

Christian	vs.	Christian
French	vs.	French
weakness	vs.	strength
humility/group orientation	vs.	vanity/individualism

Though *Roland* initially appeared to be about religious difference, its second and third battles together offer a new interpretation. By matching adversaries marked by equivalent strength or similar nationality and religion, the final encounters shift the text's emphasis from religion to group orientation. The first battle repeatedly invokes the differences between the combatants' religions, but it also stresses the surprise nature of the Saracen attack and the overwhelming superiority of Marsile's forces. We might easily come away from this episode understanding that the outcome was caused entirely by Ganelon's treachery and the pagans' strength. However, the hand-to-hand combat between Charlemagne and Baligant effectively eliminates physical superiority as an operative variable. Similarly, the judicial duel between two Christians shunts attention away from religion as the all-powerful difference that it once appeared.

Though it began as a religious epic, *The Song of Roland* ends as a feudal fable stressing fealty, a cautionary tale warning against elevation of personal concerns above respect for the welfare of the group. While it stresses Christianity throughout, *Roland's* shift from narrow nationalism to a more inclusive concern for the entire empire displaces the emphasis from religion as such to a broad concept of Christendom, along with allegiance to Christian leaders. Making a similar point in another way, we may say that the effect of *Roland's* polarity adjustment is to transfer emphasis from the primary axis of symmetry, dependent on religious difference, to the integrative axis, with its accent on the relationship between the individual and the group.

THREE Dual-Focus Narrative

The Song of Roland displays the characteristics of a narrative type that I call "dual-focus." The narrator follows no single character throughout but instead alternates regularly between two groups whose conflict provides the plot. Because the group rather than an individual plays the lead role, individuals serve primarily as placeholders, defined by the group, rather than as characters whose development constitutes an independent subject of interest. Succeeding following-units typically portray the two sides engaged in similar activities. This parallelism induces comparison of the two sides and is the source of the text's main rhetorical thrust. Each new pair of following-units is related to the previous pair by the principle of replacement. The text's structure resembles that of an equal-arm balance. When a member of one group changes sides or refuses to fight, the balance of power is destroyed and the plot is set in motion. The text ends when the two sides are reduced to one, by death or expulsion, or through marriage or conversion.

Within this basic pattern two separate but complementary models may be discerned. The first operates as if the two opposed groups carried the same magnetic charge. As the text progresses and the two sides come closer together, the group that is more firmly fixed repels the other from its field. Fixation is effected by the text's rhetorical dimension, eliciting the reader's sympathy for one side over the other. This pattern, which I call "dual-focus epic," normally concludes with the elimination or containment of the side condemned by the text's rhetoric. Many of the texts that display this pattern

are popular in nature, ranging from the medieval popular epic to comic strips and science fiction, and from the Gothic novel and *roman feuilleton* to the Hollywood western. Other dual-focus epics are religious in nature, including major portions of the Old Testament, the New Testament book of Revelation (Apocalypse), Hesiod's *Theogony*, and the Babylonian Genesis known as *Enuma Elish*. Wherever there is religion, there is of course parody, as evidenced by works as diverse as the early *Batrachomyomachia* ("Battle of the Frogs and Mice"), the *Roman de Renart*, the Renaissance mock epic, and Jonathan Swift's *Battle of the Books*. Many texts that have normally been read, like *Roland*, as the stories of individual heroes, make more sense when they are returned to their rightful place in the dual-focus tradition. Later we shall have occasion to see why Homer's *Iliad* and Vergil's *Aeneid* should be placed among this number.

Dual-focus narrative is not restricted to literary texts. It extends to historical narratives like Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*, Tacitus's account of the aftermath of Nero's death in the first book of his *History*, and Augustine's *City of God*, as well as historical fictions from Flaubert's *Salammbô* to the films of Sergei Eisenstein. The cinema is a favorite medium for the development of dual-focus potential, in such films as D. W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation*, Jean Renoir's *Grand Illusion*, Luis Buñuel's *Viridiana*, and scores of popular favorites like Merian C. Cooper and Ernest B. Schoedsack's *King Kong*, Cecil B. De Mille's *Unconquered*, and Gordon Douglas's *Them!* The plastic arts have also long borrowed the form and thematic concerns of dual-focus epic, from the high culture of Romanesque Last Judgment scenes to the commercial simplicity of magazine advertisements showing two washing machines and two equal-sized boxes of detergent, the lowly Brand X and the New! Improved! Will-get-your-clothes-one-hundred-percent-brighter Brand Y. In all these texts, irreducible differences place the two sides in opposition, creating pressure that ultimately leads to domination by one of the two groups.

Another group of texts, which I call "dual-focus pastoral," shares almost all the characteristics of dual-focus epic. Dual-focus pastoral texts retain the alternating following-pattern and parallelism, group-conscious and apsycho-logical characters, progression by replacement, and a plot that operates according to a balance mechanism, accompanied by the basic dual-focus tendency to suppress the temporal flow in favor of static spatial structures.

The difference between the two forms stems from a simple shift in the relationship between the two mirror-image groups. If dual-focus epic sets one side against the other, like similarly charged magnets laying equivalent claims to the same space, dual-focus pastoral features magnets with opposite charges, two sides that seek union. Whether or not the primary identity of the two sides in dual-focus pastoral is sexual (as it usually is in Western literature), one side is almost always associated with a strong male factor, while the other is given a strong female identity. The union that brings the text to a close is thus assimilated to marriage, whether between individuals, families, countries, or philosophies. As in dual-focus epic, the two sides are ultimately reduced to one, that reduction marking the end of the text.

Like its epic counterpart, dual-focus pastoral proliferates in popular literature. From the Alexandrian romance as represented by Heliodorus's *Aethiopica* or Longus's *Daphnis and Chloe*, to a Renaissance pastoral novel like Honoré d'Urfé's *Astrée*, all the way to the Hollywood musical, dual-focus pastoral has survived nearly unchanged. Western society has always found a place for this dual-focus complement to the more highly regarded epic form, as we see in the Old Testament books of Ruth and Song of Songs, medieval romances like Boccaccio's *Filostrato*, Chrétien de Troyes's *Cligés*, the Provençal *Roman de Flamenca*, or *Aucassin et Nicolette*'s clever parody, and modern love stories as diverse as Nathaniel Hawthorne's *House of Seven Gables* and James Cameron's *Titanic*. In fact, dual-focus pastoral has often been combined with dual-focus epic, as in the amorous diplomacy of Esther in the Bible, the *Nibelungenlied*, and Honoré de Balzac's *Les Chouans*, or the thrills and then chills of Geoffrey Chaucer's *Troilus and Cressida*, Robert Wise's *West Side Story*, and Vittorio De Sica's *The Garden of the Finzi-Contini*. The genre of melodrama in particular has shown a continuing capacity to merge the two forms, for the combination of a villain, a damsel in distress, and a dashing young savior offers a compact method of satisfying the needs of dual-focus epic and pastoral alike.

Beginnings

Let us begin with a metaphor, a touchstone to which we can return from time to time to validate our results: dual-focus narrative is a chess game, a

balanced confrontation where the two sides move alternately according to a simple set of rules, each piece having a limited function meaningful only in terms of the larger fate of its side. The battle takes place in time, yet strategy must be conceived in space, the opponent's position remaining fully as important as the attacker's plans. How then does this game begin? What action must be performed in order for the match to start? White moves first, but much has taken place before White can advance the first pawn. Two actions precede White's first move, and precede it they must, for without the chessboard and the pieces the competition cannot begin.

Two simple procedures characterize the creation of the dual-focus world. First, a contested space must be created, limited on all sides and clearly displaying its major axis of symmetry. What kind of a match would it be if the threatened pieces could simply maneuver off the board in order to escape the attack? Second, the players must be divided into two equivalent groups, clearly identifiable by a difference in color, uniform, language, sex, or other differentiation device. A football game begins in just this way. The day before, there were men all over the field, running this way and that, chaotic, helter-skelter, chasing passes onto the cinder track and errant kicks into the stands. The next morning, the groundskeepers appear, outlining the playing surface in bright white chalk. When game time arrives, the teams pour out of the chute onto the field, the home team clearly identified by its gold helmets and black uniforms, the visitors resplendent in their green and white. The game can now begin, because the formless mass of the day before has achieved differentiation through the magic effect of white lines and color-coded uniforms. The undefined, unbounded battleground has now been marked off and delimited, and the players' allegiances identified.

Whatever their scope, dual-focus texts must effect this definition by differentiation. Exposition and creation thus become quite literally synonymous. Borrowing from an earlier tradition, the beginning of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* neatly summarizes the doctrine of creation by separation with its implied parallels between God, the universe, and its elements on one side and the narrator, the text, and language on the other:

Before land was and sea—before air and sky
Arched over all, all Nature was all Chaos,
The rounded body of all things in one,

The living elements at war with lifelessness. . . .
No living creatures knew that land, that sea
Where heat fell against cold, cold against heat—
Roughness at war with smooth and wet with drought.
Things that gave way entered unyielding masses,
Heaviness fell into things that had no weight.
Then God or Nature calmed the elements:
Land fell away from sky and sea from land,
And aether drew away from cloud and rain. (1958:3)

The cosmogonic act creates a world and a language, but not just any world, not just any language. Both are built on the principle of binary opposition, so that the war of the words can adequately describe the battle of the elements, those of the text as well as those of the world.

If Ovid's style depends on a series of oppositions, it is clearly because only a nominal, dichotomized style can properly evoke the world seen from a dual-focus perspective. When Augustine writes his *Confessions*, he evokes his past sins and shows by what actions, by what thoughts, he changed his life. He has no room for balanced opposition of noun to noun, of clause to clause, because the whole point of his account is to reveal not the static binary nature of the world but man's opportunity for change. When Augustine turns to history, however, his style turns along with him. *The City of God* rewrites the history of mankind as the unceasing opposition between two cities. Consequently, its style appears to be generated by the simplest of computers, the use of any noun immediately calling forth its mirror-image counterpart. *The City of God* (but not *The Confessions*) clearly operates according to dual-focus principles.

The lexicon of dual-focus texts resembles that of our chess metaphor. The game cannot be played until and unless every "white bishop" is given a corresponding "black bishop." Dual-focus vocabulary is thus double, containing both a parameter of comparison ("bishop") and a uniform identifying allegiance ("white" or "black"). In fact, dual-focus vocabulary is doubly double. If the contrast between a white bishop and a black bishop activates the text's axis of symmetry, the juxtaposition of a white bishop and a white king feeds the text's integrative axis. This bipartite status of dual-focus words requires a two-part analytical process like that used above for *The Song of Roland*:

1. Organization of the text into pairs of actions, characters, or following-units defined according to the same parameter.
2. Comparison of the two elements in each pair in order to isolate the characteristics particular to each side.

