

and sea, gardens between city and country, all function as mediators. It is possible to be trapped in such places.

Many events are set in vehicles of transportation, such as trains, boats, carriages, airplanes. Consequently these events – murder in Agatha Christie, sex in Flaubert, meetings, quarrels, hold-ups – temporarily suspend the safe predictability and clarity of the social order. This structuring potential of places of transition nourishes the narrative potential of the road 'Penetrante Ouest' in Chamoiseau's *Texaco*. This road inaugurates the fabula but never gets built. Instead of being a connection it was only a 'penetration' of the land. Its destructive nature – for its construction, the entire site of Texaco was to be erased – makes it, and the fabula of appropriation it represented, unacceptable. As a figure for that unacceptability, the woman founder of the community of Texaco, Marie-Sophie, abducts it: she tells the story that will convert the urban planner, makes him give up the construction of the road, and instead, monumentalize the place into a site of memory.

Oppositions are constructions; it is important not to forget that and 'naturalize' them. As deconstructive criticism has amply demonstrated, they are invariably flawed in their attempted logic. And that is very fortunate. If this chapter has relied more than the previous ones on the idea of opposition, this is not because oppositions have a privileged status in reality or art. Structuring often takes the route of opposition as a handy simplification of complex content. The oppositions we expect to function in fabulas can be traps as well as tools. This is the major problem of ideological and political criticism. The very ideological structure – binary opposition – that we use for our critical readings is simultaneously the object of those readings, their main target. The point is not to notice, confirm, or denounce oppositions but to confront the oppositions we notice with those we hold ourselves, and to use the differences between them as a tool to break their tyranny. With such an approach criticism need not prejudge the politics of great literature, or of popular culture, as happens so often. Instead, it helps to realize that criticism is always also, to a certain extent, self-criticism.

6: Remarks and Sources

In this chapter I have outlined objects and processes as the most important elements of the fabula. First events were discussed, then actors. These two categories are considered the most relevant elements. In both cases I first discussed criteria for selection on the basis of which a large quantity of subject matter may be restricted on explicit grounds.

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Subsequently the relationship between the remaining elements was taken into consideration. Events were always seen in relation to the actors forming part of it, and the actors in relation to the events they initiate or suffer. With regard to events I paid special attention to different criteria of selection, while in discussing the actors I was primarily engaged in classification. This difference relates to the order in which both subjects were discussed; it is not necessary to discuss again the several criteria for selection when that has been done in the previous subsection, even if with regard to a different subject.

Finally, time and location have only been given summary attention. They have been discussed at greater length in the previous chapter, for these elements are primarily interesting because of the way in which they are ordered and specified in the story.

The different subsections of this chapter show a clear resemblance. In every case I tried to describe the elements in their relationship to each other, and not as isolated units. This approach is structuralist: its assumption is that fixed relations between classes of phenomena form the basis of the narrative system of the fabula. I chose this approach because it offers, among other advantages, that of coherence. The different elements may thus be seen within the framework of one theoretical approach. Since every choice has its disadvantages as well as advantages, objections may be raised against this approach. The one mentioned most often is that it is reductive. This is inevitable: every choice is a limitation. But if that limitation is a starting point, not end point, it can be turned against itself and help us grasp what the ideological distributions of elements are and do. Instead of an ideological foundation, structural analysis then becomes a tool for critique.

A consequence of the approach taken in this book is that a great deal of attention was given to classification. When dealing with determined relationships between classes of phenomena, the ordering principles which form the basis of these classes must be made explicit. Classification, however, is not a self-serving aim for the literary scholar. Its use is instrumental: only when classification helps to provide greater insight into the phenomena constituting the classes is it meaningful in describing the text. Then significance may be derived from the fact that a phenomenon belongs to a certain class. The specific characteristics of one object may be described in the class to which they belong – or to which, against our expectation, they possibly do not belong.

Among other things, it is to emphasize that aspect of the approach that I have, in my examples, selected typological aspects just as often as specific texts. Typologies, however, are often handled implicitly: when

saying that a text shows 'such an original vision of society,' one implicitly assumes that a certain outlook on society forms the basis of the class of texts to which that particular one belongs.

On the 'resemblance' or homology between fabulas and reality, the literature is innumerable. Suffice it here to refer to the classical study by Erich Auerbach (1953) which inaugurated a flurry of interest in this subject. A good later study is Prendergast (1986). Mary Longman's sculpture was brought to my attention by Gerald McMaster, who wrote the very suggestive essay in the catalogue *Mary Longman: Traces* (Kamloops, BC: Kamloops Art Gallery, 1996).

The criteria for the selection of events have been derived from Barthes (1977) and Hendricks (1973). A critical application of Barthes' proposals has been made by Chatman (1969). The relations between events have been discussed according to the proposals of Bremond (1973). He distinguishes a third possibility for the combination of elementary series, juxtaposition. I have not included this possibility because to me it seems not of the same order as succession and embedding. 'Juxtaposition' does not result in a complete series of events, but in several visions of one and the same event. This issue was dealt with in chapter 2. The actantial model as it is presented here is derived from Greimas (1966). I have not adopted his later proposal (e.g., 1976) to replace *opponent* and *helper* with the concepts *anti-actant* and *co-actant*; the distinction between anti-subjects – autonomous subjects whose intentions are at cross purposes with those of the first subject – and incidental opponents would be lost. I would prefer to regard the duplication of the principal actant as a possibility, in addition to maintaining the original sixfold model. An alternative to Greimas' model is the less systematic but perhaps more inspiring sevenfold model of Souriau (1956). Most structural models have, to a greater or lesser degree, been inspired by Propp, whose work only became widely known during the 1960s. The early work of Todorov and Van Dijk, some of Doležel's studies (e.g., 1973) and the work of Prince (1983) also belong to this development. Lotman's remarks on location are published in Lotman (1977). I already mentioned De Lauretis' (1983) feminist critique of this view. Fludernik (1996) offers a thorough discussion of the issues of this book, including the topics of this chapter, which motivated students might find interesting.

The example of the Book of Judges was treated extensively in my book *Death and Dissymmetry* (1988). Another example of the use of narratology for anthropology is Elsbee (1982).

Afterword Theses on for Culture

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