it. Generally speaking, the first axiom states that communication always takes place, no matter if it takes place on purpose or not. The sender (the coughing person in this case here) does not have the power to influence the understanding process of the cough because it depends on the receiver if s/he, what s/he or how s/he finally understands the cough. One cannot not communicate.

The first axiom can help to explain instances of miscommunication: people are constantly interpreting other people's behaviour, actions, etc. on a day to day basis. These interpretations, however, are mainly unverified and therefore, to some extent, bound for misinterpretation (e.g., parents go out for dinner – child may think: my parents do not care for me). If the situation is not evaluated properly, which is not possible each and every time, miscommunication is likely to occur. When the communication partner is not willing to communicate it is even more likely that communication problems occur: that is, no attention is paid to what is being said, the communication partner is ignored or rejected, no subject-bound question is asked or no informative answer is given (sometimes even no answer at all), the topic changes too frequently, sentences are unclear or they are left altogether unfinished (cf. Watzlawick 75).

The second axiom comprises two different aspects of communication: *content and relationship*. The content aspect informs about what exactly is said by the speaker, that is, which information does the speaker convey to the listener. The relationship aspect tackles the way the information is brought across. In what manner is the speaker expressing his or her thoughts? How does the speaker see his or her relation to the receiver and how does he or she want to be understood by the receiver? The relationship

aspect influences the way the content aspect is brought across and how it is to be understood. One could even go as far and say the relationship aspect is given precedence to the content aspect. The relationship aspect determines how the content is brought across: e.g., relationship one: colleagues of equal rank at work, content: “Would you mind helping me with this specific matter?” versus relationship two: colleagues of unequal rank (employer–employee), content: “This task needs to be done by Friday. Please do it”.

Communication problems with reference to the second axiom can be analysed in consideration to: do the conversational partners agree or disagree on their relationship and/or the content aspects, or is the relationship between both interlocutors already bad, or else are disagreements in one aspect transferred to the other aspect (e.g., parent does not allow child to do something, child confronts parent with the fact of not loving him or her) (cf. Watzlawick 81-82)?

The third axiom addresses the importance of *punctuation* in order to structure the information flow of speech acts. Communication is a quite complex process, with a cyclic behaviour, reoccurring communication procedures and a countless amount of information. Punctuation operates by the principle of stimulus and response: every action/cause (sender’s message) generates a reaction/effect (receiver’s answer). Punctuation units in this context refer to the process of organising verbal and non-verbal communicational information into sequences of meaning. These sequences are interpreted. Communication problems can be analysed in consideration to: conflicting punctuation because punctuation units can be interpreted differently by each communication partner. The process of interpreting other people’s messages is mostly quite subjective and in the course of communicational events, causes and effects are often interpreted differently.

The fourth axiom thematises two different modalities of communication – *digital and analogic encoding*. The digital code refers to content information, it delivers informative elements with a concrete definition, logical syntax or agreed meaning such as words, phrases or denotive statements. The analogic code, on the other hand, refers to the relationship aspect of communication. It encompasses mostly non-verbal communication such as sentiments, body postures and motions, facial expressions or gestures. A diversity of syntactic and semantic information is conveyed through digital (i.e., language) and analogic (i.e., gestures and facial expressions) communication. Encoded verbal or non-verbal communicative acts work together, so that a complex

cluster of meaning can be conveyed. If the digital code does not conform with the analogic code, failures in the communication process are more likely to occur. Complications can also arise, when one of the codes far outweighs the other.

The fifth axiom discusses the relationship between the communication partners which is either based on *equality or difference*. While a symmetric relationship is based on parity with all interlocutors being equals (e.g., colleagues talking about their work and agreeing to each other); a complementary relationship is based on difference, hence the power relationship between the communication partners is unequal, they complement each other (e.g., parent ordering child to tidy up the room, child is reluctant). Generally, the behaviour of one partner conditions the behaviour of the other. In the relationship case of difference one partner is already dominant, so that the other always has to tolerate and accept a subordinate position. It is not likely that the subordinate partner will try to gain power and take a stance in any argument, barring any special circumstances (e.g., the person is too offended to take the whole situation any longer). However, it is important to notice that *each* communication is *always* symmetrical or complementary. A good relationship between communicational partners is characterised by its *diversity*: that is to say, it is symmetrical at one point and complementary at another, depending on the context and situation of the communication. I.e. two colleagues of the same

Communication failures might ensue when one dialogue partner misjudges his or her role believing to be in a symmetric or else complementary communication at the time while he or she is not. Communication problems also develop if a communication is *always* symmetrical or *always* complementary.

Watzlawick's axioms offer help in analysing communicational situations. Specific principles within interactional patterns are shown and analysed. Proceeding further in my analysis I will turn my attention to the second last communicational theorist of this theory chapter and explain Paul Grice's parameters for successful and cooperative communication.

2.3.4 H. Paul Grice's cooperative principal & conversational maxims

In 1967 the linguistic philosopher Herbert Paul Grice gave a lecture called "Logic and Conversation" in which he offered his audience a general principle for a cooperative type of conversation. It is known as **the cooperative principle** and it states:

Make your conversational 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.

(26)

While Watzlawick's five axioms define specific principles of the communication process, the cooperative principle gives an account of how to communicate efficiently as well as appropriately. The assumption behind the cooperative principle is that all participants of the communication situation, speakers and hearers, have "to some extent a common purpose or set of purposes, or at least a mutually accepted direction" (Grice 26). Otherwise they would not really interact with each other, which again means there would not be any real conversation either or they might have conflicting goals. Moreover, the cooperative principle commands the conversational contributions to adhere to the circumstances of the talk exchange.

As a consequence of, or rather, in addition to the cooperative principle, Grice proposed **four conversational maxims**: quality (truthfulness), quantity (informativeness), relation (relevance) and manner (clarity). The maxim of *quantity* requires the speaker to make his or her speech contribution as informative as needed: "Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purpose of the exchange)" (Grice 26). The second maxim, *quality*, demands that the speaker be truthful: "make your contribution one that is true" (Grice 27). Along with the maxim of quality come two subclasses which are not to tell lies or anything that lacks adequate evidence: "1. Do not say what you believe to be false. 2. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence" (Grice 27). The third one, the maxim of *relation*, states that the speech contribution should be as relevant as the situation requires it to be: "Be relevant" (Grice 27). Last but not least, the maxim of *manner* expects the speaker to be brief and orderly in his or her speech act, so that ambiguities or obscurities can be avoided. Grice states: "I include the supermaxim – 'Be perspicuous' and various maxims such as: 1. Avoid obscurity of expression. 2. Avoid ambiguity. 3. Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity). 4. Be orderly" (27). All four 'supermaxims' need to operate together in order to enable effective communication.

After all, there are some problems with Grice's propositions. One of the greatest problems might be their vagueness. His statements are kept rather broad and general with much room for interpretation and adjustments. There are several maxims which could be added to his propositions (e.g., the maxim of politeness, could be regarded as a

subclass of manner). Another general problem is the question of validation and cultural implementation. Conversations differ from one culture to another. What might seem appropriate in western traditions may be completely inappropriate somewhere else in the world. This in fact is true for every theory developed in a specific cultural surrounding. One more problem I would like to mention, where even Grice himself harboured doubts, is the maxim of relation/relevance. Grice proclaims:

Though the maxim itself is terse, its formulation conceals a number of problems that exercise me a good deal: questions about what different kinds and focuses of relevance there may be, how these shift in the course of a talk exchange, how to allow for the fact that subjects of conversations are legitimately changed, and so on.

(27)

Grice is right in his suspicion, every conversation has various subject turns, which are not necessarily relevant to the current conversational topic. Topic changes make every conversation more unpredictable and thus most of the time more interesting or entertaining.

By means of an unreliable narrative, authors such as Henry Green, go against cooperative communication techniques. That is to say, the alteration of the story's events by any narrator is a violation against Grice's cooperative principles. Henry Green's narrators are mostly unobtrusive: in his novels he always uses a heterodiegetic narrative, a narrator who takes no or hardly any part in the story. Green's heterodiegetic narrative situation, therefore, does not always follow the four Gricean maxims: the narrator does not necessarily offer relevant, right and purposeful information, and the narrator does not always have a communication of mutual appreciation and acceptance. Alterations, shifts and turns, are modes of presentation to deceive the readership and make them think independently. Green offers a multiplicity of hermeneutic readings, and remains true to his principle that prose should have an openness to multiple readings and interpretations.

A text has to fulfil certain criteria in order for the reader to be interesting. That is to say, a reader does not only engage with the author and narrator while reading a book, but also with the text itself. The text can be: an easy read, it can speak to the expectations of a reader or it can be a dreary reading experience which might lead to the reader's rejection to finish reading the book. The last theory chapter therefore deals with the interaction between a text and its reader.

2.3.5. Peter Rabinowitz, Robert-Alain de Beaugrande's and Wolfgang U. Dressler's textual communication criteria

The interaction between a text and its readers is manifold. In his book *Before Reading: Narrative Conventions and the Politics of Interpretation* Peter Rabinowitz determines four rules of reading which try to capture the interaction between a text and its readers (cf. 42-46). The four rules are as follows: 1. the 'rule of notice' states that the reader identifies only certain aspects of the text as important, others are left unnoticed. 2. The 'rule of signification' appeals to the connection between a text and the reader's own experiences, hence the reader assigns personal meaning to the recognised aspects of the text. 3. The 'rule of configuration' addresses the fusion between the text and the reader's existing expectations of the text, that is to say, the reader connects some details of the text with others. 4. The 'rule of coherence' specifies that the reader transforms the whole text into one more or less coherent unit that somehow makes sense for him or her. These four rules of reading strongly rely on the reader's capabilities. The more the reader notices or assigns to personal experiences and expectations the better will be his or her reading experience as a whole.

During the reader's engagement with the text most readers expect the text to comply with some communicational factors. These factors are similar to the four rules of reading I just mentioned but they offer a more precise division into separate ranges of subjects. The seven text criteria I would like to address were identified by Robert-Alain de Beaugrande and Wolfgang Ulrich Dressler (cf. Titscher et al. 22-23): 1. cohesion (grammatical and lexical relationship/connection within the text; elements which unify a text syntactically such as: recurrence, anaphora and cataphora, ellipsis and conjunctions), 2. coherence (the logical connection within a text; elements which make a text semantically meaningful such as: intertextuality), 3. intentionality (the possibility of authorial intent), 4. acceptability (reader's decision on the suitability of an utterance within the overall context), 5. 'informativity' ("concerns the extent to which the occurrences of the presented text are expected vs. unexpected or known vs. unknown/uncertain" (Beaugrande I.17); a text's possibility to offer the reader new and valid information; communication difficulties may arise when information is contradictory or missing (discrepancies and discontinuities), 6. 'situationality' ("concerns the factors which make a text relevant to a situation of occurrence" (Beaugrande I.19); awareness of different contexts between encoding and decoding entity) and 7. intertextuality

(reference to other texts). Reading is a holistic process where many parameters can interact with each other and yet not all of them have to be fulfilled for a reader to approve. However, it can be argued that if most of the communicational criteria (including the “seven standards of textuality” (Beaugrande I.23)) remain unfulfilled, the ‘text’ may not be regarded as a satisfying ‘communicative event’ and thus the book might not be acceptable for the reader.

With these words in mind I would like to end my chapter of theoretical background and provide the reader with a short summary of the two novels I am going to analyse in greater detail – *Loving* and *Doting* – before applying the communicative models to both texts.

3. Plot summary of primary texts

3.1 *Loving* (1945)

Loving was not only written during World War II, it was also published at the end of it. It therefore comes as no surprise that *Loving* depicts the struggle of life, not necessarily the struggle to survive, during war time Britain. The novel explores the secluded life of British exiles in Ireland: an English upper-class family, the Tennants, and their mainly English servants. The setting takes place exclusively at the Tennant's Irish country mansion, Kinalty Castle. Kinalty Castle is Mrs Arthur Tennant's chosen place of refuge, a neutral place so much secluded from the world's affairs that even events of the war circulate only as rumours. Nevertheless, a neutral country like Ireland also possesses the lurking threat of the IRA and a possible German invasion.

Mrs Arthur Tennant is a widow, her only son Jack is far away in the army and so she is left alone with her daughter-in-law Mrs Jack Tennant (former Miss Violet), who is having a secret affair with Captain Davenport, a neighbouring Irishman; her two grandchildren Evelyn and Moira; and a considerably amount of staff that followed her from England. The male servants include: the old butler Mr Arthur Eldon, who dies at the outset of the novel; Mr Charley Raunce, who becomes the new first butler after Mr Eldon's death; Albert – Bert for short – is Raunce's right-hand man; and the only Irish members of the staff: the gate keeper Michael and the lamp cleaner Paddy O'Connor. The female servants consists of: the housekeeper Miss Agatha Burch and her two housemaids Kate Armstrong and Edith; the mostly intoxicated cook Mrs Welch, whose little nephew Albert comes to visit (it is likely that Albert is actually her son came over from England in order to be saved from the war); Mrs Welch's two assistants Jane and Mary; and last but not least the elderly nanny Miss Swift. The novel's overall theme is the passionate quest for love in a time of turmoil: housemaid Edith falls in love with butler Raunce while the other housemaid Kate is in love with the mere idea of being in love, and eventually falls for the Irish lamp cleaner Paddy; their supervisor Miss Burch had a seemingly hopeless crush on the late butler Mr Eldon. Third butler Albert falls helplessly in love with Edith, while little Misses Evelyn and Moira admire Mrs Welch's Albert. Nanny Swift has dedicated her whole life and consequently her whole love to the upbringing of the Tennant's offspring, the cook Mrs Welch has a never-ending fling with her whiskey bottle. Mrs Jack, deprived from devotion of her far-away husband, finds

herself in a romantic entanglement with Captain Davenport. Old Mrs Tennant, ignorant to most happenings around her, is never failing to think about her son far off in wartime England. Unsurprisingly, there are many different kinds of love to be found in the novel, most notably might be the love of all characters for their home country. During a longer absence of the two Tennant ladies, who embark on a trip to visit Jack, the servants find themselves left alone in the Irish country mansion. With the aristocracy gone, the servants enthusiastically assume the leading positions of their masters, including struggles for authority and power along with conflicts of hatred and love.

3.2 *Doting* (1952)

Doting depicts the life of the London upper-middle class after World War II in the English winter of 1949. London's upper-middle class is comprised by a post-World War working class generation, who is forced to earn a living and who relieves its disillusionment by drinking and flirting. The novel tries to examine the deceptive differences between two major themes: fondness and actual love (i.e 'doting' and 'loving'). Just as some characters in *Loving* are lost in love or fall in love with each other, most characters in *Doting* are trapped by a lustful feeling of infatuation, but are incapable of experiencing real love.

Doting examines various love triangles which are the result of a malfunctioning long-term relationship. Bored and imprisoned in daily routines and a tiresome marriage the business man in his mid-forties, Arthur Middleton, becomes infatuated with Annabel Paynton, a nineteen-year old Ministry worker. Annabel is friends with Peter Middleton, Arthur's seventeen-year old son. Peter is at his parents' home in London, on vacation from boarding school, but he does not stay long. He is eventually sent off on a trip to Scotland in order to go fishing with his mother's brother, uncle Dick. Diana Middleton, Arthur's wife and Peter's mother, is jealous of her husband's infatuation with Annabel. After being in a car accident with Peter, who needs to stay in hospital for a few days, she catches Arthur and Annabel off guard at her home. Diana seeks revenge and starts courting Charles Addinsell, Arthur's oldest friend, a single father who has not yet absorbed the loss of his dead wife Penelope. However, she soon tires of her untrue foolery with Charles. In consequence, Charles starts to flirt with Annabel and subsequently begins an amorous escapade with Claire Belaine, Annabel's eighteen-year old friend and co-worker. The precarious relationships are uncovered gradually as the story unravels and yet the situation at the end of the novel stays as unresolved as it was

in the beginning. The only message that is certain is: life will carry on as before. The novel starts out with a rather meaningless conversation at a restaurant table between the Middleton family (Diana, Arthur and Peter) and their guest Annabel. The same procedure takes place in the last scene of the novel, except that Charles and Claire join the other four for dinner in a new restaurant.

In his novel *Henry Green* Keith C. Odom states one striking connection between both novels: “[d]oting is the *reductio ad absurdum* of loving, and the two novels, *Loving* and *Doting*, stand in just such a relationship. In both novels, characters are reaching out for love, at least as far as they understand the emotion” (133). To analyse the characters’ connectedness in both novels, especially their communicative contact, shall be the fundamental task of chapter four.