As used by Ovid, “heat” and “cold” are not two different, independent words but the same word with opposite signs. To read these terms successfully, we need to recognize heat and cold not as separate terms but as the two parts of a dual concept, containing both a parameter of comparison (heat) and a marker of allegiance (the opposite plus and minus signs). Only in this way can we make sense of dual-focus narrative’s characteristic method of organizing texts and worlds.

In keeping with dual-focus modes of understanding, the Old Testament God is said to have created the elements not individually but in pairs. Darkness is not created, it is separated from light, thereby simultaneously constituting both paired elements. Woman is not created separately from man, she is separated wo-man, from man. Even the Jewish people are by no means created, in the modern sense of that word; instead, they are differentiated. Just as the Tower of Babel story explains the dispersion of a single language into many, the Genesis account of Adam’s descendants shows how a single family gave rise to many nations, with Israel in the center and its enemies in outlying lands. Out of sibling rivalry situations, Genesis generates the foes that plague Israel throughout the Old Testament. From the line of Cain come the herdsmen who live in tents, those who have no fixed home. Ham, who gazed on his father’s nakedness, gives rise to a long list of Israel’s traditional enemies, including the Babylonians, Egyptians, Assyrians, and Philistines. Lot, Abraham’s nephew who slept with his daughters, is the father of the Moabites and Ammonites. The Edomites descend from Esau, whose intermarriage with foreigners suggests that he “despised his birthright” long before he was formally robbed of it by a conspiracy of his mother and younger brother, Jacob. Only with the reunion of Joseph and his would-be fratricidal brothers at the end of Genesis does the pattern of sibling rivalry cease, now that the Israelites and their enemies are well defined. This separation stage reaches its culmination at the beginning of Exodus with the Passover, reaffirming separation of the world into Jew and non-Jew.

The subsequent giving of the law to Moses on Mount Sinai thus entails little new material. It is simply a recognition of already established principles, a codification of the reasoning behind the previous differentiation of the world into two radically different groups and value systems. Cain set himself before God (“You shall have no other gods before me”), and so killed his righteous brother (“You shall not kill”). Ham committed an act of perversion with his sleeping father (“Honor your father and your mother”). Joseph’s brothers were envious of his privileged position in the family circle, and so they sold him into slavery (“You shall not covet”). And so on. Once the Chosen People have reached the Promised Land, the chess game can begin, for Genesis has provided not an undifferentiated world equally available to all but a carefully laid out playing field with a set of mirror-image players, and Exodus has codified the rules by which the game is to be played. The rest of the Old Testament reads like a list of permutations generated by this junction of a series of enemies and a list of laws.

As the Old Testament establishment of the Law clearly reveals, one of the most important aspects of dual-focus narrative is the development of a language suited to description of the text. The binary opposition of Cain to Abel, of Lot to Abraham, of Esau to Jacob, and so forth not only splits the world into separate groups but also provides new vocabulary with every division, new terms particularly appropriate to the text’s dual-focus world. Just as the arrangement of chessmen on the chessboard identifies white versus black as a meaningful opposition, so the division of Noah’s sons into Ham versus Shem and Japheth defines “Honor your father” versus “Shame your father” as a meaningful opposition and thus as an important critical tool. Dual-focus texts require readers to remember the differences established in the exposition and to use them as critical vocabulary.

Less formulaic in style and structure than sacred texts, dual-focus novels often delay presentation of their constitutive dualities until the reader has already become familiar with the characters and their contexts. Émile Zola’s *Le Ventre de Paris* thus remains, for half of its length, a very confusing novel indeed. Florent, whom we expect to become the main character of a typical biographically shaped novel, has just returned from political prison in Cayenne. He moves in with his sausage-making half-brother, finds a job supervising the sale of fish in the central Paris market, and in general serves as our eyes, nose, mouth, and ears as Zola introduces us to the belly of Paris, its delights and

excesses. We learn about the operation of Les Halles and the life of its denizens, but we remain in doubt about the novel's direction. Florent has a few quarrels, makes a friend or two, perhaps even falls in love, but we are never sure because we enjoy no interior views of his personal desires or his revolutionary plotting.

In the absence of a clear sense of the novel's structure we have no idea what to look for. For us the text remains chaotic, just as the market does for Florent, until he leaves the city with his friend Claude. During their excursion to Nanterre (then a garden spot well outside of town), Claude explains the world to Florent. The market runs not according to a set of laws handed down by the government, says Claude, but according to one of the oldest laws in the universe, the war between the Fat and the Thin (whence the novel's usual English title). Suddenly, the people and smells, places and sounds, tastes and animosities of Les Halles come into sharp focus. For fully half the novel we had floundered in the watery confusion of the fish market and lingered without obvious purpose among the fattening delights of the pork butcher's shop, café-hopping like a Parisian student unsure how to organize his day. Before, we had been vaguely following Florent, though by no means continuously. Now that the text has received definition, now that we have a vocabulary for ordering the many sensations that the text provides, the following-pattern as well becomes more clearly defined. From now on the text's dual-focus status becomes apparent, with regular alternation and opposition between two camps, the Fat and the Thin.

What Zola holds off until the middle of *Le Ventre de Paris*, the cinema often provides in a film's opening footage. Around the time of World War I, movie houses didn't wait even that long. A melodrama might be introduced in such a fashion as to leave little doubt about the necessary critical vocabulary:

You may
Applaud the Hero
and
Hiss the Villain

Defining the owner's expectations regarding the conduct and class of the audience, lantern slides often preceded the show, displaying a message like this:

Gentlemen will *please* remove their hats, *others* must

In much the same way, dual-focus films sometimes organize the credits preceding the action not in order of the actors' appearance but according to their distribution within the film. Charlie Chaplin's *Great Dictator*, for example, arranges the credits in two separate but parallel lists: "People of the Palace" and "People of the Ghetto."

Whereas literature exists only in time, placing each word after the preceding one, cinema has the ability to work in space as well, thereby gaining an additional method of dividing the world. Alfred Hitchcock's *Notorious* is one of many films that opens on a trial scene viewed from a doorway at the back of the courtroom, with the camera carefully stationed right on the room's axis of symmetry. The center line of the frame thus corresponds exactly to the center line of the courtroom, both real and filmic space thus being exactly split between the accused German traitor and the U.S. prosecutor. The opening frames of Vittorio De Sica's *Garden of the Finzi-Contini* introduce a bevy of white-shirted bicyclists intent on traversing a high, solid, stone wall in order to reach the object of their summer joy, a tennis court, on the other side. We have so little idea who these young people are that we concentrate instead on the battle with the wall. There, as they stand dejectedly in the street, our eyes and our sensitivities are trained to see the world as space, divided by the walls of social distinction. Within lies the private domain of the Finzi-Contini, Ferrara's most powerful family, while on the outside waits youth, powerless until it has been recognized by the Cerberus who eventually opens the gate. Before characters even have names, De Sica's clever exposition implies, they are defined by the space they inhabit and the walls that bound them.

Even when cinema works sequentially, it often provides spatial definition for dual-focus films. Once Jean Renoir has shown us the French officers' quarters in the opening scene of *Grand Illusion*, he rapidly provides a parallel scene identifying the stakes of the initial scene. After Maréchal (Jean Gabin) and de Boeldieu (Pierre Fresnay) have been shot down, they are brought to the German headquarters commanded by von Rauffenstein (Erich von Stroheim). In many ways the two places are similar: on both sides there is music, drinking, and talk of women. Temporary army camps, we easily imagine, cannot differ much from one side of the line to the other. And yet there are differences. The French soldiers listen to a popular song and babble on in

familiar language about the squadron's shared girlfriend, while in the German camp we hear a Strauss waltz and multilingual conversation about the capitals of the world. Renoir goes beyond national difference—the expected parameter of opposition in a war film—to redefine the French camp as common and the German camp as aristocratic. In this masterful movie where the popular/aristocratic dichotomy slowly replaces the French/German clash, Renoir has from the very beginning provided the two vocabularies necessary for analysis of the film.

Dual-focus pastoral operates in much the same way, deploying the same techniques of thematic, linguistic, and character differentiation used in its epic counterpart. At once the most naïve and the most sophisticated of the Alexandrian romances, Longus's *Daphnis and Chloe* goes Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones* one better. "Two Foundlings," it might be called, for the text begins with parallel discoveries. Daphnis is found in the woods, being nursed by a goat. Chloe is discovered in the grotto of the nymphs, where a ewe gives her suck. The most obvious opposition emphasized by these paragraphs is the male/female difference, for *Daphnis and Chloe* is the story of the two foundlings' accession to the sexual knowledge of their parents' generation, but readers who see no more than a biological opposition in these opposed paragraphs are missing a chance to learn how to read the text. Dual-focus expositions offer a lesson in critical approaches in addition to introduction of the dramatis personae. Just as the Old Testament's meaning is implicit in the divisions highlighted by sibling rivalry (Chosen People/others, Promised Land/periphery, virtue/vice), so the opening paragraphs of *Daphnis and Chloe* provide the tale's basic differences and parameters, as represented in fig. 3.1. Every opposition, however simple, eventually plays a part in Longus's story. With no further information than that provided by the distance separating the opening paragraphs, we can proceed to a clear understanding of Daphnis's and Chloe's sexual strivings.

Hawthorne handles the problem of dual-focus pastoral exposition quite differently in his *House of Seven Gables*. Instead of introducing the pair of young people who will provide the novel's love interest, he begins with Colonel Pyncheon's illegitimate bid to snatch a plot of land from Matthew Maule, its rightful owner. On the one hand, a colonel, a man of the sword;

Daphnis	<i>name</i>	Chloe
male	<i>sex</i>	female
oak grove	<i>location</i>	grotto
straight	<i>shape</i>	curved
convex	<i>surface</i>	concave
dry land	<i>element</i>	spring water
(Pan)	<i>god</i>	Nymphs
older	<i>age</i>	younger
ivory sword	<i>token</i>	golden anklet
Lamon	<i>father</i>	Dryas

FIGURE 3.1 Initial oppositions in *Daphnis and Chloe*

on the other hand, a carpenter named after an apostle. Soon the two families laying claim to the same land achieve increasing differentiation. The new house on "Maule's Lane, or Pyncheon Street, as it were now more decorous to call it" (1851:18) may belong to the Pyncheon clan, but it is built by a Maule, thus perpetuating their claim to an interest in the property. Even after the Maules seem to have abandoned hope, the two families' parallel claims continue to retain the narrator's attention. The Pyncheon approach to the problem of real estate is typically feudal and aristocratic, based "on the strength of mouldy parchments," while the Maules know no other claim than "their own sturdy toil" (26), the method of a new class whose development in this country was an item of keen interest to Hawthorne. The well of nobility has run dry, he implies, just as the Maule well, its water once so sweet and plentiful, went sour the day that the Pyncheons took over. All this took place many generations before Hawthorne's narrative begins, yet the effects of the original distinction between Pyncheon and Maule linger on, informing the plot until such time as the two families can become reunited once again, through the romance of Phoebe Pyncheon and Holgrave the daguerrotypist. Just as Longus uses a dual exposition to associate his two foundlings with differences that will be essential to the remainder of the story, Hawthorne succeeds in making his young lovers carry important thematic baggage by beginning with the quarrel between their ancestors.

