

The Dialogical Traveler: A Reading of Semprun's *Le grand voyage*

Sally M. Silk
Oakland University

One of the most provocative debates in twentieth century literary studies concerns the dispersion and discontinuity of the subject. The idea that the modern travel narrative actually highlights the fragmentation of the textual subject will be explored here through a reading of excerpts from Jorge Semprun's *Le grand voyage*. As is the case with any novel about travel, its very plot is motivated by spatial displacement, thus emphasizing the constant movement of the subject.¹ In modern travel novels this displacement is frequently so complete that the subject in question must rely on other voices in the text for self-expression.

Images of travel on the level of plot can be easily apprehended. However, to find evidence of this displacement on the level of discourse, something is needed to grasp and trace through the development of the narrative. A useful concept is the notion of *voice*. Distinct from point of view because it is not a product of the represented world, voice is a purely textual phenomenon. Voices can be embodied in "fictional speakers, nonpersonified interpretative positions, or linguistic ideologies" and are realized during the reading process (McHale 273). Because of its emphasis on a contextualizing operation, this conception of voice is inextricably linked to the enunciative act itself and stands in opposition to *écriture*, the materiality of which invites repetition and interpretation independent of the enunciative situation. Modern travel literature communicates a subject's attempts to cultivate a voice, attempts that result in dispersed writing. The traveler's efforts at establishing a subject-centered voice will be explored, first in a discussion about the nature and importance of textual voices, and secondly in textual analyses of two passages from *Le grand voyage*.

Imagine a game of Scrabble with whole phrases printed on each

chip. You are expected to create verbal situations from a random selection of chips whose combination must win the approval of your fellow players. A card game similar to this is explained in François Flahault's *Jeu de Babel* in which players are expected to invent situations from statements written on their cards. Because these situations must be approved by the other players, the game essentially works on the premise that what one invents is determined by the persons for whom it is being invented. Flahault writes that "Jouer au BABEL, c'est transformer un énoncé (une carte) en énonciation; c'est lui donner des racines de sens en le reliant aux repères de sa pertinence" (136). Laden with social meaning (and not simply semantic or linguistic), the game foregrounds the social dimension of language.

Saussure's opposition of *parole* to *langue* also distinguished the social from the individual (Saussure 31), the former being "une manifestation actualisée de la faculté de langage" and the latter "un système virtuel qui ne s'actualise que dans et par la parole" (Ullman 16). However, this is not the relationship that Flahault calls into play in his game. The social side of language that is crucial in BABEL is that which takes into account the idea that words mean according to interlocutors' *positions*. *Parole* is therefore an inadequate concept insofar as it does not account for relations *between* speakers.

Michel Pêcheux's *Les Vérités de la Palice* rejects the traditional opposition of *langue* and *parole* (77–84), replacing the latter with what he significantly terms *processus discursif*.² Where *parole* represents an individual act, *processus discursif* is the name Pêcheux gives to a system in which different linguistic elements (words, expressions, phrases) within an ideology can have identical meanings (145–46). *Processus discursif* takes emphasis away from the act of individual expression and places it instead on the potential for shared expression between individuals which is the condition under which meaning is produced (146).³ This is the point around which Flahault's game operates. Ideological formations contain within themselves positions that determine what and how something can mean; consequently, meaning changes according to position in the ideological formation. BABEL forces a confrontation with the raw materials of language and communication.

Bakhtin/Medvedev criticized the Russian Formalists because they did not consider the raw materials in this light. Shklovsky's concept of "making strange" the habitual yielded nothing other than the negation of an old meaning rather than the production of the new,

and his article "Art as Technique" viewed art *only* as a device independent of a social dimension.⁴ It was believed that circumventing art's relationship to culture resulted in inadequate theories that made Formalism into simply one more way of examining art. Bakhtin expresses annoyance at this unpromising accumulation of theory:

Methodological discord in art scholarship can be overcome not by the creation of a new method, of one more method—a participant in the general struggle among methods which will exploit in its own way the factuality of art—but only by a systematic philosophical grounding of the fact and the uniqueness of art in the unity of human culture.⁵

The "grounding" of which Bakhtin speaks is his way of ensuring that meaning be sought after in the context of culture rather than in the isolation of a text. His emphasis on a "systematic" grounding from which he advocates scholarly practice recalls Pêcheux's replacement of *langue/parole* with a view of language as a relationship between two systems (*base linguistique/processus discursif*); studying language through this systematic approach forces language out from the isolation of formal epistemological analysis and into an arena that leads us to inquire into the conditions of production of discourse in any given situation.⁶ To do so means that the study of the constitution of a subject will utilize positions that the subject depends on for its existence.