4. The three levels of communication in Henry Green's texts

This chapter discusses Henry Green's use of communication in his novels *Loving* and *Doting*. I will show various instances of inadequate communication and contrast these with some examples of successful communication. Analysing Green's writing techniques will help me to disclose the conversational relationships in *Loving* and *Doting* on three different literary levels: 1. character and character, 2. narrator and narratee, and 3. author and reader.

As already mentioned, speech is Green's most important narrative mode to develop the story's meaning and action (cf. *Surviving* 136-150). In his thorough analysis of Green's mode of presentation Edward Stokes established that: five of Green's eight novels consist of 60 to 70 percent direct or indirect speech. With more than 90 percent *Loving*, *Nothing* and *Doting* expose an even higher degree of direct speech (cf. Stokes 75). Because Green's preference for direct speech scenes is quite above the average compared to many novels of the time, the narrator's commentary consequently retains little prominence, under seven percent in *Loving*, *Nothing*, *Doting*, *Concluding* and *Party Going* (cf. Stokes 75). Passages of descriptions as well as summaries remain under ten percent, too (cf. Stokes 75). One possible reason for such a high amount of undissolved dialogue is mentioned by Weatherhead. He states that: "dialogue must [...] leave enough latitude for the reader to discover a tone that carries the meaning, as in life it is what is left unsaid that gives us food for thought" (89). Green's idiosyncratic way of writing changed over the years. At the end of his writing time it could be characterised in the following way: reduce descriptive scenes as well as authorial commentary to a minimum and let the characters speak for themselves. John D. Russell fittingly summarises:

The real mystery of speech to Green is its ability to communicate that which is left unsaid. His formula runs something like this: Talk between characters, accompanied by action but not by commentary, creates those characters for the reader. By observing discrepancies between talk and action, the reader can get to know two things: what the characters are like and what they are really communicating to one another beneath the façade of ready speech. All this involves a conscious act of imagination on the reader's part, and the creation of life in his mind becomes in turn the medium of communication between author and reader.

(Russell 26)

The different ways and levels of communication is what I will embark on henceforth. My main source of reference is Green's narrative technique, especially his extensive passages

of enigmatic dialogue between the characters in the novels. Direct and indirect discourse are a crucial means to look inside a character's state of mind. Speech, so to speak, is the voice of the mind. It therefore should come as no surprise that Green's texts comprise many different voices. Each character has his or her individual voice and uses a special technique to communicate, which naturally depends on the communicational partner. Henry Green as the author has a quite unique voice himself, which does not fail to capture the reader's imagination. In the introduction of a collected edition of Green's novels *Loving, Living, Party Going*, John Updike identifies Green as a writer with a "liberating ingenuous voice, [a] voice so full of other voices, its own interpolations amid the matchless dialogue twisted and tremulous with a precision that kept the softness of groping, of sensation, of living" (7). Green seemingly was enamoured with the possibilities that emerge from the diversity of voices.

Apart from depicting the characters mostly through their individual voice, another of Green's important endeavours was to capture the life of the people as it was. The war and its consequences as well as the change of the traditional English class system influence the life of the characters in most of his novels. *Loving*, set amidst the turmoil of World War II, marks a watershed for the traditional class system. It depicts the last stages of a traditional class distinction (master-servant) and simultaneously glances ahead: when the masters leave the mansion, the servants are perfectly capable of taking over leading roles and manage themselves. It is due to the General Strike in 1926, the long years of a war fought and won essentially by the middle class and the time of the Great Depression that the existing English class system was threatened and forced its people to redefine their views of society. The reader of *Doting*, a post-war novel, experiences society's class changes towards a newly developed middle class: a working society that had to develop a new identity. It is the outcome of historical events that eventually constitutes a Henry-Green novel: the people's coping with their daily routines and/or burdensome war experiences, along with their struggle of adapting to new and unknown situations. One may ask: how do they try to adapt? The corresponding answer is quite simply: by talking to each other, by exchanging their thoughts, by communicating. Green establishes novels where narratives have endlessly insinuating possibilities, needless to say, without supplying any 'reader's guideline'. To try and unravel some of these insinuations while analysing the novel's discourse shall be the task of this thesis' central part – always keeping in mind that my analysis/reading will only be one of many possible analyses/readings!

4.1 Level of action (character-speech-character)

Green's eager interest in language is omnipresent in all his novels. It goes hand in hand with his inexhaustible curiosity for words' denotations and their several connotative meanings. Unsurprisingly, Green emphasises communicative exchange in his compositions. He has a talent¹⁰ for colouring the world of his protagonists with mystery and with communicative riddles, which open a myriad of perspectives and suggest manifold approaches to decipherment. "Green's writing dares to fall into little abysses in which it seems not to know itself what precisely it means. [...] But often he loves to leave his effects mysteriously unexplained, sending them back to the reader untasted, as it were" (Wood 55). While some of these communicative enigmas are caused by the characters' disorientation, others are a result of entangled plots. This chapter stays within the level of action and concentrates on the discourse between individual characters. The entanglement of the plot will be addressed in the next chapter (chapter 4.2 – the level of fictional mediation).

Through authorial detachment Green is able to simulate various notions of life's complexities (e.g., communication difficulties, relationship difficulties, etc.), this helps create diversified meanings. For the same reason, diversification is also the key aspect of his written discourse. In Green's novels there "is an almost imperceptible modulation from dialogue, through interior monologue, of deliberate and involuntary kinds, to objective narrative and description" (Swinden 60). The interesting mix of narrative modes gives Green's text a contradictory but realistic allure. One example of this enigmatic narrative is Green's use of "non-representational dialogue", "a kind of communication which provides the oblique and elusive quality [Green] experiences in real life" (Holmesland 109). The emphasis here, once again, falls on "the oblique and elusive quality" of the communication. Non-representational¹¹ dialogue implies that the author does not offer the reader any specific kind of interpretation. Thus, the character's mind set and their individual actions pass without much character exposition or authorial comments. Edward Stokes notes that *Loving* and *Doting* do not depict any "formal character exposition" nor "informal character revelation" or any "particular and general commentary" (75).

¹⁰ While some writers of Green's generation admired his versatile usage of language, others were quite contemptuous of his ability. Evelyn Waugh, for example, found that in *Loving* Green is "debas[ing] the language vilely" (quoted in Treglown, 176).

¹¹ For a clarification of the term, explained by Henry Green himself, consult page 89 of this thesis.

The next two subchapters concentrate on the “communicative contact” (cf. Jahn N1.7.) between the characters in *Loving* and *Doting* (i.e., the level of action). The key feature of my analysis of the character’s communication is to highlight the manner and the probable purpose of the communication. Therefore, I will tackle questions like: What are the characters’ communicative difficulties? Do they exchange information in their communication process in order to create mutual understanding or, alternatively, to distance themselves from one another?

4.1.1 Communication problems in *Loving*

In *Loving* communicative tensions exist along a social division within the cast of characters: on the one side there are the servants, on the other side are their masters. Both classes exhibit their own peculiarities regarding their use of language; this often leads to communicative problems. The communicative difficulties in the dialogues are boundless and occur between different classes as well as within the bounds of a single class. Rosamund Lehmann describes the class language of both sides as follows:

on the Servant’s Hall’s side, the class language of circumlocution, ambiguity, rhetorical flourish, of devious sly approach to the end in view; all the fragile taboos and traditional tags and saws; on the Drawing Room side, the habit of incoherence, tentativeness, over-emphasis, the obsessive modish portmanteau words. Rarely do any of them speak out with certainty and clarity, even to their own.

(qtd. in Holmesland 109)

The servants often talk in riddles, they permanently hint at things. A good example is first butler Charley Raunce. At one point he is unhappy with the fact that his lad Albert is still bringing him his tea in the morning, while former first butler Eldon got his cup of tea from one of the maids. Instead of plainly saying so in the first place, Raunce is beating around the bush and alleges Albert as a pretext. The subsequent quote comprises the emerging tension between first butler Charley Raunce and first housemaid Agatha Burch: “Yes I had a bit of a shock first thing,” [...]. “It was nasty to tell the truth. That lad of mine Albert brought my tea.” “You don’t say. Why I didn’t know he was up so prompt [Miss Burch said]” (15). It is only later on that Raunce admits frankly: “For if you must know it upsets me to see that lad of mine Albert carry me my tea” (15). But Miss Burch replies unwaveringly:

“That was what he always used to do surely.” “Yes, in Mr Eldon’s day that’s the way it used to be every morning,” Raunce admitted. Then he

went on, "But one of the girls always brought the old man's." "And now I suppose you won't be satisfied unless one of my girls brings you yours," Miss Burch said with surprising bitterness.

(15)

Admittedly, Miss Burch understands Raunce's intentions, which makes this example ultimately one of successful conversation. However, it takes Raunce quite a while to articulate his wish, even though only indirectly. He never directly asks for one of the maids to bring him his tea. The whole conversation appears to be a power game. Raunce just climbed up one step on the social ladder and tries to demand his entitled rights. Miss Burch, having been first housemaid for a long period of time already, refuses to grant Raunce all of the rights Mr Eldon, her senior, once had. This might be partly due to the fact that she was in love with Eldon and still cannot bare to see someone like Charley Raunce follow in his footsteps. Both conversational partners compete with each other, and try to measure their conversational relationship (cf. Watzlawick's second and fifth axiom). Miss Burch is well aware that Raunce as the male first butler now possesses a higher rank than she does herself. Their relationship aspect should be based on difference. However, she also realises that Raunce still seems to be unable to completely live up to his new position, so Miss Burch opts for a relationship aspect based on equality. This uncertainty about their conversational relationship is also reflected in the content aspect of their conversation. While Miss Burch wants things to stay the same (i.e., Albert has to bring Raunce his tea as usual so that the girls do not have to get involved with Raunce more than absolutely necessary), Raunce wants things to change (i.e., he cannot think of anything more pleasant than being awoken by one of the young beautiful girls with a hot cup of tea, first thing in the morning). Rosamund Lehmann is quite right in her assertion, most servants often use "class language of circumlocution, ambiguity, rhetorical flourish, of devious sly approach to the end in view" (qtd. in Holmesland 109). Raunce in particular uses suggestive remarks in order to get what he wants.

The speech acts on the aristocratic side miss certainty and clarity, too. Mrs Tennant and her daughter-in-law Mrs Jack (Violet), both born members of the upper class, speak in "the habit of incoherence, tentativeness, overemphasis, the obsessive modish portmanteau words" (qtd. in Holmesland 109). Their relationship is quite obviously one of difference: young Mrs Jack is submissive and most of the time unsure how to act around the old lady. Her insecure behaviour presumably stems from her guilty

consciousness due to the unfaithfulness towards her husband, Mrs Tennant's only son. Mrs Jack is constantly afraid her mother-in-law might find out about her ongoing infidelity and therefore tries to engage in as little communication as possible. Mrs Tennant, however, is a woman of vocalised worries and complaints. Nothing ever seems to please her completely, with the exception of her son Jack. The following quote demonstrates Mrs Tennant's need to voice her deep resentment of the servant's untrustworthiness:

"I think everything's partly to do with the servants," Mrs Tennant announced as if drawing a logical conclusion. "The servants?" Mrs Jack echoed, it might have been from a great distance. "Well one gets no rest. It's always on one's mind Violet." [...] "This last trouble over my cluster ring now. I spoke to Raunce again but it was most unsatisfactory."

(200)

Mrs Tennant seems to be living in her own world. She is clearly ignorant of Mrs Jack's dilemma, a dilemma that on the other hand completely absorbs the young woman. The two ladies' main problem in conversation is their varying psychological engagement which strongly depends on the theme of their conversation; their different levels of truthfulness, their attitudes towards and their knowledge of the situations they talk about. The subsequent quote shows Mrs Tennant's inability to recognise her daughter-in-law's detached behaviour and reinforces her self-absorption:

"I shouldn't have," Mrs Jack murmured a trifle louder. "I know Violet. But you do see one can't stand things hanging over one? This hateful business round the pantry boy. There's no two ways about it. Either you can trust people or you can't and if you can't then they're distasteful to live with." "Yes," Mrs Jack agreed simply. All at once she seemed to recollect. "What d'you mean quite?" she asked sharp almost in spite of herself. "Well he said he had it, he told Raunce so." "Had what?" Mrs Jack demanded suddenly frantic. [...] "Why my cluster ring Violet," [...].

(200-201)

Taking Jakobson's communicational factors and functions as basis of analysis one could say the following: The messages of the ladies' context do not match at all, they both have a different referential function. While Mrs Tennant feels the urge to lament over the servants' dishonesty and thereby reinforces her morals (the inferiority of the servants), Mrs Jack's guilty consciousness reinterprets it as her insincerity towards her husband and her mother-in-law: "I shouldn't have," is what Mrs Jack says to herself, thinking most

likely about her ongoing affair. For Mrs Jack every little comment is a potential threat which makes her insecure and faint-hearted, hence unable to be a proper communicational partner. Since the emotive function of Mrs Tennant (her attitude, feeling and experience) does not correspond with the conative function of Mrs Jack's (the emotional effect of the message on her as the hearer), the lady's interpersonal contact is amiss on a psychological level. They are unable to connect or interact accurately. Their code, especially their verbal and non-verbal actions are not understood correctly by the other woman. In the end Mrs Tennant concludes for herself, in reference to the missing ring: "No I made my enquiries. Like everything else in this house it was quite different. Not the natural explanation at all" (201). Right she is, and still unable to recognise that the relationship towards her daughter-in-law appears to be 'quite different', too.

The inability to establish or sustain a psychological connection in a conversation (phatic function) is a form of miscommunication prevalent throughout the novel. The following scene portrays one of the servants' heated discussions. Not one of them is able to connect with another, so that in the end, they all talk at cross purposes. Everyone is preoccupied with their individual worries: the housekeeper Miss Burch can think about nothing else but Mrs Tennant's lost ring and the endless trouble it will cause her to find it again; first butler Charley Raunce, not taking the absence of one of Mrs Tennant's items as particularly troublesome because of its commonness, is unsatisfied with the answer given by his footboy Albert concerning the whereabouts of the missing gardening glove; meanwhile, housemaids Kate and Edith seem to remain silent and unsure about the whole situation altogether:

[Miss Burch] looked worried. As she sat down she said, "She's mislaid her big sapphire cluster." There was no need to ask whose ring that was. [...] Charley seriously said, and at the same time imitated Mrs Welch's nephew, "Maybe she put'm down and forgot to pick'm up." Except for Miss Burch they none of them bothered. [...] "Which reminds me," Charley asked his lad, "did you remember to take her back that glove? Now don't give me the old answer, don't say which glove?" "It's in the pantry Mr Raunce," Albert said. "What is?" "The gardening glove." "You'll excuse me it's not. I ought to know seeing that's my own pantry. Where is it then?" "I put 'er glove in the cupboard," Albert said, "on the bottom shelf. I seen it only this morning." "Oh well if you've hidden the thing," Raunce replied and they fell back in silence. Edith looked up to find Kate watching her. She blushed. "Land's sake there she goes colouring again," Raunce announced hearty. [...] "We shall have to

make them open up the drains for us that's all," Miss Burch stated, still on about the ring. "Oh forget it," Charley said to Edith, probably meaning this remark for Albert. He lowered his eyes and an odd sort of bewilderment showed in his face. But Miss Burch must have understood that he was answering her for she objected, "I can't forget," and she spoke resigned. "I'm sure I've looked every place and it was a beautiful ring, an antique," she added.

(60-61)

The last few sentences of this scene effectively show the characters' lack of true interaction. All interlocutors are preoccupied with their own thoughts and worries, which makes it impossible for them to connect with or respond to each other. That is to say, the decoding of the message, the reception phase, fails due to the characters' personal misconceptions.

In terms of Jakobson's communicational factors and functions this failure reinforces the notion of the characters' lack of contact. Although they may be looking at and talking to each other, they do not always interact in an appropriate way. Raunce, for example, intends to convey a message to Albert but cannot take his eyes off Edith, so that she feels addressed instead. The characters' physical connection is as much amiss as their psychological one. They are unable to emphasise, to understand and to share the feelings of the others and are constantly preoccupied with their own thoughts. The overall theme of their common discourse is 'a missing item', but the item's identity is not the same for everyone, it differs in each case: Miss Burch talks about a missing ring, while Raunce associates this topic with the missing gardening glove. The servants' discourse misses a proper contact between the conversational partners – what Roman Jakobson calls the phatic function – and an informative and denotive purpose of the message – the referential function. That in turn means, the conversation does not lead anywhere and is bound to fail: no one knows where the missing ring is or how to find it, likewise the whereabouts of the gardening glove is still undecided. As a result, the act of communication discontinues due to confusion and none-connectedness.