The Hollywood musical often goes to great lengths to establish parallelism between male and female principals. MGM's 1940 version of *New Moon* (directed by Robert Leonard) begins with two simultaneous shipboard songs. On deck, Jeanette MacDonald sings in the elegant garb of the aristocracy. Cut to Nelson Eddy, singing behind bars in the hold. Just as *The Song of Roland* reinforces parallels by the use of repeated formulaic language, so *New Moon* draws the two songs together by using the same editing sequence for both stars, with similar shot changes punctuating the lyrics at exactly the same spots for both renditions. But paired songs need not be simultaneous or similarly edited if they display parallel concerns. After Maurice Chevalier's opening praise of "Little Girls" in *Gigi*, director Vincente Minnelli offers us a diptych of songs that create a connection between Gigi (Leslie Caron) and Gaston (Louis Jourdan) even before we see them together. Once Gigi has expressed her frustration with Paris life in "I Don't Understand the Parisians," Gaston's "It's a Bore" gives voice to a similar displeasure with life in the French capital. Virtually any aspect of a film can be used to establish parallelism between the male and female leads. In Thornton Freeland's *Flying Down to Rio*, back-to-back writing desks and paired cables establish the parallelism between Gene Raymond and Dolores del Rio. In W. S. Van Dyke's *Sweethearts* and Minnelli's *The Band Wagon*, mirror-image sets are used to reinforce the Eddy-MacDonald and Astaire-Charisse contrast.

Whether epic or pastoral, dual-focus texts systematically present their action as generated by preexisting categories. Exposition of those categories thus takes on enormous importance, for it is only through connection of individual characters to long-established groups and values that dual-focus narrative can operate. This is why so many dual-focus texts begin in medias res, stressing a constitutive conflict or difference even before we meet the characters involved. In many cases, the background of the main characters is withheld until the dual-focus parameters are set. Not until Superman has had the opportunity to bring many criminals to justice do we learn the story of his birth, and then only as an explanation of his sensitivity to kryptonite. In *The Song of Roland* we learn of Roland's prowess in fighting the Saracens, but only in later epics do we learn about his childhood and early exploits. As the alternating following-pattern clearly reveals, dual-focus texts are not about personal growth and decisions but about the differences between categories and the characters or groups that embody them.

Principles of Opposition

Dual-focus exposition characteristically involves creation of an entire universe—not just two opposed camps and the world around them but also the language necessary to describe that world. Unable to exercise personal control over their surroundings, dual-focus heroes at best understand the laws that govern their world and act accordingly, thereby attracting to themselves the adjectives that identify the elect in the linguistic system imposed by the narrator. Dual-focus characters are part of the created world; they cannot escape their position. Nor can they, like a picaresque protagonist oppressed by this week's master, simply walk out and create a new universe. The dual-focus world is finite, with laws and language delineated from the outset.

Chess players derive a certain thrill from knowing that their resources are limited and that neither the rules nor the board can be stretched. The winning strategy is not to expand capabilities, as one of my childhood opponents used to do by slipping an extra piece on the board when I was looking elsewhere, but to maximize efficiency with the available resources. A black bishop is a black bishop; it cannot become a white one. The words *black* and *white* are not available for transfer in the chess text as *scared* and *courageous* are in Stephen Crane's *Red Badge of Courage*. Whatever Jean-Paul Sartre may say, in the dual-focus world essence precedes existence. To understand the role that language plays in this system, we can do no better than to meditate on Isabel MacCaffrey's pertinent remarks about *Paradise Lost*: "Milton makes his words take sides; the objects of the poem, both animate and inanimate, along with other names, are aligned in opposing ranks and forced to participate in the War in Heaven that is being continued on earth" (1959:101). In this section I examine the diverse methods employed by dual-focus narrators to make "words take sides," thereby revealing the dynamics—or rather statics—of dual-focus opposition.

Of all our critical terms, perhaps the most problematic is the term "hero." Because it combines affective and formal implications, the designation "hero" often implies more than is meant. While neologisms like "protagonist" and "antihero" facilitate reference to central characters who are not necessarily heroic, they provide little help with the inverse situation, the heroic character who is not necessarily central but who by virtue of heroic

action is often assumed to occupy a central position. As with "character," problems associated with the term and concept of "hero" have been largely neglected by critics and theorists alike (though see Mieke Bal's lucid pages in *Narratology* on "The Problem of the Hero," 1985:91–93).

Perhaps the most common result of this terminological quandary is the sort to which *The Aeneid* has regularly been subjected. Traditional criticism has treated Vergil's epic as the story of Aeneas, the hero of Rome's founding, the symbol of Roman power, and the classic example of Roman virtue. The first six books, in this traditional view, correspond to the wanderings of Odysseus, while the last six derive from *The Iliad*. Yet critics acknowledge that Aeneas is neither the instigator of the plot nor an individual independent of his exemplary status, nor even a character altogether capable of self-definition. In short, Aeneas corresponds to the affective content of our term "hero" but not to any of its structural implications. He is emphatically not followed throughout most of *The Aeneid*. Not only does he share the following-pattern with Dido and Carthage, as well as with Turnus and the Italians, but equal time is also given to the gods and their quarrels.

Aeneas is a hero, no doubt, but not because he is an individual. Instead of becoming a hero, Aeneas is born one. His very existence is predicated on his ability to represent exemplary Roman traits. In one sense, Aeneas is not a character in the traditional sense at all but a synecdoche, a figure representing in miniature, on a human scale, the secrets of Roman power and domination over the rest of the world. Because it is the literary property of the Roman cause, Aeneas's character is not available to Aeneas to be defined through his own actions. Aeneas cannot create himself, because he has already been defined by his function. Aeneas is a hero all right, but in the dual-focus sense of that term. He is the group personified.

From the very exposition of *The Aeneid*, the dualistic nature of Vergil's epic is apparent. As in *The Song of Roland*, the very first line introduces to us the man with whom the book closes, but once again that man is left behind before we have read ten lines, ceding his place to the one enemy who stands between him and his home. For it is the goddess Juno who first merits the narrator's full attention. Not until all her quarrels are exposed, along with her support of the Greeks against the Trojans and of Carthage against Latium, does the narrator bring us back to Aeneas. By this time the design is clear: Aeneas will be constantly buffeted by all the storms that Juno can send

to force him off his course or delay him. Dido and Turnus, Aeolus and Allecto may be only temporarily opposed to Aeneas, but Juno always is. Traditional criticism considers that *The Aeneid* belongs entirely to one character, yet the following-pattern constantly pairs Aeneas with a matching lover or a comparable combatant.

Only within the last half-century has *The Aeneid's* dualism been recognized. Emphasizing the "great conflict throughout the whole poem between light and darkness" (1962:171), Viktor Pöschl has masterfully analyzed the manner in which Vergil subjects the structure of his epic to tension between two fundamental forces:

Vergil's Jupiter is the symbol of what Rome as an idea embodied. While Juno as the divine symbol of the demonic forces of violence and destruction does not hesitate to call up the spirits of the nether world . . . Jupiter is the organizing power that restrains those forces. Thus, on a deeper level, the contrast between the two highest divinities is symbolic of the ambivalence in history and human nature. It is a symbol, too, of the struggle between light and darkness, mind and emotion, order and chaos, which incessantly pervades the cosmos, the soul, and politics. . . . The struggle and final victory of order—this subduing of the demonic which is the basic theme of the poem, appears and reappears in many variations. The demonic appears in history as civil or foreign war, in the soul as passion, and in nature as death and destruction. Jupiter, Aeneas, and Augustus are its conquerors, while Juno, Dido, Turnus, and Antony are its conquered representatives. The contrast between Jupiter's powerful composure and Juno's confused passion reappears in the contrast between Aeneas and Dido and between Aeneas and Turnus. The Roman god, the Roman hero, and the Roman emperor are incarnations of the same idea. (17–18)

One of the leitmotifs of Pöschl's study is Goethe's insistence, expressed in a letter to Friedrich Schiller (8 April 1797), that each scene must symbolically represent the whole. It is precisely *The Aeneid's* dual-focus structure that permits Vergil to follow this precept so scrupulously. Just as the exposition must be double, so every part of the work depends on the alternating following-pattern's constant invitation to compare and contrast the juxtaposed parties. If Aeneas's wanderings are relegated to an included story, it is not solely to permit the book to begin in medias res but also to avoid giving

the impression that Aeneas himself is the poem's subject, he must not be made to appear so. Even Aeneas's final victory shows him as part of a diptych, his patience and humanity opposed to Turnus's irrational anger and barbarism. Like other early epics that show Moses and the Israelites fleeing from Pharaoh or the Greeks laying siege to Troy, *The Aeneid* portrays a battle between continents, a fight reminiscent of the wars that pitted Hannibal's elephants against the ordered legions of the Imperial Army. Vergil's universe is clearly that of the concentrically organized Old Testament, for the true antonym of "Citizen of Rome" is not "Citizen of Carthage" but "barbarian." Those who enjoy Roman citizenship have all the rights of the world's most powerful, most civilized nation; outsiders have none. Ingroup, outgroup—always the spatial distinction of a line drawn around the group in order to distinguish inclusion from exclusion. Those Italians who are willing to accept peaceful cohabitation may perhaps gain the advantages of citizenship, but the shameless fornication of a Dido or the barbaric fighting style of a Turnus must forever exclude them.

To emphasize citizenship is to play up the importance of foundation, whether of Rome in *The Aeneid*, the Promised Land in the Old Testament, or socialist Russia in Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin*. Foundation of a still existent state—along with worship of the founders—offers a theme that effectively reinforces audience homogeneity. Dual-focus narrative creates continuity between the distant past and the living present by means of a series of replacement operations. Just as Latium will be the new Troy, Augustus will be a scion of Aeneas's line. Even when the relationship is more or less facetious, as in René Goscinny and Albert Uderzo's comic strip *Astérix le Gaulois*, the continuity from text to audience is immediately apparent. Vergil affords readers every opportunity to identify with individual characters, to participate in their dilemmas, and to learn from their reactions, yet the overall structure of *The Aeneid* calls for group reaction rather than individual identification. Because the text is about Rome rather than any particular individual, it might manage without Aeneas, but it cannot dispense with some sequence of circumstances leading to the founding of Rome.