John Frow also reacts against a solipsistic approach in *Marxism and Literary History*. Using Pêcheux's two systems, he explains that literary language can and should be analyzed through ideology. Noting that Bakhtin/Medvedev regarded the Formalists' conception of ideology as "an individual-subjective fact rather than as a social relation of discourse" (89), Frow uses this critique to develop the idea that discourse should be studied with an eye to power relations determining discourse from within the text rather than to a reality external to it.⁷ Interestingly enough, for Frow, viewing ideology as "a social relation of discourse" involves abandoning the characteristic epistemological correspondence between representation and its referential object because the assumptions that classical epistemology makes about the autonomy of objects conflict with the neo-materialist idea that "theoretical objects are constituted *within*

definite ideologies and discourses” (Hindess and Hirst 318).⁸ Frow’s emphasis on the reading process itself as an attempt to make the text mean rather than subject it to epistemological categories inherent in an external reality can be understood in his formulation of a theory of ideology:

that it theorize the category of subject not as the *origin* of utterance but as its *effect* . . . that it theorize the *multiple* and variable limits within which relations of *power* and knowledge are produced (61; my emphasis).

Ideology is therefore neither a cause nor a product of the relations between social structure and literary discourse, but rather a state that can be assigned to a text insofar as discursive activity represents tensions between voices among which resistance and domination do constant battle. Frow’s definition of ideology must necessarily lead to a rejection of classical epistemological unities since epistemology presupposes a hierarchy of knowledge that permits one to “get at” meaning from the outside. His own view of ideology leaves no room for “external” reality because it is comprised solely of positions that multiply and vary inside discourse.

These positions are the salient points of what Bakhtin calls dialogism, the essence of which is that acts of enunciation are interdependent. Dialogical activity revolves around the idea that language is dynamic as it represents:

No living word relates to its object in a *singular* way; between the word and its object, between the word and the speaking subject, there exists an elastic environment of other, alien words about the same object, the same theme, and this is an environment that it is often difficult to penetrate (*DI* 276).

This “elastic environment” is fertile ground for exploring Frow’s conception of ideology because together they invite us to watch as a subject attempts to cultivate a voice. To examine thus means to abandon the notion of reality as ultimate truth and in its place aver that reality is a product of the situation. Flahault’s *La parole intermédiaire* elaborates this with the idea that the place one attributes to another determines what one says. Anticipating or reacting to the *parole intermédiaire* is constitutive of discourse so that reality

becomes dependent on cognition rather than the converse. Pêcheux explains:

A partir du moment où le point de vue crée l'objet, toute notion et, aussi bien, tout concept apparaissent comme des fictions com-modes, des façons de parler qui, en multipliant les êtres fictifs et les mondes possibles, mettent en suspens *l'existence indépendante du réel comme extérieur au sujet* (154–5; emphasis Pêcheux).

What then is the relationship of fiction to the repositioning of the non-textual real? Fiction, Pêcheux argues, is the purest form of the subject's "méconnaissance" of the real (155). If the subject literally *mistakes* this reality, then meaning can be apprehended only in light of a *mistaking* subject. The constitution of meaning then depends on an imperfect subject. This contributes to an understanding of why Frow must indeed reject epistemology as a method to gain access to meaning and why Bakhtin must go beyond Formalism to erect his own theories.⁹

Common ground between Frow's conception of ideology and Bakhtin's theory of dialogism is marked by their belief that the subject's identity is determined through relations to other subjects. Meaning is a process rather than a static endpoint of analysis. Although they both emphasize context as an important criterion for literary analysis, they do, however, diverge in their opinions of the significance of a cultural context's capacities to inform textual analysis. Bakhtin's assumption that voices and positions pre-exist a text is countered by Frow's that context is limited by discourse itself, that the reading process organizes voices and positions, an activity that results only then in a contextualizing operation.¹⁰ It is not that Frow denies the importance of historicity for textual analysis, but rather that the contextualizing operation determined solely within discourse yields two things: 1) a relationship to previous texts, and 2) more importantly, a way to perceive, through reading, that a text's relationship to preexistent (i.e. intertextual) voices and positions is not only harmonious but discordant as well.