The disappearance of divers things is arguably a sign that hints at the servants' latent insecurities and their fear of dangers lurking in the unknown. It makes their conversations even more obscure. When the ring has not been found half way through the novel, an inspector from Mrs Tennant's insurance company, Mr Michael Mathewson, makes a surprise appearance in order to investigate the ring's whereabouts. He poses an enormous threat to the whole servant community. Mr Mathewson is clearly an intruder,

an outsider with the unpleasant purpose to find the ring. Some servants believe he is not from the insurance company but from the IRA, others interpret his presence as an accusation against them stealing and hiding the ring somewhere. This particular episode shows the servants' ability to cope, even cooperate in hard times: they are isolated from the outside world, they are threatened by the war over in England and by the restraints caused by the insurance inspector.

But even in times of despair, when Raunce admits truthfully: "I don't know [...]" there's times I can't fathom any one of you an' that's a fact. What is all this?" (155), there is no possibility for closure or successful communication. By contrast, the confusion and miscommunication deteriorate even further:

"What is all this?" Miss Burch echoed in a shrill voice. "You ask me that? When you're telling us we've had a IRA man actually call at the Castle?" [Raunce answers:] "But I thought you were on about the drains." "Oh you men," Miss Burch replied faint once more, "you will never understand even the simplest thing." "It was only an insurance inspector came about the ring," Edith explained. "I don't know where Mr Raunce got it he was from the IRA I'm sure," she said. "You mean he said that ring was stolen?" Miss Burch cried, plainly beside herself again. "Not on your life," Charley took her up. "You ladies will always jump at conclusions."

(155)

The servants are in a state of great agitation, they transgress Grice's cooperative principle altogether. Neither one of them makes his or her conversational contribution such as would be required in order to be effectively understood, effectively violating all of Grice's four conversational maxims. For instance, the maxims of quantity and manner are sorely afflicted. One example would be the misinterpreted statement about Mr Mathewson identity. Raunce's contribution was not informative and precise enough, and therefore some ambiguities still remain about the man's real identity. Miss Burch, on the other hand, has obvious difficulties following the maxims of quality and relation. Her statements often seem to be taken out of context, seemingly irrelevant to the discourse at hand. When Raunce desperately asks for closure, Miss Burch counters by changing the topic to completely different issue; later on, when Edith assures her that Mr Mathewson is not from the IRA but a mere insurance inspector, she quickly moves on to the next idiotic question "You mean he said that ring was stolen?". Miss Burch keeps changing the conversation's topic, so that it matches the thoughts in her preoccupied mind. When she asks a question she already has her preferable answer right at hand. In fact, Raunce is

quite right by saying “You ladies will always jump at conclusions”, except that the gender in this case is interchangeable. They all jump at conclusions and cherry-pick interpretations that suit their particular preoccupation at that moment, without paying much attention whatsoever to the real context of the message as such. The characters’ inner turmoil affects their willingness to cooperate and makes them appear dull (e.g., the narrator describes Miss Burch as shrill-voiced, “faint once more” and “plainly beside herself again” (155)).

After these communication problems caused by inner turmoil, absentmindedness and lack of true contact, I would like to take a closer look at the issue of individual manners of speaking including: language differences and different varieties of dialect. Keith C. Odom recognises that: “Dialogue also reveals individualized characters; for the Tennants’ literate, upper-class speech is not the same as that heard in the servants’ hall where the grammar is poorer, the colloquialisms richer, and the dropped h’s more frequent” (96).

The most obvious dialect in the novel is Cockney. All servants use an individual variety of Cockney, except for the Irish-speaking staff. The servants in the kitchen appear to have the strongest variety of dialect. Mrs Welch and her little Albert, in particular, possess poor grammar (i.e., no consistent use of the suffix ‘-s’ in third person singular regular verbs, use of ‘me’ instead of ‘my’ or ‘ain’t’ instead of ‘is not’), tense problems, more dropped h’s and glottal stops. The subsequent interrogation between Mrs Welch and her little Albert does not only show their individual way of talking but portrays their complementary relationship which is accompanied by a considerable amount of dishonesty and mutual distrust:

“I’m fed up with you,” Mrs Welch said to her Albert at this precise moment as she sat him down at the kitchen table. “So [Edith] wouldn’t take you eh? Expect me to believe that eh?” She watched the boy with what appeared to be disfavour. “That’s what she said’m.” “What did she say then?” “When she come in the nursery I was like you said, I’ad my coat zipped up and me ’at in me pocket.” ‘No,’ she said, ‘not you Albert my little man, you go down in the kitchen,’ she says an’ she give me a bit of toffee out of a bag.” “Where is it?” “I’ve ate it.” “Is it in your pocket this minute along with your hat?” “No ’m.” [...] “You wouldn’t lie to me would yer?” she asked. “No ’m.” [...] “if ever I catch you taking what she offers I’ll tan the ’ide right off you d’you h’understand?”

(88)

Mrs Welch despises Edith for Edith's attitude towards herself and little Albert. She believes that Edith is "a nasty little piece that considers we're not good enough for 'er" (88). But more than she despises Edith, she might despise herself and her own situation: an alcohol-addicted cook who serves far away from home. The fact that little Albert was given a toffee by Edith is unbearable to Mrs Welch; it conveys an act of kindness on Edith's side which is interpreted by Mrs Welch as an act of pity to which she is too proud and unwilling to soften.

The conversation pattern of this interrogation simplifies as it progresses: quick-tempered Mrs Welch asks questions and each time little Albert delivers as short an answer as possible. It is quite obvious that Albert does not feel comfortable around his snappish aunt. He is unsure what to say or how to react because he does not quite understand what is going on. The unease and insecurity he feels towards Mrs Welch is depicted by his extremely condensed answer "No 'm". In this particular situation Albert does not want to cause any further trouble; therefore he complies to whatever seems to be appropriate, even if that means telling a lie. Little Albert's final speech contributions go against Grice's maxims of quantity (they are not informative enough), quality (they are not true), relation (they are not as relevant as the situation would require) and manner (they do not avoid ambiguities). The communication problem in this case is not even caused by misunderstanding but by fear of and distance towards the conversational partner.

Since all servants are of the same dialect variety they do understand each other's English perfectly fine. That cannot be said about the Irish staff in the castle, the mix of the Irish and English language is mostly conceived as unintelligible speech by the English servants. The most impenetrable character in the novel is the Irish lamp cleaner Paddy O'Connor. He is only partly understood by the chamber girl Kate, other English-speaking characters have no clue what he is talking about most of the time. One time when Mrs Jack acknowledges that she does not understand a word O'Connor says – "I can't catch what he says myself," – Mrs Tennant replies: "No more can I. That's why I wanted someone else to go. But my dear it's not for us to understand O'Connor" (203). Mrs Tennant clearly draws a line between herself and her servants. She does not need to understand the servants as long as someone else can interpret what is being said. And yet, the servants among themselves would have the same problem if it were not for Kate. Around dinner time the staff gathers in the servant's hall to eat together. This particular time the atmosphere is tense, the anxiety of being abandoned (still deserted by the lady

of the house Mrs Tennant) and the threat of the IRA surface repeatedly in their evening communication. Danger seems to be lurking everywhere and the servants' nerves are stretched. Paddy O'Connor potentially knows important information as he is closer to the local population. In this context the servants, for once, are interested in what he has to say, but how will they react to the unintelligible speech acts of Paddy?

Kate asked the lampman if he had heard any rumours. Paddy gabbled an answer. As he did so he did not meet their eyes in this low room of antlered heads along the walls, his back to the sideboard with red swans. Raunce's neck was tied up in a white silk scarf of Mr Jack's. He seemed to turn his head with difficulty to ask Kate what the Irishman had said. "He says not to believe all you're told." "I don't" Raunce put in at once. "And that they're not so busy by half as what they was," Kate ended. [...] "For land's sake," Edith began but Paddy started to mouth something. It was so seldom he spoke at meals that all listened. "What's he say?" Raunce asked when the lampman was done. "He reckons the IRA would see to the Jerries," Kate translated. "Holy smoke but he'll be getting me annoyed in a minute. First he says there aren't none then 'e pretends they can sort out a panzer division. What with? Bows and arrows?" Paddy muttered a bit. "He says," Kate gave a laugh, "They got more'n pikes like those Home Guard over at home."

(92-93)

The first thing to notice is that Paddy O'Connor never really articulates his thoughts in a manner so that the other characters or the reader are able to understand. If Kate were not able to translate his speech acts into English, nobody could actually understand him at all. It is quite prominent that Paddy's communication skills and his attitude towards comprehensible conversation are amiss: his physical and psychological connection towards other interlocutors is for the most part non-existent. The encoding of his message does not result in a proper decoding by most conversational partners. Not sharing the same code as all the other communicators makes Paddy an outsider. Most of the time he occupies the role of the passive listener, an observer who does not contribute to the conversation as such (i.e., "It was so seldom he spoke at meals that all listened."). Interestingly enough, the servants do not seem to mind the fact that they cannot understand him because Kate is there to help them out. Language differences could otherwise result in a considerable amount of difficulties for all conversational partners. At this particular juncture however, everyone is very interested in what Paddy actually has to say, as they reckon, he might know something useful about the tactics and techniques of the IRA. Unfortunately though, Paddy's speech contributions are not

particularly helpful to their present situation. It is Raunce, who calls on Kate twice to translate what Paddy says. He acts with the authority of his new position as 'the man of the house', but besides, he is also one of the most curious interlocutors, too.

Charley Raunce is a good example for colloquialisms and fixed speech patterns. He uses them quite frequently with the effect that his sentences appear to be dull and often make him seem imbecile. His repertoire includes distinct sentences like: "Busy Charley that's me." (60), "Lucky Charley they call me." (103), "And clean your teeth of course before you have to do with a woman." (56), "Here, give us a kiss." (40) or "Holy Moses see what time it is." (30). Raunce is a real platitudinarian who uses his profane phrases in order to feel more secure and respected. His habitude is to praise himself and flirt with young beautiful maids, two things that help him make it through the day with good cheer. He has a quite prosaic mind, that is to say he is a down-to-earth man without much passion or sentimentality. For example, his plans to leave together with Edith are delivered without much fuss: "We want to get out of this country and when once we've made up our minds we want to get out fast" (220). Edith eloquently helps him find the more romantic term: "Elope," she cried delighted all of a sudden. "Elope," he agreed grave. She gave him a big kiss. "Why Charley," she said, seemingly more and more delighted, "that's romantic" (221). But he is not really confident with this choice: "It's what we're going to do whatever the name you give it," he replied. "But don't you see that's a wonderful thing to do," she went on. "Maybe so," he said soft into her ear, "but it's what we're doing" (221). While Edith appears to be all head-in-the-clouds, at least for that specific moment, Raunce sees things more practical. He thinks himself very clever: "You leave all the brain work to your old man. Lucky Charley they call him" (220), and yet he does not seem to be able to see the whole picture: in their case, to elope means to go back to war, with all its consequences. The emancipation of the servants – elope and leave masters in order to become independent – parallels the middle class' fighting in the war – their standing up for themselves. The war, therefore, could be regarded as a symbol of emancipation.

My last examples of miscommunication in *Loving* are reserved for communication problems that are caused by impairment of the human senses, these will include problems of lisping and deafness as well as the consequences of heavy drinking. Advancement in age goes hand in hand with certain health impairments. Everything somehow seems to be in degression: the ability to hear, to speak, to see, to move and health in general. Miss Swift is the oldest nursemaid in Kinalty Castle. Many years ago

she had young Miss Violet in her care and now is responsible for Violet's daughters Evelyn and Moira. Nanny Swift is an elderly woman, quite past her prime: rheumatism and deafness have taken hold of her. One day after dinner time, sitting outside, near the dovecote, with Moira, Evelyn and little Albert, she tells them the story of "the two white doves that didn't agree" (49). The children soon lose their interest in the story as they observe the hustle and bustle of the dovecote. Evelyn, Moira and Albert are more interested in the evil play of some doves who push baby doves out of the dovecote or other doves who vigourously perform the courtship display, so that Miss Swift is not able to tell her story without interruptions:

"And then there was a time," the nanny said from behind closed eyes and the wall of deafness, "oh my dears your old nanny hardly knows how to tell you but the naughty unloyal dove I told you of," "It was a baby one," Albert said. "A baby dove. Oh do let me see" [Evelyn answered]. "I daresn't stir," he said. "Where did she fall then?" Evelyn asked. "Quiet children," Miss Swift said having opened her eyes, "or I shan't finish the story you asked after, restless chicks," she said. "And then there came a time," she went on, shutting her eyes again, hands folded. "What? Where?" Moira whispered. "It was a baby one," Albert said, "and nude. That big bastard pushed it."

(51)

The children and the nanny seem to have an amicable arrangement: if they want to talk without Miss Swift noticing they will have to whisper to each other. If they do not, they will be told off for interrupting. The nanny's "closed eyes and [...] wall of deafness" (51) come as no hindrance to the children, on the contrary, the nanny's impairments come to the children's advantage. They like to have their little secrets and a partly oblivious nanny suits them just fine. Miss Swift does not appear to be at a real disadvantage either. Her old age is her pretence for not being able to keep track of everything.

Even though Nanny Swift does not notice all exterior intrusions, she seems to know what is going on in general. When Edith and Kate join them for a little while, she goes on telling her story unperturbed by any noise while the children report to Edith and Kate their curious observations of the dovecote. Kate finds it inappropriate that the children should watch the doves' making love in the open but Miss Swift does not seem to notice anything she says. However, when the two housemaids are about to leave again the old lady declares: "Doves kissing indeed," Miss Swift called surprisingly after [Edith and Kate's] backs, "stuff and nonsense. That's the mother feeding their little one dears," she said to the children (53). It remains uncertain, how much of the conversation Miss

Swift does not understand and how much she does not want to understand. Generally speaking it can be said that Miss Swift's impairments, surprisingly enough, do not cause much miscommunication. All characters seem to know how to cope with her deafness. The children whisper if they do not want the nanny to notice, Kate and Edith use the same technique, either whispering or ignoring Miss Swift's ignorance or silence. The peculiar scene finally ends just like it began with the doves "quarrelling, murdering and making love again" (53), except for Miss Swift's story which ultimately is left unfinished; it remains an unfinished story with no one really interested in its conclusion.

While Miss Swift hides behind old age, Mrs Welch seeks refuge in alcohol. She has a severe drinking problem which heavily influences her attentiveness and communication faculties. Incidences of miscommunication are very common when Mrs Welch is involved. One conversation between Mrs Welch and Mrs Tennant starts out very courteously but increasingly worsens the longer it lasts. Mrs Tennant has just returned from her trip to England; she goes into the kitchen in order to inform Mrs Welch that Mr Jack is on embarkation leave and will be home by tomorrow. The scene commences with Mrs Welch getting up on account of Mrs Tennant's entry. Mrs Welch says: "Well mum I do 'ope you had a enjoyable visit and that the young gentleman was in good health as well as in good spirits in spite of this terrible war" (172). Mrs Tennant is quite pleased about the way she is received by her servant and answers: "You are a dear, Mrs Welch. [...] D'you know you're the first person has greeted me since I got back as though they had ever seen me before [...]" (173). After a quick chatter about mysterious Irishmen and "a terrible stench of drains" (173), Mrs Tennant asks for advice regarding the disappearance of her sapphire cluster ring and the butler Albert's confession of having hidden the precious ring. Mrs Welch does not seem to follow. As soon as she hears the name Albert, she mistakenly thinks of her nephew, invalidates Mrs Tennant's theory and accuses the other servants of putting little Albert up to it. The name mix-up is not resolved until the end of their conversation. By then Mrs Welch is already so taken in by her own torrent of words that she is unable to listen properly:

"I'm not going to listen. I shall leave you till you're in a fit ..." Mrs Tennant insisted wearily but Mrs Welch cut her short by shambling forward between her mistress and the door. "Yet when they grow bold to come forward with their lying tales," she went on, and grew hoarse, "when they say cruel lies about the innocent, their finger's winkin' with your rings once your back is turned, then the honest shan't stay silent. If I should let myself dwell on what they told you, that my Albert, my

sister's own son, so much as set eyes on that ring of yours or anything which belongs to you an' you don't know how to look after, then that's slander and libel, that there is, which is punishable by law." "All this is too absurd," Mrs Tennant said cold. "What's more I shouldn't be a bit surprised if you hadn't been drinking. I've wondered now for some time. In any case it never was a question of your Albert but the pantry boy." "Gin?" Mrs Welch cried, "I've not come upon any yet in this benighted island and you'll excuse me mum but I know who was intended, which Albert ..."