Interestingly, when the classical epic sought a method of increasing psychological interest, the approach adopted remained decidedly dual-focus. Instead of following a single character exclusively, concentrating all attention

on his motivations and decisions, the Christian writer Prudentius introduced a measure of psychological complexity into his *Psychomachia*, some four centuries after Vergil, by transferring *The Aeneid*'s successive diptychs into the theater of the mind. Whereas character traits are always externalized in Vergil's epic, with one set of attitudes attributed to Aeneas and another to his successive foes, Prudentius begins the long process of internalizing character psychology, using Virtues and Vices as his warriors and psychological allegory as his mode. In many ways—obvious to anyone who has read both texts—Prudentius is an inferior writer to Vergil, yet to Prudentius goes the credit for discovering an influential method of bending dual-focus strategies to psychological purpose. Nearly forgotten, *Psychomachia* deserves revival, for together with Augustine's *City of God* it provided the foundation for a thousand years of medieval dual-focus narrative, in the visual arts as well as in literary, religious, and historical texts.

Prudentius's text is built around seven hand-to-hand combats between Virtues and Vices, resulting in peace and the building of a new temple. Just as the Decalogue in Exodus renders explicit the dualities of Genesis, detailing the markers that distinguish Jew from non-Jew, so Prudentius codifies much of the Vergilian material. At the same time, he draws heavily on Old Testament parallels, thus effecting one of the first important syntheses of classical and Judeo-Christian dual-focus narrative. The second combat, in which Chastity meets Lust (Libido), clearly parallels the Aeneas-Dido relationship, for Juno's strategy involved throwing Dido soul and body at Aeneas. The next fight presents the outcome of the Dido-Aeneas relationship, with Long-suffering (Patientia) battling Wrath (Ira). Like Dido, frustrated at her inability to debauch her counterpart, Ira eventually runs herself through with a sword. The rest of Prudentius's epic operates in much the same way. Virtues named Lowliness (Humilitas), Soberness (Sobrietas), and Reason (Ratio) match Aeneas's *pietas*, while Vices identified as Pride (Superbia), Indulgence (Luxuria), and Greed (Avaritia) neatly sum up the barbarism of Turnus and his allies Camilla, Mezentius, and Juno. The end of *Psychomachia* offers additional parallels to the founding of Rome. Just as Concordia sets foot inside the new temple, she is attacked from within by Discordia—an obvious reference to Roman mythology and the well-known sibling rivalry between Romulus and Remus.

On the surface, *Psychomachia* seems no more than a militant Christian text, with no explicit reference to *The Aeneid*. The examples cited are not classical but traditional Old Testament types: Job and Solomon, Judith and Holofernes, David and Goliath. Yet the choice and order of Virtues and Vices reveal the extent to which *Psychomachia* offers a psychological codification of Vergil's epic. By combining classical and Christian psychology, Prudentius solved one of the Renaissance's thorniest problems well over a millennium too soon. By using psychological labels and by making the human mind the battleground of his epic, Prudentius began a progression whose implications lead directly out of the dual-focus mode.

Dual-focus epic, as exemplified by the Old Testament, *The Aeneid*, and *Psychomachia*, operates according to what we might call "concentric dualism." Value is allocated to opposed groups differentially, as if one group were nearer to the source of value than the other. Geography is thus always hierarchical in nature. Those closest to the center are valued most highly, for in the center is Jerusalem, the Temple, the Ark of the Covenant. In the words of Mircea Eliade (1959), the Promised Land is *cosmos*, the outlying regions *chaos*, and Jerusalem the *axis mundi*. Surprisingly, dual-focus pastoral often follows the same model. Though some dual-focus pastorals (such as *Daphnis and Chloe*) approximate equal treatment of male and female, thereby approaching a more egalitarian diametrical dualism, the more common method involves a sense of underlying inequality—of concentric dualism—as if dual-focus pastoral were simply a disguised version of dual-focus epic.

Because courtship is regularly treated as conquest in Western literature, women are repeatedly identified with territory to be occupied and won. Having conquered Italy, Aeneas simultaneously lays claim to the land and to the local king's daughter, Lavinia. By concentrating attention on the clash between the villain and the young lover, popular melodramas effectively conceal the lover's interest in occupying the young lady's property. Though Hollywood musicals typically end with a marriage of apparent equals, closer scrutiny often reveals a substantial imbalance in the couple, almost always to the benefit of the man and the detriment of the woman. From Maurice Chevalier and Fred Astaire to Gene Kelly and Elvis Presley, the guy typically gets top billing and the better half of the deal. In Fred Zinneman's *Oklahoma!*,

Laurie may realize her dreams by marrying Curly, but when the cowhand weds the farmgirl he acquires her farm as well.

Daphnis and Chloe offers not only one of the most charming of all dual-focus pastorals but a myth of artistic interpretation as well. Longus reveals characters in the very act of learning that the world can be understood only in terms of a binary principle. At first, lacking knowledge, Daphnis and Chloe gather none of the fruits of their love. Only after the facts of life are passed on to them by nature and their elders will the two star-crossed lovers enjoy physical lovemaking. The overall pattern of replacement operations is typical of dual-focus pastoral: by marrying, children of different families gain the right to engender and raise their own family, thereby constituting a new generation. This saga of birth and repopulation reverses the epic tale of death and destruction, the two forms fitting neatly together as part of the larger dual-focus vision. At first nourished by goat and sheep, Longus's pastoral pair are soon discovered by parallel peasant families, then eventually passed on to their rediscovered aristocratic parents. This series of parental replacement operations is not complete until the children born to the newlyweds are, in turn, confided to the care of a goat and a ewe. In this cyclical arrangement, the only change that takes place over the course of the text is replacement of one generation by its successor.

For that change to come about, however, Daphnis and Chloe must learn what the previous generation already knows. Taking his thematic material from the text's fundamental male/female distinction, Longus portrays a *boy* and a *girl* learning what those sexual designations mean. For children to become parents, they must first learn to understand and to represent their sex. Since the cyclical nature of human existence depends on sexual categories, Daphnis and Chloe must learn to be defined by those categories in much the same way that Esther must accept and reveal her Jewishness or Aeneas his Roman virtue. Daphnis's and Chloe's new knowledge represents the actualization of a natural reality rather than the kind of learning associated with traditional definitions of narrative. Instead of becoming something that they previously were not, they move closer and closer to perfect representation of their divine archetypes: Pan, whose altar is by a tree (the masculine principle), and the Nymphs, who are worshiped in a grotto (the female principle).

Daphnis and Chloe exist in a world apart, a domain where the gods, people, and nature live in perfect concord, for the gods are the shepherds' foster parents, and the animals their charges and constant companions. As long as the young lovers remain within this context the following-pattern strictly obeys the principle of alternation between male and female, goat and sheep. Protected by its peaceful isolation, this pastoral society is nevertheless not totally shut off from the outside world. At regular intervals, the calm and naïveté of pastoral seclusion are interrupted by incursions from the world of experience and violence beyond. Dual-focus pastoral alternation between Daphnis and Chloe thus shares the text with dual-focus epic alternation and conflict between the pastoral society and its less peaceful neighbors. Outside intervention is necessary because Longus's shepherds are doomed to perpetual ignorance as long as they remain isolated. They try to imitate the love-making of sheep and goats, but they soon find it unsuitable for humans.

In lovemaking there is also an element of violence, Daphnis discovers to his horror. From the start, the violent outside world is defined as the erotic realm of the wolf. When Daphnis and Chloe take their herds out to pasture, "Eros contrived trouble for them. A she-wolf from the adjoining countryside harried the flocks" (1953:7). Only when Daphnis has himself fallen into the trap set for the wolf will he bathe himself before Chloe, thus lighting in her the low fire of young love. The flames are fanned as Dorcon, an experienced cowherd "who knew not only the name but the facts of love" (10), challenges Daphnis to a contest, resulting in a first kiss between the two foundlings. Daphnis then for the first time finds Chloe beautiful. When autumn comes, Daphnis is carried off by pirates, then is carried away by a view of Chloe's naked body as she bathes to celebrate his return: "That bath seemed to him to be a more fearful thing than the sea" (18). But the young lovers cannot satisfy their longings without the good offices of Lykainion (whose name means "the little wolf"), a city wench who has long had her eyes on Daphnis. Knowledge gained outside the pastoral world turns out to be required for procreation of life within pastoral bounds. Daphnis and Chloe must learn the lesson of Eros: they must capture the wolf instinct and turn it to their own purpose. In the words of Paul Turner, "they cannot become mature human beings until they have come to terms with the 'wolf' element in human nature" (1968:21).

Before they can come to terms with Eros, however, they must learn to interpret their world. Like the reader faced with the hidden pattern of a

book, Daphnis and Chloe can make no progress in their understanding of the world until they discover its organizing principles. Nature is the text, Daphnis and Chloe are its readers. Progressively, the lovers perform for us the task of elucidating the text's polarity adjustment process. Not until Daphnis first bathes himself before Chloe does she discover beauty. Delightfully naïve, she sets out to answer a simple question: What produces beauty? Daphnis bathed and he was beautiful, she thinks; perhaps if I bathe myself I too will be beautiful. But her bath changes nothing. When Daphnis pipes, that too makes him beautiful in her eyes; but when she pipes, it is to no avail. Action, Chloe discovers, is not essential but incidental, a hypothesis that she proves by her ineffectual metaphorizing:

I am sick for sure, but what the malady is I do not know. I am in pain, but can find no bruise. I am distressed, yet none of my sheep is missing. I feel a burning, yet am sitting in thick shade. How many times have I been pricked by brambles, yet I never cried; how many times have bees stung me, but I never lost my appetite. The thing that pricks my heart now is sharper than those. Daphnis is beautiful, but so are the flowers; his pipe makes fine music, but so does the nightingale—but flowers and nightingales do not disturb me. Would I could become a pipe, so that he might breathe upon me, a goat, that I might graze in his care! Only Daphnis did you make beautiful; my bathing was useless. (1953:9)

Daphnis fares no better when Chloe's first nude bath leads him to discover beauty. At first, these would-be lovers mistakenly assume that all texts are the same, that each one can be compared to all the others without any loss of meaning. "They wanted something, but knew not what" (13).

What they lack is a clear understanding of the differences between their two bodies. In the dual-focus pastoral world it is difference, not change, that carries meaning. Like Montessori pupils, Daphnis and Chloe must learn to grasp the relationship between the peg and the pegboard, matching similar shapes and noting the difference between convex and concave configurations. If the young inhabitants of the pastoral world are slow to learn how their bodies differ, it is in part because those who have already discovered Eros take this knowledge for granted. Philetas thinks he is teaching them how to require their love by suggesting "kisses and embraces and lying

together with naked bodies" (1953:22), but he has left out the essential fact. He treats the young lovers as if they were both the same, as if they were exact mirror images one of the other. When Daphnis lies with Lykainion, however, he discovers the small but all-important flaw in the mirror. Chloe resembles him in all ways but one, he learns. Finally, in this binary principle, he gains the knowledge needed to read the world.