While Bakhtin offers Frow a theory of the dynamic nature of the dialogical word, Péchaux and Flahault complement this vision with a theoretical and technical inquiry respectively into the importance of positions within discourse.¹¹ In the present study, positions, and

consequently the social nature of form, are of utmost importance. The focus on dialogism also emphasizes that ideology, in Frow's sense of the word, be ever-present in the textual analyses undertaken here.

The premise on which this study is based is that the constitution of the subject is a result of the enunciative act, rather than the converse. This shall be explored in *Le grand voyage*, the fictionalized account of Semprun's arrest and deportation by train to Buchenwald in 1944. As he tries to describe his journey, Gérard, the narrator, experiences a decentering, discursive as well as thematic, as a result of his ongoing encounter with otherness. Discourse is affected by the enunciative situation in such a way as to place the traveler in a constant state of homelessness, a state which in turn must affect discourse itself. The idea of homelessness becomes newly charged when viewed in light of the dialogical constitution of discourse and of ideology as a discursive construction of the "real." Through this approach, getting at the textual discordance that Frow speaks of will demonstrate the difficulties inherent in otherness in the modern travel narrative. The construction of the self only in relation to the construction of the other means that neither the self nor the other can be a privileged object of study; the analysis will proceed instead from passages in which the relationship between self and other can unfold in all its complexity.¹²

In the first passage (86) Gérard tries to recall the first night he spent in the train on the way to the concentration camp. This event marks the first night of his trip into Germany and is significant for the way in which it is remembered. The opening sentence indicates that the passage revolves around his thoughts that night rather than his interaction with fellow prisoners. In a crowded train Gérard's discussion about Proust is an effective way to exclude the others and address himself as interlocutor. His memory of Proust's work as "*le côté de chez Swann*" without graphic underlining immediately signals to the reader that he is about to appropriate Proust's text as his own. And, indeed, in the following sentence he takes Marcel's famous first line "*Longtemps, je me suis couché de bonne heure*" and surrounds it with the emphatic "*moi aussi*" and "*il faut dire*" so as to make it sound more natural. Visualizing the smallest details of the garden in Combray, the church window, and the hawthorn hedge allows him to feel he is in Proust's text itself. But the emphatic use of "*moi aussi*" and "*il faut dire*," and the insertion of the compelling "*seigneur*" and the again emphatic "*aussi*" several lines later indicate the narrator's desire to

convince an interlocutor other than himself that *he* had a similar past. Next, hesitating about his abilities to maintain this bold comparison, he virtually repeats his opening sentence. In an urgent appeal to have us believe he shares experiences with Proust's narrator, he demonstrates that he actually anticipates disbelief from us and is himself not very convinced. But should this surprise us considering the fact that, as we learn at the very beginning, he had intended this reconstruction of Proust's narrative to serve as "un excellent exercice d'abstraction"? Qualifying this exercise as excellent makes light of a text that he will, several lines later, want us to take earnestly, thereby demonstrating that Gérard is affected by his own narrative voice.

When he remembers vainly searching back into his childhood for something comparable to Proust's Vinteuil sonata ("Je me suis demandé . . ."), he actually emphasizes the present moment of narration (Aujourd'hui, en forçant un peu les choses . . .) rather than his first night on the train sixteen years before. For it is only today that he can come up with something analogous to the Vinteuil phrase: a few bars of saxophone music by an American jazz musician and a melody of an old Spanish song. At this point one wonders how the Vinteuil piece corresponds to these memories, but it is the mention of a song from Sartre's *La nausée* that explains just what it is that the narrator of *Le grand voyage* deems important in Proust's melody. For Gérard mentions the Vinteuil piece in conjunction with the song "Some of these days" played twice at the end of Sartre's novel, the repetition of which only serves to emphasize the pure essence of a melody "[qui] reste la même, jeune et ferme" despite the scratched sounds of a worn record (Sartre 244). *La nausée*'s Antoine Roquentin, before boarding a train, experiences a "déchirement" out of emotion for a song that is moving because it simply *is*; the narrator Gérard, as he thinks back to his first hours on the train, transposes this feeling to his own memory as he calls "déchirante" a melody from "cette vieille chanson de mon pays." Why all this sudden talk about music?