(176)

The key phrase which finally catches Mrs Welch's attention is: "I shouldn't be surprised if you hadn't been drinking". The suggestive remark of having consumed alcohol, automatically pulls Mrs Welch out of her soliloquy. Her subsequent excuse is appallingly untrue. As an alcohol addict she does not only belie Mrs Tennant but also herself. In addition, Mrs Welch is unwilling to acknowledge or correct her misunderstanding regarding the mix-up of the two Alberts (two different contexts). She ultimately believes that she is right. Mrs Welch violates against all of Grice's conversational maxims. At the end of the conversation her conversational contributions are not as required by the situation: she deliberately tells lies, her final remarks are neither quite relevant, nor very informative, nor orderly. Her agitation is caused by the two things she loves most: her little nephew Albert and the Gin. Mrs Tennant has hardly a chance to intervene and stop the absurd conversation – only with determination and a clear loud voice she finally succeeds. Mrs Welch's intoxication and stubbornness as well as Mrs Tennant's incomprehension make their initially polite conversation fall apart.

The last example I would like to address is a communication difficulty – a lisping problem which afflicts Mr Mathewson: unable to pronounce the consonant 's' properly, he claims that a dentist just pulled out one of his teeth: "Jutht had a tooth out that'th why I thpeak like thith," (142). In addition to his curious pronunciation Mr Mathewson is described as "fat and short and bald with blue spats" (141). When he begins to speak, Edith cannot repress a laugh: "Edith turned away from them and began a fit of giggling" (141). The narrator's description of Mr Mathewson and the way Edith reacts, turn him into a rather ridiculous character. He clearly is an outsider who does not belong to the servant community. His occupation, furthermore, poses a threat to the servants: he works as an operative of the Irish Regina Assurance, however the servants reckon that he is a secret agent or a spy from the Irish Republican Army instead. It is quite natural that the servants turn against him. His lisping problem does not cause any

obvious communication difficulties, quite the opposite, it keeps the servants attentive while he is present and strengthens their solidarity when he is gone. After his departure Raunce even initiates a lisping game, which all servants join except for Edith and Albert:

What'th that you thay? Lithping like a toothpot," he added in a wild and sudden good humour. "Charley," Edith called. She began to go red. "You should have seen the expression you wore," he said complacent, "You should really. When he has the impudence to ask you if you'd theen a thertain thomsing. Do you recollect?" "I certainly don't" Edith said and pouted. But Kate took this up. "You don't thay he thpoke like thith thurely," she asked letting out a shriek of amusement. All of them started to laugh or giggle except for Edith and Raunce's Albert.

(205)

Raunce's imitation of Mr Mathewson's lisping problem strengthens a feeling of community, even though Edith and Albert take an uncompromising stand: they are both not in the mood for any kind of foolishness, perceiving the whole situation concerning the lost ring and the inspector as too serious to joke about.

Joking around or talking at cross purpose combined with an inability to sustain a psychological connection leads to an overall lack of true interaction, which is the main problem of the characters in *Loving*. It leads to inconclusive speech acts and frequently causes an entire communication to fail. Their "language of circumlocution [and] ambiguity" and their distinct "habit of incoherence" (qtd. in Holmesland 109) go against any form of cooperative conversation.

Against these odds however, the social intercourse in *Loving* also contains some instances of successful conversation. This passage illustrates some instances of truthful and sincere communication and interpersonal bonding between characters in *Loving*. An effective way of communicating requires the listener to understand the speaker's message and his or her ability and willingness to supply appropriate feedback (see chapter 2.3.1). As discussed previously Grice's cooperative principle defines helpful key issues in this context: "Make your conversational 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" (26). A proper conversation is a continuous give-and-take. Mutual acceptance of and respect for the communicational partner are further important factors for successful communication. To find out to which degree these principles apply to *Loving* shall be the purpose of this section. In *A Critical Introduction*

to Henry Green's Novels: *The Living Vision* Oddvar Holmesland writes that there "is all the time an underlying sense that true communication and order are beyond the realm of social intercourse. The impression is strengthened by Green's progressive attempts to view life and characters from without" (23) – a statement to which I cannot fully subscribe. Henry Green is, indeed, a master of riddles, open questions and instances of miscommunication. Nevertheless, his novel *Loving* does portray several instances of true and successful communication within the realm of social intercourse. A conversation constructed by mutual understanding takes place only in a few stray instances and only between a few selected characters. These characters possess a special bond. They feel connected either through the bond of love or through the bond of being in a similar situation. Two such character pairs are Edith and Charley and Edith and Kate, respectively. Edith and Kate are both young housemaids in Kinalty Castle who do not only share the same profession and work place but also the same room. Their similar life circumstances bind them together. In the evenings, in the privacy of their room after a hard day's work, they have long intimate talks with each other. Their sisterly relationship, however, is turned completely upside down, when Edith falls in love with Charley Raunce. She starts having secrets and they both seem to lose their interpersonal connection. One day when Kate feels unwell and lonely she finally asks Edith:

"Why don't we have the talks we used to Edie?" [...] "We used to have some lovely talks Edie." "Maybe we've got past talkin'." "What do you mean by that?" "Well things is different now Kate." "If you're referring to the fact that you've come to an understandin' with Mr Raunce that's no reason to tell me nothing about you, or about him for that matter, is it?" Edith laughed at this. "OK dear," she said, "you win. You go on asking then?" "You are going to be married Edie?" "We are that," Edith said, lying down full length. [...] "Thanks duck. And now we're like we used to be isn't that right?" "That's right." "I can't make out what came over me," Kate went on. "Honest I can't." "It's a hard bloody world." "Why Edith, I never thought to hear you swear of all people, I didn't that" "It's the truth Kate just the same." "You're right it is", Kate said.

(188-189)

Their profound connection helps them overcome difficult times and instances of miscommunication. Truthful hearty talk keeps them together and helps them to reduce existing misinformation. Their relationship determines the way the information is brought across and how it is to be understood (cf. Watzlawick's relationship aspect on pages 34 and 35). Their willingness to communicate establishes a psychological contact between Edith and Kate, which in turn establishes truthful and sincere communication.

In more general terms communication could be described as vessel a towards mutual understanding and interpersonal relations. “Dialogues [...] provide the necessary vehicle for expression” (Weatherhead 18). Without the willingness to express oneself and to communicate properly and successfully, people would live an imperfect life: there would be no shared laughter, no interpersonal cooperation, no mutual understanding. Human beings need each other as well as they need active communication. Søren Kierkegaard writes:

Freedom is constantly communicating (it will do no harm to take into account even the religious significance of this word); unfreedom becomes more and more shut-up and wants no communication. [...] In common speech we have an expression which is exceedingly suggestive. We say of a person that he will not come out with it. The shut-up is precisely the mute; the spoken word is precisely the saving thing, that which delivers from the mute abstraction of the shut-up. [...] For by speech is implied a communication.

(Kierkegaard 59)

Not only is the spoken word “the saving thing”, as Kierkegaard says, but it is our common language “more than anything else that reveals and validates [our] existence” (Walker 58). To exist in mutual understanding, to escape loneliness and live in freedom are goals of the personal development of most characters in *Loving*. Charley Raunce, for instance, finds his love in Edith and wants to leave Kinalty castle to return home to England, marry her and live together happily ever after (cf. *Loving* 225). In order to overcome the inner and outer exile, Raunce needs to overcome his alienation. A. Kingsley Weatherhead rightly states that it is love that can help escape the loneliness of the human soul: “Love, since it is the means of communion that does not comprise selfhood, is the means by which Green’s protagonists in general tend to deal with their alienation” (18). Kate, desperately searches for the safety net of love and affection, and finally finds a mate, even though he is no soul mate, in Paddy O’Connor. The love affair of Mrs Jack provides her with physical and psychological pleasure while being with her lover Captain Davenport. Likewise it also causes her psychologic instability with all her pangs of conscience. Mrs Welch loves her little nephew Albert, even though she can only express her love through worries and complaints, while drowning her anguish in alcohol. Miss Burch clearly thinks she has lost love forever, with the death of Mr Eldon, and vents her grievance when talking to Mrs Welch and Miss Swift. The same applies to Mrs Tennant. Her constant dissatisfaction is eased by expressing it. Alone the insecure

and introvert butler Albert seems to find no release. He is too shy to confess to his love for Edith and too distressed to stay at the castle when Edith falls for Charley Raunce. Albert leaves for the war and it is suggested that his life will not change for the better. The constant aspiration for human sympathy and the unshakeable need to live together in communion are portrayed openly by Green. Human imperfections become apparent through the characters' aimless conversations. Even though the novel possesses a certain fairytale allure, it appears to me very bleak and cheerless: war, threat of death, untrustworthiness and betrayal, miscommunication and problems of general understanding, class conflicts, struggle for identity, love confusions and love triangles, impairment of senses and alcoholism stand in stark contrast to true love, togetherness, happiness, mutual understanding and the power of the unspoken word.

The next chapter tackles the communicative situation on the level of action in the novel *Doting*. I will analyse to which extent the difficulties that threaten the success of the communication process are similar to those portrayed in *Loving*.

4.1.2 Communication problems in *Doting*

The communicative contact between the characters in *Doting* is comparable to the one portrayed in *Loving*, even though in general it is not quite as aimless. Just as in *Loving* the characters' exchange of information mostly helps to create distance, it rarely contributes to mutual understanding. The basic configuration of the two novels is quite similar, too. In *Loving* there are the servants who constitute a servant community: they all live under one roof, everyone has a different relationship aspects towards the others, and each of them has a specific task to fulfil within their community. In *Doting* there is the nuclear family unit, consisting of Arthur and Diana Middleton and their son Peter. This small key unit is enlarged by three other characters: Annabel Paynton, Claire Belaine and Charles Addinsell. These three soon gain a greater importance within the nuclear family than might be considered beneficial. All of the protagonists in *Loving* and *Doting* meet on a regular basis, and while some characters who once had a loose connection start to bond, others who once had a close connection start to grow apart: the family members in *Doting* steadily seem to grow apart during the fast paced post-war era (especially Arthur and Diana Middleton), and the servant community in *Loving* partly seems to grow together within the dreadful war era (especially Charley Raunce and Edith).

The events in *Doting* are portrayed mostly by dialogue, or more precisely, to a great extent by scenes of dialogue between only two characters respectively. A few exceptions are made especially at the beginning and end of the novel, when the whole cast of characters meets in a restaurant. Through the rest of the story, however, the most frequent sequences of dialogue unfold between Arthur and his wife Diana and between Arthur and his 'object of desire' – Annabel. These face to face conversations are not as confusing as most of the two-person conversations in *Loving*, but they are often more trivial by comparison. The characters seem to be quite self-obsessed, very preoccupied with their own thoughts. The communicational contact between Arthur and his wife Diana is mainly for a referential (i.e., informative) and phatic (i.e., social contact) purpose. Sometimes the emotive and conative (i.e., influencing) function do play a role, too. Most of these conversations are ordinary: conversations of a long-married couple against the backdrop of their daily routines. One example occurs late in the evening when Diana starts to enquire about Arthur's state of affairs, while he is reluctant to talk about it, especially at bed time.

At last she heard him coming, undress in the bathroom and then, almost before she knew it she lay so comfortable and warm, he was climbing cautiously in between the sheets.
 "Finished darling?" she murmured when he had settled. "All finished" he answered. There was a pause. "Asleep?" she asked in a low voice, without turning over towards him. "Not yet" he said. "So wonderful" she immediately went on "really wonderful to have Peter back! I'm afraid of burglars, alone in the house by daytime." "Stupid" he said. "I know, darling" she insisted. "But I can't help myself. You don't mind?" "Course not" he muttered, then yawned.

(19)

The conversation pattern of this interrogation is quite simple: question-answer-question-answer. Arthur is in no mood to talk and would rather like to sleep. Diana, by contrast, is too much awake to go to sleep. Her talkativeness makes her change the topic of her conversation too frequently, so that a proper communication cannot take place. Her speech contributions are neither orderly nor very engaging. Besides, this sort of conversation does not interest Arthur enough to come up with a more fruitful solution. Diana, in the end, is finally able to attract Arthur's attention by bringing Annabel into play, and yet he is too tired to stay awake much longer. Arthur demonstrates respect for his wife and holds a conversation he has no intention to last much longer. He is

cooperative but only to a certain extent. She however, is so preoccupied that she cannot hold back her thoughts and let her husband go to sleep.

The issue of the conversation's poor and repetitive quality/nature is also present when they try to engage in a more serious discussion during the day. The seriousness of the talk does not last very long and it is not very profound either:

"Yet, d'you really think we are making the best of our lives?" "Darling", he said "I'm doing all I can!" "I know", she agreed. "But couldn't you do something else?" "Such as?" he demanded, in a weak voice. "How can I tell?" she protested once more. He came over to sit on the arm of her chair. "Oh just nothing, I'm so bored," she repeated, almost in a whisper. "Di, you don't really mean all you've said?" "Yes darling, I do, but it doesn't matter, you're to pay no attention." "On the contrary," he protested "if that is so, then everything matters very much. What concerns me is your happiness, your welfare, my dear."

(134)

Diana does not know what to do with herself and Arthur is too busy to care thoroughly. He is concerned but does not know how to generally improve their situation. Diana is even more feeble-minded. She has much time at her hands to contemplate her life and still is not able to improve it. She identifies with the role of the mother who is responsible for keeping the family together and for providing a home for her husband and son. Her quite important question: "Yet, d'you really think we are making the best of our lives?" loses all significance when she is not able to carry the discussion further and nearly stifles it by saying: "it doesn't matter, you're to pay no attention". Diana's pitiful statement affects Arthur emotionally, he wants to resolve things. But Diana is not able to remain relevant nor informative with her speech contribution, so that the scene ends unresolved. Finding no possible solution in this particularly case is not only the effect of an unsuccessful discussion, but the result of blatant ignorance. None of them knows what to do or how to progress from where they are. In the end, as so many times before, Arthur and Diana derive comfort from going to bed early.

The situation between Arthur and Diana deteriorates drastically when middle-aged Arthur starts doting on other women, most notably the much younger Annabel Paynton. He hardly seems to realise that his relationship towards his wife is increasingly coming to pieces. Arthur has his own opinion about the difference between doting or loving a person, which is not shared by everyone. When he explains his theory to Annabel, she does object:

“Well you know, doting to me, is not loving.” “I don’t follow,” she said with a small frown. “To my mind love must include adoration of course, but if you just dote on a girl you don’t necessarily go so far as to love her. Loving goes deeper.” “Well,” she suggested “perhaps the same words could mean different things to men and women.” “Possibly,” he said. “Perhaps not.”

(50)

Doting, to Arthur, is not a very serious affair. It seems to be a kind of game, that he plays in order to escape his rather uneventful life, that passes by without many unexpected changes. His life is the life of the everyday, where nothing significant happens, where he can follow his daily routines without much distraction, with each and every day playing out very much like the one before. Most of the things that happen – or for that matter do *not* happen – in *Doting* are quite irrelevant, and yet the issue of irrelevancy is exactly what Henry Green wants us to scrutinise: “Irrelevancy means so much, it shows you what a person is and how he thinks, and conveys atmosphere in a way that is unconceivable [...]” (qtd. in Shepley 5). The atmosphere of irrelevancy is definitely predominant in *Doting* and gives the novel its special allure. Despite their seemingly dull everyday routines, the characters in *Doting* try none the less to savour life. They dote, drink and eat, go to night clubs, have mainly witless conversations followed by even more drinks.

The effects of Arthur’s doting attempts are not very fruitful. Annabel does not let him get much closer than a kiss. In spite of that, Diana’s jealousy is roused so severely that she starts an affair with Charles, which in turn puts Arthur in a disgruntled state of mind. The following scene between Arthur and Diana shows their mutual anger, frustration and jealousy which slowly dissolve into thin air, the moment they both find out that they are no longer seeing someone else:

“All I mean is,” her husband patiently explained “it must be an entirely different matter, my taking the girl out and a man like Charles to do so. I’m married, for one thing. Everyone knows I’m safe as houses. Whereas Charles, well, he’s just a voluptuary.” “What’s that, darling?” “Oh well, let it pass. I’m sorry I ever introduced them, now.” “You did! But how tiresomely stupid of you, Arthur. You should have known you’d lose her by so doing!” “You can’t lose what you haven’t got,” the husband objected. “We won’t go into that again. Not in this crowded place! Yet why are you still sorry?” “I am for little Ann, because Charles is the man he’s turned out to be.” “I see, Arthur. So you don’t meet Ann, now?” “No. And do you ever see Charles?” “No more, no more!” his wife wailed comically. At which they both laughed in a rather

shamefaced way at each other. "In spite of all your tricks I love you, darling," Mr. Middleton told his wife. "You're a wicked old romantic," she said, beaming back at him. "Enough of a one to put a spoke in your works every now and again." "Oh don't worry," she announced. "I haven't done with Charles yet, not by a long chalk!"