But Lykainion's warning about the violence of lovemaking keeps Daphnis from running to Chloe and putting his newfound knowledge into practice. Just as the pastoral world cannot be self-perpetuating without letting a bit of Eros through a break in its walls, so Daphnis cannot make love to Chloe without causing her to bleed: "Chloe would soon have become a woman if the matter of the blood had not terrified Daphnis" (1953:46). Never, in the course of Longus's tale, does Daphnis resign himself in a psychologically motivated manner to the "matter of the blood." Instead, Longus handles the problem ritually, exploiting the divine affinities apparent since the story's opening paragraph. At first goat and sheep, Daphnis and Chloe adjust to their roles as man and woman in two different ways. After learning a lesson in human anatomy, they perform the myths in which Pan enacts his sexual role with the Nymphs. When Daphnis's foster father Lamon passes down the knowledge of his generation in the form of the Pan-Syrinx story, the two youths act out the tale, thus rendering explicit their relationship to Pan and Syrinx. Pan tried to persuade Syrinx to give in to his desires, but Syrinx refused a partially human lover. Hiding among the reeds, Syrinx was soon accidentally cut down by Pan. When he realized what he had done, Pan bound the reeds together, thereby inventing the flute. This etiological account reveals that lovemaking does indeed have a bestial element, while recognizing that beauty and music owe their very existence to the deflowering of a woman. The lesson is clear: for love to be requited, man's bestial side must tear woman apart.

Once Daphnis learns this lesson he does his best to convey it to Chloe through another story about Pan. This time the goat god is courting the nymph Echo, who "avoided all males, whether human or divine, for she loved maidenhood" (1953:45). It would have been better for her, though, had she surrendered to Pan, for out of jealousy he tore her limb from limb and scattered her all over the land. And so it is, explains Daphnis, that today she returns our music like some antiphonal chant. Remembering the time

when he and Chloe had competed verbally, alternately launching sallies "antiphonally . . . like an echo" (40), Daphnis expects Chloe to understand the parallel between their own situation and the story of Echo. Indeed, the Echo myth elegantly demonstrates the functioning of the flaw in the dual-focus mirror. Pan with his pipe makes sounds, but their beauty is complete only when Echo has responded with her chorus. The two are complementary, but different—Pan is the phallus, with his pipe, while Echo is the concave circle of hills that returns Pan's compliment.

As recounted in *Daphnis and Chloe*, the Echo myth aptly describes more than just a single pastoral pair. For the antiphonal method is the basic mode not only of pastoral but also of dual-focus narrative as a whole. From Theocritus to Vergil and on to the Italian Renaissance, "amoebic" verse is the fundamental medium of the pastoral experience. Whether between two shepherds in a singing match or two lovers competing in fun against each other, the basic principle of this type of verse is contained in its name: *amoibé* or change. The formal similarities of succeeding verses create a mirror effect, but the amoebic aspect of the verse introduces the mirror's flaw. It is instructive to compare the type of change inherent in amoebic verse to the type we associate with the novel of education. The novel portrays a character moving through time, changing as she goes, generating the text's structure, which becomes increasingly based on change-over-time as the text progresses. In amoebic verse the situation is radically different, dependent instead on difference-over-space. The *amoibé* occurs not between one time and the next but between one character and another. Daphnis and Chloe may make significant progress in terms of their own personal education, but the text as a whole deemphasizes that progress in two distinct ways: the one cyclical (the end repeats the beginning), the other amoebic (constantly measuring the difference between Daphnis and Chloe rather than between one situation and the next). Interest is thus transferred from diachronic movement to the text's synchronic dimension. We measure change not along the text's temporal axis, as in the Bildungsroman (from ignorance to experience, for example), but at right angles to that temporal development.

From the formulaic repetitions of *The Song of Roland* to the antiphonal duets of the Hollywood musical, dual-focus narrative rejects change-over-time in favor of the amoebic principle of difference-over-space. What makes it so easy to construct comparisons is the formulaic nature of the fundamental

distinctions around which dual-focus texts are built. In one sense, dual-focus characters don't even have names—they are defined instead by their position. The name “Satan” means opponent, as does the Old French equivalent, *averser*, used throughout *The Song of Roland*. Even the word “enemy” is none other than *in plus amicus*, “not-friend.” Dual-focus epics are thus populated with characters who, structurally speaking, may be identified as *friend* and *not-friend*. The system's duality is regularly carried in character names, from Hesiod (Law/lessness), Old Testament judges (Gideon's other name is Jerubbaal, meaning “contend with Baal”), and medieval religious texts (Anti/christ) to comic strip heroes (the Avenger), science-fiction films (*Them!*), and westerns (out/laws). Indian myth takes the system one step farther. Not only is Ahi the water dragon known as Vṛtra, meaning the evil one or simply the adversary, but Vṛtra is overcome by Indra the fertility god who is also known as Vṛtrahan, the slayer of Vṛtra the opponent. Dual-focus epic always depends on the opposition of a Vṛtra to a Vṛtrahan, an adversary to an adversary killer, a foe to a friend, an other to a self. Dual-focus pastoral follows a similar route, opposing male to fe/male and man to wo/man. The rhyme is built in, because the underlying structure always already depends on the presence of rhyming characters and values.

Replacement Operations and Polarity Adjustment

Concentrating on principles of opposition, I have thus far paid little attention to the development of dual-focus texts over time. In one sense, this is appropriate, because dual-focus narratives work very hard to highlight static oppositions and questions of space. Dual-focus texts are not without plots, but those plots always seem to serve the text's fundamental duality. Much has been written about the structure of novelistic plots, but most novel-based conclusions simply don't apply to dual-focus strategies. A new analysis is needed, stressing the specificity of the dual-focus approach.

Our guiding metaphor thus far has been the chess game, with its clear opposition between equivalent but opposite players. We have now reached the limits of this metaphor's usefulness. The chess analogy exemplifies quite well the text's synchronic aspect, but it has less to say about the diachronic progression of the text. Another metaphor now suggests itself, one that is

central to both classical and Christian dual-focus traditions. Throughout *The Iliad* and then again at the end of *The Aeneid* we are told that the king of the gods holds the fate of mortals in his hand as he would hold an equal-arm balance, with the Greeks or Aeneas on one side and the Trojans or Turnus on the other. Christian mythology borrows this motif, transferring it from the battlefield to the soul and calling it *psychostasis* or the weighing of the soul. With St. Michael holding the scale, good deeds fill one pan and bad acts the other. As in the classical motif, the pan that outweighs the other is the winner. Once weighing has taken place, the soul's fate is decided and the text is finished.

Dual-focus texts are conceived as a process of weighing. Beforehand, the scale is stable. Afterward, the scale once again achieves stability. Only in between, during the process of weighing, does the scale oscillate. In order to continue, the text must avoid permanent resolution of its seesawing motion.

The opening section of this chapter argued that dual-focus texts typically begin by a process of splitting, which organizes an initial chaotic situation into two antithetical principles, groups, or characters. This split presides over the text's synchronic component, but something else is needed to initiate the dual-focus diachronic dimension. The Old Testament book of Judges offers useful insight into this process. The Pentateuch serves to establish a claim to power and value, with the Israelites separated from those around them, valorized by a special covenant with God, and organized according to laws prescribing the conduct required for extension of that privileged relationship. Joshua, the book directly following the Pentateuch, completes the establishment of the Israelites—with God's help they reach the Promised Land, where they enjoy a position of power and stability. But in stability there is no text. The book of Judges exists not because everything continues to run along smoothly but because the people of Israel continually “did what was evil in the sight of the Lord” (a formula that is repeated no fewer than eight times: Judges 2:11, 3:7, 3:12, 4:1, 6:1, 8:34, 10:6, 13:1). Whenever the Israelites stray from the source of their strength—the Law and its Giver—they empower their foes and mobilize a new section of the text. To the periods when the people of Israel are obedient and dominate the land from the Jordan to the sea, the text accords not one word, for the continued existence of the text depends on maintaining the suspense—literally and figuratively—during which no one knows which way the scales will tilt. Judges becomes a model

for the remainder of the Old Testament, which oscillates between straying from the Law, with a consequent loss of power, and periodic returns to the power engendered by proper belief and action.

Dual-focus rhetoric firmly allies readers with one side, but the diachronic aspect of dual-focus texts requires a rupture between sympathy and power. The plot isn't set in motion until the fate of the rhetorically privileged side appears to be in doubt. A real-world example may be of some use here. For decades during the twentieth century, world politics depended heavily on the notion of a "balance of power." As long as a power balance subsists, this dual-focus theory asserted, the gates of war remain closed. But when the Soviets sent Sputnik into orbit, the newspapers were suddenly cluttered with comparative graphs, terms of imbalance like "gap" or "lag," and new versions of the perennial Ivan-Johnny contrast, all triggered by fear that the imbalance might turn into war—the larger text that balance of power politics attempts to keep from being written. "What made war inevitable," Thucydides says at the beginning of *The Peloponnesian War*, "was the growth of Athenian power and the fear which this caused in Sparta" (1954:25). It is here that Thucydides begins his text, and not with a detailed account of the years of peace preceding the war, for the breakdown of the balance of power and the text are simultaneous and in a sense synonymous. In *The Song of Roland* only a few lines are needed to relate Charlemagne's successful Spanish campaign. For seven years, the Holy Roman Emperor had achieved a continuous string of victories, yet the poet shows no interest in that portion of history. What attracts the poet—what constitutes a dual-focus plot—is the breakdown of Christian unity, the consequent reduction of Christian strength, and thus the challenge to Christian superiority. Just as each episode in Judges begins when the people of Israel stray from God and his Law, so *Roland* is set in motion by Ganelon's straying from his feudal responsibilities.

Ganelon belongs to a class of characters that we may conveniently label as "middlemen." Refusing to be fully defined by the duality that organizes the text's synchronic existence, middlemen cross the line that separates the text's two constitutive groups, thereby disturbing the delicate balance between the two sides. Homer's *Iliad* offers a particularly clear example of the functioning of dual-focus middlemen. Ever since Aristotle's attempts to squeeze *The Iliad* into the biographical mold that he applied to *The Odyssey*, Homer's martial epic has been consistently misread, the Trojan war being treated as a

function of Achilles' anger rather than vice versa. In short (with the exception of a few passages in Whitman 1958 and Sheppard 1969), *Iliad* criticism has suffered from the same problem that has so long plagued *The Aeneid* and *The Song of Roland*: a fundamentally dual-focus text has been read as if it had only a single focus. *The Iliad* makes much more sense when it is treated as a dual-focus epic triggered by Achilles' alienation from his group, thus producing an imbalance between Trojans and Greeks. The mechanism by which Achilles becomes a middleman deserves attention, because it demonstrates especially clearly the dual-focus tendency to handle every situation in binary fashion. The middleman is not an independent category lying between Greeks and Trojans but is instead generated out of an internal conflict formally identical to the larger Greek-Trojan battle.