Georges Poulet wrote of the song in Sartre's novel that its importance for Roquentin as a melody "jeune et ferme" lay in the fact that it mediated "un monde inerte où tout ce qui existe, existe pour toujours et partout *en soi*, [où la pensée] se découvre elle-même comme n'étant nulle part et jamais en soi, comme existant d'une existence radicalement autre" (233). If "Some of these days" evokes a divided self, one that affirms itself only by virtue of another's existence, then Gérard's awareness of the song at this particular narrative moment is

significant. If, according to Proust's narrator, the Vinteuil phrase represents "l'air national" of the love between Swann and Odette (46), then the melodies it evokes for Gérard only in hindsight mark his awareness that the songs capable of representing an "air national" from his present perspective are bittersweet for their assertions that one always belongs to another, that even one's facial features are not one's own ("je te trouve lavant, les couleurs de ton visage l'eau claire va les emportant" to quote the Spanish song cited in this passage). Paradoxically then, the only music he can remember that night as analogous to the Proustian couple's appropriation of the Vinteuil phrase is one that emphasizes his own division of self, one that reminds him of his problematic relationship to any "air national."

In addition, the melody that so attracted Roquentin because it defied the passage of time is appreciated by Gérard as he tries to create a text that will address the problem of how to keep alive the memory of the war.¹³ Throughout *Le grand voyage* he struggles with the idea that he must remember what transpired in order to write it down.¹⁴ Resisting the surfacing of memories he would rather leave behind, the narrator remembers these particular melodies many years *after* the time he had wished to recall them—a reminder that his task as narrator is to solicit memories of a journey he feels uncomfortable remembering. What began in this passage as the memory of an innocent "exercice d'abstraction" recalling Proust turns into an expression of Gérard's present day concern that the events he had experienced many years prior to his narration not be forgotten. His preoccupation today with finding something comparable to the Vinteuil phrase that he had been unable to find then demonstrates his appreciation of Proust as someone obsessed with recapturing an evanescent past. Recognizing Roquentin's feeling of painful "déchirement" upon hearing a song emphasizes Gérard's own feeling of ruptured self as he expresses his obsession with recording the past before it is too late. In struggling with Proust and Sartre, Gérard reveals his own fears and need to have us listen to him. He persists in thinking up a Vinteuil phrase of his own because it is only now as he writes that he realizes the importance of memory.

At the end of this passage, he and his friend Juan play a light intellectual game about the meaning of decadent taste in literature. This is brought on by a playful charge on Juan's part that Gérard's admiration for Proust is decadent, a statement encouraged by the fact that Juan has just presented Gérard with a Pléiade leatherbound

edition of Proust's works. Gérard counters the accusation with a reminder that Juan enjoys Faulkner, a move which then results in a discussion about decadence in literary taste. The small power play between the two friends reveals that Gérard is not bothered by the accusation as long as his friend will admit to the same fault. The reader is actually left in the dark as to their discussion and, in the final sentence, reads only that "Nous avons tranché la question en décidant que ce n'était pas une question décisive." The issue seems to go nowhere and nothing is resolved as suggested by the tension between "tranché la question" and "pas une question décisive." The protagonists occupy no definitive positions as the text ends abruptly with no sense of closure.

The idea of using literature as an "exercice d'abstraction" and as an object of intellectual study when discussing taste demonstrates how much Gérard is at ease with the discourse of literature. However, when he actually sets out to use Proust to help him survive his first night on the train, he does so in an intimate, confessional way. This is aggravated by the fact that he is shared between two textual spaces: that of the *Recherche* and that of his own narrative. The conflict he experiences as a result leads him to discuss popular culture and his own national identity as a Spaniard, as evidenced by his choice of "cette vieille chanson de mon pays" whose words he feels obliged to translate for us. When he mentions Proust again, it is in the context of a costly Pléiade edition which completely depersonalizes the first half of this passage about Swann's world. And at the very end of this passage, literature has become an object of discussion rather than a world into which he can project himself. Throughout the scene, then, Gérard has adopted the voices of a prisoner, a youth, a writer, a reader, and a countryman. But, as Bakhtin explains in his book on Dostoevsky, it is not enough to locate dialogical activity, one must also determine the angle at which voices refract (182). In this passage 1) Gérard earnestly recalls his youth with the help of a celebrated writer's memory; 2) a clue to the significance of the intimate sounding music he imagines as comparable to the Vinteuil sonata is found in a novel by a writer other than himself; and 3) he invokes the name of another famous author to defend himself in a brief repartee with his friend. Gérard cannot represent himself without recourse to another's voice, and in particular, to an authorial voice. In addition to the allusions to Proust, this passage also brings to mind Nerval's "Sylvie," with the traveler's reminiscences of youth in the country, folk songs,

and a problematic vision of reality. The protagonist's name in *Le grand voyage* is further evidence of this intertext, for the name Gérard, a pseudonym that he admits to having selected for himself, makes reference to Nerval's own first name.¹⁵ The idea of self as fabrication highlighted here functions as an important element in the decentering of the subject.