(148-149)

Arthur tries to play along the lines of cooperativeness. His speech acts are informative, he tries to avoid ambiguities, and his answers are relevant to Diana's enquiries. Nevertheless, he keeps telling lies whenever needed: "Everyone knows I'm safe as houses". Diana knows he is not to be trusted on this one and counters his lie with wilful neglect. To reconcile with his wife Arthur keeps lying and tells her that he does not meet Annabel anymore. He even reaches out to Diana with an honest confession of love. Diana, however, is more reluctant to cooperate. She accuses her husband of stupidity and refuses to have a detailed discussion in public. Both interlocutors violate against Grice's cooperative maxims, especially against the maxim of quality. Still they are able to communicate without much miscommunication because they know each other so well. Diana even calms down when she learns that Arthur no longer meets Annabel. She is content with her husband's love confession because deep inside her she knows that they both still love each other. Nonetheless, both of them are emotionally loaded with anger and jealousy and not capable to be reunited until their lies are cleared away. While Arthur is still infatuated with Annabel, Diana revengefully keeps dating Charles; Arthur's mind is clouded by his adoration for Annabel, and Diana is preoccupied with making Arthur jealous. Nevertheless, the communication between Arthur and Diana does not exhibit many instances of severe miscommunication; existing communicational problems can mostly be overcome. Odom fittingly summarises the couple's conversational technique:

[The] conversation still sharp and true-to-life, is full of innuendo, repetition, and obliquity, especially with Arthur and Diana, who have been married almost two decades. As married couples will, they communicate by references and implications that refer to mutual experiences. [...] When Diana protests, "But I saw your hand!" she refers to the compromising scene of Arthur's dabbling at the coffee stains on the skirtless Annabel. This refrain is repeated at crucial moments, such as those when Diana is losing to Arthur's logic, until it virtually becomes a leitmotif [...].

(133-134)

The accusation “But I saw you.”/“But I saw your hand!” (first time mentioned on page 77) is Diana’s advantage that touches on Arthur’s bad conscience. Particularly the Middletons, but also most of the other characters who only have to concentrate on one communicational partner, are able to make themselves understood and manage to hold a normal conversation. This stands in stark contrast to the communicative situation in *Loving* where successful conversations are less frequent.

Doting also portrays a few characters who are not allowed to speak for themselves; they are silenced characters who are not granted an own voice within the limits of the novel. Anthony Campbell and Terence Shone, are two of Annabel’s sweethearts to whom she refers to several times (cf. 23ff, 43ff, 63ff). Both characters do not utter a single word themselves. Typically, Annabel rephrases what either of them have said in particular situations – though neither makes an actual appearance in the novel. Campbell, for example, is a self-proclaimed poet who, as Annabel informs Arthur, is about to write “an anthology of love poetry he’s to call ‘Doting’” (50). Anthony Campbell has pronounced views on nearly everything but they are only available to us through Annabel’s translations: “But, Campbell says, only to mention things makes them grow bigger” (29); “Campbell says jazz is written for crowds and so mustn’t be heard if you’re one in the room” (51). Annabel is clearly fascinated by Campbell’s views otherwise she would not continuously tell Arthur about them. Campbell never quite fades into obscurity because Annabel speaks for him. Silence is generally perceived as an absence of sounds, in this case it is an absence of a character’s voice. Nigel Dennis argues that:

there is a poet named Campbell Anthony who, unlike his creator, thinks that it is romantic to be an artist. Like a ghost of the past, he appears occasionally to stir up nostalgic memories and arouse the mingled sympathy and irritation of other characters. Campbell never speaks directly to the reader – because he no longer has anything to say – but the other characters speak for him.

(86)

Campbell might not be allowed to speak himself since his voice is left outside the realm of the novel but his opinions are heard nevertheless. I do not agree with Dennis’ argument that Campbell is not granted a voice “because he no longer has anything to say”, he has to say quite a lot, considering all the instances when Annabel conjures up her memory of Campbell to Arthur. The character of Anthony Campbell is kept mysteriously removed maybe in order to leave room for secrecy. Silenced characters ,

writes Green, exhibit the potential to “mean different things to different readers at one and the same time” (*Surviving* 140).

The dialogue in *Doting* functions admirably when there are only two characters involved. Even though the characters are self-absorbed and notorious liars, they are able to take part in a cooperative conversation, contrary to most characters in *Loving*. But as the communication partners increase, the quality, quantity, relation and manner of the conversation decreases. The novel starts and ends with a conversation at a dinner table in a restaurant where at least two out of four (first scene) or six (last scene) people are always present. The last scene of the novel portrays the confused conversation between Arthur, Diana and Peter, his companion Annabel, her friend Claire Belaine and their acquaintance Charles Addinsell. All of the interlocutors are so absorbed by their own thoughts that they keep asking questions over questions with no answers from any other character in sight:

“How have you been?” Miss Belaine enquired of Charles. “Are you all right” the mother wished her son to tell her “We shall never get a waiter!” Arthur wailed. “Steady the Buffs,” Mr Addinsell said. “Di, you’ll feel a new woman once you’ve had a drink.” “Who’ll dance?” Miss Paynton demanded. “When does the wrestling start?” Peter wanted to be told. “This is a divine tune,” Miss Belaine assured Addinsell at the same time. And Mrs Middleton put her own view forward. “Why shouldn’t we just leave?” she asked. “Go? But nothing’s even begun yet!” her son protested. “It is his evening after all,” the father said.

(235-236)

Claire is preoccupied with her lover Charles, Charles with the women Claire and Diana, Diana with Charles, Arthur and her son Peter, Peter with the goings-on in the night club, Arthur with Diana and Annabel, and Annabel with Arthur. It is the theme of ‘doting’ that keeps all of them, except for Peter, emotionally obsessed with the ongoing affairs of other members of the group. No real conversation can be established because the psychological contact between the participants is typically onesided. While Claire enquires about Charles’ well-being, Charles cares for Diana’s, who in fact wishes to know how Peter is doing. None of the addressed conversational partner seems to bother much to respond to the question they are asked. The phatic function is completely amiss at this moment. Only Arthur, who himself is never addressed directly in this paragraph tries to engage with his wife in order to calm her. His engagement is also a quite selfish act because he does not want the evening to end in a catastrophe. Everyone is primarily

interested in his or her 'own conveniences', as Diana remarks to her son: "Oh, my dear!' Mrs Middleton answered. 'As you go on in life, I fear you'll find people come more and more only to consult their own convenience'" (240). This general statement does not explicitly include Diana herself in that mass of people, it is left open for Peter and the reader to decide. In the end, the lack of true interaction leaves the characters with unanswered questions and preoccupied minds. Despite their continuous consumption of alcoholic beverages and their occasional dances, through which the evening seems to get a bit jollier, it remains a disastrous event overall. The discourse of Green's characters even develops a semblance of the Kafkaesque. They are doomed to talk at cross purpose. Maurice Blanchot argues that:

the characters are not really interlocutors; speeches cannot really be exchanged, and though resemblant in surface meaning, they never have the same import or the same reality: some are words above words, words of judgement, of commandment, of authority or temptation; others are words of ruse, fight, deceit, which keep them from ever being reciprocated.

(qtd. in Chatman, *Story and Discourse* 178)

Personally I would not go as far as saying that *Doting's* "characters are not really interlocutors" because a simple conversation between any two characters in *Doting* is usually more efficient than many of the conversations in *Loving*; and yet I do not fail to see Blanchot's point. After all, not much is achieved by most conversations in *Loving* and *Doting*. It seems as if conversations are considered to be a tool to express one's own opinion, never mind if the conversational partner actually comprehends the intended message or overhears just what suits him- or herself in that particular moment. It is quite true that hardly anything can really be exchanged between the characters because they appear to think in or even inhabit different realities. It therefore comes as no surprise that Green in general denies closure. He is always in favour of multiple reading possibilities, each character offers not only one but many interpretations. Even the end of the novel is left vague, with a single conventional sentence pretending to sum up what lies ahead: "The next day they all went on very much the same" (252). Life will carry on as usual, the characters will follow their quotidian routines. Nothing too unusual or exciting is predicted, and yet there always remains a remote possibility for it.

Green's last two novels [*Nothing* and *Doting*], especially, play with notions of what is perceived and what passes by unnoticed, what is considered significant or insignificant, relevant or irrelevant: Green

provides the backdrop of the everyday with its potential for the event and its potential for boredom. The reader experiences the indeterminacy of the everyday throughout Green's fiction. In it nothing is seen to require particular emphasis. Everything is experienced indirectly.

(Shepley 256-257)

The uneventful everyday already offers multiple meanings and reading possibilities. The increase in various possibilities is enhanced even further by the high frequency of character's discourse. The representation of the characters' consciousness in both novels happens by a great extent through indirect character portrayal (i.e., mostly dialogues). As a consequence, all characters, just like normal human beings, somehow keep their enigmatic sphere. The narrator's rare comments do not explain why one character speaks or behaves in a certain way or why something happens the way it does. Nigel Dennis states that:

Doting is almost wholly conversation. One of its merits is that though no single character is described, each builds a lifelike portrait solely by speaking. To each of us certain ways of speech suggest certain shapes of flesh, which, as in a telephone conversation with a stranger, we automatically construct around the shapeless voice.

(87)

Green takes the liberty of leaving out long explanations: he uses "human conversation at yet another social level as a means of expressing despair and defeat" (Dennis 87) on the one side; and togetherness, adoration and love on the other. As readers we construct our own fictional world by reading and interpreting the novel for themselves. Henry Green as the author seems to inherit an absent presence, merely there to create the intrinsic merits of the text and leave much room for individual interpretations. In his interview with Terry Southern "The Art of Fiction" (1958) Green admitted that "if you are trying to write something which has a life of its own, which is alive, of course the author must keep completely out of the picture. [...] And if the novel *is* alive, of course the reader will be irritated by discrepancies – life, after all, is one discrepancy after another" (*Surviving* 244-5).

The issue of existing discrepancies of any kind lead me to my two last chapters: the fictional mediation between narrator (chapter 4.2) and narratee¹² and the nonfictional communication between author and reader (chapter 4.3).

¹² I will also refer to the intersecting level of communication (addressed on page 25 in footnote 7), hence address the reader in association with the narrator.

4.2 Level of fictional mediation (narrator-story-narratee)

Most narrative texts comprise an alternation of narrator's discourse – the diegetic representational mode of narrative description: narration and report of non-verbal events – and character's discourse – the mimetic representational mode of direct imitation: the narrative of all verbal events in the story¹³. The character's discourse was already discussed in chapter 4.1 (the level of action) and this chapter shall deal with the narrator's discourse (the level of fictional mediation). As already mentioned previously, the narrator is the fictional mediator who decides *what* is to be told, *how* it is to be told and *what is to be left out* (cf. pages 16 and 17). It is the role of the narrator to communicate explicitly with his or her fictional narratee by making comments, reporting events or describing scenes (i.e., diegesis). The narrator can also let the characters speak for themselves, thus he or she communicates implicitly and shows the action of the story with the help of the characters' direct speech acts (i.e., mimesis)¹⁴. The establishment of "communicative contact" between narrator and narratee is a complex but one-sided act: the narrator decides how to tell the story while the narratee/reader can only listen/read and observe.

The narrator in *Loving* and *Doting* is an evasive authorial (or heterodiegetic) narrator, who does not inhabit the story's world. Both *novels* are told by one narrative voice, a voice that is at the same time also the external focalizer whose narrative perspective dominates most of the text. In some situations, however, the narrative perspective switches to one of the characters, so that the narratee/reader is offered the individual perspective of one character (internal focalizer). The next two quotes are examples of switching narrative perspectives in *Loving* and *Doting* respectively:

Mrs. Welch moved over to perforated iron which formed a wall of the larder, advanced one eye to a hole and grimly watched. [...] What she saw afar was Kate and Edith with their backs to her in purple uniforms and caps the colour of a priest's cassock. They seemed to be waiting [...].

(*Loving* 46)

An hour or two later Mrs Middleton, who had lit the coal fire in her grate because it was chilly, waited in her double bed, waited for Arthur with the lights off. At last she heard him coming, undress in the

¹³ For a more precise classification of the terms consult section 2.2 on page 25 of this thesis.

¹⁴ For a detailed analysis of the terms mimesis and diegesis consult pages 14 and 15 of this thesis.

bathroom and then, almost before she knew it she lay so comfortable and warm, he was climbing cautiously in between the sheets.

(*Doting* 19)

The first sentence in each passage is told by the external focalizer who is also the main narrative voice. The second sentence however, is told by a personalised internal focalizer. Within this narrative perspective the narratee/reader gets to know what precisely Mrs Welch sees or Mrs Middleton hears. Hence, the narrative perspective of Mrs Welch or Mrs Middleton is revealed. Most characters, at least all main characters in both novels, have a personalised (internal) focalizer. The narrator in *Loving* is generally more prominent due to the fact that *Loving* exhibits more diegetic narration. *Doting* consist to a greater extent of mimetic narration. The typical chain of events in *Doting* is as follows: narrator introduces a scene, characters' dialogue takes place, narrator reports who says what, and finally brings the scene to an end. The next passage is an example of the narrator's introduction of a scene:

The next night Arthur Middleton took Miss Paynton to a restaurant they had never yet visited, here they ate, they danced, they drank, they danced and drank again until he told the girl he was not like her, no longer her age, that he must go home. He asked Ann back for another drink. She neither accepted nor refused the invitation, even when he'd given their driver his address. And, in the taxi, she let him kiss her with abandon.

(*Doting* 165)

The narrator simply reports previous events (just like an accumulation of facts), he or she does not comment on anything in particular. The particularities which further the understanding of the events, happen within the dialogue. The scene finally ends again with the report of the narrator: "Not so long after, he dropped the young lady home, with a polite ill-humor which she did nothing to dispel" (*Doting* 171). There are no descriptions, no ironic or suggestive comments; the narrator is merely revealing facts.

It comes as no surprise that Green has chosen a narrator who takes no part in the story. Henry Green's narrators are predominantly unobtrusive. As a result, the characters' "dialogue usurps functions such as characterization, plot development, setting and reverie, which are conventionally developed by narration" (Fraser 64). The dialogue within the novels is therefore the most influential parameter.

*Loving*¹⁵ is to a great extent a dialogue novel: characters are represented and the plot is advanced by talk between two or more personages. The narrator is always external: we are never told how a character feels or thinks, yet we know exactly: his feelings and thoughts and fears are all expressed, usually through his speech, sometimes by gesture or through imagery.

(Mac Phail 104)

The increasing amount of dialogue, from each of Green's later novels to the next, automatically leads to a devaluation of the narrator's magnificent descriptions¹⁶. The ensuing lack of descriptive scenes and the evasiveness of a diegetic narrative is calculated by the author and necessary to allow the dialogue to flourish. Undoubtedly, this progressional narrative detachment somehow creates an artfulness in itself and is part of Henry Green's development as a writer. One point of interest and the most important question I would like to tackle within the scopes of chapters 4.2 and 4.3 is: does a Henry-Green novel really improve by reducing narrative comments and descriptions to a minimum while elevating scenes of dialogue to extreme prominence? I am going to analyse the narrative and communicative situation on the fictional mediation and non-fictional level in *Loving* and *Doting* to be able to draw a personal conclusion.

As I have already mentioned before, Green's novels are quite resistant to a singular reading; they favour multiple readings. *Loving*, considered from a narrative perspective, is an interesting novel. It has at least two very different ways of being read: it can either be read as a kind of fairy tale or else as a realistic text. The fairytale enchantment begins at the very first sentence "Once upon a day an old butler called Eldon lay dying in his room attended by the head housemaid, Miss Agatha Burch" (*Loving* 1) and ends with the prognosticated happy ending of the loving couple "Over in England they were married and lived happily ever after" (*Loving* 225). Through this fairytale-like sentence structure the novel achieves an atmosphere full of promise and a circular flow. However, a realistic interpretation is equally within reach, if the reader is so inclined. The second and third paragraphs of the first page already bestow upon the narratee/reader a dark and unfavourable change. "One name he [Eldon] uttered over and over again, "Ellen."/The pointed windows of Mr Eldon's room were naked glass with no blinds or curtains. For this was in Eire where there is no blackout" (*Loving* 1). These two paragraphs paint the

¹⁵ The same argument, even to a greater extent, applies for *Doting*, too.