At the outset Chryses brings the wrath of Apollo down on the Greeks for their unwillingness to return his daughter Chryseis, but when she is sent home, their safety seems assured. Agamemnon, however, is far from satisfied; he resents losing Chryseis and thus resolves to replace his lost prize with Achilles' captive Briseis. This series of replacement operations, substituting one anger for another, forces Achilles into the role of opponent. It is Achilles' plea to Zeus (through his mother Thetis) and not Chryses' invocation to Apollo that spells the beginning of the Greeks' misfortune. Not until Book XVI, where Achilles reverses his original plea to Zeus, will the Greeks' fortune change, and not until Achilles himself decides to reenter the combat in Book XIX will the Trojans' fate be sealed. *The Iliad* is not Achilles' book but a clever combination of international and intranational strife. It is Achilles' role at the intersection of the book's two conflicts (the Greek-Trojan battle and the quarrel with Agamemnon) that forces him into the role of middleman. This composite formula will become the model for many a later dual-focus text, including the Hollywood western and several generations of superhero comic books.

Once the dual-focus text has been set in motion by the creation of an initial imbalance (through defection of a middleman, breakdown of group unity, or divergence from the Law), the text proceeds according to a series of replacement operations. Instead of operating through a clear cause-and-effect pattern, each new confrontation seems to be generated automatically, in response to a clear textual need. When one foe is vanquished, another arises, as if out of thin air, to take his place. No bad guy, no text. In Eugène Sue's

monotonous, endlessly repeating the same opposition, with the same clear rhetorical effect, but upon closer inspection we discover a less obvious program.

D. W. Griffith's controversial masterpiece, *The Birth of a Nation*, offers a fascinating example of the opportunities available through polarity adjustment. The first half of Griffith's film alternates between two parallel families, the Stonemans in the North and the Camerons in the South. Before the outbreak of the Civil War, we witness the friendship of the younger sons—eventually destined to meet in battle—as well as the nascent romance of Elsie Stoneman and Ben Cameron. When war comes, we continue our alternation between Union and Confederate sides. As the film progresses, however, the contrast between North and South progressively diminishes in favor of the qualities shared by these noble foes. Little by little, we shift from opposition between the Stonemans and Camerons to a celebration of their hidden commonality—of their shared patrician whiteness—now opposed to the supposedly barbaric qualities of the “Negro race.” Having grabbed our attention by stressing the pathetic side of internecine strife, Griffith now slides to his real topic, the superiority of one race over the other. What appeared to be the historical tale of North versus South has turned into a biased account of white versus black. Just as photographers must deal with the problem of parallax, and cartographers must adjust for the slight difference between true North and magnetic North, readers of dual-focus narrative must remain ever attentive to a slippage in the polarities around which the text is built.

Endings

Through replacement operations, metaphoric modulation, and polarity adjustment, the alternating following-pattern of dual-focus narrative is eventually suspended by reduction of the text's two constitutive foci to one. In dual-focus epic, this process involves destruction or exile of one group. In dual-focus pastoral, reduction is effected through a merger of the two sides. Many texts combine the two approaches. Most descriptions of narrative endings assume that they relate to the body of the text in a manner that is entirely uncharacteristic of dual-focus narratives. Typically used to describe

narrative conclusions are paired terms like cause-effect, question-answer, and problem-solution (e.g., Richardson 1997:92, Miller 1998:46, Carroll 2001:32, Abbott 2002:12). None of these is adequate to describe the way in which dual-focus texts end. Instead, the necessary concepts are reversal and apocalypse. Two early Christian examples will prove especially useful for understanding the role of endings in dual-focus narrative.

One of the most influential early Christian texts was *The Martyrdom of Saint Perpetua and Saint Felicitas*, which became the literary model for the important genre known as the *passio* or martyr's life. In only a few pages, this moving text portrays two separate battles. The dominant battle is the one implied by the title: Perpetua, Felicitas, and their friends are questioned, beaten, and slaughtered by the Romans. The day before she is to die in the arena, however, Perpetua has a dream depicting a second battle. Thrust into the arena alone, she is soon attacked by the Devil disguised as an Egyptian, whom she defeats in single combat. In real life under the Romans, Perpetua dies a horrible death, but in her dream she leaves the arena victorious. In its simplicity, this account of martyrdom eloquently demonstrates the double binarity of dual-focus apocalyptic endings. An apparently primary distinction opposes the Christians to the Romans, but that antagonism is eventually trumped by a more important contrast between dingy reality and glorious dream life. Perpetua's vision cannot possibly be understood as an effect of a preceding cause. Instead, it must be seen as a reversal of the previously presented circumstances, a radical adjustment of polarities. In Perpetua's flesh-and-blood martyrdom, the operative distinctions involve physical power; in her dream, the outcome depends on spiritual power.

A similar pattern emerges from the familiar story of Dives and Lazarus (Luke 16:19–31), among Jesus' parables the most commonly depicted in medieval art. This exemplary tale about a rich man and a poor leper is typically recounted in a double diptych. The first image reveals Dives on the left, seated at his table, enjoying the fruits of this world, while Lazarus crawls into a corner on the right, his sores licked by dogs. This first panel is usually drawn or sculpted quite realistically, by medieval standards. The second image, however, is clearly the product of imagination rather than observation. On the left, the rich man burns in the fires of Hell; on the right, Lazarus reposes happily in the comforting bosom of Abraham. The variations on this

theme are manifold—on the façade of the south porch at Moissac, in the capital of Vézelay's south aisle, in Herrad of Lansberg's *Hortus Deliciarum*—but the effect is always the same. This world is revealed as nothing but a degraded realm where people are not situated in their rightful place. The connections between the two diptychs include nothing that we can clearly identify as cause and effect, nor are there any strong temporal markers connecting the two panels. This is not a depiction of before and after but of here and hereafter, of the fallen world and eternal life.

Throughout the history of dual-focus narrative, a similar textual organization has held sway. The first part of the text depicts a world of “reversed circumstances,” as one Horatio Alger character put it. The conclusion rights that wrong by reversing the reversal. In many cases, this configuration clearly represents a reaction to a very real historical situation. Before emancipation, African Americans developed a large variety of narrative songs that offered an otherworldly response to the slavery they were made to endure in this world. These “Negro Sprituals” borrowed Old Testament metaphors and apocalyptic mythology as the basis for stories of heavenly triumph over human misery. When Southern whites were defeated in the Civil War, they too sought the kind of comfort easily provided by the magic of polarity adjustment. No text makes the otherworldly nature of the solution more obvious than Griffith's *Birth of a Nation*, where the white-robed riders of the Ku Klux Klan seem to float in out of a vision, expressing Southern aspirations of vengeance.

Defeated by the British, the Irish imagined a new life in the land across the sea, thereby shedding their identity as losers to the British in favor of a new identification with the American revolutionaries who defeated the British. Many times over, Irish songs thus repeat the double diptych of defeat at the hands of the British reversed by a triumphal new life in America. In Dion Boucicault's celebrated “Oh! Paddy Dear (The Wearing of the Green),” the first verse laments past losses and their effect on daily life in the defeated homeland, while the second imagines a new life for the Irish in a land “where rich and poor stand equal in the light of freedom's day.” Though America may be a real place, it serves the same function in Irish song as dream does for Perpetua or heavenly vision for Lazarus. Because justice in this world seems faulty, dual-focus texts invent apocalyptic realms of perfect justice. Inverting previous events, apocalypse is formally equivalent to revenge, repeating the same stories with the roles reversed.

Transferred to dual-focus pastoral, this Last Judgment mentality produces fascinating results. Like its epic counterpart, dual-focus pastoral begins with “reversed circumstances,” but of a different sort. Instead of starting with a defeat or an exile, dual-focus love stories typically begin with a mismatch: the eventual lovers are matched to the wrong partners. The Hollywood musical—often a particularly transparent bearer of dual-focus pastoral structures—regularly begins by introducing same-sex friends or a mismatched heterosexual couple. For the film to progress, the “wrong” couples must be done away with, so that the “right” matches can be concluded. In Minnelli's *An American in Paris*, Gene Kelly is paired first with Oscar Levant (wrong sex) and then with Nina Foch (too old) before eventually finding Leslie Caron, who had previously been coupled with Georges Guétary (too old). In order to drive the point home, Kelly also finds the time to dance with a group of children (too young) and a grey-haired woman (too old). The minute Kelly sights Caron, we have no doubt which characters should be matched and how the film will end. Just as comedy audiences know from the start that the *senex* is an inappropriate match for the attractive young woman, who must instead be matched to someone her age, so musical audiences have a keen notion of what passes for justice in the dual-focus pastoral world. If dual-focus epic implicitly closes on the motionless end of a battle (aptly figured in *Psychomachia* illustrations by the image of a Virtue standing triumphantly over the corresponding recumbent Vice), dual-focus pastoral ends with a freeze-frame of the couple's final clinch, thereby extending the “right” match into eternity.

Dual-focus narrative typically stretches between two eternities, two absolutes. Before the text there was nothing but chaos; with the end of the text comes the end of time. Time is the enemy; it is a fallen notion. Only in the clarity of Apocalypse and Last Judgment (even when that notion is reduced to no more than a freeze-frame) can the fall into time be reversed. Given to absolutes, dual-focus narratives often assign values in a manner that is abundantly clear. “Pagans are wrong and Christians are right” (79), we are boldly assured in *The Song of Roland*. In dual-focus pastoral, a similar sense of rightness is produced by paired close-ups, a significant exchange of glances, or the convention of parallel sleepless nights. This clarity engenders a context of reader confidence that effectively undermines traditional notions of cause and effect. Why do Kelly and Caron get together at the end? Is it because of

this or that action? No, it is above all because they are “Fated to Be Mated,” as Fred Astaire puts it apropos of his relationship with Cyd Charisse in Ruben Mamoulian’s *Silk Stockings*.

Dual-focus endings thus involve a type of causality that is far removed from the logic of the detective novel. Does Aeneas defeat Turnus because he is courageous or because he is fated to do so? Is Turnus killed because he has wantonly slaughtered Pallas or simply because he is cast in the role of the villain? Does Thierry’s victory over Pinabel at the end of *Roland* prove that he is in the right, or is it the fact that he is in the right that causes him to win? In Exodus 17 the Israelites fight the Amalekites while Moses stands atop the hill holding the rod of God; whenever he holds up his hand, Israel prevails, but the Amalekites dominate when he lowers his hand. Do the Israelites win because Moses keeps his hand raised, or vice versa? In medieval iconography, are individuals sent to heaven because of their good deeds or because the angels outweigh the devils on Michael’s scale? Does Superman win because he has superpowers or because his opponents are evil?