As many voices struggle to present Gérard's past, he has set himself an impossible task by initially situating Proust as the voice to which he must compare himself. He has ultimately set himself up to keep from speaking in his own name because of a simultaneous admiration for and resistance to authorial discourse. Moving from one voice to the next with no hope of "settling in" results in discursive decentering. If the scene dissolves without resolution, without the hope of finding an answer to a "question décisive," it is because he is at home with none of these voices. There are two strains of voices that run through all of these: the narrator as a man of letters and the narrator who remembers the menace of impending death many years ago. Conflict between these two is irreconcilable and the indecisiveness of which he speaks at the end is apparent in the entire passage. There is resistance and tension as these voices confront one another; a discursive decentering takes place to such a degree that when he reaches back into a childhood which has since been colored by his experiences in the war, he has no choice in this passage but to write regretfully: "J'étais désolé, mais il n'y avait rien."

If this passage is dominated by a variety of voices, then it stands in sharp contrast to the next one under discussion (the novel's closing paragraph) because there is only one voice that prevails here (279). It is not surprising that one voice should be strong as it is at this point that Gérard passes through the gates of the camp to fully submit to his captors' power.

Weak, exhausted, and cold, he has just arrived at the camp after many days in the train and is one in a line of prisoners who must march down a long avenue in order to reach the entrance to the camp. The scene is theatrical in its resemblance to a stage complete with lighting and sets, but he finds that one thing is missing in their dramatic approach: "la musique, noble et grave, de quelque opéra fabuleux." As his head weighs like "des tonnes de coton neigeux" he suddenly believes he *does* hear music being played, "[dont l'envol est] ample [et] serein dans la nuit de janvier." The music wells into "vagues sonores" as lampposts explode with light. This direct reference to

Rimbaud's "Je devins un opéra fabuleux"¹⁶ cannot be disassociated from the "dérèglement de tous les sens" that accompanies his famous "Je est un autre."¹⁷ The identification between the young poet and the narrator as a youth is not only complete here, but suggests on Gérard's part an *awareness* of this growing division of self. It is no wonder then, that the narrator, conscious he can no longer hold in check the various voices he has come to rely on in the course of the narrative, ceases telling shortly thereafter.

It does not matter if Gérard is hallucinating or if Wagner is really being played over the camp loudspeakers. What does matter is that he feels completely overwhelmed by his situation to the point that he imagines hearing the kind of music that his captors greatly respect—that of Wagnerian opera. His brain having been reduced to a cottony mass, Gérard gives himself over to an other. That is, he has adopted his captors' discourse and can hear only what they themselves would choose to listen to. The text is discordant with itself in that the narrator is conscious of having appropriated an other's discourse *against his will*, a fact that is revealed in labeling his final Dantesque sentence "quitter le monde des vivants" as a "phrase toute faite." The "rafales d'une pluie rageuse" cannot help but suggest that other definition of "rafale" as a burst of gunfire; at the end of his trip, the narrator screams in pain as he is forced to give himself over, discourse and all, to his captors. Perhaps the ultimate decentering here is in the dramatic recognition of self as other. The scene suggests Lacan's mirror stage in which the child, recognizing his or her own image for the first time in the mirror, experiences "une image morcelée du corps" that leads a subject to assume "l'armure d'une identité aliénante" (Lacan 93–94). Although the image of the constitution of the subject in this scene from *Le grand voyage* is not a specular one, it does reveal an acute self-consciousness that is a vital component of the dialectical mirror stage.¹⁸ Gérard's closing passage may be read as a brush with this confusing phase of one's development. Furthermore, because this passage actually portrays an endpoint of his development, the novel closes with a focus on a decentered subject with no hope for a move homeward.