¹⁶ While *Loving* still portrays an abundance of descriptive scenes, *Doting's* are already reduced to a minimum.

quite opposite picture. “[No] blinds or curtains” are drawn, like it is practised procedure in many theatre performances in order to hide things away from the audience. The window glass, through which the observer is able to peek with clear vision, is portrayed as hard and “naked”. The sentences is a bit disturbing for readers because the narrator does not offer a real explanation for why there are no curtains – curtains are not required by black out practices in theatres but I as a reader would expect an Irish manor house to have curtains everywhere regardless. The realistic beginning starts out with the death of first butler Eldon and terminates with the possible death of new first butler Charley Raunce. Raunce’s ‘presumably last word’ is the name of his lover, too. The penultimate paragraph states: “‘Edie’ he [Raunce] appealed soft, probably not daring to move or speak too sharp for fear he might disturb all. Yet he used exactly that tone Mr Eldon had employed at the last when calling his Ellen. ‘Edie’ he moaned” (*Loving* 225). The fairytale resemblance of the text lends substance to the novel as a whole. MacDermott comments that: “The lyrical and fairytale quality of the novel is one of its most striking features. An impression of imaginative abundance and vividness is present, raised to an intensity of perception through skilful handling of the different elements of the novel” (172). *Loving* is a novel that thrives immensely on the narrator’s subtly sublime descriptions of people and surroundings. Alongside the communicative enigma, are the narrator’s various metaphorical devices: symbols and images. Kinalty Castle, the carefully chosen setting of the entire novel, might be the most prominent metaphorical device leaving room for speculations and contradictions. The castle offers a perfect setting to create this unrealistic dreamlike atmosphere in the novel:

This English-staffed castle, situated in neutral Ireland, is unaffected by the war which ravages in England. It seems to have some obscure symbolic implication, pervaded, as it is, with the sense of unreality and functionless remoteness. An archaic remnant of the past, the castle is a monument of conformity to customs and fashions that merely mimic natural vitality. It is a museum of false pretensions which, in its attempt to preserve a dead past, has become an empty shell of artful decoration.

(Holmesland 110)

It is indeed “a museum of false pretensions” – a token of a vigorous past which slowly but surely falls to pieces. The inside of the castle contains grand halls, most of them now lifeless with dustsheet-covered furniture and closed doors. The narrator addresses the castle’s immense grandeur and forlorn emptiness at several times. One time with a

specific prophecy: “For this house that had yet to be burned down, and in particular that greater part of it which remained closed, was a shadowless castle of treasure” (*Loving* 58). The narrator’s direct intervention with the specific prediction of the castle’s downfall is quite rare and seems abstruse at a second glance. The prediction “plays no role in the action and seems to have no communicating function but to be there purely for its outrageous absurdity” (Mac Phail 102). A great fire is never mentioned in the novel, neither is the forthcoming event of a burned down castle ever addressed again. But the castle’s grandeur is a repeated source of reference. Each room and each hall, posses an own atmosphere, form, colour and interior. When Raunce, for example, wants to go from one side of the castle to the other, he has to make “his way up to the Grand Staircase, [...] through the Long Gallery and past the Chapel [...] to a great sombre pair of doors which [divide] one part of this Castle from the other, [...] [the opened doors are entrances] into yet another world” (*Loving* 57). The narrator suggests openly that the characters are able to access different worlds depending on the room they are going to enter. Edith and Kate are two characters who appear to have different moods and different daydreams depending on the room they are in. Therefore Raunce is able to see, after finally having arrived at and opened the gold ballroom doors, Kate’s and Edith’s joyful dance. They are already drawn into another more colourful and joyful world:

They were wheeling wheeling in each other’s arms heedless at the far end where they had drawn up one of the white blinds. Above from a rather low ceiling five great chandeliers swept one after the other almost to the waxed parquet floor reflecting in their hundred thousand drops the single sparkle of distant day, again and again red velvet panelled walls, and two girls, minute in purple, dancing multiplied to eternity in these trembling pears of glass.

(*Loving* 58)

This short but vivid description¹⁷ of the two girls dancing in the ballroom contains quite a few metaphorical devices, implemented to be unravelled by the avid reader. Word and sound repetitions (e.g., wheeling wheeling, distant day), ambivalent symbols (e.g., white blinds, trembling pears of glass), colourful images (e.g., red velvet panelled walls), all of them offering various suggestions. In my opinion, this picturesque scene epitomises the sublime feeling of happiness. For once Kate and Edith are able to escape their daily routines and find themselves “wheeling in each other’s arms heedless [...] dancing

¹⁷ Fiona Mac Phail refers to this scene as one of impressive vision. For her, *Loving* is divided into “three basic elements: dialogue, description, often grotesque, and these few but impressive visions” (101).

multiplied to eternity". It is quite so that Green's applied "symbolism and imagery serve as objectification of the character's inner worlds" (Holmesland 109). Away from their dull reality, Kate and Edith are able to feel at ease, and are somehow able to free themselves from reality for a little while. They are in fact daydreaming. But the narrator already hints at the "trembling pearls of glass" which might augur ill. When Raunce starts to shout, they recognise him and all magic ends: the girls stop their joyous dance, Raunce switches off the melodious music and the ease of the moment is lost. After a rather unnecessary conversation with Raunce, the two girls finally "[make] their way back to the part that [is] inhabited, their day's work done" (*Loving* 60). What does the narrator want to suggest by saying "their day's work done"? The narrator definitely does not refer to the girls' daily chores which are still waiting for them to be accomplished back in the inhabited area of the castle. It remains for the reader to make up his or her mind.

One more "narrator-presented vision" (cf. Mac Phail 2) I would like to mention at this point is the scene where Kate and Edith discover the sleeping Paddy in his secluded and rather dirty saddleroom. The scene encapsulates one of the most wonderful transformations in terms of beauty and harmony:

What they saw was a saddleroom which dated back to the time when there had been guests out hunting from Kinalty. It was a place from which light was almost excluded now by cobwebs across its two windows and into which, with the door ajar, the shafted sun lay in a lengthened arch of blazing sovereigns. Over a corn bin on which he had packed last autumn's ferns lay Paddy snoring between these windows, a web strung from one lock of hair back onto the sill above and which rose and fell as he breathed. Caught in the reflection of spring sunlight this cobweb looked to be made of gold as did those others which by working long minutes spiders had drawn from spar to spar of the fern bedding on which his head rested. It might have been almost that O'Connor's dreams were held by hairs of gold binding his head beneath a vaulted roof on which the floor of cobbles reflected an old king's molten treasure from the bog.

(*Loving* 47-48)

The visible transformation of Paddy and his surrounding from dirty and cobwebby to golden and flooded with light is a feast for the reader's inner eye. The sunlight has the magical power to transform dust and cobwebs into something peaceful, golden and beautiful. Paddy is visibly changed, touched by the sun, into a golden kingly stature; and

yet he still remains the same old Irish lampman. It appears to be just a question of *how* he is seen – in sunlight or darkness.

The communicative power of the narrator in these dreamlike scenes is astonishing: everything that is narrated is purposely directed by the narrator in order for the narratee/reader to see and hear. That is to say, the novel relies heavily on narrative descriptions that strongly appeal to the eye on a visual level and sound melodiously to the ear on an acoustic level. And yet, the narrator does not appear as an active agent but merely comes across as nondescript observer that lends the reader his or her eyes and ears, to allow the reader to perceive. Perception and perspective play a very important role in the novel in general. Both scenes play with perception and perspective overtly and covertly. While Raunce sees Kate and Edith dance in the first scene, and Kate and Edith see Paddy sleep in the second scene, the narrative voice partly uses their angle of perception. It appears to be a mixture of external and internal focalization which can make the reader believe, he or she is the direct observer, the reader as the eye that sees and the ear that hears.

In each of these visions, the scene is prepared for by an observer, who, as it were, plays the role of the narrator. This is not done overtly, and the narration is not attributed to this character observing, for it continues objectively and externally, but the looking and the looker have been carefully placed. So much so that at the same time as the eye of an observer is suggested, like the narrator spying on a scene and relating what supposedly takes place – and so heightening the vividness and illusion of the scene – the reader also finds himself in the place of the narrator-observer. In other words, the narrator is present yet eliminated, and the impression given is that the reader eyes, and hears, the scene directly.

(Mac Phail 109)

These two dreamlike scenes do not only have a similar narrative structure but also a common agent: the sun as transformer. Anything that is touched by sunlight becomes harmonious and takes on energetic and positive properties: tedious routines and stagnation give way to happiness and eternity (ballroom scene) while gloominess and dirtiness turn into power and beauty (saddlery room scene). The narrator makes sure that the narratee/reader realises that the sun is indeed a powerful agent, which however does not offer much continuity. The minute it disappears or is threatened by disturbing external factors, the light and the dreamlike vision fade. Despite these conformities both

scenes also convey important contrasting images: the joyous movement and melodious sounds of the ballroom scene versus the peaceful stasis and 'golden' tranquility of the saddlery scene. With all their similarities and contrasts, both scenes seem to complement each other perfectly.

Doting does not exhibit any dreamlike vision but a few instances in which the narrator describes the actions of the characters in great detail. One of these instances is the after dinner scene of Arthur and Annabel at the Middleton's residence during which Arthur kisses Annabel and – in such a heated atmosphere – accidentally pours coffee on Annabel's skirt. The scene is described in great detail, each movement is captured by the narrator. The whole incidence lasts only a few minutes but the detailed description prolongs it and lets it appear as a filmic montage¹⁸ in slow motion:

He was seated beside the girl but rather too far off. Also this trolley, between the two of them and that fire, was hard by his knees. It seemed he could not move over easily. So he went on pulling, and, as she tilted towards him, he put his far hand round her chin to turn this in his direction. She rubbed this chin against his palm. Then she gently subsided on the man's shoulder, they kissed. [...] Then, probably because he was uncomfortable, for by the looks of it he had too far to reach to get at her, he dropped the far hand under her legs to lift these over his knees. He drew them unresisting to him, but must have forgotten the trolley. For the slow sweep he was imposing on her legs engaged her feet with that trolley and the coffee pot came over onto both.

(*Doting* 75)

The whole passage seems to be reduced to pure movement – the movement of two people with an undeniable attraction between them. Emotional proximity is shown by the narrator also through the choice of words. The deictic demonstrative pronouns 'this/these' and 'that/those' in this paragraph especially rose to my attention. In the paragraph it could be argued that there are the following deictic demonstrative pronouns: this trolley, that fire, this chin, these legs and that trolley. While 'this and these' express emotional involvement or psychological proximity in relation to referent, place and time; 'that and those', on the contrary, convey emotional or psychological distance. 'This chin'

¹⁸ For a more precise analysis of instances of filmic montage in the novels of Henry Green refer to Oddvar Holmesland's book *Henry Green's Novels*. One of Holmesland's main themes in his book is the filmic montage in Green's novels. In his book Holmesland states that: "[m]ontage is used in order to produce a sense of sensuous or affective immediacy between scene and reader" (Holmesland 105). He analyses in great detail specific examples of Green's texts.

and 'these legs' express Arthur's emotional involvement to Annabel, her chin and legs are near and dear to him and the narrator lets the reader know this fact by using the deictic demonstrative pronouns. 'This trolley' is, at the beginning of the paragraph, in close proximity to the two characters and the narrator, by using the deictic demonstrative pronoun 'this', ensures that the trolley is a primary topic of interest (note: the narrator could have remained more neutral by just saying: the trolley). 'That fire' however is further away from the two characters and also only a secondary concern of the narrator. 'That fire' merely functions as romantic element in the scene and corresponds to 'this trolley'. 'This trolley' functions as one of the narrator's main narrative elements and therefore should also attract the attention of the reader. In the end it is 'this trolley' that gains a major role in the outcome of Arthur and Annabel's rather disastrous evening. 'That trolley' as it is called at the end of the paragraph, that trolley is the reason why the coffee is spilled on Annabel's skirt and therefore also the reason why the mood turns. 'This trolley' changes into 'the trolley' and finally into 'that trolley'. For Arthur and Annabel 'this trolley' was a token that added to their evening's comfort because it stood right near them in case anyone wanted another cup of coffee. 'That trolley', however, is that stupid thing on wheels which brings evil upon them. The narrator communicates this changing of events by changing the deictic demonstrative pronouns. Of course, this interpretation is only one way of reading this scene. However, it is definitely safe to say, that on account of that trolley, nothing more happened at that evening, except for a short hanky-panky, to the chagrin of Arthur.

The coffee accident is only the start of an ensuing skilful description. Even though the actions as such are not out of the ordinary, the rapid succession of events and actions ensure the scene's vividness and vitality. In the passages following the coffee accident everything that happens happens in a quick succession and gains a major importance for proceeding events. Not only are Arthur and Annabel caught by Diana in a rather awkward situation: Arthur is kneeling at Annabel's side while she is in the Middleton's bedroom, rubbing a coffee stain off her skirt; Diana also informs Arthur that she and their son have been in a car accident and that Peter is in the hospital. The sentences of this incident are either quite short or neatly partitioned by commas:

It was to [the basin] that Miss Paynton ran. Turning the hot tap on, she zipped off her skirt, and stood with her fat legs starting out of lace knickers. 'Here, let me,' he said, and knelt at her side. She picked the handkerchief out of his breast pocket, drenched it in that basin, and

then, putting her hand inside the skirt she had discarded, she began to rub at the stain. And it was at this moment Diana entered. She stood at the door with a completely expressionless face. 'Arthur,' she said 'when you've done, could you come outside a minute.' After one scared glance, Annabel went on rubbing. Mr Middleton left the bedroom immediately, closing the door behind him. 'What on earth do you think you are doing?' she demanded of her husband in a low voice, then went on. 'It's about Peter,' and she seemed to choke. 'A taxi smash. He's in hospital, Arthur! On the way to that beastly train!' 'Hospital? Taxi smash? Why didn't you tell me?'

(*Doting* 76)

All actions succeed one another hastily, everything happens in quick succession. The events up to the coffee accident are portrayed like a filmic montage in slow motion where the romantic flair soothes the atmosphere. The events following the coffee accident are doomed to fail, each action is haunted by guilt. This feeling of guilt even increases when Diana enters the scene. Interestingly enough, the narrator does not change the technique: the report of the events is in both parts very detailed. Most sentences are either short or partitioned by a comma, the amount of movement is quite similar, too. It is the expressionistic setting, the different actions of the characters and the narrator's choice of words that convey the different atmospheres.

While *Doting's* narrative descriptions are mostly reduced to a minimum, *Loving* still features plenty of them. Despite *Loving's* manifold narrative descriptions, direct descriptions of subjects or objects are very limited. The narrator mostly hints at things, applying metaphorical devices (similes, images, comparisons) in order to describe. Edith's skin, for example, is compared to a flower: "her detached skin shone like the flower of white lilac under leaves" (*Loving* 19), and her eyes catch the light "like plums dipped in cold water" (*Loving* 9). These subtly placed similes leave the reader with an intriguing uncertainty and yet just enough details to obtain a vivid picture. Human nature is often compared to natural phenomena in Henry Green's novels, especially in *Loving*. Next to all these nature images, there are a lot of colour¹⁹ and animal symbols, too. The narrator applies these symbols ingeniously and implicitly throughout the whole novel. Badger the dog, for example, seems to be digging out various secrets, literally and figuratively. The hound digs up the buried peacock carcass and presents it to Raunce just

¹⁹ Also see Rod Mengham's book *The Idiom of Time* (9-41) and Barbara Davidson's article "The World of *Loving*" (67-68) which survey the issue of colour symbols quite interestingly.

when he declares his love to Edith (*Loving* 106), which could be regarded as a bad omen or merely coincidence. The dog is also primarily around Mrs Jack, who hides one of the greatest secret. When Badger and Mrs Jack are together she mentions the dog's stupidity and disobedience several times (e.g., *Loving* 21, 22, 68) and yet the dog might know more than she does. The doves are generally regarded as birds of the goddess Venus. They allegorise the cycle of life and stand for love, vivacity, habitualness, and procreation. In *Loving* the doves are not only peacefully living animals, they live in a dovecote outside the manor in a "careful reproduction of the leaning tower of Pisa on a small scale" (*Loving* 50), where they are "quarrelling, murdering and making love again" (*Loving* 53). As soon as their population gets too big, the older ones edge the younger ones out of the nest. The children are mesmerised by the bustling activities of the birds in the dovecote and astonished by their cruelty. The most prominent leitmotif in the novel is the peacock. The peacocks live together with Paddy in the saddleroom where they are "sheltered in winter, nested in spring, and where they died of natural causes at the end" (*Loving* 48). The prideful peacock's cries are warning signs. The cries sound rather shrill, haunting and heavy-hearted. The peacocks seem to see everything that is going on outside and cry out pointedly in precarious situations: "Then there was a real outcry from the peacocks. Kate slipped out of bed to look. She saw Mrs Jack walking down the drive with Captain Davenport who was pushing his bike" (*Loving* 36). The "peacocks seem to serve as warning heralds. Their shrieks seek to draw the girls' attention to some ambiguous threat which they, at this stage, disregard" (Holmesland 132)²⁰. In this particular situation the peacocks call attention to the tempestuous relationship between Mrs Jack and Captain Davenport. Male peacocks, in general, are regarded as very beautiful creatures with ravishing coloured plumage. When the male peacock fans its long upper tail he exhibits a host of multicoloured eye-shaped feathers. In Greek mythology these eye-shaped feathers are regarded as Argus eyes²¹ as Ovid describes in the *liber primus* of his *Methamorphoseom* (50). Henry Green utilises the Argus eyes and hands the peacock (with its one hundred eyes at free disposal) the role of the 'warning heralds', the main observing eye. After all, the eye plays a very important

²⁰ Oddvar Holmesland addresses the peacock's function explicitly in his book *A Critical Introduction to Henry Green's Novels* (130-138).