The traditional hair-splitting responses to questions like these are quite unnecessary in the dual-focus context, for the questions themselves reveal a misunderstanding of the normal dual-focus approach to causality and judgment. We moderns have a hard time handling the notion that battle outcome and judgment of right and wrong might be both synonymous and simultaneous. In the judicial battles that constitute the locus classicus of dual-focus clashes, one side is not right because their man won, nor did their man win because that side was in the right. Rather, the two are synonymous, simultaneous, and incontrovertible. The concepts of *injustice*, of mistaken decisions, and of appeal are possible only in a fallen world. Once the apocalyptic moment has been reached, the outcome and the right are the same and inseparable. The judge is not a man, who might be considered fallible, but Jupiter, God, or the equally infallible (and equally prejudiced) Olympian narrator. There are thus no wrong judgments, because the moral code and the particular judgment are not separable. Instead of development, dual-focus narratives offer a stable rhetoric and a corresponding—and entirely predictable—last judgment.

Because they substitute predictable judgments for cause-and-effect plots, dual-focus texts also must, in large part, do without the suspense typically associated with other types of narrative. The same ability that permits

dual-focus narrators to alternate between one side and the other typically provides not only present knowledge of all the characters but also knowledge of the future. Everything leads the reader to identify with this Olympian narrator. To a surprising extent, we share not only his prejudices but also his knowledge. The subject is either historically predictable (Rome was indeed founded) or generically predictable (we know how musicals end). At the same time, however, we have good cause to identify with the characters who receive the narrator’s most sympathetic treatment. Placing ourselves in their skins, we share their limited perspective. We thus find ourselves in the contradictory position of simultaneously identifying with an all-powerful narrator and with limited characters. As Charlemagne we cannot understand his dreams, but as the narrator we understand them perfectly well. Dual-focus readers thus find themselves split—both Olympian narrator and limited character, both sure of the outcome and repeatedly in doubt. Dual-focus suspense is thus no suspense at all, in the normal sense of the term, but a tearing apart of the spectator, a rending to which we voluntarily submit in order finally to celebrate a renewed wholeness.

Uncle Remus enacts dual-focus ritual suspense in a particularly clear manner. Joel Chandler Harris’s stories invariably begin with the little boy’s question about the fate of Brer Rabbit. Based on doubt and curiosity, these queries about time, about specific events, about what happened next are designed to heighten suspense. But the narrator’s answer is always couched in terms of universals, of essences, and of relationships that don’t change over time. For example, in chapter six, the little boy inquires: “‘Uncle Remus, did the Rabbit have to go clean away when he got loose from the Tar-baby?’ To which Uncle Remus retorts: “‘Bless gracious, honey, dat he didn’t. Who? Him? You dunno nuthin’ ’tall ’bout Brer Rabbit ef dat’s de way you puttin’ ’im down’” (1965:24). That is, if the boy has ritual curiosity, Uncle Remus has ritual knowledge, which he must impart to the boy. Just as each dual-focus text posits exception only to squelch it, so dual-focus narratives permit suspense only to demonstrate—to those who are within the circle—that suspense is never truly possible. If you know about Brer Rabbit, then there is no suspense, for his fate is fully predictable on the basis of his well-defined character. The dual-focus narrator turns us all into gods. We provisionally forget the outcome (which we have known all along from tradition, from generic knowledge, or from internal evidence) only in order to reenact the distance

between narrator and audience, between the divine and the human. The end of the text represents the joining of the two, that moment when all knowledge is shared and theophany can take place.

The Dual-Focus System

This chapter has described several structures common to texts characterized by an alternating following-pattern, thereby making a case for the existence of a common but previously unrecognized type, which I have called dual-focus. The particular traits thus far educed include:

- A following-pattern that alternates between opponents or lovers
- Regular movement between the two sides by means of metaphoric modulation
- An exposition establishing two equivalent and opposed individuals, groups, or principles
- Progression of the text by replacement rather than cause-and-effect connections
- Characters who operate as representatives of a group or category rather than as independent beings who develop or change
- A plot that results from a temporary imbalance between the two sides and that proceeds by removal of exceptions and restoration of unity
- An imbalance that produces the plot, often engendered by the action of characters (“middlemen”) who refuse to follow the dictates of their group, category, or sex
- Importance of the law, tradition, nature, or other established systems
- Negation of time through suspension, circularity, and spatialization
- Textual completion and return to a stable situation that depend on the reduction of two groups to one, through elimination or merging

This final section is devoted to constructing a coherent model that is capable of explaining the relationships connecting these apparently disparate characteristics.

The chess game metaphor evoked earlier provides useful insight. Descriptions of chess matches usually concentrate on the thirty-two pieces whose

mobility is essential to the game, taking for granted the existence of the sixty-four-square chessboard across which those pieces are moved. Just as a chess match cannot be understood by studying the moves of a single side, so the underlying logic of the match cannot be grasped without recognizing the relationship between the players and the space constituted by the chessboard. As in chess, the fundamental logic of dual-focus epic involves two rivals laying claim to the same space, with the text representing the weighing of their respective claims. The contested space may take on diverse identities, from a plot of land disputed by ranchers and farmers or the hand of a woman desired in marriage by rival suitors, to the place on a housewife’s grocery list fought over by competing detergents in commercials of the “Brand X” type. Whatever its nature, however, the contested space must be conceived as limited. As in chess or football, going out of bounds is not permitted, and resolution cannot be achieved by expansion of the available space. The claim of both sides is to a specific space, interchangeable with no other.

For a text to work in a dual-focus manner, it must establish a space (or series of spaces) and introduce two separate groups laying claim to that space. As Genesis 13:6 says of Lot and Abram, “The land could not support them both together” (New English Bible), or as the Revised Standard Version puts it, “The country was not large enough for both Abraham and Lot.” The same motif appears repeatedly. The Italian peninsula is not big enough for both Aeneas and Turnus. Either Charlemagne or Marsile must be driven out of the Iberian peninsula. Or as so many western antagonists implicitly put it: “This territory ain’t big enough for the both of us.”

A simple example, featuring two versions of the “same” story, will help explain how this process operates. Imagine this sequence of events:

A group of men sight an isolated house and decide to burglarize it. They develop a strategy and then put their plan into action. First, one of the group delivers a falsified note designed to lure the menfolk away, in the process emptying the bullets from the only gun in the house. Then the would-be burglars approach the house as a group, successively breaking down doors until they reach the inner sanctum where the objects of their desires are located.

The progress of the burglars is like a syntagmatic chain. They start in the bushes, cross the road, climb the stairs, force the front door, go through the

entrance hall, break into the living room, force the inner sanctum door, and finally reach their quarry. This is a story that takes place in time, depends on cause-and-effect progression, and operates by metonymic modulation. In short, it is not a dual-focus text. When D. W. Griffith based *The Lonely Villa* on this scenario, however, he turned the story into something else. Instead of concentrating on the would-be burglars, he alternates between the burglars and the house-dwellers. Each room becomes a fortress that mother and daughters defend against the attackers. Instead of treating the burglars' assault in a progressive or developmental manner, Griffith emphasizes the repetitive nature of the successive stages of their attack. This he does by organizing each shot in a rigorously parallel manner. Each frame is filled in such a way as to identify the left and right edges with one group or the other, thus charging each edge with an affective value. In the first shot, the burglars hide under a bush on the lower left; a road cutting diagonally across the screen separates them from the front door of the house, their first objective. In subsequent shots, whether interior or exterior, whether of the burglars, the women, or the absent husband, the configuration is always the same: the left edge of the frame represents danger, the right edge safety. Inside the house this effect is achieved only by careful camera positioning. In each room, both edges of the frame coincide precisely with doors: the one on the left barricaded against the thieves' entrance, the one on the right soon used as an exit to the next room.

Each shot thus represents a new contested space, with that contestation figured by the left-right tension between the burglars and the embattled women. Whereas my version of the story stressed time, causality, and metonymic modulation, Griffith's version depends on spatial organization, replacement, and metaphoric modulation. This transformation comes about (as suggested in Altman 1981b) because Griffith has reorganized a series of rooms—present in my version as a syntagmatic chain—into a paradigmatic situation four times repeated. As we move from the besieged women to the attacking men and back, we continue to look at a frame that maintains the same structure. In my story, the house was the object of the burglars' desire, not a contested space. The alternating following-pattern, coupled with the rigorous adherence of each shot to a single paradigm, turns the film into a series of identical units, related by replacement, each generated by the basic dual-focus model. Because emphasis is laid not on the syntagmatic relationship

between any two units but on the opposition between attackers and attacked within the unit, time is not sensed as a salient element of the story. I have previously used the image of the Archangel Michael's weighing of the souls to represent dual-focus narrative. It comes as no surprise that this action should be called *psychostasis* in Greek. *Stasis*, or weighing, is precisely what takes place in the static dual-focus world—and weighing involves spatial opposition, not temporal progression.

The timeless quality of spatial contestation is nowhere more beautifully exemplified than in Hawthorne's *House of the Seven Gables*. Maule has a plot of land that Pyncheon jealously covets; only this particular plot will do. So Pyncheon, after the custom of the times, simply has Maule hanged for witchcraft and usurps his property. But like the names of the novel's actors, "the wrong-doing of one generation lives into the successive ones" (1851:vi). The impossibility of escaping a legacy of evil is figured throughout the text by a compression of time and by transmission of the original opponents' characteristics to succeeding generations. The Maules, who built old Pyncheon's house, are consistently characterized by their sturdy toil, while the Pyncheon talents lie more in the domain of papers and words, deeds and laws. Even the day is divided between these two families: the Pyncheons' days belong to them, but their nights and their dreams belong to the Maules. Later generations of Pyncheons even look like their ancestors. The family's history "seemed little else but a series of calamity, reproducing itself in successive generations, with one general hue, and varying in little, save the outline" (273).

Page after page is devoted to assuring the reader that no time has passed since the initial scenes, that today is like yesterday and tomorrow no different. The circular movement of local history is thus represented by an organ-grinder's dancing figures, their arms and legs flying all about, but always returning to their original place. In the end this is indeed what happens, for the daguerrotypist turns out to be a Maule and in love with a Pyncheon. Together they reverse their ancestors' quarrel. Their love makes the land whole again, unifies the day once more with the night, the working class with the aristocracy: "They were conscious of nothing sad nor old. They transfigured the earth, and made it Eden again, and themselves the two first dwellers in it. The dead man, so close beside them, was forgotten. At such a crisis, there is no death; for immortality is revealed anew, and

embraces everything in its hallowed atmosphere” (1851:347). In *The House of Seven Gables* the fundamental dual-focus tendency to subordinate time to space becomes a guiding theme.