Another element that demonstrates this move out of himself is his use of third person narration when referring to himself. At the end of the novel he shifts from first person to third person, thereby indicating an alienation from self, a need to address self as other. As stated in the passage, he has arrived at the end of his voyage, a point which

apparently marks for him a division of self that can no longer be joined. Consequently, the narrative voice that speaks many years later in *Le grand voyage* is one which was divided sixteen years prior to the moment of narration. It is no wonder then, that as the narrator tries to find *his* voice in the text he is constantly thwarted at all points because a division of self is necessarily written into his text from the very beginning. Discourse is thrown off-center as a result of Gérard's "grand voyage." The shift from first to third person is one way this is effected.

This pronoun change is not unique to *Le grand voyage* as it is also a characteristic of other modern literary works, two of which help illuminate Gérard's use of this technique. In Simon's *La Route des Flandres* the concluding image of "une glace à plusieurs faces" (296) is appropriate to the problematizing of identity that Georges experiences in the novel. The oscillation between first and third person narration in Simon's text suggests that language functions as a promise of self in the way the subject moves back and forth between *je* and *il*. Gérard, on the other hand, making the decisive shift to *il* in Part Two, never alternates between first and third person. The identity that is produced through language here constitutes a complete rejection of the self for the other.

From a historical angle, Kafka's *The Castle* offers another perspective on the significance of Gérard's move from *je* to *il*. Having originally begun his text in the first person, Kafka later changed all I's to the third person without affecting tone or storyline. This easy replacement of pronouns is significant, Dorrit Cohn points out in *Transparent Minds*, because in Kafka's novel the "focus was fully on the experiencing self, with the narrating self kept out of sight" (170).¹⁹ This would suggest that Semprun's novel in the first and third person emphasizes both the narrating and experiencing self, the narrating when he uses "he" and the experiencing one when he is represented through "I." Although this pronoun shift is a good example of Lacan's notion of the futility of self-identification through linguistic markers, the concept of voice carries this idea even further; the shift from first to third person is striking because Gérard moves from cultivating his own voice as a narrating self to the cultivation of his own voice as an experiencing self.

In the two passages studied, I have attempted to demonstrate not only that these voices exist, but A) that the relationships between them are dependent on the situation in which they are expressed, and

B) that these relationships are not firmly grounded. On display here is Pêcheux's idea of *processus discursif* rather than Saussure's concept of *parole* because the former allows us to see discourse as expression shared between constructed subjects as opposed to the latter which envisions the subjective side of discourse only as an act of individual expression. Flahault's notion of *parole intermédiaire* is at work as well because the speaking subject is constituted according to the positions it attributes to others in the enunciative moment.

Both passages deal with music, but reveal very different attitudes towards it depending on the situation in which they are articulated. On the first night of his voyage Gérard is relatively in control of keeping his attention focused on using Proust to carry out an "exercice d'abstraction." This activity yields a power struggle between voices which all attempt to justify, through a discussion about music, his relationship to literature as something intensely personal as well as something from which he can maintain intellectual distance. An examination of his final discourse at the end of the novel reveals that he no longer has any personal stake in the music he envisions hearing because the music he wishes to hear is that listened to by his captors. He is so traversed by otherness that his relationship to music is determined by his captors' discourse. This exemplifies Frow's conception of ideology insofar as the subject in the text is the effect of the utterance rather than its origin.

As Gérard sets out to reconstruct his trip, discourse is continually decentered in that it is based neither in the self nor in the other, but rather in a state of homelessness that prevents any voice from decisively maintaining its strength. If the Holocaust is considered "the ultimate nonsignifying ground," "the sign of the ultimately Real," then the activities of the Third Reich necessarily close off signification (Frow 59).²⁰ This brings into sharp focus why the subject in *Le grand voyage* simply cannot find a voice: any interruption in the signifying chain would result in the disappearance of referents that enable one to assign meaning. Fascist ideology controls discourse so that the constitution of the subject becomes severely problematic, eventually resulting in tragedy. Discursive homelessness becomes the *only* world available to Gérard as he wanders in and out of the multitude of voices inhabiting the text.

Dialogism is at work as is power, for, in this text, discourse is occupied by a variety of voices culled from one another, creating friction as they interact. Among other things, this article has attempted to

demonstrate that perpetual friction is characteristic of dialogism, which, as Bakhtin writes, is inherent in “prose art” because “it deals with discourse that is still warm”(DI 331).