²¹ Argus was a "monster with a hundred eyes, killed by Hermes. After his death he turned into a peacock, or, according to a different version of the legend, Hera took his eyes to form part of the peacock's tail." (*Oxford* 42)

role in the whole novel: “From the beginning the eye of the reader is solicited: what is seen is noteworthy” (Mac Phail 103). The absence of blinds or curtains in Mr Eldon’s room (cf. *Loving* 1), for example, is one of the very first evidences. Kinalty Castle appears to be a realisation of Jeremy Bentham’s panopticon as Michel Foucault understands it (cf. 56 ff.): everyone observes everyone and everything at all times. There is nothing that goes by unnoticed. The “eye is directed, as verbs of perception accumulate: the characters look, eye, peer, watch, squint, glare, peek, wink, leer and spy, etc. Often they are seen in the act of seeing: spying is an important occupation, knowledge is power” (Mac Phail 103). Even in the act of not seeing, the eye plays an important role. When Moira, Evelyn, Albert and Edith play ‘Blind man’s buff’, they use a silk scarf embroidered with the words “I love you I love you” (*Loving* 108) for covering their eyes. Love-blind Albert wears the ‘I love you’ scarf and blindly gets hold of Edith. Edith, however, does not reciprocate Albert’s feelings. While Raunce eagerly watches Albert and Edith, Albert solely looks at Edith, and Edith has only eyes for Raunce: Edith “had raised a hand to her eyes as though to lift the scarf but she let her arm drop and faced [Raunce] when he spoke, blind as any statue” (*Loving* 111). Green creates an atmosphere full of suspense where the reader ‘sees’ one character seeing or even spying on another character (cf. Mac Phail 103). The alert eyes seem to be everywhere, everyone observes everyone and everything at all times.

Up to this point I have paid only limited attention to the narrator’s degree of reliability or correspondingly unreliability. Direct and indirect manipulation of the story’s events and existents through the narrator’s representation of speech and thought processes is present in *Loving* and *Doting*. The narrator in both novels does not evaluate much but simply reports events and sometimes interprets certain situations. Unsurprisingly, both narrators are ‘underreporting’; as a result any text alteration, shift or turn is caused by paralipsis. In other words, both narrators are partly unreliable on account of the high degree of withheld information; they simply do not report enough of what is happening. Henry Green once said: “The future function of narrative prose is not to be clear” (“The English Novel of the Future” 22). One example of the narrator’s direct vagueness in *Loving* occurs when Edith asks Charley an ambiguous question when they are finally able to spend some time alone together:

“Oh Edie,” he gasped moving forward. The room had grown immeasurably dark from the storm massed outside. Their two bodies flowed into one as he put his arms about her. The shape they made was crowned with his head, on top of a white sharp curved neck, dominating and cruel over the blue that was her mass of hair through which her lips sucked at him warm and heady. / “Edie,” he muttered breaking away only to drive his face down into hers once more. But he was pressing her back into a bow shape. “Edie”, he called again. / With a violent shove and twist she pushed him off. As she wiped her mouth on the back of a hand she remarked as though wondering, “You aren’t like this first thing are you?” / *This must have been a reference to the fact that* when she called him with a cup of tea in the mornings he never kissed her then as he lay in bed. *Or he must have understood it as such* because, standing as he was like he had been drained of blood, he actually moaned. “Why,” he said, “that wouldn’t be right.”

(*Loving* 197, my italics)

The narrator starts to build up the atmosphere by merely reporting events: he or she describes the physical movements of the characters and the appearance of the room where the action takes place. The narrator’s metaphorical description ends the moment Edith breaks away from the metaphorical embrace and utters an ambiguous question: “You aren’t like this first thing are you?” This question does not seem to make any sense at first glance and is therefore, immediately interpreted by the narrator: “This must have been a reference to the fact that [...]. Or he must have understood it as such [...].” At this particular point, the narrator directly intervenes in the story’s events. Remarkable, too, is the fact that the narrator directly leads the narratee/reader into a specific direction. Moreover, the narrator does not only offer a possible interpretation, it also seems quite plausible. It comes across as if the narrator were trying to help the narratee/reader to make more sense of what is being told. On the other hand the narrator stays just vague enough for the reader to draw his or her own conclusions. All these speculations could also be regarded as “a refusal to assume entire responsibility for the scene, [the narrator] is in the process of stepping down and handing over the scene to a character” (Mac Phail 105). The report primarily does not seem to be false and yet, it is incomplete and interpreted. Edith’s utterance is quite far fetched to be understood completely without further explanation. It remains unclear what exactly Edith wanted to communicate and why exactly she behaved reproachfully during an otherwise harmonious moment with her lover. Interestingly enough, the narrator chooses the quite decisive modal verb ‘must’ for a suggestion: “This *must* have been a reference to [...].” while ‘could’ would emphasise the speculative nature further and therefore might have

been more appropriate for making a suggestion. But this is in the eye of the beholder. Or was it in the end no suggestion but an attempted deception to put an idea into the narratee's/reader's mind? Mengham notes critically that: "In a sense, the textuality of *Loving* is that of one who neither sees nor hears, of a reader who is frequently 'in the dark'; it is a novel deprived of all regulatory functions, courting the disaster of unreadability, of unacceptability because it is too 'subtle'" (Mengham 155-156). For Mengham *Loving's* language is too subtle; for me as a reader it has just about the right amount of subtlety. The narrator uses just enough diegesis and mimesis to transmit the story effectively. In *Doting*, I may have to agree with Mengham, there could have been a bit more narrative impact. Charles McGrath comments on this matter as follows: "Green's novels aren't really narrated at all – they simply unfold, just the way life does; they go with the flow" (3). I think, if Green would have read this, he would have been thoroughly satisfied with his achievement.

In the next chapter I will process some of Green's intentions and aims in writing fiction and a few reader responses to his writing. I will also address some communication problems while reading a Green novel and finally state my opinion on the question: does a Henry-Green novel really improve by reducing narrative comments and descriptions to a minimum while lifting scenes of dialogue to their extremes?

4.3 Level of nonfictional communication (author-text-reader)

Nonfictional communication comprises the extratextual level of communication between author and reader; their communication basis is the written text²². The author conveys ideas and attitudes, shares information and concepts or 'simply' tries to entertain the reader. The reader strives to decode the author's messages in order to get some closure, understanding and meaning. Is the information given in the text plenty and valuable, the reader's interpretation will be more accurate; is the information the reader gets, on the other hand, far from complete or intentionally confusing, the interpretation will be more individual and versatile and it will also offer more room for communication difficulties and miscommunication. Since Henry Green favours ambiguities and entanglements of the plot, the reader of his novels is forced to draw his or her own conclusions and make use of his or her imagination very frequently. "The work of art must [...] be re-created in the creative imagination of the reader" Green once

²² For a more precise classification of nonfictional communication consult page 24 of this thesis.

said in “The English Novel of the Future” (23). An alert reader is likely to find something new in the text, each time he or she reads it. Moreover, multiple readings are helpful to stimulate the reader’s creative imagination. The number of details the reader is able to ‘decipher’ relates directly to the quality of the reading experience and hence the communication between author, text and reader as a whole. If a text appeals to its readers, the author has succeeded in meeting the readers’ communicational factors: cohesion and coherence are two of the most important of these factors, for readers to understand a text. The communication between author and reader in a Henry-Green novel is unobtrusive, which makes the communication process as such more complicated. Green himself once commented on his affinity for vagueness in a letter to a friend as follows: “you know me sufficiently by now to know how incapable I am to express anything directly” (qtd. in Shepley 6). Incapability or pure intention, be that as it may, it is without doubt that nebulosity is one of Green’s greatest idiosyncrasy. In “A Novelist to His Readers: I” he stated additionally that: “the writer [...] has no business with the story he is writing” (*Surviving* 139)²³. The multiplicity of layers and meanings a text inherits is likely to be reduced by assigning an author and a single interpretation to a text. Green does not support such limitations on the text; there is no ultimate meaning but a multitude of readings and meanings. The writer is there to interrogate the world with the help of his or her text rather than to seek to explain it. Green once commented on a writer’s challenges as follows:

The main difficulty before the writer is to fire the reader’s enthusiasm with what he is reading sufficiently, first to catch his attention, secondly, to make him read each word as if he were not asleep, and finally to create a work of art – that is, something living which isn’t – between the author and reader in a work which, while non-representational, will be convincing and alive.

(“The English Novel of the Future” 23)

To intrigue the reader with the help of the novel and to create a connection between author and reader with a work of art that is “convincing and alive” are rather bold claims and quite ambitious aims to achieve. Green even ventures one step further: “[t]he reader of a novel somehow or other must be encouraged by the writer to extend his imagination over the whole of all the questions that have been asked in life and can never be

²³ This claim correlates with Roland Barthes’ essay “The Death of the Author” (1967) in which he claims that “the death of the author is the birth of the reader”(55). Barthes and Green both argue that the writer/author is not directly related to the text he or she writes. It is rather the reader who gives meaning to the text.

answered" ("The English Novel of the Future" 24). Green does not only strive for a text that seems alive and a fictional world that can be shared by writer and reader, he furthermore wants to create art that demands a reader willing to overcome boundaries and to think independently. "Although there is no answer and all meanings are tentative, as Green says, the reader, if he will "extend his imagination" can, by apprehending some of the unasked, as well as unanswered, questions, create his own image of the mysteriously variable truth" (Fraser 102). Green strives for art that can "live in people who are alive" (*Surviving* 136) and that leaves the reader much scope for development. In *A Reading of Henry Green* Weatherhead comments on Green's elusive writing quality in the following way:

In his dialogue the author abides most carefully by the laws of the game he has chosen to play. And thus without stage directions or even implicit methods of telling us *exactly* how we should read this speech or that one, the fear, anger, and joy of the characters are communicated.

(90)

Green's chosen play is the play of vagueness and indirect communication – Green therefore never tells his readers *exactly* how to read a passage. Thus, potential authorial intentions can only be recognised if the reader is willing and able to work with the text. Authorial intent and the reader's response should not be mutually exclusive but a joint venture that aims for new dimensions. Green's main interest lies in the unspoken communication between novelist and reader (cf. *Surviving* 140ff.). The literary work thereby functions as a bridge which in the best case is shared by writer and reader. A "literary work [is] a mode of speech" (Holmesland 22); and the novel can be regarded as:

a medium of direct communication with the reader. The reader confronts a fragmented, contradictory world contrived in accordance with a Modernist conception of reality. To the poetic sensibility, however, a sense of unification and purpose can be found in the midst of darkness and fragmentation. As Green points out, "The truth is, these times are an absolute gift to the writer. Everything is breaking up. A seed can lodge or sprout in any crack or fissure"²⁴. Green's convictions 'lodge' and 'sprout' in his arrangement of scenes and images. They are not fully transmitted in terms of a traditional narrative line or plot. Meaning arises through the reader's response to the 'life' of the entire novel.

(Holmesland 25-26)

²⁴ Henry Green, letter to Rosamund Lehmann, quoted in Lehmann, 'An Absolute Gift', *The Times Literary Supplement*, 6. Aug 1954, p. xli.

The imaginative participation of the reader is vital in a Henry-Green novel. Direct authorial commentary is rare and not appreciated by the author. The transmission of meaning takes place indirectly by means of carefully chosen words in correspondingly carefully chosen contexts. Meaning is revealed only subtly and bit by bit. In “A Novelist to His Readers: I” Green comments on his most important tools: “[the] fascination in words is that by themselves they can mean almost anything [...]. It is the context in which they lie that alone gives them life. They should be used as painters use colour, to give tone” (*Surviving* 141). This vividness and playfulness of language use in Green’s novels is also echoed by James Wood: “Speech in Green is both real and magical, observed and invented, a report and a dance” (53). Wood obviously pays his tribute to Green’s unique writing technique, but also acknowledges the existence of difficulties:

On the page he removed those vulgar spoors of presence whereby authors communicate themselves to readers: he never internalizes his characters’ thoughts, hardly ever explains a character’s motive, and avoids the authorial adverb, which so often helpfully flags a character’s emotion to readers (“She said, grandiloquently”). He can be a difficult writer, is a scrambler of syntax, and in many ways is the last English Modernist novelist: his best-known novel, *Loving*, was published in 1945, after which English literary Modernism essentially expired.

(50)

Wood’s critique appears to be as ‘ambivalent’ as Henry Green the writer might have been: “a difficult writer”, “a scrambler of syntax” and yet “the last English Modernist novelist”. Green’s style possesses a flexibility which promotes a possibility for disorder and transgression – serious and far-reaching in consequence. The intentional lack of commas²⁵ and frequent omission of words emphasise this drifting quality and ensure that his texts are reread. Green’s texts reproduce with perfect precision the everyday conversations of ordinary people. Even so Green declares: “written dialogue is not like the real thing, and can never be. [...] Certainly there are pauses, hesitations, [endless repetition] and changes of direction which will never do in print” (*Surviving* 173). An air of carelessness is applied purposely by the author in order to draw attention to this imperfection. Misunderstanding plays a very important part in Green’s chosen

²⁵ A text example from *Loving* where the following sentence fills entire six lines in the book, and yet not a single comma is visible: “This was two tall Gothic windows and a pointed iron-studded door in a long wall of other similar doors and windows topped by battlements above which was set back another wall with a greater number of windows which in its turn was terraced into the last story that was almost all blind Gothic windows under a steep roof of slate” (*Loving* 46).

ordinariness. In the interview 'The Art of Fiction' (1958) Terry Southern asks Green about the reason he terms his novels as non-representational. Green answers:

'*Non-representational*' was meant to represent a picture which was not a photograph, nor a painting *on a photograph*, nor, in dialogue, a tape-recording. For instance, the very deaf, as I am, hear the most astounding things all round them which have not in fact been said. This enlivens my replies until, through mishearing, a new level of communication is reached. My characters misunderstand each other more than people do in real life, yet they do so less than I. Thus when writing, I 'represent' very closely what I see (and I'm not seeing so well now) and what I hear (which is little) but I say it is 'non-representational' because it is not necessarily what others see and hear.
(*Surviving* 239)

Green argues that the act of mishearing offers a chance for a 'new communicational level'. A 'new communicational level' that in turn offers various new possibilities. Unfortunately Green does not specify this thought any further. His obsession with dialogue however surfaces once again, and it is hardly surprising that over the years his writing style changes from carefully composed dialogue and description to almost bare dialogue. In the *London Magazine* interview in 1959, Alan Ross is eager to find out if Green's impairment influenced his conception of miscommunication in writing in any way:

Alan Ross: [...] Do you think that imperfect hearing has affected your view of character, and that the constant failure in communication between your characters is a consequence – not an entirely unhappy one – of it?

Henry Green: Can't tell you. When you get very deaf you retire into yourself. But as a writer it would be easy to pretend to hear, wouldn't it? I have as I think short-circuited communication but because I'm so deaf I don't know if I've done it well.

(Ross 24)

The answer Ross gets is typically Green-like: deliberately vague and ambiguous, a 'crabwise and oblique approach' (*Surviving* 237) indeed. Seemingly aimless conversations and common misunderstandings are just too intriguing to Green and never fail to present the much appreciated opportunity for manifold interpretations. Obscure meanings and ambiguities are his companions, in real life and in literature. In "A Novelist to his Readers: I" he says: "life is oblique in its impact on people. And if this is so, then how can the novelist communicate obliquely with his readers and yet retain

their interest, let alone do for them what I regard as indispensable, namely to quicken their unconscious imagination into life while reading?" (*Surviving* 140). Therefore Green has to capture life as it is, he has to make use of communication, he has to portray the everyday.