Dual-focus narrative’s constitutive contest over space regularly appears in the Western dual-focus pastoral tradition as an identification of woman with land—the contested space itself. The sexual equality that *Daphnis and Chloe* is so careful to stress cannot be carried into the realm of land. When winter comes and the two lovers are separated, it is Daphnis who wanders far from home while Chloe stays put, just as Pan is represented in the book’s included stories as a philanderer, while his partners are identified with the land (Syrinx as a swamp, Echo as the hills). This asymmetry permeates *The Aeneid*, where Aeneas is the landless wanderer and Dido and Lavinia the symbols of Carthage and Italy. To marry, for Aeneas, is to acquire land, a home, a country. In Hesiod’s *Theogony* the father of the gods is called Uranus—Father Sky. This anthropomorphic vision of the universe, inspired by the position of the sky lying atop the earth, is completed by identification of the mother of the gods as Gaea—Mother Earth. This configuration is carried over into learned mythology through the garden topos, whereby woman is a limited and circumscribed space of highly desirable, extremely beautiful real estate. The same conception enters popular mythology in a variety of ways. Vocabulary used to describe land is regularly derived from woman’s body and vice versa. The Grand Tetons and the *mons veneris* are perhaps the two best-known examples, but any erotic novel will supply more. Instead of choosing women at random, dirty jokes consistently return to the farmer’s daughter—and land is not the only thing that gets plowed in farmer’s daughter jokes. Fertility, seeding, sowing wild oats—the double application of these terms clearly identifies them as direct descendants of the Gaea-Uranus myth.

Though primarily associated with epic combats, the Old Testament recounts many pastoral tales as well, systematically built around identification of woman with the land. The book of Ruth begins as the story of a famine, yet it ends not with the expected reaping of plenty but with the birth of Jesse and the listing of his descendants. A saga about the bounty of the land is thus characteristically transferred to female fertility. The famine plot, stressing land, the harvest, and gleaning, runs parallel to the tale of Ruth and Boaz, each in need of a mate. The stories are tied together by equating Ruth with the unproductive earth. She is the empty vase, lack, famine, whereas

Boaz represents the seed, the provider, food, plenty. Ruth’s connection with the land is explicitly recognized when Boaz offers Ruth in marriage to her next of kin, as the Law requires in the case of widowed women. “The day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi,” he says, “you are also buying Ruth the Moabitess” (4:5). Woman is land; to acquire one is to acquire the other as well. Without a man, Ruth’s land is infertile, but without a woman, Boaz cannot engender a son to further the line of Abraham. Only through the symbiotic relationship between man and woman can the parallel problems of famine and family be solved.

The Old Testament book known as Song of Songs or the Song of Solomon presents a similar sexual symbiosis, but with a radically different significance. This mysterious text, a favorite of medieval commentaries, is one of the prime sources for the Christian doctrine of mystic marriage. The woman in this tale of love is described by an elaborate and extended metaphor as Israel herself. She is a rose of Sharon, a lily of the valleys, beautiful as Tirzah and comely as Jerusalem; her hair is like Gilead, her neck like the tower of David, her eyes pools in Heshbon, her nose like a tower of Lebanon; her head crowns her as Mount Carmel dominates Israel. She is the blessed, the beloved, the Promised Land itself. He, however, is like an altar:

His head is the finest gold; his locks are wavy, black as a raven. His eyes are like doves beside springs of water, bathed in milk, fitly set. His cheeks are like beds of spices, yielding fragrance. His lips are lilies, distilling liquid myrrh. His arms are rounded gold, set with jewels. His body is ivory work, encrusted with sapphires. His legs are alabaster columns, set upon bases of gold. His appearance is like Lebanon, choice as the cedars. (5:11–15)

Only one passage in the entire Old Testament matches the ornateness of this one: the section of I Kings 6–7 where Solomon builds the temple of the Lord. In Song of Songs the lover becomes a symbol of God himself, but not as some numinous, omnipresent being. The lover is the Ark of the Covenant, reposing in the Holy of Holies on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, repeatedly identified throughout the Old Testament as the navel of the earth (e.g., Ezekiel 5:5 and 38:12). The term “navel” is of course a euphemism. In the mythology of the eastern Mediterranean it signifies the woman’s sexual organ, the place where male and female sexual principles meet, which is

precisely what they do in Song of Songs. The coupling of man and woman takes place in the spring, for each year God gives himself to his people, thus rendering all things fertile. Now that God has won the land for his people (in the preceding dual-focus epic books of the Old Testament), He makes love to the land so that new life might burst forth.

Built around contested space, both epic and pastoral varieties of dual-focus narrative thus display a fascinating complementarity. As Valentine de Saint-Point puts it, rather crudely, in the "Futurist Manifesto of Lust 1913,"

After a battle in which men have died, IT IS NORMAL FOR THE VICTORS, PROVEN IN WAR, TO TURN TO RAPE IN THE CONQUERED LAND, SO THAT LIFE MAY BE RE-CREATED. (1973:71; emphasis in the original)

If dual-focus epic reduces two competitors for the same land to one, dual-focus pastoral offers the opportunity for repopulation through the fertile marriage of sky and land. Together, epic and pastoral perpetuate a closed dual-focus system featuring stable population and unchanging existence. Though some texts concentrate their attention on only one of these modes, many others combine the two, offering in a single package a coherent recipe for long-term stability.

In its dualism, its spatial orientation, its neglect of time, and its concern for long-term stability, dual-focus narrative consistently operates according to the model developed by Mircea Eliade to describe "traditional" societies. In *Cosmos and History: The Myth of the Eternal Return*, Eliade shows why many societies have no pronounced view of history, why they don't experience time as a continuum. In these societies the world is divided into two fundamentally different spaces. The village and all land that has been cleared for habitation or cultivation are "cosmos"; all cosmic actions have an archetype, symbolically repeating the acts of the gods ab initio. All other land—sea, forest, alien village—is "chaos," so termed because it has no celestial archetype, no function within the divine scheme. Within this concentric universe, all power and value derives from the hallowed center, the *axis mundi* or world navel, where heaven, hell, and earth meet. Reality and value depend on the opposition of cosmos to chaos and on repetition of certain paradigmatic gestures, thus producing "an implicit abolition of profane time, of

duration, of 'history'" (1959:35). Just as Griffith deemphasizes the syntagmatic chain of events in *The Lonely Villa* by presenting a cyclical repetition of the archetype established in the opening shot, so Eliade's traditional societies draw attention away from the passage of time by stressing the relationship of each moment to a preestablished model. Through its alternating following-pattern, its replacement operations, and its paradigmatic "slotting," dual-focus narrative reproduces this configuration.

Though dual-focus narrative is hardly limited to traditional societies, it is not surprising to discover that many dual-focus texts have a distinctly popular origin or appeal, including oral epic, serial novels, westerns and musicals, dime novels and comic books. Many of the exceptions to this rule involve conscious attempts at re-creation of a previously popular form (*The Aeneid*, John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Renaissance pastorals like Honoré d'Urfé's *L'Astrée*). The mind-set associated with primitive, peasant, or popular culture reproduces many of the most insistent dual-focus patterns and themes. This connection clearly derives from common assumptions about the organization of the world. Whatever is cosmos cannot be chaos. Whatever is Christian cannot be pagan. Whatever is female cannot be male. Social organization and narrative structure alike depend on this "zero-sum" approach. When Zeus holds the fate of Greeks and Trojans in the balance, the rules of the game—and of fixed-arm scales—dictate that the fate of one group must reverse that of the other. For there to be a winner (plus value), there must also be a loser (minus value). The sum is always zero.

Past studies of narrative have usually assumed that all narrative texts can be assimilated to a single model. Vladimir Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale* provides a useful example. One of the formative texts of literary semiotics, Propp's study takes for granted that all Russian folktales are sufficiently similar to deserve to be studied together. Propp's followers regularly expanded this claim to the entirety of narrative, applying his results to texts as diverse as French novels and Hollywood westerns. I take an entirely different position here. Instead of assuming that all narratives have the same characteristics, I insist that variation according to different following-patterns and divergent underlying structures produces substantial differences among narrative texts. Instead of treating all narratives as fundamentally identical, we must recognize that different narrative types operate according to different rules.

Because Propp conceives narrative as a linear configuration, he describes only the syntagmatic aspects of his texts. For him, every Russian folktale takes the form of "The hero did this" and then "The hero did that." At pains to deal with the stretches of text that deal with an antagonist rather than the hero, he regularly folds this material into the hero's story—as others have done with *The Iliad*, *The Aeneid*, or *The Song of Roland*. Yet the texts analyzed by Propp have a paradigmatic component that escapes Propp's syntagmatic analysis. (Claude Lévi-Strauss 1976 and Mieke Bal 1985:30–33 are among the few theorists to have recognized this problem.) Or to put it in the terms of this chapter, Propp's texts regularly display the alternating following-pattern characteristic of dual-focus narrative. Instead of "The hero did this" and then "The hero did that," we consistently find "The hero did this" and then "The antagonist did that." In short, the majority of Propp's folktales are dual-focus texts. They must be seen not as representative of all narrative but as participating in the specific tradition of dual-focus narrative.

FOUR Hester's Speculation

The dual-focus system is organized as if by divine fiat. Characters are subordinated to prearranged categories. Textual progression depends on an omniscient and omnipotent narrator. Decided from the outset, the locus of value remains invariable. Dual-focus texts thus adopt the ultrarealist position in the problem of universals. General categories are seen as real, concrete entities, whereas the particular objects, individuals, or statements that embody them are considered mere "accidents." Single-focus narrative, to which we now turn, offers a radically different approach, tending toward the nominalist solution to the problem of universals. According to this system, categories are nothing but abstractions derived from individual cases, names given to express the similarity of certain, quite concrete, particulars. Single-focus narrative typically transfers freedom and authority from the narrator and the divine to an individual liberated from the tyranny of prearranged categories and thus capable of personally creating value. Where characters once left questions of good and evil to their superiors, now individual decisions, desires, and defeats are the ones that count.

The movement from dual-focus to single-focus narrative is thus that of Prometheus, of Lucifer, of Adam, for it is the very fire of the gods that single-focus protagonists must steal in order to escape from the dual-focus universe, where they were imprisoned within the narrow walls of group orientation, preexistent universals, and narratorial whim. It is precisely this progression that Nathaniel Hawthorne portrays in his 1850 novel, *The Scarlet Letter*. From the start, it is clear that the prison, "a wooden edifice, the door