APPENDIX

J’ai passé ma première nuit de voyage à reconstruire dans ma mémoire le côté de chez Swann et c’était un excellent exercice d’abstraction. Moi aussi, je me suis longtemps couché de bonne heure, il faut dire. J’ai imaginé ce bruit ferrugineux de la sonnette, dans le jardin, les soirs où Swann venait dîner. J’ai revu dans la mémoire les couleurs du vitrail, dans l’église du village. Et cette haie d’aubépines, seigneur, cette haie d’aubépines était aussi mon enfance. J’ai passé la première nuit de ce voyage à reconstruire dans ma mémoire le Côté de chez Swann et à me rappeler mon enfance. Je me suis demandé s’il n’y avait rien dans mon enfance qui soit comparable à cette phrase de Vinteuil. J’étais désolé, mais il n’y avait rien. Aujourd’hui, en forçant un peu les choses, je pense qu’il y aurait quelque chose de comparable à cette phrase de la sonate de Vinteuil, à ce déchirement de *Some of these days* pour Antoine Roquentin. Aujourd’hui il y aurait cette phrase de *Summertime*, de Sidney Bechet, tout au début de *Summertime*. Aujourd’hui, il y aurait aussi ce moment incroyable, dans cette vieille chanson de mon pays. C’est une chanson dont les paroles, à peu près traduites, diraient ceci: «Je passe des ponts, passe des rivières, toujours je te trouve lavant, les couleurs de ton visage l’eau claire va les emportant.» Et c’est après ces paroles que prend son vol la phrase musicale dont je parle, si pure, si déchirante de pureté. Mais au cours de la première nuit de voyage je n’ai rien trouvé dans ma mémoire qui puisse se comparer à la sonate de Vinteuil. Plus tard, des années plus tard, Juan m’a ramené de Paris les trois petits volumes de la *Pléiade*, reliés en peau havane. J’avais dû lui parler de ce livre. «Tu t’es ruiné», lui ai-je dit. «Ce n’est pas ça», a-t-il dit, «mais tu as des goûts décadents». Nous avons ri ensemble, je me suis moqué de sa rigueur de géomètre. Nous avons ri et il a insisté. «Avoue, que ce sont des goûts décadents.» «Et *Sartoris*?», lui ai-je demandé, car je savais qu’il aimait bien Faulkner. «Et *Absalom, Absalom*?». Nous avons tranché la question en décidant que ce n’était pas une question décisive.

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Gérard [essaye] de laisser ses yeux se remplir de cette lumière glacée sur ce paysage de neige, ces lampadaires tout au long de l'avenue monumentale, bordée de hautes colonnes de pierre surmontées par la violence hiératique des aigles hitlériennes, ce paysage démesuré où ne manque que la musique, noble et grave, de quelque opéra fabuleux. Gérard essaye de conserver la mémoire de tout ceci, tout en pensant d'une manière vague qu'il est dans le domaine des choses possibles que la mort prochaine de tous les spectateurs vienne effacer à tout jamais la mémoire de ce spectacle, ce qui serait dommage, il ne sait pas pourquoi, il faut remuer des tonnes de coton neigeux dans son cerveau, mais ce serait dommage, la certitude confuse de cette idée l'habite, et il lui semble bien, tout à coup, que cette musique noble et grave prend son envol, ample, serein, dans la nuit de janvier, il lui semble bien qu'ils en arrivent par là au bout du voyage, que c'est ainsi, en effet, parmi les vagues sonores de cette noble musique, sous la lumière glacée éclatant en gerbes mouvantes, qu'il faut quitter le monde des vivants, cette phrase toute faite tournoie vertigineusement dans les replis de son cerveau embué comme une vitre par les rafales d'une pluie rageuse, quitter le monde des vivants, quitter le monde des vivants.

NOTES

1. If, according to Peter Brooks, "Plot itself—narrative design and intention—is the figure of displacement, desire leading to change of position," then this modern travel narrative, which I suggest exemplifies discursive fragmentation, may also be characterized by a fullness of desire whose Lacanian unfulfillment can only exacerbate the problem of fragmentation. Peter Brooks, *Reading For The Plot*, 84–85. This article will not focus on desire and the fragmented subject in the modern travel narrative, although a great deal of work remains to be done in this area.
2. He maintains the category of *langue*, but prefers to rename it *base linguistique*.
3. "Nous voyons apparaître une sorte de complicité entre le locuteur et celui à qui il s'adresse, comme condition d'existence d'un sens de la phrase. Cette complicité suppose en fait une identification du locuteur, c'est-à-dire la possibilité de penser ce qu'il pense à sa place" (103).
4. For classic essays on Formalism, including Shklovsky's "Art as Technique" and his article on *Tristram Shandy* as an illustration of formal devices "laid bare," see Lee T. Lemon and Marion J. Reis (eds.), *Russian Formalist Criticism*.
5. "The Problem of Content, Material, and Form in Verbal Art," trans. Kenneth N.