Everyday speech in particular plays an important role in Green's novels. There, the everyday is typically interesting and narcotically boring at the same time. It can be regarded as "the inexhaustible, irrecusable, constantly unfinished everyday that always escapes forms or structures" (Blanchot 239). Green seems to escape rigid 'forms and structures', because for him the everyday offers all he aims to transmit to his readers: "I consider that the novel should be concerned with the everyday mishaps of ordinary life" (qtd. in Shepley 13). However, the flip side of this is the determinacy of the everyday, "the everyday with its tedious, painful, and sordid side (the amorphous, the stagnant)" (Blanchot 239) that Green portrays in order to capture life. The characters' daily routines, their everyday conversations and the repetitiveness of their labour may seem to border on irrelevancy but for Green they offer opportunities, opportunities wrapped in words. "He is superb at showing dogged devotion to 'small' personal concerns in a world of 'large' events which seem to be passing the principals by and engaging their interest only as by-products of their personal problems" (Hall 79). The insignificant possesses the potential to be significant: dialogues, symbols, metaphors and images mostly capture the ordinary and thereby make it special²⁶. Irrelevant-seeming moments offer the possibility for miscellaneous meanings – Green consequently applies many literary images and what Nicholas Shepley has called "significant irrelevances" (226):

It is not the single, definable, anticipated event that deserves significance, but the uncertainty and unexpected nature of what might occur. The multiple resonances created by the anticipation of a certain moment, the unanticipated moments which follow and the subsequent absorption of those moments back into the flux of daily life hold more interest than the simpler satisfaction of expectations. It is impossible for nothing to happen.

(Shepley 232)

²⁶ Note, that this thesis does not address literary figures in great detail. Symbols, metaphors and images in Green's writing are referred to on page 75ff of this thesis. For a more detailed description please refer to Oddvar Holmesland and Keith Odom.

Shepley stresses Green's carefully applied 'significant irrelevances' that have great potential and play with the reader's expectations. With the help of literary devices Green is able 'to fire the reader's imagination' (cf. *Surviving* 140). Green's grasp of language use, his various plays on words and his inclination to avoid comments and explanations make his novels worthwhile. In my opinion Green is able to create life through his beautiful and unique descriptions as well as his dialogue. It is the perfect balance between the two that provides a unique reading experience. Unfortunately, he reduced his eloquent passages of descriptions to a minimum over the years. In order to prove his point Green states: "[and] do we know, in life, what other people are really like? I very much doubt it. We certainly do not know what other people are thinking and feeling. How then can the novelist be sure?" (*Surviving* 139). It is questions like these, that make him strive for less commentary and alternating units of dialogue, where each character gets the chance to reveal his or her viewpoint. Furthermore Green voices his doubts about commentaries, explanations and descriptions more clearly:

[...] then how is the reader's imagination to be fired? For a long time I thought this was best lit by very carefully arranged passages of description. But if I have come to hold, as I do now, that we learn almost everything in life from what is done after a great deal of talk, then it follows that I am beginning to have my doubts about the uses of description. No; communication between the novelist and his reader will tend to be more and more by dialogue, until in a few years' time someone will think up something better.

(*Surviving* 140)

His doubts turned into conviction, leaving him with no other choice than to write a novel almost exclusively composed of dialogue: "[what] I should like to read and what I am trying to write now, is a novel with an absolute minimum of descriptive passages in it [...]" (*The Hudson Review* 619). Green is talking about his last novel *Doting*. A novel which turned out to exhibit 97 percent direct and indirect speech scenes (cf. Stokes 75). And yet, even the sheer abandonment of any literary form except for dialogue, does not seem very satisfying in the end. Green admits: "[until] *Nothing* and *Doting* I tried to establish the mood of any scene by a few highly pointed descriptions. Since then I've

tried to keep everything down to bare dialogue and found it very difficult.”²⁷ (*Surviving* 240). Not only is a novel with an abundance of indirect and oblique dialogue more complex to write, it is also more difficult to read without explanations. Moreover, Green’s exceptional impressionistic prose style, one of his major strengths in writing, is unfortunately lost in the process. The disengagement of the author leave Green’s novels with a lack of diversity, a kind of richness that other Green novels like *Living* and *Loving* exhibit so perfectly. While keeping in mind that Green, over the years, tried to strive for perfection in writing a novel, this lack of diversity, to me, seems lamentable. Green’s descriptive paragraphs are vital to his fiction.

Loving with all its beautiful descriptions, its unique symbolism and its alternating units of the characters’ dialogue has been very well received by a moderately broad readership: “*Loving* is a supremely satisfying work. It is both the most purely comic of all Henry Green’s great novels and at the same time a full, rounded achievement: where so many works of humour remain one – plane amusements – flat and without depth – *Loving* is a true novel and a comic masterpiece” (Mac Phail 100). While *Loving* is regarded by many readers as Green’s best novel, *Doting* seems to border on an unsatisfying reading experience/communicative event. Using the example of Rabinowitz’ rules of reading²⁸ especially the rules of configuration and coherence stay unfulfilled; as a result, some readers’ expectations of the text are not met. At the end of his analysis Mengham points out: “there is almost nothing to read for in *Doting*” (214). The novel appears to lose more than it gains by concentrating on dialogue only. Mengham furthermore states that Green ‘stubbornly insists’ on the technique of writing unclear and oblique which however does not work very well: Green “clings to the heretical idea that the only means of achieving [his aim] is by the assurance of writing opaquely [...]” (211). While Rod Mengham names Green’s purification attempt a ‘heretical idea’, Edward Stokes even goes as far as claiming it an act close to sterilisation. Stokes accuses

²⁷ The question, why Green never gave a proper theatre play an honest try, somehow seems natural but an affirmative answer is quite out of reach. Henry Green wrote one three-act play that has not been staged so far (cf. *Surviving* 240). In his Paris Review interview Green comments “[and] to stop one’s asking why I don’t write *plays*, my answer is I’d rather have these sparks in black and white than liable to interpretation by actors and the producer of a piece” (*Surviving* 240). Nevertheless, *Nothing* and *Doting*’s high amount of dialogue make them suitable for theatre adaptation, even without Green’s consent. I did not find any evidence of a performance of *Doting*. *Nothing*, however, was performed in 2003 in the Glasgow Citizens Theatre and got a quite good review: “[the] *Nothing* cast feasts on dialogue. That dialogue is so deliciously studded with arch one-liners that it makes *Nothing* quite something!” (cf. CurtainUp).

²⁸ For a more precise classification of Rabinowitz’ rules of reading consult page 39 of this thesis.

Green of “excessive concentration on method” (66) – Green’s attempt to create life in the reader by relaying excessively on dialogue – in his last two novels *Nothing* (1950) and *Doting* (1952):

Nothing and *Doting* carried out this programme to the letter, without achieving the stated aim of “creating life in the reader” – or at least without achieving this object as fully as earlier novels which were not written in conformity to such a rigidly restrictive formula. In reading these novels one feels that Green has deliberately strapped himself into a strait-jacket... One feels that in these novels there is a disparity between the seriousness of the issues and the mannered superficiality of the treatment; one feels, too, that Green’s dialogue here is not sufficiently non-representational – it seems to be an exact record of the way such people talk. One can only conclude that Green’s attempt at purification of the novel, in the interests of greater reality, has resulted instead almost in sterilization. It was perhaps worth doing once... but, one feels, not worth doing twice.

(Stokes 68-69)

Stokes’ critique on Green’s last two novels is quite harsh and maybe a bit overstated. Nonetheless, it is one reader’s straightforward opinion and I dare say, he is not the only literary critic who thinks this way. Stokes’ expectations of a good literary work are obviously not met by Green’s last two novels. Mengham and Stokes’ critique on Green’s method are illustrative examples of adverse criticism. They partly belong to a readership that regards some of Green’s text as an unsatisfying reading event. No meaning can be assigned to the text, therefore no fusion/interaction between reader and text can take place. The expectations in the reading material remain unfulfilled, the reader’s acceptability is amiss. Rabinowitz’ rules of reading are not met. While Green’s critics argue that the narrator’s pronounced uncertainty and the author’s disengagement is overdone so that the reader is left too often single-handed, Green’s supporters like to think and interpret freely:

Some people dislike reading Henry Green because they are not used to supply colors and shapes out of their own experience – and even protest that Green is handing them a job which he should do himself. Similarly, readers whose imagination is excited only by straight plot and action resent an author who offers them scenes and incidents which *imply* a great many excitements but remain veiled and mysterious if the reader cannot figure them out. In this respect Henry Green is more like a poet than a novelist.

(Dennis 88)

It is a narrow path between too much, too little and quite right. It is equally difficult to say whether or not Green as author communicated too little with his readers. Some readers like his novels for the multiple possibilities of interpretation, other dislike them because they would like to understand the novel without being left so much in the dark, they want to understand Green's intentions as a writer. Keith Odom has an interesting opinion about the issue of understanding in a Henry-Green novel: "[t]he reader is not to understand Green; instead, he should admire all that 'cross-flickering', all those 'random beauties' or all these 'glancing reflections'" (28). That, for sure, is one way of understanding!

Henry Green is a writer who is very little known nowadays in the twenty-first century. That, without doubt, is also due to the fact that his literary output is compact – just nine novels and a memoir. Nevertheless, his novel *Loving* was listed by the *TIME Entertainment* magazine in 2005 on the list 'All-TIME 100 Novels'.

5. Conclusion

In each of his novels, Henry Green ventures out on a literary exploration of human relationships and of the struggles all his character endure in their efforts to find happiness. One of the greatest struggles is portrayed by the two novels which form the topic of this thesis: the longing for love and the fear of loneliness. In *Loving* love is portrayed as an illusion or charade – only capable to exist and survive in a fairy tale. In *Doting* love seems more real but only in combination with doting, an act of infatuation that only gives fleeting satisfaction. Throughout both novels, the characters' struggles are accentuated by their inability to communicate effectively: an analysis of these communication processes and their failures was the main purpose of this thesis.

On the level of action the communication between individual characters predominantly shows a lack of true interaction: everyone seems to be preoccupied most of the time and therefore unfit to show empathy or to establish psychological connections with their peers. Only in the rare cases where mutual understandings or interpersonal bonds exist, does successful communication finally seem possible. The rest of time the characters' incentive to talk is rooted more in a desire for mere self-expression rather than in a sincere interest for any further communication.

The level of fictional mediation relies heavily on a heterodiegetic narrative. Typically, Green's narrators are unobtrusive, taking no or hardly any part in the story. This heterodiegetic narrative situation, therefore, tends not to follow the four Gricean maxims: the narrator does not necessarily offer relevant, correct or purposeful information, nor foster a communication style marked by mutual appreciation and acceptance: full of alterations, shifts and turns, the narration is carefully composed to deceive its readers, thus forcing them to question everything and to think independently.

On the level of non-fictional communication the author seems to inhabit a presence marked by absence: merely there, as it were, to create the intrinsic merits of the text and to leave much room for individual interpretation. This authorial detachment helps to make Green's writing style so unique. It is a style that exhibits a variety of distinctive characteristics: his "unconventional syntax, unusual punctuation and handling of subordinate clauses, omission of articles or pronouns, surprising inversions and juxtapositions, substitution of adjectives for adverbs, [and] deliberate ellipsis" (Fraser 66), as well as the frequent omission of commas, articles and pronouns. Furthermore, Green's texts exhibit great vitality and diversity: the incongruities of his

plots, the characters' idiosyncratic speech acts, the stubborn refusal to yield explanations or closure, the colourful and vivid scenic descriptions, the use of symbols and the authentic depiction of characters are all integral parts of Green's artistic skill set. Finally, as Stokes emphasises, Green possesses the unique "ability to create an effect of livingness through incongruities" (104). These incongruities and ambiguities – an indirect form of communication – are integral parts of every Henry-Green text.

My main critique of Green's writing is its inherent obsession with dialogue at the cost of the rare but unique descriptions. It is arguable, that his novels were not improved by reducing narrative comments and descriptions to a minimum while lifting scenes of dialogue to extreme levels of prominence. In my opinion Green's novels lose some of their poetic richness by neglecting their author's talent for descriptive imagery.

Henry Green remained, throughout his literary career, true to his chosen creed that books should remain open to multiple interpretations and readings. Obliqueness and ambiguity are the principle components of the way his characters tell stories or make jokes; conversations take place, but in the end, many things remain unsaid. Henry Green's narrative is characteristically elusive: the narrators are not granted much say, they function merely as rapporteurs. According to Green, it is the narrator's and at length the author's task to set the reader's imagination to work in order to create life in the mind of the reader (cf. *Surviving* 140). His most commonly used method to achieve this task is to present written dialogue; his most useful quality is the wide semantic range of words: "we should use combinations of words with the widest possible range of meaning in dialogue. That is, dialogue should not be capable of only one meaning, or mood" (*Surviving* 138). Even though not much can be taken for granted in Green's writing, one thing is for sure: he deliberately creates ambiguities and obscurities in order to inspire the imagination of his readers. Green states: "For it is the tone in dialogue which carries the meaning as, in life, it is what is left unsaid which gives us food for thought" (*Surviving* 141). Green's texts, without doubt, offer a multiplicity of hermeneutic readings, and remain true to his belief that prose must remain ambiguous. This ambiguity makes multiple interpretations possible and, ultimately, this is what gives life to his words.

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*We shall not cease from exploration,
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.*
(T.S. Eliot "Little Gidding" in *Four Quartets*)

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Zusammenfassung

Die vorliegende Masterarbeit beschäftigt sich mit drei verschiedene Kommunikationseben in zwei Werken des englischen Autors Henry Green – *Loving* (1945) und *Doting* (1952).

Die Analyse basiert auf den narrativen Kommunikationseben die Manfred Jahn in seinem Buch *Narratology: A Guide to the Theory of Narrative* postuliert. Es werden folgende drei Kommunikationseben vorgestellt: 1. die Aktionsebene, welche die Kommunikation zwischen den Charakteren der Geschichte beinhaltet, 2. die fiktionale Diskursebene, die den Diskurs zwischen Erzähler und Zuhörer erfasst, und 3. die non-fiktionale Kommunikation, welche die Kommunikation zwischen Autor und Leser betrachtet. Das komplexe Zusammenspiel dieser drei Kommunikationsebenen ist ein wichtiger Bestandteil in den Werken des Schriftstellers Henry Green, der zwar heutzutage schon beinahe in Vergessenheit geraten ist, in Fachkreisen jedoch nach wie vor berüchtigt für seine stilistischen Eigenheiten ist: seine umfangreiche Bildsprache, seine zahlreichen Bildmontagen sowie seine ausgeklügelte Erzähltechnik.

Das Theoriekapitel bietet einen Überblick über den narratologischen Rahmen mit Hilfe welches Greens Texte analysiert und interpretiert werden. Der Theorieteil beschäftigt sich mit Erzählsituationen (Erzählfiguren und Fokalisierung), Erzählperspektiven (Rede, Bericht, Beschreibung, Kommentar), Erzählformen (innerer Monolog, erzählender Monolog, direkte Rede, indirekte Rede, etc.) und den drei verschiedenen Kommunikationsebenen (Aktionsebene, fiktionale Kommunikationsebene, non-fiktionale Kommunikationsebene). Mit Hilfe der erarbeiteten Kommunikationstheorie und den vorgestellten Kommunikationsmodellen von David K. Berlo, Roman O. Jakobson, Paul Watzlawick und Herbert Paul Grice wird erläutert, wie Kommunikation stattfindet und was erfolgreiche Kommunikation ermöglicht oder verhindert.

Der analytische Hauptteil dieser Masterarbeit untersucht detailliert die verschiedenen Kommunikationsebenen in Greens Texten *Loving* und *Doting*. Anhand dieser beiden Texte werden die drei verschiedenen Kommunikationseben im Detail analysiert: Aktionsebene (Charakter-Rede-Charakter), fiktionale Diskursebene (Erzähler-Geschichte-Zuhörer) und non-fiktionale Kommunikation (Autor-Text-Leser). Mein Schwerpunkt hierbei liegt bei folgenden Fragen: wie ist die Erzählung aufgebaut? Welche Arten des Erzählens werden für welche Ziele genutzt? Welche Schwierigkeiten gefährden den Erfolg des Kommunikationsprozesses? Wo und wie wird aus Kommunikation letztendlich Fehlkommunikation? Diese Masterarbeit thematisiert und konzentriert sich vorwiegend auf die narrativen Formen und Funktionen. Mein Hauptaugenmerk, um vorherrschende Fehlkommunikation aufzuzeigen, liegt demzufolge in der Aktionsebene – in der Kommunikation zwischen Greens Charakteren.

Curriculum vitae

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