Brostrom, *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays* by M. M. Bakhtin, Michael Holquist and Vadim Liapunov (eds.), forthcoming. I am grateful to Ladislav Matejka at the University of Michigan for allowing me access to this translation.

6. I see discourse as distinct from language in its dependence on the enunciative moment. Discourse is thus a purely contextual phenomenon while language, for example, can be said to characterize the contents of a dictionary. This distinction will be maintained throughout the paper.

7. For Bakhtin/Medvedev's position on the Formalist view of ideology vis-à-vis the literary text and its consequent failure to establish a meaningful way to account for literary history, see "The Work of Art as a Datum External to Consciousness" in *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship*, 145–58.

8. Quoted in Frow 56.

9. Todorov writes of Bakhtin that "he exceeds Formalism, but only after having absorbed its teachings." Tzvetan Todorov, *Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogical Principle*, 40.

10. Bakhtin's cultural understanding of preexistent voices and positions should not be confused with Lacan's psychoanalytic theory that the signifier preexists the subject since the production of the subject is a result of an interrelation between signifiers. See Lacan, "Subversion du sujet et dialectique du désir dans l'inconscient freudien" in *Ecrits*, 793–827. I will return to Lacan in my analysis.

11. Wallace Martin's *Recent Theories of Narrative* is built on the notion that theories themselves are dialogic: "The theorist has been incited into thought by the thought of another; the arena in which the two interact is the virtual space *between* theories that, in its entirety, makes up the context of criticism. The expository method that provides a complete and accurate account of a theory helps confirm its integrity and its isolation from others. Thus it reproduces the genial gesture of deference or dismissal through which critics avoid controversy, on the assumption that it is an ill-mannered and ill-tempered activity. But what could a theory be, other than a necessary step on the path to dialogue; and why would it be created, if not as a reply to another or an answer to a question" (10)?

12. The two passages under discussion are reproduced in the appendix.

13. Roquentin concludes that the melody of "Some of these days" is "sans passé, sans avenir" (244).

14. "Alors qu'il n'y aurait plus aucun souvenir réel de ceci, seulement des souvenirs de souvenirs, des récits de souvenirs rapportés par ceux qui jamais plus ne sauront vraiment, (comme on sait l'acidité d'un citron, le laineux d'un tissu, la douceur d'une épaule), ce que tout ça, réellement, a été" (225).

15. In his *Autobiografía de Federico Sánchez*, Semprun presents himself through the character of Federico, an alias he used during the Franco regime when he was working for the Spanish Communist Party. In this text he finds himself trapped in the middle

between "la realidad del discurso y el discurso de la realidad" (171), a state resembling that of the character portrayed under the alias Gérard in *Le grand voyage*.

16. "Une saison en enfer," *Oeuvres poétiques*, 130.

17. Lettre à Izambard, 13 mai 1871, in *Oeuvres complètes: Correspondance*, 28. These same words reappear in a letter sent two days later to a friend of Izambard's in what will become known as Rimbaud's famous "lettre du voyant" in which he writes that the poet's task is "se faire voyant," a process during which "il arrive à l'inconnu" (31). The allusion to Rimbaud in the scene of *Le grand voyage* reinforces the idea of self as an entity that can never be truly known and thereby condemned to an eternal state of homelessness.

18. Wilfried Ver Eecke writes that "Lacan is dependent upon the Hegelian analysis of self-consciousness in order to give the mirror stage its necessity." Wilfried Ver Eecke, "Hegel as Lacan's Source for Necessity," *Interpreting Lacan*, Joseph H. Smith and William Kerrigan (eds.), 124.

19. Cohn notes that the terms "narrating self" and "experiencing self" are borrowed from Spitzer's essay on Proust (*Stilstudien* II, 478). For a detailed account of Kafka's rewriting of *The Castle*, see Cohn's article "K. enters *The Castle*: On the Change of Person in Kafka's Manuscript," *Euphorion* 62 (1968), 28-45.

20. Frow makes this point when he discusses Terry Lovell's interpretation of the Holocaust. See Lovell's *Pictures of Reality: Aesthetics, Politics and Pleasure*, 37.

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